

Dharani, which made the lives of farmers miserable, would be dumped in the Bay of Bengal. A discussion will be held in the Assembly, and with the approval of everyone, comprehensive legislation on lands would be introduced. The Congress government will soon issue title deeds (pattas) for Podu lands and extend assistance including loans to farmers for cultivating their lands.



Opposition presses for caste census, super rich tax

FM PROPOSES AMENDMENTS TO LTCG TAX PROVISION

'Committee Kurrollu will transport viewers to vibrant village FAIRS'

DON'T MISS...

Need for people's participation...
 Special officer of Pachhadanam-Swachhadanam Bharati Hollikeri has underlined the need for people's participation for the success of the government programmes. She wanted everyone to become a stakeholder in the implementation of the programme. People should take part in the programme. She visited several villages of Siddipet district to inspect the implementation of the Cleanliness and Greenery programme and also in Gajwel municipality. She reviewed the implementation of the programme with...

Social factors impact lifespan...
 A combination of four social factors - gender, marital status, education and race - could impact risk of early death by up to 18 years, according to a study that analysed US citizens' data to devise a lifespan scoring system. While individual risks and genes partly explain differences in health and death, researchers said that evidence increasingly points to how social conditions, in which people are born, grow, live and work, shape one's health. The researchers at the University of Southern Denmark...

Microsoft, TCS, Amazon India's...
 Microsoft has emerged as India's most 'attractive employer brand', followed by TCS and Amazon in the second and third place respectively, according to Randstad Employer Brand Research (REBR) 2024. Microsoft scored very high on financial health, good reputation, and career progression opportunities - the top 3 Employee Value Proposition (EVP) drivers for organizations, as per the survey. Others in the top 10 most attractive employer brands include Tata Power Company in the...

Tough challenge awaits Chopra...
 His stunning monster throw of 89.34m in the qualification round made quite a statement but a tough challenge awaits defending champion Neeraj Chopra as he seeks another piece of history in the Paris Olympics men's javelin throw final round here on Thursday. Just like he did at the same stage in the Tokyo Olympics three years back, Chopra needed just a few seconds to top the qualification round with his opening throw but the similarity ends there. This time, the quality of the field is...

100 gms broke billion hearts

Vinesh disqualified for being 100 gms overweight Tragic end to wrestler's Olympic dreams



PNS ■ PARIS
 An entire nation's hopes were crushed under the weight of 100 grams. With hours to go before Vinesh Phogat's gold medal bout on Wednesday, she stood on the scales: the figures on the display were horrifying. For her 50kg category bout, she was 100gm overweight, leading to an automatic disqualification on perhaps the biggest day of her sporting career. No amount of pleading by Indian officials

to get some more time to shed those 100gm was going to change the rules and so that's how it stayed, ending Vinesh's tale of resilience at the Olympics. She had scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman wrestler to reach the gold medal bout on Tuesday night and before this morning, she was assured of at least a silver medal. But she will now be coming back empty-handed. The shattered 29-year-old had to be taken to the polyclinic inside the Games village due to severe dehydration earlier in the day.

Come back stronger: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday described wrestler Vinesh Phogat as a 'champion among champions' and exuded confidence that she would come back stronger following her disqualification from the final Olympic bout. "Vinesh, you are a champion among champions! You are India's pride and an inspiration for each and every Indian," Modi posted on X. "Today's setback hurts. I wish words could express the sense of despair that I am experiencing. At the same time, I know that you epitomise resilience. It has always been your nature to take challenges head on," he said. "Come back stronger! We are all rooting for you," Modi said.

'We even cut her hair'

India's Chief Medical Officer at the Paris Olympics, Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala, on Wednesday revealed that cutting off Vinesh Phogat's hair was among the 'drastic measures' taken to help the wrestler stay within the prescribed weight limit for her gold medal bout in the 50kg category. However, none of it was enough to prevent her disqualification as she was found 100gm overweight at the time of morning weigh-in. She was set to take on USA's Sarah Hildebrandt after three exhausting bouts on Tuesday.

It is not the fault of Vinesh P
 Ensure justice for Vinesh: Cong
 'I think it might be sabotage' PTZ

Factors that mattered

Vinesh had always competed in the 53kg category. This time Antrim Panghal qualified in that division and Vinesh had to slash weight to compete in the 50 kg category.
 For Olympics, Asian Games, World Championships and Asian Championship, no wrestler gets even one ranking concession. For the Ranking Series and Invitational events, one gets a concession of 2kg which means that in these events, one can be 52 kg on the bout day even if they are contesting in 50kg category. Sadly for Vinesh, Olympic rules are strict.
 Vinesh once disqualified from an Olympic qualifying event prior to 2016 Rio Olympics for being over-weight by 400 grams.
 Those who qualify for the gold medal, bronze medal play-offs and repechage bouts again have to come for weigh in on the second day.
 Vinesh had three bouts of six minutes each on the first day. Eighteen minutes of combat sports can drain a wrestler and he/she needs enough amount of hydration and nourishment.
 Every wrestler cuts his/her weight to fight in lesser categories. In case of Vinesh, she fought in 53kg mostly with a natural weight of 55 to 56 kg.
 Once Vinesh came into 50 kg category, she had to shed at least 6kg before every competition. The sudden weight-cut is an extremely difficult process. After first day, she gained around 1.5 kg after replenishment.

SKILLS, NET ZERO, REIMAGINATION OF HYDERABAD & CITIZEN HEALTH

TG to partner with World Bank CM Revanth, Ajay Banga discuss roadmap on cooperation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and World Bank President Ajay Banga held discussions in the US and decided to create a roadmap through which the state and the Bank could partner on several projects to make a positive outcome for TG's people. The potential areas for partnership being outlined through explorations would include initiatives on skills development, urban rejuvenation and re-imagination, Net Zero developments, citizens' healthcare, diagnostics and electronic records among others. In the over an hour-long meeting, between the head of the World Bank and the Chief Minister and his team



it was decided to constitute a cross-functional team to conceptualise viable projects in each of the areas in accelerated mode. People, plan, et, sustainability, health, skills and jobs were the major themes of the discussions between the two leaders. The World Bank backing would

HC reserves verdict on BRS MLAs' defection case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Justice Vijaysen Reddy's Bench heard the petition filed by BRS MLAs seeking action against party MLAs who defected to the Congress. The petition requested the court to direct the Speaker to act against the MLAs who defected from the BRS. After hearing arguments from both sides on Wednesday, the High Court announced that it is reserving its verdict. BRS's lawyer Gandra Mohan Rao argued that Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender, Station Ghanpur MLA Kadiam Srihari and Bhadrachalam MLA Tellam Venkataram had changed parties for personal political gains.

Yunus set to head Bangla interim govt

To take oath today, appeals for calm
 PNS ■ DHAKA
 Nobel laureate Mohammad Yunus is set to take oath as the head of Bangladesh's interim government on Thursday, as he made a fervent appeal to everyone to stay calm and "refrain from all kinds of violence" to make the best use of "our new victory". As authorities scrambled to bring the law and order situation under control, Army chief Gen Waker-Uz-Zaman on Wednesday announced that the interim government will take oath around 8 pm on Thursday. He said the advisory council may have 15 members. Gen Zaman further said THAT the armed forces will provide all possible support to 84-year-old Yunus after Sheikh Hasina resigned as prime minister and fled the country following violent anti-government protests spearheaded by the Students Against Discrimination movement. Yunus is now in Paris and was headed to Dhaka.

Committee soon to assess Madiga sub-castes categorisation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 A committee will be constituted to evaluate the categorisation of Madiga sub-castes and present its findings to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, who supports categorisation. This decision was taken at a meeting held on Wednesday at the Plaza Hotel under the chairmanship

of Minister Damodar Rajanarasimha after the recent Supreme Court verdict allowing states to categorise SC reservations. During the meeting, Minister Damodar Rajanarasimha emphasized the need for equal opportunities in education and employment for the Madiga sub-caste based on population.



Govt will scrap Dharani, says Bhatti

● Title deeds for Podu lands soon
 PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The Congress government will soon issue title deeds (pattas) for podu lands and extend assistance to farmers for cultivating their lands, including loans, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu said. The Dharani Portal which made the lives of farmers miserable would be dumped in the Bay of Bengal, he asserted. Addressing a meeting at Pipri village in Adilabad on Wednesday, Bhatti said the government would focus on developing Adilabad district. An amount of Rs 400 crore has been allocated in the budget for the district's irrigation projects, he said.

KTR rules out BRS' merger with BJP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Bharat Rashtira Samithi working president KT Rama Rao issued a statement opposing BRS's merger with the BJP. Reacting to media reports KTR said: "Our party has faced numerous conspiracies, schemes and conspirators in the last 24 years," said KTR. "Despite all these challenges, we have consistently fought and achieved Telangana through the BRS." KTR emphasised that the BRS has proudly maintained the achievements of Telangana and kept it in the forefront of development. "We have transformed self-respect and

development into synonymous terms, making the state a model for other states," he added. "24 years of resilience and devotion! Against hundreds of saboteurs, standing up against thousands of malicious propagandists and schemes for 24 years! And yet, we prevailed. We fought tirelessly, and we achieved and built a state that has become a beacon of progress. A state that others hope to emulate. Because millions of hearts beat together for one identity and emotion - 'Telangana,' he said. "We fall, we rise, and we fight solely for Telangana. We will never bow down. Not now, not ever! Jai Telangana," he added.

Bid to restore storage capacity of reservoirs Govt constitutes Cabinet sub-committee on sediment management

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The Telangana government has constituted a cabinet sub-committee to study and recommend guidelines regarding the national framework for sediment management. This move aligns with directives of the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation. The primary goal is to adopt a framework aimed at restoring the storage capacity of reservoirs in Telangana. The committee was established through GO Rt. No: 1056 on August 3, 2024. It comprises Nalamada Uttam Kumar Reddy, the Minister for Irrigation and Command Area Development (I&CAD), Food &



Civil Supplies, who will serve as its Chairman. Other members are Tummala Nageshwar Rao, the Minister for Agriculture, Marketing, Co-operation, Handlooms & Textiles, and Jupally Krishna Rao, the Minister for Prohibition & Excise, Tourism & Culture and Archaeology. The Secretary of I & CAD Department will be the

Member/Convener of the committee. The sub-committee's mandate is to thoroughly study the framework and submit detailed recommendations to the government focusing on effective sediment management practices to improve the capacity and efficiency of reservoirs in the state.

Harish questions new criteria to decide locals for MBBS, BDS entry

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 BRS MLA Harish Rao has questioned the new criteria for deciding local candidates for MBBS and BDS admissions. He said the state should study how other states like Karnataka are drafting rules so that Telangana students do not face problems in their own state. Addressing a press conference on the issue of defining criteria for students to be considered locals for MBBS and BDS admissions, Harish said, "GO: 33 issued by the TG Ministry of Health, Medical and Family Welfare gives the impression that the government has no concern about the future of our students."

Quota within quota: Litigation on reservations

Reservations, called 'quota' in education and employment opportunities in the Government have been there since 1950. It was originally meant to be implemented for 10 years. It ought to have been closed after a decade. But it has been extended continually, the last one being in 2020.

In Andhra Pradesh and Punjab, the Scheduled Castes were classified as A, B, C, and D. The journey of such categorization was questioned before the judiciary. Finally, the Supreme Court accepted it on 1 August 2024.

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS
Article 16(4) covers all backward classes, including the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. The expression used in Article 16(4) is "any backward class of citizens". The expression "not adequately represented" covers all socially and educationally

backward classes, who, on account of their backwardness, are inadequately represented in the State's services. The scope of Article 16(4) is wider in its ambit than that of Article 15(4). The expression "backward class of citizens" used in Article 16(4) covers in its ambit the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes as well as other backward classes, including the socially and educationally backward ones. The preferential treatment is a facet of equality under Article 14.

The constitutional validity of Section 4(5) of the Punjab Act depends upon whether any such classification can be made within the class of the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes or is to be treated as a homogenous class. Whether it is not permissible to provide any further reservation to the weakest out of the weak, particularly when it has not been possible to trickle

The constitutional validity of Section 4(5) of the Punjab Act depends upon whether any such classification can be made within the class of the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes or is to be treated as a homogenous class.

down the benefit of reservation to the weakest, and the same is utilized by the upper class within the group, who enjoy the benefit of reservation to the maximum creating disparities within its class.

A Punjab circular reserved half of the Scheduled Caste quota of two groups Balmikis and Mazhabi Sikhs in 1975, then made a law in 2006, the Punjab Scheduled Caste and Backward Classes (Reservation in Services) Act, 2006. It was followed by a challenge in the High Court of Punjab and Haryana.

This 2020 case referred to a landmark judgment in Indra Sawhney and Ors. v. Union of India and Ors. 1992 Supp (3) SCC, 217 (1992) in which B.P. Jeevan Reddy, J. observed that several castes or tribes within the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are not similarly situated. In N.M. Thomas, it was held that the Scheduled Castes are groups of castes, races, tribes, communities, or parts thereof found suitable by the Commission and notified by the President. Caste is nothing but a social



PROF MADABHUSHI SRIDHAR ACHARYULU
Dean, Mahindra University, Hyderabad

class or socially homogenous class. It is based on occupational grouping. Its membership is by birth, and they inherit the same occupation. **NOT TO CLAIM FOR A PERCENTAGE OF THE QUOTA**

The other class out of the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled

Tribes/Socially and educationally backward classes cannot be denied the benefit of reservation and a claim over the whole or a particular percentage of reservation. The State can provide such preference on rational criteria to the class within lists requiring uplift. There is no vested right to claim that reservation should be at a particular percentage.

Justice Arun Mishra concluded that the interpretation of Articles 14, 15, 16, 338, 341, 342, and 342A is a matter of immense public importance and correct interpretation of binding precedents in Indra Sawhney and other decisions. Though we have full respect for the principle of stare decisis, at the same time, the Court cannot be a silent spectator and shut its eyes to stark realities. The constitutional goal of social transformation cannot be achieved without taking into account changing

social realities. **THE 2020 JUDGMENT**

Thus, a five-judge bench in the State of Punjab and Ors. vs Davinder Singh & others (AIR ONLINE 2020 SC 699, and <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/137059642/>) in a landmark decision, agreed with the sub-categorization within SCs. Justice Arun Mishra ruled along with Justices Indira Banerjee, Vineet Saran, M.R. Shah, and Aniruddha Bose, on August 27, 2020. A similar reservation-related case came up from Andhra Pradesh. A reference to this AP case is thus highly relevant as it suggests that another five-judge-bench did not agree with this kind of conclusion (that it is not correct for sub-categorization).

The point of 'homogenous group' in 2024 judgment. The judgment emphasized that the Scheduled Castes are not a homogenous group, but

contain various communities of different races and social backgrounds. Some of these groups were more socially and economically disadvantaged than others. The majority also unequivocally confirmed that sub-classification was not exclusive to the OBC category. The Supreme Court bench with a 6:1 majority judged that states could create sub-classifications within the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe categories on 1st August 2024 (State of Punjab & Ors. Vs. Davinder Singh & Ors. 2024, INSC 562). The Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court held that sub-categorization within a class is a constitutional requirement to secure substantive equality if the social position of the constituents is not comparable. (readers need to study another five-judge judgment in the AP case.)

(to be continued)

Sitarama Project trial run on August 11

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy is set to inaugurate the trial run of the Sitarama Project on August 11.

The Irrigation Department has decided to conduct a trial run before the project's formal launch by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on August 15.

Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy will go directly from Hyderabad to the second pump house to check out the trial run.

After this, he will proceed to complete the trial run of the third pump and then go to Wyra to inspect arrangements for Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's scheduled meeting on August 15.

He will then visit the Duddumpotula Gandhi lift irrigation site in Adavi Devulapalli mandal in Miryalaguda of Nalgonda district to check out the proposed construction site.

Vivint Pharma to invest Rs 400 cr in new Genome Valley facility

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Vivint Pharma, a pharmaceutical company manufacturing injectables, has announced plans to establish a state-of-the-art injectables manufacturing facility in Hyderabad's Genome Valley.

The company will invest Rs 400 crore in the new facility which has a potential to employ 1,000 people, solidifying Telangana's position as a global hub of life sciences.

The announcement was made during a high-level meeting with Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and the Minister for Industries and Commerce, D. Sridhar Babu, in the US.

This investment underscores Vivint Pharma's commitment to expanding its footprint in India, particularly in Telangana, which has emerged as a preferred destination for pharmaceutical



and biotechnology companies.

The company has an R&D centre in Genome Valley and has invested about Rs 70 crore in the facility. The company decided to establish its first manufacturing plant and has acquired 5.5 acres in Genome Valley known for its world-class infrastructure and conducive ecosystem for research,

innovation and manufacturing. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, "I am delighted about Vivint Pharma's investment in Genome Valley. Telangana has always been in the forefront of fostering innovation in the life sciences sector, and this investment will add further impetus to it."

D. Sridhar Babu, the Minister of Industries and Commerce of Telangana, also

expressed his enthusiasm stating, "This investment is a testament to the business-friendly environment nurtured by our government. Genome Valley continues to be a magnet for pharmaceutical companies and Vivint Pharma's decision to set up a new manufacturing facility here reaffirms our leadership in the life sciences domain."

Vivint Pharma's injectables facility will focus on the development and production of injectable oncology and critical care drugs for both domestic and international markets.

The company's decision to invest in Genome Valley aligns with its strategy to leverage India's skilled workforce and the region's advanced manufacturing capabilities to meet the growing global demand for pharmaceutical products.

BRS demands SC Benches in Hyd, 2 other cities

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Commenting on some recent remarks of Supreme Court Chief Justice Chandrachud, former BRS MP B. Vinod Kumar said that the duties of judges can be understood only by sitting in those seats and that such comments are made due to heavy workloads. He also reiterated the long-standing demand for Supreme Court benches in all the four regions of the country. Both the Law Commission and the Parliamentary Standing Committee have suggested setting up Supreme Court Benches in Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai or Hyderabad.

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court has the Constitutional authority under Article 130 to establish Benches. Some argue that setting up Supreme Court benches in the four cities might affect national integrity.

Special Chief Secys Ramakrishna, Jayesh deny charges about CM's US trip

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a first, bureaucrats shared insights from Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's US visit. Special Chief Secretaries Ramakrishna Rao and Jayesh Ranjan gave details of their visit and meetings.

Addressing the elephant in the room Jayesh Ranjan said about the alleged shady deals, "Back home I know there are some questions about some of the meetings we had and their outcomes, but let me say this. I've been doing this for the last 10 years. No meeting or interaction will be put on the agenda without us absolutely doing due diligence. They are included only if we are sure there are good outcomes for the state. There is no basis for any apprehension. Our professionalism and our reputation is at stake and we will never let anyone

down. I will look forward to meaningful interactions in the remaining four days. By the end of the trip, I am sure that the image of the new government in Telangana will rise manifold."

"Two days of very interesting, back to back programmes have ended. We are moving to the third city. As a matter of fact I have been on these roadshows and promotional programmes in the past too. What I notice is the kind of interest the CM and the Industries Minister are taking in understanding what the other participant is bringing to the table, how it will benefit the state and what is needed for enabling the framework through which all these investments go through easier. I can also notice that the CM is getting valuable insights about the world of trade and investment after interacting with MNCs and their leaderships.

Ensure justice for Vinesh: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday alleged that wrestler Vinesh Phogat was the victim of a "conspiracy" and took a swipe at the government, asking that when Prime Minister Narendra Modi can stop the Russia-Ukraine war, then why can't he ensure justice for the Indian grappler.

In a shocking reversal of fortunes, Phogat was disqualified from the Paris Olympics after being found overweight ahead of her women's 50 kg final, leaving her medal-less within hours of coming close to an unparalleled gold.

She had scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman wrestler to reach the gold medal bout in her category on Tuesday night. Before this morning, she was assured of at least a silver medal but will now be coming back empty-handed due to the disqualification.

Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters here, Congress general secretary Randeep Surjewala said Phogat hoisted the country's tricolour in the Paris Olympics by winning the pre-quarter, quarter final and semi-final within seven hours.

"World wrestling gold medalist Yui Susaki, who had not lost even once in the last 82 bouts, was defeated by the daughter of India and the Indian flag was hoisted. Vinesh Phogat did not lose on the wrestling mat but lost to the politics of conspiracy."

She was sacrificed for the politics of sports," Surjewala said. He said every citizen of the country was celebrating on Tuesday as if their own daughter had won.

"But the ruling party, the sports minister, the prime minister and the BJP national president were avoiding congratulating Vinesh Phogat," he said.

TG to partner..

Continued from page 1

The World Bank, while expressing optimism about the balanced vision of the Chief Minister for Telangana and Hyderabad, highlighted how the Bank had enjoyed success in generating positive outcomes in the region with several initiatives earlier.

He also showcased great interest in backing the vision for the creation of a Net Zero city.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed delight after the marquee endorsement on several key initiatives of the state and promised to ensure that each project is followed up on mission mode to ensure an ambitious impact and outcomes with the highest transparency. It is the first time that

Telangana has chosen to explore working with a Bretton Woods institution. The Telangana team gave an overview of other developments which impact the lives and livelihood of citizens, environment and sustainability in the state.

IT & Industries Minister D. Sridhar Babu, Telangana Chief Secretary A. Shanta Kumari and other officials like Jayesh Ranjan, Ramakrishna Rao, V. Sheshadri, Vishnu Vardhan Reddy and Ajith Reddy attended.

World Bank Executive Director Parameswaran ("Param") Iyer, who also attended the discussions, praised the Telangana government for its holistic, balanced, sustainable and impactful vision keeping the state and people first.

Govt will...

Continued from page 1

A discussion will be held in the Assembly and with the approval of everyone a comprehensive land legislation would be introduced, he said.

Recalling his padayatra conducted before the elections as per the directive of the AICC, Bhatti said he, as CLP leader, and Revanth Reddy, as PCC President, started their yatras from Adilabad.

"When I started my padayatra in the scorching heat, many thought it would be confined to two villages and would be over in a couple of days. But I completed 1,365 km interacting with the people and listening to their hardships," he said. The Congress heard the woes of the people and brought back Indiramma Rajyam with a commitment to solve people's problems.

Yunus set to...

Continued from page 1

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chairperson and ex-premier Khaleda Zia, who was freed from house arrest on Tuesday, echoed the views of Yunus, saying it is not "anger" or "revenge" but "love and peace" which will rebuild the nation.

Businesses demanded immediate restoration of law and order to ensure the safety of their production units amid attacks on factories over the last two days. They said factories were reopened on Wednesday, particularly the garment units, but many cannot run properly fearing unrest and vandalism, the Daily Star newspaper reported.

With police absent from their duty to keep law and order or manage traffic, students carried out traffic management as volunteers for the

HC reserves...

Continued from page 1

The BRS requested the court to instruct the Speaker to decide on the disqualification of the defected MLAs within three months.

The BRS presented court judgments from Manipur and Himachal Pradesh which addressed similar defection cases. A copy of the Manipur High Court's with clear instructions to the Speaker was also submitted. Senior lawyer Jandhyala Ravi Shankar, representing the BRS MLAs who defected, argued that courts should not interfere with the Speaker's authority to issue orders. He emphasized that matters concerning elected leaders should not be controlled by courts.

Advocate General Sudarshan Reddy, representing the government, pleaded for more time for the Speaker to review the disqualification cases properly.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Chaturthi: Aug 07 10:06 PM to Aug 09 12:37 AM
Panchami: Aug 09 12:37 AM to Aug 10 03:14 AM

Nakshatram:
Uttara Phalguni: Aug 07 08:30 PM to Aug 08 11:34 PM
Hasta: Aug 08 11:34 PM to Aug 10 02:44 AM

Rahukalam: 1:56 PM to 3:31 PM
Yamagandam: 6:01 AM to 7:36 AM
Varjyam: 09:04 AM to 10:53 AM
Gulika: 09:11 AM to 10:46 AM
Amritkalam: 03:27 PM to 05:15 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:56 AM to 12:47 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Scattered Showers
Temp: 29°
Humidity: 79%
Sunrise: 5:57 AM
Sunset: 6:46 AM
Updated: August 7, 2024 5:00 PM

It is not the fault of Vinesh

PNS ■ PARIS

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) President Sanjay Singh on Wednesday demanded action against the support staff attached with Vinesh Phogat in the wake of her shock exit from the Paris Olympics, saying the blunder of not maintaining her weight before the final was not acceptable.

Vinesh has been training with Woller Akos, her personal coach from Belgium and has also worked with South African mental conditioning coach Wayne Lombard.

"It is not a fault of Vinesh. She was performing amazingly. The coaches, the support staff, the physios and the nutritionists should take full responsibility," Sanjay Singh said.

'We even cut...

Continued from page 1

"...small amounts of water had to be given to prevent dehydration. Her post participation weight was found to be increased. The coach initiated the normal process of weight cut that he has always employed with Vinesh and felt confident that it would be achieved," Paridwala said in a statement issued by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA). "However, Vinesh was found to be 100 grams over her 50kg weight category, and hence, she was disqualified. All possible drastic measures, including cutting off her hair, were used. However, she was not below her allowed weight of 50kg."

Dr Paridwala said there are several factors involved in losing weight before any competition and the process has its after-effects as well.

Dr Paridwala said there are several factors involved in losing weight before any competition and the process has its after-effects as well.

100 gms broke...

Continued from page 1

"I met Vinesh at the Olympic Village Polyclinic a short while ago and assured her of complete support of the Indian Olympic Association, Government of India and the whole country. We are providing Vinesh all medical and emotional support," Indian Olympic Association President P T Usha said in a statement after the stunning turn of events.

"The Wrestling Federation of India has filed an appeal to UWW to reconsider the decision to disqualify Vinesh and IOA is following that up in the strongest possible manner," she added.

The protests and appeals can continue but the cold fact was that Cuban wrestler Yusneylis Guzman Lopez, who lost to Vinesh in the

semifinals, replaced her in the final. Contingent's Chief Medical Officer Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala explained the process of weight cut and said that every possible trick was used to ensure that Vinesh could be within the prescribed limit. "The process of weight cut involves a calculated restriction of food and water along with sweating through exercises and sauna till the morning weigh-in. This weight cut causes weakness and energy depletion, which is counter-productive to participation," he said.

"...for energy restoration, limited water and high energy foods are given after weigh-in. Vinesh's nutritionist had calculated this to be 1.5 kg. There sometimes is also a rebound weight gain following competition," he added.

Harish questions... Committee...

Continued from page 1

The students of Telangana will become non-native in Telangana due to GO: 33. What is the point of fighting for a separate Telangana state? Former Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu had made arrangements to provide most of the jobs to TG locals." The KCR government increased MBBS seats from 2,850 seats to 9,000. According to the new GO: 33 if Telangana students study for two years in another state or if they go for long-term coaching will they become non-local? Telangana students are studying MBBS in other countries and states. According to this rule, are they non-locals for PG seats," Harish asked.

In Tamil Nadu to get an MBBS seat there one should have studied there from Class 6 to 10 and parents should have permanent residence.

He stressed that equality should be ensured without differentiating between castes and sub-castes. The Supreme Court's verdict provides states the freedom to implement categorization but does not mandate it. In this context, a committee comprising lawyers, public representatives, association leaders and professors will be set up. The Minister also suggested evaluating whether the previous categorization efforts are applicable to Telangana.

He proposed conducting a caste census and establishing a committee of leaders to summarise the findings which will then be presented to the Chief Minister. He said that the social and economic conditions of all castes should be understood.

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Librarians' Day celebrations
Bharat Ratna Dr BR Ambedkar Memorial Library, in collaboration with Department of Library Sciences, Osmania University to celebrate the birth anniversary of Father of Library Science Dr SR Ranganathan.
Venue
e-Classroom, Jasper Hall, University College of Arts and Social Sciences, OU, Hyd on Friday (August 9)

Pediatric Anesthesiologists meet
Indian Association of Pediatric Anesthesiologists
Mid-term CME 2024
Venue
Hotel The Plaza, Begumpet on August 10 and 11

Federation of All India Caterers
5th Convention & Exhibition: Aims to provide platform for manufacturers and traders in the food, allied sub-sectors
Venue
Hitex Exhibition Centre to be held from August 9 to 11

Home guard nabbed for extortion

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Banjara Hills Police arrested a home guard and his accomplice for allegedly threatening and extorting money from a couple at KBR Park in the city.

The home guard identified as M Srinivas, who works at the headquarters and is attached to the interceptor vehicle, along with a broker named Yadagiri, targeted couples sitting in isolated spots in KBR Park.

According to Banjara Hills Police, Yadagiri monitored the park's activities and informed Srinivas, who then threatened the couples with action and extorted money from them. The police registered a case and arrested Srinivas and Yadagiri.

City Pioneer



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03



STATE VARSITIES HAVE OFFICIATING VCS

OU's NAAC accreditation to expire

● Full-time VCs not yet appointed to 10 TG varsities

DEEPIKA PASHAM ■ HYDERABAD

Ten State universities are still led by senior bureaucrat in-charge Vice-Chancellors as the new academic year begins, leaving a leadership gap, particularly in rural areas. Notably, Osmania University faces the end of its National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) accreditation in September and urgently needs a full-time VC to manage the process.

The term of regular Vice-Chancellors has ended on May 21, 2024. Principal Secretary (Education Dept) Burra Venkatesham has passed an order for officiating Vice-Chancellors till June 15 or till

regular Vice-Chancellors are appointed. According to sources, the as order time has been extended, but the process to appoint Vice-Chancellors is still taking time.

Professors, who sought anonymity, explained that without Vice-Chancellors a new academic year leadership is under crisis. "It is the beginning of the year and there is lots of work such as new courses and guidance to professors. In this regard, a new leadership is being missed. For example, Osmania University alone has 750 affiliated colleges. Then what about

those who will take their decision? Then it is hostels recruitment which is an infrastructure issue. We did see a few students protesting for allotment of hostels in the recent past." Apart from this, the universities have teaching and non-teaching retirements and their benefits. If a professor worked for 30 years, then he will have a process to get initiated. The Vice-Chancellors are already occupied with many activities.

So, the Vice-Chancellors' appointment must be quick. In regard to Osmania University, the sources explained that NAAC accreditation is about to end by September and the process for applying

requires a new full-time Vice-Chancellor.

Another senior professor explains that everyday a Vice Chancellor has almost 100 to 150 files to be signed and that work requires full-time Vice-Chancellor. "In the city, with hours of difference, the officiating Vice-Chancellors either call authorities to their offices or they visit the university, but to universities in rural areas, bureaucrats take almost half-a-day to travel, which is lacking."

When The Pioneer approached the officials in Education department, they have not responded on the appointment of Vice-Chancellors. It is reported that committees have been formed to process the applications received for the Vice-Chancellors' posts.

Principal Secretary (Education dept) Burra Venkatesham has passed an order for officiating Vice-Chancellors till June 15



Leaders of corporate firms call on Minister Seethakka at Praja Bhavan in Hyderabad on Wednesday

Corporate firms urged to develop backward areas

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Panchayat Raj, Rural Development and Women and Child Welfare Minister Dr Danasari Anasuya Seethakka on Wednesday has called upon corporate entities to contribute their share for the development of backward areas. Representatives of IT giants such as Microsoft, Infosys, Cognizant, Qualcomm, Bosch, Granules India, TCS, Usha and Nirman met Minister Seethakka at Praja Bhavan in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

The Minister asked the companies to come forward as a social responsibility for the development of those who are in the last line. She suggested that each corporate company should adopt one village and develop it. She said that if corporate companies work with the aim of making people around us happy, society will develop.

Corporate companies should adopt each village and organise skill development programmes to solve local problems and improve employment opportunities. In areas like Adilabad and Mulugu, corporate companies have already adopted and transformed some villages. She called on the companies to lend a helping hand in the areas of education, medicine, employment, sanitation management, fresh water and infrastructure development.

Collector Diwakar explained the conditions, needs and development programmes being undertaken by the government in Mulugu district. On the Minister's call, companies have come forward to spend CSR funds and participate in development programmes in constituencies like Mulugu. The Minister congratulated the companies for participating in the CSR activities.

FREQUENT CANCELLATIONS HIT SERVICES

Daily passengers urge SCR to lay third line for MMTS

RASHMI BHUMIREDDY ■ HYDERABAD

Daily passengers of Multi-Modal Transport System (MMTS) are vexed with facing hardships due to frequent cancellations of MMTS trains. They demanded the officials to allocate a separate railway track for MMTS as they are not preparing a regular schedule to run MMTS trains on busy stretches.

The suburban sections of Hyderabad and Secunderabad divisions of South Central Railway (SCR) network reached a saturation point and need expansion with available sources in the capital city of Telangana. There are separate corridors for electric sub-urban train services in other Metro cities like Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata, but here there is no separate line. Due to this slowing the MMTS is fading away due to frequent cancellations and extended halts. Prior

to the pandemic, the daily ridership was over 1.6 lakh passengers while the number gradually decreased every year. At present, the passenger footfall is 40,000 to 50,000 and due to this, SCR has decreased from 121 to 100 train services. Noor Ahmed, General Secretary, Suburban Train & Bus Travellers Association and Member of ZRUCC, said "There has been no proper punctuality in trains services. Due to that, many passengers are opting for other transport modes.

It will be better for Railways department and Telangana government to conduct a survey and plan to improve rail network to lay additional line in phased manner from Secunderabad to Kacheguda/Lingampally/Cavalry Barracks via Malkajgiri so that there will be no hitch to local trains in city limits and passengers will prefer to travel by it.



The suburban sections of Hyderabad and Secunderabad divisions of South Central Railway (SCR) network reached a saturation point and need expansion with available sources in the capital city

Call to remove dangerous cables on electric poles

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Southern Telangana Power Transmission Corporation Musharrarf Farooqi directed the officials concerned to remove cables and other objects hanging in heaps from the power poles in Greater Hyderabad city, which are dangerous to pedestrians, vehicular traffic and power personnel. He held a review meeting on Wednesday at the corporation's premises with the representatives of cable operators and Internet service provider companies and representatives of the cable association.

The CMD of the company said that due to the hanging of cables, cable bundles and telecom equipment of various shapes beyond the capacity on the power poles, are putting extra load on the poles thereby bending them. Moreover, the cables are lying strewn on the footpaths, causing inconvenience and danger to the passers-by.

He said that most of the unused cables were heaps and the entire pole was surrounded by these cables. So, the electrical staff was facing problems in carrying out repairs on the poles. The operators have been asked to take steps to install cables as per norms within one week on main roads in the city and two weeks on power poles on other main roads.

Cable bundles and telecom equipment of various shapes beyond the capacity on the power poles, are putting extra load on the poles thereby bending them

44,683 students allotted seats in special category

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In all, 44,683 students were allotted seats in the special category phase-1 of Degree Online Services, Telangana (DOST) on Wednesday.

Total number of candidates allotted in Special Phase were 44,683; out of them 38,760 candidates got seat allotment against first priority and 5,923 candidates who exercised web-options but could not get seat allotment because of their limited choice of web-options and number of candidates who gave web-options in special phase were 46,538.

In regards to faculty-wise allotments, out of 44,683, 7,490 candidates were allotted for arts, 16,200 candidates for commerce, 7,624 candidates for physical education, 9,151 candidates for life sciences, 57 for D Pharmacy and 4,161 candidates for other streams.

According to Telangana State Council of Higher Education officials, candidates who were allotted seats will get SMS to their registered mobiles. These candidates can also get seat allotment details by candidate login id on DOST Website and all so the candidates who secured a seat in special phase were instructed to reserve their seat through Online Self-Reporting on August 8 and 9.

PHONE-TAPPING CASE

2G Spectrum, Chidambaram cases cited in bail petition of accused



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

During the bail petitions of former DSP Praneeth Rao and former DCP (Task Force) Radhakishan Rao, the counsel for the accused on Wednesday cited the 2G Spectrum case and the Chidambaram case (the INX Media case) to grant the bail.

During the arguments of the two accused in the phone-tapping case, the counsel said that the three-judge Bench in Chidambaram case reaffirmed the bail jurisprudence. The Supreme Court's observation on bail emphasised that bail is the rule and jail is the exception.

Meanwhile, the counsel asked the court whether the police collected the record of purchase of hard disks. If they are obtained from the Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB), those are matching with the police's found material objects' serial and model numbers.

The counsel said that the police have not submitted the document on how many numbers have been intercepted by the accused. The counsel for the accused said that there is no scope for tampering with any evidence and obstructing the investigation. It has been five months since the accused have been arrested. However, the chargesheet was also filed before the court.

The counsel for the accused asked that on Tuesday, the Public Prosecutor told the court that the case is not about the cash seizure, then why the police have arrested Radhakishan Rao in this case.

After hearing the arguments over the bail petitions of the two accused, the court called for the orders on July 9.

Musheerabad's B'deshi community reacts to crisis



SAMUEL JOSHUA ■ HYDERABAD

The city has the cheapest and oldest Bangladesh Market Street in Musheerabad, also known as Sasta Bazar Bholakpur. This market, with a 35-year legacy, is named after Bangladesh. The ancestors of the present Muslim traders started the business here, importing clothing material, jewellery and many other products.

This market is spread across three streets and is filled with products, starting at the wholesale prices of Rs 50 and Rs 100. Many Muslim women, along with their children, visit the market and choose from a wide variety of items.

When asked, Mohammed Hafez,

a women's clothing and dresses trader, said he has been running his textile shop for over 10 years, continuing his father's legacy. Hafez, a relative of his Bangladeshi ancestors, mentioned that the textile clothing is imported from Bangladesh, while the stitching is done locally.

Reacting to the crisis in Bangladesh, Hafez said that imports will be affected for a few months due to the lack of government and that army might be vigilant on imports and exports. He expressed hope that the situation would be resolved soon and that the High Court would reconsider its 2018 order on the job quota system. Meanwhile, Omar, a cosmetics and perfumes trader, said he has been running his shop in the mar-

ket since eight years. His father, a son of Bangladeshi migrants, passed down the business to him. Besides a few Bangladeshi products, he also sells items from Mumbai and Chennai. Omar explained that with the advancement of technology and rapid manufacturing in India, only a few products are now imported from Bangladesh.

Reacting to the crisis in Bangladesh, he said politicians should consider the average people by providing employment, as many young people in Bangladesh are jobless, leading to violent protests. Omar added that while some imports might be affected now for a period of time, he can rely on selling affordable products from Mumbai.

GHMC invites street-dog feeders

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

To feed street dogs, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) is inviting people to register to feed street dogs. On Sunday, the GHMC mentioned that this voluntary registration process aims to foster a harmonious coexistence between humans and animals while ensuring the well-being of street dogs.

By registering, street-dog feeders will partner with the GHMC in identifying suitable feeding locations away from public areas, thereby reducing human-animal conflicts. Additionally, registered feeders will receive essential information on responsible



By registering, street dog feeders will partner with the GHMC in identifying suitable feeding locations away from public areas, thereby reducing human-animal conflicts

feeding practices, animal welfare guidelines and opportunities to participate in sterilization and vaccination drives.

Street-dog feeders play a crucial role in identifying unsterilized dogs, which is essential for population control and preventing the spread of rabies. The GHMC encourages feeders to report such dogs for timely sterilization and vaccination.

To achieve maximum impact, the GHMC requests all animal welfare organizations to support this initiative by encouraging street-dog feeders to register. People could register through the bit.ly/GHMCdogfeederform link.



Revenue Minister holding talks with South Central Railway General Manger Arun Kumar Jain in Khammam on Wednesday

Ponguleti seeks changes in alignment of railway tracks

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Minister for Revenue, Housing and Information and Public Relations Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy on Wednesday had a meeting with South Central Railway (SCR) General Manager Arun Kumar Jain and urged him to make changes in the alignment of railway tracks to be built through Khammam and Warangal districts.

The proposed railway track from Dornakal to Kusumanchi in Khammam district via Naikgudem and from Mothe to

The Revenue Minister held talks with SCR General Manager Arun Kumar Jain on Khammam-Warangal new railway line

Gadwal in Suryapet district, passes through four mandals of his Palair Assembly constituency alienating the cultivable lands, the Minister said, asking the SCR General Manager to change the alignment of the railway line. He asked the General Manager to find an alternative route.

Taking into consideration,

the Kakatiya Urban Development Authority's master plan for development of Warangal, he asked the SCR to develop a city by-pass railway line. The State government gives top priority to the development of Warangal city. Keeping in tune with the future needs of the people of the city, the government is

readying the master plan for 2050.

Against this backdrop, the Railways should link the proposed railway line from Nashkal to Hasanpally to the Warangal master plan development. The current railway line would come in the way of implementing the Warangal Master plan for development. Therefore, keeping all these in mind, the SCR should change the alignment.

Roads and Buildings special secretary Dasari Hari Chandana and others were present.

40 students take ill due to suspected 'food poisoning'

PNS ■ JADCHERLA

As many as 40 students of the Government Residential School for Minority Students at Jadcherla took ill on Wednesday due to suspected food poisoning.

Nine of those who fell ill were admitted to government hospital. Many students complained of stomach pain after having kichdi for breakfast. Besides the stomach ache, the stu-



dents developed symptoms of vomited.

Government medical officers established a medical camp to treat the patients.

Collector Viziendira Boyi, along with Additional Collector, rushed to the residential school and spoke with students and enquired about their health condition.

They inspected the school environment and also the food cooked in the hostel. They had lunch along with the school students.



Medak District Collector Rahul Raj planting sapling in Medak on Wednesday

'Transform Medak into a healthy district'

PNS ■ MEDAK

As part of the prestigious programme launched by the State government Pachhadanam-Swachhadanam (Cleanliness and Greenery), on the third day on Wednesday, District Collector Rahul Raj took part in the programme and later inspected the garbage dumping yard in the town.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, he appealed to the district authorities to achieve the objective of healthy Medak district.

The government has been implementing the cleanliness and greenery drive till August 9, he said, asking the people to ensure that water does not stagnate in old tyres, coconut shells and other plastic goods. He wanted the people to keep their house and its surroundings tidy.

He suggested that people

plant saplings away from electricity lines and drinking water supply pipeline as part of the development of avenue plantation. Asking the officials to achieve good results as part of the Swachhadanam-Pachhadanam, he said that saplings are kept ready at government nursery. Therefore, he directed the officials to draw up plans to promote greenery in the village.

He asked the officials to implement and cleanliness drive as per the fixed schedule. The Collector has called upon the people to curtail the use of plastics completely. He exhorted the people to strive hard to make the cleanliness drive a grand success and advised officials to sensitise children on these aspects.

Panchayat officer Yadaiah, Municipal chairman, municipal commissioner and government officials took part in the event.

Four arrested for impersonating policemen

PNS ■ KOTHAGUDEM

Kothagudem Police on Wednesday arrested four persons on charge of impersonating policemen and extorted money from students.

Three students, Akash,

Tarun and Jaswant Raju, had been taking photos at Rudrampur junction when they were confronted by four persons. They stopped their car on seeing the students taking photos and accosted them.

The miscreants, the police said, posed as policemen and snatched mobile phones from students and threatened to arrest them on charge of possessing marijuana. The miscreants thrashed the students when the latter demanded

identity cards from them. The police based on the complaint made by the students investigated the case. The police arrested four persons, named Shaik Yakub Ghoori, Eggadi Ashok, Vadde Manoj and P Sarath Chandra.

Shadnagar MLA inaugurates mega medical camp at Hajipalli village

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar inaugurated a mega medical camp organised by ABV Hospital at Hajipalli village of Farooqnagar mandal. Emphasising the importance of service humanity, MLA Shankar stated, "service to humanity is service to god." During the event, Shankar urged medical professionals to provide quality health-care to poor people. He stressed the importance of delivering medical treatment with a humanitarian perspective, advising that services should not be done for the sake of money but rather with the aim of providing quality medical care to the needy. He highlighted the importance of clear communication with patients, stating that faith is the strength of medicine.

Dr Anand Kumar and his

wife Bhargavi, who organised the free medical camp under the auspices of ABV Hospital, said they dedicated to do social service. They thanked the villagers for their support and contribution to the success of the camp.

The event saw participa-

tion from several prominent figures, including Block Congress President Balraj, MPTCs Association Leaders Srisailem, former deputy-Sarpanch Sudarshan, former Sarpanch Krishna, Kammadan Naveen, Vishnu Hospital Owner, and staff.



Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar interacting with doctors at a medical camp at Hajipalli village in Rangareddy district on Wednesday.

Need for people's participation in govt programmes stressed

PNS ■ SIDDIPEET

Special officer of Pachhadanam-Swachhadanam Bharati Hollikeri has underlined the need for people's participation for the success of the government programmes.

implementation of the programme. People should take part in the programme.

She visited several villages of Siddipet district to inspect the implementation of the Cleanliness and Greenery programme and also in Gajwel

programme with government officials and made several suggestions to the officials.

She asked the people to give no room for mosquitoes to breed in the vicinity of their homes. She laid emphasis on improving the ground water table. Since people use forest produce, they have the responsibility to increase in greenery cover, she felt.

Arogya Telangana is feasible only through implementation of cleanliness and greenery promotion drive. Earlier, she planted saplings in Rajiv park here. She inspected the garbage dumping yard here. Later, she inspected the jute bags made by local women's groups. At Bayyaram village, she sensitized the people on the Pachhadanam and Parisubhrata (need to promote greenery and cleanliness).

She appreciated former sarpanch Srinivasa Reddy for maintaining sanitation in the village. Municipal chairman NC Rajamouli, Bayyaram sarpanch Madduru Srinivas Reddy, district official Jayadev and officials of various government departments, elected people's representatives and others were present.



Khammam city Assistant Commissioner of Police RV Phaninder speaking at a meeting in Khammam on Wednesday

Police caution people against investing in Ponzi schemes

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Assistant Commissioner of Police RV Phaninder has called upon the people to not to fall prey to cybercrimes. He also cautioned people against investing in Ponzi schemes launched by criminals.

Addressing a meeting held to educate people on cybercrimes held at the Krishnaveni Junior College in the city on Wednesday, he asked the people to be wary of online trading as several persons lost their money to cybercriminals taking part in the programme. Several have been lodging complaints about such online trading frauds with cyber police. Therefore, he wanted the people to exercise caution

and not walk into the trap set by the cyber criminals.

In case of cheating by cyber-criminals, the people should call up 1930 or complain through cybercrime.gov.in, he said.

Cyber fraudsters send messages asking people to earn high profits by investing in online trading. First, they ask the people to invest some amount and ensure that the people earn profits initially. When the people invest more and more money and try to reap profits out of it, the cybercriminals insist that the people should invest money equal to the profit earned. Therefore, people should not respond to such links and messages, he said.



District Superintendent of Police Janaki Sharmila speaking to the media in Nirmal on Wednesday

Three arrested for committing financial fraud

PNS ■ NIRMAL

Nirmal Polcie arrested three persons on charge of committing financial crimes. District Superintendent of Polcie Janaki Sharmila told the reporters that the three persons, The criminals Sheikh Naseem Khan, Taslim Khan and Salim Khan, who hailed from Rajasthan, committed crimes and cheated people of their money.

On July 24, the three accused went to the local Abhilasha ATM and service center near Kuntala bus stand

at 7.30 pm and told the owner of the ATM that they needed 50,000 cash and would send the money online. They also cheated a man of Rs 50,000.

On August 6, the police arrested miscreants, seized eight cell phones, more than 10 ATM cards and identity cards from them, registered a case of cheating and sent them to judicial remand.

The SP specially congratulated Bhainsa ASP Avinash Kumar, Rural Inspector Nile and Kuntala SI Rajimikanth for taking special care in the investigation.

Vemula accuses Cong leaders of spreading falsehood on Kaleshwaram

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

Former minister Vemula Prashant Reddy has made an emotional appeal to people to question the Congress government for releasing water from Kaleshwaram project into the sea instead of helping farmers irrigate their lands.

Prashant Reddy blamed the Congress leaders for spreading falsehood that the Kaleshwaram project had become destabilised when only two pillars of Medigadda barrage sank.

He released water into Lakshmi and Kakatiya canals from Srimamsagar project at Pochampad. Addressing a gathering later, he said that former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao built the Kaleshwaram project at the confluence of Pranahita and Godavari rivers to solve the drinking water and irrigation water facility of Telangana. As



part of the Rs 90,000 crore project, a Rs 4000-crore Medigadda barrage was built. When two pillars of the 84 pillars of the barrage sank, the Congress indulged in mudslinging campaign against the BRS regime then alleging that the whole project was in danger. Moreover, it posed problems to the farmers by not lift-irrigating the water from

Kaleshwaram project. He demanded that the State government to run the lift irrigation projects of Gulpa, Alisagar and fill tanks in Nizamabad, Armoor and Bodhan constituencies and wet the ayacut lands. Otherwise, he threatened to storm these reservoirs leading thousands of farmers and switch on the motors of the LI schemes.

Institutional deliveries in govt hospitals should improve: Karnan

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

Medical and health director RV Karnan on Tuesday paid surprise visit to the 30-bed hospital at Sultanabad and the mother and child welfare health center at Peddapalli along with Collector Koya Sri Harsha.

He directed the medical officers to provide better health treatment facilities to people on a par with corporate hospitals and advised them against showing dereliction to duty to provide health services to the needy.

He said that he would not tolerate hospital staff behaving discourteously towards the patients visiting the hospitals to access health services and warned them of taking stern action against the guilty. He asked the medical officers to increase the institutional deliveries in Government Hospitals. He enquired from the patients about the treatment facilities being provided to them.

He enquired from the hospital authorities the types of diagnostic facilities being provided to the patients through diagnostic hub here.

Expressing concern over decreasing institu-

tional deliveries in government hospitals, he reiterated that the institutional deliveries in government hospitals should increase.

With the availability of a district-level government hospital here, he insisted that the critical delivery cases should not be referred to other hospitals, but treated here.

He wanted the government hospitals to extend better medicare facilities to pregnant women. He called for 100 per cent registration of ANC cases and administering vaccines to babies on time. The number of referrals to private hospitals from Peddapalli hospital Mother and child Health Center should decrease. Every diagnostic test being conducted on patients should be registered online, he said.

Later, RV Karnan planted saplings on the premises of Government Hospital in Peddapalli. Hospital superintendent Dr Sridhar, Sultanabad hospital superintendent Dr Ramadevi, medical officers Dr Mahender, Dr Sunita, Dr Satsiy, Dr Raju, Dr Tanuja, Dr Vasudeva Reddy, Dr Kumar and gynaecologist Dr Anasuya and others were present.

District administration focusing on Dharani problems

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

Collector Koya Sri Harsha, along with Additional Collector GV Shyam Prasadlal, have focused on solving pending Dharani problems and land issues by August-end, according officials.

The Additional Collector

has been conducting review meetings on pending land related problems in 13 mandals of Peddapalli district. He has been touring one mandal every day and holding meetings with Tahsildars and other concerned officials to update his knowledge.

He has been gathering infor-

mation about the applicants from the mandal seeking to incorporate changes in Dharaniportal about agricultural and non-agricultural lands.

He made it clear to the officials not to neglect resolving pending land issues. He also instructed them to resolve the minor issues then and there.



Special officer of Pachhadanam-Swachhadanam Bharati Hollikeri interacting with people in Gajwel on Wednesday

She wanted everyone to become a stakeholder in the

municipality. She reviewed the implementation of the pro-

ACROSS THE STATES



4-yr-old girl killed after dog falls on her from 5th floor

A four-year-old girl walking with her mother died after a dog fell on her from the fifth floor of a building in Maharashtra's Thane, police said on Wednesday. The freak incident occurred around 4.30 pm on a narrow, busy lane in the Mumbra area, an official said. The child suffered grievous injuries after the canine fell on her. She was rushed to a hospital where doctors declared her dead, he said. A video of the dog falling on the girl has gone viral on social media. However, it is still unclear how the dog landed on the road – if it jumped or was thrown. The official said police are trying to find out from the Thane Municipal Corporation if the owner had permission to keep a dog or if negligence on their part led to the incident. The girl's body has been sent to a government hospital for post-mortem and a probe is underway, said the official. In her statement to the police, the girl's mother said she did not suspect any foul play in her daughter's death, the official added.



Maha govt nod for Wainganga-Nalganga river linking project

In a significant decision aimed at irrigating agriculture in talukas affected by farmer suicides in Vidarbha region, the Maharashtra government on Wednesday approved the Wainganga-Nalganga river linking project. The project, with an estimated cost of Rs 85,000 crore, plans to channel water from Wainganga, a tributary of Godavari river, to the Wainganga project in Buldhana district and connect it to Nalganga, a sub-tributary of Tapi river. To achieve this, 426-km of canal network will be constructed, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) stated in a release. "Fifteen talukas of Nagpur, Wardha, Amravati, Yavatmal, Akola and Buldhana will be brought under irrigation under the project. Water can be used for drinking purposes as well as industrial use," it said. To ensure that water can be used even in Rabi season, 31 storage reservoirs are also being built, as per the release.



After a long wait, Chhattisgarh to get its 4th tiger reserve

The Chhattisgarh government on Wednesday decided to declare a new tiger reserve covering areas of Guru Ghasidas National Park and Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary in the state to promote eco-tourism and create jobs, an official said. This will be the fourth tiger reserve in the state after Indravati (in Bijapur district), Udanti-Sitanadi (Gariaband) and Achanakmar (Mungeli). The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had given its in-principle approval to the project in 2014. The decision was taken in the cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai here at his official residence, he said. Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla tiger reserve will be the country's third largest tiger reserve spread over 2,829.387 sq km. Nagarjunasagar Srisailem tiger reserve in Andhra Pradesh is India's largest such reserve with an area of 3,296.31 sq km, followed by Assam's Manas tiger reserve, spread over 2,837.1 sq km, he said. The creation of the Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla tiger reserve will lead to the development of eco-tourism and generate employment opportunities for villagers living in its core and buffer areas, a government statement said.

Constitution is a powerful tool to curb disparity, says CJI DY Chandrachud

Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud on Wednesday said the Constitution is a "powerful tool" to curb disparity and it creates institutions which are meant to guard against inequality. He said the Constitution provides for checks and balances within these institutions and also stipulates institutional priorities and obligations to the citizens of the country. Addressing the gathering at the 13th convocation ceremony and founder's day of the O P Jindal Global University here, the CJI exhorted the students to spot injustice in all its facets in the world around them. "The Constitution is a powerful tool to curb such disparity. It creates institutions and structures that are meant to guard against inequality, apparent or invisible," he said. In that sense, our Constitution performs a horizontal function in that it regulates inter-institutional relationships and a vertical function insofar as it regulates the relationship between the state and its people," he said. Justice Chandrachud also implored the students to spend their days and lives not only as ambassadors of their alma mater, but also as the voices of reason in a clutter of noise.



BASEMENT DEATHS

CBI takes over probe, inspects coaching centre building

PNS ■ NEW DELHI The CBI has taken over the probe into the deaths of three civil services aspirants at a coaching centre in Old Rajinder Nagar here and registered an FIR against the owner of the institute, officials said on Wednesday. Following the FIR, a team of CBI officials visited the building housing Rau's IAS Study Circle on Wednesday and inspected the area where the incident had taken place on July 27. The IAS aspirants were studying in the library set up in the basement when water flooded it resulting in their deaths. The CBI has booked Gupta for culpable homicide not amounting to murder, causing death by negligence, voluntarily causing hurt, negligent conduct, and common intention. The agency is also likely to move special court to seek custody of Gupta and other suspects who are in judicial custody, the officials said. The high court had castigated police and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) over the students' deaths, saying it was unable to fathom how they could not come out of the basement. It also sought to know whether the doors

No alliance for J&K Assembly polls: Abdullah

PNS ■ SRINAGAR National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday said his party will not enter into a pre-poll alliance with any other party for the Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir. "We will not enter into any alliance, totally not," Abdullah told reporters here. The NC chief's comments came on the eve of the Election Commission's (EC) visit to Jammu and Kashmir to review the preparations for the polls. Led by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, the EC officials will meet the representatives of political parties to get their feedback on conducting the polls. Abdullah said the poll panel will talk to the parties and then consult the Centre, before finalising the election dates. "Whether the dates are announced or not, the EC is coming here."

Ask MVA partners if I am okay as CM face: Uddhav

PNS ■ NEW DELHI Shiv Sena-UBT supremo Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday dropped hints that he was ready to be projected as the chief ministerial face in the Maharashtra Assembly elections likely to be held in October. Thackeray's comments came on a day when he met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, AICC general secretary K C Venugopal and other INDIA bloc representatives here. Thackeray was accompanied by his son Aditya and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut. "Maharashtra's farmers and youngsters are fed up with the opportunistic BJP-led alliance. The 13 crore people of Maharashtra are looking towards change," said Kharge after the meeting. "If my colleagues (in MVA) feel that I have done excellent work, then ask them whether they want me as the chief minister. People will decide," Thackeray told reporters here before meeting the Congress leadership. Thackeray served as the chief minister of Maharashtra for two-and-a-half years as head of the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress - Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance before his government was pulled down by the BJP after dissent in the Sena ranks. Thackeray also met NCP-SP supremo Sharad Pawar, who had played a key role in stitching together the MVA coalition after the 2019 assembly elections.

Opposition presses for caste census, super rich tax

PNS ■ NEW DELHI Opposition members in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday pressed for a caste census, imposition of super rich tax, and removal of GST levy on life and medical insurance premiums. Participating in a discussion on the Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation No. 3 Bill, 2024 in the Upper House, Raghav Chadha of the Aam Aadmi Party expressed happiness at the indexation benefit being "partially restored". However, he said, this poses a "huge question mark" over the central government's tax policies. "... How confused is our country's taxation policy. On 23 July 2024, you say that you are taking away the indexation benefit from investors and exactly after two weeks, you say that you are not taking it away but restoring it. This shows that when you, without thinking, not acting on the advice of an economist, if you devise the Budget on the advice of those who do not have economic knowledge, these kind of flip flops will be witnessed," he said. Taking away indexation from an Indian investor is equivalent to breaking their back, Chadha claimed, seeking "full restoration" of the indexation benefit. "I would demand that indexation (benefit) be fully restored on all asset classes and be applicable even on asset classes bought after July 23, 2024," he said. Besides, citing Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari's letter to his Finance counterpart Nirmala Sitharaman, Chadha requested that no Goods and Services Tax (GST) be levied on health and life insurance premium. Manoj Kumar Jha (RJD) argued that ten per cent of the people have control over majority of the country's properties. "Can our country, taking into account the Preamble, make an arrangement for the top 1 per cent of the super rich to be taxed so that our other policies function efficiently and we can work towards the group that is our priority," Jha said. He argued that a caste census will ensure that the Budget announcements will be "more effective".



OPPOSITION PARTY UNITED WE STAND. 17-18 JULY BENGALURU, KARNATAKA. P Wilson of the DMK claimed that no allocation has been made in the Budget towards important projects in Tamil Nadu, and accused the Centre of ignoring the people of the state

ISRO to launch Earth observation satellite soon

PNS ■ BENGALURU ISRO on Wednesday said its latest earth observation satellite EOS-08 will be launched onboard the third and final developmental flight of its Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)-D3 on August 15. The primary objectives of the EOS-08 mission include designing and developing a microsatellite, creating payload instruments compatible with the microsatellite bus, and incorporating new technologies required for future operational satellites, the Bengaluru-headquartered national space agency said. "SSLV's third and final (developmental) flight will launch EOS-08 microsatellite on August 15, 2024, at 09:17 IST from Sriharikota. It completes the SSLV Development Project and enables operational missions by Indian industry and NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)," ISRO posted on "X". Built on the Microsat-LMS-1 bus, EOS-08 carries three payloads: Electro Optical Infrared Payload (EOIR), Global Navigation Satellite System-Reflectometry payload (GNSS-R), and SiC UV Dosimeter. The spacecraft has a mission life of one year. It has a mass of approximately 175.5 kg and generates power of around 420 W. The satellite interfaces with the SSLV-D3/IBL-358 launch vehicle, ISRO said. The EOIR payload is designed to capture images in the Mid-Wave IR (MIR) and Long-Wave IR (LWIR) bands, both during the day and night, for applications such as satellite-based surveillance, disaster monitoring, environmental monitoring, fire detection, volcanic activity observation, and industrial and power plant disaster monitoring.

MAHARASHTRA ASSEMBLY POLL Cong to focus on farmers, youth

PNS ■ MUMBAI Congress has planned a rally in Mumbai on August 20, coinciding with the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. "The party's manifesto committee will be led by former Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan. Today's core committee meeting focused on key issues such as the welfare of farmers and youth, as well as the challenges posed by unemployment and inflation, which will be central to our electoral manifesto," Patole said. The Mahayuti (comprising BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP) suffered a big blow at the hands of the people of Maharashtra during the recent Lok Sabha



PM CARES FOR CHILDREN PORTAL 4,264 applications rejected, says Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI About 4,264 applications received on the PM Cares for Children portal have been rejected, the government said on Wednesday, listing non-eligibility as the reason for rejection under the scheme for children orphaned during the Covid pandemic. The scheme was launched by the prime minister to support children who have lost both parents or legal guardian or adoptive parents or surviving parent after March 11, 2020. Women and Child Development (WCD) Minister Annpurna Devi told the Rajya Sabha that 9,331 applications have been registered on the PM Cares for Children portal from 613 districts in 33 states/UTs. Out of these, 524 applications were duplicate, she said in a written response. Thus, 8,807 applications were reviewed by district level child welfare committees and district collectors or district magistrates (DMs), the minister said. Based on the final approval of DMs, 4,532 beneficiaries are receiving benefits under the scheme and 11 other applications are in the pipeline for release of benefits, Devi said. The remaining 4,264 applications were not found eligible by DMs. However, registration under the scheme is still open so that no eligible applicant is left behind, she said. This WCD ministry acts upon cases approved or finalised by DMs for transfer of benefits under the scheme. No application is being processed for eligibility at the central government level, Devi added. The PM-Care programme saw a significant number of applications across various states and Union Territories (UTs) in 2021 with a total of 6,360 beneficiaries. Out of these, 3,953 were approved by DMs, 1,985 rejected and 422 declared duplicates, according to data shared by Devi. Maharashtra had the highest number of registrations at 1,107, with 713 approvals. Andhra Pradesh had 473 registered beneficiaries, with 338 approvals, while Delhi reported 266 registrations with only 124 approvals, the data showed. Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh were among the states and UTs that showed high approval rates, whereas Bihar and Odisha had notably high rejection rates.



Prime Minister to support children who have lost both parents or legal guardian or adoptive parents or surviving parent after March 11, 2020.

Social factors impact lifespan by up to 18 years

PNS ■ NEW DELHI A combination of four social factors -- gender, marital status, education and race -- could impact risk of early death by up to 18 years, according to a study that analysed US citizens' data to devise a lifespan scoring system. While individual risks and genes partly explain differences in health and death, researchers said that evidence increasingly points to how social conditions, in which people are born, grow, live and work, shape one's health. The researchers at the University of Southern Denmark found that while no one of the four factors was more influential than any of the others, the more of these factors a person has, the higher their risk of an earlier death. The authors also devised a "simple scoring system" based on the four factors to identify those most at risk. According to the scoring system, one's lifespan score could range from a lowest of (minus) 10 to a highest of eight. For the study, published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) Open, the researchers took data on registered deaths and population numbers from national statistics and census data for the period 2015-19. Overall, 54 different social groups and 12 specific causes of death, representing 11 leading ones in the US such as lung, breast and other cancers, were included in the analysis. The team compared the partial life expectancies between age 30 and 90 years of the 54 social groups, which included three types of marital statuses, education and race each. Partial life expectancy, one of the most commonly used measures of public health, estimates the expected number of years lived between specific ages. In this study, it measures the expected years lived between ages 30 and 90, for a maximum of 60 years of life, the authors explained. Their analysis revealed "very large" differences in the lifespans between the social groups studied. For example, the authors found that white never-married men with a high school diploma or less had the shortest partial life expectancy of 37 years, while white married women with a university degree had the longest one of 55 years. "There is an 18-year difference between the minimum and maximum partial life expectancies between age 30 and 90 years across the (social groups)," they wrote. The team also found that the advantage of the social groups having longer lifespans was not obvious once multiple factors were considered.



for the period 2015-19. Overall, 54 different social groups and 12 specific causes of death, representing 11 leading ones in the US such as lung, breast and other cancers, were included in the analysis.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Finance Minister yields

Facing a backlash over changes to the property transaction taxation, the FM has given some concessions to homeowners

Bowing to the popular pressure and critiques from MPs within the NDA coalition, the Central Government has relented to grant some relief for property transactions. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in the budget that the tax on long-term capital gains was reduced from 20% with indexation benefits to 12.5% but without indexation benefits. However, following significant opposition, an amendment is being made to The Finance Bill, 2024. For the transfer of a long-term capital asset such as land or a building acquired before July 23, 2024, the taxpayer can now choose to calculate their tax either at 12.5% without indexation under the new scheme or at 20% with indexation under the old scheme and pay whichever amount is lower. Indexation adjusts purchase price for inflation, reducing tax liability on gains from investments like debt funds. The government eliminated indexation benefits on long-term capital gains, increasing taxable gains. It prevents inflation from eroding returns on long-term investments.



This adjustment marks a significant reversal from the government's firm stance on the issue after the Budget.

The ministry officials had argued that the new tax rate structure, with a lower tax rate minus the indexation benefits, would benefit people in almost all cases. However, the industry experts had different opinions. Industry bodies had sought to rethink the proposal, observing that the removal of indexation benefits amounted to a retrospective tax change for those who had bought properties earlier. They pointed out that this would particularly hurt those who

had invested in assets that had delivered lesser appreciation in value over the years. It was widely feared that the removal of indexation benefits on long-term capital gains would slow down property transactions in the Mumbai real estate market, and the real estate engine of the country and could have cascading effects throughout the country. Besides, several MPs also urged the Government to reconsider the proposal. During the debate on the Finance Bill in the Lok Sabha, TDP MP Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu echoed the concerns of other MPs, emphasising that this issue involves taxpayers' hard-earned money and impacts middle-class people the most. He noted that the middle class views real estate as a safe investment and and so should be protected. Indeed he had a point, as the middle-class is facing the pinch of price rise and rising unemployment. If their small investments and savings are wiped off they would have nothing to fall back upon. Providing taxpayers with the option to choose between the two tax regimes would address some of their concerns. Thankfully the finance minister yielded to allow for the second option. This would indeed give some relief to small and middle-class homeowners, providing a more balanced approach to long-term capital gains taxation in the real estate sector.

PICTALK



Fishermen cast their nets in the Arabian sea, at the Kochi coast

The evolution of Rahul Gandhi

It may be premature to assess Rahul Gandhi's effectiveness as the new Leader of the Opposition, but his initial performance is promising



KALYANI SHANKAR

It might be too soon to judge how well Rahul Gandhi is doing as the new Leader of the Opposition. The current budget session ends in just a few days, so we'll need more time to understand his leadership fully. But he has begun well.

After winning in the Lok Sabha polls, Rahul has been confident and strong both inside and outside the house, which is appropriate for an opposition leader. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen recently discussed Rahul's evolution since their days at Cambridge University. Sen underlined that Rahul has significantly matured over the years and underscored that his true test lies in how he steers the Opposition in Parliament. Rahul stepped into the shoes of the Leader of the Opposition, a quarter of a century after his political debut in 2004. The Lok Sabha had been without a Leader of the Opposition for a decade, as no opposition party had the requisite number of members to stake the claim in the last two Lok Sabhas. During the recent budget session, the first after Rahul became the LOP, he took a vital leadership role in his party and the Opposition. Since becoming the Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi has taken on more responsibilities. He now leads and represents the Opposition's viewpoint on various subjects. This is a new role for him. He organised protests, delivered powerful speeches against the Modi government, and worked closely with allies to coordinate their efforts on the floor. He also focused on critical issues for the people and made himself more accessible. In the recent budget session, Rahul Gandhi, as the Leader of the Opposition, took on an important leadership role within his party and the Opposition. He has organised protests, delivered powerful speeches against the Modi government, and worked closely with allies. Additionally, he has focused on critical issues for the people and made himself more accessible. Rahul Gandhi's backroom office has a



team of about twelve key members.

This team, led by General Secretary K.C. Venugopal and including Sam Pitroda, Sunil Kanugolu, K. Biju, B. Srivatsa, Manickam Tagore, Alankar Sawai, and Kaushal Vidyarthi, plays a vital role in managing Gandhi's political activities and election strategies, including logistics and social media. Rahul's growth and evolution in the political arena have transformed him into a more confident leader, marking a significant departure from his previous image as a reluctant politician. This change has been compelling to witness in his political journey. Rahul finds it easier to take on a more assertive role now, with a substantial number of opposition members in the 18th Lok Sabha. Furthermore, the success of united allies in the 2024 polls has made them realise the power of unity.

When Rahul spoke as the Leader of the Opposition for the first time, he said, "While the government has political power, the Opposition also represents the voice of the Indian people. This time, the Opposition represents significantly more of the Indian people's voice than it



DESPIITE BEING AN MP FOR THE PAST TWO DECADES, RAHUL WAS NOT CONSIDERED A GOOD PARLIAMENTARIAN. HE ASKED ONLY 99 QUESTIONS, PARTICIPATED IN 26 DEBATES, AND WASN'T ALWAYS PRESENT AT CRITICAL TIMES

did last time. "Rahul Gandhi's criticisms of Prime Minister Narendra Modi have caused strong reactions from the ruling party. During Rahul's maiden speech as LOP, PM Modi spoke up for the first time in 10 years. Modi accused Rahul of saying that the entire Hindu society is 'violent'. The Prime Minister stated, "Democracy and the Constitution have taught me to take the Leader of the Opposition seriously." Modi's responses to Gandhi's criticisms show an acknowledgement of the changed situation and the resulting tension in the Parliament. Rahul Gandhi has been speaking out against the Modi government's decision to arrest AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and JMM chief Hemant Soren. He opposes the BJP's attempts to silence opposing viewpoints. This has caused increased tensions in Parliament for the ruling party. During his Lok Sabha campaign, Rahul Gandhi strategically showed a small red pocket edition of the Constitution at public meetings. This move effectively highlighted what he called the perceived threat to the Constitution from the BJP.

His use of the Constitution helped him gain support from reservation beneficiaries.

Despite being an M.P. for the past two decades, Rahul was not considered a good Parliamentarian. He asked only 99 questions, participated in 26 debates, and wasn't always present at critical times. Since 2014, he has been noticeably absent during budget sessions, only appearing occasionally. He also frequently went abroad, leaving the party in a crisis. Rahul is doing well as the Leader of the Opposition (LOP).

His success will depend on his political planning. He missed some opportunities in the past, like becoming a minister in Manmohan Singh's cabinet or strengthening the party as the Congress President. However, his current role shows his potential. He must use this opportunity to face future political challenges confidently. Rahul's belief in the power of the LOP to raise its voice in Parliament gives hope and optimism to the party.

(The writer is a popular columnist; views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Justice delayed is justice denied



This is with reference to your editorial "Justice Delayed". The Chief Justice of India's deep concern over the excessive delay in disposing of cases, as noted in the

editorial is a concern shared by all. The staggering fact that 44 million cases are pending and could take 300 years to resolve at the current pace should prompt the ruling government to seek a tangible solution. Currently, filing a case itself feels like a punishment for both parties involved.

Even after winning a case, the appeals process undertaken by the losing party makes the entire affair extremely frustrating. There is a pressing need to increase the capacity of courts at all levels to handle and dispose of cases in a timely manner. However, it is unfortunate that even the existing courts are forced to operate with severe manpower shortages. Simply changing the Acts and their names is not the change people desire; what is urgently needed is systemic and infrastructural improvement.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

this can mainly be blamed on poor quality of driving schools and doling out licences without proper application of mind.

Ganpat Bhat | Akola

TURMOIL IN BANGLADESH

Madam — Sheikh Hasina's resignation as Prime Minister of Bangladesh is a result of socio-political upheaval of her own making. Every nation is an enterprise owned and run by its people who elect a government to run it as also simultaneously place an Opposition as the auditor. So long as the auditor is facilitated by the government to put up dissenting notes and is willing to correction, the shareholders let the checks and balances play out. When the government fails to give credence to the opposition, a plethora of public fora and institutions come in to press an alternative narrative. Should the government resort to suppressing them too, the people step in as suo- moto auditor. The likes of social media then expound dissent and if this too goes unheeded, people act as regulators leveraging electoral

platforms to tone down aberrations in governance by impinging on electoral standing of the ruling dispensation. Should a government seek to neutralise the process of such franchise itself, as has been in many nations across the globe, people take to roads to convey the message. An extremely recalcitrant government could then compel people to set up tribunals and don the robes of judge and jury. Bangladesh has apparently slipped into this unhappy final phase. It's military may yet be sagacious enough to restore law and order and enable the nation to reclaim governance and eschew going the Myanmar way. There is a lesson for every progressive democratic nation. Stifling the elected opposition and relentless and heavy handed suppression of dissent per se in hubris of power, is bound to heavily set back economic progress while the socio political fabric stands frayed beyond repair.

R Narayanan | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Renewable energy: Paving the way for a sustainable future

By 2030, India plans to achieve 500 GW of installed capacity from non-fossil fuels, marking a significant shift towards sustainability and energy security

India's growth story over the past two decades has been marked by vibrant economic progress, largely driven by service exports and rising domestic consumption. As of 2024, the economy appears robust, poised to replicate its service sector success by transforming into a global manufacturing hub to leverage its demographic dividend.

A robust manufacturing sector necessitates significant resources, with power being a crucial component. Despite this, India's per capita electricity consumption remains low compared to global averages. As the country embarks on its manufacturing-focused era, electricity demand is expected to rise significantly. To meet this demand while adhering to climate commitments, India plans to add new electricity generating capacity primarily from non-fossil fuel sources. The goal is to achieve 500 GW of installed non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030.

By May 31, 2024, India's non-fossil fuel-based power generation capacity stood at 201.7 GW, with renewable energy, including small hydro pro-



jects, contributing 146.6 GW. To meet growing demands, a significant increase in renewable energy capacity is anticipated, supported by the renewable energy procurement roadmap from the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), which targets 50 GW of bids annually from FY 2023-24 to FY 2027-28.

Regulatory policies for the renewable energy sector are governed by both central and state governments, as electricity is part of the concurrent list. Key aspects of central government policy include promoting domestic manufacturing of solar modules and electrolyzers, safeguarding domestic manufacturing, and domestic content requirements, and implementing policies to encourage specific types of electricity genera-

tion like rooftop solar and offshore wind.

India's renewable energy policy framework adopts a holistic approach, addressing multiple factors. For example, the Ladakh region, with excellent irradiation levels, lacks sufficient infrastructure to integrate its power into the grid. To tackle this, the government announced the green energy corridor. Furthermore, the government identified states with offshore wind potential and introduced a viability gap funding scheme with an outlay of Rs 7,453 crores for installing 1 GW of offshore wind projects. Regulatory policies also aim to enhance self-sufficiency in the energy. The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, with an outlay of Rs. 24,000 crores, targets achieving gigawatt-scale manufacturing capacity of high-efficiency solar PV modules. Additionally, the Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) Program, with an outlay of Rs. 17,490 crores under the National Green Hydrogen Mission, supports domestic manufacturing of electrolyzers and green hydro-

gen production. These investments are expected to generate numerous direct and indirect jobs while ensuring energy security.

The government has also introduced schemes to promote distributed solar generation at the household level in both rural and urban areas. The PM-KUSUM scheme aims to reduce the agricultural sector's reliance on diesel and boost farmers' incomes by providing central government subsidies of up to 50% for installing standalone solar pumps and solarizing existing grid-connected agricultural pumps. Farmers can also install grid-connected solar plants on barren land and sell electricity to local distribution companies (DISCOMs). In the interim budget for FY 2024-25, the government announced the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojna, which offers subsidies covering up to 40% of solar panel installation costs. This scheme aims to equip 10 million homes with solar panels, saving INR 75,000 crores in electricity costs.

(The writer is a manager-investments at AMPIN Energy Transition, views are personal)



GAURAV PRABHUMIRASHI





FIRST COLUMN

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Praying, Chanting, meditation and other such practices can transform your life



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We are forever doing material acts like eating, sleeping, 'vihar' (entertainment) and, yes, work. Some of us may be doing some spiritual practices as well. Why is there such a mismatch? Because most people do not realize how beneficial spiritual practices are for a human being. Read on and you will agree. I have chosen ten common spiritual practices for this article. They are simple to do and almost everyone can benefit by doing them. Beginning with praying, what is so difficult to do it? Someone is not well in a family, and a family member prays for his or her quick recovery. Even small children pray for their mother when she is unwell. What happens then? God hears them, as He has eyes and ears everywhere. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 13.13) What is God's response? He has to consider several factors like what does the person prayed for deserves, what effect it will have on other family members, who is praying, etc. There will be a response, which will be appropriate taking into consideration everything. Let us remember that God knows 'The Big Picture', which includes the past, present and future also.

Whatever God may decide, the act of praying sincerely curbs ego, which helps one to become humble – a necessary quality to be able to deal properly with others. Praying is also a good start for taking shelter from God – the topmost spiritual activity. Chanting of God's names and mantras is quite common across all religions. Many studies have been done to see the effects of chanting on the brain. They have found that chanting stimulates positive changes in the brain. Mantras with the sound 'Ohm'



are especially useful. God's names bring similar benefits. When we take God's name, He must respond. Didn't Lord Krishna respond to calls of Draupadi – "Krishna, Krishna, Krishna"? How the Lord respond to us depends again upon what we deserve and what will be good for us. 'Darshan' – seeing God's 'murti' in Deity form or a photo of one of God's incarnations like Krishna, Rama, etc. is very useful. This is my favourite spiritual act. I have hung a large photo of Lord Krishna on the right side of my bed. All I do is to sit or lie comfortably and look at the Lord's attractive face. Lord Krishna has allowed gaining spiritual knowledge to be pleasing in doing. (9.2) What better company than of God there can be? My Lord has become my own. And He rewards me in many ways. 'Atmabala' (inner strength) flows into me. This strength – the mother of all strengths has made me stronger mentally. I am also able to tolerate the inevitable miseries of this world better. Meditation is getting quite popular worldwide.

People are beginning to see the enormous benefits of this spiritual practice. Lord Krishna has recommended it strongly. In verse # 6.35, the Lord says, "Mind can be brought under control by practice." In verse # 12.8, He tells us where our mind should be fixed, i.e. in Him only. (12.8) In verse #18.65, the Lord asks us to develop His consciousness. Then, what will happen? We will be in God, i.e. become part of Him. (9.29) Could anything be better than that? Hearing about God is another great activity. Lord Krishna goes to the extent of indicating that those devoted to hearing from others will also benefit greatly. (13.25) There are many, who are conversant with spiritual truths. Satsang is a meeting of persons, who are conversant with spiritual truths. "And preachers of supreme knowledge (spiritual benefits) amongst My devotees please Me the most." (18.69) This is the highest devotion towards God. Remembering God and thanking Him whenever some good happens to us are immensely beneficial; they make us deserving of more such rewards. Why don't we do such activities? Because we are almost entirely focused on material acts. We can all do spiritual acts – the givers of great benefits both spiritual and material.

(The writer is a spiritual guide; views are personal)

Negligence and tragedy: The price of complacency



RAJDEEP PATHAK

The death of three IAS aspirant highlights severe systemic negligence by coaching center management, property owners, and municipal authorities



In reflecting on the powerful speech delivered by Mark Antony following the assassination of Julius Caesar, one cannot help but recall his stirring words: "Friends, Romans, countrymen, I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him." Antony's oration skillfully ignited the Roman populace, who were initially ambivalent towards Caesar's murder. Through his use of rhetorical questions and ironic praise for Brutus and the other conspirators, Antony incited the crowd to question the motives behind the assassination. < By revealing Caesar's will, which generously bequeathed wealth and public parks to the citizens, Antony further endeared Caesar to the people and painted the conspirators as traitors. The crowd, now convinced of Caesar's benevolence and the conspirators' treachery, erupted into chaos, leading to a violent riot. This turmoil precipitated a civil war, ultimately overthrowing the existing order and paving the way for the rise of the 'Second Triumvirate' (all sought revenge for the murder of Julius Caesar) and the end of the Roman Republic.

A tragic incident in the Capital City of India echoes this (Shakespearean) historical upheaval, where the death of three students (IAS aspirants) has incited public (students') outrage. On Saturday, July 27, 2024 evening, a supposed drainage burst led to flooding in the basement of Rau's IAS Study Circle in Old Rajinder Nagar used as a library where approximately 35 students were present when rainwater began to inundate the basement, creating a panic-stricken atmosphere. Despite attempts to evacuate, three students were trapped and subsequently died.

This disaster has cut short the dreams of the parents of three students. Unlike Bhola Baba – who philosophically dramatized death as an inevitable part of life following the Hatras stampede tragedy – the negligence displayed by the coaching centre owners in this instance cannot be so easily dismissed. The failure to ensure proper evacuation facilities has underscored the mismanagement of the institution. Although the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has stormed into action, they

cannot fully absolve themselves of responsibility. More than anything else, the basement, intended for parking and storage, was illegally repurposed as a library. As the news became the talk of the town, sentiments of anger and frustration poured amidst huge grief and loss. The incident in Old Rajinder Nagar underscores a pervasive pattern of systemic negligence among various stakeholders, including coaching centre management, property owners, and municipal authorities. The illegal conversion of the basement into a library, without proper safety measures reveals a severe disregard for student safety. Compounded by chronic infrastructure deficiencies such as inadequate drainage systems, this negligence is exacerbated by municipal authorities' failures.

Regulatory lapses, such as issuing No-Objection Certificates (NOCs) without thorough verification and compliance checks, further point towards significant enforcement shortcomings. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi's (MCD) delayed actions in sealing off illegally repurposed basements reflect a reactive rather than proactive enforcement strategy. Additionally, the coaching centres' lack of an effective emergency plan, including proper drills and protocols, significantly contributed to the chaos and heightened the tragedy, demonstrating a critical need for better emergency preparedness, stricter regulations and oversight to prevent such tragedies in the future.

Accounts from traumatized students reveal harrowing experiences. Whether it is Aishwarya Rai, a 30-year-old UPSC aspirant from Kanpur, Nakul Tiwari, or Shreya, the very fact that they have been rescued from the terrifying moment of being drowned to death will linger

in their psyche for years to come. The question arises: why does it take such disasters for the administration to take action?

The arrest, bulldozing of illegal constructions and other preventive and punitive measures often come only after tragedy strikes. Videos now emerging tell tales of utter mismanagement and illegal use of properties, breaking all norms. Why are the students only now flagging these issues? Another question is why their seniors, who have perhaps lived and studied in these conditions and are either IAS aspirants or have cleared their examinations, did not raise such issues of negligence in the past. Moreover, if a few of them have become Civil Servants from these coaching centres, why didn't they, over the years, bring this to the notice of the local administration? Another crucial issue is that the commercialization of education, driven by the high demand for competitive exam preparation, should not compromise safety standards, which in this case has resulted in unsafe and overcrowded conditions.

The commercialization of education, characterized by the increasing influence of profit-driven motives, brings both benefits and drawbacks to student welfare. On the positive side, it often leads to improved infrastructure, better resources, and innovative teaching methods that enhance the learning experience. Private institutions do attempt to provide advanced facilities and extracurricular activities, fostering a more dynamic and engaging educational environment. This recent incident must become an eye-opener. It critically highlights the need for enhanced regulatory oversight and stricter enforcement of building codes and safety regulations, emphasizing regular inspections and audits to ensure compli-

ance. Investment in infrastructure, particularly drainage systems, is crucial to mitigate flooding risks, especially in flood-prone areas like Old Rajinder Nagar.

Additionally, educational institutions, particularly coaching centres, should be mandated to develop and regularly practice emergency evacuation plans, as safety drills can significantly improve preparedness and reduce panic during emergencies. Increased public awareness about safety regulations and accountability mechanisms is necessary, encouraging students and residents to report violations and demand action from authorities.

Moreover, the process for obtaining necessary permits and NOCs should be transparent and stringent, with severe penalties for deviations from approved plans. Public awareness and advocacy are crucial. Educating students and residents about safety standards and rights is another key factor. Further, creating platforms for community engagement and empowering residents with safety mechanisms is crucial.

More than anything else, authorities should respond promptly to such reports and take corrective action. While this is a sad moment for all of us to have lost young budding talents of our country in this manner, it is time we foster a culture of accountability, in our endeavour to safeguard the dreams and lives of countless students who come to Delhi in pursuit of their aspirations. The path forward requires a collective effort from authorities, institutions, and the public to prioritize human safety over commercial interests and ensure that such a tragedy never recurs.

(The writer is programme executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

REGULATORY LAPSES, SUCH AS ISSUING NO-OBJECTION CERTIFICATES WITHOUT THOROUGH VERIFICATION AND COMPLIANCE CHECKS, FURTHER POINT TOWARDS SIGNIFICANT ENFORCEMENT SHORTCOMINGS

Indian cardiologist sparks global debate on mind-based medical protocols

In a groundbreaking challenge to conventional medical practices, Prof B M Hegde has called for a paradigm shift in the treatment of serious ailments

The world of medicine is all set to see an intense debate on the medical protocol to be employed in curing serious ailments thanks to an Indian doctor.

An internationally reputed cardiologist Prof B M Hegde who is based in Mangalore in Karnataka has challenged the existing diagnostic system in the field of physical ailments practiced across the world and has called for a shift to mind-based cure protocol.

Dr Hegde says that if one wants to live a life free of ailments like cancer and other serious medical issues, all one needs to do is to love all and hate none. "The more you hate people and abuse/criticize them, the



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

medical constitution in your body gets deteriorated," he told The Pioneer. "Although there has been a lot of thinking going on in medical circles about the role of the mind in psychological disorders, much needs to be done in the field of physical ailments. Recent data on the important role played by the human mind in the causation of major physical ill-

nesses like heart attacks and cancer have rekindled our interest in the intricacies of the working of the human mind vis a vis the human body. In the 17th century itself, William Harvey had clearly indicated that in all bodily afflictions there is a mental basis.

As there is no big money involved in this kind of research unlike the gold rush in the field of epidemiology and interventions, the field did not until very recently attract good researchers," writes Prof Hegde, who is also the chief editor of the "Journal of Science of Healing Outcomes", a super peer-reviewed scientific publication. Interestingly, Prof Hegde, a former visiting

professor of cardiology at the University of London, always had strong reservations about the treatment protocol for cardio vascular diseases and cancer. In the editorial of the July 2024 issue of the JSHO, he quoted from the Journal of American Medical Association which has published a large study on the connection between life stresses and their role in the causation of coronary artery diseases.

He said the JAMA study focused on the immediate and long-term effects of various emotional stressors that are a part of life in the modern rat race of the monetary economy. Prof Hegde with more than five decades of medical research and prac-



tice to his credit has found that hostility, anger, frustration and bereavement come up on top among the negative emotions.

"Love, compassion, social support and job satisfaction have control over one's situation, negative emotions acutely raised the blood

pressure as also the heart rate and the breathing rate," said the octogenarian professor who has been honoured with Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan by the President of India for the scintillating works he has done over the decades. According to Prof Hegde's experience, chronic stress does take its toll leading to killer diseases. "Emotions play a major role in one getting afflicted with such ailments. Scientists, business barons, professionals and politicians should bear this in mind. When the competition becomes too intense, chances of one losing control shoot up and there can be no coming back to normalcy," he said.

Dr Hegde pointed out the debates in Parliament and election campaigns to drive home the point that one should be elegant and cool-headed during the battle for power. "Even military officers behave in a disciplined manner while they are engaged in fighting the enemies.

This is what we should learn to stay cool and free of ailments," he said. For the uninitiated, Prof Hegde is the author of many books and has written the preface for medical books published by medical scientists. His seminal work "What Doctors Don't Get to Study in Medical School" is widely read in the world of medicine and many doctors rate it as the Holy Bible of

Modern Medicine. If we stay away from unhealthy competition for wealth and power, we can keep serious ailments like heart disease and cancer miles away from us.

The only losers would be pharma companies that charge a fortune for a course of medicine. The JSHO has the whose-who of the world of medicine and science working as its editorial staff and board. This includes Prof Joanna Floros, and Evan Pugh Professor of Paediatrics and Obstetrics, Penn State University Hershey, USA, who is the co-editor in chief.

(The writer is a special correspondent with the Pioneer, views expressed are personal)

IN BRIEF



Godawari Power and Ispat Q1 profit grows to Rs 287 cr

Godawari Power and Ispat on Wednesday posted 24 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 286.89 crore for June quarter FY25, helped by reduced expenses. Net profit from ordinary activities after tax was at Rs 230.88 crore in April-June FY24, the company said in an exchange filing. Total income rose to Rs 1,372.42 crore from Rs 1,344.37 crore in the same quarter a year ago. Expenses reduced to Rs 987.30 crore from Rs 1,063.00 crore in first quarter last financial year. The company's board has also approved the appointment of MD Bajrang Lal Agrawal as the chairman with effect from August 9, 2024, in place of Shashi Kumar. Besides, the board approved a proposal for payment of a special dividend of Rs 1.25 per equity share of Rs 5 each on the occasion of 25th anniversary of the company. The payment will be made on or after August 28, 2024.



Gold plunges Rs 350; silver rises Rs 200

Gold prices plunged by Rs 350 to Rs 71,350 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday amid a fall in the precious metal in the overseas markets. In the previous session, gold of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 71,700 per 10 grams on Tuesday. However, silver prices bounced back after four straight days of massive decline. Silver rose by Rs 200 to Rs 82,200 per kilogram from Rs 82,000 per kg in the previous trade, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also declined by Rs 350 to Rs 71,000 per 10 grams. It had settled at Rs 71,350 per 10 grams in the previous close. Traders attributed the decline in gold prices to a reduction in domestic customs duty and global influences. On the global front, gold at Comex was quoted at USD 2,393 per ounce, down by USD 16 from the previous close. Comex gold declined as the US Treasury yield headed higher along with the dollar index.



Tata Motors confident over long-term prospects of EVs

Tata Motors on Wednesday said it remains confident about the long-term prospects of the electric vehicle segment and termed the fall in sales numbers a 'short-term' issue. In an interaction at the launch of the company's first mid-sized electric SUV, Curvv.ev, at a starting price of Rs 17.49 lakh (with 45 kWh battery) Shailesh Chandra, Managing Director of Tata Motors Passenger Vehicle and Tata Passenger Electric, said that the company is looking to achieve one-lakh electric vehicle sales this financial year. Curvv EV is the second car based on the advanced Pure EV architecture - acti.ev, which marks Tata Motors' entry into the highly competitive mid-size SUV segment and will be competing with the likes of MG ZS EV, Hyundai Creta and Maruti Suzuki Grand Vitara, among others. Tata Motors' passenger electric portfolio now comprises Tiago EV, Tigor EV, Punch EV, Nexon and Curvv EV. Moreover, EV sales account for 12 per cent of the company's total sales.

Sebi issues Rs 25-cr notice to Karvy Stock Broking, Parthasarathy

Markets regulator Sebi on Wednesday sent a notice to Karvy Stock Broking Ltd (KSBL) and its CMD C Parthasarathy asking them to pay around Rs 25 crore within 15 days in a case pertaining to misappropriation of clients' funds by misusing the Power of Attorney. The notice came after they failed to pay the fine imposed on them by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi). Sebi in April 2023 barred KSBL and Parthasarathy from the securities market for seven years and also imposed a penalty of Rs 21 crore on them for misappropriating clients' funds by misusing the Power of Attorney given to the broking firm. Individually, the regulator had levied a fine of Rs 13 crore on KSBL and Rs 8 crore on Parthasarathy, promoter-cum-managing director. In its fresh notice, the regulator has vbdirected KSBL and Parthasarathy to pay Rs 15.21 crore and Rs 9.36 crore, respectively, which includes interest and recovery cost, within 15 days. In the event of non-payment of dues, the markets regulator will recover the amount by attaching bank accounts, attaching as well as selling the entities' moveable and immovable property.



Replying to a debate on the Finance Bill, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the rollover benefit will be available to taxpayers who buy new immovable property utilising the capital gains on the sale of old property

IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

FM proposes amendments to LTCG tax provision

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said the contentious LTCG tax proposal on real estate is being amended to give option to taxpayers to compute tax liability under the old system or at reduced rates without indexation, and pay the lower of the two. Replying to a debate on the Finance Bill, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the rollover benefit will be available to taxpayers who buy new immovable property utilising the capital gains on the sale of old property. The Budget 2024-25 proposal to remove indexation benefit in calculation of long term capital gains on sale of immovable properties evoked sharp criticism from various corners, including opposition parties and tax professionals.

The Budget, presented on July 23, had proposed a lower 12.5 per cent rate of LTCG tax, down from 20 per cent, while doing away with the indexation benefit. The major amendment in the Bill relates to restoration of indexation benefit on sale of properties bought prior to July 23, 2024. Now, individuals or HUFs who bought houses before July 23, 2024, can opt to pay LTCG tax under the new scheme at the rate of 12.5 per cent without indexation or claim the indexation benefit and pay 20 per cent tax.

The Indian retail market is one of the fastest growing markets in the world, expected to cross US\$ 1.4 trillion by 2027, said the latest annual report of Reliance Industries (RIL).

RIL operates the country's leading retailing firm propelled by factors like increasing urbanisation, rising income levels, expanding female workforce, and an aspirational young population. Moreover, a rising demand for premium and luxury products further fuels this growth trajectory, reflecting the evolving preferences with rising disposable incomes. This growth extends across various town classes, benefiting numerous local, regional and international brands and manufacturers. "They are being connected with consumers across diverse markets, thereby actively participating in India's ongoing growth narrative," said Reliance.

'Property mkt sentiment to improve as govt gives options on LTCG tax'

Property owners will heave a sigh of relief and market sentiments will improve with the Centre deciding to give taxpayers the option to choose between the new 12.5 per cent long-term capital gain (LTCG) tax rate and the old 20 per cent rate with indexation benefit for assets purchased before July 23, according to industry bodies. Realtors' apex body CREDAI President Boman Irani said the recent amendment in the long-term capital gains tax and indexation benefits is a welcome move by the central government.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who in her budget for 2024-25 proposed to cut LTCG tax to 12.5 per cent from 20 per cent but without the indexation benefit, moved an amendment to the bill to give the option. Indexation benefits allow taxpayers to arrive at property cost after adjusting for inflation.

Stock markets snap 3-day slump, Sensex rebounds 875 pts

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty bounced back sharply on Wednesday after three straight days of slump following a rally in global peers and value-buying in metal, IT and oil shares at lower levels. The 30-share BSE Sensex rallied 874.94 points or 1.11 per cent to settle at 79,468.01 with 25 of its constituents ending with gains and five with losses. During the day, it jumped 1,046.13 points or 1.33 per cent to 79,639.20. The NSE Nifty jumped 304.95 points or 1.27 per cent to 24,297.50. Intra-day, it surged 345.15 points or 1.43 per cent to 24,337.70.

Among Sensex firms, Adani Ports & SEZ rose the most by 3.42 per cent. Power Grid climbed 3.39 per cent, Tata Steel by 2.4 per cent and JSW Steel by 2.61 per cent. Infosys, HDFC Bank, ITC, Reliance Industries, Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti, and Larsen & Toubro also advanced. IndusInd Bank, Bharti Airtel, Hindustan Unilever, Tech Mahindra and Titan were the laggards.



Reliance ready for next level of growth, says Ambani

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Industries is ready for the next level of growth as the historically fossil fuel-heavy conglomerate pivots a green path agenda while consolidating its telecom business that turned data-dark India into a data-rich nation, its chairman Mukesh Ambani said.

India's most valuable company, which over the past decade added telecom, retail and finance to its core business of oil

and chemicals, is now pivoting a green pathway, targeting net zero carbon emissions from its operations by 2035.

Ambani draws nil salary for 4th yr in a row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani drew nil salary from his oil-to-telecom-and-retail conglomerate Reliance Industries for the fourth straight year in a row while his children earned a sitting fee and a commission for being on the board of India's most valuable company.

Ambani, 67, had capped his annual remuneration at Rs 15 crore from financial year 2008-09 (April 2008 to March 2009) to 2019-20 (FY20); and since FY21, he opted to forego his salary, due to COVID-19 pandemic, until the company and all its businesses were fully back to their earnings potential.



In the firm's latest annual report, he said in the world of volatility and uncertainty, India is shining as a beacon of stability and prosperity.

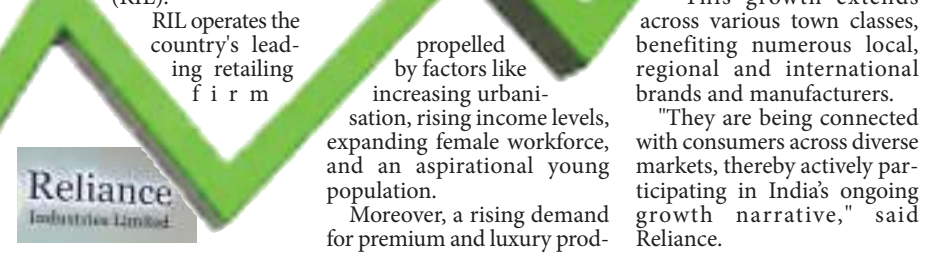
India's retail market, to cross \$1.4 trillion by 2027

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian retail market is one of the fastest growing markets in the world, expected to cross US\$ 1.4 trillion by 2027, said the latest annual report of Reliance Industries (RIL).

Reliance Retail, India is poised to become the third-largest retail market by 2030, the report said adding the growth is

propelled by factors like increasing urbanisation, rising income levels, expanding female workforce, and an aspirational young population. Moreover, a rising demand for premium and luxury products further fuels this growth trajectory, reflecting the evolving preferences with rising disposable incomes. This growth extends across various town classes, benefiting numerous local, regional and international brands and manufacturers. "They are being connected with consumers across diverse markets, thereby actively participating in India's ongoing growth narrative," said Reliance.



Hiring activity up 11% on positive momentum: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The overall job market showed a positive momentum as hiring activity in July rose by 11 per cent compared to the same month of last year, a report said on Wednesday. According to the Fountit Insights Tracker (fit), hiring activity was down 1 per cent on a month-on-month (MoM) basis. Coimbatore has emerged as the leader in job growth among India's Tier-II cities, with a 24 per cent increase in hiring, followed by Jaipur with a 23 per cent rise.

Other cities showing strong growth include Delhi-NCR (18 per cent), Chennai (14 per cent), and Pune (12 per cent), the report added. "The strong focus of the recent Union Budget on productivity and job creation is an encouraging sign for the recruitment industry. We have also noticed that the salaries of employees have consistently risen driven by higher demand for fresh talent and competitive salary offerings. This growth is likely fueled by high-growth sectors such as technology, digital marketing, and e-commerce,"

Foundit (previously Monster APAC & ME), a Quess company, CEO Sekhar Garisa said. The Foundit Insights Tracker (fit) is a comprehensive monthly analysis of online job posting activity conducted by Foundit. The report further revealed that the salary growth across most sectors has been positive and consistent over the past year, led by the IT software and services sector followed by retail, advertising, market research and PR. However, a few sectors such as automotive, BFSI, and travel and tourism witnessed a decline in salary packages, reflecting the market challenges and industry adjustments.



Microsoft, TCS, Amazon India's most attractive employer brands: Survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Microsoft has emerged as India's most 'attractive employer brand', followed by TCS and Amazon in the second and third place respectively, according to Randstad Employer Brand Research (REBR) 2024. Microsoft scored very high on financial health, good reputation, and career progression opportunities - the top 3 Employee Value Proposition (EVP) drivers for organizations, as per the survey. Others in the top 10 most attractive employer brands include Tata Power Company in the fourth position, Tata

Motors (5th), Samsung India (6th), Infosys (7th), Larsen & Toubro (8th), Reliance Industries (9th) and Mercedes-Benz (10th).

The insights from this year's findings reflect the changing expectations of the workforce. As talent increasingly prioritizes work-life balance and favourable work environment, to retain top talent. Additionally, it is heartwarming to witness that the majority of the workforce received some form of inflation compensation from their employers. The findings also indicate talent's strong inclination towards leveraging AI in their work, which presents a strong case for employers to consider investing in upskilling their workforce in new-age technologies.



The REBR 2024 is an independent survey that covered nearly 1,73,000 respondents and 6,084 companies worldwide with nearly 3,507 respon-

dents in India. The findings of this year's

BSE posts threefold surge in profit to Rs 265 cr in Jun qtr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leading stock exchange BSE on Wednesday reported an over threefold surge in net profit to Rs 265 crore in the quarter ended June 2024. The exchange had posted a net profit of Rs 75 crore in the

same quarter of the preceding fiscal, BSE said in a statement. The exchange has recorded its highest-ever quarterly financial performance with a revenue of Rs 674 crore in the April-June quarter in the current financial year FY25 as compared to Rs 271 crore in the year-ago period.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
TENDER NOTICE
NIT No. EE/08/DIV-XI/RJNRJ/GHMC/2024-25 Date: 07.08.2024
Name of Work: for 1 no work of Laying of SWD in Rajendranagar Circle-11, GHMC.
Estimate Amount / ECV: Rs. 24.10 Lakhs. Downloading Start Date & Time: 07-08-2024 at 2.30 PM., Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bid: 17-08-2024 at 2.45 PM., Name & Address of EE/SE: Executive Engineer, Rajendranagar, Div. No. 11, GHMC, Cell No.: 9989930608, e-mail id-eeef11.ghmc2@gmail.com Sd/- Executive Engineer
R.O.No: 2633-PP/CLADVT/12024-25, Dt. 07-08-2024 Division-XI, (RJNR), GHMC.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA PANCHAYAT RAJ ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
e-Proc. T.N.No. PR/07 to 18/2024-25 Dt: 06.08.2024
No. of works (12) BT Renewal on R/F Nalgonda -Overseerakonda PWD road to Venkatapuram Chowraha via Thanedarpally Junuthala Makkapally and Sulthanpur villages (00-6/76)km in Gurrampode Mandal Nalgonda Dist & other works in MRR, 15th Finance, 2BHK SCF & DMFT Grants with Total Estimate Cost: Rs. 2999.45 Lakhs. Tenders Download Start & End Dt:12.08.2024 to 29.08.2024 Every NIT/Bid will be available (14) clear working days available from the date of publishing for further details: e: https://tender.telangana.gov.in Sd/- Regional Officer, R.O.No: 2999-PP/CLADVT/12024-25, Dt: 07-08-2024 Regional Office, PR Nalgonda.



Hazards of dysglycemia!

Blood sugar is the body's primary energy source. Insulin plays a key role in regulating the blood glucose level and keeps it within a normal range. Uncontrolled blood sugar also known as Dysglycemia is when insulin doesn't work as it should and (blood sugar) glucose stays in the blood. This creates high blood sugar, known as hyperglycemia. Blood sugar can also go too low. This is a condition known as hypoglycemia.

HYPERGLYCEMIA IN DIABETES:

Resistance to the action of insulin or deficiency of insulin can lead to hyperglycemia.

Common complications of high blood sugar

- **Diabetic Retinopathy**
Diabetic Retinopathy affects the eye, especially the blood vessels around the retina, leading to vision loss or blindness.
- **Diabetic Nephropathy**
Diabetic Nephropathy affects the kidneys, causing them to lose function, leading to kidney failure over time, requiring dialysis or transplant.
- **Diabetic Neuropathy**
Diabetic Neuropathy affects the nerves, causing numbness in the feet, legs, hands, or arms. It can further damage nerves, affecting the digestive, reproductive, urinary systems and heart.
- **Diabetic Foot-Ulcers**
Diabetic Foot Ulcers are open sores that develop on different parts of the feet due to nerve damage, poor blood circulation, and infection. They can be very difficult to heal and, when left untreated, can lead to gangrene or amputation.
- **Heart attack and stroke**
High blood sugar for a period can damage the blood vessels. This may lead to heart attacks and strokes.

Hypoglycemia in diabetes:

This is often related to medications for diabetes treatment or when the intake of sugar is insufficient or delayed

Common complications of low blood sugar

Symptoms

- Low blood sugar causes hunger, shakiness, sweating, dizziness, headache, confusion, irritability, or fainting
- Brain damage
- Low blood sugar can deprive the brain of oxygen and sugar, damaging brain cells and causing cognitive impairment or neurological disorders
- Coma
- Low blood sugar causes loss of consciousness that can further result in brain damage, organ failure, or death.

Cardiac arrest

- Low blood sugar can affect the heart rhythm and blood pressure, causing cardiac arrhythmias, heart attack, or cardiac arrest.
- Ways to control high blood sugar
- Adhere to the outlined treatment plan
- Monitor the blood sugar levels regularly
- Exercise regularly and stay physically active
- Drink plenty of water and have a balanced diet
- Manage stress and practice relaxation techniques

Ways to control low blood sugar

- Limit or avoid alcohol intake
- Avoid skipping meals or fasting
- Carry a source of fast-acting sugar tablet
- Wear a medical alert bracelet or necklace
- Supervise the blood sugar levels at intervals

Blood sugar is a vital component of the body's metabolism and health. However, it causes irreversible damage to various organs and systems when it becomes too high or too low. Therefore, it is essential to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle and follow the treatment plan prescribed by healthcare experts to prevent or manage dysglycemia. While it may prove to be difficult, patients can seek guidance from peer groups, support programs and associations that provide education and support for people living with diabetes or prediabetes.

(The author, Dr Mohammed Riyaz, is from Esani Diabetic Centre in Tolichowki, Hyderabad.)

Surge in influenza cases

Seasonal influenza (the flu) is an acute respiratory infection caused by influenza viruses. Seasonal epidemics (the rise of cases) occur mainly during the winter and rainy seasons. Influenza spreads easily between people when they cough or sneeze, with rapid transmission in crowded areas including schools and nursing homes.

Dr. Usha Gaddam, MBBS, DNB (Family Medicine), Apollo Clinic highlighted that of being witnessed over 25 cases per week. "The symptoms usually begin around 2 days after being infected by someone who has the virus. The symptoms include a cold, cough, sudden onset of fever, headache, malaise, muscle and joint pains and sore throat. Cough could also be severe and last up to 2 weeks or more," shares Dr. Usha. People at greater risk of severe disease or complications when infected are pregnant women, children under 5 years of age, older people and people with chronic medical conditions and immunosuppressive conditions (cardiac, pulmonary, renal, diabetes and HIV). Most people will recover from the flu on their own. However, people with

severe symptoms or other medical conditions should seek medical care. In severe cases influenza can lead to pneumonia and sepsis. Vaccination is the best way to prevent influenza. The flu vaccine is a yearly vaccine. Immunity from vaccination goes away over time so yearly vaccination is recommended.

Annual vaccinations are recommended for

- Pregnant women
- Children 6 months to 5 years
- People over 65 years age
- People with chronic medical conditions
- Health workers

Other ways to prevent influenza

- Wash and dry hands properly
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing
- Dispose tissue correctly
- Stay home when feeling unwell
- Avoid close contact with sick people
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth

RHYTHMIC BEATS OF 'DJEMBE' ECHO THROUGH THE CITY



AARTI SREENATH

In the heart of Hyderabad's diverse cultural landscape, a new and soulful rhythm is making waves. The deep, resonant beats of the djembe, a traditional African drum, are weaving a tapestry of healing, connection and joy. At the helm of this harmonious movement is Y. Sai Kumar, the passionate founder of the Djembe Circle, who has been dedicated to sharing the transformative power of this ancient instrument.

The djembe player's musical odyssey began over a decade ago with classical instruments like the keyboard and piano. "I started my musical journey in 2006-07," he reminisces. "After completing my PhD in musicology from a university in Germany, I delved into Reiki and other natural healing practices. It was then that the djembe found me, or perhaps I found it." This serendipitous encounter with the djembe, a member of the percussion

family alongside *tabla* and *mridangam*, inspired Sai Kumar to explore its potential beyond mere musical expression.

Sai Kumar's sessions are a blend of rhythm and mindfulness, designed to alleviate stress, enhance team-building and provide physical exercise. "The djembe is not just an instrument; it's a vessel of energy and healing. It's always played in a group, which creates a communal vibe that's both therapeutic and exhilarating. The vibrations from the drum connect with our chakras, from the Muladhara to the Crown, facilitating a unique form of chakra healing."

The inspiration for the Djembe Circle came from a friend, Ayu, an international Djembe player from South Africa. "He introduced me to the magic of drum circles. We would gather and play, immersing ourselves in the powerful rhythms. It was then that I knew I wanted to bring this experience to Hyderabad." Thus, in January 2024, the

Djembe Circle was born, offering a fresh and unique experience to the city's cultural scene.

Starting this journey in Hyderabad, however, was not without its challenges. "It's a new concept here and many people don't quite understand it at first," he notes. "But once they attend a session, they're hooked. The energy, the camaraderie—it's something you have to experience to truly appreciate."

Despite the initial struggles of introducing this new concept, Sai Kumar remains optimistic. "The biggest challenge is getting people to come and try it. But once they do, the djembe speaks for itself."

One particularly memorable session drew 150 participants, some travelling from as far as Medak. "The feedback was overwhelming. People left feeling rejuvenated and many returned with their families and friends."

The benefits of the djembe circle extend beyond the joy of music. Participants often report feelings of calm,

enhanced creativity, and improved social interactions. He recounts, "It's a stress buster. I've seen corporate workers, families and even senior citizens find relief and happiness through these sessions." He recounts a touching story of a woman and her child, who, despite the child being unwell, attended a session. By the end, he was full of energy and completely healed. Moments like these, he says, make it all worth it.

A typical session with the Djembe Circle is an immersive experience—starting with the basics and introducing the three main rhythms of the djembe, Sai explains, "Then we dive into African tribal music, with everyone singing, dancing, and even shouting with joy. It's not just a musical experience; it's a celebration."

Looking ahead, Sai Kumar dreams of making the djembe a staple in Indian culture. "In the 20th century, we saw many instruments gain popularity. I want the djembe to become one of the prominent instruments of the 21st century," he asserts. His vision extends to schools, colleges and communities across India, spreading the joy and healing power of the djembe. His advice to newcomers is simple yet profound: "Come with an open mind and open heart, and let the rhythm guide you."

In Hyderabad, the Djembe Circle is more than a musical gathering; it's a lighthouse of harmony and recovery. *The Pioneer* gets a chance to interact with the founder as we learn more about how Hyderabadis are currently grooving over these beats for wellness



I PICKED UP THE SKILL OF MANUAL CAR DRIVING FOR *GYAARAH GYAARAH*

SHIKHA DUGGAL

All geared up for her upcoming series, actress Kritika Kamra will be seen playing a police cop in *Gyaarah Gyaarah*. The upcoming series on Zee5 also stars Raghav Juyal and Dhairya Karwah in the lead roles. After making the audience go 'aww' with her diverse and impressive performances, this series will certainly show the actress in a new light. We join up with *Tandav* fame for an exclusive interview and the thriller cop

series is set to release on August 9 with the promise of captivating audiences with its compelling story!

"I finally experienced what my colleagues had always said: wearing a police uniform while performing for celluloid makes you feel something inside of you! I felt proud of myself as soon as I put it on. Suddenly, I was walking straight ahead of me. I believed that I was here to serve a purpose and bear responsibilities. I truly admire law enforcement officials!" reveals Kritika Kamra about a delightful self-discovery she made

while filming *Gyaarah Gyaarah*.

She also mentioned to us that, in her observation, there aren't many female police officers. "Being in their shoes for a short while gave me a sense of how well they hold up! I realised that achieving a dominant position in a station full of guys is not an easy job. It's challenging, as you should be commended for your physical prowess and aggressiveness."

She captivates us with anecdotes like, "I spent a lot more time with Dhairya than with Raghav while we were off-set (she laughs). He's more laid back in real life!" as she shares those behind-the-scenes adventures with her fellow actors. "Despite the fact that I have funnier scenes with Raghav in the series, I still have more. For this show, I then picked up the skill of manual car driving! I was meant to drive an old Bolero; I practiced driving in Bombay, but the next thing I knew, I was driving up the slopes in Dehradun and Mussoorie. Is that even possible to imagine? The pace was giving me trouble! Thus, it was Raghav's responsibility to shift gears whenever we were in the car together (we giggled)."

The filmmaker and Kritika had a stimulating conversation on time travel and space after filming *Gyaarah Gyaarah*. She thought the series' concept was so great and original that it didn't need a resolution! Maybe that's why she agreed to do this show? Who knows? She was genuinely enthralled with everything on the sets of *Gyaarah Gyaarah*, from talking about ideologies to quantum physics, as she informed us. It's interesting to learn that she basically had a lot of in-depth conversations after the series ended. "I feel like I understand these themes a little better now!" exclaims Kritika!

The actress also tells us, "You just can't underestimate your senses! That's why I used a specific scent for my character! Nothing is new; many actors have done it.

Your character might occasionally be defined by your perfume! When I come back from a break, for instance, it's that perfume that quickly transports you to your role. Everything in the highly realistic show was based on information from the Uttarakhand Police. That's right—we had on actual uniforms! The landscape is another thing that truly works in our favour as actors. I can just picture Dehradun! I felt completely cut off from Mumbai. Being an actor is magical to me."

"I had watched *Pagglait* before coming on to the sets of *Gyaarah Gyaarah*," she said in response to our following query. "I was aware of his delicate style as a director. Actors typically have to adjust to directors' styles, but ours was really different. He always had a different story to tell each of us and a different actor's brief. As you point out, the magical aspect he added—the fact that the clock struck 11:11—was what made it distinctive or an 'ahaaa' moment. Two walkie-talkies seem to connect inexplicably! This was genuinely a novel approach to police dramas, unheard of in India before."

As she looks forward to hearing from the fans, Kritika shares, "I have a lot of anxiety. Nothing about me is objective! Absolutely, in fact, I'm aware that my admirers have high hopes for me. Their opinions should be a prize for us. I hope this gamble pays off! For *Gyaarah Gyaarah*, I will never forget filming in chilly conditions. Also, I had a lot of delicious food on good days! I cannot believe how many offers I am getting, but I am dying to play a humorous part right now. Dark humour or a kind of intelligent comedy!" In the series, Kritika portrays a police officer. She only talked about what drew her to the part and how she believes that portraying Vamika, the character she plays, has allowed her to fully express her acting abilities.



Actress Kritika Kamra, known for bringing in her versatile prowess on screen, will next be seen in *Gyaarah Gyaarah*. She speaks to *The Pioneer*, discussing wearing the police uniform and also shares some exclusive anecdotes from the BTS of the shoot

what's brewing?

Likita

Pavani

Shriya Saran

Sruthi

Kriya Jewellers at KPHB Colony Road no: 1, Hyderabad was set afloat by actress Shriya Saran. Due to her attendance at the event, Shriya generated quite a buzz!

Chai Sutta Bar expands to Hyderabad

Chai Sutta Bar, one of India's largest and most beloved tea chains announces the launch of its new outlet in Hyderabad, located at Building bearing Municipal No. 17-1-382/R/9/2, RTC Colony, Saidabad, K V Ranga Reddy District, Champapet Hyderabad- 500 035, this new outlet is set to bring the rich flavours of Indian chai to the city of pearls, Hyderabad, offering residents and visitors a cozy, inviting atmosphere to enjoy their favourite tea blends with a great company.

'Dawn of Valour'

Marking a decade-long partnership between Asian Paints and St+Art India Foundation, they unveil one of their most unique projects, 'Dawn of Valour'. Over the last 10 years, Asian Paints & St+Art India have brought to life over 450 murals covering nearly 30 cities, thereby making 'Art Accessible For All'. This project pays homage to the Indian Defence Forces stationed at Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh by creating multiple interventions that celebrate them.

Apollo Clinic launches vaccination campaign

With the goal of helping Indians tackle monsoon related diseases & illnesses, Apollo Clinic has launched a nationwide vaccination campaign. As part of the campaign, the clinic chain will be providing a set of 10 vaccinations and another set of 10 tests to tackle monsoon related issues. Through this campaign, the clinic is targeting to reach more than patients across all 102 clinics.

'Furnestry' unveils experience studio

Furnestry unveiled its maiden state-of-the-art, Furnestry Experience Studio in Hyderabad. The one-of-its-kind Hyderabad center, located in Banjara Hills, spans an impressive 5,000 sq ft. This stunning space showcases a curated selection of customised loose furniture, elegant wall art and sophisticated Japandi, Mediterranean and several other grandeur style home decors.

India's WCC announces new climate action

Recognising the pivotal role that women can play in driving effective climate action, the Women Climate Collective (WCC) is strategically consolidating its efforts to amplify women-led initiatives. Their cohort highlights the unique challenges faced by women while also underscoring their contributions to the global climate discourse. As the 2024 cohort begins their journey, they embody the immense promise of empowering women to take the lead in combating climate change. Their efforts not only aim to address today's challenges but also pave the way for a more sustainable and fair future for everyone. In India, where the impacts of climate change are deeply felt, the involvement of women leaders is more important than ever. These women bring fresh perspectives and a steadfast dedication that can drive real progress, motivating communities and shaping policies at every level.

BLACKPINK celebrates 8 years of magic in India

VRINOX Pictures is thrilled to present the exclusive release of BLACKPINK's WORLD TOUR: BORN PINK concert film in India this 9th August to 11th August on limited screens. Celebrating the 8th anniversary of the legendary K-POP girl group BLACKPINK, this film captures the electrifying performances and essence of their Born Pink world tour. Relive the unforgettable moments of their spectacular 2022-2023 world tour, which took the world by storm, now in cinemas across India.

Laureates to redefine Indo-French cultural exchange

The French Institute in India unveiled the 28 exceptional artists and writers selected for this year's residency program across India, Bangladesh and France. With the addition of four new residences, now a total of 18 in India, 1 in Bangladesh and 10 in France, the laureates' projects will bring fresh perspectives on current themes and deepen our understanding of diverse cultural viewpoints.

Tyanni by Karan Johar announced the launch of an exclusive, limited-time collection curated especially for the Varalakshmi occasion. This exquisite collection is available only at their Hyderabad store in Jubilee Hills and features a stunning array of jewellery styles designed to cater to diverse tastes and preferences, ensuring every individual finds their perfect piece.

The Federation of All India Caterers (FAIC) announced its 5th Convention and Exhibition at the Hitec Exhibition Centre, Hyderabad, beginning from August 9 to August 11. This event will unite and organise catering professionals nationwide to celebrate and learn about the trends in the catering industry.

Policybazaar organised an exclusive press meet in Hyderabad with a special focus on Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The event unveiled significant trends driving innovation in the Indian insurance ecosystem. The press meet was addressed by the director, Saija Praveen Chowdhary, who spoke about key growth metrics and evolving customer preferences that are reshaping the insurance landscape in the country, especially in southern states.

Founder and Chairman of Shantha Biotech, Dr. K. I. Varaprasad Reddy, launched the book *Message from God* in Telugu, a ground breaking new book authored by Pradiip Mukherji, who is known for bringing the graceful message directly to humanity.

FUN

ARCHIE

WHAT DID MS. GRUNDY THINK OF YOUR PRAGMATIC READING? SHE THOUGHT MY PERFORMANCE BROKE NEW GROUND! AUDITIONS TALENT SHOW! JERRY SANDERS! GINGER BUCKLE!

GROUND BREAKING? WOW, THAT'S VERY FLATTERING! ACTUALLY, THAT'S NOT QUITE THE WAY SHE PUT IT!

HER EXACT WORDS WERE "IT REACHED NEW LOWS!"

CALVIN AND HOBBS

BANG! BANG! HA! THAT'S SIX SHOTS! YOU'RE OUT OF BULLETS! I'VE GOT YOU NOW, YOU RUSTLER!

ZAP!

ZAP? MY CATTLE PROD.

GARFIELD

ROCK AND ROLL!!! I ALWAYS WANTED TO YELL THAT IT'S OVER, RIGHT?

REALITY CHECK

DOG CONSPIRACY THEORY CLUB. WHO'S THE GOOD BOY, ANYWAY? HAS ANYONE ACTUALLY SEEN HIM?

DON'T YOU SEE? THEY USE THE TREATS, SQUIRRELS AND BALLS TO CONTROL US!

WHY DO THEY TAKE OUR FOOD, MAN? IS THE GOVERNMENT INVOLVED?

SPEED BUMP

THE GUY WITH TWO ROCKS SAID HE'D BE HERE TO RESTART THE FIRE BETWEEN 10:00 AND 4:00.

CROSSWORD

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

NANCY

NANCY ARE YOU STILL ON YOUR PHONE IN THERE? MORE LIKE THE PHONE IS ON ME

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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.

GINGER MEGGS

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning... We will remember them.

ACROSS

- A Dutch building with sails
- A warm thick cover for a bed
- Prepared
- Breathe in
- Say this to make a person or animal go away
- Small rodents
- The language spoken in Paris
- Loud sound
- Not decorated
- Sightseers

DOWN

- Use scales to do this
- A stinging plant
- A female horse
- A dog's lead

11 Make wine from these

13 The capital city of Egypt

15 Gets closer

16 Expensive

SOLUTION

D	A	F	F	O	D	I	L	T
A	E	U	E	S				
N	E	W	S	E	X	T	R	A
G	A	T	H					
E	A	R	T	H	S			
R	R	C						
O	C	E	A					
O	C	E	A	N				
U	I	H	A	B				
S	P	O	N	E				
E	E	P	I	L	L			
T	R	E	L	E	A	S		

Ahead of the release of the much-anticipated film *Committee Kurrollu*, director Yadhu Vamsi speaks to the Hyderabad media sharing insights about the film

'COMMITTEE KURROLLU WILL TRANSPORT VIEWERS TO VIBRANT VILLAGE FAIRS'

PNS | HYDERABAD

In the vibrant world of cinema, where storytelling meets artistry, director Yadhu Vamsi's latest creation, *Committee Kurrollu*, is said to have creativity and a heartfelt narrative. Slated for release on August 9, this film promises to captivate audiences with its charming portrayal of village life and the complexities of human emotions.

Yadhu Vamsi, renowned for his innovative approach to filmmaking, has poured his heart into this project, drawing inspiration from the lively village fairs of his childhood. On Wednesday, Vamsi interacted with the media here and shared, "The inspiration behind *Committee Kurrollu* is deeply rooted in the vibrant village fairs I experienced growing up. I wanted to capture the essence of those moments and weave them into a story that reflects the journey of every young man, filled with friendship, love, and ambition."

Created by Niharika Konidela with the backing

of Pink Elephant Pictures LLP and Sriradha Damodar Studios, the movie represents a notable partnership between experienced professionals and new faces. Vamsi expressed his appreciation for Konidela's vision and support, stating, "Niharika Konidela's belief in my vision has been invaluable. Her dedication to providing creative freedom allowed us to craft a story with authenticity and depth."

The film's casting of newcomers, including the talented Prasad, was a deliberate choice by Vamsi. He highlighted their remarkable performances, noting, "I chose fresh faces to bring a unique charm to each character. Their commitment, including physical transformations for authenticity, has truly brought the story to life."

Committee Kurrollu explores themes of friendship, love, and societal issues, set against the backdrop of picturesque Konaseema. With cinematography by Ma Raju Garu capturing the essence of the 90s and Anudeep's evocative music, the film offers a visual and auditory feast. Vamsi described

the film's emotional core, saying, "The film delves into the profound bond between a mother and her children, creating an emotional rollercoaster that will resonate deeply with viewers."

Anticipation is high for this cinematic gem, which promises to transport viewers to a world of vibrant village fairs and poignant storytelling. Vamsi invites audiences to experience the magic of *Committee Kurrollu* on the big screen, where the full impact of the film's charm and emotional depth can be appreciated.

As *Committee Kurrollu* prepares to light up theatres, it stands poised to be a heartwarming journey celebrating the spirit of youth, the strength of friendship, and the enduring bond of family.



Thangalaan is one of the toughest films made in Indian cinema: Malavika Mohanan

PNS | HYDERABAD

Actress Malavika Mohanan exudes calm confidence as she prepares for the release of her latest film, *Thangalaan*. Starring opposite the legendary Chiyaa Vikram and directed by the acclaimed Pa Ranjith, the film is generating significant buzz as one of the most anticipated Tamil releases of the year.

Malavika, known for her captivating performances and striking screen presence, took time out to share her thoughts on *Thangalaan*, her evolving career and the distinct challenges she faced while portraying her character, Aarthi. "I was eager to work on well-written roles by good filmmakers," Malavika reveals. Her enthusiasm for tackling complex characters is evident as she reflects on the monotony of playing similar roles repeatedly. For Malavika, the chance to delve into a new and challenging role was an opportunity she could not pass up.

Addressing about her character in *Thangalaan*, she explains, "Yes, I did think about *Thangalaan*, as audiences had seen me in certain kinds of roles before. However, I was determined to crack the character of Aarthi." Her commitment to this role is palpable and she hints at the unique aspects of her character that will undoubtedly surprise viewers.

Thangalaan is poised to be a cinematic spectacle, shedding light on the historical significance of the Kolar Gold Fields during the British era. The film promises to be a groundbreaking addition to the South Indian film industry, known for its innovative concepts and storytelling. Directed by Pa Ranjith, this film is set to be released in multiple languages—including Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam—on August 15, 2024. The music, composed by G.V. Prakash Kumar, adds another layer of anticipation to this already highly anticipated project.

Malavika speaks highly of her collaboration with Chiyaa Vikram, noting,

"Acting alongside Vikram was a great experience. Without him, I might not have been able to perform the Aarthi character as well as I did. *Thangalaan* is one of the toughest films made in the Indian film industry, and we often wondered if we could portray these roles correctly. It wasn't just me; everyone felt the same way. Vikram's presence was crucial to our performance." Reflecting on her broader career, Malavika also touched on her experience in the Telugu film industry. "The Telugu film industry is very large. I came here waiting for an opportunity to make a bang with a film. I consider it fortunate to get such an opportunity with *Raja Saab*." She also shared her joyful experience working with Prabhas, highlighting his generosity in sending her some of Hyderabad's best food, which she found reminiscent of her mother's cooking. On her diverse roles, Malavika remarked, "Maruthi is known for designing female characters well. The character I play in *Thangalaan* is completely different from the one in *Raja Saab*." This contrast underscores her versatility as an actress and her commitment to taking on varied and challenging roles. As *Thangalaan* approaches its release date, Malavika Mohanan's anticipation and enthusiasm are clear. Her dedication to her craft and her collaboration with some of the industry's finest talent promise a film that will leave a lasting impression on audiences.



Revolutionary poet Gaddar's last film, *Ukku Satyagraham* to release on August 30

Director and producer Hero People Star Satya Reddy's film *Ukku Satyagraham*, featuring the renowned public activist and revolutionary poet Gaddar, is set for release on the 30th of this month. With the slogan "Visakha Ukku Telugu Vari Hakku," the film highlights the struggles against the privatisation of the Visakhapatnam steel plant.

The release date was announced with the unveiling of the poster by a distinguished group including National Best Director B. Narsinga Rao, Telangana state anthem creator Ande Sri, Gaddar's son Suryam, folk poet Goreti Venkanna, Prof. Kodanda Ram, Nandini Siddha Reddy, and Allam Narayana. Satya Reddy announced that *Ukku Satyagraham* will release in over 200 theaters worldwide on August 30. Gaddar has

contributed to the film by performing three songs, acting in two, and appearing in some informative scenes. The lyrics were penned by Goreti Venkanna and Suddala Ashok Teja.

Speaking about the film, Satya Reddy emphasised the extensive efforts behind *Ukku Satyagraham*, which has been in the making for three years. The film, a collective effort of steel plant union leaders, employees, intellectuals, poets, artists and writers, addresses the fight against steel plant privatisation and the quest for justice for land squatters. The movie was shot across various locations, including Delhi's India Gate and Jantar Mantar, Andhra Pradesh Bhavan, Singareni Coal Mines and Visakhapatnam.



Mummy Ji: Mouni Roy sets the floor on fire!

Director Nikkhil Advani has recently released the lively dance song *Mummy Ji* from his forthcoming action movie, *Vedaa*. The lively and colorful song stars Mouni Roy and is ready to electrify dance floors with its contagious vibe.

Nikkhil Advani shared the song on social media with an enthusiastic post: "Ignite the heat! #MummyJi ft. @Roymouni is here to set the floor ablaze! SONG OUT NOW! Get ready to vibrate, move, and slay the night away! #Vedaa in cinemas on August 15 in Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu." Prajakta Shukre and Himani Kapoor are the singers of the song, composed and written by Manan Bhardwaj, who also contributes with a rap verse in the song. The infectious rhythm and vibrant beat are expected to be a standout feature of the movie's music. *Vedaa* is a gripping action thriller that narrates a tale of courage and defiance towards an oppressive regime. It focuses on a young woman who defies the challenges, supported by a strong influence.



Ram Charan's *Game Changer* enters dubbing phase

Anticipation is soaring for *Game Changer*, the upcoming political thriller starring Global Star Ram Charan and directed by the acclaimed Shankar Shanmugam. As the film gears up for its December 2024 release, it has officially entered its final stage with the commencement of dubbing in Hyderabad.

The dubbing process kicked off with a traditional pooja ceremony, marking a celebratory moment for the film's team. With only 10 days of shooting left, *Game Changer* is rapidly approaching completion, generating excitement among fans eager for this major cinematic event.

The film features a star-studded cast, including

Bollywood actress Kiara Advani in the female lead role, alongside Anjali, Srikanth, SJ Suryah, Naveen Chandra, Harry Josh, Samudrakhani and

Changer promises to dazzle with a captivating soundtrack by Thaman, stunning visuals by cinematographer Tirru and sharp editing by Shameer



Jayaram in pivotal roles. Ram Charan is set to portray a dual role, playing both a father and son, with Anjali rumored to play the father's character, adding an intriguing element to the narrative. Produced by Dil Raju under Sri Venkateswara Creations, *Game*

Muhammed. The film features a powerful story penned by star director Karthik Subbaraj, with intense dialogue crafted by Sai Madhav Burra. Although the exact release date is yet to be confirmed, the start of the dubbing process indicates that the film is on schedule for its December 2024 debut. Fans are eagerly awaiting insights into the compelling storyline, the dynamic chemistry between Ram Charan and Kiara Advani and the cinematic brilliance that Shankar Shanmugam is renowned for.



Wayanad landslides: Prabhas donates big to Kerala CM Relief Fund

Prabhas, a prominent and highly bankable actor in the Indian film industry, is widely recognised for his philanthropic efforts and substantial contributions during crises. His commitment to humanitarian and charitable causes places him at the forefront of such activities. Recently, Wayanad district in Kerala experienced severe rains and landslides around July 30, leading to significant loss of life. In response to the disaster, many notable South Indian celebrities have made financial donations to support

the victims. Prabhas has now joined their ranks by donating Rs. 2 crore to the Kerala CM Relief Fund to aid in the relief efforts. This act of generosity is consistent with Prabhas's history of substantial contributions during times of need, including natural disasters in Telugu states and the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a source close to the actor, this donation is a way for Prabhas to give back to society and show gratitude for the unwavering support he has received from his fans throughout his career.



Yash's *Toxic* to commence shooting from today

Actor and producer Yash was recently seen on a spiritual journey across Karnataka, accompanied by producer Venkat K. Narayana and their families. Their temple visits included stops at the Shri Sadashiva Rudra Surya Temple, Shri Manjunatheshwara Temple in Dharmastala, and Kukke Subramanya Temple in Subramanya. This sighting delighted fans, who noted that it fits with Yash's tradition of visiting temples before starting a new project. Confirming the news, a source revealed that Yash's upcoming film, directed by Geetu Mohandas, is set to commence filming on August 8, 2024, in Bangalore. Interestingly, the date 8-8-8 resonates with Yash, as the number 8 holds special significance for him. It not only corresponds to his birth date but also aligns with the date of the official announcement for *Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-ups*.

Gelludu Gelludu exudes a classic Telangana folk atmosphere

Vishwak Sen has started promoting his upcoming movie, *Mechanic Rocky*. On Wednesday, the first song titled *Gelludu Gelludu* was released. The film *Mechanic Rocky* is directed by newcomer Ravi Teja Mullanpudi and produced by Ram Talluri.

The tune exudes a classic Telangana folk atmosphere. It is a number for a wedding. The lyrics are written by Suddala Ashok Teja. The song features lively rhythms that blend seamlessly with its traditional roots, thanks to music director Jakes Bejoy. With her unique entertaining flair, Mangli expressed herself vocally. The song showcases Vishwak Sen and Meenakshi Chaudhary. They playfully danced together, like *bava* and *maradalu*.



Thrigun's *Sweetly Naughty Crazy* launched

The much-anticipated film *Sweetly Naughty Crazy*, starring Thrigun and Sreejitha Ghosh, was officially launched on Wednesday with a grand pooja ceremony. Produced by R. Arun under the Arun Visuals banner and directed by Rajasekhar G., the film also features Iniya, Radha, Ali, Raghubabu and Ravi Maria in significant roles. Speaking at the launch, Thrigun expressed his excitement, stating, "I'm thrilled to collaborate with Arun Garu and Rajasekhar on this project. The film's title aptly captures the essence of the unique and dynamic roles played by Sreejitha and Iniya, promising a mix of sweetness, naughtiness and craziness." Raghubabu shared his enthusiasm, noting, "This film is being made as a bilingual, and I'm excited to be a part of it. I'm confident it will be a major success." Producer Arun highlighted the film's entertainment value, saying, "Our film is designed to bring laughter to everyone. We hope to receive widespread support." Director Rajasekhar added, "The movie is a full-fledged entertainer featuring a triangular love story and a comedic angle. We are sure it will have audiences laughing."



STANDALONE

Poonam Kaur, a committed scholar and supporter of handlooms, had the honour of meeting Padmanabha Sevini Padma Shree Awardee Gowri Laxmi Bai and Pooyam Thirunal Padmanabha Sevini Gowri Parvathy Bai during her visit to Kerala.



I THINK IT MIGHT BE SABOTAGE: BOXING ICON VIJENDER ON VINESH'S DISQUALIFICATION

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian boxing stalwart Vijender Singh has alleged that wrestler Vinesh Phogat's disqualification from the Olympics final might be a case of sabotage as elite athletes like her are well-versed with the techniques of cutting weight before major competitions.

Vijender, who is India's first and only male boxer to have won an Olympic medal, knows a thing or two about maintaining weight before major bouts and he said it is shocking that Vinesh was 100gm over in the weigh-in before an Olympic final.

"I think it might be sabotage. 100gm, you have got to be kidding me. We athletes can shed 5 to 6kg overnight. It is difficult no doubt but we know how to control our hunger, thirst, and exert to the extreme," the middle-weight (75kg) boxer told PTI.

"And when I say sabotage I mean people who are not happy to see India rise as a sporting nation. This girl has been through so much, your heart breaks for her. What more could she have done? Which other test?" he wondered.

Vinesh was the face of a lengthy protest against former Wrestling Federation of India head Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who has been accused of sexual harassment and intimidation by women wrestlers. She had endured police detention, nights on the streets and a tumultuous qualification process before



making it here. The highlight of her remarkable performance at the Olympics was the opening win over defending champion Yui Susaki of Japan who came into the competition undefeated in her international career. "I can't believe that Vinesh would make a mistake like this. She has been an elite athlete for so long that she knows, there has to be something more to it. I am worried for her, I hope she is fine. What has happened is not good at all," said Vijender, a trailblazer in Indian boxing. Athletes who compete in contact sports, where fights

are held as per weight categories, have to go through the painful process of staying within their divisions. It involves going hungry for hours, avoiding even liquids and in some desperate situations, stay huddled inside layers of blankets to sweat out the extra weight. "There have been times when I have spat out saliva continuously so that nothing goes inside, you know. One can't imagine this extreme exercise. There are special Sauna suits that we wear, they feel like a furnace and there are times we run wearing them to shed weight," he explained.



It's an extraordinary exercise that takes a physical and mental toll on athletes and in 2018, six-time world champion woman boxer M C Mary Kom, in an interview to PTI, had revealed how she lost 2kg in a matter of four hours. Mary Kom had landed in Poland for a tournament, where she eventually picked up her third gold of that year. But hours before she was to take the ring, she had gone through the strenuous process of shedding weight just to be eligible to fight. "We landed in Poland at round 3-3:30 in the morning and the general weigh-in was at

around 7:30am. I was a couple of kilograms above 48kg, the category I compete in, at that point," she had said. "So, I had roughly four hours to shed that or I would have been disqualified for being over-weight at the time of general weigh-in. But I did skipping for an hour at a stretch and just like that, I was ready. "Thankfully, the flight was so I could sleep with my legs outstretched, ensuring that I was not stiff on landing there. Otherwise, I don't know how I would have been able to compete," she had revealed.



Tough challenge awaits Chopra in bid for another piece of history

PTI ■ PARIS

His stunning monster throw of 89.34m in the qualification round made quite a statement but a tough challenge awaits defending champion Neeraj Chopra as he seeks another piece of history in the Paris Olympics men's javelin throw final round here on Thursday.

Just like he did at the same stage in the Tokyo Olympics three years back, Chopra needed just a few seconds to top the qualification round with his opening throw but the similarity ends there.

This time, the quality of the field is better than Tokyo with nine throwers crossing the automatic final round qualification mark of 84m in Paris as against six in Tokyo. Out of the nine, five made it to the final round with their first throws and thus will have a lot in their tanks for the medal round.

The 26-year-old Chopra knows it too well, having been in the global circuit for more than eight years.

"In the final, everyone has a different mindset and different situation. It will be a good competition. Whoever qualifies automatically is the best in preparation," Neeraj told journalists after his 'lightening' appearance on the field.

He was in a hurry to go back to the Games Village and take rest to prepare for his best for the final round, as a lot is at stake on Thursday.

Chopra will have a chance to become only the fifth man in Olympic javelin throw history to defend the title. Eric Lemming (Sweden; 1908 and 1912), Jonni Myrta

(Finland; 1920 and 1924), Jan Zelezny (Czech Republic; 1992, 1996 and 2000) and Andreas Thorkildsen (Norway; 2004 and 2008) are the only ones to have defended the men's javelin gold medals in the Olympics.

If he wins gold, and for that matter a medal, he will become the most decorated Indian in Olympics in individual sport. Shuttler PV Sindhu (one silver, one bronze), wrestler Sushil Kumar (one silver, one bronze) and shooter Manu Bhaker (two bronze) have won two Olympic medals each post Independence.

The tremendous effort, which was the second best of his career, also set aside concerns surrounding Chopra's fitness after he revealed that he had been battling an adductor niggle in the build-up to the Games. His personal best continues to be 89.94m achieved back in 2022.

His 89.34m throw may also raise hopes of millions of Indian fans to see Chopra cross the elusive 90m mark on Thursday. His effort was also the second-best qualifying throw at an Olympics after the 89.39m registered by the legendary Jan Zelezny at 2000 Sydney Games.

But there were some ominous signs coming out from the qualification round which Chopra will have to be wary of. The peaking of two-time world champion Anderson Peters (personal best 93.07m) of Grenada as well as immediate hitting of form by Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem may indicate that the final round at Stade de France could be a classic contest.

Peters, of the same age as Chopra, was beaten up and

thrown off a party boat in his native country just a few days after winning a silver medal at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. A month before that incident, he had won the World Championships gold in Eugene, USA, after beating Chopra with a monster throw of 90.54m.

The Grenadian, who interestingly finished third when Chopra won gold in 2016 World Junior Championships in Poland, has gone past 90m four times in his career and he is one of the few who have beaten the Indian superstar. His season's best of 88.63m in the qualification round could be a precursor to something bigger. Nadeem, who beat Peters to win the 2022 Commonwealth Games gold with 90.18m, is unpredictable and he has pulled off big throws earlier also. After coming back from an elbow surgery, he claimed silver behind Chopra in the 2023 Budapest World Championships with a throw of 87.82m.

Nadeem has not beaten Chopra in 10 meetings since 2016 but he can spring a surprise. Czech Republic's experienced thrower Jakub Vadlejch could also be looking to make the records with Chopra as he had ended up with a silver in Tokyo Olympics. He had beaten Chopra for the gold in Doha Diamond League in May.

Conditions on Thursday may also be different from the qualification round. The final is expected to be cooler as it's happening in the evening as against daytime during a qualification round.

Kellie of Ireland wins second boxing gold and retires

AP ■ PARIS

Kellie Harrington is an unusual boxing champion. She is passionate only about the amateur version of her pro-dominated sport, and she has long claimed to have no ambitions of being paid to fight.

Minutes after she stepped onto the podium at Court Philippe Chatrier to have her second gold medal hung around her neck Tuesday night, Harrington announced her retirement from boxing. The money to be made from being a two-time Olympic gold medalist in a passionate fight nation like Ireland still isn't enough for Harrington to change her plans after her magical run at the Paris Games. "I'm done and dusted," Harrington said.



"I'm going to go out a champion. That's the way I want to go out. I don't want to go out and lose a fight and then retire. I'll retire happy."

Harrington is the first Irish woman to win gold medals at two Olympics, and she is just one of four Irish athletes to retain an Olympic title. After winning

three years ago in Tokyo, she clinched her second gold with a remarkable charge through the Paris field, capped by her 4-1 victory over China's Yang Wenlu at Roland Garros.

Harrington pressured Yang more than enough to get the victory despite losing the third round. The champion's most impressive win in Paris likely was in the semifinals, when she spectacularly outboxed Brazilian IBF lightweight champion Beatriz Ferreira, whose physicality and aggression had made her look like a gold-medal favorite.

Harrington isn't the fastest or the most powerful woman in the lightweight division, but she might be the best ever to fight at the weight in the four Olympics with women's boxing. "It has been four fights with absolutely

fantastic opponents," Harrington said. "Everyone who is here is the best of the best. Everyone deserves respect."

Harrington's final drew thousands of Irish fans to the famed tennis arena where she clinched her gold. They waved flags, chanted her name and generally put on a party while their improbable boxing hero got her final job done.

"To have the support of the nation. It is just amazing," Harrington said. "The people here today lifted me. They made me feel like I wasn't tired and I was exhausted."

Harrington danced in the ring after her victory, clearly thrilled to be fighting in front of her frenzied fans instead of in the mostly empty Ryogoku Kokugikan in Tokyo three years ago.

Demoralised India need to regroup quickly to win in bronze medal play-off

PTI ■ PARIS

A heart-wrenching defeat in the semifinals, notwithstanding, a demoralised Indian men's hockey team will have to regroup quickly and aim for a second consecutive podium finish at the Olympics when it takes on Spain in the bronze medal play-off here on Thursday.

The Indians played bravely against Germany, putting their defence under pressure from the start and in the process took the lead in the seventh minute through a penalty corner conversion by skipper Harmanpreet Singh. But the Germans came back strongly in the second quarter and fourth quarters to secure the close win, courtesy some silly defensive lapses from the Indians, especially Jarmanpreet Singh.

The Indians too were guilty of wasting too many scoring chances, including as many as 10 penalty corners, while converting two, one directly and another through variation. The opposition teams seemed to have found out a way to deny one of the world's best drag-flicker Harmanpreet as he managed to be on target just once on Tuesday.

The over-reliance on Harmanpreet and lack of innovative penalty corner variations seemed to be hurting India badly here as they don't have much options in their hands.

But the return of Amit Rohidas, who missed Tuesday's match after being shown the red card against Great Britain in the quarterfinal, should bolster the Indian defence and also give more chances from



penalty corners as he is second best option from set pieces after Harmanpreet.

The Indians were looking to break a 44-year-old jinx to reach an Olympic final but it eluded them narrowly.

The last time India made the Olympic hockey final was way back in 1980 Moscow Games, which, in fact, was their last of the eight gold medals at the quadrennial event.

A place in final would have at least assured India a silver medal after 1960 Olympics but that also slipped out of hands. But all is not lost for the Indians as they still have a chance to claim a podium finish if they beat Spain on Thursday in the bronze medal match.

For that, the Indians will have to leave the baggage of the semifinal loss behind and come out with a fresh mind to get the better of Spain. Veteran India goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, who is playing his last international tournament, reminded his teammates that all is not lost.

"It's a heartbreaking loss for us (against Germany). We had the chance to win gold, but now, we have to forget this semifinal

and focus on the bronze medal match," he had said.

"It's a medal match and it's about the country. It's about those 19 players here, all the staff. And I think we all get a last opportunity to play, to get a medal for our country rather than worrying about what happened today (Tuesday)."

"These 19 players should play like this is our last opportunity as a player to get a medal for our country."

Going by form and world ranking, the Indians are clear favourites to win the tie against Spain but in the end it will all boil down to the mental aspect of the side.

While India lost a close semifinal, Spain were thrashed 0-4 by Netherlands. In world ranking too, Spain are placed eighth while India are currently at the fifth spot. But it would be easier said than done for the Indians as Spain, while not matching India's Olympic achievements, has made significant strides in recent decades. The Spanish team has secured two European Championship titles and has consistently participated in World Cups since 1971.

AP ■ PARIS

All the favored teams in the first three men's basketball quarterfinals at the Paris Olympics had problems. Canada lost to France, Serbia erased a 24-point deficit to beat Australia. Germany had to shake off a double-digit deficit before beating Greece. So, going into the fourth and final game of the night, the U.S. knew what it had to do. "We wanted to come out and make sure we were the aggressor," U.S. Coach Steve Kerr.

They made it look easy, too. Devin Booker led a balanced front with 18 points and the Americans had little trouble with Brazil in the quarterfinals of the Paris Olympics, winning 122-87 on Tuesday.

The U.S. (4-0) moves on to face Serbia (3-1) in Thursday's semifinals, while Germany (4-0) takes on France (3-1) in the other semifinal. Winners of those games will play Saturday

night for the gold medal; Thursday's losers will play Saturday morning for the bronze medal. "Everybody expects us to win," U.S. Forward Jayson Tatum said. "But you don't take things for granted, right? Canada lost earlier. It's a different game. It's not like playoffs, where it's a series. We've got one game and a lot of (stuff) can happen in one game, especially over here."

If there was one issue, it was this: LeBron James left in the third quarter after catching an elbow around his left eye, struck by Brazil's Georjinho de Paula while going for a rebound. James went down, eventually pressed a towel over the eye and left for the locker room area later in the

third. Kerr said James needed four stitches. "I'm all right," James said. "Got hit with an inadvertent elbow around the eye." Anthony Edwards scored 17 points, while Joel Embiid - booed again in France, of

US rolls into semifinals of basketball tournament, eases past Brazil 122-87

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and passed Lisa Leslie as the U.S. Olympic career scoring leader, men's or women's. Leslie had 488 points in her four Olympic appearances, all of which ended with gold medals. Durant is trying to go 4 for 4 on the gold front as well; he's two wins away from getting that done. "He's incredible. He was born to play ball and he's simply incredible," James said. "I'm happy for him. Congratulations to him. I'm super proud of him. And he's got more to go."

There was a moment where Brazil might have thought it had a chance. It trailed the U.S. by only eight midway through the second quarter. A big deficit had turned into something rather manageable.

Echikunwoke changes countries and wins a hammer silver for US

AP ■ SAINT-DENIS

This time at the Olympics, hammer thrower Annette Neka Echikunwoke got to compete. Not only compete, but win a medal - for the United States.

Three years ago, Echikunwoke arrived at the Tokyo Games ready to represent Nigeria, but she wound up needing to leave before even getting to take a throw. Nigeria was among a handful of countries deemed "high risk" by track's anti-doping regulators in the lead-up to those Olympics - forcing its athletes to be subjected to more drug testing. Echikunwoke was among those from Nigeria who did not meet the requirement and so was not allowed to participate. The 28-year-old was born in

Ohio and originally decided to represent Nigeria because that's where her parents are from. But after the issues in 2021, she switched her Olympic country to the U.S., and on Tuesday night became the first American woman to earn Summer Games medal in the hammer, getting a silver.

Echikunwoke was in the early lead before Canada's Camryn Rogers won the gold on her second-to-last throw. "I think (this medal) could have happened three years ago, but I'm happy it's happening now," Echikunwoke said. "I feel like everything happens for a reason, even if it's bad or good or ugly or whatever the case may be. This is beautiful." She remembers that time in Tokyo so vividly, such as not being able to walk in



the opening ceremony. "Not the best feeling, as you could imagine," said Echikunwoke, who went to the University of Cincinnati. Echikunwoke's application to change what country she would compete for finally came through at the last minute before the U.S. Nationals in 2022, and she earned a spot for the world championships that year. Now, she's an Olympic medalist for the red-white-and-blue. "It doesn't feel real right now," she said. "I can't really put it into words." Echikunwoke led after the third round Tuesday with a throw of 75.48 meters (247 feet, 7 inches). Rogers, though, threw the hammer 76.97 (252-6) on her second-to-last attempt to overtake her. Bronze went to Zhao Jie of China.