

QUOTE OF THE DAY
 Harish Rao should ask his uncle (KCR) about the spirit of Khammam. The less BRS pokes Khammam people the better for them. BRS managed to win only one seat in the last three elections in Khammam. Even in the last election, my disciple using my image and influence won that seat. BRS would be completely wiped out in the future and be a zero.
 -Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Minister Telangana

US looks forward to expanding critical partnership with India
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 RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA-SOUTH AFRICA TO BE REVIVED
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'It was a challenge to dub for an ape IN TELUGU'
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DON'T MISS...

Special tourism packages for IT ...

Explaining that Telangana Tourism department has designed customized weekend getaway packages with discounts for IT professionals, Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao said while encouraging techies to partner and promote tourism through social media and community events. The Minister interacted with IT professionals during the Weekend Getaways from Hyderabad programme themed "Ready for a Deccan Recharge," at Raheja Mindspace on Tuesday. Addressing IT professionals, Jupally emphasised...

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Youth must strive to make India...

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday launched the BJP's 'Tiranga Yatra' in Ahmedabad and called upon youth to come forward and strive to make India a developed nation by 2047. The 'Tiranga Yatra' is a way to energise youth and commit themselves to nation building, asserted the senior BJP leader while addressing a gathering before flagging off the yatra in Gujarat's commercial hub ahead of Independence Day. "The Har Ghar Tiranga campaign launched by..."

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Major domestic appliances...

The market of major domestic appliances saw an 18 per cent value-based growth in the first half of 2024, helped by a strong demand for essential household items, according to a report from GfK. The growth in MDA (major domestic appliances) market was led by Key categories such as air-conditioners and refrigerators, which reported a growth of 30 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively. "This growth is 3X of growth in 2023 over the previous year," said the report from GfK, which is now an NIQ Company...

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High hopes, disappointing...

The Indian boxing contingent, that featured two reigning world champions in Nikhat Zareen and Lovlina Borgohain, entered the Olympics hoping for an unprecedented medal haul, only to crumble under pressure, leaving behind a trail of disappointment in a medal-less campaign. Boxing became a medal hope for India after Vijender Singh's historic bronze at the 2008 Beijing Games. MC Mary Kom added a women's bronze to it in 2012. Although the 2016 Rio Games saw the boxers return without a...

-SPORTS

'Repairs cannot proceed without releasing water'
 K'taka assures AP, TG on Tungabhadra Dam repair work

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday assured the Agriculture Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana about the restoration work of the Tungabhadra Dam gate. "Our farmers are no different than your states' farmers. We will take measures to ensure that they are not troubled in the wake of damage to the Tungabhadra Dam gate," the Chief Minister told media persons in the presence of Agriculture Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. He also instructed the officials to expedite the repair work of the Tungabhadra Dam gate at the earliest. "Water from the Tungabhadra Dam was previously released through the gates. However, the 19th gate of the dam, which prevents water flow, has been damaged," the Chief Minister said.



CAS verdict on Vinesh deferred again

To be delivered on 16th

PNS ■ PARIS
 Suspense continued on the fate of Vinesh Phogat's appeal against her Olympic disqualification with the ad-hoc division of the Court of Arbitration for Sport extending the time limit to deliver its decision till August 16 without specifying the reasons for continuing to defer the matter. The 29-year-old was disqualified from the women's 50kg free-style final for being 100gm overweight at the time of weigh-in on Wednesday last week. "The CAS ad hoc division president has allowed Hon.

CM Revanth returning with flying colours

12 - DAY TOUR FETCHES INVESTMENTS AND ASSURANCES

- In the US itself, the Telangana Chief Minister was able to net investments totaling 32 thousand crores
- Cognizant expansion plan will create an additional 15,000 jobs and include a new campus spanning 1 million square feet

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 After successfully showcasing the conducive business ecosystem in Telangana as well as the efforts of his government to adopt proactive policies, Team Revanth is returning with flying colors by bagging thousands of crores of investments and assurances from the US and South Korean investors. The 12-day tour of Chief Minister Revanth's team has been successful beyond expectations and there is the immense possibility that the government will be taking follow-up actions to materialise the agreements entered into with the business honchos in both the nations. In the US itself, the Telangana Chief Minister was able to net investments totaling 32 thousand crores and with the same spirit he went to South Korea, where also he got immense response from business houses. The foundation stone will be laid for Cognizant's new facility at GAR Building, Kokapet on Wednesday.



CM to switch on Sitarama Project's pumps tomorrow

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Capt N Uttam Kumar Reddy has refuted the claim of former minister Harish Rao that 90% of the Sitarama project work had been completed under the Bharat Rashtra Samithi regime, calling it 'ludicrous'. He asserted that only 39% of the work had been completed under the BRS government. Uttam Kumar Reddy announced that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy would switch on the Sitarama Lift Irrigation Project's pumps on August 15. The project would be fully operational by August 15, 2026, he added.



Joint Collector MV Bhoopal Reddy and Senior Assistant Y Madhan Mohan Reddy

AP relieves TG employees

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The Andhra Pradesh government has issued orders relieving 122 non-gazetted employees who, despite being locals of Telangana, were allocated to Andhra Pradesh against their options following the state's bifurcation. The decision follows a request from the Telangana government to allow these employees to return to their native state. According to G.O.Rt.No.1412, dated August 13, 2024, the Telangana government had earlier conveyed through a letter from its Chief Secretary that these employees had been allocated to Andhra Pradesh against their preferences, leading to their prolonged stay in the neighboring state. The Telangana Non-Gazetted Officers' Union had appealed for the reallocation of these employees, which was thoroughly considered by the Telangana government before a formal request was made to Andhra Pradesh. The Andhra Pradesh government, after careful examination, agreed to the request. The Heads of Departments (HoDs) in Andhra Pradesh have been directed to obtain undertakings from the identified employees, as per the formula provided by Telangana. These undertakings confirm the employees' willingness to accept postings in Telangana and to assume the last rank in their respective cadres, aligning with those already employed in Telangana.

AMIDST RISING DEMAND
 TG staring at shortfall of 7K MU power by 2032

- Telangana's electricity demand is projected to grow at a CAGR of 6.17% over 2023-24 to 2029-30
- Peak demand in Telangana is projected to reach 27,059 MW by 2031-32
- Telangana needs to add 4,676 MW of solar, 4,590 MW of wind, and 1,655 MW of hydro capacity by 2031-32
- TG needs additional 1,655 MW hydro capacity to meet 2032 energy goals



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana's electricity demand is projected to grow significantly, with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 6.17% over 2023-24 to 2029-30, according to a recent report by the Central Electricity Authority (CEA). The report outlines a comprehensive Resource Adequacy Plan, highlighting the need for immediate capacity expansion to ensure reliable and affordable power supply through 2031-32. Telangana's power demand is heavily influenced by its agrarian economy, leading to seasonal and diurnal fluctuations, particularly from January to March, with the lowest demand observed in July. The state's current power scenario, with a total contracted capacity of 15,751 MW as of March 2023, shows a significant reliance on coal (48%) and solar energy (33.2%). However, the report indicates that the existing and planned capacities, including renewables,

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MINISTER HITS BACK

Why didn't BRS blacklist MEIL when pumphouses were submerged?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 With the Bharat Rashtra Samithi and the Bharatiya Janata Party openly demanding action against Megha Engineering & Infrastructure Limited (MEIL) -- the contracting agency under a cloud over the Sunkishala retaining wall collapse -- a Minister in the Congress government has hit back, asking why BRS did not take action when the pumphouses (built by the same agency) were submerged. "Key pumphouses of the Kaleshwaram project were submerged during the BRS regime. At that time, why didn't BRS blacklist the contractor? Isn't it the same contractor against whom they are making demand", a prominent Minister asked. The Minister said that it was BRS which had given the contract. It may be mentioned here that BRS working president KT Rama Rao had posted on X, questioning the government why it was hushing up the incident and going soft on the agency involved. KTR pointed to the glaring inaction despite the severity of the incident, raising concerns about the government's apparent reluctance to hold MEIL accountable. He addressed All India Congress committee leader Rahul Gandhi directly.

'Quality compromised, funds misused'

- No milk, eggs served in govt hostels
- Poor hygiene in kitchens and no proper toilets

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Officials of the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) conducted surprise searches in 10 government hostels on Tuesday and found shortcomings in the quality and quantities of food items served as well as misappropriation of funds on Tuesday. The hostels raided include Hostel for SC Boys at Jambagh; Hostel for BC Boys at Medipally; Hostel for BCs Boys, Koyala konda; Hostel for SC Girls, Tipparthi; Hostel for ST Boys, Vemana Palli; Hostel for SC Boys, Ippala palli;

FINDINGS OF STATEWIDE ACB RAIDS

Hostel for SC Girls, Hostel for ST Boys; Karepalli, and Hostel for BC Boys, Hostel for SC Girls; Kothagalli. The ACB teams were assisted by Inspector Legal Metrology, Sanitary Inspector, Food Inspector and Auditor to check the quality, quantity of the food, sanitation conditions, strength particulars of the students, and records of the hostels, according to an official statement. A report will be submitted to the authorities of the government, along with suggestions to improve conditions in the hostels. It was found that students' numbers were inflated. No proper hygiene was maintained in the kitchens, store rooms, wash

rooms and toilets. Even proper drinking water is not being supplied. There was no sufficient lighting and ventilation in the rooms. The teams found misappropriation of funds in purchases. The prescribed food menu was not being maintained. The students were supposed to be given egg and milk every day, but the items were never given. The bathrooms of girls' hostels were not in a condition to be used. There are 18 types of registers or records to be maintained, but none of them was being maintained. The wardens who are supposed to be available in the hostels were not found. The teams found that they come "once a week or once a month".

Ranga Reddy JC held for taking bribe

PNS ■ RANGA REDDY
 Two government officials, including the Joint Collector of Rangareddy district, were arrested by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 8 lakh, the ACB said on Tuesday. ACB Director-General CV Anand said on 'X' that the Anti-Corruption Bureau trapped and arrested Joint Collector MV Bhoopal Reddy and Senior Assistant Y Madhan Mohan Reddy of Ranga Reddy who colluded and abused their official positions. They were caught red-handed while accepting a bribe of Rs 8 lakh from the complainant for removal of 14 guntas land from prohibited list in Dharani portal. The duo took many precautions to receive the money without getting exposed, the ACB DG said adding that the ACB teams remained one step ahead and spontaneously strategised throughout the night and trapped them. Dharani is an Integrated Land Records Management System.

NATIONWIDE SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED PHARMACISTS

Upskilling pharmacy assistants need of the hour

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Healthcare experts have raised concerns over the acute shortage of qualified pharmacists across India, warning that the gap between demand and supply could impact severely the country's healthcare delivery system. With nearly nine lakh pharmacies operating nationwide, the country requires over 30 lakh qualified pharmacists to adequately staff these establishments. However, experts estimate that there are only about 17.5 lakh registered pharmacists, and less than one-third of these are diploma holders qualified to work in retail pharmacies. "The disparity between the number of qualified pharmacists and the demand is



alarming," said a leading healthcare analyst. "Most of the pharmacists holding bachelor's or master's degrees are absorbed into the pharmaceutical manufacturing and marketing sec-

tors due to better incentives and the perception that retail jobs are less prestigious for those with advanced degrees. This shift leaves retail pharmacies critically understaffed, particularly in smaller towns where the need is most acute." Experts also pointed out that the distribution of pharmacists varies significantly across states, with some like Maharashtra and Gujarat having a higher concentration of pharmacists, while others face severe shortages. The situation is further exacerbated by the declining enrollment in pharmaceutical diploma programs, which are considered ideal qualifications for retail pharmacy positions. "Urbanization is driving pharmacists away from Tier 3

and Tier 4 towns, leaving these areas with an acute shortage of qualified professionals," noted a healthcare expert. "This trend is particularly concerning because smaller towns heavily rely on pharmacists for both medical advice and medication, given the limited reach of doctors in these regions." In light of this pressing issue, experts have proposed an innovative solution aimed at bridging the gap: upskilling the 20 to 30 lakh pharmacy assistants who currently man retail outlets across the country. These assistants, who typically have a 10th or 12th-grade education, have gained valuable practical experience in dispensing medicines by working alongside qualified pharmacists.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 The Congress announced on Tuesday that it will organise public mobilisation campaigns over its demands for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the Adani issue, a caste census, and adherence to the Constitution in letter and spirit, as it held a key meeting on its preparedness for the upcoming Assembly polls. Amid a raging row over Hindenburg's allegations, the opposition party also said it will hold a nationwide agitation on August 22 demanding SEBI chief Madhabi Puri Buch's resignation and a JPC probe into the Adani issue. The assertions came after

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge held a meeting with all party general secretaries, state unit chiefs and AICC state in-charges here to discuss organisational matters and various issues of national importance for election preparedness. Elections are due in Haryana, Maharashtra, and Jharkhand later this year. Polls could also be held in Jammu and Kashmir this year. Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi, and general secretaries Jairam Ramesh and K C Venugopal, among others, were part of the meeting at the AICC headquarters here. The Congress also urged the BJP-led Centre to take all possible steps to ensure that targeted attacks on religious

Continued on Page 5

The Indie Comedy Show

Stand-up Comedy by Hriday Ranjan, Abhijeet Deshpande, Toby Thomas, Muneer Taufeeq, Sakil Ansari and Kirtiraj for a laughter filled evening.

Venue
Navika Cafe & Studio
564a, Road No. 92,
behind Ceramic pro,
MLA Colony, Jubilee
Hills,
Hyderabad
August 15

Pottery Workshop

Venue
At Feu, Jubilee Hills,
By the Pottery Circle
August 14

Akan Aahvaanam - A Unique Fund Raising Feast

This Independence Day, Akan redefines the spirit of freedom by extending a helping hand to those in need. Akan Aahvaanam is a unique fundraising feast that brings together culinary excellence, artistic expression, and philanthropy. Akan Aahvaanam is a "pay as you please" lunch experience where chefs and artists collaborate to create an unforgettable experience.

Venue
Akan, Hyderabad
Date: Independence Day
Time: 12-4 pm

HUMAN FLAG

A photo shoot of a group of Lodge Keys members, their spouses and family members, wearing kurtas of saffron, white, green will form a human flag to celebrate this Independence Day uniquely.

Venue
Goshamahal Baradari
Masonic Building,
Goshamahal,
Day & Date:
Wednesday, August
14th, Time: 9am

City Pioneer



HYDERABAD WEDNESDAY | AUGUST 14, 2024

03

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Explaining that Telangana Tourism department has designed customized weekend getaway packages with discounts for IT professionals, Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao said while encouraging techies to partner and promote tourism through social media and community events.

The Minister interacted with IT professionals during the Weekend Getaways from Hyderabad programme themed "Ready for a Deccan Recharge," at Raheja Mindspace on Tuesday.

Addressing IT professionals, Jupally emphasised that tourism creates peace and helps bridge cultural gaps. He noted that IT professionals, who drive technological advancements, need peace and tranquility. He gave the example of how people in the US often spend their weekends camping and visiting tourist spots.

quail waters of Nagarjunasagar, breathtaking views from Bhadrakali Lake, and the Srisailem reservoir with its greenery, hills, and wildlife, including tigers. He noted that Bhadrakali Lake is particularly beautiful for weekend getaways.

Jupally pointed out that the State has something for everyone, with many scenic spots in Telangana's interior that are not widely known. He highlighted Nagarjunasagar as a prime location, offering stunning views, valleys, and a rich history of Mahayana Buddhism, which is the largest in South Asia. He encouraged techies to visit these places on weekends with their families.

Jupally announced that a new website will soon be launched to allow online booking of hotels and transport, along with ensuring security at tourist destinations.

Principal Secretary of Environment and Forests, Vani Prasad, said the government has never reached out to IT professionals like this before to invite them to explore Telangana. She encouraged people to look for discounts and new packages for weekend travel. Vani noted that beautiful places don't require long trips, mentioning that Telangana has its own Stonehenge, along with temples, heritage sites, and adventure spots around Hyderabad.

She urged people to join in exploring these places, stating that to protect our heritage, people need to take ownership and appreciate it.

Telangana has its own Stonehenge, along with temples, heritage sites, and adventure spots around Hyderabad. For those wanting to connect with nature, Telangana offers lush greenery in Ananthagiri Hills, the tranquil waters of Nagarjunasagar, breathtaking views from Bhadrakali Lake, and the Srisailem reservoir with its greenery, hills, and wildlife, including tigers.

READY FOR A DECCAN RECHARGE

Special tourism packages for IT techies

Encouraging them to partner in promoting tourism through social media and community events

Jupally highlighted Telangana's rich culture, from the majestic Golconda Fort to Ramoji Film City. He mentioned the State's many historical landmarks and cultural cities. For those wanting to connect with nature, Telangana offers lush greenery in Ananthagiri Hills, the tran-

The State has something for everyone, with many scenic spots in interiors that are not widely known.

Nagarjunasagar is a prime location, offering stunning views, valleys and a rich history of Mahayana Buddhism, which is the largest in South Asia.



Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao seen addressing the IT professionals at the Raheja Mindspace on Tuesday.

PRAJAVANI

People apply for schemes that are yet to be rolled out

REVANTH CHITHALURI ■ HYDERABAD

People are applying for schemes which are not yet rolled off by the government at the Prajavani held at Praja Bhavan on Tuesday. People applied for the Mahalakshmi scheme and Ambedkar Abhaya Hastham scheme at Praja Bhavan in Hyderabad.

People came to apply for the Mahalakshmi scheme. According to the Congress's manifesto every woman receives Rs 2500 every month. A Sanath Nagar resident named Ruksar Begum said that she came to apply for financial assistance of Rs 2,500. "I knew that this scheme had not started yet but I am applying for it because I do not want to miss it." "I do not have a ration card, I am not a beneficiary of free electricity bill, and LPG gas cylinder for Rs 500 also", she added.

Some of them went to Praja Bhavan to apply for the Ambedkar Abhaya Hastham scheme. According to the Congress manifesto, under this scheme every SC, ST family would get Rs 12 lakh economic help from the government.



Vice-Chairman of Telangana State Planning Board (TSPB) Chinna Reddy receiving applications from the people at Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Praja Bhavan on Tuesday.

A Medchal resident Anjaneyulu said that he came to apply for Ambedkar Abhaya Hastham. "If the government would give Rs 12 lakh of financial assistance, it

would be a great help to my family."

A Kachiguda resident Haneef Begum said that she has not been benefiting from Rs 500 gas bill. "My husband is handicapped. We are living on pension. So I came here to request the government to provide some work for us", she said.

Some of them were misled that August 13 was the last day to apply for Mahalakshmi scheme. A Pahadi Shareef resident Vahidha Begum said, "I came here to apply for free Rs 2,500 every month. My neighbours told me that this is the last day to apply for that scheme".

The government received a total of 475 applications on Tuesday. Out of them, revenue department received 120 applications, minority welfare 60 applications, social welfare 53 applications, panchayat raj and rural development 38 applications, consumer affairs, food and civil supplies 36 applications and other departments 168 applications.

DSC -2024 key and response sheet released

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Director of School Education Department on Tuesday issued the key and response Sheet of DSC-2024 on its official website of Telangana School Education Department.

According to officials, DSC-2024 aspirants should go through the official website for verification of their response sheet with the Key and also submit their objections, if any on the official website www.schooledu.telangana.gov.in up to August 20 by 5pm.

Any wrong entries with regard to the name, date of birth, gender, caste, EWS and addition of TET score for who had written TG TET-2024 will be rectified based on the submission of documentary evidences through official email ID: helpdesksdsc2024@gmail.com up to August 28.

Edn institutions asked to form anti-ragging panels

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Cyberabad Commissioner of Police Avinash Mohanty said that principals of all educational institutions should take proactive steps in preventing ragging.

On Tuesday, the Cyberabad said that any student convicted and imprisoned under Section 4 of the Telangana Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1997, will be dismissed from the educational institution. In cases where the imprisonment exceeds six months, the convicted student will be barred from admission to any other

educational institution. Police said that as the new academic year has begun, students across various educational institutions embark on a journey filled with hope, aspirations, and opportunities. Unfortunately, in certain instances, some senior students may attempt to abuse, humiliate, or harass new entrants in the name of ragging.

"It is requested that Anti-Ragging Committees be constituted, comprising the principal, professors, wardens, parents, and students. These committees should work in close

coordination with student union leaders to foster a ragging-free environment. Additionally, educational institutions are encouraged to display posters highlighting anti-ragging laws at prominent locations within and around the campus."

The Cyberabad Police is actively conducting awareness programmes on anti-ragging in various educational institutions to eradicate this social evil.

For any assistance or to report incidents of ragging, one can contact the nearest police station or dial 100.

Indigo & Qatar Airlines asked to pay Rs 3.70 L for missing luggage

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission II, Hyderabad, ordered Indigo Airlines and Qatar Airlines to pay Rs 3.70 lakh to a passenger for missing luggage.

Complainant Thannir Sriranga Rao said that while he was returning from San Francisco (USA) via Doha to Hyderabad (India) on July 30, 2022, he



Interglobe Aviation Limited (Indigo Airlines) staff at the airport said that the luggage will be delivered at the destination point. Further, they mentioned that if any such baggage is lost Indigo Airlines and Qatar Airlines would compensate him.

Believing in it, the complainant has given his baggage weighing 32 kgs of various items worth \$429.58 equivalent to Rs 3,54,062. When he landed in Hyderabad airport he noticed that his luggage was missing. When informed, the authorities assured him that they would let him know after enquiry. But they did not give any response.

After hearing the arguments, the court ordered the Indigo Airlines and Qatar Airlines to pay an amount of Rs 3,12,412, along with interest of 9 per cent per annum from the date of loss of baggage on July 31, 2022 till the date of realisation.

However, the court noted that out of Rs 3.12 lakh, Rs 41,650 was paid by the Indian Airlines under monetary compensation to the complainant.

Along with Rs 3.12 lakh, compensation of Rs 50,000 and legal costs of Rs 10,000 should be paid in 45 days from the date the opposite parties receive the order.

OU dining hall in a 'mess'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Once again Research Scholar's mess facility of Osmania University (OU) is in limelight, as a video of the dining facility inundated with water went viral and students began to protest against apathy of OU authorities on Tuesday. The video shows the students dining in the indoor pool of water and they began to protest by alleging the water seepage from the rooftops that led to water logging in the mess.

The students stated that the varsity authorities are not responding to the seepage that has been happening for the past week. In-charge Vice-Chancellor Dana Kishore has taken charge. He has not taken any action despite protesting on this issue for days.

The Congress government, which came to power in the name of change,

has not transformed the education sector. There is no proper appointment of VCs for Telangana State universities by the present government. Hence, the reaserach scholars demanded that the State government immediately appoint regular VC and resolve the issues.

Research students Nelli Satya, Chevella Yadagiri, Kranti, Tirupati, Prashanth, Nagaraju and others participated in the programme.



CBI registers case against 2 GST officers for graft

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered a case against Superintendent and Inspector of Principal Commissionerate of Central Tax, who are working at GST Commissionerate, GST Bhavan, Basheerbagh, Hyderabad. On Tuesday, the CBI said that both the accused allegedly harassed and extracted Rs 5 lakh from the complainant.

It was alleged that the accused threatened to impose Goods & Services Tax on the complainant for certain alleged irregularity. Further, the complainant alleged that the GST officers sealed his iron scrap shop and accepted Rs 5 lakh as gratification on July 4, 2023. It was also alleged that the accused further demanded Rs 3 lakh to open the seized premises.

The CBI conducted searches at two places in Hyderabad which led to recovery of incriminating documents. Investigation is continuing.

Dustbins to be arranged at all apartments

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GHMC Commissioner Amrapali Kata ordered officials to speak with apartment associations to install dustbins at every apartment to collect the garbage everyday. She said that it would be convenient to collect the garbage at one place, instead of going door-to-door in the apartments to collect the garbage.

Commissioner Amrapali held a teleconference with additional and zonal commissioners on Tuesday.

The Commissioner said that the collection of garbage in the apartments is not fully done by Swachh autos due to various reasons.

Officials should take appropriate measures to prevent littering near power transformers. The authorities concerned have been directed to provide a detailed report of the transformers without fencing.

The Commissioner ordered the officials to arrange dustbins at parks too. The Urban BioDiversity (UBD) department officials have been directed to arrange flowering plants at the junctions to make it pleasant for the motorists.

ACROSS THE STATES



Indian visa centre in Dhaka resumes 'limited operations'

The Indian visa application centre here resumed 'limited operations' on Tuesday, days after Bangladesh saw violent clashes which led to the ouster of prime minister Sheikh Hasina...

CM Revanth returning with flying colours



revealed that the expansion plan will create an additional 15,000 jobs and include a new campus spanning 1 million square feet. The company has focused on setting up this new campus within 10 days of signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the state government...



US looks forward to expanding critical partnership with India

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

The Biden Administration looks forward to expanding its "critical and critically important" partnership with India and creating a more prosperous and secure Indo-Pacific, the White House has said.



Jean-Pierre said. Earlier in the day, India's Ambassador-designate to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, arrived in the American Capital.

Cong to garner support to..

Continued from page 1

minorities and their places of worship in Bangladesh are stopped and make sure that they are enabled to lead a life of security, dignity, and harmony.

meeting. In a post on X after the meeting, Kharge said, "The shocking revelations of nexus between SEBI and Adani need a thorough investigation. The money of small investors in the stock market can't be jeopardised."



SC closes contempt proceedings against Ramdev, Patanjali Ayurved

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a relief to yoga guru Ramdev, his aide Balkrishna and Patanjali Ayurved Limited, the Supreme Court on Tuesday closed the contempt proceedings initiated against them for "violation" of the undertakings given before the court in the misleading advertisements case.

indeed be grave," a bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah said. "In that eventuality, the sword of contempt that has now been returned to rest in its sheath, shall be flourished as swiftly as these proceedings were originally initiated," the bench said in its 41-page verdict.



ucts manufactured and marketed by it and, further, that no casual statements claiming medicinal efficacy or against any system of medicine will be released to the media in any form".

CAS verdict on..

Continued from page 1

Dr Annabelle Bennett, Sole Arbitrator in the Vinesh Phogat vs United World Wrestling (UWW) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) matter, an extension until 6:00 pm (Paris time) on Friday, August 16, 2024, a release from the IOA said.

TG staring at..

Continued from page 1

will not suffice to meet the projected demand. It estimates that by 2031-32, the state could face an energy shortfall of 7,027 MU, especially during peak demand months like February and March.

Repairs cannot proceed..

Continued from page 1

He also expressed confidence that the Tungbhadra Dam will fill up again, saying that he will personally come to offer worship once the dam is full. "Tungbhadra Dam management falls under the Tungbhadra Dam Board, which includes members appointed by the Union government as well as representatives from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka."

to farmers. Farmers require 90 TMC for their initial crops and this quantity is available in the dam. However, due to the damage to the 19th gate, 35,000 cusecs of water were lost. "Repairs cannot proceed without releasing the water from the dam. The water level will be reduced, leaving 64 TMC remaining. The repair of the gate will take a minimum of four to five days."

lems, adding that heavy rainfall is expected in the state from August 17. On the dam's maintenance issues, the Chief Minister said that while there were problems with the canals in 2019, there were no issues with the dam gates. "The current gate chain breakage is a first in the last 70 years," the Chief Minister said.

Upskilling pharmacy..

Continued from page 1

"These pharmacy assistants have a wealth of practical knowledge, but their skills remain unrecognized and unrewarded," said an industry expert. The solution involves allowing individuals with at least two years of experience in a pharmacy retail outlet and a 12th-grade education with chemistry to take the same exam that awards a Diploma in Pharmacy.

effort between the Pharma Sector Skill Council and the Pharmacy Council of India. "This approach not only provides a permanent structural solution to the pharmacist shortage but also offers a respectable career trajectory for those who may not have had access to formal education," experts emphasized.

Ranga Reddy JC held for..

Continued from page 1

Madan Mohan Reddy was caught red-handed at Gurruguda X road near Sanjeevani Vanam here on August 12 night by the ACB officials when he demanded and accepted the bribe amount of Rs 8 lakhs from the complainant in his car as bribe to process and get complainant's work done by influencing his higher officials, the ACB said.

Mohan Reddy confessed that he demanded the bribe on behalf of MV Bhoopal Reddy, Joint Collector, the ACB officials said. When Madan Mohan Reddy called Bhoopal Reddy on his phone and informed about the receipt of bribe amount, the Joint Collector instructed him to come to Peddabertpet ORR to hand over the money.

recovered from the Joint Collector's car. The ACB conducted raids on Madan Mohan Reddy's residence, his office, and the homes of his relatives as part of the investigation. Both the Senior Assistant and the Joint Collector were arrested and would be produced before the Principal Special Judge for ACB Cases in Hyderabad. The investigation is underway.



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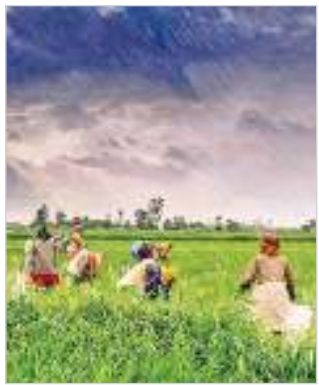
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PAPER WITH PASSION

Sunshine after the storm

Indian agriculture set to benefit from good monsoon and PM Modi's release of climate-resistant seeds

India's agricultural sector, the cornerstone of its economy, is set to benefit from a double dose of positive news this monsoon season. With forecasts predicting a normal to above-normal monsoon and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent announcement of 109 climate-resistant seed varieties, the outlook for the country's farmers is brighter than ever. These developments not only promise a significant boost for agriculture but also hold the potential to ease inflationary pressures—a key concern for both policymakers and the general public. A favorable monsoon is expected to drive agricultural growth in India, with a report from India Ratings predicting a 4.3% increase in FY25, up from 1.4% in FY24. The monsoon plays a critical role in sustaining food supply, which in turn satisfies consumer demand and helps stabilise food prices. Additionally, a good monsoon increases rural incomes, which can stimulate demand for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG). Monsoon rains are vital for Indian agriculture, particularly for the kharif crop season, which includes staples like rice, maize, and pulses. With nearly 60 per cent of India's farmland being rain-fed, a good monsoon often translates to a successful harvest. This year's normal to above-average rainfall has raised hopes for a bumper crop season. A successful monsoon reduces the need for costly irrigation solutions, helping farmers save on input costs. As a result, rural incomes are expected to rise, driving consumer demand in villages and small towns, which are vital engines of the country's economic growth.



Against this promising backdrop, Prime Minister Modi's release of 109 climate-resistant seed varieties marks a significant step towards securing India's agricultural future. These seeds have been specially developed to withstand the growing challenges posed by climate change, including erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts, and rising temperatures. By enhancing crop resilience, these seeds aim to ensure stable yields even in adverse weather conditions. The introduction of these seeds is a forward-looking initiative that aligns with the government's broader agricultural strategy, which emphasises sustainability and self-reliance. These seeds are expected to reduce crop losses due to unpredictable weather, providing farmers with a safety net and helping to stabilise food production. This could lead to a more consistent food supply. In recent years, inflation, particularly driven by volatile food prices, has been a persistent concern for the Indian economy. A good monsoon and the adoption of climate-resistant seeds could bring much-needed relief to consumers, especially those in lower-income brackets who are most affected by rising food costs. During his second term, Prime Minister Modi had promised to double farmers' incomes—a goal that was challenging to achieve at the time. However, that target now seems within reach. The combination of good rainfall and resilient seed varieties could be the key to realising that vision and securing a prosperous future for Indian agriculture.

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PICTALK



NCC cadets during full dress rehearsal for the 78th Independence Day celebrations at Red Fort, in New Delhi PTI

Finding fault with the US for internal failures



BHOPINDER SINGH

The narrative of an 'American hand' in political unrest in South Asia sells, even as the root cause of instability often lie with its own politicians

The United States of America did not have a significant role in the run-up to the independence of the Indian subcontinent from the British Raj. Indeed, the Gandhian Party started as a San Francisco-based anti-colonial organization, as did the New York-based India Home Rule League founded by Lala Lajpat Rai, but the Government of the USA had remained largely oblivious of the subcontinental developments. It was only in the post-World War 2 tensions between the competing 'blocs', when the Cold War started in earnest, that the USA went into overdrive to control the subcontinental narrative. To further its interest, the USA had backed military dictators in Pakistan, and undemocratic monarchies in Afghanistan and Nepal, while remaining decidedly hostile towards India.

Washington DC tellingly overlooked the genocidal conduct of the Pakistani Generals in what later became Bangladesh. Americans were instrumental in harnessing toxic religiosity by creating the Afghan mujahedeen, the curse of which continues to this date. Pakistan was a 'Major Non-NATO Ally' and did most of its bidding in the region. The end of the Cold War with the implosion of the Soviet Union in the early 90s coincided with the rise of China as the new principal enemy. This led to a recalibration of allies and enemies, which eventually warranted a more pro-India outlook from Washington DC, even though an unnatural alliance with Pakistan persisted owing to the necessities of Afghanistan and tackling religio-terror.

For a variety of reasons, including the continuing 'War on Terror' in Afghanistan, the Middle East, and Iran, to now the latest Israel-Palestine War, perceptions of America within the Ummah (Islamic World), made it naturally unsavoury. This often makes the USA the prime suspect for anything that went wrong in Tehran, Kabul, Damascus, Islamabad to even Dhaka. Invariably the Americans are seen to be partaking in Samuel P



Huntington's 'Clash of the Civilisations', which seemingly pits the Americans as a force against the Ummah. America-bashing is a latent and potent undercurrent that is tapped by various political parties in the Islamic countries of the region like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Maldives or Bangladesh, even if the same is genuinely warranted or not. There is no denying that America has had an amoral past with many missteps and convenient overlooking of events, but it is equally true that many political parties have twisted and even extrapolated the same to suggest out-sized agendas for Washington DC because they know that such a spiel feeds into the popular and basic instincts of their citizenry.

In Pakistan, amidst the turf wars between the Military 'establishment' and Imran Khan's Tehreek-e-Insaf government, the wily Imran Khan dialled up a phoney 'cypher' controversy entailing a foreign power i.e., the USA. This move sought to conflate two enemies (one already imagined i.e., USA, and the other requiring some context i.e. Pakistani Military) to apportion a disproportionate role for the Americans, as it was safe and popular to do so. The Americans have historically had a say in Pakistani affairs, but the ouster of Imran Khan had more to do with the Pakistani 'establishment' tak-



WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT DHAKA UNDER HASINA HAD ADOPTED A BELLIGERENT STANCE AND EVEN COSIED UP TO ITS NEMESIS THAT IS, CHINA, BY ACCEPTING BEIJING'S OVERTURES — BANGLADESH WAS NOT CHINA'S BUNNY IN THE SAME WAY AS PAKISTAN IS, NOR WAS IT POISED TO GO THAT WAY

ing the initiative with Americans agreeing to the same, as opposed to the other way round.

Today, realising his folly of having overlapped the America-hand storyline, Imran Khan has deftly redirected the attack onto his local political rivals as opposed to the Americans or even the Pakistani 'establishment', as done earlier. Now, after the self-created tinder-box-like situation and the subsequent implosion, Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is believed to have drummed up the US hand in the recent coup. While it is true that Dhaka under Hasina had adopted a belligerent stance and even cosied up to its nemesis i.e., China, by accepting Beijing's overtures — Bangladesh was not China's bunny in the same way as Pakistan is, nor was it poised to go that way, either. It is true Hasina had declined the American request for a Military base in its Saint Martin Islands, but that was more out of good sense given the societal sentiments that prevailed and good local politics.

The only thing that riled up Hasina was the routine concerns expressed by the USA that Hasina was increasingly undemocratic, intolerant and authoritarian (which she was) — but other than these concerns, both Hasina and the

Americans had a common enemy in religious-extremist forces that threatened the interests of both sides. Hasina also amplified her American rhetoric as it was without any accompanying risks and could endear her to Bangladeshi society, as the Ummah has been wounded by emotions of the Palestine war, and the tacit role of the USA. Hasina's purported accusation of the USA plotting regime change in Bangladesh (in her undelivered speech) needs to be read contextually. His supposed stance that she'd be in power if she had given away, "Saint Martin and Bay of Bengal", is more theatrical than factual as Bangladeshis (especially youth) had genuinely tired of her rule.

If anything, the forces that have come to power reflect the sort of spirit and religious tenor that militates against American preferences. Hasina's exit has more to do with her hubris and excesses than with America working overtime to dislodge her. America is just a convenient (though often justified) enemy in Islamic countries and those who are inelegantly bumped out resort to blaming the USA hand on the rebound e.g., Pakistan earlier, Bangladesh now.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MOTHERS HAVE BIG HEART

Madam — In the world of sports, where records are measured in meters and seconds, Nadeem's Olympic gold throw of 92.97 meters and Neeraj's silver throw of 89.45 meters are remarkable feats. Yet, they pale in comparison to the "universal affection javelin throw" of infinite meters launched by their mothers. The media captured a heartwarming moment as both mothers wished their sons not just victory and medals, but everlasting friendship and affection.

Indeed, the true champions here are the mothers of Nadeem and Neeraj, whose boundless care and love transcend international borders, setting a new record for the longest "affectionate and harmonious javelin throw" of infinite meters. Kudos to these incredible women for their unparalleled contribution to the spirit of sportsmanship and humanity.

PV Madhu Nivriti | Secunderabad

ADDRESS ATTACK ON MINORITIES

Madam — The ongoing attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh are deeply concerning. Despite Hindu support for the movement against the Sheikh Hasina government, the new regime has failed to protect them. Alarming, Indian opposition parties, vocal about minority rights in India, have remained silent on this issue.

Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus, leading the interim government, has appealed for calm but to little effect. The anti-quota protests in Bangladesh, which led to the fall of the Hasina government, have now targeted Hindus, even though their involvement was primarily against the previous government. The situation worsened with the forced resignation of Bangladesh's Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan. Bangladesh remains an Islamic country, and protection for minorities is limited compared to India. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's offer to shelter "anyone" in distress is problematic, as it could enable more Bangladeshi infiltration into India, exacerbating the

Medics need support



The removal of the City Police Commissioner and the Medical Superintendent cum VP of RG Kar Medical College Hospital in Calcutta, following the horrific rape

and murder of a 31-year-old medical professional on the hospital grounds, will not alone bring justice to this case. The Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA) has demanded a CBI inquiry and calls for decisive action.

The frequency of such atrocities against doctors across the country, compounded by inadequate protection from many state authorities, is undeniable. The reluctance of junior doctors to speak out due to fear has led to even greater tragedies over the years. If this situation persists, it will severely impact medical care for millions of impoverished patients and place the medical profession in a critical condition.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

demographic challenges in states like Assam and West Bengal.

Mamata Banerjee's silence on the attacks against Hindus in Bangladesh is troubling, especially as her actions seem to prioritise vote-bank politics over national security and humanitarian concerns. The government must act fast as things are very fluid in Bangladesh.

K V Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

LESSONS FROM WAYANAD

Madam — The recent landslides and floods in Wayanad, Kerala, have drawn global attention, reminding us of the ongoing vulnerability of our planet to natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods. Our Earth has always been a haven of beauty and abundance, providing a diverse range of species and natural resources like majestic mountains and expansive oceans. For millennia, Mother Nature has been humanity's nurturing cradle. I recall the massive floods of the early 1990s, which devastated regions in Tamil Nadu, including Korkai, Tiruchendur, Tuticorin, and

Tirunelveli. It is crucial for all Asian countries, especially those in the Himalayan region, to implement proactive measures such as adopting advanced technologies and large-scale afforestation to mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

These events underscore the urgent need to harmonise human activities with the Earth's natural systems. Overexploitation of resources has pushed our planet to its limits, disrupting its balance. To address this, it is essential to regulate high-rise construction in earthquake-prone areas and shift focus from building concrete jungles to fostering green, sustainable landscapes. Regions like Korkai, Tiruchendur, Tuticorin, Tirunelveli, Marthandam, Nagercoil, and Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu serve as examples of how humans and nature can coexist harmoniously. By prioritising reforestation and sustainable land use, we can build a resilient future.

P Senthil Saravana Durai | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The quest for real freedom in a divided society



VINOD BEHAL

Real liberation comes from transcending divisions and recognising our spiritual identity, a path that leads to peace, harmony, and tranquility

More than seven decades after we attained independence from the British, we are still enslaved—trapped in the bondage of caste, creed, religion, regionalism et al. This has created deep fissures in society, destroying the democratic fabric of amity, harmony and peaceful co-existence. All this is there because as individuals, society and a nation, we have not attained real or to say ultimate freedom that promotes peace, harmony and happiness.

What is real or ultimate freedom? It is a state of not being enslaved to physical senses, to mind and its desires. It means breaking free from toxic thoughts and the vices associated with it. We need freedom from prejudices of caste, creed and religion, greed and selfishness, anger and animosity, hate and hostility. But then why are we failing to achieve real freedom and how can we attain it? Real freedom is eluding us because we are facing an identity crisis. We don't know our real identity.



In reality, we are spiritual beings (having soul-based identity) in body form. But we make a fallacy of treating ourselves as a body and this unreal world as the real world. The basic nature of our material existence is bondage and when we act upon the material desires of the mind and senses, we often take to unwise and unholy acts which lead to our sorrows and sufferings. Because of duality, we tend to discriminate against fellow beings and this dis-

crimination takes the form of hatred, animosity and hostility, even leading to violence and bloodshed. Liberation of the soul or spiritual freedom is the ultimate freedom. The devotees belonging to the Nirankari Mission observe the 15th of August as 'Mukti Parv Diwas' to signify the liberation of the soul. To attain this ultimate liberation, we have to come out of the contaminated state of our consciousness and position ourselves in a pure state of

our consciousness. Even Bhagavad Gita says that being situated in such a position, one is never shaken even amid the greatest difficulty and it is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact.

We can certainly attain ultimate liberation through self-liberation by way of self-realization that we are a pure and noble soul—a constituent of God. We can lead such an aware life constantly by strengthening our spiritual dimension through God's remembrance and the company of saintly persons. Lord Jesus set people free from bondage to live in the freedom that only comes from God.

We shall be able to attain real freedom by living an enlightened life in the spirit of oneness (Vasudhaiva Kutumbam) with the Creator and His creation, in turn turning this world into a happy, harmonious and peaceful place to live.

(The writer is a senior journalist; views expressed are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

FROM RIFTS TO RESOLUTION

It is very important to recognise that the world shall change when I change



BY RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

We all know that conflicts are a part of our everyday life and they form in our close relations, at a societal level & on an international level. Very often we see conflicts leading to aggression, hostility and war. However, conflicts can also be a stepping stone leading to change and wisdom; if we learn to handle them constructively. Since relationship conflicts are inevitable, learning to deal with them healthily is extremely crucial because when a conflict is mismanaged, it can harm the relationship. But when handled respectfully and positively, it provides an opportunity for growth, ultimately strengthening the bond between two people.

Any kind of conflict has two dimensions, internal and external. Internal conflicts arise when the mind and intellect are moving in opposite directions and external conflicts are caused when people or situations confront us and we are not sure how to cope with them. Some people view conflicts as an opportunity for a change and some see it as a natural global phenomenon. But others feel that conflicts are avoidable through better communication but they are frightened of the process. Due to this fear, they hold themselves back and content themselves by making a peace contract or a deal. However, such solutions are very temporary and can be seen as a band-aid solution, which might be effective for the short term only. We all know that conflicts ought to be resolved by use of intellect or reasoning because when conflicts are allowed to develop unhindered without intervention or when the parties involved fuel the



conflict, it often happens that the conflict evolves negatively. And that is why people seek guru's or senior's advice when they are faced with conflicting decisions. But the irony is that with all the information and advice that is available to us, we are unable to resolve matters because there is an acute implementation paralysis. We must not forget about the fact that the best source of judgement is a person's intellect because nobody can understand his feelings, situations and capabilities to deal better than his self.

We may seek advice from an experienced person, however, the sense of joy or security that we feel on hearing good advice is only temporary because it is not real. Just like the feeling of joy derived from thinking of eating something delicious is unreal, real joy comes only after eating the thing. We too have to undergo an experience to make it real. Remember! conflict triggers strong emotions and can lead to hurt feelings, disappointment, and discomfort. When handled in an unhealthy manner, it can cause irreparable rifts, resentments, and break-ups. But when it is resolved healthily, it increases our understanding of one another, builds trust, and strengthens our relationship bonds. A growing body of research has shown spirituality as a great antidote for all kinds of conflicts. Spirituality is like the medicine that heals the root of the disease and not just the symptoms. It is the only means that gives us complete solutions to conflicts. From a spiritual perspective, the most powerful value needed for conflict resolution is 'respect'. This is because most of the people don't wish to negotiate when they have material power. Therefore, there's an urgent need for those to realize and respect their inner powers. Similarly, faith is also a very important element in conflict resolution, it is the key to mutual understanding. For global conflicts, the solution lies with the leadership. The leaders can bring about the much-needed change and make it trickle down the societies. Leaders of today must remember that any kind of change can be termed 'real' only when it affects the grassroots. It is thus very important to recognize that the world shall change when I change. Hence, people should not wait to be told that they need to change, instead, they should realise it themselves.

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

Rupee's fall against dollar is a wake-up call for India



BRAJESH KUMAR TIWARI

As the rupee weakens and inflation rises, strategic economic reforms to boost domestic manufacturing and reduce import dependency are urgently needed

The rupee hit a record low against the US dollar on August 5th and was trading at 84.09 per dollar. This is the biggest fall ever seen in the rupee and the rupee has reached its all-time low. If the currency of any country is stronger than other currencies, then the country is considered strong. In this globalized world, the value of every country's currency against the US dollar not only impacts the economy of that country but also affects the prices of many things in the market.

Rupee has Fallen 20 Times since Independence: The rupee has fallen almost 20 times since independence; in 1948, 1 dollar was equal to 4 rupees. At that time there was no debt in the country, then when the first five-year plan was implemented in 1951, the government started taking loans from foreign countries and then the value of the rupee also started decreasing continuously.

The continuous outflow of foreign funds from financial markets and crude oil has increased pressure on the rupee. The economy around the world has seen two major shocks - the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine, Israel conflict. India is also not untouched by this. Today, the condition of currencies in major markets around the world is weak.

Dollar as King: According to the International Standard Organization list, there are a total of 180 currencies around the world, but among them, the American currency 'Dollar' has become a global currency. The price of most of the things exported is paid in dollars. Today the dollar is involved in 80 percent of the world's trade. The US dollar has the status of a global currency, which is why the value of the rupee against the dollar shows whether the Indian currency is strong or weak.

The falling value of the Rupee affects Common People: When the rupee becomes cheaper against the dollar, it has a direct impact on the economy.

The falling value of the rupee brings inflation. Rising prices could accelerate inflation, which is already high. In such a situation, everything from the life of the common man to businessmen and government will be affected by the value of the rupee. The decline in global activity, investors' decision to invest money in safe global markets and increasing tension in global politics are among the main reasons behind the fall of the rupee. Even if we do not take seriously the fall and rise of a few paise in the rupee, they have a big impact on our lives.

The fall in the rupee has a direct impact on the country's economy, due to which import of petroleum products will become expensive and freight transportation will become expensive. This will have a direct impact on the inflation of every essential item. There is a sudden increase in all loans taken in foreign currency and the interest paid on them. Studying abroad will also be expensive.

Why the Rupee is falling: The value of the rupee completely depends on its demand and supply and import and export also have a direct impact. A country that imports more than it exports has a higher demand for dollars. Like India imports more than it exports. India is one of the major importers of crude oil and imports about 80 per cent of the oil, undoubtedly the rising prices of crude oil



IF WE START USING INDIGENOUS GOODS THEN THE COST OF IMPORTING FOREIGN GOODS WILL BE SAVED. FOR INDIA TO BECOME A \$5 TRILLION ECONOMY BY 2025, WE NEED TO EXPORT AT LEAST \$2.5 TRILLION WORTH OF GOODS AND SERVICES, AS EXPORTS CURRENTLY CONTRIBUTE ABOUT 25% TO THE TOTAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

in the international market are the main reason for the fall in the value of the rupee. Things to do for the value of the Rupee: Although the Central Government has assured to make every possible effort to stop the fall of the Rupee, now the Government will have to take concrete and tough steps. If the government tries to change its economy dependent on oil, then we can save a huge part of the foreign reserves and for this, we all should consider alternatives to oil. There is a need to pay attention to electric vehicles. Effective steps will have to be taken to stop the fall in the value of the rupee and keep the foreign exchange reserves rich.

Government Steps: The government is indeed striving to create a competitive, dynamic environment to provide sustained economic growth and enhance its relevance in international trade, PM Gati Shakti, National Single Window Clearance, GIS-mapped Land Bank, Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) etc. The manufacturing sector is expected to benefit from the implementation of recent policies like the PLI scheme. Its results are also visible in some areas, the development of coronavirus vaccines by Indian companies is a vivid example of indigenous talent. India has rapidly made its place in the Ease of Doing Business index released by the World Bank. India's EDB rank was 134th in the year 2014, whereas in the year 2023, it has become 63rd. India is ranked 40th in the Global Competitiveness Report Index published by the Geneva-based World Economic Forum, where it was ranked 60th in 2014. But all these reforms in the ranks have also failed to revive the manufacturing sector and provide the desired support to the Make in India campaign.

Big Time for Make in India: The government will have to move strategically towards controlling imports and increasing exports. This is the time to effectively

implement the 'Make in India' program which even after nine years is far behind in its effective contribution. Despite being the fifth largest economy, India contributes barely 1.6% to world exports. A primary objective of the campaign was to increase the share of the manufacturing sector in the Indian GDP to 25 per cent by 2022 although it has remained between 14 to 16 per cent in the last 9 years.

During the coronavirus pandemic, there was publicity that the companies leaving China were going to come to India, however, most of these companies have shifted their base to Vietnam, Taiwan, Thailand etc. and only a few have come to India. Every year crores of laptops, desktops and servers are sold in India, in which motherboards memory models and chips are being imported. We are dependent on other countries for these components.

Even today, most of the items are not being produced but are being assembled. There is no justification for the import of Harmonized System products (HS-84, nuclear reactors, boilers, mechanical equipment and their parts), and HS-85 (electrical machinery) as most of these items can be produced locally. PLI schemes should be extended to MSMEs and emerging industries to increase exports.

The 15 per cent corporate tax rate for new investment in manufacturing should be extended to all industries including the service sector. The expansion and use of new-age technology applications such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) and Machine Learning (ML) require tax incentives on capital or operational expenditure. The government should reduce the logistics cost to 6-8% of the GDP which is currently 14%, the good thing is that recently at the G-20 summit, there has been talk of setting up an economic corridor at the international level.

The manufacturing industry in

India remains flawed due to the poor infrastructure of the country. Compared to China, which spends 20% of its GDP on infrastructure development, our country spends only 3%. Way Forward: At a time when the value of the rupee has crossed Rs 84 per US dollar, the role of 'Make in India' becomes very important. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), India may face a shortage of about 29 million skilled workers by 2030.

The economy needs more than policy window dressing to increase manufacturing activity. We need to understand that just passing bills and organizing investor conferences will not be enough to promote industrialization.

The manufacturing sector is constrained by large amounts of paperwork, be it labour, land or environmental clearances, stringent regulations and policy. Taxation and customs policies are complex to such an extent that it is cheaper to import things like medical equipment rather than manufacture the equipment domestically. India can make itself the next 'global factory' in the future, which is already fed up with China and is looking for alternative manufacturing hubs. There is a need to free the manufacturing sector from cumbersome rules.

Certainly, the fall of the rupee against the dollar can be controlled through such effective steps. Also, if we start using indigenous goods then the cost of importing foreign goods will be saved. For India to become a \$5 trillion economy by 2025, we need to export at least \$2.5 trillion worth of goods and services, as exports currently contribute about 25% to the total gross domestic product (GDP). India has no time to rest. We have come a long way, but the journey is not over yet.

(The writer is an associate professor at JNU, New Delhi; views are personal)

The strength of sisterhood: How women's circles empower and change lives

Women groups foster empowerment, drive economic progress, and challenge societal stereotypes, proving that together, women can achieve anything

Humans are inherently social beings, and women, in particular, thrive on social connections. This insight struck me during a recent celebration of Hariyali Teej, a Hindu festival dedicated to women. On this day, women don traditional attire, enjoy special foods, and revel in music, reflecting the profound significance of women's gatherings in our cultural history. Hariyali Teej exemplifies the value our ancestors placed on women's circles. These gatherings not only provide joy but also reinforce the unique strength women possess. This power is deeply rooted in their ability to manage and share energy, which flourishes through communal interactions. Women need to connect with their feminine essence and the best way to nurture this strength is by bonding with other women. Such connections are crucial for self-discovery and empowerment.



SUGANDHA NAGAR

The concept of Shine Theory, coined by journalist Ann Friedman and business-woman Aminatou Sow, encapsulates this idea: exceptional women support each other to shine even brighter.

Historically, women have passed wisdom and experience through communal practices, whether through household chores or cultural rituals. For example, traditional activities like grinding spices together in Indian families or crafting quilts in Alice Walker's 'The Color Purple' symbolize unity and shared strength. Everyday interactions among women not only ease the burden of tasks but also preserve cultural traditions and create a space for emotional exchange. These interactions form a vessel of healing and transformation, extending beyond personal growth to effecting positive change in their communities. In modern settings, such as neighborhood gatherings or

workplace environments, the same principles apply. Despite the often harsh competitive dynamics driven by stereotypes, supportive women's circles offer a vital source of relief and rejuvenation. Unfortunately, societal narratives and media perpetuate the myth that women are inherently competitive and unsupportive of one another. This stereotype undermines the historical practices of women uplifting each other and fosters unhealthy rivalry. Recent initiatives aim to counteract these negative dynamics by promoting women's economic empowerment. The Union Budget for 2024-25 proposes establishing working women hostels and supporting women-led self-help groups (SHGs). These



measures are designed to enhance financial stability and provide economic opportunities for women, particularly in rural areas. The goal is to transform women into 'Lakhpati Didis,' or those with an annual income exceeding INR 1,00,000, while also encouraging sustainable livelihoods and

improved living standards. The emphasis on SHGs highlights the importance of collective unity and mutual support among women. These groups not only provide economic benefits but also foster a strong network of women who support each other's growth and success. By encouraging more women to

engage in such supportive environments, we can pave the way for greater economic prosperity and gender equality. Sheryl Sandberg, former COO of Meta Platforms, emphasizes the power of women supporting women in her book, 'Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead'. She dispels the myth that women don't support each other, arguing that collaboration among women is key to achieving remarkable success. Successful women often have the backing of other women who help them reach their goals. To overcome systemic discrimination and internalized biases, women must challenge the societal pressures that pit them against each

other. By rejecting stereotypes and fostering genuine support, women can create spaces where they feel safe to express themselves, show vulnerability, and receive the support they need. Ultimately, female friendships and communal support not only inspire personal and spiritual growth but also enhance collective strength and performance. Women's circles provide a crucial platform for sharing energy, ideas, and support, enabling women to achieve their full potential and contribute positively to their communities. *(The author is a writer, social worker, culture enthusiast, and former UN employee; views are personal)*

IN BRIEF



Alembic gets USFDA nod for generic medication

Alembic Pharmaceuticals on Tuesday said it has received approval from the US health regulator to market a generic product indicated for prophylaxis of deep vein thrombosis.

Not heard from Govt on stake sale: Vodafone Idea

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid reports that the government may have sounded out some sovereign funds for offloading its stake in the telco, Vodafone Idea on Tuesday said that it is up to the Centre to decide what it wishes to do about its holding.



government as a public shareholder...they are free to take decision with respect to their investment. That is an independent subject."

very clearly focused on having three healthy private operators...The conversion to equity was a means of supporting balance sheet of the company by converting some debt into equity.

Responding to another ques-

India-SA trade relations to be revived

PNS ■ JOHANNESBURG

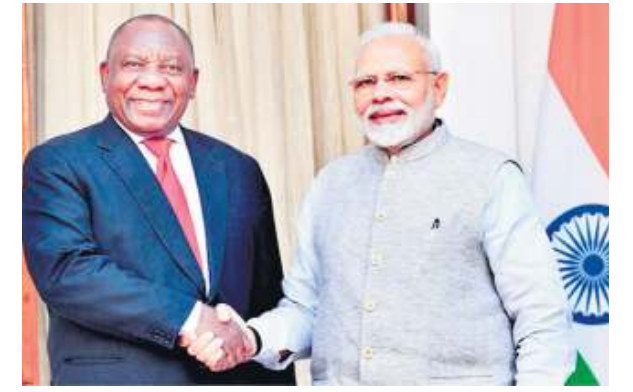
The Consulate General of India in Johannesburg on Thursday here launched a new initiative to revive the once very vibrant trade relations between India and South Africa until the COVID pandemic led to a slump.

"The India-SA Investment Network is an effort to bring our wider bilateral eco-system closer," said Consul General Mahesh Kumar, who initiated the concept.

"We have about USD 19 billion annual trade and an estimated cumulative multiple investment of USD 19 billion. All of us are aware that this is

way less compared to the potential. All of us would like this to grow, unlocking more opportunities for us." Kumar said as he welcomed government leaders and top captains of industry from South Africa.

Kumar said there had been a simultaneous outreach programme to corporate South Africa and to corporate India to learn how this could be achieved. "We found that while the overall mood was right and bright, the action was not taking place. We learned that there was a lack of awareness and information and a lack of avenues to find this. There were also lots of unknowns and a fear of the unknown," he said.



Indian FMCG companies resume operations Bangladesh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian FMCG companies with operations in violence-hit Bangladesh say their business in the neighbouring country is slowly returning to normalcy after being shut for about a week.

Leading FMCG companies, including Marico, Dabur, Emami, Pidlite Industries, Britannia and Godrej Consumer Products, have operations in Bangladesh, which recently faced violent clashes leading to a regime change there.

Besides, leading QSR chain Jubilant FoodWorks Ltd (JFL), a master franchisee of American pizza restaurant chain Domino's, also operates around 30 stores in Bangladesh. Marico, which has the biggest exposure in Bangladesh, has informed the bourses that its manufacturing operations in the country resumed at normal scale on August 11.

market have been gradually improving and a large majority of our retail sales force and distributors have been functioning since last week," the Mariwala-promoted FMCG maker said.

In Bangladesh, Marico operates in personal care, baby care, edible oil and food segments, and has contributed 44 per cent to the international sales of the company. It has two factories in Gazipur, Dhaka, and five depots.

"We continue to prioritise the safety of our employees, factory workers, distributors and other stakeholders of our business," it said adding "we firmly believe that the medium-term prospects of Marico's business in Bangladesh remain intact."

It had incorporated a subsidiary Marico Bangladesh in 1999. It is a listed entity on the Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchanges and is amongst the top 3 FMCG MNCs in Bangladesh.



Gold jumps Rs 500 to Rs 72,850 per 10 g

Gold prices jumped Rs 500 to Rs 72,850 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid strong cues from the global market and a rise in domestic demand.



Fintech startup Jai Kisan gets RBI nod for NBFC acquisition

Rural fintech startup Jai Kisan on Tuesday said it has received regulatory approval from the Reserve Bank of India for the acquisition of a majority stake in NBFC Kusthal Fintech Capital. Details of the stake acquired were not disclosed.

"The NBFC subsidiary allows us to cater to our farmer and rural business customers with credit products they want, how they want them, when they want them and where they want them—which is what they deserve," Jai Kisan co-founder and CEO Arjun Ahluwalia said.

Investors' wealth declines Rs 4.52 L cr as markets plunge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Equity investors became poorer by Rs 4.52 lakh crore Tuesday as markets plunged due to intense selling in HDFC Bank amid fresh foreign fund outflows.

Extending its losses for the second straight day, the 30-share BSE SENSEX tumbled 692.89 points or 0.87 per cent to settle at 78,956.03. During the day, it tanked 759.54 points or 0.95 per cent to 78,889.38.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms declined by Rs 4,52,565.44 crore to Rs 4,45,30,265.42 crore (USD 5.30 trillion). "The domestic market plunged into red terrain in the latter half, amidst mixed global sentiments. Recent IIP data indicates a lacklustre growth in the major manufacturing sector. Persistent selling by FIIs and elevated valuations are further contributing to the decline.

"All sectors, especially banking, metals, were in red, while HDFC Bank declined due to lower-than-expected passive fund inflows in the recent MSCI



index rejig," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

From the 30 SENSEX firms, HDFC Bank declined over 3 per cent. Bajaj Finance, Tata Motors, Tata Steel, State Bank of India, Power Grid and JSW Steel were the other laggards.

In contrast, Titan, HCL Tech, Nestle, Sun Pharma, Reliance and Mahindra & Mahindra

were the gainers. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) again turned sellers on Monday as they offloaded equities worth Rs 4,680.51 crore after a day's breather, according to exchange data.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge declined 1.16 per cent, and the midcap index dipped 0.98 per cent.

Hero MotoCorp Q1 PAT up 47 pc at Rs 1,032 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hero MotoCorp on Tuesday posted 47 per cent increase in consolidated profit after tax at Rs 1,032 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, 2024, aided by higher sales.

The country's largest two-wheeler maker had reported a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 701 crore for April-June period a year ago. Revenue from operations rose to Rs 10,211 crore from Rs 8,851 crore, Hero MotoCorp said in a regulatory filing. The company said it sold 15.35 lakh units of motorcycles and scooters in the April-June period this fiscal as compared with 13.53 lakh units in the first quarter of FY24. Hero MotoCorp said it witnessed positive trends across domestic, EV and global businesses during the quarter.

The company also witnessed sequential improvement in retail sales, it added. It expects the momentum to build up in the following quarters on account of positive customer sentiments, good monsoons and the upcoming festive season.

CIL to supply coal beyond annual contracted quantities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned CIL on Tuesday said thermal power plants, including independent power plants, will be supplied coal beyond annual contracted quantity (ACQ).

The development comes after CIL's board cleared the decks for allowing supplies beyond ACQ.

"With this, CIL has removed the earlier provision which allowed coal supplies to a maximum of 120 per cent of ACQ to power plants and IPPs," Coal India Ltd (CIL) said in a statement. Now, the simplification would benefit the power plants which prefer to lift higher quantities of coal beyond their stipulated ACQ.

The development comes at a

time when the coal demand is showing signs of slackening.

Coal India accounts for over 80 per cent of the domestic coal production.

CIL's pitheads currently have a coal stock of 72 million tonne (MT), which is 47 per cent more compared to 49 MT as of August 12 last year.

Supplies to coal-fired plants peaked to an unprecedented 619.7 MT in FY24, meeting 101.6 per cent of the demand projected. Compared to 586.6 MT offtake by the power sector in FY23, the increase in volume terms was 31.9 MT, which is a growth 5.4 per cent.

Of the 153 domestic coal-based power plants of the country, CIL has long-term linkages with 127 plants of 592 MT.

DUE TO DELAYS IN PAYMENTS

Discoms face financial constraints: Icr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The state-owned power distribution companies are facing financial constraints despite improving their aggregate technical and commercial losses, according to an Icr report.

"The performance of state-owned discoms remains constrained by inadequate tariffs relative to the cost of supply, higher-than-regulator-approved AT&C losses, and a considerable debt burden. Further, delays in realising payments from state government departments for power supply as one of the reasons for the constrain of discom finances and assigned a negative outlook for the power distribution segment.

The all-India aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses for state-owned discoms declined from 23 per cent in FY2021 to 16.5 per cent in FY2022 and further to 15.8 per cent in FY2023 due to infra-

structure upgrades and higher subsidy payout.

Despite this progress, losses remain particularly high at over 20 per cent for the discoms in Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh, Icr noted.

"The performance of state-owned discoms remains constrained by inadequate tariffs relative to the cost of supply, higher-than-regulator-approved AT&C losses, and a considerable debt burden. Further, delays in realising payments from state government departments for power supply constrain the discom finances," Icr said.

The agency further said its outlook for the power distribution segment remains nega-



remain modest with a median 1.7 per cent rise for FY2025, lower than the 2.5 per cent approved for FY2024. Despite an uptrend in tariff hikes in a few states in recent years, discoms continue to incur losses due to increases in power purchase costs, operating inefficiencies in a few large states, and a high debt burden, he said.

Icr Vice President & Co-Group Head - Corporate Ratings Vikram V said: "The tariff-determination process for state discoms has improved, following the General Elections, with 22 of the 28 states issuing the orders for FY2025 as of July 2024 against only 11 states as of May 2024. However, the tariff hikes

Niti Aayog seeks proposals to evaluate central schemes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Government think tank Niti Aayog has invited proposals for evaluation of centrally sponsored schemes across nine crucial sectors, including health, agriculture and education.

According to the Aayog, each sector will require a separate application through the GeM portal.

The 9 CSS packages include agriculture and allied sector, women and child development, education and rural development, among others.

Centrally sponsored schemes (CSS) are implement-



ed by the state governments but sponsored by the central government with a defined shareholding.

These schemes are aimed at supplementing efforts undertaken by the state government because the Centre has more

resources at its disposal. These schemes can either be national or regional in character. In CSS, the funding by the central government works as an initiation, with further spending coming from states towards the cause.

VIVO TOPS THE CHART

India's smartphone market grows 3.2 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian smartphone market grew 3.2 per cent with 39 million units shipment in the second quarter of 2024, market research firm International Data Corporation said on Tuesday.

The market was led by Chinese smartphone maker Vivo with a 16.5 per cent share in volume terms with its shipment growing by 6.7 per cent on a year-over-year (YoY) basis, it said. Apple led the



super-premium segment, which are smartphones priced above Rs 67,000 apiece with an 83 per cent share followed by Samsung with a 16 per cent share. "Overall, Vivo continued to lead for the second consecutive quarter, with multiple

launches across price segments through the Y series, mid-premium V series and flagship X Fold 3 Pro. Motorola registered the highest growth backed by product portfolio across price segments," the report said. Xiaomi followed Vivo with 13.5 per cent market.

Samsung slipped to the third spot with a 12.9 per cent share as its shipment declined 15.4 per cent on a YoY basis, according to the report.

Apple stood at the sixth spot with a 6.7 per cent market share

and a 24.2 per cent increase in shipment on a YoY basis. According to IDC Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker, the Indian smartphone market shipped 69 million smartphones in the first half of 2024. In the premium segment, the price range above Rs 50,000 to Rs 67,000, Apple's share increased YoY to 61 per cent, while Samsung's share increased to 24 per cent, from 21 per cent a year ago, the report said.

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED OPEN TENDER NOTICE No: 02/2024-25

Tenders are invited from eligible vendors for various Civil works and supply of various Non-Centralized Materials to Suryapet Circle. Schedule dates for Open-Tender Specification No: 01/24-25 to 04/24-25, P-01/24-25 to P-10/24-25 of Tender Notice O-02/2024-25 of SE(OP/Suryapet) are: 1) Bid download starts from 16.08.2024 at 15:00 Hrs. 2) Last date and time for submission of Bid hard copies along with DD's and BG's: 30.08.2024 upto 15:00 Hrs. 3) Bid opening Date & Time: 30.08.2024 at 16:00 Hrs. Details are available at www.tgssouthernpower.com. Ph.No: 9494335490. Sd/- Superintending Engineer R.O.No.: 2824-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2024-25, Dt. 13-08-2024 Operation Circle, TGSPDCL, Suryapet

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

NIT No. 14/GHMC/KCP-24/2024-25 Dated: 12.08.2024 Name of Work: Developmental Works, Estimate Amount / ECV: Rs. 202.00 Lakhs, Start Date / Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids: 14.08.2024 @ 11.30 A.M / 22.08.2024 @ 11.30 A.M. Name & Address of Officer Cell No.: Sri. D. Goverdhan Goud, Executive Engineer, GHMC, Kukatpally Circle - 24, Cell 9154299633. Further details can be seen at e-procurement @ https://tender.telangana.gov.in/ Sd/- Executive Engineer R.O.No.: 2806-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2024-25, Dt. 13-08-2024 Kukatpally Circle - 24, GHMC

Hyderabad

UNSTOPPABLE FORCE BEHIND KILL: Nikhil on turning Patna's chaos into cinematic gold



SHIKHA DUGGAL

The greatest spot to watch *Kill*, a violent Indian beat-em-up set on a train and written in Hindi by Nikhil Nagesh Bhat, would probably still be a cinema theatre. The director has been blown away by Lionsgate and the John Wick franchise producing company's plans to remake his Indian action film in English. True, the filmmaker produced nonstop action scenes that as many people as possible should witness. It's fantastic to learn that an English-language version is now being developed. It could be inevitable for it to occur!

We contact the filmmaker out of curiosity to find out more about how it all transpired and he suffices, "People first took an interest in my film, I recall, at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) premiere. Then the news suddenly leaked out! At first, I would surreptitiously visit theatres to observe the reactions to my movie. Applause, hoots and other noises were heard. This isn't what I recall from last time! These kinds of reactions, in my opinion, would only occur in a star-studded film, yet look at us. It was also a huge confidence booster for my actors."

It's unbelievable that the movie is still making news and the writer keeps telling us, "I learned with a pleasant surprise that my movie was being considered for a Hollywood remake. When I saw the guys from the production business, I could see they were shocked by the scenes I had directed and the performances my actors were giving them. The strength and emotional engagement of it rather impressed them! Do you have feelings for a dacoit? That's what was taking place in the movie theatres. This astonished them to see. Today, a localised tale is making its way around the world; to me, this is nothing less than a phenomenon."

Speaking briefly about his hopes for such a worldwide hit, the *Apurva* fame says, "My film has been viewed by people from Chile, Argentina, Ecuador and Mexico. What a feeling! They were all required to state only one thing: they all truly enjoyed the film's emotional content. Permit me to take the readers back in time to the 1990s, when I was a child living in Patna. Back then, Bihar was an unstable state. Every day, murders and robberies occur and I have witnessed these crimes in my immediate surroundings. But the thing that sticks out in my memory from all of this is that none of them appeared to be criminals—rather, they were charmers! I made similar suggestions in my film, which is where the inspiration that everyone is discussing originated."

The name of the unconventional actor, Raghav Juyal, was suggested by one of his associates! After seeing a hundred or more auditions, Nikhil cast him because of a self-tape where he could see an unpredictable quality in Raghav's eyes. "The casting director had enough of me until I decided on Raghav. I told my team right away not to put me in front of any other actors after meeting Lakshya Kapoor because I couldn't see beyond him. He served as my Amrit. I saw Tanya Manikantala in the cult film *A Suitable Boy* and her innocent gaze convinced me to cast her in *Kill*. Her eyes convey so much emotion."

The Patna guy reminisces about filming *Kill* by sharing a few unforgettable stories, such as, "I have a clear recall of the first time my film was shown at an international film festival around midnight. Suddenly, I started to get strange ideas like, 'Why am I here?' Right now, I feel like something is wrong with every shot and sound! I was experiencing intense internal anxiety. I began to worry that we might be poorly received by the crowd. Twenty-five minutes in, the audience began to react. From then on, there was no turning back and the rest is history." He said he had chills as he was talking. That's how vivid the recollection of shooting *Kill* was for him!

Filmmaker-writer Nikhil Nagesh Bhat, whose latest venture *Kill* has been in talks to date, speaks to *The Pioneer* about the tremendous response for the film at TIFF and more of the Behind the scenes from the film



FOOD REVIEW

Feasts made effortless!

AARTI SREENATH

Let's not forget the fact that, when it comes to hosting a party at your house, it's no less than a tiring task. I used to feel overwhelmed for sure by the endless chores, especially cooking the huge amount of food for the guests, until I discovered CaterNinja. This service doesn't just provide food; it creates a culinary experience that lingers long after the last bite. The menu reads like a symphony of flavours, each dish carefully curated to deliver a memorable dining experience.

The *Achari Chicken Tikka*, with its perfect balance of spice and tang, could easily make you rethink your go-to starter. The *Tandoori Prawns*, juicy and charred just right, evoke the smoky allure of coastal grills. The *Seekh Kebab*, despite being a vegetarian option, was packed with such a robust taste that it competed with its meaty counterparts. The *Paneer Tikka*, with its velvety texture and fragrant marinade, was to the finesse with which the simplest ingredients can be elevated.

The main course was a celebration of classic Indian comfort food. The *Butter Chicken*, rich and indulgent, married the sweetness of tomato with the warmth of *garam masala* in a way that lingers on the palate long after the last bite. The *Dal Makhni*, slow-cooked to perfection, was creamy and hearty, a bowl of warmth that felt like home. The *Veg Pulao*, fragrant with spices and dotted with colorful vegetables, was the perfect accompaniment, while the *Wheat Paratha* offering a wholesome touch. And just when you think you can't eat another bite, the *Moong Dal Halwa* arrives, a sweet finale that is both comforting and indulgent, with its earthy notes of lentils and the richness of ghee.

But what truly sets it apart isn't just the food; it's the entire experience. As the brainchild of Anup Agarwal and Anurag Mishra, CaterNinja redefines what catering can be. It's not just about delivering food; it's about making the process seamless and customisable, catering to events of all sizes, whether at home or in the office.

Their journey hasn't been without challenges. It's a platform that's a haven for food lovers, offering services like *Ninjabox*, *NinjaBuffet* and *NinjaLive*, each bringing a unique twist to the catering experience. In a world where hosting an event can often feel daunting, it is the ally you need—swift, efficient and always on point—ensuring your event is nothing short of spectacular.

FOODS TO TRY: *Achari Chicken Tikka*, *Tandoori Prawns*, *Paneer Tikka*

VERDICT: 3.5/5

TEJAL SINHA

2023 saw India's first-ever chat show on positive masculinity with Yuva's popular show *Be A Man Yaar*, by The Man Company. While the first season saw Naseeruddin Shah, Karan Johar, Vicky Kaushal and Zakir Khan, among the rest, start the much-needed conversation around men and see an astonishing response, the second season has already been making waves with Javed Akhtar, Kartik Aaryan, Bhuvan Bam and Imran Khan.

With more men, laughs, love, hugs and vulnerability, an ecstatic Nikhil Taneja has taken up the seat, engaging in candid conversations. "I could have only hoped but not expected the overwhelming response to Season 1 of *Be A Man Yaar*," shares the media entrepreneur in an exclusive interaction with *The Pioneer*. As he shares the response, he reiterates his belief that there is space in the media and entertainment sector, as well as among audiences, for gentler, more empathetic and more intimate conversations involving men.

So what's up with Season 2? This season, he says, they have tried to maintain the goal of creating a safe space on the internet for positive masculine conversations.

"There's a belief system that the only kind of masculinity that exists or is lauded is the alpha masculine or hyper-masculine because we see that in pop culture and in films time and again," shares Nikhil, adding, "It leads us to believe that perhaps this is what the audiences want, but the fact is that we have never given an alternative to the audiences. We have always reinforced gender stereotypes by showcasing a certain kind of 'heroic' masculinity, so it just made me feel so grateful that the audiences showed up for an alternative. It proves that there are many masculinities possible and we need to hold space for softer masculinities as well."

With *Be A Man Yaar*, Nikhil aimed to reclaim the idea of the phrase 'Be a man', that's often used to ask men to not cry, to toughen up, to not express pain and to not be emotional or vulnerable, rather 'it's okay to express'.

"Everything I heard from any guest, no matter how difficult or different it was from my own story, I felt like I was able to see my own stories in theirs," affirms Nikhil. Whether it was Nakuul Mehta speaking of not being able to hug his father, Karan Johar speaking of being called unkind names in school, or Vicky Kaushal speaking about not being able to cry. "That's the incredible thing about listening to the raw stories of those who may seem to be unlike you—you realise that we are all the same in the kind of emotions we feel and how difficult it is, especially for us men, to be able to find spaces to speak of these emotions."

When you have a theme like *Be A Man Yaar*, he believes that it encourages men to have deep, personal conversations, which, in fact, is not easy for everyone to agree to let their guard down and to be a part of a show like that. For instance, "So when someone like Kartik Aaryan, who is so widely known and loved, agrees to bring his most authentic self to a show

Nikhil Taneja returns with more conversations and continues to promote men opening up about their emotions in the new season of *Be A Man Yaar*, featuring beloved celebrities. In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, he discusses the theme, recalling the stories of celebrities and more

Be A Man Yaar, it's okay to express!



like ours, it is an indication to his fans and so many others that these conversations are necessary, important and meaningful." True that! Today, despite Kartik being one of the leading actors of the B-Town, he still spoke about his fear of being 'unfit'.

With people having a notion that men can work and fit anywhere, he further highlights, "The stereotype there is that men can work and fit anywhere that's acceptable by society as a conventionally male profession. There are professions where the name in itself typically has 'man' associated with it because it's expected only of men to do it, like 'fireman' or 'watchman'. Even in sports, it was called 'batsman' until women started playing just as well and they changed the term to 'batter'. But whenever men want to take not-so-mainstream professions, they are discouraged and told that they are unfit for them, just as women and other genders are discouraged from taking up things typically expected to be done by men. In an ideal society, everyone should have equal rights to be whoever they want to be. We are definitely getting there, but slowly."

When men speak about their depressive thoughts, they are either thought of or shamed as 'weak', or are expected to get better on their own because they are men. There's very little space given to the mental health of men, as men are always expected to be on top of their emotional health—except when it comes to anger.

Talking of men's mental health, there was also a time when Nikhil battled anxiety, making him put a pause on his career, take a sabbatical and reevaluate life choices, which led him on a more introspective and empathetic path. With several panic attacks and emotional breakdowns, he somehow took up the courage to battle the stigma that comes with seeking therapy.

In his most recent episode, Imran Khan shared that he had trouble recognising his anxiety at first. He described waking up at 4 a.m., feeling his heart racing and struggling to breathe and staying awake until sunrise. This ongoing discomfort caused him to open up to his mother about feeling powerless and inept. He encountered criticism from those who dismissed therapy and emotional vulnerability as weaknesses when seeking help.

"How do you respect a man who's not earning, not going to work, or just crying about his feelings? That narrative weighed heavily on me," he expressed.

We often do not have enough conversations about failure in society with men. Men are often looked at as 'return on investments', for a lot of our countrymen are supposed to be breadwinners to support the dreams and aspirations of the whole family and sometimes to just put food on the table. While Kartik spoke about rejections in his career, Nikhil shared, "In such a situation, where the worth of men is reduced to how much money they can make for their families, any time they face failure, it's not just taken as 'rejection', but as the difference between the family's survival and livelihood. Every rejection then adds up in the minds of men and they see themselves as unable to live up to their gender, by not being able to earn enough. We need men to become comfortable with the idea of failure as a way of life and not take it personally to the level of harming themselves or others."

LISTENINGS

Zenplus fleet launches 1,000 eco-friendly vehicles on Uber

Zenplus Fleet Management (ZFM), proudly announces the deployment of 1,000 eco-friendly vehicles on the Uber platform to boost tech-enabled mobility services in metro cities. The new fleet, consisting of CNG-powered Maruti Suzuki Wagon R models, underscores Zenplus Fleet's commitment to reducing carbon emissions and promoting green transportation.

Starbucks celebrates individuality, style and coffee

Dare to be different as Starbucks teams up with international street and lifestyle brand New Era to launch a limited-edition Starbucks x New Era collection in select stores across India. Celebrating individuality, style and coffee, this collaboration blends two cultures to bring out bold attitudes and unique stories, elevating the daily cup of coffee into a moment of fashionable self-expression.

Ila Arun and KK Raina's play makes its silver screen debut

India's leading archival platform, Zee Theatre, presents *Peechha Karta Parchhayaan*, a star-studded teleplay headlined by renowned theatre, film and music artist Ila Arun, theatre veteran KK Raina and popular television actors Param Singh, Priyamwada Kant and Vijay Kashyap. The intergenerational drama is the culmination of the enduring creative synergy between Ila Arun and KK Raina and was first performed in 2016. Adapted by Ila Arun from Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's classic play *Ghosts*, it is directed for the stage by stalwart director KK Raina and helmed by filming director Saurabh Shrivastava for television.

Goibibo celebrates 15 years with special deals

Goibibo marks its 15th anniversary with a customer-focused campaign, offering a range of special deals and discounts. This celebration includes discounts of up to 45% on hotels, homestays and hostels; up to 10% on domestic and international flights and airport cabs; up to 15% on buses and up to 30% on holiday packages. The travel platform is also offering select customers a chance to enjoy a free stay at luxurious 5-star hotels.

Free dental screenings for moms-to-be

Fernandez Clinic Necklace Road is offering free dental screenings exclusively to expectant mothers in their second trimester. It will provide essential oral healthcare and preventive measures for the well-being of mothers and babies. Maintaining good gum health during pregnancy can help reduce the risk of pre-eclampsia, premature birth and low birth weight.

WCC to expedite leadership in climate action

Recognising the pivotal role that women can play in driving effective climate action, the Women Climate Collective (WCC) is strategically consolidating its efforts to amplify women-led initiatives. Their cohort highlights the unique challenges faced by women while also underscoring their contributions to the global climate discourse.

PARTY



DRS International School, Gudlapochampally, organised a large meet for former students in Hyderabad on Monday. During this event, numerous former students were observed enjoying themselves, taking selfies with their teachers and cherishing memories with them.



Texas Review hosted the USA Education Fair at Hyatt Place, Banjara Hills. This event had an impressive footfall of over 500 students planning to apply for the upcoming spring intake to study in the USA. Featuring representatives from more than 35 US universities, this education fair provided attendees with valuable one-on-one guidance on pursuing higher education in the United States.



Leading luxury watch retailer Art of Time is pleased to announce the official purchase of the Panerai boutique. With this calculated takeover, Art of Time has achieved yet another important step toward its goal of becoming a more prominent player in the luxury watch industry and giving customers an unmatched shopping experience.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



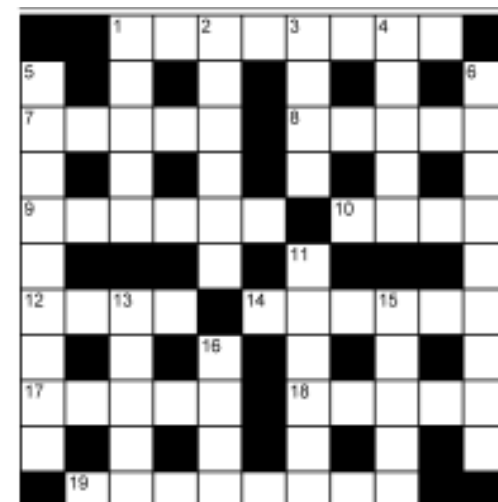
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



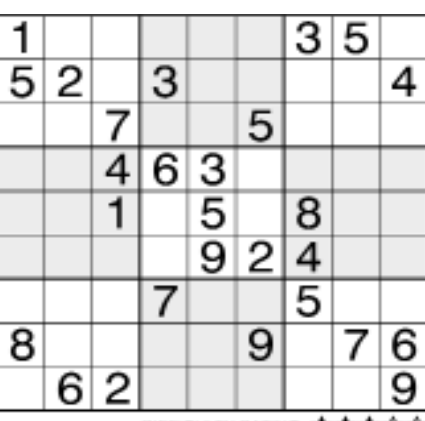
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

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

- 1 A water sport
- 7 After eighth
- 8 Worship
- 9 Hurt someone's feelings by being rude to them
- 10 Fewer
- 12 This metal goes rusty
- 14 A fruit
- 17 A large serving spoon
- 18 Book name
- 19 Someone in jail
- 4 Rope loop
- 5 Not able to be seen
- 6 Read this daily
- 11 Cardboard box
- 13 Command
- 15 Change
- 16 Untidy shambles

DOWN

- 1 Musical pieces for the voice
- 2 Breathe in
- 3 A ditch around a castle



GINGER MEGGS



'IT WAS A CHALLENGE TO DUB FOR AN APE IN TELUGU'



Voice artist R Shankar, who has been on the path of lending his voice to some great projects, irrespective of the languages, speaks to *The Pioneer* about his journey, lending his voice to Big B and the challenge of lending his voice in the *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes*

TEJAL SINHA

What started off as an inclination back in his childhood, today R. Shankar has been a dubbing and voice artist for over 13 years now. Having his voice over multiple languages, he has recently lent his voice to the box-office hit *Deadpool and Wolverine*. Not just this, he has also been the voice of the Proximus character in the *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes*.

"I began dubbing as a voice artist in 2010," shares the artist, who had also lent his voice to Sylvester Stallone in *Samaritan*, John Cena in *Ricky Stanicky*, as well as Jackpot and Dave Bautista in *My Spy*. "I began working as the voice behind the supporting characters and now here I am doing lead characters. I have lent my voice to around 750 to 800 movies in all languages."

Over the years, he has found his inspiration in Sai Kumar, Ravishankar, Shrinvas Murthy and Hyderabad's legend, RCM Raju. However, Big B's voice, he says, has been a benchmark that has inspired him a lot.

After finding his inspiration in the voice of Big B, he did get the opportunity to even be his voice in films like *Ganapath* and *Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy*. What an honour!

As we went ahead in this chat, he recalls, "It was a nice experience working in *Deadpool and Wolverine* because this was a big opportunity for me. The dubbing director, had supported me a lot. Voicing has been one of the most important aspects of every movie. Every movie has voice tests; collecting voice samples and pick the ones that better suit the character." However, he shares that dubbing for Hollywood movies is a bit challenging because they are

very conscious. "We cannot afford to leave out the beauty of the character. We cannot leave out what the expressions of the characters should be. As a voice artist, our main focus needs to always be on connecting with regional audiences."

Having also lent his voice to Prabhas-starrer *Salaar* and Yash-starrer *KGF* and sharing his feelings on the films' success from his point of view, he shares, "It's pleasing. However, if a film is going to do well or not, as a voice artist, we have to do our work. If, commercially, the film is doing well, then what else can we ask for? Our hard work is recognised by other people; they'll get to know about you and also know about how we can work on any of the projects, not confined to a particular genre."

Speaking of his most challenging project, beyond a doubt, it was the *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes*. Voicing the Proximus character, he says, "I really enjoyed it. Working on different projects, brings a whole new learning experience. This project was certainly different from the previous ones because it was the first time that I was dubbing for an ape. The film is made of motions that capture a kind of technology. With this project, I was really surprised because they came up with detailed expressions. We had to coordinate and be very careful because every minute the expressions were being changed."

As we head towards the end of the chat, with great enthusiasm, Shankar gushes, "The job of a voice artist is in itself a tough job, because it is not your behaviour or expressions. We need to dub according to the dubbing director, take inputs and deliver things accordingly. Now, I am glad that the voice artists have also been getting their due credit."

KRITI SCOOPS OUT OVER HER IDEAL LIFE PARTNER

Kriti Sanon has been making waves this year with standout performances in *Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya* and *Crew* recently. As she enjoys the success of these films, she's also gearing up for her next project, *Do Patti*, where she stars alongside Kajol. In a recent interview, Sanon shared her thoughts on what she seeks in a life partner.

Sanon expressed a desire for a partner who brings positivity and motivation into her life. She explained, "You want people who contribute positively to your life. They should inspire and support you, especially during tough times. A partner should be there for you through both joyful and challenging moments, making achievements feel meaningful when shared."

The actress also touched on the loneliness often felt in the Bollywood industry, noting, "Loneliness in this field can be profound. You frequently form close bonds on set, but they are temporary. Moving from one project to another, everything feels fleeting. Therefore, having stable constants in your personal life is essential."

Recently, Sanon celebrated her birthday in Greece with her sister Nupur Sanon and her rumoured boyfriend Kabir Bahia made an appearance in the social media posts from the celebration. Despite the public interest, Sanon has chosen to keep details about her relationship status private.



Is Malavika Mohanan set to portray goddess in *Thangalaan*?

The trailer for *Thangalaan* has recently been unveiled, generating considerable buzz with its stunning visuals and unique portrayals. Among the notable cast members are Chiyaan Vikram and Malavika Mohanan, who both appear in striking new roles. While Vikram's character is prominently featured, Malavika's role is more enigmatic, with her being briefly introduced as Aarathi. The trailer's brief but impactful glimpses of Malavika Mohanan have sparked widespread speculation about her character. Although details are scarce, many believe she may be playing the role of a goddess. Her significant mention by other characters and the grandeur associated with her appearance suggest a pivotal role in the narrative.

An industry insider has hinted, "Malavika Mohanan, as Aarathi, is expected to portray a goddess in *Thangalaan*. Her role is designed to add substantial depth to the film's storyline and audiences can look forward to experiencing intriguing character nuances." While the specifics of her role remain under wraps, it is clear that Malavika Mohanan's character will be a crucial and compelling element of *Thangalaan*. Fans eagerly await to discover whether she will indeed embody a goddess in this highly anticipated film.



Kamal's *ThugLife* hits new milestone with train set shoot

The highly anticipated film *ThugLife*, starring the iconic Kamal Haasan, has recently taken a thrilling turn as the team shifts focus to a dynamic train set for pivotal scenes. Filming is currently underway on these meticulously crafted sets, with the climax and crucial flashback sequences being captured over the past five days. The train set, designed to reflect various time periods, adds a distinctive atmosphere to the film's narrative, enhancing the dramatic impact of these pivotal scenes. This segment of the shoot is crucial as it underscores the film's high-stakes drama and emotional

depth. Directed by Mani Ratnam, *ThugLife* promises to be a gripping saga, with Kamal Haasan portraying a complex character embroiled in thrilling and intense situations. The choice of a train set for these important scenes adds a layer of authenticity and excitement, complementing the film's intricate storyline. Fans eagerly await further updates on the project, which is expected to showcase Haasan's unparalleled acting prowess and innovative storytelling. The film's production team is working diligently to ensure that *ThugLife* meets the high expectations of audiences and critics alike.

PrimeShow Films to release *Double ISMART* in TG

Following their blockbuster hit with *ISmart Shankar*, Ustaad Ram Pothineni and the dynamic director Puri Jagannadh are poised to make an even bigger splash with their highly anticipated sequel, *Double ISMART*. The film is set to hit theatres on August 15. In a significant development, PrimeShow Films has secured the theatrical rights for *Double ISMART* in the Nizam area. The distribution house, known for its lucrative deals in other regions, will oversee the release in this crucial market.

Double ISMART has generated substantial buzz with its engaging songs, teaser, and trailer. The film promises to blend mass appeal with action, romance, and poignant emotional moments. Bollywood star Sanjay Dutt joins the cast in a prominent role as the Big Bull, while Kavya Thapar stars as Ram's love interest. Produced by Puri Jagannadh and Charmme Kaur under the Puri Connects banner, the film features a chart-topping score by Mani Sharma, adding to the excitement surrounding its release.



Janhvi celebrates Sridevi's birthday by visiting Tirupati with boyfriend

Actress Janhvi Kapoor, known for her spiritual connection with the Tirupati Balaji temple, made a heartfelt pilgrimage to the shrine on her late mother Sridevi's 61st birth anniversary. Accompanied by her boyfriend, Shikhar Pahariya, Janhvi's visit was captured in a video that quickly went viral on social media.

On Tuesday, Janhvi honoured her mother with a touching Instagram post. She shared a series of photos, including an image of the temple, a childhood picture with Sridevi, and a snapshot of herself in a saree worn for the Tirupati visit. Alongside the images, she wrote, "Happy birthday Mumma. I love you (sic)." In the video from the temple, Janhvi, dressed in a yellow saree with a green blouse and traditional jewelry, was seen seeking blessings with Shikhar, who wore a traditional South Indian dhoti and shawl.



KAVIN, NAYANTHARA FILM'S FIRST SINGLE ALL READY

The highly anticipated film starring Kavin and Nayanthara, is generating a lot of buzz. The latest update is that the first single from the film is ready. The song, crafted into a lively and peppy melody, promises to be a highlight of the film's soundtrack.

The track, which features a popular sweet name as its title, has been penned by the talented Vishnu Edavan. Known for his work on the songs for *LEO* and *Devara*, Edavan brings his expertise to this new project, ensuring that the song is both catchy and memorable. The music for the film is composed by Jen Martin, who has been working on creating an engaging and energetic score to complement the vibrant mood of the single. The collaboration between Edavan and Martin aims to deliver a track that will resonate with audiences and enhance the film's appeal.

Vishnu Edavan, who is also directing the film, is making his mark not only behind the camera but also through his musical contributions. The song's upbeat nature and Edavan's lyrical touch are set to make it a popular addition to the film's soundtrack.



DEVARA 'AYUDHA PUJA' SHOOTING WRAPS UP

The production of the highly anticipated film *Devara* has reached a significant milestone with the completion of its Ayudha Puja shooting on Tuesday. The wrap-up of this crucial segment signals exciting developments ahead for the movie's release. *Devara: Part 1* is described as "an epic action saga" set in picturesque coastal landscapes. The film showcases exhilarating, emotionally intense events across a historical timeline. It centers on a titular protagonist who rises as a hero for the oppressed and a formidable force against wrongdoers. Directed and written by Koratala Siva and produced by Sudhakar Mikkilineni and Nandamuri Kalyana Ram, the film unfolds against the stunning backdrop of coastal lands. Featuring Jr. NTR and Janhvi Kapoor in the lead roles, it also boasts a robust supporting cast, including Saif Ali Khan, Prakash Raj, Meka Srikanth, Chaitra Roy, Murli Sharma and more.



PONTING BACKS AUSTRALIA TO HAND INDIA 3-1 DEFEAT IN BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY

PTI ■ DUBAI

Ricky Ponting believes Australia will have a "point to prove" after two straight Test series defeats at home against India and backed the Pat Cummins-led side to win the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy 3-1 come November-December. India, who have returned victorious in both their previous Test assignments Down Under with identical margins of 2-1, will take on the world No.1 Australia in a five-Test series starting on November 22. "It's going to be a competitive series. Australia has got a bit of a point to prove against India in Australia on the back of what happened the last two series here," Ponting told "The ICC Review". "We are back to (having) five Tests as well, which is the other really important thing about this series. It has only been four Tests the last couple of time. (To have) five Tests, everyone is really excited by that and I don't know if there'd be too many drawn games. "I'm obviously going to tip Australia to win and I'm never going to tip against Australia. There will be a draw somewhere and there will be some bad weather somewhere, so I'm going to say 3-1 to Australia," he added. India and Australia have not played a five-Test series after their bilateral affairs came to be known as the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Before that, in 1991-92, India had toured



Australia for a five-Test series. Ponting backed India's left-arm seamer Khaleel Ahmed, whom he coached in the IPL at Delhi Capitals, to be a part of India's touring party. "Someone like Khaleel Ahmed, I think, could find himself on the Test

tour. He has just been over in Zimbabwe recently and played that (T20) series over there, but a left-arm would be ideal for them to have in their touring squad," Ponting said. The former Australia skipper hoped both teams will be deploying full-

fledged bowling attacks. "(Mohammed) Shami will be back fit by then. (Mohammed) Siraj we know will be there-abouts somewhere and obviously (Jasprit) Bumrah is going nowhere. Both teams are going to line up really, really strongly," he said.

Ponting said the competitiveness between India and Australia is quite close to the Ashes rivalry against England. "I was a part of it when that really started to grow, when the rivalry really started to grow, was it's right at the back end of my career," Ponting said. "I've said for the last couple of years now, Australia have always had a fierce rivalry with England, obviously, and a very strong rivalry with South Africa. "But I think India is now sitting right on the back of what an Ashes clash is like and probably overtaken the rivalry with South Africa. Ponting said while Australia's squad looks more or less settled, it remains to be seen if Steve Smith would like to persist being at the opening slot. "Australia will pretty much pick itself. Probably, the only one question there might be with Australia again, is if (Steve) Smith's the right man to be opening the batting," he said. "That would be the only query that I can see there. But that was all about obviously bringing Cameron Green back into the side. "So I'll rephrase it, not whether Smith's the right man to open the batting but whether he thinks it's the right spot for him. Because if he doesn't think it's the right spot, then they'll make a change and get someone else back up there," Ponting added.



Sri Lanka Cricket ropes in Ian Bell as batting coach ahead of away Test series vs England

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka on Tuesday appointed Ian Bell as their batting coach ahead of their tour of England comprising three Tests. Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) announced on its website that Bell, who scored 7727 runs in 118 Tests, will start working with the national side later this week. "He will start working with the team from August 16 and remain until the conclusion of the three-Test match series," SLC said. SLC CEO Ashley de Silva expressed: "We appointed Ian to bring in a person with local knowledge to help the players with key insights on the conditions there."

"Ian has a lot of experience playing in England, and we believe his inputs will help our team in this crucial tour. Sri Lanka's tour of England begins with the first Test at Manchester from August 21-25. The second Test will be played at Lord's from August 29-September 2 while The Oval will host the third and final Test from September 6-10. Meanwhile, England could be in a race against time with skipper Ben Stokes suffering a hamstring injury last Sunday while playing in The Hundred. Stokes sustained the injury while batting and was eventually helped off the field. He was taken for scans and was also seen walking with the help of crutches.



We didn't even get desired coach for Olympics: Ashwini

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian doubles badminton specialist Ashwini Ponnappa on Tuesday said she received little to no individual financial assistance from the sports ministry in the build up to Paris Olympics and even her request for a coach was turned down ahead of the just-concluded Games. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) had come out with a document, detailing the financial support provided to the Paris-bound Indian athletes. It mentions that Ashwini was provided Rs 4,50,000 under TOPS and Rs 1,48,04,080 under Annual calendar for Training and Competition (ACTC), which included the procurement of Game Ready recovery equipment, international competitions and sparring partner in the Tokyo cycle. "I'm absolutely shocked.. I don't mind not getting money but telling the nation that I got money is ridiculous. I haven't received it. Like if you're talking about national

camp, then that 1.5 Crore is spent on all the campers," Ashwini told PTI. "I don't have a specific coach. As for my personalised trainer, I'm paying for him myself. I'm not taking money from anyone. I've played on my own until November (2023). I was included as part of TOPS only after we qualified..." Ashwini, 34, has been one of the top Indian doubles player, having won a gold, a silver and a bronze in the Commonwealth Games 2010, 2014 and 2018 respectively. She has also competed in the London and Rio Olympics with Jwala Gutta. Detailing the Rs 1.48 crore spending, a SAI source said: "The Rs 1.48 crore has been spent on her on travel, stay, food, competition fee, DA in all the competitions that she participated in as part of the Indian team in the Paris cycle. "This money is given to BAI as part of ACTC." Ashwini, who had paired with N Sikki Reddy till August, 2022, joined hands with Tanisha Crasto in



December that year and started playing in international tournaments from January 2023. A series of good performances helped them seal their Paris berth, after which the duo were included in the TOPS scheme in May this year. "The ministry has always supported me. I've been part of the team for years and I'm grateful for the support I've received," Ashwini said. "The last year I haven't been supported and it's ok. But you can't say I've been given Rs 1.5 crore, if it's over four years, fair enough. As I was TOPS when I was partnering Sikki." Playing her third Olympics, Ashwini was left in tears after she and her partner Tanisha couldn't win a single match to make an unceremonious exit from the group stage. "I haven't played well, irrespective of the coach not being there, I take responsibility for that. But you can't say I'm getting this amount when I haven't even got this amount," she said.

I will meet hockey team before Sept 10 to chalk out future plans: Sports Minister

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday informed that he will hold a meeting with the bronze medal winning Indian men's hockey team before September 10 to chalk out future plans in its endeavour to clinch the gold medal in 2028 Los Angeles Games. Mandaviya on Tuesday felicitated star custodian PR Sreejesh, defender Sanjay, Amit Rohidas and striker Abhishek after their return from Paris on Tuesday morning. "It's been a wonderful performance from you guys, we didn't get the gold but we came very close to it and the way you guys inspired after the semifinal loss is commendable," Mandaviya said. "But it's not the end of the road and I will sit with you by September 10 and churn out future course of action so that

we should return with nothing less than gold from Los Angeles. I will seek your opinion how to go about it and try to provide you all possible support from the government." The minister also said he was satisfied with the performance of the Indian contingent even though they couldn't match last edition's result. In Tokyo India won seven medals including a gold, but in Paris the country could manage just six medals -- five bronze medals and one silver. The Indians, however, missed out on seven medals, finishing fourth, a fact which Mandaviya rued. "In Tokyo, we won seven medals but in Paris we won six. But the fact is we missed out on seven more medals by finishing fourth, which is a worthy performance," he said. Mandaviya had earlier felicitated the other members of the hockey who returned early.

PTI ■ JAIPUR

India is hoping to win more than 25 medals from its largest-ever contingent of 84 athletes at the upcoming Paris Paralympic Games beginning on August 28, the country's governing body chief Devendra Jhajharia said on Tuesday. Jhajharia, himself a double gold medallist at the Paralympics, said the Indian contingent would look the carry the momentum of record-breaking performances in the 2021 Tokyo Paralympics and 2023 Hangzhou Asian Para Games. India had won 19 medals at the Tokyo Paralympics and a historic 111 medal at the Para Asian Games. "This is the biggest para

India aiming to win more than 25 medals at Paris Paralympics: PCI chief Jhajharia

contingent India has ever sent to the Paralympics. We are very confident about the overall performance and are sure to win more than 25 medals," Jhajharia said here at an event organised by the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI). India is set to compete in 12 sports, including archery, athletics, badminton, canoeing, cycling, blind judo, powerlifting, rowing, shooting, swimming, table tennis, and taekwondo. "Most of our athletes are in excellent shape, having



trained rigorously for this event. We expect outstanding results, particularly in athletics, badminton, archery, and shooting. They are ready to make India proud," the PCI president said. The Indian team boasts of a mix of experienced and young athletes athletes. Many of them are participating in their second or third Paralympics. Amit Kumar Saroha, a seasoned athlete competing in his fourth Paralympics, will represent India in the

F51 category discus throw. The 39-year-old Asian Para Games medallist is the oldest member of the contingent. On the other end of the spectrum, the youngest athlete is 17-year-old archer Sheetal Devi, who shoots with her legs instead of her hands due to a medical condition that has afflicted her since birth. She recently made headlines by winning gold medals in individual compound and mixed team events in archery at the 2023 Asian Para Games. Meanwhile, 100 Sports Management Private Limited has been awarded the exclusive broadcasting and digital media right for Paris Paralympics in India, according to a release.

Premier League will have different look when season starts Friday

AP ■ LONDON

The Premier League rarely stands still. For the 2024-25 season starting on Friday, there are five newly hired managers, around \$1.6 billion worth of new players (and counting), new offside technology, updated financial regulations and a tweaked match schedule. **COACHING CHANGES:** A quarter of the coaches will be taking charge of a Premier League game for the first time, with Liverpool (Arne Slot), Chelsea (Enzo Maresca) and Brighton (Fabian Hurler) all having new managers and both Southampton (Russell Martin) and Ipswich (Kieran McKenna) gaining promotion with managers owning no top-flight experience. Throw in Julien Lopetegui being the new guy at West Ham after 4 1/2 years of David Moyes at the helm and Steve Cooper replacing Maresca at Leicester, and the dugouts will look different this season. Most of the intrigue, however, will focus on Slot and what style he implements at Liverpool after the team's nearly nine years with the popular Jurgen Klopp. Rock n' roll

could turn into more control, with Slot preferring more of a possession game. **SLOWER MARKET:** The Premier League's 20 clubs have spent as much on new players in this transfer window as those in Spain, Italy and Germany combined, according to transfermarkt.Com. So why does it feel such a slow summer of trading? Maybe because there have been no blockbuster deals, with the most expensive being striker Dominic Solanke moving to Tottenham from Bournemouth for 65 million pounds (\$83 million). However, lots of deals for between \$30-70 million quickly add up - and there are still three weeks left in the window, during which Manchester City, Manchester United, Liverpool, Arsenal and Chelsea are expected to weigh in. City (Savinho) and Arsenal (Riccardo Calafiori) have only made one new signing so far and Liverpool hasn't made any. Come the end of transfer deadline day on Aug. 30, don't be surprised if Premier League clubs have spent way more than \$2 billion - even if most are balancing the books with sales because of the league's sterner financial rules.



SEMI-AUTOMATED OFFSIDES: Expect offside decisions to be reached much quicker in the Premier League this season. The competition is introducing semi-automated offside technology for the first time, with the new system set to be launched during the first half of the season. Multiple cameras will track player movements and record data points on parts of the body that are relevant for an offside decision. Data is processed with artificial intelligence to create a 3D offside line that is alerted to the team of VAR officials. It is expected to take an average of around 30 seconds off the length of time it currently takes VAR officials to come to a decision manually. Semi-automated offside technology were used at the 2022 World Cup and at the recent European Championship. **SPENDING RULES:** Last season in the Premier League was notable for some clubs, like Everton and Nottingham Forest, receiving points deductions for breaking the competition's profitability and sustainability regulations, which are now being more strictly applied. This coming season is the final year of these regulations, with two new

forms of spending caps being trialed ahead of their introduction from the 2025-26 season. Teams in England's top division will trial a "Squad Cost Rules" system, which will limit spending on players to 85% of a club's soccer revenue and net profit or loss on player sales. A second system called "Top to Bottom Anchoring" limits - or anchors - spending to a multiple of the lowest combined prize money and cash from TV rights forecast to be earned by a team. The league said the systems aimed to "improve and preserve clubs' financial sustainability and the competitive balance of the Premier League" as well as "promote aspiration of clubs. **NO WINTER BREAK:** The Premier League is renowned for being a relentless slog - even more so this season. There's no winter break for clubs this time, with the season starting later, to give players more time to recover from international tournaments this summer, and therefore being squeezed. Last year, for example, five games were held each weekend over a two-week period, giving teams at least one weekend off over January.