

Two migrant workers from UP killed in road mishap

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

Two young migrant workers were killed on the spot in a road accident that took place on Rajiv Rahadari in Godavari district of Peddapalli district late on Saturday night. They were identified as Sattender and Kumar hailing from UP. They have been working in a shopping mall at Mancheril. They were killed on the spot when an unidentified vehicle dashed the two-wheeler on which they were travelling at the conclusion of their duty on Saturday night, the police said. The police said that the incident had taken place while they were on their way to attend a get-together under way at 8th Colony area of the district. The bodies have been shifted to Government General Hospital in Godavari for an autopsy. Godavari District Collector Indra Sena Reddy is investigating the case.

'Ranganayaka Sagar project brought smiles on farmers' faces'

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Former Minister T Harish Rao came down heavily on the Congress leaders for spreading on Kaleshwaram project. BRS worked to see happiness on farmers' faces: Harish Rao. He made the comments after visiting Ranganayaka Sagar project. He said that the project brought back the smiles on the faces of farmers. He inspected the flow of Godavari water into Ranganayaka Sagar in the district on Saturday. The Minister inspected the lift-irrigation of Godavari waters into the project. Later addressing the gathering, he said that the Ranganayaka Sagar project stands as an example that the BRS strived to provide irrigation to every acre. He said, "I am so glad to see the flow of water into the project."

It may be noted that Ranganayaka Sagar was built as part of the Kaleshwaram Project. The lift-irrigation of Godavari waters into Kaleshwaram Project Link-2 is under way. Water from Sripada Yellampalli reservoir is reaching Nandi Pump House at Nandimedaram through two tunnels. Using the heavy-duty motor,



Former minister T Harish Rao at Ranganayaka Sagar in Siddipet on Sunday

3150 cusecs is pumped into Nandi reservoir, from where the water is reaching Gayatri pump house in Lakshampur of Karimnagar district. At Gayatri pump house, a single motor is being used to pump 3150 cusecs of water into Srirajareswara reservoir. Till Saturday evening, over 13 tmc of water pumped to

Mid-Maneru project, where the total water stored was put at 17.06 tmc against the full reservoir level of 27.54 tmc ft. From Mid-Maneru water is being discharged into Annapurna project in Anantagirimandal of Siricilla district.

From Mid-Maneru project, the Godavari water is finding its way to surgepool at Tippapur through underground tunnels. Using two heavy duty motors, 6440 cusecs is being pumped into Annapurna reservoir, which opened its gates to discharge water into the Ranganayaka Sagar.

Land grabbing becomes rampant in Rangareddy dist

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Over the past few years, Rangareddy district has been plagued by widespread illegal land grabbing. Government lands in areas like Maheshwaram, Rajendranagar, Chevella, Shadnagar, Shamshabad, Narsingi, and Shankarpalli are particularly falling into the hands of land grabbers. Reports suggest that nearly 50 per cent of government lands in these regions have been encroached upon by land grabbers. One of the most alarming aspects of land grabbing is the occupation of full tank levels (FTL) of lakes and streams, crucial natural resources that play a vital role in the region's water management and ecology. Despite numerous complaints from concerned citizens, the authorities have turned a blind eye to the crime. Local residents have repeatedly voiced their concerns to district officials, warning of the long-term consequences of such unchecked land grabbing. However, these pleas have largely fallen on deaf ears, with offi-

cial promises of action but failing to do so. The inaction has led to a growing sense of frustration and helplessness among the community, who see their environment being degraded and public lands being lost to private interests. Adding to the residents' frustrations, some officials have made public statements asserting that action would be taken against the encroachers.



However, these assurances have done little to placate the community. Many residents are now questioning why the authorities failed to act when the land grabbing was initially taking place. They argue that proactive measures could have prevented the current situation, rather than allowing it to reach such alarming proportions. Visible signs of this illegal

activity are scattered across the district, with lakes and streams being filled in and converted into real estate ventures. These developments not only threaten the natural landscape but also risk exacerbating the region's water scarcity issues, as the destruction of these water bodies disrupts local hydrological cycles. Environmentalists and activists have expressed their alarm at the situation, calling for immediate government intervention to prevent further encroachments and restore the affected lands. They argue that preserving these natural resources is crucial not just for the environment but also for the well-being of the district's residents, who depend on these water bodies for agriculture, drinking water, and other essential needs.

As the land grabbing continues unabated, the future of Rangareddy's lakes and streams hangs in the balance. Without decisive action from the authorities, these vital natural resources could be lost forever, with devastating consequences for the district's environment and its people.

MP lays emphasis on inter-caste marriages



Lok Sabha member Kadiyam Kavya speaking at a meeting in Hanamkonda on Sunday

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Congress MP from Warangal Kadiyam Kavya and former deputy chief minister Kadiyam Srihari on Sunday expressed the opinion that social change is feasibly only through ideal marriages. She was taking part as the chief guest at a model marriage held in Hanamkonda on Sunday. The marriage of Apurva, who is the daughter of Telangana Mahila Samakha State general secretary Neevuri Jyoti, with Sridhar in the presence of CPI national executive member Chada Venkat Reddy. She appealed to the youth to unite themselves in bond of marriage with mutual understanding and respect.

Children's happiness should be important for parents, she said. It is not important how lavishly the marriage was performed, but how the newly-weds have mutual respect for each other.

Kadiyam Srihari quoted the example of how two of his three daughters chose their classmates as their life partners and suggested encouraging inter-caste and inter-religious marriages. CPI state secretary and Kothagudem MLA Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao stressed the need to encourage ideal marriages.

Vardhannapeta MLA KR Nagaraju, CPI National Committee member and former MLA Palla Venkat Reddy and others were present on the occasion.

Student's death: Action initiated against tribal school officials

PNS ■ BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM

Bhadrachalam ITDA project officer B Rahul said that a show cause notice has been issued to headmaster Narasimha Rao and deputy warden Harikrishna following the death of Class 8th student at Kothapalli Tribal Boys Ashram School in Dummugudem mandal. The student hailed from Bandarugudem village, Dummugudem mandal. It may be recalled that an auto-rickshaw they were travelling in met with an accident at Thunikeru in the mandal on Saturday. The boys were going to their native village from the school without prior permission.

Shortage of doctors, dysfunctional devices plaguing MGM Hospital

PNS ■ WARANGAL

A shortage of doctors and paramedical staff has been plaguing the MGM Hospital in Warangal. It is the biggest hospital equipped with the latest medical devices. Patients from Maharashtra and Odisha make a beeline for hospitals during the Covid-19 pandemic. Every day, between 2,000 and 3,500 patients visit the hospital from as far as Karimnagar and Adilabad district, apart from people from Warangal. The hospital is devoid of sanitation. Though the government provided the latest medical equipment to the hospital, most of it is under repair. There are no adequate stocks of medicine. District Collector D Satya Sharada recently inspected the hospital and stressed the need to improve the functioning of the hospitals.

Two days ago a newborn baby was found partially eaten by stray dogs on the premises of a state-run hospital in



MGM Hospital

Warangal district of Telangana on Friday, police said. The policemen manning a police outpost at the hospital found stray dogs eating the newborn at a secluded place in the hospital premises and chased away the canines, a police official said. This incident creates panic among the patients.

It was not clear whether the

Teenager succumbs to viral fever

PNS ■ ASIFABAD

In a shocking incident, a 16-year-old girl, who battled with viral fever, succumbed to it as she was allegedly denied proper medical treatment. Parents of the girl have been weeping inconsolably for their dear one recalling her last words "Father same me at any cost from the viral fever."

During the current rainy season, viral fevers have broken out in Telangana and they claimed lives of many across the state. The deceased was identified as Puja, an SSC student of Tribal Welfare Hostel in Asifabad, daughter of Jade Kishore and Surekha of Gundayipeta of Asifabad district. Recently, she contracted fever during her stay in the hostel. Last Saturday, she called up her father saying, "Father, I have contracted fever. I am not able to tackle it. My hands and legs are pulling. Please take me home." Her father immediately rushed to the hostel and brought her home. He showed her to the local RMP and got her treated, but of no use. Her fever increased. Her family members immediately rushed her to a private hospital in Chandrapur in Maharashtra. But, her condition worsened by Saturday afternoon. On the direction of the hospital doctors, she was rushed to Hyderabad, but she died en route. Before she breathed her last, she held her father's hand and appealed to him earnestly "Father save my at any cost."

Safety of coal miners is paramount: SCCL CMD



PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) chairman Balram Naik has put the safety of the SCCL workers above the coal production and appealed to coal miners to follow the safety standards and work together with team spirit to achieve production targets. He made it clear that the SCCL management is ready to spend any amount of money for the safety and security of the coal workers. Responding to a news report appeared in *The Pioneer* with the title: Concern over mounting mishaps in SCCL in its Saturday edition, the SCCL chairman called for a marathon meeting of the SCCL officials and reviewed the safety and security of the workers and cautioned the officials to take precautions for the safety and security of the coal miners. He said that the lives of the SCCL workers are the most precious and the management would not hesitate to spend any amount of money for their safety and security. For the first time in the annals of the SCCL history, the Chairman held a meeting via video conference mode with security committees of various wings of 40 coal mines in 11 coal mining areas, workmen inspectors, mines committee members and other security supervisors

and reviewed the safety and security of the coal miners.

Earlier, the SCCL used to hold safety meeting in coal mines in the presence of the managers. For the first time, the CMD of the SCCL held the safety meeting and issued suggestions and advice to the workers. Balram Naik admitted that the SCCL, inspite of making rapid strides in all other aspects, lagging behind to an extent in preventing industrial accidents. But, he put the blame on human errors for the phenomena.

To handle every task there are some safe operating procedures have been fixed, but the coal managers are not paying attention to follow them, causing accidents in coal mines. He wanted every worker to follow these procedures. He reiterated that the SCCL management would provide all amenities for the security of the workers unmindful of the expenses involved. He clarified that special medical experts are being appointed to SCCL hospitals. The Ramagundam Area Hospital is going to be groomed as a superspecialty hospital, he assured the coal miners. The meeting went on for four hours. SCCL directors from Kothagudem NVK Srinivas (Operations and Personnel), D Satyanarayana Rao (E and M), G Venkateswar Reddy (P & P) and others spoke.

Consumer forum directs SBI Life to pay Rs 2 lakh to a nominee

PNS ■ NALGONDA

The Nalgonda District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, consisting of Mamidi Christopher, S Sandhya Rani and K Venkateswarlu ordered SBI and Group Operations (PMJBY-SBI Life) to pay Rs 2 lakh insurance policy money, Rs 20,000 for mental agony and Rs10,000 towards costs to the nominee of Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyothi Bima Yojana policy scheme. Complainant Marapangu Jayamma said that her husband Marapaka Mallaiah met with an accident and died on May 17, 2018 while undergoing treatment. He submitted that her husband had insured with Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyothi Bima Yojana policy (PMJBY-SBI Life) with the SBI Life. Her deceased husband paid a premi-

um of Rs 330 per year which was debited from his account on May 31, 2015 and for a second time on June 25, 2016. Then the SBI has not debited Rs 330 even after having the sufficient balance in his account.

Group Operations (PMJBY-SBI Life) told the court that Mallaiah is reported to have died on May 17, 2018, whereas the Insurance cover lapsed on June 1, 2017. Thus, as on the date of death of Mallaiah, there was no insurance cover existing on his life. Group Operations (PMJBY-SBI Life) had admitted that the deceased paid two premiums towards the policy. The sum assured amount cannot be paid as the premium was not paid either by the bank or by the deceased. After hearing from both parties the court ordered the opposite parties to pay the money to the nominee.

ACB court orders 14-day remand for Dasari Narender

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

The ACB court at Nampally in Hyderabad has remanded Nizamabad Municipal Corporation office superintendent and in-charge Revenue Officer Dasari Narender in judicial custody for 14 days. He was arrested in 'disproportionate assets' case.

ACB Deputy commissioner of police Sekhar Goud told reporters on Saturday that Narender was pro-



duced before the special court for ACB cases in Hyderabad. The court sent him to judicial remand for 14 days.

It may be recalled that the ACB officials conducted simultaneous raids at four places and unearthed wealth worth Rs 6.7 crore amassed by Narender.

The ACB is likely to file a petition in the ACB court to seek the custody of Narender to question him further.

Sanitation worker drinks pesticide by mistake, dies

PNS ■ KOTHAGUDEM

In a case of mistaken identity, a sanitation worker who consumed pesticide which is used in anti-mosquito operations and it proved fatal. The authorities rushed her to hospital without any delay, but she died while undergoing treatment. She was identified as Battula Odemma, a contract worker in Bhadradi-Kothagudem municipality. As usual, she reported for work on Friday. To quench her thirst, she came across a bottle, containing pesticide in liquid form, mistaking it to be drinking water, she drank the solution. In fact, there are no any indications or labels on the bottle. But the bottle con-

tained mosquito spray. As she became severely indisposed, she was immediately rushed to a hospital, where doctors asked those who admitted her to the hospital to bring the mosquito spray container so that they could save her life extending appropriate treatment.

The municipal authorities were busy and forgot to send the container to the hospital. As she did not receive appropriate treatment, her condition worsened on Friday night and died. Official negligence was attributed for the death of the sanitation worker. The doctors felt that they would have saved her life had the authorities sent the container to the hospital in time.



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Catastrophe revisited

Prime Minister Modi visits Wayanad, pledges full Central Government support for recovery efforts

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently visited Wayanad, Kerala, which was devastated by landslides that left more than 200 dead. Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a review meeting after conducting an aerial and ground survey of the landslide-hit areas in Wayanad. Recalling the devastating 1979 Morbi dam disaster in Gujarat, Modi empathised with the affected residents, assuring them of full support from the central government. During his day-long visit to Wayanad, Modi surveyed the destruction caused by the July 30 landslides. Modi's visit included a trek through the severely impacted Chooralmala region, where he assessed the damage and interacted with rescue personnel, officials, and residents. He also visited a relief camp in Meppadi, offering comfort to survivors, including children who had lost family members. PM Modi emphasised the need for better preparedness and resilient infrastructure to mitigate the impact of such natural disasters in the future.



Wayanad is perhaps the worst hit as the incessant rains triggered landslides, damaging homes and infrastructure and causing extensive agricultural losses. The region's economy, heavily dependent on agriculture and tourism, has been severely impacted, with farmers facing significant losses and tourists staying away due to the adverse weather conditions. However, Wayanad is not the only place that has endured losses. This year's monsoon has brought unprecedented destruction across the country. From north to south, no region has been spared from the monsoon fury. The Himalayan states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand have also endured losses. Torrential rains, landslides, and flash floods have resulted in significant loss of life and property. In Himachal Pradesh, an entire village was tragically wiped off due to a deluge after a cloudburst. The heavy rainfall has also caused rivers to overflow, leading to widespread flooding and disruption of daily life in the plains. Roads have been washed away, leaving many remote areas inaccessible, and thousands of people have been displaced from their homes. The increasing frequency and intensity of monsoon-related disasters in India can be attributed to a combination of factors, including climate change, deforestation, and unplanned urbanisation. India must continue to invest in and implement strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy sources. International cooperation is also crucial in addressing the climate change. Besides, ensuring that development projects, particularly in ecologically sensitive areas like the Himalayas must be properly evaluated before being commissioned. This includes stricter regulations on construction and deforestation. In the given scenario what is of utmost importance is preparedness—strengthening disaster management capabilities at the local, state, and national levels. This includes improving early warning systems, enhancing infrastructure resilience, and conducting regular disaster preparedness drills.

PICTALK



An elderly woman spins tricolour yarns ahead of the Independence Day in Nadia district

When heroes defy their legacies



SANTHOSH MATHEW

History is a tapestry of contradictions and ironies, offering few clear heroes or villains. Instead, it presents figures whose actions and legacies are deeply intriguing

History, much like a tapestry, is interwoven with threads of contradiction, paradox, and irony. It refuses to offer a simplistic narrative of heroes and villains, instead presenting us with figures whose actions and legacies are often at odds. Even as we try to categorize these individuals within neat labels, the complexities of their lives and the contexts in which they lived often defy such easy classifications. In delving into these paradoxes, we uncover the profound dichotomies that have shaped our world. Here, we explore some of the most striking examples of such contradictions.

The Pulitzer Prize is one of the most prestigious awards in journalism, representing the pinnacle of recognition for investigative reporting, public service, and literary achievement. It stands as a symbol of journalistic integrity and excellence. Yet, the man behind this esteemed award, Joseph Pulitzer, was a pioneer of "yellow journalism"—a style characterized by sensationalism, exaggeration, and a sometimes tenuous relationship with the truth. Pulitzer's newspapers, including the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and the New York World, became synonymous with this sensationalist style, prioritising scandal, shock, and spectacle over factual reporting. Pulitzer was, in many ways, a shrewd businessman who used his media empire to captivate, excite, and often inflame public opinion. Yet, despite his role in fostering yellow journalism, Pulitzer's legacy is paradoxically one of promoting journalistic excellence. The award that bears his name has honoured countless journalists who have exposed corruption, championed the underdog, and stood as defenders of truth against tyranny. The irony is profound: a man who built his career on sensationalism is now celebrated as a patron of journalistic integrity. This duality highlights the complexities of human nature and the ever-evolving landscape of media. The Nobel Prizes, particularly the Nobel



Peace Prize, embody the highest aspirations of humanity. They honour individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the betterment of the world through science, literature, and the pursuit of peace. However, the man behind these prestigious awards, Alfred Nobel, accumulated his wealth from an invention that has caused immense destruction: dynamite. Nobel's invention revolutionized construction and engineering, but it also became a powerful tool in warfare. The devastating impact of dynamite weighed heavily on Nobel's conscience. It is said that his decision to establish the Nobel Prize was influenced by a premature obituary that labelled him "the merchant of death" after his invention became synonymous with violence and destruction. By creating the Nobel Prizes, particularly the Peace Prize, Nobel sought to reshape his legacy from one of destruction to one of hope and progress. Yet, the contrast between his contribution to the proliferation of powerful weapons and his desire to reward peacemakers serves as a poignant reminder of the paradoxes that can define a person's life. A recent example of this paradox can be found in the story of



JINNAH'S PERSONAL LIFE WAS FAR REMOVED FROM THE STRICT RELIGIOUS VALUES THAT WOULD LATER COME TO DEFINE THE COUNTRY HE FOUNDED. JINNAH WAS A HIGHLY WESTERNISED INDIVIDUAL WHO ENJOYED THE FINER THINGS IN LIFE

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019. Abiy was recognized for his efforts in resolving the long-standing conflict with neighbouring Eritrea, earning international acclaim as a peacemaker. However, within two years of receiving the prize, Abiy found himself leading his nation into a brutal civil war. The conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region has been marked by atrocities, displacement, and a humanitarian crisis of staggering proportions. The United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights are celebrated as monumental achievements in the history of human rights, enshrining the principles of freedom, equality, and justice. Thomas Jefferson, one of the Founding Fathers and the principal author of the Declaration of Independence, played a crucial role in shaping these foundational documents. Yet, Jefferson was also a slave owner who, during his lifetime, owned over 600 enslaved people. This glaring contradiction between his public advocacy for liberty and his private practice of slavery has sparked intense debate among historians and scholars. Jefferson's writings espoused ideals of

freedom and human dignity, yet he continued to benefit from an institution that deprived others of these very rights. Similarly, Muhammad Ali Jinnah is revered as the founding father of Pakistan, the world's first Islamic republic. He is celebrated for his role in establishing a nation for Muslims in the Indian subcontinent, based on the idea of Muslim nationalism. However, Jinnah's personal life was far removed from the strict religious values that would later come to define the country he founded. Jinnah was a highly Westernised individual who enjoyed the finer things in life. He was known to smoke cigars, drink alcohol, and reportedly favoured pork—a practice contrary to Islamic teachings. His second wife, Maryam, was a Parsi, and his only daughter, Dina, married a Parsi as well, sparking considerable controversy given his public role as a Muslim leader. These episodes remind us that even the greatest leaders are not without their contradictions. In the end, history reminds us that even the greatest of icons are not immune to contradiction—it is in their complexity that their true humanity shines through. (The writer is an associate professor, views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BAIL NOT JAIL SHOULD BE THE NORM

Madam — Recently, while an assistant director of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) was swiftly remanded to CBI custody over a bribery charge involving Rs 20 lakhs from a Mumbai-based jeweler, the ongoing case of Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia raises serious concerns. Despite being accused of money laundering in the Delhi excise policy scam, Sisodia has languished in jail for 17 months without any progress toward a trial, as observed by the Supreme Court.

The Court emphasised that personal liberty is paramount, and delaying bail without commencing the trial is unacceptable, leading to Sisodia's release on bail. This case highlights a troubling disparity in the justice system: while some accused individuals evade legal consequences due to the laxity of investigative agencies and courts, others, potentially innocent, remain imprisoned for years, leaving their families to suffer. As we have seen in numerous cases, delayed justice is effectively denied justice. A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

HATS OFF TO INDIAN OLYMPIC SQUAD

Madam— Hats off to the Indian Hockey team for regaining its past international glory via winning a medal in the Paris - Olympics - 2024. Their defeating the great - proven - teams such as Australia and England elucidates their resolve, dedication, determination. It could not enter the final and had to settle for bronze (due to sheer bad luck of the day). This is the 13th Olympic medal for India in hockey (8 gold, 1 silver, 4 bronze). Arman Sherawat's bronze in wrestling, cooled the hearts of Indians, which otherwise wallowed in pain over the disqualification of Vinesh Phogat, (the gold medal sure shot). Hats off to the Indian magnificent 6, who won 5 bronze medals and 1 silver in the Paris Olympics - 2024. Also kudos to all the national and international participants of the prestigious grand gala Olympics (sports festival). Kudos to Indian winners: 3 shooters:

A world in turmoil



The world seems to be in flames. In the UK, violent clashes between communities are intensifying, with immigrants gaining

ground in the conflict. Across Europe, a similar surge sees immigrants clashing with native populations. But the most alarming development this week has been the chaos and coup in our neighboring country—once a close friend and an Islamic nation that upheld peaceful coexistence among all religions, now plunged into turmoil. These are difficult times where unrests and upheavals have become order of the day.

Amidst this global unrest, our own opposition leaders are calling for insurrection, openly demanding the removal of our elected Prime Minister. These are the same voices that champion democracy and preach about love. Yet, we believe that Indians will never tread that destructive path. We stood strong during the Emergency, showing our love for the nation and our willingness to fight for it if necessary. C K Subramaniam | Bengaluru

Manu, Sarabjot, Swapnil Kusale, wrestler Aman Sehrawat and the hockey team for the 5 bronze medals, star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra for the silver medal (for the athletic 89.45 m throw). PV Srinivas Sreelekha | Secunderabad

NEERAJ WINS SILVER

Madam — India's star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra clinched a silver medal at the Paris Olympics, performing in front of an enthusiastic crowd at Stade de France. Neeraj's throw of 89.45m earned him second place on the podium. Although it was his best performance of the season, it wasn't enough to secure gold, which went to Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem with a throw of 92.97m, (will be hard to beat in the near future) setting a new Olympic record. It's a pity for 145 crore Indian that we have not won a single gold but we plan to hold the Olympics in India! It is quite evident that Neeraj Chopra has given his best (though too much pressure of expectations was put on the guy). But the most important thing to note is that India is very poor in succession planning and finding alternatives,

not just in sports but in every field. If the sports administration could not find a single alternative between Tokyo and Paris then it's an utter failure (sadly Vinesh Phogat's golden hope mar by 100 gram over weight) for the sports authority. Among Indians Neeraj Chopra is a champion player but what he failed to do is to up his game and cross 90m during the last four years. It is a classic case of a person sitting on his laurels and not pushing himself. Last 4 years he has not even crossed 90m marks once and the government has spent (Rs. 5,21,72,457 crore) so much money on him. One has to agree that 8th August was the Pakistani's day but fact is that Nadeem crossed 90m earlier and today in the crucial moment he did it twice while winning the gold. He had not even half the support that Neeraj got. India stands behind Pakistan in the medal tally at Olympics. What else, wondering, though it's sports! Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

A Heartfelt reflection on the changing face of Nainital

Over the decades, relentless deforestation and unchecked construction have turned Nainital's once verdant landscapes into tinderboxes

Summers were harsh this year. Fire rained from the skies. Cities were burning. So were the mountains. My first holiday to the mountains was in the summer of 1970. We boarded the train in the evening, excited about the trip. The first glimpse of the distant mountains the next morning kept us awake for the remaining journey, as the faint outlines turned prominent. The bus ride from the railway station was equally exciting. Sometimes we travelled hugging the mountains, and at other times we looked down with fear, as the bus moved literally at the edge of the road.



After what felt like an impatiently long time, as we turned a bend, I gasped looking with awe at the majestic lake spread out before me. We had arrived at Nainital. I had fallen in love with the hills. I would return several times in the following years, till I realised that there were many other equally beautiful hills to explore. Things started changing fast. My first view in the summer of 1970 faded into a fond memory, which I would often draw upon to mourn a lost time. I still remember very vividly the green shades covering the hills, even in the summers, much before the onset of monsoons. There was not even a speck of brown visible beneath the thick curtain of foliage. I also do not remember the presence of fans, coolers, refrigerators, much less air conditioners. The only cooling devices were the soft ice-cream machines along the Mall road. The high and mighty of the land are seldom blamed. Wildfires in the mountains are not new; but not to the extent that they now rage. A trickle in the previous century is now a raging river. Fires in the Nainital region alone engulfed vast tracts of land even entering residential areas. Other mountains in the north also faced the same fate. Even the plains are not immune to the rapid march

of unplanned urbanisation and the greed of the unscrupulous. I remember going to view Ram Lila wearing half-sleeved sweaters. We would wait with baited breaths for Diwali. However warm it was the previous day, we would invariably take out heavier woollens from Diwali. With time, winters started setting in later than we were used to. Our beautiful planet is nudging us with innumerable omens to wake up and look after her. Hills are sinking under the heavy burden of unplanned construction of houses, hotels, and resorts. Sea levels are going up. Many coastal cities may submerge over the next few decades. Water tables are fast going down resulting in conflicts for drinking water. We need to act to live a better future for the coming generations. Let us remember British historian, explorer and activist Robert Swan, "The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it." (The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



SANJAY CHANDRA

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

HAVE A INTREPID AND ROBUST MINDSET

Through spiritual practices, one can find strength to continue the journey of life



RAVI VALLURI

Always be associated with people who are good at heart. This is what Swami Vivekananda said. My mother shares her birthday with Swami Vivekananda who was born on 12th January 1863. Association, Sangha, and Satsang were her strong points. She nurtured strong bonds with all religious faiths and spiritually inclined people. She wanted to pursue medicine but life did not take that trajectory instead she became a qualified medical social worker. She used to tell patients and their children, 'Fear is only as deep as the mind allows.' Thus, patients afflicted with TB, but not bedridden, participated in the projects. This was what she called 'Diversionary Therapy'.

The TB Hospital became a unique template for the methods adopted by doctors, para-med staff, social workers, government bodies and NGOs, all to contribute to the rehabilitation of the patients. Climate changes, civilizations collapse, governments change political affiliations alter and even the best possible model collapses. This is inevitable. As Buddha says, 'The only permanent thing in life is impermanence.' The lofty objectives were not approved by a new set of hospital administrators and the beacon of hope collapsed but she tried hard with a robust mindset. This was extremely traumatic for my mother and she became a patient of Paroxysmal Atrial Tachycardia (PAT). This is a type of arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat).

Paroxysmal means that the episode of arrhythmia originates and terminates abruptly. Atrial implies the arrhythmia starts with the atria or in the upper chambers of the heart. The tachycardia results in a significant



increase in the heartbeat per minute. It abnormally increases the pace, like in an athlete on a treadmill. PAT significantly increases the heartbeat of an adult from the normal 60 to 100 to 130 to 230 and among infants and children, it shoots up from 100 to 130 to 220 beats per minute. It is accompanied by sweating, dizziness, palpitations, angina and acute breathlessness.

Normally, a patient suffers from such a condition owing to emotional upheavals, physical exhaustion, deep anxiety, and consumption of caffeine or alcohol. I saw my mother suffering from this condition on several occasions and being admitted to the ICU. It was a distressing and disturbing sight. While it is not a life-threatening affliction, it certainly disorients the psychology and attitude of the patient. During her suffering, we saw her clutching onto her rosary as a lifesaver, while we prayed fervently for her recovery. She was administered medication but it worked only to an extent. The real help came in the form of a pentagon-shaped talisman. That is through Siddha Healing, Pranic Healing, the ten-day Vipassana Course and the Part 1 and Part 2 Art of Living courses. This is the unique, amazing and scientific power of the breath. Breathing techniques, meditation, medication, and proper diet changed the trajectory of the life of the patient and brought back the mojo in her life. 'When you take a breath in, let it become your meditation that all the suffering of all the beings in the world is riding on that incoming breath and reaching your heart, and see a miracle happen,' says Osho. Till her final days, she continued with these practices. Senior citizens, those in pain and agony and even the able-bodied should undertake the courses mentioned. Swami Vivekananda took Yoga to America and spread the Ramakrishna Mission. He was the Arjuna of Shri Rama Krishna Paramhansa. My mother imbibed the trait of service to mankind by reading extensively about Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda and the Almighty God blessed her with an intrepid mind.

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

Populism will not let food subsidy reforms take off



UTTAM GUPTA

Leakages can be curbed if the subsidy is given directly to the beneficiaries using 'direct benefit transfer' mode. The potential for reducing food subsidies is immense



In the full Budget presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on July 23, 2024, the government has pegged the budget estimate (BE) food subsidy for FY 2024-25 at Rs 205,250 crore which is no different from the estimate given in the interim Budget. Though slightly lower than the revised estimate (RE) of Rs 211,394 crores for FY 2023-24, this is no consolation as invariably, the RE for any financial year turns out to be higher than the BE. For instance, while presenting the budget for FY 2023-24, Sitharaman kept the BE for food subsidy at Rs 197,000 crore. Against this, RE has turned out to be Rs 14,394 crore more. The moot point is that the expenditure incurred by the Central government during the last five years under this head has been consistently over Rs 200,000 crore mark every year 2020-21: Rs 529,000 crore; 2021-22: Rs 372,000 crore; 2022-23: Rs 287,000 crore; 2023-24: Rs 211,394 crores and 2024-25: Rs 205,250 crore (BE).

During 2024-25, food subsidy will account for 4.2 per cent of its budget (Rs 482,000 crore), 5.5 per cent of its revenue expenditure (Rs 3709,000 crore) and consume nearly 8 per cent of its estimated net tax receipts (Rs 2583,000 crore). Reining in food subsidy is no less important than the goal it seeks to achieve namely providing 'food security'. The uncontrolled rise in the former leads to an unsustainable increase in fiscal deficit (excess of total receipts over total expenditure) which can injure the economy in multiple ways through high inflation, high interest rates, a slowdown in growth, fewer jobs, low incomes and so on. This, in turn, can lead to a demand for higher financial assistance including food subsidies from the government thereby exacerbating the vicious cycle.

There exists a huge scope for reducing food subsidies. To assess this, at the outset, let us see how it is administered. Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), the Centre asks the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and other state agencies to procure food from the farmers at MSP (minimum support price) and organize its distribution to around 820 million people for free.



REINING IN FOOD SUBSIDY IS NO LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE GOAL IT SEEKS TO ACHIEVE NAMELY PROVIDING 'FOOD SECURITY'. THE UNCONTROLLED RISE IN THE FORMER LEADS TO AN UNSUSTAINABLE INCREASE IN FISCAL DEFICIT (EXCESS OF TOTAL RECEIPTS OVER TOTAL EXPENDITURE) WHICH CAN INJURE THE ECONOMY IN MULTIPLE WAYS

The entire cost i.e. MSP paid to farmers plus handling and distribution cost (HDC) is reimbursed to the FCI/other state agencies as a subsidy. The money comes from the Union Budget's allocation for 'food subsidy'. While, the PMGKAY has been in force since January 1, 2023, before that, the Centre was giving food to 820 million persons (7 kg of cereals per person per month to 120 million poorest of the poor persons covered under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana or AAY families and five kg of cereals per person per month to the remaining 700 million) at a heavily subsidized price of Rs 2/3/1 per kg for wheat/rice/coarse cereals under the National Food Security Act (NFSA). In addition, since April 2020, it has given 5 kg of food per person per month for "free" to all 820 million beneficiaries under PMGKAY to mitigate the consequences of Covid-19 pandemic. From January 1, 2023, it merged the free part of PMGKAY with the regular food security schemes under NFSA.

Now, food is available to all 820 million beneficiaries for free under the new incarnation of NFSA namely the PMGKAY. This arrangement will continue for five years till the end of CY 2028 as per the announcement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November 2023. Avenues for saving in subsidy First, fundamentally, subsidized food is meant for the poor. The number of poor isn't more than 15-20 per cent of India's population. Yet, the number of beneficiaries under the PMGKAY at 820 million works out to nearly 59 per cent of the population. Even as per the Shanta Kumar Committee (2015), the number of people eligible for subsidized food under NFSA shouldn't be more than 40 per cent. The excess of 19 per cent comes to around 270 million.

Further, during the last nine-and-a-half years of the incumbent government, 250 million persons have come out of poverty (as per a recent report by Niti Aayog). These persons can be excluded from the list of beneficiaries.

Doing a back-of-the-envelope calculation, giving free food to a million persons entails a subsidy of Rs 200 crore per annum. Excluding 250 million will help save Rs 50,000 crore. The existing beneficiaries list of 820 million is based on 2011 Census estimates while the Supreme Court (SC) has directed that the Centre should take into account the population during 2021. On this basis, it needs to give free food to an additional 100 million.

That will cost Rs 20,000 crore. Even after providing for this, it will save Rs 30,000 crore annually. Second, why every beneficiary should get free food? The Shanta Kumar Committee had recommended that non-AAY persons should pay 50 per cent of the MSP. Other than AAY are 700 million persons. Minus 250 million (who shouldn't get a subsidy at all) and adding 100 million (as per SC order), we get 550 million. Making them pay 50 per cent of MSP or Rs 11.4 per kg (wheat), will save Rs 37,600 crore annually. Third, the NFSA legislation enacted in 2013 required beneficiaries to pay Rs 2/3/1 per kg for wheat/rice/coarse cereals.

It froze these rates for three years. Since 2016, there has been no legal bar on increasing the price. Yet, far from increasing, the Modi-government has reduced the price to zero. Are they all (read: 820 million persons) so poor that they can't pay even a fraction of the cost (in the case of wheat at Rs 2 per kg, it is 1/15th)? Even if you make them pay a notional Rs 1 per kg, this will yield savings of Rs 5000 crore per annum. Fourth, the initial idea under the

Scheme was that FCI et al would buy only the quantity needed for meeting beneficiaries' requirements under NFSA plus maintain some 'strategic' buffer to meet emergencies.

It was never meant to be an 'open-ended' procurement which it has become today. This has also contributed to the avoidable increase in subsidy besides stocking problems. Shunning 'open-ended' purchases can yield significant savings. Fifth, currently, FCI/state agencies are paid HDC on an 'actual' basis. This leads to payment for inefficiencies in the system and even cost padding.

The stories of loaders being paid hefty salaries by the FCI are still fresh in memory. A shift from 'actual' to reimbursement of cost to agencies on a 'normative' basis can save a lot of subsidy. Finally, the availability of a mammoth of around 60 million tons (the quantity distributed under the PMGKAY) in the supply chain with zero price tag is an open invitation to dubious operators to siphon off and sell in the open market raking in a moolah.

The PDS scam in West Bengal involving the diversion of subsidized food grains worth tens of thousands of crore currently under investigation by the central agencies provides a classic example. This can be curbed if the subsidy is given directly to the beneficiaries using DBT (direct benefit transfer) mode. The potential for reducing food subsidies is immense. The government can go for any of the above measures or all of them depending on how much savings it targets. But, ALAS under the current political scenario, Modi won't dare to take even a baby step like charging a notional price of Rs 1 per kg.

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

Implications of upheaval in Bangladesh on its trade relations with India

The sudden turn of events have raised concerns about the potential impact on trade, economic stability, and the broader geopolitical dynamics of the region

Since Sheikh Hasina assumed office as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in 2009, the country has been a key ally of India. Her leadership has seen significant progress in bilateral relations, with a focus on infrastructure, connectivity, and trade. However, the recent political crisis in Bangladesh has raised concerns about the future of this partnership.



ADITYA PRATAP SINGH

refuge in India, raising concerns about the stability of Bangladesh and its impact on Indo-Bangladesh relations. **The Evolution of Indo-Bangladesh Relations** Over the past decade, India and Bangladesh have fostered strong economic ties, with infrastructure and connectivity projects playing a crucial role in strengthening their relationship. Since 2016, India has extended \$8 billion in

credit to Bangladesh for the development of road, rail, shipping, and port infrastructure. The two nations have also engaged in various areas of commerce, including medical tourism, business expansion, and the international garment trade. Bangladesh, a major player in the global garment industry, relies heavily on cotton imports from India. The textile and garment sectors account for 56% of Bangladesh's total exports to India, making it a vital trading partner in South Asia. In the financial year 2023-24, bilateral trade between the two countries reached \$13 billion, according to the Union Ministry of Commerce. **The Impact on Trade** Sheikh Hasina's leadership saw a flourishing of com-

merce between India and Bangladesh, leading to a significant trade surplus for India. However, the ongoing political turmoil in Bangladesh threatens to disrupt this economic partnership. The civil unrest and worsening economic situation have created security concerns that could impact Indian exports, commerce, and infrastructure projects in the neighboring nation. One of the major challenges will be on the bilateral trade front. After reaching \$12.21 billion in 2022-23, India's exports to Bangladesh dropped to \$11 billion in 2023-24. Similarly, Bangladesh's imports decreased from \$2 billion in the previous year to \$1.84 billion in the most recent fiscal year. Indian exporters have



voiced concerns about the situation in Bangladesh, fearing that the instability in the country will negatively affect commerce between the two nations. A significant scarcity of dollars in Bangladesh, as noted by the think tank GTRI, has already curtailed the country's ability to import goods, particularly from India. **Uncertainty Surrounding the Free Trade Agreement**

In October 2023, India and Bangladesh discussed the possibility of a free trade agreement (FTA) during a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Trade meeting in Dhaka. An FTA could streamline regulations, encourage investment and commerce, and potentially remove customs tariffs, boosting trade between the two countries. According to a 2012 World Bank working paper, a full-product FTA could enhance Bangladesh's exports to India by 182%, while a partial FTA might grow them by 134%. This would contribute to strengthening Bangladesh's trade transport infrastructure and commerce links, leading to a significant rise in exports. However, the current political crisis has cast doubt on the

future of the FTA proposals. Sheikh Hasina's exit might slow or pause this development, affecting the expansion of commerce and trade in new areas between the two nations. **Challenges for the Textile and Garment Industry** The ongoing crisis in Bangladesh could also have a negative impact on other sectors, particularly the textile and garment industry. In the fiscal year 2021-2022, Bangladesh exported garments worth \$42.613 billion, solidifying its position as the second-largest apparel exporter globally. However, the recent incidents of factories being set on fire have raised concerns about the future of this industry. Many of these textile units are owned by traders associated with the

Awami League Party, making them particularly vulnerable in the current political climate. While India has the potential to step in and provide garments to developed economies, there are certain drawbacks to this shift. Bangladesh, as a Least Developed Country, benefits from zero-duty advantages, while Indian goods face tariff barriers. If borders remain closed and duty-free export-import activities are suspended, there is a possibility of increased demand for Indian garments. However, it is still too early to make definitive predictions about the opportunities and gains that might arise from this situation. *(The author is a PhD scholar at HBTU, Kanpur; views are personal)*

Hyderabad



Revolutionising quality healthcare!

RASHMI BHUMIREDDY

Motivated to make a difference in the world, particularly in healthcare, Aparna Jain has transformed herself into an exemplary leader. Hailing from Lucknow, Aparna Jain completed her B.Tech in Biotechnology at Amity University and received merit-based scholarships throughout her undergraduate and postgraduate education. Upon finishing her studies, she joined a financial services firm and took part in a three-month training program to enhance her industry expertise. However, she still lacked hands-on industry experience. In order to bridge the divide, she sought assistance from an experienced colleague who provided training to improve her technical abilities. She also obtained two national certifications from the National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM) in investment advisory and equity derivatives markets. This resulted in a five-fold increase in her portfolio and an annual growth rate of 10 percent. Being the team's youngest member, she achieved the highest client acquisitions and revenue goals. Apart from her professional career, she has been engaged in social services by taking sessions and personality development classes for slum children during weekends. "Eventually, I realised that I wanted to work full-time helping these children access education. This was when I joined the Sarthak Foundation full-time as a fundraising manager, taking up the leadership role of the entire department. Within five years, I have increased the funding by 15 times, ensuring that all 5000 children from slums and villages did not drop out of school," cheerfully shared Aparna in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*. Through her Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts, campaigns and digital marketing, she maintained a 100 percent child retention rate. Throughout the pandemic, she spearheaded the effort to raise funds for the *COVID Community Care Project*, obtaining Rs 50 lakhs in resources to assist 10,000 individuals with both their livelihoods and education. Furthermore, she secured jobs in the corporate sector for 60 percent of young women of working age. Following her time at the financial services company, she transitioned to a health tech startup, where she was instrumental in establishing the business from the ground up. She was in charge of the go-to-market (GTM) strategy and sales planning in three cities in North India, creating a network of more than 100 doctors. Being involved with the health tech startup was crucial in honing her abilities and knowledge, which eventually enabled her to establish various organisations and departments, showcasing her innovative skills. Upon finding out that she required more skills to expand her business, Aparna chose to pursue an MBA to enhance her leadership skills. Throughout her time at the startup, her main obstacle was persuading doctors in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities to utilise their digital platform, Electronic Health Records. Aparna then enrolled in a full-time PGP program at ISB, focusing on marketing. Sharing her experience at ISB, she shares with great enthusiasm, "My primary motivation for joining ISB was to work with larger organisations where I could scale up with the same entrepreneurial spirit as I demonstrated in smaller setups. Joining ISB opened a world of opportunities, allowing me to interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds and geographies, which significantly broadened my perspectives and enhanced the quality of my learning. The hands-on experience through experiential learning programs and case competitions honed my ability to tackle challenging problems and arrive at structured solutions." In spite of the obstacles, she achieved notable success in the healthcare startup by overseeing the partnership and functioning with Uber. The idea behind this project was to educate drivers on managing basic first aid and handling emergencies, whether it be for a passenger or someone on the road in crisis. Drivers were provided hospital emergency contact information and received basic health assessments and screenings. This comprehensive method made sure that drivers were adequately equipped to effectively and confidently deal with emergencies, ultimately improving passenger safety and community welfare. Under her guidance, her team provided first aid and emergency services training to more than 500 drivers. This project assisted in kickstarting the organization for a couple of months. Initiating preventive health counseling for women from low-economic backgrounds also led to a 35 percent increase in patient enrollment in her program. "With my professional skills and education, I aim to work in a healthcare organisation and transform it into a more efficient and automated entity. I envision a system where high-quality healthcare is accessible to all, especially those who cannot afford it," signs off Aparna on a concluding note.

In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Aparna Jain, who is on a mission to provide accessible healthcare for all, shares her journey and how different roles molded her into a perfect leadership figure.

'RANG'ING WORLD WITH HIS SOUL-STIRRING RHYTHM

AARTI SREENATH

Ram Sampath, a name synonymous with innovation in the Indian music industry, is a composer who has consistently pushed the boundaries of creativity and emotion. With a body of work that spans advertising jingles, film scores, and independent music, Ram's compositions are known for their ability to capture the essence of a brand or narrative. His latest work on the *Make Life Beautiful* jingle for Birla Opus Paints is a shining example of his artistic genius, blending the vibrancy of colour with the soul of music. The story behind the creation of this jingle is one that Ram recounts with passion and fondness. He describes it as one of the most beautiful briefs he has ever received in his career. "As musicians, we dream in colour," he says, reflecting on the project. The brief wasn't just about promoting a product; it was about capturing the beauty of wonder, the curiosity of magic and the essence of colour—all deeply connected to paint. For him, this project was more than just work; it was a journey into the emotional landscape that colour can evoke, a rare opportunity to explore the intersection of music and visual art. His connection to colour and paint is deeply personal, rooted in his earliest memories. He recalls a vivid experience from his youth when he decided to paint his first home studio a bright reddish-pink. His parents and everyone around him were horrified—they thought he had lost his mind. But for Ram, that bold choice of color symbolises something much deeper. It was a statement of creativity, freedom and a break from the conventional. "I've



Gaining much accolades for his latest jingle, *Make Life Beautiful*, Ram Sampath has been ecstatic of the response he has received. In a fun chat with *The Pioneer*, he discusses the making, his approach to this jingle and more

always had a strong connection to colour and paint and this project tapped right into that," he reflects. The brief for the jingle was centered around the tagline "Duniya ko rang do," which translates to "Colour the world." For Ram, this tagline was more than just words; it was an invitation to celebrate life itself. He believes there's a universal emotion tied to the act of painting, whether it's a wall, a canvas, or even a room. "I don't know a single person whose heart doesn't flutter at the thought of getting something painted. It's an act of transformation and that's what made this project so special," he shares. When it comes to composing a jingle meant to go viral, Ram emphasises the importance of staying true to classic values while infusing the composition with freshness. "I believe that to create something that touches people, it must come from the heart. If you don't feel it, how can you expect the audience to feel it?" he asks. For him, the

music isn't just for listening—it's meant to be sung, hummed and lived with. The idea that people might hum 'Ooh Opus Opus' in their daily lives brings him immense joy. "I love the idea that my jingles become a part of people's lives," he says, clearly delighted by the thought. Ram's approach to creating a jingle often involves crafting a first draft that is more intimate and personal, which then evolves into a more expansive and polished final product. He describes the first draft as a close conversation—intimate and focused. As the project progresses, the final version becomes more expansive, like opening your arms wide to embrace the audience. Working with Sachin Kamble, the creative director of the agency, was a particularly rewarding experience for Ram. Their visions were so aligned that they never found themselves at cross purposes. He also credits Munna, his long-time collaborator and lyricist, for his ability to distill profound ideas into simple, impactful words. Together, they have worked on many projects, from Sonu Mohapatra's first album to songs for *Delhi Belly* and *Satyamev Jayate*. Munna's contribution to the jingle was invaluable, helping to ensure the final product was both powerful and relatable. When the team reviewed the final project, the feedback was straightforward—just a few minor tweaks and they were good to go. Staying relevant in an industry as dynamic as music requires an acute awareness of evolving trends, but Ram remains steadfast in his belief that the foundation of any great composition lies in its melody and lyrics. "Melody and lyrics are like the body of a person and the trend, the production, are the clothes. You have to keep track of the latest clothes and the latest trends, but it's more about perspective—who are you talking to right now? What's the audience you're trying to reach?" he explains. Whether it's a song like *Sajni* from *Laapata Ladies*, which did exceptionally well, or a viral jingle, clarity of mind is crucial. The composition needs a strong melody and simple lyrics that convey something profound yet accessible. With the *Make Life Beautiful* campaign gaining millions of views during the ICC World Cup, Ram reflected on the impact such success has on his future work. He understands that each new project begins with a blank slate, requiring humility and a willingness to explore. "You need to have the humility of looking at a blank page and saying, 'Okay, buddy, any reputation is out the window right now. You have to be answerable to the people and be as truthful and sincere as possible,'" he says. For Ram, each new composition is an exploration, a journey into the unknown, driven by curiosity rather than fear. Looking back at his career, Ram remains as curious and passionate as ever. Whether working on advertising jingles or film scores, he approaches each new project with a sense of humility and exploration. "The most important thing is to stay true while evolving," he said. "I'm still the same guy who was trying to make *Wadaa Raha* and *Dil Dooba in Khakee* and I'm still curious about what's ahead." As for the future, Ram is excited about several new ventures, including a romantic comedy with Aamir Khan Productions and an upcoming interview with maestro A.R. Rahman. "I've been fortunate to have a career that allows me to explore different facets of music and I'm looking forward to what's next," he concluded, leaving us eager to see where his musical journey will take him next.

'All of them were in a state of shock; they had not even clapped when I won'

TEJAL SINHA

Sass, grace, fiery vibes and hair flips—well, Sana Makbul has been all about it! There are no two ways about the fact that her audacious aura has made her emerge as the winner of *Bigg Boss OTT 3*, holding the trophy rapturously. 'Rishton ki ek jeeti jaati missal, Sana Makbul', just as *Bigg Boss* had aptly defined her just a few moments before the finale episode, her journey in the house truly spells out the same. "The crown is already heavy (we laugh)," shares the ravishing Sana as we have her onboard. Hot as hell, setting trends and breaking all the spells at the *BB House*, the trophy for her was everything beyond. Just as in King Khan's acclaimed dialogue, 'Kehte hain agar kisi cheez ko dil se chaho...to puri kainaat usse tumse milane ki koshish mein lag jaati hai...' and since the day she had entered the house, everyone knew her only target was the trophy. We've often heard that *Bigg Boss* is a controversial show and people in talks are the ones who generally enter the show. But that wasn't the case with the *Dikkulu Choodaku Ramayya* actress! In fact, she too remembers how her close ones asked her, "Sana, you are a non-controversial person; why *Bigg Boss*?" However, being a low-key person, she has a different look to it. "I wanted to come back with a bang. For the past year, *mera kaam kaaj utna kuch high mai nahi tha*. I used to work, but it was tiny little ones," she affirms as she also confesses, "This was not the first time that I got a call for *Bigg Boss*. It has been happening for a few years and if I remember, I have been getting calls even before I did *Khatron*. I started getting the call after I did *Vish* on Colors. They started approaching me for *BB*, even for the main one. During the pandemic, when I was approached, I wanted to do *Khatron Ke Khiladi*. I wanted to get rid of the animal fear I have had. Then, in the first OTT season, I still did not feel like doing it. However, over the years, I somewhat got convinced and had this attitude that whenever I did *Bigg Boss*, I would be all in." Keeping all the other things aside, every season of *Bigg Boss* does see a celebration when the winner gets announced. But as a shock to many, none of the contestants had gotten on stage to congratulate Sana. With all the talk around it, let's hear what she had to tell us about it: "A lot of people have been clarifying their side of it. Of course, the whole team and makers wanted to capture my moment and I really appreciated this and went with them. They were instructed, apparently. But I would like to say that it was not about 'kaun aaya and kaun nahi'. Even if you weren't involved in my happy moments at that time, you could have been happy for me. They weren't even clapping for me. I felt bad. *Aapko itni kya najrat hogayi*. All of them were in a state of shock. How did I win the show? That was really unexpected for me, but at the end, the people who mattered to me—my mom, sister and my three friends who were sitting there—were very happy. Lovekesh was like, 'Arey Chori' in his Haryana language. Vishal and Shivani were very happy. Naezy, with whom I was standing at the stage, was happy. So people who mattered were happy and the ones who did not were cold to me, which is okay." While she, on one side, was clear about her target, on the other hand, was also targeted by the housemates who often called her 'fake', 'selfish' and 'snake'. These tags did not end there. Post-season, she was termed the 'fixed winner' of the season. "I really don't know why they said that. If I am emerging as a star outside, then you are call-

ing that star a 'fixed winner'. I know my personality. When I walk into that room, people do look at me. Yes, I have that in me and my personality is like that. Even when I was nothing, people used to notice me. All of us were chosen there; the makers had chosen us. I am just not talking about me, but all of us were selected. Out of those contestants, I too was one of them and shone amongst them. I was just being me; that was in my hand and I was showing and being myself. It was the realness that people loved. In fact, if I had been the most favoured, *meri itni nahi bajate they Weekend Ke Vaar main*. I was questioned for what not, even on my character. The whole season and *Weekend Ka Vaar*, things were against me." "Joh tutt ke bikhra jaaye woh Sana Makbul kaisi," said *Bigg Boss*. And her strong personality and mind proved it. We've often seen her during this season and how she stood boldly against the housemates, especially Ranvir Shorey. She further addressed Ranvir Shorey's decision to hold grudges against her sharing, "See, I'll tell you honestly, while we were in the house, even I felt that I would hold my grudges against him. Even though I was like, I am not going to see him outside, I still stand by it. He is not somebody I like or somebody I will sit with. Somebody had asked me if I would work with him. Back in the show, I was like, No, but now I would contradict it. Why should I get the work in between? It's a small world and while working, if we'd meet, I'd certainly have only that professional attitude. If he is holding it against me, then I would say that man is obsessed with me and has to move on. The show is over and Sana has become the winner. This is something that you need to accept now. I know it is difficult for him, Sai and Armaan. For them, the winner was either them or Ranvir. It's their call, but I don't hold any grudges against anybody." She goes on to recall how her formative years taught her lessons, making her who she is today. On the one hand, she is kind and sympathetic; on the other hand, she also has a cold and different side to her. In her *Bigg Boss* journey, "I have been myself and real. When all of us entered the show, we had come to win and were very diplomatic. They had no self-love and didn't have the zeal that I had. I had the jira to say that I had come here to win. My mindset when I entered the show was that I was not here to make relationships. My focus and vision were to win it. But some people cornered me, and again, I did not want people to fight and speak on my behalf. I can do that myself. If people point a finger at me, I'm like, *aap apne aap ko bhi dekho chaar ungli aapke taraf bhi hai*. I had that attitude that I was not going to take anyone of them back home."



After a lot of controversies yet again, the third season of *Bigg Boss OTT* has come to an end, with Sana Makbul emerging as the winner. *The Pioneer* has her onboard for a quick interview, as she goes on to share her emotions about being crowned the winner and also speaks her heart out on a few controversies



Lavanya Tripathi, marked her presence at the opening of Narayani Silks' 11th store in Kukatpally. The showroom boasts a breathtaking collection of intricately designed sarees, catering to the diva in every woman.



Bombay Shirt Company has opened its new store in Sarath City Capital Mall, adding as an extension to their existing store in Jubilee Hills. The brand new location showcases all their apparel categories and offers the best customer service level in its segment.



The Famous Management Institution of South India "ICBM – School of Business Excellence" is now accorded with "MBA" from AIU (Association of Indian Universities). The famous PGDM Program of ICBM – SBE received the MBA (Master of Business Administration) Accordance from AIU, which enables students to pursue higher studies and doctorates.



DPS Nacharam's campus reverberated with mirth and glee as Feriya Y Fiesta 2.0s celebrations took place! This magnetic event, the brain child of Tribhuvana- Director of DPS Nacharam, enthused about 4500 plus students in the age group of 12 to 19 from over 50 schools. The event was spearheaded by Chairman Malka Komaraiah, Yasasvi M CEO & Director and Pallavi – Director, among the rest.



Founders Mohammed Irfan and Mirza Ghouse Pasha, celebrated the launch of their new Amyra Clinics in Hyderabad. The event witnessed the presence of Hyderabad's who's who, right from entrepreneurs, socialities and influencers.

- Asma
- Md.Irfan, Mirza and Md.Imran Khan
- Anika Khara
- Sushila Bokadia
- Aanchal
- Sweeta
- Dr.Sravanti



The 3rd edition of Hybiz TV Food Awards was announced at an event held at the Mercure hotel in Irram Manzil. The trophy and poster was released by its Managing Director M Rajgopal, along with the team.



At Ravindra Bharathi, Samyu and Khushi Kamtam, siblings and students of the Kuchipudi Guru Deepika Reddy, enjoyed an enchanting Rangapravesham. The room was full with people who were supporting and cheering the sisters on as they gave a lovely performance. Samyu and Khushi enthralled the audience with their graceful and abhinaya-infused moves

FUN

ARCHIE



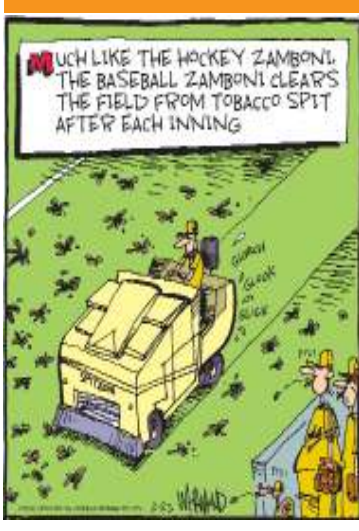
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



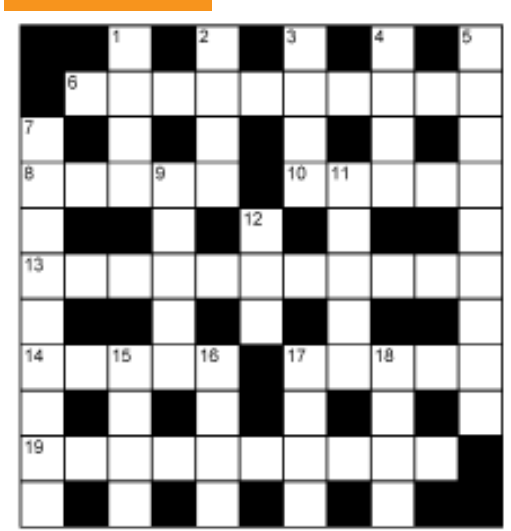
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

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 team game
- Foe
- A bamboo-eating animal
- Measure temperatures with this
- Player of bagpipes
- Stairs
- Book of word meanings

DOWN

- Not in danger
- All right, but not especially good
- Halt
- A sign of tiredness
- A big sea bird
- A many-legged creature

SOLUTION

R	U	C	K	L	E	C	L	E
E	A	J	O	N				
S	O	K	M	A	R	L	E	
T	H	E	N	L	E	V		
P	U	R	I	O	U	S		
A	B	M	A	B	N			
U	L	I	B	R	A	R		
T	R	L	V	O	L			
H	A	N	G	A	R	K	N	E
O	R	Z	F					
R	O	T	S	D	E	T	E	S

GINGER MEGGS



'THE MESSAGE WE ARE CONVEYING IN *AAY* IS NOTHING GREATER THAN FRIENDSHIP'

PNS | HYDERABAD

The actor Narne Nithin starer *Aay* is heading for a grand theatrical release on August 15. Bankrolled by GA2 Pictures, the film will see Anji K. Maniputra make his directorial debut. Ahead of the film's release, the actor shared insights about the movie and its journey during a recent media interaction in Hyderabad.

"We initially did not consider the title *Aay* for the film. It was Allu Aravind's idea to use this title. The reason is that the word *Aay* is commonly used in the Godavari slang. You'll also see this term used in various contexts throughout the movie. Hence, we decided to fix this title," Nithin revealed.

The actor emphasised the film's lighthearted nature, saying, "The movie will be full of fun. That's why we used the tagline 'Fun Bath' in the posters. This was the director's idea. On the day of the movie release, everyone will clearly understand this aspect."

As Narne Nithin's upcoming film *Aay* is nearing its release, the lead actor speaks to the Hyderabad media, sharing more insights about the film



With numerous films scheduled to release on the same day, Nithin expressed confidence in their project: "Many movies are releasing on August 15. However, we believe that the audience that is meant for us is ours. It has been a long time since a good, fun movie with a Godavari backdrop has come. We firmly believe that the audience will enjoy it."

Reflecting on his role, Nithin mentioned his familiarity with the Godavari slang: "From a young age, I have interacted with my Godavari friends and listened to them speak. Hence, I did not find it difficult to speak in the Godavari slang in *Aay*."

On working with debut director Anji K. Maniputra, he shared, "Director Anji K. Maniputra is a young man from Amalapuram. The film *Aay* is a combination of his frustrations and everything he has seen in life. He is a person who gets along easily with anyone and is friendly with everyone on the set."

Nithin also shared that Jr NTR had seen the trailer and enjoyed it: "NTR Garu watched the trailer. He liked com-

edy a lot. He enjoyed it. It would be great if we got such a response from him after he watched the movie."

On choosing projects, Nithin stated, "I have no particular preference to work only with debut directors. I choose films based on the story. Whether it's *Mad* or *Aay*, I acted in films whose stories I liked. Regarding music, Ram Miryala provided music for three songs, while Ajay Arasada provided music for two songs and the background score. Music plays a crucial role in the success of a film." He also praised his co-star, Nayanthara: "Heroine Nayanthara is a Marathi girl, but she fits in well like a Telugu girl. Her role will connect well with everyone."

Nithin concluded with a message from the film: "Friendship is far greater than caste and religion. The message we are conveying in *Aay* is that nothing is greater than friendship."

Looking ahead, Nithin mentioned, "The shooting of the sequel to *Mad* is ongoing. It might be released within this year. No new projects have been finalised yet."



'It's surreal to receive such compliments so early in my career'

Actor Krishna Vamsi, currently gaining much accolades for his movie *Alanaati Ramachandrudu*, shares the love he has received for his character, being tagged as the 'Cute Lover Boy' of Telugu cinema and more

AARTI SREENATH

In the ever-evolving landscape of Telugu cinema, every now and then, a character comes along that resonates deeply with audiences—someone who feels familiar and relatable yet refreshingly new.

Enter Krishna Vamsi, the breakout star of *Alanaati Ramachandrudu*, whose portrayal of 'Siddhu' has not only captured hearts but also sparked a wave of admiration, particularly among his female fans and making a heartthrob.

In a candid interview with the *Alanaati Ramachandrudu* fame and what initially drew him to the role of 'Siddhu,' Vamsi's eyes lit up with enthusiasm. "The moment I heard the narration, I felt an instant connection," he shares. "Siddhu is someone we've all encountered in our lives, whether it's that quiet kid in class with a secret crush or the introverted neighbour who speaks more with his eyes than his words."

He realised that Siddhu wasn't just an introvert. He was emotionally layered, a true ambivert and that complexity excited him the most about the character. The challenge was to bring out those subtle nuances and expressions that are more felt than seen. "In a way, it was a blank canvas, with no prior reference and I relished the opportunity to paint it with my own strokes," he shares.

The success of *Alanaati Ramachandrudu* has also given rise to a new tag for Vamsi, the 'Cute Lover Boy' of Telugu cinema.

Vamsi is humbled by the comparison. "Honestly, it's such a flattering compliment. When I first saw Siddhu on screen, I even thought he had this charming, relatable quality. The way he smiles at his loved ones—that's something I think audiences took home with them. It's heartwarming to know that people of all ages found something endearing in him," he said.

Comparisons to iconic characters like R. Madhavan's 'Karthik' from *Sakhi* have naturally followed. But while Karthik was all extroverted passion, Siddhu's charm lies in his subtlety. "Madhavan Sir is a legend and it's an honour to be mentioned in the same breath," Vamsi says with a smile. "Karthik was bold and direct, while Siddhu was shy and reserved, yet deeply committed. I think today's generation appreciates that kind of quiet intensity, a love that doesn't shout but speaks volumes through a simple glance or a smile. Maybe that's why girls have taken to Siddhu; they can feel those same butterflies he feels on screen," he said.

When asked about his best feature, his captivating smile or his natural screen presence, Vamsi is thoughtfully reflective. "It's surreal to receive such compliments so early in my career," he admits.

"Growing up, everyone told me I had a charming smile and I've definitely used it to get out of trouble a few times!" he laughs. "But now, when people see Siddhu in me, they recognise that natural ease I tried to bring to the screen. It's a validation that keeps me grounded and motivated to give my best in every role." If he had to choose,



though, he'd say it's his smile, it's something that instantly connects with people and he is incredibly grateful for that.

Blushing slightly, Vamsi turns his attention to the fans who have showered him with love and support. "I'm overwhelmed by the affection, especially from my women fans. During our promotional tours, the energy and the love from college girls were unbelievable; it boosted my confidence like nothing else." He thanks every-

one from the bottom of his heart and promises to reciprocate that love through his work, bringing characters to life that his audience will continue to adore. "Please keep supporting me on this journey; I wouldn't be here without you," he requests.

As Krishna Vamsi steps further into the spotlight, it's clear that his journey has only just begun. With a blend of natural charm and raw talent, he's set to carve out a niche in Telugu cinema, one smile at a time.

VIJAY SETHUPATHI'S TRAIN GEARS UP FOR 10 DAYS OF SHOOTING

The highly anticipated dark thriller *Train*, starring Vijay Sethupathi, is nearing the final stages of production.

Despite significant progress, the film's shooting is not yet complete. The team is gearing up for an additional ten days of shooting, which is scheduled to take place next month.

Train promises to be an intense and gripping thriller, adding to the excitement among Vijay Sethupathi's fans. Starring Shruti Haasan as the female lead, the film's release is set to precede the debut of *Pisasu 2*, another eagerly awaited project. With the shooting expected to wrap up soon, anticipation for *Train* is building. The film is set to deliver a captivating narrative and has already garnered significant attention due to its dark and thrilling storyline.



Varun Tej's *Matka* first look makes a bold impression

Mega Prince Varun Tej is set to make his pan-India debut with *Matka*, which is also his most ambitious film to date. Directed by Karuna Kumar and produced by Dr. Vijender Reddy Teegala and Rajani Thalluri under the banners of Vyra Entertainment and SRT Entertainment, the film is being crafted on a grand scale. Production is currently underway in Hyderabad.

On Sunday, the team unveiled the first look poster for the film, showcasing Varun Tej in two distinct avatars—one as a young man and the other as a middle-aged individual. The film will span the protagonist's journey over 24 years, featuring him in four different looks. The poster highlights two contrasting facets of his character: from an underdog to a powerful overlord, capturing his rise to dominance.

In one image, Varun Tej exudes youthful intensity and style, smoking a cigar with a vintage look. On the other hand, he appears aged and affluent, also smoking a cigar but with spectacles and grey hair, and a gun on his desk. The background features a king card from a deck of playing cards. The impressive first look creates a strong visual impact, hinting at Varun Tej's return to roles his fans are eager to see. The film also stars Meenakshi Chaudhry and Nora Fatehi, set against a period backdrop. The cinematography is handled by A Kishor Kumar, with GV Prakash Kumar composing the music and Karthika Srinivas R editing the film. *Matka* will be released in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada.

Bekkam Venugopal reveals *Radhe Krishna* climax was reshot for perfection

The teaser for the film *Radhe Krishna*, which was unveiled, is finally out now. Produced by Voodugu Sudhakar under the banner of SV Creations and directed by Ismail Shaik, the film stars SS Saikulu in the lead role, with Bramarambika and Arpita Lohi as the heroines and music composed by ML Raja. The movie will be released in both Telugu and Banjara languages.

The teaser launch event was attended by several prominent guests, including producers Bekkam Venugopal and Ram Talluri and heroes Sohel and Auto

Ramprasad. Producer Ram Talluri remarked, "This film is a product of our district. The teaser looks impressive and the songs are excellent. If newcomers are well guided, we will see even better films in the future. I sincerely hope that this film brings financial success to the producer and a good name to the actors."

Producer Bekkam Venugopal praised the film's production, stating, "I always support small films. When I saw this movie, I felt the climax could have been better. After sharing my feedback, the team revisited the shoot and edited it for three

more days, reflecting their passion for cinema. They have created a high-quality film on a modest budget. I hope it brings success and recognition to the producer."

Hero Sohel expressed his support, saying, "The film's team feels like family to me. Cinema is often seen as a world of colors, but we operate in black and white while delivering those colours. We never know which films will resonate with audiences, but we understand the effort behind making them. This team has worked hard and I hope everyone enjoys the movie and it succeeds."



STANDALONE

The city of Hyderabad witnessed a spectacular event as Tollywood cine actress Sreeleela attended the CREDAI Hyderabad Property Show at the Shree Convention Centre in Kompally. The event has been a resounding success, drawing an overwhelming response from attendees and participants alike.

