



the pioneer

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Published From: HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN VIJAYAWADA

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

There is a need for the Civil Supplies Corporation to supply 7.83 lakh tonnes of rice during the Kharif season by January 31 and 35 lakh tonnes of rice for the Rabi season. This requires

Telangana millers to deliver around 42 lakh tonnes of rice in the coming weeks, a commitment in which there is a significant gap

- N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, Civil Supplies Minister

Committed to development of citizens living in tribal areas



CENTRE WANTED TO DEVELOP TAJPUR AS REVENUE GENERATING: THAKUR



Kiccha Sudeep unveils first look of WORLD OF UI



DON'T MISS...

Kite flying near places of...

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Kothakota Sreenivas Reddy on Monday prohibited kite flying in the vicinity of places of worship in order to maintain peace during Sankranti. The orders will remain effective from 6 am on January 14 to 6 am on January 16. "In order to maintain law and order, peace and tranquility and to prevent incidents of breach of peace and accidents that are likely to occur unless kite flying is regulated during the celebration of Sankranti Festival in Hyderabad City from January..."

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Indians top Maldives' tourist...

Data shows Indians top the Maldives' tourist arrival figures, with more than two lakh of them visiting the island nation every year after the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Maldives tourism ministry statistics, more than 2.09 lakh Indians visited the country in 2023. The number was more than 2.4 lakh in 2022 while over 2.11 lakh Indians flew to the Maldives in 2021. The Maldives was also one of the few countries open for international tourists during the pandemic and nearly 63,000 Indians visited the...

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DGCA revises duty time norms for...

Aviation safety regulator DGCA on Monday came out with revised Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDLT) norms for flight crew, entailing increased weekly rest periods to 48 hours, extension of night hours, and limiting the number of night landings to only two as against six earlier. These regulations have been instrumental in managing fatigue-related aviation safety risks for more than a decade now, an official statement said. Airlines are required to comply with the revised norms latest by June 1, it...

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Rohit, Kohli get final shot at T20...

The selectors have clearly gone for the status quo rather than addressing the elephant in the room by picking Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli for their first T20 series in 14 months. Will it have a bearing on India's chances in another T20 World Cup? Only time can tell. Having endured a heartbreak in the previous two editions of the T20 World Cup, the two greats of the game can't be faulted for wanting a final shot at glory in the format. But the same can't be said about the selectors, who picked a fresh...

-SPORTS

Revival of sick industries in TS

CM holds talks on Kamalapuram Pulp Mill; asks Finquest to expedite process

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Chief Minister reviewed along with senior officials the status of the move to revive the Kamalapuram Pulp Mill of Ballapur Industries Limited (BILT).

The Congress government has prioritised the revival of sick industrial units like the BILT's pulp mill in Mulugu district to boost the economy and provide employment.

The Chief Minister held a meeting with Hardik Patel, the MD of Finquest Financial Solutions Pvt Ltd, which has secured BILT assets in the State as per an order from NCLAT and is in the process of selling it to potential investors.

The CM expressed the government's strong desire to revive the



Kamalapuram Pulp Mill and requested Finquest to expedite the process.

The Chief Minister also had discussions with the CEO of ITC, PSPD (Paperboards and Specialty Papers Division), Vadiraj Kulkarni,

on their projects in Telangana and future expansion plans. The ITC is holding negotiations with Finquest to acquire BILT's assets. The CM promised all possible help to ITC to revive the BILT factory in Kamalapuram.

The Kamalapuram Mill in Mulugu DISTRICT is a dedicated pulp mill manufacturing rayon-grade pulp for the Viscose Staple Fibre (VSF) industry.

The Kamalapuram Mill in Mulugu DISTRICT is a dedicated pulp mill manufacturing rayon-grade pulp for the Viscose Staple

Fibre (VSF) industry.

The unit started commercial production in September 1981. Run by Ballapur Industries Limited (BILT) the unit became sick and was closed in 2014. The closure of the unit has affected the livelihoods of 750 workers and 100s of families dependent on the company.

Many attempts were made by past governments to revive the closed unit by extending incentives in 2015 and 2018 without success. The case was referred to NCLAT which appointed Finquest Financial Solutions Pvt Ltd as the Interim Resolution Professional in 2020.

Revanth holds talks with Coca-Cola

A senior delegation of Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB) met the CM, Revanth Reddy, and briefed him about their investments. The delegation led by Himanshu Priyadarshi, the Chief of Public Affairs, Communications & Sustainability (PACS) briefed the CM about their company's investment of around Rs 3,000 crore in Telangana. They also discussed the green field project at Bandatimmapur in the Siddipet district. Among other things, the HCCB delegation assured the CM of their commitment to continue to



contribute towards community development in the region. The CM also assured the HCCB team of the government's cooperation to ensure ease of doing business for the company.

Cabinet sub-committee set up to implement six-guarantees

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has constituted a cabinet sub-committee for implementing the six guarantees. Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka will be the chairman of the sub-committee. Ministers Sridhar Babu and Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy will be members.

A review meeting on Praja Palana was held under the chairmanship of the CM and implementation of the six guarantees was discussed. The Congress had promised to implement the six guarantees during the Assembly elections.

Ministers Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Ponnampalapati Prabhakar said that a sub-committee has been set up for implementing the six guarantees.

Ponguleti said that the data in the applications received through Praja Palana is being recorded on a war footing. He praised officials for



completing the public administration programme. All promises given will be implemented in the next 100 days.

The minister said that the data in the applications will be recorded till January 30. Nearly 30,000 data entry operators are working on it. After the data entry door to door verification will be done to identify beneficiaries. He said that welfare schemes will be provided to real beneficiaries and that the government is committed to

implementing its election promises. Meanwhile, from December 28 to January 6, around 1,24,85,383 applications were received across the state. Of this, 1,05,91,636 applications were received for five schemes, while 19,92,747 applications were received for ration cards and other things.

Praja Palana gram sabhas were held in 16,392 panchayats and 710 municipal wards.

Will have to constitute bench to hear plea against collegium system: CJ



Speed up rice delivery to FCI

Uttam warns of action against PDS rice diversion

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Civil Supplies Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy directed officials to speed up the delivery of rice to the Food Corporation of India to meet the January 31 deadline.

The Minister, along with Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari, Civil Supplies Commissioner DS Chauhan and other officials, addressed a video conference on Monday from his office in the Secretariat with Collectors, officials of the Civil Supplies Corporation and the FCI, focusing on expediting the milling of custom milled rice by rice millers and its delivery to the FCI.

Expressing serious concern over the pending delivery of custom milling rice from the



Civil Supplies Department to the FCI, Uttam said that during his recent visit to New Delhi, Central officials had complained about Telangana asking for large rice allocations but underperforming on deliveries.

He emphasised the need for the Civil Supplies Corporation to supply 7.83 lakh tonnes of rice

during vanakalam by January 31 and 35 lakh tonnes of rice for Yasangi. This requires all Telangana millers to deliver around 42 lakh tonnes of rice in the coming weeks, a commitment currently facing a significant gap.

Cong engineering delays for political gains: KTR

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR) accused the Congress of attempting to halt all social welfare programmes launched by the BRS government.

KTR also lashed out at the Congress's drama about debts and white papers and accused them of making false promises during the election campaign.

He reminded that the Congress Deputy Chief Minister even denied promising unemployment allowance to youth in the Assembly.

"They gave 420 guarantees, and we won't let them get away with talking about only six. The BRS will hold them accountable for every promise made to the people," the BRS Working President said.

"They are deliberately engineering bureaucratic delays for political gain. The BRS will expose their mismanagement and pressure on them

to deliver," he added. Calling upon BRS members, KTR urged them to work tirelessly to counter the "poor performance and administration" of the Congress government. Speaking at a party meeting at the Telangana

Bhavan, KTR asserted that the BRS would stand with the beneficiaries of these programmes and oppose any efforts to dismantle them. He said that the Congress government is already freezing the bank accounts of select Dalit Bandhu beneficiaries, a revolutionary scheme aimed at empowering Dalit families through a financial grant of Rs 10 lakh each for their economic self-reliance.

KTR criticized the cancellation of the Gruha Lakshmi

scheme, designed to help the poor to construct their own houses.

"The Congress, despite having ruled for 50 years, has never implemented such welfare programmes," KTR said. "Now, they want to sabotage our initiatives like Dalit Bandhu, Gruha Lakshmi, BC Bandhu and sheep distribution," he added.

The Supreme Court said just as an order passed by a court without jurisdiction is a nullity, in the same vein, an order passed or action taken by an authority lacking in jurisdiction is a nullity and is non est (does not exist) in the eye of law.

Will BJP make giant killer Katipally BJLP leader?

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

The selection of the BJP Floor Leader in the Telangana Assembly is not yet over. The matter is still going on with four MLAs in the run to get the post. They are three-time MLA T. Raja Singh, two-time MLA Aleti Maheshwar Reddy and first-time MLAs Katipally Venkat Ramana Reddy and Payal Shankar.

However, the BJP high command is inclined to make giant killer Kamareddy MLA Katipally

Venkat Ramana Reddy the BJLP leader, it is learnt.

The BJP high command's logic is that Katipally defeated former and present Chief Ministers KCR and Revanth Reddy in one go. Another reason for the BJP's interest in Katipally is that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is the leader of the House and the main opposition party, the BRS, had selected former Chief Minister KCR as their floor leader.



2

SC quashes Gujarat govt's remission order

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a massive setback to the Gujarat government, the Supreme Court on Monday quashed the remission it had granted to 11 convicts in the high-profile gang-rape case of Bilkis Bano and the killing of her seven family members, while slamming the state for being "complicit" with an accused and abusing its discretion. It ordered all the convicts, who were released prematurely on Independence Day in 2022, to be sent back to jail within two weeks.

Excoriating the Gujarat government, the apex court said it "usurped" the power of the Maharashtra government to grant remission to the convicts.

It held as nullity the May 13, 2022 judgement of another bench of the

11 CONVICTS TO RETURN TO JAIL

Excoriating the Gujarat government, the apex court said it "usurped" the power of the Maharashtra government to grant remission to the convicts.



apex court, which had directed the Gujarat government to consider the remission applications of the 11 convicts in the case, saying it was obtained by "playing fraud on court". "This is a classic case where the order of this court dated May 13, 2022, has been used for violating the

rule of law while passing orders of remission in favour of respondent nos 3 to 13 (convicts) in the absence of any jurisdiction by the State of Gujarat. Therefore, without going into the manner in which the power of remission has been exercised, we strike down the orders of remission

on the ground of usurpation of powers by the State of Gujarat not vested in it. The orders of remission are hence quashed," a bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan said. It asked whether "heinous crimes against women permit remission" irrespective of the faith she may follow or creed she may belong to.

Bilkis Bano was 21 years old and five months pregnant when she was raped while fleeing the horror of the communal riots that broke out after the Godhra train burning incident in February 2002. Her three-year-old daughter was among the seven family members killed.

In its 251-page judgment, the Supreme Court said the Gujarat government had no jurisdiction to entertain the applications for remission of sentences and only the government

of the state where the offenders were sentenced was competent to consider an application for remission and pass an order. "Government of State of Gujarat (respondent No.1 herein) had no jurisdiction to entertain the applications for remission or pass the orders of remission on August 10, 2022 in favour of respondent No.3 to 13 (convicts) herein as it was not the appropriate government within the meaning of sub-section (7) of Section 432 of the CrPC," the bench said.

The Supreme Court said just as an order passed by a court without jurisdiction is a nullity, in the same vein, an order passed or action taken by an authority lacking in jurisdiction is a nullity and is non est (does not exist) in the eye of law.

2

Congress hoodwinking people with promises

Objective of the Congress in hoodwinking the people with promises, raising new slogans is to ensure that the Gandhi-Nehru family grabs power anyhow. The Congress has been making futile efforts to benefit a family.

As part of the efforts, the Congress declared Rahul is going to embark on Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra from January 14. In 2022, Rahul undertook Bharat Jodo Yatra. Now, before the elections he changed the yatra's name and decided to tour some more states.

Objective of the jodo yatra is to unite various sections of society in the nation, while the Jodo Nyay Yatra's objective is to fight for the political, economic and social justice of various cross-sections of society, according to the Congress.

Surprisingly, experimenting with Rahul Gandhi in any manner would have no result at all no matter how many times the Congress

experiments with him.

Since taking a plunge into politics in 2004, Rahul did not leave any impact either on the party or on the people of the nation. He could not notch up success as party general secretary, in-charge of Youth Congress and other allied organisations. When Congress went to polls in 2014 with Rahul at the helms of affairs, it miserably failed. The strength of the Congress dipped to 44 in 2014 from 206 in 2009.

He took responsibility of the party campaign in 2019 polls, but failed to help win at least 10% of the seats in the House. He resigned from the party president's post blaming the seniors for the failure.

Rahul's Jodo Yatra failed to show any impact on people. The Congress suffered miserable defeat in the recently Assembly elections. Rahul campaigned along with sister Priyanka Wadhra in 21 seats in MP, but the Congress managed to win only in 4

The Congress leaders boast of Rahul's Yatra benefiting the Congress to come to power in Telangana. But, Rahul toured in 29 Assembly constituencies, but the Congress managed to win only in 12. Rahul's yatra impact was zero in several regions, including Hyderabad.

seats. People in Rahul-toured areas of Burhanpur, Indore, Agar Malwa and Ujjaini regions rejected the Congress.

In Rajasthan, Rahul's yatra proceeded through 12 Assembly constituencies, but the Congress won only in 3. People of Jhalwar, Dausa, Sawai, Madhopore and Alwar districts taught a lesson to the Congress.

The Congress leaders boast of Rahul's Yatra benefiting

the Congress to come to power in Telangana. But, Rahul toured in 29 Assembly constituencies, but the Congress managed to win only in 12. Rahul's yatra impact was zero in several regions, including Hyderabad.

The failure of Rahul Yatra could be gauged in the first phase itself, but the Congress encouraged him to take part in the second phase. It stands as a classic example of the ideological deficiency of the



Y SATYA KUMAR
BJP National Secretary

Congress regime on the basis of caste, religion, regionalism had not taken place under the regime of any other political party.

When questioned, the Opposition leaders were lodged in jails and democratic rights of people were trampled upon. The family rule, corruption, nepotism perpetrated during Congress regime alone. Rahul Gandhi should atone for the sins perpetrated by the Congress through his yatra. Therefore, he should declare that he is undertaking Prayashchitta Yatra.

When Modi-led BJP entered political arena in 2014, the people heaved a sigh of relief and helped BJP with a huge majority of votes. Under Modi's leadership, the people united strongly behind him forgetting their caste, colour, religion and creed. The significance of Indian culture has been made known to world. BJP got majority of SC and ST

seats only under Modi's leadership. Also, several BC groups took Modi under their wings. The Vikas Bharat

Sankalp Yatra launched by Modi and his ministers, BJP representatives, activists on November 15 to meet the beneficiaries of government schemes was successful. BJP leaders reached 11 crore beneficiaries in 50 days.

Objective of Rahul's yatra was to urge the people to render justice to his family. Rendering justice to the party would mean rendering injustice to the nation.

The Congress was in a bad shape as such it is not able to think beyond the scope of the family. That is why Congress is banking on Sharmila, daughter of former CM YS Rajasekhara Reddy, in AP.

Congress that had once ruled the undivided AP almost extinct in divided Andhra Pradesh. Sharmila

joined the Congress out of anger for her brother as she did not get justice in the distribution of thousands of crores of booty looted by her brother Jagan in Congress regime.

Jesus Christ alone knows why she floated a party in Telangana and closed it down to join hands with the Congress. It seems Rahul Gandhi pinned hopes on her that Sharmila would be able to revive the Congress in AP. How can a leader who fled Telangana soil develop Congress in AP? May be the elections useful to Sharmila and her Evangelist husband to get some personal benefits. Sharmila declared to the AICC stating that she joined the Congress out of agony of torching of churches in Manipur.

When thousands of temples were destroyed in the nation, when Kashmiri Pandits were lynched in J and K, why did Sharmila not experience any agony?



Lacchi Reddy is CMRO Project Director in CCLA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

After four years, the government has handed over key responsibilities to Deputy Collector V. Lacchi Reddy. On Monday, Revenue Principal Secretary Naveen Mittal issued an order appointing him as the CMRO Project Director in the CCLA.

Special Grade Deputy Collector D. Srinivas Reddy, who is working there, was ordered to report to the Revenue Department.

Lacchi Reddy who belongs to the 1992 batch has been entrusted with key responsibilities. Even before the new government took over there was a rumour that Revanth Reddy was behind him.

But in 2017, during the clearing of records, Lacchi Reddy was the RDO and Kees

Sara submitted a report as a pilot project. He worked hard to make the project a success. However, during the RTC strike, he supported workers on behalf of the Revenue Employment Association. Then Lacchi Reddy, was the RDO of Keesara. However, the transfer was cancelled as he had supported the RTC strike. He has been away from duty for about four years. It was during this period that he openly criticised the minus points of the Dharani portal and the irregularities committed by the KCR government.

He explained the technical errors in Dharani at meetings with evidence. He also blamed the government for abolishing the VROs system and strongly criticised the design and implementation of Dharani.

Praja Durbar is nothing but 'Drama Durbar'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Praja Durbar is nothing but a 'Drama Durbar', BRS MLA Vemula Prashanth Reddy said.

"The CM attended the Praja Durbar only once. Then he said two days a week. Now even the authorities don't care about the people. We demand that the government should release a white paper on how many people got their problems solved at the Praja Durbar this month. It is not a Praja Durbar but a Drama Durbar," he said. "Revantth said that governance is being brought closer to the people. People are being sacrificed in the name of public governance. In the name of receiving applications, people are brought on to the roads. Applications are also taken from those who do not need it," he said.

A large number of key BRS activists attended the preparatory meeting of the Nizamabad Parliamentary Constituency.



"Our cadres told us to forget the Assembly election defeat and focus on Parliament elections. The karyakartas assured that they would capture the Nizamabad Parliament seat this time. This is our defeat but not a Congress victory. It has been a month since the Congress took over," he said. "There are no records indicating that people were bothered by schemes during KCR's rule. The only new scheme implemented by the Congress

government is free bus travel for women. The lack of increase in the number of buses is inconveniencing both men and women. Auritrick drivers are now begging. The Rs 15,000 per month employment scheme for auritrick drivers should be announced immediately. When the Congress government came, many big companies left Telangana," he said. "The CM should make it clear whether he stands by his word on unemployment allowance. There is no Rythu Bharsa scheme and the money under the Rythu Bandhu scheme is still not coming properly. Why is the government not telling how many people have become farmers so far? Revantth said that loans up to Rs 2 lakh would be waived on December 9. The government should say whether the loan has been waived. Within a month, the Congress has done many things that will damage Telangana.

Diplomatic row: Maldivian envoy summoned

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Maldivian envoy to India was on Monday summoned to the external affairs ministry and conveyed its strong concerns over disparaging social media posts against Prime Minister Narendra Modi by three now-suspended-ministers as the backlash over the remarks continued for the second day.

In Male, the Maldivian government conveyed to Indian High Commissioner Munu Muhawar that the remarks against Modi do not represent its views.

Deputy ministers in the youth ministry Malsha Shareef, Mariyam Shiina and Abdulla Mahzoom Majid were suspended on Sunday by the government of President Mohamed Muizzu over their posts.

The Maldivian President is in China on a week-long trip.

Rajnath arrives in UK for defence, security dialogue

PNS ■ LONDON

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh arrived in London on Monday for a three-day visit focusing on all aspects of the India-UK Defence Partnership and to hold high-level discussions covering a wide range of defence, security and industrial cooperation issues.

Singh is accompanied by a Ministry of Defence delegation comprised of senior officials from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Service Headquarters, Department of Defence, and Department of Defence Production.

Besides a bilateral meeting with his UK counterpart, Defence Secretary Grant Shapps, he is also expected to meet Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Foreign Secretary David Cameron. "During his visit, the Raksha Mantri will hold a bilateral meeting with his UK counterpart Secretary of State for Defence, Mr Grant Shapps.



They are expected to discuss a wide range of defence, security and industrial cooperation issues," the Ministry of Defence in New Delhi said in a pre-visit statement over the weekend. "Shri Rajnath Singh is also expected to call on UK Prime Minister Mr Rishi Sunak and hold a meeting with Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Affairs Mr David Cameron. He will also interact with the CEOs and industry leaders of the UK Defence Industry and meet with the Indian community there," the statement added.

No shortage of urea in state

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Officials from the Agriculture and Marketing departments have made it clear that there is no shortage of urea in the state. At present 4,67,788 tonnes of urea are available in the state. The Minister of Agriculture, Marketing, Cooperation and Handloom and Textiles, Tummala Nageswara Rao, reviewed the urea supply situation on Monday with the Principal Secretary of Agriculture and the Director of Agriculture.

During the review, officials were ordered to ensure that there is no shortage of urea in the next season as well.

IndiGo to charge Rs 2,000 for front seats

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Passengers will have to dole out up to Rs 2,000 for front seats having more leg room in IndiGo flights, with the airline hiking the charges.

As per the fees and charges mentioned for various services on the airline's website, selecting a window or aisle seat in the front row of an A321 aircraft having 232 seats will cost Rs 2,000, while the amount is Rs 1,500 if it is the middle seat.

The charges are the same for these seats in an A321 plane that has 222 seats and in an

A320 aircraft having 186 seats. The same tariff is applicable for selecting these seats in an A320 aircraft with 180 seats, according to the airline's website.

In the case of ATR planes, the charge for seat selection is up to Rs 500. Aviation analyst Aameya Joshi said the airline has increased the seat selection charge for the front row seats with extra legroom to up to Rs 2,000.

Earlier, it was up to Rs 1,500, he added. There was no immediate from IndiGo on hiking the seat selection charge to up to Rs 2,000.

SC quashes Gujarat govt's...

Continued from page 1

On that short ground alone the orders of remission have to be quashed. This aspect of competency of the Government of State of Gujarat to pass the impugned orders of remission goes to the root of the matter and the impugned orders of remission are lacking in competency and hence a nullity. The writ petition filed by the victim would have to succeed on this reasoning," the bench said.

The top court said if the Gujarat government really had in mind the provisions of law and had adhered to the rule of law, it would have filed a review petition against the May 13, 2022 judgement of another bench of the apex court by contending that it was not the appropriate government.

While holding as nullity the May 13, 2022 judgement of the apex court, which had directed the Gujarat government to consider the remission applications of the 11 convicts, the Supreme Court said on Monday it was obtained by "playing fraud on court".

In its previous verdict, a bench comprising Justices Ajay Rastogi (now retired) and Vikram Nath had asked the Gujarat government to consider the plea of convict Raddheshyam Shah for premature release in terms of its

remission policy of July 9, 1992, holding that the government of the state where the offence had taken place has the jurisdiction to decide the application.

On Monday, the top court noted that Shah had initially approached the Gujarat High Court in 2019 for a direction to consider his application for remission.

"By order dated July 17, 2019 the High Court disposed of Criminal Application by observing that he should approach the appropriate Government being the State of Maharashtra. His second such application before the Gujarat High Court was also dismissed in 2020," it said.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Trayodashi: Jan 08 11:59 PM to Jan 09 10:25 PM
Chaturdash: Jan 09 10:25 PM to Jan 10 08:11 PM
Nakshatram: Jyeshtha: Jan 08 10:03 PM to Jan 09 09:11 PM
Moola: Jan 09 09:11 PM to Jan 10 07:40 PM
Rahukalam: 3:08 PM to 4:31 PM
Yamagandam: 9:37 AM to 11:00 AM
Varjyam: 06:10 PM to 07:40 PM
Gulika: 12:23 PM to 1:45 PM
Amritakalam: 12:42 PM to 02:15 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 12:00 PM to 12:45 PM
HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 28°
Humidity: 59%
Sunrise: 6:48 AM
Sunset: 5:58 PM
Updated: January 8, 2024 5:00 PM

Congress engineering delays for...

Continued from page 1

KTR specifically condemned the alleged backtracking plans of the Congress on Dalit Bandhu, claiming that they have forgotten their election promise to increase the grant per family from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 12 lakh. KTR cited the abrupt cancellation of the Gruha Lakshmi scheme, despite completing beneficiary identification and necessary proceedings. He vowed to stand by the affected families and fight for their rights.

Will BJP make...

Continued from page 1

The BJP high command thinks that it will become interesting in the Assembly if it makes Katipally the floor leader of the BJP. The BJP floor leader will get a chance to speak after Revantth and KCR as the BJP is the third largest party in the Assembly. Katipally will get a chance to speak after Revantth and KCR making the Assembly a crazy place. Both the defeated CMs (KCR and Revantth) would feel insecure when Katipally stands up in the House and it will be advantage BJP in the House. No one can take Katipally lightly in the House as he is the one who defeated two CMs in one go. On Monday at the meeting held at the State BJP office,

Speed up rice delivery...

Continued from page 1

The Minister highlighted the fact that the Civil Supplies Corporation had taken substantial loans to procure paddy from farmers and deliver it to millers. Recovering this investment depends on millers delivering the required quantity of rice to the FCI. Such delays, however, have caused significant losses for the corporation, now burdened with a debt of around Rs 58,000 crore and losses of Rs 11,000 crore in the last 9 to 10 years. It also has an annual interest burden of nearly Rs 3,000 crore. Uttam emphasised the futility of millers holding on to large stocks without timely delivery of rice. He warned that frequent delays or inability to deliver the prescribed quantity of

CM to embark...

Continued from page 1

District in-charge ministers have been given the responsibility of development in Assembly constituencies. The CM assured that everyone is a partner in the welfare and development of the state. Unlike the former Chief Minister, Revantth Reddy told the MLAs he will be available to all MLAs after January 26. The CM will also be available to MLAs at the Secretariat three days a week between 4 pm to 6 pm every day. The Chief Minister advised the leaders to work with more enthusiasm during the Lok Sabha elections. Leaders are directed to work hard to win more votes than in the recently held Assembly elections.

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

Kite flying near places of worship prohibited for fest

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Kothakota Sreenivas Reddy on Monday prohibited kite flying in the vicinity of places of worship in order to maintain peace during Sankranti.

The orders will remain effective from 6 am on January 14 to 6 am on January 16. "In order to maintain law and order, peace and tranquility and to prevent incidents of breach of peace and accidents that are likely to occur unless kite flying is regulated during the celebration of Sankranti Festival in Hyderabad City from January 14 to 15, 2024, I, K. Sreenivasa Reddy, Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad, in exercise of the powers vested in me under Section 22 (1), (2) and (3) of Hyderabad City Police Act, 1348 Fasli (No. IX) do hereby order that kite flying on all thoroughfares and in and around places of worship be prohibited, in the interest of maintenance of public order and public safety," read an



order from the Commissioner. "No loud speakers or DJ shall be placed or played in public spaces, without permission from concerned police authorities as per Rule 8 of Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000 and no provocative speeches / songs shall be played over them."

"No loud speakers should be used from 10 pm - 6 am; Parents and citizens of Hyderabad city are advised to

guide and supervise their children, not to fly kites from the terraces without parapet walls, to avoid any accident/unlawful incident. They are suggested, also to advise their children not to run on the roads or vulnerable places while flying kites or trying to collect stray kites. Children should be made aware of their vulnerability regarding electrocution, if they try to collect stray kites from electric poles.

The orders will remain effective from 6 am on January 14 to 6 am on January 16. In order to maintain law and order, peace and tranquility and to prevent incidents of breach of peace and accidents that are likely to occur

All these suggestions are in the interest of the safety and security of children and to avoid accidents," the order further read.

People must not collect wood forcibly for bonfires and they should use wood only with the consent of owners. Any person violating the orders is liable for prosecution under the Hyderabad City Police Act, 1348 (No. IX) and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and other relevant laws.

Under-19 T-20 Championship from Jan 18

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The 43rd All India Rajiv Gandhi Under-19 day-night T-20 League Cricket Championship will be held from January 18 to January 21.

The organiser of the Championship and Congress senior leader V Hanumantha Rao said that the Telangana Congress Affairs incharge Deepa Das Munshi will inaugurate the Championship at LB Stadium and Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy will participate in the closing ceremony that would be held at LB Stadium.

Speaking to the media on Monday, VH said that 14 teams are participating in the Championship and they are Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Hyderabad, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, CFI, Bengaluru, Maharashtra, Bihar, Vidarbha, Chennai, Haryana and Delhi.

The Championship organizing members Rohin Reddy, Srikanth Goud, Adi Avinash, Laxman Yadav, Naryanswamy, Sadhguru, Rajnikanth, Shakeel and Manmohan were present.

NIRD, NBA conduct global meet on wetlands, biodiversity

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), in collaboration with the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), on Monday inaugurated a Convention of Wetlands and Biodiversity.

It is a five-day convention. Dr B Balaji, Secretary, NBA, recalled the long cherished relationship between NBA and NIRDPR in organising various training programmes for officers of different capacities. "The officers get limited opportunities to update themselves and hence, case studies and field visits are included in the programme. "Wetlands cover around 6 per cent of the earth's surface; However, more than 40 per cent of plant and animal species live and breed in it. Such is the importance of wetlands," he noted.

"In the Convention on Biological Diversity, India is a signatory. We can proudly state that out of 192 signatories, India is a role model for many of the countries. India passed the Biological Diversity Act in 2002, and the access-benefit sharing is the key feature of it, which makes it a tremendous



success," Balaji added.

The goal of the capacity building on the 'International Convention of Wetlands and Biodiversity', with a focus on the Biodiversity Act 2002, is to introduce recent changes in principles and governance tools at the international level to the Indian Forest Service officers. The capacity-building programme will be conducted as a training programme for the officials.

This programme takes a transdisciplinary approach consisting of natural and social scientists from different disciplines and adds value to India's

existing efforts on biodiversity governance promoted by the National Biodiversity Authority. It will also help strengthen State and national ties between researchers and administrators working on managing biodiversity and ecosystem services by creating a well-structured capacity-building community. The programme is designed under the larger perspective laid down by the Convention of Biodiversity (Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework), and the governance approaches adopted in the Biodiversity Act 2002.

Two booked for misbehaving with flight cabin crew

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Two persons were booked on Monday by the RGIA police for misbehaving with cabin crew of a flight from Mumbai to Hyderabad.

The accused belong to Tolichowki. "The duo, returning to Hyderabad airport after a vacation in Mumbai, initiated an argument over seats on the flight," said the police. The accused weren't willing to listen to the crew members. As the situation escalated, the issue was reported to the captain and the airport authorities.

Following the complaint, the RGI police registered a case against the Hyderabad duo under relevant sections. They were later released but are required to present themselves before the court in this matter, the SHO added. However, they are not placed on 'no fly list' which usually happens after the completion of the investigation.

TSRTC MD appeals women to carry original Aadhaar for Mahalakshmi Scheme

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) Managing Director VC Sajjanar has appealed to women travellers to carry an Aadhaar card or original identity card to avail "Mahalakshmi - Women Free Bus Travel Facility Scheme."

He said that the passenger's photograph and address should be visible on the identity card. Any original identity card issued by Central and State governments is applicable for this scheme. The PAN card is not valid for free travel as it does not have an address.

TSRTC management has come to the notice that some people are showing photocopies and colour Xerox copies on their smartphones despite repeatedly saying that original identity cards should be shown. Due to this, the staff is facing difficulties and the travel time is also increasing. As a result, other passengers are getting inconvenienced. All

women passengers are requested to show original identity cards and take zero tickets. "If you do not have the original identity card, we request you to take the ticket after paying the money. Mahalakshmi scheme applies to women of Telangana region. Women of other states should pay the charge and take the ticket as a duty and cooperate," he added.

He also emphasised that women passengers cooperate with the RTC staff and take zero tickets when they travel in buses. It is incorrect to argue with staff about why to take zero tickets. The State government reimburses TSRTC that money based on the issuance of zero tickets. If they travel without a zero ticket, it will be a loss to the organisation. So every woman should take zero tickets. If one travels without taking a ticket and is detected in the checking, the job of the staff will be in jeopardy. Also, there is a possibility of imposing a fine of Rs 500 on the concerned person.

DCA nabs quack for stocking unlicensed drugs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Drug Control Administration (DCA) on Monday arrested a man from Mahabubabad district for unlicensed stocking and sale of medicines worth Rs 95,000.

The accused was identified as S Murahari, a quack who operated a clinic named 'New Life Care Clinic' at Palakonda village in Mahbubnagar mandal and detected unauthorised stocking of huge quantity of medicines for sale.

Officials seized 36 varieties of medicines, including antibiotics, steroids, anti-ulcer drugs and analgesics. Based on a tip off, the authorities raided Murahari's house and detected several high generation 'antibiotic injections' and 'steroid injections' at the clinic during the raid.

Samples of the seized drugs were taken for further examination.

Public hearings should be resolved within a week: Mayor

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi directed the officials to resolve the pleas received from the public within a week. LB Nagar zonal office has received pleas from the public during the public hearing.

The Mayor said that a decision has been taken to organise a public radio programme to solve public problems and to solve people's problems at circle and zonal levels in Greater Hyderabad from Monday. Similarly, a public radio programme will be organised at the headquarters on January 22.

In regards to requests received on various issues, most of them came on the issues related to the Town Planning Department. Following the public address programme, the requests were reviewed by the DCs with the Town Planning sanitation officials. The Mayor has issued instructions to the officials to examine the requests received at the field level and take



appropriate action. If there are illegal constructions in the town planning, action should be taken as prescribed. She also ordered to pay special attention to the prevention of mosquitoes in the slum area. The DCs were directed to take immediate action on the complaints received on sanitation.

Vijayalakshmi ordered the officials to respond immediately and take appropriate action when government property was encroached

upon. The veterinary officials were ordered to check whether the sterilisation of dogs is being done properly to prevent dog bites. The veterinary officer explained that a committee meeting will be held at the zonal level every month on this matter.

On this occasion, the Mayor examined each application thoroughly and handed it over to the concerned officer for resolution.

Zonal Commissioner Pankaja was directed to send a written report on the action taken on each application to the applicant and submit the report by Saturday. Many corporators took the problems of their ward to the notice of the Mayor. She directed the officials to immediately solve the problems described by the corporators.

Zonal Commissioner Pankaja, Maintenance SE Ashok Reddy, DCs, Town Planning, Entomology, Veterinary, and Sanitation department officials participated in this programme.



Review meet ahead of Medaram Jatara

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Health Minister Damaodhar Rajanarsimha on Monday called for medical camps to be set up ahead of the Medaram Jatara.

The Minister stressed on food safety measures and prevention of adulteration during the jatra. "Ambulances should be available along with medical staff and necessary medicines to deal with emergency situations. Medical camps must be set up and the health department staff should be available on ground during the event," Rajanarsimha stressed.

Health officials have been asked to remain on ground from the day of Sankranti and monitor the jatra and be prepared to deal with any medical emergency.

Complete stormwater canal works quickly: GHMC Commissioner

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Commissioner Ronald Rose has directed the officials to complete the stormwater drain works at the earliest. The Commissioner, along with local MLA Zafar Hussain, inspected several canal works in Yakutpura constituency on Monday.

The Commissioner inspected the works of Talab Katta nala. The engineering officials requested him to acquire the land for completion. Ronald Rose ordered the officials to complete the acquisition of assets and complete the remaining work. Till then the officials were asked to take temporary measures without disturbing the public.

Subsequently, the Commissioner inspected the works of Rain Bazar nala and ordered them to do without waterlogging.

He said that the old return wall of the sewage canal adjacent to the railway track in Yakutpura should be restored and the works should be taken up. In the background of construction work of vehicle underpass (VUP) in Yakutpura, he ordered the officials to prepare a suitable plan for preventive measures without storage of rainwater.

Project SE Duttu, Zonal Commissioner Venkanna, Maintenance SC, Corporators Mohammad Wasi, Dr Samina, Nasreen Sultana, Muzaffar and Almadar Walajahi Shafath participated in this programme.

Aata Niharika replicates her success through Bharatha Kala Kshetram

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Around 60 students of Bharatha Kala Kshetram mesmerised the audience during a Talent Expo organised on the occasion of its first anniversary celebrations at Marina Skies Clubhouse, Moosapet in Hyderabad. The young kids of different age groups have enthralled the visitors by performing both traditional Kuchipudi and Western dance forms.

VVS Jagannadha Rao, a renowned Kuchipudi dancer, choreographer and dance teacher, and Srinivas Rao Goddu, Associate Dean of International Affairs at Andhra University, were the chief guests at the event.

Jagannadha Rao appreciated the young talent of the dance school. He is a direct disciple of



legendary Indian dancer and Kuchipudi dance guru Padma Bhusan Vempati Chinna Satyam. He is also the guru of Niharika Chowdhary, founder of Bharatha Kala Kshetram.

Niharika started presenting classical dance shows right from the age of three years. When others of her age struggled to walk, she used to dance on the edge of brass plates keeping earthenware pots on her head. Since her childhood,

she has won various national and State-level awards for her energetic dance performances in Odissi, Kuchipudi and western dance forms.

Fondly known as 'Aata' Niharika, she won the grand finale titles of popular dance shows like Zee Telugu Aata 5 Juniors and ETV Telugu Dhoom during her school days. She was recently recognised by Doordarshan as a Grade-B artist.

Man convicted for dowry death, gets 7 years RI

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A man convicted of dowry death on February 25, 2014, at midnight in Kesaram village of Shabad mandal was given rigorous imprisonment for seven years on Monday by ADJ Court Ranga Reddy at LB Nagar.

The accused Challa Rajendra Reddy (25) S/o Malla Reddy R/o, of Kesaram in Shabad mandal got married to the deceased Challa Rajini. At the time of their marriage, the parents of the deceased gave 12 tulas gold and promised to give two acres of land later. After one month of their marriage, the deceased was subjected to harassment to get two acres of land from her parents.

On February 24, 2014, at 9 am, the accused beat the deceased and went to Shadnagar for his duty. Due to the unbearable harassment of the accused, the deceased was

vexed with her life and poured kerosene on herself and set herself ablaze. She was admitted to Gandhi Hospital, Secunderabad for treatment. While undergoing treatment she died on March 6, 2014, at 10:30 pm.

Based on the statement of deceased Challa Rajini W/o Rajendar Reddy recorded by SI Shabad Ch Nagaraju, while undergoing treatment at the hospital, a case in Cr.No: 27/2014 U/s Women burns of PS Shabad initially, after the death of the deceased, altered the section of law from Women burns to 304(B) IPC of PS Shabad, Cyberabad. Later, SDPO of Chevella, Sridhar took up the investigation. After completion of the investigation, he filed a chargesheet in the court. During the trial at the ADJ Court Ranga Reddy at LB Nagar, the accused was given rigorous imprisonment for seven years.

Strict action against hotels that do not comply with quality: Mayor

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

City Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi has directed the authorities to take strict action against hotels that do not comply with quality standards. The Mayor held a review meeting with additional commissioner health Sneha Sabarish, food safety officials and corporators on Monday and directed them to focus on providing quality food to the people of the city.

The Mayor said, "In the background of food safety inspectors regularly inspecting restaurants,

hotels and fast food centres in the respective circles and collecting samples and testing them, they were ordered to take action against the hotels that do not comply with the prescribed standards." She said that measures should be taken to ensure that the kitchen in hotels and restaurants is clean and the ingredients used in it are of good quality. Action should be taken at the field level on adulterated food through Food Safety on Wheels under the auspices of the Food Safety Authority of India. Measures should be taken to

close down the concerned establishment following the receiving of a complaint about adulterated food. Food safety inspectors are advised to carry out inspections in collaboration with the Enforcement Vigilance and Disaster Management (EVDM) department.

Gazetted Food Safety Assistant Director Balaji, Narasimha Reddy Corporators CV Reddy, Shruvan, Rajasekhar Reddy, Bannala Geetha Praveen, Padma Venkat Reddy and Food Safety Inspectors participated in the programme.

'Strict measures to prevent stray dogs menace'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi said that the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) will take strict measures to keep the people of the city safe from the menace of stray dogs. The Mayor held a review meeting with Additional Commissioner Sneha Sabarish, veterinary officers and corporators who are members of the High-Level Committee formed to prevent dog bites from stray dogs at the GHMC headquarters on Monday.

The Mayor said that measures have been taken as per

the instructions of the High-Level Committee to protect the people from the danger of stray dogs across the city, and as per their instructions, the Veterinary department is taking sterilization and anti-birth control (ABC) measures for stray dogs.

She reviewed the incidents of stray dog attacks in many places in the city and said that extensive measures are being taken to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. Veterinary officials said that steps should be taken to provide regular rabies vaccine to stray dogs. The Mayor said that steps have been taken for anti-birth con-



trol operations in 16 municipalities around the GHMC. As per the circle wise, how many dogs are sterilized every day should be recorded and explained to the public, and special shelters should be established for stray dogs.

Vijayalakshmi said that a

shelter for stray dogs will be set up in an area of one acre in Serilingampally. The members of the high-level committee suggested creating awareness about the menace of stray dogs through various media.

She also said that zonal officials should review this matter and ordered them to take strict action. Regular monitoring should be done in the six centres set up for stray dogs. Fresh water and timely feeding should be provided to the dogs. After sterilization, they should be kept in the centres for four days and then released. Action should be taken to prevent stray dogs from roaming

in groups. Waste from mutton and chicken shops should not be disposed of in empty spaces and appropriate measures should be taken along with awareness. Officers working at the zonal level should pay special attention to this matter. Likewise, the Chief Veterinary Additional Commissioner should always review with the field-level officials.

Veterinary officer Abdul Vakil, corporators CV Reddy, Shruvan, Rajasekhar Reddy, Bannala Geetha Praveen, Padma Venkat Reddy, deputy directors and veterinary doctors participated in the meeting.

BJP appoints in-charges for TS Lok Sabha constituencies

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
The BJP has appointed political in-charges for all Parliament constituencies in Telangana for the forthcoming Parliament elections. Telangana BJP unit President G. Kishan Reddy had a meeting with the leaders of the 10 committees at the state BJP office on Monday. The BJP appointed all its eight MLAs in Telangana as in-charges in various LS constituencies.

Interestingly, Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy is in-charge of the Congress in the Khammam Lok Sabha constituency while his cousin Ponguleti Sudhakar Reddy is the in-charge of the BJP in the same constituency.

The BJP's in-charges are T. Raja Singh-Hyderabad, Dr K. Laxman-Secunderabad, Venkat Narayana Reddy-Chevella, Paidi Rakesh Reddy-Malkajgiri, Payal Shankar-Adilabad, Ramarao Patel-Peddapalli, Dhanpal Suryanarayana-Karimnagar, Aleti Maheshwar Reddy-Nizamabad, Katipalli Venkat Ramana Reddy-Zaheerabad, Palvai Harish-Medak, N. Ramchander Rao-Mahabubnagar, Magam Rangala Reddy-Nagarkurnool, Chintala Ramachandra Reddy-Nalgonda, NVSS Prabhakar-Bhongir, Marri Shashidhar Reddy-Warangal, Garikapati Mohan Rao-Mahabubabad, Ponguleti Sudhakar Reddy.

BRS leaders involved in Nayeem's illegal assets case: Bandi Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Karimnagar MP and BJP national general secretary Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that the secrets of many leaders of all political parties will come out if the State government cracked the slain gangster Nayeemuddin's illegal assets and documents case. He said that huge amounts of money came out after the encounter with Nayeemuddin.

Alleging that the BRS leaders' involvement is there in Nayeem's case, Sanjay demanded the government to tell where Nayeem's illegal assets and documents were. He opined that two or three districts will

be developed if the illegal assets of Nayeem are brought to light. Sanjay demanded the government to bring the persons, how big they may be, involved in the drugs case to reopen the case. He also demanded the Congress government to tell whether it will amend the GO number 317 or not. He demanded the Congress government to order a probe into the Intermediate students' suicides and also reveal who closed that case. He also demanded the State government to tell who water-downed the TSPSC paper leakage case. Sanjay asked the Congress government, which is stating that corruption took place in

Alleging that the BRS leaders' involvement is there in Nayeem's case, Sanjay demanded the government to tell where Nayeem's illegal assets and documents were. He opined that two or three districts will be developed if the illegal assets of Nayeem are brought to light.



Kaleshwaram project, to tell as to why it is not ordering a CBI inquiry. He asked the Congress government to tell what is objection to handing over the

Kaleshwaram project scam for CBI inquiry. Sanjay demanded the Congress, which is stating that the BRS and BJP are one, to

show the evidence to prove it. He alleged that the BRS is a sunken boat and the Congress is a sinking boat.

He demanded the Congress government not to deceive the people as it came to power giving 6-guarantees to the people. He said that it is not proper for the government to pass the time in the name of debts. He asked the Congress government to tell how it will clear the debts. "The loans will be given to the governments only when there are no debts to the State," he said.

Bandi Sanjay made it clear that there were no differences between former Minister Eatala Rajender and him.

Kavitha and KTR will go to jail soon: Rajgopal Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress MLA from Munugode Komatireddy Rajgopal Reddy commented that the former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's son KT Rama Rao and daughter Kavitha will go to jail very soon.



Speaking to the media on Monday, Rajgopal Reddy alleged that former Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao hatched a conspiracy to defeat him in Munugode constituency. However, the people of Munugode ensured a huge victory there, Rajgopal Reddy said, making it clear that he stepped in Palakurthi constituency intentionally. He warned Errabelli to be careful and quit politics. He alleged that Errabelli indulged in atrocities with the power in Palakurthi constituency. Rajgopal Reddy said that there was no need to fear anyone and the Congress government will come to power

once again. He said that he expected that KCR would retire. However, he fell on the floor. He alleged that KCR indulged in Rs 1 lakh crore corruption and Errabelli indulged in Rs 500 crore scam. Rajgopal Reddy participated in the Bhoomi Pooja held for Anumandla Jhansi-Rajender Reddy Skill Development buildings. Palakurthi MLA Yashaswini Reddy, Mahabubabad MLA Murali Naik, Dornakal MLA Ramchandar Naik and Vardhannapet MLA KR Nagaraju participated in the programme.

'Contest will be between Cong, BJP in LS polls'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Making it clear that the contest will be between the BJP and the Congress in the coming Lok Sabha elections, Telangana BJP president G Kishan Reddy said that the BRS party, Kishan Reddy said that the BJP will win majority seats in the coming LS polls in Telangana.

While speaking to the media on Monday at the State party office, Kishan Reddy said there is no need for the



KCR family to join Telangana. He said that the party has to face the LS polls with full strength. He said that the party will go to the people with the

slogan 'Fir Ek Baar Modi Sarkar'. He said that the party will take the opinion of the people for the sake of the election manifesto. The party has to meet young voters as 90 per cent of young voters are with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said that the party will take up Swatcha Abhiyan programme from January 14 to 22. He appealed to the people that every Hindu has to participate in Ram Mandir Prana Prathista. The live telecast will be provided in 150 nations.

Bandla Ganesh says people will make wise decisions

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Actor-cum-producer-cum politician Bandla Ganesh slammed former Ministers T Harish Rao and KT Rama Rao alleging that their jealousy reached the peak. He said that Harish Rao has to be aware that not only dal but also biryani will be cooked after 100 days. He said that the people are intelligent and will

make wise decisions. Speaking to the media on Monday, Bandla Ganesh asked Harish Rao to tell whether he fought for the last 10 years with the Centre demanding the assurances given by the Centre. He said that CM A Revanth Reddy and Ministers were speaking to the Prime Minister and Union Ministers seeking funds to be given to the State.

Saidireddy loses no-trust motion moved against him

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Nalgonda Municipal chairman Saidi Reddy lost the no-confidence motion moved against him by the Congress councillors here on Monday.

The Municipality has a total of 50 members, including two ex-officio members. Of the 48 members, 47 took part in the voting held on the motion.

Of the 47, 41 members voted in favour of the motion. Two ex-officio members and BJP floor leader abstained from voting. District in-charge Hemant Kesav Patil declared that the no-confidence motion was carried through with the support of 41 members. He declared that the next chairman of the municipal council would be announced soon.

Testing time for Revanth, KCR in Lok Sabha polls

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

BRS President K Chandrasekhar Rao and TPCC President A Revanth Reddy will once again face each other. But now their positions are changed. In December last, both KCR and Revanth faced each other in the Assembly elections. During that elections KCR was BRS President and the Chief Minister. But Revanth was only TPCC President. In the Assembly elections, BRS was defeated and the Congress came to power. Now Revanth is TPCC President and the Chief Minister. But KCR is only the BRS President.

In the coming Lok Sabha elections, KCR and Revanth will be facing each other as for-

mer Chief Minister and the Chief Minister respectively. In Telangana, there are total of 17 Lok Sabha seats. The coming Lok Sabha elections are testing time for both KCR and Revanth. Both are planning to win majority seats in the Lok Sabha elections to show their upper hand in the Telangana politics.

In the previous Lok Sabha elections BRS won 9 seats and the Congress won three seats. Just like in the previous time, now also Lok Sabha elections are coming after three months to the Assembly elections. Winning majority Lok Sabha seats is most important to the Chief Minister Revanth than former Chief Minister KCR. If the BRS wins majority seats there are chances of troubles starting for Revanth Reddy



within the party. At the same time the BRS graph will increase and those who want to jump into Congress may rethink. The Congress high command has a lot of hopes on Revanth after winning in the Assembly elections under his leadership as TPCC President. The

Congress high command is hoping that Revanth will ensure in winning majority seats. If BRS wins, the image of Revanth in the party high command will decrease. Setting aside the senior leaders' opinion Congress high command made Revanth the Chief Minister. In the

Telangana Congress disidence may start against Revanth. At present the Congress has just four members against the magic figure to form the government. If BRS wins majority seats it may try to attract some Congress MLAs to create trouble to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.

If the Congress wins majority Lok Sabha seats the image of Revanth will significantly increase. Within the Telangana party also there will be no threat to his leadership. At the same time the BRS leaders and MLAs also may think of jumping into the Congress. The BRS will further weaken political and the image of KCR also may get clouded. The coming Lok Sabha elections are a challenge to the image of Revanth and KCR.

Telugu version of Sam Pitroda's book launched in Hyderabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Monday launched the Telugu version of Sam Pitroda's book "Redesigning the World, A global call to action."

The Telugu version is translated by Poludasa Narasimha Rao and has been edited by Dr D Chandrashekar Reddy. The book is titled "Prapanchaniki Kotharupam iddam. Kadalirandi" in Telugu. Pitroda joined the event virtually.

The chief guests included MM Pallam Raju, former Union Cabinet Minister. Guests of honour included Madhu Yashki Goud, former MP, Parakala Prabhakar, Vundavalli Arun Kumar, former MP, Madan Mohan Rao, MLA, Uma Reddy Venkateswarlu, former Union Cabinet Minister, V



Lakshmi Narayana, N Sambasiva Rao and KN Kumar.

Giving an overview of the book, Pitroda said, "This book titled "Redesign the World" Prapanchaniki Kotharupam iddam, Kadalirandi" is a very insightful description of global issues with absolutely clear identification of problems faced in the world and root causes for the same. Sam also suggested through this book a clear manifesto as a pragmatic and feasible solution to the global issues well identified. Sam Pitroda lays emphasis on three unique dimensions

of information technology, democratisation, decentralisation and demonetisation which have allowed us to change the world order. Democratization through the Internet enables and empowers all to have access to knowledge, education, entertainment and shopping. Decentralised access to banking, health care and transport is enabled by hyper connectivity in this new world. Mobile wallets, payments and banking offer digital platforms will profoundly impact the future of our society and civilisation."

Differently abled face problems in getting slots

PNS ■ MEDAK

The differently abled persons have been waiting near the Mee Seva and Ee Seva centres and facing difficulties in getting their slots booked to take part in the Sadaram camps as the computer servers have been reported down. Collector Rajarshi Shah appealed to the physically challenged to get their slots books for the Sadaram camps to be held on Jan 9, 10, 18, 19, 23 and 24. Responding to the call, the physically challenged made a beeline to the Mee Seva and E-Seva centres, but they were told to wait as the servers developed a technical snag.

Man applies in the name of God to draw attention to plight of temple

PNS ■ HANUMAKONDA

In order to draw attention of the State administration to the plight of the 12th century Trikooteswara temple, dating back to the period of the Rashtrakuta rulers, a resident of Muttaram in Bheemaveerapalli mandal of Hanamkonda district applied for sanction of six guarantees on the last day on January 6 giving the applicant's name as Sivayya.

Over 1.24 crore have applied for various benefits under the six guarantee schemes under Abhaya Hasham scheme of the Congress. Among the millions of applications received the

application filed by one "Sivayya" garnered the attraction of all. Name of the wife was given as Parvati Devi and names of sons as Kumaraswamy and Vinyakudu. Soon the incident became viral on the Internet.

Soon the reason behind lodging such an application came to the fore and it put fullstop to criticisms at all levels.

It was Yenugu Venkata Surender Reddy who had applied in the name of "Sivayya". He was the chairman of the temple committee for Trikooteswaram temple in Muttaram village of Bheemaveerapalli mandal.

The rare and beautiful temple dating back to 12th century of the Rashtrakuta period witnessed no development all these years. Surender Reddy and other villagers were pained to note this. But, Surender Reddy did not keep mum. While the government was collecting applications to identify beneficiaries of six guarantee schemes, Surender Reddy hit upon an idea: Submission of an application in the name of Sivayya. In the particulars column, he only mentioned names of deities alone. In place where the beneficiary should attach his or her photograph, he pasted the photograph of Lord Siva.

Since the temple has no room for the priest, he applied for an Indiramma house and applied for Gruha Jyoti scheme to get free power. The Trikooteswara temple was built and idols installed during the Rashtrakoota period. When the news went viral on social media platforms, people thought it as a ploy by the BRS sympathisers to make new CM A Revanth Reddy unpopular.

Several have expressed doubts over how the officials acknowledge such an application without any number and having the photo of Lord Siva as the beneficiary.

RMPs violating service rules, practicing like doctors

PNS ■ KANDANOO LU

There were no raids on the clinics being run by the Registered Medical Practitioners, who instead of providing first-aid have been prescribing medicines and administering injections on the lines of a qualified doctors.

In fact, there are at least 800 clinics being run by the RMPs, who have been practising like doctors, thanks to their political clout.

Some of the RMPs have been running diagnostic laboratory services and administering intravenous fluids. There were instances of the RMP doctors' treatment causing death to patients.

The district authorities have raided a hospital belonging to an RMP who was conducting



sex-determination tests. The authorities have sealed his clinic. Similarly, the district authorities sealed the clinic of an RMP in Atchampeta for violation of rules.

A top official working in the DMHO has been working at the same place for the past 10 years without any transfer. He has been preventing the government from posting other officials to the district. Because of his style of functioning the

functioning of the DMHO derailed. Without the permission of the top authorities, other officials would not be able to take any action. The RMPs in the district have good rapport with the officials in the department with questionable behaviour.

The locals allege that the RMPs formed into a group and have been paying huge amount of bribe to the officials.

Dr Sudhakar Lal, DMHO, has said that the violation of rules by the RMPs has come to his notice. He threatened to take the issue to the notice of Collector P Uday Kumar. RMPs would be sensitized again. If they did not mend their ways, raids would be conducted on their establishments and suitable action would be taken against them, he clarified.

BJP aided rapists in Bilkis Bano case: Owaisi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) President Asaduddin Owaisi on Monday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of aiding convicts in the Bilkis Bano's rape case that happened during the 2002 Godhra riots.

Quoting the Supreme Court, Owaisi said, "The State of Gujarat acted in complicity with the convicts." Welcoming the Supreme Court judgment, he demanded, "BJP government and PM Modi to apologise to Bilkis Bano."

Following the Supreme Court judgement that overturned remission granted to 11 persons convicted of Bano's rape, the Hyderabad MP criticised the Gujarat government's welcome of them in 2022. The apex court ordered the convicts



to report back to the concerned jail authorities within two weeks. The Bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan emphasised that the plea for the protection of the liberty of convicts cannot be accepted, and the "natural consequences" of setting aside remission orders must follow. The top court nullified the Gujarat government's decision to release the convicts under the State's remission policy on August 15, 2022.

INDIA CORNER

10 people stuck in elevator rescued after three hours

Ten people, who were stuck in an elevator of a restaurant-cum-bar in Rajender Nagar area of central Delhi, were rescued following a three-hour operation on Monday, said an official. The Delhi Fire Service official said they received information around 2.57 am that a few people got stuck in an elevator and needed immediate help. "Soon three fire tenders were pressed into service. A rescue operation was immediately carried out, which took around three hours to rescue a total of 10 people after cutting the roof of the lift," said Delhi Fire Service (DFS) chief Atul Garg. The officials said that the matter was informed to the local police for further investigation. "All the people, who got stuck were safely rescued. No one had received any injury. Further investigation into the matter has begun," said a senior police officer. "We are also checking the CCTV of the elevator to see if there was any human error," he added.



Thieves steal SBI ATM with Rs 30 lakh in Uttar Pradesh

Unidentified thieves stole an ATM machine of the SBI containing about Rs 30 lakh in Uttar Pradesh's Agra district, police said on Monday. A complaint has been registered on the branch manager's request, police said, adding that teams have been formed to investigate the matter. The incident took place around 2:45 am on Monday near the Kagarol bus stand, they said. The owner of the house in which the SBI branch is running told the police that he suddenly heard a noise in the ATM and screamed to alert the neighbours. The house owner further told the police that the thieves uninstalled the ATM machine and ran away with it in a van as he shouted for help. The branch manager of the State Bank of India (SBI) in Kagarol claimed that the ATM has a cash of about Rs 30 lakh, police said.



Karanpur poll: Another election, another loss for Titar Singh

Titar Singh, 78, is used to losing elections. So the result of the Karanpur assembly poll on Monday wouldn't have surprised him. The habitual contestant who has fought about 30 elections so far got 1,223 votes in this election, in which Rajasthan minister Surendra Pal Singh, the BJP nominee, lost to Congress rival Rupinder Singh Koonar. This secured Titar Singh, a daily wage labourer, the fourth place, higher than the NOTA (None of the Above) option. Titar Singh has contested every election in Rajasthan, from sarpanch to Lok Sabha, since the 1970s and forfeited his deposit every time but that hasn't deterred the Dalit community leader from trying his luck. "Why should I not fight? The government should give land, facilities... this election is a fight for rights," Titar Singh had told PTI in an interview in November last year. According to Election Department data, Koonar won the Karanpur election with 94,950 votes.



Committed to development of citizens living in tribal areas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is committed to the development of citizens living in tribal areas, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday as he lauded a tribal woman from Chhattisgarh for her knowledge of government schemes. The prime minister was interacting with thousands of Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra beneficiaries from across the country via video conferencing with Union Ministers, MPs, MLAs and local-level representatives also joining the event. Bhumika Bhuraya, who belongs to an agricultural family from Kanker, Chhattisgarh, informed the prime minister that she works as a secretary of one of the 29 'Van Dhan' groups in her vil-



lage and she has availed the benefits of various government schemes including Ujjwala Gas connections, Jal Jeevan, MNREGA Card, Ration Card and PM Kisan Samman Nidhi. Impressed with Bhumika's awareness about the various government schemes, the prime minister said that it provides strength to the government to work for the people. PM Modi also enquired about the availability of ration on time. When he asked about the source of her vast information about the government schemes, she responded by

saying that it was her parents and other family members. Modi also lauded the contributions of her parents in imparting education to both the children including her younger brother who is currently studying in a college and urged other residents of the village to invest in the education of the children. She also informed the prime minister about her self-help Van Dhan Group which produces Mahwa Ladoo and Amla pickles which are sold to the mart at Rs 700 kg per kg. Prime Minister Modi expressed satisfaction that all the benefits have been made available to the beneficiaries without any hassle and also appreciated her efforts in making appropriate use of Mahwa, which is generally used for intoxication. Maharashtra Speaker Rahul Narwekar will on January 10 deliver his verdict on the disqualification petitions against Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and several MLAs whose rebellion had split the Shiv Sena in June 2022, Vidhan Bhavan officials said on Monday. The deadline set by the Supreme Court for delivering the verdict was December 31, 2023 but some days before that, on December 15, the apex court gave a 10-day extension and set January 10 as the new date for a decision. In June 2022, Shinde and several MLAs had rebelled against then chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, leading to a split in the Sena and fall of the Maha Vikas Aghadi, which also comprised the Nationalist Congress Party and the Congress.

241 PACS operating Jan Aushadi Kendras: Shah

Says rural poor can get affordable medicines now

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Monday said around 241 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) have opened Jan Aushadi Kendras across the country that will ensure rural poor and farmers too avail the benefit of generic medicines at affordable rates. So far, the government's Jan Aushadi Kendras were largely opened in cities benefiting the urban poor. Now this benefit is being extended to the rural poor, he said addressing an event here. Shah, who also gave away the Jan Aushadi Kendra 'store code' certificates to five eligible PACS, said the PACS could expand their business activities to open Jan Aushadi Kendras due to changes made in their byelaws. Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya



Jan Aushadi Kendras (PMBJKs) provide quality generic medicines to general public, which cost 50-90 per cent less than the branded medicines available in the open market. More than 2,000 types of generic medicines and around 300 surgical items are made available through these kendras to citizens at affordable prices. "In the last six months, 4,470

applications from PACS were received. Out of these, in-principle approval has been given to 2,373 PACS. Around 241 of them have started operating Jan Aushadi Kendras," Shah said. With these outlets being opened in rural areas, people there can now buy generic medicines at affordable rates. For instance, cancer medicines which cost about Rs 2,250 in the open market are sold at Rs 250. Even rural girls can buy sanitary napkin at Re 1 from these kendras, he said. Shah further said irony was that despite being a top global supplier of medicines, India has about 60 crore poor people who could not afford it. However, the Modi government took steps to streamline Jan Aushadi Kendras to ensure the poor gets medicines at a lesser price.

VOTERS WON'T FALL FOR CONG PROMISES 'Modi Guarantee' will bag all 28 K'taka LS seats: BJP

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka BJP President B Y Vijayendra on Monday said there is a pro-BJP wave in the country and the party will win all 28 seats from the state in the coming Lok Sabha elections. Addressing a BJP Lok Sabha poll planning meeting here, he said intelligent people of the country will not fall for the "gimmicky guarantees" of the Congress party as they know that Modi guarantee is the best. "Narendra Modi is set to become Prime Minister for the third time and under his leadership the country will rapidly move on the path of development, if the BJP wins the next election," Vijayendra said. Hitting out at the Congress government in Karnataka, he said the state's financial health has deteriorated "due to the incompetent Congress". "The government has completely failed to maintain law and order. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who has presented 14 budgets, has completely failed in the matter of resource mobilisation,"



Vijayendra claimed. Despite severe drought situation in many parts of the state and the suicide of 500 farmers in recent times, the state government has not given any compensation to the distressed, according to him. Vijayendra said voters of the state are all set to teach the Congress government a lesson in the next Lok Sabha elections, adding that his party would win all the 28 seats in the upcoming polls. In the last Lok Sabha elections, the BJP won 25 seats in Karnataka, while an independent emerged victorious. The Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) had won in one constituency each. Former chief ministers B S Yediyurappa, Basavaraj Bommai and D V Sadananda Gowda and National General Secretary and Karnataka in-charge Arun Singh, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly R Ashoka and Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council Kota Srinivas Pujari were among those present.

Centre not giving due recognition to Gangasagar Mela: Mamata

PNS ■ SAGAR ISLAND (WB)

Expressing despair, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said that though Gangasagar Mela was "one of the best" religious congregations in the world, the Centre has not given it the due recognition. Speaking at an official programme at the Sagar Island in the South 24 Parganas district, she said that it was her government that was working for the annual event despite no help from the Centre. "Kumbh Mela is a big fair and it gets all help from the Centre. We also must remember that the site of Kumbh Mela is connected by road. Gangasagar Mela, which is held on an island, is one of the best such fairs in the world but I don't know why the Centre is yet to give it the due recognition," she said. She said that her government was working to build a bridge to connect the island to the mainland. "There is no help from the Centre. It's our government which is doing everything," she added. Banerjee reviewed the preparedness for the congregation in the afternoon, and also inaugurated a number of developmental projects. The Gangasagar Mela, which is held on the occasion of Makar Sankranti, will continue till January 17.

Will have to constitute bench to hear plea against collegium system: CJI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court said on Monday it will have to constitute a bench to hear a plea against the collegium system of appointment of judges to the apex court and high courts. "I will have to constitute a bench," Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud told advocate Mathews J Nedumpara terse-ly, after the latter mentioned an old plea filed by him for urgent listing. Nedumpara referred to the recent interviews of former apex court judge Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, who retired on December 25 last year. In an interview on December 29, Justice (ret'd) Kaul had said the National



Judicial Appointments Commission was never given a chance to work, leading to angst in political circles and friction in the working of the collegium system of judges appointing judges to higher judiciary. The Narendra Modi government, after coming to power in 2014, had got enacted the National Judicial

Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act. The NJAC, tasked with the responsibility of making judicial appointments, comprised the Chief Justice of India, two senior Supreme Court judges, the union law minister and two other eminent persons nominated by the CJI, the prime minister and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. However, in October 2015, the Supreme Court had struck down the NJAC Act holding it unconstitutional. In the interview, Justice (ret'd) Kaul had said one has to accept there is a problem with the collegium system and it will be "unrealistic" to say that it is working smoothly.

SC ruling cancelling remission granted to Bilkis case convicts path-breaking: Trial court Judge

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Supreme Court ruling cancelling the remission granted to the convicts in the 2002 Bilkis Bano case by the Gujarat government is "path-breaking and encouraging", said the Mumbai trial court judge, who had sentenced them to life imprisonment, here on Monday. Justice U D Salvi, now retired, had in 2008 convicted the 11 men in the gang-rape-murder case of Gujarat,

whose trial was held in Mumbai. The 11 convicts sentenced to life imprisonment by Justice Salvi were granted remission by the Gujarat government, leading to their premature release from a jail in the adjoining state on August 15, 2022. This decision was challenged in the apex court by the victim, Bilkis Bano, and others. On Monday, the SC quashed the Gujarat government's remission order and

directed the convicts to surrender in two weeks. "This is a path-breaking and encouraging judgment. It will provide a path of guidance in other cases," Justice Salvi said. The SC, in its ruling, has rightly noted that the Gujarat government had played a "fraud" and obtained the May 2022 order of the apex court asking the state government to decide on the convicts' remission plea based on an old policy existing in 1992, he said.

ACCUSES STATE POLICE OF PRESSING LIGHTER CHARGES IN FIR

ED says WB PDS 'scam' enormous

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The row over the attacks on ED teams in West Bengal escalated on Monday with the federal agency saying that the state police registered an FIR only under bailable sections in the January 5 Sandeshkhali incident, while no details were given to it in the Bongaon assault case. The ED also claimed that the magnitude of the PDS "scam" which it was investigating was "enormous" and proceeds of crime transferred by a suspect amount to Rs 9,000-10,000 crore, out of which Rs 2,000 crore are "suspected to be transferred to Dubai either directly or through Bangladesh". The money laundering investigation of the agency pertains to alleged irregularities in the public distribution system (PDS) including bogus procurement of paddy in West Bengal, where the ED last year arrested minister and Trinamool Congress leader Jyotipriya Mallick and his aide Bakibur Rahaman. Fresh raids were launched on January 5 in this case as part of which an ED team, along with an armed CRPF security escort, reached Sadeshkhali to search the premises of Shajahan Sheikh,

convenor of TMC's local unit. The other team raided the location of TMC leader Shankar Adhya in the Simultala area of Bongaon. Both locations are in the North 24 Parganas district. The agency said three of its officials were "grievously" injured and their mobile phones, laptop, cash, wallets, etc were looted in the first incident. It said in a statement that a complaint was given by the ED at Nazat police station for registration of FIR in the Sandeshkhali case under as many as 19 sections of the IPC. These included IPC sections like 307 (attempt to murder), 333 (voluntarily causing hurt on provocation), 326 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant), 392 (punishment for robbery) and 395 (punishment for dacoity). It had also registration of the case for offences under IPC sections 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon), 186 (voluntarily obstructing any public servant), 189 (threat of injury to public servant) and 149 (every member of unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object).

Indians top Maldives' tourist arrival figures

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Data shows Indians top the Maldives' tourist arrival figures, with more than two lakh of them visiting the island nation every year after the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Maldives tourism ministry statistics, more than 2.09 lakh Indians visited the country in 2023. The number was more than 2.4 lakh in 2022 while over 2.11 lakh Indians flew to the Maldives in 2021. The Maldives was also one of the few countries open for international tourists during the pandemic and nearly 63,000 Indians visited the country in that period. In 2018, India was the fifth-

largest source of tourist arrivals in the Maldives with 90,474 visitors. In 2019, India reached the second spot with nearly double the number (1,66,030) of arrivals compared to the previous year. However, this travel hotspot for Indians is now facing a backlash after three ministers from the Maldives cabinet made derogatory comments against Prime Minister Narendra Modi following his visit to Lakshadweep. There were posts on social media claiming that some Indians are cancelling their scheduled trips to the Maldives in view of the row. Hashtag "Boycott Maldives" was also trending on social media. EaseMyTrip on Monday said



it has suspended all flight bookings to the island nation on its website "in solidarity" with India. The government of the Maldives suspended three of its deputy ministers on Sunday after they criticised Modi for his post on X following his visit to Lakshadweep, inferring that it was an attempt to project the Union Territory as an alternative tourist destination to the Maldives.

No new enquiries for travel to Maldives

Amid the India-Maldives diplomatic row, domestic tour operators' association IATO on Monday said no new enquiries are coming for travel to the island nation since the recent controversy over derogatory remarks on Indians and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) President Rajiv Mehra said, "We have not seen cancellations because people have invested money on bookings related to travel.

However, in 15-20 days, we may see some impact". He also said "no new enquiries are coming for Maldives from Indian tourists". India being the top tourist market for Maldives, a potential travel boycott by Indians, if it happens, may become a "pain point" for the island nation, according to Travel Agents' Association of India President Jyoti Mayal. "India is the number one source market for Maldives, and then to have such derogatory remarks is not going to hold good for them.

Oppn alliance members can't add to single vote outside their state

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The constituents of the opposition alliance INDIA bloc cannot garner a single vote outside their state and were struggling for their survival, Union Commerce and Industry, and Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal said here on Monday. On the political scenario ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Tamil Nadu, he said "the air is pregnant with the possibility of an alliance." "The INDIA bloc is only a new avatar of the UPA. Its constituents including Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar cannot



add a single vote to anybody's kitty," Goyal told reporters here. The same was the case with Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, TMC which is struggling in its own state, former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray

whose party will not cross a double-digit mark, Nationalist Congress Party leader Sharad Pawar, and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) which is struggling for its own survival will not add to a single vote, he claimed. "Where will the DMK in Tamil Nadu add the votes? Which votes will add to the Congress anywhere in the country by the DMK," Goyal sought to know. Asked about the possibility of the saffron party allying with the regional parties in the state, he replied "the air is pregnant with the possibility of an alliance."



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Facile victory

Sheikh Hasina wins fourth term as Bangladesh PM, Opposition gives poll a miss

The just-concluded election in neighbouring Bangladesh, notable for yet another boycott by the Opposition, saw the Awami League emerging victorious and Sheikh Hasina securing a landmark fourth term as the Prime Minister. The poll, however, remains embroiled in controversy over allegations of lack of fairness levelled by the Khaleda Zia-led main Opposition, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). The election was held against the backdrop of violence during the campaign. Though the Awami League secured 222 of the 300 seats, it is interesting to note that no party came second; the 'independents' --- Awami League's own candidates who were allowed to contest the poll to give it the semblance of a "competition" --- finished as runners-up. While 63 such 'independents' made it to the House, the third largest party in the country, the Jatiya Party, could win just 11 seats. It will be interesting to see who is anointed the official Opposition in Parliament. The fate of the poll was decided the day the BNP, the arch-rival of the Awami League, announced its decision to boycott the election. In her win, Hasina has defeated not only the Opposition but also democracy. However, it goes to her credit that Bangladesh has emerged as a strong economy and the abject poverty it once had has been considerably reduced. However, her Government has faced criticism for alleged human rights abuses and its crackdown on the Opposition. Hasina's career has been characterised by a mix of economic development initiatives and political dominance, and the Awami League has been in power since 2009.



A robust democratic system relies on a healthy Opposition to ensure checks and balances. The absence of a formidable Opposition can potentially impact the democratic fabric of Bangladesh, leading to concerns about the concentration of power in the hands of one political party. Hasina's supporters argue that her leadership has been pivotal in driving economic growth and social progress, justifying the measures taken to secure her victory. International observers and human rights organisations have, however, raised concerns about the fairness of the electoral proceedings. The Government's control over key institutions and the media has also been criticised for limiting the space for dissent. Back home, the victory of Hasina is good news as she is a known supporter of India and enjoys good rapport with the Indian Prime Minister. Bangladesh holds strategic importance for India due to shared historical, cultural and economic ties. The bilateral relationship has seen positive developments in recent years in areas such as trade, security and connectivity. Hasina's continued leadership is likely to maintain stability and foster cooperative endeavours between India and Bangladesh. For its part, India must convince her to allow space to the Opposition and let the democratic institutions run independently. It would be good for her and Bangladesh in the long run.

Devotees participate in a 'Ram Rath Yatra' ahead of the consecration ceremony of Ayodhya Ram temple, in Ranchi

PICTALK



Devotees participate in a 'Ram Rath Yatra' ahead of the consecration ceremony of Ayodhya Ram temple, in Ranchi

Will Modi magic work in the south?

Can the enormous popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi help the Bharatiya Janata Party achieve electoral success in the southern states?



KALYANI SHANKAR

The Party is seeking to gain more voters in the challenging southern region. Its presence is limited in states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh. Since it has already peaked in the northern states, the BJP needs to secure more seats in the South. Last week, Modi began his election campaign for the 2024 elections in the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Lakshadweep. He also inaugurated several multi-crore projects. The BJP has access to unlimited funds and has well-organised party workers on the ground. To achieve the Party's objective, 40 central ministers had been fielded in the South. In Telangana, the Bharatiya Rashtriya Samithi (BRS) has been present since its establishment in 2014 but recently lost the State to Congress. Kerala is ruled by Congress or Left-led fronts, while Tamil Nadu alternates between Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) in Karnataka, Janata Dal (Secular), Congress, and BJP have all had a turn in power. Several factors influence voters in the region. They include caste, money, power, ideology, cinema, and liquor. In Tamil Nadu, political figures such as CN Annadurai, M Karunanidhi, MGR, and Jayalalitha have significantly influenced voters. In the past, N.T. Rama Rao played a crucial role in united Andhra Pradesh. However, the B.J.P. currently lacks prominent leaders in the southern states. With the passing of influential leaders like M Karunanidhi and Jayalalitha, the BJP is trying to fill the political void.

The BJP won 29 of the 130 regional seats in the 2019 elections, including 25 in Karnataka and four in Telangana. However, the Party lost the state to the Congress in last year's assembly polls. The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) was a significant ally of the BJP. However, they ended their alliance three months ago, and neither Party has attempted to reconcile since then. The southern states of India are known for their unique cultures. One noticeable difference is the language divide between the North and South. While Hindi is the preferred language in the North, the South predominantly uses English and local languages. Dravidian Parties in Tamil Nadu oppose the use of Hindi and follow an atheistic ideology. On the other hand, Kerala has a robust communist presence and alternates between Left Front and Congress-led coalitions. The method of using population as a measure for constituency delimitation has led to the South feeling mistreated. This is because the population control measures implemented by Southern states have resulted in a decline in population compared to the North, leading to a sense of unfairness. As a result, the North, which has yet to enforce any population control measures, will be allocated more parliamentary constituencies than the South. A possible solution to address the delimitation issue is to consider changing the composition of the Rajya Sabha.



RELIGION IS NOT A MAJOR POLITICAL ISSUE IN SOUTH INDIA. THE BJP'S VIEWS ON CHRISTIAN CONVERSIONS OR HOSTILITY TOWARDS ISLAM HAVE YET TO GAIN ANY TRACTION IN THE REGION

This can be inspired by the US Senate's approach of guaranteeing equal representation of all states. However, this proposal could face resistance from bigger states in the US. Prime Minister Modi is attempting to change the perception that the BJP is not aligned with the culture of South India. The BJP must still reach a mutual understanding with Southern states. The opposition coalition, INDIA, controls most of the Southern States. They are determined to unseat Modi in 2024. The BJP has a strong focus on Hindutva, the construction of the Ayodhya Ram temple, and an anti-Muslim stance. However, these views may be less popular among voters in southern regions of India. The Opposition parties like DMK, AIADMK, TDP, and BRS hold dominant positions in their respective states. Specific communities such as Vanniyars, Thevars, and Gounders have influential roles in Tamil Nadu. In Karnataka, Vokkaligas and Lingayats have influence, while Reddys and Kammas are rivals in Andhra Pradesh. However, Brahmins have lost

power. In Kerala, Communists opposed the rival Congress in the state, which is also a member of the INDIA coalition. In Telangana, K. Chandrababu Naidu, a Velama leader, held sway, but in 2023, Congress snatched the state. Religion is not a major political issue in South India. The BJP's views on Christian conversions or hostility towards Islam have yet to gain any traction in the region. The southern states have not experienced any religious conflicts. This is because the minorities have assimilated themselves with the local population. For the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to gain success in South India, they need to adapt to the local cultural norms and political strategies. They must form alliances and regain the support of former partners. To achieve this, the BJP should revise its election strategy and develop a new narrative. Failing to do so will result in the opposition coalition INDIA becoming stronger and posing a significant threat to the BJP. (The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GOVERNOR CANNOT DISMISS MINISTER

Sir — A Governor is the Head of the State, and a Chief Minister is the Head of the Government. The governor is bound by the advice of the council of ministers headed by the Chief Minister. The Supreme Court has correctly observed that a Governor is not vested with powers to dismiss a minister. When the law and order of a state break down, making it impossible to run the government by the provisions of the Constitution, the Governor can recommend the President's rule in the state. During President's rule, the Governor rules the state on behalf of the President. All authorities vested in the hands of a Chief Minister are transferred to the Governor during this period. Essentially, during President's rule, the Governor assumes the role of a Chief Minister. While the Governor administers the oath of office to the Chief Minister, they have no authority to dismiss the Chief Minister or their ministers. Governors, the Attorney General the Council of Ministers, and the Prime Minister hold office at the pleasure of the President, and the Chief Minister and their Ministers hold office at the pleasure of the Governor. In practice, the President acts at the pleasure of the Prime Minister, and the Governor acts at the pleasure of the Chief Minister. The President and the Governors of states cannot withhold assent to a Bill. The Constitution does not grant any powers to the President to act unilaterally, even when the interest of the nation demands. While a Prime Minister cannot sign a Bill into law, the President cannot refuse to sign. The President or Governor can return the Bill with observations for reconsideration. The Supreme Court, in the case of Senthil Balaji, has ruled that a Governor cannot dismiss a minister. This ruling aligns exactly with the provisions of the Constitution. However, prima facie, the term "pleasure" appears perplexing. Both the Prime Minister and Chief Minister function when they enjoy the pleasure of the majority of the MPs and MLAs. K V Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

WORLD DAY OF WAR ORPHANS 2024



Every year on January 6th, the World Day of War Orphans is commemorated. The purpose of the day is to raise public awareness concerning children who have become orphaned as a result of wars. The World Day of War Orphans spread information about their plight and emphasised the psychological, social, and physical obstacles that children experience as

they grow up it is clear that civilians in several nations around the globe have become victims of the war. Amongst them, the children are the silent victims. Millions of children have grown up in war zones, and ethnic strife with no families. The orphans are forced to not only look after themselves but their younger siblings too. Palestinian children have been killed by Israeli forces in Gaza since October 7, the government's media office says. Thousands more are missing under the rubble amid relentless bombardment and it is sad. Many children lost their parents and lived in relief camps for survival. In conclusion, World Day of War Orphans 2024 is a day of both reflection and action. It's a day to stand in solidarity with those who have lost their families to war and to work towards a future where no child has to bear the scars of conflict. C K Subramaniam | Chennai

SHORTEST TEST MATCH

Sir — India defeated South Africa by 7 wickets in the second and last Test match, leveling the series 1-1. The bowlers dominated the match, which concluded in just two days. Bumrah and Siraj each took six wickets. With this, a new record has been set in Test cricket history. This is the shortest Test match in cricket history in terms of total balls played. The Cape Town Test concluded in just 642 balls (107 overs in total). India became the first Asian team to win a Test match against South Africa in Cape Town. This is a promising start for Team India in the new year. We hope this momentum continues and India will triumph in the T20 World Cup. Players should continue practicing, as the more they practice, the better they will perform. Mohammad Taukir | Champaran

ALASKA EMERGENCY

Sir — The Alaska emergency is a new threat to the airline industry and poses imminent danger in mid-air. An Alaska Airlines flight traveling from Portland, Oregon, to

Ontario, California, had to make an emergency landing after a portion of the aircraft blew out mid-air. The aircraft reached approximately 16,000 feet about six minutes into the flight before beginning its descent. The jet had 174 passengers and six crew members aboard. In a statement provided to CBS News, Alaska Airlines said that Flight No. 1282 experienced an incident soon after departure and "landed safely back" in Portland, but it was a miraculous escape for the passengers on board. This type of aircraft comes equipped with a rear emergency exit door, mainly used by international airlines, and has a seat configuration that allows for more passengers on the plane. Most US airlines don't use that configuration and design the area to appear as a window from the inside of the aircraft. Somehow, the plane averted disaster, and the pilot deserves all credit. C K Ramani | Mumbai

Policy reforms crucial to make India a manufacturing hub



JAY SHAH

India requires a comprehensive and coordinated effort from the Government and industry players to become global manufacturing hub

With the swift expansion of India's manufacturing sector, the country is poised to become a leading global manufacturing force. Currently positioned among the top three preferred global manufacturing locations, India has the potential to boost its exports to an impressive \$1 trillion USD by 2030. [1] However, within the spectrum of various supply chains, the challenges and opportunities of Indian manufacturing are evident in the wooden pallet sector. To consolidate its position in the pallet industry, essential policy reforms are necessary for sustainable growth and global leadership. Infrastructure Development India needs to focus on developing robust infrastructure, including transportation, power, and telecommunications, to support the manufacturing sector. The government should invest in building modern industrial parks, logistics hubs, and efficient transportation networks to reduce manufacturing costs and improve competitiveness. Sustainable Manufacturing



In the era of increasing environmental awareness, sustainable and eco-friendly manufacturing practices are becoming imperative. The government should encourage manufacturers to adopt green technologies and sustainable processes by providing incentives and enforcing regulations that promote environmental responsibility. This not only aligns with global trends but also enhances the reputation of Indian products in international markets. Simplified Regulations: The regulatory environment in India is complex, and businesses face bureaucratic hurdles. Streamlining regulations and creating a more business-friendly environment will encourage investment and growth in the manufacturing

sector. Implementing a single-window system for approvals, clearances, and licenses can facilitate ease of doing business. Skilled Labour Development India's education system needs to adapt to the changing needs of the economy by providing relevant skills training. Addressing the shortage of skilled workers in the manufacturing sector is crucial for its growth. The government should focus on creating appropriate skill sets among the workforce to meet the demands of modern manufacturing. Government schemes: The government has introduced Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes to promote domestic manufacturing and increase India's share of global exports. These schemes encourage investments in manufacturing and provide incentives for various sectors, contributing to the growth of the manufacturing industry. Trade Policies and Foreign Investment: India's trade policies and foreign investment regulations play a significant role in attracting global manufacturers. The government should continue to

focus on policies that promote domestic manufacturing, reduce import dependence, and encourage foreign investment in the manufacturing sector. Tax Reforms A competitive and stable tax regime is essential for attracting investment. India needs to rationalise its tax structure, ensuring that it is transparent and predictable. Reducing corporate tax rates, providing incentives for research and development, and promoting innovation through tax breaks will encourage manufacturing companies to invest and operate in India. Conclusion: By implementing the suggested policy reforms, India can create an environment conducive to manufacturing growth, attract investments, and position itself as a key player in the global manufacturing landscape. The success of these reforms will not only boost the economy but also create employment opportunities and enhance India's standing in the world of international trade and commerce. (The writer is CEO of Jay Wood Industry, views are personal)

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN A JEALOUS AND POSSESSIVE MIND

Human minds have fallen prey to the traits of jealousy, envy and possessiveness



RAVI VALLURI

There were twenty theatre enthusiasts of a college who participated in the audition for staging the annual college day play. All six roles were up for grabs, which included one female and five male characters.

As a safety valve, the well-feted and cerebral director handpicked one additional female lead and two male characters. The first choice was a female lead who was attractive, vivacious and bubbling with talent. She felt wretched sharing stage space with another plucky woman. Her covetous and jealous mind, instead of concentrating on the character and performance, kept plotting strategies to run down her perceived opponent, much to the consternation of the director. At his wit's end, the director opted for the alternative and assigned her to the lead role. The tempestuous woman burning with envy was clearly responsible for the loss.

Companies, countries and communities have all become wary of the material success of their 'competitors' and in the process compromise with their goals and objectives. Consequently, they resort to shortcuts in order to emerge triumphant and victorious. "You can be the moon and still be jealous of the stars," writes the American musician Garry Allen. The attribute of jealousy arises in an individual when the mind is possessive of certain belongings. Interestingly, envy in many also arises out of shortages. There can be a lack of aptitude, talent, resources, connections, opportunities, or because of unfavourable outcomes. Individuals subsumed by jealousy build walls of possessiveness and false security walls around their personalities. Such minds feel cheery about their possessions.



As per the epic, The Mahabharata, Karna was extremely jealous of Arjuna, which eventually proved to be his nemesis. The jealous and possessive mind is acquisitive by nature, taking both animate and inanimate objects for granted and getting attached to things like an addiction to alcohol or marijuana. For instance, in the case of the college theatre mentioned earlier, the more talented actress became fearful and was gripped with hatred and greed. Jealous and envious minds have become laboratories of antagonism that spew hatred. How do we overcome attributes such as jealousy, envy and possessiveness? At one end of the spectrum are organizations and authorities which need to take up this responsibility. This includes proper parenting, where children are brought up on ideals of inherent goodness, an effective educational system that imparts values as part of their pedagogy, governments that take up the responsibility of providing equal opportunities to the citizens and make an attempt to carve out an egalitarian system, and a society that addresses the core issues of humaneness amongst its citizenry. Vasudeva Kutumbakam is the net result.

This may appear altruistic but is an effort to restore some semblance of sanity in society, which otherwise is plagued by avarice and jealousy. The spiritual touch is an important colour in the rainbow of goodness. One can practice any faith, but we need to be tolerant of other peoples' points of view. Spirituality succeeds where religions draw the fault lines and wave red flags. Globalisation has made the world flat, but has resulted in an exponential increase in crass commercialization and human minds have fallen prey to the traits of jealousy, envy and possessiveness. The vicious tendencies of jealousy and possessiveness can be tackled by following the two-fold approach highlighted so that the chasm between individuals diminishes.

Manifest plainness, Embrace simplicity, Reduce selfishness, Have few desires — Lao Tzu

(Ravi Valluri is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and is a faculty of the Art of Living. Views are personal)

Hiring based on skills is now a standard practice



DINESH SOOD

As India enters this transformative phase in hiring practices, both employers and job seekers need to embrace the opportunities presented by skills-based hiring



The job market in India is constantly changing, and we are now witnessing a significant shift towards skills-based hiring. The old-fashioned approach to hiring, which relied on academic qualifications and work experience, is giving way to a more dynamic method that prioritizes specific skills. The new skills-first approach enables professionals to explore unconventional career pathways and places greater emphasis on their abilities rather than their educational background. This shift reflects a wider recognition that skills, rather than just degrees, are the key to success in today's highly competitive job market.

A skills-first hiring approach gives priority to a candidate's practical abilities over traditional qualifications. This trend is growing rapidly in India as employers realize the value of diverse skill sets. It is relevant today because it provides equal opportunities for all, allowing talent to shine beyond academic labels. The advantages of this approach include a more inclusive job market and the ability to tap into hidden talent. This approach values merit over formalities, enabling professionals from diverse backgrounds to contribute on a global scale. Every foreign job market has a specific skill shortage that they are looking to fill, and this approach helps to fill that gap. According to a report titled 'The State of Skills-Based Hiring 2023', 86 per cent of employees believe that they are more likely to secure their dream job when the hiring process includes skills-based hiring. The latest data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) is alarming: a whopping 86% of individuals aged between 15 and 59 years have not received any form of vocational training. This is unacceptable! It is high time that we focus our efforts on converting this pool of individuals into skilled human capital.

The current trend in hiring prioritizes skills. Therefore, high schools and post-secondary education institutions must design their curriculum to focus on these skills. The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 rightly emphasizes the need for standardized vocational training courses in high schools, with a range of experiences aimed at developing a bundle of skill competencies.

To achieve the goal set by the NEP of



THE LATEST DATA FROM THE PERIODIC LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (PLFS) IS ALARMING: A WHOPPING 86% OF INDIVIDUALS AGED BETWEEN 15 AND 59 YEARS HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANY FORM OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

increasing the gross enrolment ratio in higher education, including vocational education, to 50% by 2035, further action is needed. This requires the addition of 3.5 crore new seats to higher education institutions (HEIs) and focusing on a flexible curriculum with creative combinations of subjects. We must integrate vocational education with mainstream education and allow for multiple entries and exits with appropriate certification. To provide our students with the best possible skills, it is imperative to establish Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) at par with the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).

However, accurately assessing these skills may pose challenges. Nevertheless, the future outlook suggests continued growth, fostering innovation and adaptability in a workforce where skills, not just degrees, define success. This reflects a dynamic shift towards meritocracy in the evolving employment landscape. The growing integration of advanced technologies like generative AI, machine learning, cloud computing, and data science across these sectors drives the trend. As these technologies continue to propel business and alter business operations, the demand for upskilling in technology remains robust. Companies are increasingly seeking professionals with specific skills to fill key roles in areas such as valuation analysis, financial research, investor relations management, and risk analysis within this domain.

Skills-first hiring is a new approach that is dismantling traditional barriers to offer global work opportunities irrespective of educational background or regional certifications. For instance, a cyber security expert equipped with practical knowledge and certifications can now find doors opening abroad, as security needs transcend geograph-

ical confines. IBM India has adopted a 'skill-first' approach where college degrees do not matter. In 2012, IBM implemented this approach in the US by removing the four-year college degree requirement from about 50% of its jobs. Ten years later, 29% of the present IBM US workforce in hardware, software, and consulting does not have a college degree. However, companies like Oracle had 100%, followed by Intel (94%), HP (92%), and Apple (90%). A study conducted between 2017 and 2022 showed that US employers reduced degree requirements for 46% of middle-skill positions and 31% of high-skill positions. Various studies highlight that for the job of software quality-assurance engineer, only 26% of Accenture's postings for the position contained a degree requirement.

The rise of skills-based hiring can be attributed to several factors, each contributing to a more comprehensive and efficient employment ecosystem. One of the key drivers is the fast-paced evolution of technology, which has made some skill sets obsolete while creating an insatiable demand for new ones. As industries digitize and automate, employers are looking for candidates who have the technical expertise required to navigate this new world.

Skills-based hiring is not only about technical prowess but also about fostering inclusivity in the workplace. By focusing on skills, employers can tap into a broader talent pool, breaking down barriers related to age, gender, or educational background. This approach enables individuals with non-traditional career trajectories to showcase their abilities, ultimately leading to a more diverse and innovative workforce. In a country as diverse as India, this inclusive hiring model is crucial for unlocking the full potential of the population. It allows for the recognition and utilisation of a rich tapestry of skills that may be over-

looked in a more rigid, qualification-centric system.

When individuals are hired based on their skills instead of solely on academic qualifications, there is a higher likelihood of job satisfaction and engagement. Employees who feel that their skills are valued are more likely to invest in their professional development, leading to a continuous improvement loop.

This paradigm shift challenges the traditional notion that a candidate's potential is solely based on their educational background. It acknowledges that skills are dynamic, and the ability to learn and adapt is highly valued in today's fast-paced work environment.

As India transitions to this transformative phase in hiring practices, both employers and job seekers need to embrace the opportunities presented by skills-based hiring. Job seekers should focus on acquiring and showcasing relevant skills, whether through formal education, online courses, or on-the-job experience. Employers, on the other hand, should refine their recruitment processes to ensure that they identify and nurture the diverse talents that the Indian workforce has to offer.

In conclusion, skills-based hiring in India marks a pivotal moment in the country's employment landscape. It is a departure from traditional norms, a response to technological evolution, and a step toward a more inclusive and dynamic professional future. As India continues to embrace this shift, the workforce will be characterised not just by degrees but by a mosaic of skills that power innovation and drive success in an ever-changing global economy.

(The writer is a Co-Founder and MD of Orane International, a Training Partner with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), and a Network Member of India International Skill Centres. Views expressed are personal)

Confronting cancer: Are we winning the war against it?

With the growing incidents of cancer, it is crucial for health authorities to prioritise early detection, cost-effective treatment and preventive measures

Cancer, often referred to as the "emperor of maladies," continues to be a formidable challenge for medical researchers and scientists worldwide. Despite significant advancements in the field of medicine and biomedical science, cancer remains a relentless adversary, and its burden is escalating rapidly in India. India is facing a mounting crisis, with alarming statistics indicating a surge in cancer cases and mortality rates. As we delve into the current scenario, it becomes evident that immediate action is imperative to strengthen cancer care infrastructure, improve early detection and enhance preventive measures. The cancer burden in India is reaching unprecedented levels.



BISHAL KUMAR SAHA

According to a recent report presented in Parliament, there were 14.61 lakh cancer cases detected in 2022, an increase of 35,000 cases from the previous year. Even more concerning is the mortality rate, with 8.08 lakh patients succumbing to cancer in 2022 compared to 7.89 lakh in 2021. The projections estimate a staggering 29.8 million cancer patients in

India by 2025. These figures paint a bleak picture, sounding an alarm for both healthcare authorities and the general public. Despite improvements in cancer treatment, the incidence of cancer and mortality rates persistently rise in India. The country faces multiple challenges in combatting cancer effectively. The most prevalent types of cancer in India include breast, lung, colon, rectum and prostate cancer. Moreover, India has one of the highest mortality-to-incidence ratios for cancer globally, indicating a need for early detection and accessible treatment facilities. The actual incidence of cancer in India could be significantly higher than the official figures, as highlighted by a

2022 study conducted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young (FICCI-EY). This suggests that the situation is more dire than what the statistics portray, making it all the more urgent to address this issue promptly.

One of the central issues contributing to the cancer crisis in India is the lack of easy access to specialized hospitals equipped with experienced oncologists and state-of-the-art machinery. Timely detection of the disease and affordable treatment are critical factors that need immediate attention.

The government must prioritize the establishment of cancer institutes and tertiary care centres to cater to the



growing demand for quality cancer care. While the public healthcare system is overburdened, private hospitals often provide treatments that are financially out of reach for many patients. Raising public

awareness about cancer detection and prevention is a key aspect of tackling this crisis effectively. Beyond the well-known risk factors such as tobacco and alcohol consumption, obesity and seden-

tary lifestyles, environmental factors also play a significant role in the rising disease burden. For instance, the consumption of processed and packaged foods with preservatives has been linked to cancer. Promoting healthy habits, including regular exercise, can be instrumental in reducing cancer risk.

Among women of reproductive age, breast and cervical cancers are the leading causes of cancer-related mortality. These cancers, however, are largely preventable through early screening and timely interventions. Public health campaigns aimed at encouraging regular screenings and educating women about the importance of early detection can save many lives. Cancer continues to cast a

dark shadow over India's healthcare landscape.

As the cancer burden increases, it becomes vital for health authorities to focus on early detection, affordable treatment and preventive measures. The establishment of specialized hospitals coupled with heightened public awareness campaigns, can significantly alleviate the challenges posed by cancer. The time for action is now, as India must stand united in its fight against the dreaded emperor of maladies. Only through collective efforts, we can hope to turn the tide and provide a brighter future for cancer patients in the country.

(The writer studies at Delhi University and is a freelance writer. Views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

TAFE Ltd to invest Rs 500 cr, inks pact with TN

Tractors and Farm Equipment manufacturer TAFE Ltd on Monday signed a memorandum of understanding with the Tamil Nadu government to invest Rs 500 crore in the state. The investments would be utilised for taking up expansion of the Chennai-headquartered company's farm equipment division besides enhancing its manufacturing facility for the assembly and exports of 'Silent Generators', the company said. During the second day of the Global Investors Meet organised by the ruling DMK government here, company officials exchanged documents with the government in the presence of Chief Minister M K Stalin, Minister for Industries T R B Rajaa. Tractors and Farm Equipment Ltd proposes to expand its Farm Equipment division to produce an advanced range of farm equipment for a wide variety of crops ideally suited for both Indian and international markets, the company said in a statement.



India's coal import rises 11.7 pc to 21 MT

The country registered an 11.7 per cent rise in coal imports to 20.95 Million Tonnes (MT) in November as compared to the year-ago period. The country's coal imports in November 2022 was 18.75 MT, according to data compiled by B2B e-commerce company junction services. However, coal import in the April-November period of the current financial year dropped to 169.08 MT from 173.47 MT in the year-ago period. There was reduction in coal imports due to ample domestic supply and a slowdown in demand after the festive season in October, mjunction MD and CEO Vinaya Varma said. The demand for imported coal, he said, is likely to remain subdued in the coming months. Of the total import in November 2023, non-coking coal import was at 14.37 MT, against 11.88 MT in the same month the previous year. Coking coal import was at 4.23 MT, against 3.90 MT imported in November 2022.



Ceva, boAt in partner to drive wireless audio experience

Ceva and boAt on Monday announced a strategic pact for technology innovation across the audio and wearables brand's lifestyle-focused consumer products like earbuds, headphones and smartwatches. The alliance spans a wide range of Ceva's connectivity, sensing, and inferring technologies, which 'boAt Labs', the in-house research and development team, will leverage to develop products that offer a superior user experience at accessible price points, according to a release. 'Ceva, Inc, the leading licensor of silicon and software IP that enables smart edge devices to connect, sense and infer data more reliably and efficiently, and ...audio and wearables brand, boAt (Imagine Marketing) today announced they have formed a strategic partnership to deliver technology innovation across boAt's next generation of lifestyle-focused consumer products, including TWS earbuds, neckbands, headphones, speakers and smartwatches,' the release said.



Govt to invest Rs 60,000 cr in river cruise tourism: Sonowal

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Monday said the government would invest Rs 60,000 crore by 2047 in river cruise tourism and development of green vessels. "We are going to invest Rs 45,000 crore in river cruise, which will take the passenger capacity from 2 lakh to 15 lakh by 2047," he said on the sidelines of the first Inland Waterways Development Council meeting here.



The ports, shipping and waterways minister also said the government aims at investing another Rs 15,000 crore in green transport over the next 10 years to develop 1,000 vessels and ferries. "In total, there will be a Rs 60,000-crore investment by 2047, and it will be through the public-private partnership (PPP) model. The projects will help generate thousands of jobs," he said.

Of the Rs 45,000 crore investment in cruise tourism, an estimated Rs 35,000 crore has been earmarked for cruise vessels while Rs 10,000 crore will be used for development of cruise terminal infrastructure. The council meeting, represented by officials of around 20 states and Union

territories, also saw the unveiling of Harit Nauka' guidelines for green transition of inland vessels and the River Cruise Tourism Roadmap 2047. The day-long meeting, held on a cruise vessel, was conducted by Sonowal to streamline and advance the development of waterways involving 20 states

and central government agencies. The sessions covered topics such as fairway development, private sector engagement and best practices, optimising cargo transport efficiency in Inland Water Transport (IWT), fostering the promotion and development of eco-friendly vessels for passenger trans-

portation, exploring the economic advantages of river cruise tourism, among others. The union minister shed light on the development works and achievements of the Narendra Modi government in the last nine years, focusing on the port and inland waterways sectors. He drew particular attention to the remarkable turnaround of Kolkata Port, now known as Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port.

Once a loss-making entity of around Rs 70 crore, it has now posted a net profit of Rs 550 crore in FY2022-23, Sonowal said. "This exemplifies the government's commitment and the effectiveness of its measures," he said. Sonowal also emphasised the tremendous boost given to the inland waterways sector, with government investments totalling Rs 5,200 crore since 2014, a 200 per cent increase in nine years.

MF industry assets crosses Rs 50 lakh crore mark

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After a lacklustre performance in 2022, the mutual fund industry saw a substantial rebound in 2023 with its asset base surging by nearly Rs 11 lakh crore, reaching over Rs 50 lakh crore mark fuelled by an optimistic equity market, awareness about financial stability and a robust economic expansion.



"This noteworthy achievement comes against the backdrop of India's growth story, highlighting the MF industry's ability to win investors' trust by providing low-cost, long-term-oriented wealth creation avenues," the Association of Mutual Fund Industry (Amfi) said on Monday.

The year 2023 has seen a substantial increase in overall inflow reaching Rs 2.74 lakh crore. This was supported by the increasing popularity of Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs), which drew in Rs 1.84 lakh crore.

The inflow has pushed the assets under management

(AUM) of the mutual fund industry by 27 per cent, adding Rs 10.9 lakh crore in 2023. This was way higher than the 5.7 per cent growth and Rs 2.65 lakh crore increase in AUM observed throughout 2022, as well as the nearly 22 per cent growth and close to Rs 7 lakh crore addition to the asset base in 2021. According to the data, the asset base rose from Rs 39.88 lakh crore in 2022 to an all-

time high of Rs 50.78 lakh crore in 2023. The asset base stood at Rs 37.72 lakh crore at the end of December 2021 and Rs 31 lakh crore in December 2020. The year 2023 also marked the 11th consecutive yearly rise in the industry AUM after a drop in two preceding years. This year growth in the industry was supported by inflows in equity schemes, especially through SIPs.



K-shaped recovery narrative flawed and prejudiced: SBI report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The repeated argument that India witnessed a K-shaped recovery post-pandemic is "flawed, prejudiced, and ill-concocted," said a research report by SBI on Monday.

According to the report, post-pandemic, households are reconfiguring their savings towards physical assets, including real estate, it said.

The oft-repeated conundrum debating a K-shaped recovery post-pandemic seems at best flawed, prejudiced, ill-concocted and fanning interests of select quarters to whom India's remarkable ascendance, signalling more the renaissance of the new global south, is quite unpalatable," the report said.

K-shaped recovery reflects uneven recovery where certain sectors of the economy thrives while other sectors continue to decline or struggle to recover. It further said post-pandemic, there has been two-way shift between savings channelled into physical assets from finan-

cial assets in consonance with the global trend to take advantage of lower interest rates.

However, it said, recent data shows that there is a shift towards financial assets since 2023 onwards. "Gini coefficient estimated using ITR data of taxable income of individuals shows that individual income inequality has significantly declined from 0.472 to 0.402 during FY14-FY22," it said. There is a change in income pattern of MSMEs, too, reflecting the changing contours of industry/services as formalisation drive brings more entities into the net. Around 19.5 per cent of majorly micro-sized firms have been able to shift their income upwards, to classify them into small, medium and large-sized firms, it said. Of these, it said, 4.8 per cent firms have transitioned themselves into small firms, around 6.1 per cent firms transitioned into medium-sized firms, and around 9.3 per cent firms are transitioned into large-sized firms.

Investors' wealth erodes by Rs 2.91 L cr as markets down

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investors became poorer by Rs 2.91 lakh crore on Monday as the BSE benchmark Sensex fell sharply by nearly 1 per cent amid a weak trend in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex plunged 670.93 points or 0.93 per cent to settle at 71,355.22. During the day, it tumbled 725.11 points or 1 per cent to 71,301.04.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies eroded by Rs 2,91,756.23 crore to Rs 3,66,40,965.08 crore.

"Investors fretted across Asian and European markets, as US bond yields crossed 4 per cent again that spiralled into a large-scale correction in domestic equities. While rising valuations were beginning to raise concerns, investors resorted to profit-taking as weakness in banking, IT and oil & gas stocks saw the Sensex end below the 72,000 mark," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research) at Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower. Japan's Nikkei was closed for a holiday.

European markets were trading lower. The US markets ended marginally up on Friday. Among the Sensex firms,



State Bank of India, ITC, Nestle, Asian Paints, Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services and Hindustan Unilever were the major laggards.

In contrast, HCL Technologies, NTPC, Sun Pharma, Power Grid, Bajaj Finance and Bharti Airtel were the gainers.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 0.87 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.36 per cent.

Among the indices, FMCG fell 1.55 per cent, commodities declined 1.44 per cent, bankex

(1.42 per cent), metal (1.40 per cent), financial services (1.05 per cent), telecommunication (0.93 per cent), IT (0.90 per cent) and teck (0.77 per cent).

Power, realty and services were the gainers. "Global stocks slipped on Monday ahead of a busy week of inflation and economic data and amid the diminishing prospect of a cut in US interest rates in the first quarter. Stocks fell ahead of a corporate reporting season where robust results are needed to justify high valuations," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities, said.

Center wanted to develop Tajpur as revenue generating: Thakur

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Union Minister Shantanu Thakur Monday lamented the uncertainty in the progress of the proposed Tajpur deep sea port and recalled an "unanswered call" from the Centre to the West Bengal government to collaborate on it as a revenue generating project. Thakur, the union minister of state for ports and shipping, said the Centre had sent a proposal to the effect.



"The Centre had sent the proposal as it was interested but there was no response from the state," he said speaking at the

sidelines of the first Inland Waterways Development Council meeting here.

The project went into a limbo following West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's surprise announcement at the November Bengal Global Business Summit (BGBS) inviting bids for the port several

months after a private group was selected as the lowest bidder.

At the BGBS Banerjee declared 12 "game changing opportunities" in Bengal with the Tajpur deep sea port at the forefront and called for open tenders.

Adani Ports was earlier selected as the developer for the port. The Adani Group's absence at the BGBS further fueled speculation about its involvement in the Tajpur project. Adani Ports and SEZ Ltd (APSEZ) had emerged as the L1 bidder in October 2022, out of two final contenders. JSW Group was the other participant in that round.

Sensex, Nifty tumble nearly 1 pc on global weakness

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty surrendered early gains to close with deep losses on Monday, snapping their two-day winning streak as investors pared exposure to banking, metal and FMCG stocks amid a weak trend in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 670.93 points or 0.93 per cent to settle at 71,355.22. During the day, it fell 725.11 points or 1 per cent to 71,301.04. The Nifty declined

197.80 points or 0.91 per cent to 21,513. "Nifty snapped a two-session rally to end lower after opening with marginal gains. Global stocks slipped on Monday ahead of a busy week of inflation and economic data and amid the diminishing prospect of a cut in US interest rates in the first quarter. Stocks fell ahead of a corporate reporting season where robust results are needed to justify high valuations," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities.

Agri exports likely to double to \$100 bn

PNS ■ GREATER NOIDA

India's agriculture exports, which stood at over USD 50 billion at present, are expected to double by 2030 and reach USD 100 billion, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said on Monday.

He said that the country is targeting USD 2 trillion worth of exports of goods and services by 2030.

"I am very sure that this USD 50 billion exports of India today will see a doubling of our exports by 2030 to almost USD 100 billion," he said at the IndusFood Show 2024 here. This is the largest food and beverage show in South Asia.

The secretary said that areas like the ready-to-eat food segment have huge potential to grow.

DGCA revises duty time norms for flight crew

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aviation safety regulator DGCA on Monday came out with revised Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) norms for flight crew, entailing increased weekly rest periods to 48 hours, extension of night hours, and limiting the number of night landings to only two as against six earlier.

These regulations have been instrumental in managing fatigue-related aviation safety risks for more than a decade now, an official statement said. Airlines are required to comply with the revised norms latest by June 1, it said.

With a view to address and mitigate concerns on pilot fatigue through a data-driven approach, Directorate General of

Raises weekly rest periods to 48 hrs



Civil Aviation (DGCA) collected and analysed extensive numbers of pilot rosters, along with pilot fatigue reports submitted by airline operators, it said.

Based on the study and analysis, some of the key areas indicating fatigue, such as maximum flight duty period, night duty, weekly rest period, flight duty

period extension, among others, were identified, it said.

The revised FDTL regulations have been formulated after extensive data analysis and feedback from various stakeholders, including airline operators, pilot associations and individuals, as per the statement.

It also said the best practices

in the world -- FAA in the US, and EASA in the European Union -- have also been taken into consideration in amending the regulations, while keeping in mind the specific operating environment in India.

The revised regulations mandate increased weekly rest periods from 36 hours to 48 hours for flight crew, thus ensuring sufficient time for recovery from cumulative fatigue, it said.

Moreover, the definition of night has been amended and it now covers the period of 0000-0600 hours in the revised regulations vis-a-vis the period of 0000-0500 hours under the previous regulations.

This enhancement of one hour during the early morning will ensure adequate rest and also align the night duty period,

which encompasses Window of Circadian Low (WOCL) from 0200-0600 hours, the time during which the circadian body clock cycle is at its lowest in terms of alertness, the statement said. Also, the revised regulations have taken into consideration different types of operations across time zones, the statement said, adding that the maximum flight time and maximum flight duty period for flight operations encroaching night have been restricted to eight hours flight time and 10 hours flight duty period, respectively.

The number of landings has been limited to only two as against the maximum permissible six under previous regulations during night operations, thus enhancing flight safety, it added.

FORM NO. 5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
600/1, University Road,
Hanuman Setu Mandir,
Lucknow- 226007
(Area of Jurisdiction- Part of Uttar Pradesh)

SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY & APPEARANCE BY PUBLICATION
O.A. No. 818/2022

(Summons to defendant under Section 18(4) of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993)
O.A. No. 818/2022
ICICI Bank Ltd. ...Applicant
Versus
Mr. Mohd Maqdoom Mohiuddin & Others ...Defendants

To,
1) Mr. Mohammed Maqdoom Mohiuddin, S/o Mr. Mohammed Zameeruddin Khan, Resident of - 21-4-216, Moosa Quadri Hussaini Alam Hydrabad- 500 064 (A.P.).
ALSO: Flat No.-604, 6th Floor, Tower-C Plot Bearing No. GH-07A, Cassa Grande Sector-CHil-V, Greater Noida, Noida- 201 307 (U.P.).
2) Mrs. Rumana Khadri, Resident of -19-4-274/5/11/1, Nizam Colony, MIR Sagor, Hyderabad- 500 001.
3) Mr. Tanveer Ahmad Khan, Resident of - H No.101, Sir Syed Apartments Bhangal, Begampur Sector-110, Noida- 201 301 (U.P.)

In the above noted application, you are required to file reply in paper book form in Two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel / duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 12/02/2024 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal,
Lucknow

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
FOREST DEPARTMENT
TENDER NOTICE
NT No. 73/2024/A5. Date: 08.01.2024.
(1) License to Operate (25-50)
Electric Bicycles to Visitors in the premises for the period from 01.02.2024 to 31.01.2027 (03) years.
The Bid uploading starting date: 08.01.2024 from 01.30 P.M. Closing Date: 25.01.2024 upto 4.00 P.M.
Further details @
www.tender.telangana.gov.in.

Sd/- Curator
Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad
R.O. No. 342/OF/CLAD/NT/2023-24, Date: 08-01-2024

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
O/o THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
PR DIVISION, TANDUR VIKARABAD DIST.
SHORT TENDER NOTICE
No. DB/01 to 28/2023-24, Date: 08.01.2024.
No. of works (20) Tandur Division works, Total Estimate Cost Rs. 178.00 Lakhs. Schedules issued start Date: 09.01.2024 to Close Date 18.04.2024.
Further details can be had Executive Engineer PR Sub Division Tandur.
E-MAIL: ceprntandur@gmail.com,
Contact Numbers: 9640661739.
Sd/- Executive Engineer,
PR Division, Tandur.

‘Supporting young filmmakers is my way of giving back to the filmmaking community’



TEJAL SINHA

Think of Huma Qureshi, and one thought that would certainly strike your mind—‘Wonder Woman’. With all the projects that she does, she has defined being a synonym of Wonder Woman. Apart from being an actor, producer, and model, now she’s added another feather to her hat, which is being an author.

Recently, she launched her debut book, *Zeba: An Accidental Superhero*, which is a story of passion, wonder, and magic. Having always been fascinated by superhero narrative and fantasy fiction, in our exclusive chit-chat, the *Monica, O’ My Darling* actress shares, “The protagonist is a symbol of resiliency and is both unique and relatable. She is a misfit as well, but she eventually learns how to get around. Zeba started off as a screenplay for a television show. But I soon realized that producing a superhero movie in a fantastical setting would cost a lot of money. I went back over the screenplay during COVID and made the decision to publish it as a book.”

Basically, she goes on to reveal, “Every character in the book has a little bit of me and the people that I have observed and interacted with over the years. But it’s a work of fiction, not autobiographical at all. As for more books, yes, but then again, I am waiting to see how many copies this one sells.”

Well, going ahead, Ten years down the lane, and the *Gangs of Wasseypur* actress, who made

her debut with the Anurag Kashyap directorial film, has created a niche for herself in the industry, undeniably! And to mention all her projects and characters that she plays have been divergent from one another. We wondered if she gets emotionally affected by the roles that she plays. Well, no, she doesn’t, because, “For me, it’s a job, which I have to do.”

She has always preferred to work on movies that she herself would want to watch. Not someone who’d prefer to repeat herself, she says, “I’m always trying to think of the next amazing thing I can accomplish.”

Always keen on being associated with new and interesting initiatives, recently she was also one of the adroit actors associated with Royal Stag Barrel Stag Large Short Films for ‘Select Films, Select Conversations’.

“I think it’s always good to be associated with initiatives that support young voices and young filmmakers, and I think this is the perfect platform to do that. I love to support younger filmmakers. I love to watch their work. I love to engage with them. I feel like that’s my way of also giving back to the filmmaking community. I just hope more and more budding artists end up telling their kind of stories,” says the *Badlapur* actress, who has gotten her hands on multiple mediums, be it with films or web series. Now with short films too, the *Maharani* star enthuses, “I think it’s a great format because it helps people without the burden of the avenue or the opportunity of working with a big studio or a big star, all of that, to just tell their stories in the most unadulterated way possible, and I think

that’s what will always ensure the longevity of short films being around. It’s a great way for makers to express themselves.”

As we get to the end of this fun tête-à-tête, we ask her about what’s more on her plate, and she hilariously responds, “Dinner, meeting my parents, and then going for a drive in Delhi (we laugh out loud). I can only tell you what I am going to do in the next couple of hours, but I’m looking forward to the future!”

ACTRESS HUMA QURESHI, WHO HAS CARVED OUT A NICHE FOR HERSELF IN THE FILM INDUSTRY IN JUST A LITTLE OVER A DECADE, OPENS UP TO THE PIONEER IN AN EXCLUSIVE CONVERSATION ON HER NEWLY PUBLISHED BOOK, HOW NO CHARACTER HAS EVER AFFECTED HER EMOTIONALLY, AND MORE.



FOR ME, IT’S A JOB TO PLAY THESE DIFFERENT CHARACTERS, WHICH I HAVE TO DO. I DON’T GET EMOTIONALLY AFFECTED WITH THEM IN ANY WAY.

Actor Abhay Verma, who recently gave a remarkable performance with his character Chandni in the Sandeep Singh directorial *Safed*, gets candid with *The Pioneer*, sharing insights about getting onboard for the character, love knowing no language and boundaries, camaraderie with Meera Chopra, and more.



‘Being an outsider with no Johar, Khan, or Kapoor to my surname, I’m a product of good content’

The recently released film *Safed*, starring Meera Chopra and Abhay Verma in the lead roles, not only marks Abhay’s debut as a lead but also producer Sandeep Singh’s debut as a director. The film has a quote that says, ‘The society we are growing up in is not growing up’. And this is true! This is not just us who are telling it up, but Abhay, whose character Chandni, who is transgender, is being named as an unusual character, says, “The fact,” he begins, “that we are calling ‘Chandni’ an unusual character tells us that we as a society are not yet that aware; this was one of the reasons that I really wanted to do *Safed*.”

Initially, he did feel sceptical about playing the character, as it had scared him in a lot of ways, including the process that he had to go through and, above all, the responsibility of representing a community. But little did he know that it would become ‘the most enriching and eye-opening experience of his life, in a way that it made him responsible towards society and eventually made him a better person.’

Basically, Abhay wasn’t aware of Sandeep Singh’s name ever before. But, as he goes on to share about getting onboard for *Safed*, he says, “When I was called to meet him for a few minutes, in which he made me wear a saree, I was like, What and where is it going? But as soon as I walked a couple of steps and then read the one-pager, which I didn’t know would change my life, I got the idea that this is something that is a story of a kind that hasn’t been made ever. The pure thought of questioning society to let love be the

most important feeling, giving out a message of love and let live subtly through communities we so demean, is what intrigued me. And now I’d like to believe that *Safed* has given me things that are beyond many small things, like money.”

Respective of the mixed responses that the film has received, undeniably, what *Safed* intends to highlight is that one of the perfect examples of love has no language and goes beyond any physical dimensions.

And so Abhay, seconding to us, shares, “Love knows no language, and love shouldn’t know any religion. It’s the most beautiful emotion that has made people cross ‘saat samundar’ as we’ve seen in films. If anyone

says that they haven’t felt great when they see such things on screen, they are liars, so if they can enjoy that feeling there, then we can create a better world in reality.”

But looking at the concept and theme, the film would have brought in multiple challenges, wouldn’t it? But “to achieve what you never have, you have to do something that you have never done.” This is something that keeps me going. From *Safed*, I got the opportunity—or rather, a blessing—to dive into emotions that I would have never known were inside me. For instance, an inbuilt ignorance towards a sector in society. I would proudly say that I am all for challenging things. I do not want the path to be easy because that would put me in a comfortable space, and I really don’t want to stop exploring myself. Comfortability gives ease in life, and the growth is stagnant, whereas I want my filmography to be like the waves of the ocean, some big, some small, and some giant.”

“Sometimes the beauty of some things is in their uncommonness, and *Safed* is one such story,” he shares, adding, “If a man can love a woman, a woman can love a man, and a man can love a man, and vice-versa. Then why not these two communities who are striving just for one thing, which is love at its purest form?”

The audience, or, let’s say, a major portion of the audience, has been more keen to watch commercial cinema that has action, dance, and love scenes. And with *Safed* not being an easy film to work on and also make, he says, “From my experience, the audience has been craving only good content. Be it commercial, a magnum opus project, a serious,

intense project, or of any other genre, it has gone beyond limits since the barriers of languages have also blurred. It has given good-intentioned content a chance to flourish on its own, despite the need to have only big stars in it. Being an outsider with no Johar, Khan, or Kapoor in my surname, I’m a product of good content. I am proud to say that I was given the opportunity to do something that is uncommon but pure at the same time, which is not only what the audience is hungry for but also allows me to put a message out from my side for other actors to go beyond their comfort level and choose films that give them more than just fun.”

Another reason for him to love the profession is that every film allows him to make a new family, and with *Safed*, Meera has thankfully become a family member who is brutally honest and truthful, which nowadays people lack. “Meera is to me what Kaali is to Chandni. There is an unconditional bond that lies between us as characters in the film and also in life, for which I will be forever grateful for *Safed*. I proudly want to say that this includes each and every person who has worked in *Safed* and all the other projects that I have done.”

The film has seven romantic and heart-touching tracks, rendered by some of the most renowned names like Sonu Nigam, Rekha Bhardwaj, Shilpa Rao, Shail Hada, Shashi Suman, Jazim Sharma, and Suvarna Tiwari. Abhay thus believes that music is the biggest religion in the world because it allows people to connect with each other even if they don’t know the name. “*Safed* is a musical love story, and considering the hurdles I went through in the film, I would call it a beautifully painful experience. The beautiful part comes from the legends singing in it, and the painful part comes from the challenges I faced during the shooting of the film. It has always been a dream to first meet such legendary artists in my lifetime, and I am even grateful that I am a part of their lives now. ‘God lies in detailing’ is something that I learned from my guru, who has also been a father figure to me, who is Sonu Nigam, and that has been something that I will put very close to my heart forever.”

With *Safed* being a spiritual journey, there could not have been another place than Benaras in which we could have shot this film. “I remember Sandeep Sir and I chatting and talking about the people who will connect in *Safed* since everything in the film that has happened seemed to have a God-sent message. Out of all the beautiful things in Benaras, the fact that you experience life and death very closely at Manikarnika Ghat gave me a reality check when I was preparing for a scene at 4 AM because, in today’s times, what we forget is that everything else is temporary and humanity is permanent.”

While trends change with time, furniture is made to last a lifetime or even several lifetimes. No matter what the latest trends say, Grandma’s inherited dining room table will never go out of style. Thus, while investing in new furniture or equipping a house almost entirely, it’s crucial to avoid following fads that go out of style quickly. The secret is to pick furniture that is both classic enough to endure several trend cycles and stylish enough to conform to today’s design preferences. Furthermore, furniture is simply too expensive to replace every time the wind shifts, unlike stylish throw pillows or accessories.

Interior décor trends for 2024

ECO-FRIENDLY FURNITURE SMART LIVING

It might seem repetitive, but it is the year of natural beauty once more. This trend takes into account the influence of furnishings both inside and outside the home in addition to its earthly inspiration. Sustainability is being considered for 2024, starting in 2022. Before furniture is placed in their homes, homeowners are becoming more interested in where it originates from and are drawn to eco-friendly materials like bamboo.

Smart technology is still transforming our way of life. The seamless integration of technology into our environment in the upcoming year will further improve comfort and convenience. These advancements, which range from AI-driven home management to voice-activated lighting design trends and smart glasses, make life easier, more productive, and unquestionably stylish.



THE HOME OFFICE GETS ESTABLISHMENT

Ashish Aggarwal, Director, Indo Innovations says, ‘Productivity is one of the interior design trends for 2024 that is certain to endure. The home office is becoming a necessary and permanent presence in homes, and it is not going anywhere. People are investing in ergonomic furniture, soundproofing, and chic design to make their workstations more exciting and useful now that remote work is here to stay.’

CUSTOM FURNITURE

Tejal Singh Shekhawat, Founder and CEO, Kalyanam Furniture says, “More people now view furniture as a long-term investment. In place of purchasing any old piece from the showroom floor and being disappointed a year or two later, people are placing a higher value on custom furniture that better suits their tastes, lifestyles, and home layouts.”

EARTH TONES

Raghunandan Saraf, Founder and CEO, Saraf Furniture says, “In 2024, warm colours influenced by nature, such as browns, greens, greys, and subdued reds, will be at their height in appeal. Thankfully, this implies that the green furniture that has been popular in the country over the past several years will continue to be in trend. Even if vivid, vibrant colours were popular in 2023, the taste in colour is shifting towards something more earthy and grounded.”



what's brewing?

Kishan Reddy and Kiran Kumar Reddy

Hethvita Nallari, daughter of Mr. Nallari Nirup Kumar Reddy and Mrs. Rupana, performed a special dance performance as part of her Kuchipudi Ranga Pravesham. Hethvita Nallari learned Kuchipudi under the guidance of Deepika Reddy. Union Minister, BJP State President Kishan Reddy, and former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Nallari Kiran Kumar Reddy, among the other dignitaries graced the event.

Nirup Kumar and Rupana

Nidhi

Hethvita Nallari

Abhi

Ramesh Patel

Nirvitha

Lakshmi

PARTY
Photos by - SV Chary

LISTINGS

Bandhan multi-asset allocation fund launched for investors

Bandhan Mutual Fund announced the launch of the Bandhan Multi Asset Allocation Fund, an open-ended scheme that enables investment across diverse asset classes including Indian Equities, International Equities, Arbitrage, Fixed Income, Gold and Silver. Studies have established that asset allocation, rather than security selection or market timing, is the dominant factor impacting return variability. This new fund will adopt a multi-asset allocation strategy to optimize reward and risk by diversifying investments across various asset classes, each offering unique advantages in terms of growth, stability, and inflation protection. The New Fund Offer (NFO) is set to open on Wednesday, 10 January 2024, and will close on Wednesday, 24 January 2024. Investments in the Bandhan Multi Asset Allocation Fund can be made through licensed mutual fund distributors, investment advisors, online platforms, or directly at <https://bandhanmutual.com/info/bandhan-multi-asset-allocation-fund/>.

Raintree Foundation partners with Srushti Conservation Foundation

Raintree Foundation in partnership with Srushti Conservation Foundation (SCF) is facilitating a 15-Day Certificate Course in Peoples' Biodiversity Register (PBR) development for Masters' students at the Fergusson College, Deccan Education Society's Pune University's (DESPU), Pune. The People's Biodiversity Register (PBR) is an essential participatory tool for documenting the local community's traditional knowledge about the region's biodiversity and human interaction with ecological systems. Human actions like habitat destruction, pollution, overexploitation, climate change, and invasive species threaten biodiversity, causing ecosystem disruptions, habitat loss, and straining community resources.

Ather Energy launches 450 Apex

Ather Energy launched the 450 Apex, a special edition scooter that commemorates 10 years of Ather. The 450 Apex is the pinnacle of performance, and it pushes the envelope on design across all scooters in the country. Along with an exciting new colour scheme and a host of new features on the 450 Apex, Ather has introduced 'Magic Twist', a first-of-its-kind city riding feature that offers outstanding convenience to the rider. Elevating the performance with the 450 Apex, Ather has introduced a new riding mode, Warp+, that takes the scooter from 0 to 40 km/h in just 2.9 seconds. It also boasts an industry-leading reaction time of just 90 ms, making it the scooter with the fastest throttle response time, not just amongst ICE scooters but also amongst EVs as well. The 450 Apex delivers peak torque of 210 Nm at the wheel, nearly 25% higher than its closest competitor and the average 200cc ICE two-wheeler, which is also the best in the scooter industry.

METRO Cash & Carry rolls out 'METRO Kirana Utsav' campaign

METRO Cash and Carry has launched the 'METRO Kirana Utsav' for traders and kiranas across its 'METRO Wholesale' stores in India. The weeklong campaign officially commenced from 4th January-10th January in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana region. With the tagline 'Maha Munafe Ke Saat Din', the Kirana Utsav campaign has been rolled out for traders, small retailers and kirana customers to enable them to avail attractive schemes and offers from leading FMCG brands across categories, under one-roof at competitive wholesale prices. The initiative is aimed to help Kiranas, small retailers and traders to leverage sales and help pass on the special offers and benefits to their end customers in their local catchments.

AOI hematology physicians rescue 14-month-old with griscelli syndrome

A significant milestone was achieved at American Oncology Institute (AOI), Citizens Specialty Hospital in Hyderabad, where a 14-month-old suffering from Griscelli Syndrome (GS) underwent a successful Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT). Led by Dr. C.S. Ranjith Kumar, Consultant Pediatric Hemato Oncologist, this achievement stands as a testament to AOI's expertise in handling complex pediatric cases. Baby Raghav (name changed) was grappling with recurrent infections stemming from immune system irregularities, alongside distinctive symptoms like hypopigmented skin and a silvery-gray sheen of the hair. The successful treatment involved a stem cell transplantation, a complex procedure given the patient's tender age. Presently, at 4 years old and over 24 months post-BMT, Baby Raghav is thriving, having achieved a complete recovery from recurrent infections with 100 percent donor cells.

Galaxy unpacked 2024: opening a new era of mobile AI

Get ready to discover a new era full of possibilities with the latest Galaxy innovations, designed to transform how you live, connect and create. The new Galaxy S series will set a higher standard for the most intelligent mobile experience yet. Experience the epic in everyday life like never before. On January 17, Samsung Electronics will host Unpacked in San Jose. Join us as we unveil the latest premium Galaxy innovations, providing an all-new mobile experience powered by AI. The event will be streamed live on Samsung.com, Samsung Newsroom India, and Samsung's YouTube channel beginning at 11.30 p.m. IST.

Akash Khurana's Yeh Shaadi Nahi Ho Sakti now in Telugu

Trust versatile director Akash Khurana to bring back the 90s on the small screen with a hilarious caper. This delightful teleplay woven around two couples and their complicated love lives will now be available in Telugu for audiences in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. They too can now savour the situational comedy which begins with the lovelorn Lakshman plotting to get his lady love Priya's elder sister Pallavi hitched to an NRI groom. He is desperate to marry Priya but can't do so till the stubborn Pallavi agrees to get married. Will his plan succeed or misfire and lead to many more complications? The teleplay starring Prajakta Koli, Chaitanya Sharma, Adhar Khurana, Shikha Talsania, Akash Khurana and Aseem Hattangady and Gopal Datt will answer these questions in the most entertaining way. When: 20th January, Where: Airtel Theatre, Dish TV Rangmanch Active, and D2h Rangmanch Active

Embracing Makar Sankranti Festivities

Bringing an end to winter, Makar Sankranti is here - the longer days and the start of a new agricultural season. The festive season encourages participation in the most cherished traditions of this festival. To enrich these traditions with vibrant hues, Nexus Hyderabad Mall is hosting a Rangoli Competition and distributing kites to children. The Rangoli Competition provides a platform for patrons to showcase their creativity and complimentary kites will be distributed to children, encouraging family participation in the celebration.

Shobu Yarlagadda, founder of Arka Media works, along with Pratap Reddy, president of Swecha, and Chaitanya Chokkareddy, co-founder and CTO of Ozonetel, among the rest, unveiled the Chandamama Kathalu, in the first of its kind Telugu built AI for storytelling by Swecha Telangana, in Gachibowli.



FUN

ARCHIE

NOW YOU HOLD THE FOOTBALL, AND WHEN I RUN UP TO KICK IT, YOU PULL IT AWAY!

IF YOU INSIST?

PEOPLE SURE HAVE INTERESTING WAYS OF CELEBRATING NATIONAL CARTOONISTS' DAY!

AAAUGH!

CARTOONISTS' DAY MAY 5

CALVIN AND HOBBS

I FOUND ANOTHER BONE! I FOUND ANOTHER BONE!

BOY, THIS IS A WEIRD ONE. WHAT IS IT?

IT COULD BE A FOREARM AND FINGERS.

I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT THE COMPLETE CALVINOSAUR LOOKS LIKE.

I DIDN'T KNOW BONES CAME IN DECORATOR COLORS, DID YOU?

GARFIELD

LAZINESS IS CONTAGIOUS

RIGHT, JIM?

JIM?...

REALITY CHECK

yelp review ★★

Only gave it two stars as the food is tired and dry... always the same every day... The owners have a bit of an attitude... Also, I found a hair in my food

SPEED BUMP

I HAVE THE BOOZE, CARL HAS THE SNACKS... OH, AND HERE COMES KEVIN WITH THE GAME.

I THINK IT'S HIS OWN FAULT - BUT STILL!

CROSSWORD

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

NANCY

I'D LIKE TO BUY TWO MONTHS OF A DAY PLANNER

THAT'S AS LONG AS I CAN USE ONE BEFORE I GIVE UP ON IT

WHICH TWO DO YOU WANT? I STOPPED IN FEBRUARY

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- Dirty and unhealthy air or water
- More than is needed
- Water covering land that is usually dry
- A female relation
- A symbol on playing cards
- A passenger needs this
- Famous singer or actor
- Run after trying to catch
- Sooner than expected
- Squashed
- Stretchy stuff in clothes
- Wreck completely
- Choose
- Move along on hands and knees
- The number in a trio
- At this place

DOWN

- Frequently
- Jump over
- A chewed sweet
- Bad smell

SOLUTION

B	P	N	I	G	D			
A	R	O	W	C	R	I		
L	O	E	S	E	A	I		
L	O	N	L	Y	P	L	A	N
E	L	P						
R	U	B						
I	A	I	O	E	E			
N	A	K	E	D				
A	E	O	L	L	E			
T	R	O	L	L	E			

Kiccha Sudeep unveils first look of World of UI



Superstar Kiccha Sudeep recently unveiled the first look of the highly anticipated film, *World of UI* on his Twitter. Coinciding with a grand event held in Bangalore, the teaser was launched amongst eminent personalities including renowned producer Allu Arvind and the iconic Century Star Shiva Rajkumar. This big reveal was live-streamed on leading platforms, creating a global buzz.

Directed and conceived by the visionary Upendra, *World of UI* is an ambitious project that has been in the making since the mid-2000s. The storyline delves into a global subject promising a thought-provoking cinematic experience. Boasting a staggering budget of Rs 100 Crore, this period action film is set to redefine the standards of entertainment.

The teaser, which has left audiences eagerly anticipating the film's release, showcases an entirely different visual world built for *UI* built by Upendra's unimaginable Direction described by insiders as nothing short of surrealistic. Going with the intriguing tag line of the movie "This is not AI, this is UI", the teaser offers a glimpse into the immersive and captivating universe created by the talented team behind the movie. With top-of-the-line special effects, vibrant landscapes, haunting music, high-octane action sequences, great Art Direction and Upendra's signature heroic entry, the teaser speaks volumes about the large-scale entertainment that *World of UI* promises to deliver.

Joining Upendra in the cast are talented actors including Reeshma Nanaiah, Murali Sharma, Nidhi Subbaiah, Ravi Shankar, Sadhu Kokila and Cockroach Sudhi among others, in pivotal roles. Upendra, in addition to directing, has also penned the screenplay and takes on the lead role in this ambitious venture. The film's entire soundtrack and music are composed by the *Kantara* fame B Ajaneesh Loknath, adding another layer of brilliance to the project. *World of UI* promises to be a cinematic masterpiece, bringing together a stellar cast, a compelling storyline, and groundbreaking visuals.

Produced by G Manoharan, Sreekanth KP and Co-Produced by Naveen Manoharan under the Lahari Films and Venus Entertainers banners, This film has Art Direction from KGF Fame Shivakumar and VFX from Vikranth Rona Fame Nirmal Kumar, this groundbreaking film is set to captivate audiences worldwide.



HRITHIK ROSHAN GIVES AN ODE TO AIR FORCE PILOTS IN HEER AASMANI FROM FIGHTER

The third song from Hrithik Roshan's *Fighter*, titled *Heer Aasmani* has released to a bumper response. The song showcases the day in the life of Air Force Pilots, from their on duty routine to their off duty lifestyle.

Heer Aasmani showcases Hrithik Roshan in all his glory as he slips into the character of Squadron Leader Shamsher Pathania aka Patty, who is an ace Fighter Jet Pilot. Featuring Hrithik in the shower and locker room as he gets ready to go on the runway, to team briefings on the hangar and off duty fun and games, *Heer Aasmani* is a visual representation of the daily routine of Air force pilots. The soulful music of *Heer Aasmani* beautifully depicts the budding team spirit within the Air Dragon squad featuring Hrithik Roshan and actors Deepika Padukone, Karan Singh Grover, Akshay Oberoi to name a few. Combined with hard-hitting lyrics and vocals by B Praak, *Heer Aasmani* is a soothing melody that features the iconic *Fighter* theme music. *Fighter* is all set to release in cinemas on 25th January 2024, on the evening of India's 75th Republic Day. The film marks to be Hrithik Roshan's first movie to release in 3D.



Reports of VD and Rashmika's engagement are 'False'

Amid reports of Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna getting engaged in February, sources close to the actors on Monday termed it "false". A media report stated that the two are getting engaged. However, when IANS contacted their representatives, they denied.

"The report is false," sources told IANS. Reportedly, the actors are dating, however, they have not made their relationship official. The two have starred together in movies like *Geetha Govindam* and *Dear Comrade*. Meanwhile, on the work front, Rashmika is basking in the success of recently released action thriller *Animal*, in which she stars opposite Ranbir Kapoor. She next has *Pushpa 2: The Rule*, *Rainbow*, *The Girlfriend* and *Chaava*. Meanwhile, Vijay, who was last seen in *Kushi*, next has *Family Star* and *VD 12* in the pipeline.



'OG is ours, and will forever be,' says OG makers dismissing rumours

Jr. NTR at his best of the brutal in Devara

Blood fills the sea—it's his Red Sea! Hail to all! *Devara's* creators wrote, releasing the teaser for their largest-ever pan-Indian film. "All praise the tiger! (sic)." This season, Jr. NTR and Koratala Siva are working harder than each other to up the ante. On April 5, the action thriller-drama will open in theaters. The movie takes place in a made-up coastal town. *Devara's* battle against the enemies of the land is set against the horrific backdrop of the Red Sea, a sea that has seen many killings. We presume these adversaries are murderous weapon-wielding, avaricious men who are bloodthirsty, ferocious, and savage. Their enemy, *Devara*, embodies fortitude and endurance. The choreography of the actions has a gladiatorial quality. The production design of Sabu Cyril is a little bit derived. The color scheme strangely reminds of the latest *Kanguva* peek. The background score is the foundation of Anirudh. The teaser gives us a taste of a short tune, and haphazard songwriting is not his strong suit. Overall, considering Tarak and his director, the teaser is satisfying. Koratala Siva, having achieved a disastrous result with *Acharya*, is now actively pursuing revenge.



'Hanu-Man team to donate ₹5 from each ticket for the construction of Ram Mandir,' reveals Chiranjeevi

Director Prasanth Varma and hero Teja Sajja's superhero film *Hanu-Man* will be hitting the screens on the 12th of this month. The team hold the film's pre-release event majestically and it was attended by megastar Chiranjeevi as the chief guest. Chiranjeevi revealed his entire journey from his childhood and the influence of Lord Hanuman on him and his family. He then appreciated hero Teja and director Prasanth Varma. "Lord Hanu-Man is always there to support us in tough times. During a show with Samantha, I told her that I like Hanu-Man than any other superhero. I'm happy that I suggested that title to this movie. Undoubtedly, this movie is going to be a big hit, along with other movies releasing for Sankranti. In fact, the audience encourages any number of movies for Sankranti if the content is good. I came to know about this movie through get-up Greenu." With the request of team *Hanu-Man*, Chiranjeevi made an announcement. "The construction of Ram Mandir is a milestone in history. I was invited to the opening ceremony of Ram Mandir On the 22nd of this month. I will be attending it along with my family. Hanu-Man team makes a key announcement, on the occasion of the inauguration of Ram Mandir. They decided to donate Rs. 5 from each ticket of their movie sold for the construction of Ram Mandir. I'm announcing the news on behalf of the team. My heartfelt congratulations to the team of *Hanu-Man* for such a noble decision," said he.

Director Yeshasvi roped in by Sukumar Writings for a new film

Creative genius and filmmaker Sukumar has always been at the forefront of encouraging talented artists and technicians. While some directors who worked under him in the direction department went on to score blockbuster success with their first film, some others consider him as their 'guru', having learned a great deal watching his movies. They have been his indirect disciples.

Director Yeshasvi V is on the list of Sukumar's Eklavya-style disciples. Deepak Saroj, the child artist-turned-hero, has acted in a distinct love story titled *Siddharth Roy* as the hero. The film will hit the screens soon. Yeshasvi is its director. At this juncture, Sukumar has platformed Yeshasvi for a new film.

The maker of *Pushpa* and *Rangasthalam* is very impressed with the talent of Yeshasvi in *Siddharth Roy*. That's why Sukumar has roped him in to make his next film on his banner, Sukumar Writings.

It is known that many meaningful films have been produced on Sukumar Writings. Currently, the banner is producing pan-Indian films as well as a diverse set of content films in collaboration with many top production houses.



Geethanjali Malli Vachindi wraps up its shooting

Actress Anjali's horror-comedy genre. The makers on Monday revealed that the team has wrapped up shooting for the sequel. "Done filming, but the horror's just begun," the notice says. Soon, *Geethanjali Malli Vachindi* will arrive to make you laugh and raise your spirits." Anjali's 50th movie is called *Geethanjali Malli Vachindi*. The actor will perform the same character as she did in the 2014 movie in its direct sequel. Along with the announcement came a photo of the film crew posing from the hill station where the movie was filmed. In addition, Rahul Madhav, Brahmaji, Ali, Shakalaka Shankar, Satyam Rajesh, Satya, and Srinivas Reddy are featured in *Geethanjali Malli Vachindi*.

TEAM SALAAR ARE ALL SMILES WITH THE SUCCESS OF PART-1

Hombale Films is undeniably one of the biggest content makers in Indian cinema. The leading production house has delivered a variety of content to mainstream audiences, including *KGF Chapters 1 and 2* and the global sensation *Kantara*. The production house has proved its mettle among the masses with the recently released *Salaar Part 1: Ceasefire*. The action drama helmed by KGF director Prashanth Neel and starring Prabhas got unanimous love and praise from fans and audiences across the globe and it continued to write history since its release on December 21st. The film has breached 650 crores at the worldwide box office. The film has collected 550 Cr. Gross in India, 153 Cr. Gross overseas and 703 Cr. Gross worldwide. (All India

Hindi 177 Cr. Nett and 208 Cr. Gross). Counting the massive success of the film, the makers recently organized an intimate celebration party which was attended by the producers, Pan India Superstar Prabhas, director Prashanth Neel, Prithviraj Sukumaran, music composer Ravi Basrur and distributor Anil Thadani.

Sharing a glimpse of the success bash, the makers wrote on social media, "The BLOCKBUSTER success calls for a BLOCKBUSTER CELEBRATION! #SalaarBoxOfficeStorm #RecordBreakingSalaar #SalaarRulingBoxOffice." Talking about the film, it gave the fans and the audiences a never before

seen visuals, once in a lifetime cinematic experience, and the action-packed drama that glued them to their seats. Everyone raved about the action-packed avatar of Prabhas, the storytelling of Prashanth Neel, and the intriguing world of Khansaar, which makes it an international standards film from the production house. The film got massive love from the critics as well as the audiences and is one of the most successful films of the year 2023. Upon its release, the film became the biggest global blockbuster and has been getting appreciation from non-traditional international markets as well. After the victorious run in the worldwide market, the film is set to roar in Japan and Latin America with a grand release planned by makers soon.

Following the roaring success of the film the audiences are eager to know the next segment of the story in the much-awaited sequel *Salaar Part 2: Shouryanga Parvam*. Hombale Films *Salaar Part 1: Ceasefire* starring Prabhas, Prithviraj Sukumaran, Jagapathi Babu, and Shruti Haasan is directed by Prashanth Neel and the film is enjoying its Blockbuster in worldwide cinemas.



ROHIT, KOHLI GET FINAL SHOT AT T20 GLORY

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The selectors have clearly gone for the status quo rather than addressing the elephant in the room by picking Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli for their first T20 series in 14 months. Will it have a bearing on India's chances in another T20 World Cup? Only time can tell. Having endured a heartbreak in the previous two editions of the T20 World Cup, the two greats of the game can't be faulted for wanting a final shot at glory in the format. But the same can't be said about the selectors, who picked a fresh bunch of players to take the team forward since the crushing semifinal loss to England in November 2022. Now that Rohit and Kohli have been picked for the home series against Afghanistan beginning on January 11, it is a given that the famed duo will be a part of India's squad for the ICC showpiece in the US and Caribbean in June. It also means that India, who have been guilty of playing conservative cricket at the top of the order, are also back to square one as far as their planning for the T20 mega event is

concerned. The two superstars played a massive role in taking India to the ODI World Cup final but can they step up to the demands of the shortest format where one needs to go after the bowlers from ball one? Rohit, who did not score tons of runs in the recently held ODI showpiece but yet managed to make a compelling impact with his high risk game, will most likely carry on in the same vein when the Afghanistan series begins in Mohali. On the other hand, Kohli's game is tailor-made for the 50-over format but he has also managed to maintain more than a decent strike rate of 137.96 over 148 T20s. Rohit strikes at almost 140 in T20s but he too will need to bat at a higher clip to keep up with the fast changing demands of the modern game. In contrast, their teammate and world's best T20 batter, Suryakumar Yadav, bats at a 170 plus strike rate. The likes of Yashasvi Jaiswal and Ruturaj Gaikwad showed promise in the opportunities they got in the absence of senior players but there is no substitute to experience at an

BUT WILL SELECTORS' SAFE APPROACH COST INDIA ANOTHER WC?



ICC event. It's a sentiment that has been unanimously voiced by former players including Sunil Gavaskar and Sourav Ganguly, who have backed the inclusion of Rohit and Kohli in the T20 squad. Former India selector Sarandeep Singh too feels Rohit and Kohli are best suited for the job. "It is the right call. In ICC events, you need players who can handle pressure well. They both were great in the ODI World Cup and are in top form. However, this development means it would be very difficult to accommodate Jaiswal and Ruturaj," he told PTI. He also justified the celebrated pair not playing the shortest format since November 2022. "You have to prepare bench strength also. In all probability this will be their last T20 World Cup. If Rohit and Virat were not rested, you could not have tried the likes of Jaiswal, Ruturaj, Jitesh (Sharma) and others. "Having said that, these two greats don't need to play the shortest format to make a comeback. Eventually, the performance of all the World Cup probables in the IPL will make the picture clearer for the sub-

sequent World Cup," the former India spinner added. With Rohit and Kohli's inclusion, it is amply clear that selectors did not want to rock the boat. Former India opener Aakash Chopra feels the selectors had to pick both the greats as they could not have left one and included the other. "It seemed they won't play another T20 World Cup (after 2022) as they had not been playing since the previous edition. Both are in the same boat. Even if the selectors thought about leaving out one of the two, I don't think they would have been able to do that. It was always about picking both or otherwise," Chopra said on his YouTube channel. Hardik Pandya had led the T20 side in Rohit's absence and was expected to lead the team in the US and Caribbean but another injury setback seems to have cost him that chance. Rohit is back as captain and will have Kohli by his side to rely on when India take on the sprightly bunch of Afghans in the three-match series. But most significantly, will they finally be able to land an elusive ICC title? That question will be answered in five months' time.



India women eye maiden T20I series win over Australia

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

The culmination of a long and mixed home season brings the Indian women's cricket team one last opportunity to register a maiden T20I series triumph over Australia at home when the two sides square off in the series-decider here on Tuesday. With the three-match affair levelled 1-1, Harmanpreet Kaur's India have a chance to beat the reigning world champions Australia in their own den and kick off the 2024 T20I World Cup year in style. India have only one series win to show against Australia's four in their five-series bilateral T20I history. Their triumph in an away affair in 2015-16 sits atop in the list of achievements for this side. However, having registered historic wins in one-off Tests earlier this season against both Australia and England, India would want to make this one last opportunity count. India were on a roll in the first game and thrashed Australia by a record margin of nine wickets but their batters cut a sorry figure in the second. A tricky pitch here at the DY Patil Stadium on Sunday did not allow batters to flourish. While heavy dew in the first half of the game assisted India's charge with the bat, the absence of it in the second made the job of containing the Australian batters difficult.

But to their credit, the Indian bowlers did well to take the game as deep as possible with some tight lines and sharp fielding. However, the home team's fielding has only been sporadically good. Kaur's own form with the bat will remain a huge concern for the hosts, who were humbled by six wickets in the second game. The Indian captain has not made a fifty yet in 10 matches so far across formats in these games. She has seven single-digit scores now in 11 innings including the first T20I wherein her services were not required. "Every player cannot have a good day everyday, but suddenly anyone can have a very good day. It is not the case that we are (right away) aiming for big shots but we are trying to play (as per the) merit of the ball," all-rounder Deepti Sharma told the media after the match when asked if Kaur's form was a concern for the team. Deepti waged a lone battle of sorts with a combative all-round performance in the second game scoring a 27-ball 31 in a faltering Indian innings to give them some late impetus, and also fought hard with the ball to take the first two wickets of the four Australian wickets to fall. The pitches for the two T20Is so far have not allowed batters to go berserk especially in the first innings, allowing the bowlers to dominate the proceedings. "It has been a really good con-

test between bat and ball, there is something in it for both the batters and the bowlers," said Australia's player of the match on Sunday Kim Garth. "Especially, coming from the wicket that we played on the Test match, (it) was a lot more challenging for the batters, so it has been really pleasing that there has been a bit in it for the bowlers, particularly with the new ball," she added. Deepti also found the pitch for the second game a challenging one to bat on. "...It was not an easy wicket to bat on. The ball was turning as well as getting slow (off the surface). I think we were about 15 runs short..." she replied when asked what went wrong for India. **SQUADS:** INDIA: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Deepti Sharma, Yastika Bhatia (wk), Richa Ghosh (wk), Amanjot Kaur, Shreyanka Patil, Mannat Kashyap, Saika Ishaque, Renuka Singh Thakur, Titas Sadhu, Pooja Vastrakar, Kanika Ahuja, Minnu Mani. AUSTRALIA: Darcie Brown, Heather Graham, Ashleigh Gardner, Kim Garth, Grace Harris, Alyssa Healy (c&wk), Jess Jonassen, Alana King, Phoebe Litchfield, Tahliia McGrath (vc), Beth Mooney (wk), Ellyse Perry, Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland, Georgia Wareham.

Heinrich announces Test retirement

PTI ■ PRETORIA (SOUTH AFRICA)

South African wicketkeeper-batter Heinrich Klaassen has announced his retirement from red-ball cricket, bringing curtains to his brief stint in the format. Having made his debut against India in Ranchi in 2019, the 32-year-old played four matches in his brief Test career with his final outing against the West Indies in Johannesburg last year. He has scored 104 runs at an average of 13.00, while his top score was 35 against Australia in Sydney. Klaassen will continue to be available for the Proteas in white-ball cricket. "After a few sleepless nights wondering if I am making the right decision, I have decided to retire from red ball cricket," he said in a statement. "It's a difficult decision that I have made because it is by far my favourite format of the game." "The battles that I faced on and off the field has made me the cricketer I am today. "It has been a great journey and I am glad I could have represented my country. "My baggy Test cap is the most precious cap I have ever been handed.



"Thanks to everyone that has played a part in my red ball career and shaped me into the cricketer I am today. "But for now, a new challenge awaits and looking forward to it." It is understood that the explosive batter is keen on the T20 franchise leagues with his commitments in the IPL, Hundred, and MLC. He has become the second

South African player to retire from red-ball cricket within a week. Dean Elgar also hung up his boots following the conclusion of the two-Test series against India that ended in a 1-1 draw last week. Klaassen was dropped for the India series, as head coach Shukri Conrad went ahead with Kyle Verreynne.



England still comes first: Liam

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

He is an acclaimed T20 free-lancer but white ball commitments for England is still a priority for Liam Livingstone, one of the world's most destructive batters in the shortest format. Livingstone, who has played 25 ODIs and 38 T20Is for England, has already plied his trade in IPL (Rajasthan Royals and Punjab Kings), Birmingham Phoenix in The Hundred, Perth Scorchers in Big Bash League (BBL) of Australia and Peshawar Zalmi in Pakistan Super League (PSL) to name a few. In the second edition of SA20, Livingstone will play for MI Cape Town and he, along with Kagiso Rabada and skipper Kieron Pollard, will be the guiding light for the franchise. How does he balance his calendar in terms of playing for franchise leagues and English white ball commitments? "Yeah, I think England comes first. We see our calendar at the start of the year and see where we have gaps. If we feel like it's a good opportunity for us to go away and play franchise cricket, then we'll do that," Livingstone replied to a query from PTI. "If we feel like we need a rest and it's going to hinder our international cricket, then we'll probably have a rest. So I guess at the start of the year, you just try and

work out when you can play and where you can go and go from there," he added. Livingstone believes that a league like SA20 will help youngsters stake claim for national berth in their respective countries. "Yeah, international cricket is very different from franchise cricket. It is what it is. I think it's different for the young boys coming up compared to the older boys who are already playing international cricket. It's a great chance for young boys to make a name for themselves and showcase their talent. "I think it's a little bit different for the older ones of us, shall I say that? We've already played international cricket for a while now," the 30-year-old said. Playing for a legacy franchise like MI, what's his expectations? "Hopefully, lots of entertainment, win games of cricket. I guess that probably will be the two biggest things in a franchise tournament. You want to entertain people that pay money to come and watch and you want to win games of cricket for your franchise. "So yeah, hopefully we can do both. You've got to try and get everybody together, everybody on the same wavelength. Hopefully, we can do that over the next couple of days and start the season really strong," Livingstone concluded.

Dhull loses captaincy after defeat in Ranji Trophy opener

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Yash Dhull was on Monday removed as Delhi captain, hours after the team suffered a heavy defeat against Puducherry in their Ranji Trophy opening match. Senior batter Himmat Singh will now lead the side that takes on Jammu and Kashmir in an away game from January 12. In an attempt to revive Delhi's flagging fortunes, U-19 World Cup-winning captain Dhull was made the skipper of the side in December 2022. Since making his debut in February 2022, Dhull has made 1185 runs at an average of 43.88. Dhull made two and 23 in the nine-wicket loss to Puducherry at home. The 21-year-old had also led the side in the white-ball tournaments earlier in the season.

Himmat Singh is new skipper



"Yash is a talented player but is out of form. We wanted him to do well as a batter, that is why we have relieved him of captaincy duties. Himmat is our senior player and has done very well for us. He will captain the side," DDCA joint secretary Rajan Manchanda told PTI. Dhull has struggled against fast bowlers, of late and was reluc-

tant to open the innings. Himmat had led Delhi to a momentous win over Mumbai in the former's absence last season. The 27-year-old has played 22 first-class games, having made his debut back in 2017. The team manages to court unwanted attention season after season. Last year, senior players Nitish Rana and Dhruv Shorey left Delhi and moved to UP and Vidarbha respectively. Senior pacers Navdeep Saini, who was named in the India A squad to face visiting England Lions, and Ishant Sharma won't be travelling with the team to Jammu. It has been learnt that veteran pacer Ishant will only be available for Delhi's home games. Delhi, who have won Ranji Trophy seven times, last lifted the coveted trophy back in 2007-08.

RANJI TROPHY

Seamers set up Mumbai outright win over Bihar

PTI ■ PATNA

Seamers Shivam Dube (4/10) and Royston Dias (3/35) powered Mumbai's outright win over Bihar by an innings and 51 runs in their Ranji Trophy 2023-24 season opener here on Monday. Bihar's fate was decided on the third day evening itself when they were reduced to 91/6 following-on, having made 100 in their first innings in reply to Mumbai's 251, with Mohit Avasthi returning 6/27. Bihar could not manage a run more than that in their second attempt and lost heavily as Mumbai walked away with seven points. Dube, who was named in India's squad for three T20Is against Afghanistan, celebrated his call-up with a superb 11-4-10-7 after 6-3-

13-2 in the first innings. In another game, Chhattisgarh also clinched an outright win and seven points following a 10-wicket hammering of Assam, for whom Riyan Parag produced a record century. Parag cracked 12 sixes and 11 fours to make 155 from 87 balls for the second fastest century in the Ranji Trophy history, but his outstanding effort had no say in the outcome. Chhattisgarh, who made 327 in the first innings, bowled out Assam for 159 in reply and Parag's ton could only take his side to 254 in the second essay. Chhattisgarh remained unscathed in their 87-run chase. However, at Visakhapatnam, Ricky Bhuvi's marathon 347-ball 175 (23x4s, 1x6s) helped Andhra force a draw against Bengal who made

409 batting first. Bhuvi's ton, combined with fifties from Hanuma Vihari (51) and Shoaib Khan (56) took Andhra to 445 in reply with a slender 36-run first-innings lead, thus giving them three points from the tame draw in which Bengal reached 87/1 in their second essay. At Alapuzha, the visitors Uttar Pradesh team walked off with a draw and three points against hosts Kerala in a hard-fought contest. UP took a 59-run lead in the first innings, for they dismissed Kerala at 243 after posting 302. In the second innings, Priyam Garg (106) followed Aryan Juyal (115) in completing a three-figure mark as UP declared at 323/3, taking an overall lead of 382 runs. In reply, Kerala were 72/2.

BRIEF SCORES: AT PATNA: Mumbai 251 beat Bihar 100 & 100 (Sharman Nigrodh 40; Shivam Dube 4/10, Royston Dias 3/35) by an innings and 51 runs. AT RAIPUR: Chhattisgarh 327 & 87/0 (Eknath Kerkar 31*, Rishabh 48*) beat Assam 159 & 254 (Riyan Parag 155; Vashudev Bareth 3/59, Jivesh Butte 3/37) by 10 wickets. AT VISAKHAPATNAM: Bengal 409 & 82/1 (Sourav Paul 30*; Shoaib Md Khan 1/16) drew with Andhra 445 (Hanuma Vihari 51, Ricky Bhuvi 175, Shoaib Khan 56; Mohammed Kaif 3/62). AT ALAPPUZHA: Uttar Pradesh 302 & 323/3d (Aryan Juyal 115, Priyam Garg 106; Basil Thampi 1/30) drew with Kerala 243 & 72/2 (Rohan Kunnummal 42; Kuldeep Yadav 1/19).

Matthew grabs maiden five wickets haul as Puducherry win easy against Delhi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Medium-pacer Abin Matthew hogged the limelight with a maiden five-wicket haul as Puducherry bowlers came up with an exceptional show to orchestrate a commanding nine-wicket win over hosts Delhi in their Ranji Trophy opener here on Monday. Resuming on 126/8 in their second innings, Delhi managed to add 19 more runs before being bowled out for 145. Matthew claimed a career best 5/39 to dismantle the Delhi batting order. Gaurav Yadav (3/49) and Saurabh Yadav (2/43) also contributed to Delhi's downfall to give them an easy 51-run chase. In reply, Puducherry lost opener Akash Kargave (23) with seven runs shy from the target.

Jay Pande (21 not out) and Marimuthu Vikneshwaran (7 not out) then sealed the chase in the very next over. **BARODA WIN EASY VERSUS ODISHA** Off-spinner Mahesh Pithiya's impressive five-wicket haul complemented Shashwat Rawat's stellar 102 in the second innings as hosts Baroda defeated Odisha by 147 runs in Vadodara. Set a tall chase of 432, Odisha were bundled out for 284. In only his fifth Ranji match, the budding 22-year-old Pithiya showcased immense skill and determination to return figures of 5/61. **Brief Scores** AT DELHI: Delhi 148 and 145; 46.4 overs (Abin Matthew 5/39, Gaurav Yadav 3/49, Saurabh Yadav 2/43).

Puducherry 244 and 51/1; 13.4 overs. Puducherry won by nine wickets. Points: Puducherry 6, Delhi 0. AT VADODARA: Baroda 351 and 258/4 declared. Odisha 178 and 284; 101.5 overs (Shantanu Mishra 78, Anurag Sarangi 56, Sandeep Pattnaik 51, Suryakant Pradhan 46; Mahesh Pithiya 5/61). Baroda won by 147 runs. Points: Baroda 6, Odisha 0. AT JAMMU: Jammu & Kashmir 100. Himachal Pradesh 120/1. Match drawn. Points Himachal Pradesh 3, Jammu & Kashmir 1. AT DEHRADUN: Madhya Pradesh 323 and 243/3 declared. Uttarakhand 192 and 266/8; 95 overs (Piryanshu Khanduri 62, Aditya Tare 51, Kunal Chandela 50; Kumar Kartikeya 4/73, Saransh Jain 3/77). Match drawn. Points MP 3, Uttarakhand 1.