

QUOTE OF THE DAY
 Why are Congress leaders who said before the Assembly election that KCR's family had robbed TG using the Dharani portal not conducting an inquiry into the matter? What was the report of the 5-member committee on Dharani? Why are the culprits who looted in the name of the Dharani portal not being investigated? How can Congress leaders rob the people in the name of Dharani like the BRS? It seems that the Dharani Committee has a secret report on the subject.
 - Bandi Sanjay, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs

NDA will form govt again in 2029: Shah

RBI LIKELY TO KEEP INTEREST RATE UNCHANGED AT 6.5%

'We invested a lot to bring 'teddy bear' TO LIFE'

DON'T MISS...
TG to be world-class tourist...
 Many world-class tourist destinations in Telangana, previously neglected by the previous government, will be developed into national and international destinations, said Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao. He addressed the media during a study tour of Mahabubnagar district's Devarakadra constituency on Sunday. Under the guidance of Jupally, MP Mallu Ravi, and a team of MLAs, visited the Sarala Sagar project. Minister Jupally emphasised that Telangana takes pride in world-class tourist...
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BSP doesn't agree with Supreme ...
 BSP chief and former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mayawati on Sunday said her party doesn't agree with the recent Supreme Court's verdict allowing sub-classification within Scheduled Castes. The sub-classification of people within Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) has been permitted, our party doesn't agree with it at all, Mayawati said while addressing a press conference here. In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court on Thursday held that states are constitutionally ...
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India seeks duty concession on ...
 India is seeking customs duty concession on a number of goods including cars, commercial vehicles and machinery from Sri Lanka under a comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA), talks for which are underway, an official said. India has also sought easier visa norms to further facilitate entry of professionals from here, the official said. The 14th round of talks between senior officials of India and Sri Lanka was concluded recently in Colombo. Issues which came up for the talks included rules of origin, ...
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Won't retire until I get Olympic ...
 She has flattered to deceive for four straight Olympics but multiple World Cup medal winning archer Deepika Kumari has vowed not to quit unless she ends up on podium which she feels could be Los Angeles in four years' time. For Deepika, it has always been a case of not being able to display enough temperament in pressure situation at the grandest stage. "Obviously, I want to play more in the future and will continue my game," Deepika told PTI in an exclusive interaction at the India House here. "I really want ..."
 -SPORTS

CM Revanth begins pitching TG's USP in US

Our dream is to develop Telangana, says CM as he lands in New York

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Ambitious Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy exuded confidence to showcase investment opportunities in Telangana at the start of his 10-day tour of the US and other nations on Saturday. Armed with a massive mandate, the Chief Minister has lined up a slew of meetings with industrialists and honchos of major corporations to drive home the point that the state of Telangana is a fertile ground for massive investment opportunities and that his government is ready to do its best to smoothly channel investments. The Chief Minister said that his tour abroad for attracting investments from New York City is appropriate. Telugu NRIs came to welcome him with love in their hearts. "Our dream will unite us in developing Telangana," the CM said after landing in NYC. Earlier, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy was given a warm welcome on arrival at the JFK Airport on Saturday. Hundreds of Telugu NRIs waited two hours to welcome the CM. Kailash Kumar, the General Secretary of the Telangana state Congress Committee welcomed the Chief Minister at the JFK Airport in New York.



CM Revanth Reddy gets grand welcome in New York City

The CM's visit to the US and South Korea aims to seek investments for Telangana. The tour aims to attract investments into the state during meetings with CEOs and industrialists across various sectors. Meanwhile, an official statement from the CMO said that Revanth, who is accompanied by senior officials of the industries department, will return to Hyderabad on August 14. "Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu will also leave for the US on Sunday and will join the Chief Minister," the statement said. The tour aims to attract investments to the state and the CM's team is meeting CEOs and industrialists of various companies operating in the fields of IT, healthcare, manufacturing, etc. The Telangana CMO posted a message on X saying, "Chief Minister Shri @reventh_anumula has just landed in New York accompanied by the Minister for Industries and IT, Shri @OfIDSB and senior officials. The team is eager to kick start 10 days of meetings, discussions, and deliberations with top government and business leaders in the US and South Korea.

Thrilling penalty shoot out!

□ Sreejesh takes Indian hockey to Paris Olympics semifinals
PNS ■ PARIS
 A battle-hardened PR Sreejesh gave a big fillip to the Indian hockey team's aspirations of winning a second consecutive Olympic medal with his splendid shootout saves in a 4-2 victory over Great Britain that earned his side a place in the semifinals of the Paris Games here Sunday. Playing most of the match without key defender Amit Rohidas, who was shown a red card for hitting a rival player with his stick, the team did extremely well to hold Great Britain to 1-1 in regulation time. Great Britain dominated possession and played with man-to-man marking, not allowing India to attack much. In the absence of Rohidas, Manpreet Singh, who plays in mid-field, was asked to man the defence. Reduced to 10 men on the pitch, India could not play scoop balls, a strategy that worked for the side in previous matches, but it managed to escape without getting hurt.

Build on BRS' momentum

■ KTR advises govt in attracting investments
PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Government team travels to the US and South Korea to attract investments, I want to take a moment to wish @reventh_anumula and @Min_Sridhar_Babu gaaru "All the Best." I came across the schedule report-ed by the media and I'm pleased to see that the relationships we've nurtured over the years continue to attract significant new investments from marquee companies.
 BRS Working President KT Rama Rao said that he hopes the Congress government can continue bringing in investments and build on the 'strong' foundations the BRS has built. KTR extended his wishes to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and his team as they went on a foreign tour to attract investments through X on Sunday. "As a Telangana
 Continued on Page 2



We will invite tender for Uppal Flyover again: Venkat

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The Minister for Roads and Buildings, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, said that it is shameful that the construction of the Uppal Flyover could not be completed even after six years. We are going to invite tenders for the project once again, he said. Komatireddy Venkat Reddy was addressing the media in Hyderabad on Sunday. He said that after being in power for 10 years, BRS leaders said we made Hyderabad a cosmopolitan city. But they could not complete the flyover even after six years. Former CM K. Chandrasekhar Rao and former minister KT Rama Rao should be ashamed of it, Venkat added. He said that another Rs 200 crore to Rs 300 crore will be needed to complete the flyover.
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Key parliamentary panels constituted without elections

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 Key parliamentary panels, including the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), have started taking shape, mostly by consensus as against elections witnessed during the previous Lok Sabha. Besides the PAC, which examines government expenditure, the Committee on Public Undertakings, the Committee on Estimates, the Committee on Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the Joint Committee on Office of Profit and the Committee on Welfare of Other Backward Classes have been constituted without an election. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla is expected to nominate the chairpersons of the panels soon, parliamentary officials said. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju and his team of floor managers worked to ensure that appointments to the committees take place by consensus. As many as 19 nominations were received for the election to the PAC from the Lok Sabha.

Rains ravage western India



PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Chiranjeevi, Ram Charan, Allu Arjun contribute ₹1.25 crore to Kerala
 P11

GODAVARI-KAVERI LINK NWDA to weigh TG's objections

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The National Water Development Agency (NWDA) will discuss the Telangana government's objections regarding the Godavari-Kaveri linking issue on August 9. The discussion will be held under the supervision of NWDA Chairman Bhupal Singh at the Jal Soudha. NWDA officials conveyed a message regarding this to Telangana Irrigation officials. It may be recalled that a discussion has been going on for linking the Godavari and Kaveri rivers for many years. The Centre made proposals to pump water from Sannamkka Sagar and later from Itchampally to Kaveri. However, another proposal came up at the NWDA meeting that water should be pumped to Kaveri from the Indravati River. The NWDA will conduct a meeting on August 9 and clear the doubts of Telangana on the Godavari-Kaveri linking project. Meanwhile, the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) will meet officials of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh online on August 14 at 11 am and discuss supplying water to Chennai. KRMB Member Secretary DM Raupure sent a message regarding this to officials of both Telugu states.

91 killed, hundreds injured in Bangla clashes

PNS ■ DHAKA
 At least 91 people, including 14 policemen, were killed and hundreds injured on Sunday in fierce clashes between protesters demanding Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation and the ruling party supporters in different parts of Bangladesh, forcing authorities to cut off mobile internet and enforce a nationwide curfew for an indefinite period. The clashes broke out Sunday morning when protesters attending the non-cooperation programme under the banner of the Students Against Discrimination with the one-point demand of the government's resignation over a job quota system faced opposition from the supporters of the Awami League, Chhatra League, and Jubo League activists. At least 91 people have been killed in clashes, shootings and counter-chases across the country surrounding the non-cooperation program, leading Bengali-language newspaper Prothom Alo reported.

MAHILA CONGRESS PRESIDENT FIVE IN RACE TO BAG POST

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD
 Five women leaders are in the race for the Telangana Mahila Congress President post. Three of them are trying seriously to grab the post, it is learnt. The women leaders Bhavani Reddy, Parijatha Narsimha Reddy, Neelam Padma, Madhavi and Saritha Tirupathiah Yadav submitted their bio-data hoping to bag the Telangana Mahila Congress President post, it is learnt. However, the current President, Sunitha Rao Mogili, who hails from the Mudhiraj community, is hoping that the party would allow her to continue in the post. Sunitha may not try for another term if she is given a nominated post, it is learnt. Sunitha has been asking the party to give their due share of nominated posts as the party had given five nominated posts to women earlier. The women who got nominated leadership. However, Sunitha, who contested the Assembly elections from Goshamahal is in the good books of Mahila Congress President Alka Lamba. Women leaders have already submitted their bio-datas to Alka Lamba. In fact, Sunitha Rao's three year term as Telangana Mahila Congress President ended recently. The Congress high command may take a decision on whether to continue the present Telangana Mahila Congress President or not when the high command discusses the TPCC's new President. Sources said the party may take a decision on the TPCC's new President before local body elections. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is continuing as the TPCC President now.

Accept all Praja Vani complaints that can be resolved

● Planning board to hold review of Praja Vani every 3 months: Bhatti
● Submit report if any Govt policy needs change: Bhatti
PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu said that all complaints submitted through Praja Vani that can be solved should be accepted. Bhatti held a review along with Planning board Vice Chairman Chinna Reddy at the Secretariat here on Sunday. He announced that a review on the functioning of the Praja Vani programme would be held once in three months under the supervision of the Planning Department. If Praja Vani officials think that any changes should be made in the government approach for resolving complaints then they should give a written report to the government to consider amendments. The Deputy CM asked officials about the complaints received through Praja Vani and the way they were being addressed. He also sought details of department-wise complaints received so far. The officials explained the way various departments and Collectors were responding to address public complaints. Bhatti sought to know what kind of mechanism is in place in Praja Vani to let the complainant know about the status of one's complaint. Praja Vani Nodal Officer Divya Devarajan said that an SMS would be sent soon to the mobile phone of the complainant after a complaint is registered and another SMS would be sent after the complaint is resolved. There is no system at present to inform at what stage the complaint redressal process is and said they would try to put in place such a mechanism. The Nodal Officer said the bulk of the complaints pertained to new ration cards, pensions and the Dharani Portal. The Deputy CM said the government had constituted a sub-committee on new ration cards and a decision would be taken soon to sanction new ration cards.
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Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka, Planning board vice-chairman G Chinna Reddy participated in a meeting to review Prajavani program on Sunday

Monday Mirchi

JAYESH FOR JIBE, SHAILAJA FOR RESCUE

Leaders in other states may want to pluck senior bureaucrat Jayesh Ranjan from Telangana, given his accomplishments under the previous Bharat Rashtra Samithi regime and storied networking skills that have funneled substantial investments into Telangana. Yet, in tune with a Tamil proverb 'Yanaikkam adi carukkum' (meaning, 'even an elephant can slip'); Jayesh may have been taken for granted at least in some cases by guys smarter than him. In a curious development, BRS working president KT Rama Rao took a jibe at Jayesh Ranjan, once his man Friday, in the Assembly the other day. While speaking about investments that had come following his own visit to Davos, KTR said: "Since you were new then, the government seems to be misled by the officer". He then spoke about how Godi, a company with which the then government had signed a Rs 8,000 cr investment deal, had authorised capital of just Rs 1.5 crore. The whisper in the corridors of power is: How come KTR took a stand against his then IT Secretary Jayesh Ranjan? In a strange coincidence, during the same session, when questions were raised relating to 'Bathukamma sarees scam'; the Opposition dropped Shailaja Ramaiyer's name and sought to know whether she would have allowed any scam? For the unversed, she is Minister Sridhar Babu's wife, and the crux of the matter at issue sounds part official and part ghar ka mamla. So, it is easy to get at the truth.

'AMRAPALI BATCH' IAS OFFICERS FUME OVER THE NAME

Depending on the industry, even products under one batch have differing codes like numeric (say 001, 007, 008) alphanumeric (A180, B450) date (20240805) or special characters like #001. Given that no two human beings are exactly alike, it is but natural that All India Service officers of a particular batch would like to retain their individuality. Heartburn is inevitable if one of them becomes prominent and the others in the batch are identified with him or her as also-rans. Kata Amrapali, 2010 batch IAS officer, is no doubt holding key portfolios in the new Congress government. However, the other 2010 batch officers are being referred to as 'Amrapali batch officers' in some circles as if she is the engine and the others bogies attached to her. Naturally, some officers of the batch did not like this bunching, and they corrected people, saying use '2010 batch' instead. One bureaucrat, however great she or he may be, cannot subsume the work profile of others in the batch.

ARE OFFICIALS UNAWARE OF ALLOTMENT OF LAND TO NIKHAT?

When sports persons make a splash at international competitions, the state government concerned basks in reflected glory by announcing cash awards, allotment of land etc. Since bureaucracy moves at a snail's pace, it may be ages before the recipient of such awards gets it in his or her hands. Public memory is short and that of babies shorter. Recently Minister Ponguloti Srinivas Reddy announced that the Cabinet had approved

allotment of 600 sq yards of land for boxer Nikhat Zareen and cricketer Md Siraj. In February 2023 itself, Nikhat was allotted land on Road No 46 in Jubilee Hills and construction is in full swing. The larger question is now whether it is double allotment. The whispers in the corridors of power are that officers should have informed the Minister about the existing allotment.

THE BOSS WANTS SPEED WITH QUALITY

A little bird told us that, at a review recently, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu took the Industries Minister and top officials of the Industries Department a peg down. The Chief Minister apparently expressed his displeasure, saying they were not catching up with his own speed of execution. Stung by the remarks, the Minister dashed off a message in their WhatsApp group. In the message, he highlighting that the Chief Minister was far from pleased with their efforts to woo investors and industrialists. This message hurt senior IAS officer and Secretary to Government Industries N Yuvaraj. To prevent resentment from spreading, the very next day the Minister held a review with the department officials and instructed them to transform all industrial parks in the state so that they match the illustrious Sri City in Nellore. Now, poor officials have a formidable combination: speed with quality!

THE MAGIC OF MENTORING IN REMOTE AREAS

Excellence can thrive even in far-flung areas inhabited by tribals and other marginalized communities, if the government official at the helm and in charge of their uplift means business and does his duty conscientiously. The quintessence of this is the Project Officer of the Integrated Tribal Development Authority - Paderu, V Abhisek, whose initiative 'Super 50' has been transforming the lives of government school students across the district's 11 mandals. Launched in the academic year 2023-24, Super 50 is a meticulously designed program aimed at honing the academic prowess of Class 10 students. The first batch has already showcased exceptional results, with 37 out of 50 students securing seats in coveted government-run Colleges of Excellence through NEET. What sets this program apart is its unique and focused approach that lets students immerse themselves in an intensive study regimen, dedicating their day to mastering four core subjects. Evening student hours and interactive doubts-clearing sessions reinforce their learning. Going beyond academics, the initiative emphasizes holistic development through essay-writing, elocution contests, sports, motivational films, and book reading sessions. "Our goal is to create well-rounded individuals who are not just academically proficient but also confident and capable of facing the world," Project Officer V Abhisek says, with the confidence of a mentor who can work magic against odds.

--Yours truly

'Commence Yadadri Power Plant by March'

Invite tenders immediately for constructing staff quarters: Bhatti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu told Genco officials that power generation should commence at the 4,000 MW Yadadri Thermal Power Plant by March 2025.

Bhatti held a meeting at the Secretariat here on Sunday to review the construction of the Yadadri Power Plant with Genco officials.

He said that the first unit should be ready by October 30, the second unit by October 15, the third unit by February 2025, the fourth unit by December-end and the fifth unit by March 2025.

Genco officials said that some officers and staff were suffering from fever resulting in some delay in the work.

Responding immediately, Bhatti said that staff welfare is of top priority and ordered that a medical camp be organised immediately.

Mosquito nets should be provided in camps to protect



DCM Bhatti Vikramarka reviewing the Yadadri Power Plant on Sunday with the officials of Power Department

officers and staff and fogging should be done extensively in work areas, he said.

Bhatti also said that tenders should be invited for the construction of residential quarters to enable officers and staff to stay nearby.

Until the quarters are constructed, special buses would be provided for transporting officers and staff from Miryalaguda and Damaracherla, he said.

Bhatti also asked officials to submit a report within a week on the construction of the

Thalla Veerappagudem-Damaracherla four-lane bypass road for transporting ash from the Yadadri Power Plant.

He said he would visit the plant this month and meet officers and staff.

The meeting was attended by Energy department Principal Secretary Ronald Ross, Genco Directors Ajay, Sachdanandam, YTPS Chief Engineer Sammaiah, Transco JMD Srinivas, Deputy CM Special Secretary Krishna Bhaskar, SPDCL CMD Varun Reddy and others.

Give money to fishermen instead of fishlings: Jeevan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government should give money to fishermen instead of fishlings, Congress MLC T. Jeevan Reddy said in a letter he sent to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Sunday.

In his letter, Jeevan said the government had invited tenders in July for fishlings to distribute it to fishermen. However, contractors forced the government to postpone the tender process to make the government relax guidelines for the distribution of fishlings.

Fish size and the number of fishes distributed in ponds is important to ensure quality standards. It goes without saying that it is difficult to comply with regulations regarding quality, size and the number of fish being shipped, he said.

In these circumstances,

instead of direct distribution of fishlings by the state government, grants should be given to fish industrial cooperative societies after considering the area of their ponds so that the interference of middlemen can be stopped, he said.

If funds are provided to Fishermen Co-operative Societies through the Fisheries Department they will get a chance to get expected results, he said.

He said the government had spent around Rs 100 crore and the second round of the tender process has been taken up this August. In fact, under the contract system, it is possible to implement programmes only by looking at profits. So to eliminate the system of middlemen, the government distributes subsidized fishlings to fishermen and fishermen cooperative societies.



Build on BRS'...

Continued from page 1

The numerous announcements about the expansion of existing establishments are a testament to the success of Telangana's policies and initiatives, KTR said.

Under the leadership of KCR, Telangana consistently prioritized creating a favourable ecosystem for growth. We pioneered several innovative policies, such as TS-IPASS, and invested significantly in both physical and social infrastructure, he said.

Over the last decade, these efforts have resulted in attracting investments of around Rs 4,000 billion creating over 24 lakh jobs across various sectors, he said.

BJP demands White Paper on Central funds to Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP demanded that the state government should release a white paper on funds given by the Centre to Telangana.

Speaking to the media on Sunday at the State BJP office, the BJP's official spokesperson in TG, Rani Rudrama, said the Centre is giving funds to Telangana like a golden duck that lays golden eggs.

She said the details of funds given by the Centre to Telangana between 2016-2022 in the health sector as per the CAG report, which was being



Telangana BJP official spokesperson Rani Rudrama addressing the media at State BJP office on Sunday

placed in the House by the state government, is the best example of the Centre giving funds to the state.

However, it is surprising that the Chief Minister and

Ministers spoke against facts during the budget session, she said and added that the CM and his Ministers spoke lies even though the funds came from the Centre. She said the CAG report is a slap on the faces of the Congress and the BRS.

Rani Rudrama said the CAG report revealed the funds given by the Centre and funds returned from the state back to the Union Health Ministry. The Centre is like a golden duck for the state, however, the Congress and the CM have been airing the 'donkey egg' theory.

Cricketer Rayudu refuses BRS MLA Kaushik's request to Govt to allot him house site

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Indian cricketer Ambati Rayudu refused politely the request of BRS's Huzurabad MLA, Padi Kaushik Reddy, to the Telangana government to provide a 600 square yard house site in Hyderabad city to Rayudu. It may be recalled that the Telangana government made a statement in the Assembly that it is allocating a 600 square yard house site to Mohammed Siraj and boxer Nikhat Zareen apart from giving them Group-I jobs.

In this context, BRS MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy, who was a cricketer before entering politics, welcomed the decision of the government and appealed to the government to give house sites to fellow cricketers Pragman Ojha and Ambati Rayudu and shuttle

badminton player Gutta Jwala in Hyderabad.

However, thanking Padi Kaushik Reddy's request to the Telangana government, Rayudu said he doesn't want a house site.

"Kaushik Reddy gaaru... it is important to encourage players. I am happy that the Indian cricketer from Hyderabad, Mohammed Siraj, got recognition. However, I did not ask the government anything and did not expect anything. It is important for the government to give equal priority to players and games. Support is important to improve skills and develop players," Rayudu said. "As cricketers we can manage ourselves financially. We are lucky in that. I am respectfully refusing your (Padi Kaushik Reddy) request to the government to allocate a house site for me.

'Merger move...'

Continued from page 1

He said the BJP leadership will discuss it and announce an action plan opposing the state government's proposal.

Sanjay said the state government had implemented farm loan waiver schemes only for 18 lakh farmers. He said that the number of farmers who took Rs 1 lakh as loan was 36 lakh during BRS rule. It is shocking that the number of farmers, who took loans up to Rs 1.5 lakh did not cross even 18 lakhs.

It means that 70 per cent of farmers did not benefit from the farm loan waiver scheme but the Congress government is telling stories, he said.

Sanjay said that Congress

leaders are habituated to raising new issues to divert attention from the implantation of the farm loan waiver scheme and its 6-guarantees.

The Congress government has been enacting dramas in the name of the farm loan waiver scheme to win local body elections but it has no use for farmers, he pointed out.

Sanjay said the BJP will not let go of the Congress government regarding farm loan waiver and the so called 6-guarantees.

He said the BJP is getting ready to launch a protest along with farmers and the public under the leadership of BJP state President G. Kishan Reddy.

CM humiliated private school teachers: Vinod



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy humiliated teachers working in private schools during the Teachers Atmeya Sammelanam held at the LB Stadium on Friday, former BRS MP B. Vinod Kumar said. He said the BRS does not consider private school teachers differently and asked the CM not to ignore private schools.

Speaking to the media at the Telangana Bhavan on Sunday along with former MLC Naradasu Laxmana Rao, Vinod said that students pursuing education in government schools are more only in backward areas.

He said that people are sending their children to private schools. Even the CM would send his grandchildren to only private schools, he said and asked the CM who said that teachers in some private schools are Class 10 failed to reveal whose mistake is that.

"As per the Right to Education Act, schools can hire only trained teachers and many private schools have trained teachers. Revanth should withdraw his comments against private school teachers immediately.

91 killed, hundreds injured in...

Continued from page 1

According to the police headquarters, 14 policemen have been killed across the country. Of them, 13 were killed in Sirajganj's Enayetpur police station. One person was killed in Comilla's Elliotganj, the paper said. More than 300 policemen were injured, it added.

The fresh round of clashes erupted days after over 200 people were killed in violent clashes between the police and mostly student protesters demanding an end to the controversial quota system that reserved 30 per cent of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's War of Independence in 1971. Since then, more than 11,000 people have been arrested.

Officials claimed that today's protests were joined by unidentified people and activists of rightwing Islamic Shashontantra Andolon, which erected barricades on several major highways and within the capital city. The protesters attacked the police

stations and boxes, ruling party offices and residences of their leaders and burnt several vehicles, they added.

The situation prompted authorities to order a curfew in major cities and small towns across Bangladesh for an indefinite period from 6 PM Sunday, mobilising troops, paramilitary border guards BGB, and the elite anti-crime Rapid Action Battalion alongside police.

The government ordered the shutdown of Meta platforms Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp and Instagram. The mobile operators were ordered to shut down 4G mobile internet, the paper added.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Hasina said that those engaging in "sabotage" across the country in the name of protest are not students but terrorists and asked people to suppress them with a firm hand.

"Appeal to the countrymen to suppress these terrorists with a firm hand," she said.

Hasina called a meeting of the National Committee on

Security Affairs - the highest policy-making authority of national security - at Ganabhaban, the paper reported citing sources from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The meeting was attended by the chiefs of the Army, Navy, Air Force, police, RAB, BGB, and other top security officers.

The meeting came as renewed violence spread to several parts of the country.

The government has announced a three-day general holiday on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday to ensure public safety amid the ongoing violent protests across the country.

Giving details of casualties, the paper said eight people were killed in Feni, 22 including 13 policemen in Sirajganj, five in Kishoreganj, eight in Dhaka, five in Bogura, three in Munshiganj, four in Magura, three in Bhola, four in Rangpur, three in Pabna, five in Sylhet, three in Cumilla, two in Sherpur and two in Joypurhat. One person was killed in Keraniganj, one in Savar and one in Barisal.

We will invite...

Continued from page 1

"We will start construction from Uppal Circle to Ghatkesar ORR in 10 days. We will complete it in 18 months. We will also complete the six lanes Vijayawada-Hyderabad NH in the next three months," he said.

"We have requested Union Roads and Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari to increase the estimated cost to complete this project. Due to delays and not maintaining the existing road, the public is suffering," Venkat said.

The Minister said that if they do not complete the road, the TG government will repair the road with its own funds.

BJP has good future in Telangana, says Santosh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP has a good future in Telangana, the BJP's General Secretary (organisation) BL Santosh said. He directed party leaders to concentrate on local body elections.

Santosh came to the State BJP office here on Sunday and had a meeting with the BJP's Telangana General Secretaries.

Speaking on the occasion, Santosh said that BJP leaders and cadres have to work in tandem and he asked the General Secretaries to campaign hard at places where the party is weak.

He called upon the General Secretaries to launch protests

against the mistakes of the Congress government and asked party leaders to stand by the people. Later, Santosh held a special meeting with Goshamahala MLA T. Raja Singh about party programmes in the state. He also enquired about implementing programmes given by the party's national leadership and asked senior leaders about the party's standing in Telangana after the Lok Sabha elections.

Meanwhile, the BJP is conducting a meeting of its TG office bearers on August 6 under the leadership of Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy.

Thrilling penalty...

Continued from page 1

It all boiled down to how Sreejesh would perform and the veteran goalkeeper did not disappoint, blocking the third and fourth attempts by Connor Williamson and Phillip Ropper after the score was tied 2-2 in the shootout. James Albrey and Zach Wallace had scored earlier for Great Britain while skipper Harmanpreet Singh, Sukhjeet Singh, Lalit Upadhyay and Rajkumar Pal sounded the board for India.

"We had no option but to keep the score tied till the end. We focussed on defence, we played to a structure and today communication between the players was pretty good. It was a team effort," Harmanpreet said.

The skipper said they had to forget the red card and

move forward. "We could not change what had happened. It was a team effort, it was our best defence, playing with 10 men, that was a hard part."

"At this stage, we can't afford to be nervous, no matter who we play or we play extra man or not. That mindset will remain in the next match."

Harmanpreet acknowledged Sreejesh's role in the win but insisted it was not a one-man show. "Sreejesh is a legend, he is one of our best. He is saving us from day one. But even if you ask him, he will say it was a team effort, so team first, then individual."

India had taken the lead through Harmanpreet in the 22nd minute from a penalty corner before Great Britain drew level through

Lee Morton from a field effort in the 27th minute.

Once Rohidas, India's first rusher was given the controversial marching order, Great Britain attacked in numbers, constantly trying to take advantage of the one-man lead.

Great Britain dominated possession with their brisk start. The play was largely restricted to India's half. The red shirts build up their attacks with short, coordinated passes from both the flanks.

They earned their first penalty corner in the fifth minute for a dangerous play from the Indians when Zach Wallace sent a pass to Furlong just inside the circle. The umpire initially didn't award the short corner but the British went for a referral.

Accept all Praja...

Continued from page 1

The government is considering a proposal to issue different identity cards for sanctioning ration goods and welfare schemes and the government would take a decision soon, he disclosed. There is a possibility of sanctioning new pensions too, he added.

There is no issue giving sewing machines free to women without giving them training to use them first. The government, if required, would extend financial assistance for this, he said. Referring to complaints regarding CMRF, Bhatti said that if Arogyasri desks are strengthened in hospitals, then CMRF related complaints would decrease.

He said the government would consider giving training to mandal level staff to accept applications for zero electricity bills.

Cinare Paataku Pattabhishekam

Music programme to commemorate Dr C Narayana Reddy's 93rd birth anniversary to be organised by Vamsi Educational Trust and Vegasna Foundation.

Venue:

Sri Tyagaraya Ganasabha, at 4.30 pm on August 5.

Association of India

Srinivasulu, president of Association of India to address the media about the work done for the community, particularly schools all over India,

Venue:

The Park, Raj Bhavan Road, Hyderabad at 3.30 pm on August 5.

Chalo Collectorate

PDSU called for Chalo Hyderabad Collectorate on Monday. They will organise an agitation to release the pending scholarships, reimbursement, to fill vacant teacher posts, increase cosmetic charges and give free bus pass to every student.

Welcome to world champion

Welcoming World Champion, Olympian, Telangana star boxer Nikhat Zareen August 5 at 4:45 pm.

Venue:

Shamshabad Airport (Domestic arrivals)

Gaddar Foundation

First death anniversary of Gaddar. Gaddar Foundation chairman Gummadri Surya Kiran said that officials from across the country would attend the anniversary.

Venue:

Ravindrabharathi on August 6.

City Pioneer



HYDERABAD | MONDAY | AUGUST 5, 2024

03

Relocation of Hyd zoo; RTI query yields no information

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

After Hyderabad-based activist Karim Ansari raised a query under Right to Information (RTI) Act regarding the move to relocate Hyderabad Zoo Park from Bhadurpura to Shadnagar, the authorities responded that there is no such information regarding the relocation of Hyderabad Nehru Zoo park. Moreover, there are no clear copies or verified links to any gazettes, notifications, circulars or any other public communications that provide information on this matter.

TG to be world-class tourist destination: Minister Jupally

Telangana takes pride in world-class tourist destinations, including scenic beauty, famous pilgrimage sites, and historical treasures

JUPALLY KRISHNA RAO

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Many world-class tourist destinations in Telangana, previously neglected by the previous government, will be developed into national and international destinations, said Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao. He addressed the media during a study tour of Mahabubnagar district's Devarakadra constituency on Sunday. Under the guidance of Jupally, MP Mallu Ravi, and a team of MLAs, visited the Sarala Sagar project.



Minister Jupally Krishna Rao addressing the media during his visit to the Sarala Sagar project on Sunday

Minister Jupally emphasised that Telangana takes pride in world-class tourist destinations, including scenic beauty, famous pilgrimage sites and historical treasures. He criticised the previous government for neglecting tourism development over the last decade, despite many opportunities

and resources. Under Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's leadership, plans are now being made to develop the existing tourism areas in the State, he added. Jupally explained that the unified Palamuru region, where efforts to attract tourists, promote tourist areas

and create infrastructure such as roads are underway. Sarala Sagar and Koil Sagar, which have the second automatic siphon system in Asia, will be developed as tourist destinations. Additionally, the Kurumurthy temple will be developed as part of temple tourism.



Infrastructure such as roads would be developed to promote tourist places and attract tourists in the unified Palamuru region. Under CM Revanth Reddy, plans are now being made to develop existing tourism areas also.



Sarala Sagar and Koil Sagar, which have the second automatic siphon system in Asia, will be developed as tourist destinations.

ZENITH OF DANCING GLORY

Much needs to be desired about the functioning of the State academies, the Sangeet Natak Academy and the Sahitya Academy, which are supposed to promote research and disseminate scientific temper in the field. The appointment of dance guru Alekhya Punjala as the chairperson of Sangeet Natak Academy has kindled the hopes of music and dance lovers that here is a person who can put things in the right perspective and give the right direction to the august body.

tivals like the famous Khajuraho Dance Festival and Konarak Dance Festival. May her ambition be fulfilled to make Hyderabad the dance capital of the country.

BROADCASTER PAR EXCELLENCE

As a lyricist, prolific writer, renowned broadcaster and orator Voleti Parvathesam has become a byword for literary excellence in the two Telugu States. He has 40 musical operas to his credit. As an able broadcaster with the AIR and Doordarshan, he was instrumental in conducting Ashtavadhanas and

GIFT OF THE GAB

COVID-19 continues to affect many people in many ways still, long after the pandemic has subsided. It metamorphosed the literature and art scene... making online meets become common.

One such forum is the B Plus YouTube channel floated by Rayavaram Bhaskar, an NRI, during the 'Covid Days' - to celebrate the Telugu Story...through once a week meet via zoom. Literature lover Vijayaradhni Jeedigunta, son of radio personality Jeedigunta Sreerama Chandra Murthy, instituted



With many awards and honours to her credit, Alekhya has trained several batches of upcoming artistes during her stint as the head of the department of the Potti Srimulu Telugu University. She is the first woman to take up the responsibility as the chairperson of Sangeet Natak Academy.

As a chairperson she wants to foster dance by collaborating with the tourism and endowments departments and thereby hold dance fes-

Satavadhanas. Political leaders, social reformers, great writers, musical geniuses, have all been interviewed by Parvathesam for Doordarshan.

It is in the fitness of things that Parvathesam was conferred with Dr C Narayana Reddy Sahitya Puraskaram at Ravindra Bharati auditorium on Wednesday last by Justice Radharani and retired IAS officer Ramanachari to mark Cinare's birth anniversary.

an award in memory of his father. Gala Kala - for excellence displayed in story narration, had Akashvani Hyderabad Newsreader Bhamidipati Sarat Jyotsna walk away with the second prize, for narrating Purnanam Subrahmanyam Sarma's 'Nadi Nadi Gosta Nadi', from his most celebrated literary work - 'Ilaali Mucchathu'.

VENKOB R BALANTRAPU
Senior Journalist
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Contractors, GHMC staff ask ECI to clear pending bills

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The contractors who arranged basic facilities for elections and employees of the GHMC who additionally worked have not received their remuneration from the Election Commission of India (ECI). An official said that around Rs 100 crore of is still pending for the elections in Hyderabad district. "They have released advances but they did not released the balance amount and the closing amount," the official added.

Even the GHMC employees have not received their remuneration for their additional work during the election. An

employee of the GHMC said that during the election code, the officials were very strict with employees and they did not give leave to them. Thousands of employees conducted the election process. Some people may have been transferred or suspended for not attending election training classes. "It has been months since the elections are over but we have not received our remuneration yet", a GHMC employee said.

Contractor Rajesh Lahoti said that the contractors worked during the 2023 Assembly elections and Parliament elections. "We have so many representation letters to the Election Commission of

India (ECI) to clear our bills. But nothing had happened. We are facing financial problems as crores of money is still pending before the ECI."

Rajesh said, "We worked at Distribution, Reception and Counting Centres (DRC), assured minimum facilities (AMF), and basic minimum facilities (BMF). "A file (No. 2682) is pending with the finance department for releasing Rs 27 crore," he added.

During the election time, they made tent house arrangements, tables, chairs, repair works of toilets, carpentry works including labour, transport, electrical arrangements and other civil works.

Juvenile among eight held for dacoity

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner's Task Force (South West) Zone on August 3 arrested eight persons, including a juvenile for dacoity.

The accused were identified as Mohammed Aijaz Qureshi (22) a cloth store employee of Bazarghat; Sahel Fardeen Khan (21) of Bazarghat; Nerati Prashanth (22) of Humayun Nagar; Kollapuri Sai (22) of Humayun Nagar; Peyyala Rajashekar (26); Mohammed

Khaleel (22) and Gimka Abhilash Mohan (19), all from Vijaynagar Colony. The accused were held



based on a complaint by the victim M Srimanth Kumar who was robbed of his mobile phone and a gold chain. The

incident occurred at the PS Nagar under Vijaynagar Colony when the accused stopped Vijay's car while he, along with friends, was going to Asifnagar. The victim was robbed at knife point. The police seized one Apple I-Phone belonging to the complainant, a gold chain belonging to the complainant's friend, a knife and a two-wheeler.

The accused were arrested under Sections 310(2) R/w 3 (5) of BNS, Sec 25 (1)(b) of Arms Act.

Justice for women, children get priority in State: DGP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Director General of Police (DGP) Dr Jitender on Sunday said justice for women and children is the highest priority in the State.

"A systematic and structured system of supervision and monitoring of investigation and prosecution is being followed in respect to serious offences. This has yielded rich dividends in terms of convictions received in such crimes," said the DGP.

"In 2024, Telangana Police achieved good convictions, including a recent capital punishment awarded by the Metropolitan Special Judge Court, Ranga Reddy, in a case involving rape and murder of a young girl in Narsingi police station (Cr No: 818/2017 U/s Section 363, 366,376(A),302 IPC, Sec 5 r/w 6 Protection of children from sexual offences Act-2012."

There has been a significant increase in convictions under

rape and POCSO cases this year, with 15 convictions for 20 years, 2 convictions for 25 years, and 11 convictions for life imprisonment, totalling 28 convictions. The highest number of significant convictions were recorded in Hyderabad and



Rachakonda, each with a total of five convictions.

The DGP highlighted a few significant convictions, including a case in Hyderabad, a father of 8 children was awarded life imprisonment for repeatedly raping his own daughter; in a case of unnatur-

al sex with a boy in Adilabad, the offender was awarded rigorous imprisonment for 20 years; a rapist was awarded a jail term of 25 years for raping his own daughter.

In most cases of crime against women and children the crime (almost 95%) is committed by known persons. This often results in victim/family members turning hostile during trial. Continuous support by Bharosa and local Police has ensured that in the cases the prosecution case was well supported with evidence.

The DGP directed officials to focus on the quality of investigation to secure convictions. It was reiterated by the DGP that there shall be zero tolerance for crime against women and children. He appreciated the role of Bharosa Centres, investigating officers, court duty officers and prosecutors in obtaining these important convictions which would act as deterrent against such crimes.

'Cong govt failed to serve quality meals at schools'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Students of Kothapalli Government School of Kotagiri Mandal, Nizamabad district were served rice mixed with chilli paste and oil to fill their hungry stomachs. Reacting to this news, Bharat Rashtra Samithi former MLA T Harish Rao stated that it is inhumane to serve poor quality lunch in government schools.

He also stated that the Congress government is so irresponsible towards the future citizens of India. It has stopped the CM's breakfast scheme which provides nutritious food to the students and miserably failed to provide mid-day meals. "This is proof of the careless attitude of the Congress government. The students are not getting proper meals due to the pending food bills and wages of cook-cum-helpers related to the

mid-day meal scheme. I request Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka to respond immediately and pay the pending bills of the mid-day meal scheme, pay the salaries of the workers and fill the stomachs of the students studying in government schools", he added.

The Nizamabad District Education Officer conducted an inquiry on food issues served at Kothapalli Government School on Sunday.

Instructions were given to the concerned cooks and teachers. He stated that steps have been taken to provide quality meals to the students from Monday. So far, the District Education department officials released Rs 58.69 crore towards the arrears to be paid to the mid-day meal workers. Another Rs 18 crore will be released on Monday.

Doctor highlights shortage of breastmilk banks in India

MOHAMMED BALEEGH ■ HYDERABAD

With the World Breastfeeding Week underway, a Hyderabad-based doctor has highlighted the shortage of breast milk banks in India.

Speaking of breast milk banks, Senior Consultant Neonatology and Pediatrics at KIMS Cuddles, Dr Aparna C said, "Breast milk banking is an upcoming concept wherein a donor mother's breast milk is pumped, pasteurised and is usually frozen for long-term storage. Whenever a baby is in need of the donor milk, the milk is warmed back to room temperature and given to the baby. It is similar to the process in blood banks. Any mother who has a quantity of milk exceeding her child's requirements and is free of infections such as HIV, Hepatitis B and is non-smok-

Breast milk banking is an upcoming concept wherein a donor mother's breast milk is pumped, pasteurised and is usually frozen for long-term



Any mother who has a quantity of milk exceeding her child requirements can donate milk

er can donate milk. Stressing on the shortage of milk banks in India, Dr Aparna said, there is one milk bank at our hospital which stores 10-12 liters of milk every month.

Mothers are tested and infections are ruled out and the milk is pasteurised and stored. It is dispensed when babies in the NICU require it. This milk is very precious; it is used for very low birth weight babies. 3.5 million pre-term babies are born in India; However, there are only

100 milk banks in India. Statistics suggest that the number of milk banks in India is insufficient. There are 5 to 7 milk banks in Hyderabad; Explaining the golden hour in the context of breastfeeding, the doctor said, for any baby, golden hour refers to the first hour after

the birth. It is the birth right of every baby to be started on breastfeeding within the first hour of the birth.

Larger the number of babies put on breastfeeding postpartum, the greater the success of breastfeeding at four weeks, four months, six months and beyond. It is important, because in case there is cesarean birth or a difficult labour, the doctors don't press for breastfeeding rather they give a formula.

JAPANESE MIYAWAKI TECHNIQUE

Environmentalist on a mission for green cover

RASHMI BHUMIREDDY ■ HYDERABAD

With an aim to enhance greenery across Hyderabad and to provide fresh air to the people, Mahesh Talari, an environmental enthusiast has implemented a Japanese Miyawaki technique, which creates dense forests with native plants. Though this method has been implemented in various parts across the country, many environmentalists and social workers are not showing attention or prominence to it. However, Mahesh wants to make the technique popular by implementing it to grow forests in his NGO's land.

Maresh runs Ever Green Again, an NGO. He has been an environmentalist since his school days. His passion for nature has driven him to set up an NGO. He has come across various methods of afforestation or enhancing greenery but the Miyawaki method introduced by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki has caught his atten-



Mahesh Talari planting saplings

tion. He began implementing this method to enhance greenery in Hyderabad. Speaking to the Pioneer Correspondent, Mahesh said, "In urban areas, we can witness

a lot of open plots lying empty or filled with trash. So, I thought of doing something we can be friendly to the environment and soon I got an idea of why not planting saplings. With the idea

To increase greenery across the city, especially in urban areas, the Miyawaki method is a unique approach to fast-growing native forests

This method focuses on recreating natural forests with native species, allowing them to grow quickly and become self-sustaining in a short period

to increase greenery across the city, especially in urban areas, I opted for the Miyawaki method which is a unique approach to fast-growing native forests. I have started this method since 2020 in open government plots in Hyderabad by planting Jamma, Neem, Banyan and others. This method focuses on recreating natural forests with native species, allowing them to grow quickly and become self-sustaining in a short period.



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Information and Technology Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu has called on the Central government to declare the Wayanad tragedy a national disaster and provide support to the State.

He emphasised that the nation will not forgive treating it merely as a State issue. "Such an incident has never happened in the past," he said. Sridhar



Babu also urged the Central government to address the situation from a humanitarian perspective rather than a political one, noting that more than 350 people have died. He also requested early warning systems for extreme weather events like heavy rains, cloudbursts, landslides, and mudslides. He suggested using modern science to map areas prone to landslides.

'Govt committed to promoting medical edn, health sector'

Minister for Revenue Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy vows to ensure more funds for village development

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Minister for Revenue Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy on Sunday asserted that the Congress government is committed to promoting medical education and health sector. The government also formulated a plan for the development of villages. He elaborated that works related to development of cement concrete roads and drainages would be taken and completed at a brisk pace.

He inaugurated a health sub-centre building built at a cost of Rs 20 lakh in Guvvalagudem village under Nelakondapalli mandal of the district on Saturday.

Earlier, the Minister laid the foundation stone for development of cement concrete roads at a cost of Rs 10 lakh. He distributed Chief Minister Relief Fund cheques worth Rs 36,35,000 to 140 beneficiaries of Nelakondapalli village.

Within one month of Congress coming to power in Telangana, it increased the health insurance cover under Rajiv Aarogyasri Health Scheme to Rs 10 lakh. He asked the health sub-centres to provide better treatment facilities to patients.

Under the crop loan waiver scheme, the government waived loans up to Rs 31,000 crore in a gap of just one month. The



Minister for Revenue Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy inaugurating a health sub-centre at Guvvalagudem village on Sunday

state government is committed to solve the problems related to Dharani portal. The problems related to the Dharani portal would be solved within one or one-and-half month.

He announced that 3,500 Indiramma Houses would be built in Palair constituency. The government would build 4.50 lakh houses at a cost of Rs 2,20,000 crore. Similarly, house sites would be distributed among the homeless poor.

Within a month of submitting applications, CMRF cheques would be distributed to beneficiaries, he said. The government works to see smile on the faces of women and farmers. Later, he planted saplings at the health sub-centre premises. Later, the minister laid the foundation stone for development of CC Roads in Chennaram village at a cost of Rs 10 lakh.

At his camp office in Kusumanchimandal, he distributed CMRF cheques worth Rs 46.20 lakh benefiting 161. Telangana Government Warehousing Corporation Chairman Rayala Nageswara Rao, state irrigation development corporation chairman Muvva Vijay Babu, DMHO Dr B Malati, R and B SE Hemalata, Khammam RDO G Ganesh, elected people's representatives and others took part in the event.

Probe ordered into beating of a woman by cop

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Shadnagar Detective Inspector Rami Reddy and four other officials allegedly detained a woman in a gold theft case and beat her to confess. After this incident came to notice of Cyberabad Commissioner, he called an inquiry into the incident.

A man named Nagender had complained to the police against a couple named Sunita and Bhimaiah for gold theft in Ambedkar Colony in Shadnagar town. The Shadnagar Police took Sunita and Bhimaiah and their 13-year-old son to the police station, where the police allegedly beat them.

A video of Sunita being beaten went viral in the social media after the incident happened. Sunita said that after they took the three of the family into custody they initially beat her husband and released him. She and her son were taken into custody and the police beat her mercilessly. She claimed that in the night, Sunita was brought to the police station, she was undressed, put sticks between her legs, and beat her on chest from 9 pm to 2 am.

Congress to commemorate 30 yrs of Muslim reservation

Series of events planned to highlight the impact of reservation on Muslims

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress has announced a series of events to celebrate the 30th anniversary of introducing reservations for Muslims in united Andhra Pradesh, culminating in a grand event on August 25.

The first GO proposing reservation for Muslims was issued on August 25, 1994, by the Congress government led by Chief Minister Kotla Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy.

The order, GO Ms No: 30, was a pioneering move that provided reservation to Muslims along with 14 other Backward Classes.

Addressing a press conference at the Gandhi Bhavan on Sunday, Hyderabad DCC President Mohammed Waliullah Sameer and senior leader Mateen Shareef said the Congress revolutionized the lives of nearly 20 lakh poor Muslims by providing a 4% quota in jobs and education from 2004-05.

Sameer highlighted the crucial role of Mohammed Ali Shabbir, who was elected as an MLA in 1989 and initiated the drive for Muslim reservation by establishing the country's



Hyderabad DCC president Mohammed Waliullah Sameer

first Minorities Welfare Department and introducing a Minorities Welfare Budget.

On August 25, 1994, the Congress government issued GO Ms No 30 to provide reservation for Muslims along with other backward classes. Following this, the Puttuswamy Commission was set up to implement the reservation. However, after the Congress lost the 1994 elections, the TDP government extended the Commission's term without a report, delaying its implementation.

Before the 2004 elections, the then Congress President Sonia Gandhi included a 5% Muslim reservation promise in the party's manifesto. After the Congress returned to power in Andhra Pradesh in May 2004,

the then Chief Minister Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy and Shabbir Ali, then a minister, introduced 5% reservation for Muslims within 58 days. GO Ms No 33, issued on July 12, 2004, granted reservation in jobs and education.

However, GO Ms No 33 faced legal challenges and was annulled by the Andhra Pradesh High Court on September 21, 2004. After a legal battle, the reservation was reduced to 4% by GO Ms No 23 on July 7, 2007, for socially and economically backward Muslims.

"Due to the 4% reservation, the Muslim community has seen significant advancements, with nearly 14,000-15,000 doctors and 5 lakh engineers emerging from professional courses. The BC-E reservation has also been implemented in local bodies, leading to the election of Muslims as Sarpanches, ZPTC and MPCC members, councillors, deputy mayors, and mayors," Sameer said.

Sameer said that as part of the celebration, the Congress will organise campaigns in the mainstream media and on social media.

Komatireddy advises youth to develop skills

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has said that a skill development institute would be set up in Nalgonda district to provide employment and employment opportunities to educated unemployed youth.

On Sunday, he distributed free sewing machines through Prateek Foundation to 30 women who were trained under Nyack at a municipal park near his camp office in Nalgonda.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that various types of training would be



Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy distributing sewing machines to self-employed women in Nalgonda on Sunday

imparted to the unemployed youth educated through

NAAC, especially to the women.

He said that a skill development centre is being built in the district to provide job and opportunities to the educated unemployed youth of the district, which will be completed soon. He said that women trained tailoring can earn Rs 500 to Rs 1000 per day if they work hard and it will make them self-employed and they can also stand on their own feet. He urged the educated youth not to remain idle, but to get trained in some field and become self-employed so that they can stand by the families.

Ponnam stresses need to increase green cover

PNS ■ HUSNABAD

Minister for Transport and Backward Classes Welfare Ponnam Prabhakar has appealed to the people to make the Vana Mahotsavam and cleanliness drive programmes launched by the state government a grand success.

He was taking part in a series of developmental programmes in Husnabad on Sunday.

Addressing a gathering, he called upon people to join the cleanliness drive. He stressed to create awareness among people on hygiene and cleanliness. He suggested prevention of drinking water contamination, besides accumulation of sewer.

He also underlined the need for maintaining personal hygiene and educate the people on adverse impact of plastics. Laying emphasis on implementing sanitation programmes in schools and



Minister for Transport Ponnam Prabhakar planting a sapling in Husnabad on Sunday

Anganwadi centers.

Besides the elected people's representatives, youth, voluntary organisations, local peoples should take part in the exercise. Saplings should be planted on vacant

sites, he said calling for prevention of depletion of forest cover. Cutting down of trees would have adverse impact on environment, which is essential for sustenance of human race.



Two dead in scooty-RTC bus collision

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

A 35-year-old man died in a road accident at the corner of Dargah Road in the Rangapur suburb on Sunday.

Hazrat Begum (35) and Abdul Rahman (12), residents of Chandrayan Gutta, died on the spot in an RTC bus and scooty collision. The accident took place when Hazrat Begum, who was traveling on the scooty, attempted to overtake another vehicle and collided with an oncoming RTC bus at a hair-pin curve at Rangapur village. Another passenger, Rahim (9), sustained serious injuries and is reported to be in critical condition. Police reached the scene and registered a case.

Fourth City is 'Congress conspiracy' to grab land: Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Fourth City idea is a conspiracy of the Congress to collect and loot thousands of acres, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said.

Bandi Sanjay demanded that the Congress government should release a white paper on land alienation through the Dharani Portal. The Congress government should reveal what the Dharani Committee has found and why no action is being taken against the KCR family which grabbed lands, he said.

Speaking to the media after taking part in Bonalu celebrations at Gurranguda on Sunday, Sanjay said that land 'Danda' is going on in a big way behind the move for the Fourth City by the Congress government.

The Union Minister said that Congress leaders have collected thousands of acres in Maheshwaram in advance and are getting ready to seize valuable real estate costing several

crores. Sanjay said that a scam involving Rs 2 lakh crore was engineered in the name of the Dharani Portal by the BRS government.

Calling it the biggest scam in the country, Sanjay said that Congress leaders are also getting ready to grab assets worth thousands of crores following the path shown by the BRS.

Union Minister of State Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Chevella MP Vishweshwar Reddy, BJP state Vice-President Gangidi Manohar Reddy, district President Bokka Narsimha Reddy, state representative J. Sangappa and state leaders Andela Sriramulu Yadav attended Bonalu celebrations at Gurranguda in Maheshwaram.

Sanjay said the Fourth City will not bring any benefits to the public except Congress leaders. The local Congress leader in Maheshwaram has been given the responsibility to take over lands, he said.

Sanjay said the Congress



government which is changing the name of the Dharani Portal to Bhumata, is preparing to use Bhumata for grabbing lands. During BRS rule, the biggest scam in the country took place using the Dharani Portal.

When Telangana state was formed in 2014, there were 24 lakh assigned lands. How come those lands have declined to just five lakh now, he asked.

The Union Minister said that BRS leaders grabbed assigned lands, Shikam lands, endowment, forest and Bhoodan lands along with land belonging to the poor using the Dharani Portal. What are the details regarding land registra-

tions? The Congress government is not releasing them, he pointed out.

Sanjay said the value of those lands is almost Rs 2 lakh crore. "Why are Congress leaders who said before the Assembly election that the KCR family had used Dharani to grab lands on a large scale not conducting an inquiry into the matter? What was the report of the 5-member committee on Dharani which was appointed after the Congress came to power? Why are the culprits who grabbed lands using Dharani not brought to justice? It seems that a secret report has been given on the subject," he said. Sanjay said that is why Congress leaders are planning to grab lands using the Fourth City and Bhumata.

Looking at the behaviour of Congress leaders, it does not appear that even a yard of land will be left in future. The government should release a white paper on alienation of Dharani lands if it has any sincerity, he said.



C Narayana Reddy

NS project crest gates to be lifted today

PNS ■ NALGONDA

District Collector C Narayana Reddy, in a statement asking people living downstream of the project to be vigilant as the radial crest gates of the Nagarjuna Sagar project will be lifted at 8 am on Monday as the reservoir is likely to be filled to its full capacity.

He appealed to the people not to venture into the river for bathing, youth not to go to the river for swimming and also not to take cattle, goats, buffaloes etc. into the river.

He said that at present, there is a huge flood from Srisailem project to Nagarjuna Sagar project and at any time the Nagarjuna Sagar project reservoir will reach its full storage capacity. The full capacity of the project is 312.505 tmcft, which has reached 266.358 tmcft so far, the Collector said, adding that the full capacity of the Nagarjuna Sagar project reservoir is likely to be reached anytime in view of the flood situation from the Srisailem project.

About two lakh cusecs of water is being released downstream through the radial crest gates of the Nagarjuna Sagar project.

Aarogyasri dues cleared to hospitals in Nizamabad dist

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

Performing surgeries under Aarogyasri scheme has picked up momentum in the district as the Congress government has cleared the dues to various hospitals piled up during the BRS regime.

Therefore, the private hospitals have been vying with each other to get listed under Aarogyasri network hospitals as the Congress has cleared the dues and moreover doubled the treatment cost under Aarogyasri after 11 years.

The state government paid Rs 5 crore dues to the Government General Hospital here, which conducted 3,901 surgeries from January to July this year. On an average, at least 20 surgeries are being performed per day under Aarogyasri.

Patients have been visiting the GGH here from as far as Adilabad and Karimnagar for knee-replacement surgeries.

The spinal cord surgery, neurosurgery and brain surgeries are also being performed at the hospital. As a result, the number of patients visiting

the hospital has increased.

With adoption of simplified treatment procedures under Aarogyasri, the patients gained confidence in the scheme with commencement of treatment to the patient within 24 hours of admission. In all, 163 new diseases have been included in the list of diseases taking the total number of diseases to be treated to 1835. This included the knee-replacement surgery. Therefore, at least 15 knee-replacement surgeries are being performed at the GGH every month.

ACROSS THE STATES



12 Bangladeshi nationals arrested in Tripura

Twelve Bangladeshi citizens who entered Tripura without valid documents were arrested from different parts of the state, police said on Sunday. Acting on intelligence inputs about the presence of Bangladeshi nationals, police, in coordination with BSF personnel, conducted raids at Lankamura, Joyagar, and Ramagar under West Agartala police station on Saturday night and arrested the 12 people, including three women. "During interrogation, they admitted to entering India from Bangladesh without valid documents. They were arrested for violating the Indian Passport Act," said Kanti Bardhan, the second officer-in-charge (OC) of West Agartala police station. He added that police have increased vigilance along the border areas due to rise in infiltration. "We are enhancing surveillance along the border as this matter is considered sensitive. Police will continue such operations to apprehend infiltrators," he added.



Will bring law for life sentence in 'love jihad' cases

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said his government will soon introduce a law for life imprisonment in cases of 'love jihad'. Speaking at the state BJP executive meet here, he said, "We spoke about 'love jihad' during the elections. Soon, we will bring a law, which will award life imprisonment in such cases." Sarma also said a new domicile policy will be introduced soon, under which only those born in Assam will be eligible for state government jobs. He maintained that indigenous people have received priority in the "one lakh government jobs" provided as per a pre-poll promise, which will be evident when the complete list is published. The CM said the Assam government has also taken a decision regarding the sale of land between Hindus and Muslims.



Delhi LG calls ground reality 'shameful'

Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena on Sunday inspected three arterial drains in the Nizamuddin area and flagged their state "appalling & shameful" that were found to be heavily choked with silt, sludge and debris, Raj Niwas officials said. Hitting back at the Lt Governor, the AAP, in a statement, said, "Now that the monsoon is almost over, the LG has come forward, just to pay lip service and engage in dirty politics. It would have been better if the LG had taken action against the Chief Secretary and the PWD Secretary, as well as any other officers involved in the wrongdoings." "There is still time for the LG to take action against CS Naresh Kumar; otherwise, everything else is just a photo opportunity and blatant politics mere lip service," they said. In a series of posts on X, Saxena said he visited and inspected the Barapulla, Kushak and Sunehri drains and the historic Barapulla bridge at Nizamuddin today. "The reality on the ground is appalling & shameful."

KEDARNATH RESCUE OPERATION

Rains ravage western India

DEATH TOLL IN LANDSLIDES IN WAYANAD AND HIMACHAL ROSE TO 221

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Heavy rains lashed western and central parts of India on Sunday while a cloudburst in Jammu and Kashmir led to the closure of the arterial Srinagar-Leh national highway, cutting off the Kashmir Valley from Ladakh and rendering the Baltal base camp for the Amarnath Yatra inaccessible. The death toll in last week's landslides in Kerala's Wayanad and Himachal Pradesh rose to 221 and 11, respectively, while more than 370 people, including pilgrims, stranded on the rain-ravaged trek route to Uttarakhand's Kedarnath, were evacuated.



and water discharge from the Khadakwasla dam, officials said. In view of the discharge of water from Khadakwasla, Mulshi, Pavana and other dams in the Pune region, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde directed authorities to be alert and shift people from dangerous zones to safer places with the assistance of NDRF, SDRF and the Army, if needed.

Officials of Maharashtra's irrigation department said 35,000 cusecs of water was discharged from the Khadakwasla dam following heavy rainfall in the catchment areas in the past fortnight. The ghat section in Pune district received heavy rainfall in the last two days. In Jammu and Kashmir,



373 people to be airlifted

PNS ■ RUDRAPRAYAG

Over 370 people, including devotees and locals stranded on the rain-ravaged trek route to Kedarnath, have been evacuated and sent to Lincholi to be airlifted as the rescue operation entered its fourth day. Chief Executive Officer of Shri Badrinath Kedarnath Temple Committee Yogendra Singh said that these 373 people who left from Kedarnath with rescuers, including teams of SDRF and NDRF, for Lincholi from where they will be airlifted to safer places via helicopter.



9 children killed, 2 injured as house wall collapses in MP

PNS ■ SAGAR (MP)

Nine children were killed and two others injured after a wall of a dilapidated house collapsed in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district on Sunday, a senior official said. The incident occurred between 8.30 am and 9 am near the campus of a temple during a religious programme in Shahpur village under the Rehli assembly seat, as per officials. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has suspended the chief municipal officer (CMO) of Shahpur Nagar Panchayat and a sub-engineer. He also directed civil bodies across the state to identify the dilapidated buildings and take action. Nine children, aged 10 to 15 years, were killed and two injured in the wall collapse incident at a religious programme in Shahpur, Sagar. Divisional Commissioner Virendra Singh Rawat told PTI over the phone.

NDA will form govt again in 2029: Shah

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday slammed the opposition parties for raising questions about the strength of the NDA government at the Centre, saying the alliance will not only complete its term but also form the government in 2029.

Shah made the remarks addressing a gathering here after inaugurating the 24x7 Manimajra water supply project.

Lauding the Modi government for its works, he said, "I want to say that the 10-year period from 2014 to 2024 will be inscribed in golden letters in history of our country's development."

Shah said in the past 10 years under the Modi government, the country achieved different types of successes as he spoke about surgical and air strikes, abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, building Ram temple in Ayodhya, setting up a road network and transformation of British-era



railway stations. In every field, people of the country experienced development, he said.

'Three new criminal laws biggest reform of 21st century'

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday dubbed three new criminal laws as the "biggest" reform of the 21st century, saying their objective is to ensure people get justice. He also said after the complete implementation of these laws -- Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA) --

India will have the most modern and technology-equipped criminal justice system in the world. Shah was addressing a gathering after launching the e-evidence, Nyay Setu, Nyay Shruti and e-summon systems to augment the criminal justice apparatus here. The BNS, the BNSS and the BSA, which came into effect on July 1, replaced the British-era Indian Penal Code,

Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively. Shah said Chandigarh will be the first administrative unit in the country where hundred per cent implementation of all the three laws will be completed in the next two months. He said these new laws through which the criminal justice system is run are the "biggest" reform of the 21st.



Nitish's 20 years in power will be remembered for wasted opportunities: Prashant

PNS ■ PATNA

Political strategist turned activist Prashant Kishor on Sunday charged Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, his former mentor, with failure to secure tangible benefits for the state despite the BJP's dependence on him to retain power at the Centre. Kishor alleged the JD(U) boss was fretting over his party's share in the Union council of ministers and using

his clout with the BJP to settle scores with detractors at the state level, instead of leveraging his position to rehabilitate the state industrially. "People are talking about special status for Bihar. I ask why Nitish Kumar could not press for the restoration of 20 sugar mills that have been moribund for years? He has been in power for nearly 20 years which shall be remembered for wasted opportunities," the IPAC founder told reporters here.

SUB-CLASSIFICATION WITHIN SCS BSP doesn't agree with Supreme Court's verdict: Mayawati

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

BSP chief and former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mayawati on Sunday said her party doesn't agree with the recent Supreme Court's verdict allowing sub-classification within Scheduled Castes.

"The sub-classification of people within Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) has been permitted, our party doesn't agree with it at all," Mayawati said while addressing a press conference here. In

a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court on Thursday held that states are constitutionally empowered to make sub-classifications within the Scheduled Castes,

which form a socially heterogeneous class, for granting reservation for the uplift of castes that are socially and educationally more backward.

"Because the atrocities faced by the people of SCs and STs have been faced as a group and this group is equal in which it would not be right to do any kind of sub-classification," she said.

Will bring back BJP-JD(S) coalition govt in K'taka, asserts Kumaraswamy

PNS ■ RAMANAGARA (KARNATAKA)

Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy on Sunday said he will work together with the leaders and workers of the BJP and JD(S) to bring back an NDA government in the state.

There is no question of his party joining hands with the Congress once again, the JD(S) state president said.

The JD(S) had been in power twice in the state, in coalition with both national parties, despite being a junior partner -- for 20 months with BJP from February 2006 and for 14 months with the Congress after the May 2018



assembly polls. Kumaraswamy was the chief minister on both occasions. Ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the JD(S) joined hands with the BJP and became a part of the NDA. "I appeal to the BJP and JD(S) workers to work together. Who should become chief minister is not important to me. With your blessings I have been the chief minister of the state twice. Welfare and development of the state and its people are important for me," Kumaraswamy said.

Addressing workers of the BJP and JD(S), ahead of the second day of a week-long protest march from Bengaluru to Mysuru against the MUDA 'scam', he said, "I will work for your sake in the days ahead with the aim of bringing back the BJP-JD(S) coalition government."

"Our fight is ultimately to bring in a pro-people government in the state, which will look after the welfare of every family. We want to bring such a government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. For that, myself, B Y Vijayendra (BJP state president) and all leaders and workers from both parties will work together."

NOVEL RECOUNTS

Assam's tumultuous insurgency, counter-insurgency days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A new book recounts Assam's tumultuous insurgency and counter-insurgency days through the eyes of an ordinary young man, who experiences terror, mental shock, memory loss and also impossible love and heartbreak.

Dhruvajyoti Borah's new novel "The Rainbow Runners" (translated by the author himself from his Assamese novel "Artha") is the final book of his "Kalantar" trilogy - "Kalantar Gadya" ("The Prose of Tempest") and "Tejor Andhar" ("Darkness of Blood") being the first two works.



In the trilogy, Borah makes an insightful enquiry into the

trouble-torn tragic reality of present-day Assam. Assam witnessed violence on an unprecedented scale for

more than three decades. Violation of human rights, abduction, ransom, extortion by the rebels or alleged state-sponsored atrocities continued unabated.

Sriman, an ordinary young man, lived in Guwahati at a time when insurgency and counter-insurgency operations were rife in Assam. Secret or anonymous killings, kidnappings and extortions became commonplace.

The terror which engulfed Sriman after he witnessed a spine-chilling incident set off a series of events. Existing as a

terrified zombie, unable to share his secret with anyone, Sriman ends up in the murky world of journalism and soon becomes an unwitting bedfellow of the 'dadas' - the erstwhile underground leaders who first surrender to the state and then start working for it.

He tries to forcefully suppress what he saw and get on with his life, drunk with power thanks to the company he starts keeping. But the past catches up inevitably. He once again faces an upheaval and seems to lose his mind completely.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday claimed that the National Testing Agency had netted a profit of Rs 448 crore in the last six years, alleging that the future of millions of youths was reduced to mere "revenue-raising exercise" by the Narendra Modi government.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared on X Minister of State in the Education Ministry Sukanta Majumdar's reply in the Rajya Sabha on July 31 to a question



on the NTA. "The National Testing Agency (NTA) is at the very heart of the NEET scandal. It is a body of the Education Ministry whose

only purpose is to function via outsourcing to private vendors," Ramesh said on X.

"Not only do these vendors very often have dubious credentials but the NTA itself is headed by a person who presided over the Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission, which has seen mega-scams," Ramesh said.

In an answer to the Rajya Sabha, the Union MoS for Education revealed that the NTA collected an estimated Rs 3,512.98 crore, while it spent Rs 3,064.77 crore on the conduct of examinations.



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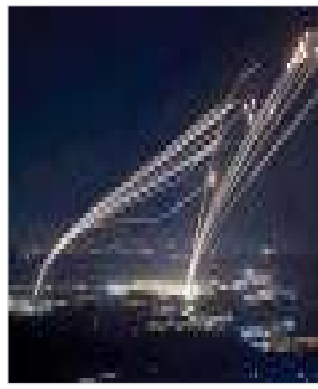
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PAPER WITH PASSION

On the brink of war

War clouds hover over West Asia as Iran-backed militias attack Israel following the assassination of a Hamas leader

As Iran-backed militias engage in conflict with Israel, a protracted war looms large over West Asia, one of the world's prominent flashpoints. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has long been a focal point of West Asian tensions, involving numerous state and non-state actors. Recently, the situation has dramatically escalated following the assassination of a senior Hamas leader, which has ignited a series of violent responses and counter-responses. The assassination of the Hamas leader, who orchestrated militant operations against Israel, was carried out in a covert operation attributed to Israeli forces. Hamas vowed retaliation, and their pledge quickly materialised in a barrage of rockets targeting civilian areas, prompting Israel to activate its Iron Dome missile defence system. The airstrikes and rocket attacks have resulted in significant casualties and damage on both sides. Compounding the situation, Iran-backed militias, primarily from Lebanon and Syria, entered the fray. Hezbollah, a powerful Shia militant group based in Lebanon



and backed by Iran, launched a series of rocket attacks into northern Israel. Similar militias in Syria have also increased their operations, targeting Israeli military positions and border areas. These militias have a long-standing alliance with Hamas and other Palestinian factions, often receiving financial, logistical, and military support from Iran. The current escalation can be seen as an extension of Iran's broader strategy to challenge Israeli military dominance.

As a response, Israel has intensified its military operations. Airstrikes on Gaza have become more frequent and devastating, targeting not only military installations but also civil infrastructure. Northern Israel has also

seen a ramp-up in military presence. The war's escalation has had dire humanitarian consequences. Civilian casualties are mounting, and the already dire conditions in Gaza are worsening. Indeed, the situation in West Asia is very volatile and a full-on war can break out anytime which would engulf the whole region. It is not the time to assess who is right and who is not, but to deescalate the tensions, and all must show restraint. It is high time the UN intervenes and the Security Council swings into action to ask all concerns to show restraint. If it is unable to stop the war, the UN would lose its standing and become irrelevant in the present world order. The international community must intervene to convince the two sides to come to the negotiation table. The United States has expressed support for Israel's right to defend itself while also urging caution to avoid a full-scale war. European nations have echoed these sentiments, calling for an immediate ceasefire and resumption of peace talks. The West must take a definitive stand against the war. On the other hand, Iran has condemned the assassination and justified the militias' responses as legitimate defence against Israeli aggression. Diplomatic efforts are urgently needed to deescalate the situation and prevent further loss of life and destruction. The world must put its act together before it is too late.

PICTALK



A woman feeds a goat in her partially submerged house after heavy rains in East Bardhaman

The unyielding spirit of military families



BHOPIINDER SINGH

Military service comes with 'unlimited liability,' a reality underscored by the valour and ultimate sacrifices of the young soldiers who gave their lives for the country

Recent martyrdom of four Indian Army personnel i.e., Capt. Brijesh Thapa, Naik Rajesh, Sepoy Brijendra and Sepoy Ajay of the 10th Rashtriya Rifles (Rajput Regiment) are a continuing reminder of the price that a few pay for the entire country. Seemingly service in the Army does not come with a 'Limited Liability' like in a civilian organisation, but with 'Unlimited Liability'. Hardly had the news of Captain Abhimanyu's daredevilry played out in public discourse, earning him the Kirti Chakra, and the news of this Doda operation broke.

Parallels in both cases are significant, even as one was a combat mission, and the other, a rescue mission. The real fire of the Indian Army is not necessarily in its weaponry, training, doctrines, senior leadership etc., but in the proverbial 'junior leadership' of its Young Officers and Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) who ensure that the institution's youthful iron is tempered into steel. Both Capt. Thapa and Capt. Abhimanyu were from that 'junior leadership' fount, one a combatant and the other a doctor, but warriors in their ways. Both had heeded that unsaid call of military leadership to 'lead from the front'. Officers of other militaries tend to lead relatively more entitled and safer lives, which manifests in the Indian Army having the highest 'Officer-to-Soldier fatality ratio'.

This young leadership does not take the backseat of 'ordering' but walks first in harm's way, as this is what Capt. Thapa did, as did Capt. Abhimanyu, who answered his conscience to attempt to save his comrade-in-arms from a fire incident. Such stories are the norm in the Indian Army, but not so, in other militaries of the world. Interestingly, both belong to what is proudly called the 'Military Families', an age-old concept that has survived the vicissitudes and institutional diminutions of time, which would logically expect the end of this noble tradition. In the USA, the concept of multi-generational soldiers, who fight its bloody wars is a revered concept. Folks within these 'Military



Families' uphold the timeless promise of righteous defence that is passed down through generations. While this solemn tradition of sacrifice is recognised and valorised in the USA, sadly, not so in our Indian context. It is almost unknown and unrecognised. This is particularly surprising because India too has a culture of similar 'Military Families' that dot the mofussil hinterlands. Initially a legacy of the British 'martial caste' regimentation, it is no longer the reserve of any specific societal group, anymore.

The rarefied air within these 'Military Families' still resonates with much-forgotten values like honour, valour, sacrifice, tradition et al, despite many far more compelling reasons to walk a safer and more financially-materially gratifying path. Both Capt. Brijesh Thapa and Capt. Abhimanyu were professionally qualified (the former got through engineering, and the latter, both engineering and medicine) to venture into the lucrative civilian world – yet, both opted for the 'Uniform', knowing what it entailed. They followed the militaristic footsteps of their respective fathers. Gut-wrenching images of Capt Thapa's parents, Col BK Thapa and his wife receiving their



THIS YOUNG LEADERSHIP DOES NOT TAKE THE BACKSEAT OF 'ORDERING' BUT WALKS FIRST IN HARM'S WAY, AS THIS IS WHAT CAPT. THAPA DID, AS DID CAPT. ABHIMANYU, WHO ANSWERED HIS CONSCIENCE TO ATTEMPT TO SAVE HIS COMRADE-IN-ARMS FROM A FIRE INCIDENT

son's coffin was a modicum of dignity, pride and unbearable pain all wrapped in controllable emotions. Col Thapa's moving words about his gallant son, "He always wanted to join the Army and would sometimes wear my uniform, saying one day he would own one", added incalculably to his family legacy, and on to the plans, and to the nation. Capt. Thapa stood tall till the very end as the third generation in service to India. Similarly, both Sepoy Ajay (third-generation soldier) and Sepoy Brijendra were from the traditional soldiering areas of Jhunjhunu District, again from 'Military Families'.

The power of the Indian Army is a testament to these 'Military Families' who have defended the territorial integrity of the nation, for generations. One such typical family is of Mata Deen Singh who joined the Bengal Native Infantry in the early 1890's. He was later declared missing and believed killed in NWFP in 1901. Later four more generations of his served with much aplomb and distinction in the fiery Rajput Regiment. Befittingly, this family claims that there hasn't been a war that India has fought, where a member of the family has not fought! For many in the coun-

try, wars and insurgencies are either far removed or distant abstractions but for these families, the price to keep it 'distant' is personal, real, and never cheap. Col Thapa led the stirring fist-pumped salutation of Bharat Mata Ki Jai with his son wrapped in a Tiranga. People in such 'Military Families' are cut from a different cloth, and the nation can never repay its gratitude to them, ever. Sadly, those in power who are responsible for much of the prevailing mess have very little skin in the game and only play politics ad nauseum. For them, each tragedy is still tradeable to score a partisan point. Beyond condescending exhortations and appropriations, the politicians (since independence, without any exception) have prioritised financials – what with 'austerity' measures, OROP, Agniveer (with pension bill concerns) et al, but always without adequately thinking about how much it would actually 'cost' to send soldiers in harm's way. The 'Military Families' have persisted, despite all this.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stop anthropogenic disaster



The devastating flood and landslides conditions of Kerala's Wayanad district, which have shocked the entire nation with the tragic count of surmounting death tolls and founding of body parts, has once again raised the heated debate of the Urban Flooding and manmade disasters. Kerala's vulnerability to these natural and anthropogenic disasters had led to multifold trouble for the local residents. The climate change and Heavy rainfall due to uncertain changes in the Arabian ocean cause unnecessary climatic harassment for

the people. There is no doubt to the fact that Urban environment is purely concrete, well constructed, neatly build up with skyscrapers with adjusted greenery for pleasing eyes. But anthropogenic alterations are always hazardous for the environment and hard to heal and cherish naturally. The scenario of Kerala is nothing less than we had already seen in Uttarakhand. Repeated landslides, flashfloods have caused immense hardships for the local resident.

Making strategies, policies and claims will not serve the purpose, if have to be attentive in our actions for healing the climate. Let's stop giving anthropogenic scars to our environment surrounding, our actions for healing climate will serve the cause. The incidence of Wayanad is a lesson for all of us, and we have to take combined responsibility for improve our climate by taking care of its well-being.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

act with care. The identification of groups should be based on unchallengeable evidence and reason. The categorisation should not be made or perceived to be made on political reasons.

DVG Sankaro Rao | Vizianagaram

ISRAEL ESCALATING CONFLICT

Madam — It is clear from the assassinations of Hamas' top leaders Ismail Haniyeh and Mohammed Deif and Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukur against the backdrop of its genocidal war on Gaza that Israel is a law unto itself and crosses red lines at will and with impunity. The series of extraterritorial assassinations have dashed our hopes of a long overdue ceasefire deal in Gaza and fuelled fears of a wider war.

The nub of the matter is that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who oversees the assassinations and threatens the 'enemy powers' that 'there is no place that the long arm of Israel won't reach' is keen on escalating the war beyond Gaza to prolong his political career. Clearly, US' unconditional sup-

port and its amenability to being dragged into the war that emboldened Israel to conduct itself in gross violation of international laws and flagrant disregard of human life and increase the risk of a broader war.

It would be sheer folly if Israel deludes itself into thinking that its savage acts that are likely to result in a full-scale regional war constitute 'deterrence' and take it nearer to 'total victory', to use Netanyahu's phrase. Israel must end its illegal occupation of Palestinian territories, as told by the International Court of Justice, for the 'axis of resistance' to lose its relevance. The international community must apply enough pressure on Israel to stop the war on Gaza and its attacks elsewhere in 'the Middle East' inviting possible counterattacks and agree to a just peace deal and pull the region back from the brink of a full-blown armed conflict.

G David Milton | Kanniyakumari

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Green logistics is an environmental imperative

Minimising empty return trips through triangulation technology reduces carbon footprint and also underscores the economic benefits of green logistics

Green freight transport is an important facet of sustainable logistics and enables the reduction of environmental damage and pollution caused by shipping and transportation. Central to enhancing economic efficiency in this domain is the optimization of container movements which can be achieved through innovative strategies such as triangulation solutions.

The need for green freight transport sustainable logistics is crucial to mitigating the adverse environmental impacts of freight transport. Traditional logistics methods often result in significant greenhouse gas emissions and environmental degradation.

By adopting cleaner vehicles, optimising routes, and using eco-friendly fuels, companies can not only reduce their carbon footprint but also enhance their operational efficiency. The business benefits of green logistics are manifold. Companies that invest in sustainable practices can realise substantial savings on fuel costs and improve their corporate reputation. These practices also appeal to



a growing base of environmentally conscious consumers, ensuring loyalty and enhancing brand image. Therefore, the shift towards greener logistics is both an environmental imperative and a strategic business decision.

Optimising container movements: Effective container movement is essential for the economic efficiency of green freight transport. Inefficient container handling can lead to increased fuel consumption, higher operational costs, and elevated emissions. Optimizing these movements involves ensuring that containers are fully utilised and that their transport routes are as direct as possible. **Triangulation solutions:** It optimises container movements. This method involves coordinating the movement

of containers in a way that minimises empty return trips. Instead of returning an empty container to its point of origin, triangulation arranges for it to be loaded with cargo headed to a new destination, thus creating a triangular route. Using advanced data analytics, companies can identify routes where triangulation is possible. This involves analysing shipping patterns, cargo availability, and potential destinations.

Matching cargo with containers: After the potential routes are identified, the next step is to match available cargo with containers that would otherwise return empty. **Implementation and monitoring:** After matching cargo with containers, the triangulated routes are implemented. Continuous monitoring ensures that the routes remain efficient and adjustments can be made as needed. By minimizing the distance containers travel empty, triangulation significantly reduces fuel consumption and emissions. A study by the European Commission found that optimizing container movements could cut emissions by up to

30%. **Cost savings:** Lower fuel consumption directly translates into cost savings for logistics companies. Additionally, more efficient container usage reduces the need for additional container purchases and maintenance.

Enhanced operational efficiency: Triangulation streamlines operations, leading to better utilization of assets and resources. This enhances the overall efficiency of the supply chain.

Advanced data analytics and machine learning algorithms can process vast amounts of data to identify optimal routes and cargo matches. Internet of Things (IoT) devices provide real-time tracking and monitoring of container movements, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of triangulated routes. For instance, AI can optimize routing in real time. IoT devices can monitor and manage energy use across operations. Governments can support these efforts by enacting policies and incentives that encourage sustainable shipping. (The writer is founder & CEO, MatchLog; views are personal)



DHRUV TANEJA

ILL TREATMENT OF ELDERLY

Madam — There are two elements which confirm the government's loyalty and passion towards their people and growth. One the education of children and next comes the health of the elders. The very budget highlights the most dissatisfied segment of elders who are continuously penalized after the GST by levying 18% as tax on health policies. It was 15% prior to GST implementation. Even the heat of it has been felt by the colleague of the Finance Minister, Nitin Gadkari whose plea comes by asking for withdrawal of GST on life and health insurance premiums.

There are many who by their fear either avoid taking up the insurance cover or give up when it comes to renewal by disappointing increase in tax rates. When something is being charged extra there needs to be a fair play by servicing the clients. Not only is the service absent and also a survey indicates that 43% of respondents who filed a claim in the last three years are struggling to get their claim settled. Even when the Minister for Road Transport feels this as a bigger toll levied by his colleague FM, the public outcry is obvious by this exorbitant collection by the government.

AP Thirvadi | Chennai

SC'S LANDMARK JUDGEMENT

Madam — The apex court has delivered a landmark judgement in case of reservations. The seven judge bench has clarified that the state governments can classify the list of scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes in to different groups to accord preferential treatment in applying quota. Till now some tribes are being considered as primitive tribal groups and are being given special financial assistance and attention by the Government, but such arrangement is not in case of education and employment. Now the judgement has made it possible to extend such preference in the reservations for education and jobs. Anyway the states have the onus to



FIRST COLUMN

A HOLISTIC APPROACH FOR HEALING A TROUBLED MIND

Through spiritual practices and positive affirmations, one can find the peace



RAVI VALLURI

Recently I received a message on my cell, "I am the son of Lord Krishna, I keep visiting Tirumala, yet I take drugs. Why do I suffer? Kindly help me!" My response was, "Meet a psychiatrist, undergo counselling, and undertake a holistic programme of wellness." But the caller remained unsatisfied and kept pestering me with a flurry of such messages. This person was positively in a state of misery and fear. His crutch and lifeboat were Lord Krishna. The mind of the caller was both fragmented and deeply disturbed. He appeared to be in a state of imbalance. Patanjali Yoga Sutras have identified the following as root causes of misery in life—Avidya, Asmita, Raga, Dwesha and Abhinivesha. 1) Avidya—This is nothing but a lack of knowledge or ignorance.

Everything around us keeps changing constantly. It could be our cells, blood, stomach linings, and hair to name some. But we are oblivious to the change. 2) Asmita—This is our intellect and our self. We get stubbornly stuck to our opinions. The caller was fixated on the idea that he was the child of Lord Krishna and stayed put at Tirumala. Yet he was partaking in drugs. 3) Raga—This is nothing but craving. Normally craving arises out of certain pleasurable experiences of the past.

It has a deep imprint on the mind. But such impressions only aggravate our wants and misery. 4) Dwesha—Is nothing but hatred. Hatred is antithetical to craving. Though it arises out of craving, the premise is an unpleasant experience. This could be because of certain trag-



ic moments in the past or unrealistic expectations which do not materialise. 5) Abhinivesha—This is fear of the unknown. An emotion that affects all of us. Only a clairvoyant sage through penance and austerity overcomes this barrier. The caller proclaiming to be the son of Lord Krishna was in obvious pain and agony. He could experience ecstasy only through scientific help that is, consulting a psychiatrist, taking proper medication and a wellness programme.

The troubled individual's mind could have undergone say the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living or Vipassana to combat fear. But he remained an escapist by not attending either. This is how a fragmented and escapist mind reacts. The caller continued to escape and obviate the inevitable. It keeps hunting for excuses, and alternatives. Invariably the cloak of negativity and ignorance shrouds the mind from combating the problem. Exercising all love, caution, and care, I asked him to chant "Om Namah Shivaya", 108 times thrice a day to purge his mind of all negative thoughts and by making positive affirmations through writing "I am happy, healthy and peaceful".

This task was also to be done thrice daily 108 times, and the tapas was to be continued for 41 days. In case a day is missed for some reason, repeat the process for 41 days. Such signals to the mind are extremely useful and powerful. The mind then responds to positivity and discards negative feelings and emotions. He has not contacted me thus far. Presumably, he has embarked on the journey of tapas and hopefully has found support and a beacon of light in the dark tunnel. His Ishta Devata, Lord Krishna wielded Sudarshan Chakra wading through negativity and impurity. Sudarshan Kriya, Pranayama, Yoga and Meditation will certainly swathe through the cobwebs of his troubled mind and increase his Prana, Chi, or energy to obliterate the negativity. I am waiting for the 41 days to end so that he can be happy, healthy, and peaceful and lead a purposeful life.

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

The global crisis of over-tourism



ARCHANA DATTA

Around the world, over-tourism is emerging as a big problem. The overwhelming influx of tourists causes significant hardships for local residents and destinations



The growing problem of over-tourism across the globe! Archana Datta Recently, thousands of residents of Barcelona in Spain, protested against tourism, urging tourists to 'go home', waving placards and squirting water guns at outdoor diners, averting that tourists increased prices and put pressure on public services in Spain's most visited city. Not, only Barcelona alone, Venice also introduced a five euro entrance fee to dissuade day-trippers from crowding into the city's limited space and public resources. Japan, too, has put up a giant screen to block views of Mount Fuji to discourage tourists from gatherings at the iconic spot. Closer home, in Chikamagaluru, Karnataka, police resorted to a special drive at tourist destinations to curb the unruly behaviour of visiting tourists. Now, people have been travelling for centuries, and have traditionally been welcomed to visit countries. While, in India, the spirit of 'aiti devo bhava', treating guests as Gods, prevailed. Over the years, travel as tourism, has turned into one of the most important economic sectors. The ease in global air connectivity and people's increasing craze for exotic visits, adventure and leisure in the internet-connected world, created an unprecedented rise in the number of tourists, which, eventually, evoked a 'tourist phobia', an aversion and social rejection among the locals, as happened in Spain, and elsewhere. In 2019, when, 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals were recorded, a hike of 4% from the previous year, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) called for managing 'such a growth of tourists responsibly to best seize the opportunities that tourism can generate for com-



ONE TOURIST PRODUCES FROM 1 TO 12 KG OF SOLID WASTE PER DAY WHEN VISITING A NEW PLACE, DEPENDING ON FACTORS LIKE LOCATION, THE TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION, PERSONAL PREFERENCES, AND THE CHARACTER OF THE STAY

munities around the world'. While, tourism has been described as 'the excessive growth of visitors in areas where residents suffer negative consequences such as permanent changes to their lifestyles, denial of access to civic amenities and damages in their general well-being' (Milano et al., 2019). It has a social dimension too that 'impairs the place-person inter-relationships and induces changes in residents' attitudes towards tourism' (Gössling et al., 2020). Over tourism, also makes urban life 'more tense and stressful' and for women 'a concern for safety in public space'. (Maja Hristov, Nebojša Stefanovic, Nataša Danilovic Hristic, Serbia, 2021). However, the present-day discourses predominantly veer around the issue of sustainability (Gowreesunkar & Thanh, 2020), as tourist hotspots are mostly located in sensitive ecosystems. Water, a precious natural resource, gets seriously misused by the tourism sector affecting the water cycle of the area. In Zanzibar, an average household consumes a little over 93 litres of water per day, while, the average consumption per room in a guesthouse is 686 litres, 7 times more, which in a luxurious 5-star hotel room, rises to 3,000+ litres of water per day. Spain, an important producer of vegetables and fruits for Europe, struggles over water utilisation in two competing economic sectors, tourism and agriculture (Water Equity in

Tourism, 2012). While, a 2022 study said that in case of water scarcity, women are the most affected ones, as it worsens their daily life tasks. One tourist produces from 1 to 12 kg of solid waste per day when visiting a new place, depending on factors like location, the type of accommodation, personal preferences, and the character of the stay. If the present trend continues, there will be an increase of 251 per cent in solid waste production because of tourism by 2050 (UNEP). Cruise ships are among the top polluters, and their raw sewage affects the coral reefs. Sewage from Mexico's tourism industry threatens the Caribbean coast, and the Mesoamerican Reef has already lost 80 per cent of corals to pollution. In 2023, Santorini Island in Greece, which has a population of fifteen thousand, received around 800 cruise ships, which caused a layer of pollution around the caldera. Notwithstanding, tourism is an economic powerhouse. The Travel & Tourism sector (T&T) witnessed a boom in 2019, accounting for 10.5% of all jobs (334 million), and 10.4% of global GDP (US\$ 10.3 trillion). In India, in 2019, the T&T sector was worth about \$194.3 billion, added 6.8% to the GDP and employed 40 million people. By 2033, the tourism industry is slated to represent 11.6% of the global economy. While, women comprise 54% of the workforce, but, they are mostly in lower-

skilled, lower-paid and often in informal employment (UNWTO). Now, some cities have gone for new or revised taxation, fines, etc, to de-market tourism. However, tourism de-growth cannot be considered a remedy, which can push tourism-dependent local economies into crisis, as happened in Myanmar's temple city, Bagan, where people suffer to make ends meet for want of visitors, as the country is deep into civil wars. While, regenerative tourism as an antidote, was mooted in 1987 in the Brundtland Report, which set the tone for 'building back better', going beyond the concept of 'not damaging the environment'. The UN called for a holistic understanding of living systems in the entire tourism ecosystem, as everything is inter-connected, the government, private sector, voluntary sector, and the communities'. The tourism industries should also operate in a new way by discarding the 'make-use and dispose' linear extractive model and fit themselves into a circular economy model of 'reuse/no waste', the world body urged. Isn't it high time for the burgeoning tourism sector to follow the path of regeneration, and herald an era of intergenerational equity, without compromising the planet for future generations? (The author is former Director General, Doordarshan, All India Radio)

Jammu and Kashmir post-Article 370: Tackling terrorism and ensuring integration

Recent terrorist attacks in Jammu highlight the necessity for a having deeper emotional connect with the people and addressing their concerns

This is a 'Stop Press' moment for Jammu and Kashmir after the significant and benefitting legislation of the abrogation of Article 370 - a step towards demystifying and demolishing the 'special status' of Jammu and Kashmir which was a hydra-headed invitation to the West to make a spectacle of India's extreme problems of terrorism as it was and is being transported from Pakistan and India's Foreign Minister Dr. Jai Shankar has often enlightened us on our Nation's self-interest. I say the 'Stop Press' moment because there has been a spike in terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, especially in Jammu and has brought under the lens the



PRATIBHA CHOPRA

local support for Pakistan terrorists. So what does the 'Stop Press' moment signify? In this 'stop press' moment, we need to dig deep - the abrogation of Article 370- will not integrate into the body-politic on its own - it has to be integrated as a living experience to attain validation in the Being and Soul of Jammu and Kashmir and its people. The definition of the people

of Jammu and Kashmir is 'Indians' where Indians from the rest of the country also become an active agency. This calls for a few hardcore resolute living and active steps- the foremost being understanding the minds of the people of Jammu and Kashmir - a lot has been done - but we need to engage with this relentlessly and break the ice to pierce their 'special status', 'isolation' and 'exclusivity' which has not done them any good except for dragging them into the mindless narrative of asking for 'autonomy' and realizing it the hard way that Pakistan has always worked out of bounds, and still does so, to 'keep' them in a perpetual zone of conflict.

This brings us to a preparation for working towards democratic strengthening and consolidation of institutional structures in consonance with the reality of Jammu and Kashmir as the Government of India wants to see it after the abrogation of Article 370. Needless to say, all those developmental questions that are normally addressed in any State or Union Territory of India need to be addressed, foremost being economic egalitarianism. The Congress Party must keep its mouth shut and let the present govt. led by the Prime Minister Modi do its work in Jammu and Kashmir with the infrastructure and development, as



Union Minister Nitin Gadkari would have it. The Congress has through the years mutilated all the Federal aspects of the Constitution of India to politically force a Centralised hegemony. The present Govt. does not intend to treat Kashmir as a communal cauldron and a battleground for Hindutva

and rightly so, therefore it is building infrastructure there. The whole idea of the abrogation of Art. 370 would bear fruit if religious and ethnic exclusiveness were not exploited negatively but used towards international trade and commerce in the best cultural parlance. In the same breath I would say that the Muslim majority

could suggest itself to confine its international commitments to religious brotherhood and political proximities within the respectful questioning bounds and press freedom, this press freedom not being an absolute right but subject to the upholding of the Sovereignty and Integrity of India and its Dignity as envisaged in the Constitution of India. As far as the question of 'Kashmiriyat' is concerned, nobody is stopping or stalling this journey as long as it is within the legitimacy of the Constitutional provisions and the artistic license that it provides. And there may be questions of class and caste here that cannot be ignored if we are

to sound and purport real. We will never forget the Indian Army, the soldiers who never fail us in the treacherous terrains of Jammu Kashmir, Ladhak & Siachen in the said region. We give them the space in our hearts for they do not hide behind any 'political' discourses and tricks and are the first agency of the Social Contract that a Nation State is based on. Their relentless invincibility and risk-taking bravado have no given path to tread but every day is a new challenge. Let all our actions as envisioned in the above paras be a tribute to the soldiers of the Indian Army and it is on us to do our duty now and here. (The writer is a lawyer; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Amara Raja Energy Q1 profit up 26% to Rs 249 cr

Amara Raja Energy & Mobility (ARE&M) has posted about 26 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 249.12 crore for June quarter FY25. It had reported a net profit of Rs 198.31 crore for April-June period of 2023-24, the company said in an exchange filing on Saturday. Revenue from operations rose to Rs 3,263.05 crore from Rs 2,796.27 crore in the year-ago quarter. Revenue growth was aided by year-on-year healthy volumes registered in the automotive after-market, OEMs (original equipment manufacturers), and export markets, the company said in a statement. "In the quarter, we have seen good traction from our international operations. This was spearheaded by the offtake of our indigenously designed AGM (Absorbed Glass Mat) batteries. We are betting big on growing this space in the coming months," Harshavardhana Gourineni, Executive Director, Automotive & Industrial Batteries said.



Zomato collected Rs 83 cr in platform fee from customers

Food delivery aggregator Zomato, which began charging platform fee on orders from last August, collected Rs 83 crore through the new levy till March, the company's annual report has revealed. Platform fee has been cited as one of the three key factors driving Zomato's Adjusted Revenue, which grew 27 per cent year-on-year to Rs 7,792 crore in FY24. "Adjusted Revenue as a percentage of GOV (gross order value), continued to increase primarily due to increase in restaurant commission take-rates, improvement in ad monetization and introduction of platform fee from Q2FY24 onwards," the report stated. All of these factors more than compensated for the reduction in customer delivery charge per order due to the free delivery benefit available on Gold orders, it added. Interestingly, most late night orders in the last fiscal year came from Delhi NCR, while most breakfast orders came from Bengaluru, Zomato shared in the report.



BCCL pays first-ever Rs 44 cr dividend to CIL

Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL), a subsidiary of Coal India Limited (CIL), paid its first-ever dividend of Rs 44.43 crore to its parent company on Sunday. This milestone follows BCCL's achievement of clearing its accumulated losses and reporting a net profit of Rs 1,564 crore for the financial year 2023-24, with a turnover of Rs 13,216 crore. BCCL chairman-cum-managing director Samir Dutta formally handed over the dividend to CIL chairman P M Prasad at a ceremony. The dividend payment was approved by BCCL shareholders at its 53rd Annual General Meeting on August 1. Dutta attributed the company's strong financial performance and strategic progress to a consistent growth rate of 15 per cent over



RBI likely to keep interest rate unchanged at 6.5%

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to keep the key interest rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent on Thursday, and wait for more macroeconomic data before taking a call on rate cut in line with expectations, experts said. The US Federal Reserve has decided to maintain a status quo on its interest rate for now and indicated there could be monetary policy easing in the coming months. Amid persisting inflationary pressures, RBI will be closely tracking the US monetary policy trajectory before changing its stance on interest rate, which has remained unchanged since February 2023, experts opined. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) may also refrain from rate cut as economic growth is picking up, notwithstanding the elevated interest rate of 6.5 per cent (repo rate). The meeting of the Reserve

Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das headed MPC is scheduled for August 6 to 8. Das will announce the decision of the rate-setting panel on August 8 (Thursday). The central bank last hiked the repo rate to 6.5 per cent in February 2023 and since then it has held the rate at same level in its last seven bi-monthly

Economist, Bank of Baroda. He further said growth is on the stable path which means that the present interest rate situation does not militate against business. "The RBI would rather wait and be sure that inflation is on the downward path on a durable basis before taking any action. While we do not expect any change in GDP

forecast, there is a possibility of new guidance on inflation numbers," Sabnavis said.

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA, said that high growth in FY2024, combined with the inflation of 4.9 per cent in first quarter of the current fiscal are unlikely to shift the voting pattern of the four members who voted for a status quo in the June 2024 meeting towards a change in stance or rate cut in the August 2024 meeting itself. "If the food inflation outlook turns favourable on the back of a normal distribution of rains in the second half of the monsoon season, and in the absence of global or domestic shocks, a stance change is possible in October 2024. This could be followed by a 25 bps rate cut each in December 2024 and February 2025, with an extended pause thereafter," she said. Last month, Governor Das had said the question of change of stance on interest rate is quite premature given the gap between current inflation and 4 per cent target.

Pradeep Aggarwal, Founder and Chairman, Signature Global (India), too said that the central bank is expected to maintain the status quo on the interest rate for now as retail inflation continues to pose challenges.

The meeting of the Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das headed MPC is scheduled for August 6 to 8. Das will announce the decision of the rate-setting panel on August 8 (Thursday)

monetary policy reviews. "We do expect a status-quo position to be adopted by RBI in the forthcoming credit policy. Inflation remains high even today at 5.1 per cent and while this will come down numerically in the coming months, it will be more due to the base effect," said Madan Sabnavis, Chief

forecast, there is a possibility of new guidance on inflation numbers," Sabnavis said. Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA, said that high growth in FY2024, combined with the inflation of 4.9 per cent in first quarter of the current fiscal are unlikely to shift the voting pattern of the four members who

'Rise in construction activities to propel India's cement demand'



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Demand for cement is projected to grow 7-8 per cent in the current financial year, helped by an increase in construction activities throughout the country, UltraTech Cement said in its latest annual report.

To meet this increased demand, the cement industry is expected to add 35-40 million tonne capacity in the next fiscal, with 60-65 per cent concentrated in the eastern and southern regions, said

the Aditya Birla group flagship firm.

Besides, this demand surge will translate into an increase in capacity utilisation of the industry to 72 per cent in FY25, which was around 68 per cent in FY23.

"In FY 2024-25, cement demand is projected to grow 7-8 per cent driven by an increase in construction activities throughout the country, spread across the infrastructure and housing sector," said UltraTech.

RBI rate decision, macroeconomic data to drive markets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

RBI interest rate decision, macroeconomic data and global trends would guide markets' movement this week, analysts said.

Besides, the trading activity of foreign investors and the last batch of Q1 earnings announcements would also guide trends in equities.

HSBC PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index) for the services sector is scheduled to be announced on Monday.

"This week, all focus will be on the global markets as we are seeing the first major signs of weakness after a long period of stability. This will test the strength of the Indian market, which has remained resilient

due to strong domestic liquidity and a better macroeconomic outlook despite global headwinds and valuation concerns," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd.

On the domestic front, the upcoming RBI's monetary policy announcement on August 8 will be important, Meena added.

"The last batch of Q1 earnings will drive stock-specific movements. Additionally, institutional flows will play a crucial role in market dynamics," he said.

Bharti Airtel, BEML, ONGC, NHPC, Life Insurance Corporation of India, and MRF would announce their earnings this week.

Focus on profitable businesses

Finmin asks state-owned general insurance companies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The finance ministry has asked state-owned general insurance companies to focus on profitable businesses and not to chase top-line but aim for improving profitability. The government has recently infused Rs 7,250 crore in installments in three public sector general insurance companies -- National Insurance Company Limited, Oriental Insurance Company Limited, and United India Insurance Company. "We have been monitoring performance of state-owned general insurance companies and as a result they have started looking up. So,

we will watch their performance this year," Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi said. Hopefully, he said, these companies may not require



any further capital infusion, which is why the Budget has not made any provision. These three general insurance companies have improved their financial per-

formance significantly, he said. For instance, he said, Oriental Insurance has earned Rs 18 crore profit in FY24 as against a loss of Rs 5,000 crore a year ago, while National Insurance Company narrowed its loss to Rs 187 crore from Rs 3,800 crore, and United India Insurance to a loss of Rs 800 crore as against the loss of Rs 2,800 crore in the preceding year that is FY23.

New India Assurance has continued to perform well, increasing its profits from Rs 1,000 crore in FY23 to Rs 1,100 crore in FY24.

In addition to the shift in focus, the government is also addressing operational issues within these insurers.

FTA WITH SRI LANKA

India seeks duty concession on cars, vehicles, machinery

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is seeking customs duty concession on a number of goods including cars, commercial vehicles and machinery from Sri Lanka under a comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA), talks for which are underway, an official said. India has also sought easier visa norms to further facilitate entry of professionals from here, the official said.

The 14th round of talks between senior officials of India and Sri Lanka was con-

cluded recently in Colombo. Issues which came up for the talks included rules of origin, goods, services, and technical



barriers for trade. On the other hand, Sri Lanka has sought removal of a

quota on apparel exports to India. The island nation is also asking for duty concessions on tea and certain agricultural commodities.

The official said that as elections are announced in Sri Lanka, the next round of negotiations between the two countries will be held after that.

The two nations have already implemented a free trade agreement in goods and now they are negotiating to expand the pact by including more goods and services.

IIHL fails to deposit money as per NCLT order

RCAP admin tells tribunal; IIHL denies contempt charge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The administrator of debt-ridden Reliance Capital (RCAP) has filed an affidavit with NCLT, accusing IIHL of non-compliance as the Hinduja Group firm failed to meet the conditions set by the tribunal in a July 23 order.

However, IIHL later in a statement denied allegations saying there has not been any

contempt of NCLT order.

The administrator, in its affidavit seen, informed NCLT that instead of depositing Rs 2,750 crore in the designated escrow accounts of the Committee of Creditors (CoC) in India and abroad, IndusInd International Holdings Ltd (IIHL) has deposited the money in its own accounts as well as the promoters' accounts. In a rebuttal to allegations,



IIHL said, there is neither any default nor any contempt by IIHL to comply with its oblig-

ations as directed by NCLT.

The order of NCLT required IIHL to deposit monies in escrow account designated by the CoC and not "operated" or "controlled" by CoC, IIHL said in the statement.

CoC has also not provided any escrow arrangement terms and details till date, it said, adding, this left IIHL with no choice but to deposit monies in its own account.

As per the NCLT order dated July 23, the successful bidder, IIHL, had to comply with certain conditions by July 31, 2024.

These conditions included depositing the initial equity amount of Rs 250 crore in a domestic escrow account designated by CoC and Rs 2,500 crore in an offshore escrow account again designated by the lenders by July 31.

Spending on outbound tourism to reach US\$ 55 bn in 2024: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Spending on outbound tourism is expected to grow from US\$ 18.82 billion in 2024 to US\$ 55.39 billion in 2034, a report said. The 'Navigating Horizons' report jointly prepared by Nangia NXT and Ficci said packaged tours still dominate the outbound market in India, with a share of 39.20 per cent in 2024, as there is a preference for choosing pre-planned tour packages from travel service providers due to greater convenience and customisation.



The report said that availability of Indian or vegetarian food options as well as awareness about niche tourism will help increase the number and frequency of Indians engaging in foreign travel in the coming years. The market has already seen robust growth with rising disposable incomes, an expanding middle class, systemic ease and flexibility in obtaining visas, and a desire for international experiences.

"Countries like Egypt, Azerbaijan and Georgia, among others, known for their rich history, cultural heritage, natural beauty and unique topographies, are attracting more and more Indians to venture abroad. Such destinations are often more affordable as well," the report said.

INQ Holdings, SBI funds, Citigroup biggest buyers in Adani Energy's US\$ 1 bn QIP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A unit of Qatar Investment Authority, SBI Mutual Fund, and foreign investment funds Nomura and Citigroup were the biggest buyers of shares in Adani group's power transmission unit's US\$ 1 billion QIP, according to a stock exchange filing by the company.

The Rs 8,373.10 crore (US\$ 1 billion) qualified institutional placement (QIP) of Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL), which closed last week, saw over 120 investors seek shares in the firm that is into power transmission, distribution and smart metering business.



Billionaire Stanley Druckenmiller's family office-led investment firms were among the companies that sought shares of AESL in the QIP. AESL in the filing said its

floor price of Rs 1,027. Giving details of allottees who got more than 5 per cent of shares, it said INQ Holdings LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of QIA, cornered 15 per cent of the shares sold.

Two Mauritius funds of Citigroup bought 8.88 per cent of the shares sold while four SBI funds - SBI Infrastructure Fund, SBI Large & Midcap Fund, SBI Long term Advantage Fund Series IV and SBI Magnum Children's Benefit Fund - together took home 7.93 per cent of the shares.

Nomura Singapore Ltd ODI cornered 7.5 per cent of the shares, the filing showed.



Executive Officer, Co-Founder Aravind Mani said here.

"We are very excited about the Chennai store. We have a lot of people from Tamil Nadu working in our facility (located outside Bengaluru). Chennai is a big EV market. The first store in Chennai is also the company owned operated store," Mani said.

Elaborating about the expansion plans, he said the company would open more retail showrooms in Chennai over the next one year and the second store in Tamil Nadu would come up in Coimbatore.

'MYSTERY ASPECTS OF WALKIE-TALKIE GOADED ME TO SIGN GYAARAH GYAARAH'

Actor Dhairya Karwa is all set to make a mark yet again with the upcoming series *Gyaarah Gyaarah*. Known for his performance in *Gehraiyaan*, the actor discusses life post-it, getting onboard for the series, some nostalgic moments and more

SHIKHA DUGGAL

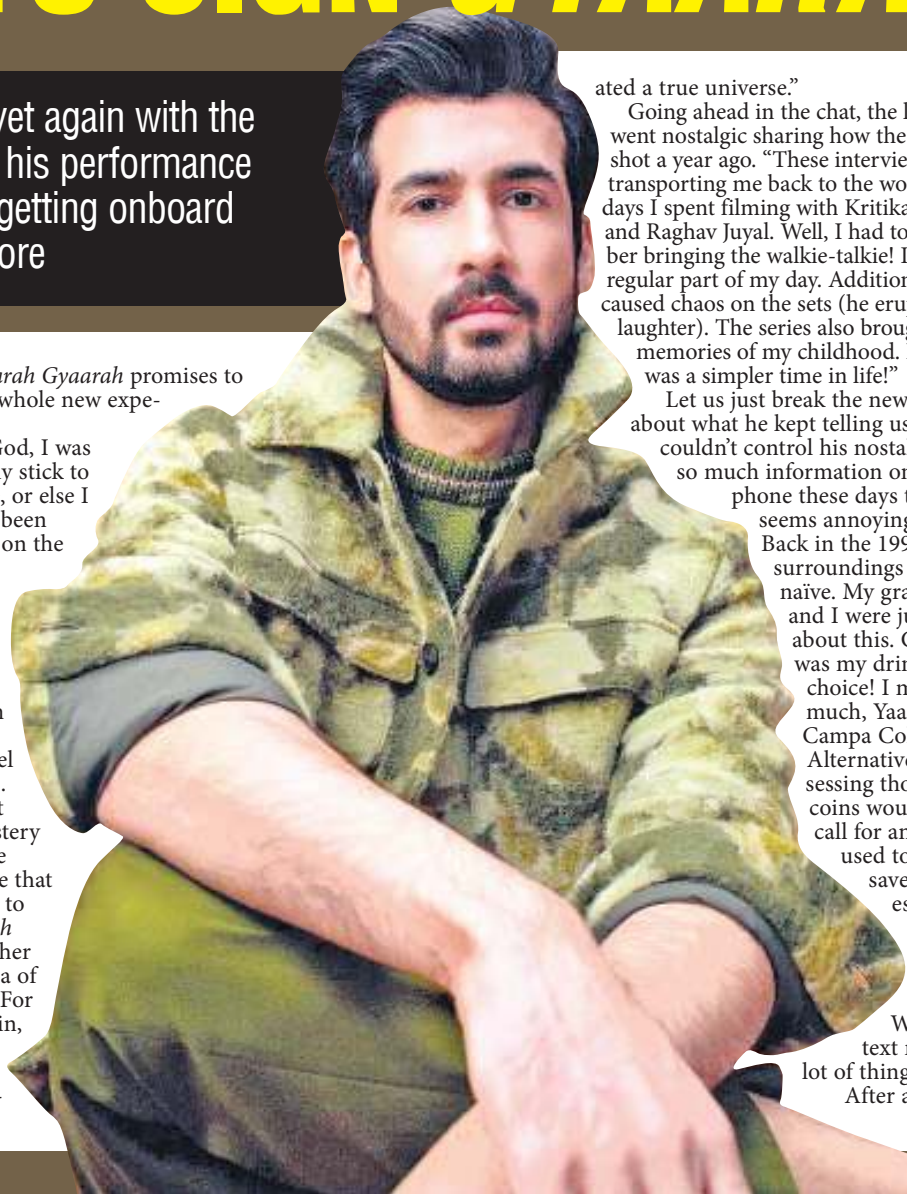
Get ready for an exciting interview as the *Gehraiyaan* fame, Dhairya Karwa, returns! He has teamed up for the first time on a fantasy thriller series called *Gyaarah Gyaarah*, which is set to break the boundaries between genres. The online series will debut on Zee5 and be available for viewing on August 9, 2024. With its intriguing premise and, of course, a hottie playing a cop, this much-awaited series is generating quite a buzz.

He shares the details in an exclusive conversation with us that you won't want to miss—he amazed us with some exquisite deets during the Zoom Meet! "Yes, life has altered somewhat since *Gehraiyaan*, but I won't deny that it hasn't changed as drastically as I had anticipated. Following *Gehraiyaan*'s popularity, I had to deal with a lot of speed bumps. I signed on to a few projects, but they never really took off! That's the reason my fans will finally get to see me again in *Gyaarah Gyaarah* now. There is nothing negative to say about my first film, as it surprised me with the amount of recognition it garnered. That's why *Gyaarah Gyaarah* today, so I don't whine, friend," says an elated Dhairya.

In this upcoming series, Dhairya plays the character of a cop named Shaurya Atwal. Going by the

trailer, *Gyaarah Gyaarah* promises to bring out a whole new experience.

"Thank God, I was asked to only stick to my timeline, or else I would have been everywhere on the set," *Gehraiyaan* fame remarks, expressing his equal appreciation for the idea of time travel in the series. "However, it was the mystery aspect of the walkie-talkie that inspired me to sign *Gyaarah Gyaarah* rather than the idea of time travel. For us to shoot in, the art director actually cre-



ated a true universe."

Going ahead in the chat, the lead actor went nostalgic sharing how the series was shot a year ago. "These interviews are transporting me back to the wonderful days I spent filming with Kritika Kamra and Raghav Juyal. Well, I had to remember bringing the walkie-talkie! It was a regular part of my day. Additionally, it caused chaos on the sets (he erupted in laughter). The series also brought back memories of my childhood. Hey, that was a simpler time in life!"

Let us just break the news to you about what he kept telling us—he just couldn't control his nostalgia. "I get so much information on my phone these days that it seems annoying at times. Back in the 1990s, my surroundings were so naïve. My grandparents and I were just talking about this. Gold Spot was my drink of choice! I miss it so much, Yaar. And the Campa Cola, too. Alternatively, possessing those many coins would only call for an STD! I used to write and save letters, especially in school; these days, a

WhatsApp text may ruin a lot of things." After a talk

down the memory lane, he had nothing but kind things to say about his fellow actors. For example, "We all have similar journeys and our roots coincide a lot. We have a mutual admiration club for one another (he chuckled loudly). *Naam kamana, chote shehron se aana*. We weren't raised in a fancy way; we were all raised pretty simply. We also share a lot of the same familial values! Both Kritika and Raghav are talented actors. Even though she didn't have any ties to the Dehradun location where we shot, Kritika Kamra is a darling in person. However, after *Gyaarah Gyaarah*, she will. (He let out a loud laugh.) Dehradun is where Raghav was born and it is also where I attended school. We therefore forced Kritika to eat a lot of momos and bun tikkis because she is a foodie! For me as well, that "bun-tikki" brought up so many memories."

He discovered that Dehradun had radically altered since then; the commercial activities there were not-so-cool for the young Dhairya who attended school there. We are cognizant of your emotions! He and Raghav talked extensively about single-screen theaters as well.

He goes on to tell us more interesting anecdotes from his time while filming *Gyaarah Gyaarah*. "We were shooting in peak cold! We took pictures in the nighttime lows of zero degrees in Mussorie. The genuine rains, huh? Poor Raghav and Kritika too had their rainy episodes. I was genuinely sympathetic to them. Because it was so chilly, they were always in front of the bonfire. We shot close to the well-known Kempy waterfalls as well. I needed to produce an emotional moment, but how? Funny enough, my tears were frozen too. I was utterly worn out by my character description; most of the scenes required me to chase people because I am a police officer in *Gyaarah Gyaarah*. I was breathing heavily."

Future plans, we ask and as we head towards the end of this fun chat, she shares, "I'm having a great time working in this field. I adore playing heroic roles in films! Thus far, everything is going well."

EVENT COVERAGE

Art that greets you!



AARTI SREENATH

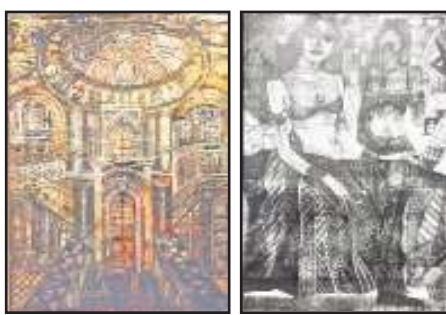
As I entered the art gallery, I was greeted by two girls dressed in traditional outfits, their cheeks blushing and their eyes hidden behind sunglasses. They looked like they had stepped straight out of one of Rao's paintings. With warm smiles, they offered me flowers, making it feel as if his artwork had sprung to life. It was a vivid illustration of his boundless creativity, seamlessly blending the world of his paintings with reality. In a captivating blend of humour, satire and vibrant artistry, the State Art Gallery recently hosted an exclusive preview of "Satirical Symphony," a solo exhibition by the acclaimed artist A. Rajeshwar Rao. Curated by M. Annapurna and Kiran K. Mohan, this event drew the art community's elite, including the distinguished art maven, Anju Poddar.

Stepping into the recent art show felt like entering a whimsical world where ordinary moments were transformed into extraordinary tales. The gallery was alive with over 20 mesmerising pieces from the 'Footpath Series', each telling its own unique story through the delicate art of reverse scratching. This technique, a rare and fascinating approach, revealed intricate details and textures that seemed to leap off the canvases.

Anju Poddar, known for her discerning eye and appreciation of fine art, shared her admiration for Rao's work. "I like his colour play and how sure he is in his expressions. So many times, I ask him to design for me. I have a pendant specially made from his art. I might not know everything about him, but I have a couple of his papers. Whenever I have a function or guests coming over, I tell him beforehand, and he delivers something unique with a logo. The portrait of the wife and the two kids is something I really like; Padma looks so regal in the painting. I like his humour and satire. These artworks are lively, cutting-edge. His 'flying Hanuman over Poland' and the way he names his pieces are delightful. 'Old Heroine' is my favourite, it's contemporary and vintage both! The motorbike with glasses, the old heroine—it's a blend of contemporary and vintage."

What truly set this exhibition apart was the artist's signature touch: the playful addition of cooling glasses to his characters. The artist's ability to blend subtle satire with vibrant colours created a delightful visual feast that left a lasting impression.

Kiran K. Mohan, a writer, curator and advisor at Dhoomimal Gallery, expressed her vision for creating a satirical symphony. "I'm a literature student and studying satire has always been fascinating. Seeing it in paintings



is even more captivating. When I met Rajeshwar, his humour was evident. His technique of reverse scratching is very challenging. Imagine how it will look on the front while scratching the back. It's a difficult technique that requires immense practice. This show is like a prelude to the major event we plan in September at the Visual and Habitat Center."

Born in 1960 in Vizianagaram, A. Rajeshwar Rao's journey in art has been profoundly influenced by his father, Paidei Raju, an esteemed artist, poet, sculptor and art guru. Rao's early works captured the essence of life and death, reflecting the raw human experience. Guided by his father's anecdotes and poetry, Rao's work embodies a deep understanding of human pretensions and societal norms. His unique technique, inspired by his mentor Subramaniam's glass painting, led him to develop a distinctive style of reverse painting on acrylic sheets, creating vibrant, three-dimensional images on a two-dimensional surface.

Rao explained his creative process: "This technique started in the '90s after I finished college. I felt there should be a change in artwork, not just canvases and paper. Subramaniam Gaaru used to do glass painting, and I loved his work. I started scratching, applying colour, and scratching again, creating layers for a three-dimensional effect. A person gifted me an acrylic sheet, and I increased the thickness, making the colors pop vibrantly. It's interesting how the damage done to the art adds beauty to it."

Among the attendees were artists from Delhi, who came to admire and celebrate this unconventional collection. A personal highlight was the series of portraits depicting the artist's family members, each rendered with a blend of affection and light-hearted humour. These portraits were more than just representations; they were intimate glimpses into the quirky traits and personalities of those closest to the artist, brought to life with a perfect harmony of subtlety and vibrancy.

M. Annapurna, an ardent admirer of Rao since childhood, shared her excitement about curating his art. "Every painting speaks to you and has a coil of surprise. His humour and new approach to every work are fascinating. It's a dream come true to curate his art." From clicking pictures with banners of heroes to the deity series featuring Telangana goddesses, his art reflects a blend of satire and cultural commentary. The centerpiece of this exhibition is a painting of Shiva with ten heads on a bike, symbolising the many avatars of gods.

The preview was a demonstration of Rao's keen wit and satirical lens, breathing life into a world where the familiar blends with the fantastical. His reverse painting technique on acrylic sheets adds intriguing perspectives, transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary. Each piece invites viewers to engage deeply, with titles that add new dimensions and sometimes trick the eye. As the evening unfolded, guests were treated to an enlightening conversation with the artist, who shared the inspirations behind his work and the unique creative journey that led to the 'Footpath Series'. The atmosphere was filled with lively discussions and shared laughter, making it not just an art show but a joyous celebration of life, humour and the beauty found in the everyday. It was a night that reminded us all of the power of art to connect, amuse, and inspire.

"Satirical Symphony" invited art lovers to explore Rajeshwar Rao's humorous and critical world, where each piece offers a new lens to view society. This solo exhibition was a harmonious fusion of wit, observation, and technique, challenging and delighting viewers in equal measure.

Ward off rainy season illnesses!

The monsoon in India, while eagerly awaited for its soothing showers and a much-needed break from the summer heat, also heralds a season fraught with health concerns, particularly affecting the eyes. The increased humidity and the prevalence of stagnant water create optimal conditions for various infectious agents to thrive, leading to a spike in eye-related ailments. Understanding these conditions and implementing effective strategies to combat them is crucial for maintaining optimal eye health during this season.

Monsoon and eye health

During the monsoon, the proliferation of bacteria, viruses, and fungi is significantly higher, resulting in various eye infections. Conjunctivitis, or pink eye, becomes particularly prominent, characterized by redness, swelling, excessive tearing, and a gritty sensation in the eyes. Both viral and bacterial forms are common, with the latter requiring stringent medical treatment to prevent complications such as corneal ulcers.

Fungal infections, although less common than bacterial and viral infections, pose a severe threat due to their potential to cause lasting damage to the eye structures, especially the cornea. These infections often develop from exposure to contaminated water or soil and necessitate prompt and aggressive treatment, including antifungal medications and sometimes surgical intervention.

Styes, or hordeolums, are another prevalent monsoon-related eye issue. These painful, pus-filled lumps on the eyelid result from bacterial infections of the eyelash follicles or oil glands. While styes often resolve on their own with warm compresses and proper hygiene, persistent or recurrent cases might require antibiotic treatment.

Allergic reactions also escalate during the monsoon as the air becomes laden with pollen, dust mites and mold spores. Allergic conjunctivitis is marked by intense itching, redness and tearing, significantly impacting daily activities. Effective management includes minimizing exposure to allergens and the use of anti-allergy eye drops.

Preventive measures

The cornerstone of preventing monsoon-related eye diseases lies in maintaining excellent personal hygiene. Regular and thorough hand washing is crucial, as is avoiding touching the eyes with unclean hands. Using a clean towel or handkerchief for the eyes and changing pillowcases frequently can help reduce the risk of infections.

Protective measures include wearing sunglasses or goggles when outdoors to protect the eyes from rain and wind-blown contaminants. For those susceptible to allergies, staying indoors during high pollen days and using air purifiers at home can help manage symptoms.

Environmental hygiene, particularly controlling water accumulation around living areas, is vital for reducing the breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Mosquitoes can carry vector-borne diseases like dengue and chikungunya that indirectly affect eye health. Ensuring that water does not stagnate in and around the home is essential.

Diet and nutrition

Diet plays a critical

role in bolstering the immune system, which in turn enhances the body's defense mechanisms against infections. Nutrients particularly beneficial for eye health include Vitamin A, found abundantly in carrots, spinach, and sweet potatoes, and Vitamin C, present in citrus fruits, tomatoes, and bell peppers. These vitamins support the health of the mucous membranes, including those in the eyes, and are powerful antioxidants that help fight infections. In addition to vitamins A and C, Omega-3 fatty acids are essential for maintaining eye health.

Professional care

Regular eye check-ups are more crucial during the monsoon to promptly address any emerging eye issues. Early detection of any abnormalities can facilitate timely treatment and prevent complications. For contact lens wearers, the monsoon demands extra care in lens hygiene. Ensuring that hands are clean before handling lenses and opting for daily disposable lenses can mitigate infection risks.

The role of healthcare providers is also pivotal in raising awareness about these monsoon-related eye conditions. Educating the public through community health programs about preventive measures and the importance of seeking timely medical advice can go a long way in preventing the spread of infections.

Community health initiatives

Public health systems have a crucial role in addressing these issues, especially in areas with limited access to healthcare. Mobile eye care units and community health workers can be instrumental in providing education and treatment in remote areas. These programs ensure that communities are informed about eye health risks specific to the monsoon and are equipped with the necessary knowledge to take preventive measures.

Local health authorities can also aid by monitoring water quality and controlling mosquito populations, which can help reduce the spread of vector-borne diseases indirectly affecting eye health. By implementing community-wide drainage and waste management strategies, they can minimize water accumulation and reduce the risk of infections.

Educational campaigns can leverage various media platforms to reach wider audiences, disseminating information on symptoms of common monsoon-related eye diseases, when to seek medical help and how to apply simple preventive measures at home.

Conclusion

Understanding the risks, adopting preventive measures, and seeking professional health advice timely can ensure that the season can be enjoyed without health hazards. By fostering a community-wide approach to health education and maintaining personal hygiene, the impact of monsoon-related eye diseases can be significantly mitigated. This proactive approach not only ensures individual health but also contributes to public health safety, making the monsoon a season to enjoy in its full glory without reservations.

(The author, Dr. Ravi Daruka, is a Senior Consultant, at Sharp Sight Eye Hospitals.)



what's brewing?



Bipasha Kanksha Grover, a 16-year-old student from Hyderabad, currently in her second year of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP), was crowned as the "Miss Teen Charm India-2024" at the Star Miss Teen India pageant. She is also a national-level badminton player and swimmer.

● Bipasha Kanksha



Actresses Tejaswi Madiwada and Nayani Pavani, along with other fashion enthusiasts, marked their presence at the launch of Mine N Yours Wedding Show, held at Hotel Taj Krishna in Banjara Hills.



● Preeti Sunder



● Ishaka Roy



● Aparna Reddy

PARTY

Photos by- SV Chary



Actress Kajal Aggarwal inaugurated the new "Tyohaar", a silver jewelry brand by the house of Neeru's in Jubilee Hills. With Tyohaar, the brand aims to continue its illustrious heritage, offering a meticulously crafted collection that celebrates the spirit of festivity and elegance.



Meridian School in Banjara Hills announced the successful conclusion of its much-anticipated Inter-School Literary and Cultural Fest, MELANGE 2024. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from over 20 schools, with more than 1000 participants from across the schools of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, celebrating the rich tapestry of literary and cultural talents of young minds.



The two-day Bengali film festival and Esprimiti 4.0 came to an end on Sunday at the Ethnic Hall in Shilpagram in Madhapur. The event was inaugurated by Supran Sen, Secretary General of the Film Federation of India; Kishen Rao and Chandana Khan, both IAS officers, and Partha Pratim Mallik, the Founder Director of HBFF and Esprimiti. The festival also screened an array of films on Sunday, including a tribute to the legendary filmmaker Mrinal Sen on his 100th birth anniversary.



Hilton (NYSE: HLT) India reintroduced its popular "Wedding Diaries" project, with a new twist. Wedding Diaries presents a new approach to the traditional and frequently hectic wedding preparation process: the "Wedding Ambassador." This specialist acts as a vital link between the family and the hotel, closely collaborating with couples to provide individualised services. Hilton wants to give couples truly memorable wedding planning experiences. A series of video assets will be part of an extensive digital campaign that will be launched on various platforms!

CHOWMAN HYDERABAD'S FIRST ORIENTAL SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

Dive into a culinary adventure like no other as Chowman Hyderabad unveils its first-ever 'Oriental Seafood Festival!' Prepare your palate for a sensational journey through the ocean's finest offerings, meticulously crafted to enchant food lovers at this spectacular event. Experience the magic of the sea with our signature dishes such as Seafood Wonton Soup, Stir-Fried Squid with Seasonal Veggies in Butter Garlic Sauce, Steamed Beekti with Chinese Greens, Kolkata-style chili Octopus, Kung Pao Style Lobster, and more.

Debaditya Chaudhury, MD of Chowman Hospitality Pvt Ltd., shares his excitement, "It feels fantastic to bring our Oriental Seafood Festival to Hyderabad. We know how passionate Hyderabad foodies are about their seafood, and as a food entrepreneur, I am excited to bring joy to people's hearts. I'm confident that the dishes featured this time will make the Oriental Seafood Festival a grand success!"

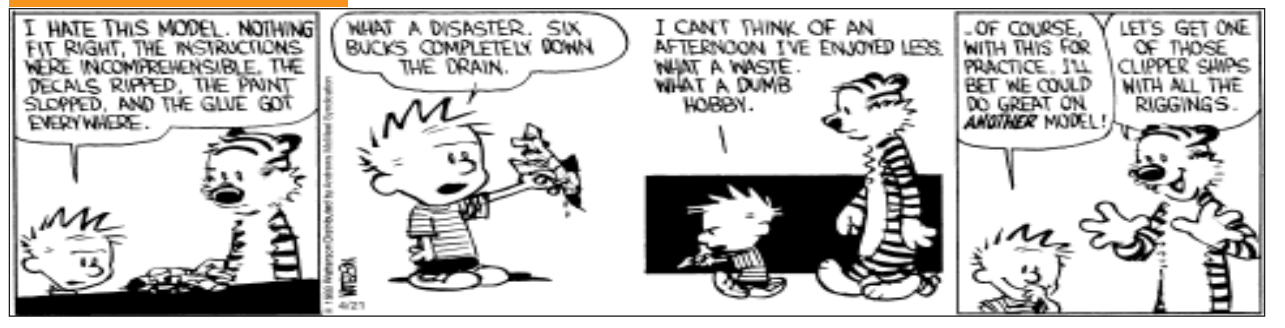
Date: Until 12th August 2024 **Time:** 12 Noon - 10:30 PM
Venue: Chowman, Hyderabad - Madhapur & Kukatpally branches.
Availability: Dine-in & Home Delivery

FUN

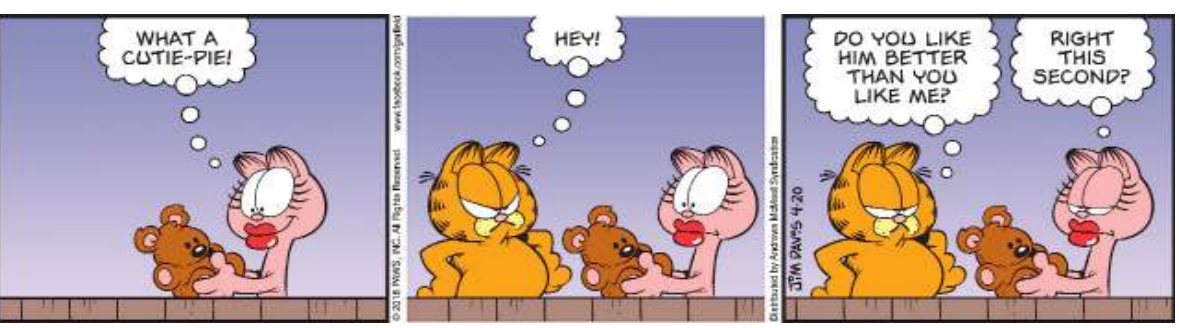
ARCHIE



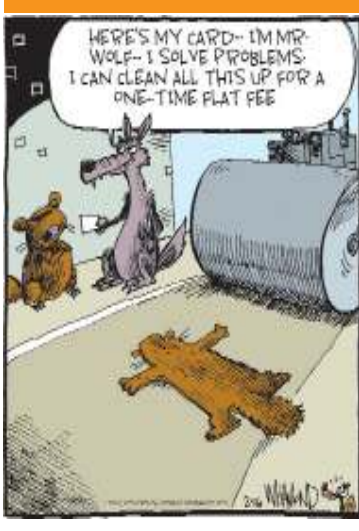
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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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.

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

ACROSS

- To go back and forth in a crooked line
- Exchange for another
- Wet weather
- A member of a ship's crew
- Another name for pudding
- Opposite of sister
- A large country just south of the USA
- Dotted cubes used when playing board games
- Animals like large mice
- Animals with humps
- The side of a building
- A sea robber
- These birds might talk
- A large, flightless bird
- The hottest season
- Instructions for making a cake
- The way out of a building
- Pleads

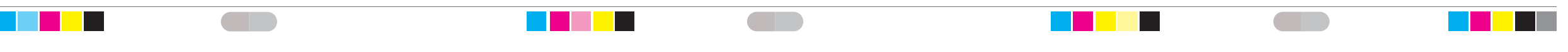
DOWN

- The number nothing
- This type of aeroplane has no engine

SOLUTION

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GINGER MEGGS



'WE INVESTED A LOT TO BRING 'TEDDY BEAR' TO LIFE'

K. RAMYA SREE

In a conversation with us, director Sam Anton shared his excitement about the positive reception of his latest film, *Buddy*. The movie, which stars Allu Sirish alongside Gayathri Bharadwaj and Prisha Rajesh Singh, has been making waves with its adventurous blend of action, comedy, and emotion. Produced by KE Gnanavel Raja and Adhana Gnanavel Raja under the Studio Green Films banner and co-produced by Neha Gnanavel Raja, *Buddy* has successfully captivated audiences of all ages.

Anton expressed his thrill at the film's success, noting that the positive feedback has been overwhelming. "I'm absolutely delighted that both children and adults are enjoying *Buddy*. The word of mouth started with the morning shows and it's been a joy to see it resonate so well. Our team is thrilled to have entertained audiences with a film that blends comedy, emotion, action and features a unique teddy bear character."

Reflecting on the film's development, Anton revealed that the project began about two years ago with discussions with producer Gnanavel. Although there were initial thoughts of remaking the Tamil film *Teddy*, the decision was made to craft an entirely new story while retaining one core concept from the original. This approach allowed the team to create something fresh and engaging. "We felt a young hero would be ideal for this film, and Allu Sirish was the perfect choice. He has been familiar with my work and after discussing the story of *Buddy*, he was excited to join the project."

Anton emphasised that *Buddy* was specifically designed to offer a true theatrical experience. "In today's cinematic landscape, audiences seek movies that provide a genuine theatrical experience. With *Buddy*, we aimed to deliver just that. We invested a lot in the CG work to bring the teddy bear character



Director Sam Anton, who is overwhelmed with the response for his latest film *Buddy*, speaks about the positive feedback, addressing comparisons and more

to create something unique. Whether it's the villain character, the love story, or the teddy bear, we worked hard to ensure that the emotions were impactful. We wanted to make *Buddy* as engaging as films like *Khaidi* and *Vikram*, with a special highlight being the action sequence in the flight's climax. The music by Hip Hop Tamizha has also added a wonderful dimension to the film."

Anton also shared his admiration for Telugu cinema and hinted at future projects in the industry. "I have a great appreciation for Telugu films and regularly watch them. I'm planning to make a straight Telugu film in the future. As a director, I'm open to exploring various genres, whether it's comedy, action, or romance. I'm excited about the opportunities and eager to contribute to Telugu cinema." With *Buddy* proving to be a theatrical hit, Sam Anton's vision of creating an engaging and entertaining film has certainly paid off. As he looks towards new projects, audiences can anticipate more innovative and captivating cinema from this talented director.



69TH SOBHA FILMFARE AWARDS SOUTH 2024:

Clinching accolades for their global recognition

The 69th SOBHA Filmfare Awards South 2024 with Kamar Film Factory celebrated the finest talents in the Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam cinema industries amid much fanfare at the JRC Convention, Jubilee Hills in Hyderabad. With the 69th edition of the Filmfare Awards for South Indian Cinema, the event brought the stalwarts from all four film industries under one roof for an exciting and unforgettable awards night.

The crowd cheered in sheer joy as Nani and Vikram won the Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male) Awards in the Telugu and Tamil categories for their phenomenal performances in *Dasara* and *Ponniyin Selvan, Part 2*, respectively. Similarly, Rakshit Shetty bagged the award of Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male) in the Kannada category for his role in the critically acclaimed film *Sapta Sagaradaache Eello*. Thanks to an exceptional performance in *Nanpakal Nerathu Mayakkam*, Mammooty received the Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male) award in the Malayalam category, marking his 15th Filmfare award, as he revealed in his acceptance speech.

When accepting the award, the actor expressed that the occasion should have been joyful but is actually sorrowful for him due to the suffering of 'his people' following the landslides in Wayanad. Mammooty described this as a significant moment after receiving the award from Vikram and Siddharth.

He said, "This is my 15th Filmfare. I played a dual role in which I speak Tamil as well as Malayalam. I produced it myself. I thank my team for this. This is supposed to be a very happy moment for me, but I am not very happy. I am sad for the suffering of my people in Wayanad, who lost their lives. I remember them at this moment. I wish for you to support them and help them regain their lives."

Meanwhile, the crowd further applauded thunderously at the heartfelt moment when Shweta Mohan accepted her first Filmfare award for the Best Playback Singer (Female) in Telugu from her mother, Sujata Mohan, on stage, welcoming the 5th black lady into their house! While *Dasara*, *Balagam* and *Baby* won big in Telugu, *Sapta Sagaradaache Eello* took home the big prizes in Kannada. *Ponniyin Selvan 2* and *Chithha* shared the spoils in Tamil, and Malayalam had an eclectic set of winners.

This year, the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award was won by Srinath, aka Pranay Raja (King of Romance). He has dedicated 57 years of his life to South Indian cinema, with more than 300 films. Due to his spectacular success in romantic movies during the 1970s, he earned the title of 'Pranay Raja', a title that



remains with him to this day. In addition to this, at the prestigious awards, the South Indian film industry also paid tribute to the late Ramoji Rao, whose vision not only shaped the landscape of Indian cinema but has also provided a platform for countless filmmakers, actors, and technicians to bring their dreams to life. Keeping the evening filled with synergy, Raashii Khanna, Aparna Balamurali, Saniya Iyappan and Gayatri Bhardwaj showcased their power-packed dance performances.

Vishwambhara climax being shot in Hyd

The eagerly anticipated socio-fantasy epic *Vishwambhara*, starring Megastar Chiranjeevi, is gearing up for a grand theatrical release during the Sankranthi festival. With production progressing on schedule and post-production tasks underway, the film is set to make a significant impact upon its release.

Currently, the film is reaching its electrifying climax, which is being shot on a grand scale in Hyderabad. This climactic sequence is shaping up to be one of the most ambitious and visually stunning moments of the film. Director Vassista's creative vision has brilliantly woven the fantasy elements into a visually mesmerising and narratively gripping experience. To ensure this intense climax lives up to expectations, India's top action choreographer, Anil Arasu, has been enlisted to craft the action sequences. Renowned for his exceptional choreography, Arasu's contribution is expected to inject a high level of dynamism and precision into the climax, enhancing its overall impact.

The grandeur of the climax is further highlighted by its elaborate sets and sophisticated visual effects, which serve to elevate the film's fantasy realm. The action sequences are anticipated to be both intense and captivating, adding to the climax's overall excitement. With Chiranjeevi's charismatic presence driving the final act, *Vishwambhara* promises a truly unforgettable experience. The climax is set to be a standout feature, culminating in a payoff that matches the grandeur of the story that has unfolded.

Produced on an epic scale by Vikram, Vamsi and Pramod under the esteemed UV Creations banner, *Vishwambhara* boasts a stellar cast, including Trisha Krishnan, Ashika Ranganath and Kunal Kapoor in pivotal roles. The film's music is composed by Oscar-winner MM Keeravani, with acclaimed cinematographer Chota K Naidu handling the visuals. *Vishwambhara* is slated for release on January 10, 2025 and is poised to be a major highlight of the Sankranthi festival.



Chiranjeevi, Ram Charan, Allu Arjun contribute ₹1.25 crore to Kerala

The devastation that took place in Kerala has left everyone praying and hoping for the recovery of the people of Kerala as well as the place. Celebrities, politicians and renowned personalities are coming in support of the Kerala government by making generous donations.

Recently, actors Vikram, Rashmika Mandanna, Suriya, Jyotika and Karthi made donations to the state. Megastar Chiranjeevi, actors Ram Charan and Allu Arjun expressed deep sorrow over the recent landslide tragedy in Wayanad, Kerala and announced their share of contributions to the Kerala Chief Minister's Relief Fund to aid in the rehabilitation efforts. Chiranjeevi and Ram Charan made a collective donation of Rs 1 crore to the state, while Allu Arjun contributed Rs 25 lakh.



Megastar wrote: "Deeply distressed by the devastation and loss of hundreds of precious lives in Kerala due to nature's fury in the last few days. My heart goes out to the victims of the Wayanad tragedy. Charan and I, together, are contributing Rs 1 crore to the Kerala CM Relief Fund as a token of our support for the victims. My prayers for the recovery of all those in pain!"

On the other hand, expressing solidarity with the people of Kerala, pan-Indian hero Allu Arjun stated, "I am deeply saddened by the recent landslide in Wayanad. Kerala has always given me so much love and I want to do my bit by contributing Rs 25 lakh to the Kerala CM Relief Fund to support the rehabilitation work. I am praying for your safety and strength."

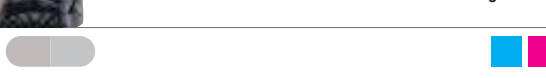


'The idea for Simbaa came from a challenge by Udaya Bhanu'

The much-anticipated film *Simbaa*, featuring Anasuya and Jagapathi Babu, is poised to make a significant impact with its release on August 9. Produced by Sampath Nandi and Dasari Rajendara Reddy under the banners of Sampath Nandi Team Works and Raj Dasari Productions, the film is directed by Murali Manohar and presented by Sampath Nandi. The pre-release event was attended by distinguished guests including former Rajya Sabha members Santhosh Kumar, MLA Vijaya Ramana Rao and Raj Thakur.

Sampath Nandi shared the inspiration behind the film, revealing, "The idea for *Simbaa* came from a challenge by Udaya Bhanu as part of the Green India Challenge. This challenge led to increased awareness about Haritaharam, and during that period, I encountered a story that is both eye-opening and entertaining with a strong, meaningful message. Although I often propose mass commercial stories to producer Rajender Reddy, he chose the story of *Simbaa* to make a positive impact on society. This film is a tribute to his noble intentions. I am also thankful to Poorna and Raghava for their support in production, Kishore for his scientific input, and Vijay for his script ideas. I believe *Simbaa* will impress audiences and meet their expectations."

Producer Rajender Reddy elaborated on the film's inspiration, stating, "Our story was inspired by Vanajivi Ramaiah's initiative to plant over one crore saplings, a feat documented in school textbooks. We wanted to center our film around nature, emphasising its importance and the consequences of neglecting it. In conjunction with the film's release, we plan to launch a tree-planting program in our village and will present several thousand plants to Chiranjeevi on his birthday, August 22. We aim to use the film's profits to support this initiative. I am grateful to everyone who contributed to this project. Our film presents a unique concept that hasn't been explored before in Indian cinema. I hope audiences will appreciate it when it hits theaters on August 9."



Malavika Mohanan adds The Raja Saab to her lineup

Malavika Mohanan is celebrating her birthday in a unique way this year. Instead of a day off or a grand celebration, she's in Hyderabad, kickstarting the promotions for her highly anticipated film, *Thangalaan*. This Tamil film, touted as one of the biggest releases of 2024, also stars the versatile Chiyaan Vikram.

Thangalaan has already created buzz with its intriguing premise and star-studded cast. As Malavika begins the promotional journey for this film on her birthday, it marks a special milestone in her career. The dedication she shows by working on her birthday highlights her commitment and passion for her craft.

Adding to the excitement, today also marks the announcement of Malavika's next big project, *The Raja Saab*, where she will star alongside superstar, Prabhas. Film's director, name has welcomed Malavika as his heroine via a social media post. The news has created a ripple of curiosity and excitement among fans and the film industry alike, eager to see this fresh on-screen pairing.



LOOKBOOK
Hyderabad glitters as South Indian film industry gathers for the 69th SOBHA Filmfare Awards South 2024 with Kamar Film Factory

JULIEN SHOCKS SHA'CARRI, WINS WOMEN'S 100 METRE GOLD, BRINGS 1ST OLYMPIC MEDAL TO SAINT LUCIA

AP ■ SAINT-DENIS, FRANCE

Sha'Carri Richardson's comeback story hit a brick wall when Julien Alfred romped in the rain to the 100-meter title in 10.72 seconds to bring the first-ever Olympic medal to her island country of Saint Lucia.

Racing one lane to the left of Richardson, and with water from a fast-moving storm puddling on the purple track in the Stade de France, Alfred got off to a fantastic start, then powered through the rain and beat Richardson by .15 seconds - about three body lengths on Saturday. It was the biggest margin in the women's Olympic 100 since 2008.

Richardson's training partner, American Melissa Jefferson,



finished third in 10.92 seconds. All week long, the field seemed to be clearing for Richardson, the reigning world champion who was making her Olympic debut after a positive test for marijuana cost her a chance to

race three years ago in Tokyo. When Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce abruptly withdrew from the semifinal, which went off about 90 minutes before the gold-medal race, the entire Jamaican team that had swept the podium

in Tokyo was out of the 100. One island's loss is another's gain. The strongest contender left was Alfred, who hails from the Eastern Caribbean island with a population of around

180,000. She was the only Olympic entrant besides Richardson to break 10.8 this year - and when she and Richardson lined up next to each other in the semifinals, it was a preview of things to come.

Alfred won that race by .05, then lined up next to Richardson again for the final and tripled that margin. One of the most anticipated races of the Olympic track meet was never a contest.

Alfred had two steps on the entire field at the 40-meter mark, while Richardson, whose starts have been an issue at times this summer, labored to get to full speed.

The American, her arms pumping wide in Lane 7, looked to be making up a bit of ground when Alfred leaned

into the finish line. But there was too big a gap between them and the real contest was the one between Richardson and Jefferson for second. America's lone gold medal of the day came from Ryan Crouser, who earned a three-peat in the shot put. Another American silver went to the 4x400 mixed relay team, which got reeled in by Femke Bol of the Netherlands in the anchor lap.

Jasmine Moore won a bronze medal in the triple jump competition, won by Thea Lafond, setting herself up for a possible double when she competes in long jump later this week.

Earlier in the day, Noah Lyles finished second (10.04) in a sluggish first-round qualifying heat to make the semifinals in the men's 100.

BADMINTON AT OLYMPICS Sen falls to Axelsen in semis, to play bronze-medal playoff

PTI ■ PARIS

India's dream of a first-ever Olympic gold in badminton will remain unfulfilled after Lakshya Sen suffered a straight-game defeat to reigning Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen in the men's singles semifinals at the Paris Games here on Sunday.

The 22-year-old from Almora, a 2021 World Championships bronze medalist, squandered a three-point advantage in the first game and a 7-0 lead in the second to surrender 20-22 14-21 to the two-time world champion Axelsen in a 54-minute semifinal clash.

Sen will have another chance to become the first Indian male shuttler to win an Olympic medal when he meets Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia in the bronze medal playoff. India have never won a Olympic gold medal in bad-



minton with PV Sindhu claiming a silver and bronze at the Rio and Tokyo Olympics and Saina Nehwal securing a bronze in London Games.

Boxer Nishant's Olympic debut ends in heartbreak with quarterfinal loss

PTI ■ PARIS

Nishant Dev's maiden Olympic campaign ended in heartbreak after a devastating split verdict defeat to Mexico's Marco Verde Alvarez in the men's 71kg quarterfinal here on Saturday.

Leading after the first round, the 23-year-old world championship bronze medalist Indian lost 1-4 to his second seed Mexican opponent in the quarterfinal at the North Paris Arena.

Nishant had defeated Alvarez

in the 2021 World Championships. Nishant was off to a flyer as Alvarez struggled to match his pace. He used his straight jabs to great effect, landing them square on the Mexican's face as well as the body to tire his opponent.

Alvarez was trailing for the most part of the round but managed to connect a lethal right hook on Nishant's face, that forced the referee to give the Indian a standing count, followed by a left in the dying minutes. But the Indian's dom-



inant display ensured he had the bragging rights. Nishant continued to unleash

a range of punches, including a combination of hooks, while Alvarez too upped his game,

connecting some vital blows. However, Nishant looked the stronger of the two as he picked the Mexican's shots.

But the judges favoured the Mexican 3-2 as Alvarez and Nishant entered the final three minutes by the narrowest of margins, leading on one card. Alvarez landed a combination of punches to start the final round on an aggressive note. The Mexican showed more urgency as he landed an uppercut. The Indian, on the other hand, looked completely spent and while he tried to throw

punches he was slow. Alvarez acknowledged that the bout was a tough one.

"It was a tough bout, played with heart and mind. I hit on his body to open up for upper cuts. I had lost to him in 2021 world Championships. I have a lot of respect for him," Alvarez said.

"He is very technically sound boxer. My coaches asked me to play smart after I lost the first round." Nishant is the fifth Indian boxer to exit the Olympic Games.



Lovlina outwitted in QF; India's boxing campaign ends

PTI ■ PARIS

India's boxing campaign at the ongoing Olympics came to a medal-less end after Tokyo edition bronze-winner Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) bowed out following a hard-fought quarterfinal loss to China's Li Qian in the women's competition here on Sunday.

Borgohain, the reigning world champion in the category, went down 1-4 to the Tokyo Games silver-winning 34-year-old in a messy contest during which both the boxers were repeatedly cautioned for clinching and holding.

The 26-year-old's loss ended India's boxing campaign in the Olympics after Nishant Dev was ousted from the men's 71kg quarterfinals on Saturday night, also a close contest.

A six-strong boxing contingent, comprising four women and two men, was representing the country in the Games. Out of these, four had crashed out in the preliminary stage itself.

It was a pacey start to the proceedings as Borgohain and Qian quickly got into a tangle.

However, none of the boxers seemed willing to launch the first attack.

The holding and clinching started pretty early in the bout and the referee had to repeatedly step in to separate the two old foes.

Qian seemed determined while Borgohain came across the more animated of the two early on. The Chinese connected some clean combination punches and a left hook towards the end of the first round. She was particularly impressive before she took a 3-2 lead in the contest.

The second round didn't start any different but Qian was more purposeful in her approach. Her right straights were on target while Borgohain was cautioned twice for excessive holding. It was once again 3-2 in favour of Qian but with a different set of judges scoring in her favour this time, she only had a slender one-point lead on one card, while the remaining four were tied.

The holding and clinching continued in the third round too and both the women seemed a bit drained. However, Qian showed great presence of mind throughout to keep Borgohain at a distance. Borgohain was not up to it when it came to controlling the pace of the bout and repeatedly took hits on counter-attacks.

The Assamese had fought Qian in the Asian Games final last year and gone down 0-5. She later beat Qian in the semifinals of the world championship semifinal in 2023.

But more recently, she was bested by the veteran in a pre-Olympic tournament in Czechia in June.

Katie Ledecky swims into history with 800 freestyle victory at Paris Olympics

AP ■ NANTERRE (FRANCE)

Katie Ledecky capped another stellar Olympics by becoming only the second swimmer to win an event at four straight Summer Games, holding off Ariarne Titmus to win the 800-meter freestyle Saturday night.

It was Ledecky's second gold medal in Paris and ninth of her remarkable career, which marked another milestone. She became only the sixth Olympian to reach that figure, joining swimmer Mark Spitz, track star Carl Lewis, Soviet gymnast Larisa Latynina and Finnish runner Paavo Nurmi in a tie for second place.

Ukraine wins its first gold medal of Paris Olympics in women's team saber fencing

AP ■ PARIS

Ukraine has won its first gold medal of the Paris Olympics by defeating South Korea in the final of the women's team saber fencing on Saturday.

The Ukrainian team recovered from six points down to beat South Korea 45-42 on 22 points from individual bronze medalist Olga Kharlan. She came in for the final leg of the bout with her team at 40-37 down and went 8-2 to win. Ukraine had two medals before Saturday's final; a silver in shooting from Serhiy Kulish and the bronze that Kharlan won Monday in women's saber. That was a particularly emotional moment for Kharlan, a year after she was disqualified



at the world championships for refusing to shake the hand of a Russian fencer, something which briefly put her Olympic qualification in jeopardy. It was an incident that highlighted the tension over whether to allow Russian athletes to keep competing following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Viktorija, a former UCF rower with epilepsy, wins Lithuania's first medal in Paris Olympics

AP ■ VAIRES-SUR-MARNE, FRANCE

A former University of Central Florida rower with epilepsy who won Lithuania's first medal at the Paris Olympics on Saturday hopes her achievement will help motivate others with the disorder.

Viktorija Senkute, who attended the Florida college from 2015-18, won the bronze medal in the women's singles class. It was also the first medal for any Baltic country at the 2024 Paris Games.

"This is insane, I still feel like I'm dreaming," Senkute said. "It's a very big day for Lithuania, for all Baltic countries and for UCF. Everybody from UCF was watching and cheering, everybody from Lithuania. This unites so many



countries, so many people." Senkute said she wants to use her Olympic success to help show that people with epilepsy can live their lives normally and compete at a high level.

"It means nothing to me. It's not a limitation at all," she said.

"People who have epilepsy are normal, regular people and they win Olympic medals. So I really hope that this will be a motivation for everyone who at some point people didn't believe in them. I kept doing what I want, what I love. And this being rowing. And this led to fulfilling my dreams." The 28-year-old Senkute was diagnosed with epilepsy, which causes seizures, when she was 15 and has to take medication daily to keep it under control. "I take medication every morning and afternoon, but it's just routine discipline," she said. "I'm just taking it with my vitamins, so I don't even notice. It's really a part of my life, but it gives no limitations." UCF's rowing team won four American Athletic Conference championships while Senkute was on the team.

Won't retire until I get Olympic medal: Deepika

PTI ■ PARIS

She has flattered to deceive for four straight Olympics but multiple World Cup medal-winning archer Deepika Kumari has vowed not to quit unless she ends up on podium which she feels could be Los Angeles in four years' time. For Deepika, it has always been a case of not being able to display enough temperance in pressure situation at the grandest stage.

"Obviously, I want to play more in the future and will continue my game," Deepika told PTI in an exclusive interaction at the India House here.

"I really want to win an Olympic

medal, and I won't quit until I achieve that. I'll train harder and come back strongly," added Deepika, who has won every international medal except for an Olympic yellow metal.

"Firstly, I will present myself more strongly. There are many things, like quick shooting, that I need to learn a bit more about, and it's very important to train myself accordingly. "What I learned from the Olympics is that late shooting doesn't work; you have no room to make big mistakes, so you have to control that. I will learn that from here," she said in hindsight.

Deepika, 30, appeared in her fourth consecutive Olympics in



Paris, making a remarkable comeback after becoming a mother for the first time in December 2022, when she gave birth to her daughter.

After topping the national selection trials, Deepika went on to

win an individual gold at the Shanghai World Cup in April.

Back at her favorite venue, where she had won multiple World Cup medals, Olympic pressure was evident as she had her worst ranking round ever at

the Games. She qualified for the main draw as the 23rd seed, ranking lower than fellow Indian debutants Ankita Bhakat and Bhajan Kaur. Her score of 658 was notably 36 points below that of Korean top seed and eventual gold medalist Lim Sihyeon.

She was the weakest link in the team event, as they succumbed to the Netherlands in their opening round match without much of a fight. However, Deepika was not ready to give up as she made a splendid comeback in the individual category, working her way up to the quarterfinals with three tough wins.

Pitted against Korean archer Nam Suhyeon, whom she had defeated in the semifinal of the Shanghai World Cup, Deepika took a two-set lead but could not convert another, shooting into the 7-point red ring as the Korean teenager rallied to a 6-4 win.

Nam finished with a silver, losing to her more favored teammate Lim.

Looking back at the result, Deepika said: "I was not nervous. I was playing strongly, but one shot (the 7-point) really went wrong, and that was the reason I lost the match. Overall, it was a good experience."

Salukvadze, only woman to compete at 10 Olympics, says she's retiring. For good this time

AP ■ CHATEAURoux, FRANCE

After 10 Olympics and 36 years, Nino Salukvadze says she's finally done.

The pistol shooter from Georgia has been ever-present at the Summer Olympics since Seoul in 1988, when she competed for what was still the Soviet Union. At the 2024 Paris Olympics, she became the first female athlete to compete at the Games 10 times.

In that time, the 55-year-old has seen the Games become bigger and more professionalized and says the competition is tougher than ever.

Salukvadze considered retiring after her first Olympics, after she'd won gold and silver medals as a 19-year-old. She nearly walked away in the 1990s, when she struggled to support her family financially

in newly independent Georgia. She announced her retirement after the Tokyo Games in 2021. This time, though, she says she is done "for sure."

Coming to the Paris Olympics was about honoring her father, Vakhtang, who was also her coach. After the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics in 2021, he talked her out of retirement for one last push. "He was my mentor not only in sports, but also in life. He was a wise man," she told The Associated Press in the city of Chateauroux, near the Olympic shooting range, on Friday after her last competition.

"He never asked for anything in his life. We had the kind of relationship where we understood each other just with our eyes," Salukvadze said.

"If you quit sports, you can't come back. Just try," she



recalled her father saying, "It was the only favor he asked me

for his whole life. I thought he perhaps wouldn't be able to ask

again. I gathered all my strength, for his sake."

Salukvadze's father died earlier this year at the age of 93, but he

lived to see his daughter qualify for a spot for Georgia. From her 10 Olympics, Salukvadze has three medals: one gold, one silver and one bronze. In Paris, she placed 38th in the 10-meter air pistol event and 40th in the 25-meter pistol, meaning she didn't reach a televised final.

Salukvadze's last Olympic medal - and her first for an independent Georgia - was in Beijing in 2008. At the time, Georgia was at war with neighboring Russia. Salukvadze won bronze and embraced Russian silver medalist Natalia Paderina on the podium in what was widely seen as a gesture for peace.

Salukvadze may not be totally done with the Olympics yet. She's a coach at her own shooting club back home in Georgia and is a vice president of the

national Olympic committee. Salukvadze's record 10th Olympic appearance was recognized by the International Olympic Committee.

"IOC President Thomas Bach has sent his congratulations to Nino Salukvadze in a letter and we understand that the International Shooting Sport Federation is holding an event to honor this achievement," the IOC told the AP in an emailed statement.

Even after 36 years, nothing quite matches the feeling of winning an Olympic gold medal as a teenager back in 1988.

"When I won at the Olympics and stood on the podium, it was indescribable," she said. Even now, Salukvadze added, "I can evoke these feelings in myself in the same way, feel it just the same."