

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer
 We bore all insults mentally all these days and now they are killing us by attacking physically. Why should we bear all these things? I will serve the people by setting up a voluntary organization. Tell me, why I should continue in the party. The Congress party gave a good gift for striving for four decades. Murder took place due to the Congress party's encouragement of defections
- Jeevan Reddy, MLC

Trying to restore trust, reassure each other
 5

MINISTER PURI HOPES GLOBAL OIL PRICES WILL COOL DOWN
 8

Shraddha Kapoor to add glamour to Pushpa 2 with special SONG
 PTI

DON'T MISS...
People cry out for crop loan waiver
 People alleged that crop loan waiver was not sanctioned, with bank accounts on hold and no data found on website. In all, 518 people have submitted their grievances at the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Praja Bhavan during Prajavani programmed on Tuesday. When asked, Sambasiva Rao from Kurmalguda village said he has been coming to Prajavani since last month after submitting his ...
 -PAGE: 3

'Ready to provide all possible cooperation'

PM Modi holds talks with Russian Prez Putin
 PNS ■ KAZAN
 The Russia-Ukraine conflict should be resolved in a peaceful manner and India is ready to provide all possible cooperation towards it, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday during his talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Modi held bilateral talks with Putin hours after arriving in this central Russian city to attend the 16th BRICS summit. In his televised opening remarks, the prime minister conveyed to the Russian leader that New Delhi "fully supports" the early return of peace and stability in the region. Modi also said that his second visit to Russia in the last three months reflected "close" coordination and deep trust between the two countries. "We are in constant touch on the issue of ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. As I said earlier, we believe that problems should be resolved in a peaceful manner," the prime minister said. **Continued on Page 5**

Jagan files plea against Vijayamma, Sharmila in NCLT over shares

Jagan's petition in the NCLT describes a personal and emotional conflict, stating that he initially intended to give the shares to Sharmila with 'sisterly affection'. However, he alleges that Sharmila's recent political opposition has led him to withdraw this offer, reflecting a troubling shift in their familial bond. He referred to the situation using the term 'cheater' without naming Sharmila directly, suggesting deep feelings of betrayal and hurt
Continued on Page 5

Liquor, drug abuse rampant...
 Liquor addiction is crippling the families. Drunk-driving deaths are also mounting in the district. In most of the road accidents, the victims are aged below 35 years old. Those addicted to alcohol and drugs are driving their families to despair. Young people addicted to drugs are not only committing serious crimes but also losing their lives in alcohol-related crashes. It is heartbreaking for ...
 -PAGE: 4

Row over TG finances

BRS rule ruined TG : Cong
 PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 In a fresh round of political sparring, the state unit of the Congress has accused the Bharat Rashttra Samithi party of completely ruining Telangana's finances during its rule, particularly with regard to its handling of deficit and expenditure management. The Congress responded sharply to claims made by BRS working president KT Rama Rao, who had cited an Economic and Political Weekly (EPW) paper to present his views on the state's fiscal standing. According to the Congress, the same paper had exposed significant financial mismanagement under the BRS regime. Ayodhya Reddy, CPRO for the Congress, in a post on X, laid **Continued on Page 5**

State flourished under BRS : KTR
 PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Bharat Rashttra Samithi working president KT Rama Rao (KTR) has strongly criticised the Congress party for running a campaign that Telangana is bankrupt. He emphasised that the state continues to lead the country in financial, debt, and resource management, with data published in Economic and Political Weekly serving as solid proof of Telangana's strong governance. According to KTR, these figures stand as undeniable testimonials of the former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's (KCR) effective governance. He pointed out that the Congress, unable to fulfil its '6 Guarantees' and other promises, had **Continued on Page 5**

Consumers worried about...
 Consumers are worried about data breaches, and a large number of them are not aware of their rights related to personal data, according to a PwC India survey. The PwC Survey on Data Privacy offers vital insights from 3,233 consumers and 186 organisations across India, exploring the awareness and implementation gaps concerning the Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA), the consultancy firm said. As per the survey report titled 'How ...
 -PAGE: 8

Cong MLC Jeevan's aide murdered
Killer makes reel in PS before surrendering

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Senior Congress leader and MLC T Jeevan Reddy's aide Maru Ganga Reddy (58) was murdered on Tuesday morning, with the killer, Santhosh, first hitting his two-wheeler and later stabbing him 20 times along with others. Ganga Reddy died while being taken him to the hospital by local people. Jeevan Reddy rushed to the spot on coming to know of the incident and later saw the body of Ganga Reddy in the government hospital. He immediately sat on dharna on the road demanding the government to "catch the killer and punish him severely". Speaking to media persons later, Jeevan Reddy observed: "Murder of Ganga Reddy is equal to killing me". The police diverted traffic via the by-pass road to prevent a flare-up of the incident in view of the MLC's dharna. When government whip Adhuri Laxman came to the dharna place, Jeevan Reddy, expressing his anger at the Congress party, remarked: "Salute to you and your Congress party. Leave us at least now. We bore all insults mentally all these days and now **Continued on Page 5**

Kaleshwaram inquiry to resume today
BJP TG unit to get new chief soon

NAVEENA GHANATE
 naveena.ghanate@gmail.com
 ■ HYDERABAD
 directed the Director General of Vigilance to submit the final report at the earliest. As part of the inquiry, Justice Ghosh will also question representatives from the companies involved in the construction of the Kaleshwaram dams. The inquiry commission will examine all relevant records, including those related to construction and financial transactions made by these companies. Additionally, V. Prakash, who has filed an affidavit in the case, will be questioned. The investigation will rely on reports from the National Dam Safety Authority and the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The Telangana unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party is likely to get a new president in January 2025 before the appointment of the party's new national president. The party has begun the exercise for organizational elections for the sake of naming the new BJP national president. It may be recalled that the BJP had extended the tenures of the BJP national president as well as those of presidents of several state units, including that of Telangana. Now the changes will take place as per the process of the BJP organizational elections. The BJP named Rajya Sabha member Dr K Laxman as the BJP organizational elections returning officer. **Continued on Page 5**

MI, KKR among five IPL...
 Mumbai Indians, Kolkata Knight Riders, Rajasthan Royals, Sunrisers Hyderabad and Lucknow Super Giants are among the IPL franchises who have submitted bids to acquire teams in the English Cricket Board-run The Hundred, according to a report. The GMR Group, recently named the new owner of Hampshire, and Avram Glazer, co-owner of Manchester United Football Club, also submitted bids before the ECB's October 18 deadline for potential investors, reported ...
 -SPORTS

69.4% candidates appear for Group-I General Essay paper
 PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The Telangana Public Service Commission has released a note on Tuesday stating that 21,817 candidates appeared for the Group-I General Essay paper with 69.4 per cent. On the first day, 22,744 candidates appeared out of 31,383 candidates with 72.4 per cent. The candidates' percentage decreased to 3 per cent when compared to the first day's attendance.

Govt hands over Dharani portal to NIC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The Telangana government has handed over the maintenance responsibilities of land records on Dharani portal to the central government's National Informatics Centre (NIC), keeping aside TerraCIS, a private firm. The government issued orders in this regard on Monday. TerraCIS supervised the responsibilities of Dharani portal till last month. The government had extended the maintenance responsibilities temporarily even though TerraCIS's contract ended in the first quarter of 2024. It may be recalled that the Congress government had appointed a committee to study the issue of handing over Dharani portal maintenance to NIC, TGTS or CGC firms. The committee gave a report to the government in this regard. However, the government was inclined to hand over the portal to NIC, which had sought relatively lesser amount for portal maintenance. The government entered into a contract for three years with NIC and the government will extend the contract based on the performance of the NIC. TerraCIS will extend its cooperation till November 30 in handing over the technical issues of Dharani portal to NIC.

BJPLP challenges GO 33 in High Court

Notices issued to Government
 PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The BJP Legislature Party, represented by its floor leader Alleti Maheshwari Reddy, has filed a petition in the Telangana High Court challenging the recently issued GO Ms No. 33 issued by the state government. The petitioner's counsel Akhila Ennamsetty stated that the GO Ms No. 33, which allows the District Collectors to form Indiramma Committees in consultation with the District In-charge Ministers, is an arbitrary process to accommodate the ruling party workers and the same is in violation of Article 243 A of the Constitution and Section 6 of the Panchayat Raj Act. The High Court heard the matter on Tuesday, following which notices were issued to the state government seeking its explanation on the issue of the said G.O. by the next date of hearing i.e., coming Monday.

Council building to be ready within three months: Ministers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The new Council building, located within the Assembly premises, is expected to be ready for use within the next three months, according to Roads, Buildings, and Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and IT, Industries, and Legislative Affairs Minister Sridhar Babu. The Ministers made this announcement after reviewing the progress of the heritage restoration work on the old Assembly building, which is being beautifully restored in line with the architectural style of the Asaf Jaha era. The Ministers, along with Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, Legislative Council Chairman Guttha Sukender Reddy, and Vice Chairman Banda Prakash, conducted a detailed review in the Speaker's Chamber. They also met with representatives from the Aga Khan Trust, R&B officials, and Assembly Secretary Narshima Charyulu, **Continued on Page 5**

Hoaxes keep passengers, security staff on tenterhooks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/MUMBAI
Around Rs 600 cr loss likely for airlines in 9 days
 Nearly 80 domestic and international flights received bomb threats in less than 24 hours that later turned out to be hoaxes, keeping thousands of passengers and security agencies on tenterhooks. The estimated losses incurred by airlines due to the disruptions would be around Rs 600 crore, according to two former airline officials. On Tuesday alone, around 50 flights, including 13 each of IndiGo and Air India received bomb threats. Akasa Air got the threats for over 12 flights and as many as 11 flights of Vistara also received the threats, the sources in the know said. Around 30 flights of IndiGo, Air India and Vistara got bomb threats on Monday night, they added. In nine days, more than 170 flights operated by Indian carriers have received bomb threats, mostly through social media, that also forced the diversion of some of the international flights. An international flight, an official, who has worked in the finance department of a domestic airline, said. A back-of-the-envelope calculation shows that the average cost of disruption caused to domestic and international **Continued on Page 5**

ACROSS THE STATES



Delhi LG flags toxic froth in Yamuna, asks for accountability

Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena on Tuesday shared pictures of toxic froth in Yamuna, saying instead of making excuses and accusations on media, authorities should focus on providing relief to the city's residents.



SC permits Teesta to travel to Amsterdam

The Supreme Court on Tuesday permitted activist Teesta Setalvad to travel between November 14 and November 24 to attend the International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam.



Police bust fake court in Gujarat; conman arrested

Police have uncovered a nefarious scheme orchestrated by a man masquerading as a judge in his own fake tribunal and passing 'judgements' since 2019 especially in land deals in Gandhinagar area.

State flourished under..

Continued from page 1. resorted to spreading false rhetoric that undermined the interests of the state. Despite these efforts to mislead the public, KTR expressed his confidence that truth would prevail.



BRICS emerged as important platform for dialogue: PM

India values close cooperation within BRICS which has emerged as an important platform for dialogue and discussion on a range of key issues concerning global developmental agenda, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday.

after it was expanded at its summit in Johannesburg last year. "India values the close cooperation within BRICS which has emerged as an important platform for dialogue and discussion on issues concerning the global developmental agenda, reformed multilateralism, climate change, economic cooperation, building resilient supply chains, promoting cultural and people to people connect, among others," Modi said in his department statement.

Russian Krishna devotees welcome PM with bhajan in Kazan

A Sanskrit welcome song, a Russian dance and Krishna Bhajan by devotees of ISKCON welcomed Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he reached here for the BRICS Summit on Tuesday.



Trying to restore trust, reassure each other

Army Chief on patrolling pact with China

India will look at disengagement and de-escalation of the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh after restoration of the status quo of April 2020, Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi said on Tuesday.



The announcement came ahead of a likely meeting between Prime Minister

Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in the Russian city of Kazan on Wednesday on the sidelines of the BRICS summit. "As far as we are concerned, we want to go back to the status quo of April 2020. Thereafter, we will be looking at disengagement, de-escalation and normal management of the LAC," he said at an interactive session.

China confirms agreement

China on Tuesday confirmed that it has reached an agreement with India to end the standoff between the two armies in eastern Ladakh. "Over a recent period of time, China and India have kept close communication through diplomatic and military channels on issues relat-

ed to the China-India border," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a media briefing here. Lin was asked for a response to Monday's Indian announcement about reaching an agreement to end the over four-year long military standoff. "Now, the two sides have reached a resolution on the 'relevant matters,' he said.

People can't be made to consume expired food products: HC

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday expressed concerns over the sale of expired food products that are reintroduced in the markets after repackaging and re-branding with new expiry dates, and said that people cannot be made to consume "adulterated" food items.



can be allowed to sell expired items and this cannot be a business.

"People cannot be having adulterated food in Delhi. Give us suggestions on how this can be tackled," a bench of Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said. The bench was hearing a public interest litigation which was initiated on its own after several such instances of expired products being repackaged with new expiry dates came to light.

Lack of clarity in laws will lead to judicial intervention: Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday stressed the need for clarity in laws, stating that judiciary can intervene only when people responsible for drafting legislations leave 'grey areas'.



'Legislative Drafting Training Workshop' organised for the officials of the assembly secretariat.

"I know that whatever I am going to speak will create a controversy, but I want to tell you that the judiciary will intervene only when you leave any grey area in drafting the legislation. More clarity in the legislation, less the intervention of courts," Shah said in his address to the House, where MLAs, MPs as well as former legislators and

Speakers were present. Citing the Modi government's move of abrogating Article 370, he said, "When the Article was drafted, it was clearly written that it is a temporary provision of the Constitution which can be removed through an amendment that can be passed through a simple majority in Parliament."



POLICE ENCOUNTERS IN ASSAM

SC terms issue 'very serious', seeks details

The Supreme Court on Tuesday termed 'very serious' the issue pertaining to 171 police encounters in Assam from May 2021 to August 2022 and sought details, including about the probe conducted in these matters. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan was hearing a plea challenging a January 2023 order of the Gauhati High Court which had dismissed a public interest litigation (PIL) raising the issue concerning these encounters by Assam Police. In its order, the high court had referred to an affidavit filed before it by the Assam government which said 171 incidents had taken place from May 2021 till August 2022 in which 56 people died, including four in custody, and 145 were injured. During the hearing on Tuesday, the apex court observed, it is a very, very serious issue.

Cong MLC Jeevan's aide..

Continued from page 1. they are killing us by attacking physically. Why should we bear all these things? I will serve the people by setting up a voluntary organization". When TPCC chief B Mahesh Kumar Goud reached him over phone, Jeevan Reddy snapped: "Tell me, why I should continue in the party. Kindly forgive me. I will not continue in the party". He then lamented, saying the Congress party had given him "a good gift" for having striven for four decades in the organization. Jeevan Reddy then disconnected the phone call of TPCC president abruptly. Jeevan Reddy attributed the murder to Congress party's encouragement of defections. It was bad that murders of

Congress leaders were taking place after the Congress came to power. "Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy is not respecting seniors", he commented. Jeevan Reddy alleged that the murder took place due to the negligence of the police, considering that the killer (Santosh) had forewarned Ganga Reddy of dire consequences and Ganga Reddy later filed a complaint in this regard. He alleged that Santosh, a rowdy-sheeter, had been facing 20 cases and had links with an SI. He demanded a fair probe into the killing by examining call records of the conversation between the SI and the killer. Giving a shocking twist to the murder, the killer, Santhosh, created a reel on the premises of the police station

Jagan files plea..

Continued from page 1. to court over shares once promised to them. This unprecedented move raises critical questions about familial loyalty, love, and the implications of political power. Jagan, and his wife Bharati Reddy, filed a petition in the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on September 9, 2024, concerning shares of the family-owned Saraswati Power and Industries Private Limited. Established by the Grandhi family, the company has become a focal point in this legal drama. In their petition, Jagan and Bharati argued that they have greatly contributed to the growth of the company. They claim to have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on August 21, 2019, to allocate shares to Sharmila, but that allocation had not been finalised for various reasons. Jagan's petition describes a personal and emotional conflict, stating that he initially intended to give the shares to Sharmila with 'sisterly affection'. However, he alleges that Sharmila's recent political opposition has led him to withdraw this offer, reflecting a troubling shift in their familial bond. He referred to the situation using the term 'cheater' without naming Sharmila directly, suggesting deep feelings of betrayal and hurt.

As the NCLT hearing approaches, Jagan is requesting the tribunal to declare that he owns 51% of the shares in the company and to nullify the transfer of shares that were intended for his mother and sister. He has made it clear in his petition that he does not wish to give any shares to either Vijayamma or Sharmila, despite previous commitments. This legal battle poses critical questions: How will the people of Andhra Pradesh respond to Jagan's legal disputes with his family? Will they continue to view him as the revered 'sher' of the State, or will this conflict tarnish his legacy? The public is left to ponder the sincerity of Jagan's familial relationships against the backdrop of his political career, especially as Sharmila also enters the political arena. The situation not only signifies a rift within the family but also threatens to undermine the foundation of YS Rajasekhara Reddy's legacy. As the NCLT hearing on November 8 approaches, all eyes will be on Jagan and his ability to navigate these family tensions while maintaining the support of a populace that once idolised his father. As the unfolding drama continues, the implications of this dispute reach far beyond mere family matters, raising profound concerns about the integrity and authenticity of familial bonds in the face of personal ambition and political power.

Council building to be..

Continued from page 1. them to complete the work within the next two to three months while preserving the historical significance of the building. Minister Venkat Reddy directed R&B Special Secretary Dasari Harichandana to invite tenders for the electrification and plumbing work. Additionally, the Minister ensured the immediate release of Rs 2 crore of pending funds to the Aga Khan Trust after discussing with the Deputy Chief Minister. He urged officials not to halt any public welfare-related work due to pending bills and assured that if there are any, he or Minister Sridhar Babu would take care of the funds' immediate release. The Ministers also highlighted the need for additional facilities such

as dedicated parking and security staff rooms within the premises. They expressed their vision to convert the restored building into the Council Hall, similar to Parliament's structure, and create a more accessible Assembly for the public. Minister Sridhar Babu, addressing the gathering, ordered the appointment of a Special Engineer (SE) level officer to oversee the construction and ensure that the work progresses swiftly without any delays.

Ready to provide..

Continued from page 1. "We fully support the early return of peace and stability. All our efforts give priority to humanity. India is ready to provide all possible cooperation in times to come," he said. "We have the opportunity to discuss all these issues," he added. The prime minister also referred to his summit talks with Putin in Moscow in July. Our annual summit resulted in strengthening cooperation in every field, he said. The prime minister congratulated Putin on Russia's successful presidency of BRICS and said many countries want to join the grouping now.

BJP TG unit to get new..

Continued from page 1. The election process will start initially from Booth Committees and take place later at state and national levels. Active party members will play a key role in the elections of the new committees. The BJP organizational elections will be completed within 3 months. Speaking to the media on Tuesday, Laxman said that 10 crore persons took BJP primary membership. The elections will be held as per internal democracy. The elections will be held from the booth level to the

national level. Active membership process will take place after the completion of primary membership. The booth committees' election process will start soon and elections will be held for 10 lakh booths across the nation. Each booth committee will have 11 members, including the president. Laxman said that his appointment as a returning officer was an honour to him as he had entered the party as a common activist. He said that a national level workshop for the conduct of party organizational elections was completed.

Hoaxes keep passengers..

Continued from page 1. flights would be around Rs 3.5 crore, and for more than 170 flights, the total expenses or loss for the airlines would be around Rs 600 crore. The figures are broad based since many other factors like narrow-body and wide-body planes, and duration of a flight also need to be taken into consideration. Another official, who has served in the finance department of another domestic airline, said the operational costs are higher for wide-body planes compared to narrow-body planes. Apart from direct expenses such as fuel and airport parking

charges, there are also indirect costs like impact on overall flight network, due to disruptions, the official added. In separate statements, an IndiGo spokesperson said 13 of its flights received security-related alerts on Tuesday. These are 6E 196 (Bengaluru to Lucknow), 6E 433 (Aizawl to Kolkata), 6E 455 (Kolkata to Bengaluru), 6E 17 (Mumbai to Istanbul), 6E 394 (Kolkata to Jaipur), 6E 318 (Kolkata to Ahmedabad), 6E 297 (Hyderabad to Jodhpur), 6E 399 (Lucknow to Goa), 6E 381 (Goa to Ahmedabad), 6E 403 (Pune to Dehradun), 6E 419 (Surat to Goa), 6E 323 (Bagdogra to Chennai) and 6E 214 (Mumbai to Shrinagar).

**FIRST COLUMN**
THE PATH TO TRUE GROWTH

Constant comparison overshadows cooperation, empathy and joy of life



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

All of us, whether we like it or not, have to compete from the time we are born until the time we die. Though most of us indulge in healthy competition all the time, nevertheless, one thing common to all kinds of competitions is the underlying desire to win a victory for the self or to defeat others. While competing, a person brings out their skill, ability, art, acumen, or talent to show that they are superior, stronger, better, more powerful, more skilful, more learned, or more competent than others. It is this habit of making comparisons with others that creates the competition background.

That is why we always see this subtle desire in people who are winners, to hear some words of praise about themselves or their performance. To fulfil this ultimate objective of massaging their egos, one does not care if the other person feels disappointed, depressed, defeated and even humiliated, ridiculed, or booted. This drive to be recognised as "better" than others sometimes overshadows the simple joy of participating or improving oneself. To understand this kind of behaviour, one needs to understand human psychology because the roots of comparison and competition have been sown into our minds since our childhood days. From school grades to sibling rivalries, we are conditioned early to pit our success against others' failures. Hence, they become more rigid with time. We need to understand that the core objective behind the competition is not simply the desire to win, but it is intertwined with the motive of laying aside the softer and nobler sentiments of cooperation, kindness, and gentleness, even if only for a while. In competition, one puts all energies and talents into bogging down or defeating another person, leaving them behind in the race while making a forward thrust to reach



the goal before anyone else. As the famous philosopher Schopenhauer said, "The world is a battle of will and intellect." But in this battle, one often loses sight of empathy and connectedness, which are essential for human growth.

It may also put a limit on one's spirit of giving, helping, cooperating and sacrificing. Remember! Anything small and insignificant in the beginning has the potential to grow and become big. Hence, we must not forget that even though a spark or flame of fire may be small to start with, it can reduce a big apartment with valuables to ashes if it grows into a big fire. Thus, we should be careful and vigilant, because if the whole society catches this contagion or infection of selfishness or rivalry, it may spoil the charm of life and the atmosphere in society. Some people link competition to motivation and developing an attitude toward high performance. But they fail to understand that this evil trait to defeat others, which may look like a harmless thing initially, may eventually develop into a spirit of revenge, feelings of hatred or enmity, bitter jealousy, confrontation, hostile attitudes and ugly outbursts. These effects are not limited to the individuals involved but spill over into communities, organisations and even nations. Look at global politics or corporate boardrooms, and you will see this principle at play on a massive scale. Hence, it all depends upon the emotional maturity of a person whether or not he or she is affected. Because this seed of evil, as it grows, takes the form of a big tree with many branches; so, too, does selfishness or the spirit to downgrade others to gain ascendancy for the self. It may proliferate into many evils or obnoxious habits. Hence, one must try to curtail selfishness and give up the ambition of winning by vengeance for the applause and praise of the self. Remember! The only competition that should matter to us is the one that takes place within ourselves. Hence, it is better to defeat one's inner demons first and become victorious from within to be an example for others to follow.

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

NEP 2020: A blueprint for transformative education

GURMEET SINGH

While NEP promises radical changes through holistic learning and flexible assessments, implementation challenges continue to hamper its progress

NEP 2020 was founded on the guiding principles of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. This was primarily to prepare the young ones to face the diverse national & global challenges for the present & future. The Policy aims to lead to a multi-disciplinary, holistic under-graduation syllabus, create wider choices of combinations of Subjects, Integration of Vocational Education with regular Subjects and multi-entry and multi-exit points with regular appropriate certification at various stages. The aim is to ensure that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth, economy and/or background. This should eventually lead to transformative changes which shall change the lifeline of education in our country. The emphasis is going to be on holistic education, early childhood care, flexible assessments, skill development, integration of technology, teacher training and higher education reforms. These are aimed at designing a learner-centric and inclusive education for a future-ready system.

By embracing these India is poised to provide quality education to everyone with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in the 21st century. The motto has been to provide "Equitable and Inclusive Education" to ensure that no child should be denied quality education because of their socio-cultural background and 100 per cent GER is reached by 2030. Looking at all the facts presented alone, one gets a feeling that this is going to be a real game changer in the education system of our country but the reality remains that it has not taken off even after three years of its approval. The major reason is that a majority do not understand the spirit of this very meaningful policy. If implemented in letter and spirit then our country shall be comparable to the best in the world in the field of education. An in-depth analysis and exploring what lies ahead; One can divide this whole NEP-2020 into four main capsules which this Policy envisages:

Teaching in the mother tongue or spoken language, Learn to leave, Teach to Transform and Educate to Empower. These highlighted Capsules shall completely sum up the entire NEP-2020, which none has so far put appropriately and completely. Elaborating each one of these shall drive home all the points: **Teaching in spoken language:** The importance of this cannot be undermined. Original thinking comes only in the mother tongue (spoken languages) and this advantage has never been given to our students in any of our earlier policies. English has always been overemphasised and a wrong notion has been created that English is knowledge whereas the fact remains that it is just a language and not knowledge. Knowledge can always be acquired by knowing a language. Our beginners have always been worried about learning English rather than developing an understanding of a concept in their way, therefore majority of the students are lost in this learning of the English language rather than focussing on the original thinking. This has been given an appropriate weightage under NEP. A student shall learn to



INDIA IS POISED TO PROVIDE QUALITY EDUCATION TO EVERYONE WITH THE NECESSARY SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO THRIVE IN THE 21ST CENTURY. THE MOTTO HAS BEEN TO PROVIDE "EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION" TO ENSURE THAT NO CHILD SHOULD BE DENIED QUALITY EDUCATION BECAUSE OF THEIR SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND

develop an understanding of what subjects to learn and what to pick up eventually in higher classes which has not been the case so far. A course used to be thrust upon them. This very important facet has been very appropriately addressed in this.

Learn to Leave: Having decided what course to take up for secondary and higher education, a student used to be trapped forever whether one liked the subject/course or not. (In the older education system for example if one had opted for Physics or Sanskrit: one was struck with that forever whether one liked these subjects or not)

There was no way to move out unless one gave up higher education or started afresh. The other difficulty was that due to some odd circumstances if one had to discontinue the education there was no way to restart unless you lose years/ time, but in this, one could leave anytime or rejoin anytime (Comes under Multi entry/ Multi exit system). In the present system if one stayed away for a few years one could not come back to education in desired subjects but under NEP-2020 one can restart anytime one's education by including the credits earned before leaving. Therefore, under the present NEP, no one shall stay away or be denied education because of circumstances. This was not the case in the older system.

Education to empower: Under this education is to give due benefits to society by developing the right kind of skill. For Example, an electronic engineer is not able to do even basic electrical repairs or a mechanical engineer is not in a position to rectify even a basic fault. Integration of vocational courses with regular ones to provide practical skills for employment, benefiting students with diverse academic interests or lim-

ited access to traditional pathways or linking them with one another are some of the hallmarks of the present system.

This is to develop the right syllabus to reduce disparities. Emphasis in this is on equitable access to quality education. Essentially NEP 2020 shall be attempting to reduce unwanted syllabus for comprehensive understanding towards skill-based education.

Teach to transform: the teaching in the older system was not of any speciality. One acquires the right skills through one's efforts to be useful to society. Under this, it shall be essential to train teachers and educational staff to deliver child-centred education for job placement, which shall be an important feature so far lacking to a large extent.

Challenges: One of the biggest features of this has been the wide choice of subjects that one could take. Now this wide spectrum of subjects will be possible to be taken by students if there is a way to keep a record of a student's movement and subjects taken. In a Country like ours which has more than 39K colleges, about 1000 Universities and 4.33 crores students (Nearly 80 per cent are in graduation and the remaining 20 per cent are from post-graduation classes), it shall be impossible to maintain a record of this kind unless there is a mechanism similar to computerised banking arrangement which maintains all types of record impeccably. For this an Academic Bank of Credit has been proposed where every institution shall be registered to maintain a record of these movements of students, subjects taken and credits earned can be maintained like what is done in banking.

Biggest flaw so far: Unfortunately, to date, not even 50 per cent of Institutions have reg-

istered themselves in this (in ABC) which is the real key to the success of this policy. This is a way to keep records of students' subjects, their movements and credits earned.

Sharing of resources: Under NEP a wide umbrella of choice of subject, record of early education, movement from one institution to another and credits cleared/ earned by a student shall be possible only if the resources are shared by various institutions. It will be impossible for any particular college to offer all subjects and to offer teaching in a variety of courses unless there is a huge staff to do this. It will be humanly impossible to achieve all this unless sharing is done particularly when online teaching has now come in a big way in our university system.

Similarly, the resources for science laboratories, libraries research facilities as well as Entrepreneurship schemes can be very effectively shared to make the education truly inclusive as per the aims of NEP 2020. Therefore, in conclusion, this policy shall succeed if: Every institution registers with ABC (Academic Bank of Credit) Sharing of resources starts in a big way in earnest in all areas like teaching, especially in online modes, libraries, laboratories and instrumental facilities; Open schooling system for all without any conditions and Establishment of the Higher Education Commission of India immediately to monitor the registration of ABC etc. It shall not become a roaring success unless all agencies like MOE, UGC etc take concerted efforts to bring about a radical change.

(The writer is a Former Vice-Chancellor of Pondicherry University and Gandhigram Rural Institute, Dindigul; views are personal)

Revolutionising India's food security: Route optimisation cuts costs, carbon emissions

With over 81 crore beneficiaries, the Govt is now leveraging advanced data-driven route optimisation tools as part of the PM GatiShakti master plan

The Government of India provides free food grains to more than 81 crore beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) making it the largest food security programme in the world. This vast operation—from sourcing food grains from farmers to delivering them to ration cardholders—relies on a complex, decades-old supply chain. The Food Corporation of India (FCI), state procurement agencies, millers, transporters, warehouses, and Fair Price Shops (FPS) all play a critical role in this network. However, its design has historically been shaped by administrative convenience more than scientific optimisation. Supply routes were planned manually by



SANJEEV CHOPRA

state officials, a process prone to sub-optimality, bias and human error. In October 2021, the Prime Minister launched the PM GatiShakti Master Plan aiming to enhance multimodal connectivity and optimise logistics across the country. One of its key pillars, "Optimisation," envisions selecting the most efficient routes for transporting goods,

thereby saving time and reducing costs. In line with this vision, the Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) launched a national route optimisation exercise in March 2023, in partnership with the World Food Programme (UNWFP) and the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT) from IIT Delhi. This exercise, targeting the annual transportation of 6.8 crore metric tons of food grains through the PDS, marks a transformative step towards building a more efficient and cost-effective food supply chain. The process was comprehensive: geo-locations of warehouses and FPS, along with their capacities and road distances, were collected from each state. Using this data, cus-

tom algorithms were developed for each state to determine the most optimal supply chain routes. More than 50 physical workshops were held by DFPD and FITT officials to guide states in data collection and demonstrate the benefits of route optimisation. These optimised routes were then validated on the ground to ensure they accounted for local conditions, and a state-specific intra-state optimisation tool was developed to allow for adjustments in the supply chain—such as adding or modifying entities like warehouses or FPSs. For instance, Bihar developed an annual movement plan based on its PDS requirements, food grain volume, and monthly transport routes. The customised algorithm factored in different



possibilities of local procurement within the state and the grain required to be sourced from the FCI. This gave the state a clear view of its yearly logistics, allowing for cost-saving adjustments. By choosing the optimal option, Bihar reduced transport distances by 19 per cent, saving over Rs 3.09 crore per month. Similarly, Mizoram optimised its routes by eliminating unnecessary transfers of food grains

between warehouses, achieving a 50 per cent reduction in distance and saving an estimated Rs 1.27 crore monthly. A significant milestone in this effort was the integration of the route optimisation tool with the GatiShakti platform, which now houses geo-locations of FPSs and warehouses across all states. This integration enables the platform to generate the shortest possible motorable routes from FCI godowns to state godowns, and further from state godowns to FPSs. The platform also allows real-time route re-optimisation based on updated infrastructure data (such as new roads) from other ministries. Since March 2023, route optimisation assessments have been completed for 30 out of 31 states, with intra-

state route optimisation tools developed for 15 states so far. Early results from 12 states show tremendous promise, with transportation costs reduced by an estimated Rs 112 crore annually. Once fully implemented across all states, savings could exceed 250 crore per year. This initiative is not only an economic win but also an environmental one. Global food miles—representing the distance food travels from production to consumption—account for nearly one-fifth of total food system emissions. Optimising India's food distribution routes can contribute significantly to reducing CO2 emissions, aligning with the country's climate change commitments under the Paris Agreement and its Conference of Parties (COP) targets. The

reduction in fuel consumption will also help conserve foreign exchange reserves. Looking ahead, DFPD is exploring the possibility of earning carbon credits under the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS), offering states an added incentive to complete the route optimisation process and earn tradable carbon credit certificates. This step would not only strengthen India's commitment to a climate-smart supply chain but also potentially generate financial benefits. In conclusion, The integration of advanced technologies and data-driven tools is setting the stage for a smarter future in public distribution, one that safeguards both our resources and the planet. *(The writer is Secretary, Food & Public Distribution, Govt of India; views are personal)*

CHHOTE PANDIT IS BACK! NEW AVATAR, MORE HUMOUR

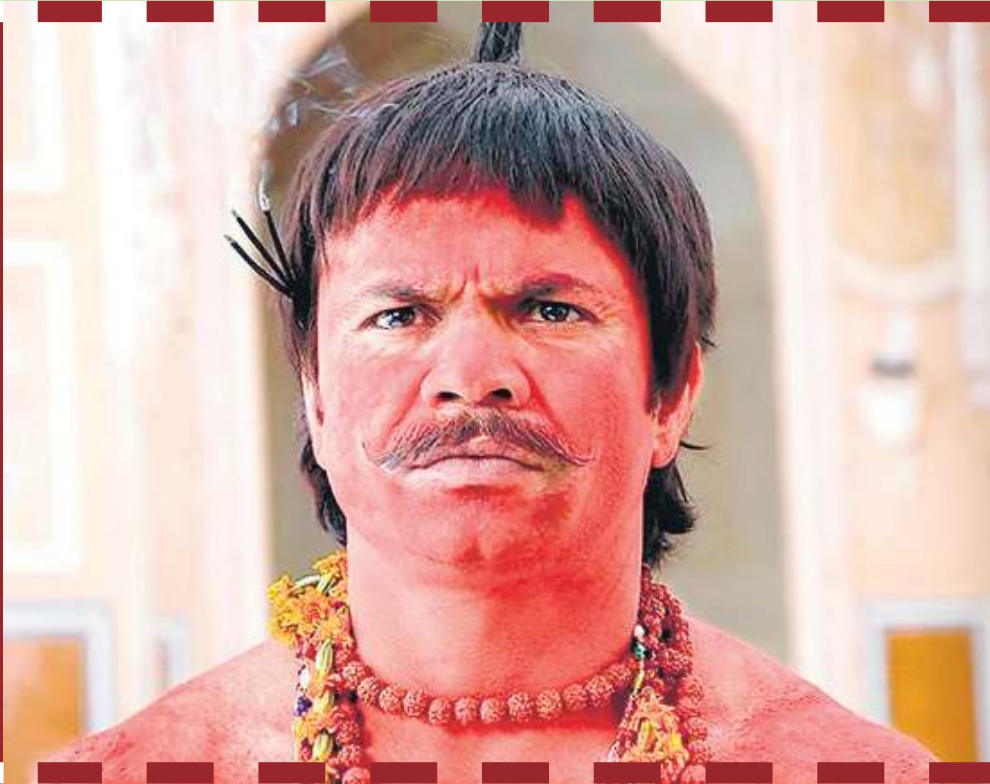
TEJAL SINHA
 tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

Laughter alert! Rajpal Yadav is back to cast his comedic spell as the irrepressible Chhote Pandit in *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*! With a career spanning decades of rib-tickling roles, Rajpal is poised to unleash a fresh wave of hilarity, blending his trademark wit, impeccable timing and sidesplitting antics.

From revisiting the franchise's cult classic moments to revealing the newest twists in the storyline, let's get ready to dive into the world of *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3* through Rajpal Yadav's eyes as he takes us on a journey of laughter, excitement and pure entertainment.

"*Bhool Bhulaiyaa* has now become a trio for us," begins the gagster in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, who never fails to enrapture hearts with his on- and off-screen persona. His character in the *Bhool Bhulaiyaa* franchise has a unique sixth sense, enabling him to see ghosts that others can't. "While in *Bhool Bhulaiyaa*, we see him in order to get rid of water and negativity; he puts up a red colour (kumkum); in the second one, we see him putting up white, which is ultimately the symbol of water. Now in the third one, he puts up *Chandan*. With the trap of Manjulika, he signifies that *apna tann—mann thanda rakho*. I feel that the director liked the concept of using *Chandan* this time, which portrays that *Chandan ke upar kitni bhi musibatain rahe, andar toh woh sheelta pradhan karta hai* (Despite facing numerous challenges, sandalwood retains its soothing properties). These colours are very close to nature and it's often believed too that one who is closest to nature is away from any sort of difficulties. This caricature feature of Chhote Pandit is that of a 'vidhushak', who makes fun of himself and entertains the people around. Chhote Pandit is that comedic element in a hor-

GET READY FOR A DOSE OF LAUGHTER AND ENTERTAINMENT AS RAJPAL YADAV, BOLLYWOOD'S BELOVED COMEDIC GENIUS, JOINS THE PIONEER FOR AN EXCLUSIVE CONVERSATION. AS HE GEARS UP FOR THE RELEASE OF BHOOL BHULAIYAA 3, YADAV SHARES HIS INSIGHTS ON PLAYING THE ICONIC 'CHHOTE PANDIT', HIS APPROACH TO COMEDY AND HIS EXCITING LINEUP OF UPCOMING PROJECTS



ror comedy who entertains the audience with his humour."

Well, as he speaks of his character, it was beyond a doubt that this character is something he is blessed to play on-screen, and he agrees it too. Now, with the third film of the franchise, not an approach, but Yadav believes taking his character in the most simplest and natural way to the audience. While the plot keeps you hooked, his character doesn't miss out on tickling your funny bones, of course! "This is a character you can just not ignore. An effort has been to keep the character along and a part of the story or make him fit in

the director's interpretation."

The *Chup Chup Ke* fame further tells us that he doesn't feel any pressure to portray Chhote Pandit for the third time but rather has performed it with all the freedom within the boundary line. "This is a character that doesn't pressurise in any way. He is here only to bring comedy—not a character that's real but an illusion of reality. *Isko pressure nahi, pyaar se leno ki zaroorat hai joh ki mai le raha hoon* (we chuckle)."

Phir Hera Pheri, Partner, Bhootnath, Krazzy 4, Dhol, Bhagam Bhag, De Dana Dan, Khatta Meetha and to the endless list of films where his comedic perfor-

mance has been a highlight. But how does he even manage to bring so many variations of comedy every time on-screen? "It's by doing the homework and getting inspired by people around," affirms the *Dhol* fame. But again, he continues to highlight, "We can try to change the mentality, but not a person. Similarly, as an actor, all that we can do is change the mentality and present ourselves the best way possible."

"Comedy is a word and cinema is entertainment. So, the stories that are made have a priority—entertainment," enthuses *Malamaal Weekly* actor, who is now, in fact, celebrating his 25 years in

the industry. "In these years that I've been in the industry, *comedy films ka bolbala raha hai*. We've seen both the protagonist and the antagonist doing comedy. I feel so blessed that I'm among the few of those who have been doing comedy and getting the respect."

Ever since he began acting, which was at the tender age of about 13 years, he has had the opportunity to play approximately 500 characters on different platforms. However, he has always believed that every new character brings a new life for him to live. As we talk of comedy, "Comedy has many sub-genres within: realistic comedy, romantic comedy, black

comedy, horror comedy, and so many more. And so the approach of my character in *Bhool Bhulaiyaa* is different from, let's say, *Chup Chup Ke, Dhol or Waqt*. So I always try either by being a small kid or a big one; I always make sure to learn the best that I can from all of these."

Talking of any improvisations that we would get to see in *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*, the *Partner* fame enunciates, "Every actor does improvise. But a good actor always works according to the director's interpretation and being around that discipline, if they are able to work a little more on it, so why not? The communication between a director and actor is done on the basis of interpretation. And this is something I believe much in."

Let's not forget the fact that horror-comedy has been one of those genres that has a great fan following. "I would say, since childhood, there are only two things that we are taught: either excitement and bravery or fear. It's been a ritual in our country that this 'natya-roopantaran' is portrayed in the form of fear and romance. So here in *Bhool Bhulaiyaa*, the Manjulika's character is that form of fear, where you do get scared and have fun laughing too."

Rajpal Yadav has been a synonym of 'scene-stealer' and why not? No matter what character he plays on-screen, a lead or a supporting actor, he's one of those adroit actors who knows how to pull over the eyes of the audience so well. "*Main bachpan se jis galli, jis ghar mai baithta tha, maine humaesha dil churaye hai* (we laugh out loud). So with that, if I steal the show or scene and I also get the credit for it, then it's a matter of great fortune for me. I'm so glad and blessed that over the years, I've got to play and live over 500 characters."

The actor's pipeline is overflowing with laughter, drama and suspense, with *Baby John* releasing during Christmas, *Vanvaas*, Tigmanshu Dhulia's *Ghamasaan* and *Welcome to the Jungle*, which are just the beginning.

ROCKING THROUGH TIME: BIG 30-YEAR BASH

India's most iconic music festival, *Independence Rock (I-Rock)*, is back with a bang, celebrating its 30th edition in style. *The Pioneer* catches up with VG Jairam, the driving force behind *I-Rock's* revival, in an exclusive conversation

AARTI SREENATH
 aarti.sreenath9@gmail.com

The revival of India's most iconic rock festival, *Independence Rock (I-Rock)*, has marked a new era in the country's music scene, thanks to the efforts of VG Jairam and Farhad Wadia, the creators of the festival. As India celebrated the 30th edition of this event, Jairam shared the journey behind the resurrection and the vision for its future.

His partnership with Wadia took shape in early 2022 when he noticed a significant void in the live music landscape—rock music had nearly vanished from mainstream events. "Farhad has always been a dear friend. I approached him about reviving it, as the genre was missing from the live scene. Our goal was to bring back rock music and make it bigger than before," he recalls.

Bringing *I-Rock* back wasn't without its challenges. The festival had always been a platform for India's rock music community and staying true to its roots while making it relevant for today's audience required careful balance. "It's more than just a festival. It's a space for performers and fans to connect over their shared passion for rock music. The key is to

support emerging talent, even as we celebrate 30 years of rock history."

He remained tight-lipped about the specifics of this year's innovations, teasing that fans would have to wait to experience the full spectacle. However, he emphasised that enhancing the consumer experience is at the heart of everything he does. "We believe in creating memorable experiences. If you show people a good time, they'll keep coming back."

Reflecting on the changes in India's rock scene, Jairam sees the evolution of the genre as both a challenge and an opportunity. "Rock isn't just classic rock or metal anymore. It's hybrid, it's experimental—fusion rock, rap rock, glam rock—all of these subgenres keep it alive and thriving." It has embraced this diversity, offering a stage to new-age artists while honoring its legacy as the birthplace of India's rock revolution.

For him, some of his most memorable moments with *I-Rock* aren't just about standout performances. It's the personal connection to the festival that stands out. Balancing the festival's legacy with the need to innovate has been a critical focus. According to him, it's about finding the sweet spot between retaining what makes it iconic and welcoming the next generation of rock fans. "Legacy is what people hold you in high regard for and relevance is about ensuring that both

long-time fans and newcomers are engaged. You can't choose one over the other—you have to innovate while respecting history."

This year's festival promises surprises, but as he playfully suggests, "If I tell you now, it won't be a surprise."

Inclusivity and diversity remain central to his approach. "We keep our ears to the ground, listening to what the people want. Whether it's local talent or emerging genres, we're always adapting," he explains. This philosophy ensures that the festival remains a dynamic platform for artists from all backgrounds to share their music. Its impact on the local music community has been profound. He notes that the festival has become a launchpad for emerging rock bands and a space for cultural exchange within the genre. "By bringing people together, we foster opportunities for networking, collaboration, and creative innovation."

When it comes to measuring success, for him, it's more than just ticket sales. "It's the energy, the passion, and the connections made. Long-time attendees return each year, while younger fans discover rock for the first time. These moments, these interactions, are what make the festival a success." Looking ahead, he envisions continuing to uncover hidden talent and providing a global stage for India's rock music scene. "There's so much untapped talent in India and I want it to be the platform that helps these artists reach their potential."

When asked about the future of rock festivals in India, he is optimistic. He points out that India is becoming a hotspot for live music experiences, with festivals bringing international acts and creating immersive environments for fans. "The future looks promising. We've seen a resurgence in rock music since the revival of *I-Rock* and initiatives like *BandLand* and multi-genre festivals are fueling this momentum. It will continue to play a key role in fostering this growth."

SLAUGHTERING ANIMALS FOR RESOLVING FOOD CRISIS

Constitutional mandate that has taken us back to the dark ages

Beyond the slightest doubt, we live in an era of blooming and lurking challenges across all fronts and all forms all around us - including abject poverty, glaring wealth disparity, widespread unemployment, fractured outcomes of flawed health and education policies, and alarming environmental hazards prone to epidemics and pandemics.

But just when we thought we had seen the worst of all forms, here comes a shocker.

The Southwest African country of Namibia plans to slay 700 wild animals including 83 elephants, 300 zebras, 30 hippos, 50 impalas, 60 buffaloes, 100 blue wildebeest and 100 elands to mitigate the pangs of an acute hunger crisis in the wake of a severe drought that has affected more than half of its population, an alarming fallout of an El Niño pattern.

This barbaric move has been sheltered by the nation's constitutional mandate shows the abject failure of global diplomatic organisations like the United Nations, to make needful interventions to ensure that such regressive moves bordering on cannibalism are vehemently opposed and banned with unanimous approval of member nations.

As it is, seal hunt, a cruel annual event in Namibia slaughters thousands of cape fur seal puppies every year to sell their skins in international fur markets at premium rates.

Having said that, we can't put all the blame on Namibia; that would be a deplorable and desperate attempt to escape the guilt of a collective crime committed by the world at large. The sorry state of affairs we see is indicative of what price we as humans of the planet have had to pay in the name of progress and advancement. There is simply no amount to human greed for more of anything and everything.

Our predatory instincts drive all notions of progress and development; which is why we see

the maximum land mass being used for real estate development at the cost of shunning agricultural activity. Our sea shores and river banks are being eroded and water bodies are being depleted to fill the insatiable bellies of housing and construction, mountains and valleys are being destroyed and trees are being felled in the name of road and infrastructure connectivity and worst of all, the great divide between the haves and the have nots is growing by the day, which has created the disparity that is at the heart of Namibia's food crisis, ahead of the El Niño pattern.

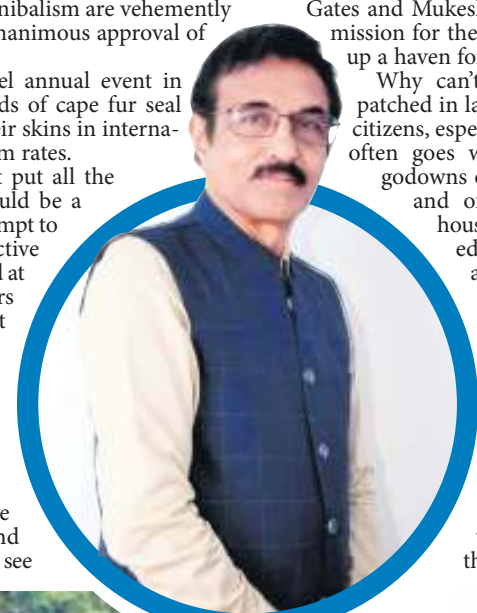
Can the world not unite to help Namibia with enough food for its people to safeguard the life and freedom of these precious wild animals, which is their birthright denied by humans? Why can't the UN call for an emergency meeting of member nations? Why can't the World Wildlife Fund swing into protest action? Why can't nations of the world seed and nurture a relief fund for poverty-stricken countries like Namibia? Why can't the wealthiest individuals like Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates and Mukesh Ambani et al fund a rescue mission for the animals under threat and set up a haven for them?

Why can't grains and pulses be dispatched in large numbers to the aggrieved citizens, especially when stored food grains often goes waste in many canaries and godowns of the globe, as well as homes and office establishments? Indian households alone waste an estimated 78.2 million tonnes of food annually. We can surely arrive at a win-win solution, if we unite as global citizens rather than look the other way, leaving Namibia to fend for itself in regressive ways that have been legitimised in the name of tradition.

It is high time, as world citizens, wake up from our feigned slumber and cherish with fresh resolve those virtues that make us human. It is high time we arrest the demonic disparity of wealth, income and resources which is at the root of inhuman traditions, wilful or otherwise.

Otherwise, the dark ages will come back to haunt us with a vengeance, ironically in this post-modern age marked by Artificial intelligence. What a tragedy would that be?

(Written by Dr. B. S. Ajaiakumar)



what's brewing?



● Vyshnavi

● Shreya

● Bhavani

● Neeraja

● Pravalika

● Samata

Teach For Change Trust, under the leadership of its Managing Trustee, actor Lakshmi Manchu, in collaboration with Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre & HICC, hosted a joyous Diwali celebration for children from government schools at the Novotel Gardens. Over 50 children from various government schools were invited to participate in the celebrations, which included fun activities, cultural performances and a festive meal.

PARTY
Photos by - SV Chary



BPP University of London has launched New MMCA Technology Management Course at Banjara Hills Park Hyatt in Hyderabad. Dean of the University Sara McCroola had attended the event!



Issa Abdullah Saleh Al Shibani, the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to India, visited the BTR Greens MAK Projects, on Tuesday.

Northern Arizona University (NAU), in collaboration with Risaya Academy, announced the launch of its Summer School Programme, offering Indian students a unique academic experience at NAU's esteemed campus in the USA. Launching for the first time in India, this intensive summer programme aims to address the critical skill gap faced by students pursuing degrees in fields like Computer Science, Information Technology, Blockchain, AI/ML and Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE).



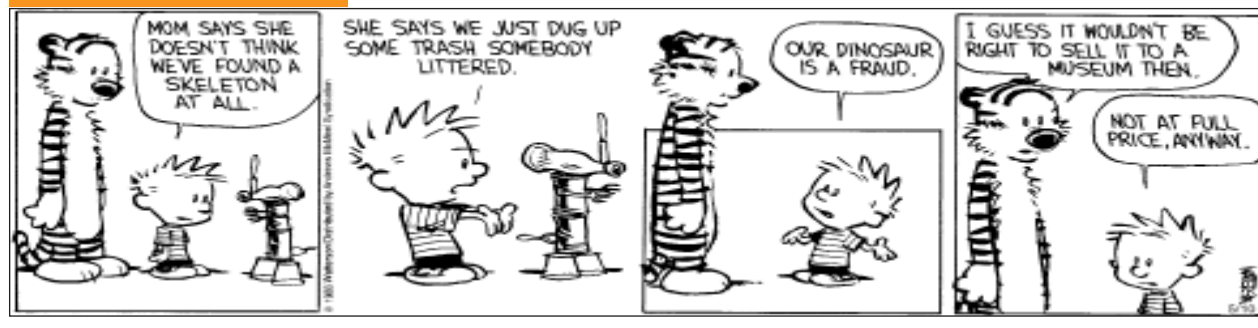
The stage is set and music lovers are waiting with bated breath for the biggest musical production of the year. After the phenomenal success of his last tour, Arijit Singh is ready to captivate audiences once again with another enthralling multi-city tour. Spanning from November 2024 to April 2025, this highly-anticipated tour will take over the cities of Bengaluru (November 30), Hyderabad (December 7), Delhi (February 2), Mumbai (March 7) and Chennai (April 27).

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



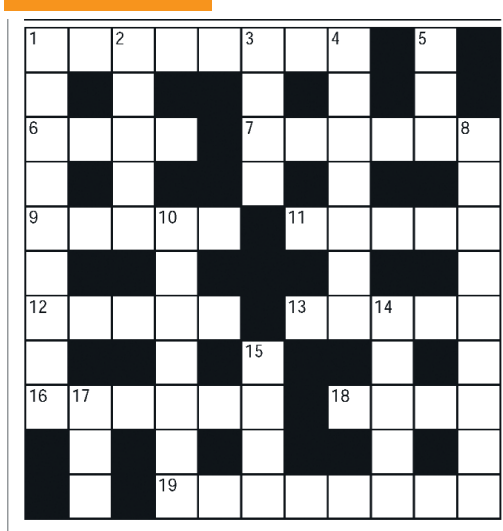
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



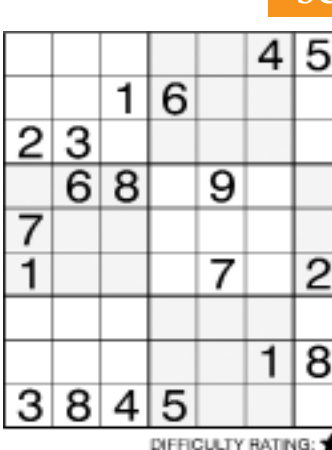
CROSSWORD



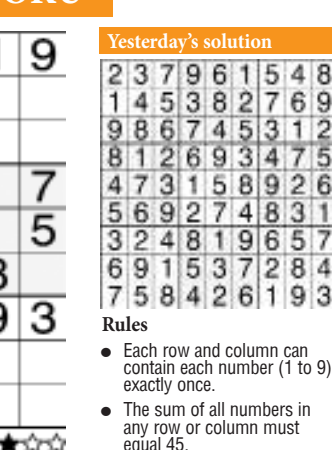
NANCY



SUDOKU



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

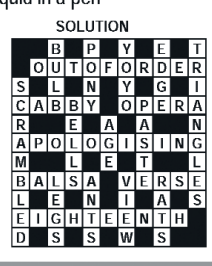


ACROSS

- 1 Without any bends
- 2 Travel by horse
- 3 Bigger
- 4 From Turkey
- 5 Tell a fib
- 6 A large store of water for supplying a town
- 7 The movement of cars and people in the street
- 8 A book of maps of countries
- 9 A plant's underground parts
- 10 Wheel a baby about in this
- 11 Flying creatures
- 12 Sweeten food with this
- 13 Sit on this
- 14 Be unlike
- 15 Liquid in a pen
- 16 Too
- 17 Writer of music

DOWN

- 1 Startled
- 2 Listen to music on this
- 3 A precious metal



'MY MASK DESIGN WAS INSPIRED BY BATMAN'

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

Kannada actor Sri Murali is venturing into the Telugu film industry with his new movie *Bagheera*, set to release on October 31. This film was conceptualised by top director Prashanth Neel and directed by Dr Suri. Sri Murali expressed his admiration for Prashanth Neel and revealed that the story was handed to him by the director. Hombale Films then took over the project with director D. R. Suri, ensuring everything was planned for the film. For the unaware, Sri Murali is the brother-in-law of director Prashanth Neel. "My wife and mother-in-law are from Nellore; they speak Telugu. And now, I have learned a little bit of Telugu," said Murali. Though Prashanth Neel is providing the story, Sri Murali gives all the credits to director Suri. "I agree that Prashanth Neel provided a good story, but it is the director Suri who has worked hundred percent and analysed the story and script," he said. He added that execution is very important. "With whatever the script has demanded, Suri as a director has executed it well. It is a larger than life story and goes well for any language." In the film, he revealed playing a vigilante and further shared, "We have all certain visions of life and want to do something good for society. If something wrong happens in society,

you want to act and it is something for the betterment of society. So we narrate this story in our own way through Prashanth Neel's story and Suri's vision. He enhances the acting from me and all of them in this film." For this character, Sri Murali has been on a strict diet for almost three years. Yes, you read that right! "I am a foodie and I like Biryani a lot. Oh and also sweets! However, for my character, I was mostly taking up fluids." Seems like his better half had given the best of her support because she didn't let him have his favourite food, hahaha. "I had to take this character as a challenge. The director also wants me to look like it, so I did it," he added. Sri Murali entered the Kannada film industry nearly 21 years ago and has done 21 films. However, this is for the first time that his film is going to release in Telugu. "It is the production call. I have done a good movie and now I am a bit nervous. I just want good things to happen. I can't do some rubbish projects and scripts just to make money, I can't do that. I have good love and respect in Karnataka and I always surrender to my state. But now it's a different attempt and I am coming to other states. I don't know how people will look at me, but we have done a good project. My request is to come with a blank mind and don't expect anything. I am a new born actor entered into the industry," said the actor about his film releasing across the states. Talking about his association with Prashanth Neel professionally, Prashanth's debut film *Ugram*, where Sri Murali played the lead actor, was a hit in Kannada. "I always trusted Prashanth very much and he was also closely connected to me. Compared to *Ugram* and *Bagheera* both are differ-

Kannada actor Sri Murali is expanding into different languages with his new movie Bagheera, which has his brother-in-law Prashanth Neel providing the story. Ahead of the release, he shares more insights about the film

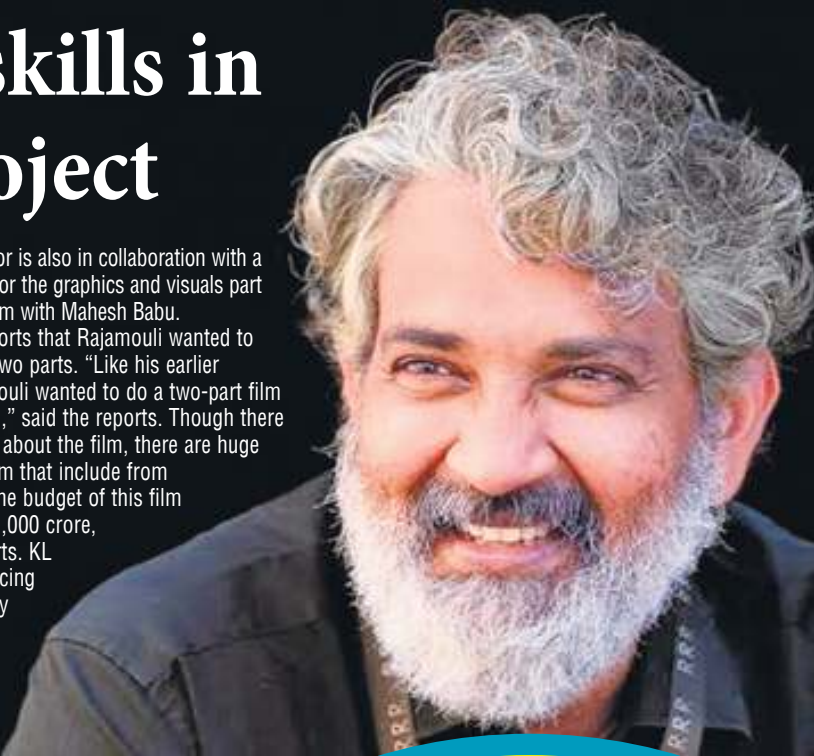


but the narration is different and how the director executed it. We can't compare films as this is a different format. But about the mask for my role, we took reference from *Batman*," he said. Prakash Raj is playing an important role in this film and Sri Murali says working with him is a good experience. "I am a fan of Prakash Raj and I have seen all his films. It's wonderful work with him and he is like mercury where he fits into the roles. I want to learn everyday and again with Prakash Raj garu I picked up and learnt a lot," said Murali. Talking about his co-star Rukini Vasanth, he says, "She is a very good and dedicated actress. She is a natural actor." There are some reports that Prashanth Neel just remade *Ugram* as *Salaar* with Prabhas. "Both are different and Prabhas garu has done fabulous work in *Salaar*, which is a much larger than life project. I like *Salaar* in my own way," he said. He talks very highly about Prashanth Neel and said, "He changes the format look-out of the Kannada industry." Talking about his journey till now, he said he made a few mistakes. "Here and there small mistakes are done and corrected. I want to do better movies and a better actor. My first film ran for two years and the second film won Best Actor for me and I have seen a lot of bad days. At that time, *Ugram* gave me rebirth and I never look back from him as all my films were successful," he said. He added that he is taking a longer time to do a film because only six films have been released in the last ten years. "I don't know why the delay in my films, this *Bagheera*, took nearly three years because of my injury. I have to recover from it and it took a little bit of time," he said.

SS Rajamouli up-skills in AI for next big project

Top director SS Rajamouli is now gearing up for his next project with Superstar Mahesh Babu. The film's pre-production work is still going on and according to the writer Vijayendra Prasad, the shooting starts in January next year. Rajamouli's earlier film *RRR* was a big hit and the director used many animals in that film in a couple of scenes. Talking about the animals at a summit, the director gives a hint about using animals in his upcoming films. "I love animals and I used many in my earlier films and I want to use more animals in my upcoming films also," he said. With this, people assume that he may use animals in his upcoming film with Mahesh Babu also. The film is an adventurous one that travels to Amazon forests, which is like that of an *Indiana Jones* films. According to the reports, Rajamouli wants to use artificial intelligence (AI) in this film. "For that, he along with some of his team members are taking classes on AI," said the

reports. The director is also in collaboration with a Hollywood studio for the graphics and visuals part of his upcoming film with Mahesh Babu. There are also reports that Rajamouli wanted to make this film in two parts. "Like his earlier *Baahubali*, Rajamouli wanted to do a two-part film with Mahesh Babu," said the reports. Though there is no official word about the film, there are huge star cast in this film that include from Hollywood also. The budget of this film is also nearly Rs 1,000 crore, according to reports. KL Narayana is producing this film and it may release in foreign languages apart from Indian languages.



Shraddha Kapoor to add glamour to Pushpa 2 with special song

Allu Arjun and director Sukumar combination, much-awaited film *Pushpa 2* is all set to hit the screens on December 6. The first part *Pushpa* was a blockbuster film and more than that was *Oo antava*, which had Samantha grooving alongside Allu Arjun and music provided by Devi Sri Prasad. Now, everyone is curious who the female actress playing in the special song in this *Pushpa 2*. According to the source, Bollywood actress Shraddha Kapoor is confirmed to be a part of this special song. "When the producers met her and asked her for this special song, she was very excited and ready to do the song," said a unit source. The shooting of this song has been planned for the next month, added the source. It is said that,

it was Allu Arjun and Sukumar's idea to rope in Shraddha Kapoor for this song. Shraddha has been one of the most popular actresses in India. Her latest film *Street 2* was a super hit. The makers have also paid a bomb to Shraddha for doing this special song, added the source. Rashmika Mandanna is playing the female lead and Mythri Movie Makers is producing it.



RAM CHARAN IS LATEST CELEBRITY AT MADAME TUSSAUDS!

Telugu actor Ram Charan is the latest celebrity to join the prestigious line-up of superstars at Madame Tussauds Singapore with a wax figure. Earlier few South Indian actors wax statues at Madame Tussauds Singapore. The first one is Prabhas where his wax statue from *Baahubali* film looks featured at Madame Tussauds, Singapore. The next one is Superstar Mahesh Babu and his wax statue was unveiled in Hyderabad first and later put it in Singapore. Sridevi and Kajal Aggarwal wax statues were also unveiled at Madame Tussauds. Now, Ram Charan is also joining the list, with his wax-statue coming up in 2025. Ram Charan was presented the 'Madame Tussauds of the Future Award' at the star-studded 2024 International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards at Etihad Arena, Abu Dhabi. "It's great to be a part of Madame Tussauds alongside others who have contributed so much to cinema. As a kid, when I visited Madame Tussauds to see the legends and take pictures with them, I never imagined I would one day be part of it so early in my career. I thank Madame Tussauds for acknowledging my work and motivating me to do better," said Ram Charan. His pet, Rhyme, will be included as part of his upcoming figure, making him the only celebrity, apart from Queen Elizabeth II, to have a pet featured. "I'm really touched that the Madame Tussauds team included my darling pet Rhyme with my figure. This means a lot to me. This one is special," said Ram Charan. IIFA and Madame Tussauds Singapore have been collaborating since 2017 when the IIFA Awards Experience was launched exclusively at the Singapore attraction. This collaboration serves to bring together a celebration of Indian cinema on a global stage. Since then, many icons of Indian cinema have launched there, with Ram Charan being next in line in Madame Tussauds Singapore. Another South Indian actor Allu Arjun wax statue was also released, but it was at Madame Tussauds, Dubai.

Producer Seven Hills Satish announced on Tuesday that he is releasing two of his films simultaneously. The first one is *Coffee With A Killer* directed by popular music director RP Patnaik. He directed earlier films and after a long gap, he is directing this film. Satish said that the Telugu audience always encouraged content based films. "I produced earlier *Battala Ramaswamy Biopic* and *Andari Bandhuvaya* which gave me good success. Even the first one generated good revenue for me at the Covid

time," said Satish. The second film *Solo Boy* is directed by Naveen Kumar and the lead actor is Gautam Krishna. "Now, the actor is in *Bigg Boss* and once he comes out of it, we will start promotions and announce the release date," said Satish. Swetha Avasti and Ramya Pasupuleti are playing the female leads opposite Gautam Krishna in this *Solo Boy* film. The producer said that he is introducing Naveen as director with this *Solo Boy* film. Both these films are completed and ready to hit the screens soon. "I am planning to release these two films simultaneously in December," said Satish. The producer celebrated his birthday on Tuesday.



Producer Satish to release two back-to-back films



NO POINT SUGARCOATING, THERE'S FIGHT FOR A SPOT BETWEEN RAHUL AND SARFARAZ: TEN DOESCHATE

PTI ■ PUNE

India assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate said on Tuesday that middle-order batters KL Rahul and Sarfaraz Khan are locked in a selection battle for the second Test against New Zealand here even though head coach Gautam Gambhir is keen to give the former, a long rope.

With India looking to bounce back from the eight-wicket thrashing at Bengaluru in the opening Test, focus will be on the team combination with Washington Sundar being added to the squad. Shubman Gill and Rishabh Pant are both aiming to shake off injury concerns for the match starting Thursday.

"Yeah, there's no point in sugarcoating it, there's a fight for a spot," ten Doeschate told the media when asked if Rahul and Sarfaraz were battling for a place in the team, here at the MCA Stadium ahead of India's training session.

"Sarfaraz was obviously brilliant in the last Test. I went to KL after the last Test (and) said how many balls do you play at (and) miss at? He didn't play at (and) miss at one ball and that's what tends to happen when you're not getting runs.

"There's certainly no concerns about KL, he's batting nicely, he's in a good mental space. But we are certainly



going to have to fit seven pieces into six spots for this Test and look at the pitch now and decide what's going to be best for the team," he said.

Sarfaraz scored a second-innings 150 in the Bengaluru game, while Rahul remained off-colour in both essays.

While admitting that it is difficult to keep Rahul out of the equation in the Test format, ten Doeschate said head coach Gautam Gambhir is "keen to" give him a long rope.

"It's not like we're worried about his

form. If you go on just the past three months since Gauri has been in here, he's keen to give him (Rahul) as much rope as we can. We have a lot of faith in him," he said.

"But at the same time, it's a very competitive environment, with Sarfaraz getting 150 plus runs (222 not out) in the Irani Trophy final. The decision will be what's best for the team, but we'll certainly back all the guys in," he added.

Pant, who did not keep wickets for a significant part of the opening Test,

and Shubman Gill, who missed the match due to stiffness in his neck, are close to attaining their full fitness.

"Rishabh is pretty good. I think Rohit (Sharmna) touched on it the other day. He was having a little bit of discomfort at the end range of his movement with the knee. But fingers crossed, he'll be good to keep in the Test as well," he said.

"He (Gill) looks so (available for this Test). He has batted last week in Bangalore, he had a few nets, he's got

a little bit of discomfort, but I think he'll be good to go for the Test," he added.

Ten Doeschate said the addition of Washington Sundar is "no desperate measure" but to add a bowling option who would take the ball away from the Kiwis left-handers.

"Definitely not. They (New Zealand) are filled with four left-handers in the XI. We've had Washy around the white-ball squad for a while and we like the way he operates. It's also nice to see that guys are getting rewarded for Ranji Trophy performance as well."

"We just want to make sure we're absolutely prepared for conditions here and if that does mean taking the ball away from the left-hander, we want that option," he added.

Ten Doeschate said Mohammed Siraj could be going through a "wicket-drought" but there was nothing to suggest that he was struggling for rhythm.

"Siraj bowled beautifully in the second innings. That hour of Test match cricket on the last morning was really high quality," he said.

"It maybe wasn't a nicking wicket, which is obviously his big strength, particularly to left-handers when he moves the ball across. There's nothing there to say like he's not bowling well or his rhythm is not good.



Cook backs Root to surpass Sachin Tendulkar as leading run-getter in Test cricket

PTI ■ DUBAI

Former England captain Alastair Cook feels Joe Root has the potential to surpass the legendary Sachin Tendulkar as the leading run-getter in Test cricket thanks to his insatiable hunger and incredible talent.

The 33-year-old Root currently has 12716 Test runs and is 3205 short of the Indian icon (15921).

Root occupies the fifth spot in the leading run-getter's chart at the moment with Rahul Dravid (13,288), Jacques Kallis (13,289) and Ricky Ponting (13,378) and Tendulkar ahead of him.

"I think Joe Root could set a mark, certainly on an English side, that'll be very hard to beat. But you just never know," Cook was quoted as saying by the ICC.

"I hope he can get very close, if not be the first person who scores 16,000 Test runs. It'd be a great achievement." Root overtook Cook as England's leading run-scorer in the longest format during the Multan Test against Pakistan earlier this month.

Having watched his compatriot go past him to become England's most decorated batter, the 39-year-old Cook struggled to express his feelings and called up Root to congratulate him for his massive feat.

"I watched the moment, then I rang him after the end of the play. I couldn't think of the right words to write in a text message," Coon said.

"So, I thought I'd just ring him, see what he was up to, and make sure he had a beer in his hand, which I think he did."

Root's remarkable form over the past four years has seen him score more than half of his total 35 Test centuries in that period, averaging close to 60.

Cook believes that he is currently the best batter in the world with New Zealand's Kane Williamson coming close to matching him.

"I think at this precise moment in time, I find it hard to see anyone playing as well as Joe Root. Over the last year or so, of the so-called 'Big Four', I think Williamson and him are probably in the best form at the moment."

"They're all wonderful, wonderful players, all very different, actually, in their methods and ways of playing. But one thing, which kind of unites them is that hunger and desire to keep improving and keep churning out the runs," Cook said.

Root will look to continue to amass big scores and add to his tally during the third Test against Pakistan in Rawalpindi, beginning on Thursday.

Moving to another topic, Cook has expressed his support for England's 'Bazball' style of play in Test cricket.

"I think the game has certainly made a big jump forward in what is now deemed possible in Test cricket."

"I think the jump happened in one day cricket first, probably. The fundamental change, certainly from the English point of view, is when Owen Morgan took the side forward in 2015. And obviously the Ben Stokes era has changed the mentality of what was possible."

We're here to make amends: Cummins

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Australian skipper Pat Cummins is determined to "make amends" against India in the upcoming five-match Test series, as he aims to reclaim the Border-Gavaskar Trophy for the first time in over a decade.

The two teams will face off in a five-match series starting November 22 in Perth. India will come into the contest with the Border-Gavaskar Trophy firmly in their grasp, having held it for nearly a decade and winning two consecutive series in Australia. "We've had a bit of a break, so I'm excited for the five match Test series. Excited to get into it," the 31-year-old said in Star Sports' Press Room. "We haven't had a lot of luck against India over the last few Test series, but we always pride ourselves on playing well here in Australia."

Inglis earns maiden call-up as NZ name squad for Women's ODI series against India

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

Wicketkeeper-batter Polly Inglis earned her maiden call-up as recently-crowned Women's T20 World champions New Zealand announced their 15-member squad for the upcoming three-match ODI series against India, beginning in Ahmedabad on Thursday.

Inglis, 28, was rewarded for consistent performances with both bat and gloves for Otago Sparks in the women's Super Smash and New Zealand A, leading to her first New Zealand Cricket central contract in June.

"We're really excited to introduce Polly for her first tour," Head coach Ben Sawyer said in a statement.

Mair and off-spinner Leigh Kasperek are the only two players missing from the



competition and throughout the New Zealand A series against England, so it's a great next step for her."

Lauren Down also returns to the squad after resuming international cricket in July following a maternity break.

Rosemary Mair, who sustained a serious back injury earlier this year, has been rested as part of her long-term rehabilitation.

squad that won the T20 World Cup in the UAE. "Touring India is one of the great experiences in world cricket," Sawyer said.

"It's such a special place to come and I know everyone is looking forward to the

challenge ahead.

"Alongside trying to win the series, the tour will serve as important preparation for next year's ODI World Cup in India."

New Zealand won the Women's T20 World Cup in Dubai with a 32-run win over South Africa.

"It's been an amazing 24 hours for this group becoming T20 World Cup champions," said Sawyer.

"We're relishing the win but when we get to India we'll need to refocus and set our sights on the next challenge."

New Zealand Women's ODI squad: Sophie Devine (C), Suzie Bates, Eden Carson, Lauren Down, Izzy Gaze, Maddy Green, Brooke Halliday, Polly Inglis (WK), Fran Jonas, Jess Kerr, Melie Kerr, Molly Penfold, Georgia Plimmer, Hannah Rowe, Lea Tahuhu.

Williamson ruled out of 2nd Test against India

PTI ■ PUNE

Senior New Zealand batter Kane Williamson will not be available for the second Test against India here as his rehabilitation from a groin strain is still not complete, the country's cricket board announced on Tuesday.

New Zealand lead the three-match series 1-0 after winning the first game by eight wickets in Bengaluru. The second match will start here on Thursday.

Williamson, who is yet to join the squad here, suffered the injury during the recent Test series against Sri Lanka.

Blackcaps head coach Gary Stead said Williamson was not yet ready even though he



has made significant progress. "We're monitoring Kane and he's tracking in the right direction, but isn't yet 100 per cent fit," said Stead in a statement issued by New Zealand Cricket (NZC).

"We're hopeful to see further improvement over the

coming days and have him available for the third Test. "We'll give him as much time as possible to get himself ready, but certainly continue to take a cautious approach," he added.

The third Test is scheduled in Mumbai from November 1.

Shaw left out of Mumbai squad for next Ranji Trophy clash due to fitness and disciplinary issues

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Top order batter Prithvi Shaw has been left out of the Mumbai squad for their next Ranji Trophy match against Tripura owing to fitness and disciplinary issues.

The match is scheduled to be played in Agartala from October 26 to 29. The right-handed opening batter, who has played five Tests, six ODIs and one T20I for India, seems to have run into trouble.

It is reliably learnt that the 24-year-old does not regularly attend the team's training sessions and has also appeared a "little overweight".

"You have to look at his fitness and his running when he is on the field. The MCA has a rich history and there cannot be exceptions for a certain



player," an official from Mumbai Cricket Association told PTI.

Shaw's form has been a concern given that he has scores of 7, 12, 1 and 39 not out in the two rounds of Ranji Trophy. The decision to drop him has been

taken by the Mumbai senior men's selection panel owing to his fitness and "general conduct".

The Mumbai selectors have named 29-year-old left-handed opening batter Akhil Herwadkar as

replacement. Herwadkar has played 41 first-class matches and averages 36.51 with seven centuries and 10 fifties.

Also, middle-order mainstay and India's T20I skipper Suryakumar Yadav has been rested from the Mumbai squad. Suryakumar scored seven in his only outing for Mumbai in their nine-wicket win over Maharashtra.

Mumbai squad: Ajinkya Rahane (c), Ayush Mhatre, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Akhil Herwadkar, Shreyas Iyer, Siddhesh Lad, Suryansh Shedge, Hardik Tamore (wk), Sidhaant Adhatrao (wk), Shams Mulani, Karsh Kothari, Himanshu Singh, Shardul Thakur, Mohit Avasthi, Juned Khan, Royston Dias.

MI, KKR among five IPL franchises bidding for teams in The Hundred: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mumbai Indians, Kolkata Knight Riders, Rajasthan Royals, Sunrisers Hyderabad and Lucknow Super Giants are among the IPL franchises who have submitted bids to acquire teams in the English Cricket Board-run The Hundred, according to a report.

The GMR Group, recently named the new owner of Hampshire, and Avram Glazer, co-owner of Manchester United Football Club, also submitted bids before the ECB's October 18 deadline for potential investors, reported ESPNcricinfo.

The ECB has invited bids for a 49 per cent stake in each of the eight franchises, with the board retaining majority control. "Expressions of interest

could be for all eight teams, which would be culled to four in the next step which will start in November when the investors get to meet the host counties of each Hundred franchise," stated the report.

"Following that, investors would need to prune their wishlist to four teams, as part of the second stage, which will then come down to two teams of which they would need to make their final choice."

The ECB is aiming to finalise investors by early 2025 but is committed to a deliberate approach to avoid "underselling what it believes is a valuable product".

ECB chairman Richard Thompson has also mentioned the possibility of a "hybrid" ownership model, where some teams remain under ECB control



while others are sold to private investors.

The report further says while several IPL franchises showed early interest, not all followed through with bids.

"Punjab Kings opted out, while there has been no confirmation on whether five-times IPL champions Chennai Super Kings and equity major CVC Capital Partners, which owns Gujarat Titans, have submitted bids," it added.

"Global sports investors INEOS, owned by Jim Ratcliffe, which owns a 27% stake in Manchester United and run the football club's operations wing, have also opted out of bidding."

One of the main concerns for IPL franchises was whether they would be "happy being passive investors".

