





# Monday Mirchi

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER, AND  
DON'T GO GAGA OVER IT

When regimes change, apart from the outgoing Ministers, blue-eyed boys (ok, ok girls) of the administrative wings too get displaced. When this happens, the one thing that most inquisitive people, particularly the media, like to watch is whether the cream of officials, particularly those perceived as unapproachable and a cut above the rest, go with the flow and meet the new Executive head. Former CM Secretary Smita Sabharwal, after a prolonged guessing game in social media and other circles over her studied distance from the new Chief Minister, at last met Revanth Reddy. The grapevine has it that this is perhaps the longest time that a bureaucrat took to meet a newly elected CM. As Member-Secretary Finance Commission, she posted on X that she had called on Telangana CM and sought all support to make SFC a robust policy and reform instrument for Telangana. Some of the bureaucratic circles were no doubt expecting an accompanying reel and a bit more, but the simple photo she had posted speaks a lot about the message she wanted to convey.

## WHOSE TRUSTED LIEUTENANT, BY THE WAY?

Consummate officials, if backed to the hilt by political bosses, do their job thoroughly, though the specifics of their accomplishments may differ depending on the exigencies of the situation. After Jayesh Ranjan nearly doubled investments in Telangana State as CM Revanth Reddy's man Friday during the World Economic Forum at Davos, there was speculation that the new investment pipeline 'hurt' former minister KT Rama Rao. That perceived rift seems to be no longer there, going by how KTR had jumped to the defence of Jayesh recently like any understanding ex-boss. When newshounds drew KTR's attention to a story against the Telangana startup ecosystem and how the bureaucrat in question (Jayesh) had switched sides; KTR interestingly remarked: "That official - he called and told me 'I said something and they wrote something else'. I said, 'Leave it'. KTR then added for good measure: "Officials have not changed, but some specific media". With information regarding KTR's strong defence of Jayesh now in the public domain, the whispers in the corridors of power are the bureaucrat could be moved sooner than later.

## MODEL PRAJA PALANA IN SINGARENI

Singareni Collieries Company Limited CMD Balam appears set to make SCCL the model of Praja Palana – poll plank of the new Congress government in Telangana. Unlike in the past under his predecessors, these days 100-200 employees get to meet top officials concerned almost daily to have their issues addressed in the true spirit of Praja Palana,

it was disclosed during an official meeting in Singareni Bhavan. Balam is also widely popular for the balam he had employed in the plantation drive taken up under his watch so much so that the targeted areas have now become forests. For newbies, N Balam was elevated to CMD post after the sack of the longest-serving Singareni MD Sridhar by the Congress government.

Sridhar had maintained a low profile throughout his tenure. The new CMD is a like breath of fresh air, aver employees. Of course, there are others waiting to see how things would work out under the new regime when it comes to employee welfare.

## POLL-VAULTING IN STYLE

Some babus have political inclinations that they unabashedly betray while in service, while others take a political plunge in style. Senior IAS officer from Kurnool district A MD Imtiaz, who had served as Collector of the erstwhile Krishna district, has struck while the iron is hot by seeking VRS, much to the surprise of his peers. The Kurnool constituency has a significant number of voters belonging to the minority community; so, all political parties prefer to field candidates from the minority community. Sensing that YSRCP has been looking for the right candidate for the Kurnool constituency, Imtiaz responded promptly and proactively. He sought VRS and joined the ruling party. No wonder, Imtiaz has since been appointed as in-charge of Kurnool.

## BLOWN BY ELECTION WINDS

Transfers of officials well ahead of the elections seem to have become inevitable in Andhra Pradesh. Many IAS/IPS officers have been transferred over the past few days. Budithi Rajsekhar, who had been kept in the loop line post his service as the Special Chief Secretary to Government, Panchayat Raj & Rural Development Department, has been directed to report to the General Administration Department. Shashibhushan Kumar, IAS (1996), Principal Secretary to Government, Water Resources Department, has been placed in full additional charge of the post of Principal Secretary to Government, Panchayat Raj & Rural Development Department, until further orders.

K Venkata Ramana Reddy has been elevated. Currently the Managing Director, AP Housing Corporation Ltd, he has been placed in full additional charge of the post of Additional CCLA- cum- Secretary to CCLA, until further orders.

Senior IPS officer Malika Garg, who had been posted as Superintendent of Police, Tirupati District, has been transferred and posted as Superintendent of Police, CID, apparently for political reasons.

-- Yours truly

# Telugu clout declining in national politics: Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that the role of Telugus in national politics is on the decline. Sanjeeva Reddy, PVN and NTR rose to the level of being able to dictate national politics. S. Jaipal Reddy and Venkaiah Naidu continued their legacy by maintaining a key role in national politics.

"Today, the role of Telugus in national politics is almost nil. It is not a good sign for our survival at the national level. It is high time we moved together and restored the political glory of Telugus in national politics. Telugu is the most widely spoken language after Hindi at the national level. We should also dominate national politics. We hardly found any Cabinet min-



CM Revanth releasing a book titled 'Governorpet to Governor's House' at MCRHRD on Sunday. The book is written by former DGP Ram Mohan Rao

ister from the Telugu States in the Union Government," the CM said.

He released a book titled 'Governorpet to Governor's House' at the MCRHRD Institute in Hyderabad on Sunday. The book is authored

who have gained knowledge in the last 76 years," he said.

The CM said the Telangana Government will seek suggestions from experienced intellectuals and administrators. In the past, NTR had not fielded his party's candidate against PV Narasimha Rao, so that the senior Congress leader from Telangana could be elected MP unanimously and become the Prime Minister.

"There is nothing wrong with pursuing good traditions in politics. My government will also adopt such a good tradition. Despite the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, we should maintain cordial relations. I am seeking the cooperation of everyone to develop the state and reach development results to the people," he said.



## BRS MLA, Mayor meet CM Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS MLA representing Bhadrachalam, Tellam Venkatrao, met Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday at the latter's residence along with his family and Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy.

Although Tellam Venkatrao submitted a memorandum seeking funds for the development of his constituency, rumours spread in political circles that he may join the Congress. However, this is the second time that Venkat met Revanth Reddy.

It may be recalled that Venkat contested from the BRS successfully when he failed to get a ticket in the Congress.

# Central Cabinet brainstorm over 'Viksit Bharat' vision

## PM Modi chairs Council of Ministers' meet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday chaired a day-long meeting of his Council of Ministers as they brainstormed over the vision document for 'Viksit Bharat: 2047' and a detailed action plan for the next five years.

Government sources said a 100-day agenda for immediate steps to be taken after a new government is formed in May was deliberated upon during the meeting for its quick implementation.

They said the roadmap for 'Viksit Bharat' is a result of more than two years of intensive preparation and involved a 'whole of government' approach involving all ministries and wide-ranging consultations with state governments, academia, industry bodies, civil society, scientific organisations and mobilisation of youths for inputs.

"More than 2,700 meetings, workshops and seminars were held at various levels. Suggestions of more than



20 lakh youths were received," one official said.

The roadmap for "Viksit Bharat" has a comprehensive blueprint with clearly articulated national vision, aspirations, goals and action points, the sources said, adding that its goals include areas such as economic growth, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ease of living, ease of doing business, infrastructure and social welfare.

Several ministries articulated their ideas in the meeting, which is likely to be the last such get-together before the Lok Sabha polls are announced.

## Modi contributes Rs 2,000 to BJP for 'Viksit Bharat'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday contributed Rs 2,000 to the BJP's campaign to strengthen efforts to build a 'Viksit Bharat'. He contributed Rs 2,000 to the party fund and urged people to be a part of the "Donation For Nation Building". Modi also shared on X a screenshot of the receipt of his contribution. In his post on X, Modi said, "I am happy to contribute to @BJP4India and strengthen our efforts to build a Viksit Bharat."

# Number of bail pleas rising in SC due to district courts, HCs

PNS ■ PUNE

The number of bail pleas in the Supreme Court was steadily rising since it was not being granted in the district courts or even the high courts, Justice Bhushan R Gavai said on Sunday.

Every SC bench hears at least 15 to 20 bail matters per day, the apex court judge said at an event where the bhoomi

pujan' of a new court building was held in Pimpri Chinchwad in Pune.

"These days the situation is such that bail is not granted in the district court. It has become a challenge to get bail even in the high courts. Therefore, the pendency of bail matters in the Supreme Court is going up," he said.

Asserting that judges have the courageous and unbiased

nature of Ramshastri Prabhune, the revered chief justice of the Maratha Empire in the latter half of the 18th century, Justice Gavai asked 'why should we fear to grant bail?'

"Even after spending 9-10 years in jail before the trial is over, if judges don't consider the bail plea (of an accused), (then) we should think about the current system," Justice Gavai asserted.

Speaking on the occasion, SC Justice Abhay Oka said disputes related to marriages were on the rise and there was need to increase the number of family courts nationwide.

"This has become a serious issue, particularly in cities. There are 10-15 cases filed for one marriage dispute. There is need to increase the number of district, sessions and family courts," he said.

## Pak's new PM Shehbaz rakes...

Continued from page 1

"We will keep ties with neighbours on the basis of equality," Shehbaz, 72, said as he easily won the election in the National Assembly to become Pakistan's prime minister for a second time.

Shehbaz, however, raked up the Kashmir issue and equated it with Palestine. "Let's all come together [ ] and the National Assembly should pass a resolution for the freedom of Kashmiris and Palestinians," he added.

He also thanked his allies in the coalition government for putting their trust in him and making him Leader of the House.

"When my Quaid (leader Nawaz) was elected the prime minister thrice, the development that followed in the country is an example of its own. And it is not wrong to say that Nawaz Sharif is the one who built Pakistan," Shehbaz said in his victory speech.

# Fight will be...

Continued from page 1

Addressing BRS leaders from Karimnagar and Peddapalli Lok Sabha constituencies at the Telangana Bhavan on Sunday, KCR said that party leaders have to ignore the results of the Assembly election and work unitedly.

"Public opposition towards defeated MLAs has not gone down. Everyone thought that this MLA should lose, but KCR should win. That created strong problems for the party," KCR said.

KCR said the BRS is conducting a public meeting on March 12 on SRR College Grounds. Later, the party will conduct bus trips across the state. Meetings should be held at the Mandal level, he said. KCR said that he was confident that the BRS is going to win the Karimnagar Lok Sabha seat.

It is common for problems

to arise while exuding envy. The BRS government repaired the Mid-Manair project immediately when troubles occurred in the project. The government should solve problems immediately if problems come. "We will not remove all the teeth if one tooth is destroyed. We will take treatment for that particular tooth too," "KCR" said.

KCR said the Congress criticised the BRS government regarding the LRS and assured people that it will do LRS freely if it comes to power. The Congress should do LRS freely as per its assurance, KCR demanded. KCR said, "There are quarrels between Congress leaders. They spend their time settling their quarrels. The people will remember the BRS within a few days. Victory and defeats are not new to the BRS and should not be disappointed with the defeat. No need to think about leaders changing party.

# Ponnam's tryst with bus...

Continued from page 1

Ponnam said that within 90 days of his government taking charge, it provided free travel for women in TSRTC buses. Arogyasri limit hiked to Rs 10 lakh, LPG gas for Rs 500 and 200 units of free electricity would be provided.

The government would start the Indiramma housing scheme in March, he said.

When passengers and conductors brought some problems to the attention of the Minister, he said that 1,000 new buses would be purchased and there would be no problems.

# BJP first list...

Continued from page 1

"Some top leaders moved against me so that I do not get a ticket. They feared that I might win if given a ticket. I am not a bird depending on a branch. I am a bird depending on my own wings and I have developed on my own. The leaders who ran away in 2019 when the party offered them tickets are now competing for tickets. I provided victory to the BJP with my strength although the BJP had no strength then.

I ensured the victory of ZPTCs, MPPs and also four MLAs. The party will give me a ticket if it wants my contribution. I hope the party will give the ticket to me in the second list. I will chart my path if the party fails to give a ticket to me. I will not bow my head to anyone. The Adilabad LS seat is mine and I will win. The BJP has to think whether it allows me to contest or not," Soyam Bapurao said.

Meanwhile, the BJP MLA representing Goshamahal, T. Raja Singh, lashed out at the

party for giving the Hyderabad ticket to Madhavi Latha. Raja Singh commented satirically about Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy saying, "Whether the party did not get a male candidate (Mogodu) in Hyderabad?"

Raja Singh is not happy with the party for not giving the BJLP leader post to him. He had made known his unhappiness by not attending the Vijaya Sankalpa Yatra of Kishan Reddy in Goshamahal. Now Raja Singh has openly expressed his anger at the party and Kishan Reddy.

Ale Narendra's son Ale Bhaskar and Bhaga Reddy's son Jaipal Reddy have also protested over the party not giving the Zaheerabad ticket to BB Patil.

It is learnt that Bangaru Laxman's daughter Bangaru Sruthi also is unhappy as the party did not give the Nagarkurnool ticket to her.

Senior leader AP Jithender Reddy tweeted on Sunday that he has 'Lord Venkateshwara Swamy' on his side.

## Cong eyes....

Continued from page 1

The Congress party which lies on Malkajigiri attracted the BJP leaders to join the Congress as the BJP announced its candidate Eatala Rajender for the Malkajigiri LS constituency. Several top leaders including BJP senior leader P. Muralidhar Rao expressed their unhappiness over the party for not giving tickets to them. Muralidhar tweeted on his X that he will announce his future course of action after discussing with associates and fans.

The BJP sitting MP from Adilabad Soyam Bapurao also expressed his anger at the party for not giving a ticket to him in the first list.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha

Tithi: Ashtami: Mar 03 08:45 AM to Mar 04 08:49 AM

Navami: Mar 04 08:49 AM to Mar 05 08:04 AM

Nakshatram: Jyeshtha: Mar 03 03:55 PM to Mar 04 04:21 PM

Moola: Mar 04 04:21 PM to Mar 05 03:59 PM

Rahukalam: 8:03 AM to 9:31 AM

Yamagandam: 10:59 AM to 12:27 PM

Varjyam: 02:25 PM to 03:59 PM

Gulika: 1:55 PM to 3:23 PM

Amritakalam: 07:23 AM to 09:01 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 12:04 PM to 12:51 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy

Temp: 36°

Humidity: 38%

Sunrise: 6:32 AM

Sunset: 6:23 PM

Updated: March 3, 2024 5:00 PM



# CP for anti-drug panel in all city schools

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Kothakota Sreenivas Reddy on Sunday called for setting up of anti-drug committees up in all schools to curb the drug menace among schoolchildren.

"Before becoming the Commissioner of Police here, there were quite a few reports about an increase in drug abuse and drugs reaching to nuke and corners of the city. It is not limited to schools and colleges and has spread across educational institutes. The drug peddlers are making their way into schools and not just in urban centers but districts too. It is evident from the rising number of drug-laced chocolates being seized from the paan shops in the vicinity of schools," Sreenivas Reddy said.

He further said, "Parents raise concerns over the spread of drugs. The drug issue is here to stay in the cities and it should be nipped in the bud. This is not just and addiction affecting the health of an individual or family. This is a major network which impacts the nation and the world. Most of the money made through drug peddling is used for terrorist financing. This disrupts peace all over the world, disturbs the moral values of people. It is time to wake up and ensure that drugs don't become



Hyderabad Police Commissioner K Sreenivas Reddy lighting the lamp to mark the inauguration of teachers' meeting in Hyderabad on Sunday

a major issue in the city."

"In order to curb the drug influence in schools, the Police Commissioner said that anti-drug committees must be setup in schools. Inclusion of students in such committees fosters a drug free environment and awareness. Active participation would build a sense of ownership among students. It helps break stigma around substance abuse, encourages open discussion and support seeking," he added

Addressing the teachers, the Police Commissioner said, "It is essential to educate ourselves through reliable sources; pro-

mote healthy alternatives, invite experts for to address drug related issues and promote physical and mental well-being of students. Create awareness regarding stress management and demonstrate methods to deal with peer pressure."

Speaking at a workshop titled 'Narcotics and other Addictions de-sensitising Reprocessing Empowerment and Prevention forum' Telangana State Anti-Narcotics Bureau Director Sandeep Shandilya addressed teachers and parents and said, "Comparison with others since

a very young age has a negative impact on the children. Please don't compare them with anyone; the lack of appreciation pushes them to extremes. The children need attention and must not be judged on the basis of grades. They must be given the right amount of care and attention."

Telangana Education Secretary Burra Venkatesham said, "This is an important meeting since there is a need to understand the status of education in Telangana and where it is heading. Parents and Children share responsibility of shaping students.

## Praja Vani programme will be held today in GHMC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) will hold Prajavani programmes on Monday from 10:30 am to 1 pm at its Circle offices, Zonal Office and Head Office GHMC. People can directly submit their grievances to officials through phone or directly go to the offices.GHMC Commissioner Ronald Rose said that the Prajavani programme will be held at GHMC Head Office on March 04, Monday.

Ronald Rose said, "As a part of the phone in programme, the Commissioner said that people can represent their issue by calling 040- 23222182. After the phone in programme, applications would be accepted from people.

## Ponnam hints at starting bars to sell toddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Excise Ponnam Prabhakar has hinted at Government soon starting the bars selling toddy in Telangana.

He was participating in the Atmeeya Sannam of Gowda community members along with Jupally Krishna Rao in Mahabubnagar on Sunday.

Addressing a gathering, the Minister said that the caste-based vocations have been changing fast. Similarly, the nature of all businesses has been undergoing changes.

Therefore, he underlined the need for modernising the profession of the toddy tappers. As part of it, an action plan is being implemented to sell unadulterated toddy.



Addressing a gathering, the Minister said that the caste-based vocations have been changing fast. Similarly, the nature of all businesses has been undergoing changes.

The Congress government came to power 90 days ago. Since then 20 crore women undertook free travel by RTC buses, he said.

To solve the problems of the people, the Congress should come to power at the Centre, he added.

He appealed to the people to vote for the Congress in the Lok Sabha election. He particularly urged the people to vote for Vamsichander Reddy in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. He alleged that KCR, KTR and Harish Rao forfeited their right to seek votes in MLC and MP elections.

He made it clear that the Congress government would implement all guarantees given to people ahead of the Assembly elections.

## Old City happy with Revanth launching Metro work: Niranjan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC Senior Vice-President G. Niranjan said that the people of the Old City and the Congress are elated that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has decided to launch Metro works in the Old City on March 7 at Falaknuna.

He said that people want the Chief Minister to release necessary funds for these works without any hindrance and pay special attention to making Metro services available as



soon as possible.

Although Metro services were started in Hyderabad in 2017, the Metro works stopped at the Mahatma Gandhi Bus Stand due to objections from

the AIMIM, he said.

He said not only did L&T not agree to the alternative route suggested by the AIMIM, but also expressed its inability to execute work as the agreement period had expired and the cost of the project had increased.

The CM said that even at the all-party meeting organised by the then government on December 9, 2014, AIMIM MLAs had objected to the original proposal for Old City Metro.

He said that due to AIMIM leaders, the cost of the Metro line from Imilban to Falakunuma has increased to around Rs 2,000 crore.

Niranjan said that the Congress and other opposition parties and Citizen Forums had raised their concern and staged protests to provide Metro facility to Old City.

He said that AIMIM leaders are responsible for the delay in providing Metro services to the Old City and they should apologise to the people.

## Traffic restrictions amid recruitment process today



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Police has announced traffic restrictions ahead of appointment letter's being handed over to candidates appointed to the Telangana State Social Welfare department.

The restrictions will remain in place from 2 pm to 8 pm on Monday.

Traffic coming from AR Petrol Pump Jn. (Public Gardens) towards BJR Statue will not be allowed and will be diverted at A.R. Petrol Pump towards Nampally.; Commuters moving from AR Petrol Pump Jn. (Public Gardens) towards BJR Statue will not be allowed and will be diverted at BJR Statue towards, SBI, Abids- Nampally station road; commuters moving Sujatha School lane towards Khan Lateef Khan building

will not be allowed and will be diverted at Sujatha School junction towards Nampally.

Commuters are requested to avoid the following junctions Panjagutta, VV Statue, Khairatabad flyover, Ambedkar Statue, NTR Marg, Telugu Thalli, Iqbal Minar, Ravindra Bharathi, Hyderabad Traffic Police Junction, Basheerbagh, BJR Statue Circle, SBI Gunfoundry, Abids Circle, A.R. Petrol Pump (Public Gardens), Nampally, KLK Building, Liberty, Himayath Nagar, Assembly, MJ Market and Hyderguda. RTC buses plying from Ravindra Bharathi towards BJR Statue should avoid L.B. Stadium main Gate i.e. in front of Khan Lateef Khan Building and take diversion at A.R. Petrol (Public Gardens) bunk towards Nampally. Citizens are requested to take alternative routes to reach their destinations and avoid the above routes during the above specified timings and co-operate with the Traffic Police.

## Krishnaiah demands hike in mess charges

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

R Krishnaiah, President of the National Backward Classes Welfare Association, demanded that mess charges be increased for SC/ST/BC hostel and Gurukula school and college hostel students and increase the scholarship of 16 lakh college students. He was speaking at a massive protest staged by students at Indira Park on Sunday.

Addressing the students, Krishnaiah said that mess charges that were fixed six years ago proportionate to prices at that time. The prices of essential commodities, oil, pulses, vegetables went up. Due to this increase hostel and gurukula school students are being served poor food. Again the problems of hostel students started. It is evil that the government has not come up with the idea of providing all the facilities to the hostel students. The concerned commissioners also visit the hostels one day and know the problems of the students. However, they are not solving the issues.

He also said, "If we do not fight, there is no chance of improving the condition of our hostels. One meal at the hotel is 80 rupees. But 10 per night for hostel students. Asked how they fit?"

He questioned how the future citizens of India would come up if poor food was served. He questioned how a knowledge society can be formed if inferior food is given in the growing-reading age. The salaries of the employees have been increased twice. The



salaries of legislators and ministers have been tripled. Old age pensions have been increased five times. But scholarships/mess charges of SC/ST/minority students have not been increased, Krishnaiah added.

The SC/ST students are sanctioned full fees by the central government. The state government also sanctioned full fees to the minority Muslims by G.O. Issued. But even if B.s are making movements, B.C. GO is not issuing to grant full fees to students. If the full fees are sanctioned the cost will not be more than 150 crores. Granting full fees to other castes only B.C. Isn't it unfair not to grant the students? Is it a sin to be born in B.C.? Does BCs do not pay taxes? The wealth of the country does not create! Krishnaiah Dwajametha, who does not look down on B.C.s, the president of the National BC Welfare Association added.

He demanded that mess charges for college hostel students be increased from Rs 1500 to 3 thousand per month, mess charges for school hostel students from Rs 950 to 2 thousand per month, and cosmetic charges be increased from Rs. 500, to revise the scheme of full fees for BC/EBC – students studying Engineering –



City Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi administering polio drops to a child at pulse polio centre in Hyderabad on Sunday

## Mayor launches pulse polio drive

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

City mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi launched pulse polio drive in the city on Sunday. She administered drops to children under the age of 5 years at MBT Nagar Basti Hospital on Sunday.

The polio vaccination programme for children aged 0 to 5 years has been carried out for the last 27 years.

Mayor Gadwal

Vijayalakshmi requested the residents of the city to cooperate with the health workers on the occasion of giving polio drops to children by going door to door for two days on 4 and 5 March.

She said that a case of polio was registered in Hyderabad in 1998, similarly another case was registered in Nalgonda district in 2007. As per the orders of the state government, all arrangements were made in the city to

administer polio drops to children under 5 years of age in order to eradicate polio.

Deputy Mayor Mote Srilatha Shobhan Reddy and Mote Shobhan Reddy participated in the vaccination programme at Lalpet Urban Primary Health Center, Tarnaka Division. She advised the parents to make no mistakes in protecting children. Give polio dose every time, help the country to win against polio.

## Toddler kidnapped from city, rescued in Zaheerabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The he Zaheerabad police apprehended a woman on Sunday for allegedly abducting one of the twin female toddlers she had been caring for while the parents had taken the other child to the hospital.

Upon their return, they

discovered both the caretaker, Shahjahana Begum, and the nine-month-old child missing. The couple approached the police for help who conducted an investigation into the matter. Using CCTV cameras, the police discovered that Shahjahana Begum had boarded a Zaheerabad-

bound bus from the Mahatma Gandhi bus station at Imilban. Then, the Madannapet police immediately alerted the Zaheerabad police, who were able to apprehend the woman as soon as the bus arrived in Zaheerabad. The child was then handed over to their parents, the police said.

## Undergrad Summit holds fourth edition at T-Hub

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Undergrad Summit (UGS), Telangana's largest youth conference, organised its fourth edition at T-Hub on Saturday. This day-long event is a showcase of exposure, guidance, inspiration, networking, and entertainment, specifically designed for undergraduates.

This year, the event featured an array of panel discussions with notable Civil Services Officers, including Tarun Reddy. It also includes spotlight interactions with acclaimed singer PVNS Rohit (Indian Idol Runner-up) and Damini. Influential creators and influencers such as Panju, FinancialThinkings, and Vamshi Kurapati engaged



attendees alongside HR professionals from leading corporations.

The agenda includes enriching keynotes, interactive games, stand-up comedy acts by Rajasekhar Mamidanna and Rohit Swain, and a sun-downer concert by the Elyzium Band.

A special highlight of this edition is the finale of the Speakathon, a competition seeking to crown Telangana's

next top speaker, adding a competitive edge to the event's diverse offerings. Additionally, the summit featured a keynote address by Sesidhar Kolikonda, CEO of Arvensys Group, providing invaluable insights into the professional world.

Hosted by Student Tribe (formerly StuMagz), a Forbes 30 under 30 listed organization led by founder Charan Lakkaraju, UGS aims to foster a community of over 500,000 students from more than 300 colleges across the South of India. The event is a platform for students, educators, professionals, and industry leaders to engage in meaningful discussions, workshops, and networking sessions, promoting growth, innovation, and collaboration.

### WORLD WILDLIFE DAY



Schoolchildren wearing tiger masks as they take part in World Wildlife Day celebration at Zoological park in Hyderabad on Sunday

## Nehru Zoological Park celebrates

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Nehru Zoological Park celebrated World Wildlife Day on Sunday with enthusiasm. To mark the day as an eventful and educative, educational events like puzzle solving, drawing and painting, crosswords, jumble sentence and jumble letter, quiz competition, and awareness programme at each animal enclosure were conducted at its premises. Tiger masks were distributed to the visiting children. Prizes were

distributed to winners. Over 500 individuals, including children, youngsters, parents, and senior citizens participated in the day-long program. Dr Sunil S Hiremath, Curator, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad greeted all the participants and briefed them about Zoo management and its role in Wildlife conservation and breeding, and most importantly is Wildlife Education. He appreciated the children who evinced interest in knowing about the wildlife.

## Minister stresses use of tech for wildlife conservation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Keeping in view the environmental changes around the world, Minister of Forest and Environment Konda Surekha stressed the need to celebrate World Wildlife Day on March 3 every year to raise the awareness on the survival and protection of wild animals. "On the seventh World Wildlife Day, we are celebrating it with the determination to use technological advancement and new inventions for the protection of wildlife," she said.

The Minister said that biodiversity and the survival of all living beings is the lifeblood of a balanced nature. In the name of development, there are drastic changes in the attitude of people towards forests and



other fauna. This is putting severe pressure on the survival of wildlife. "If we want a habitable environment for the generations to come, we must continue the principle of survival and coexistence of all living beings."

She emphasised the protection of the environment including animals, birds and plants requires. The conflict between humans and animals

is increasing due to human encroachment in animal habitats. It is our responsibility to reduce it as much as possible. Moreover, due to human negligence, forest fires are caused which needs to be avoided.

Further, Minister Konda Surekha said that everyone should exercise with caution while traveling on forest trails and should contribute as much as possible to provide water for animals and birds during the dry season. Additionally, all of us should cooperate with the government machinery to prevent crimes in forests, poaching and smuggling of wild animals. Ecological balance, fauna and human life are interdependent. We should realize that the lack of any one of these will affect the life of the others.





# Griha Jyoti helped 1,82,000 people in Nalgonda: Venkat

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Stating that he is seeing happiness in the eyes of the poor after 10 years, R&B Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said the Griha Jyoti scheme has touched the lives of 1,82,000 beneficiaries in Nalgonda district, bringing tangible results within a short span.

"We are implementing the promises given by the government to the poor within 90 days," he said.

He said the distribution of Indramma houses will start on March 11, highlighting the government's dedication to providing housing to the homeless.

The visit of Komatireddy Venkat Reddy to Nalgonda district brought smiles on the faces of the underprivileged. The Minister, currently on an extensive tour of the district, addressed various issues with authorities during his morning sessions.

In a significant move, Venkat released the Youth Congress Parliament election poster and participated in the Pulse polio programme at the PHC.

The Minister, showing his commitment to public welfare visited the houses of Grihajyothi beneficiaries in Nalgonda and told them about the various initiatives undertaken by the Congress government.

The Minister, known for his hands-on approach, attended various programmes in Nalgonda town on a bike, resonating with the Congress ranks and boosting the morale of the party cadre. The people of Nalgonda, seeing Minister Venkat's style of addressing issues on the spot expressed admiration.

During the visit, Venkat engaged with zero electricity bill consumers, listening to

## Komatireddy launched pulse polio immunisation drive

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has called upon parents to get their children, below five years of age, vaccinated during the pulse polio immunisation programme.

He was inaugurating a programme at the urban primary health centre at Manyam Chelka, near here, on Sunday, by administering pulse polio drops to children.

He appealed to the parents of children to protect the children from polio, which results in deformity, through vaccination.

The District Medical and Health Department undertook the pulse polio immunisation programme to benefit 1,61,925 children, below five years of age. A total of 981 pulse polio immunisation centres were opened and 3,924 health staff was deployed to make the programme a success.

The Minister called for



Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy administering polio drops to a child after launching pulse polio immunisation drive in Nalgonda on Sunday

administering the polio drops to children below 5 years of age in slum areas, rural areas, railway stations and bus stations.

Earlier, Nalgonda Municipal Chairman Burri Srinivas Reddy administered polio drops to children.

District Collector Dasari

Hari Chandana, District Medical and Health Officer Dr Kondal Rao, Deputy DMHO Venugopal Reddy, district immunisation programme Dr Zameer, GGH superintendent Dr Nityananda, MCHPO Dr Arundhati Reddy and others were present.

their experiences in Manyam Chelka, Hyder Khan Guda and Rahmat Nagar. The beneficiaries shared stories of their hardships under the BRS government and expressed joy at the positive impact of Congress initiatives like Grihajyoti, free bus travel and the Rs 500 gas cylinder scheme.

In response, Venkat assured the residents that the Congress government is committed to supporting people from all walks of life. He highlighted the success of the Griha Jyoti scheme, providing zero elec-

tricity bills from March 1, and reaffirmed that all promises to the poor would be fulfilled within 90 days.

He shared upcoming plans, including the construction of Indramma houses for the homeless, new buildings for health centres and the creation of jobs for educated youth. Despite financial challenges, he affirmed the timely payment of salaries to government employees.

Before concluding his visit, he addressed the opposition's scepticism, stating that the

Congress government would rigorously implement the six guarantees promised by Sonamma and projected the Congress's continued leadership for the next 20 years.

He was also honoured on the Arya Samaj premises in Nalgonda on the occasion of the centenary of the establishment of Nalgonda district Arya Samaj. The programme was attended by District Collector Dasari Harichandana, Municipal Chairman Burri Srinivas Reddy and other dignitaries.

## SCCL falls short of coal production target



PNS ■ GODAVARIKHANI

The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) is yet to excavate 8.28 million tons of coal in March to reach the target of 70 million tons for 2023-24.

The coal production fell short of the target due to unforeseen circumstances.

This year, heavy rains affected the coal production and also the elections to choose the SCCL-recognised trade union.

To achieve the target during March the coal workers should produce 3 lakh tons of coal per day. However, the daily production of SCCL from 19 open cast mines and 23 underground mines has been put at 2.5 lakh tons.

In five divisions of the SCCL coal mining areas, the coal production was 100 per cent. They reached the target fixed till February. Officials of these divisions have been making all efforts to reach the target for March too. The Kothagudem, Illendu, Manuguru, Bellampalli and RG-3 divisions of the SCCL have so far reached the target up to February. Four more divisions are required to recover in coal productions so that the SCCL would be able to reach the annual production target.



Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka speaking at a meeting in Madhira on Sunday

## Congress government committed to welfare of people: Bhatti

### The Deputy Chief Minister taunted the BRS leaders for failing to implement elections promises for 10 years, but throwing mud at State government

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Sunday took the BRS leaders to task for accusing the new Congress government of not implementing the six guarantees. He reminded the BRS leaders of their failure to implement the election promises for 10 years.

He was addressing a gathering after laying the foundation stone for development of black top road in Rompimalla village on Sunday. The Deputy Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for development of bitumen road from Rompimalla to Yendapalli at a cost of Rs 2.80 crore. He asserted that foundation stone would be laid for development of Yendapalli industrial estate.

He took pity at the BRS leaders for the comments they made against the Congress regime and said

that the Congress government is committed to the welfare of the people.

Of the six guarantees, the free bus travel for women, doubling the limit of Rajiv Arogyasri, giving LPG cylinder for poor women at Rs 500 each and providing 200 units of free power to households were implemented.

"The Congress Party implements what it promises, he said, adding that it would fill 25,000 jobs within three months. During the past 10 years of the BRS regime, it did not release at least one Group-1 notification.

The TSPSC has been cleansed soon after Congress came to power and it would soon conduct all recruitment tests transparently, he said.

Expert faculty members would offer free coaching to the students from poor families, he said.

The Congress government would give top priority to

education during the current year's budget, he said. Blue print has been prepared for building integrated residential school buildings, he said, observing that the amenities in the existing buildings are not adequate.

The Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes residential schools would be located at one place with a common playgrounds and common laboratories, he said.

They would be developed in such a way to provide world class education to the students.

The policy of the Congress government is to create wealth and share the created wealth to the people, he asserted.

He said that Rs 52 lakh have been sanctioned for development of bitumen road near Jalamudi project and the road development works have been grounded,

# Sitakka distributes zero bills to Gruha Jyoti beneficiaries

PNS ■ ICHODA

Minister for Panchayat Raj Sitakka has said that the State government is committed to implementing the six guarantees promised by it.

She was taking part as the chief guest at the swearing-in ceremony of the market committee at Boath here on Sunday.

Later, she started distribution of zero bills as part of the Gruha Jyoti programme at Ichoda.



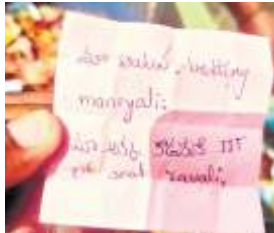
The Congress government has been providing free power up to 200 units to ensure that paying power bills should not

become a burden on the poor. Also, the government gives LPG connection for Rs 500 only to the poor, he added. The government has been providing free travel in the State-owned buses.

The BJP and BRS rule saw price rise, particularly LPG cylinder.

Khanapur MLA VedmaBojju, Boath constituency in-charge A Gajender and others accompanied the minister on her visit.

## Woman seeks Goddess' blessings for nephew's IIT seat



PNS ■ MEDARAM

Devotees submit their wishes to deities in writing and drop them in hundi. It happens during the biennial tribal festival at Medaram.

A devotee dropped a chit in hundi seeking the blessing of forest goddess for securing IIT seat for her nephew.

The counting of offerings to the hundi of the forest deities are being carried out. The counting staff has come across a Re 1 note which is no longer in circulation dropped by someone into the hundi.

It may be recalled that some persons dropped fake Rs 100 note containing Ambedkar's image on it and urged the government to print images of important leaders on the currency notes. Currently, all currency notes carry the image of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi. Lakhs of devotees dropped their offerings into the hundi. "We also came across some persons drop foreign currency notes in it."

## Bandi Sanjay appeals to voters to support BJP

PNS ■ SAIDAPUR

Karimnagar Lok Sabha member and BJP national general secretary Bandi Sanjay kumar on Sunday said that Saidapur mandal is synonymous with the supporters of the lotus flower. The people side with BJP despite presence of Congress and communist party candidates in the fray.

As part of his election campaign in the mandal, he appealed to the people not to vote for the Congress and vote for the BJP which wage many battles on behalf of the people.

"BJP top leaders JP Nadda and PM Modi gave an opportunity to me to contest the elections once again," he said.

PM Modi gave funds to Husnabad constituency and gram panchayats, but KCR plunged Telangana into debts. The BRS regime did not issue at least one ration card during the past 10 years, he said, appealing to the Congress to immediately issue ration cards.

The Congress



promised to implement six guarantees within 100 days, but already 80 days passed since it came to power. There were no signs of implementing the six guarantees, he said.

Modi under Ujjawala scheme gave LPG connections to the poor, he said.

He apprehended that the Congress would play new histrionics citing the code of conduct, which is going to be issued in 10 days, as a hindrance to implementsix guarantees. The Congress would approach the people to vote the party again, unveiling a new drama, he predicted.

### NEWS FROM ANDHRA PRADESH

## POLL CAMPAIGN IN AP

# Oppn on weak wicket

### It's advantage YSRCP as TDP-JSP is riddled with challenges

C PRADEEP KUMAR  
■ VIJAYAWADA

As the general elections in Andhra Pradesh draw closer, opposition parties seem to be struggling to gain momentum in their campaigning efforts. The main opposition parties, Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Jana Sena Party (JSP), are banking on a potential alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for the upcoming 2024 elections.

Sources suggest that the BJP will decide on alliance in Andhra Pradesh by March 5. However, the ground-level presence of TDP and JSP leaders in election campaigning remains scarce. Internal conflicts and factionalism within TDP and JSP further hinder their electoral prospects.

In contrast, the ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) appears to be miles ahead in terms of campaign readiness. YSRCP leaders and coordinators have been actively engaging with constituents in their respective areas daily. Notably, the ruling party has been steadily announcing its list of candidates for both Assembly and Lok Sabha since December 2023, with party members actively gearing up for the elections ever since.

While the TDP-JSP alliance recently unveiled its list of candidates, there



Sources suggest that the BJP will decide on an alliance in Andhra Pradesh by March 5. However, the ground-level presence of TDP and JSP leaders in election campaigning remains scarce. Internal conflicts and factionalism within TDP and JSP further hinder their electoral prospects.

seems to be a lack of visible campaigning by these candidates. Instead, party leaders are preoccupied with addressing grievances among ticket aspirants who were excluded from the initial candidate list. Internal dissent within the alliance ranks has become a significant concern for party leadership.

The recent withdrawal of Saripella Rajesh, a Jana Sena candidate, from the P Gannavaram assembly constituency race due to demands from party supporters highlights the challenges faced by the opposition alliance. Furthermore, the absence of Nara Lokesh, a prominent TDP figure, from

key alliance meetings has sparked speculation and discussion among party members.

In contrast, YSRCP leaders have been actively hitting the campaign trail across the state, with notable figures such as Devineni Avinash, Velampalli Srinivas, and Shaik Asif engaging voters in their respective constituencies in Vijayawada. The party's grassroots outreach efforts, under the guidance of President and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, have been ongoing for the past two years through the Gadapa Gadapa program, ensuring continuous interaction with voters at the doorstep.



## Garg shifted within weeks

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Weeks after Malika Garg (RR: 2015), was transferred and posted as Superintendent of Police Tirupati, the IPS officer was transferred and posted as Superintendent of Police, CID. In a minor reshuffle of IPS officers by the state government, Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy issued transfer orders to four IPS officers through GO RT No 494 on Sunday. (Pradeep)

Krishna Kanth Patel, (RR: 2018), DCP, L&O, Vijayawada is transferred and posted as Superintendent of Police, Tirupathi District. Adhiraj Singh Rana, IPS(RR:2018), Commandant, 5th Battalion, Vizianagaram is transferred and posted as DCP, L&O, Vijayawada. Gowthami Sali, (RR: 2015), Commandant, 16th Bn. APSP, Visakhapatnam is placed in Full Additional Charge of the post of Commandant, 5th Battalion, Vizianagaram, until further orders.

## Purandeswari: BJP final list for all Assembly, LS seats soon

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh State president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Daggubati Purandeswari, has disclosed that the party is gearing up with approximately 2,000 potential candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly Constituency elections. Speaking to reporters, she said that the party's leadership is actively soliciting opinions regarding the potential candidates across all 175 Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha constituencies.

Purandeswari held a press conference at the party's office in Vijayawada on Sunday, where she elaborated on the outcomes of a two-day series of party meetings conducted in the city. During these sessions, BJP president JP Nadda

emphasised the importance of gauging public sentiment, as reflected in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Janmat Lekha', or public opinion.

In preparation for the forthcoming elections, Purandeswari mentioned that discussions have taken place with all 26 district party presidents, gathering opinions from around 50,000 persons. Additionally, party leaders will engage directly with the public to understand their concerns.

After collecting feedback from the people, Purandeswari noted that this information would be relayed to the party leadership. The BJP's Andhra Pradesh unit is committed to aligning its strategies with the directives of the national leadership.

Amidst the considerable interest



Amidst the considerable interest shown by around 2,000 potential candidates for election participation, Purandeswari explained that the party's leadership will conduct a thorough selection process. Ultimately, three to five candidates will be shortlisted for each constituency before the final list is announced following review by the Parliamentary Committee.

shown by around 2,000 potential candidates for election participation, Purandeswari explained that the party's leadership will conduct a thorough selection process. Ultimately, three to five candidates will be shortlisted for each constituency before the final list is announced following review by the Parliamentary Committee.

Regarding candidate selection, Purandeswari said that while a preliminary list has been prepared for all 175 Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha segments, deliberations continue to identify the most suitable candidates for each area. The finalised list will be submitted to the party leadership within two days, after which the party will devise its election strategy based on these decisions.



INDIA CORNER

Parents of missing Navy sailor demand CBI probe

The parents of Indian Navy sailor Sahil Verma, who has been missing for a week, on Sunday demanded a CBI probe into the circumstances leading to his 'mysterious disappearance' at sea from an Indian naval ship while on deployment. Verma, a seaman in the Indian Navy, went missing from a naval ship on February 27 and a massive search operation has been launched to trace him. His father Subash Chander and mother Rama Kumari -- who live in the Ghou Manhasan area of Jammu -- have sought the intervention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah and Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha to ensure the safe return of their missing son. "It is astonishing that a soldier went missing from his naval ship and is not traceable. I have been told that the CCTV cameras installed on the ship did not find anyone falling into the sea. Then where is my son?" Chander told PTI Videos at his residence in the outskirts of the city.



CUET-UG dates likely to be changed depending on LS polls

The schedule for the Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-UG is likely to be changed depending on the Lok Sabha elections schedule, according to UGC Chairman Jagadeesh Kumar. The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Tuesday announced that the exam would be conducted from May 15 to 31 and the results declared on June 30. India is gearing up for general elections to elect its 18th Lok Sabha, the schedule for which is likely to be announced this month. "The dates announced by the NTA are tentative. Once the election dates are announced, the NTA will finalise the CUET-UG dates. The tentative schedule is from May 15," University Grants Commission (UGC) chief Kumar told PTI on Sunday. The application process for CUET-UG began on Tuesday and will conclude on March 26. Introduced in 2022, the CUET-UG provides a single-window opportunity to students seeking admission in any of the central universities or other participating organisations.



Five-tier security in place for PM's TN visit

A five-tier security arrangement has been made for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Chennai on March 4, police said on Sunday. As many as 15,000 police personnel, including officers, have been deployed. The use of drones (unmanned aerial vehicles) has been prohibited during the time of PM's visit, a city police statement said. Intensive checking and surveillance activities are underway in the city. The YMCA Ground at Nandanam, the venue of PM Modi's public meeting, and the airport and its surrounding areas are among the places where vigil has been stepped up. Police have said that there may be traffic congestion in the city and that intermittent restrictions are likely for commercial vehicles from noon to 8 pm on Monday. On Monday by 3.30 pm, the Prime Minister will in Kalpakkam near Chennai and witness the initiation of "core loading".



WTO MINISTERIAL MEETING

India's move to block China-led pact promotes multilateralism

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's move to block a China-led investment facilitation pact in the recently concluded WTO ministerial meeting in Abu Dhabi will help promote multilateral agreements in the 166-member global trade watchdog, according to experts. The ministerial conference (MC), the highest decision-making body of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), concluded late night on March 1. The talks, which were to end on February 29, got extended by almost two days due to a logjam among members on key issues like agri, fisheries subsidies and the e-commerce moratorium. International trade experts stated that India's principled stand in opposing the addition



of the IFDA (Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement) into the WTO is based on its longstanding support for multilateralism. A group of over 120 nations, led by China, tried to push the IFDA to integrate into the WTO as a plurilateral agreement at the 13th MC meet in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

India, South Africa and others opposed it because it was a joint statement initiative and did not have a ministerial mandate. "India, along with other developing countries, was also cautious about the push for a multilateral framework on investment facilitation, arguing that it could impose binding commitments

that limit policy space for development and industrialisation strategies," Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) founder Ajay Srivastava said. Sharing similar views, former head of the Centre for WTO Studies Abhijeet Das said that India's stand would help preserve the WTO as an institution for multilateral agreements, and not plurilateral agreements. In a multilateral pact, all the 166 members have to reach a consensus for that, as it is the basic foundation of the WTO. On the other hand, when a group of nations signs a pact is called a plurilateral agreement. Ashwani Mahajan of the Swadeshi Jagran Manch also said that by blocking the agreement, India has safeguarded sovereignty and global peace.

BJP says it is 'Bomb Bengaluru', not 'Brand Bengaluru'

PNS ■ BENGALURU

The BJP in Karnataka on Sunday slammed the Congress government for turning the city into 'Bomb Bengaluru' instead of 'Brand Bengaluru', drawing condemnation from Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy D K Shivakumar. The saffron party posted a poster on X which read, "They said Brand Bengaluru'. They made it Bomb Bengaluru." BJP state president B Y Vijayendra claimed there was a link between the 'Pakistan Zindabad' slogan shouted inside Vidhana Soudha on February 27 and the blast in Rameshwaram Caf in Bengaluru on March 1, which left 10 people injured. Speaking to reporters, he claimed that he has information that the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) investigation report.

Centre neglecting marginalised sections of society: Rahul



PNS ■ PATNA

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday claimed that the Narendra Modi government at the Centre was neglecting 73 per cent of the country's population, which belongs to marginalised sections of the society. Addressing the 'Jan Vishwas Rally' organised by the RJD here, Gandhi, in an apparent reference to the BJP, alleged that "one party" was trying to create hatred among people but "we are offering 'nafrat ke bazaar mein mohabbat' (love in the market of hatred)". He alleged that injustice is being meted out to farmers, youths and downtrodden in the country. "The Centre is neglecting 73 per cent of the population that

belongs to marginalised sections of the society," Gandhi said. Referring to the Agnipath recruitment scheme, the implementation of which saw protests in Bihar, the Congress leader asserted that the initiative was against the youths of the country. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, speaking on the occasion, claimed that the INDIA bloc will win the maximum number of seats in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. He said that the opposition leaders were not scared of central agencies such as ED, CBI and I-T, which were being "misused against them". "For the prosperity of the country and to protect the Constitution.

MANIPUR VIOLENCE

CBI charge - sheets seven in Bishnupur armoury loot case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has filed a charge sheet against seven accused in connection with the looting of arms and ammunition from the Bishnupur police armoury during the Manipur ethnic violence last year, officials said on Sunday. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is probing cases related to the ethnic clashes in Manipur, recently filed its charge sheet before the court of chief judicial magistrate in Kamrup (Metro) in Assam's Guwahati. The accused named in the charge sheet are Laishram Prem Singh, Khumukcham Dhiren alias Thapkp, Moirangthem Anand Singh,



Athokpam Kajit alias Kishorjit, Loukrakpam Michael Mangangcha alias Michael, Konthoujam Romojit Meitei alias Romojit, and Keisham Johnson alias Johnson. On August 3 last year, a mob looted more than 300 weapons, 19,800 rounds of ammunition

and other accessories from two rooms of the 2nd Indian Reserve Battalion headquarters at Naranseina in Bishnupur. Around 9,000 rounds of bullets of different calibres, an AK series assault rifle, three 'Ghaatak' rifles, 195 self-loading rifles, five MP-5 guns.

Man axes wife, two daughters to death; attempts suicide in Chandrapur

PNS ■ CHANDRAPUR

A 45-year-old man allegedly hacked his wife and two daughters to death with an axe and attempted suicide at his home in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district on Sunday, police said. The incident occurred in a village in Nagbhid tehsil and the bodies of the three women were found by a relative in the early hours of the day, an official said.

The accused, Ambadas Talmale, allegedly attacked his daughters Pranali (19) and Tejaswini (20) with an axe and proceeded to kill his wife Alka (40) after a quarrel over the family's finances, superintendent of police Mummaka Sudarshan said. Talmale also allegedly attempted to kill himself but was caught by the police, he said. The accused has been taken into custody and further probe is underway, the official said.



Modi govt's ruthless approach towards drugs yielding results

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Modi government's ruthless approach towards narco-trade has borne effective results which saw drastic rise in the number of arrests and seizures, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday. Writing on X, he also said a drugs-free Bharat is the greatest gift to the future generations. Shah said an invincible anti-narcotics apparatus has been built nationwide through coordination, cooperation and collaboration among governments and agencies under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The strategy has resulted in an increased number of drug seizures and cases registered," he wrote with the hashtag #DrugsFreeBharat. The home minister said the Modi government's ruthless approach towards narco-trade has borne effective results.

Delhi HC to hear wrestlers' plea against WFI elections today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court will on Monday hear a petition by wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik and her husband Satyawart Kadian seeking to set aside and declare as illegal the elections held by the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI). The petition by the wrestlers, who were at the forefront of last year's protest at Jantar Mantar here demanding the arrest of former WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh for the alleged sexual harassment of seven women grapplers, is listed for hearing before Justice Sachin Datta. The plea contended that the WFI elections, held on December 21, were in blatant violation of Sports Code and sought a direction to the federation to "cease and desist" from undertaking any activity pertaining to the sport of wrestling. "The present Writ Petition is being filed by the Petitioners inter alia assailing, challenging, and seeking directions against the illegal action of the suspended Wrestling Federation of India conducting selection trials for the Senior Asian Wrestling Championships 2024 and Asian Olympic Games Qualifier Wrestling Tournament notified through its circular Dt. 26.02.2024 against the directives of the Ad-Hoc Committee for Wrestling Federation of India," the petition said. "At Shambhu and Khanauri, the agitation will continue like before and will be further intensified. Our agitation will continue till the demands are met," he added.



Researchers develop marine robot for surveillance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Researchers at the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) Mandi and Palakkad have developed a marine robot that can cater to real-time problems and reduce maintenance cost and death risk for underwater operation scenarios. The research which was partially funded by the Naval Research Board (NRB) of Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has been published in two journals-- Journal of Intelligent and Robotic Systems, and Ocean Engineering. The state-of-the-art robot has been developed for meticulous underwater monitoring and inspections, promising heightened efficiency, minimised risks, and potential cost



savings, the researchers said. The Earth's surface is covered approximately 71 per cent by water, with the oceans holding about 96.5 per cent of all the Earth's water, where only a tiny percentage of the ocean floor and the submerged ecosystem is known to man. "As understood from history, the ocean interior has been

mainly observed using instruments lowered from research ships," Jagadeesh Kadiyam, Assistant Professor, Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics at IIT Mandi told. Kadiyam, a co-author of the study, said typical ship cruises lasted a month or two, therefore making the detailed monitoring of oceans limited.

"It is often said that ocean variables do not wait for the ship to come for measurements," he pointed out. "This problem of under-sampling and the relatively high cost of these observation platforms demands technologies that could provide longer observation times at a lower cost through spatial and temporal density," Kadiyam said. "Similarly, infrastructure safety is a global concern with ageing dams and increased environmental stresses necessitating more advanced inspection methods. Traditional inspection approaches often involve human divers, which can be risky, time-consuming and expensive," he said. "Integrating marine robots into dam inspection procedures offers a safer, cost-effective,

and technologically advanced solution," he added. Kadiyam explained that the recent open-water reservoir field trials signifies a considerable advancement in the maturity of underwater vehicle technology. "Our research focuses on the prototype development and performance investigations of an underwater vehicle for intervention and inspection applications. A novel framework has been designed and implemented to cater to the various missions in the oceans and inland waters," he said. Several simulations and experimental outcomes have proven the system's capabilities in the presence of external disturbances such as water currents and varying payloads, the professor said.

Agnipath scheme has 'compromised' national security 'Severely disrupted' armed forces' recruitment: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday attacked the Centre over the Agnipath scheme, alleging that it has "compromised" national security and "severely disrupted" the armed forces' recruitment processes in India. The Congress' attack came after party leader Rahul Gandhi had an interaction with ex-servicemen, potential Agniveer recruits and the youth whose regular recruitment into the armed forces has been disrupted by the introduction of Agnipath during the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Madhya Pradesh. Congress general secretary



in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh in a post on X said that Gandhi had a 40-minute interaction with the three communities on the morning of the 50th day of the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra.

"The Agnipath scheme has compromised national security and severely disrupted the armed forces' recruitment processes in India," he alleged. Ramesh claimed the ex-servicemen have noted.







FIRST COLUMN

THE MENACE OF A TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT

We must resist the allure of toxicity, lest we become complicit in its propagation



SAKSHI SETHI

The success of any organisation rests on how well and healthy its work environment is. The workplace is a very sensitive place, be it in schools, colleges or business organizations. The employees and workers need to be motivated by their principals and bosses to do their work properly else they get demoralised. However, when a toxic work environment engulfs an organisation, it can have disastrous consequences for both the employees and the organisation at large. A recent study found that around 40 per cent of people in the US have left jobs due to an overly stressed work environment. Workplace violence has existed throughout history. The toxic behaviours have been allowed to fester unchecked. A few influential individuals within the organisation engage in bullying, manipulation, and favouritism, which permeate throughout the company's structure. At the same time, their behaviours create an environment that builds walls and crushes creativity and loyalty. Toxicity in the workplace is a pervasive and serious issue that affects employees at all levels of an organization. At the same time, it is also a combination of dysfunctional behaviours among leaders that causes them to conduct unhealthy organisational practices. Organisational toxicity is driven by disempowering practices, individuals with a mentality of personal entitlement and resistance to change. It is an insidious problem that can be difficult to recognise, yet its effects on the mental and physical well-being of employees can be devastating. When the work environment is toxic, it trickles down. There is no denying the fact that toxic leadership leads to a toxic environment. One of the reasons for toxicity in the work environment is a lack of true diversity and inclusion followed by a lack of effective communication.



Nowadays, new executives have adopted a top-down approach, leaving little room for the honest exchange of ideas and feedback. This has resulted in unheard voices of the employees, leading to a growing sense of alienation and frustration amongst the workforce. Even the teachers and educators in schools and colleges are also the victims of the same. Employees have started to experience emotional responses that include anger, irritability, cynicism, distress, psychological strain, job insecurity, fear and shame. In other words, an atmosphere of behaviour that is more crippling for employees than all other work-related stress put together is created. The toxic work environment encourages a cutthroat competition, where colleagues undermine and sabotage each other, instead of valuing the teamwork. Also, being overworked and overburdened can lead to severe burnout and even cause resentment. Organisations and other workplaces should allow room for creativity for more than meeting a lettered standard. By fostering open communication, promoting empathy and encouraging a supportive culture, organisations can build an environment where employees can thrive thereby leading to increased productivity, creativity, and overall success. Simultaneously, if teachers cannot be diverse—using their individuality, uniqueness and creativity—to diversify the lessons organically, then the entire concept of differentiation is missed. Teachers become teachers because they are creative people who have a desire to share their knowledge with others. Remember, a toxic work environment will tarnish the organisation's reputation. Negative employee experiences spread through word-of-mouth and social media, discouraging potential candidates from joining the organization. It's the individual's peace and sanity that is worth more than dealing with organisations that don't value them enough to stop the bad behaviour. One needs to protect their mental health at work at all costs. Various factors are responsible for brewing a toxic culture, the results of which are catastrophic and can sink the organisation into an abyss of failure.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

# The inspiring saga of the Goat Bank

Despite its significant contribution to the economy, the goat sector largely operates in the informal market, underscoring the need for greater recognition



PARAG ACHARYA

In a remarkable feat of rural innovation, Kalahandi couple Jayanti Mahapatra and Biren Sahu have earned praise from Prime Minister Narendra Modi for their groundbreaking agri-tech startup located in the remote Salebhata village. Their unique Goat Bank, recognised in 'Mann Ki Baat,' breaks traditional banking norms, empowering local farmers and uplifting the community's socio-economic status through innovative rural solutions. Goats often referred to as the "ATM" or "poor man's cow," play a pivotal role in India's livelihoods and nutritional security. Their popularity stems from factors such as low capital investment, adaptability, early maturity, prolific breeding, superior chevon quality, and steady returns. Amid changing agro-climatic conditions, goats emerge as the 'Future Animal' for national prosperity. Goat meat commands a premium in the market and goat milk offers therapeutic benefits. Despite constituting 27.80 per cent of the total livestock and contributing significantly to the national economy with annual revenue of Rs 38,590 crores, the goat sector often operates in the informal and untaxed market. The goat, however, deserves serious attention and investment. Contributing 3% of milk, 13.8% of goat meat, and 0.18 million tonnes of skin in India, goats have immense economic potential. As goat farmers strive for financial inclusion, recognising and investing in the goat sector can lead to substantial economic upliftment, making it imperative for the goat to take centre stage in national agricultural and economic planning. Traditionally, successful livestock development strategies have heavily relied on providing credit to empower underprivileged individuals to acquire or replenish their livestock. This not only marks the initial foray into livestock ownership but also serves as a pivotal step towards breaking free from the shackles of poverty, paving the way for a more secure and prosperous life. In the evolution of livestock development strategies, the traditional reliance on credit to empower underprivileged individuals has given rise to an innovative approach embodied by the Goat Bank. Welcome to the innovative realm of the Goat Bank, where farming dreams come alive with a unique twist. Instead of conventional cash, the bank offers aspiring farmers a lifeline in the form of a pregnant female goat. It's not a giveaway; a deal is struck. Deserving farmers receive guidance on scientific goat rearing, along with support for vaccinations, deworming, ear tagging, and premium concentrate feed during pregnancy. In return, farmers commit to caring for the goats and returning six to eight kids to the Goat Bank. The math magic unfolds as goats, with a 7 to 8-month kidding interval, yield two or three kids in each kidding cycle. Over two years, farmers find themselves with an impressive twelve to fourteen kids from just two does. Beyond personal gain, these farmers extend the goat family, nurturing them and, when the time is right, selling them for a lucrative profit. This cycle of goat generosity creates a symbiotic relationship, with benefits flowing from the Goat Bank to the farmers and ultimately reaching the market. It's a win-win scenario, shaping



GOATS, OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE 'ATM' OR 'POOR MAN'S COW,' PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN INDIA'S LIVELIHOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SECURITY

a pathway for sustainable farming practices and economic prosperity. In Maharashtra's Akola district, Naresh Deshmukh's visionary Goat Bank, launched in July 2018, redefines empowerment. Aspiring farmers pay a nominal Rs 1,200 registration fee, entering into a loan agreement to return four lambs within 40 months. This innovative scheme fosters accountability, propelling a sustainable growth cycle. Women participating in goat rearing anticipate significant profits, enabling investments in land, education, and celebrating life's milestones. In Salebhata village, Kalahandi district of Odisha, the Goat Bank, spearheaded by Jayanti Mahapatra and Biren Sahu, offers needy farmers two adult female goats, hailing from the resilient breeds of native Kalahandi or Black Bengal. During two years, the goats exhibit their prolific nature, birthing impressive 9-10 kids. The bank retains six of these newborns, channelling the rest back to the same families dedicated to goat farming. This sustainable cycle has now woven a network connecting 1,000 farmers across 50 villages. In the undulating agro-climatic expanse of western Odisha, encompassing Kalahandi and Nuapada districts, the author's research illuminates a striking reality: 95% of goats thrive as indigenous, hardy, uniquely adapted to endure temperatures soaring up to 48°C. These robust creatures are meticulously managed in modest hold-

ings under semi-extensive systems, relying solely on roadside grass and tree leaves as their primary sustenance, achieving impressive average adult body weights of 35 kg for males and 30 kg for females. The elegance of this agricultural practice lies in its simplicity, relying on family labour and minimal investment, mainly directed towards veterinary care. Farmers, with negligible expenditure, witness substantial profits. The sale of castrated males after four years commands prices between Rs. 25,000 to 30,000, while females are priced slightly lower. During the Chatar Parab festival (a local festival), prices experience a commendable surge, contributing to an annual income of approximately Rs. 100,000 from goat sales. Through extensive interviews, the author uncovers a burgeoning interest among landless farmers to engage in goat rearing, signalling a desire for expansion. However, these aspiring farmers articulate a need for essential elements like proper housing, quality feed, and a superior breeding buck to unleash the full growth potential of their goat herds. While existing state government schemes provide very good assistance to many goat farmers in this zone, the author still posits that pioneering initiatives like a goat bank have the potential to include more landless, downtrodden farmers in the journey. Such innovative concepts could substantially contribute to the financial stability and prosperity of a broader section of farmers, offer-

ing a promising avenue for uplifting native goats and enhancing the overall well-being of the farming community in the area. The success stories from Salebhata village in Kalahandi and Sangavi Mohadi village in Maharashtra illustrate how the Goat Bank is not merely an institution but a catalyst for positive change. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi rightfully recognises the transformative power of such initiatives, it becomes evident that the goat, often overlooked, deserves centre stage as a species worthy of serious investment. The Goat Bank model showcases a sustainable cycle of growth, from the bank to the farmers and eventually to the market, fostering economic upliftment and financial inclusion. The Goat Bank revolution is not just about goats; it's about changing lives, revitalising rural economies, and creating a blueprint for similar innovations across the country. As more farmers join such schemes and receive the support they need, the potential for further improvement of goat farming practices in native tracts becomes promising. The winds of change are indeed blowing, and the resonant call for serious attention and investment in the goat sector is no longer a distant bleat but a reality that holds the promise of a brighter and more prosperous future for rural India. (The writer is a scientist at Odisha University of Agriculture & Technology, Bhawanipatna; views are personal)

# Creating awareness about menstrual rights among men

Menstrual rights encompass not only access to hygiene products but also the eradication of discriminatory practices surrounding this natural biological phenomenon

Menstruation, a natural facet of human existence, has often been cloaked in stigma and silence. As we delve into the stories from Leh, it is crucial to understand the broader context of menstrual rights and the significance of these conversations. Menstrual rights include access to menstrual hygiene products, comprehensive education about menstruation, and the elimination of discriminatory practices associated with this natural biological process. The lack of awareness has fueled a culture of shame and secrecy. In Leh, the conversation around menstruation has undergone a transformative journey. Traditionally, whispers among friends were the primary source of information



QAMARUN NISSA

for young girls, making it a taboo subject. However, today, strides have been made, enabling open discussions, particularly between mothers and daughters. In Leh, the celebration of Menstrual Hygiene Day on May 28th, 2023, is a significant event. The event, exclusively held at a government girl's higher secondary school, reflects a pivotal shift. Surprisingly, on this day, not a

single male presence is noted; only the cameraperson was a man. Why do we think that including men in this conversation isn't important? In Leh, most of the shopkeepers give pads wrapped in newspapers. Wrapping a pad in the newspaper is not a solution; rather, it perpetuates improper handling of menstrual products. There is a need for a more respectful and informed approach to changing societal norms and practices surrounding menstruation. Mutup Dolma, a 17-year-old from Hanu village, which is approximately 200 kilometres from Leh, shares her story about periods. In her hometown, it's not easy to talk openly about menstruation. People feel uncomfortable saying words like 'periods' in public,

and asking for pads from male shopkeepers is a challenge. When Mutup moved to Leh for school, things changed. In Leh, she could buy pads without feeling awkward because people didn't know her. But in her hometown, cultural norms made talking about periods difficult. Mutup thinks it is very important to have an open conversation. "I got scared when I got my first period," recalled Mutup. It was hard for her to understand what was happening until she talked to her mom. She mentioned, "When sometimes my mom isn't home, it is very difficult to ask for money from my father for menstrual products." Moving to Leh for education made it easier for her to buy menstrual products, but she realised the gap in aware-

ness between urban and rural areas. Hailing from Ibex Colony in Leh, Tsewang Namgyal, a 17-year-old boy, noticed something strange in his science class. Whenever their teacher explained the menstrual cycle, his friends would laugh. When he tried to tell them it was a biological process and shouldn't be mocked, they made fun of him. This laughter affected the girls in their class, making them feel embarrassed. Going back to his village, Tsewang observed that his cousins were hesitant to discuss menstruation due to a lack of awareness. Jigmet Skit, a 19-year-old resident of Skara, Leh, shares her perspective on menstruation. Despite being part of many menstrual awareness programmes in school,

she expresses discomfort due to the segregation of boys from these discussions. Jigmet believes that schools should create an open environment like home, fostering learning and awareness rather than perpetuating secrecy. According to Jigmet, the awkwardness in society stems from the practice of hiding menstruation, especially in schools. She emphasises that women should openly share information to eliminate discomfort and encourage discussions about menstrual health. In her experience, when she gets her period, she is not able to go out for 3 days because of the pain, and it becomes difficult when they ask why she is not able to go out; it becomes difficult to answer her friends and even her father due to a

lack of understanding. Jigmet hopes that breaking the silence and providing equal awareness will end the societal awkwardness around menstruation. This, she believes, will enable girls to share their problems openly and make it easier for everyone to endure. Abdul Wahid, age 21, a resident of Shenam Leh, reflects on his school days when he and his friends lacked awareness about menstruation. He recalls an incident where they would check girls' bags and laugh at the sight of pads. However, upon moving to Delhi for studies, he noticed a stark difference in people's openness about menstruation. Now, during his visits to Leh, Abdul actively helps his cousin's sister to buy pads, a task he once refused to do dur-

ing his school days. He emphasises the importance of open conversations about menstruation, highlighting that knowledge about periods enables individuals to assist someone in need during menstruation. Stories from Mutup, Tsewang, Jigmet, and Abdul show the changes and challenges in understanding menstruation. Leh is making progress by celebrating Menstrual Hygiene Day and encouraging discussions. Despite this, there's still a need for better education about periods. Changing cultural norms and ensuring menstrual rights are essential for a society free from shame and secrecy. (The writer is the winner of Sanjoy Ghose Media awards 2024; views are personal. Charkha Features)



MONEY MATTERS

## Bharat Textile Expo to be an annual affair

The mega textile exhibition -- Bharat Tex 2024 -- will now be held every year in the country as the first event which concluded last week witnessed participation of over 3,500 exhibitors and 3,000 buyers from 111 countries, AEPC said on Sunday. The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) said that as many as 63 agreements were announced during the expo with international institutions focusing on collaborations in research, innovation, entrepreneurship, new product development, skilling and sustainability. "The Bharat Tex expo will be an annual affair," AEPC Chairman Sudhir Sekhri said in a statement. He said the industry is working on sustainable production practices as it would help enhance the competitiveness of the sector in the international market. He added that the mantra given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to boost textiles exports through 5F - Farm to Fiber, Fiber to Factory, Factory to Fashion, Fashion to Foreign -- will energise the textiles export sector.



## Rooftop solar installations rise 6.25% to 1.7 GW

Rooftop solar capacity addition saw a 6.25 per cent growth to 1.7 gigawatt in 2023, supported by various factors like reduced installation cost, according to Mercom Capital. The rooftop capacity addition was at 1.6 gigawatt (GW) in 2022, the US-based research firm said in its latest report. In October-December 2023, 406 megawatts (MW) of rooftop solar was added, down 15.9 per cent from 483 MW in the last quarter of 2022, the 'Mercom India Rooftop Solar Market Report' said. Cumulative rooftop solar installations reached 10.5 GW at the end of December 2023. Residential installations were the primary driver of capacity additions in 2023. However, growth was marginal as many commercial and industrial (C&I) consumers waited for module prices to stabilise to lower their capital investments. The residential segment accounted for over half of the capacity additions in 2023, followed by C&I segments.



## Tata group will remain committed to integrity

Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran on Sunday said the conglomerate would continue to uphold the legacy of its founder Jamsetji Tata, and remain committed to the principles of integrity, innovation and social responsibility. Chandrasekaran was addressing a gathering at the Postal Park in Bistupur in Jharkhand's Jamshepur after paying homage to Jamsetji Tata on his 185th birth anniversary. He was accompanied by Tata Steel CEO and MD TV Narendran. "Our founder, Jamsetji Tata, envisioned a future where industry would be a force for positive change, and it is with great pride that we continue to uphold his legacy. In this occasion, we reaffirm our commitment to the principles of integrity, innovation, and social responsibility that have guided us since our inception," Chandrasekaran said. "We will continue to work together with the community to build a brighter, more prosperous future for Jamshepur and its residents," he added.



# India to be on high-stake global stage of chip makers in 5 years

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India will, in next five years, join the high-stake global stage of semiconductor manufacturing as it combines unparalleled design capabilities with US\$ 10 billion of incentives to draw manufacturers to set up new fabs and units that will cut dominance of Taiwan, South Korea and China, said IT and Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

In an interview, he said India's well-crafted policies are tempting manufacturers to set up new fabs (semiconductor fabrication plants) and pouring investment in related sectors.

Semiconductors are an essential component of electronic devices, and are used in automobiles to computers, mobile phones and even washing machines.

India already has factories of best known automobile companies -- from Renault-Nissan to Hyundai, computer makers such as Dell, Apple suppliers and electronic makers like Samsung which produce TVs,



"People who were earlier thinking when should we go to India or should we go to India...now they are asking how soon do we go to India...that is the change which is happening. This means, practically every big player would now like to reconsider their investment plans and come to India."

washing machines and fridges, among others.

Now, India is eyeing to step up the manufacturing value chain with a high-stake semiconductor manufacturing. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's Rs 76,000 crore of incentives have got four players including Micron and Tatas.

Vaishnaw said the country already has roughly one-third of global design talent.

His government is leveraging this and India's geopolitical clout to become an indispensable partner for tech ambitions of the US, which like other west-

ern economies, is looking to decouple their supply chains from China.

Beijing's draconian lockdowns had disrupted global chip supply and sent companies and governments on a hunt for alternative sources of production.

India is offering itself as a democratic and trusted alternative tech hub to China.

"People who were earlier thinking when should we go to India or should we go to India...now they are asking how soon do we go to India...that is the change which is happening. This means, practically every big player would now like to recon-

sider their investment plans and come to India," he said.

Asked about the timelines when India would aim to be a formidable player rivalling known semiconductor destinations, the minister said "in the coming 5 years, definitely".

Last week, the Cabinet approved proposals to set up three semiconductor plants, including a mega fab by Tata Group, at a cumulative investment of Rs 1.26 lakh crore, as India moved to position itself as an international powerhouse in chip manufacturing.

"...it is very important for any developing country, an economy of our size, to have a semiconductor supply chain within the country. We have very strong design capabilities, as a corollary of design capabilities we must have the manufacturing capability also because that is where value gets added further," Vaishnaw explained.

The semiconductor plans will make India self-reliant, trigger a multiplier effect on economy and various industries, create job and spur livelihoods, according to the minister.

## LIC Housing Finance to raise funds via green bonds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

LIC Housing Finance, the mortgage arm of insurance behemoth LIC, plans to mobilise funds through green bonds in the coming financial year with an aim to finance environmentally-sustainable housing projects.

"Green financing is something that we will look at the next year and we would deploy the fund for financing green housing projects," LIC Housing Finance MD and CEO Tribhuvan Adhikari told PTI in an interaction. LIC Housing Finance will have its board meeting on March 7 to consider and approve the borrowing plan for 2024-2025 through loans or issue of redeemable non-convertible debentures, zero coupon bonds, subordinate debt, Tier II bonds or any other means approved by the regulator.

Adhikari said the company hopes to hit the net profit of Rs 5,000 crore-milestone by the end of current financial year on the back of robust loan demand and expansion in non-core business.

## Rising interest rates drawing more people to term deposits

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rising interest rates seem to be driving more people to go in for term savings plans as the share of such instruments in total bank deposits increased to 60.3 per cent in December 2023 from 57.2 per cent in March 2023, according to the Reserve Bank data.

On an incremental basis, term deposits accounted for nearly 97.6 per cent of the total deposits during April-December 2023 and the shares of current account and savings account (CASA) deposits went down, said RBI's Quarterly BSR-2: Deposits with Scheduled Commercial Banks - December 2023.

"Rising return on term deposits has been driving the compositional shift in bank deposits: the share of term deposits in total deposits increased to 60.3 per cent in December 2023 from 57.2 per cent in March 2023," it



said.

RBI further said that deposits moved to higher interest rate buckets as the share of term deposits bearing over 7 per cent interest rate rose to 61.4 per cent of the total term deposits in December 2023 from 54.7 per cent a quarter ago and 33.7 per cent in March 2023.

It is almost a year that the Reserve Bank has kept the short-term lending rate or repo rate at 6.5 per cent. The benchmark interest rate was last raised in February 2023 to 6.5 per cent from 6.25 per cent due to inflation driven mainly by global developments.

## IFFCO moves NCLT against Triumph Offshore, Swan Energy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IFFCO has moved the NCLT against Swan Energy Ltd (SEL) and their joint venture Triumph Offshore to restrain their JV firm from passing any resolution without its approval and issuing any share/security to the lenders against loans.

Seeking an injunction against any such proposal, IFFCO, in its petition filed before the Ahmedabad bench of the NCLT, alleged that 'Triumph Offshore is pre-paying the debt, which may result in dilution of its shareholding in the joint venture firm and is detrimental to its interest.

IFFCO has moved the NCLT under sections 241 and 242 of the Companies Act 2013, alleging oppression and mismanagement. It has prayed to restrain Swan Energy and Triumph Offshore "from passing any board resolution without the prior written approval of petitioner (IFFCO), with reference to the substitution of the bank term loan with promoters loan or from issuing any shares/security or from issuing any instrument convertible into equity in favour of R2 (SEL) or any third party."

### FPIS REVERSE TREND

## Infuse Rs 1,500 cr into Indian equities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors made a significant turnaround and injected over Rs 1,500 crore into Indian equities in February, reversing the massive outflows seen in the preceding month, primarily due to robust corporate earnings and positive economic growth.

Additionally, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) continued to be bullish on the debt markets as they put in over Rs 22,419 crore during the month under review, data with the depositories showed.

Looking ahead to March, the outlook for FPI flow appears promising, provided the current economic trajectory and corporate performance sustain their positive momentum, potentially continuing to attract foreign investment into Indian equities, Mayank Mehra, small-case manager and principal partner at Craving Alpha, said.

According to the data, FPIs invested a net sum of Rs 1,539 crore in the Indian equities in February. This



came following a net withdrawal of Rs 25,743 crore in January.

The latest influx can be attributed to robust corporate earnings and positive economic growth trends observed during the December quarter.

Despite perceived stretched valuations in the previous month, the compelling performance of companies justified their value, enticing FPIs to re-enter the market, Mehra said.

Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said that improvement in the global economic environment would have prompted FPIs to invest in high growth-oriented markets like India.

## India-UAE non-oil trade target achievable: CII president

PNS ■ ABU DHABI

The target of USD 100 billion non-oil trade between India and the UAE by 2030 is ambitious but achievable as huge business opportunities are there in both the nations for sectors such as textiles, jewellery and pharma, CII President R Dinesh said on Sunday.

He said that the free trade agreement between India and the UAE, which was implemented in May 2022, has resulted in a surge in bilateral trade and investments.

Dinesh was here to participate in global investors' event 'Investopia' and various bilateral meetings, including with many participants at the WTO (World Trade Organisation) Ministerial Conference.

"The target to achieve USD 100 billion in non-oil trade between India and UAE is ambitious but I do believe that it is achievable and recent developments are encouraging in this regard," the CII president said here.

# Markets to focus on global trends, investors' trading

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Trends in the global markets, trading activity of foreign investors and announcement of domestic macroeconomic data are the major factors that would drive investors' sentiment in a holiday-shortened week ahead, analysts said.

Benchmark indices had a record-breaking rally in the past week driven by impressive GDP data.

Equity markets would remain closed on Friday for Mahashivratri.

"Key upcoming events, such as the release of the US services PMI on March 5, 2024, testimony by the US Fed Chair Powell, along with the US unemployment rate on March 8 will be



closely watched for their potential impact on market sentiment. "Crude oil is also inching

higher, and any negative surprise from there can disturb the mood of the market. However, the market is ignoring any bad news and continuing its bullish momentum," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd.

From the domestic macroeconomic front, PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index) data for the services sector is scheduled to be announced on Tuesday.

"This week market will react to the global and domestic economic data, FII/DII investment pattern, crude oil inventories, movement of the rupee against the dollar and trends in global stock markets," Arvind Singh

## PM MITRA parks to help attract large investments, FDI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Expedient implementation of the ambitious scheme to develop seven PM Mega Integrated Textile Regions and Apparel (PM MITRA) parks will help in attracting large investments, including FDI, in the sector besides generating huge employment, said industry experts.

After inaugurating 'Bharat Tex 2024', one of the largest-ever global textile events to be organised in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi threw light on the government's expansion



plans to create seven PM MITRA parks in various states and underlined the emphasis on the creation of opportunities for the entire textile sector.

The parks are coming up in Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Gujarat,

Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. Nearly Rs 70,000 crore investment and 20 lakh employment generation is envisaged through these parks.

The valuation of the Indian textiles market is estimated at Rs 12 lakh crore.

The Union Ministry of Textiles is overseeing the execution of these projects. A special purpose vehicle (SPV) owned by the Centre and state governments is being set up for each park, which will oversee the implementation of the project.



# 'Used car market size to touch US\$ 100-bn mark'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian used car market is expected to touch the US\$ 100 billion-mark in the next ten years on the back of rising disposable incomes and a growing middle class, according to CAR24 Co-Founder and CEO Vikram Chopra.

As per the findings of the Gurugram-based online used car marketplace, there are changes in market dynamics with customers opting for frequent upgrades when it comes to cars.

"According to our internal study, the anticipated growth of the Indian used car market is set to occur at a 15 per cent CAGR, increasing from

US\$ 25 billion in 2023 to US\$ 100 billion by 2034," Chopra said in an interaction.

The growth trajectory is propelled by various factors unique to the Indian market, including urbanisation and a growing middle class, which is changing consumer preferences and boosting the demand for affordable mobility solutions, he added.

Chopra noted that when CAR24 began its journey eight years ago, the used car market size stood at around USD 10-15 billion.

"I think, in the last 3-4 years, with different kinds of cars coming up, the market has truly accelerated," he stated.

# Three firms to raise Rs 1,325 crore next week

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The primary market will see a flurry of activity in March, with at least three companies including Gopal Snacks will float their initial public offerings (IPOs) in the upcoming week to raise Rs 1,325 crore collectively.

The other two companies which are set to launch their maiden public issues are -- RK Swamy and JG Chemicals.

Additionally, Bengaluru-based luxury furniture brand Stanley Lifestyles and Krystal Integrated Services are expected to float their initial share-sales later this month, according to merchant bankers.

Market experts attributed

the bustling IPO activity to various factors, including impressive post-listing returns from recent public offerings and the robust macroeconomic conditions.

So far this year, 16 companies launched their IPOs to mobilise Rs 13,000 crore, while Rs 224-crore initial share-sale of Mukka Proteins is slated to conclude on March 4.

This came after 58 maiden public issues initiated in 2023 to garner Rs 52,637 crore. This included the Rs 3,200-crore IPO of Nexus Select Trust REIT.

Market experts said that March is anticipated to usher in a wave of IPOs, offering a plethora of opportunities for exploration and investment.



Rajkot-based Gopal Snacks' Rs 650-crore public issue is entirely an offer for sale (OFS). The issue, with a price band of Rs 381 to Rs 401 per share, will open for subscription during March 6-11.

The OFS comprises the sale of shares by Bipinbhai Vithalbhai Hadvani, Gopal Agriproducts Private Ltd and Harsh Sureshkumar Shah.

Founded in 1999, Gopal Snacks is a fast-moving consumer goods company, offer-

ing namkeen, western snacks, and other products across India and internationally. As of September 2023, the namkeen makers' products were sold in 10 states and two Union Territories and has a network of 3 depots and 617 distributors.

The Rs 423.56-crore IPO of integrated marketing services firm RK Swamy will be open for public subscription during March 4-6. Shares will be available for bidding in the price range of Rs 270-288 apiece.

The company's IPO comprises a fresh issue of shares aggregating up to Rs 173 crore and an OFS of up to 87 lakh equity shares by selling shareholders worth Rs 250.56 crore at the upper end of the

price band.

Those offering shares in the OFS are Srinivasan K Swamy, Narasimhan Krishnaswamy, Evanston Pioneer Fund L.P. and Prem Marketing Ventures LLP.

Funds raised through the fresh issue would be used for setting up a digital video content production studio, establishing new customer experience centres and computer-aided telephonic interview centres as well as for general corporate purposes.

Also, funds would be utilised for investment in the IT infrastructure development of RK Swamy Ltd and its subsidiaries Hansa Research and Hansa Customer Equity.





## MASTERING MULTIDISCIPLINARY CREATIVITY THROUGH HIS ‘DOODLES’

Santanu Hazarika, a luminary in the contemporary Indian art scene, gets candid with *The Pioneer* discussing his formative days, his arts, and more.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Santanu Hazarika gave up his engineering job, but found solace in drawing and illustration. His partnerships with Harper's and well-known hip-hop artists like Raftaar and Divine witness to his rising reputation in the arts! Notably, he won the 2014 Red Bull Doodle Art Competition, solidifying his standing as a prominent figure in the field and making him even more well-known.

Therefore, in an exclusive interview with us, the guy recalls, "I come from a very small city of Guwahati, where there was hardly any idea about art and design earlier." He is a real example of the boundless prospects that come with pursuing one's artistic love. "Naturally, things have altered as of late! For the most part of my life, I was therefore led to believe that art is merely a passion and cannot be pursued professionally. I was shocked! That's how, just like every other Indian family, I was raised to think that the only paths to success were engineering and medicine. However, I never stopped scribbling and drawing. My love for it developed from imitating comic book drawings to having the urge to draw my own sketches on the walls of my dormitory. My fellow roommates' gratitude real-

ly helped to keep me going. And it wasn't until I left Guwahati that I realised this was a professional path that existed."

He says, "There was a lot of unrest going on in my town when I was growing up," in the same breath. "The atmosphere was not favourable, and it caused us to feel a certain amount of angst and fury. That's how the majority of us in our generation naturally became drawn to the punk and heavy metal genres. I thus joined the underground movement as a whole. These were the formative years that shaped my interest in art. Simply put, it was a counterculture!" Yes, it was amazing to learn a little bit about his background. "When I actually won the Red Bull Doodle Art competition in 2014, that was a moment of 'in your face,'" he continued. "I can be a creative trailblazer! I spun around and declared, 'See, I am a world champion, and art brought me this recognition! I genuinely stopped studying engineering at that point.'"

"Right now, I am working on a project with Red Bull in Hyderabad," he continued. "I therefore never seem to 'pick' the projects. Rather, I would like everything to be a reflection of my artwork! I haven't declined any projects up until now because I want to maintain my artistic integrity. Anywhere in the world that you encounter my artwork, you will be able to recognise my distinct style right away."

Going further with the interview with Santanu on the Google Meet platform, he said, "I can't think of anything else apart from art in my life now." During our talk, there was an obvious passion and a strong emotion for the love of art. "I guess my real calling is art! I don't think about myself as an artist; it's just what I do for a living. It surprises me occasionally, and other times it makes me nervous. I have a hard time explaining why I create art (he chuckled)."

With the same fervor, he went on to discuss other parts of it, saying, "There are incredibly amazing artists in Guwahati who are aching for a national platform. Ask me about it! Not even close can I compare to them. And what distinguishes them from everyone else in the nation is



the humility they possess. As a native, I can see that there is going to be a big upheaval; therefore, I am delighted they are showing off their potential now. In an effort to close the gap amongst visual artists, I have also launched the Guwahati Art Project. With the assistance of the Ministry of Culture, I am curating shows for them. The focus is entirely on modern artists! Also, the internet has been quite helpful in publicizing them. I notice a shift. This endeavour ended up being a mentor for them because we never had any instruction on it while we were growing up."

Finally, he said, "Yes, sometimes it's a healing process for me. Not every time! For instance, I still struggle with depression, which I was diagnosed with in my early college years. Thus, using art as a coping mechanism for depression is crucial. Even if it didn't make my depression go away, it did help me manage it."

## Vijay Maurya is 'living his dream' life with his 'earning while learning' principle

TEJAL SINHA

Be it as an actor, a screenwriter, or a director, Vijay Maurya has sure and shot been that talent that will never fail to impress you. Well, basically, his journey started as an actor in theater, and luckily, people started appreciating his work during his theater days. And then he started writing for television and films. Then that wasn't it, as he tried his hands at copywriting as well, and then directing!

From starting his career in theater by enrolling in a workshop under Satyadev Dubey for acting, to playing an integral part of Prithvi Theatre from 1993 to 2008, to acting in critically acclaimed films, the Satya actor recalls, "It's a journey—and it's a learning journey. My principle—now I can say that—is earning while learning. You work, and you enjoy what you do. But when you work and people enjoy what you do, I think that's what truly makes what you're doing count. From my theater days to writing to directing, I'm living my dream. Touchwood."

He gleefully switches between his acting, writing, and direction. "I recently submitted a film to a big OTT platform, and then I kept my director's hat aside for a bit. After that, I wrote something, and I'd been trying to pitch that to production houses and studios. But then Dibakar Banerjee approached me to act in this film for Royal Stag Barrel Select Large Short Films, so I put that on sleep mode and switched to my actor mode! I try not to mix things while on someone else's set. Dibakar asked me to act, so I didn't approach this project from any other angle. If someone asks me about something in particular, then I'll talk about it, but other than that, I focus on purely being an actor in that moment because I love acting!"

Gelling with any director, he says, is very important, as is choosing who you work with. "The dialogue is a part of the screenplay that's in the director's mind, so it's important that the writer of dialogue understands the director's vision and where they fit into it. What voice does the character have, what lingo is to be used—only the director can tell you this. So I follow my director's instinct, and if they're unsure, then I make my suggestions like, 'What if we do it like this?'. It's a collaborative job, and I totally surrender to my director whenever I write dialogues," he shares, adding, "Rather than a challenge, I think it's the process of understanding the nuances in the director's vision and then reflecting that through the writing."

Recently, at the Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival, he enthused, "I love the short film format because you get to meet, greet, and work with both aspiring and inspiring directors—first-timers or seasoned individuals. The thing with short films is that sometimes when we get ideas, they end up remaining just ideas, or at times people use those ideas as a scene or a subplot. So when you look at our film *Badminton*, for example, it's been able to become a whole film in itself because of the importance that it has received from the platform. And this is a great thing because, being a

writer, actor, and director myself, I also get a lot of ideas that I think I will add to a film at some point, but now I can make that idea into a short film instead." And you know what? It was not one but two of the Royal Stag Barrel Select Large Short Films, *Badminton* and *Next, Please*, that he was cast in, that were being premiered at the festival. Isn't that something to be proud of?

"It's a great feeling that a film that I'm in is a part of MAMI. Dibakar approached me and said there's a film and there's this character, and when I read the script, I was like, This is madness, this is great! Knowing and following Dibakar's work and then reading the script, I felt this was going into some quirky zone, and that was exciting to me. On the set as well, I used to observe him at work; he's such a fantastic and fine director. He showed that confidence in the actor, and just gave an open platform for us to work, so it was very easy and there was no nervousness while working."

Not only does his character in *badminton*, but also Jim's and Sayan's characters—they all portray something. "We put on a mask in society. My interpretation is that we are all made of ceramic, and on the

inside, we are all bare. So on the day that ceramic shatters, your inner self is put on display. All three of our characters are dealing with their personal things, and towards the end, when these characters all shatter, their inner selves come out. I loved the approach of that particular script," he highlights, adding, "It's very important to be making this sort of cinema and storytelling. It's not a plot-heavy film; it's about the characters. It's about mindset, satire, and society. I think it's important to show something like this in the present day and age."

Basically, as an artist as a whole, "it depends on what I'm approached for. If I've been approached for an acting project, but if I feel like I can contribute something on the writing front as well, then I go ahead and share my thoughts. It also depends on the director; since we share a rapport already, they ask me what I feel about the script, so I share my suggestions then. Similarly, if they approach me for a writing project, I might share my thoughts regarding directing as well. Then they offer me the role, and then I accept—it's a very interdependent sort of thing. It depends on what I'm doing. People give it a lot of names—guest appearance, extended cameo. Being a writer and director, I understand what is being offered to me. So I decide whether to accept the project based on that gut feeling. But I couldn't reject *Badminton* because it is part of the plot and it's a fantastic character that he gave me. Thank you, Dibakar!"

ACTOR-DIRECTOR-SCRIPTWRITER VIJAY MAURYA, WHO HAS OFTEN RECEIVED ACCOLADES FOR HIS PROJECTS, GETS CANDID WITH THE PIONEER OVER AN EXCLUSIVE CHATTER-CHATTER SHARING INTERESTING DEETS ABOUT HIS ART.



## Decoding the low carbohydrate diet

You may have heard about the low carbohydrate diet and would be wondering what all the fuss is about? Is it really all that it is made out to be?

Now, here is the long answer. There are several advantages of a low carbohydrate diet. While the one most commonly publicised is weight loss, there are other benefits also. It is important to remember that each person will have a unique response to such a diet. Let us examine the advantages of a low carbohydrate diet.

**Weight Loss:** People usually adopt a low-carb diet for weight management. The low carbohydrate intake (as the name suggests) compels the body to burn stored fat for energy which leads to weight loss.

**Improved blood sugar control:** Individuals with insulin resistance, prediabetes, or type 2 diabetes can benefit from such a diet as it helps regulate blood sugar levels. Indian meals predominantly comprise of grains like rice and wheat. When we eliminate or reduce these elements in the diet, it can help to control the blood sugar levels.

**Increased satiety:** Individuals turn to higher proteins and healthy fats intake in a low carb diet. These options tend to be more filling and can help control cravings which in turn prevent us from over eating and then gaining weight – the vicious cycle.

**Higher energy levels:** Individuals may have better mental clarity and sustained energy on low carb diet. It

is seen that the body becomes more efficient at using fats for fuel.

**Improved Triglyceride Levels:** Low-carb diets have been associated with the reduction in triglyceride levels, which is beneficial for heart health.

**Reduced Inflammation:** Some low-carb diets emphasise whole, unprocessed foods. These diets may contribute to reduced inflammation in the body.

**Better Blood Pressure:** Some studies suggest that low-carb diets may lead to improvements in blood pressure, which is a key factor in cardiovascular health.

**Improved HDL Cholesterol:** While the impact can vary, some individuals experience an increase in high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, often referred to as 'good' cholesterol.

While the benefits of a low carb diet are many, it is always advisable to approach any new diet with caution. Individual needs, goals and dispositions should be considered before embarking on a dietary journey. The feasibility of cooking low-carb meals (for working professionals, those living with family who have other preferences etc.) should also be considered. The services of a professional dietician is also indispensable when crafting a new meal plan with specific requirements.

It is important not to be swayed by second hand information even if you consider the sources authentic. Do get the opinion of a professional before taking the plunge.





● Anchal Bansal



● Bhavya Gavara Reddy, Padmaja and Ajmera Pooja Pawar



● Guinar Virk



● Sheena Kaur



● Harika



● Shivani



● Vyshnavi



● Baikitha Francis

Reserve presented Edition 1, a unique pop-up exhibition curated by the dynamic trio of Bhavya Gavara Reddy, Padmaja Gavara, and Ajmera Pooja Pawar. The event took place at the chic Naomi Cafe in Banjara Hills, Hyderabad, where Reserve aimed to offer a delightful day-long shopping experience featuring an impressive array of top-notch labels both within and outside the city. Reserve's Edition 1 was meticulously crafted to provide a haven for fashion enthusiasts, with a diverse selection ranging from clothing and accessories to home decor and artwork.

Photos by- SV Chary



● Harish ,Pooja ,Shreya and Sowmith



● Harsha Reddy



● AnTeRa Courtyard



● Sowmith Reddy



● Pooja Reddy




● Shreya Reddy



● Harish Reddy

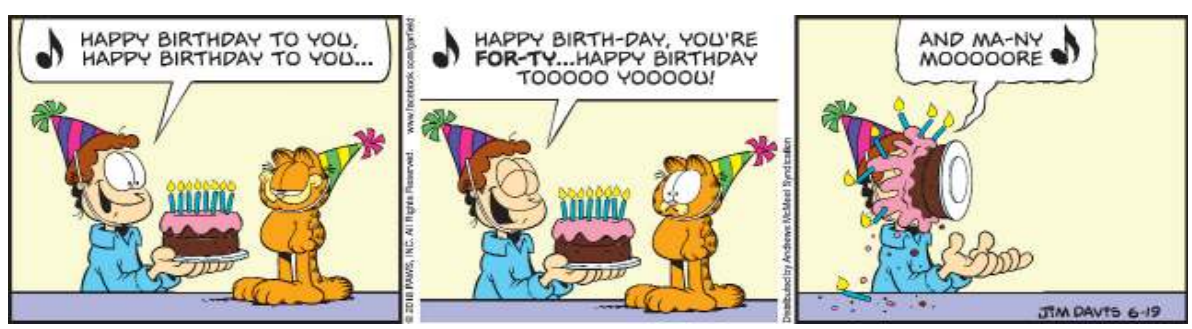
Harish Reddy, Sowmith Reddy, and Harsha Reddy launched their new restaurant, AnTeRa Courtyard. Following the success of their previous venture, AnTeRa (Andra Telangana Rayalasema), the trio has embarked on a culinary journey to showcase the rich and diverse flavors of Telugu cuisine. Located at Vattinagulapally, Beside Pradhan Conventions, Financial District, Hyderabad, AnTeRa Courtyard invites food enthusiasts to immerse themselves in a culinary oasis that exudes passion and dedication.

ARCHIE




Archie comic strip featuring Archie, Jughead, and the gang. Archie is talking to Jughead about a messy bedroom. Jughead is talking to Archie about a spotless mom. Archie is talking to Jughead about a free spot anywhere. Jughead is talking to Archie about a messy bedroom.

GARFIELD



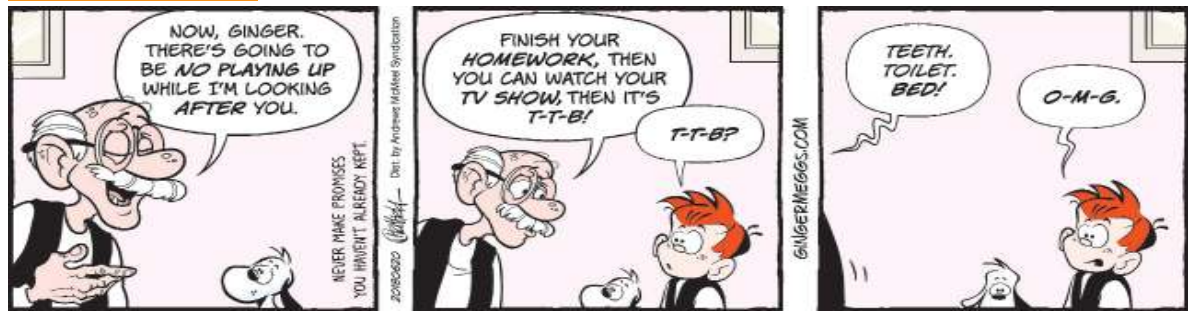
Garfield comic strip featuring Garfield and Odie. Garfield is talking to Odie about a birthday. Odie is talking to Garfield about a birthday. Garfield is talking to Odie about a birthday. Odie is talking to Garfield about a birthday.

NANCY




Nancy comic strip featuring Nancy and her friends. Nancy is talking to her friends about a window. Her friends are talking to Nancy about a window. Nancy is talking to her friends about a window. Her friends are talking to Nancy about a window.

GINGER MEGGS




Ginger Meggs comic strip featuring Ginger Meggs and his friends. Ginger Meggs is talking to his friends about a homework. His friends are talking to Ginger Meggs about a homework. Ginger Meggs is talking to his friends about a homework. His friends are talking to Ginger Meggs about a homework.

CALVIN AND HOBBS




Calvin and Hobbes comic strip featuring Calvin and Hobbes. Calvin is talking to Hobbes about a streetlights. Hobbes is talking to Calvin about a streetlights. Calvin is talking to Hobbes about a streetlights. Hobbes is talking to Calvin about a streetlights.

REALITY CHECK



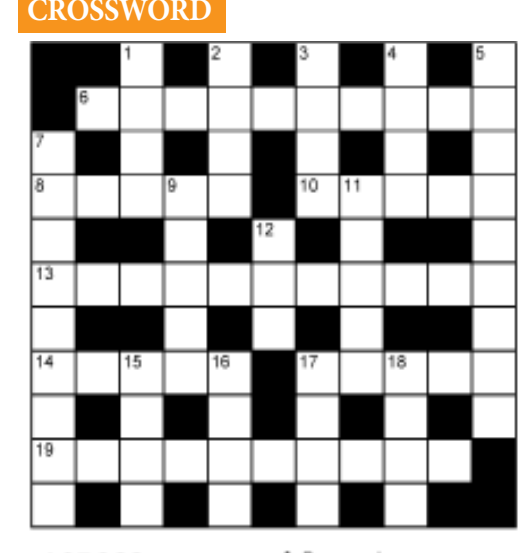
Reality Check comic strip featuring a man and a woman. The man is talking to the woman about a wall. The woman is talking to the man about a wall. The man is talking to the woman about a wall. The woman is talking to the man about a wall.

SPEED BUMP



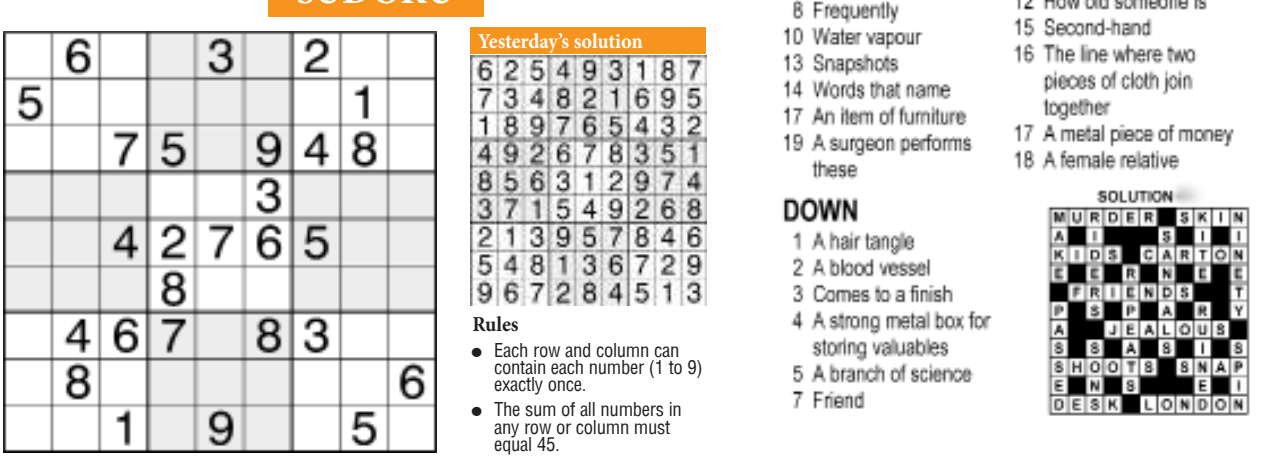
Speed Bump comic strip featuring a man and a woman. The man is talking to the woman about a gutter cleaning service. The woman is talking to the man about a gutter cleaning service. The man is talking to the woman about a gutter cleaning service. The woman is talking to the man about a gutter cleaning service.

CROSSWORD



Crossword puzzle grid with clues. Across: 6 Below, 8 Frequently, 10 Water vapour, 13 Snapshots, 14 Words that name, 17 An item of furniture, 19 A surgeon performs these. Down: 9 Devoured, 11 Give a lesson, 12 How old someone is, 15 Second-hand, 16 The line where two pieces of cloth join together, 17 A metal piece of money, 18 A female relative.

SUDOKU



Sudoku puzzle grid with clues. Yesterday's solution: 6 2 5 4 9 3 1 8 7, 7 3 4 8 2 1 6 9 5, 1 8 9 7 6 5 4 3 2, 4 9 2 6 7 8 3 5 1, 8 5 6 3 1 2 9 7 4, 3 7 1 5 4 9 2 6 8, 2 1 3 9 5 7 8 4 6, 5 4 8 1 3 6 7 2 9, 9 6 7 2 8 4 5 1 3. 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.



## Meet the man behind *HanuMan's* ethereal visuals

D. Sivendra, the man behind some of the visually appealing films, gets candid with *The Pioneer*, about winning accolades with the recent hit *Hanuman*, challenges, and much more.

All your projects have been way different from each other. Be it *Hanuman*, *30 Rojullo Preminchadam Ela*, or *Managalavaaram*, for instance. What are the challenges you generally face in bringing the visuals to life in the most realistic way possible?

Challenges always exist. No matter what kind of project it is, the visuals are mostly affected by light, equipment, weather, and most of the natural challenges, which are on-ground challenges. Otherwise, budget issues and other technical issues are rare. The technicalities for visuals are planned ahead of schedule, and nothing goes for a toss when planned well.

**Can you share what was the most difficult shot for you while shooting for *HanuMan*?**

For *HanuMan*, there has not been much of an issue at all, as everything was planned ahead. I and Prashanth Varma sat together and worked on the visual part. For instance, the *Hanuman* statue is something we discussed much before. We know how long it has to be, and accordingly, the remainder was planned. Accordingly, the camera is placed and set.

**Can you take me through your journey briefly? When and how did it start, and when was the moment you realised you wanted to be a cinematographer?**

I started my career almost 15 years ago. I started my career with *Mantra*, starring Charmme Kaur. Later, I worked for films like *Solo*, *Jayeebhava*, *Pilla Nuvvu Leni Jeevitham*, *Siddu from Srikakulam*, *Kalki*, and many more. I have been part of some good and content-driven films, which got me to work with some talented directors in the industry. It has been a good journey, and there is a long way to go.

**Can you take me through your upcoming projects?**

I am currently doing a film for Ganga Entertainments. Ashwin, who played the lead in *Raju Gari Gadhi*, is playing the lead role in the film. I have known Maheshwara Reddy for a long time now, and he is trying to give his best to produce another hit in the industry. He even brought Arbaaz Khan back to Telugu cinema.

**Lastly, if you were starting over, what would you do differently?**

I would make sure that Telugu cinema gets the best and top-notch visuals and technicalities through the camera.

## Sharathulu Varthisthai trailer: Relatable and realistic

It is known that actor Chaitanya Rao, known to do relatable films only, is coming up with another satirical family drama, *Sharathulu Varthisthai*, helmed by director Kumaraswamy. Also starring Bhoomi Shetty as the female lead, the movie is all set for a grand theatrical release on March 15, 2024.

The trailer for the film, produced under the Star Light Studios banner, was released on Sunday. The film's trailer suggests that the tale is based on actual occurrences.

Coming to the trailer, this film is the story of a man named Chiranjeevi (played by Chaitanya Rao), a middle-class man from Karimnagar, struggling to fulfill all his responsibilities. He struggles with a lower salary and more expenses. As the makers promoted it, the trailer proved that the film is the story of every common man. After he marries his sweetheart, one of their closest friends betrays them. Problems always enter their carefree lifestyles. How Chiranjeevi, a middle-class man, fought his difficulties seems to form the remaining story. Overall, the trailer was interesting and relatable.



## Panna Royal: *Inti No. 13* is a unique film; we'll increase theaters soon

*Inti No. 13*, which is a new type of suspense and horror film, has been released recently and is running successfully. Panna Royal directed the movie, which Haysan Pasha produced under the Regal Film Productions banner.

Since the film is running successfully in more than 72 theaters, the director, speaking to us, expressed, "I have directed two films before. Both are horror movies, and just like this one, even they were termed 'different'."

He added, "As it is a horror movie, the audience likes to watch second shows. So we are increasing theaters in both states. Looking at the response coming now, it is clear that there is no stopping the movie."

There are many twists in this movie, which, according to the director, thrills the audience. "The background score provided by Vinod's management is also one of the reasons why the movie got so much craze. Manikarn's photography is also a plus for the movie. Technically, the film is getting a good name," shared Panna.

Despite average collections on the first day, collections picked up on the second day, with people talking good about the film. — KRS

## IT'S THE EVENING FOR FAMILY STAR TEASER

We have recently reported that Vijay Deverakonda and Mrunal Thakur's *Family Star*'s shooting has moved to Chennai, wrapping up the whole shoot. This film is one of the eagerly-awaited movies of Vijay Deverakonda, as he tied up with his *Geetha Govindam* director Parasuram Petla, who gave the actor one of the biggest hits of his career.

The latest announcement by the film's makers has set all VD fans rolling. The producers of Dil Raju and Shirish's *Family Star* revealed on Sunday that the film's teaser will debut this evening, March 4, at 6.30 p.m.

The film, all set for a grand theatrical release on April 5, has already received a good response for its song *Nandanandanaa*.



## Suraj Venjaramoodu is onboard for *Chiyaan 62*

Actor Vikram's next, tentatively titled *Chiyaan 62*, is the hot topic in south India, as the movie has some of the finest technicians come on board.

Helmed by critically acclaimed director SU Arun Kumar, the movie, produced under the banner HR Pictures, has GV Ravi Kumar render tunes for Vikram for the fourth time.

The announcement video itself gave chills to Vikram fans when the actor appeared as a mysterious man, whom no one knows.

On Sunday, the makers of the film announced a new addition to the team.

They made it official that national and Kerala award-winning actor Suraj Venjaramoodu, known for his films like *Driving Licence*, and *Android Kunjappan*, to name a few, is now onboard for this much-anticipated film.

Further details will be revealed soon.



## Indraja dons a fierce look in *Razakar*

*Razakar*, starring Bobby Simha and Vedika in key roles, is billed as a unique film that is set to unfold a significant chapter in history: the silent genocide of Hyderabad. The film is directed by Yata Satyanarayana and produced by Guduru Narayana Reddy under Samarveer Creations. It also stars Anushya Tripathi, Prema, Indraja, and Makarand Desh Pandey. The songs and the trailer for the film are already receiving a good response from the audience.

On Sunday, the makers of the film released the first-look poster of veteran actress Indraja from the film. Describing her character, the makers wrote: "She's fierce. She's an inspiration."

Indraja is said to play Chakali Iamma in the film. She was rightly described as fierce, as in the poster we can spot Indraja in an intense look holding two sickles, one in each hand.

Her look promises the film is going to be really intense.

The film, which has terrific music by Bheems Ceciroleo, is all set for a grand theatrical release on March 15.



K. RAMYA SREE

Cinematography plays a crucial role in executing any film, and directors are supremely careful when it comes to choosing their DoPs, as they are responsible for setting the movie's tone and meaning. In fact, a good cinematographer is one who knows how to create an environment that works with the director's vision for a film.

D. Sivendra is one such cinematographer in the Tollywood film industry who has to his credit some of the visually appealing films like *Mantra*, *Bluff Master*, *Pilla Nuvvu Leni Jeevitham*, *Kalki*, and now the very latest and sensational *HanuMan* and *Mangalavaaram*, both that visually sound.

After the release of *HanuMan*, this DoP has received praise from all corners for his visual wonder and also for exploring the potential of every location they shot.

He has been in the industry for over 15 years now, and his work, despite being way different from each other, has always been atmospheric, artistic, and expressive.

*The Pioneer* rang the DoP, who is riding high on the success of *HanuMan*, *Mangalavaaram*, and *Naa Saami Ranga*, all three back-to-back hits, and here is all he had to share with us.

EXCERPTS FROM THE INTERVIEW:

*Solo* and *Bluff Master* have been some of the biggest hits in your career. And now, with *HanuMan* and *Mangalavaaram* to your credit, how has your career graph changed?

I have been in the industry for more than 15 years now and have worked on many films. A few films did not work in between, and that is why there is a gap in between. Coming to the current scenario, *Mangalavaaram* and *HanuMan* have changed my career's graph. I worked for *Naa Saami Ranga* as well, and that too was released during Sankranti only. I can definitely call these films milestones. I have been getting many offers after these films did well at the box office. The feeling is good, and I am glad I am busy.





# India climb to top spot in WTC standings

**PTI ■ DUBAI**

Two-time finalists India jumped to the top of the World Test Championship standings, replacing New Zealand in the latest rankings issued on Sunday.

India, who defeated England by five wickets in the fourth Test in Ranchi to take an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series, replaced the Kiwis with a stronger points percentage of 64.58.

With five wins, two losses and one draw, India have 62 points



in 8 matches, while the Black Caps have 36 from five matches (three wins, two losses) and have a point-percentage of 60.00.

Before the start of the Wellington Test, New Zealand were sitting at the top of the table with 36 points in four games and a points percentage of 75.

But following their massive 172-run defeat, the 2021 WTC champions lost the top spot, slipping to the No 2 position with a points percentage of 60.

Third-placed Australia have closed on the gap after the

Wellington Test, gaining 12 crucial points as they now have 78 points from 11 matches (seven wins, three losses and one draw).

Their points percentage has also increased from 55 to 59.09.

The 2023 champions have the opportunity to surpass New Zealand and move up to the second spot if they win the second and final Test at Christchurch from March 8.

India, meanwhile, take on England in the final match of the five-Test series in Dharamsala from March 7.



## Himanshu hundred gives MP edge over Vidarbha

**PTI ■ NAGPUR**

Himanshu Mantri showed patience and technical aptitude while constructing a fine hundred to guide Madhya Pradesh to 252 in their first innings against Vidarbha on the second day of their Ranji Trophy semifinal here on Sunday.

Mantri's 126 off 265 balls (13x4, 1x6) helped Madhya Pradesh to gain a small yet significant 82-run lead after beginning the day at 47 for one.

In their second innings, Vidarbha reached 13 for the loss of Atharva Taide at stumps, trailing by 69 runs.

The importance of Mantri's knock, his third hundred of the season, can be gauged from the fact that the next highest score in MP innings was a 30 by Saransh Jain.

But in the morning session, Madhya Pradesh made a steady start through Mantri and Harsh Gawli as the second wicket pair stretched their alliance to 61 as Vidarbha reached 81 for one.

But pacer Yash Thakur (3/51) trapped Gawli (25, 77b) in front of the wicket to snap the stand and Vidarbha lost two more wickets while adding another 12 runs.

Veteran speedster Umesh Yadav (3/40) yorked hosts skipper Shubham Sharma (1) and Thakur won an appeal for leg-before against shuffling Venkatesh Iyer (0).

Vidarbha slipped to an uncomfortable 93 for four but Sagar Solanki (25) gave Mantri solid support as the fifth wicket duo milked 42 runs to steady the ship.

A mix-up with Mantri saw Solanki getting out but a

more solid period followed.

Mantri found another willing partner in Jain as the duo added 73 runs for the sixth wicket, taking MP past Vidarbha's first innings total of 170.

The pitch was eased out a bit as compared to Day 1 but there was enough carry and bounce on the track to keep the bowlers interested.

As the day progressed, spinners too received a bit of turn as left-arm spinner Aditya Sarwate and off-spinner Akshay Wakhare posed some questions.

But Mantri had enough skill sets with him to negate those threats - playing the spinners with the turn or standing just outside the crease against the pacers to smother the swing.

Soon, Mantri reached his century with a quick single off Wakhare, and celebrated the moment with a roar.

But just as they were going strong, Jain's hard-handed prod off Wakhare ended with Aman Mokhade at cover.

Mantri, who received a reprieve on 115, too did not last long as his attempt to sweep Wakhare fetched fatal results.

The ball ballooned off a top-edge and stumper Akshay Wadkar showed fine anticipation to complete the catch diving towards his right.

The Vidarbha innings also folded soon as the last three wickets fell for 21 runs.

Brief Scores:

Vidarbha: 170 and 13/1

Madhya Pradesh 1st innings: 252 all out in 94.3 overs (Himanshu Mantri 126, Saransh Jain 30; Umesh Yadav 3/40, Yash Thakur 3/51, Akshay Wakhare 2/68).

## Pucovski suffers concussion after taking blow on head



**PTI ■ HOBART**

Australian batter Will Pucovski suffered a nasty blow on his head and had to be substituted while playing for Victoria in a Sheffield Shield match against Tasmania here on Sunday.

The No. 3 batter retired hurt for 0 after being hit on his helmet from a Riley Meredith bouncer. It was just the second delivery he faced in Victoria's chase of 442 in the second innings.

The 26-year-old, who has experienced several blows to the head with the most recent being in a second XI match in January, was struck on the left side of his helmet after he turned his head to a rising delivery from Meredith.

The blow left him visibly disturbed as he kneeled on the pitch. The medical staff rushed to the centre. He eventually got up and slowly walked off the field, rubbing his eyes.

"Will is currently in the hands of our medical professionals," a Cricket Victoria spokesperson said. "We'll look to provide an update in due course."

Reserve batter Campbell Kellaway came in as a concussion substitute.

Pucovski had returned after the blow in January to score 131 in their Shield match against New South Wales at the SCG last month.

He has also battled "mental health" issues in the past.

"The mental health has been a much bigger issue for me than even the concussions," he told the Vic State Cricket podcast. "I don't fear for my long-term health, it's more the mental health side that's been the tougher part."

The righthander has played one Test against India in January 2021.

## Will New Zealand recall retired Neil for Christchurch Test?

**PTI ■ WELLINGTON**

New Zealand might be tempted to recall retired pacer Neil Wagner to the side for the second and final Test against Australia following an injury to fast bowler Will O'Rourke.

The hosts suffered a crushing 172-run defeat in the opening Test here on Sunday and skipper Tim Southee said the door was not shut on Wagner, who had bid a tearful adieu to international cricket last week after taking 260 wickets in 64 Test matches.

The South Africa-born pacer had announced the decision to retire days before the Test series against Australia after learning that he won't feature in the opening game and will be released from the squad for the second Test in Christchurch, starting March 8.

"We haven't had a lot of discussions as yet. We'll see how Will scrubs up. The physio hasn't sort of put a time-frame on it or how bad it is. We'll just wait and see how Will goes over the next couple of days. I'm sure there'll be an update in the next 24 hours," said Southee.

"We obviously have to go on and make a decision on who comes in



and what role we sort of see that playing out in Christchurch.

"(Wagner's) had a great reception here over the last week where he got a couple of moments on the field and obviously he's been a fan favourite for a long time," said the home skipper.

Southee though was sure that pacer Trent Boult, who last played in a Test in June 2022, won't play the second game.

"I don't think his loading is up to it on the back of T20," Southee said.

Southee had requested to be left out of New Zealand's central contract list in August, 2022.

**World's shortest retirement**

Meanwhile, Australian skipper Pat Cummins backed Wagner to come out of retirement.

"World's shortest retirement. I mean, why not? If he's your next best bowler that you think is going to perform, then go for it. I've faced him before. It'd be good to see. He's high energy. It's been good fun chatting to him each morning out here, so see how he goes," said Cummins.

Australia have retained the Trans-Tasman Trophy for the 12th successive time after ensuring that they won't lose the series with their victory in the series-opener.

## Vaughan wants England cricket team to adopt Man City manager approach

**PTI ■ LONDON**

For Michael Vaughan, Pep Guardiola is the best sporting leader in the last 15 years and the former England skipper won't mind if Ben Stokes employs Manchester City manager's approach of never allowing players to take their places for granted.

Vaughan made the statement on the back of England's aggressive "Bazball" strategy under coach Brendon McCullum and Stokes which backfired in the ongoing India tour.

England have already lost the five-match series 3-1 after winning the first Test in Hyderabad.

Vaughan questioned the

approach of England batters and demanded greater accountability from them.

"I often mention Pep Guardiola's approach. In my eyes he's the best sporting leader of this generation, say the last 15 years. He never allows his players to get comfortable. He always keeps them guessing, and they all know they are guaranteed nothing," he wrote in a column for Daily Telegraph.

"If a great sporting leader like Pep has everyone on their toes like that, is it right that an England cricket team that is decent but struggling to crack the next level should be as comfortable as it seems?"

"The whole batting lineup has known week in, week out on this

tour that it will be playing the next game. That is about to change, because after this tour Harry Brook will be back. He has to bat at No 5, because he should be the bedrock of their batting with Joe Root. Does that mean England's statement moment is coming?," he questioned.

Vaughan questioned England's selection policy and said despite losing the series the visitors have a lot at stake to play for in the final Test in Dharamsala beginning March 7.

"Consistency of selection is such a fine balance in team sports. Making people comfortable is right, and England have generally batted well over the last two years.

"There comes a point, though, where when it's your batting that is costing you the biggest series you can't keep sending the same guys out there every week," he wrote.

"The series may have been lost already with a game to spare but a big week looms for England in Dharamsala. There is a massive difference between losing the series 3-2 and 4-1. You have lost either way but 3-2 would show England were right in this series for much of it, and two wins in India is an achievement."

Vaughan said a loss in Dharamsala would be a demoralising result for England.

He once again criticised England's batters approach.

"India haven't lost two matches

in a series at home since 2012, on their run of 17 series wins in a row. 4-1 would be a very disappointing end to a disappointing winter, with the World Cup debate, both white-ball series lost in the Caribbean and even a poor World Cup for the Under 19s," he wrote.

"It's a huge week for a number of England's batsmen. When we think of this England team, we think of their wonderfully dynamic batting. But when you look at why they haven't won any of their last three series, it's down to the batting."

"There never seems to be much scrutiny or noise around England's batsmen. Even last week I chuckled. They lost in Ranchi in large part because

they didn't bat well enough, but there was lots of finger pointing at Ollie Robinson, a bowler who scored an important half-century!"

"He looked well short of a gallop with the ball and dropped a catch but I thought it was ironic that he became a scapegoat. It's classic 'batsmen vs bowlers stuff.' Vaughan feels when it comes to team selection there should be consistency in the batting order."

"Compacency can be damaging. As a management team, how you approach selection of batsmen and bowlers is obviously different. Fast bowlers, especially, sit out games and are rightly rotated to preserve their bodies," he wrote.

## Shardul led Mumbai rearguard puts Tamil Nadu on mat

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

Shardul Thakur's sizzling 109 and Tanush Kotian's unbeaten 74 offset R Sai Kishore's six-wicket haul, putting Mumbai in command by powering to a 207-run first-innings lead over Tamil Nadu on the second day of the Ranji Trophy semifinal here on Sunday.

Thakur's sensational counterattacking hundred, featuring 13 fours and four sixes from a mere 104 balls, pulled Mumbai out of doldrums after they were reduced to 106 for seven at one stage.

At stumps, Mumbai were 353 for 9 at stumps against TN's first innings' 146, with Sai Kishore causing the maximum damage.

Sai Kishore (6/97) ran through a chunk of Mumbai's batting line-up, while Shreyas Iyer (3) fell to pacer Sandeep Warrier as Tamil Nadu levelled up with the hosts for the first time in the game.

But Thakur launched a stunning onslaught, putting each of Tamil Nadu bowlers under severe pressure while forging vital partnerships along the way to take Mumbai far ahead in the game.

Thakur teamed up with Hardik Tamore (35) for a crucial 105-run stand for the eighth wicket and took Mumbai further ahead in the company of Kotian, adding another 79 runs for the ninth wicket.

Using his blade to perfection, Thakur was adroit with his hands to pierce gaps at will and did not miss out clearing the field with disdain four times for maximums - one of which also brought up his maiden century across formats.

Thakur, who also struggled with an ankle-related issue along the way, finally fell to Kuldeep Sen (2/65) in the third session, which brought the pair of Kotian and Tushar Deshpande together again after their heroics in the last match.



Coming off a 232-run stand for the 10th wicket in the previous match, Kotian and Deshpande picked from

where they left off to put on another 63-run unbeaten stand for the 10th wicket.

With Deshpande (17 not out)

joining him much later in his innings, Kotian excelled in this innings like a specialist batter, cracking 10 fours from

109 balls to get to 74 not out.

If it were not for yet another rearguard from their tailenders, who shone in the

quarterfinal as well, Mumbai would not have ended the day's play with a massive lead, for most of their key batters cut a sorry figure.

On a cloudy morning with breeze sweeping across the field here at the BKC Ground, Sai Kishore's decision to open the bowling in conditions conducive to seamers raised a few eyebrows.

But the Tamil Nadu skipper and leading wicket-taker this Ranji Trophy only validated his move with relentless pressure on the Mumbai batters, delivering a superb 17-6-28-4 in the first session, and took a break only after sending down 22 overs at a stretch.

After nightwatchman Mohit Avasthi (2) was stumped, Sai Kishore ended his counterpart Ajinkya Rahane's 67-ball vigil for a mere 19 (2x4s) by getting him caught at the first slip.

Rahane strode out confidently to defend on the front foot but only to have the

ball kissing the outside edge and being collected by Baba Indrajith at the first slip.

Mumbai's woes compounded when Iyer, pounded by lack of runs and loss of central contract, was cleaned by Tamil Nadu pacer Warrier for a mere three.

But Musheer (55 off 131 balls, 6x4s) continued to take giant strides, shouldering the responsibility of getting runs for his side from the other end. The 18-year-old also made no retorts when Tamil Nadu fielders, both in front and behind him, tried to unsettle him.

However, a lapse in concentration saw Musheer's innings ending prematurely when his backfoot was caught 'on line' at the crease with N Jagadeesan quick in taking off the balls.

Brief scores: Tamil Nadu 146 trail Mumbai 353/9 in 100 overs (Musheer Khan 55, Shardul Thakur 109, Tanush Kotian 74; R Sai Kishore 6/97) by 207 runs.