

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

- Bhatti Vikramarka, Dy CM TG



Opposition presses for caste census, super rich tax



FM PROPOSES AMENDMENTS TO LTCG TAX PROVISION



'Committee Kurrollu will transport viewers to vibrant village FAIRS'

DON'T MISS...

33% reservation for BCs in Legislature...

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has assured that the alliance government will support handloom workers in the State. He said that the previous YSRCP government cancelled all the schemes meant for handloom workers. The coalition government will take measures to increase their income. CM Chandrababu participated in the National Handloom Day celebration organised at Maris Stella College auditorium here on Wednesday. He visited the stalls and spoke to the handloom workers. The CM bought two sarees for his wife...

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Social factors impact lifespan...

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

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Microsoft, TCS, Amazon India's...

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

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Tough challenge awaits Chopra...

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

-SPORTS

100 gms broke billion hearts

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



50.1kg Gold of India

PNS ■ PARIS

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

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

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Come back stronger: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

'We even cut her hair'

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

Continued on Page 2

Factors that mattered

Vinesh had always competed in the 53kg category. This time Antim Panghal qualified in that division and Vinesh had to slash weight to compete in the 50 kg category.

For Olympics, Asian Games, World Championships and Asian Championship, no wrestler gets even one gram concession. For the Ranking Series and Invitational events, one gets a concession of 2kg which means that in these events, one can be 52 kg on the bout day even if they are contesting in 50kg category. Sadly for Vinesh, Olympic rules are strict.

Vinesh once disqualified from an Olympic qualifying event prior to 2016 Rio Olympics for being over-weight by 400 grams.

Those who qualify for the gold medal, bronze medal play-offs and repechage bouts again have to come for weigh in on the second day.

Vinesh had three bouts of six minutes each on the first day. Eighteen minutes of combat sports can drain a wrestler and he/she needs enough amount of hydration and nourishment.

Every wrestler cuts his/her weight to fight in lesser categories. In case of Vinesh, she fought in 53kg mostly with a natural weight of 55 to 56 kg.

Once Vinesh came into 50 kg category, she had to shed at least 6kg before every competition. The sudden weight-cut is an extremely difficult process. After first day, she gained around 1.5 kg after replenishment.

New pattadar passbooks with QR code

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The meeting of the Council of Ministers of the State, chaired by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, approved key decisions including the Bill to amend the law to remove the disqualification clause to contest local body elections if there are more than two children, and decided to ban the Maoists for another year in Andhra Pradesh. It was also approved to remove former CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's photos on the survey stones, and to distribute Pattadar pass books with QR code with the AP Government logo.

Speaking to the media after the cabinet meeting, I&PR Minister Kolu Parthasarathy said that reg-



AP CABINET'S KEY DECISIONS

- Ban on Maoists extended.
- Law to remove the disqualification clause.
- Jagan's photos on survey stones to be removed.

istrations for lands under Section 22A will be suspended for three months and pass books with QR code will be issued. The new liquor policy will be implemented in the State from October 1. He said that the government will provide quality liquor at a low price. The cabinet discussed what should be done with the survey stones with Jagan's

photo and name. There was another discussion on the issue of decreasing fertility rate in AP, the Minister said.

He said that the cabinet has decided to remove the disqualification rule in local body elections if there are more than two children.

2

AP election result was a silent revolution: CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has made interesting comments comparing the Bangladesh revolution with the Andhra Pradesh election results. The AP Cabinet meeting was held at the State secretariat at Velagapudi on Wednesday and after the completion of the agenda, Naidu discussed political issues with the ministers. He said: "What happened in the AP election was a silent revolution, but a violent revolution is being seen in Bangladesh."

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Jungle clearance works begin in Amaravati

Experts to submit preliminary report on building structures soon

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As per the instructions of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Municipal Administration Minister P Narayana has launched the jungle clearance works in Amaravati. The work was awarded to Nagarajuna Constructions Company Limited (NCC) for Rs 36.5 crore. A total of 23,429 acres of jungle will be cleared on a war-footing.

The work was launched at the present secretariat along the N9 road in Amaravati. Minister Narayana started the work by operating the Poklein himself after performing special puja, along with local MLA Tadikonda Shrawan

Kumar. Speaking to media persons, Minister Narayana said that during 2014-19, the farmers gave 34,000 acres of land to the government through land pooling for Amaravati in just 38 days, because of their confidence in Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. "Works worth Rs 41,484 crore have been undertaken in laying roads, construction of buildings and setting up other basic facilities on the land collected through land pooling, as per the master plan. But the previous YSRCP government totally destroyed the capital and put the farmers who gave their lands in a spot."

Continued on Page 2

Peddireddy denies involvement in Madanapalle fire mishap

Accuses CM Naidu of 'political vendetta'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy has firmly denied any involvement in the Madanapalle fire incident. He challenged that if there is any evidence of his involvement, it should be shown and proven, and condemned the character assassination attempts.



Speaking to the media at his residence in Hyderabad, the former minister reaffirmed his commitment to facing any investigation confidently due to his clean political record and long-standing public support. He also slammed

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for his political vendetta and diversion tactics, promising to take legal action against those perpetuating false narratives.

He mentioned that some officials, including the Chief Minister and other ministers, are making baseless statements, despite the absence of any evidence against him, and are continuously tarnishing his image. Referring to the fire incident in Madanapalle RDO office, he noted that records are available in various offices, including the MRO office, RDO office, Collector's office, and even in the secretariat.

Continued on Page 2

Will set up world-class AI University in AP: Lokesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Education, IT and Electronics Minister Nara Lokesh has said that the government's mission is to transform AP as an Artificial Intelligence hub, and as part of it, a prestigious global university will be established. On Wednesday, Minister Lokesh reviewed the performance of higher education departments in the State, improvement of ranking, establishment of integrated university management system and other issues with the officials.

On the occasion, Minister Lokesh directed the officials to study where AI University should be set up in the State, ecosystem and other aspects. "Through AI University, there will be an opportunity to provide effective services in 16 sectors like education, health care, governance etc. Regarding

"Through AI University, there will be an opportunity to provide effective services in 16 sectors like education, health care, governance etc. Regarding the education sector, a framework should be created to provide passports to students from KG to PG through advanced AI technology. Through this, students' attendance and their intelligence will be assessed and given an opportunity to improve."

the education sector, a framework should be created to provide passports to students from KG to PG through advanced AI technology. Through this, students' attendance and their intelligence will be assessed and given an opportunity to improve," he said. As the academic year has

Focus on academic excellence, faculty development



already started this year, it has been directed to strictly implement the academic calendar in universities and degree colleges from next year. It is suggested that a route map should be prepared for achieving better results by reviewing the performance indicators. He discussed the steps being taken by

the Higher Education Regulatory Monitoring Commission, which was formed to control the fees in the State. Focusing on academic excellence and faculty development, measures should be taken to improve the ranking. He said that only Andhra University, Venkateswara University and

JNTU (Kakinada) are performing satisfactorily in terms of rankings.

The Minister asked the officials to provide a comprehensive report on the fee reimbursement arrears to the PG students. There should be an increase in research in the universities and industry-related internships and apprenticeships should be designed to provide job and employment opportunities to the students. He said that the students are facing difficulties in getting caste certificates and soon there should be a permanent solution. The officials were directed to start the recruitment process of VCs in the universities.

Higher Education Secretary Saurabh Gaur, Higher Education In-Charge Chairman Rammohan Rao, College Education Commissioner Pola Bhaskar, Skill Development VC and MD Ganesh Kumar were present.

Quota within quota: Litigation on reservations

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

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

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PROF MADABHUSHI SRIDHAR ACHARYULU
Dean, Mahindra University, Hyderabad

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

The other class out of the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled

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

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

THE 2020 JUDGMENT

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

The point of 'homogenous group' in 2024 judgment

The judgment emphasized that the Scheduled Castes are not a homogenous group, but

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

(to be continued)

33% reservation for BCs in Legislature: CM Naidu

Call to wear handloom clothes once in a month

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has assured that the alliance government will support handloom workers in the State. He said that the previous YSRC government cancelled all the schemes meant for handloom workers. The coalition government will take measures to increase their income.

CM Chandrababu participated in the National Handloom Day celebration organised at Maris Stella College auditorium here on Wednesday. He visited the stalls and spoke to the handloom workers. The CM bought two sarees for his wife Bhuvaneshwari.

Addressing the gathering, the CM announced that a resolution will be passed in the Assembly to implement 33 per cent reservation for the backward classes in the Legislature.



He added that he will fight to make it a law in the Parliament. He also gave a call to the people to wear handloom garments at least once in a month. **The CM said:** "Justice will be done to BCs in nominated posts. A BC was given the post of TDP State president. TDP has been giving the BCs top

positions in the cabinet and the BCs have been with the party since the beginning. We will bring reservations again in local bodies. We will adopt a comprehensive approach to support the handloom sector. We will enhance the skills of artisans and give them training. We will provide them with

health insurance and try to revoke GST for handloom workers. Steps will be taken to reimburse if GST is not revoked. Justice will be done to the weavers by giving them Rs 67 crore.

"A system will be set up where the weavers work collectively. The government will support weavers by releasing Rs 50,000 for handlooms. It is our responsibility to protect the handloom industry and give a call to everyone to wear handloom clothes at least once a month. The government will provide free electricity to handloom workers through solar power panels and also support them through online marketing. We will provide 200 units of free electricity to handloom families. In view of environmental protection, we will promote natural colours in handloom," said Chandrababu.

AI being used to improve railway services

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Replying to a question asked by Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath in the Parliament during the Question Hour on implementing Artificial Intelligence (AI), Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said that AI is being used to improve the efficiency of railway services in the Indian Railways.

Ashwini Vaishnav further said AI is being used to automate routine tasks, Mission Learning (ML) algorithms, Natural Language Translations (NLT), Natural Language Processing (NLP), booking tickets, checking PNR, knowing train schedules, and handling complaints in 'Railmadad'.

He said that generative AI techniques for software coding are being used for development of railway IT applications.

With the advent of AI, passengers can get information quickly in a very short time, speeding up some tasks and reducing manual efforts.

New liquor policy on Oct 1: Minister Kollu Ravindra

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Minister for Mines, Mineral Resources & Excise Kollu Ravindra has stated that a better liquor policy will soon be introduced in the State to get rid of adulterated liquor brands that kill people. The Minister, on Wednesday, said that the new liquor policy will be introduced on October 1.

At a meeting with representatives of the multinational companies (MNCs) that manufacture liquor, Kollu Ravindra said that during the period from 2014-19, the State government considered liquor as a private business only. Brands available across the country are also available in the State. "But, after the previous YSRC government took the reins in 2019, that government turned liquor into a source of income and took lives of people.

Will ensure that quality liquor brands are available across AP



Regardless of sales and purchases, the entire income was diverted. While the whole country is moving towards digital payments, thousands of crores of rupees have been looted through sale of liquor in AP under the cash payment system.

Thousands of people died or fell ill by consuming adulter-

ated liquor. Former CM Jagan Mohan Reddy's violations in liquor policy will soon be revealed," the Minister said.

"By October 1, the government will frame a new liquor policy in the State and ensure that quality liquor brands are available across Andhra Pradesh," said the Minister, adding that the government will support the companies that come forward to provide employment to the unemployed youth.

Minister Kollu Ravindra added that the representatives of the company who came forward to manufacture quality liquor brands will be given necessary support from the government.

AP election...

Continued from Page 1

We are a democratic country, so the people gave their verdict in the form of votes."

CM Chandrababu suggested to the ministers that while making decisions on the development of the constituencies, there should be a discussion among the people and decisions should be made according to their opinions. YSR Congress leaders have stolen the revenue in liquor sales.

Inferior brands were brought at the risk of people's health. He recalled that during 2014 and 2019, all brands were available.

Naidu repeatedly told the ministers not to do what the YSRC leaders did during the previous government's term. "Let's go according to the law to punish the culprits," he said.

TDP sweeps GVMC Standing Committee elections

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Greater Visakha Municipal Corporation (GVMC) Standing Committee elections culminated in a decisive victory for the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), which secured all 10 seats, establishing its control over the committee. The elections, marked by a day of high anticipation and palpable excitement, have become a focal point of political discourse in Visakhapatnam. The voting process commenced early at 7 am and continued until 2 pm. The counting of votes began two hours later.

The announcement of TDP's sweeping victory ignited a tense atmosphere on the GVMC premises. YSR Congress Party (YSCP) corporators quickly voiced their discontent, alleging that the elections were

marred by undemocratic practices. Their protests met with staunch opposition from TDP supporters, who rallied in defence of their party's triumph.

Earlier in the day, YCP corporators had raised alarms about the integrity of the counting process, accusing TDP agents of marking ballot papers with pencils. This accusation caused a temporary halt in the counting. The situation escalated when YCP leaders attempted to approach the counting center to address their concerns but were blocked by the police.

Despite the protests and the cloud of allegations, TDP's victory in the GVMC Standing Committee elections remains unshaken, marking a significant political milestone for the party in Visakhapatnam.

New pattadar...

Continued from Page 1

The cabinet approved the amendment Bill to remove this provision. Several ministers suggested that Jagan's photo and name should be removed from the survey stones. The ministers said that the then CM had spent Rs 700 crore due to his crazy thoughts. The cabinet has decided to ban Maoists for another one year. There was a discussion on the liquor policies undertaken by the YSRC government and TDP in the past. Changes and additions were also discussed in the excise policy without any irregularities. Parthasarathy said that the cabinet has decided to cancel GO 217, which is unfavourable to fishermen.

Minister Parthasarathy said that the cabinet decided to remove Jagan's photo and name on the survey stones. It has been decided to distribute the new Pattadar pass books with QR code and government seal.

100 gms broke million hearts...

Continued from Page 1

"I met Vinesh at the Olympic Village Polyclinic a short while ago and assured her of complete support of the Indian Olympic Association, Government of India and the whole country. We are providing Vinesh all medical and emotional support," Indian Olympic Association President P

T Usha said in a statement after the stunning turn of events.

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

The protests and appeals can continue but the cold fact was that Cuban wrestler Yusneylis

Guzman Lopez, who lost to Vinesh in the semifinals, replaced her in the final. Contingent's Chief Medical Officer Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala explained the process of weight cut and said that every possible trick was used to ensure that Vinesh could be within the prescribed limit.

"The process of weight cut involves a calculated restriction of

food and water along with sweating from exercises and sauna till the morning weigh-in. This weight cut causes weakness and energy depletion, which is counter-productive to participation," he said.

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

VMDA Commissioner reviews key road projects

Urgent need to prioritise roads specified in the master plan



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a decisive move to enhance infrastructure, KS Viswanathan, Commissioner of the Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA), led a crucial review on Wednesday of the proposed road conditions in Vizianagaram and Anakapalli districts. This meeting, held at the VMRDA conference hall, is a key part of the initiative to advance significant road projects in these regions, particularly focusing on industrial areas.

Commissioner Viswanathan underscored the urgent need to prioritise the roads specified in the master plan, stressing alignment with government directives. He instructed officials to undertake a systematic approach in identifying and categorising these roads. The goal is to create a comprehensive Road Development Plan (RDP) that ensures construction is conducted based on priority, necessity, and available funding.

The meeting also outlined the immediate steps for creating an actionable RDP. A follow-up session with district representatives is scheduled to further refine and address these plans, ensuring that all aspects of the development are thoroughly considered and executed effectively. A key aspect of the review was the involvement of vital stakeholders.

Representatives from prominent industry groups including the Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Andhra Pradesh Renewable Energy Development Agency (APREDA), National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO), Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI), and the Builders Association contributed valuable insights and feedback. Their input is expected to significantly influence the final road development strategies, ensuring they meet both industrial and community needs.

'We even cut her hair'...

Continued from Page 1

"...small amounts of water had to be given to prevent dehydration. Her post participation weight was found to be increased. The coach initiated the normal process of weight cut that he has always employed with Vinesh and felt confident that it would be achieved," Pardiwala said in a statement issued by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

"However, Vinesh was found to be 100 grams over her 50kg weight category, and hence, she was disqualified. All possible drastic measures, including cutting off her hair, were used. However, she was not below her allowed weight of 50kg."

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

"Wrestlers usually participate in a weight category less than their natural weight. It gives them an advantage since they are fighting with less stronger opponents.

He questioned the conspiracy angle when officials stated that the data had been retrieved from Madanapalle. The former minister expressed no fear of the investigation being handed over to the CBI, reiterating his innocence. He pointed out his consistent electoral success, indicating the strong support and trust he has from the people.

He questioned the State's lack of response to other serious incidents, such as the Godavari Pushkar stampede and various atrocities, suggesting a biased approach in handling cases. He mentioned that a section of the media has been intensively spreading false propaganda against him for the past 15 days, with derogatory comments in TV debates, and announced that he would file cases against them.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
No. 23 to 42/2024-25 Date: 06-08-2024
Online tenders are being invited for execution of the annual maintenance of 20 CPWS schemes for 2024-25 sanctioned under 15th Finance Commission Grant in Prakasam District Zilla Parishad at a cost of Rs. 1845.90 Lakh. Tender documents are available from 12-08-2024 for 12 works and for the 8 works from 13-08-2024. For details: www.tender.approcurement.gov.in or call 98592-233275. Sd/- Superintending Engineer, RWS and Sanitation Circle, Ongole

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Lokesh extends greetings to weavers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

IT Minister Nara Lokesh has extended his greetings to all the handloom artists on the occasion of National Handloom Day on Wednesday. He said that bond with Mangalagiri made him a member of the weaver's family. "I have seen the hardships of handloom artisans and have complete awareness of the issues. During the Yuvagalam Padayatra, I realised that the handloom sector is not only living livelihood to lakhs of people, but also an art that preserves our culture and traditions. I promised to bring back the old glory to the handloom industry during the padayatra," said the Minister.

He said that they have started a pilot project of Weaver's Shala to help handloom weavers in Mangalagiri and tied up with Tata Tanera. "We provided looms and other materials to poor handloom artisans. The coalition government is making a plan to solve all the problems of the handloom sector and workers on a permanent basis. We are branding our handloom garments across the country with the slogan 'Mana Mangalagiri-Mana Cheneta'."

All gates of Prakasam open

1.37 lakh cusecs of surplus water discharged into sea

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

With huge floods coming from upstream reservoirs on River Krishna, such as Srisailem, Nagarjuna Sagar and Pulichintala Projects, the Prakasam Barrage has received a large amount of water. The Water Resources Department lifted all 70 gates and discharged the surplus water into the sea. At 6 pm on Wednesday, over 1,37,450 cusecs of floodwater was reaching the barrage. The officials lifted 50 gates by three feet and the remaining 20 gates by two feet and discharged surplus water into the sea.

Upper reservoirs Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar have reached their Full Reservoir Level (FRL) and the authorities released the surplus water into the river towards the Pulichintala Project. Also, there are chances of increasing flood water from the upper catchment. The Pulichintala Project officials lifted the crest gates and discharged the water downstream about 1.20 lakh cusecs.

Besides Pulichintala, local flood water of around 17,000 cusecs reached the Prakasam Barrage in the early hours of Wednesday. Vijayawada Irrigation Circle officials lifted all 70 crest gates of the Prakasam Barrage. It was the first time that all 70 crest gates were lifted in this current water year.



Irrigation officials releasing surplus flood water from Prakasam Barrage in Vijayawada on Wednesday (Photo: Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar)

According to Krishna Central Division (KC) Executive Engineer (EE) and River Conservator Krishna Rao, surplus water was discharged downstream through 70 crest gates.

As per the reports from the Central Water Commission (CWC), the surplus from the Pulichintala Project will be increased to 2.80 lakh cusecs at Wednesday midnight, he said. Subsequently, the surplus discharge from the Prakasam Barrage will be increased up to 2.50 lakh to 3 lakh cusecs as per the realisation of water, he added.

EE Krishna Rao requested the Krishna and NTR district authorities, besides the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation, to alert all the officers to take precautionary measures to avoid any untoward incidents along the Krishna River margin on both upstream and downstream of Prakasam Barrage. If the flood water increases to 3 lakh cusecs, all the 70 crest gates will be lifted fully, he said.

On the other hand, Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner HM Dhyanchandra alerted the officials to take precautionary steps to shift people of low-lying areas to safe places. Also, he said the flood control room was opened on the premises of the VMC. He inspected several roads in the city and instructed the officials to remove the stagnated water on the roads.

CM watches flood water flow
On his way back to his residence in Undavalli, after attending the Handlooms Day celebrations in Vijayawada, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu made a brief stop at the Prakasam Barrage to observe the floodwater from the upper catchment of River Krishna. He stopped his convoy at the Prakasam Barrage and got out of his vehicle to observe the flood flow upstream of Krishna at Prakasam Barrage.

During his stop, CM Naidu interacted with visitors who were watching the flood flow from the Prakasam Barrage downstream. He expressed his satisfaction at seeing the flood flowing from the Pulichintala Project. Later, he spoke with Water Resources Department officials about the water levels in various projects in the State.



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu watching the floodwater flowing from the Prakasam Barrage downstream in Vijayawada on Wednesday



NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana addressing PR, RWS, DWAMA and other officials at a meeting held at the Collectorate in Vijayawada on Wednesday

Prepare overall development plans for villages: Collector

Dr Srijana directs officials to consider future requirements

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr. G. Srijana has met various officials to discuss the implementation of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's ideas for developing villages by providing infrastructure facilities. Emphasising the importance of considering future requirements, she stressed the need to prepare comprehensive development plans.

Collector Srijana conducted a meeting with officials from the departments of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, Rural Water Supply, and the District Water Management Agency to lay out plans for village development at the Pingali Venkaiah meeting hall in Vijayawada.

She highlighted the Chief Minister's vision for village development and provided

directives in line with this vision. She urged the officials to change their way of thinking and emphasised the importance of planning to address future social requirements.

Furthermore, she said that people's representatives, villagers, and engineering officials collectively visited villages and prepared a detailed report outlining the necessary infrastructure works to be undertaken in the coming three years.

She specified that roads, drains, street lights, individual toilets, and other infrastructure facilities will be proposed in a phased manner with colour coding. She also emphasised the need for timely submission of proposals, prioritising ongoing and future works.

Moreover, she stressed the government's goal of providing drinking water tap connections

to every household by March 2025. She also emphasised the use of scientific systems in constructing drains in all villages.

Regarding the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the Collector said that around 22 lakh person-days remained this year. She urged the officials to take special measures to achieve the target by completing three lakh person-days per month. Additionally, she emphasised the importance of DWAMA officials to involve more workers to participate in Upadhi works and promised to review progress daily.

DWAMA Project Director J Sunitha, PR SE Akkineni Venkateswara Rao, RWS SE DV Ramana, DPO NV Siva Prasad Yadav, DRDA PD K Srinivasa Rao, and others were present at the meeting.

'Handloom Walk' marks National Handloom Day

Government striving to restore lost glory of handloom: Minister Savitha



Handlooms and Textiles Minister Savitha, Vijayawada East MLA Gadde Rammohan Rao, Handlooms and Textiles Principal Secretary Sunitha, Commissioner Rekha Rani and Industries and Commerce Principal Secretary Vani Mohan participating in the Handloom Walk in Vijayawada on Wednesday

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of the National Handloom Day, a Handloom Walk was organised in Vijayawada by the Department of Handlooms and Textiles on Wednesday, to honour and promote the heritage of handlooms. The event commenced at the Maris Stella College Gate, Patamata, and proceeded to the Maris Stella Indoor Stadium on Pantakalava Road, via Benz Circle.

Several dignitaries, including Minister for Handlooms & Textiles and Welfare of BCs and Economically Weaker Sections S Savitha, Vijayawada East MLA Gadde Rammohan Rao, Handlooms and Textiles Department Principal Secretary K Sunitha, Commissioner G Rekha Rani, Industries and Commerce (Sugar) Principal Secretary G Vani Mohan and others graced

the event. Minister Savitha flagged off the walk and also participated in the walk. The Handloom Walk highlighted the collective commitment to preserving and promoting handloom traditions, emphasising their significance in contemporary society. Participants carried placards and donned handloom attire, demonstrating the rich cultural heritage of the State.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Savitha spoke about the rich varieties of handlooms in Andhra Pradesh. She advocated for the extensive promotion of handlooms by incorporating them into everyday and special occasion attire.

Further, she stated that her government, under the leadership of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, is striving to restore the past glory of handloom. "CM Naidu is aware of the weavers' problems and

the government will support them. To provide livelihood to the weavers, the government is implementing several welfare and financial assistance schemes in the State," she added.

"For several years, weavers have faced various problems. They have no proper income and no one purchases their products. As a result, many weavers migrated from the State and some of them even committed suicide. At this stage, our government will be encouraging weavers and at the same time, creating awareness among the people to wear handloom clothes," Savitha said.

APCO VC & MD Pavana Murthy, APKVIB CEO VRVR Naik, students and staff of Maris Stella College and Social Welfare Degree Residential College students were also present on the occasion.

DGP seeks students' help to make state drug-free

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Loyola College organised an awareness programme on 'Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking' on the college campus on Wednesday. The Director General of Police (DGP), Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao, attended the programme as the chief guest.

In a symbolic gesture of commitment, a pledge was taken by all attendees to work towards a drug-free country. The programme saw the participation of around 1,000 students in person, with another 2,500 students watching the event via live telecast from their classrooms.

Addressing the gathering, DGP Tirumala Rao encouraged students to take an active role in spreading awareness and supporting friends and peers who might be struggling with substance abuse. He emphasised the theme "The Evidence is Clear: Invest in Prevention" and highlighted the importance of proactive measures in combating drug abuse.

He spoke passionately about the government's comprehensive strategy, which includes educational initiatives, community outreach programs, and stringent law enforcement actions. DGP Tirumala Rao pointed out that students are



DGP Dwaraka Tirumala Rao attending an awareness programme on 'Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking' at Andhra Loyola College in Vijayawada on Wednesday

among the most powerful elements in society who can lead

the change toward a drug-free State.

Further, he stressed that their involvement and vigilance could significantly reduce the spread of drug abuse. He also warned of the serious consequences faced by those involved in drug-related activities, noting that the government is committed to taking strict actions against users and traffickers to ensure public safety and health.

Andhra Loyola College Correspondent Dr Sagayaraj, Principal GAP Kishore, Staff Association Secretary Dr Prasad Rao, Professor of Telugu, Dr Ravindra Bhas, Dean Dr Subha, staff, and students were also present at the programme.

Clarion call to end corporal punishment in schools

Cultivates fear and other negative behaviours among students

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A fervent appeal to abolish corporal punishment in schools reverberated through a district-level workshop held at Visakha Valley School on Wednesday. The event focused on raising awareness about Section 17 of the RTE Act, 2009, and guidelines for eradicating corporal punishment.

Keynote speakers emphasised the devastating consequences of corporal punishment, underscoring its role in cultivating fear and other negative behaviours among students. K. Appa Rao, Chairperson of the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR), urged educators to adopt a compassionate approach, asserting that



a violence-free learning environment is essential for students' holistic development. Rao emphasised the crucial role of school administrators in preventing corporal punishment and providing necessary support to affected students. "Headmasters should serve as mentors, guiding students towards their goals and empowering them to succeed," he said.

RJD Vijay Bhaskar concurred, highlighting the crippling fear inflicted by corporal punishment. He advocated for teachers to transition into supportive advisors, fostering a nurturing atmosphere conducive to student growth. District Educational Officer L. Chandrakala stressed the importance of creating a positive and stress-free learning environment.

Govt will scrap Dharani, says Bhatti

• Title deeds for Podu lands soon

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress government will soon issue title deeds (pattas) for podu lands and extend assistance to farmers for cultivating their lands, including loans, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu said.

The Dharani Portal which made the lives of farmers miserable would be dumped in the Bay of Bengal, he asserted.

Addressing a meeting at Pipri village in Adilabad on Wednesday, Bhatti said the government would focus on developing Adilabad district. An amount of Rs 400 crore has been allocated in the budget for the district's irrigation projects, he said.

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

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

"When I started my padayatra in the scorching heat, many thought it would be confined to two villages and would be over in a couple of days. But I completed 1,365 km interacting with the people and listening to their hardships," he said.

The Congress heard the woes of the people and brought back Indiramma

Rajyam with a commitment to solve people's problems. From the minute the Congress came to power, it functioned with great responsibility. "Power is not for enjoyment but to discharge duties towards people. It is a great responsibility," he asserted.

Regardless of the difficult financial situation, the TG government is implementing every assurance given to people, he said.

"On the day of taking charge itself, the free bus travel scheme for women in TGSRCT buses was launched, and the Rajiv Arogya Sri insurance

limit was enhanced to Rs 10 lakh from Rs 5 lakh. Soon after, gas cylinders were provided for Rs 500 and zero electricity bills for consumption below 200 units under Gruha Jyothi were implemented. The government has prepared plans for the construction of 3,500 Indiramma houses in every constituency in the first year itself. Double bedroom houses will be constructed at Rs 5 lakh each, and for SC and STs, an additional Rs 1 lakh will be given. This is the people's government, and steps are being taken to spend every Rupee meaningfully without wastage," Bhatti said.

Pointing out that the job calendar was released in the Assembly as promised giving dates for Group I, II, III posts, the Electricity department and SCCL, he said this is a programme taken up by the government for the youth.

First mother's milk bank in State opens at Andhra Hospitals

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of World Breastfeeding week celebrations, Dr PV Rama Rao, Head of Children's Services & Director, Andhra Hospitals highlighted the importance of Mother's Milk Bank at Andhra hospitals, Vijayawada, which was started for the first time in the State.

The benefits of breastfeeding are recognised the world over, with studies showing that exclusively breastfed children are 14 times less likely to die in the first six months than non-breastfed children. Yet, in low-income countries, only 39 percent of children under six months are exclusively breastfed.

The WHO recommends that whenever the mother's fresh milk is not available for the baby, pasteurised donor human milk is the best option. In case of ill, preterm babies, banked milk is as important as the other preterm care. Human milk banking is getting established in India gradually but still we are not up to the mark. Considering the breastfeeding friendly culture in India we are very poor in this field.

Building the right infrastructure for milk banks is important. But equally vital is creating public awareness and support for the programme since it is not easy to persuade any woman to part with her breast milk.

Heavy rains lash NTR, Krishna districts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Due to the heavy rainfall that lashed NTR district, several low-lying areas were inundated on Wednesday. Many tributaries and streams have been overflowing in the district and roads in several rural areas including many prominent places in Vijayawada were inundated. A tributary Kattaleru overflowed and as a result, about 20 villages between Gampalagudem and Cheemalapadu have been isolated.

Continuous rain affected daily life across the district. Rainwater overflowed on many roads in Gunadala, Benz Circle, Patamata, Eluru Road, MG Road, Suryaraopet, Governorpet,



One Town, Low Bridge and other areas in the city. Due to the lack of a proper drainage system in the city, all major outfall drains including internal drains were overflowing.

As a result, two-wheelers and pedestrians faced severe inconvenience.

In the absence of proper drainage system at Benz Circle, which is the heart of

the city, rainwater stagnated on the road. The National Highway from Benz Circle to Ramavarappu Ring was also waterlogged. Vijayawada Municipal Commissioner HM Dhyanchandra inspected the spot and instructed the engineering officials to take the necessary steps to remove stagnated rainwater immediately.

Meanwhile, due to the heavy rain, main roads in the Port City of Machilipatnam were inundated. The heart place of the city, Koneru Centre was surrounded with rainwater and the drains were overflowing. People have faced a lot of troubles and the municipal authorities did nothing to remove stagnated water, people alleged.

MP urges Gadkari to four-lane 'Pedana-Gudivada' road

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

Lok Sabha member V Balashowry appealed to Union Road Transport and Highway Minister Nitin Gadkari to develop the 'Pedana-Gudivada' road as a four lane road.

Jana Sena MP Balashowry called on Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi on Wednesday. He submitted to him three representations on road projects. The MP urged the Union Minister to develop the Pedana-Gudivada highway as a four lane road and also construct a highway connecting the Machilipatnam sea port and the national highway, a release here on Wednesday said.

He explained to the Union Minister that at present the Pedana-Gudivada highway is a two lane road and urged to develop it as a four lane highway keeping in view the growing vehicular traffic on the road.

The MP also told the Union Minister the importance of constructing a four Kilometers



four lane road connecting the Machilipatnam sea port to the national highway. He also asked the Union Minister for the construction of a 6 KMs

four lane road from Chiralakapudi to Vijayawada bypass road NH 65, and informed him that the land acquisition for the same had

been completed. Union Minister Nitin Gadkar responded favourably to the MP's request, the MP said in a release.

DC stresses need for encouraging wearing handloom clothes

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari Collector Chadalavada Nagarani underlined the need of encouraging people wearing handloom clothes.

The Collector attended as chief guest to the 10 th National Handloom Day programme organized in the DNR college auditorium here on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Nagarani said that everyone should contribute to the development of handloom in the district, adding that handloom workers will be encouraged by purchasing handloom cloths. She felt that apart from comfort in wearing clothes, it is also good for health.

The Collector stated that 95 percent of handloom products are from India. As part of the Swadeshi movement, the freedom fighters brought handloom cloth.

However the importance is being given to the clothes made on machines. She regretted that nowadays the youth are not familiar with handloom cloth.



"There are 1,027 handloom workers in WG district. I will take to the notice of the government the problems of weavers of the district," she said.

The Collector felicitated two handloom weavers S Vigneswara Rao and Ch Lingam on the occasion. Handloom development officer B Ramaiah, ADO G Gurraju and other officials were present.

Woman killed as SUV collides with four two-wheelers

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

A woman was killed and two others were injured when a Scorpio vehicle collided with four two-wheelers at Anjaneya Swamy temple in Narasapuram Wednesday.

Police said that a speeding Scorpio vehicle hit four motorcycles killing Meka Meribai (50) on the spot while Gorinkala Alihar suffered grievous injuries.

The SUV driver drove the vehicle at a high speed and in a reckless manner resulting in it colliding with four motorcycles.

The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for postmortem. Narasapur MLA Bommidi Nayakar visited the scene of the accident and consoled the bereaved family.



Take stringent measures to curb ganja menace: Collector

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi told the police officials to adopt stringent measures to curb the ganja menace in the district and intensify the checking at check-posts. A district level anti-narcotic committee meeting was held here on Wednesday presided over by Collector Vetri Selvi.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector told the authorities to intensify inspections to prevent transportation of cannabis and other drugs which spoil the future of the youth. She also asked them to identify the areas where the transportation of ganja and drugs is frequent and intensify inspections at the toll plazas on the highways and at district borders.

"Strict measures should be taken to prevent the consumption of ganja and drugs

anywhere in the district. The peddlers who supply drugs should be identified and cases should be registered against them. Supply and consumption of drugs are also punishable and awareness programmes should be organized in schools and colleges on the ill-effects of cannabis and drug use," she told the officials.

Information could be given by calling the 14500 toll free number regarding the sale of ganja and consumption on the supply of drugs, she said and directed the officials to take steps to display the 14500 toll free number at all schools, colleges and prominent road junctions.

"Special teams with police, education, medical and officials should be set up to organise programmes to create wide awareness on the ill-effects and legal punishments

caused by the use of drugs like ganja," Collector Vetri Selvi told the officials.

SP K P Shiva Kishore said that so far 540 people have been arrested and 149 cases have been registered in the district during the year for transporting ganja, illicit liquor and selling. "The SEB officials are conducting checking of vehicles extensively across the district as part of efforts to prevent the ganja and country-made liquor menaces. A vigil has also been laid extensively on cannabis and on the brewing of country-made liquor," the SP said.

Joint Collector P Dhatri Reddy, Additional SP Nakka Suryachandra Rao, DRO D Pushmani, deputy commissioner of transport Santhi Kumari and DEO Abraham were among those who attended the meeting.

Man hacks to death wife, arrested

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

In a gruesome incident, a man hacked to death his wife in broad daylight in public glare on the road at Ramanujapuram village in Koyyalagudem mandal on Wednesday.

Police said that the accused Rajanala Suryachandram had differences with his wife, the deceased Rajanala Sailakshmi (28). The couple quarreled sometime in their house. In a fit of rage, the accused Suryachandra hacked his wife Sailakshmi with a sword in which she died instantaneously on the road.

After killing her, he sat in



front of their house holding the sword for some time and the panic-stricken neighbors fled the scene. The police rushed to the village and arrested the accused and sent the body to the GGH for postmortem.

Idupulapaya IIT girl student commits suicide

PNS ■ KADAPA

An engineering girl student committed suicide by hanging herself to water pipeline in bathroom in his hostel at Idupulapaya on Wednesday.

Police said that the deceased Jameensha Khuresi (20) was studying second year B.Tech at IIT Idupulapaya campus. She belonged to Chiralata town in Prakasam district.

A student's mobile phone was found missing on Tuesday evening. The IIT officials reprimanded the deceased Jameensha Khuresi on the issue of missing a mobile



phone. Feeling humiliated and disgusted for being reprimanded by the officials, she ended life by hanging with her chunni to a water pipeline in the bathroom. The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH in Vempalli.

Officials directed to expedite construction of TIDCO houses



PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam district Collector A Thameen Ansariya has directed the officials concerned to take steps to complete the construction of TIDCO houses expeditiously. The Collector, accompanied by engineers and officials, inspected the TIDCO housing Complex in Giddalur on Wednesday.

She directed the officials to take steps to complete the TIDCO houses expeditiously. The officials explained to her that 1,248 houses are under construction at the TIDCO housing complex. All required basic amenities are being provided to the TIDCO housing complex, the officials told her.

Executive Engineer Venkateswara Rao informed the Collector Rs 70.77 crore is required to complete the construction of TIDCO houses and provide all basic amenities. The Collector told the officials the government has agreed to release the funds. She directed the officials to complete the houses by March and hand them over to the beneficiaries.

Later the Collector visited the Khambham irrigation tank. Speaking on the occasion she said that the historical Khambham tank would be developed as a tourist centre.

The officials explained to her the historical significance of the Kambham irrigation tank. They told her that the tank has spread in 5,917 acres

of land and over 7000 acres are being cultivated depending on the water of the tank. As much as 2,952 tmc of water could be impounded in the tank, the officials informed her.

Irrigation DE Jakeer Ahmad apprised the Collector that proposals were sent to the government to develop the tank at a cost of Rs 67 lakh. The Collector said that the tank would be further developed as an attractive tourist place.

Later the Collector inspected the Area hospital, TIDCO Housing complex, social welfare hostel and Girijana girls residential school in Giddalur. She spent more than an hour in the area hospital. She interacted with the patients and examined the registers.

Heavy rain throws normal life out of gear

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

Heavy rain threw normal life out of gear in various towns and cities on Wednesday and vehicular traffic to several villages disrupted due to overflowing rainwater on roads.

Heavy rains that occurred on the night of Tuesday and Wednesday morning caused quite an inconvenience to the people and threw normal life out of gear. The main thoroughfares in Machilipatnam inundated in two feet of water.

The main road from Lakshmi talkies to Koneru centre submerged in two to three feet water. The bus station was also under three feet of water. Many vehicles, especially two-wheelers, were seen stopped in the water filled roads. Normal life was badly affected for four hours in the morning in the town.

In Tiruvuru constituency in NTR district, several low-lying localities were inundated and the water gushed into the Tiruvuru RTC bus station. The road connectivity was disrupted to 20 villages in the constituency as the Kattaleru stream swollen with heavy inflow and the flood water overflowed on the road between Vinagadapa-Thotamala villages.

The police did not allow vehicles to pass on the road as



a precautionary measure. The road between the bypass road factory centre looked like a canal as three feet of water stagnated. There was heavy downpour in Konaseema district including in Amalapuram in the wee hours on Wednesday as a result many roads were inundated in rain water.

In Kadapa, several residential localities were inundated in knee deep water on the night of Tuesday. The bus stand was in three feet of water causing inconvenience to the passengers.

The Y Junction, Akkayapalli and Ganjigunte colonies were marooned in the rain water.

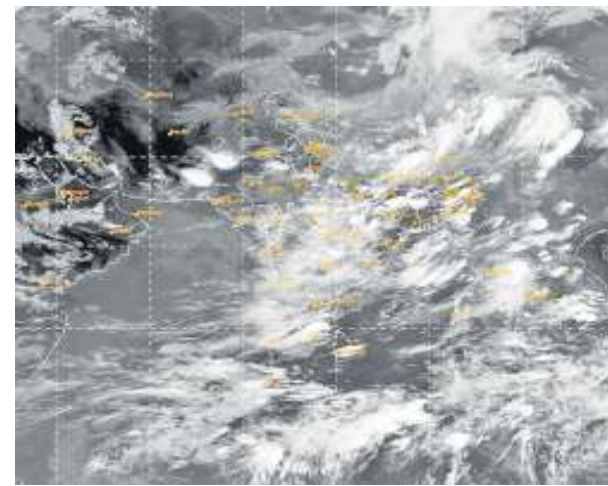
Heavy rain forecast in north coastal AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next 24 hours.

In a daily weather report here on Wednesday said that a north-south trough runs from Rayalaseema to Comorin area across interior Tamil Nadu at 0.9 km above mean sea level. The southwest monsoon has been active over Coastal Andhra Pradesh and vigorous over Rayalaseema.

Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and strong surface winds with speed ranging from 30- 40 Kmph are likely to occur at isolated places in



North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next

five days.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at most places or many places or at a few places or at one or two places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next seven days.

Heavy rainfall occurred over Eluru, Guntur, NTR District, Palnadu, Parvathipuram Manyam, Srikakulam districts of Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Annamayya District, Chittoor, Nandyal, Tirupati, YSR District districts of Rayalaseema during the last 24 hours.

Rain occurred at most places over Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the same period, the report added.

YSRCP suffers a blow as former MLA Dorababu quits

PNS ■ KAKINADA

The Opposition YSRCP suffered a blow on Wednesday as Pithapuram former MLA Pendem Dorababu announced his resignation to the party claiming that his decision was for the development of people of the constituency.

Though he did not disclose his political future, it is learnt that he would be joining the

Janasena party soon. P Dorababu told the media here on Wednesday that he was grateful to Pithapuram people for electing him as the MLA twice and he would take a decision about his political future after consulting his supporters. He claimed that though he was denied the party ticket in the elections he worked whole heartedly for the party nominee Vanga Gita. It is stated that party



chief Jaganmohan Reddy promised him MLC but failed to fulfill his promise leading to Dorababu to quit. It may be mentioned here that YSR Congress Party and former Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy had earlier decided to field former Minister Botcha Satyanarayana as MLC candidate for under local bodies quota from united Visakhapatnam.

ACROSS THE STATES



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

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



Maha govt nod for Wainganga-Nalganga river linking project

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



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

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

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

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



BASEMENT DEATHS

CBI takes over probe, inspects coaching centre building

PNS ■ NEW DELHI The CBI has taken over the probe into the deaths of three civil services aspirants at a coaching centre in Old Rajinder Nagar here and registered an FIR against the owner of the institute, officials said on Wednesday. Following the FIR, a team of CBI officials visited the building housing Rau's IAS Study Circle on Wednesday and inspected the area where the incident had taken place on July 27. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) took over the case from the Delhi Police late Tuesday evening following a Delhi High Court order. The central agency has re-registered a case against Abhishek Gupta, owner of Rau's IAS Study Circle, in accordance with the laid down procedure, the officials said. Shreya Yadav (25) from Uttar Pradesh, Tanya Soni (25) from Telangana and

Nevin Delvin (24) from Kerala drowned after water gushed into the basement of a building housing Rau's IAS Study Circle following heavy rains on July 27. The IAS aspirants were studying in the library set up in the basement when water flooded it resulting in their deaths. The CBI has booked Gupta for culpable homicide not amounting to murder, causing death by negligence, voluntarily causing hurt, negligent conduct, and common intention. The agency is also likely to move special court to seek custody of Gupta and other suspects who are in judicial custody, the officials said. The high court had castigated police and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) over the students' deaths, saying it was unable to fathom how they could not come out of the basement. It also sought to know whether the doors

No alliance for J&K Assembly polls: Abdullah

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

ISRO to launch Earth observation satellite soon



PNS ■ BENGALURU ISRO on Wednesday said its latest earth observation satellite EOS-08 will be launched onboard the third and final developmental flight of its Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)-D3 on August 15. The primary objectives of the EOS-08 mission include designing and developing a microsatellite, creating payload instruments compatible with the microsatellite bus, and incorporating new technologies required for future operational satellites, the Bengaluru-headquartered

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI Shiv Sena-UBT supremo Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday dropped hints that he was ready to be projected as the chief ministerial face in the Maharashtra Assembly elections likely to be held in October. Thackeray's comments came on a day when he met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, AICC general secretary K C Venugopal and other INDIA bloc representatives here. Thackeray was accompanied by his son Aditya and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut. "Maharashtra's farmers and youngsters are fed up with the opportunistic BJP-led alliance. The 13 crore people

of Maharashtra are looking towards change," said Kharge after the meeting. "If my colleagues (in MVA) feel that I have done excellent work, then ask them whether they want me as the chief minister. People will decide," Thackeray told reporters here before meeting the Congress leadership. Thackeray served as the chief minister of Maharashtra for two-and-a-half years as head of the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress - Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance before his government was pulled down by the BJP after dissent in the Sena ranks. Thackeray also met NCP-SP supremo Sharad Pawar, who had played a key role in stitching together the MVA coalition after the 2019 assembly elections.

Opposition presses for caste census, super rich tax

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition members in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday pressed for a caste census, imposition of super rich tax, and removal of GST levy on life and medical insurance premiums. Participating in a discussion on the Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation No. 3 Bill, 2024 in the Upper House, Raghav Chadha of the Aam Aadmi Party expressed happiness at the indexation benefit being "partially restored". However, he said, this poses a "huge question mark" over the central government's tax policies. "... How confused is our country's taxation policy. On 23 July 2024, you say that you are taking away the indexation benefit from investors and exactly after two weeks, you say that you are not taking it away but restoring it. This shows that when you, without thinking, not acting on the advice of an economist, if you devise the Budget on the advice of those who do not

OPPOSITION PARTY UNITED WE STAND



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

have economic knowledge, these kind of flip flops will be witnessed," he said. Taking away indexation

from an Indian investor is equivalent to breaking their back, Chadha claimed, seeking "full restoration" of the indexation benefit. "I would demand that indexation (benefit) be fully restored on all asset classes and be applicable even on asset classes bought after July 23, 2024," he said. Besides, citing Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari's letter to his Finance counterpart Nirmala Sitharaman, Chadha requested that no Goods and Services Tax (GST) be levied on health and life insurance premium. Manoj Kumar Jha (RJD) argued that ten per cent of the people have control over majority of the country's properties. "Can our country, taking into account the Preamble, make an arrangement for the top 1 per cent of the super rich to be taxed so that our other policies function efficiently and we can work towards the group that is our priority," Jha said. He argued that a caste census will ensure that the Budget announcements will be "more effective".

MAHARASHTRA ASSEMBLY POLL
Cong to focus on farmers, youth

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Issues affecting farmers and youth, along with tackling unemployment and inflation, will be the focus of Congress party's manifesto for the upcoming Maharashtra assembly, a senior party functionary said on Wednesday. The announcement was made by the party's state unit chief, Nana Patole, following a meeting of the party's core committee at the Gandhi Bhavan in South Mumbai. The elections for the 288-member Maharashtra assembly are anticipated to take place in October. To kick off its campaign, the

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

About 4,264 applications received on the PM Cares for Children portal have been rejected, the government said on Wednesday, listing non-eligibility as the reason for rejection under the scheme for children orphaned during the Covid pandemic. The scheme was launched by the prime minister to support children who have lost both parents or legal guardian or adoptive parents or surviving parent after March 11, 2020. Women and Child Development (WCD) Minister Annpurna Devi told the Rajya Sabha that 9,331 applications have been registered on the PM Cares for Children portal from 613 districts in 33 states/UTs. Out of these, 524 applications were duplicate, she said



processed for eligibility at the central government level, Devi added. The PM-Care programme saw a significant number of applications across various states and Union Territories (UTs) in 2021 with a total of 6,360 beneficiaries. Out of these, 3,953 were approved by DMs, 1,985 rejected and 422 declared duplicates, according to data shared by Devi. Maharashtra had the highest number of registrations at 1,107, with 713 approvals. Andhra Pradesh had 473 registered beneficiaries, with 338 approvals, while Delhi reported 266 registrations with only 124 approvals, the data showed. Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh were among the states and UTs that showed high approval rates, whereas Bihar and Odisha had notably high rejection rates.

in a written response. Thus, 8,807 applications were reviewed by district level child welfare committees and district collectors or district magistrates (DMs), the minister said. Based on the final approval of DMs, 4,532 beneficiaries are receiving benefits under the scheme and 11 other applications are in the pipeline for

Social factors impact lifespan by up to 18 years

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

Denmark found that while no one of the four factors was more influential than any of the others, the more of these factors a person has, the higher their risk of an earlier death. The authors also devised a "simple scoring system" based on the four factors to identify those most at risk. According to the scoring system, one's lifespan score could range from a lowest of (minus) 10 to a highest of eight. For the study, published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) Open, the researchers took data on registered deaths and population numbers from national statistics and census



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

The team compared the partial life expectancies between age 30 and 90 years of the 54 social groups, which included three types of marital statuses, education and race each. Partial life expectancy, one of the most commonly used measures of public health, estimates the expected number of years lived between specific ages. In this study, it measures the expected years lived between ages 30 and 90, for a maximum of 60 years of life, the authors explained. Their analysis revealed "very large" differences in the lifespans between the social groups studied.

For example, the authors found that white never-married men with a high school diploma or less had the shortest partial life expectancy of 37 years, while white married women with a university degree had the longest one of 55 years. "There is an 18-year difference between the minimum and maximum partial life expectancies between age 30 and 90 years across the (social groups)," they wrote. The team also found that the advantage of the social groups having longer lifespans was not obvious once multiple factors were considered.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

Finance Minister yields

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

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



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

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

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

PICTALK



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

The evolution of Rahul Gandhi

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



KALYANI SHANKAR

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



team of about twelve key members.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PRESIDENT'S STATE VISIT

Madam — President Droupadi Murmu embarked on a six-day state visit to three nations: Fiji, New Zealand, and Timor-Leste a couple of days ago. I wonder why the President has undertaken this visit? How will engaging with these nations benefit India? Fiji and Timor Leste are almost unheard of countries in India. What is the government's agenda really? As both Fiji and New Zealand are approximately 11,000 kms and Timor Leste is about 6,500 kms away, it goes without saying that a to and fro visit to these countries would cost our nation a humongous sum. Besides, the President who would be travelling by a state aeroplane (read, like a private airliner) would leave a heavy carbon footprint. Will a RTI query in respect of the purpose and cost of the tri-nation jaunt be answered, if at all?

Avinash Godbole | Dewas

BLINDING HEADLIGHTS CAUSE ACCIDENTS

Madam — Blinding headlights are one of the important causes of road accidents in India. A driver can be blinded by the opposite vehicles as well as the rear ones. On an average, glaring headlights are direct or contributory causes of 75 percent of vehicular collisions in India. Of course high beam lights are useful in low visibility when there are little or no street lights. However, rules say high beams can be employed by the drivers only if there are no oncoming vehicles but not many drivers are sticklers for rules. Rear vehicles can distract the front drivers' vision by using bright lights within 60 metres.

It has become a fashion for several youngsters, especially in small towns and cities with none to keep a hawk's eye on them, to use ornamental illumination like flashy headlights. Flickers, Light emitting diodes (LED), and its variants, are freely used by irresponsible drivers. Section 177 of the Motor Vehicles Act (MVA) has explicitly detailed the proper and improper use of headlights. Many drivers, especially the non-professional ones, are oblivious to the correct usage of headlights and

Justice delayed is justice denied



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

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

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

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

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

Ganpat Bhat | Akola

TURMOIL IN BANGLADESH

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

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

R Narayanan | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Renewable energy: Paving the way for a sustainable future

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

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

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

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



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

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

tion like rooftop solar and offshore wind.

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

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

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



GAURAV PRABHUMIRASHI



FIRST COLUMN

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

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



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

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

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



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

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

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

Negligence and tragedy: The price of complacency



RAJDEEP PATHAK

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



In reflecting on the powerful speech delivered by Mark Antony following the assassination of Julius Caesar, one cannot help but recall his stirring words: "Friends, Romans, countrymen, I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him." Antony's oration skillfully ignited the Roman populace, who were initially ambivalent towards Caesar's murder. Through his use of rhetorical questions and ironic praise for Brutus and the other conspirators, Antony incited the crowd to question the motives behind the assassination. <

By revealing Caesar's will, which generously bequeathed wealth and public parks to the citizens, Antony further endeared Caesar to the people and painted the conspirators as traitors. The crowd, now convinced of Caesar's benevolence and the conspirators' treachery, erupted into chaos, leading to a violent riot. This turmoil precipitated a civil war, ultimately overthrowing the existing order and paving the way for the rise of the 'Second Triumvirate' (all sought revenge for the murder of Julius Caesar) and the end of the Roman Republic.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Moreover, the process for obtaining necessary permits and NOCs should be transparent and stringent, with severe penalties for deviations from approved plans.

Public awareness and advocacy are crucial. Educating students and residents about safety standards and rights is another key factor. Further, creating platforms for community engagement and empowering residents with safety mechanisms is crucial.

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

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

Indian cardiologist sparks global debate on mind-based medical protocols

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

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

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

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



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

medical constitution in your body gets deteriorated," he told The Pioneer. "Although there has been a lot of thinking going on in medical circles about the role of the mind in psychological disorders, much needs to be done in the field of physical ailments.

Recent data on the important role played by the human mind in the causation of major physical ill-

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

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

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

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



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

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

pressure as also the heart rate and the breathing rate," said the octogenarian professor who has been honoured with Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan by the President of India for the scintillating works he has done over the decades. According to Prof Hegde's experience, chronic stress does take its toll leading to killer diseases. "Emotions play a major role in one getting afflicted with such ailments. Scientists, business barons, professionals and politicians should bear this in mind.

When the competition becomes too intense, chances of one losing control shoot up and there can be no coming back to normalcy," he said.

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

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

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

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

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

IN BRIEF



Godawari Power and Ispat Q1 profit grows to Rs 287 cr

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



Gold plunges Rs 350; silver rises Rs 200

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



Tata Motors confident over long-term prospects of EVs

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

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

Markets regulator Sebi on Wednesday sent a notice to Karvy Stock Broking Ltd (KSBL) and its CMD C Parthasarathy asking them to pay around Rs 25 crore within 15 days in a case pertaining to misappropriation of clients' funds by misusing the Power of Attorney. The notice came after they failed to pay the fine imposed on them by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi). Sebi in April 2023 barred KSBL and Parthasarathy from the securities market for seven years and also imposed a penalty of Rs 21 crore on them for misappropriating clients' funds

by misusing the Power of Attorney given to the broking firm. Individually, the regulator had levied a fine of Rs 13 crore on KSBL and Rs 8 crore on Parthasarathy, promoter-cum-managing director. In its fresh notice, the regulator has vbidrected KSBL and Parthasarathy to pay Rs 15.21 crore and Rs 9.36 crore, respectively, which includes interest and recovery cost, within 15 days. In the event of non-payment of dues, the markets regulator will recover the amount by attaching bank accounts, attaching as well as selling the entities' moveable and immovable property.



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

IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

FM proposes amendments to LTCG tax provision

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said the contentious LTCG tax proposal on real estate is being amended to give option to taxpayers to compute tax liability under the old system or at reduced rates without indexation, and pay the lower of the two. Replying to a debate on the Finance Bill, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the rollover benefit will be available to taxpayers who buy new immovable property utilising the capital gains on the sale of old property. The Budget 2024-25 pro-

posal to remove indexation benefit in calculation of long term capital gains on sale of immovable properties evoked sharp criticism from various corners, including opposition parties and tax professionals. The Budget, presented on July 23, had proposed a lower 12.5 per cent rate of LTCG tax, down from 20 per cent, while doing away with the indexation benefit. The major amendment in the Bill relates to restoration of indexation benefit on sale of properties bought prior to July 23, 2024. Now, individuals or HUFs who bought houses before July 23, 2024, can opt to pay LTCG tax under the new scheme at the rate of 12.5 per cent without indexation or claim the indexation benefit and pay 20 per cent tax.

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

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

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



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

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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



Reliance ready for next level of growth, says Ambani

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Ambani draws nil salary for 4th yr in a row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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



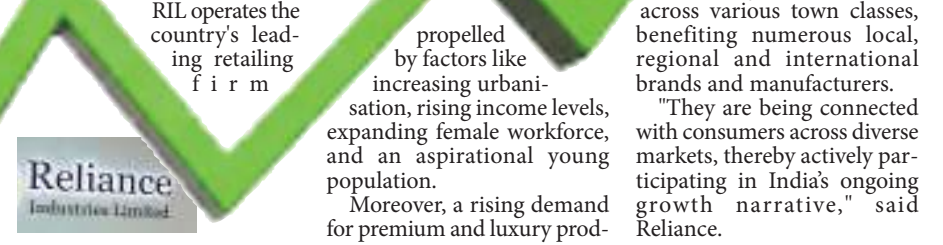
India's retail market, to cross \$1.4 trillion by 2027

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

fuels this growth trajectory, reflecting the evolving preferences with rising disposable incomes. This growth extends across various town classes, benefiting numerous local, regional and international brands and manufacturers. "They are being connected with consumers across diverse markets, thereby actively participating in India's ongoing growth narrative," said Reliance.



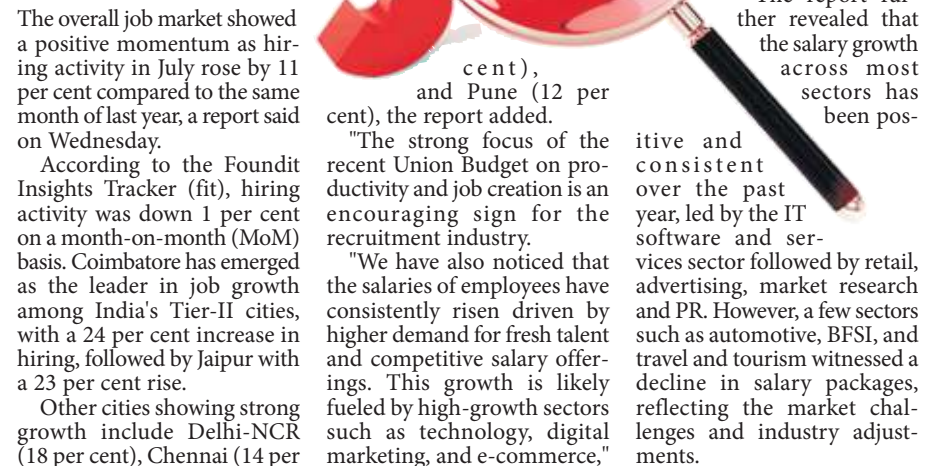
Hiring activity up 11% on positive momentum: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The overall job market showed a positive momentum as hiring activity in July rose by 11 per cent compared to the same month of last year, a report said on Wednesday. According to the Foundit Insights Tracker (fit), hiring activity was down 1 per cent on a month-on-month (MoM) basis. Coimbatore has emerged as the leader in job growth among India's Tier-II cities, with a 24 per cent increase in hiring, followed by Jaipur with a 23 per cent rise. Other cities showing strong growth include Delhi-NCR (18 per cent), Chennai (14 per

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

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

report suggest that job-switching intent has stabilized since last year. However, employers still need to offer a holistic benefits package with a healthy combination of work-life balance, adequate career progression opportunities, and a flexible and favourable work environment, to retain top talent. Additionally, it is heartwarming to witness that the majority of the workforce received some form of inflation compensation from their employers. The findings also indicate talent's strong inclination towards leveraging AI in their work, which presents a strong case for employers to consider investing in upskilling their workforce in new-age technologies.



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

dents in India. The findings of this year's



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

The exchange has recorded its highest-ever quarterly financial performance with a revenue of Rs 674 crore in the April-June quarter in the current financial year FY25 as compared to Rs 271 crore in the year-ago period. "We have finished the first quarter strongly, with every business line contributing to revenue and profitability. This reflects the strength of our proposition, the improvements we have made to our products and the depth of our relationships with customers," BSE MD and CEO Sundaraman Ramamurthy said. The average daily turnover in the equity cash segment for the first quarter of FY25 stood at Rs 9,006 crore as compared to Rs 4,025 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

The exchange has recorded its highest-ever quarterly financial performance with a revenue of Rs 674 crore in the April-June quarter in the current financial year FY25 as compared to Rs 271 crore in



AYUSHMANN KHURRANA EXITS BORDER 2

Sunny Deol recently revealed plans for a sequel to his 1997 film, *Border*, called *Border 2*. There were rumors that Anurag Singh's film would star Sunny and Ayushmann Khurrana in the main roles. Nonetheless, a report has stated that following extensive discussions over several months, Ayushmann has decided to withdraw from *Border 2* due to uncertain-

ty about his role in the Sunny-led group drama. "Ayushmann was in talks to play a soldier in the sequel. While both Ayushmann and the makers were keen on collaborating, the actor felt unsure of his positioning in an ensemble led by Sunny Deol, a towering star in his own right," the source told the portal. Recently, there have been rumours that

the war drama will feature Punjabi actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh. Speaking of which, the source added, "Nothing is confirmed yet. But Diljit has been approached by the makers. It will be a treat to see Diljit and Sunny together on screen, given their strong audience base in north India." The film is expected to go on the floor by November.



Jenna teases exciting deets about *A Little Bit More Horror*

Jenna Ortega, who brilliantly portrays *Wednesday's* main character, has given some news about the upcoming season of the Tim Burton-directed Netflix hit. In the second season of *Wednesday*, creators guarantee new antagonists, extraordinary abilities and a gloomy atmosphere inspired by the 1964 film *The Masque of the Red Death*. The timeless movie is adapted from a brief tale by Edgar Allan Poe. The objective is to give it a darker, more frightening tone, but it cannot be too gory due to the fact that it is intended for a young audience. A sudden appearance out of nowhere on *Wednesday* created a jump scare of her own. Jenna Ortega informs that she believes the vibe we are aiming for is somewhat influenced by horror. Catherine Zeta-Jones will portray Morticia and Luis Guzmán will play Gomez every *Wednesday*, ensuring a thorough exploration of the complex mother-daughter dynamic. *Horror Core* is expected to be at its

highest point, with Morticia and Wednesday leading the way. Ortega gave Zeta-Jones glowing compliments in their interview with the outlet. Jenna described the veteran actress as a kind and chill individual. She doesn't dwell on things too much. She admired Zeta-Jones for being equally flawless like her character, Morticia. Ortega describes Steve Buscemi as a traditional individual among the additional cast members. Despite feeling pressure to succeed after a two-year break, the *Scream* actress admitted, "There's definitely the pressure to do this correctly," but she managed to portray the Deadpan It-girl character perfectly, as fans have recognised. Both Wednesday and Ortega have been commended for representing Latinas and criticized for lacking true Latina authenticity. Ortega values the nuanced representation that doesn't focus solely on Wednesday's Latin identity, steering clear of the stereotypical portrayal of Mexican characters.

Ammy Virk expresses gratitude towards Bollywood!

Ammy Virk is on a winning streak with his recent successes in both Hindi and Punjabi cinema, thanks to hits like *Bad Newz* and *Kudi Haryave Di*. Now, he's back to tickle our funny bones with the highly anticipated comedy *Khel Khel Mein*, which is already being hailed as the biggest entertainer of the year. The film's hilarious trailer has garnered a lot of love from fans, setting high expectations. At the trailer launch recently, Ammy Virk not only charmed the audience with funny and untold stories about the film's cast which includes Akshay Kumar, Fardeen Khan, Taapsee Pannu, Vaani Kapoor, Pragya Jaiswal, and Aditya Seal but also shared his heartfelt reflections on his journey in Hindi films. He expressed genuine gratitude towards the audience. He added, "My journey has just begun. I come from a small village in Punjab and spent many years working in Punjabi films. To be welcomed so warmly into Bollywood is a blessing. I've had the chance to work with amazing people and I feel truly fortunate. I believe in *karma* and I've been blessed with great destiny, working with people who are not just Punjabi but Punjabi at heart full of love." On Fardeen Khan's return to the big screen, Ammy added with a smile, "I'm genuinely happy for him. After so many years, he's making a comeback to Hindi films, and it is adorable to see him shoot and make new memories." Ammy Virk's next film, *Khel Khel Mein*, is set to release on August 15, 2024. With his track record,

it seems like Ammy might just be Bollywood's new lucky charm, ready to score his third box office hit this year.



Kate Winslet's bold stand against body-shaming!

Hollywood star Kate Winslet is comfortable in her own skin and she wants everybody who works with her to know this. The actress refuses to be ashamed of looking like the 48-year-old mother-of-two that she is, according to a crew member on the set of her new film, about war photographer Lee Miller, as per reports. She told: "There's a bit where Lee is sitting on a bench in a bikini. And one of the crew members came up between takes and said, 'You might want to sit up straighter'. So you can't see my belly rolls? Not in your life! It was deliberate, you know?" Asked if she minded looking her age on the big screen, she said, "The opposite. I take pride in it because it is my life on my face and that matters. It wouldn't occur to me to cover that up." As per the reports, the star has a bucket list of 50 things she wants to do to celebrate her 50th birthday. She said, "I want to spend the year doing

50 remarkable things, whether that's a particular hike I've never done or acts of kindness. I'm gathering a little list." Kate's new film, *Lee*, about the fashion model who became a Second World War photographer for *Vogue*, is set to be released next month. In June, Kate opened up about how she felt "beaten up" in the spotlight following her role in the acclaimed film *Titanic*. Speaking of her role alongside Leonardo DiCaprio in the 1997 blockbuster, she revealed that she found it hard to talk about how hurt she was by the commentary on her body following her role in it. She told: "I actually felt a bit beaten up by it, truth be told... I had a lovely family, but all my family saw is 'My God, Kate's got work in a really big film'." "One doesn't want to turn around to your mum and dad and say 'it's really hard, actually'," she added.



STANDALONE
Ananya "Bae" Panday is ready to kill it, stealing the show at the Mumbai airport as she takes off with her 'Bae Baggage' amid the commotion of the metropolis.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



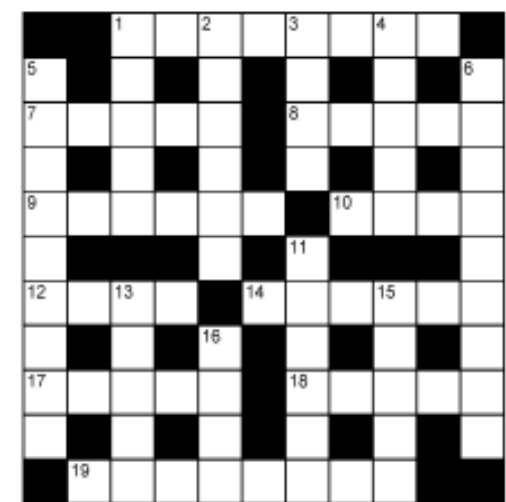
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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							1	6
	1		8		2	4		
3						9	2	
7	6						4	5
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		3	4		8		9	
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Yesterday's solution
5 8 9 1 3 4 6 2 7
7 3 4 9 2 6 1 8 5
2 1 6 8 7 5 3 4 9
3 4 2 7 6 9 5 1 8
8 9 5 4 1 3 2 7 6
6 7 1 2 5 8 9 3 4
1 5 7 6 8 2 4 9 3
4 2 3 5 9 7 8 6 1
9 6 8 3 4 1 7 5 2

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

ACROSS

- 1 A Dutch building with sails
- 7 A warm thick cover for a bed
- 8 Prepared
- 9 Breathe in
- 10 Say this to make a person or animal go away
- 12 Small rodents
- 14 The language spoken in Paris
- 17 Loud sound
- 18 Not decorated
- 19 Sightseers

DOWN

- 1 Use scales to do this
- 2 A stinging plant
- 3 A female horse
- 4 A dog's lead

5 The things you need for doing something

- 6 A musical instrument that you hit with a small hammer
- 11 Make wine from these
- 13 The capital city of Egypt
- 15 Gets closer
- 16 Expensive

SOLUTION

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

GINGER MEGGS





Hazards of dysglycemia!

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

HYPERGLYCEMIA IN DIABETES:

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

Common complications of high blood sugar

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

Hypoglycemia in diabetes:

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

Common complications of low blood sugar

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

Cardiac arrest

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

Ways to control low blood sugar

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

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

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

Surge in influenza cases

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

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

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

Annual vaccinations are recommended for

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

Other ways to prevent influenza

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

RHYTHMIC BEATS OF 'DJEMBE' ECHO THROUGH THE CITY



AARTI SREENATH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A typical session with the Djembe Circle is an immersive experience—starting with the basics and introducing the three main rhythms of the djembe, Sai explains, "Then we dive into African tribal music, with everyone singing, dancing, and even shouting with joy. It's not just a musical experience; it's a celebration." Looking ahead, Sai Kumar dreams of making the djembe a staple in Indian culture. "In the 20th century, we saw many instruments gain popularity. I want the djembe to become one of the prominent instruments of the 21st century," he asserts. His vision extends to schools, colleges and communities across India, spreading the joy and healing power of the djembe. His advice to newcomers is simple yet profound: "Come with an open mind and open heart, and let the rhythm guide you."

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



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

SHIKHA DUGGAL

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

series is set to release on August 9 with the promise of captivating audiences with its compelling story! "I finally experienced what my colleagues had always said: wearing a police uniform while performing for celluloid makes you feel something inside of you! I felt proud of myself as soon as I put it on. Suddenly, I was walking straight ahead of me. I believed that I was here to serve a purpose and bear responsibilities. I truly admire law enforcement officials!" reveals Kritika Kamra about a delightful self-discovery she made

while filming *Gyaarah Gyaarah*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

Vijender, who is India's first and only male boxer to have won an Olympic medal, knows a thing or two about maintaining weight before major bouts and he said it is shocking that Vinesh was 100gm over in the weigh-in before an Olympic final. "I think it might be sabotage. 100gm, you have got to be kidding me. We athletes can shed 5 to 6kg overnight. It is difficult no doubt but we know how to control our hunger, thirst, and exert to the extreme," the middle-weight (75kg) boxer told PTI.

"And when I say sabotage I mean people who are not happy to see India rise as a sporting nation. This girl has been through so much, your heart breaks for her. What more could she have done? Which other test?" he wondered. Vinesh was the face of a lengthy protest against former Wrestling Federation of India head Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who has been accused of sexual harassment and intimidation by women wrestlers. She had endured police detention, nights on the streets and a tumultuous qualification process before



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

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



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

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



Tough challenge awaits Chopra in bid for another piece of history

PTI ■ PARIS

His stunning monster throw of 89.34m in the qualification round made quite a statement but a tough challenge awaits defending champion Neeraj Chopra as he seeks another piece of history in the Paris Olympics men's javelin throw final round here on Thursday. Just like he did at the same stage in the Tokyo Olympics three years back, Chopra needed just a few seconds to top the qualification round with his opening throw but the similarity ends there. This time, the quality of the field is better than Tokyo with nine throwers crossing the automatic final round qualification mark of 84m in Paris as against six in Tokyo. Out of the nine, five made it to the final round with their first throws and thus will have a lot in their tanks for the medal round.

The 26-year-old Chopra knows it too well, having been in the global circuit for more than eight years. "In the final, everyone has a different mindset and different situation. It will be a good competition. Whoever qualifies automatically is the best in preparation," Neeraj told journalists after his 'lightening' appearance on the field. He was in a hurry to go back to the Games Village and take rest to prepare for his best for the final round, as a lot is at stake on Thursday. Chopra will have a chance to become only the fifth man in Olympic javelin throw history to defend the title. Eric Lemming (Sweden; 1908 and 1912), Jonni Myrta

(Finland; 1920 and 1924), Jan Zelezny (Czech Republic; 1992, 1996 and 2000) and Andreas Thorkildsen (Norway; 2004 and 2008) are the only ones to have defended the men's javelin gold medals in the Olympics. If he wins gold, and for that matter a medal, he will become the most decorated Indian in Olympics in individual sport. Shuttler PV Sindhu (one silver, one bronze), wrestler Sushil Kumar (one silver, one bronze) and shooter Manu Bhaker (two bronze) have won two Olympic medals each post Independence.

The tremendous effort, which was the second best of his career, also set aside concerns surrounding Chopra's fitness after he revealed that he had been battling an adductor niggle in the build-up to the Games. His personal best continues to be 89.94m achieved back in 2022. His 89.34m throw may also raise hopes of millions of Indian fans to see Chopra cross the elusive 90m mark on Thursday. His effort was also the second-best qualifying throw at an Olympics after the 89.39m registered by the legendary Jan Zelezny at 2000 Sydney Games. But there were some ominous signs coming out from the qualification round which Chopra will have to be wary of. The peaking of two-time world champion Anderson Peters (personal best 93.07m) of Grenada as well as immediate hitting of form by Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem may indicate that the final round at Stade de France could be a classic contest. Peters, of the same age as Chopra, was beaten up and

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

The Grenadian, who interestingly finished third when Chopra won gold in 2016 World Junior Championships in Poland, has gone past 90m four times in his career and he is one of the few who have beaten the Indian superstar. His season's best of 88.63m in the qualification round could be a precursor to something bigger. Nadeem, who beat Peters to win the 2022 Commonwealth Games gold with 90.18m, is unpredictable and he has pulled off big throws earlier also. After coming back from an elbow surgery, he claimed silver behind Chopra in the 2023 Budapest World Championships with a throw of 87.82m. Nadeem has not beaten Chopra in 10 meetings since 2016 but he can spring a surprise. Czech Republic's experienced thrower Jakub Vadlejch could also be looking to make the records with Chopra as he had ended up with a silver in Tokyo Olympics. He had beaten Chopra for the gold in Doha Diamond League in May. Conditions on Thursday may also be different from the qualification round. The final is expected to be cooler as it's happening in the evening as against daytime during a qualification round.

Kellie of Ireland wins second boxing gold and retires

AP ■ PARIS

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

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



"I'm going to go out a champion. That's the way I want to go out. I don't want to go out and lose a fight and then retire. I'll retire happy." Harrington is the first Irish woman to win gold medals at two Olympics, and she is just one of four Irish athletes to retain an Olympic title. After winning

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

Harrington pressured Yang more than enough to get the victory despite losing the third round. The champion's most impressive win in Paris likely was in the semifinals, when she spectacularly outboxed Brazilian IBF lightweight champion Beatriz Ferreira, whose physicality and aggression had made her look like a gold-medal favorite. Harrington isn't the fastest or the most powerful woman in the lightweight division, but she might be the best ever to fight at the weight in the four Olympics with women's boxing. "It has been four fights with absolutely

fantastic opponents," Harrington said. "Everyone who is here is the best of the best. Everyone deserves respect." Harrington's final drew thousands of Irish fans to the famed tennis arena where she clinched her gold. They waved flags, chanted her name and generally put on a party while their improbable boxing hero got her final job done. "To have the support of the nation. It is just amazing," Harrington said. "The people here today lifted me. They made me feel like I wasn't tired and I was exhausted." Harrington danced in the ring after her victory, clearly thrilled to be fighting in front of her frenzied fans instead of in the mostly empty Ryogoku Kokugikan in Tokyo three years ago.

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

PTI ■ PARIS

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

The Indians played bravely against Germany, putting their defence under pressure from the start and in the process took the lead in the seventh minute through a penalty corner conversion by skipper Harmanpreet Singh. But the Germans came back strongly in the second quarter and fourth quarters to secure the close win, courtesy some silly defensive lapses from the Indians, especially Jarmanpreet Singh. The Indians too were guilty of wasting too many scoring chances, including as many as 10 penalty corners, while converting two, one directly and another through variation. The opposition teams seemed to have found out a way to deny one of the world's best drag-flicker Harmanpreet as he managed to be on target just once on Tuesday.

The over-reliance on Harmanpreet and lack of innovative penalty corner variations seemed to be hurting India badly here as they don't have much options in their hands. But the return of Amit Rohidas, who missed Tuesday's match after being shown the red card against Great Britain in the quarterfinal, should bolster the Indian defence and also give more chances from



penalty corners as he is second best option from set pieces after Harmanpreet. The Indians were looking to break a 44-year-old jinx to reach an Olympic final but it eluded them narrowly. The last time India made the Olympic hockey final was way back in 1980 Moscow Games, which, in fact, was their last of the eight gold medals at the quadrennial event. A place in final would have at least assured India a silver medal after 1960 Olympics but that also slipped out of hands. But all is not lost for the Indians as they still have a chance to claim a podium finish if they beat Spain on Thursday in the bronze medal match.

For that, the Indians will have to leave the baggage of the semifinal loss behind and come out with a fresh mind to get the better of Spain. Veteran India goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, who is playing his last international tournament, reminded his teammates that all is not lost. "It's a heart-breaking loss for us (against Germany). We had the chance to win gold, but now, we have to forget this semifinal

and focus on the bronze medal match," he had said. "It's a medal match and it's about the country. It's about those 19 players here, all the staff. And I think we all get a last opportunity to play, to get a medal for our country rather than worrying about what happened today (Tuesday)." "These 19 players should play like this is our last opportunity as a player to get a medal for our country." Going by form and world ranking, the Indians are clear favourites to win the tie against Spain but in the end it will all boil down to the mental aspect of the side. While India lost a close semifinal, Spain were thrashed 0-4 by Netherlands. In world ranking too, Spain are placed eighth while India are currently at the fifth spot. But it would be easier said than done for the Indians as Spain, while not matching India's Olympic achievements, has made significant strides in recent decades. The Spanish team has secured two European Championship titles and has consistently participated in World Cups since 1971.

AP ■ PARIS

All the favored teams in the first three men's basketball quarterfinals at the Paris Olympics had problems. Canada lost to France, Serbia erased a 24-point deficit to beat Australia. Germany had to shake off a double-digit deficit before beating Greece. So, going into the fourth and final game of the night, the U.S. knew what it had to do. "We wanted to come out and make sure we were the aggressor," U.S. Coach Steve Kerr. They made it look easy, too. Devin Booker led a balanced front with 18 points and the Americans had little trouble with Brazil in the quarterfinals of the Paris Olympics, winning 122-87 on Tuesday.

The U.S. (4-0) moves on to face Serbia (3-1) in Thursday's semifinals, while Germany (4-0) takes on France (3-1) in the other semifinal. Winners of those games will play Saturday night for the gold medal; Thursday's losers will play Saturday morning for the bronze medal. "Everybody expects us to win," U.S. Forward Jayson Tatum said. "But you don't take things for granted, right? Canada lost earlier. It's a different game. It's not like playoffs, where it's a series. We've got one game and a lot of (stuff) can happen in one game, especially over here." If there was one issue, it was this: LeBron James left in the third quarter after catching an elbow around his left eye, struck by Brazil's Georjinho de Paula while going for a rebound. James went down, eventually pressed a towel over the eye and left for the locker room area later in the

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

night for the gold medal; Thursday's losers will play Saturday morning for the bronze medal. "Everybody expects us to win," U.S. Forward Jayson Tatum said. "But you don't take things for granted, right? Canada lost earlier. It's a different game. It's not like playoffs, where it's a series. We've got one game and a lot of (stuff) can happen in one game, especially over here." If there was one issue, it was this: LeBron James left in the third quarter after catching an elbow around his left eye, struck by Brazil's Georjinho de Paula while going for a rebound. James went down, eventually pressed a towel over the eye and left for the locker room area later in the

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



course - had 14 points and seven rebounds in 12 first-half minutes for the Americans. Anthony Davis finished with 13 points and eight rebounds for the U.S. James had 12 points and nine assists. Kevin Durant scored 11 points

and passed Lisa Leslie as the U.S. Olympic career scoring leader, men's or women's. Leslie had 488 points in her four Olympic appearances, all of which ended with gold medals. Durant is trying to go 4 for 4 on the gold front as well; he's two wins away from getting that done. "He's incredible. He was born to play ball and he's simply incredible," James said. "I'm happy for him. Congratulations to him. I'm super proud of him. And he's got more to go." There was a moment where Brazil might have thought it had a chance. It trailed the U.S. by only eight midway through the second quarter. A big deficit had turned into something rather manageable.

Echikunwoke changes countries and wins a hammer silver for US

AP ■ SAINT-DENIS

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

Ohio and originally decided to represent Nigeria because that's where her parents are from. But after the issues in 2021, she switched her Olympic country to the U.S., and on Tuesday night became the first American woman to earn Summer Games medal in the hammer, getting a silver. Echikunwoke was in the early lead before Canada's Camryn Rogers won the gold on her second-to-last throw. "I think (this medal) could have happened three years ago, but I'm happy it's happening now," Echikunwoke said. "I feel like everything happens for a reason, even if it's bad or good or ugly or whatever the case may be. This is beautiful." She remembers that time in Tokyo so vividly, such as not being able to walk in



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

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

'COMMITTEE KURROLLU WILL TRANSPORT VIEWERS TO VIBRANT VILLAGE FAIRS'

PNS | HYDERABAD

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

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

Created by Niharika Konidela with the backing

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

PNS | HYDERABAD

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

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

Addressing about her character in *Thangalaan*, she explains, "Yes, I did think about *Thangalaan*, as audiences had seen me in certain kinds of roles before. However, I was determined to crack the character of Aarthi." Her commitment to this role is palpable and she hints at the unique aspects of her character that will undoubtedly surprise viewers. *Thangalaan* is poised to be a cinematic spectacle, shedding light on the historical significance of the Kolar Gold Fields during the British era. The film promises to be a groundbreaking addition to the South Indian film industry, known for its innovative concepts and storytelling. Directed by Pa Ranjith, this film is set to be released in multiple languages—including Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam—on August 15, 2024. The music, composed by G.V. Prakash Kumar, adds another layer of anticipation to this already highly anticipated project.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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Mummy Ji: Mouni Roy sets the floor on fire!

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

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



Ram Charan's *Game Changer* enters dubbing phase

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

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

The film features a star-studded cast, including

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

Changer promises to dazzle with a captivating soundtrack by Thaman, stunning visuals by cinematographer Tirru and sharp editing by Shameer Muhammed. The film features a powerful story penned by star director Karthik Subbaraj, with intense dialogue crafted by Sai Madhav Burra.



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

film is on schedule for its December 2024 debut. Fans are eagerly awaiting insights into the compelling storyline, the dynamic chemistry between Ram Charan and Kiara Advani and the cinematic brilliance that Shankar Shanmugam is renowned for.



Wayanad landslides: Prabhas donates big to Kerala CM Relief Fund

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

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



Yash's *Toxic* to commence shooting from today

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

Gelludu Gelludu exudes a classic Telangana folk atmosphere

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

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



Thrigun's *Sweetly Naughty Crazy* launched

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



STANDALONE

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

