


QUOTE OF THE DAY


 For 10 years, former Chief Minister KCR did not step out of his farmhouse, while Revanth Reddy is travelling abroad to ensure the state's welfare. The BRS government never considered attracting investments. Why are BRS leaders uncomfortable with initiatives that help the people of Telangana?
 - Ponnam Prabhakar, Minister P2

'How much Delhi exchequer lost due to faulty liquor policy'
 5

CAN'T IGNORE FOOD INFLATION: DAS
 8

Niharika Konidela: My true passion lies IN ACTING
 P11

Retaining wall of Sunikshala collapses

 PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 A high retaining wall of Nagarjuna Sagar Dam's Sunkishala Project collapsed, exposing the lack of safety and quality standards in large irrigation projects. Although the incident occurred on August 1, it came to light only on Thursday after a video of the incident went viral.
5

FIRST TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CENTRE IN INDIA
Charles Schwab to locate centre in Hyd
 CM Revanth, IT Minister Duddhilla hold meeting, assure help
 PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Charles Schwab, a global leader in financial services, has chosen Hyderabad to locate its first Technology Development Centre in India. This decision comes after discussions between Chief Minister Revanth Reddy,

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MEETING ON DRAFT OF NEW REVENUE ACT
BRS, BJP, AIMIM stay away
 PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The main opposition parties – the BRS, the BJP and the AIMIM – stayed away from the all-party meeting on the new Revenue Act draft. However, the CPI, the CPM, the TJS and those who led protests against the Dharani and intellectuals attended the meeting.
 Responding to the absence of the BRS, the BJP and the AIMIM at the meeting held at the Fateh Maidan Club on Thursday, the meeting's organizer and Dharani Committee member, M. Kodanda Reddy, appealed to them to send their suggestions to the Revenue Department Secretary.
 Kodanda requested the BRS, the BJP and the AIMIM to extend their cooperation to the government as the new Revenue Act is useful to the public.
Continued on Page 5

Revanth to visit California, South Korea; return on Aug 14
 PNS ■ HYDERABAD
P2

TG's MSMEs employ 1,16,22,743 workers
 NAVEENA GHANATE
 naveena.ghanate@gmail.com
 ■ HYDERABAD
 OBC category as of August 5 were tabled in the Lok Sabha on Thursday. Telangana ranks fifth in the country in the share of OBC-owned MSMEs with a 42.64% share. The state ranks sixth in the share of SC-owned MSMEs with an 11.57% share and ranks ninth in the share of ST-owned MSMEs with a 5.59% share.
 The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector continues to be the cornerstone of Telangana's growth, providing significant employment opportunities and fostering inclusive development.
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Govt introduces Waqf Bill, refers it to JPP
 PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 The Waqf (Amendment) Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on Thursday and referred to a joint parliamentary panel after a heated debate, with the government asserting the proposed law did not intend to interfere with the functioning of mosques and the opposition calling it targeting of Muslims and an attack on the Constitution.
Continued on Page 5

Withdraws Waqf Properties Bill
 The government on Thursday withdrew the Waqf Properties (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Bill 2014, which sought to provide for a mechanism for the eviction of unauthorised occupants from waqf properties.
5

Buddhadeb passes away
 PNS ■ KOLKATA
 Former West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, who will be remembered both for his commitment to the communist ideology and a pragmatic approach to industrialising the state, passed away at the age of 80 at his residence here on Thursday.

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Phogat can still win silver medal
 ● Court of Arbitration accepts appeal
 PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has accepted the appeal against Vinesh Phogat's disqualification.
 Initially, Vinesh appealed to be allowed to compete in the gold medal match in the women's 50-kg weight category, but this was denied as the US's Sarah Hildebrandt had already won the event. In her second appeal, Vinesh requested the CAS to declare her a joint-silver medallist which may be granted. The CAS will review her appeal and she could potentially return to India with a medal.
 Vinesh's appeal hearing will be conducted online. Joelle Monlouis, Estelle Ivanova, Habbine Estelle Kim and Charles Amson who are pro bono lawyers with the Paris Bar for the Paris 2024 Olympics will represent her at the CAS hearing.
Continued on Page 5

BJP activists want full-time party president for TG
 PNS ■ HYDERABAD
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Conflict between Malas and Madigas in AP

The Supreme Court judgment on 1 August 2024 dealt with another five-judge bench of SC in a case of Andhra Pradesh. Two judgments conflict with each other. In 2020, SC supported the sub-categorisation of SCs, while opposing SC verdict in 2005. The Supreme Court's decision in *E.V. Chinnaiah v. State of A.P. and Ors.*, (2005) 1 SCC 394 held that the Scheduled Caste groups were a "homogenous group" notified in the Presidential List under Article 341. Punjab State appealed against the High Court decision and separately Andhra Pradesh High Court challenged the validity of *Chinnaiah*.

The journey went beyond 2000 and another landmark verdict was given in 2020. The bench noted that the aspect of "backward classes" in *Indra Sawhney* also included the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. Justice Arun Mishra also observed that states are best placed to study "disparities in different areas." Additionally, the referring bench suggested that the 'creamy layer' exclusion would also apply to the Scheduled Caste category, as observed in *Jarnail Singh v. Lachmi Narain Gupta* (2018).

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PROF MADABHUSHI SRIDHAR ACHARYULU
Dean, Mahindra University, Hyderabad

In June 1997, the Maadiga Reservation Porata Samiti (MRPS) organized a big rally from Chittoor to Hyderabad, after which the then Chief Minister of AP (Chandrababu Naidu) agreed to divide the SCs into the A, B, C, and D categories. A *Mala Mahanadu* leader E.V. Chinnaiah, Mallala Venkat Rao with another challenged the order before the AP High Court, saying it was a myth that Malas corner everything from the six per cent SC quota.

category under the Constitution of India, followed by BR Ambedkar and various other national leaders. Then, a new category called 'Other Backward Classes' (OBC) was created as SCs and STs were Backward Classes. As per legal language, BCs are different from OBCs, while normally newspapers say SCs, STs, and BCs. While BCs are inclusive along with SCs and STs, the 'creamy layer' became another category with 'exclusives'. It was created by the historical

judgment in *Indra Sawhney* that confirmed reservations for Other Backward Classes and the exclusion of the 'creamy layer' within OBCs. What we need to understand is that the Governments both at the Centre and in the States could not make them 'forward', though 'backwardness' has been

perpetuated for the last 75 years by extending reservations every 10 years. The OBCs were created in the Mandal Commission Report as suggested by the judgment in the *Indra Sawhney* case. (See the entire report of the Commission. <https://www.ncbc.nic.in/Writereaddata/Mandal%20Commission%20Report%20of%20the%201st%20Part%20English635228715105764974.pdf>)

litigation either from one of the State High Courts or the Supreme Court. Justice B.R. Gavai's remarks on states needing to identify and exclude the 'creamy layer' within the Scheduled Castes category will start a series of judgments. **WHEN CJI WAS SILENT** Three other judges concurred with Justice Gavai's remarks but the Chief Justice's judgement did not opine on the topic. 'Creamy layer' within the Scheduled Caste category was not framed as an issue; so, there remains some confusion about whether Justice Gavai's observations have the force of law. Our civil society needs to identify based on 'empirical evidence' to conclude who should be called the 'creamy layer', backward and most backward categories among the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (though, now it is confined to the Scheduled Castes). The State governments in different states have

to decide by notification or law such that executive or legislative decisions will naturally be subject to judicial review. **LANDMARK JUDGMENT IN 2024** The Union government and several state governments argued in favour of sub-classification. The respondents contended that sub-classification by states amounts to "tinkering" with the Presidential List, which is a prerogative of Parliament. The bench of the Supreme Court majority (6:1) held that the different entries in the Presidential List can be considered "backward classes" under Article 16(4). Hence, 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*). (Concluded)

GIS survey to give unique ID numbers to Hyd buildings

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The GHMC's new initiative to collect details of buildings for survey under the Comprehensive Integrated Geographic Information System (GIS) and give unique identity numbers known as Digital Address for buildings is not linked to property tax, Commissioner Amrapali Kata said.

Buildings to get unique identification number
GHMC Commissioner to discuss with Cantonment CEO for survey in Cantonment areas
GHMC to spend Rs 22 crore on project
PAN, Aadhaar, personal details not mandatory



unscientific number given to us, so the GIS Unique number known as Digital Address will be a new scientific number. Regarding the security of data and access it is secured and will be saved in RailTel of the Government of India, Ministry of Railways server. The access is limited to GHMC and building owners for now," Commissioner Amrapali said. The project has three stages: first mapping, second drone survey which captures pictures and third is staff doing the ground exercise of collecting details in a form. The Commissioner clarified that no PAN, Aadhaar, or identity details are being collected and only mandatory details of the building and resources like accelerator and garbage picker.

Bhatti emphasises need for reliable electricity supply

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Emphasising the need for reliable electricity supply Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu said that people are increasingly unable to endure power supply failures. The Deputy CM, who is also the Minister for Energy, held a review of the electricity department staff operating in the GHMC area on Thursday. He emphasised the importance of quality power supply and providing continuous service to consumers. Bhatti announced that an action plan is being prepared to keep consumers informed about the electricity department's operations. He urged staff to publicise their work and use social media for feedback.

KCR never went abroad to get investments: Ponnampati

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's official trip to the United States, aimed at seeking investments for Telangana, has drawn sharp criticism from BRS leaders, who appear "envious," stated Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnampati Prabhakar. "Why are BRS leaders uncomfortable with initiatives that benefit the people of Telangana?" he asked. He highlighted the fact that the Chief Minister along with the state's Chief Secretary, Finance Secretary and IT and Industries officials, are negotiating investments for the state. "For 10 years, former Chief Minister KCR did not step out



of his farmhouse, while Revanth Reddy is travelling abroad to ensure the state's welfare," Prabhakar said. He urged the people of Telangana to take note of these criticisms aimed at undermining the Chief Minister's efforts. "The BRS government never considered attracting investments," he added and accused BRS leaders of levelling baseless allegations to cover up their failures. Addressing the Sunkisala incident, he said, "A comprehensive inquiry has been ordered by the Chief Minister, and those responsible will be held accountable. No one will be spared, and action will be taken based on the investigation's findings." Prabhakar also criticized the BRS for its hasty decisions regarding the Kaleshwaram Project, claiming that the decisions harmed Telangana's farmers. "Farmers in the state have not seen the benefits they enjoyed during the united Andhra Pradesh era in the last 10 years," he said. Prabhakar accused the BRS of dodging accountability in the Assembly, pointing out their inability to respond adequately to questions.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST CM'S FAMILY Congress rejects BRS' accusations

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Refuting BRS's allegations that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's rule is family rule, the Congress said that BRS leaders were levelling allegations against the CM's family due to envy. "KCR's rule was family rule but not that of Revanth Reddy's," the Congress said. AICC Secretary SA Sampath Kumar said on Thursday that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's brother had presided as the Congress in-charge when the review meeting was held in Kodangal. Revanth Reddy's other brother Kondal Reddy's Australia

tour is not official. Another brother, who is staying in the US and connected to the Swachh Bio said that he will invest in India, Sampath said, and asked why BRS leaders are making it a political issue. "KTR wished Revanth Reddy's tour success. However, BRS leaders Balka Suman and Krishank are now speaking against KTR. I think there are differences between KTR and Balka Suman and Krishank. KCR's family spread across Telangana in the last 10 years but Revanth Reddy never showed his family during his eight-month rule," Sampath said.

Revanth to visit California, South Korea; return on Aug 14

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Following the successful completion of the New York, New Jersey, Washington DC, Dallas and Texas legs of his US tour, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and his team are set to begin their California visit shortly. After engaging with top CEOs on the US West Coast, the focus will shift from technology to urban development and the Hyderabad 4.0 initiative in South Korea in the coming days. This strategic move aims to enhance international collaboration and attract investments to propel Hyderabad's development into a global hub. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's foreign tour schedule remains unchanged.

BJP activists want full-time party president for TG

KOLISHETTY VENKATESHWARLU
venkat.k.warlu@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD

The BJP leaders of Telangana want a full-time president for the party. The current President, G Kishan Reddy is in New Delhi most of the time as he is busy with his Union Coal and Mines Ministry. State BJP leaders have a feeling that they have a 'Visiting President' for the party. Moreover, the BJP's leadership have assigned him additional responsibilities like being the BJP's election in-charge for Jammu and Kashmir where Assembly elections will be held in September. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Modi made it clear that Union



Ministers will have to stay in New Delhi from Monday to Friday. The other Union Minister from Telangana, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, himself revealed this. In this context, BJP leaders in Telangana have been saying that they want a full-time President for the party. Otherwise, the party will lose the tempo that it got by winning eight LS seats and it may affect its prospects in local body elections, one BJP leader told "The Pioneer".

Uttam to head panel on new ration cards

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Government of Telangana has set up a Cabinet Sub-Committee to oversee the distribution of new ration cards. Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari issued an order (GO RT No: 1071) dated August 8, 2024, regarding this. The Cabinet Sub-Committee consists of Civil Supplies & Irrigation Minister Nalamada Uttam Kumar Reddy who is its Chairman and Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha and Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy as its members. The Principal Secretary of Consumer Affairs, Food and Civil Supplies Department will be the Convener of the above Sub-Committee. The Cabinet Sub-Committee will recommend the eligibility criteria and modalities for issuing new

food security (ration) and health cards to the government.

7,000 crore allocated for tribal welfare: CM

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy extended greetings to the tribal community on the occasion of International Adivasi Day on Friday (August 9). In his message, the Chief Minister highlighted the government's commitment to tribal welfare, underscored by the allocation of Rs 17,056 crore in this year's budget. He said that tribals, as the original inhabitants of the forests, play a crucial role in safeguarding natural resources. The allotted funds will support the development of neglected and upgraded Panchayats in tribal habitations, providing infrastructure such as roads, electricity, medical care and education facilities, he said.

India win successive hockey bronze after 52 years



PNS ■ PARIS

The Indian men's hockey team clinched a second successive bronze medal at the Olympic Games for the first time in 52 years with a come-from-behind 2-1 win over Spain, giving veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh a fitting farewell here on Thursday. It was tense last few minutes for the Indians as they faced two short corners within the last minute but the defence stood tall and soaked in the pressure. India, who claimed the bronze in Tokyo Games after a hiatus of 41 years, lived up to the expectations despite not having a perfect build-up to the Games.

TODAY ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Panchami: Aug 09 12:37 AM to Aug 10 03:14 AM
Shashthi: Aug 10 03:14 AM to Aug 11 05:45 AM

Nakshatram:
Hasta: Aug 08 11:34 PM to Aug 10 02:44 AM
Chitra: Aug 10 02:44 AM to Aug 11 05:48 AM

Rahukalam: 10:46 AM to 12:21 PM
Yamagandam: 3:31 PM to 5:06 PM
Varjyam: 11:46 AM to 01:34 PM
Gulika: 7:36 AM to 9:11 AM
Amritakalam: 07:56 PM to 09:45 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:56 AM to 12:46 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Cloudy
Temp: 31°C
Humidity: 73%
Sunrise: 5:58 AM
Sunset: 6:45 PM
Updated: August 8, 2024 5:00 PM

Release pending bills of panchayats: Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Harish Rao recently expressed concern over the neglect of village panchayats by the Congress government. He emphasized that unpaid pending bills have made sanitation management extremely difficult. He asked why the state government is panicking when these issues are raised. "We repeatedly state facts, but Minister Seethakka accuses us of lying," he said. "What is a lie? Is it false

that the government hasn't paid even a single paisa to village panchayats in the last nine months? Is it a lie that Rs 2100 crore, received from the Centre under schemes like MGNREGA and Health Mission was diverted from villages?" he said. "Is it a lie that Rs 500 crore from the 15th Finance Commission was withheld from village panchayats? Is it false that former sarpanches were detained at police stations when they called a protest at the Secretariat for pending bills?" he said.

'Pay pending staff salaries'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS leader Enugula Rakesh Reddy addressed the issue of unpaid salaries of government employees during a press conference held at the Telangana Bhavan. He criticised the Congress for ignoring its promises and highlighted the plight of panchayat staff who haven't received salaries for seven months. Rakesh pointed out that various employees, including those cooking midday meals and model school teachers in nine districts, have not been paid for months. He demanded immediate payment of pending salaries and bonuses, especially for those on the front lines like midday meal staff.

Govt correcting BRS admin's mistakes on farmers' lands: Kodanda

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Stating that there is a peoples' government in the state and that it will take decisions as per the suggestions of the people, Kisan Congress Vice-President M. Kodanda Reddy said that a lot of mistakes took place regarding land and that the Congress government is correcting the mistakes committed by BRS leaders. Addressing the media on Thursday at the Gandhi Bhavan, Kodanda Reddy, said that former Prime Minister, the late Indira Gandhi, intro-

duced land distribution to end the landlord system, however, the BRS government tried to bring back the landlord system. He said that the BRS government gave pass books in 2018 to come to power and intentionally kept some land on the prohibited list. Reviewing prohibited lands, the Congress government is bringing a new ROR Act. He said the Revanth Reddy government is correcting the mistakes of the KCR government. He said the Congress government had resolved two lakh complaints filed by farmers.

Meira Kumar to release VH's biography

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior Congress leader V. Hanumantha Rao met former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar and requested her to release his biography written in English in September. Later, VH said that Meira Kumar had accepted his invitation and said that she would come to Telangana in September.

Categorise SC sub-castes Cong Madiga leaders ask CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Madiga leaders of the Congress have decided to organise a meeting named 'Madiga Sanghala Ikya Vedika' at the Jagjivan Ram Bhavan in Banjara Hills on August 11 and to appeal to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to take up categorisation of SC sub-castes. Congress Madiga leaders AICC secretary and former MLA SA Sampath Kumar, former Minister A. Chandrasekhar, Madiga Dandora founder president Sathesh Madiga and TPCC General Secretary Charagonda Venkatesh had a meeting on Thursday at SA Sampath Kumar's residence.

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Book launch

'India @100: Envisioning Tomorrow's Economic Powerhouse' by Professor KV Subramanian
Venue
 ISB, Hyderabad Campus
Date: August 12, 2024
Time: 3:30 pm

CREDAI Hyderabad Property Show

2nd CREDAI Ability-themed CREDAI Hyderabad Property Show
Venue
 Sree Convention, 158A, 158 C, Dulapally Cross Road, Quthbullapur, Kompally, Hyderabad
date: August 9, 2024
Time: 11:00 am

One Night in TOKI-O in Hyderabad

By Suntory Global Spirits, curated by Toki Suntory Whisky. The event promises a plethora of experiences - from mixology workshops to curated food inspired by the Streets of Japan.
Venue
 The Quorum, Hyderabad
Date: August 9, 2024
Time: 8:00 pm onwards

Nizami Chowki

Discover the culinary legacy of the Asafiyah dynasty through a dining experience
Venue
 Novotel, Hyderabad Airport
 From August 3 to 31, every Saturday, 7pm to 11 pm
Joyalukkas Diamond Jewellery show
Venue
 Miyapur Road, Kondapur
 August 9 to 24

8th edition of HIMTEX

The Hyderabad International Machine Tool and Engineering Expo will showcase over 300 exhibitors presenting cutting-edge advancements
Venue
 HITEX Exhibition Centre
 August 16 to 19

Kuchipudi Rangapravesam

Deepanjali, school for excellence in Kuchipudi, to organize Rangapravesam of Samy and Khushi Kamtam, disciples of Guru Deepika Reddy.
Venue
 Ravindra Bharati, Lakdikapool
 August 9 (Friday)
 Time: 5:45 pm

City Pioneer



HYDERABAD | FRIDAY | AUGUST 9, 2024

03

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE OF THE WOMEN SAFETY WING

SHE Teams show positive impact

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The half-yearly review of SHE Teams by Women Safety Wing showed a positive impact. Shikha Goel, Director General of the Women Safety Wing, conducted a half-yearly review of the SHE Teams operating in Telangana. The meeting included officers from the Women Safety Wing, the tri-Commissionerate, and over 300 officers and staff from 31 district police units. SHE Teams is a flagship initiative of the Women Safety Wing, are focused on combating sexual harassment against women and children in public spaces. This includes addressing issues like eve-teasing, stalking, and harassment through social media, phone calls, and messages. The initiative aims to act as a deterrent to prevent serious crimes against women and children. During the meeting, DG Shikha Goel emphasised the strong safety perception that SHE Teams have created across the State. She urged officers to launch intensive awareness campaigns and focus on known hotspots. Currently, 331 SHE Teams are operational in Telangana, working to monitor and address incidents of harassment through proactive measures and the use of technology. These teams operate covertly in hotspots, gather evidence, and take necessary actions, including filing FIRs

and conducting counseling sessions. The review highlighted that from January 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024, 6,129 cases were registered. Among these, 2,314 were petty cases, 1,085 individuals were counselled, 1,007 cases were closed and 358 complaints remain under process. Complaints were received from various sources, including Dial 100, social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook, and direct reports. The types of harassment included over 986 cases of phone harassment, 604 cases of stalking, and 2,661 cases of eve-teasing and misbehavior. Awareness programmes were conducted, and online counselling sessions were held for respondents. There were 2,429 cases involving major respondents caught in the act and 847 cases involving minor respondents. Over 5,719 awareness programmes reached a total of 378,747 people, with three quarterly online counseling sessions organised by WSW. Online counselling was provided to 5,076 major respondents and over 784 minor respondents. The review also noted that the



Shikha Goel, Director General of the Women Safety Wing, conducting a half-yearly review of the SHE Teams operating in Telangana

SHE Teams have made significant strides in increasing the reporting of cases, successful interventions, and raising public awareness. Through regular monitoring and continuous improvement, the initiative has shown a high rate of success in reducing harassment and improving women's safety across Telangana.

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MLC offers to address hostel rooms issue

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

MLC Balmoori Venkat on Thursday paid a visit to Nizam College to meet UG students who protested for change in the allotment of hostel rooms. After interacting with the students, the MLC said, "UG students are demanding that the entire hostel be allotted to them. But PG students want 50 per cent of the rooms to be allotted to them. If the problem is to be solved, two more floors will have to be built for the existing hostel. This problem could not be solved due to the lack of sincerity in the previous government. The previous government did not take proper care of the education system and the students. Since the last five or six years, the construction of the building has not been done." "We will take this issue to



the attention of the Chief Minister and take a decision to construct the existing building or to construct two more floors. I will also interact with the Deputy Chief Minister regarding the budget. The current government will work hard for a permanent solution to this problem. Moreover, I request both UG and PG students to solve the problem without getting stuck. PG students should be generous as all UG students are newcomers from Telangana," he added.

Woman hits bus with beer bottle

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A TGSRTC bus, route number 107V/L from Dilsukhnagar depot, was plying from Secunderabad to LB Nagar on Thursday evening, when after the Vidyanagar bus stop, a woman attacked the bus with a beer bottle at the signal-free left turn, shattering the rear window. The driver immediately stopped the bus and the on-duty female conductor got down to confront the attacker. When questioned about her action, the woman suddenly threw a snake from her bag at the conductor. The snake fell to the ground as the conductor raised her hands in defence. RTC officials lodged a complaint with the Nallakunta police station under the Hyderabad Commissionerate. The police have registered a case and are investigating.

Real development is welfare of tribals: Minister Seethakka

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Panchayat Raj and Rural Development and Child Welfare Minister Dr Dasari Anasuya Seethakka stated that real development is the development of tribal people, during the two-day international conference on "Tribal Livelihood Practices: Issues and Strategies in Empowerment" organised by Dr BR Ambedkar University on Thursday. The Minister said that she is proud to be a tribal child. Adivasis are a race that does not trouble anyone. It is said that the tribals have been fighting for their self-respect and the fight is still going on. Intellectuals on the solution and empowerment of tribals should hold such conferences and give suggestions to the governments for the solution of the problems, discuss with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and work for the solution of the problems of the tribals.

The Minister also expressed her concern that the society has been developing in one direction for the last few decades and the rural areas, especially the tribal areas, have not progressed much. Along with the governments, many corporate organisations are also coming forward for the programmes undertaken by their government, which is a welcome development. She called upon the society to focus on the enrichment of forests in the State, especially in the Agency area. Delivering the key note address, former Dean of Central University of Hyderabad, Acharya G Haragopal, stated that he visited the tribal villages to solve the problems that arise from time to time. He expressed concern that in any development model, Adivasis are left behind. There is always a conflict between the interests of the governments and the tribals, where the losers are the tribals.



TGCHE reschedules TG-PGECET phase-1 counselling

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The officials of Telangana State Council of Higher Education on Thursday announced the rescheduling of the phase-1 counselling process of Telangana Post Graduate Engineering Common Entrance Test (TG-PGECET) or TG-PGEC from July 30 to August 24 due to delay in the approval of colleges by the Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) and other unavoidable circumstances. As per the schedule, the notification for TG-PGECET/ TG-PGEC was released on July 20. The online registration-cum-verification for phase-1 counselling was rescheduled from July 30 to August 24 while physical verification of special category certificates by slot booking was rescheduled from August 1 to 3. The display of a verified list of eligible registered candidates and call for corrections if any via email will be on August 25. Exercising web options for phase-1 will be done on August 27 and 28 while the editing of web-options for phase-1 is on August 29. The list of provisionally selected candidates will be prepared college-wise on September 1 and the reporting at concerned colleges for verification of original certificates along with tuition fee payment receipt will be from September 2 to 5.



TG native appointed as SBI chief

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana native Challa Srinivasulu Setty was appointed as the 27th Chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI). Challa hails from the remote village of Peddapothulapadu in Jogulamba Gadwal district of Telangana. BRS leader B Vinod Kumar remarked that it is a significant achievement for Challa Srinivasulu Setty, who was born in a remote village and educated in a Telugu medium government school, to rise to the position of SBI Chairman. He pointed out that no Telugu individual has held this position for many years and Challa's appointment is a remarkable development for the Telangana region. Vinod Kumar also requested that the Telangana government, through State Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, to honour Srinivasulu Setty for his outstanding accomplishment.

TG to experience light to moderate rain

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana is expected to experience light to moderate rains until August 10. Hyderabad saw a downpour along with cool breeze on Wednesday night, providing relief and a good night's sleep to the residents. According to the IMD, a Yellow Alert has been issued for rains with thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds of 30-40 kmph which are likely to occur in isolated places across all districts of Telangana. Thunderstorms are particularly expected in Adilabad, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherial, Nirmal, Nizamabad, Jagtial, Karimnagar, Peddapalli, Jayashankar Bhupalapally, Mulugu, Bhadradi Kothagudem, Khammam, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Mahabubabad, Warangal, Hanamkonda and Jangaon districts.



'Medical services in Osmania, Gandhi hospitals uninterrupted'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha reacted on the recent transfers and patient services at Osmania General Hospital and Gandhi Hospital on Thursday. According to the GO 80 the service of 4 0% of employees who have been in one hospital for long periods has been identified and transferred. The process is transparent without any disruption to the hospital's performance and patient care services. Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha said that considering

the urgency of super-specialty services as per GO 80, specialty doctors have been exempted in these transfers. He said that doctors and senior resident doctors have been appointed on contract basis in March 2024. In addition to this on August 9, 2024, the schedule for hiring doctors and senior resident doctors on contract basis has been released. Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha disclosed that Gandhi and Osmania hospitals have sufficient number of doctors, nurses and paramedical staff to provide patient care services.

Five IPS officers promoted to DGP rank

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana government has promoted five IPS officers of the 1994 to the rank of Director General of Police (DGP) on Thursday. The officers are Kothakota Srinivas Reddy, B Shivdhar Reddy, Abhilasha Bisht, Soumya Mishra and Shikha Goel. They have been empanelled for promotion to the above super time scale of IPS and will now hold the rank of DGP, level 16 in the Pay Matrix of

IPS (Pay) rules, 2016 said the order copy. Kothakota Srinivas Reddy will retain the same post as Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad city in the rank of Director General of Police. B Shivdhar Reddy will be in the same post as Director General of Police, Intelligence, Hyderabad in the rank of Director General of Police. The officer's name has been in the list of DGP of

Telangana. However, the wait was for the promotion to DGP rank level by the Telangana government. Abhilasha Bisht will be in the same post as Director, RBVRR, Telangana State Police Academy, Hyderabad in the rank of Director General of Police. The officer shall continue to hold the post of DGP (Training), Telangana, and Hyderabad. Dr Soumya Mishra, IPS

(RR:1994) is retained in the same post as Director General, Prisons & Correctional Services, Telangana. Shikha Goel continues as Director General of Police, CID, Telangana, Hyderabad in the rank of Director General of Police. The officer shall continue to hold full additional charge for the post of Director, TG Cyber Security Bureau, Hyderabad and in charge Director, TG FSL and Women Safety, SHE Teams & Bharosa, Hyderabad.



NEED FOR NEW RAIL TRACKS

'20 projects costing Rs 32,946 cr in TG are under different stages'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In all, 20 projects costing Rs 32,946 crore for 22,98 km in Telangana are under different stages of approval. Madhavaneni Raghunandan Rao, Member of Lok Sabha, has raised a question on whether the government has identified any bottlenecks in Telangana in terms of the need for new rail tracks for which Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnav gave the data on Thursday. The Union Minister said,



"As on April 1, 2024, 20 projects costing Rs 32,946 crore for 2,298 km length falling fully / partly in the State of Telangana

are under different stages of planning/ approval/ execution. These include seven new line projects covering a length of 997 km at a cost of Rs 16,935 crore, out of which 245 km length has been commissioned and an expenditure of Rs 4,433 crore has been incurred upto March. In all, 13 doubling projects covering a length of 1,301 km at a cost of Rs 16,010 crore out of which 230 km has been commissioned and an expenditure of Rs 5,526 crore has been incurred up to March, 2024."

TG GOVT BANNED CONOCARPUS IN 2022

Removal of saplings at field level falls behind

RASHMI BHUMIREDDY
 bhumireddyashmi@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD

Conocarpus saplings, which were widely used to enhance greenery in urban areas due to its high growth rate were banned by the Telangana government after the officials came to know the negative consequences of the plants that affects human health. However, despite the State government banning it, these alien species were not removed at field level due to various reasons. According to the Telangana Forest department and the GHMC officials, there is no official data on how many Conocarpus trees were



removed and how many are still present across the city following the ban. Speaking to the Pioneer correspondent, Mahesh Talari, an environmentalist said, "Telangana government banned

Conocarpus in 2022. But it's too late. Earlier, the authorities used these alien species massively to enhance greenery especially in urban areas. Lakhs of Conocarpus saplings were grown across the city.

However, the pollen grains of Conocarpus cause various respiratory issues to humans. So, the government banned these species especially in HMDA and GHMC municipalities with real estate ventures. But at the field level, the species were not removed except in certain areas in the city. From now onwards, one should try to improve biodiversity with native saplings." He also filed an RTI on prohibition orders issued by the Telangana Forest department on Conocarpus trees. As per the RTI, the forest department is not planting Conocarpus plants in forest areas and hence the issue of prohibition orders on Conocarpus does not arise.

Govt committed to providing healthcare to all: Minister

Minister for Health Damodar Raja Narasimha announced that the Sangareddy Hospital will be upgraded to 500-bed facility

PNS ■ MEDAK

Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha on Thursday made a surprise visit to the government hospital in Sangareddy and inspected the out-patient ward, medicines stock room and the dialysis centre at the facility. The government is committed to strengthening the government hospitals and providing quality healthcare to people belonging to all sections of society.

He held meetings with the medical college teaching staff and medics. He told them, "Let us soon lay the foundation stone for a 500-bed hospital in Sangareddy."

He called for maintaining sanitation at the hospital.

He told the medical fraternity that the medical profession is a noble profession and wanted them to discharge their duties with diligence. He suggested that medical students adopt friendly approach while dealing with patients.

Objective of the state government is to provide quality medical treatment to all patients, especially the poor. He described Sangareddy town as a heart to the people who visit Sangareddy from the adjacent



Minister for Health Damodar Raja Narasimha interacting with a patients at the government hospital in Sangareddy on Thursday

Assembly constituencies for medical treatment.

He wanted the private hospitals to follow the medical ethics instead of ill treating the patients.

All medical equipment should be available at the district hospital and exhorted the people to utilise facilities in government hospitals instead of spending money in private

hospitals. The government is committed to strengthening the government hospitals.

He asked the hospital authorities to increase the beds in the dialysis ward. He asked the government officials to complete the hostel building on the premises of the hospital and other buildings remained incomplete as early as possible. District collector Kranti

The Minister told the medical fraternity that the medical profession is a noble profession and wanted them to discharge their duties with diligence. He suggested that medical students should adopt friendly approach while dealing with patients

Valluru, trainee collector Manoj, TGIC chairman Nirmala Jagga Reddy, municipal chairman Vijayalakshmi, RDO Vasanta Kumar, MDE Dr N Vani, Government General Hospital superintendent Dr Anil, Government Medical College principal Dr Sudha, DMHO Dr Gayatri, TPCC president Jagareddy, elected people's representatives, officials of the concerned government departments and others were present.

DC stresses need to build rain harvesting pits

PNS ■ BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM

District Collector Jitesh V Patil on Thursday appealed to people built rain harvesting pits at their houses to help raise groundwater level.

He appreciated rainwater harvesting structure constructed at Vidyanaagar Colony under gram panchayat of Chunchupalli mandal.

The Collector urged people to extend their cooperation in helping the raise the groundwater table. He suggested that pits should be built at government buildings and private buildings. He stressed the need to educate people on the importance of rain harvesting pits to ensure that there is no water scarcity in future.

Jitesh V Patil also urged people to participate in Cleanliness and Greenery programme launched by the State government and make it a success. The importance of planting saplings was stressed.



Bhadraddri Kothagudem Collector Jitesh V Patil planting a sapling in Kothagudem on Thursday



A lorry carrying rice meant for Public Distribution System, was intercepted by police on the outskirts of Warangal

PDS rice diverted to neighbouring States

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The rice meant for public distribution system is surreptitiously diverted to neighbouring States where it is being recycled and sold at Rs 15 or 20 a kg. In fact, the rice enjoys good demand in the market.

The rice, which is meant for distribution among the ration card-holders, is being procured locally and diverted illegally to other states. The touts have been earning huge profit selling the tons of recycled PDS rice. In fact, there are allegations that some fair price shop dealers are not distributing the rice properly to the card-holders.

There is open criticism that some of the fair price shop dealers have been diverting the rice meant for public distribution system to other purposes helping the smugglers to smuggle the rice across the border to other states.

The rice is finding its way into the markets of Tamil Nadu and Odisha. Now and then the vigilance officials have been conducting raids to check the smuggling of the PDS rice and confiscating the rice bags, but there was no let-up in the smuggling of the rice.

Depending on the demand for the rice, in some areas the rice is being sold between Rs 15 and 20 a kg. Some of the smugglers have targeted to smuggle

the rice into Maharashtra markets, while some others transport the rice illegally to Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

The procured PDS rice is being recycled into fine variety of rice in some designated rice mills and packed into 20- or 25-kg rice bags and fake way bills are created to smuggle them to the markets across the border of Telangana.

In north Telangana, several rice mills have been illegally recycling the PDS rice in Karimnagar and Warangal districts. The police would dare touch these rice mills as the mill owners have political support. The modus operandi is the mill owners, who enjoy a lot of political clout, send their agents to villages to procure PDS rice from cardholders. The procured rice is generally polished especially at night time at these rice mills. Lorries directly transport the rice bags from these mills.

The mill owners allegedly grease the palms of the police and revenue personnel on a regular basis to ensure no hiccups in the movement of the rice bags. To keep the illegal trade under the wraps, the rice mill owners often grease palms of some sections of society, it is alleged. This indicates the extent of the moolah the rice mills rake up in the murky business.

Officials told to protect government lands

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao has directed officials to take steps to prevent encroachment on government lands in Khammam Assembly constituency.

The Minister conveyed the message to Swachhadanam-Pachhadanam district special officer VP Gautam, District Collector Muzammil Khan and Municipal Commissioner Abhishek Agastya who called on him as a matter of courtesy on the occasion of the minister visiting the district.

He asked the government officials to safeguard the government lands from encroachment and also use them for the public use.

He made a special mention of government lands at Raghunadhapale mmandal. He directed the officials to erect a fence around government lands. Further, he asked the officials to ensure that the Gollapadu channel pending works are executed with quality. Further, he suggested con-



Tummala Nageswara Rao

verting the urban park in Velugumatla into an eco-tourism park. Also, he wanted the road leading to the park should be developed into a double-road.

In view of visit of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to the city, he asked the officials to deck up the city and plant saplings on road dividers.

Further, he asked the officials to identify suitable land for development of international school in the city.

Khammam city mayor Punukollu Neeraja, municipal corporation officials and others were present.

Need to promote greenery programmes stressed

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

MLC Nagarkunta Naveen Kumar Reddy on Thursday emphasised the importance of Cleanliness and Greenery programmes launched by the State government. He said that the scheme was aimed at maintaining ecological balance.

While attending Vana Mahotsavam programme as chief guest in Mekaguda village under Nandigama Mandal. The event was organised under the auspices of United Way of Hyderabad and Microsoft Corporations.

The programme was held with great enthusiasm with a focus on tree plantation and environmental conservation.

Along with Naveen Kumar Reddy, the event saw the participation of prominent local figures, including BRS Party Nandigama Mandal President Padma Reddy, former MPTC Raju Naik, and representatives from the Tree Plantation Unit Organization.

Representatives from Microsoft, including Chandana Committee Officer Chandrakant, Senior



MLC N Naveen Kumar Reddy participating in Vana Mahotsavam programme at Mekaguda village in Ranga Reddy district on Thursday

Manager Madhuvathi, Manager Ramulu, and Manager Saikiran, were also present. Former Sarpanch Parvathamma Mallesh Yadav, Women Association Leader Manjula,

Swapna Shirishanarasimha, PACS Mekaguda Director Yadaiah, and Rythu Coordinator member Mekam Raju, Mohan Naik joined villagers in the celebration.

Police Commissioner warns students against ragging

PNS ■ SIDDIPEET

City Police Commissioner B Anuradha has warned senior students against ragging the juniors. She sought to send a message to students that bullying would not be tolerated under any circumstance.

Addressing students here on Thursday, she called the ragging as an evil culture and advised juniors and seniors to mingle and pursue their academics. She warned the seniors of losing their golden future in case they figured in ragging cases. Further, she appealed to students not to get addicted to vices and lose their future.

She asked the students to keep in mind the hardships being faced by the parents in educating the students. For the sake of entertainment, the students should not ask for trouble, she said. The freshers should stop doing anything according to the whims and fancies of the seniors. They should immediately lodge complaint with the college management against the seniors who rag them. The freshers can call 100



B Anuradha

and inform the police the names of seniors who have been ragging them. Since the academic year has commenced, the anti-ragging seminars and workshops should be conducted in all educational institutions, she said.

The police officials have been asked to constitute anti-ragging committees. Under the Anti-ragging act, the seniors would be liable to be punished with a jail term up to three years plus either suspension from the college or the rustication.

She asked the students to study the biographical works of eminent persons to understand society, life and their goals.

Minister's itinerary in Khammam district today

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Minister for Revenue, Housing and Information and Public Relations Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy will visit Bhadraddri Kothagudem district on Friday.

In an official statement T Dayakar Reddy here on Thursday, the Minister will participate in several programmes. He will plant saplings. Later, he will lay foundation stone for development of drainages in Ashok Nagar colony.

Later, he will inaugurate the synthetic tennis court at Paloncha and start Indra Mahila Sakti Canteen at Integrated District Offices' Complex.

At 11.45 am, the Minister is scheduled to inspect the Sitarama Project 18 L canal. Afterwards, he is scheduled to inaugurate a church at TNGOs' colony in Khammam rural mandal.



Secretary of Health Christina Chongthu, accompanied by District Collector K Shashanka, inspecting Vanasthalipuram Area

Officials inspect Area Hospital

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

On Thursday, Christina Chongthu, Secretary of Health and Family Welfare Department, along with District Collector K Shashanka, made a surprise inspection of the Vanasthalipuram Area Hospital in Rangareddy District.

During her visit, the Secretary held a review meeting with hospital authorities and inspected the antenatal care unit, labour room, labo-

ratory, physiotherapy ward, Sakhi Centre, and the parking facilities. She directed the hospital authorities to ensure that all necessary resources are available to support the efficient execution of staff responsibilities.

The inspection was attended by Coordinating Officer of District Hospitals Dr G Raju Yadav, TSMIDC officials, doctors, and other medical personnel, who accompanied Secretary Chongthu in assessing the hospital's services and infrastructure.

Groupism in Wanaparthy unit of Cong comes to the fore

PNS ■ WANAPARTHY

Groupism in Wanaparthy district Congress has reached a crescendo because of differences between leaders.

Grapevine has it that differences surfaced between Telangana State Planning Board G Chinna Reddy and Wanaparthy MLA Tudi Mega Reddy.

It may be recalled that Tudi Mega Reddy, following his differences with the then BRS Minister Niranjan Reddy, joined the Congress before the 2024 Assembly elections. Chinna Reddy was disappointed as Tudi Mega Reddy managed to get Congress B-form to contest from Wanaparthy.

By virtue of his continuation in Congress for over three decades, Chinna Reddy pinned hopes on securing the Congress nomination in the last Assembly elections. However, Tudi Mega Reddy managed to secure the B-form. This has incensed Chinna Reddy. He was alleged to have not supported the official candidate in the elections, his adversaries alleged.

Chinna Reddy group reportedly felt disappointed following the election of Tudi Mega Reddy as Congress MLA. Consequently, there was no rapport between the MLA and Chinna Reddy. However, Chinna Reddy was saddled with the Telangana state planning board vice-chairman post.

Comedian accused of denigrating Hindu gods

PNS ■ SURYAPET

The Rashtriya Vanara Sena Mission lodged complaint with twotown police station here against small screen popular comedy star Bithri Satti for making videos

denigrating the Hindu Gods and Hindu religion. An FIR was lodged against him in the case.

The controversial comedy star is defending his case by making himself videos claiming himself to be an innocent

person and accused vested interests of circulating videos maligning his image.

However, the Rashtriya Vanara Sena criticised comedy star terming the videos as egoistic.

'Hawk-eyed' SHE Teams after anti-social elements

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

Ramagundam city Police Commissioner M Srinivasa Rao has issued a severe warning that those who harass women will face punishment. He said that the SHE Teams have been patrolling the district keeping a hawk eye on suspects.

At an event held at Ramagundam city police commissioner's office on Thursday, he released a poster to sensitise people on the SHE teams, cybercrimes and T-safe mobile application.

He reiterated that the police department has initiated stringent measures to provide security to women, girl students and children. To provide protection to women from mischief-mongers, the SHE teams have been sensitising women against these mischievous elements and remained accessible to women.

Also, the police personnel have been patrolling on Petro Cars and Blue Colts personnel remained accessible to women. In case of any danger, the



Ramagundam Police unveiling posters to sensitise people on the works being carried out by She Teams, in Ramagundam on Thursday

people have been asked to call the police control room by dialling 100 to access immediate assistance.

Regarding the mischief-mongers passing unsavoury remarks on women passing through the road, the victims have been asked to complain to police commissionerate control room dialling 8712656597 or SHE team 63039 23700 or send a message via Whatsapp.

He appealed to women to make use of the mobile application having many special features for women's safety T-SAFE to benefit women trav-

elling alone, to enable them to share their live location, to navigate the route and so on.

The people have been falling prey to the cybercrimes because of their greed, he said exhorting the people to remain alert towards cybercrimes.

In case cheated by online criminals, the victims should immediately complain to the police dialling 1930.

Expressing concern over youth destroying their future getting addicted to marijuana, he appealed to the people to come forward voluntarily to eradicate narcotics.

ACROSS THE STATES



Barber held for spitting on customer's face

A barber here was arrested a day after a video of him applying his spit on a customer's face made rounds on social media, police said on Thursday. The barber's makeshift shop was bulldozed by the local administration. Superintendent of Police Amit Kumar Anand said, "We received a report regarding a video in which a barber, Yusuf, was seen applying his spit on the face of a customer. Acting on the complaint we arrested him on Wednesday night." According to the police, the incident occurred a fortnight ago but the video was posted online recently and it began doing rounds on Wednesday. "The accused is seen applying some cream on the face of the customer in the video. While doing so he spits, spits in his palms and applies it on the customer's face," Circle Officer Kapoor Kumar said. The local administration on Thursday reached the spot and bulldozed the makeshift salon. "The salon was made using tin sheets and was an encroachment. It was removed with a bulldozer today," the CO said



17 Indian workers stranded in Bangladesh evacuated

Together 17 Indian workers engaged in road construction in Bangladesh and stranded due to the ongoing unrest were evacuated by the BSF, an official said on Thursday. BSF Tripura Frontier IG Patel Piyush Purusottam Das received a call about the workers' situation on Wednesday evening, the official added. "Due to unrest in Bangladesh, the workers were stranded at their camp in Ramrail. They were en route to ICP Akhaura from the Bangladesh side, and a request was made to the BSF to facilitate their safe passage through ICP Agartala," a BSF official said, adding that contact was promptly established at the nodal officer level between the BSF and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB). "In a well-coordinated operation, the BSF and BGB worked together effectively. The BGB assisted the 17 AFCONS workers, ensuring their safe movement to ICP Agartala, where their customs and immigration were cleared late at night before handing them over to the BSF," the official added.



CBI arrests ED assistant director for taking bribe

The CBI has arrested an assistant director of the ED for allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 20 lakh from a Mumbai-based jeweller, officials said on Thursday. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had conducted searches at the premises of the jeweller, Vipul Harish Thakkar, on August 3 and 4. Assistant Director Sandeep Singh Yadav allegedly threatened to arrest Thakkar's son if he did not pay him Rs 25 lakh, according to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). During negotiations, the amount was reduced to Rs 20 lakh, the officials said. Later, Thakkar approached the CBI. The verification of the complaint in the presence of independent witnesses, prima facie revealed criminal conspiracy hatched by Sandeep Singh, Assistant Director, Enforcement Directorate HQ, New Delhi with unknown others to obtain undue advantage... of Rs 20 lakh by himself and through other person from the complainant Vipul Thakkar for not arresting his son Nihar Thakkar in the matter being investigated by the ED," the CBI FIR stated. Yadav, who is an officer from the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), was caught red-handed while accepting the bribe in the national capital.

Buddhadeb passes away

Bhattacharjee, a stalwart of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), was known for his efforts to bring industrialisation to the state, an endeavour that, despite his best intentions, eventually led to the downfall of the Left Front government after 34 years of continuous rule. Bhattacharjee is survived by wife Mira and daughter Suchetana. Despite his failing health in recent years, Bhattacharjee remained a revered figure in Bengal's political landscape, remembered for his integrity and his efforts to balance ideological commitments with the practical needs of governance. Prime Minister Narendra Modi con-

doled the death of Bhattacharjee. "He was a political stalwart who served the state with commitment. My heartfelt condolences to his family and supporters. Om Shanti," Modi said in a post on X. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who succeeded Bhattacharjee after the 2011 elections, also paid her respects, highlighting the former chief minister's contributions to the state. "He will be remembered for his work," she said, recalling her visits to him during his illness. Bhattacharya, known for leading a spartan life, died at 8.30 am at his two-room government flat on Palm Avenue, where he resided both during his tenure as chief minister and beyond.

MEETINGS WITH EC
Political parties demand immediate Assembly polls in J&K

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

With the Supreme Court deadline for holding Assembly polls looming large, the Election Commission (EC) held a series of meetings in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday with political parties and district heads of the civil administration and police in order to get a feedback for holding the election.

The EC team, led by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar and including election commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and S S Sandhu, met representatives of registered political parties, including the National Conference (NC), People's Democratic Party (PDP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Congress and Jammu and Kashmir Panthers Party (JKPP), at the International Convention Centre (SKICC) here.

Immediate Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir was the



dominant demand of all the political leaders who met the visiting EC team.

Assembly polls have not been held in Jammu and Kashmir since 2014. The polls

were due to be held in early 2019 following the dissolution of the legislative body of the erstwhile state in 2018.

However, after the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir

into Union territories in August 2019, the Assembly polls could not be held due to various reasons, including a delimitation exercise that was completed in 2022.

Rahul takes loco pilots to meet Vaishnav over their concerns

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday met a delegation of loco pilots in the Parliament House complex and took them to meet Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav in a bid to resolve their issues and problems.

Gandhi also posted a video of his meeting with the loco pilots in which they are seen airing their grievances like long duty hours, lack of toilets and tough working conditions.

Loco pilots, who were part of the delegation, said Gandhi met them in the Parliament House and then took them to meet the Railway Minister.

In a post in Hindi on X, Gandhi said, "Today, again met loco pilots in Parliament House, where they reiterated their demands for adequate



comfort and basic amenities in the cabins. This is extremely necessary for the safety of millions of passengers who travel by train every day, and is a completely justified request."

"The loco pilots were arranged to meet the Railway Minister, who listened to their problems and promised to look into their concerns," the former Congress chief said.

"I will ensure that solutions to these problems are implemented for the safe travel of the people of the country," Gandhi said.

Court extends Arvind Kejriwal's judicial custody till Aug 20

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday extended the judicial custody of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal till August 20 in a corruption case registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the alleged excise scam.

Special Judge Kaveri Baweja extended Kejriwal's custody after he was produced before the court through video conference.

The court is likely to consider on August 12 a supplementary charge sheet filed by the CBI against Kejriwal in the case. The judge had sent Kejriwal to judicial custody in June, saying his name has surfaced as one of the "main conspirators" and the investigation was still in progress. The judge had also noted the apprehension of the CBI, which claimed that Kejriwal may influence the witnesses

KILLING 2 CIVILIANS IN KASHMIR
Pak-based terrorist among 4 charge-sheeted by NIA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has charge-sheeted four people, including a Pakistan-based terrorist, for their involvement in the killing of two civilians in Kashmir this year, an official statement issued on Thursday said.

Adil Manzoor Langoo, Ahran Rasool Dar alias Tota, Dawood and their Pakistan-based handler Jahangeer alias Peer Sahab have been charge-sheeted under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, it said. The NIA special court, Jammu, has already issued an open-ended non-bailable warrant against Jahangeer who is absconding. The probe agency on Wednesday charge-sheeted the four people for the killing of two non-local civilians by the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and its offshoot The Resistance



Front (TRF) on February 7 in Karfali Mohalla in Srinagar's Shala Kadal, the NIA statement said.

NIA probe has revealed that Langoo, who had joined LeT last year, had been motivated by Pakistani handlers to boost the terror outfit's activities in Srinagar, it said.

"He had also been involved in previous terror attacks in the Kashmir Valley. He, along with his close associates Ahran Rasool Dar and Dawood, was

working under the directions of Jahangeer, who had motivated them to unleash 'jehad' in the Srinagar area to spread fear and terror among the non-locals with an intention to wage war against the government of India," the NIA said.

The trio had conspired with their handler Jahangeer to kill the civilians at Shala Kadal, it added. On the directions of Jahangeer, Langoo and Dar had received arms and ammunition which were used subsequently by Langoo to commit the crime, the statement said.

Dawood had helped Langoo destroy evidence of the crime, it said. The NIA has been cracking down on terrorist organisations active in Kashmir. LeT, the largest terrorist group in the region, has been working through various offshoots to carry out its operations after it was banned by the government.

Phogat can still win silver medal

Continued from page 1

If Vinesh wins the appeal, she will be awarded a joint silver medal. If she loses, the disqualification will stand, and she will finish in last place.

The star Indian grappler was having a stellar run at the Paris Olympics having switched from the 53 kg to the 50 kg weight category just five months ago.

Vinesh was disqualified from her gold medal match in the women's 50-kg weight category for being 100 grams overweight on the day of her bout. As a result, Yusneily Guzman, whom Vinesh had defeated in the semi-final, advanced to the final and ultimately lost to US's Sarah Hildebrandt.

A day after her disqualification from the Paris Olympics 2024, Vinesh announced her retirement from wrestling on X. She had made history as the first Indian woman wrestler to reach the finals in women's wrestling at the Olympics.

BROKEN PHOGAT ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Her long-cherished Olympic dream shattered by a cruel twist of fate, a crestfallen Vinesh Phogat bid adieu to her international wrestling career on Thursday, saying that she doesn't have the strength to continue anymore.

The 29-year-old, who was disqualified for being 100gm overweight ahead of her 50kg category gold medal bout in the Olympics on Wednesday, announced her decision on social media, seeking forgiveness from everyone who supported her.

Addressing her mother Premlata, Vinesh, a three-time Olympian, wrote, "Ma, wrestling has won, I have lost. Please forgive me, your dreams and my courage, everything is broken."

"I don't have any more strength now. Goodbye wrestling 2001-2024. I shall be indebted to you all. Forgive (me)," added the two-time

world championships bronze-medallist.

Her stunning decision comes a day after Vinesh appealed against her disqualification from the Olympic finals in the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS), demanding that she be awarded a joint silver medal.

An ad-hoc division of CAS, which has been set up here for resolution of any disputes arising during the Olympic Games, will take up her appeal in the next few hours.

She spent a good part of the day at a polyclinic inside the Games village owing to severe dehydration caused by her desperate measures to make the cut, which included going hungry, avoiding fluids and staying up all night to sweat it out.

Cuban wrestler Yusneily Guzman Lopez, who lost to Vinesh in the semifinals, replaced her in the final against American Sarah Ann Hildebrandt.

Retaining wall of..

Continued from page 1

The HMWSSB clarified that the incident occurred due to water ingress caused by the collapse of the side wall at the Sunkishala Project site near the Nagarjuna Sagar reservoir. The incident occurred in just five minutes, filling the sump at the full reservoir level.

After the water level recedes, the damaged side wall section will be rebuilt with the construction agency bearing the estimated Rs 20 crore reconstruction cost.

The HMWSSB clarified that this incident will not affect the drinking water supply to Hyderabad which will continue as usual until next year. "Recently, an unexpected heavy inflow of approximately 3.5 lakh cusecs caused a sudden backflow at the Nagarjuna Sagar Reservoir bringing water into the tunnel," the HMWSSB said. This resulted in the tunnel gate getting damaged and the connected side wall collapsing. "We thought the BRS government did a shoddy job in Kaleshwaram. Now it is evident that not only Godavari, they didn't spare the Krishna River too. With the collapse of Sunkishala

wall, the inferior quality of the work done got exposed," Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka said.

In 2021, the BRS government decided to construct an independent raw water intake well from the dead storage at Sunkishala near Nagarjuna Sagar to meet the drinking water needs of Hyderabad. Megha Engineering secured the tender for this project on June 11, 2021. The project includes constructing an intake well, pump house, tunnels and a pipeline network. As of now, 60% of the intake well works, 70% of the pumping main works, and 40% of the electro-mechanical works have been completed.

In 1994, an independent raw water intake well project was proposed at Sunkishala foreshore for the Krishna Drinking Water Supply Scheme, and the foundation was laid by the then Chief Minister, the late Vijayabhaskar Reddy. Subsequent governments arranged to use raw water from the Akkampally Balancing Reservoir canal for the scheme. Emergency pumping is arranged at the Puttam Gandhi area on the Nagarjuna Sagar shore to draw raw water during summer.

Withdraws Waqf Properties Bill

Continued from page 1

in Rajya Sabha. The Waqf Properties (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants), Bill, 2014 was introduced in Rajya Sabha on February 18, 2014 by erstwhile minority affairs minister K Rahman Khan.

It was referred to the Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice on March 5, 2014. Assets dedicated for religious or charitable purposes are referred as Waqf properties. Minister of Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju sought the leave of the House to withdraw the bill and the withdrawal was approved by voice vote in Rajya Sabha by the members. CPI (M) MP John Brittas and IJML MP Abdul Wahab opposed the withdrawal of the bill in the Upper House. Explaining about his stand, Brittas said the bill was introduced in Rajya Sabha precisely because it was intended to free the properties of Waqf properties.

BRS, BJP, AIMIM stay away

Continued from page 1

The Congress government is trying to make sure that mistakes are not repeated. The government is going to take a decision regarding Dharani problems, he said and added that lakhs of farmers faced troubles due to the Dharani Portal.

Meanwhile, Kodanda took the opinion of the CPI, the CPM, the TJS and intellectuals on the new Revenue Act draft. It may be recalled that the government had placed the new Revenue Act draft on the NCLA website, sought opinions on it and gave three weeks for that.

TG's MSMEs employ 11,6,22,743 workers

Continued from page 1

According to the latest data from the Udyam Registration Portal and the Udyam Assist Platform, the MSMEs in Telangana have demonstrated substantial contributions in job creation.

The steady growth in employment figures highlights the critical role of MSMEs in driving the state's economic engine. The employment data from the Udyam Registration Portal indicates a significant upward trend in job creation by MSMEs in Telangana.

From July 2020 to August 2024, there has been a consistent increase in the number of people employed by these enterprises.

In 2020-21 there were 1,639,319 employees. In 2021-22 it rose to 1,933,845 employees. In 2022-23 it went up to 2,607,412 employees and in 2023-24 there were 4,309,137 employees. In 2024 (till August) there are 1,133,030 employees in Telangana.

In Andhra Pradesh, there are 2,013,987 MSMEs. The distribution is 769,063 for OBCs, 229,640 for SCs and 40,735 for STs. This means OBCs own 38.17% of MSMEs, SCs 11.40% and STs 2.02%.

Nationally, there are 47,919,539 MSMEs. OBCs own 14,864,379 of these, SCs 5,009,069 and STs 1,559,279. This reflects shares of 31.02% for OBCs, 10.45% for SCs and 3.25% for STs.

Govt introduces Waqf Bill.

Continued from page 1

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said he will talk with leaders of all parties for constituting the joint parliamentary committee. Soon after Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju sought leave to introduce the Bill, opposition INDIA bloc MPs strongly protested the introduction of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, calling it an "attack" on the Constitution and aimed at targeting Muslims.

Congress MP K C Venugopal, who had submitted notice to oppose its introduction, accused the government of violating the right to freedom of religion and claimed the legislation was being brought with an eye on the upcoming assembly polls. "This is a draconian law and a fundamental attack on the Constitution," Venugopal said. He said people taught the BJP a lesson -- in the Lok Sabha polls -- for its divisive politics but it is continuing with the same, keeping in mind the upcoming assembly elections in states such as Maharashtra.

Charles Schwab to locate centre in Hyd

Continued from page 1

IT Minister Sridhar Babu Duddhilla and senior Schwab executives, Dennis Howard, Rama Bokka and others at the Charles Schwab's headquarters in Dallas on August 7.

Revanth Reddy and Sridhar assured Schwab executives full support and guidance through necessary formalities to establish their presence in Hyderabad. They emphasised swift access to talent in the region which will facilitate a rapid ramp-up of the centre. Schwab's executives expressed confidence about the collaboration, praising the proactive support from the Telangana government. They see this as a promising indicator of a successful partnership.

Charles Schwab is currently awaiting final approvals before announcing detailed plans for the centre and delegating a team to India for its official establishment.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Daunting task ahead

The interim Govt led by Yunus must restore law and order in Bangladesh as there is chaos and fear all around

As Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus takes charge of the interim government of Bangladesh, he may have the challenging task of restoring peace and law and order in the country. Bangladesh, relatively a young nation, is once again in the throes of instability. The latest chapter in its ongoing saga of unrest, unfolded after the ouster of Sheik Hasina and subsequent takeover by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. As Yunus steps into power, the country is gripped by fear and uncertainty, prompting hundreds of citizens to seek refuge in India. Recent months saw political violence, protests, and crackdowns on dissent, creating a volatile environment that led to the ouster of Sheik Hasina and chaos on the roads of Dhaka. The announcement of Muhammad Yunus, a globally renowned figure for his work in microfinance and founder of Grameen Bank, taking over the reins of power comes as a dramatic twist. Yunus, who has faced his share of political and legal challenges in recent years, has long been a critic of the Hasina Government's policies.



The political upheaval has triggered a wave of fear among the populace especially the minorities. Reports indicate that hundreds of Bangladeshis are attempting to cross the border into India, driven by concerns for their safety. The future course of Bangladesh's political landscape under Yunus' leadership is fraught with uncertainty. Yunus has been an advocate for political reform and transparency. His leadership could usher in a new era of governance, focusing on anti-corruption measures and democratic practices. However, implementing these changes in a deeply entrenched political system will be a formidable challenge. Besides, Bangladesh's economy has been under strain due to mismanagement and corruption. Yunus' expertise in economic development and microfinance could play a pivotal role in revitalising the economy, promoting entrepreneurship, and creating jobs. While some may view him as a saviour, others may see him as an outsider with no political experience. Building trust and garnering widespread support will be essential for his administration's success. However, the biggest challenge would be restoring peace and maintaining the law and order. Ensuring law and order during this transition period is paramount. Yunus will need the cooperation of the military and law enforcement agencies to maintain stability and prevent further violence. As Bangladesh stands on the brink of a new political era with Muhammad Yunus at the helm, the road ahead is uncertain. The immediate priority will be to address the fears of the populace and restore a sense of security, especially amongst minorities. All said and done, right now the army will call the shots and till elections are announced nothing can be said about the future of interim government itself. The coming days will be crucial in determining whether Yunus' leadership can guide the country towards stability and prosperity or if Bangladesh will descend into further chaotic unrest.

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PICTALK



A priest performs 'aarti' at Bade Hanumanji temple which was flooded after heavy rains in Prayagraj

Rediscovering the true value of life

Amidst climate change and environmental crises, it's time to re-evaluate our priorities and appreciate the irreplaceable gifts that nature freely provides

The best things in life, they say, come free. It is a dubious statement that we may not readily agree to in a world where anything material has a price tag attached to it. The problem is not in the maxim that I opened this piece with; the problem is with our definition of "the best things". We have devised a curious way to assess our lives by putting a numerical value on everything we can possess and call our own. Even as we scamper all over the place trying to fetch luxuries and comfort items, we tend to forget several things which we do not personally possess but are indispensable to our existence. They are more valuable to us than all the material assets of the world put together. Air, sunlight, water, and soil for instance. Many things are too obvious for us to appreciate as I discovered recently when astronauts Sunita Williams and Barry Wilmore got stranded in space. Reports say that her extended stay would affect her body adversely and as per NASA,



it could alter the structure of the eyes and brain, and their function "because low-gravity conditions shift the body's fluids toward the head". Gravity: The natural phenomenon that Newton discovered by chance in late 1666 when he saw an apple fall to the ground isn't something that we pay attention to in our daily lives. We take universal gravitation for granted, just as we take many other conventional things and natural forces as part of our privilege on this planet. The heat wave sweeping across the globe, the unprecedented floods and unseasonal snow are all testimonies of this casual attitude we have adopted towards the most valuable things in life that the universe has granted us. Climate change has been converted to a mere topic of discussion and not as a veritable threat for all species. Who will tell us that we have been presently allowed to live the best versions of ourselves aided by natural resources and no matter how hard we try, we cannot replicate these conditions in another part of the universe anytime soon? We may be vain to declare that space travel will soon become a regular thing thanks to man's daring explorations. We can claim that we are

doing everything we can to shift our domicile to another planet. But let us make no mistake - we cannot find another optimal domain to establish ourselves should the present one perish because of our over-indulgences. Our conceit might make us proclaim that the skies are for us to invade, but to find another place like this where everything is measured just right for our survival will only remain a pipedream. It's time we stopped taking the vital elements of existence as a given. It's time for us to stop expanding our wingspans without regard for nature. That an apple should fall is part of a grand cosmic design, but the fact that hills are sliding, forests are burning and villages are getting swept away is part of man's narrow and reckless nature. The value of the many simple blessings we have been bestowed with will be known only when these free privileges are taken away from us. (The writer is a columnist and author based in Dubai; views are personal)

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ASHA IYER KUMAR

Cultural identity shapes behaviour

This cultural phenomenon, observed in many parts of the world, highlights the profound impact of inherited values on personal and collective actions



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

In India, several clans have their pedigree narratives. It is a great instrument for creating venerable ideals of behaviour and conduct and, above all, pride in their antecedents. Like many other places in the world, their pedigree is often traced to some other planet or has an anecdote or theory associated with their distinctive pedigree. Some consider themselves descendants of the Sun (Suryavanshi), others consider themselves descendants of the Moon (Chandravanshi), and so the call goes on.

The veracity of these claims is another story altogether, but invariably there is an ideal connected to them, and that is important. For example, the Suryavanshis are supposed to be very committed to their 'word of mouth', and they are supposed to never backtrack from what they have said or promised.

These ideals are important in identity formation and establishing a bottom line of behaviour. They also create a narrative of keeping the clan on track, such as it may be. There are fallouts for rituals, marriages, festivities, and more. Loyalty is not territorial because the clan has, often, migrated from its place of origin but the bonding is clear. Their rituals of festivities and celebrations keep the clan together, even though technology may have played its role in the widespread celebration and observance of clan identities. The protocols are very often strictly adhered to. Often these serve as an unwritten code of behavior.

There is another anecdote linked with planets, especially the Sun. Japan is considered to be the land of the rising sun, and there are anecdotes about special places in many parts of the world related to the sun. Toledo is a good illustration of a place where the sun's rays are said to have met the Earth for the first time.

There are other rituals associated with the sun in many parts of the world as well. In



India, planet worship is considered particularly venerable by many components of the population, and the steps in sun worship are a widely shared phenomenon. This practice is often accompanied by pouring water facing the sun. Celebrating obeisance to the sun is popular and has many stories spun around it.

It may be useful to remind oneself that, in the belief of many, worship of even other planets is a virtuous thing to do. The point, however, is to recognise that behaviour is determined by one's belief, and this belief may not always be an act of choice but an act of an inherited value system and cognitive association with values that are considered virtuous. This component of tradition, which is common in many parts of the world, is now often referred to, not so complementarily, as the Third World Phenomena. The older the community, the greater their belief and the more grounded their behaviour.

In such communities' gender relationships have a strong overlay of traditional beliefs.



LIKE MANY OTHER PLACES IN THE WORLD, THEIR PEDIGREE IS OFTEN TRACED TO SOME OTHER PLANET OR HAS AN ANECDOTE ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR DISTINCTIVE PEDIGREE. SOME CONSIDER THEMSELVES DESCENDANTS OF THE SUN, OTHERS CONSIDER THEMSELVES DESCENDANTS OF THE MOON

Indeed, icons that grow up at times geography-wise and even climate-wise are significant factors in belief systems.

The broad takeaway from this narrative should be a realisation, that what goes into the composition of the human mind and belief system is often not only acquired from formal learning in the classroom but also by inherited and handed down beliefs.

This is an important aspect of learning which deserves far more attention even in formal learning systems. There is an obvious need to understand, all that goes into the making of one's identity and personality make-up.

One of the important dimensions should also be to assess and evaluate the complete personality of a person when recruiting him. The identity that that person carries may have many layers that are important for his work performance.

Unfortunately, not enough literature is available to convert all this into assessment instruments. This understanding would help to

explain why there are so many times a situation of grief when a person is recruited on just what could be called his 'professional knowledge'.

It will be worth remembering that professional knowledge is indeed important in the work dimension but that is not a full personality at work. To create a work identity, it is important to selectively integrate the cultural identities of individuals with a focus on the organisational identity of the enterprise concerned.

This is an important dimension of work management that both employers and employees need to pay much more attention to, more than what they have enabled so far. This will help to manage, better, group identities at work and create a culture of resonance for greater productivity and fulfillment all around. The idea of focusing on the 'complete personality', to the extent possible, is worth considering.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BANGLADESH CRISIS

Madam — Amid the backdrop of controversial job reservations and widespread violent protests, Bangladesh has seen its former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed flee the country and seek temporary exile in India, a sanctuary supposedly facilitated by the United Kingdom. The nation now stands on the brink of establishing a new interim regime, led by Muhammad Yunus and supported by student unions and the military. It is deeply disappointing that the international community, with whom Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had maintained good relations—particularly China, the US, and the United Kingdom—turned a blind eye to her government during this crisis. The violent student protests, demonstrations, and clashes, followed by anti-government forces, went largely ignored by these global allies. China, despite being a close economic partner of Bangladesh, remained a passive observer throughout the turmoil.

India's support for Bangladesh during this tumultuous period is commendable and highlights Prime Minister Modi's political commitment to its neighbor, strengthening bilateral relations rooted in cultural and historical ties. However, it is regrettable that Hindu citizens and temples have borne the brunt of the lawlessness and vandalism, acts seemingly orchestrated to provoke Indian sentiments.

While the caretaker government led by the army appears to be a viable solution at the moment, it remains uncertain whether it can overcome the significant economic losses and extensive damage to national properties caused by the protests.

There is hope that peace will prevail in Dhaka and that New Delhi's active involvement will help pave the way for the formation of an interim government, free from being hijacked by the military or anti-India radical elements.

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Bagarkote

We are proud of you!



Had the gravitational force acted on Vinesh Phogat been little bit kinder she would have not only lost the silver medal which was in her grab but would have also bagged a gold considering her performance in the tournament so far. Vinesh lost the gold by weighing 100 Grams more than the permit-

ted weight of 50 kgs in the category and also suffered a disqualification from the tournament. It is one of the most unfortunate thing that could have happened to her as a sports person, shattering her dreams. Regardless of this she is the golden girl and would be remembered for her superb performance.

While Phogat has been successful in bagging Gold and silver medals in Commonwealth and Asian games, courtesy misfortune Olympics has been eluding her as she suffered an injury in Rio olympics in 2016 while in 2020 Tokyo olympics and in the Paris olympics yesterday she suffered a cruel disqualification! Phogat, you might have lost Gold medal in Olympics, for sure you have won a place in the hearts of all the sports lovers in the world! We are proud of you!!

Gopalswamy J | Chennai

THE PLIGHT OF SEWER WORKERS

Madam— Kudos to Mr N Sadhasiva Reddy for his letter titled "Death of sanitation workers" (August 7). Our eardrums are constantly bombarded with the triumphant declarations of "conquering" the other side of the Moon, yet all that is provided for a sewer worker risking his life for society's "dirty work" is an ordinary rope. Billions of state funds are invested in mass yoga performances on the streets to showcase the country's "might" to the world, yet the same ordinary rope is the only safety measure for the poorest souls in this "mighty" India. Gigantic statues and bullet train projects are undertaken to "mesmerize" the world, but the faceless manual scavengers who work tirelessly to keep our environment clean receive no more than that ordinary rope.

Those who ignore the plight and suffering of these unsung heroes, without whose essential service our "civilized modern" society would come to a standstill, are nothing short of barbarians.

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

PREAMBLE MISSING IN NCERT BOOKS

Madam — The absence of the "Indian Constitution" preamble in some NCERT textbooks for certain classes should not lead to blame. Instead, consider this as an opportunity to highlight its sacred importance and encourage students to learn it with increased focus.

This can greatly contribute to shaping a clean thought process centered on equality and the socialist republic structure. It would be beneficial if NCERT issued a circular or sent an online message to all schools following the NCERT syllabus, advising them to download the preamble from Google or refer to other NCERT textbooks. Emphasising its sacred points with enhanced focus during teaching can greatly benefit the students. It is very important that today's children know about our freedom struggle and how our Constitution was written.

PV Srinivas Sreelekha | Secunderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

HASINA'S OUSTER: A BLOW TO INDIA

Ouster of Sheikh Hasina shakes India's strategic balance in the neighbourhood



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

A full-fledged crisis has been lobbed in India's court, with the ouster of PM Sheikh Hasina earlier this week. India's already troubled neighbourhood has now three countries under the firm grip of the armed forces. Pakistan, Myanmar and now Bangladesh, are now the army-ruled trioka, on a slippery slope of getting too close to China. Out of the two, it was Bangladesh which has been the crown jewel of India's neighbourhood first policy, having had a visibly pro-India government for the past decade and half. Pakistan has been China's proxy state acting against Indian interests, while Myanmar due to the army rule, has also slipped closer to China. Meanwhile, a pro-China (read anti-India) leader in the Maldives, a not-too-Delhi-friendly regime in Nepal, presents Indian diplomacy as one of its biggest challenges in recent history.

Former PM Sheikh Hasina, despite her dictatorial governance style, enjoyed bipartisan support in India. She used her relations with Narendra Modi and the opposition leaders in India, to come out heavily on extremist forces operating on Bangladeshi soil against India's interests. It is no coincidence that former PM Hasina has travelled to New Delhi thrice in a year. PM Modi, lauded her efforts in upgrading the bilateral relations when she came for a state visit, a first under the new government in the centre. Indo-Bangladesh bilateral grew from strength to strength during Sheikh Hasina's decade and a half-regime, with important long-term infrastructure projects being operationalised by India and increasing new transit and trade corridors between the two



neighbours. India shares, nearly 4000 km of land border with Bangladesh, bringing its 5 states in unique proximity to the neighbour. This land border, the fifth largest land border in the world, acts as a porous conduit for the movement of goods and people during times of bonhomie, as governments maintain strict vigil keeping in mind each other's interests. This was visible during Sheikh Hasina's tenure when cross-border smuggling and terrorism had nearly vanished. This has built a very comfortable position for Indian diplomats, as they have trusted a friendly regime to keep Indian interests in mind. However, with Sheikh Hasina, gone and chances of her never being back in the political arena of Bangladesh looking extremely certain, things are about to change. India has not built bipartisan support for itself in the local Bangladeshi politics.

It has chosen to be cosy with Sheikh Hasina's government and dealt with overtures from the principal opposition party in Bangladesh with nonchalance. The fear was, that showing any affinity to Bangladesh's opposition party may not be taken kindly by Sheikh Hasina. Therefore a public diplomacy narrative emerged, that Sheikh Hasina was 'too close to be comfortable', with India and acting against her nation's interests. A caged opposition in Bangladesh managed to get external support from China, and Pakistan's intelligence agency, both of whom have a huge interest in keeping India under constant stress in the geopolitical affairs of the region. The on-ground situation in Bangladesh currently is against India. The current interim regime has allies who may be infiltrated with extremist elements, with whom India has had bitter experiences in the past. The nature of the protests and subsequent ouster of Sheikh Hasina ensured that any of her policies, including being pro-India would not be taken too kindly by the Bangladeshi citizens. An anti-Sheikh Hasina mood could easily be swayed to anti anti-India mood, which would be detrimental to the long-drawn deep bilateral relationship. It would be a challenge for India to work new bunch of leaders in Bangladesh and remain a crucial strategic allies for the eastern neighbour.

(The writer is a political analyst; views are personal)

Bangladesh at political crossroads

The interim government faces a formidable task in restoring law and order, organising free and fair elections, combating corruption and gaining public trust



K S TOMAR

According to British parapsychologist Celia Elizabeth Green, "In an autocracy, one person has his way; in an aristocracy, a few people have their way; in a democracy, no one has his way." This sentiment resonates deeply with the ousted former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, who refused to acknowledge the clear signs of her impending downfall. Conspiracy theory is gaining momentum which led to ouster of EX PM, Sheikh Hasina which allegedly included the intelligence agencies of America (CIA), Pakistan (ISI) and China which yearned for an alternate government led by EX PM, Khalida Zia who might be on her way of ascendancy to power in future. Another version points out the preference of China and Pakistan to have Anti-Indian government in Dhaka which might alter the regional balance in South Asia.

CONSPIRACY THEORY. There have been numerous speculations and allegations regarding the United States' involvement in attempts to oust Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Some argue that the U.S. might be seeking a more favourable government in Dhaka due to concerns over human rights, democratic practices, and regional security dynamics. Critics suggest that American interests, particularly in countering China's growing influence in South Asia, might drive such alleged conspiracies.

However, concrete evidence of U.S. involvement in any conspiracy against Sheikh Hasina is lacking. Officially, the U.S. government has maintained a stance of promoting democratic values and fair elections in Bangladesh. Publicly, U.S. officials have expressed concerns about political repression and the fairness of the electoral process under Hasina's administration but stopped short of endorsing any regime change.

Sheikh Hasina's administration has leveraged these allegations to bolster nationalist sentiment and consolidate power, portraying itself as a bulwark against foreign interference. This narrative resonates with many Bangladeshis, fostering a perception of external threats to national sovereignty. Ultimately, while suspicions persist, the claims of direct American involvement in a conspiracy to oust Sheikh Hasina remain speculative and unproven. The situation underscores the complex interplay of domestic politics and international relations in Bangladesh.

Hasina's dramatic fall from grace has not surprised many, except perhaps herself. She ignored the rising tide of public discontent and the conspiracies hatched by vested interests aiming to assert dominance in South Asia and undermine India. Winning 288 out of 300 seats in the January 2024 elections, alongside the arrests of opposition leaders and suppression of dissent, highlighted a significant loss of credibility for Hasina, culminating in widespread revolt and her eventual ouster.

Hasina, a pro-democracy leader who witnessed the sacrifices made by her late father and family, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Bangladesh, has now left the nation poised for a potential regime dominated by hardliners, anti-India, and pro-China forces, possibly sandwiching this troubled nation between two powers in the future. The interim government faces several challenges:

Restoring Political Stability: establishing neutral ground and engaging in dialogue with all political factions to ensure a peaceful and democratic transition.



Organizing Free and Fair Elections: Ensuring upcoming elections are free, fair, and credible to restore public trust in the democratic process.

Combating Corruption: Initiating anti-corruption drives to target high-profile politicians and business leaders while ensuring fairness.

Maintaining Law and Order: Managing protests and civil unrest carefully, and ensuring security forces act with restraint to avoid human rights abuses.

Ensuring Human Rights: Balancing order with respecting human rights and avoiding authoritarianism. Gaining Public Trust; Building public confidence through transparency, effective communication, and inclusive policies.

International Relations: Engaging with international organizations, donor countries, and regional allies to ensure continued support and investment. The political upheaval in Bangladesh over the past 13 months has been deeply polarizing and emotionally charged citizens. Experts attribute the whirlwind of violent emotions to an unresolved conflict over the nation's identity—a conflict that must be successfully addressed for the country's survival. There is no denying that Hasina was a secular and reformist figure in Bangladesh.

Her government had been instrumental in ensuring safety and fostering economic growth, making Bangladesh one of the fastest-growing developing nations. Yet, her leadership was marred by accusations of election rigging, suppression of opposition, and human rights violations, which stoked public discontent.

The crisis reached its peak with unprecedented violence and street protests, allegedly orchestrated by Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, and active involvement from Khalida Zia's BNP and Chinese intelligence networks.

Amidst this turmoil, Nobel Peace Laureate Muhammad Yunus was chosen to lead an interim government after consultations with military leaders and key stakeholders. Experts and ex-diplomats agree that the current turmoil is a by-product of the public uprising against Hasina, who fled the country with India's assistance. She is now seeking asylum in Europe, with the UK being a potential destination, though nothing is certain.

Comparative Analysis of Hasina and Rajapaksa's Ousters: There are several similarities between Sheikh Hasina's downfall in Bangladesh in 2024 and the ouster of Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in 2022. Both events stem from political, economic, and social factors.

Economic Mismanagement and Authoritarian Governance: Sheikh Hasina faced criticism for stifling dissent and undermining democratic processes. Similarly, Gotabaya Rajapaksa's administration was criticized for authoritarianism and nepotism. Both countries struggled with economic difficulties, rising living costs, and unemployment, leading to public frustration and mass protests.

Debt and Foreign Exchange Issues: Bangladesh experienced increasing national debt and challenges in managing foreign exchange reserves, while Sri Lanka faced a severe economic crisis characterized by foreign exchange shortages and high inflation, leading to widespread hardship.

Public Unrest and International Factors: Both countries saw mass protests against economic hardships and political repression. The international relations of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were strained due to economic mismanagement and human rights abuses, affecting foreign aid and investment.

Challenges for IndiaThe ouster of Sheikh Hasina presents several

challenges for India: **Political Instability in Bangladesh:** The removal of a stable, pro-India government may lead to political instability, creating a power vacuum that could be filled by elements less friendly toward India.

This could foster anti-India sentiments and alter bilateral relations. **Border Security and Migration:** Political changes might affect cooperation on border management, potentially increasing challenges related to illegal migration, human trafficking, and terrorism.

Economic Relations and Trade: Changes in the political landscape could impact ongoing and future trade agreements, affecting bilateral trade beneficial to both countries. **Geopolitical Dynamics:** A new leadership might tilt towards China, enhancing its influence in Bangladesh and affecting India's strategic interests in the region.

Counterterrorism Efforts: A change in leadership might alter the level of collaboration on counterterrorism, impacting efforts to combat terrorism and insurgency.

Water-Sharing Disputes: The Teesta River water-sharing agreement, already a contentious issue, might face new challenges with a change in leadership.

India's Strategic Response: Experts suggest India should engage diplomatically with the new leadership, enhance border security, reassess trade agreements, and strengthen regional alliances to counter external influences like China's growing presence in Bangladesh.

Navigating these challenges requires a careful balance between immediate stabilization measures and laying the foundation for long-term democratic governance. The success of the interim government in managing these issues is crucial for providing stability to Bangladesh.

(The writer is a strategic affairs columnist and political analyst based in Shimla; views are personal)



THERE IS NO DENYING THAT HASINA WAS A SECULAR AND REFORMIST FIGURE IN BANGLADESH. HER GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN ENSURING SAFETY AND FOSTERING ECONOMIC GROWTH, MAKING BANGLADESH ONE OF THE FASTEST-GROWING DEVELOPING NATION

Khalistan movement is bereft of any vision, survives merely on hatred

Khalistan movement harps upon divisive tactics and has struggled to present a viable vision for a sovereign state nearly fifty years since its inception

Gurupatwant Singh Pannun, of Sikhs for Justice, recently released a video over his X-handle that Chandra Arya, a Hindu Member of Parliament in Canada's House of Commons should go back to India. Arya had earlier criticized the Khalistani extremists for vandalism at BAPS Swaminarayan Temple in Edmonton in Alberta state. The temple was recently found sprayed with anti-India graffiti of recognizably Khalistani variety.

Why do Khalistani always need to assert their existence through hatred of the Hindus? If they are indeed fighting for a sovereign Khalistan, even though no sensible or patriotic Indian would approve of it, they must establish the tenabil-



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

ity of the idea. Strangely, a movement approaching 50 years has not been able to throw up a credible map of Khalistan. On June 9, 2022, Pannun released a map of Khalistan at an event held at Lahore Press Club which showed Shimla, Himachal Pradesh as the capital of Khalistan. Could things get more ridiculous? The Sikhs comprise less than two per cent of Himachal Pradesh's

population. Their percentage same in Shimla city, which is not contiguous to Punjab where most Sikhs live. The map in addition to Punjab encompassed almost the whole of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, five districts of Rajasthan, several districts of Uttarakhand and several districts from Uttar Pradesh.

The net effect of such a map would be to reduce the Sikhs into a minority in Khalistan! In the early 19th century, Maharaja Ranjit Singh could rule over trans-Sutlej Punjab, by the dint of sword, despite the Sikhs comprising no more than 10 per cent of the population (based on Census figures, 1881). This was because the form of government was autocratic in an era of autocr-

racy. Still, the Maharaja had to pursue an inclusive and tolerant policy given the fractured religious demography of Punjab.

In the 21st century, when democracy has triumphed in the sub-continent, do Khalistanis propose to turn the clock back on political evolution? The fact that "Khalistan" should be carved out from the Indian side of Punjab alone makes the motive of its sponsors suspect.

Few Sikhs indeed remain on the Pakistan side of Punjab, from where the bulk of them were ethnically cleansed after the partition. However, the very same fact should prohibit the Sikhs from pursuing any secessionist agenda from the Indian side. The Sikhs concentrated in the fertile terrains of



central Punjab, which fell to the Pakistan side, and took refuge on the Indian side after the partition. There was a forcible exchange of population between the two halves of Punjab on religious lines. This bolstered their population from 13 per cent in colonial Punjab (Census, 1941) to 33 per cent in East Punjab (Census, 1961). After the reorganization of Punjab (1966), whereby Hindu-dominated Haryana

and Himachal Pradesh were separated, their population share increased to 60.2 per cent in rump Punjab (Census, 1971).

There is no grouse against Sikhs becoming a majority in Indian Punjab, as never before in the history of Punjab. However, there would certainly be a grouse if this majority, of less than two-thirds, wants to secede from the territory of the state. Questions will be asked why they have not demanded a single square inch of territory from the Pakistan side and all liability is on India which had graciously accommodated the Sikhs after the partition. The Khalistanis could grumble that not conceding a sovereign nation to the Sikhs during the partition itself was an injustice.

This is a bogus argument. None of the districts in colonial Punjab had a Sikh majority, which made the demand for "Khalistan" completely untenable.

As early as December 2, 1942, Master Tara Singh had asked for the bifurcation of colonial Punjab - one dominated by the Muslims and another by Hindu-Sikhs. History aside, "Khalistan" would put the future of Sikhs in jeopardy. Around 30 per cent of wheat procured by authorities and 21 per cent of rice procured during FY. 2021-22 came from Punjab alone. The loss of this assured procurement by the Food Corporation of India will put Punjab under mountains of rice and wheat. The "Khalistan", a landlocked nation sandwiched between

India and Pakistan, will be dependent on trade with both. Even today it can redirect its procurement mechanism profitably towards other states rather than favouring Punjab. However, Punjab, whose 75 population is dependent on agriculture for livelihood would be sorely hit. The loss of a huge pan-Indian market for Punjab will be disastrous in every sector e.g. transportation, hosiery, machine tools etc. The Sikh population in other states of India would be adversely affected. No wonder, the Khalistanis prefer to stroke passions, by ducking these critical questions.

(The writer is an author and an independent researcher based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

NINTH TIME IN A ROW

RBI keeps interest rate unchanged

RBI's move on expected lines: Experts

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) decision to maintain the status quo on key policy rate was on expected lines, experts said on Thursday. Bandhan Bank Chief Economist and Head of Research Siddhartha Sanyal said the status quo on the key (repo) rate is not a surprise. The central bank was emphatic to underscore the commitment to further disinflation and is in no hurry to cut rates, he said. While the RBI closely watches the heightened volatility in financial markets

globally, it has rightly avoided a knee-jerk reaction, Sanyal said. The decision to keep the rate at 6.5 per cent was taken with a 4-2 majority in the six-member MPC. Equirus Securities economist Anitha Rangan said the decision to keep the rate unchanged was taken in view of the domestic inflation led by the food side. "RBI is not going to ignore food inflation. According to the central bank, the pace of inflation is moderating but the moderation is uneven and slow. Therefore patience is required," she said.



Can't ignore food inflation: Das

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Amid suggestions for excluding food inflation while setting benchmark interest rates, Governor Shaktikanta Das on Thursday said the Reserve Bank cannot ignore it while formulating the monetary policy. He said that the weightage of food in the overall consumer price inflation, which stands at 46 per cent currently, was done in 2011-12, and needs to be revisited, and added that analysis work is going on by the National Statistical Office. "The MPC (monetary policy committee) may look through high food inflation if it is transitory; but in an environment of



persisting high food inflation, as we are experiencing now, the MPC cannot afford to do so," Das said in his policy review statement. "It (MPC) has to remain vigilant to prevent spillovers or second round effects from persistent food inflation and preserve the gains made so far," he

added. Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran had pitched for excluding food inflation from the rate setting calls, saying that the monetary policy has no bearing on the prices of food items, which are dictated by supply side pressures. Das declined to elaborate further on the remarks made in the written statement earlier in the day, but said that the weightage of food in CPI could change based on the findings of the NSO survey. The current CPI basket is based on 2011-12 data and the review could not be undertaken because of the Covid pandemic, he said.

so. It has to remain vigilant to prevent spillovers or second round effects from persistent food inflation and preserve the gains made so far in monetary policy credibility." The MPC last revised interest rate in February 2023, when it was hiked to 6.5 per cent. The status quo by RBI comes amid varied central bank action in advanced economies. While the Bank of England reduced interest rates last week, Bank of Japan hiked rates to their highest levels since 2008. Also, fears of a US recession have risen on the

back of weak employment numbers, piling up pressure on the Federal Reserve to start cutting rates to support the economy. RBI retained India's GDP growth forecast at 7.2 per cent and headline CPI inflation at 4.5 per cent for the current fiscal 2024-25. Upasna Bhardwaj, Chief Economist, Kotak Mahindra Bank said, with growth remaining robust, the MPC still has room to hold on to policy stance to get confirmation on the disinflationary trend.



'Critical minerals drivers of modern economy'

Coal and mines minister G Kishan Reddy on Thursday said that critical minerals have emerged as drivers of the modern economy and the Centre has ensured the country taps into this global opportunity through the launch of the National Critical Mineral Mission. Union Budget 2024-25 has proposed launching Critical Mineral Mission for domestic production, recycling of critical minerals, and overseas acquisition of critical mineral assets. Its mandate will include technology development, skilled workforce, extended producer responsibility framework, and a suitable financing mechanism. Addressing the national seminar on challenges and opportunities in the mines and minerals sector organised by the Mining, Geological, Metallurgical Institute of India, Reddy said that the government has brought about a paradigm change in the coal and minerals sector, making it transparent and competitive. He elaborated on the government's extensive efforts over the past decade to harness this potential through initiatives such as the introduction of a commercial auction regime for coal and mineral blocks and encouraging private sector partnership.



FMCG growth slows, rural outpaces urban market

The FMCG industry's volume growth slowed to 3.8 per cent in June quarter 2024 due to macroeconomic headwinds which impacted the staple food categories, including packaged salt, wheat flour and palm oil, according to a report by data analytics firm NielsenIQ. The industry saw a volume growth of 7.5 per cent in June quarter 2023 and 6.5 per cent in March quarter 2024. "Urban consumption growth dips to 2.8 per cent from 5.7 per cent in Q1'24 while Rural growth is at 5.2 per cent vs 7.6 per cent in the last quarter. However, rural outpaces urban in most parts of India in terms of volume growth," it said. Modern Trade, which includes supermarkets, hypermarkets, and large-format stores continues to exhibit double-digit volume growth at 10.9 per cent year-on-year. However, it was slower as compared to the March quarter. Volumes decelerated for traditional trade (such as Kirana stores) registering 3.1 per cent growth in Q2'24 (June quarter) compared to 5.6 per cent in the previous quarter, it added. The FMCG consumption growth has been primarily impacted by the food sector, with growth at 2.4 per cent in June quarter compared to 4.8 per cent in March quarter, the report added.



Meesho says 33 pc e-comm shoppers under 25 yrs

Softbank-backed e-commerce firm Meesho on Thursday said 33 per cent of users under the age of 25 and people from UP and Bihar are driving the growth of the segment in India. Based on Sensor Tower and Meesho's internal data, the report found that users from tier 4 cities and beyond are the most frequent and repeat shoppers in e-commerce, shopping across categories such as women's fashion, footwear and baby care. The report titled "Meesho's Smart Shopper Report" said, "1 in every 3 users is under the age of 25, making Gen Z the fastest-growing demographic to adopt e-commerce. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are leading in e-commerce user growth, showcasing remarkable potential and adaptability of these states." More than 80 per cent of Indian online shoppers come from tier 2 and beyond cities such as Ambur, Rourkela, Sangli and Zirakpur, the report said. According to the report, customers in the Northeastern states like Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim are increasingly making e-commerce purchases based on influencer content, contributing to an impressive 40 per cent of all orders from these states.

Sensex falls 581 pts as RBI retains policy stance

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed nearly 1 per cent down on Thursday after the Reserve Bank of India decided to keep the policy rate unchanged for the ninth time in a row and termed food inflation "stubborn". The 30-share BSE Sensex declined by 581.79 points or 0.73 per cent to settle at 78,886.22 in a volatile trade. During the day, it tumbled 669.07 points or 0.84 per cent to 78,798.94. The NSE Nifty declined by 180.50 points or 0.74 per cent to close at 24,117. During the day, it tanked 217.8 points or 0.89 per cent to 24,079.70. Analysts said continuous foreign fund outflows and weak trends in the US and European markets drove domestic equities lower. "The domestic market reversed its earlier gains as RBI's held its current policy rates with a caution to revise upward the CPI and moderate



the growth forecast for Q1," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said. Among 30 Sensex firms, Asian Paints, Infosys, JSW Steel, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, Larsen & Toubro, HCL Technologies and Tata Steel were the biggest laggards. Tata Motors, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ITC, IndusInd Bank and Axis Bank were the gainers. "Today's MPC decision to keep the repo rate unchanged at 6.5% did not come as any surprise as the rate setting

committee once again reiterated its stand on containing inflation without sacrificing growth," V P Nandakumar, MD & CEO, Manappuram Finance, said. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 0.44 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.16 per cent. Among the indices, metal tanked 2.02 per cent. IT (1.82 per cent), utilities (1.62 per cent), commodities (1.45 per cent), tech (1.40 per cent) and realty (1.22 per cent) also declined.

NSE adds 1 crore investors in 5 months, total goes up to 10 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Thursday said its unique registered investor base has crossed the 10 crore mark, with the latest 1 crore addition taking place in just five months. The investor base has seen more than 3-time jump in the last five years, facilitated by rapid growth in digitisation, rising investor awareness, financial inclusion and sustained market performance. "The unique registered investor base on the National Stock Exchange of India crossed the 10-crore mark on August 8, 2024," the bourse said in a statement. With this, the total number of client codes (accounts) registered with the exchange stands at 19 crore. This includes all client registrations done till date. Notably, clients can register with more than one trading member. Investor registrations at

NSE have seen an accelerating trend over the last few years. The exchange said that it took over 25 years for the registered investor base to hit the 4-crore mark in March 2021. The subsequent 1 crore increments have come through at an accelerated pace, taking on an average of about 6-7 months, with the last crore added in just over five months. Of the 10 crore registered investors, the median age is 32 years. Five years ago, it was 38 years. This reflects the increasing interest in markets among the youth. Nearly, one in five investors today are females. "This growth can be attributed to several key factors, including the streamlined Know Your Customer (KYC) process, enhanced financial literacy facilitated by stakeholder-led investor awareness programmes and enduring positive market sentiment," Sriram Krishnan, Chief Business Development Officer of NSE, said.



Silver plunges by Rs 1,100 per kg; gold flat at Rs 71,350 per 10 g

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices ruled flat at Rs 71,350 per 10 grams while silver prices declined by Rs 1,100 per kg in the local market here on Thursday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Silver prices plunged by Rs 1,100 to Rs 81,100 per kg on decreased offtake by coin makers and industrial units. The metal closed at Rs 82,200 per kg in the previous session. In the national capital, gold of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity remained flat at Rs 71,350 and 71,000 per 10 grams, respectively. On the global front, gold at Comex was quoted at USD 2,396 per ounce, up by USD 3 from the prior day.

India's logistics cost will be below 9% of GDP by April next year: Gadkari

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's logistics cost will come down to 9 per cent of GDP by April next year, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Thursday. Addressing an event here, Gadkari further said the country's exports will also increase when the logistics cost comes down to single digit. "Our logistics cost now is 16 per cent...It will come down to 9 per cent by April next year," he said. However, according to quick estimates of economic think tank National Council of

The road transport and highways minister noted that Indian economy needs to create more jobs.



Applied Economic Research (NCAER), the logistics cost in India ranged from 7.8 per cent to 8.9 per cent of GDP in 2021-22.

The road transport and highways minister noted that Indian economy needs to create more jobs. While noting that earlier

governments did not give enough attention to rural sector, he said that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government is giving more priority to the agriculture sector. "We need to increase our agriculture growth...We need to increase per capita income in rural areas," Gadkari said. The minister noted that India is the fastest growing major economy, and the government is working hard to make it the third largest economy in the world. Currently, India is the fifth largest economy globally.

JFSL to lead financial future for India: Ambani

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Jio Financial Services Ltd (JFSL) will lead the way in shaping a prosperous and inclusive financial future for India by focussing on technol-

ogy and developing tailor made products, RIL Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani said. JFSL is a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL).

IT hiring likely to surge as demand grows

PNS ■ MUMBAI

With IT companies gradually coming out of the slump and actively ramping up their hiring efforts, a report on Thursday said that recruitment is set to surge with an estimated 8.5 per cent increase in job roles within the industry by next year. The demand for skilled IT talent is growing after a slow period late last year and early this year. Hiring is set to surge, with

an estimated 8.5 per cent increase in job roles within the industry by next year, according to a report by Indeed, a global job matching and hiring platform and a subsidiary of Recruit Holdings. This data from Indeed has been compiled from Indeed Hiring Tracker and Indeed's platform data. Indeed Hiring Tracker is a quarterly report that explores the employment landscape and job market. The report further revealed



that almost 70 per cent of all tech jobs currently on the Indeed platform are for software roles. The dominance of software roles on Indeed is driven by the rapid adoption of technologies by companies like AI, machine learning, and blockchain which has further amplified the need for specialised software development, the report stated. The thriving tech startup ecosystem also plays a significant role, as new ventures prioritise

hiring developers to build and scale their products, it said. According to Indeed data, companies are actively hiring for roles such as Application Developer, Software Engineer, Full-Stack Developer, Senior Software Engineer, and PHP Developer. There's also a growing demand for NET Developers, Software Architects, DevOps Engineers, Data Engineers, and Front-End Developers, it stated.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
NIT No. 08/SE/KPZ/GHMC/2024-25 Date: 07.08.2024
Name of Work: Beautification of flyovers and Providing public amenities to parks, Estimate Amount/ECV: Rs. 940.00 Lakhs, Start Date/Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids: 09.08.2024 @ 02.00 PM and 13.08.2024 @ 02.00 PM. Name & Address Officer Cell No.: SSE/KPZ, GHMC, 9989930363. Sd/- Superintending Engineer Kukatpally Zone, GHMC
R.O.No: 2655-PP/CLAD/T1/2024-25, Dt: 08.08.2024

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Short NIT No.18/SE (M)/Sec-bad Zone/GHMC/2024-25 Dated: 08.08.2024
No. of Works: 02 Works, Estimated amount: Rs. 117.00 Lakhs, Bid Submission Start Date & Time: Dt: 09.08.2024 @ 1.00 PM, Bid Submission Closing Date & Time: Dt: 17.08.2024 @ 1.00 PM. Name & Address Officer Cell No.: SE, Sec' bad Zone, GHMC, Cell No. 9989930374. Further details can be seen at: https://www.tender.telangana.gov.in Sd/- Superintending Engineer Secunderabad Zone, GHMC
R.O.No: 2648-PP/CLAD/T1/2024-25, Dt: 08.08.2024

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
OFFICE THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (R&B) CIRCLE, SANGAREDDY
TENDER NOTICE
e-NIT No.3/SE(R&B) SRD/TS/2024-25 Dated: 05-08-2024
No. of works: 4 Works, Name of works: 2 work in Vikarabad District & 2 works in Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri District. Total ECV Value: Rs. 241 Lakhs, Download of Tender Documents From: 12-08-2024 at 4 PM to 19-08-2024 up to 3.30 PM and submission of Bid documents Technical bid opening : 19-08-2024 at 4.00 PM
Price bid opening : 22.08.2024 at 4.00 PM
Contact Number : 8333922725
Tender documents will be available in e-procurement market place in between, from 12-08-2024 at 4.00 PM to 19-08-2024 up to 3.30 PM details can be seen by login into @ www.tender.telangana.gov.in Sd/- Superintending Engineer (R&B) R.O.No: 2867-PP/CLAD/T1/2024-25, Dt: 08-08-2024 Circle Sangareddy

NAVIGATING NEW NATIONS

Ravi Prabhu, an avid world traveller, has captivated tales of travelling to over 195 countries. Popularly known as Ravi Telugu Traveller, takes *The Pioneer* through his travel voyage experiences for our exclusive Travelogue segment.

AARTI SREENATH

In a world where wanderlust knows no bounds, globetrotter Ravi Prabhu's journey symbolises the boundless spirit of exploration. With a repertoire of languages spanning continents, this seasoned traveller has traversed 195 countries, sharing captivating tales and remarkable experiences. His linguistic prowess is evident as he effortlessly switches between Bengali, Odia, Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada, among many more. Though not fluent, his ability to converse in French, Spanish and Portuguese further highlights his commitment to connecting with diverse cultures.

Guess what? While over 600 people have gone into space and 6,600 have scaled Mount Everest, only 280 out of the world's 850 million people have visited every country. Ravi Prabhu is one of those elite 280.

Having travelled over 30 lakh air miles—equivalent to travelling eight times to the moon—on over 1,000 airlines, popularly known as Ravi Telugu Traveller, he has invested a significant portion of his hard-earned money on these trips. Despite the extensive travel, he maintained his career and family life, making his achievements even more incredible.

As our conversation delved into his recent travels, his eyes lit up with passion as he recounted his trip to Venezuela, making it the 195th country on his list. For our exclusive Travelogue segment, he begins, "The most memorable part was seeing Angel Falls, the world's highest waterfall. Unlike the waterfalls in India, which are undoubtedly beautiful, like Jog Falls and Dudhsagar Falls, Angel Falls is beyond imagination. It's about 1 km tall and witnessing such a vast amount of water from that height is an unforgettable experience." His adventure to Angel Falls was nothing short of extraordinary. "I took a helicopter ride and landed on top of the falls. I also embarked on an 8-hour boat journey through the jungle to reach the foot of the falls. This was one of the most memorable moments I had been waiting for, and that's why I saved Venezuela for last."

When asked about his fashion sense while travelling, his philosophy was refreshingly practical. "Comfort matters the most to me," shares the wanderer. "Fashion sense,



to me, is about ease. I believe that what you wear should make you feel comfortable. I prefer dressing down rather than dressing up, especially while traveling. Even today, for this interview, I deliberately didn't wear a suit because this is how I travel. Fashion is not just about clothes; it's about how you carry yourself. Comfort is ideal." For this avid traveller, cultural experiences and interactions with locals form the essence of his journeys. Every place he visits, interacting with the locals is something that he never misses. "For me, the most important thing is human interaction. It's not just about seeing famous landmarks like waterfalls or beaches, but about connecting with people and their traditions, art, and culture."

India, he says, has the most complex culture. As we discuss his deep appreciation for India's rich cultural heritage, "As I travelled more, I realised how rich our culture is. Traditional dance forms like Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi and Kathakali take years to master, unlike some other countries where traditional dance forms are simpler. This made me appreciate India's cultural richness even more."

His travels have also led him to discover lesser-known gems. "In Pakistan, I visited the beautiful Luv Kush Temple in Lahore's fort, which many people don't get to see. I managed to get it opened for the first time in history and shared the experience on YouTube. In India, places like Gandikota in Andhra Pradesh are amazing yet not widely known. It looks like a Grand Canyon and is a hidden gem I believe more people should visit."

In discussing his travel preferences, he emphasised the importance of convenience and connectivity. "The choice of accommodation depends on the budget, but I prefer places with strong Wi-Fi and easy access to public transport. While staying at luxury hotels is nice, I also enjoy staying at local hotels where I can experience local cuisine and culture." When it comes to relaxation and rejuvenation, the home holds a special place in his heart as he gushes with a heart-warming tone, "Being with my wife, daughter and dog helps ease any stress and tension."

Travelling extensively comes with its share of unexpected adventures. He recounted some of the more challenging moments he faced, namely, "I experienced severe turbulence while flying from Istanbul to Baghdad, which was quite frightening. There was also a time when we faced landing issues due to strong turbulence."

As a lover of diverse cuisines, he does appreciate the variety available in the US, right from Indian to Japanese to Ethiopian cuisine. As we head towards the end of this chat, he shared his future travel aspirations: "I plan to visit Antarctica next. It's quite expensive, but I want to experience it as a family. Another dream destination is space."

In conclusion, this polyglot and world traveller continues to explore and share his unique experiences, inspiring others with his stories from around the globe.

'I put on my Sherlock hat and analysed 36 Days script'



TEJAL SINHA

Actress Chahat Vig has been one of those compassionate souls who doesn't shy away from bringing out the best of her talent, not just on screen but also by giving the best of her work to society. Having had a thriving career in the industry, she jumped into the showbiz scene at the age of 22 with *Gumraah*, starring Aditya Roy Kapur and Mrunal Thakur. Following her debut, she explored her prowess pretty well, starring as the lead opposite Manish Paul in *Rafuchakkar*.

"My journey in the industry has been quite a ride—challenging, rewarding, and all about moving forward," shares her *Gumraah* fame. "I jumped into the scene at 22, right out of film school, diving into ads and endless auditions, and dealing with plenty of rejections along the way." Well, it seems like she's on a quest to explore the best of her valour, because there's no stopping. Now, at 25, she is pleased to see *36 Days* as one of the top-streamed shows in India and to have her character Sia resonate with the audience.

Talking of her latest project, *36 Days*, she has been all over the news for her portrayal of Sia, as she stars alongside Neha Sharma, Purab Kohli and Chandan Roy Sanyal. Quite humbled by the attention that she's been receiving, she enthuses, "I was really drawn to Sia because she's such a complex and interesting character. Her story is about finding love within herself and chasing her dreams, all while being in a relationship that doesn't give her much space to do either. It's a compelling journey, and I was excited about the chance to explore her struggles and growth, and to bring all those different facets of her personality to life."

Preparing for her role, she says, feels a bit like being Sherlock Holmes, searching for clues in the script about the character. For Sia, "I put on my

Sherlock hat and carefully analysed the script to uncover those details. I created a storyboard outlining Sia's life journey in chronological order and imagined her life before the events of the script to understand her personality, behaviour and motivations. To help embody Sia, I gave her a soft and delicate speech pattern, which felt like an invisible costume that helped me get into character."

Sia Walia, the character she portrays, is an elegant actress with a strong love for her spouse. Sia's strong compassion and love for her husband, along with her drive and determination to conquer her fears, greatly attracted her to the character. "Her transformative journey towards self-love and success with integrity is what makes her so inspiring," shares the *Rafuchakkar* fame.

Going ahead, she recalls her experience shooting in Goa, mainly known for its beaches. "While we were shooting in Goa, I had a bit of an accident and ended up with a nasty bruise on my right elbow."

With a funeral scene scheduled in just four hours, I had to push through the pain. I asked the costume team for a black shawl to cover the bruise and I used the discomfort to enhance my performance. My co-actors were fantastic, keeping things light and using humour to help me cope with the pain off-camera." In addition to her successful career, Chahat also finds comfort and enthusiasm in pole sports, a therapeutic pastime that helps her stay grounded.

She explores psychology as well, demonstrating her wide range of interests. "Pole fitness is at the center of my heart," shares the avid pole dancer as we head toward the end of the chat. Going on to sign off on this talk, she says, "It brings me so much joy. It's such a fun and dynamic way to work out, combining dance, acrobatics, and strength training. For me, it's not just about fitness; it's a passion that really challenges me both physically and mentally. It helps me build strength, improve flexibility, and stay motivated in my fitness journey, all while having a great time."

Actress Chahat Vig, known for her stints in *Gumraah* and *Rafuchakkar*, has given a remarkable performance in her latest *36 Days*. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, she discusses her overwhelming feelings for the responses and getting into the skin of the character.

Preventing infections in transplant recipients!

India performs 17,000–18,000 solid organ transplants every year. Transplant recipients face an increased risk of infection due to two main factors: epidemiologic exposure to pathogens and the extent of immunosuppression. The balance between these factors determines susceptibility to infection. Even those with standard immune systems can develop infections if exposed to high pathogen levels or if their immunosuppression levels are not properly assessed. Understanding and managing these risks is crucial for ensuring the long-term health and success of transplant recipients.

Risk factors for infection :

Immunosuppression in transplant recipients increases their susceptibility to infections due to factors such as the type and number of immunosuppressive medications, the underlying medical condition and other health concerns. Even low-virulence organisms can cause invasive infections in these patients. Therefore, the likelihood of disease is influenced not only by the pathogen's aggressiveness but also by the patient's immune system strength and environmental exposure.

Best practices for infection prevention :

Effective infection prevention strategies are crucial for transplant recipients to reduce the heightened risk. Implementing best practices can significantly lower the incidence of infections and enhance patient outcomes.

1 Good hygiene practices: Hand washing with soap and warm water is crucial for removing germs and preventing them from entering the body through mucous membranes. Additionally, avoiding the sharing of personal items like makeup, toothbrushes, eating utensils and glasses helps reduce the spread of pathogens.

2 Avoiding contact with sick individuals: Transplant recipients should avoid close contact with people who are known to be sick or have been exposed to contagious diseases. This includes common infections such as the cold, flu, strep throat and conjunctivitis.

3 Safe food handling: Ensuring food safety is vital for transplant recipients. They should thoroughly cook all foods, especially meat, and avoid raw foods that may harbor harmful bacteria or viruses. Safe food handling practices include frequent handwashing, cleaning food preparation surfaces, avoiding cross-contamination, cooking food to the appropriate temperature and promptly refrigerating leftovers.

4 Clean drinking water: Access to clean drinking water is essential to prevent gastrointestinal infections. Transplant recipients should ensure their drinking water is free from contaminants that could compromise their health.

5 Regular medical monitoring: Attending regular monitoring appointments enables healthcare providers to identify and address signs of infection early. Early intervention can prevent minor illnesses from worsening and allow for timely adjustments to immunosuppressive therapy if necessary.

6 Adherence to medications: Following prescribed antibiotic and antiviral medications exactly as directed is vital. This adherence helps prevent infections and ensures that potential infections are treated

promptly and effectively.

Innovations in infection prevention :

Ongoing research and advancements in medical science have led to innovative approaches to prevent infections in transplant recipients. These innovations offer new hope in reducing infection-related complications and improving the quality of life for transplant patients.

1. Vaccine development: Developing vaccines specifically tailored for immunocompromised patients is a promising area of research. These vaccines aim to provide adequate immunity without triggering adverse reactions, thereby protecting transplant recipients from common and severe infections.

2. Prophylactic antiviral therapies: Innovations in antiviral therapies are helping to prevent viral reactivation in high-risk patients. Prophylactic use of antiviral medications can significantly reduce the incidence of viral infections such as cytomegalovirus (CMV) and Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), common in transplant recipients.

3. Advanced diagnostic tools: The development of advanced diagnostic tools allows for the early detection of infections at a molecular level. Techniques such as polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and next-generation sequencing (NGS) enable healthcare providers to identify pathogens quickly and accurately, facilitating prompt and targeted treatment.

4. Personalised immunosuppressive therapy: Personalised medicine approaches are being explored to optimize immunosuppressive therapy. By tailoring immunosuppressive regimens to the individual patient's immune response and infection risk profile, healthcare providers can minimize the risk of infections while preventing organ rejection.

5. Microbiome research: Emerging research on the microbiome is uncovering its role in infection resistance. Modulating the gut microbiota through probiotics, prebiotics, and diet adjustments could enhance the immune function of transplant recipients and reduce their susceptibility to infections.

Preventing infections in transplant recipients is a complex challenge that demands a comprehensive approach. By understanding risk factors and implementing effective prevention measures, the infection risk can be significantly reduced. Ongoing research and advances in medical science provide hope for improved outcomes and quality of life for transplant patients. Integrating best practices and innovations is essential for ensuring their long-term success and well-being.

(The author, Dr. P. Vikranth Reddy, is the Head of the Department & Chief Consultant Nephrologist, at Care Hospital in Hyderabad.)





GS Sampradaya Sarees Showroom has opened its doors in Nizampet. *Allare Allari* movie team actor Kaushik, Vishwa Mohan and Srinivas attended the event. The showroom will have handwoven silk sarees, fancy saree collection, exclusive bridal sarees, jewellery and lehenga collections.



Anamika



Bengal Handloom Art launched the official poster for Silk of India with organisers Somnath Bowmik and Abhijit Shaw. This event will be held at Classic Garden, Balamrai, Secunderabad from August 12 and end on August 18, celebrating the rich heritage and intricate craftsmanship of handloom weavers.



Monika



Kashraf



Tanishka

PARTY

Apollo Hospitals Group subsidiary Apollo Health and Lifestyle Limited (AHL) today announced the opening of The Apollo Spectra Hospital, a boutique-style multispecialty hospital, as part of its entry into Chirala. Renowned gynaecologist Dr. Manikyamma officially opened the state-of-the-art secondary care hospital, which offers state-of-the-art, individualised care. The opening of the Apollo Spectra Hospital, which seeks to give Chirala residents and the surrounding community access to comprehensive, reasonably priced and individualised high-quality healthcare.



Photos by - SV Chary



A landmark event for India's sports and fitness scene occurs when SPARTAN racing, the top obstacle course racing series in the world, launches as TVS Apache Spartan. Sidharth Malhotra, the versatile actor, fitness star and face of TVS Apache Spartan, attended the occasion to make an announcement about this momentous launch. Spartan Race represents a global movement in endurance sports and fitness, with over 250 events spread over 40 countries and 1.2 million active participants globally.



OpenTextTM is proud to announce the opening of the "Hope in a Cup" café at their Hyderabad office (NASDAQ: OTEX, TSX: OTEX). This program aims to assist people of the LGBTQIA+ community in their business journeys by offering crucial training and practical experience, in collaboration with the non-profit Nirmaan Organisation. In addition, this effort seeks to provide community members with the tools and knowledge necessary to start and grow their own businesses.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



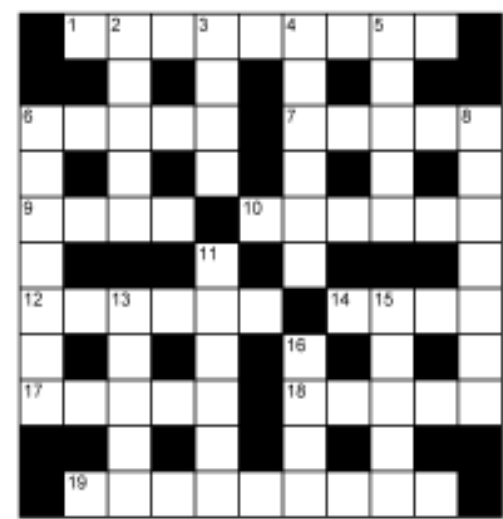
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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Rules

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

ACROSS

- A person who lives next door
- Two times two, times two
- Speed competitions
- Have a lie down
- Sick
- A bed for a small baby
- Rub out
- The start of the day
- A large bird of prey
- An exciting experience

DOWN

- So dull it makes you feel sleepy
- The opposite of aunt
- Pain in your ear
- No sound at all
- The arm of a coat
- A special prize
- A feeling of rage
- A compass direction



GINGER MEGGS



Niharika Konidela: My true passion lies in acting

K. RAMYA SREE

Niharika Konidela is making her feature film debut as a producer with the movie *Committee Kurrollu*, all set to hit theatres on August 9. Produced by Pink Elephant Pictures LLP and Sreedha Damodhar Studios and directed by Yadu Vamsi, this much-anticipated film is making a lot of noise as it is introducing many young actors to the Tollywood film industry.

Ahead of the film's release, Niharika Konidela shared insights about the film and her evolving role in the industry.

Reflecting on her transition from acting to producing, Niharika revealed, "After hearing the story, I was determined to have my name associated with this film. The script

Niharika Konidela, ahead of the release of her much-anticipated project, *Committee Kurrollu*, shares insights on her transition from acting to producing and more insights around the film.

came to me through Ankit while I was considering a feature film. Along with the music, Anudeep had already crafted a score that added depth to the story. Though I was born and raised in the Hyd and had never experienced a *Jathara* (traditional festival), Vamsi brought it to life for me as if I were witnessing it firsthand. His narration was exceptional. Whether for OTT or theatres,

the filmmaking process remains consistent, and that's why I was resolute about producing this film."

The film centers around a *Jathara* that occurs once every twelve years and spans three generations, incorporating elements from Vamsi's personal experiences. "Vamsi, being a fan of Pawan Kalyan, has infused the narrative with his own style and a touch of satire, including events from the 2019 election campaign," Niharika explained.

Niharika also touched upon her previous experiences, stating, "I acted in *Muddapappu Avakai* and even invested in it. That's how my journey as a producer started. My true passion lies in acting."

She continued, "I envisioned myself among the eleven boys in the film. Every audience member will find a character they connect with, which is crucial for engaging storytelling."

"I was initially worried that having an entirely new crew might affect the business. However, Vamsi asked me to listen to the story before making any judgments."

On the subject of discipline in the industry, Niharika quoted Chiranjeevi Garu, who often empha-

sizes that success requires more than just talent—it demands discipline. "I've seen that discipline in Vamsi. He has worked exceptionally hard on this film," she noted.

Niharika also mentioned how Vamsi's storytelling impressed her father, a tough critic. "Vamsi gave a narration to my father, who usually leaves if he doesn't like something. However, he was genuinely impressed by the story Vamsi presented."

Her family's feedback was equally positive. "My brother and sisters-in-law watched the film and loved it. I don't focus too much on external praise or criticism. My brother, who is always straightforward, called me immediately after watching the film to congratulate me. The censor board also responded well to it."

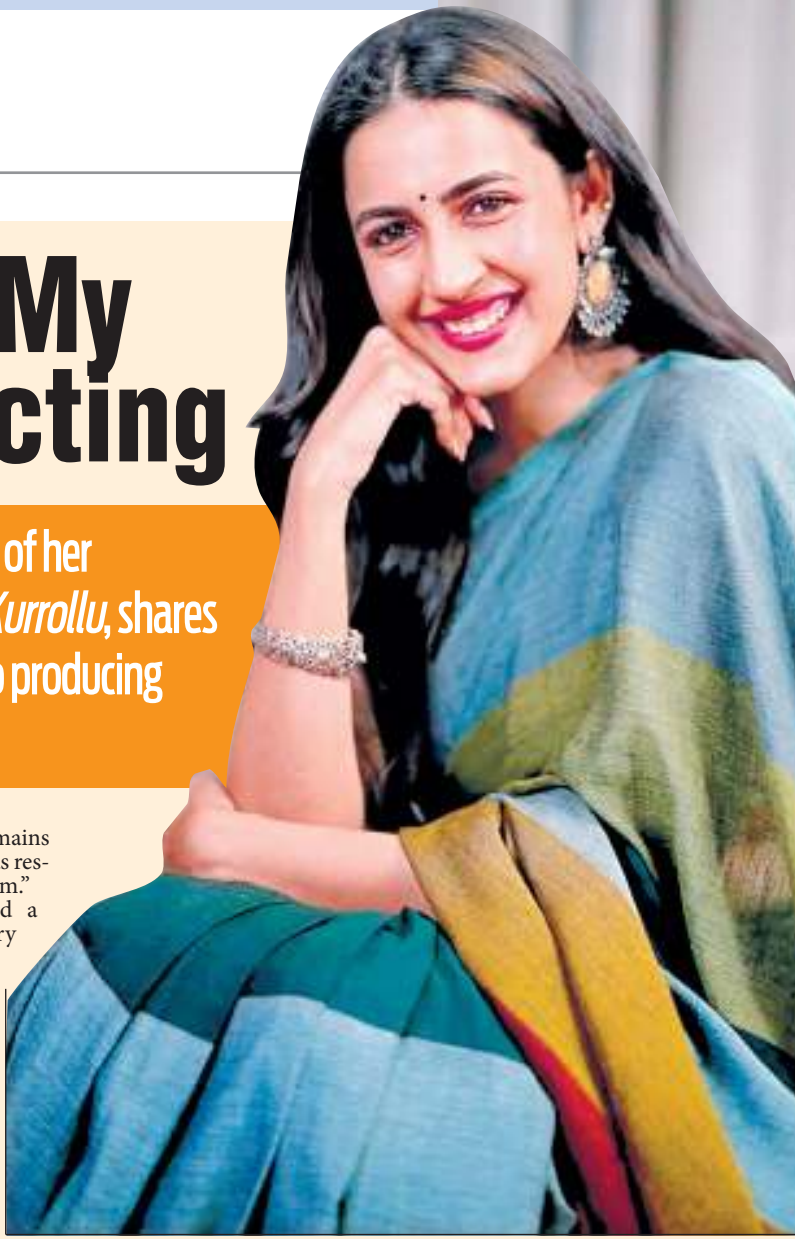
Addressing concerns about working with a new team, Niharika said, "I was initially worried that having an entirely new crew might affect the business. However, Vamsi asked me to listen to the story before making any judgments. Prasad is the only familiar name, but everyone involved has been dedicated to the project for three years. None of them held a dialogue paper on set, and they chose to work with me."

Finally, Niharika clarified the meaning behind the film's title.

"The title *Committee Kurrollu* was decided early on. I didn't initially understand it, but Vamsi explained that committee members are always at the forefront during festivals, feasts, or conflicts," she laughed.

She concluded, "Every character in the film has significant scenes, and Anudeep's music is the lifeblood of the movie. He has delivered fantastic songs and a remarkable

background score. I prioritise good stories and scripts. If a role is well-written, I'm more interested in it, regardless of its size. Legacy alone doesn't ensure success in the film industry. Passion, interest and hard work are essential to achieving success."



Anupam Kher joins Hari Hara Veera Mallu

Renowned Indian actor Anupam Kher has signed on to join the cast of the highly anticipated action epic *Hari Hara Veera Mallu*, starring Pawan Kalyan. Kher, celebrated for his illustrious career and impactful performances, will play a pivotal role in this magnum opus.

In an exciting development, *Hari Hara Veera Mallu* marks the first on-screen collaboration between Power Star Pawan Kalyan and the legendary Anupam Kher. Fans are eagerly anticipating the dynamic chemistry between the two stars, with the film's makers promising a captivating cinematic experience.

The buzz around *Hari Hara Veera Mallu* has intensified following the release of a special teaser by the film's young director, Jyothi Krishna. The teaser has generated significant excitement and elevated expectations among the film's dedicated fan base.

The project has also welcomed ace cinematographer Manoj Paramahansa, who joins the talented team alongside legendary production designer Thota Tharani and *Baahubali*'s VFX supervisor Srinivas Mohan. Together, they are craft-



ing a visually stunning epic. Oscar-winning composer M.M. Keeravani is providing the film's score, adding another layer of grandeur to the project. As production continues, the team is actively scouting locations and finalising post-production and VFX work. *Hari Hara Veera Mallu* will be released in two parts, with Part 1 titled *Sword vs. Spirit*. The release date for the first installment will be announced soon. Fans can look forward to more details from the makers in the coming weeks.

Pushpa 2: The Rule: Fahadh's character-centric poster squealed

Icon Star Allu Arjun's highly anticipated film *Pushpa 2: The Rule* is shaping up to be one of his most exhilarating projects to date. The pan-Indian action extravaganza has been generating buzz with its meticulously crafted promotional content and the teaser has already made a major impact, showcasing the prowess of director Sukumar.

In the film, versatile actor Fahadh Faasil takes on a high-profile role as a compelling cop. To celebrate his birthday today, a striking new poster has been unveiled, featuring Faasil's character, Bhanwar Singh Shekhawat, in a menacing and intense pose.

The sequel promises to be as thrilling and unpredictable as the first installment, with Sukumar infusing the role with unexpected twists. The film's climactic action sequence is currently being filmed at Ramoji Film City, reflecting Sukumar's grand vision for the project.

Produced on an opulent scale by Mythri Movie Makers and Sukumar Writings, the film is being overseen by producers Naveen Yeneni and Y Ravi Shankar, who are dedicated to delivering a top-quality product. Cinematographer Mireslow Kuba Brozek is expected to showcase his finest work yet, while S. Rama Krishna and N. Monica's production design and the efforts of the entire technical team aim to achieve unprecedented acclaim.

Pushpa 2: The Rule is set for a global release in multiple languages on December 6, 2024, promising to be a blockbuster event for audiences around the world.



Big Bull from Double ISMART catches bull's eye!



The countdown has officially begun for the release of the highly anticipated Pan-India film *Double ISMART*. Starring Ustadd Ram Pothineni and directed by the dynamic Puri Jagannadh, the film is set to hit theatres on August 15. With Sanjay Dutt playing the antagonist and Kavya Thapar as the leading lady, *Double ISMART* is generating an exceptional buzz. On Thursday, the filmmakers unveiled a special song titled *Big Bull*, highlighting Puri Jagannadh's knack for giving his villains memorable roles.

In this film, Sanjay Dutt takes center stage as the character *Big Bull*, and the song celebrates his powerful presence. Composed by Mani Sharma, *Big Bull* is an energetic and vibrant track that promises to be both a visual and auditory feast. The song features a high-energy, festive backdrop, with Kavya Thapar adding a glamorous touch as she joins the ensemble in a dazzling dance sequence.

The lyrics, penned by Bhaskarabhatla Ravi Kumar, capture the essence of the *Big Bull* character, enriching the song's narrative. Vocals by Prudhvi Chandra and Sanjana Kalmanje infuse the track with additional vitality. Produced by Puri Jagannadh and Charmme Kaur under the Puri Connects banner, *Double ISMART* boasts cinematography by Sam K Naidu and Gianni Gianneli. The film will be released globally on Independence Day in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi, promising to be a major cinematic event.



Naga Chaitanya, Sobhita Dhulipala are officially engaged!

In a heartwarming update, actor Naga Chaitanya and actress Sobhita Dhulipala have officially announced their engagement. After a few years of dating, the couple has taken the significant step of making their relationship public.

The news was shared by Naga Chaitanya's father, actor Nagarjuna, who took to social media to reveal the joyous occasion. "We are delighted to announce the engagement of our son, Naga Chaitanya, to Sobhita Dhulipala, which took place this morning at 9:42 a.m.! We are overjoyed to welcome her into our family. Congratulations to the happy couple! I wish them a lifetime of love and happiness. God bless! 8.8.8—A beginning of infinite love," Nagarjuna tweeted.

The engagement ceremony was held at Naga Chaitanya's residence in Hyderabad on Thursday, featuring a private gathering with close family members in attendance. Despite persistent rumors about their relationship over the past few years, both actors had previously kept details about their personal lives under wraps.

With the engagement now officially confirmed, fans and well-wishers are celebrating this new chapter in the couple's lives, extending their heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for their future together.

PNS | HYDERABAD

Jagapathi Babu, Anasuya starrer *Simbaa* is all set to hit theatres on August 9. Rajender Reddy, the producer behind the film, sheds light on his latest project and its deeper societal impact. With *Simbaa*, coinciding with International Adivasi Day, Reddy's commitment to blending entertainment with social responsibility is clear. The producer explained, "This film isn't just concept-oriented; it incorporates various elements. I have a deep appreciation for nature and Sampath Nandi shared this story with me during the pandemic. I wanted to create a film that served societal benefits and *Simbaa* resonated with me. While I've heard many stories before, this one stood out."

reflects the film's essence. Murali Manohar, who has previously collaborated with Sampath Nandi and trained at a film school in London, was entrusted with this project due to our mutual faith in his abilities." The pandemic had a significant impact on the production schedule. The producer recalled, "Initially, conceived before the pandemic, shooting was halted due to COVID-19, but we gradually resumed production. My longstanding relationship with Jagapathi Babu, who is deeply connected to this story and worked with great dedication, has been integral to this project." Addressing the film's environmental themes, he noted, "Given the current environmental challenges, raising awareness about environmental protection is crucial. We have conveyed this message through the film while incorporating commercial elements. My passion for nature and forest conservation is reflected in *Simbaa*. I even participated in the *Green Challenge* program and our work received support from the government." *Simbaa* ventures into new territory within Indian cinema as a sci-fi thriller, a genre that Reddy believes adds a fresh perspective. "Although

Sampath Nandi is known for commercial concepts, this film explores a genre not previously seen in Indian cinema. The trailer might not reveal much about the characters, but the censors have appreciated it and predicted awards for the film." Reflecting on his career, he said, "I entered the industry with a focus on social impact, having worked in media 25 years ago. My aim is to produce films that offer something valuable to society. I felt satisfied with *Simbaa* and only proceed with projects when I am entirely content." Looking ahead, he teased, "After *Simbaa*'s release, I will announce new projects. My focus remains on producing films that not only entertain but also contribute positively to society."

'Simbaa is a film with social conscience'

Vikram heaps praise on GV Prakash Kumar

National Award-winning composer GV Prakash Kumar is set for a major release with his latest project, *Thangalaan*. The pan-India film, directed by Pa Ranjith and starring Chiyaan Vikram, is slated to hit worldwide cinemas on August 15, 2024.

At the recent audio launch event for *Thangalaan*, Chiyaan Vikram praised GV Prakash Kumar's contribution, stating, "GV Prakash Kumar is another hero for *Thangalaan*. His music doesn't just accompany the story; it enhances it, making you not only watch but truly hear it." Vikram continued, reflecting on their past collaborations, "I previously worked with him on *Thaandavam* (2012) and *Devathirumogal*, and even now, those songs remain

exceptional. In *Thangalaan*, GV Prakash Kumar has brought an incredible depth of emotion and pain to every frame. The new sounds and powerful execution are remarkable. I have immense respect for him and his craft." *Thangalaan* marks GV Prakash Kumar's third collaboration with Chiyaan Vikram, following *Thaandavam* and *Devathirumogal*. The duo is also set to collaborate on the upcoming *Veera Dheera Sooran Part 2*.



WRESTLER AMAN ENTERS SEMIFINALS

PTI ■ PARIS

Young Indian grappler Aman Sehrawat rekindled India's hopes of a medal in wrestling, demolishing former world champion Zelimkhan Abakarov of Albania by technical superiority to seal a place in the 57kg free-style semifinal at the Paris Olympics here on Thursday.

Aman was in imperious form as he toyed with Abakarov in the second round. The 21-year-old Indian locked his legs at the start of the second round and turned him over multiple times to earn eight straight points to secure a 12-0 victory. The bout started with Aman earning a passivity point after his Russian-turned-Albanian opponent did not initiate any attacking move. Moments later, the Indian effected a left-leg hold to earn two more points to showcase his dominance by going 3-0 up at the end of round 1.

Aman was on song in round 2 and Abakarov, world champion in 2022, bore the brunt. The Indian's superb agility against the 31-year-old Albanian was on display as he attacked the left leg to bring him down.

He then effected a 'fitley' (leg lace), turning the Albanian around several times to end the contest with more than two minutes to go. Abakarov contested the last two points awarded to Aman but the referee ruled in favour of the Indian and awarded him a point. Aman will meet Japanese top seed Rei Higuchi in the last-four round later in the day.

Earlier, Aman ensured himself an easy passage into the quarterfinal with a dominating performance against North Macedonian rival Vladimir Egorov.

The 21-year-old Indian, an Asian Championship gold medallist and the only male wrestler from the country to qualify for the Olympics, was amazingly agile as he kept his defence intact while regularly overpowering his 29-year-old former European champion with leg holds to win the bout on technical superiority (10-0). Egorov seemed to be in a bit of bother after the first round, requiring medical attention on his knee following Aman's all-out attack.

But the Macedonian could not stage a comeback with Aman effecting a takedown to earn two



more points and go 10-0 up with more than two minutes remaining on the clock.

ANSHU MALIK LOSES: Woman grappler Anshu Malik displayed great determination but could not breach the defence of USA's vastly experienced Helen Louise Maroulis, losing 2-7 in the 57kg pre-quarterfinals.

It was a rematch of the 2021 World Championship final in Oslo where Anshu had to settle for silver against the American.

Anshu's hopes of qualifying for the bronze-medal bout now hinge on 'repechage' provided Helen, the 2016 Rio Olympics gold medallist and Tokyo Games bronze medallist, reaches the final.

Anshu was up against one of the most reputed wrestlers in the world, but she fought with a lot of gumption to concede just two points in the first round. Helen attacked Anshu's left leg and then pushed the Indian to the mat to take a 2-0 lead.

The Indian then held Helen, a three-time world champion, at bay in the first round before the American came back to showcase her pedigree in the second and win despite getting a warning.



Panghal likely to get three-year ban for indiscipline: Source

PTI ■ PARIS

Wrestler Antim Panghal, who caused embarrassment to the Indian Olympic contingent by trying to facilitate her sister's entry into the athletes village through her accreditation card, is likely to be banned for three years by the IOA, a source told PTI on Thursday.

Panghal had crashed out of the Olympics after losing her opening bout in the women's 53kg category on Wednesday. "IOA (Indian Olympic Association) officials discussed the issue that caused embarrassment to all. It is considering a three-year ban on everyone involved, including the coaches," a source in the Indian contingent told PTI.

"First, we need to ensure that she reaches home. The decision will be announced only after she reaches India," the source added.

Panghal is set to take a flight to Delhi this evening.

The IOA decided to send her and her support staff back after the disciplinary breach was brought to its notice by the French authorities. The body, however, asserted that the ban has not yet been imposed.

"A ban has not been imposed as yet," said an IOA official. Speaking with PTI before her flight back to India, the 19-

year-old said, "I did not intend to do anything wrong. I was not well and there was confusion. All of this happened due to confusion."

Later, in a video, she admitted that she had to go to the police station but only for the verification of her accreditation card.

"It was not a good day for me. I lost. A lot is being spread about me, that's not true. I had high fever, and had taken permission from my coach to go to the hotel with my sister. I needed some of my belongings which were in the Games Village. My sister took my card and asked the officials there if she could take my belongings. They took her to the Police Station for accreditation verification."

She also denied that her coaches were drunk and got into an altercation with a taxi driver over fare.

"My coaches had stayed back at the venue and when they wanted to come back, we booked a cab for them. My coaches did not have enough cash and due to the language issues, led to an argument with the taxi driver."

"Since they came to collect some Euros from the hotel room, it took some time and led to the situation. I already have had a bad time, please don't spread rumours. Please support me," she said.

AP ■ LE BOURGET (FRANCE)

For many athletes at the Paris Olympics, the fun was just beginning after they were done competing.

During the second full week of the 2024 Olympics, going home wasn't an option. Now that the pressure of having to compete is gone, it was time to become a fan: Enjoy Paris and watch other sports.

"I'm a huge track fan," said triathlete Morgan Pearson, who won the silver medal with the U.S. Team in the mixed relay on Monday. "I hope to go to some of those races. I'm a huge Olympic fan in general."

American sport climber Zach Hammer, who was finished competing on Tuesday, also was headed to the track.

"I would definitely be excited to watch the men's 200(-meter) with (Noah) Lyles. He's one of my favorite athletes," he said. "I'm definitely excited to get the full Olympic experience, and I'll go watch whatever there is to watch. It will definitely be cool to see Americans competing on the

Athletes stick around Paris Games to watch other sports, get full experience

biggest stage."

U.S. Rower Jacob Pihlaj was among those who stayed in town after competing during the first week.

"Hopefully I can watch a little handball if that's still going, maybe 3x3 basketball," he said. "I don't know what the schedules are. I've been focused on the racing but I'm excited to stick around and watch other sports, cheer Team USA on and get to know some athletes at the (Olympic) Village."

Another American sport climber, Sam Watson, who broke the speed world record in an elimination heat on Tuesday, was making the most out of his stay at the village. He was challenging fellow athletes to chess games and trying to get selfies with a member of



every delegation at the Games. Some of the American women rowers who competed last week were at the women's basketball game between the U.S. And Nigeria on Wednesday.

Molly Thompson-Smith, a

British sport climber, was interested in watching some of the other smaller sports that don't often get much attention. She said "it's been really cool to kind of learn how they work and all the weird things about them."

Thompson-Smith added that she "did see a bit of beach volleyball" but "I think everyone wants to see the athletics, just to see something like that and feel the atmosphere of the crowd would be incredible. But I'm open to seeing anything now ... I'm here to make as many memories and see as much as I possibly can."

Rower Viktorija Senkute, who won Lithuania's first medal at the Games last week, was sticking around to watch her boyfriend, Simonas Maldonis, compete in canoe sprint. Athletes can watch their own discipline with their accreditation, but need tickets for other sports. Some said they can get them through their national Olympic committees, or with the

International Olympic Committee, which gives each athlete one free ticket per day.

There was an additional Olympic experience for athletes this time in Paris, as for the first time in the Summer Games organizers gave them a place to be closer to fans and celebrate their medals. In the new Champions Park, athletes got a chance to parade with their medals and interact with fans.

"I feel as if this year you've done a really good job of treating after winning athletes with memories that we're going to cherish forever," French rugby player Aaron Grandidier Nkanang said after going to the Champions Park. "We're just in front of the Eiffel Tower, and there's thousands of people out to come and cheer us on.

Weinberg helps US beat Australia 11-10 in men's water polo quarters

AP ■ NANTERRE

Adrian Weinberg made two blocks in a penalty shootout to help the United States beat Australia 11-10 in the quarterfinals of the men's water polo tournament at the Paris Olympics.

Hannes Daube and Alex Bowen each scored two goals in regulation as the U.S. Reached the semifinals at the Olympics for the first time since 2008. Daube and Bowen also converted their penalty shots in the tiebreaker.

"It was exhausting," U.S. Attacker Marko Vavic said. "Both of us fighting for our country, each trying to get to the semifinal. It's what we've been dreaming about since we were kids. Everyone put it down on the line."

It was the third straight win for the U.S., which will play Serbia on Friday at Paris La Defense Arena. Serbia is trying to become the third men's team to win three consecutive Olympic gold medals.

Croatia will face Hungary in the other semifinal. Croatia beat Spain 10-8 in the first quarterfinal of the day, and Hungary edged Italy 12-10 in another game that went to a penalty shootout. Serbia advanced when captain Nikola Jaksic skipped home a perfect shot from deep with 3 seconds left, lifting his country to a 12-11 victory over Greece.

"We finally looked like the team that came here to win it," Jaksic said. "We didn't give up from the first to the last moment."

Angelos Vlachopoulos had just tied the game for Greece with 6 seconds remaining.

"In this moment, I really hope this is a dream right now, just a nightmare and I will wake up and play again," Greece's Dimitrios Skoumpakis said. "Every guy on this team really tried a lot. We worked very hard, but this is the sport."

The U.S. Rallied after a tough sequence in the first quarter. Max



Irving had a goal waved off when the game was stopped for a video review and U.S. Attacker Johnny Hooper received a brutality foul, taking him out for the rest of the contest.

Luke Pavillard converted a penalty shot to give Australia a 3-1 lead.

Australia also got a 4-minute power play that it turned into two more goals and a 5-2 advantage.

But the U.S. Went ahead 6-5 when Daube scored with 6:03 left in regulation. After Pavillard scored two straight for Australia, Bowen's man-

up goal with 32 seconds remaining tied it at 7.

Irving also connected for the U.S. In the tiebreaker before Vavic closed it out for the U.S., beating Australia goaltender Nic Porter after they played together in college at Southern California.

"I didn't even look at him until I went up to shoot," Vavic said. "He was trying to eye me down and talk to me about the pressure before I got there. "He was chirping me, but I just tried to keep my composure and luckily I stuck it."

Pavillard scored four times for Australia in regulation on four shots. He also converted his penalty shot in the tiebreaker.

"Full credit to the U.S.," Porter said. "They really pulled it out of the fire there. It was our game to win, and they snatched it from us for sure."

Krisztian Manhercz scored five times for Hungary in its quarterfinal win, and Gergo Zalanki had three goals. Manhercz and Zalanki also made their penalty shots in the tiebreaker. Francesco di Fulvio and Gonzalo Echenique each scored three goals in the loss. When it was over, Italy's Nicholas Presciutti directed a middle finger toward Hungary's players.

AP ■ PARIS

Oleksandr punches his way to Paris Gold

Oleksandr Khyzhniak was one minute away from winning an Olympic gold medal three years ago when he was rocked by one miraculous punch. Khyzhniak went down, the fight was stopped and the most fearsome boxer in Tokyo had to settle for silver.

The middleweight from Ukraine decided he would wait three years to make it right. Khyzhniak got his epic redemption Wednesday night at the Paris Games with a gold medal finally around his neck - but only after he paid for it in time, sweat and pain.

Khyzhniak beat Nurbek Oralbay of Kazakhstan 3:2 in a thrilling final at Roland Garros, securing the championship that evaded him in heartbreaking fashion in Tokyo. The fighters unloaded on each other for three action-packed rounds, but Khyzhniak clinched the win by dominating a final three minutes filled with a jaw-dropping number of uppercuts, combinations and power punches for an Olympic fight.

When Khyzhniak's hand was

raised, the 29-year-old dropped to his knees in cathartic relief. Even though he is an obvious blue-chip professional prospect, Khyzhniak put any other chapters of his life on hold because he was determined to do what he couldn't in Tokyo. Khyzhniak spent the last three years thinking about his loss to Hebert Sousa of Brazil, a game competitor who clearly wasn't the best middleweight in a stacked division in Tokyo. Khyzhniak was up 20-18 on all five cards after two rounds in their gold medal bout, meaning he only had to avoid a stoppage or a point deduction to win.

But Khyzhniak simply couldn't stop himself from coming forward relentlessly. He knows no way to fight other than to throw as many punches as his arms can muster for nine minutes of bruising, bleeding pressure.

So Khyzhniak kept coming forward, and the artful Sousa floored him with what might



have been just a flash knockdown in the pros but was enough to persuade the Olympic referee to stop the

bout. After the loss, Khyzhniak devoted himself to an Olympic comeback, winning every

amateur bout he took since Tokyo. When the Olympics eliminated the 75-kilogram division in which Khyzhniak

fought in Tokyo, he even moved up to 80 kilograms - now called middleweight. Although he has been probably

the most exciting fighter in his second Olympics, Khyzhniak didn't steamroll through his four bouts in Paris. He was tested in his early fights before he reached the semifinals against Arlen Lopez, the two-time Olympic gold medalist from Cuba.

The veteran amateurs put on a memorable show worthy of their combined star power, but Khyzhniak won with another phenomenal third round. He simply wouldn't stop pressuring Lopez, who finally ran out of stratagems to keep the Ukrainian star off him.

In the final, Khyzhniak faced a dynamic prospect in the 24-year-old Oralbay, whose twin brother also fought at Paris. Oralbay had ample skill and punching power to challenge Khyzhniak, and the fighters were essentially even on the scorecards heading to the third round.

And what a round it turned out to be. Oralbay bled from a cut near his right eye early in the third,

but the fighters unloaded on each other for three minutes. All five judges favored Khyzhniak, who snapped Oralbay's head back on his neck multiple times with pinpoint-perfect uppercuts.

Khyzhniak was the second gold medal winner at Roland Garros on Wednesday, joining Erislandy Alvarez of Cuba. Alvarez edged Sofiane Oumihia of France 3:2 in an exciting lightweight bout - but it couldn't match the emotion and savagery on display between Khyzhniak and Oralbay, who fights one weight class below his twin brother.

Earlier on the card, Lin Yu-ting of Taiwan advanced to the women's featherweight gold medal bout with her third straight victory while dealing with widespread scrutiny regarding misconceptions about her gender.

Tokyo gold medalist Bakhodir Jalolov of Uzbekistan shut out Nelvie Tiafack of Germany to move within one victory of becoming the first two-time super heavyweight gold medalist in Olympic history. The 30-year-old Jalolov, a 14-0 professional, will fight Ayoub Ghadia of Spain for gold.