


the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

Published From: VIJAYAWADA HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN



NDA will form govt again in 2029:
Shah



RBI LIKELY TO KEEP INTEREST RATE UNCHANGED AT 6.5%



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

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

Why are Congress leaders who said before the Assembly election that KCR's family had robbed TG using the Dharani Portal not conducting an inquiry into the matter? What was the report of the 5-member committee on Dharani? Why are the culprits who looted in the name of the Dharani Portal not being investigated? How can Congress leaders rob the people in the name of Dharani like the BRS? It seems that the Dharani Committee has a secret report on the subject.

- Bandi Sanjay, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs

P4

DON'T MISS...

Nimmagadda appointed EO for ...

Vijayawada MP and Kurmool District Cricket Association vice-president Kesineni Sivanath has said that former State Election Commissioner (SEC) Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar has been appointed as the Election Officer for the upcoming elections of Andhra Cricket Association (ACA). ACA special general body meeting was held at a private hotel on Sunday. MP Sivanath spoke to the media persons after this meeting and said that in this meeting the old members of ACA have tendered their resignations which were accepted ...

-PAGE: 2

BSP doesn't agree with Supreme ...

BSP chief and former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mayawati on Sunday said her party doesn't agree with the recent Supreme Court's verdict allowing sub-classification within Scheduled Castes. "The sub-classification of people within Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) has been permitted, our party doesn't agree with it at all," Mayawati said while addressing a press conference here. In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court on Thursday held that states are constitutionally ...

-PAGE: 5

India seeks duty concession on ...

India is seeking customs duty concession on a number of goods including cars, commercial vehicles and machinery from Sri Lanka under a comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA), talks for which are underway, an official said. India has also sought easier visa norms to further facilitate entry of professionals from here, the official said. The 14th round of talks between senior officials of India and Sri Lanka was concluded recently in Colombo. Issues which came up for the talks included rules of origin, ...

-PAGE: 8

Won't retire until I get Olympic ...

She has flattered to deceive for four straight Olympics but multiple World Cup medal winning archer Deepika Kumari has vowed not to quit unless she ends up on podium which she feels could be Los Angeles in four years' time. For Deepika, it has always been a case of not being able to display enough temperament in pressure situation at the grandest stage. "Obviously, I want to play more in the future and will continue my game," Deepika told PTI in an exclusive interaction at the India House here. "I really want ...

-SPORTS

Stage set for AP Collectors' meet

Focus to be laid on management of lands, mines & sand during YSRCP govt



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu will host a District Collectors conference at the State Secretariat on Monday. Participants will include Collectors, Ministers, and Secretaries. The meeting will primarily address the management and exploitation of lands, mines, sand, and natural resources from the previous YSRCP government's tenure. CM Chandrababu will scrutinise these issues closely. Additionally, the conference will include a special review of law and order across the state, allowing for discussions on district-level law enforcement and restrictions related to the cultivation and sale of ganja.

The conference will include a special review of law and order across the State, allowing for discussions on district-level policing and restrictions related to the cultivation and sale of ganja. The conference will also cover other topics such as civil services and grievance redressal.

Continued on Page 2



Four roads to connect Amaravati to NH

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The capital construction in Andhra Pradesh has gained momentum following the formation of the TDP-led NDA government two months ago. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, after taking office, prioritised the construction of Amaravati and the Polavaram project, which had come to a halt in 2019 under the previous YSRCP government.

In a recent review meeting, the Chief Minister approved the construction of the E-11 and E-13 roads, which were previously stopped, as well as the new E-5 and E-15 roads to connect to National Highway 16.

The Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) had initially planned to connect the E-11 and E-13 roads from Amaravati to the Chennai-Kolkata National Highway. However, they have now decided to include E-5 and E-15 in the project. The immediate priority for CRDA is the construction of E-11 and E-13 roads and mapping their connection to the National Highway.

Continued on Page 2

3 train coaches catch fire at Vizag

No casualties as mishap occurs after disembarkment of all passengers

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Three air-conditioned coaches of the Korba-Visakhapatnam Express were engulfed in flames on Sunday morning, shortly after the train arrived at Visakhapatnam railway station. Luckily, there were no casualties as all passengers had already disembarked when the fire was discovered.

The train, arriving on platform number four from Chhattisgarh's Korba at 6.30 a.m., was scheduled to depart for Tirupati later. A railway official stated that the Korba Express had to undergo maintenance during the coaching depot. Consequently, the train was locked and the power supply was cut off.



Railway Protection Force personnel noticed smoke from the B7 coach around 9.20 a.m. and immediately alerted the authorities and

fire services. "By then, all passengers had disembarked the train after its arrival," said the official.

Continued on Page 2

Key parliamentary panels constituted by consensus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Key parliamentary panels, including the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), have started taking shape, mostly by consensus as against elections witnessed during the previous Lok Sabha. Besides the PAC, which examines government expenditure, the Committee on Public Undertakings,

the Committee on Estimates, the Committee on Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the Joint Committee on Office of Profit and the Committee on Welfare of Other Backward Classes have been constituted without an election. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla is expected to nominate the chairpersons of the panels soon, parliamentary officials said.

Continued on Page 2

100% 4G coverage by March 2025: Pemmasani

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Union Minister of State for Rural Development and Communications, Dr Pemmasani Chandrasekhar, announced that both central and state governments are dedicated to rapidly expanding 4G services across India. The target is to achieve 70 per cent coverage by September and 100 per cent by March 2025. During his visit to the BSNL office in Tadikonda, accompanied by Tadikonda MLA Tenali Sravan Kumar and other officials, Dr Chandrasekhar inspected

a newly installed 4G tower. Dr. Chandrasekhar stressed the importance of providing affordable internet services, particularly in rural areas, to alleviate the burden on residents. He mentioned that BSNL is undergoing modernization to deliver 4G services, in line with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. He further emphasized that delivering high-quality 4G services in Andhra Pradesh is a top priority for the government. Testing has already com-



menced at 300 locations in the state. The minister highlighted the ongoing 4G testing by BSNL at 300 locations in Andhra Pradesh, with equipment installation underway at 400 additional centres. He pointed out the challenges faced by rural populations due to high internet recharge rates and reaffirmed the government's commitment to making internet services affordable. BSNL's modernization efforts are pivotal to this initiative, aimed at bridging the digital divide and enhancing connectivity for rural communities.

Thrilling penalty shoot out!

Sreejesh takes Indian hockey to Paris Olympics semifinals

PNS ■ PARIS



A battle-hardened PR Sreejesh gave a big fillip to the Indian hockey team's aspirations of winning a second consecutive Olympic medal with his splendid shootout saves in a 4-2 victory over Great Britain that earned his side a place in the semifinals of the Paris Games here Sunday.

Playing most of the match without key defender Amit Rohidas, who was shown a red card for hitting a rival play-



er with his stick, the team did extremely well to hold Great Britain to 1-1 in regulation time.

Great Britain dominated possession and played with man-to-man marking, not allowing India to attack much. In the absence of Rohidas, Manpreet Singh, who plays in mid-field, was asked to man the defence.

2

80 per cent subsidy on seeds for crop losers: Atchannaaidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Agriculture Minister K. Atchannaaidu has assured farmers who have lost their crops due to heavy rains that the government will provide immediate support. During a review meeting with officials at the AP Secretariat on Sunday, several crucial issues were discussed. Minister Atchannaaidu issued key instructions and suggestions to the officials present.

Speaking to the media afterwards, Minister Atchannaaidu announced that seeds have been distributed to farmers at an 80% subsidised rate. Orders for the immediate distribution of seeds have been issued to address the damage caused by the heavy rainfall. The Minister highlighted that approximately 1,406 hectares of saplings and 33,000 hectares of paddy crops have been severely affected by the rains. He reassured the farmers that the government was committed to supporting them in every possible way.

The Minister also mentioned that around 6,356 quintals of paddy seeds are ready for distribution at each Rythu Seva Kendra in the districts of East Godavari, West



Orders for the immediate distribution of seeds have been issued to address the damage caused by the heavy rainfall.

Godavari, Eluru, Kakinada, and Anakapalli, facilitated by the Andhra Pradesh State Seed Development Corporation. Farmers whose paddy crops have been damaged can obtain these seeds at an 80% subsidy through their respective Rythu Seva Kendras. The minister encouraged farmers to follow good farming practices to achieve high yields.

Lokesh helps needy student realise his IIT dream

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Education Minister Nara Lokesh has once again made a significant impact by helping a deserving student from a financially strained background secure admission at IIT Lucknow. Lokesh, known for his active engagement on social media, responded to a heartfelt plea from Basavayya, a student from Attili village in West Godavari district.

Basavayya, who recently earned a spot at IIT Lucknow, faced a major hurdle in paying the Rs 4 lakh course fee, a substantial amount for his family, who rely on daily wage labour. In a desperate bid for assistance, Basavayya reached out to Lokesh via Twitter, detailing his challenging situation. The minister's swift and empathetic response was both reassuring and impactful. "Basavayya, you will study at IIT Lucknow. Your dream will come true, and I will cover your fees. Best wishes for your future," Lokesh tweeted in reply. His prompt and generous act has been met with widespread praise, and Basavayya's family has expressed profound gratitude for the support they received.

91 killed, hundreds injured in Bangla clashes

PNS ■ DHAKA

At least 91 people, including 14 policemen, were killed and hundreds injured on Sunday in fierce clashes between protesters demanding Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation and the ruling party supporters in different parts of Bangladesh, forcing authorities to cut off mobile internet and enforce a nationwide curfew for an indefinite period.



The clashes broke out Sunday morning when protesters attending

the non-cooperation programme under the banner of the Students Against Discrimination with the one-point demand of the government's resignation over a job quota system faced opposition from the supporters of the Awami League, Chhatra League, and Jubo League activists.

At least 91 people have been killed in clashes, shootings and counter-chases across the country surrounding the non-cooperation program, leading Bengali-language newspaper Prothom Alo reported.

Continued on Page 2

Now, it's NSP's turn to brim with heavy inflows

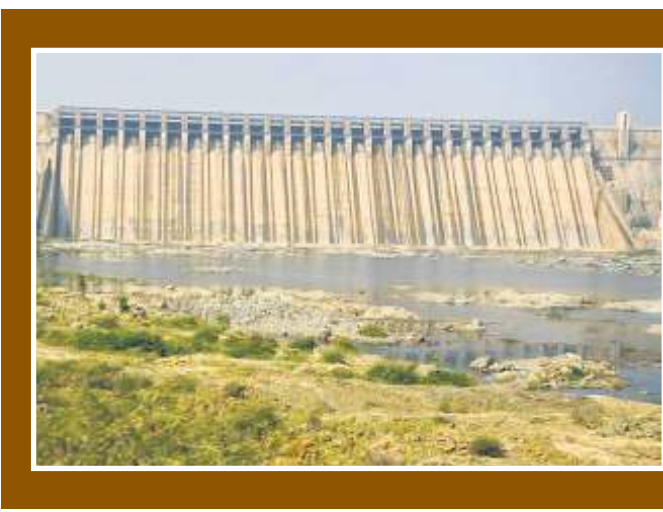
PNS ■ GUNTUR

The Nagarjuna Sagar Project (NSP) is experiencing a significant inflow of water from upstream sources, with officials anticipating that the reservoir will reach full capacity within the next few days.

The Srisaillam Reservoir is currently receiving approximately 600,000 cusecs of water. To manage this, 10 crest gates have been lifted to discharge over 500,000 cusecs of water downstream to the Nagarjuna Sagar Project.

Currently, the water level at NSP stands at 572.7 feet, with 263.35 TMC of water stored against its full capacity of 312.5 TMC. The NSP is receiving 314,000 cusecs of water. Should the inflow persist for another two days, engineers expect to open the NSP crest gates on the evening of

Nagarjuna Sagar Dam crest gates likely to be lifted today



Currently, the water level at NSP stands at 572.7 feet, with 263.35 TMC of water stored against its full capacity of 312.5 TMC. The NSP is receiving 314,000 cusecs of water. Should the inflow persist for another two days, engineers expect to open the NSP crest gates on the evening of August 5 to release excess water downstream to the Pulichintala Project

August 5 to release excess water downstream to the Pulichintala Project.

Meanwhile, the inflow to the Srisaillam Project is steadily increasing, and the dam is now at full capacity. Engineers reported that 550,730 cusecs of water have been discharged downstream.

Hydropower generation is ongoing at both the right and left canal power stations.

The surge in water flow has attracted large crowds of tourists to the dam. Thousands visited on Sunday to witness the dramatic release of water from the 10 crest gates.

However, the influx of visitors caused traffic congestion, with numerous cars stranded on both sides of the ghat road due to inadequate traffic management by the police.

Monday Mirchi

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

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

ARE OFFICIALS UNAWARE OF ALLOTMENT OF LAND TO NIKHAT?
When sportspersons make a splash at international competitions, the state government concerned basks in reflected glory by announcing cash awards, allotment of land etc. Since bureaucracy moves at a snail's pace, it may be ages before the recipient of such awards gets it in his or her hands. Public memory is short and that of babus shorter. Recently Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy announced that the Cabinet had approved

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

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

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

--Yours truly

Nimmagadda appointed EO for ACA polls: MP Sivanath

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada MP and Kurnool District Cricket Association vice-president Kesineni Sivanath has said that former State Election Commissioner (SEC) Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar has been appointed as the Election Officer for the upcoming elections of Andhra Cricket Association (ACA). ACA special general body meeting was held at a private hotel on Sunday.

MP Sivanath spoke to the media persons after this meeting and said that in this meeting the old members of ACA have tendered their resignations which were accept-



ed and the members have been appreciated for their service to ACA. The MP said that the ACA elections will be held in the next month and a

three-member committee has been formed to take care of the ACA activities during this month. Former minister RVSK Ranga Rao, Moncho

Ferrer and Jagarlamudi Murali Mohan Rao will be members of this committee. Later in the general body meeting various issues of ACA were discussed like the condition of cricket stadiums and facilities for cricket players. The MP said that many advice and suggestions have been given regarding these issues.

ACA former secretary Gopinath Reddy, former joint secretary Rakesh, former minister RVSK Ranga Rao, Sana Satish, former treasurer Chalam, presidents and secretaries of various district cricket associations were present.

TG CM humiliated private school teachers: Vinod

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

He said that people are sending their children to private schools.

No letup in political violence in AP: Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former chief minister and YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has expressed grave concern over what he called the rule of lawlessness and political violence over the past two months in the State.

Taking to Twitter, he said "It is with grave concern that we address the current state of governance in Andhra Pradesh, which has been marred by the rule of lawlessness and political violence over the past two months. Andhra Pradesh has unfortunately become synonymous with political violence, and the situation shows no signs of improvement."

Daily incidents of politically motivated violence, encouraged by the ruling party's leaders and carried out with the confidence of being in power, are becoming the norm. The murder in Nandyal district last night



and the attack in Jaggaiahpet, NTR district, stand as stark examples of this alarming trend. To silence any dissent and prevent public protests, the TDP leaders and workers are resorting to intimidation and violence. Such heinous acts are a direct attack on democracy and the fundamental rights of citizens.

He also said that YSRCP will stand in solidarity with the victims of these atrocities and pledge to continue their fight against this oppressive regime. We urge the people of Andhra Pradesh to join us in condemning these acts of violence and to demand accountability from those in power, he said

Tribals in Agency areas await road infra development

PNS ■ PADERU

Despite significant strides in development, many tribal villages in the agency area continue to face acute challenges due to the absence of adequate road and transportation infrastructure. The region's tribal population has borne the brunt of this neglect, with limited access to essential services and healthcare. A recent assessment reveals that out of 3,915 tribal villages under the jurisdiction of 244 village panchayats in 11 mandals, a substantial number—2,191—lack paved roads. This infrastructure deficit has forced residents to endure arduous journeys through hilly terrains, often carrying the sick and infirm on makeshift stretchers. The region has witnessed tragic loss of life due to these perilous conditions.

The previous government's initiatives to address this issue, such as 'Mission Connect Paderu', remained incomplete due to insufficient funding. This lack of commitment exacerbated the problems faced by



tribal communities. A renewed hope has emerged with the current government's emphasis on developing road and transportation infrastructure in the agency area. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has directed officials to prioritize road construction and implement comprehensive development plans for the region. The government is also exploring the establishment of hostels for pregnant women to address transportation-related challenges during this vulnerable period.

To expedite the process, the Principal Secretary of the State

Tribal Welfare Department has initiated a detailed review of the region's needs. Officials have been tasked with identifying villages without road connectivity and preparing comprehensive road construction proposals. The government's commitment to transforming the lives of tribal communities through improved infrastructure is a significant step forward. As efforts to connect these isolated areas gain momentum, it is anticipated that the region will witness a positive transformation in terms of accessibility, healthcare, and overall quality of life.

Stage set for AP Collectors' ...

Continued from Page 1

Since the coalition government assumed office, it has focused on addressing past administrative issues and initiating a departmental overhaul. This has involved a significant reshuffling of IAS and IPS officers, with many taking on new roles. The formation of the coalition government has also led to the transfer of older officials and the appointment of new Collectors in various districts. RP Sisodia, Special Principal Secretary of the Revenue Department; CCLA Jayalakshmi; Guntur Collector Nagalakshmi; and officials from the General Administration Department have been overseeing the arrangements for the conference.

Four roads to connect Amaravati ...

Continued from Page 1

These plans were approved in a recent meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naidu. The construction of E-11 and E-13 roads will be undertaken on a priority basis by the Amaravati Development Corporation (ADC), which will appoint consultants to finalize the road alignments. Construction work on E-11 and E-13 has already com-

menced. The previous YSRCP government had halted the capital construction works and the road projects in 2019. The current administration has now decided to expedite the road construction to enhance connectivity to Amaravati. According to government sources, since the extension areas of the roads are adjacent to hills, significant land acquisition issues are not anticipated.

3 train coaches catch ...

Continued from Page 1

The fire swiftly spread to adjacent coaches, completely gutting the B7 coach and partially damaging the B6 and M1 coaches. Four fire engines were dispatched to the site and successfully extinguished the blaze.

Joint Commissioner of Police K Fakirappa confirmed no injuries or fatalities resulting from the incident. Railway officials have initiated an investigation to ascertain the cause of the fire and to implement measures to prevent similar incidents in the future. This event has raised concerns about the safety protocols for parked trains, prompting calls for a review of maintenance and monitoring procedures at railway stations.

ities resulting from the incident. Railway officials have initiated an investigation to ascertain the cause of the fire and to implement measures to prevent similar incidents in the future. This event has raised concerns about the safety protocols for parked trains, prompting calls for a review of maintenance and monitoring procedures at railway stations.

Key parliamentary panels constituted ...

Continued from Page 1

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju and his team of floor managers worked to ensure that appointments to the committees take place by consensus.

As many as 19 nominations were received for the election to the PAC from the Lok Sabha. The Lower House of Parliament elects 15 members to the PAC, while seven members are from the Rajya Sabha.

"Subsequently, four candidates withdrew their candidature from the election," the Lok Sabha bulletin said, leading to the remaining 15 members to be nominated to the PAC.

Senior Congress leader K C Venugopal, DMK leader T R Baalu, BJP leaders Anurag Thakur, Ravi Shankar Prasad and Tejasvi Surya, TMC leader Saugata Ray and SP leader Dharmendra Yadav are members of the PAC. Similarly, 36 nominations

91 killed, hundreds injured...

Continued from Page 1

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

The fresh round of clashes

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

Officials claimed that today's protests were joined by unidentified people and activists of rightwing Islami Shashontantra Andolon, which erected barricades on several major highways and within the capital city. The protesters attacked the police stations and boxes, ruling party offices and residences of their leaders and burnt several vehicles, they added.

Thrilling penalty ...

Continued from Page 1

It all boiled down to how Sreejesh would perform and the veteran goalkeeper did not disappoint, blocking the third and fourth attempts by Connor Williamson and Phillip Ropper after the score was tied 2-2 in the shootout.

James Albrey and Zach Wallace had scored earlier for Great Britain while skipper Harmanpreet Singh, Sukhjeet Singh, Lalit Upadhyay and Rajkumar Pal sounded the board for India.

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

"We could not change what had happened. It was a team effort, it was our best defence, playing with 10 men, that was a hard part." "At this stage, we can't afford to be nervous, no mat-

ter who we play or we play extra man or not. That mindset will remain in the next match."

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

India had taken the lead through Harmanpreet in the 22nd minute from a penalty corner before Great Britain drew level through Lee Morton from a field effort in the 27th minute.

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

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

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Pratipada: Aug 04 04:42 PM to Aug 05 06:03 PM
Dhwitiya: Aug 05 06:03 PM to Aug 06 07:52 PM
Nakshatram: Ashlesha: Aug 04 01:26 PM to Aug 05 03:21 PM
Magha: Aug 05 03:21 PM to Aug 06 05:44 PM
Rahukalam: 7:35 AM to 9:11 AM
Yamagandam: 10:46 AM to 12:22 PM
Varjyam: 04:32 AM to 06:18 AM
Gulika: 1:57 PM to 3:32 PM
Amritakalam: 01:37 PM to 03:21 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:56 AM to 12:47 PM
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Partly cloudy
Temp: 94°
Humidity: 69%
Sunrise: 5:49 AM
Sunset: 6:37 PM
Updated: July 4, 2024 5:00 PM

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

10th century Jain sculpture cries for attention in Kurnool

THE 24TH JAIN TIRTHANKAR VARDHAMANA MAHAVIR SCULPTURE IS CARVED OUT OF BLACK BASALT STONE

PNS ■ KURNOOL

A 1,000-year-old Vardhanama Mahavir Jain idol remains in utter neglect in the outskirts of Nayakallu village of Kalluru mandal in Kurnool district, says Dr E Sivanagi Reddy, archaeologist and CEO, Pleach India Foundation.

As part of sensitising the local communities on preserving the heritage for posterity, Dr Reddy and his team conducted a thorough survey of ruined temples, neglected sculptures and inscriptions in and around the village. They came across the 24th Jain Tirthankar Vardhamana Mahavir sculpture carved out of black basalt stone, which was mutilated at the head and leg



The team requested them to shift the idol either to a school or Panchayat Office and erect it on a pedestal with a label giving the historical details of the sculpture and its style, for the benefit of the future generations

portions and thrown on the roadside.

Sivanagi Neddy and his team briefed the villagers on the historical importance of the sculpture, which belongs to the Rashtrakuta period (10th century CE). The team requested them to shift the idol either to a school or Panchayat Office and erect it on a pedestal with a label giving the historical details of the sculpture and its style, for the benefit of the future generations.

Mahendra Naidu, in-charge, District Archaeological Museum, Kurnool, and the Pleach India team comprising Jitendra, Charan, Uday Kiran Harish, Srihari Kausthubh, Durga and Mythreyi participated in the programme.

'Ashadam saare offering' concludes on a grand note

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Offering of the sacred Ashadam saare to goddess Kanaka Durga atop Indrakeeladri hill concluded on a grand note on Sunday. The Ashadam saare has been offered to the presiding deity for a month by devotees from various places.

Devotees from different regions offered various gifts to goddess Durga in the name of saare. Devotees believe that offering saare to Durga will bring prosperity, good rains, good yield to farmers and good health to the people.



It is customary from good olden days for the devotees to come together with their children and offer saare to Kanaka Durga. The sacred saare-offering celebration began on July 6 at Sri Krodhi Namasamwatsaram and ended on Sunday.

On the first day, according to the temple tradition, the

Vedic Committee of Durgamalleswara Swamy Devasthanam and the priests along with their families offered the holy saare to the goddess. On the last day, temple EO Rama Rao, staff, vedic scholars and other department members offered the saare along with their families. Over two lakh devotees participated in the celebrations.



Addl EO inspects four mada streets

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

TTD Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdhary, along with the officials concerned, inspected four mada galleries at Tirumala on Sunday. As the annual Brahmotsavams are scheduled from October 4 to 12, they thoroughly inspected all the galleries moving along on a buggie. The officials explained to the Additional EO how the vahanam procession commences from Vahana Mandapam and proceeds along four mada galleries, the movable bridge at Tirumala Nambi Temple, entry-exit points at the galleries and many other related information.

Temple DyEO Lokanatham, VGO Nanda Kishore and other officials were present.

No change in senior citizens' darshan: TTD

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The TTD has appealed to the pilgrims not to believe the fake and misleading news spread on a few social media platforms regarding the darshan for elderly and handicapped people.

The TTD releases an online quota for 1,000 senior citizens and disabled people every month on 23rd at 3 pm three months in advance. The ticket holder will get a Laddu worth Rs 50 free of cost.

They will be allowed for darshan, adjacent to the Tirumala Nambi Temple in Tirumala, through the senior citizen/PHC line at 3 PM every day. The TTD appealed to the devotees to visit www.tirumala.org, tdevastanams.ap.in for correct information.

YSRCP activist murdered, another attacked

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Amid rising concerns from YSRCP leaders about attacks on party activists across the State, one YSRCP activist was brutally murdered in Nandyal district, and another suffered serious injuries in a separate attack on Saturday night.

In Sitaramapuram, Mahanandi mandal, YSRCP activist Pedda Subba Rayudu was killed at his home. Family members reported that a group of individuals forcibly entered Rayudu's house and engaged in an argument with him. Despite police intervention, the attackers returned and fatally stabbed Rayudu. They also ransacked the house. Subba Rayudu's wife, P. Bala Subbamma was injured while trying to help her husband and has been admitted to GGH. The police have registered a case and moved Rayudu's body to GGH for a postmortem. A police picket has been established in the village. Rayudu's family alleges that

Samineni condemns attacks

Former government whip Samineni Udayabhanu has called upon Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu to take action against those responsible for the attacks on YSRCP leaders. Udayabhanu claimed that in several cases, FIRs were not even filed against the accused. Speaking to the media on Sunday, Udayabhanu said that over the past two

months, 15 YSRCP members had been attacked. He highlighted the case of Ginjupalli Srinivasa Rao's father, Veeraiah, a respected leader known for constructing Indiramma houses, who was killed by TDP leaders in 2009. Udayabhanu alleged that the same individuals who were responsible for Veeraiah's murder were trying to kill Srinivasa Rao.

some TDP leaders were involved in the murder. Rayudu was actively involved in YSRCP's election efforts and was a close associate of former MLA Shilpa Chandrapani Reddy.

In a separate incident, YSRCP activist Ginjupalli Srinivasa Rao was attacked on Saturday night at Konakanchi crossroads, Penuganchiprolu mandal. As

he was heading to his village, Navabpet, a group of attackers dragged him from his car and inflicted severe injuries. Two of his followers who attempted to intervene were also injured. Srinivasa Rao is being treated at GGH in Jaggayyapet. The police, led by ACP Ravikiran, have reviewed CCTV footage and identified suspects, including TDP leader Venkateswara Rao alias Bullabbai.

Sandhya Rani unveils initiatives to empower tribal communities

- Stress on economic empowerment through introduction of TRICOR loans to foster self-employment

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Minister for Women and Child Welfare and Tribal Welfare, Gummidi Sandhya Rani, has announced a series of initiatives aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of tribal populations. Speaking at the Adivasi Day celebration hosted by Tribal Associations in Saluru, the Minister outlined a comprehensive vision for tribal empowerment.

Minister Sandhya Rani emphasised the significance of economic empowerment through the introduction of TRICOR loans designed to foster self-employment among tribals. She also highlighted the State's forthcoming plan to establish Anna Canteens, aiming to bolster food security and enhance access to vital services for these communities.



In addressing the persistent issue of inadequate infrastructure, the Minister promised a comprehensive road construction plan to improve connectivity in tribal villages. Acknowledging the severe impact on pregnant women due to poor road facilities, she committed to laying roads

to every village, ensuring the efficient movement of feeder ambulances and improving overall health outcomes.

In a major development, Sandhya Rani announced the approval of 31 drinking water schemes for the Makkuva, Saluru, and Pachipenta mandals, with the works set to

begin shortly. She further revealed plans to extend these schemes to 70 additional villages and to install RO plants in Tribal Welfare Ashram Schools, aimed at enhancing water quality and health standards.

The Minister also urged the tribal youth to excel academically and professionally, encouraging them to draw inspiration from successful peers who have made strides in higher education and employment. "Our tribals possess immense intelligence and potential. With dedication and effort, they can compete and succeed in every field."

The event also featured contributions from State ST Commission Chairman Dr. DVG Shankara Rao and various tribal leaders.

SHORTAGE OF INSPECTORS

Food safety compromised in Vizag

- Practice of storing and reheating food in unsanitary conditions a major concern

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A public health crisis is unfolding in Visakhapatnam as a critical shortage of food safety inspectors is leading to a surge in food safety violations across the city. The district's food safety authorities are overwhelmed by the sheer number of eateries, struggling to maintain adequate surveillance and enforce stringent hygiene standards.

Recent, high-profile cases of food contamination, including the discovery of foreign objects in food and outbreaks of severe food poisoning, have underscored the urgent need for increased oversight of the city's food industry. The widespread practice of storing and reheating food in unsanitary conditions has become a major public health concern.

The Food Safety Department, tasked with ensur-

ing the quality of food consumed by 2.5 million residents, is currently operating with a staggering deficit of just three inspectors. This severe understaffing has critically hindered their ability to conduct thorough inspections, allowing numerous eateries to flout hygiene regulations with impunity. The shortage of inspectors has led to inadequate monitoring, making it challenging to address the proliferation of food safety violations effectively.

Adding to the problem is the lack of a local food testing laboratory. Currently, food samples must be sent to Hyderabad for analysis, which not only delays investigations, but also hampers timely enforcement of food safety regulations. The absence of a local lab exacerbates the issue, making it difficult to quickly identify and respond to potential health hazards.

Caravan tourism project revived with renewed zeal

Tourism Department signs MoU with Tours & Travels Association

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The much-anticipated caravan tourism project is back on track with efforts underway to accelerate its implementation. The Tourism Department, in collaboration with travel associations and other relevant departments, is gearing up for a series of coordination meetings next week to iron out the logistics and operational details.

The Tourism Department has inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Tours & Travels Association. This partnership stipulates that while travel associations will provide caravan vehicles, the Tourism Department will furnish the necessary infrastructure and facilities for tourists on a revenue-sharing basis.

Key scenic locations are being scouted to establish caravan parks. These parks will enable tourists travelling in car-



avans to park, cook, and rest. Two prime spots, one on a hill-top (Hill View Caravan Park) and another by the beach (Sea Caravan Park) are being identified along the picturesque Tenneti Park to Bheemunipatnam stretch. Besides, a viewpoint near Anjoda in Araku Valley is earmarked for development as a caravan park.

"Caravan tourism is immensely popular abroad, and Kerala was the first Indian State to adopt this model.

These vehicles are equipped with amenities such as toilets, kitchens, beds, and televisions," explained Srinivasa Pani, Regional Director of the Tourism Department. He noted that certain permissions regarding vehicle design and route clearance from the Transport Department are still pending. "A coordination meeting is scheduled for next week to discuss the project's progress." Simultaneously, efforts are being made to expedite other pending tourism projects.

District Collector Harendhira Prasad recently participated in a review meeting to assess the progress of ongoing initiatives. Among these projects is the floating restaurant on the abandoned Bangladesh ship MV Maa near Tenneti Park. Pending permissions from the Forest Department and the Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) authorities are delaying the project.

The Tourism Department is also seeking to revive the 40-seat 'Visakha Boating' project near the dry dock at the fishing harbour, with plans to enhance water sports activities at Rushikonda. Currently, 2+1 speed boats operate on the beach, but there are plans to introduce five-to six-seater speed boats to cater to increasing tourist demand. The rejuvenated caravan tourism project, along with the acceleration of other tourism ventures, is set to boost Visakhapatnam's appeal as a top tourist destination.



AP Home Minister graces 'Handloom Saree Walk'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra Pradesh Home Minister Vangalapati Anita has added a touch of star power to the 'Handloom Saree Walk' organised by the Spirit of Vizag Society on the eve of National Handloom Day, on the picturesque RK Beach on Sunday. The event, a vibrant celebration of India's rich textile heritage, witnessed an enthusiastic participation of women, aiming to promote handloom sarees and extend support to weavers. Minister Anita extolled saree

as an embodiment of India's cultural identity and tradition. "Saree is more than just an attire; it's a living testament to our heritage, passed down through generations," she declared. Acknowledging the immense challenges faced by handloom weavers, who dedicate nearly three weeks to crafting a single saree, the Minister pledged the NDA government's support to the sector. She announced comprehensive welfare schemes aimed at improving the lives of these skilled artisans.

Korean team will visit Bandar on Aug 25: Minister

MINISTER CONDUCTS PRAJA DARBAR AT MACHILIPATNAM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Mines and Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra has said that the works of Machilipatnam (Bandar) port will pick up pace and a Korean team will visit Machilipatnam on August 25 to examine the beach development. On Sunday, the Minister conducted Praja Darbar at Machilipatnam and received petitions from the people.

On the occasion, the Minister said that Praja Darbar is being organised on Saturday or Sunday and grievances are received on public issues. He said that out of the 1,159 applications received in the four public grievances held so far,



850 have been resolved. A majority of the petitions were for the development of roads and drains, and 159 were for jobs. He said that a large-scale job mela will be held soon in Machilipatnam.

The Minister said that a Korean team will visit Machilipatnam on August 25 which will examine the beach development and educational aspects. Many steps will also be taken to set up industries. As

a result, there will be ample employment opportunities, which will be of great benefit to the unemployed. The Minister stated that a skill mapping programme will be undertaken soon and that a survey of their vocational skills will be conducted. A skill development centre will be set up in Machilipatnam soon. The Minister recalled that in connection with the second phase of pension distribution across the State, more than 99 per cent of pensions were distributed to 55 lakh people on the first day itself.

Regarding the AMRUT project, he said that development works will be undertaken under its second phase at

a cost of Rs 55 crore. Apart from providing household taps in rural areas under the Jal Jeevan Mission, a five-MLD water purification plant and a pond will be set up on 70 acres in Chinnapur Gundupalem area at a cost of Rs 105 crore to reduce the burden on the Tarakatur SS tank, and will be completed in two years. De-weeding work has already been undertaken in the drainage at a cost of Rs 18 crore in connection with irrigation. The Minister said that works such as the immediate construction of roads, filling potholes, and road repairs will be undertaken under the MGNREGS at Rs 160 crore.

'Precaution can prevent varicose veins'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

MLAs Gadde Rammohan and Bonda Umamaheswara Rao have said that people should increase awareness about varicose veins and take adequate precautions to avoid getting such problems. They said that by having healthy eating habits, regular exercise, walking and yoga, one can maintain health without getting affected by varicose veins.

A walkathon was flagged off by Dr NTR Vaidya Seva Trust CEO Lakshmi, Gadde Rammohan, Bonda Uma, Dr Makineni Kiran, Dr Siva Krishna and Dr Ratna Sri at Vijayawada Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium. The event was organised by Praja Vaidyasala in Vijayawada under the auspices of the Vascular Society of India, with the aim of



bringing awareness among the people. Speaking on the occasion, Lakshmi said that to prevent health issues one should follow healthy lifestyle habits like walking, exercise for an hour every day, adopt good eating habits, and avoid smoking and consuming alcohol.

Vascular surgeons Dr Makineni Kiran, Dr Shiva Krishna and Dr Ratna Sri attended the programme. They

said just taking medicines will not cure varicose veins; the patient should also follow the advice of the doctor. Then only the risk of black legs, heart disease and paralysis will be reduced. He said that only by reducing oily foods, fried foods and fatty foods, the disease can be controlled. To prevent varicose veins one should do exercise, avoid standing in one place, and maintain balanced weight.

Works worth Rs 12 cr to be carried out in Atmakur: Min

PNS ■ NELLORE

Minister for Endowments Anam Ramanarayana Reddy has said that Rs 12.80 crore worth of development works will be carried out in the Atmakur constituency. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu will lay the foundation stone for them, he added.

The Minister visited some of the areas in Atmakur which is his constituency on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said Atmakur was upgraded as a municipality during his tenure as an MLA.

"The drinking water supply scheme will be taken up in Atmakur at a cost of Rs 9.04 crore under the Amrit scheme.



An amount of Rs 22.81 lakh was sanctioned to carry out desilting works in drainage canals in Atmakur town," he stated.

If the drinking water project

was completed, there would be no water scarcity in Atmakur in the next 20 years, he announced.

The Minister said that Rs 3.18 crore was sanctioned for

the construction of a sewage treatment plant in the town. All the works would be taken up soon, he said, adding that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu will lay the foundation stone for some of the development works in the town soon.

Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy announced that BC Gurukula School was granted to Atmakur town, adding that the school will be updated as a junior college later.

He also assured of taking steps to widen two main roads from Anjaneyaswamy temple, developing a walking track, constructing road dividers and central lighting system in the Atmakur town.

Juvenile among eight held for dacoity

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner's Task Force (South West) Zone on August 3 arrested eight persons, including a juvenile for dacoity. The accused were identified as Mohammed Aijaz Qureshi (22) a cloth store employee of Bazarghat; Sahel Fardeen Khan (21) of Bazarghat; Nerati Prashanth (22) of Humayun Nagar; Kollapuri Sai (22) of Humayun Nagar; Peyyala Rajashekar (26); Mohammed Khaleel (22) and Gimka Abhilash Mohan (19), all from Vijaynagar Colony. The accused were held based on a complaint by the victim M Srimanth Kumar who was robbed of his mobile phone and a gold chain.

Police seize fake currency notes; two arrested

PNS ■ ELURU

The police seized fake currency notes with Rs 47 lakh face value and arrested two persons.

SP KPS Kishore told the media here on Sunday the police arrested two accused Marumudi Madhusudan Rao of Chintalapudi village and Bireli Rambabu of Gopplavarigudem village.

The complaint D Phani Kumar complained with the three town police station that the accused offered him Rs 47 lakh forfeited currency notes if he gave Rs 10 lakh genuine notes. The police registered a case 241/2024, 179,180,182,318 (1) r/w 3 (5) BNS and arrested two accused and seized 500 currency notes bundles with Rs 44 lakh of face value.

When the accused forced Phini Kumar to give some amount as advance to deliver fake current notes, he had given them Rs 3 lakh worth of genuine current notes on July



30. However, one of the friends of the complainant Phani Kumar cautioned him that the accused would cheat him as they were fraudsters.

Then, he approached the police and informed them about the fake current note racket. The police arrested the two accused and seized 94 bundles of 500 notes and they were Rs 47 lakh of face value. The police also seized a mobile phone from the accused.

The district SP appreciated Three Town Inspector Kagita Srinivasa Rao and CCS Inspector Ch Muralikrishna for arresting the two accused.

STATUE INSTALLATION

Minister Nimmala takes part in 'Shramadaan'

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Minister for Water Resources Nimmala Ramanaidu took part in the 'Shramadaan' programme for the installation of statues of BR Ambedkar and Jagjivan Ram at Aryapet village in Yelamanchili mandal on Sunday.

The residents of Arundhati Pet in Aryapet village are installing the statues of BR Ambedkar and Jagjivan Ram in their village. The statues were placed on pedestals, and other related works were carried out on Sunday. Minister Ramanaidu participated by carrying construction materials on his head and mixing concrete. He also worked



alongside construction workers to help construct a slab.

Speaking on the occasion, Ramanaidu expressed his happiness in contributing to the installation of the statues. He mentioned that he draws inspi-

ration from BR Ambedkar and Mother Teresa.

In-Charge Tahsildar Baji Satyanarayana, MPDO P Srinivasa Rao, along with leaders from TDP, JSP, and BJP, also took part in the programme.

'Cong govt failed to serve quality meals at schools'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

The Nizamabad District Education Officer conducted an inquiry on food issues served at Kothapalli Government School on Sunday. Instructions were given to the concerned cooks and teachers. He stated that steps have been taken to provide quality meals to the students from Monday. So far, the District Education department officials released Rs 58.69 crore towards the arrears to be paid to the mid-day meal workers. Another Rs 18 crore will be released on Monday.

Contractors, GHMC staff ask ECI to clear pending bills

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The contractors who arranged basic facilities for elections and employees of the GHMC who additionally worked have not received their remuneration from the Election Commission of India (ECI).

An official said that around Rs 100 crore of is still pending for the elections in Hyderabad district. "They have released advances but they did not released the balance amount and the closing amount," the official added.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

Speaking to the media after taking part in Bonalu celebrations at Gurramguda on Sunday, Sanjay said that land 'Danda' is going on in a big way behind the move for the Fourth City by the Congress government. The Union Minister said that Congress leaders have collected thousands of acres in Maheshwaram in advance and are getting ready to seize valuable real estate costing several crores.

Sanjay said that a scam



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

those lands have declined to just five lakh now, he asked.

The Union Minister said that BRS leaders grabbed assigned lands, Shikam lands, endowment, forest and Bhoodan lands along with land belonging to the poor using the Dharani Portal. What are the details regarding land registrations? The Congress government is not releasing them, he pointed out. Sanjay said the value of those lands is almost Rs 2 lakh crore. "Why are Congress leaders who said before the Assembly election that the KCR family had used Dharani to grab lands on a large scale not conducting an inquiry into the matter? What was the report of the 5-member committee on Dharani which was appointed after the Congress came to power? Why are the culprits who grabbed lands using Dharani not brought to justice? It seems that a secret report has been given on the subject," he said. Sanjay said that is why Congress leaders are planning to grab lands using the Fourth City and Bhumata. Looking

involving Rs 2 lakh crore was engineered in the name of the Dharani Portal by the BRS government.

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

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

Gurramguda in Maheshwaram. Sanjay said the Fourth City will not bring any benefits to the public except Congress leaders. The local Congress leader in Maheshwaram has been given the responsibility to take over lands, he said. Sanjay said the Congress government which is changing the name of the Dharani Portal to Bhumata, is preparing to use Bhumata for grabbing lands. During BRS rule, the biggest scam in the country took place using the Dharani Portal.

When Telangana state was formed in 2014, there were 24 lakh assigned lands. How come

JAPANESE MIYAWAKI TECHNIQUE

Environmentalist on a mission for green cover

RASHMI BHUMIREDDY ■ HYDERABAD

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

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



Mahesh Talari planting saplings

Speaking to the Pioneer Correspondent, Mahesh said, "In urban areas, we can witness

a lot of open plots lying empty or filled with trash. So, I thought of doing something we can be

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

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

friendly to the environment and soon I got an idea of why not planting saplings. With the idea to increase greenery across the city, especially in urban areas, I opted for the Miyawaki method which is a unique approach to fast-growing native forests. I have started this method since 2020 in open government plots in Hyderabad by planting Jamma, Neem, Banyan and others. This method focuses on recreating natural forests with native species, allowing them to grow quickly and become self-sustaining in a short period.

Doctor highlights shortage of breastmilk banks in India

MOHAMMED BALEEGH ■ HYDERABAD

With the World Breastfeeding Week underway, a Hyderabad-based

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

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

milk banks, Senior Consultant Neonatology and Pediatrics at KIMS Cuddles, Dr Aparna C said, "Breast milk banking is an upcoming concept wherein a donor mother's

ature and given to the baby. It is similar to the process in blood banks. Any mother who has a quantity of milk exceeding her child's requirements and is free of infections such as HIV, Hepatitis B and is non-smoker can donate milk. "Stressing on the shortage of milk banks in India, Dr Aparna said, there is one milk bank at our hospital which stores 10-12 liters of milk every month.

Mothers are tested and infections are ruled out and the milk is pasteurised and stored. It is dispensed when babies in the NICU require it. This milk is very precious; it

is used for very low birth weight babies. 3.5 million pre-term babies are born in India; However, there are only 100 milk banks in India. Statistics suggest that the number of milk banks in India is insufficient. There are 5 to 7 milk banks in Hyderabad; Explaining the golden hour in the context of breastfeeding, the doctor said, for any baby, golden hour refers to the first hour after the birth. It is the birth right of every baby to be started on breastfeeding within the first hour of the birth.

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

Justice for women, children get priority in State: DGP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

"In 2024, Telangana Police achieved good convictions, including a recent capital punishment awarded by the Metropolitan Special Judge Court, Ranga Reddy, in a case involving rape and murder of a young girl in Narsingi police station (Cr No: 818/2017 U/s



Section 363, 366,376(A),302 IPC, Sec 5 r/w 6 Protection of children from sexual offences Act-2012." There has been a significant increase in convictions under rape and POCSO cases this year, with 15 convictions for 20 years, 2 convictions for 25 years, and 11 convictions for life imprisonment, totalling

28 convictions. The highest number of significant convictions were recorded in Hyderabad and Rachakonda, each with a total of five convictions. The DGP highlighted a few significant convictions, including a case in Hyderabad, a father of 8 children was awarded life imprisonment for repeatedly raping his own daughter; in a case of unnatural sex with a boy in Adilabad, the offender was awarded rigorous imprisonment for 20 years; a rapist was awarded a jail term of 25 years for raping his own daughter.

In most cases of crime against women and children the crime (almost 95%) is committed by known persons. This often results in victim/family members turning hostile during trial.

ACROSS THE STATES



12 Bangladeshi nationals arrested in Tripura

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



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

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



Delhi LG calls ground reality 'shameful'

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

KEDARNATH RESCUE OPERATION

Rains ravage western India

DEATH TOLL IN LANDSLIDES IN WAYANAD AND HIMACHAL ROSE TO 221

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

So far, more than 10,000 people have been rescued from Kedarnath, Bhimbali and Gaurikund. The trek route to Kedarnath suffered extensive damage as a result of a cloudburst in Junglehatti near Lincholi last Wednesday. Army personnel were deployed at an inundated residential area in Maharashtra's Pune amid heavy downpours



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

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



373 people to be airlifted

PNS ■ RUDRAPRAYAG

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



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

PNS ■ SAGAR (MP)

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

NDA will form govt again in 2029: Shah

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

PNS ■ PATNA

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

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

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

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ RAMANAGARA (KARNATAKA)

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

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

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



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

Addressing workers of the BJP and JD(S), ahead of the second day of a week-long protest march from Bengaluru to Mysuru against the MUDA 'scam', he said, "I will work for your sake in the days ahead with the aim of bringing back the BJP-JD(S) coalition government." "Our fight is ultimately to bring in a pro-people government in the state, which will look after the welfare of every family. We want to bring such a government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. For that, myself, B Y Vijayendra (BJP state president) and all leaders and workers from both parties will work together."

NOVEL RECOUNTS

Assam's tumultuous insurgency, counter-insurgency days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



In the trilogy, Borah makes an insightful enquiry into the

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

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



www.dailypioneer.com

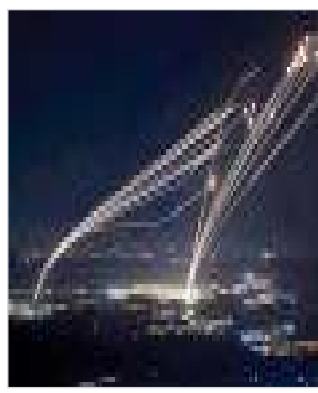
facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

On the brink of war

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

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



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

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

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

PICTALK



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

The unyielding spirit of military families



BHOPIINDER SINGH

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

The power of the Indian Army is a testament to these 'Military Families' who have defended the territorial integrity of the nation, for generations. One such typical family is of Mata Deen Singh who joined the Bengal Native Infantry in the early 1890's.

He was later declared missing and believed killed in NWFP in 1901. Later four more generations of his served with much aplomb and distinction in the fiery Rajput Regiment. Befittingly, this family claims that there hasn't been a war that India has fought, where a member of the family has not fought! For many in the coun-

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

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



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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ILL TREATMENT OF ELDERLY

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

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

AP Thirvadi | Chennai

SC'S LANDMARK JUDGEMENT

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

Stop anthropogenic disaster



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

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

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

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

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

DVG Sankaro Rao | Vizianagaram

ISRAEL ESCALATING CONFLICT

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

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

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

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

G David Milton | Kanniyakumari

Green logistics is an environmental imperative

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

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

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

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



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

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

Triangulation solutions: It optimises container movements. This method involves coordinating the movement

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

Matching cargo with containers: After the potential routes are identified, the next step is to match available cargo with containers that would otherwise return empty.

Implementation and monitoring: After matching cargo with containers, the triangulated routes are implemented. Continuous monitoring ensures that the routes remain efficient and adjustments can be made as needed. By minimizing the distance containers travel empty, triangulation significantly reduces fuel consumption and emissions.

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

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

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



DHRUV TANEJA

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

A HOLISTIC APPROACH FOR HEALING A TROUBLED MIND

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



RAVI VALLURI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

The global crisis of over-tourism



ARCHANA DATTA

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PRATIBHA CHOPRA

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

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

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



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

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

could suggest itself to confine its international commitments to religious brotherhood and political proximities within the respectful questioning bounds and press freedom, this press freedom not being an absolute right but subject to the upholding of the Sovereignty and Integrity of India and its Dignity as envisaged in the Constitution of India. As far as the question of 'Kashmiriyat' is concerned, nobody is stopping or stalling this journey as long as it is within the legitimacy of the Constitutional provisions and the artistic license that it provides. And there may be questions of class and caste here that cannot be ignored if we are to sound and purport real. We will never forget the Indian Army, the soldiers who never fail us in the treacherous terrains of Jammu Kashmir, Ladhak & Siachen in the said region. We give them the space in our hearts for they do not hide behind any 'political' discourses and tricks and are the first agency of the Social Contract that a Nation State is based on. Their relentless invincibility and risk-taking bravado have no given path to tread but every day is a new challenge. Let all our actions as envisioned in the above paras be a tribute to the soldiers of the Indian Army and it is on us to do our duty now and here. (The writer is a lawyer; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



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

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



Zomato collected Rs 83 cr in platform fee from customers

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



BCCL pays first-ever Rs 44 cr dividend to CIL

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



RBI likely to keep interest rate unchanged at 6.5%

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

the Aditya Birla group flagship firm.

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

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

RBI rate decision, macroeconomic data to drive markets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Focus on profitable businesses

Finmin asks state-owned general insurance companies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

formance significantly, he said. For instance, he said, Oriental Insurance has earned Rs 18 crore profit in FY24 as against a loss of Rs 5,000 crore a year ago, while National Insurance Company narrowed its loss to Rs 187 crore from Rs 3,800 crore, and United India Insurance to a loss of Rs 800 crore as against the loss of Rs 2,800 crore in the preceding year that is FY23. New India Assurance has continued to perform well, increasing its profits from Rs 1,000 crore in FY23 to Rs 1,100 crore in FY24. In addition to the shift in focus, the government is also addressing operational issues within these insurers.

FTA WITH SRI LANKA

India seeks duty concession on cars, vehicles, machinery

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

quota on apparel exports to India. The island nation is also asking for duty concessions on tea and certain agricultural commodities. The official said that as elections are announced in Sri Lanka, the next round of negotiations between the two countries will be held after that. The two nations have already implemented a free trade agreement in goods and now they are negotiating to expand the pact by including more goods and services.

IIHL fails to deposit money as per NCLT order

RCAP admin tells tribunal; IIHL denies contempt charge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The administrator of debt-ridden Reliance Capital (RCAP) has filed an affidavit with NCLT, accusing IIHL of non-compliance as the Hinduja Group firm failed to meet the conditions set by the tribunal in a July 23 order. However, IIHL later in a statement denied allegations saying there has not been any

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



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

ations as directed by NCLT. The order of NCLT required IIHL to deposit monies in escrow account designated by the CoC and not "operated" or "controlled" by CoC, IIHL said in the statement. CoC has also not provided any escrow arrangement terms and details till date, it said, adding, this left IIHL with no choice but to deposit monies in its own account.

As per the NCLT order dated July 23, the successful bidder, IIHL, had to comply with certain conditions by July 31, 2024. These conditions included depositing the initial equity amount of Rs 250 crore in a domestic escrow account designated by CoC and Rs 2,500 crore in an offshore escrow account again designated by the lenders by July 31.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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



frequency of Indians engaging in foreign travel in the coming years. The market has already seen robust growth with rising disposable incomes, an expanding middle class, systemic ease and flexibility in obtaining visas, and a desire for international experiences.

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A unit of Qatar Investment Authority, SBI Mutual Fund, and foreign investment funds Nomura and Citigroup were the biggest buyers of shares in Adani group's power transmission unit's US\$ 1 billion QIP, according to a stock exchange filing by the company. The Rs 8,373.10 crore (US\$ 1 billion) qualified institutional placement (QIP) of Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL), which closed last week, saw over 120 investors seek shares in the firm that is into power transmission, distribution and smart metering business. Billionaire Stanley Druckenmiller's family office-led investment firms were among the companies that sought shares of AESL in the QIP. AESL in the filing said its



board has approved allocation of over 8.57 crore shares to eligible qualified institutional buyers at the issue price of Rs 976 per share, reflecting a discount of Rs 51.11 (4.98 per cent) to the

floor price of Rs 1,027. Giving details of allottees who got more than 5 per cent of shares, it said INQ Holdings LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of QIA, cornered 15 per cent of the shares sold. Two Mauritius funds of Citigroup bought 8.88 per cent of the shares sold while four SBI funds - SBI Infrastructure Fund, SBI Large & Midcap Fund, SBI Long term Advantage Fund Series IV and SBI Magnum Children's Benefit Fund - together took home 7.93 per cent of the shares. Nomura Singapore Ltd ODI cornered 7.5 per cent of the shares, the filing showed.

River Mobility on expansion mode

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Bengaluru-headquartered electric vehicle startup River Mobility Pvt Ltd backed by marquee investors Yamaha Motor Corp, Mitsui & Company Ltd, aims to open 100 showrooms by March 2026, a top official said. The company under its expansion drive inaugurated its first store in Chennai and plans to open 15 more stores by November and 50 stores by March 2025 Chief



Executive Officer, Co-Founder Aravind Mani said here. "We are very excited about the Chennai store. We have a lot of people from Tamil Nadu working in our facility (located outside Bengaluru). Chennai is a big EV market. The first store in Chennai is also the company owned operated store," Mani said. Elaborating about the expansion plans, he said the company would open more retail showrooms in Chennai over the next one year and the second store in Tamil Nadu would come up in Coimbatore.

what's brewing?

JASON SHAH WAS AFRAID OF BEING SEEN AS A 'PROBLEM MAKER' IN HEERAMANDI

During the filming of *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar*, actor Jason Shah, known for his role as the British officer Cartwright, discussed his disagreements with certain artistic choices. He mentioned that Sanjay Leela Bhansali, the creator of the series, didn't direct a lot of his scenes and he desired more control over how his character was portrayed. On Rushabh's podcast, Jason shared that he expressed his worries but was afraid of being seen as a 'problem maker' if he spoke up further. Speaking about his character, Cartwright, the actor said, "It's all up to the director; it's all in his hands. I've played a lot of these British officers, so I've sat around sets where history has been talked about. There are some places where I feel I could've made stronger choices. Given the freedom to do those things, the character could've

come out in a stronger way. What didn't happen was the depth of the character. Look at Ben Kingsley's *Gandhi*; there they show how far racism can go." On being asked whether he had shared his concerns with director Sanjay Leela Bhansali, he said, "I said enough; I would've become a problem-maker if I said more." In the same podcast, he also said that Sanjay Leela Bhansali 'wasn't directing that much.' "I think web (series) and film are a little bit different because web is very stretched; you have a lot of episodes to make. It is not made in a short span of time. It took him two-and-a-half years to make this... He also wasn't directing that much; I had other directors with me. I felt like we could've worked on his character a little bit more. A lot more colour could've come out; it had the capacity, I feel," Jason shared.



SWIFTIES DUET PART OF BON IVER'S WITH TAYLOR

Taylor Swift's performances consistently result in memorable moments from her fans, fueled by their adoration for her. A comparable memorable moment occurred when she performed her Eras Tour show in Warsaw, where the audience sang along to the *Exile* track, singing *Bon Iver*'s part. According to People, Swift performed a combination of *The Black Dog* from *The Tortured Poets Department* and *Exile* from *Folklore* during the third and final Eras Tour show on August 3 at the same venue. During the show's secret song segment, Swift played a piano mashup and her fans sang the verse and back-and-forth parts in place of *Bon Iver*'s Justin Vernon. Online videos of the event show the audience enthusiastically joining in on the lyrics of *Exile* after the songstress started singing Vernon's first verse. Swifties sang with the singer, "I can see you standing, honey / With his arms around your body / Laughin', but the joke's not funny at all," adding, "And it took you five whole minutes / To pack us up and leave me with it / Holdin' all this love out here in the hall." While the worldwide star performed on stage, singing her parts in the chorus, bridge, and outro, the audience at the concert also sang along with Vernon's alternating sections.



Kendall Jenner recalls growing up 'Hannah Montana-y in a way'

Kendall Jenner spoke about her upbringing in the public eye and her time as a teenage model on the *Anything Goes* podcast. The 28-year-old model told Emma Chamberlain, "It's a little Hannah Montana-y in a way," but it didn't involve a secret identity or disguise like the Disney Channel character. Jenner said, "I didn't have a disguise, or I didn't have a physical shift." Jenner explained how she and her siblings attempted to maintain a regular lifestyle, even while appearing on the TV show *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*. They attended traditional school until their junior and senior years, when they transitioned to homeschooling. She shared, "I started home school in 11th and 12th grade, so even though we had a TV show at home, we were going to regular school all day and had our friends that we had from before the show started." Jenner stressed that despite her unconventional life, it still felt quite standard, and she is grateful for that. She expressed in the interview, "We lived as much of a normal life as, I think, was possible, and I'm so grateful for that."



Naam Namak Nishan pays tribute to the true spirit of brotherhood

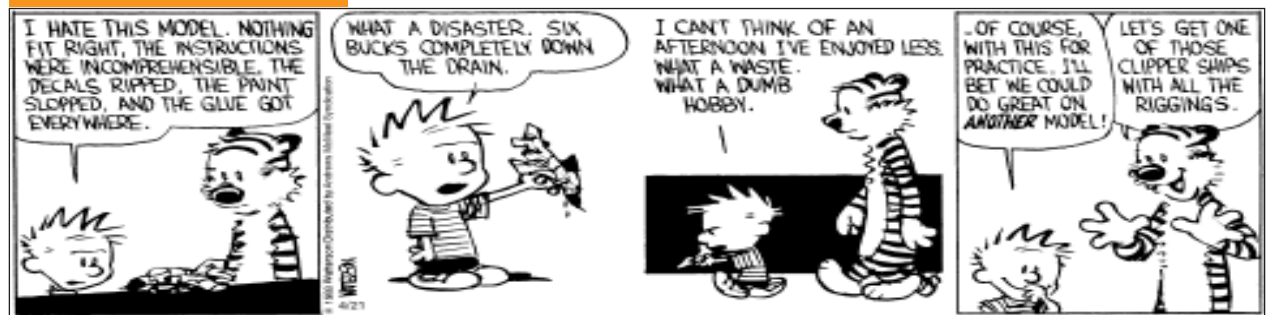
Amazon miniTV rings in Friendship Day by announcing its upcoming drama series, titled *Naam Namak Nishan*. Centered around meaningful themes of brotherhood and love for the nation, the series beautifully captures the essence of genuine bonds as it follows the journey of young cadets at the prestigious Officers Training Academy (OTA) in Chennai. Along their journey, marked by rigorous training and personal growth, the cadets overcome the divides of race, caste, class, sex, and creed to discover the true meaning of brotherhood, forging unbreakable connections that mirror the spirit of patriotism and unity within the Indian Armed Forces. Taking the Friendship Day cheer to the next level, the streaming service shared a heartfelt post to announce *Naam Namak Nishan* across its social media handles. Produced by Juggernaut Productions, the upcoming series boasts a stellar cast, including Varun Sood, Danish Sood, Helly Shah, Karan Vohra and Roshni Walia in key roles. The story revolves around the dynamic between Yuvraj and Gurbaz, two young cadets from contrasting social backgrounds. Despite their differences, their shared love for the motherland unites them in a profound and moving journey. It's a story of resilience, honour, and camaraderie that develops in the face of adversity, offering an authentic glimpse into the making of army officers who swear by *Naam, Namak and Nishan*.

FUN

ARCHIE



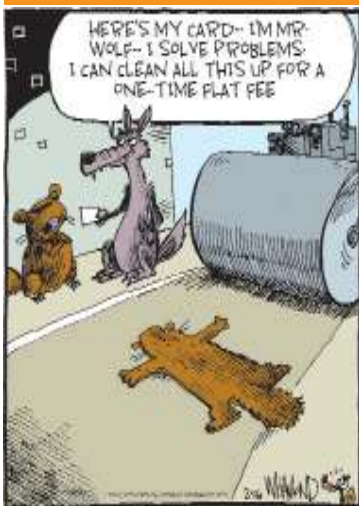
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



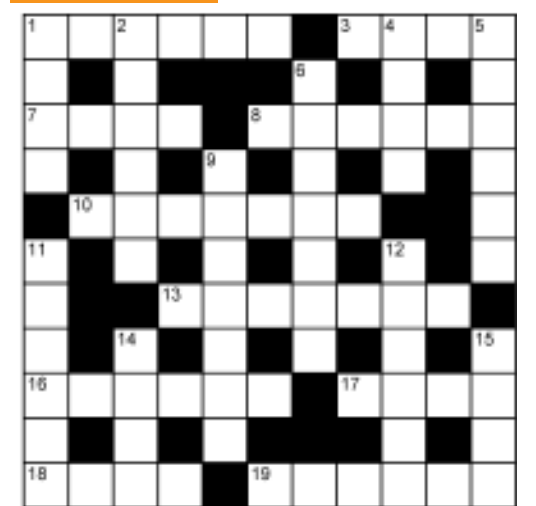
REALITY CHECK



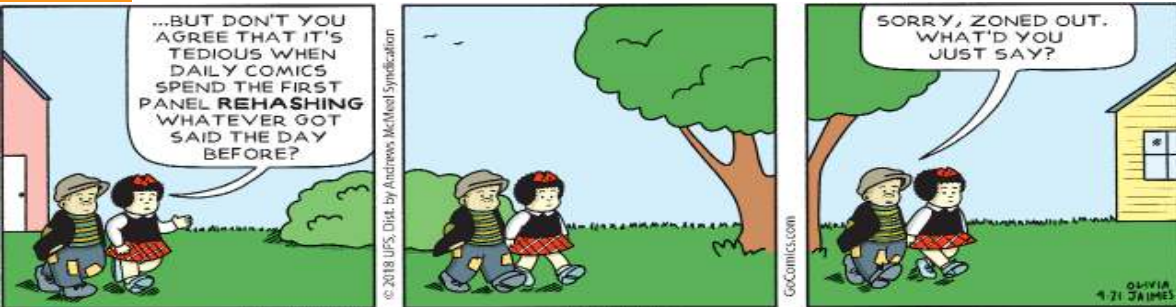
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

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

DOWN

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



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

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

SHIKHA DUGGAL

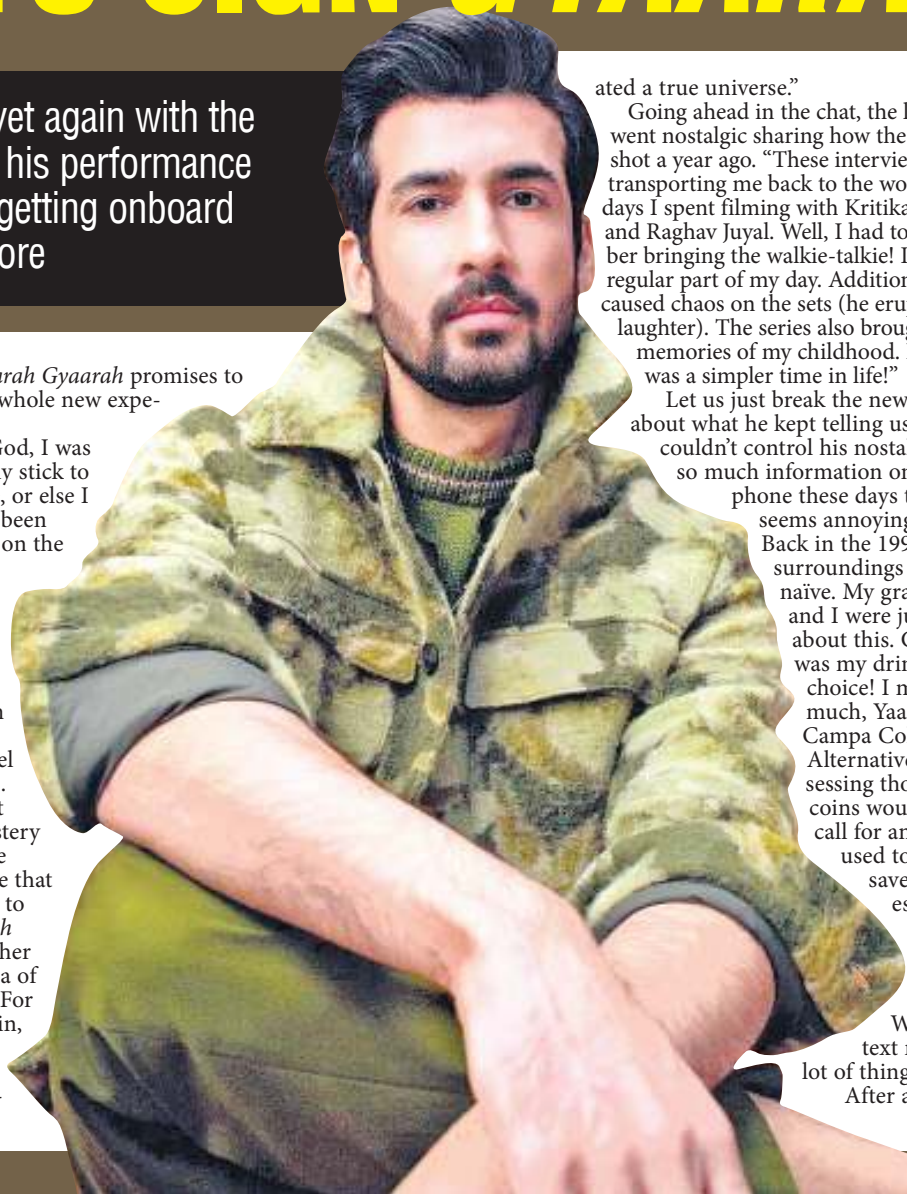
Get ready for an exciting interview as the *Gehraiyaan* fame, Dhairya Karwa, returns! He has teamed up for the first time on a fantasy thriller series called *Gyaarah Gyaarah*, which is set to break the boundaries between genres. The online series will debut on Zee5 and be available for viewing on August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

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

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

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

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



ated a true universe."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EVENT COVERAGE

Art that greets you!



AARTI SREENATH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ward off rainy season illnesses!

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

Monsoon and eye health

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

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

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

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

Preventive measures

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

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

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

Diet and nutrition

Diet plays a critical

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

Professional care

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

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

Community health initiatives

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

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



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

AP ■ SAINT-DENIS, FRANCE

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

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

Richardson' training partner, American Melissa Jefferson,



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ PARIS

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

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

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



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

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

PTI ■ PARIS

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

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

Nishant had defeated Alvarez

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

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



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

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

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

But the judges favoured the Mexican 3-2 as Alvarez and Nishant entered the final three minutes by the narrowest of margins, leading on one card.

Alvarez landed a combination of punches to start the final round on an aggressive note. The Mexican showed more urgency as he landed an uppercut. The Indian, on the other hand, looked completely spent and while he tried to throw

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

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

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



Lovlina outwitted in QF; India's boxing campaign ends

PTI ■ PARIS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The holding and clinching continued in the third round too and both the women seemed a bit drained.

However, Qian showed great presence of mind throughout to keep Borgohain at a distance. Borgohain was not up to it when it came to controlling the pace of the bout and repeatedly took hits on counter-attacks.

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

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

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

AP ■ NANTERRE (FRANCE)

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

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

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

AP ■ PARIS

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

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



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

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

AP ■ VAIRES-SUR-MARNE, FRANCE

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

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

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



countries, so many people." Senkute said she wants to use her Olympic success to help show that people with epilepsy can live their lives normally and compete at a high level. "It means nothing to me. It's not a limitation at all," she said.

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

Won't retire until I get Olympic medal: Deepika

PTI ■ PARIS

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

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

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

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

Deepika, 30, appeared in her fourth consecutive Olympics in



Paris, making a remarkable comeback after becoming a mother for the first time in December 2022, when she gave birth to her daughter. After topping the national selection trials, Deepika went on to

win an individual gold at the Shanghai World Cup in April. Back at her favorite venue, where she had won multiple World Cup medals, Olympic pressure was evident as she had her worst ranking round ever at

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

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

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

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

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

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

AP ■ CHATEAURoux, FRANCE

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

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

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

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

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

Coming to the Paris Olympics was about honoring her father, Vakhtang, who was also her coach. After the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics in 2021, he talked her out of retirement for one last push.

"He was my mentor not only in sports, but also in life. He was a wise man," she told The Associated Press in the city of Chateauroux, near the Olympic shooting range, on Friday after her last competition.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

K. RAMYA SREE

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

ter to life and enhance the visual experience. The film combines action and adventure with a core love story between a girl working in ATC and a pilot, crafted to be fully appreciated on the big screen."

Addressing comparisons to films by acclaimed director Rajamouli, Anton assured that while there are emotional elements in *Buddy*, it stands on its own merit. "We were inspired by successful films but aimed

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

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

69TH SOBHA FILMFARE AWARDS SOUTH 2024:

Clinching accolades for their global recognition

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

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

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

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

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

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



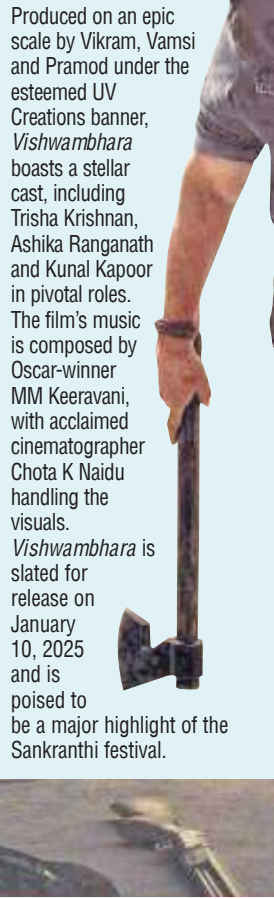
remains with him to this day. In addition to this, at the prestigious awards, the South Indian film industry also paid tribute to the late Ramoji Rao, whose vision not only shaped the landscape of Indian cinema but has also provided a platform for countless filmmakers, actors, and technicians to bring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

Vishwambhara climax being shot in Hyd

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

Currently, the film is reaching its electrifying climax, which is being shot on a grand scale in Hyderabad. This climactic sequence is shaping up to be one of the most ambitious and visually stunning moments of the film. Director Vassista's creative vision has brilliantly woven the fantasy elements into a visually mesmerising and narratively gripping experience. To ensure this intense climax lives up to expectations, India's top action choreographer, Anil Arasu, has been enlisted to craft the action sequences. Renowned for his exceptional choreography, Arasu's contribution is expected to inject a high level of dynamism and precision into the climax, enhancing its overall impact. The grandeur of the climax is further highlighted by its elaborate sets and sophisticated visual effects, which serve to elevate the film's fantasy realm. The action sequences are anticipated to be both intense and captivating, adding to the climax's overall excitement. With Chiranjeevi's charismatic presence driving the final act, *Vishwambhara* promises a truly unforgettable experience. The climax is set to be a standout feature, culminating in a payoff that matches the grandeur of the story that has unfolded.

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



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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

Malavika Mohanan adds *The Raja Saab* to her lineup

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

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

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



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