



the pioneer

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India-Nepal discuss ways to improve bilateral ties & economic cooperation

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NOTHING MORE FOR GOVT TO ADD



Dubbing dynamite: RCM Raju's 'Rakaa' Roars with unique TELUGU TWISTS



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QUOTE OF THE DAY

The pioneer

If KTR's relatives come to invest in Telangana, we will welcome them too. BRS leaders have to stop spreading lies about investments. Amara Raja will be given the support it needs from the state government. BRS leaders are trying to throw mud at Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's foreign tour. BRS leaders should pull up the government if we have committed mistakes but should not engage in mudslinging.

-Kiran Kumar Reddy, Bhongir MP Chamala, Telangana

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DON'T MISS...

AP govt to take part in offshore mining...

Minister for Excise and Mines has revealed that the AP government is interested in participating in the offshore mining auction and urged the Union government for its cooperation to set up a seabed mining corporation. He also emphasised the need to safeguard natural resources and correctly utilise them by the government. Minister Kollu Ravindra participated in the 6th Governing body meeting of 'The National Mineral Exploration Trust, in New Delhi for which Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, Dr.Jitendra Singh, Satischandra Dube...

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'One in five lives could be saved...

Poor quality diets are the main contributor to all forms of malnutrition and the leading cause of various diseases worldwide, even as one in five lives could be saved each year by improving diets, according to a report by a private research body. According to the report, two billion people are affected by micronutrient deficiencies across the globe, 40 per cent of both men and women (2.2 billion) suffer from being overweight or obese, 148 million children below the age of five have been stunted...

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Major domestic appliances...

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

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High hopes, disappointing...

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

-SPORTS

CM NAIDU TO MEDICAL & HEALTH OFFICIALS

Resume last TDP govt's policies

Accent on restoration of public confidence in govt hospitals

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has directed officials to reintroduce the best practices and policies from the previous TDP government (2014-2019) in the Health, Medical, and Family Welfare Department. During a review meeting at the secretariat, Naidu emphasised the need to restore public confidence in government hospitals, which he claimed had been eroded under the previous YSRCP government due to mismanagement and chaotic policies. Naidu outlined several initiatives to improve healthcare in the state. He instructed officials to create a government app to track patient details in private hospitals, including the medical services, equipment, and medicines provided. The Chief Minister also called for a detailed study of water sources in areas with high incidences of kidney disease, as well as a mandal-wise enumeration of kidney and tuberculosis (TB) patients to ensure continuous medication supply. Furthermore, Naidu directed that computed tomography (CT) scanning facilities be established in all district hospitals to make them accessible to the poor. [Continued on Page 2](#)



- Naidu outlines several initiatives to improve healthcare in the State.
- Officials instructed to create a govt app to track patient details in pvt hospitals, including medical services, equipment, and medicines provided.
- Naidu calls for a detailed study of water sources in areas with high incidences of kidney disease and a mandal-wise enumeration of kidney and tuberculosis (TB) patients to ensure continuous medication supply.
- CM issues directions for the establishment of CT scanning facilities in all district hospitals to make them accessible to the poor.
- Naidu stresses the importance of telemedicine services, referring to the previous TDP government's success in securing Rs 2,300 crore from the World Bank for such services.
- Naidu reiterates the need to make corporate-level medical services available to rural areas through telemedicine.
- CM reviews the draft of the new Industrial Development Policy 2024-29.
- Officials told to design a policy that would position AP among top 5 states in the country in terms of industrial development.
- Naidu highlights the State's strategic advantages, including its 10 seaports, 10 airports, and robust road and rail connectivity, particularly in the east coast region.
- Need for cost-effective, large-scale industrial setups emphasised in sectors such as green energy, green hydrogen, electric vehicle manufacturing, and food processing.
- Naidu reminds officials of past successes in attracting major companies like Hero Motors and Apollo Tyres to AP.
- Concerted efforts called for bringing new industries to the State.
- Naidu says he would meet with industrialists on August 16 to discuss further strategies.
- The importance of adhering to NITI Aayog's guidelines in crafting the new industrial policy and ensuring a growth rate of over 15 per cent stressed.

New liquor policy soon with substantial cut in prices

Quality liquor @ Rs 80/quarter bottle

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh state government is set to introduce a new liquor policy aimed at drastically reducing the prices of alcoholic beverages. Under this policy, the price of a quarter bottle of brand-ed liquor is expected to be slashed to Rs 80. Officials are working to ensure that these reduced prices come with the assurance of good quality. In contrast, during the previous administration, the lowest price for a quarter bottle was Rs 200. The current government has cited high liquor prices under the previous regime as a contributing factor to the rise in youth addiction to ganja and other intoxicants. According to the government, studies have indicated that the increased use of ganja in the state is a direct result of the previous administration's policies. The new liquor policy is scheduled to be implemented in October, with preparations already underway. Teams from the Excise department have visited six neighbouring states to study their liquor policies, and a report is expected to be submitted to the government within the next few days. Discussions have also been held with various companies regarding the procurement of liquor, and the government plans to permit the sale of all types of multinational company (MNC) brands. These popular brands are likely to be available by the end of August or the first week of September. It is worth noting that the previ-



- Studies have been cited by the govt indicating that the previous administration's high liquor prices led to increased ganja use among youth.
- A report on liquor policies from neighbouring states is being prepared by Excise department teams and will be submitted to the government soon.
- The implementation of the new liquor policy is scheduled for October, with popular brands expected to be made available by the end of August or early September.

ous administration, led by Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, had promised to implement a phased prohibition of liquor in the State but failed to deliver on that promise. While the number of liquor outlets was reduced and belt shops were closed, the total prohibition was not achieved. Additionally, liquor prices were increased, and many mainstream brands were sidelined in favour of new ones.



Student dies as school bus overturns

PNS ■ KADAPA

In a heartbreaking incident on Monday, a young girl lost her life when the school bus she was travelling in overturned near Obulavaripalli village in Annamaya district. The bus, carrying 20 students to Sri Vani Vidya Niketan School, overturned near a bridge, tragically killing 8-year-old Bhavishya. According to police reports, Bhavishya was standing near the bus's door at the time of the accident, and the bus fell on her, causing her death instantly. The body was discovered under the bus after it was lifted with a JCB. Three other students sustained injuries in the accident. Following the incident, the bus driver fled the scene, prompting outrage from the parents and students. They alleged that the bus was in poor condition and that the school management was operating buses without regard for their safety. There were also accusations that the driver was driving recklessly. The police have registered a case and have sent Bhavishya's body to the GGH for a postmortem examination.

Pawan Kalyan urges UNHRC to protect Bangla minorities

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Monday appealed to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to protect minorities in Bangladesh in the wake of widespread anarchy, following the fall of the government there. The actor-politician called for the protection of minorities such as Hindus, Christians, Buddhists and the Islamic sect of Ahmadiyas in the neighbouring country. "I call upon the @UNHumanRights@UN_HRC and

High Commission in India to take immediate necessary action and restore peace and order in Bangladesh," he said in a post on X. Praying for the safety, security and stability of all minorities in the neighbouring country, the Janasena chief observed that the recent visuals and pictures emerging from Bangladesh were heart-wrenching and concerning. Citing the alleged hacking of Bangladesh Communist Party leader Pradip Bhowmik and vandalism of Hindu temples, Kalyan expressed his anguish and concern.



CM briefs WB team about progress in Amaravati project

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A delegation from the World Bank met with Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu on Monday at the Secretariat to discuss the ongoing construction of the new capital, Amaravati. The meeting was attended by Minister of Municipal Administration and Urban Development, Ponguru Narayana, and CRDA Commissioner, Katamaneni Bhaskar. The four-member World Bank team, which includes Infrastructure



Senior Specialist Raghu Keshavan, Lead Transport Specialist Gerald Paul Olivier, Senior Urban Specialist King Yun Shen, and South Asia Urban Practice Manager Abedalirzak F Khalil, has been touring Amaravati for the past two days. [Continued on Page 2](#)

Nimmala & his team assess Tungabhadra Dam damage

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Water Resources, Nimmala Ramanaidu, visited the Tungabhadra Dam in Karnataka on Monday to evaluate the situation following the washing away of one of the dam's crest gates. The minister reviewed the ongoing restoration work at the dam, located in Hospet, Vijayanagara District, and consulted with engineers and experts regarding installing a new gate. Accompanying the minister were the Special Chief Secretary and the Engineer-in-Chief. Earlier, a team



of experts from Andhra Pradesh had met with the dam's engineers to discuss the temporary measures implemented at the site of the damaged gate and the ongoing efforts to install a replacement. The Andhra Pradesh team, led by Design Department Chief Engineer T. Kumar, included Superintending Engineer Shiva Kumar Reddy and Executive Engineer Venugopal Reddy. [Continued on Page 2](#)

CID probe into TDR bonds case likely

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Municipal Minister P Narayana has brought the TDR bonds scam to the attention of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, urging a thorough investigation into the matter. There is a strong possibility that the State government will involve the CID to probe the irregularities surrounding the TDR bonds. The investigation is expected to reveal the true masterminds behind the scam. Minister Narayana alleged that former minister Karumuri

Nageswara Rao was involved in the TDR bonds case. He briefed the Chief Minister on how the scandal unfolded in Tanuku. The Municipal Administration Department, along with the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), discovered that bonds worth Rs 754 crore were issued by the Tanuku municipality. Of this, the ACB identified irregularities amounting to Rs 691 crore. The government is currently consulting with legal experts, as the matter is under judicial consideration. [Continued on Page 2](#)



NBFC DEPOSITS

Depositors can take back entire amount within three months

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Monday said non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) will pay 100 per cent of deposit amount within the first three months of accepting the fund, if the depositor seeks an withdrawal citing an emergency. In its review of regulations governing NBFCs, the central bank said no interest will be paid for such premature withdrawals and added that these changes will be in force from January 1, 2025. The definition of "critical illness" set by insurance regulator Irdai will guide on whether a request qualifies under the category, the central bank said. "...in cases of critical illness, hundred



per cent of the amount of the principal sum of deposit may be prematurely paid to individual depositors at the request of the depositors, before the expiry of three months from the date of acceptance of such deposits, without interest," the central bank said. It specified expenses of an emergent nature include a medical emergency or expenses due to natural calamities or a disaster as notified by the government, it said. [Continued on Page 2](#)

DISQUALIFICATION AT PARIS OLYMPICS

Will it be a silver lining for Vinesh?

PNS ■ PARIS

India awaits verdict on appeal today

India's sports fraternity waited with bated breath as the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), having heard arguments of all parties, got ready to deliver its verdict on wrestler Vinesh Phogat's appeal against her disqualification at the Paris Olympics, on Tuesday. Vinesh, who stormed into the final of the women's 50kg freestyle event with three convincing wins, including against wrestling royalty Yui Susaki of Japan last Tuesday, was debarred

from the gold medal bout against eventual winner Sarah Hildebrandt of the United States as she was found 100gm above the prescribed limit in the customary morning weigh-in. Shocked by the dramatic turn of events, the crest-fallen grappler last Wednesday appealed against the decision at the CAS and demanded that she be given a joint silver with Cuban wrestler Yusneylis Guzman Lopez, who had lost to Vinesh but was later

promoted to the final following the Indian's disqualification. A day after her heart-breaking disqualification, Vinesh announced her retirement from the sport, saying she doesn't have the strength to continue, as sporting icons from across the world threw their weight behind the 29-year-old wrestler who was appearing in her third Olympic Games.

Minister Narayana alleged that former minister Karumuri



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'Krishnamma Harati' to be resumed soon, says Anam

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, Minister for Endowments, announced that steps are being taken to restart the Krishnamma Harati program at the Krishna-Godavari Pavitra Sangam in Ibrahimpatnam within the next month. This decision was made during a Group of Ministers (GoM) meeting held at the Secretariat on Monday.

Minister Anam recalled that under the leadership of former Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Krishnamma Harati was regularly conducted as a sacred spiritual event at Pavitra Sangam. However, the program was neglected by the previous government over the past five years. The Minister assured that the Krishnamma Harati would be resumed within a month, and instructed the relevant departments to take immediate action to restore the necessary infrastructure at Pavitra Sangam-Ibrahimpatnam, including roads, electricity, bus transport, and sanitation.

Minister Anam directed officials from the NTR District Administration, Water Resources Department, CRDA, Devadaya Department, Durgamalleswara Swamy



Endowments Commissioner S. Satyanarayana noted that Krishnamma Harati was regularly held at Pavitra Sangam since 2016, but was halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He assured that with the government's decision to restart the programme, all necessary arrangements will be made on a priority basis.

Devasthanam, Police, Transco, Municipal, and other related departments to coordinate and ensure the smooth resumption of the programme. He also mentioned that the Godavari Harati is currently ongoing in Rajamahendravaram, with plans to strengthen its organisation further.

I&PR Minister K. Parthasarathy emphasised the spiritual significance of Krishnamma Harati and the need to resume it promptly. He suggested establishing a temple

under the TTD or Endowments Department and developing the area into a major tourist and spiritual centre. He also stressed the importance of providing adequate security for tourists and devotees, urging the police to take necessary measures. Additionally, Minister Parthasarathy proposed organizing special package tours to renowned holy sites in the Krishna River catchment area in conjunction with the Krishnamma Harati program. Endowments Commissioner

S. Satyanarayana noted that Krishnamma Harati was regularly held at Pavitra Sangam since 2016, but was halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He assured that with the government's decision to restart the programme, all necessary arrangements will be made on a priority basis.

The meeting was attended by NTR District Collector Srijana, Director of Fire Services Murali, Vijayawada West DCP T. Harikrishna, and other officials from the relevant departments.

Endowments Commissioner inspects development works at Durga temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Endowment Commissioner Reviews Development at Sri Durga Malleswara Temple

Endowments Commissioner S. Satyanarayana conducted an inspection of the ongoing development activities at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Monday. During his visit, he offered prayers and had darshan of Goddess Durga Devi.

Accompanied by Executive Officer K.S. Rama Rao and other engineering officials, Commissioner Satyanarayana reviewed various developmental works at the temple. He paid particular attention to the 'Annadanam' (free meal distribution) and 'Prasadam Potu' (sacred offerings kitchen) operations, providing specific instructions to the officers and staff for their enhancement.

The Commissioner also interacted with devotees regard-



Endowments Commissioner S. Satyanarayana inspecting the 'Annadanam' scheme implementation at the Durga temple in Vijayawada on Monday.

ing the 'Annadanam' scheme, seeking their feedback and directing officials to implement improvements. Executive Officer Rao briefed him on the progress of ongoing development projects at the temple. Temple Executive Engineers K.V.S. Koteswara Rao, L. Rama, and other officials were present during the visit.

Temple richer by Rs 2.97 cr
In a separate event, the

temple authorities, in the presence of Executive Officer K.S. Rama Rao, opened the hundis (donation boxes) at Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam on Monday. The temple reported an income of Rs 2,97,47,668 over 18 days, averaging Rs 16,52,648 per day. Additionally, the temple received 410 grams of gold and 5,280 grams of silver as

offerings. Devotees also contributed foreign currencies, including 681 US Dollars, 875 Australian Dollars, 20 British Pounds, 3.5 Omani Rials, 35 Canadian Dollars, 765 UAE Dirhams, 30 Euros, 62 Malaysian Ringgits, 107 Saudi Riyals, 50 South African Rands, 280 Thai Baht, and 17 Qatari Riyals. These contributions were also collected in the hundis.

Jagan to meet Vizag YSRCP leaders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former chief minister and YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has shifted his attention to the upcoming MLC elections in the Greater Visakhapatnam region. In light of this, YS Jagan will be holding a series of meetings with leaders from the Greater Visakhapatnam district on August 13 and 14.

YS Jagan has already conducted meetings with ZPTC and MPTC members from five constituencies within the Greater Visakhapatnam area to discuss the local bodies' MLC elections. On the upcoming dates, he is scheduled to meet with leaders from the remaining constituencies. The YSRCP central office has announced that, due to these meetings with local body representatives, other leaders will not have the opportunity to meet with Jagan during this period.

In related news, former minister Botsa Satyanarayana filed his nomination on Monday as the YSRCP candidate for the MLC elections. He expressed confidence in the party's chances, stating that YSRCP is poised for victory in the elections.

Ambati slams TDP on Tungabhadra gate

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Former minister Ambati Rambabu condemned the TDP coalition government for shamelessly attempting to pin the blame on the previous YSRCP government regarding the recent incident where a gate at the Tungabhadra Project was swept away due to intense floodwaters and urged the authorities to expedite the repair work at the Tungabhadra Dam to prevent further loss of water and ensure the safety of downstream areas.

Speaking to the media at the Guntur party office here on Monday, he said that the 19th crest gate of the dam was washed away due to heavy flooding, leading to the release of approximately 90,000 cusecs of water downstream, posing a flood threat to districts like Anantapur in our state and clarified that Tungabhadra



project is a joint project managed by Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana, under the oversight of the Tungabhadra Board, which includes representatives from these states and the Central Water Commission (CWC). The maintenance of the dam falls under the purview

of this board, and any allegation that the crest gate was washed away due to YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's government's negligence is baseless propaganda.

He further noted that the Tungabhadra Dam, which was constructed 71 years ago, had a guaranteed lifespan of only 45 years.

Despite its age, the project is still being managed effectively by the concerned authorities.

He mentioned the Pulichintala project, noting that during YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's tenure, a similar incident occurred, and the damaged gate was promptly repaired within 20 days.

He said the previous TDP government's negligence and mismanagement in projects like Gundlakamma eventually led to similar issues. The former minister said that attributing every problem to YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is unfair and misleading.

'Strong action will...

Continued from Page 1

The duo has denied the allegations as baseless and asserted their finances are an open book. The Adani Group termed the latest allegations malicious and based on manipulation of select public information. The company said it has no commercial relationship with the Sebi chairperson or her husband.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of an event here, Singh, the Union Minister for Textiles, also came down heavily on Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Jairam Ramesh. "This is a gang to defame the country, Rahul (Gandhi) and Jairam Ramesh. Hindenburg defames us. We will not tolerate this insult to the nation. These people are enemies of the country. Now strictest action will be taken against Hindenburg," Singh said.

Calling Gandhi 'Bade Baap Ka Beta', the minister said: "Rahul does not know anything about the state and direction of the nation", and cautioned that the countrymen should "beware" of such people who try to create confusion and fear. Asked about demands by Congress for a JPC probe in the Hindenburg matter, Singh said: "This Congress is behind Hindenburg. Hindenburg is a tool kit to ruin India and people like Rahul Gandhi are involved in it".

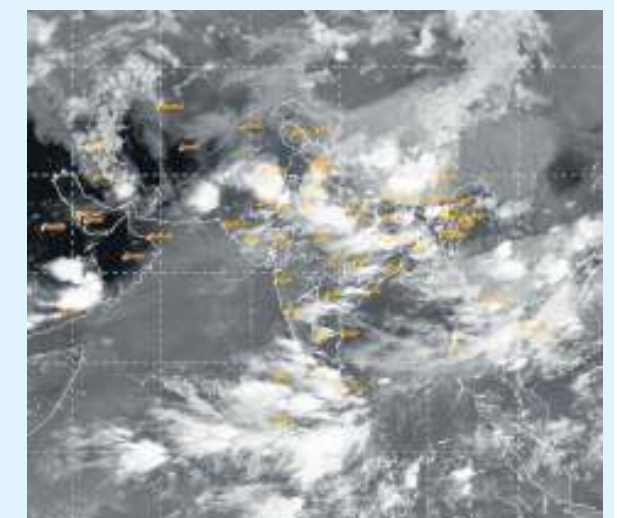
Heavy rain likely in R'seema over next five days

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The trough extending from South Interior Karnataka to the Comorin area now stretches from Rayalaseema to the Comorin area at an altitude of 0.9 km above mean sea level, according to the Meteorological Centre.

In its daily weather update, the Centre noted that the Southwest monsoon has been weak over Coastal Andhra Pradesh and normal over Rayalaseema. Due to this system, heavy rain is expected at isolated locations in Rayalaseema over the next five days.

Thunderstorms with lightning and strong surface winds, ranging from 30 to 40 km/h, are anticipated at isolated locations in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during this period. Light to moderate rain or thunder-



showers are expected at various places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next seven days. Over the past 24 hours, heavy rainfall has been report-

ed in the Chittoor and Annamaya districts of Rayalaseema, while Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema experienced rainfall at one or two locations.

Resume last TDP gov't's...

Continued from Page 1

He also stressed the importance of telemedicine services, referencing the previous TDP government's success in securing Rs 2,300 crore from the World Bank for such services. Naidu criticized the YSRCP government for failing to implement this initiative effectively and reiterated the need for corporate-level medical services to be made available to rural areas through telemedicine.

In addition to healthcare, the Chief Minister reviewed the

draft of the new Industrial Development Policy 2024-29. He urged officials to design a policy that would position Andhra Pradesh among the top five states in the country in terms of industrial development. Naidu highlighted the state's strategic advantages, including its 10 seaports, 10 airports, and robust road and rail connectivity, particularly in the East Coast region. He emphasized the need for cost-effective, large-scale industrial setups in sectors such as green energy, green hydrogen, electric vehicle manufactur-

ing, and food processing. Naidu also reminded officials of past successes in attracting major companies like Hero Motors and Apollo Tyres to Andhra Pradesh, and he called for concerted efforts to bring new industries to the state. He mentioned that he would meet with industrialists on the 16th of this month to discuss further strategies. The Chief Minister concluded by stressing the importance of adhering to NITI Aayog's guidelines in crafting the new industrial policy and ensuring a growth rate of over 15 per cent.

CM briefs WB team...

Continued from Page 1

The delegation arrived in Vijayawada on Saturday for a three-day visit.

During their visit, the World Bank team held meetings with officials at the Vijayawada CRDA headquarters, where they were briefed on the current status of the Amaravati project. The delegation also conducted field inspections of buildings under construction in Amaravati and assessed ongoing infrastructure works, including roads, the Kondaveeti Vagu pump house, and the development of educational institutions such as VIT, SRM, and AIIMS.

During the meeting on Monday, CM Naidu provided an overview of the progress made in Amaravati's construction, emphasising the use of world-class standards and modern technology to develop the capital into a globally recognised city.

Will it be a silver lining...

Continued from Page 1

Months before she boarded the plane to Paris, Vinesh was spearheading a protest along with fellow wrestlers Bajrang Punia and Sakshi Malik against former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who was accused of sexual harassment and intimidation by the renowned trio and few other grapplers. This list of sports personalities backing Vinesh included famous Japanese Olympic champion Rei Higuchi, who suffered a similar fate in the Tokyo edition three years ago before claiming a gold in Paris and legendary American freestyle wrestler Jordan Burroughs, who went to the extent of ask-

ing the IOC to give Vinesh a silver medal.

Cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar, who also was of the opinion that Vinesh should have been awarded a silver at least, champion shooter Abhinav Bindra, double Olympic medalist superstar javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra and celebrated hockey player PR Sreejesh also offered their support to Vinesh and reminded the country of her contributions in the sport.

On the eve of the verdict, 2008 Beijing Olympics bronze medalist boxer Vijender Singh also extended his support to Vinesh.

"Bhan @Phogat_Vinesh aap ke sath pehle bhi the ab bhi hai or aage bhi rahenge (Sister, I was with you earli-

er, with you now, and will be with you in future too)," Vijender tweeted.

Meanwhile, International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach, while being sympathetic to Vinesh's situation, wondered where would one draw the line after allowing small concessions in certain situations but United World Wrestling (UWW) chief Nenad Lalovic remained doubtful that there would be any change in the results as they were only following the rules. "I must say, I have a certain understanding for the wrestler; it's clearly a human touch," Bach had said on Friday.

"Now, it's (appeal) in CAS. We will, at the end, follow the CAS decision. But, again, the international (wrestling) fed-

eration, they have to apply their interpretation, their rules. This is their responsibility," Lalovic added, "I am so sorry for what happened, but no matter the size of your country, athletes are athletes. This weigh-in was public, everyone saw what happened. How can we allow someone to compete when we all saw what happened."

"We don't have any other choice but to follow our rules," Lalovic had said.

The Games concluded on Sunday with a ceremony at Stade de France, which was the venue for track and field events. The CAS ad-hoc division, set up especially for dispute resolution during the Games, had accepted Vinesh's appeal against her ouster on Friday.

Depositors can take back...

Continued from Page 1

If the money is not sought for an emergency and a premature withdrawal is sought within three months, NBFCs can pay up to 50 per cent of the deposit without paying any interest.

However, not more than 50 per cent of the amount of the principal sum of deposit or Rs 5 lakh, whichever is lower, may be prematurely paid, it added.

The RBI has also asked NBFCs to intimate depositors about a maturity 14 days ahead as against the present regulations stipulating it at two months.

The RBI has also asked NBFCs to ensure that the audit committee must ensure that an information system audit is conducted as per the stipulations.

The central bank said it reviewed regulations applicable to

housing finance companies and NBFCs in order to harmonise the rules for the two.

Accordingly, it has announced changes on minimum percentage of liquid assets, which specifies that all deposit taking HFCs (housing finance companies) shall maintain liquid assets to the extent of 15 per cent of the public deposits as against 13 per cent right now.

HFCs shall ensure that full asset cover is available for public deposits accepted by them at all times, and ensure that they get the 'investment grade' rating by credit rating agencies at least once a year, it said.

Home lenders shall not renew existing deposits or accept fresh deposits thereafter till they obtain an investment grade credit rating," it added.

Public deposits accepted or

renewed by HFCs shall be repayable after a period of 12 months or more but not later than 60 months, it said.

It has also aligned the rules on branches and appointment of agents to collect deposits, under which HFCs having branches or agents outside the state of its registration shall not accept fresh deposits or renew existing deposits in these branches if they do not meet certain conditions.

Restrictions on investments in unquoted shares applicable for NBFCs will also become applicable to HFCs, the RBI said, adding deposit taking HFCs shall fix board-approved internal limits separately within the limit of direct investment, for investments in unquoted shares of another company which is not a subsidiary or a company in the same group as HFC.

Minister: AP will turn into sports hub in five years

- Government will construct stadiums and playgrounds
- Will promote IPL cricket team Amaravati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Transport, Youth Services, and Sports Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy has stated that the government is striving to transform the State into a sports hub in the next five years. For that, key initiatives will be taken up including enhancing sports infrastructure, encouraging participation among students and youth, and constructing new playgrounds and stadiums across the State, he said. He also mentioned that following discussions with Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, the government is considering introducing a new sports policy to further support these efforts.

Minister Ramprasad Reddy convened a review meeting with the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) officials at the SAAP headquarters on the premises of the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation (IGMC) Stadium in Vijayawada on Monday. He discussed various issues regarding creating sports infrastructure, constructing grounds and stadiums, and providing incentives for outstanding sportspersons.

Later, the Minister told the media that the previous YSRCP government neglected sports and games completely. During its final days, the YSRCP gov-



Transport, Youth Services and Sports Minister Ramprasad Reddy addressing the media at the SAAP headquarters on the premises of the IGMC Stadium in Vijayawada on Monday

ernment organised 'Adudam Andhra', which was a flop. The event involved a big scandal worth around Rs.120 crore, and the present government is trying to collect evidence, he said.

Further, he said that the TDP-led NDA government will promote an Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket team, named Amaravati. The government is striving to encourage sports and games starting from streets to district, and State-levels. We will provide all sports facilities to athletes to help them be the best, he said.

"As part of encouraging sportspersons, our government is giving top priority to constructing stadiums and

As part of encouraging sportspersons, our government is giving top priority to constructing stadiums and playgrounds. We will discuss with Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu conducting Kreedha Vikasa Kendralu (KVK) and sports competitions at the village-level

playgrounds. We will discuss with Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu conducting Kreedha Vikasa Kendralu (KVK) and sports competitions at the village-level," Minister Reddy said.

Will bring IGMC Stadium under SAAP control

Furthermore, he said the government will close all sports academies that have no permissions. The IGMC Stadium is now under the purview of the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation. However, they will try to bring it under the control of the SAAP. The government will review the present Pay and Play Scheme and if any problems are found, further decisions will be taken.

Meanwhile, the Minister said that the government will give issue orders to all schools, government and private, to

allow one hour for students to play on the grounds.

For that, they will be giving specific orders soon to prepare a timetable. "Sports and games should be a part of life and they help students become stronger physically and mentally," he said. Further, he made it clear that notices will be served to those schools that have no playgrounds and strict action will be taken against them. Responding to a question about the fake certificate scandal, he said the government will initiate a probe.

Minister Reddy said that the main problems faced by sportspersons will be taken into consideration by CM Chandrababu Naidu. They are expecting that sports sector will get priority in the Union Budget. They will hold discussions with CM Naidu and bring a new sports policy soon, he said.

Maintaining discipline key to combat HIV: DC

Dr Srijana inaugurates 'Meeku Teulusa' awareness campaign

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana has emphasised the critical role of discipline in life as a means to combat the dangers of HIV/AIDS. She urged the public not to discriminate against those affected by the disease and to offer them moral support. Highlighting the efforts of both State and Central governments, Dr Srijana noted that various awareness programmes are being conducted to educate the public about HIV/AIDS.

The intensified awareness campaign, titled 'Meeku Teulusa', was jointly organised



by the National AIDS Control Organisation, State AIDS Control Organisations, and the Health, Medical and Family Welfare Department at Siddhartha Academy Auditorium in Mogalrajapuram, Vijayawada.

Dr Srijana inaugurated the programme and released wall posters to promote the campaign. Also, she administered an oath to the participants.

In her address, Dr Srijana shared that continuous publicity campaigns over the past 30 years have led to an 86 per cent reduction in HIV/AIDS cases. She attributed this success to increased public awareness, with early campaigns such as 'Puli Rajuku Aids Vastunda' significantly impacting public consciousness. As a result, people are filled with bravery by exorcising the demon HIV/AIDS and the cases have been gradually decreased, she said.

The campaign 'Meeku Teulusa' focuses on educating the public about how HIV/AIDS spreads and the methods for its prevention, including conducting tests, using condoms, accessing medical services, engaging in discussions about the disease, and reducing the viral load. The campaign also promotes the use of Toll-Free No. 1097 for assistance.

Several key figures from the State AIDS Control Society, including Joint Directors Dr Kameswara Prasad, Dr Manjula, Dr Bhagya Lakshmi, and others, participated in the event alongside Dr Srijana.

Transport minister donates first month's salary for Amaravati construction

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Transport, Youth Services and Sports, Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy donated his first month's salary of Rs 3,01,116 for the construction of the Capital Amaravati. In this regard, he handed over the cheque to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at the Secretariat at Velagapudi on Monday.



YSRCP in a spot over MLC Duvvada Srinivas' scandal



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As the controversy of YSRCP MLC Duvvada Srinivas shook the political landscape, the comments made by Rajya Sabha MP YV Subba Reddy in connection with the personal life of Duvvada Srinivas ignited fierce debate in the political circles.

The party is now grappling with the fallout from the exposure of an extramarital affair involving its own MLC, Duvvada Srinivas. Srinivas's relationship with Divvela Madhuri, a married woman from Tekkali in Srikakulam district, has sparked widespread debate on social media, with critics accusing YSRCP of hypocrisy.

One netizen pointed out the glaring double standard, saying, "While Pawan Kalyan got married thrice after divorcing his previous wives, Duvvada hasn't even given his wife, Vani, a divorce and is living with another woman." The comparison has struck a chord with many, leading to widespread criticism of the YSRCP's earlier attacks on Pawan Kalyan's personal life.

TDP govt targeting poor: Jupudi

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party SC Cell State president Jupudi Prabhakar Rao has slammed TDP coalition government for 'viciously targeting the poor' in the State by taking steps to reverse an ordinance introduced by the then Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy that granted full ownership rights to assignees over assigned lands that they have held for more than 20 years.

Speaking to the media at the Hyderabad Press Club here on

Monday, he strongly criticised the government's actions to annul this ordinance and labelled their decision to halt registrations on these lands as malicious.

Explaining in detail, he highlighted that on January 26, an ordinance was issued concerning these lands. Historically, lands assigned before and after 1977 for housing and agricultural purposes to the poor and small farmers were not allowed to be sold. However, with increasing land values, debates

arose during the tenures of Chandrababu Naidu and YSR on whether to allow these lands to be sold. Upon taking office, Jagan Mohan Reddy made a decisive move regarding these lands, ensuring that only the original assignees could register and sell them. He recalled that despite pressure from those who had purchased these lands, the YSR Congress government upheld the ordinance's provisions, ensuring that only the original beneficiaries would retain full rights.

Over 3,000 students start journey at Udaan-2024

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

SRM University-AP has extended a warm welcome to its newest cohort of students as it kicks off the much-anticipated Udaan-2024 orientation programme. This 10-day event, running from August 12 to August 23, is meticulously crafted to seamlessly integrate more than 3,000 freshers from more than 20 States of India into the vibrant campus life and academic environment.

The event began with the tra-



ditional lighting of the lamp and an invocation ceremony, setting a tone of reverence and inspiration. During the inaugural ses-

sion, students were given an overview of the university's various directorates, schools, and the academic ecosystem, providing them with essential knowledge about their new environment. Deans and directors from all departments were present.

Pro-Chancellor, SRM University-AP Dr P Sathyanarayanan, extended his warmest wishes to the students, stating, "At SRM University-AP, we are dedicated to shaping the next generation of leaders, innovators, and change-makers."

Restrictions on two-wheelers on ghat roads

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

TTD has decided to allow the movement of two-wheelers on both the ghat roads from 6am to 9pm only till September. The restriction came into force with immediate effect from Monday onwards. The decision has been taken in view of the safety of the devotees.

According to the Deputy Conservator of Forests, TTD, August and September happen to be the peak breeding season for wild animals. Animals are often seen crossing roads along the first ghat road.

To avoid human-animal conflict, TTD has decided to allow two-wheelers to ply on both ghat roads only from 6am to 9pm till September 30.

Minister vows swift action on public grievances

Announces special revenue meetings starting August 15 to swiftly resolve land disputes

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Minister for Women, Child Welfare, and Tribal Welfare, Gummidi Sandhya Rani, has pledged to expedite the resolution of public grievances, with a particular focus on the concerns of tribal communities. The Minister made this commitment following a Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS) programme held in the city on Monday.

Directly interacting with citizens, Sandhya Rani listened attentively to their problems, emphasising the government's dedication to their well-being. "People come to these platforms with great hope and trust," she stated, underscoring the importance of addressing their issues promptly.

Land disputes emerged as a primary concern among the



Minister Sandhya Rani interacting with a bedridden pensioner during Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS) on Monday.

public. Recognising the urgency of the matter, the Minister announced special revenue meetings starting August 15 to swiftly

resolve these cases. Beyond land issues, the Minister acknowledged the challenges faced by people in areas such as family dis-

putes, unemployment, and healthcare, assuring the public of the government's commitment to finding solutions.

To tackle unemployment, especially among the youth, Sandhyarani outlined plans for skill development training programmes. Additionally, to foster self-employment among tribal entrepreneurs, the government will provide tricar loans. Highlighting the government's emphasis on maternal health, particularly in tribal regions, the Minister announced plans to establish more hostels for pregnant women. This initiative aims to provide improved healthcare and support to expectant mothers in remote areas.

A particularly poignant case unfolded during the programme when a pensioner was brought to the venue on a bed. Deeply moved by the man's condition, the Minister immediately instructed officials to increase his financial assistance.

Mid-day meals should meet high-quality standards: Collector

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad has called upon officials to ensure that the mid-day meals provided to students meet high-quality standards. Speaking at the District Level Steering and Monitoring Committee meeting, convened by the Education Department, to review the implementation of the Doka Seethamma mid-day meal scheme, Prasad highlighted the critical importance of these meals, particularly for students who depend on them as their primary source of nutrition.

"Mid-day meals play a vital role in the lives of many students, and it is our responsibility to ensure that these meals meet the highest standards of quality," the Collector stated. He shared insights from his personal inspections, expressing satisfaction with the overall menu but stressing the urgent need to improve the quality of rice being provided. "Any substandard rice should be promptly returned. We must ensure robust implementation of the scheme, especially in tribal welfare schools," Prasad added, directing the Tribal Welfare Officer to address rice quality and storage issues.



During the meeting, District Education Officer (DEO) L Chandrakala provided an update on the scheme, noting that 61,228 students across 584 primary, secondary, and high schools in the district are currently benefiting from the mid-day meal programme. She highlighted ongoing efforts to achieve 100 percent participation, up from the current 98 percent. "We are committed to reaching every eligible student with this essential programme," Chandrakala remarked, offering a detailed overview of the scheme's implementation to the Collector.

Centre demands update to Visakhapatnam Metro project's Comprehensive Mobility Plan

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Union Government has directed the Andhra Pradesh state authorities to update the Comprehensive Mobility Plan (CMP) before the project can undergo appraisal and approval. This step is crucial for advancing the proposed light metro rail system, which aims to transform urban transport in the city.

The state government has outlined plans for a 76.9 km light metro rail project under a public-private partnership model, with an estimated cost of approximately Rs 14,300 crore. The current CMP, originally formulated in 2018, requires revision to align with contemporary standards and

address evolving urban transport needs.

The CMP is an essential document for evaluating and approving major transport initiatives such as metro rails, Bus Rapid Transit Systems (BRTS), and feeder networks. Designed to create a sustainable and low-carbon urban transport system, the original CMP laid out extensive strategies to improve mobility in Visakhapatnam, reflecting traffic and transportation needs, projected population growth, and travel demands.

Among the original CMP's key components were the procurement of over 2,000 buses, including an immediate addition of 700 buses, and the expansion of the BRTS network



by two additional corridors, supplementing the existing 42 km of BRTS. Additionally, the plan proposed significant enhancements to street infrastructure, including improved

signage, road markings, 360 km of footpath facilities, dedicated pedestrian walkways, and a public bike-sharing system with segregated cycle tracks spanning 286 km. The CMP also envisioned a transit-oriented development plan to bolster urban mobility.

The Urban Mass Transit Company (UMTC), which played a crucial role in the 2018 CMP's preparation, conducted extensive surveys between 2016 and 2017 to inform the plan's recommendations. According to UJM Rao, Managing Director of AP Metro Rail Corporation Limited, the general validity of a CMP is five years. "Given that the CMP for Visakhapatnam was prepared about six years ago, we have

revisited and made minor adjustments as required. We are preparing to submit the updated CMP to the Union Government. We believe no further significant changes are necessary," Rao told The Pioneer.

The revised CMP will continue to focus on integrating land use and transport, enhancing accessibility, promoting public transit usage, and improving facilities for non-motorized and pedestrian transport. These efforts aim to reduce pollution and support sustainable urban development, ensuring that Visakhapatnam's transportation infrastructure meets the city's growing needs and supports its economic development.

29 MPDOs reposted to Krishna dist

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Krishna Zilla Parishad, Dr RC Anand Kumar, reposted the Mandal Parishad Development Officers (MPDOs) to their previous working areas in the combined Krishna district...

The Election Commission of India (ECI) had transferred all MPDOs from Krishna district to other districts before the general elections. Now, as per the guidelines and the note orders of the Krishna, NTR, and Eluru district collectors, the MPDOs have been allocated back to the erstwhile Krishna district.

As per the orders, the respective district administrations should relieve them immediately by making alternative temporary FAC arrangements until the MPDOs of the erstwhile Krishna district who are allotted to the other districts are repatriated, the CEO said.

According to ZP CEO Anand Kumar, around 29 MPDOs were transferred and these MPDOs should be relieved from the erstwhile Krishna district without fail. Later, they should report to the concerned authorities of their original district from where they were allotted, he added.

Paddy dues to be paid within 48 hours: Nadendla



PNS ■ ELURU

Minister for Civil Supplies, Nadendla Manohar, has assured the farming community that payments for purchased paddy will be disbursed within 48 hours starting from the upcoming Kharif season.

The announcement was made during a programme held at CR Reddy College Auditorium on Monday, where the Minister formally launched the disbursement of Rs 674.47 crore to over 35,374 farmers for the paddy produce purchased by the government.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Manohar expressed regret that the previous YSRCP government had failed to pay Rs 1,674.47 crore to over 8,724 farmers for their paddy produce.

He noted that the newly formed coalition government, led by Chandrababu Naidu, has taken swift action to clear these arrears.

"Upon taking office, the coalition government immediately disbursed Rs 1,000 crore to the farmers. Today, the remaining Rs 674 crore is being disbursed," Minister Manohar stated. He also highlighted that farmers are now being provided with tarpaulins at a 50 per cent subsidy to protect their paddy produce from rain.

The Minister criticised the previous YSRCP government for neglecting the farming community, accusing it of taking Rs 40,500 crore in loans under the Civil Supplies department while failing to disburse payments to farmers for purchased paddy.

He assured that efforts are underway to ensure the Civil Supplies Ministry repays Rs 10,000 crore to the banks by March 31, 2025.

Minister Manohar also promised that CCR cards would be issued to farmers during the Grama Sabha programs scheduled to take place across the state from August 16. He reiterated the government's commitment to purchasing all paddy produce from farmers.

Selvi reported that 2,17,496 metric tonnes of paddy were purchased from farmers in the district. Out of the Rs 200 crore owed to these farmers, Rs 153 crore has already been disbursed, and the remaining Rs 47.53 crore is now being credited to the bank accounts of 2,116 farmers in the district.

The event was also attended by Civil Supplies MD Veerapandian, MP Putta Mahesh Kumar, MLAs Kamineni Srinivas, B Srinivas, and Chintanmani Prabhakar. Joint Collector P Dhatri Reddy and ZP Chairperson G Padmasri were among the dignitaries present at the programme.



Officials urged to distribute deworming tablets to kids

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector C. Nagarani has directed officials to ensure the distribution of deworming tablets to all school students as part of efforts to combat parasitic infections.

The Collector emphasised the importance of administering these tablets to children to prevent malnutrition, anaemia, and fatigue. On Monday, she unveiled a wall poster promoting the National Deworming Programme.

Addressing the gathering, Collector Nagarani highlighted the health risks posed by worms, noting that deworming can significantly improve children's physical and mental growth. "Children are suffering from various health issues due to worms," she said. "Taking these deworming tablets will help prevent mal-

DM&HO Dr. D. Maheswara Rao advised that children under two years of age should receive half a tablet, while those above two years should receive a full tablet. He assured that the tablets are safe, with no significant side effects. However, he cautioned that children with chronic illnesses, fever, or cold symptoms should not be given the tablets.

nutrition, anaemia, and fatigue."

The Collector called for the National Deworming Programme to be conducted on a large scale across the district on August 24. She instructed that Albendazole-400 mg tablets be administered to all students in governmental and private schools, as well as Anganwadi centres, targeting children between the ages of 1 and 19 years.

Rao advised that children under two years of age should receive half a tablet, while those above two years should receive a full tablet. He assured that the tablets are safe, with no significant side effects. However, he cautioned that children with chronic illnesses, fever, or cold symptoms should not be given the tablets. Dr Rao also mentioned that approximately 3.52 lakh deworming tablets are available in the district.

'Revenue Sadassulu' mooted to resolve land rows: Minister

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Minister for Social Welfare Dola Balaveeranjanya Swamy has said that the 'Revenue Sadassulu' will be organised across the State from August 16 to resolve land disputes of people.

Addressing the district-level coordination committee here on Monday, the Minister reiterated that the government is committed to resolving the land disputes of people. "To resolve the land disputes of people, Revenue Sadassulu will be held from August 16 to September 30 across the state. The 'Revenue Sadassulu' is being organised as part of governance at the people programme," the Minister observed, adding that the 'Revenue Sadassulu' will be launched formally on August 15.

Doing justice to the real owner of the land is the main objective of conducting Revenue Sadassulu, the Minister revealed.

The government machinery would focus on resolving land disputes during the 45 days 'Revenue Sadassulu, he made it clear and appealed to the



people to avail the opportunity. District Collector S Thameem Ansaria stated that 80 to 90 per cent of grievances received during the 'Mee Kosam' programme are land-related disputes.

The 'Revenue Sadassulu' would be conducted in all mandal headquarters for 45 days from August 16, she observed.

The Collector called upon the representatives of political parties, and farmers associations to sensitise people on the 'Revenue Sadassulu'. The petitions received during the 'Revenue Sadassulu' would be

uploaded on the computers every day, she said, adding that a special official is being appointed to every mandal to monitor the 'Revenue Sadassulu' and take steps to resolve land dispute issues.

DRO Visweswara Rao gave a PowerPoint presentation on the 'Revenue Sadassulu' to be organised in the district.

Joint Collector R Gopal Krishna, MLAs Damacharla Janardhan Rao, Dr Kukku Ugranarasimha Reddy, M Ashok Kumar Reddy, BN Vijay Kumar, and Dr Gottipati Lakshmi were among those who attended the meeting.

Home Minister Anitha visits Central Prison



PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Home Minister V Anitha visited the Central Prison here on Monday.

The Home Minister, accompanied by District Collector P Prashanthi and Prisons ADGP Kumar Vishwajeet, visited the jail. She took guard of honour at the prison. She interacted with the prisoners.

She assured that she would make efforts to provide special remission to the prisoners and assured them of passing a

GO in this regard. She visited the bakery unit set up the prison and tasted a cake there. She also spoke with the prison staff and knew their problems.

She appreciated the prison officials for maintaining hygienic conditions on the prison premises.

MLA Adireddy Srinivas, Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary, D Narasimha Kishore and prison Superintendent S Rahul were among those who were present.



AP govt to take part in offshore mining auction: Minister Kollu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Excise and Mines has revealed that the AP government is interested in participating in the offshore mining auction and urged the Union government for its cooperation to set up a seabed mining corporation. He also emphasized the need to safeguard natural resources and correctly utilise them by the government.

Minister Kollu Ravindra participated in the 6th Governing body meeting of 'The National Mineral Exploration Trust, in New Delhi for which Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, Dr. Jitendra Singh, Satishchandra Dube attended on Monday.

Addressing the conference, Minister Kollu Ravindra said that Andhra Pradesh has an abundance of natural resources and diverse mineral resources. "If they are utilized in the right way, the state will stand as a guide for the development of the country. Andhra Pradesh has valuable resources like vanadium, titanium, nickel, phosphorite, phosphate, graphite, lithium and platinum," the Minister highlighted.

Stating that Andhra Pradesh has a coastal area of about 972 km, the Minister sought the Center's help to contribute to the exploration of resources in the marine area. Polymetallic nodules, polymetallic sulphides and other resources will

also become available in AP seashore mining. Ravindra appealed to Union Minister Kishan Reddy to consider relaxing some rules on the off-shoring mine auctioning.

The National Mineral Exploration Trust was established in 1996 to technologically utilize the resources in the state, he said adding that 2% is pegged as a seigniorage fee for mining of minerals which is used for state mineral exploration. It has been decided to set up a special system for comprehensive surveillance of the mining activities in AP. Minister Ravindra observed, stating that the cooperation of Union Mines department secretary Kanta Rao has been sought in this regard.

20 kg ganja seized, 2 arrested

PNS ■ ELURU

The police seized 20 kg of ganja while being transported illegally on a motorcycle at Kalaparru toll gate. On the directions of SP K P Siva Kishore, an SEB team conducted a checking of vehicles at the toll plaza.

They found two persons taking 20.030 kg of ganja on the bike. The police arrested the two drug peddlers N Harikrishna and VLN Srinivas.

They purchased the ganja at Chintapalli in the combined Visakhapatnam district and brought it to supply other peddlers to sell in retail. Later on the information provided by the duo, the police teams arrested seven persons.

If KTR's relatives invest in TG we will welcome them: Kiran

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Bhongir Congress MP, Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, said that BRS leaders are trying to throw mud at Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's foreign tour and asked BRS leaders to point out the government's mistakes and not to engage in mudslinging. He said that Telangana suffered family rule for 10 years unlike any other state in India. A single family bagged all posts and now they are using social media against the Congress with the money they earned illegally, he said.

"If KTR's relatives come to invest in Telangana we will welcome them. However, BRS leaders must stop spreading lies. Amara Raja will be given all the



support it needs from the government. The government will also examine whether some people are spreading lies. We will support all companies operating in the state," Kiran Kumar Reddy said. The Chief Minister went on two foreign tours in the last eight months. Everybody knows the BRS government's errors. The Chief Minister waived the loans of farmers as he had promised. But BRS leaders are engaging in

a campaign of lies against the Congress government. Can the Congress government do within eight months what the BRS did not do in 10 years," he asked.

Criticising BRS leaders for holding the Congress government responsible for the Sunkishala incident, Kiran said the Sunkishala retaining wall collapsed only because of the BRS government's carelessness.

Sisodia on four-day trip to Uttarandhra

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Special Principal Secretary (Revenue, Stamps and Registrations) RP Sisodia will attend the revenue conferences at the port city. He will reach Vizag on August 15 evening and Vizianagaram, on August 16. The State government has directed Sisodia to attend at least two or three conferences on August 16 and return to Vizag.

Keeping in mind the election code of the Legislative Council in Vizag, he has decided not to attend the revenue meetings directly. On August 17, he will meet the revenue officials at the Visakhapatnam Collectorate on the priorities of the government. In the wake of the Madanapalli incident, a review will be conducted with the officials on the security of the revenue files in the offices. On August 18, he will leave Visakhapatnam by road for Vijayawada.

New lease of life to 35-year-old suffering from parathyroid cancer

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A rare case of parathyroid cancer in a 35-year-old woman was successfully treated at American Oncology Institute (AOI) at Mangalagiri in Vijayawada. Parathyroid cancer occurs in the parathyroid glands, which are small glands located in the neck near the thyroid. These glands produce parathyroid hormone (PTH), which helps regulate calcium levels in the blood. In parathyroid cancer, the tumor can cause an overproduction of PTH, leading to elevated calcium levels in the blood which can be life threatening.

This was a challenging case due to the patient's heart condition and the

advanced nature of the tumor. However, with a multidisciplinary approach and careful planning, we were able to successfully remove the tumor and stabilise the patient's condition. This case highlights the importance of specialised care in managing rare and complex cancers, Dr Kalyan said.

Harish Trivedi, CEO of CTSI South Asia, added, "This case exemplifies our mission of delivering world-class cancer care across South Asia. The remarkable recovery of this patient underscores our dedication to improving the lives of those affected by cancer, regardless of how rare or complex their condition may be. Our team of

skilled oncologists and advanced treatment protocols ensures that we are equipped to handle even the most challenging cancer cases, providing patients with the best possible outcomes and hope for a healthier future."

Mahendra Reddy, RCOO, AOI Vijayawada, commented, "The success of this complex surgery underscores AOI commitment to delivering advanced cancer care to the local community in Vijayawada. Our facility is equipped with state-of-the-art technology and staffed by a team of highly skilled professionals, allowing us to manage even the most challenging cases with precision and expertise.

Andhra University soars to new heights in NIRF rankings

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra University (AU) has scripted a new chapter in its history by securing the seventh position in the inaugural State universities category of the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2024. This unprecedented achievement is coupled with a phenomenal 35-rank jump in the overall

rankings, placing AU at a commendable 41st position. The results, announced by the Union Ministry of Education on Monday, have sent ripples of joy and pride across the university community.

Vice-Chancellor Prof G Sasibhushana Rao credited the university's remarkable success to the visionary leadership of HRD and IT Minister Nara

Lokesh. "This is a testament to our commitment to academic excellence and research. We are aiming even higher and aspire to secure a coveted spot in the top 10 national rankings in the coming year under the guidance of Shri Nara Lokesh," he declared.

AU's ascent is not confined to the overall rankings. The university has made significant



Bags seventh position in State universities category

strides in various categories. It has climbed to the 25th position in the Universities category, a substantial improvement from its previous rank of 43. The Engineering department has also showcased remarkable growth, moving up to the 90th position from 94th. The Pharmacy department has secured a commendable 34th rank, while the Law College

has earned a respectable 16th position. When compared to other regional universities, AU's performance is truly exceptional. Acharya Nagarjuna University and Osmania University from Telangana secured 97th and 70th positions, respectively.

Prof Rao expressed immense pride in AU's overall performance, emphasising

that the university has outshone several prestigious Central institutions, including NIT Warangal, NIT Calicut, NIT Suratkal, IIT Jodhpur, IIT Mandi, IIT Patna, and IISER. AU's meteoric rise in the NIRF rankings is a resounding affirmation of its dedication to providing world-class education and research opportunities.

ACROSS THE STATES



Meghalaya CM briefs Shah about security situation

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma met Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday and briefed him about the situation at the India-Bangladesh border in the state. Shah was also briefed about the night curfew imposed along the border to prevent attempts of illegal immigration. Sangma was accompanied by Deputy CM Prestone Tynsong during the meeting in Delhi. "Today we had a meeting with the Union home minister to review the overall situation along the border areas, keeping in mind the current situation in Bangladesh," said Sangma. He said he told Shah that the BSF was strictly monitoring the border along with the Army. "The Meghalaya Police are also on high alert, and we have informed him that a night curfew has been imposed to further strengthen the overall security in the border zone," he added. Sangma said Shah assured him that the Centre would not allow illegal immigration and that all measures were being taken to ensure the border is guarded.



BSF prevents major infiltration bid by Bangladeshis in Tripura

A "major" infiltration bid by a group of Bangladeshi nationals was thwarted after BSF troops fired one round of non-lethal ammunition in the forward area of Khowai district in Tripura on Monday, a spokesperson said. He said a group of 12-15 Bangladeshi nationals was trying to take advantage of inclement weather and poor visibility in the area during the day and tried to cross over from the area of the district's Pahamura border post. "On being challenged by BSF (Border Security Force) troops, they tried to negotiate the border fencing forcefully. To prevent the infiltration attempt, one round of pump action gun was fired following which the group of Bangladeshis fled towards Bangladeshi territory," the spokesperson for the force's Tripura frontier said. "The alertness of BSF troops managed to prevent a major incident of infiltration," the spokesperson added. Keeping in mind the ongoing unrest and law and order situation in Bangladesh, the BSF has intensified surveillance and domination along the border, he further said.



Tigress crushed to death by train in Maharashtra's Gondia

A tigress was run over by a goods train on Monday on the Gondia-Ballarsha railway route here, a forest department official said. The big cat was killed in Arjuni Morgaon-Wadsa section near compartment 97, the official said, adding it may have not been able to spot the approaching train due to the dense undergrowth at the site of the incident. "The driver of the goods train applied emergency brakes after the incident and informed railway officials. After being alerted, a forest department team, including a representative of the National Tiger Conservation Authority and personnel from Rapid Response Team, reached the spot," he said. The carcass was consigned to flames as per NTCA guidelines in Wadsa, he added. Wildlife Warden Sawan Bahekar said an underpass should be constructed at the site and fences must be put in place along specific areas on the route to ensure such incidents don't recur.

Hasina's stay in India will not hurt bilateral relations: B'desh

A top adviser of Bangladesh's interim government on Monday said that that particular country will be affected? There is no reason for that," he said, emphasising that bilateral relations are a big matter. Hasina, 76, resigned and fled to India last week following widespread protests against her government over a controversial quota system in jobs. Hossain said bilateral relations are a relation of interest and friendship is also of interest. "Friendship does not exist if the interest is hurt," reported.

"This is a hypothetical question. If someone stays in a country why the relations with that country will be affected? There is no reason for that," he said, emphasising that bilateral relations are a big matter. Hasina, 76, resigned and fled to India last week following widespread protests against her government over a controversial quota system in jobs. Hossain said bilateral relations are a relation of interest and friendship is also of interest. "Friendship does not exist if the interest is hurt," reported.

India-Nepal discuss ways to improve bilateral ties & economic cooperation

PNS ■ KATHMANDU

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Monday held wide-ranging discussions with his Nepalese counterpart Sewa Lamsal and the two top diplomats reviewed the progress made in various bilateral initiatives and developmental projects and discussed opportunities for further collaboration.

Misri's two-day visit is the first by the Indian foreign secretary to Nepal after the formation of the new government led by Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli last month.

"Their wide-ranging discussions covered various aspects of the multi-faceted cooperation between India and Nepal," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

It said both foreign secretaries reviewed the progress made in various bilateral initiatives and developmental projects and discussed opportunities for further collaboration.

"Both sides committed to deepening bilateral cooperation and addressing shared challenges," the Nepalese Foreign Ministry wrote in a post on X.

A statement issued by the Nepalese Foreign Ministry said the two sides reviewed the overall aspects of Nepal and India relations, including coop-



eration between the two countries in the areas of energy and power sector, physical and digital connectivity, agriculture, tourism trade and transit, and people-to-people relations. The two foreign secretaries agreed to continue advance engagements between the two sides, including through regular bilateral mechanisms, it said.

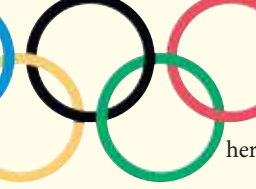
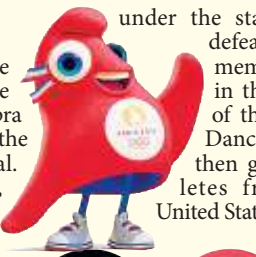
Misri also called on Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Urban Development Prakash Man Singh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Bishnu Prasad Paudel, Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak and Foreign Minister Dr Arzu Rana Deuba.

'India' scripts history in Break Dancing at Paris Olympics

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's quest for gold at the Paris Olympics 2024 came to an end after Neeraj Chopra had to settle for a silver in the javelin throw event final. But, in a surprising twist, 'India' made history in the sport of Break Dancing. The country's name echoed through the arena, but as the dust settled, a surprising revelation came to light. The Dutch athlete, competing under the stage name 'India,' defeated refugee team member B-girl Talash in the opening match of the women's Break Dance event. She was then grouped with athletes from China, the United States, and Portugal in Group A.

Unlike most B-girls and B-boys, India Sardjoe prefers using her real name as stage name. She made history by becoming the first-ever winner of a Break Dance battle at the Olympics. Ms India started playing football as a child before switching to hip-hop and later changed over to Break Dancing. When she was just 10 years old, she won the Dutch national championship in the Under 12 category. She became the Dutch, European, and world champion in just six months in 2022.



SC concerned over non-implementation of central law

Asks Centre, states to ensure compliance by October 12

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Concerned over non-implementation of a 2021 central law on allied professions in the field of health care, the Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre, states and the UTs to ensure compliance of the Act by October 12 or be ready to face coercive action.

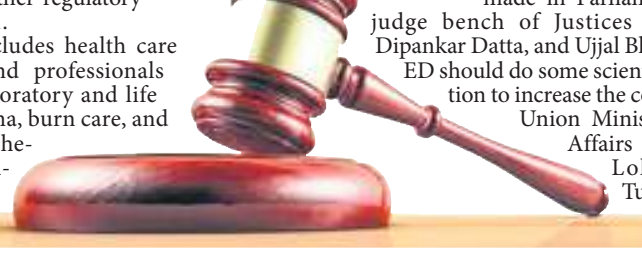
The top court, which had issued notices to the Centre, all state governments and union territories on a PIL in September last year, was irked over the non-implementation of the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) Act, 2021.

The NCAHP Act provides for "regulation and maintenance of standards of education and services by allied and health care professionals, assessment of institutions, maintenance of a Central Register and State Register" of allied

health care professions in the country.

The law mandates setting up of regulatory bodies and state-level councils for all allied health care professions which are not governed and covered by the National Medical Commission, Dental Council of India and other regulatory bodies till 2021.

The Act includes health care professions and professionals of medical laboratory and life sciences, trauma, burn care, and surgical/ anaesthesia-related technology, physio-therapy etc.



'Low conviction rate in money laundering cases'

SC asks ED to focus on quality of prosecution

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Citing low conviction rate in money laundering cases, the Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Enforcement Directorate to focus on quality of prosecution and evidence.

Referring to a statement made in Parliament, a three-judge bench of Justices Surya Kant, Dipankar Datta, and Ujjal Bhuyan said the ED should do some scientific investigation to increase the conviction rate.

Union Ministry of Home Affairs informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday that a total of 5,297

cases were lodged under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) by the ED between 2014 and 2024 while conviction was secured in 40 cases. The top court was hearing a bail plea filed by a Chhattisgarh-based businessman, who was arrested in connection with a money laundering case involving illegal levy on coal transportation.

"You need to concentrate on the quality of prosecution and evidence. All the cases where you are satisfied that a prima facie case is made out, you need to establish those cases in the court."

"In this case, you are harping on the statements given by some witnesses, affidavits.

This kind of oral evidence... this type of oral evidence, tomorrow, God knows that person will stand by it or not. You should do some scientific investigation," the bench told Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the ED.

DOCTOR'S RAPE-MURDER

Mamata vows CBI probe if police fail to crack case by Sunday

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee vowed to transfer the alleged rape and murder case of a woman physician inside a Kolkata hospital to the CBI if the police failed to solve it by Sunday, amid public outrage.

Supporting the cease work by junior doctors at that hospital, interns and post-graduate trainees at other state-run medical establishments across the state vowed to continue their agitation, now in its fourth day, until the culprits are brought to justice.

Banerjee's promise, however, did not placate the protesting students, who criticized the chief minister for setting a seven-day deadline to address the alleged rape and murder of a fellow doctor.

They demanded a judicial inquiry, capital punishment for the culprits, adequate compensa-

tion for the victim's family and stronger security measures at hospitals.

A two-member team of the National Commission for Women (NCW) this afternoon arrived in



Kolkata and is scheduled to meet city Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal and the family members of the victim.

The body of the woman post-graduate trainee, who was allegedly raped and murdered inside a seminar hall of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, was found on Friday morning. Junior doctors began a cease work from the evening that day.

People should not back those detrimental to peace in J-K: L-G Sinha

PNS ■ JAMMU

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has urged the people of Jammu and Kashmir not to support those who were detrimental to peace and development in the Union Territory.

Describing the abrogations of Article 370 and Article 35A as a historic change, he also claimed half the population would have continued to be denied their rights without this move.

"I want to tell the people not to empower or strengthen elements that are detrimental to peace and development," Sinha told PTI Videos in an interview on Sunday.

Sinha was responding to a question about his message to the people in light of criticism from some political parties regarding jailed leader Engineer Rashid's election to Parliament and concerns that it could lead to increased separatism in democratic politics.

"It is true that such elements have reached Parliament. The country



knows them and we know them too. I urge voters, who have total freedom in a democracy, to make decisions with national interest in mind," he said.

Rashid was sworn in as a member of the 18th Lok Sabha following his victory from the Baramulla constituency, where he defeated National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah by

more than two lakh votes.

The Independent MP was arrested in a 2017 terror-funding case. The lieutenant governor further said the administration would take necessary steps to prevent such individuals from advancing in politics.

Sinha also termed the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A as the beginning of a historic era of peace and development.

In 2009, the Narendra Modi government annulled the articles that granted special rights to the then Jammu and Kashmir state, which was also divided into two Union territories.

"The abrogation of Article 370 was historic. It has begun a new chapter of peace and development in Jammu and Kashmir. We have tried our best to ensure that Jammu and Kashmir is at the forefront, that every individual's aspirations are fulfilled, and, most importantly, that stability is established here," he said.



'One in five lives could be saved by improving diets'

PNS ■ KATHMANDU

Poor quality diets are the main contributor to all forms of malnutrition and the leading cause of various diseases worldwide, even as one in five lives could be saved each year by improving diets, according to a report by a private research body.

According to the report, two billion people are affected by micronutrient deficiencies across the globe, 40 per cent of

both men and women (2.2 billion) suffer from being overweight or obese, 148 million children below the age of five have been stunted, and 48 million under five years children are wasted (underweight).

These findings were published in a report titled '2024 Global Food Policy Report: Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Nutrition' launched by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Nepal last week.

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This year's report focuses on food systems for healthy diets and nutrition and highlights a slowdown in progress on reducing undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies in low and middle-income coun-

tries while observing a rapid rise in overweight and obesity rates.

The annual report - co-authored by 41 researchers from IFPRI and partner organisations - aims to sustainably

reduce poverty, hunger, and malnutrition in developing countries by providing research-based policy solutions.

The event was organised in collaboration with the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIM-STEAC), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS).

'Mitra Shakti': India-Sri Lanka joint military exercise begins

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A joint exercise between the militaries of India and Sri Lanka got underway in the island nation on Monday to facilitate interoperability and sharing of best practices, the defence ministry said.

The 10th edition of the India-Sri Lanka Joint Military Exercise 'Mitra Shakti' at the Army Training School, Maduru Oya, will be conducted from August 12-25. It will enhance the joint military capability to undertake counter-insurgency operations in a sub-conventional scenario under the UN mandate, the ministry said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Capital of monsoon misery

Thee national capital grapples with waterlogging and a host of issues that accompany the rains

TS Eliot wrote, "April is the cruellest month..." in his famous poem *The Waste Land*. He was, of course, speaking of a different context and place, but one might wonder if he would have felt the same had he experienced Delhi in August. This year has brought a good monsoon, but for Delhiites, heavy downpours rarely bring good news. They must brace themselves for waterlogging, traffic snarls, a host of diseases, unclean water, power failures, and what have you. Streets turned into rivers, traffic reached a standstill, and daily life was thrown into disarray. The scene is all too familiar, a recurring nightmare that haunts the city every monsoon. But why does Delhi, with its sprawling infrastructure and resources, continue to grapple with such chaos year after year? More importantly, what can be done to mitigate this annual misery? Heavy rainfall over the past 24 hours has left several key areas in Delhi, including Connaught Place, Minto Road, and the Ring Road, severely waterlogged. Commuters faced long hours in traffic jams, and pedestrians struggled to navigate the flooded streets. The drainage system, overwhelmed by the sheer volume of water, failed to cope, leading to a cascading series of problems: halted public transport and power outages.



The residents of low-lying areas are the worst hit, with water entering homes and causing significant damage to property and belongings. Unfortunately, it's an annual ritual: heavy monsoon showers overwhelm the infrastructure, bringing the city to a standstill. The blame game ensues, followed by knee-jerk responses and funds allocated for improvements. Yet, by the next year, those efforts are washed away, leaving the city again

at the mercy of the weather gods. It is not rocket science to find the root cause of the problem and even fix it. Surely, the authorities would know that but the execution plan is missing. Despite being a metropolitan hub, Delhi's drainage system is outdated and poorly maintained. Besides, rapid and often haphazard urban development has led to the encroachment of natural water bodies and green spaces. These areas, which once absorbed excess rainwater, have been replaced by concrete structures, exacerbating the problem of water runoff. There is an urgent need to remove those encroachments and upgrade the drainage system. But unfortunately, urban planning in Delhi often happens in silos, with little coordination between different departments. This lack of an integrated approach has led to a situation where roads are built without adequate drainage. Delhi needs a multifaceted approach that addresses both the immediate challenges and long-term vulnerabilities: Utilising smart city technologies, such as real-time monitoring of drainage systems and predictive weather modelling, can help in better preparedness and response to heavy rains. While heavy rains are a natural phenomenon, the resulting waterlogging and disruption are largely man-made problems. To tackle this issue, concrete measures and decisive actions must be taken immediately.

PICTALK



Devotees carry a Lord Ganesh idol for the Ganesh Chaturthi festival, in Mumbai

Progress depends on retentiveness

Today, as political discord echoes through our democracy, I find myself reflecting on those dark days of Emergency and the enduring wounds inflicted on our nation's soul



J S RAJPUT

It was only in 1956 that I got some idea of how the Constitution of India was framed, and who were the major personalities that constituted the historic Constituent Assembly. The teacher who introduced me to it was a great admirer of Mahatma Gandhi and adored Pandit Nehru and Neta Ji Subhash Chandra Bose. The library had a copy of the constitution of India having the signatures of all of the members of the Constituent Assembly and also images representing Indian culture and heritage. We learnt the Preamble by heart. This teacher-created interest amongst students interested in dramatics, and after hectic preparation of a couple of weeks, a mock Constituent Assembly was enacted in the presence of a huge gathering.

This young teacher was also confident that the ancient Indian culture now be resurrected, and the entire world would know how advanced Indians were in 'thought and deed'. In 1975, I read the constitution in all seriousness, and witnessed how it was being mercilessly mutilated! After nearly five decades, as one peruses the print and electronic media, one witnesses a slugfest between the union government and the opposition, it makes one reflect on the emergency days, and one just can't avoid reflecting on the 18 months of democratic darkness that shattered the lives of millions of the people. It ruined the credibility of Indian democracy internationally.

No apology could erase the wound inflicted on the constitution and the humiliation of the stalwarts who created the constitution of India. Was it not a shameful humiliation inflicted on Baba Sahib Bhim Rao Ambedkar? He had repeatedly opposed the inclusion of the term 'secular in the Preamble of the Constitution. How could any active and alert citizen forget the fact that the 44th Constitution Amendment Act was passed by a Parliament that was in its arbitrarily-extended sixth year? Practically all of the opposition stalwarts were in jail! Today, any voice that says 'I want my



original Preamble back' should be deciphered in the spirit it deserves to be comprehended in its objectivity. It could certainly be a great tribute to Dr Baba Sahib Ambedkar! This correction would offer a healing touch to persons like me who had witnessed the emergency and also - to a great extent - to those who had suffered damages of an irreversible nature. Let me narrate a personal experience.

One senior academic was appointed head of a regional institute in Bhopal in December 1974. In August 1975, he was asked to report to report to his central office New Delhi next day 'for consultations'. I was number two in the institutional hierarchy and had become a full Professor just a year back in August 1974. I assisted him in preparing certain project proposals he would carry that evening for obtaining sanction from New Delhi. The next morning, I received a 'lightening call' to take over as Head of the institution immediately, as the incumbent stood removed from his position. It was shocking, and I was just not ready to comply. I was advised by all my well-wishers including those from senior bureaucracy and police services to quietly 'take over', without in any way indicating unwillingness.



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On return, the summarily sacked academic described the ordeal he suffered. As he was to reach the designated office, a peon was waiting with a letter that he swiftly handed over, obtained his signatures on the peon book, and vanished!

I got instructions to ensure that no one even meets him! I insisted that the head of an academic institution should not be humiliated before his students. A lady bureaucrat from the New Delhi office reposed faith in me, but told me that only I, and I alone, would be responsible for any mishap that may occur, and its consequences.

The academic who was humiliated and removed never got justice during his remaining lifetime of around two decades.

Those who would not like even a mention of emergency could recall how strongly India was proud of the persona of that great intellectual and jurist Nani Palakivala. He had refused the brief from Mrs Indira Gandhi and fought for the constitution in draconian conditions.

His reflections on emergency shall remain ever-relevant: "No period in the history of our republic is of more educational value than 1975 to 1977. George Santayana said, 'Progress far from consisting

in change, depends on retentiveness... Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. If our basic freedoms are to survive, it is of vital importance that we remember the happenings during emergency when the freedoms were suspended'. Is it necessary to 'fight facts' to negate the truth? What we witness all around us in the world of the current-day average politicians was envisioned by Sri Aurobindo in his lifetime: "The modern politician in my part of the world does not represent the soul of a people or its aspirations. What he does usually represent is all the average pettiness, selfishness, egoism, self-deception that is about him and these he represents well enough as well as a great deal of mental incompetence and moral conventionalty, timidity and pretence".

What he does usually represent is all the average pettiness, selfishness, egoism, self-deception that is about him and these he represents well enough as well as a great deal of mental incompetence and moral conventionalty, timidity and pretence". The adults and elders must realize what the young of India are getting from them in the years of their growing up!

(Professor Rajput works in education, social cohesion and religious amity; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT REMEMBERED

Madam — Mahatma Gandhi's relentless efforts were instrumental in India's journey to independence. From the 1930 Dandi March to the 1942 Quit India Movement, Gandhi's leadership was pivotal in challenging British rule. On August 9, 1942, India embarked on a crucial new phase in its fight for freedom—a mass uprising against colonial rule that heralded the imminent end of the British Empire in India. Although Gandhi and the Congress leadership were imprisoned on August 8, the call to "Quit India" ignited a nationwide movement. With the leaders behind bars, the people took to the streets, driven by Gandhi's urgent call to action. Their resolve and sacrifice laid the groundwork for India's eventual independence, a testament to their undying commitment to freedom and self-determination.

Jayanthi Subramaniam | Mumbai

PM VISIT REASSURES WAYANAD

Madam — On Saturday, the Prime Minister visited Wayanad, a region recently struck by an unprecedented disaster that claimed around 400 lives and forced thousands into relief camps. His visit uplifted the spirits of the disillusioned and distressed and fostered the hopes. Their eyes were filled with tears emotionally as they recounted their ordeals to him. The visit also expedited the rehabilitation process, with authorities working tirelessly to restore normalcy, as the Prime Minister promised to provide all possible assistance. This gesture has won the hearts of the people, and such initiatives are now expected in the future. In the aftermath of the Prime Minister's visit, the people of Wayanad find themselves not only comforted by his empathy but also reassured by his commitment to their recovery. The renewed hope in their eyes speaks to the power of genuine leadership in times of crisis. As the region begins to rebuild, the memory of this visit will linger, a reminder that in the face of

Bangladesh on boil



This is in response to the news article, "Bangladesh: Uncertainty and Chaos Grip the Nation" (August 10). The recent vio-

lence in Bangladesh has tragically impacted hundreds of Hindus. The growing relationship between Bangladesh and India under Sheikh Hasina's leadership has become intolerable to Islamic fundamentalists in the region. Targeting Hindus as part of the anti-national movement in Bangladesh could backfire on the newly elected interim government led by Mohammad Yunus.

This unrest is likely to have negative repercussions on the yarn trade between India and Bangladesh. Unfortunately, international human rights organizations have remained silent in the face of these atrocities against minorities. It is imperative to take immediate action to stop the violence against Hindus in Bangladesh. The call for Hindu unity is resonating strongly both within the country and abroad.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

adversity, they are not alone.

Jakir Hussain | Kanpur

RAHUL GANDHI'S EVOLUTION

Madam — Apropos the article, "The Evolution of Rahul Gandhi," published on August 8, this is my response. Rahul Gandhi, once mocked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his supporters as "Pappu" and an "entitled dynast," staged a remarkable comeback in the 2024 general elections. He became the central figure of an alliance that successfully penetrated BJP strongholds, particularly in Uttar Pradesh. As the heir to India's renowned Nehru-Gandhi political dynasty, Rahul Gandhi led two nationwide marches against what he termed Modi's politics of hate and fear, revitalizing his Congress party and redefining his own public image. Rahul Gandhi has repeatedly emphasized that his fight against Modi's BJP is not merely about seizing power but about challenging the party's and the RSS's "Hindu-first" ideology, which contradicts India's secular principles as outlined in

the Constitution. The results of the last general election significantly boosted Rahul Gandhi's morale, prompting people to view him more positively and take him seriously as a leader. They have come to recognize him as a leader focused on real-life issues—such as unemployment, women's safety, the violence in Manipur, NEET exam paper leaks, rising prices of gas cylinders, petrol, and diesel, and caste-related issues. Most importantly, he is seen as the one who will uphold the spirit of secularism in the nation. These factors have collectively reshaped public perception of Rahul Gandhi.

Now, having emerged stronger and as the Leader of the Opposition with substantial support from Opposition MPs in Parliament, Rahul Gandhi, known for his oratory skills, is poised to present significant challenges to Mr. Modi and his party in the days ahead on various issues facing the country.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Revamping the English literature curriculum

Once a cornerstone of intellectual pursuit, English literature studies are now facing a troubling decline in popularity among students in India

Once a most demanding course among youngsters, English literature studies has seen a significant decline in the past decade. In many colleges in India seats of B.Literature remain vacant despite its huge potential in this digital age. The policymakers and academicians should brainstorm the reasons and come out with concrete plans to overcome this dilemma. In India, many students see STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) as a subject of intellect and opportunities, compared to humanities.

Emerging fields like data science, artificial intelligence, and digital marketing are gaining popularity among students due to their perceived relevance and lucrative opportunities. This trend reduces the appeal of traditional literary studies. The perception that a degree in English offers limited career options and lower earning potential can deter students from pursuing it. This view is compounded by a lack of clear and well-promoted career pathways specifically tied to English studies. Many



English literature programs may have curricula that have not been updated to reflect contemporary literary trends and regional and global issues. The stress on Shakespearean and other literary works doesn't get connected to present-day society. Shakespearean plays and other classical works were written in very different historical and cultural contexts. The social norms, political structures, and everyday concerns of ancient times may seem foreign to modern readers. This historical gap can make it hard for students to see how the themes and issues of these works relate to their own lives. A focus on classic literature without integrating contemporary and diverse voices may alienate students who are more interested in

modern and global literary trends. The rise of digital media and alternative forms of entertainment, such as social media, video games, and streaming platforms, has altered reading habits. Students may be less inclined to engage with traditional literature due to these competing interests. Though science education reformations forms part of national policies, literature education rarely finds its place in national policies, though NEP stresses the need to undertake literary studies.

To make literature more relatable and engaging, integrate a diverse range of texts. Include contemporary works from different cultures, genres, and perspectives. For instance, introducing novels, short stories, and poetry from emerging voices around the world, alongside regional literature, can provide students with a broader view of the literary landscape. Academicians should link literature with other fields such as history, psychology, sociology, and environmental studies. For instance, studying dystopian novels alongside discussions of climate sci-

ence and environmental issues can provide students with a deeper understanding of both the literature and the real-world issues it reflects.

Thrust should be given to include components that prepare students for the job market, such as resume writing, interview skills, and networking opportunities. Connecting literature studies with science and other relevant fields will enhance career prospects. In the age of bots, literature students should even be taught the fundamentals of computer programming. Revitalising the literary syllabus necessitates a deliberate strategy that incorporates current issues, embraces digital and multimedia resources, fosters interdisciplinary linkages, and emphasises practical skills. Educational institutions can establish a literary program that is relevant and exciting for 21st-century students by using a variety of texts, utilising technology, and regularly updating the curriculum.

(The writer is the Academic affairs, GCU and adjunct faculty at NIAS, Bengaluru; views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN





FIRST COLUMN

CELEBRATING WORLD LEFT-HANDERS DAY

This day honours the 13 percent who navigate a world designed for the right-handed



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

The 13th of August is commemorated as World Left-Handers Day, a day dedicated to the 13% of the world's population who make do in a world that wasn't meant for them. To many of us, left-handedness is just a fascinating statistic, something we mention in passing or wonder at during a discussion. However, for those of us who lean left, this is a quiet, everyday rebellion against a world that expects us to fit in when we don't quite belong. From the moment we grip our first crayon, left-handers are thrust into a world where ease can be transformed into hand-to-hand combat.

Scissors bite painfully; pens spill over the paper; spiral notebooks are a tangle of discomfort. It's completely out of tune, like music played in a different key. However, this dissonance does not weaken us, but rather it strengthens us. In a world designed for right-handers, left-handers learn to improvise, create, and, eventually, prosper. This kind of adaptability lends itself to creativity, which is sometimes cited as a virtue among lefties. To us, however, creativity is more than just an artistic talent; it is a survival ability. Being left-handed means seeing the world from a different perspective and approaching difficulties with a different mindset.

Our brains are wired to think beyond the box because, honestly, the box was never meant for us in the first place. It is no surprise that left-handers such as Leonardo da Vinci, Nikola Tesla, and Marie Curie are among history's most recognised thinkers. They did not think differently; they saw differently, creating visions that changed our per-



ception of what is possible. However, it is not only about inventiveness. Being left-handed entails a quiet fortitude, borne of years of adjusting to a world that frequently forgets to include you. Each southpaw has a story to tell: awkward contortions in class, struggles with right-handed instruments, and ink-stained palms. However, these events do not diminish us; rather, they define us. They teach us how to be resourceful, to face challenges with fortitude, and to see beauty in the unexpected. Being rare has a mystical quality about it. Being left-handed means standing out in a crowd, but more significantly, in life. It represents the fact that normalcy can be overvalued while the difference is powerful.

The left-handed intellect does not only accomplish what most others avoid; it frequently forges a new path where none previously existed. In art, science, sports, or leadership, a left-hander will do things differently, deviate from the norm, and transform the ordinary into remarkable. As we commemorate World Left-Handers Day, let us remember that being left-handed is much more than a biological quirk; it is a way of life, a sign of creativity, perseverance, and inventiveness that stems from a worldview that sees things not as they are, but as they could be.

Left-handers, living in a right-handed society, remind us that magic sometimes happens in the opposite direction. Here's to the lefties—the visionaries who prove that being different is not only acceptable but also remarkable. In celebrating World Left-Handers Day, we honor more than just a minority group—we recognize a testament to human adaptability and creativity. Left-handers remind us that thriving often means forging our own path, embracing differences, and finding strength in what sets us apart.

As we acknowledge the challenges lefties face, we also celebrate the unique perspective they bring to the world. Here's to the left-handers, whose quiet resilience and innovative spirit show us that being different isn't just okay—it's extraordinary.

(The writer is a freelance writer; views are personal)

Can Muhammad Yunus micro manage Bangladesh



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

As the world watches, the implications of this power shift resonate far beyond Dhaka's borders; the once peaceful country has plunged into anarchy

South Asia's youngest nation has been thrust into a new era following a four-day power vacuum, decisively crossing a point of no return. A new messiah has emerged to rule over 171 million people, arriving from Paris in a full-circle moment. Had Hasina remained in power, he would have been sentenced to life for corruption on the very day Hasina fled the country she had ruled for over 15 years. Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus has assumed the role of head of the interim government. A 14-member interim government including a Hindu psychiatrist and a Buddhist human rights activist led by Prof. Yunus has taken charge.

Alarming, most of these members are heads of Western-funded NGOs, exposing the true manipulators behind the scenes. It was a nightmare for them to run their NGOs during Hasina's tenure, with many facing harassment, intimidation, and even imprisonment. Now, they have set their yardstick. Nobel laureate Prof. Yunus, who has received the Congressional Gold Medal and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honours in the United States, illustrates the adage that, as Americans say, there's no such thing as a free lunch. The coming months will reveal how Dhaka's political shifts will reverberate across borders. Nearly 300 people have been killed in the post-Hasina period, with rampant looting, attacks on minorities, and intimidation of state institutions. Images show disturbing violence, including the burning of Hindu temples. The riots go beyond protests against the Awami League, revealing deeper conflicts. Simultaneously, one should not overlook the deep-rooted anti-India sentiments in Bangladesh and its diaspora, exacerbated by the India Out campaign. Unfortunately, Delhi policymakers may have underestimated this sentiment and placed undue trust in Hasina.

It was a bloodbath, and the incidents that unfolded suggest it was a well-planned political scheme, executed promptly to overthrow Hasina—a time-tested leader, though surrounded by controversies. The humiliating destruction of Bangabandhu's statue starkly echoes the fall of Saddam Hussein's statue in Baghdad. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, known as Bangabandhu, laid the foundation of Bangladesh with his political ideology and dedication during the struggle for independence. Despite overcoming initial challenges, fear has once again taken hold in the country. The chaotic situation exemplifies a state of total anarchy. This is not a revolution; revolutions are meant to improve the lives of people, not to indulge in bloodlust against unarmed citizens with opposing political viewpoints or religious beliefs. However, given the nation's violent history even before its inception, it seems to be passing through yet another despicable period.

Is this merely a student uprising, or is someone manipulating them behind the scenes to exploit the situation? When the political intelligentsia abstains from protests, reducing them to mere emotional outbursts, it fosters an environment ripe for the creation of new, equally monstrous situations. This cycle will inevitably doom us to repeat the same failures. The harrowing video of an unemployed youth wearing a black t-shirt being shot by a policeman only deepened the unrest. Hasina bears blood on her hands; whether direct-



DESPITE OVERCOMING INITIAL CHALLENGES, FEAR HAS ONCE AGAIN TAKEN HOLD IN THE COUNTRY. THE CHAOTIC SITUATION EXEMPLIFIES A STATE OF TOTAL ANARCHY. THIS IS NOT A REVOLUTION. REVOLUTIONS ARE MEANT TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF PEOPLE, NOT TO INDULGE IN BLOODLUST AGAINST UNARMED CITIZENS

ly or through those who ordered lethal force against protesters, accountability is imperative. Thanks to India, Hasina narrowly escaped a fate akin to Muammar Gaddafi's. In the January elections, she set a trap with her abuse of power and legislative misogyny, even denying medical treatment to opponents. Her opponents seized on the quota issue as the tipping point. Although she addressed it, she failed to recognise it was merely a façade. Her inability to understand that 15 years is too long for any democracy to be managed alone highlights a grim historical lesson. However, history teaches us a valuable lesson: despite Ferdinand Marcos' ousting, his family's influence persisted, and in 2021, his son made a notable comeback in the Philippines. That's the nature of politics. Consequently, whoever comes to power next will face a challenging situation.

The manipulations behind these shocking events, which unfolded within a month while the Prime Minister was in China, may be revealed in the future, much like how America tried to obscure the genocide in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) during the early 60s, with Henry Kissinger maintaining a political alliance with General Yahya Khan of Pakistan as a secret route to engage with China. Commenting on the situation, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, reflecting his country's global ambitions, urged the Bangladeshi people to ensure that 'any decisions made by the interim government need to respect democratic principles, uphold the rule of law, and reflect the will of the people.' This statement came shortly after the arrival of F-16 fighter jets in Ukraine, continued arms supplies to Israel, and the brutal killing of

Black woman Sonya Massey by law enforcement in her own home—just a few examples that highlight the contradictions in America's respect for the rule of law and international norms. Ironically, many have started comparing the situation in Bangladesh with Sri Lanka. However, there are significant differences between the unprecedented exit of the Bangladeshi Prime Minister this week and the relinquishment of power by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in Sri Lanka two years ago. One key factor was India's attitude, which was drastically different in these cases.

Reliable sources with knowledge of the events in Sri Lanka have asserted that India believed Gotabaya Rajapaksa should not resign but should stay in power. This stance resulted in no airlift facilities being provided for a safe exit, forcing the then-President to flee to the Maldives in an over-50-year-old Air Force plane.

In contrast, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh received swift support from India. Second, Gotabaya Rajapaksa came to power through free and fair elections with a significant majority, whereas Sheikh Hasina was re-elected after a series of repressions against opposition political parties. Her handling of the elections reflected growing public displeasure. Winning over regional powers and maintaining their support certainly made her powerful and influential.

Her development projects offered to India, China, Russia, and Japan highlighted bold decisions in her foreign policy. She effectively balanced both India and China, showcasing her capability more effectively than any other South Asian leader in contemporary political history. However, a com-

mon trait between these two leaders is their stance on China. Despite unprecedented pressure from the West, both leaders continued to work harmoniously with China. For instance, when Mike Pompeo, then Secretary of State and former CIA Director, criticised China during his visit to Colombo, President Rajapaksa directly told him that "the opinion held by America against China in Sri Lanka is factually wrong." Since then, Rajapaksa's politics began to crumble, pointing to the decisions he made and the protests that followed.

Similarly, after successfully concluding a visit to India right after Modi's re-election, Hasina flew to China to initiate more Chinese-funded development projects. By then, her fate at home was already sealed. In this context, Elon Musk's recent comment on Venezuela is apt: 'We will coup whoever we want! Deal with it.' Amidst the social media spectacle dominated by profit-driven motives and emotionally manipulative politics, the unemployed youth who ignited change in Bangladesh may soon face this harsh reality. Western ambitions in unstable countries often focus on destruction and manipulation through proxies rather than genuine improvements in livelihoods. The new interim government may well understand this realpolitik. With Hasina's downfall, the direction of the interim government's foreign policy and its approach towards the Global South, including BRICS, remains uncertain. While it may be premature to fully assess this interim arrangement, the situation poses a significant challenge for India, China, and Asia as a whole.

(The writer is a journalist and author. Views expressed are personal)

Pushpanjali Medicon 2024: Top doctors share insights on health and wellness

This unique medical conference covered topics ranging from liver health to the often-overlooked connection between sex and wellness

It's not every day that you see India's top medical professionals gathering under one roof to discuss various health conditions and offer advice on leading a healthy life. This rare opportunity drew people of all ages in large numbers to the capital, eager to hear the insights and wisdom of these renowned doctors.



VIVEK SHUKLA

This significant event was made possible through the tireless efforts of Dr. Vinay Aggarwal, the Past National President of the Indian Medical Association, and his dedicated team, who organized the Pushpanjali Medicon 2024 conference. The conference was meticulously planned to cover a wide range of topics, including Pregnancy-Related

Acute Kidney Injury, Headache Management, the Mystery of Dizziness, Suicide Prevention, Fatty Liver, and issues of reproductive health. The event saw the participation of leading doctors from the capital and various states such as Mumbai, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and beyond. One of the most anticipated sessions was led by Dr. Shiv

Kumar Sarin, a distinguished clinician and gastroenterologist, who captivated the audience with his talk on maintaining liver health. Dr. Sarin emphasised the liver's critical role as the controller and fulcrum of our metabolic well-being, comparing it to a chartered accountant that keeps a meticulous record of our body's intake and expenditure. He highlighted how any surplus, whether from genetic factors or excessive calorie consumption, can lead to fatty liver disease.

This condition forces the pancreas to produce more insulin, which can eventually result in diabetes. Moreover, the excess fat in the liver doesn't just stay there; it circulates through-

out the body, potentially leading to complications such as gallstones. Another notable speaker, Dr. Rajeev Sood, the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor of Baba Farid University of Health Sciences and former Dean of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and PGIMER in Delhi, shared his expertise on managing prostate health. His session provided valuable insights into a topic that is often overlooked but crucial for men's health, particularly as they age.

One of the most engaging sessions was on the topic "Sex Has No Expiry Date," delivered by Dr. Deepak Juman, a Mumbai-based expert in sexual health. Dr. Juman spoke with remarkable eloquence on a subject



that is rarely discussed openly, especially in such forums. He stressed the undeniable link between sex and overall health, arguing that sexual activity is one of the

most vital biological functions, essential for a fulfilling life. Addressing a packed audience, Dr. Juman asserted that sexual pleasure is both a personal business

and a fundamental right, emphasizing that all sexual dysfunctions can be managed, allowing individuals of all ages to lead a sexually satisfying life.

The success of this unique health conference, where top doctors interacted with both medical professionals and the general public, is indeed a great achievement. The importance of conferences like Pushpanjali Medicon 2024 cannot be overstated. Similar events must be held across the country. Dr. Aggarwal argues that such gatherings are vital for fostering closer ties between doctors, patients, and medical professionals. Healthcare conferences like Pushpanjali Medicon are

more than just formal events; they are epicenters of innovation and collaboration within the medical field. These gatherings offer invaluable networking opportunities with industry peers, critical for both personal and professional growth.

They also provide continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions that are essential for staying updated with the latest advancements in healthcare. Beyond the educational value, these conferences are inspiring and refreshing, offering a chance to recharge while gaining new insights and connections.

(The writer is an author and a columnist; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



India's industrial output grows 4.2 pc in June

India's industrial production grew 4.2 per cent in June this year, mainly due to a good show by the mining and power sectors, according to official data released on Monday. The factory output, measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) witnessed a growth of 4 per cent in June 2023. India's Index of Industrial Production increased by 4.2 per cent in June 2024, an official statement said. The data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) showed that the manufacturing sector's output grew 2.6 per cent in June 2024 against 3.5 per cent in the year-ago month. In June this year, mining production rose 10.3 per cent, and power output increased 8.6 per cent. In the April-June quarter of this fiscal, the IIP grew 5.2 per cent compared to 4.7 per cent in the year-ago period.



Gold rises Rs 200, silver rallies Rs 1,000 per kg

Gold prices rose by Rs 200 to Rs 72,350 per 10 grams while silver prices rallied by Rs 1,000 per kg in the local market here on Monday amid firm global trends. In the previous session, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed lower at Rs 72,150 per 10 grams on Saturday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Silver prices jumped by Rs 1,000 to Rs 83,500 per kg from Rs 82,500 per kg in the previous close. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also climbed by Rs 200 to Rs 72,000 per 10 grams. In the previous trade, it had ended at Rs 71,800 per 10 grams on Saturday. Traders attributed the rise in gold prices to increased demand from local jewellers and a strong trend in the overseas markets. "Gold prices rose on Monday as persisting geopolitical concerns about Middle Eastern crises boosted the safe-haven demand for precious metal," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.



Panasonic Energy India profit grows to Rs 4 cr in April-June

Panasonic Energy India Company Ltd (PECIN) on Monday reported a profit after tax of Rs 4.14 crore in June quarter, up from Rs 2.59 crore in the year-ago period. The company's total income fell to Rs 64.18 crore in the first quarter of this fiscal from Rs 77.48 crore in the April-June period of preceding 2023-24 financial year, Panasonic Energy India said in an exchange filing. During the reporting quarter, the company reduced expenses to Rs 58.55 crore from Rs 74.02 crore in the three-month period a year ago. In a separate statement, Akinori Isomura, Chairman and Managing Director, PECIN, said, "Last two years have charted a turnaround story for company's operations and we have been reporting a consistent growth in profit. The slight dip in revenue this quarter is on account of a large B2B one time order that we won last year, so if we look at the overall sales growth in insolation of this order, we have recorded a 7 per cent growth."

Nothing more for govt to add
DEA Secretary on Hindenburg report on Sebi Chief

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Monday said it has nothing more to add to the statements given by the Securities and Exchange Board of India and its chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch regarding Hindenburg's latest report. US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research on Saturday launched a broadside against the Sebi's chairperson, alleging she and her husband had stakes in obscure offshore funds allegedly used in investments in the Adani companies.

"Sebi has made the statement. The chairperson has also made a statement. There is nothing further to be added by the government," Economic Affairs Secretary in the Finance Ministry Ajay Seth told reporters here. Hindenburg, in its latest report, alleged that Sebi Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband had undisclosed investments in obscure offshore funds in Bermuda and Mauritius, the same entities allegedly used by Vinod Adani - the elder brother of group chairman Gautam Adani - to round-trip funds and inflate stock prices.

Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch, in a joint statement, strongly denied the "baseless allegations and insinuations made in the report", saying the charges were "devoid of any truth". Sebi also defended its chairperson. In a two-page statement, the regulator said Buch had made relevant disclosures from time to time, and she "had also recused herself in matters involving potential conflicts of interest".



Sebi has made the statement. The chairperson has also made a statement. There is nothing further to be added by the government

Sebi chief gets backing of REIT, industry bodies

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Industry bodies representing the Real estate Investments trusts (REITs) and alternate capital on Monday came in support of embattled Sebi chief Madhabi Puri Buch facing allegations by US short-seller Hindenburg Research of having stakes in obscure offshore funds linked to Adani group. Indian REITs Association (IRA) said that claims made by the US-based short-seller suggesting that the REIT framework made by markets regulator Sebi serves the interests of a select few are "baseless and misleading". In fact, the association has commended Sebi and its leadership for crafting a "rigorous regulatory environment" that includes comprehensive periodic reporting requirements, mandatory independent valuations, and strict governance

standards. "Developed in consultation with all market participants, this framework ensures the highest levels of investor protection for both -- domestic and international institutional investors, as well as retail investors," it said. The Indian Venture and Alternate Capital Association (IVCA) also said it stands firmly behind Buch in the "challenging times" and added that the markets regulator has shown an "unwavering commitment to market integrity, regulatory governance, and investor protection". The support from the two bodies comes a day after mutual fund lobby grouping Amfi (Association of Mutual Funds in India) on Sunday backed Buch, saying the short-seller's report is an attempt to undermine Buch's contribution to the Indian capital market and the country's economic progress.

PUBG, BGMI-maker plans to set up R&D unit in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

PUBG and BGMI-maker KRAFTON intends to set up an R&D facility in India by next year to develop games suited to the Indian culture, company's India business head Sean Hyunil Sohn said. KRAFTON India CEO Sohn said that the details of the facility are yet to be finalised, but the top location choices are Bangalore and Pune. "We will continue to launch new games for the Indian market, either sourcing from outside or from India. We will do our best to set up a good quality development team based in India and develop quality games based on Indian culture," he said on the sidelines of IDGS Gaming Conclave.

Sohn had earlier said that India was among the top three markets for the company in terms of user base. "India has a huge demand for digital entertainment content, including gaming. We have seen a very fast pace of growth on a year-on-year basis but I think there's a lack of top quality talent supply into the ecosystem, which has many factors behind that sort of situation."

Govt approves 20 pc premium for gas from new wells for ONGC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has approved a 20 per cent premium over the regulated or APM price for any natural gas that ONGC will produce from new wells, the company said on Monday. Currently, two pricing regimes govern the majority of the domestic production of natural gas, which is used to generate electricity, produce fertiliser, turn into CNG for running automobiles and piped to households for cooking.



Gas produced from legacy or fields given to state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Ltd, on nomination basis, is priced at 10 per cent of the prevailing price of crude oil that India imports. This price, subject to a cap price of USD 6.5 per million British thermal units, is called regulated or APM price. So, at the current Indian basket price of USD 77 per barrel, the APM

price for gas produced from ONGC's Mumbai High and Bassein fields in the western offshore should come to USD 7.7 per mmBtu, but it is paid the cap price of USD 6.5. Gas produced from difficult fields, such as those in the deep sea, is governed by a different formula and paid a higher rate because of the higher cost involved in its production. That price for six months starting April 1 is USD 9.87 per mmBtu. When these formulas were adopted last year, it was decided that gas produced from new wells, even in legacy fields, would be paid a premium of 20 per cent over the APM price. Now, that has been notified. "As per guidelines for domestic gas pricing, domestic natural gas price (APM price) was fixed at 10 per cent of the Indian crude basket price as announced by Petroleum Planning and Analysis (PPAC) on a monthly basis."

RBI penalises CSB Bank, Union Bank of India, others

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India on Monday imposed penalties on five entities, including CSB Bank, Union Bank of India and Muthoot Housing Finance for contravention of various regulatory norms. A penalty of Rs 1.86 crore has been imposed on CSB Bank for non-compliance with certain directions issued by the RBI on 'Guidelines on Managing Risks and Code of Conduct in Outsourcing of Financial Services by banks' and 'Master Circular on Branch Authorisation'. In another statement, the RBI said a penalty of Rs 1.06 crore has been imposed on Union Bank of India for non-compliance with certain norms on 'Creation of a Central Repository of Large Common Exposures-Across Banks' and 'Know Your Customer (KYC)'. A fine of 5 lakh has been imposed on Muthoot Housing Finance Company for non-compliance with certain provisions of the 'Non-



Retail inflation slips to 5-yr low of 3.54 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Retail inflation declined to a five-year low of 3.54 per cent in July mainly on account of subdued prices of food items, and base effect, according to official data released on Monday. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based retail inflation was 5.08 per cent in June 2024 and 7.44 per cent in July 2023. Retail inflation slipped below the median target of 4 per cent of the Reserve Bank for the first time since September 2019 when it was at 3.99 per cent. The government has tasked the RBI to ensure inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side. Inflation has remained below 6 per cent since September 2023.

According to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the annual inflation in 'milk and milk products' was 2.99 per cent, 'oils and fats' (-) 1.17, fruits 3.84 per cent, and spices (-) 1.43 per cent. The rate of price rise was 6.83 per cent in the vegetable basket and 8.14 per cent in 'cereals and products', NSO said. The CPI Inflation in the food basket was 5.42 per cent in July, down from 9.36 per cent in June, and 11.51 a year ago. Inflation in the 'fuel and light' segment was in negative at 5.48 per cent. The NSO data further showed that inflation was more than the national average in rural India at 4.1 per cent while in urban areas it was 2.98 per cent.

IIP growth slows to 5-month low

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's industrial production slowed to a five-month low of 4.2 per cent in June 2024, mainly due to poor performance of the manufacturing sector, though power and mining sectors continue to perform well, as per official data released on Monday. The factory output growth, measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), was 6.2 per cent in May, 5 per cent in April, 5.5 per cent in March, 5.6 per cent in February

and 4.2 per cent in January 2024. During the April-June period this fiscal, the IIP growth was 5.2 per cent against 4.7 per cent in the same period of the preceding financial year. India's Index of Industrial Production grew by 4 per cent in June 2023, according to a statement by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation. As per the data, the mining output growth accelerated to 10.3 per cent in June against a 7.6 per cent expansion in the year-ago month.

HINDENBURG-SEBI-ADANI ROW
Stock markets close lower

Pvt banks lend support

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Stock markets closed marginally lower in highly volatile trade on Monday as gains in private banks helped benchmark Sensex recoup some of the early losses inflicted by allegations against Sebi chief Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband by the US short-seller Hindenburg Research. The 30-share Sensex closed lower by 56.99 points or 0.07 per cent at 79,648.92 with 18 of its constituents ending with losses and 12 with gains. The index had declined by 479.78 points or 0.60 per cent to a low of 79,226.13 in morning trade due to losses in Adani group shares and blue-chips like Reliance Industries. The benchmark later staged a sharp recovery climbing around 880 points from the day's lows to hit a high of 80,106.18. But at the day-end, the BSE benchmark slipped into the negative territory and closed lower. The NSE Nifty dipped 20.50 points or 0.08 per cent to 24,347. Intra-day, it hit a low of 24,212.10 and a high of 24,472.80. "The Indian market concluded relatively flat, with its initial path being eclipsed by the continuation of the Adani-Hindenburg-SEBI saga. However, the market tried to brush away these noises, taking positive cues from global markets," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. From 30 Sensex firms, Adani Ports, NTPC, Power Grid, State Bank of India, Nestle, Mahindra & Mahindra, Reliance Industries and Tata Consultancy Services were the biggest laggards. Axis Bank, Infosys, JSW Steel, Tata Motors, HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the gainers from the blue-chip pack.



SUNIL MITTAL ON BHARTI'S STAKE ACQUISITION IN BT

'Attractive buy, good long-term investment'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bharti Enterprises Chairman Sunil Mittal on Monday said the conglomerate's decision to acquire a 24.5 per cent stake in BT Group marks a "good, long-term investment" and an "attractive buy", citing the British company's strong portfolio of home broadband, fibre, mobile and enterprise offerings.

Mittal, a telecom industry stalwart, exuded confidence about the investment and business prospects of BT and indicated that while the priority, for now, is to understand the com-

pany and the UK market in-depth, "if there are more opportunities in Europe, we will certainly be open to it in future". On Bharti's decision to buy a 24.5 per cent stake in BT Group - a move that would make it the single largest shareholder in Britain's largest broadband and mobile company - Mittal said: "I think this is a very attractive buy... the UK and European telecom companies are trading at low multiples... so given the cash flow expectations of BT, we believe this is going to be a good investment, and it is a long-

term investment. Earlier on Monday, Bharti Global, the international investment arm of Bharti Enterprises, announced it will acquire about 24.5 per cent stake in BT Group from Altice UK. Although Bharti did not divulge the size of the transaction, the deal is estimated to be the ballpark figure of USD 4 billion. Sunil Mittal's son Shравin Bharti Mittal, Managing Director of Bharti Global, highlighted that this was a "rare opportunity to buy a stake this size". "BT is exciting for a couple

of reasons. It has a perfect combination of a stable cash flow profile from its consumer business, BT business and growth coming through 'Openreach', and our expectation is that there is enough clarity that the management is delivering, there is clarity of vision and clarity on execution, and it is the right time to enter as an investor in BT." "Our belief is that in the coming years, we will see a significant expansion of the cash flow profile, and the timing was rightly suited for us, at the international arm for this investment," he added.

Major domestic appliances market sees 18% growth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

The small domestic appliances market recorded a 29 per cent increase in value, reflecting heightened consumer interest in home convenience products, according to the report. The report also added that customers are now looking for feature-rich and premium products, which is fuelling the value growth in the appliance segment. Now washing machines with capacities of 9kg or above have recorded an "impressive growth rate of 30 per cent", which is driven by consumers seeking enhanced performance and innovative features. Similarly, the air-conditioner segment is benefiting from



similar trends, where demand for energy-efficient and high-performance models has grown by 59 per cent in the split inverter and 5-star segments. "Cooling appliances (refrigerator) have seen an 11 per cent increase in the side-by-side, French door, and 3/4

door segments," it said. The report also suggests that despite such gains, the relatively low penetration of these products presents significant opportunities for industry expansion. The smartphone and mobile phones segment had a 6 per cent reduction in volume, it

was offset by a substantial 10 per cent increase in overall value. In particular, the smartphone segment registered a 12 per cent increase in value," it said. The report further stated that India has emerged as "the fastest growing market for consumer tech and durables market" and this growth trajectory is underscored by a strong PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index) reading and declining inflation rates. "The middle class in India is set to outspend the upper class by 2030, with half of the world's population expected to belong to the middle class, predominantly driven by growth in Asia," it said.

Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I likely to be completed by 2027-28: MoRTH

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

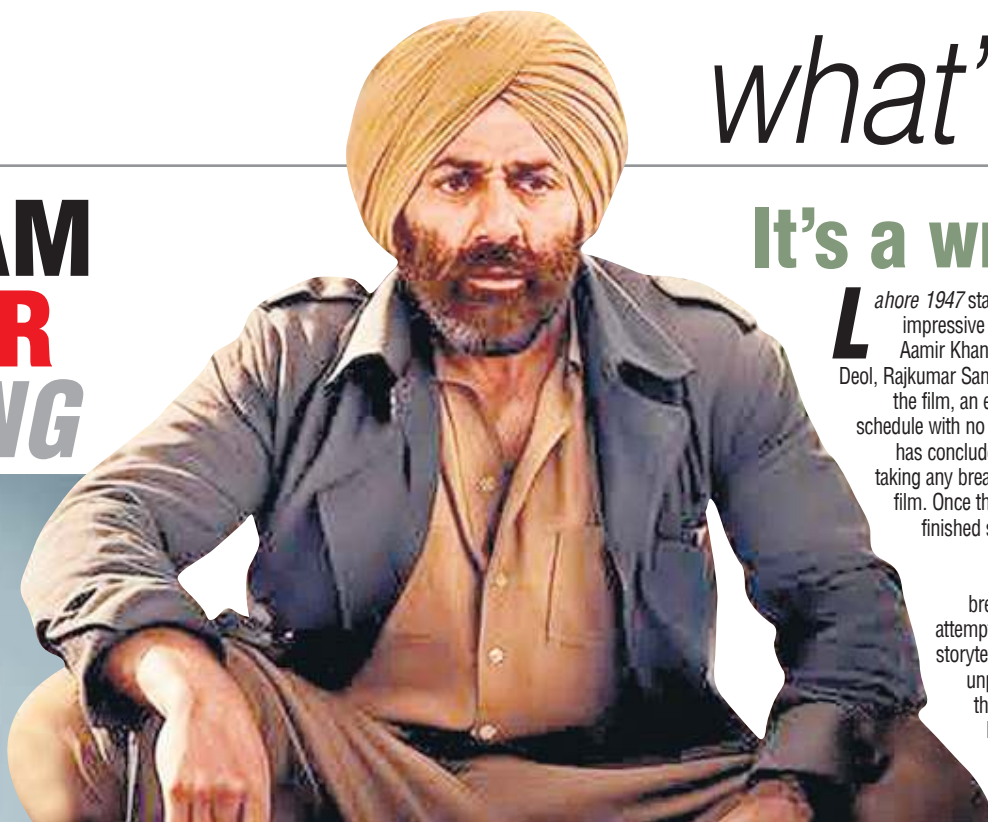
The Modi government's flagship Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I, which has overshot the expenditure limit, is expected to be completed by 2027-28, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) said in its annual report. The ministry, in its annual report 2023-24, said a revised financial proposal for the Bharatmala Pariyojana is under process for approval. The Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I entails a total length of 34,800 km in 31 states and UTs and more than 550 districts.



"The length awarded is 26,425 km, and the length constructed is 17,411 km so far. The programme is expected to be completed by 2027-28," the report said. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)

approved the Bharatmala Phase-I in June 2017. The Bharatmala Pariyojana envisages the development of about 26,000 km length of economic corridors, which -- along with the Golden Quadrilateral (GQ) and North-West and East-West (NS-EW) Corridors -- are expected to carry the majority of the freight traffic on roads. Further, about 8,000 km of interstate corridors and about 7,500 km of feeder routes have been identified for improving the effectiveness of Economic Corridors, GQ and NS-EW Corridors.

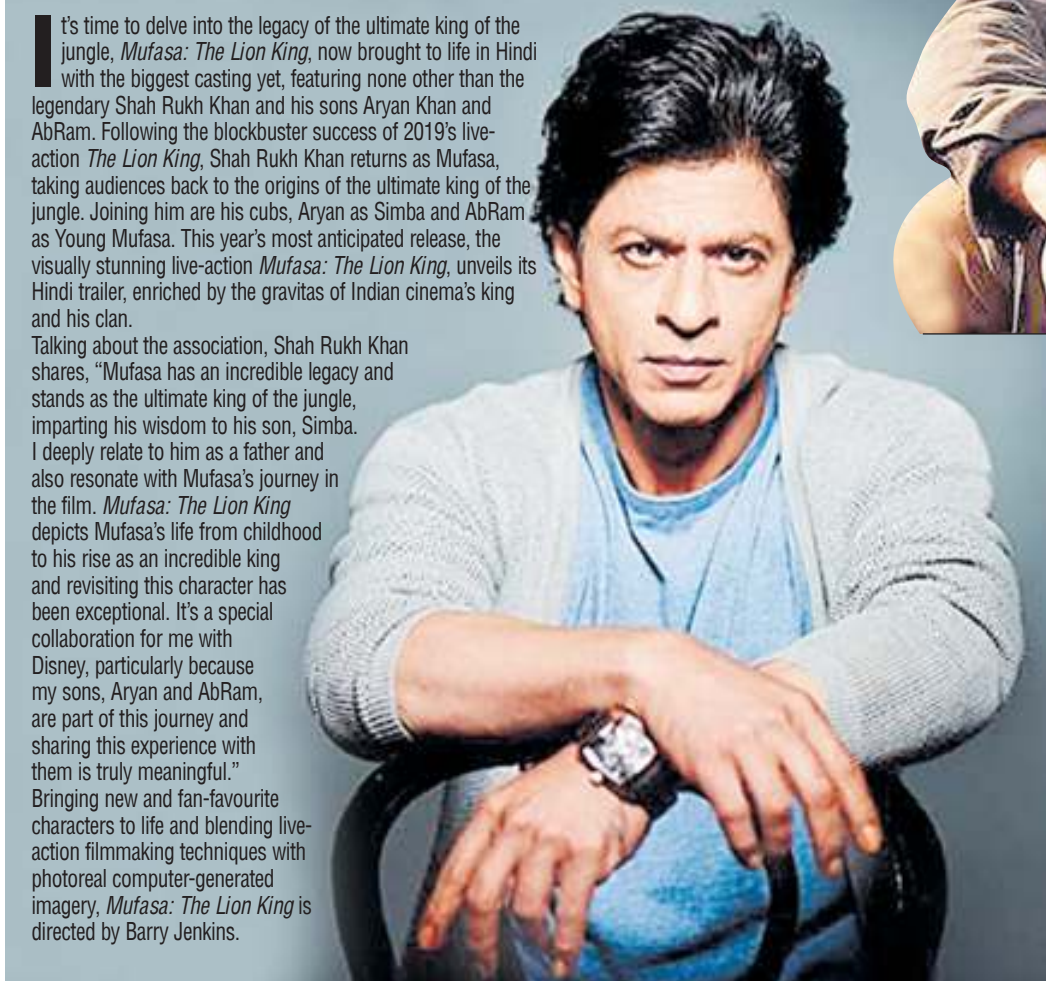
SRK, ARYAN & ABRAM COME TOGETHER FOR MUFASA: THE LION KING



It's a wrap for *Lahore 1947*

Lahore 1947 stands as one of the most anticipated projects in recent times, bringing together an impressive array of talent both in front of and behind the camera. Made under the banner of Aamir Khan Productions, the film brings together a dream team of formidable forces: Sunny Deol, Rajkumar Santoshi and Aamir Khan, collaborating for the first time. Amid rising excitement for the film, an exciting update has come: the film has finally wrapped up after an intense 70-day schedule with no breaks. As per a source close to the production, "The shooting for *Lahore 1947* has concluded after an intensive 70-day schedule. The schedule has been completed without taking any breaks. It's been a fantastic experience to see stalwarts bring a magical quality to the film. Once the edit is locked, there will be a few days of patch work... but largely the film has finished shooting. Raj ji has been very excited about what they have been able to capture. There have been several crowd sequences that have been shot."

In a recent update, the makers unveiled that the film's grand finale included a breathtaking train sequence—one of the most ambitious and elaborate scenes ever attempted in a film about the Partition era. It is expected to set new standards for visual storytelling, capturing the chaotic and emotionally charged atmosphere of the time with unparalleled detail and intensity! For *Lahore 1947*, Aamir Khan will be stepping into the role of producer, bringing his vision and expertise to the project through Aamir Khan Productions. The film will be directed by the renowned Rajkumar Santoshi, known for his exceptional storytelling. Leading the cast will be Sunny Deol and Preity Zinta, who will play pivotal roles in this highly anticipated film.



It's time to delve into the legacy of the ultimate king of the jungle, *Mufasa: The Lion King*, now brought to life in Hindi with the biggest casting yet, featuring none other than the legendary Shah Rukh Khan and his sons Aryan Khan and AbRam. Following the blockbuster success of 2019's live-action *The Lion King*, Shah Rukh Khan returns as Mufasa, taking audiences back to the origins of the ultimate king of the jungle. Joining him are his cubs, Aryan as Simba and AbRam as Young Mufasa. This year's most anticipated release, the visually stunning live-action *Mufasa: The Lion King*, unveils its Hindi trailer, enriched by the gravitas of Indian cinema's king and his clan.

Talking about the association, Shah Rukh Khan shares, "Mufasa has an incredible legacy and stands as the ultimate king of the jungle, imparting his wisdom to his son, Simba. I deeply relate to him as a father and also resonate with Mufasa's journey in the film. *Mufasa: The Lion King* depicts Mufasa's life from childhood to his rise as an incredible king and revisiting this character has been exceptional. It's a special collaboration for me with Disney, particularly because my sons, Aryan and AbRam, are part of this journey and sharing this experience with them is truly meaningful." Bringing new and fan-favourite characters to life and blending live-action filmmaking techniques with photoreal computer-generated imagery, *Mufasa: The Lion King* is directed by Barry Jenkins.

Ines de Ramon seeks to calm Angelina Jolie

Brad Pitt's relationship with Angelina Jolie might be at odds, but his girlfriend, Ines de Ramon, is working to prevent any further conflict and keep him close to his children. Insiders report that Ines has reached out to Jolie, showing real worry for the children of the ex-couple. During the prolonged legal dispute, the jewellery executive wants to make sure Jolie understands her sincere intentions, acknowledging that every situation has multiple perspectives. Brad Pitt was devastated when his and Angelina's son Pax was seriously hurt in a bike accident, causing his life to fall apart. Even though they tried desperately to reach him, the *Moneyball* actor allegedly did not respond. The latest development in the turbulent relationship between Brad and Angelina occurred in 2016, when they split up due to allegations of domestic violence. The former partners are currently involved in a heated legal dispute, mainly concerning Jolie's decision to sell her shares in their Parisian vineyard. "Ines' loyalty is obviously with Brad, but she's savvy enough to know there are two sides to every story," a source told. Pitt and Ines have been dating for over a year now. "She's prepared to hear Angel out and do her best to convince Brad to give her what she wants to finally end their ongoing war," the insider added. "Brad is very much in love with Ines and wants to make her happy. She knows that and is prepared to use that to help them declare a truce," the source further alleged. Previous reports of Ines seeking a confrontation with the actress have likely arisen before but were dismissed by a spokesperson.



RYAN AND BLAKE BECOME 1ST MARRIED COUPLE TO DOMINATE US BOX OFFICE

In the Ryan Reynolds-Blake Lively box-office showdown, both husband and wife came out winners. Reynolds' Marvel Studios smash *Deadpool & Wolverine* remained the top movie in North American theatres for the third straight week with \$54.2 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates. Worldwide, it's now surpassed \$1 billion. *Deadpool & Wolverine*, though, was closely followed by *It Ends With Us*, the romance drama starring Lively, which surpassed expectations with a stellar \$50 million debut. Together, the films created a kind of family edition of *Barbenheimer*, in which a pair of very different movies thrived in part due to counterprogramming. Only this time, the opposite movies were fronted by one of Hollywood's most famous couples. The film's one-two punch wasn't entirely unprecedented. In 1990, Bruce Willis' *Die Hard 2* led the box office, while Demi Moore's *Ghost* came in second. The weekend also featured a high-priced flop. *Borderlands*, the long-delayed \$120-million videogame adaptation directed by Eli Roth, launched with a paltry \$8.8 million for Lionsgate. The film, starring Cate Blanchett, Kevin Hart and Jack Black, was

shot all the way back in 2021. After delays and reshoots, it finally landed in theatres effectively dead-on-arrival; it scored just 10% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes and seems likely to contend for one of the worst movies of the year. Meanwhile, *Deadpool & Wolverine*, which co-stars Hugh Jackman, continued its march through box-office records. The film, directed by Shawn Levy, is only the second R-rated movie to reach \$1 billion, following 2019's *Joker*. In three weeks, it's already one of the most lucrative Marvel releases and trails only Disney's other 2024 smash, *Inside Out 2* (\$1.6 billion worldwide), among movies released this year. Lively makes a cameo in *Deadpool & Wolverine* but she both stars in and produced *It Ends With Us*. Adapted from the bestselling romance novel by Colleen Hoover, Lively stars as Lily Bloom, a Boston florist torn between two men, one from her present life (Justin Baldoni, who also directed the film) and another who was her first love (Brandon Sklenar).



ELNAAZ TO COLLAB WITH RIHANNA'S MUSIC PRODUCER!

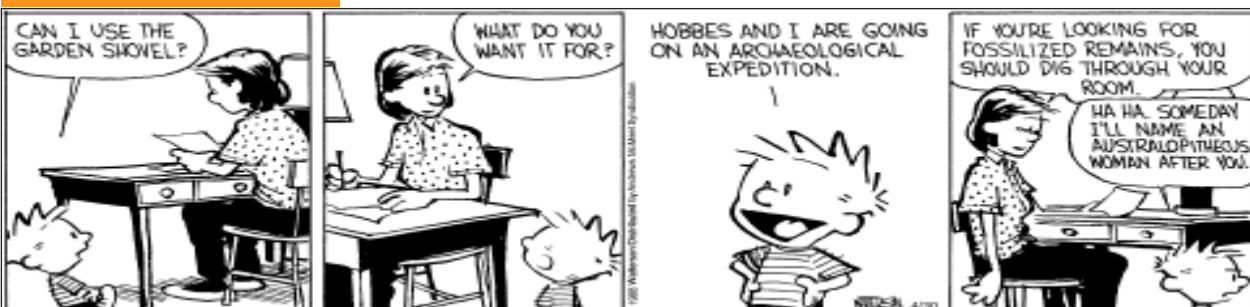
Actress-Singer Elnaaz Norouzi has made her mark on the acting front. She broke the internet with her rendition of *Jamal Kudu, Jamal Jamaloo*. Elnaaz Norouzi has been seen going to Los Angeles a lot recently, it seems the actress is planning something big on the international front. A source reveals, "Elnaaz has been meeting a lot of music producers while she is in LA. She is spotted with renowned names and is maybe discussing a possible collaboration. There are murmurs that she will be possibly collaborating with Rihanna music producer and will be dropping an announcement soon." Elnaaz is also gearing up for her Hindi singing debut alongside a well-known singer, we hope to hear an announcement soon. On the work front, Elnaaz is shooting for multiple projects, which include two films, a series and will also be dropping more singles in the future.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



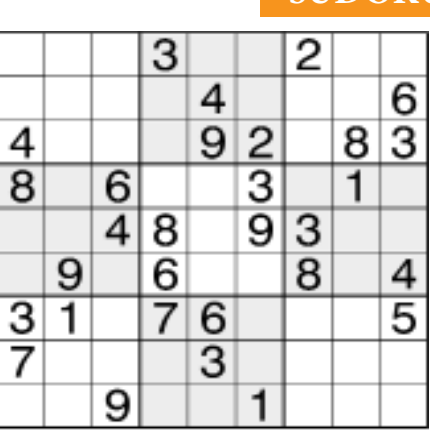
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution
 2 1 3 9 8 5 6 4 7
 5 8 9 6 7 4 2 1 3
 6 4 7 2 1 3 8 5 9
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 3 6 1 4 2 9 5 7 8
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 4 3 2 5 6 7 9 8 1
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Rules
 • Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
 • The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

ACROSS

- 1 A fight using words
- 6 Rip
- 7 A root vegetable
- 9 Group of eight
- 11 Not ever
- 12 A fruit with pipe
- 13 A hot drink
- 16 Extreme fear
- 18 Grow weary
- 19 A large animal
- 5 Glide over snow
- 8 Not temporary
- 10 Make bigger
- 14 A large country in Asia
- 15 Costing nothing
- 17 A large bird

GINGER MEGGS



Vijayawada

'Female comics should mean a safe community that's funny and fabulous'

Sumukhi Suresh is certainly that person who hones the tough times into rib-tickling movements with her wit and humour. With her much-acclaimed show *Hoemonal* going international, she speaks to *The Pioneer* about her comedy, the show and a lot more about her prowess

TEJAL SINHA

Comedy is viewed as a form of art and recognised as a potent means of conveying the truth to authority. Sumukhi Suresh has given us multiple reasons to laugh and wonder in this world of hilarious satires. Donning multiple hats as an actor, writer, comedian and entrepreneur, her journey has been nothing less than fulfilling and exciting. With each of these skills being dynamic, there is something new to learn every day. "I think they are interconnected in so many ways that help in the overall growth of me as an artist," shares the multi-faceted artist, who is all excited for her upcoming show, *Hoemonal*, going international. But hey, wait! Excited, she says, would be an understatement. "This show has been one of my favourite pieces to write and perform. A global audience will validate the fact that the core concept of *Hoemonal* is relatable and interesting." Since entering adolescence, the gagster has been experiencing hormonal issues and dealing with PCOS. The ongoing hormonal problem initially made her feel less confident because of her body image and physical discomfort, but eventually she learned to find humour in her struggles. With *Hoemonal*, she says, "It is all about the struggles of trying to date and explore

when you've been raised conservatively while dealing with hormone imbalance, PCOS, terrible metabolism and the pressure to not die alone. I sometimes wonder if it's really bad to die alone since you spend time with yourself the most and also, doesn't everyone die alone eventually?" Well, all in all, it's a fun show, says Sumukhi. Content, body-over-mind positivity and a dash of humour, how does she bring it all together so well? We ask her. With great enthusiasm, she says it's all about being honest in her storytelling, writing and acting. "I don't like being preached to, so I try not to do it. With body positivity, I am a work in progress. It's also different for different people. So now I take my time and allow mistakes and moments of anger and sadness. And try not to punish my body." Speaking of her inspiration, she says that many would feel relatable too, which is "The chaos of hormones, the lack of mainstream information and research about female reproductive health. Not just this, the journey of being a feminist and wanting an equal relationship or none at all and the dream of finding the best gynecologist has been the inspiration behind *Hoemonal*." Well, we get you, Sumukhi! In the end, these encounters influenced her thinking and led her to embrace life with humour, as her immediate response to

adversity is to laugh. Despite the numerous successful women comedians like Prashasti Singh, Gurleen Pannu, Kaneez Surkha and Jamie Lever, many artists prefer to be recognised solely as artists without being defined by their gender. Having been tagged as a 'female comic', she has her own take on it: "I understand the tag and if it gets more girls to do open mics and try comedy, then it's a great tag. Female comics shouldn't mean that we are pitted against each other and fight for the 'top position.'" Female comics should be a safe community that is funny and fabulous." She is heading to the *Edinburgh Fringe Fest* with *Hoemonal* now. "I am doing an India and US tour after that. It might be the last leg for *Hoemonal*. I've acted in a show for a leading OTT and am so excited about its release. I've written dialogue for Vikramaditya Motwane's next project, a milestone for me because I have wanted to work with him since I started writing. I've written Tushar Hiranandani's next and here's hoping it goes on floors soon." Motormouth is also developing some fun comedies. As we come to an end, Sumukhi, with great enthusiasm, shares, "I would love to have more hours in a day, but for 24 hours. Also, my studio has some amazing writers working towards reducing my work! As a comic, it's great to do as many things as possible to be exposed to multiple perspectives."

FROM CONSTRUCTING EQUATIONS TO CHARACTERS

Pallav Singh finds solace in acting

AARTI SREENATH

In the labyrinth alleys of Mirzapur, where chaos reigns and loyalties are fleeting, one figure has etched his name into the diaspora of Indian web series with verses as sharp as his wit. Pallav Singh, who breathed life into the enigmatic character Shayar Raheem in *Mirzapur 3*, is far from a conventional actor. His journey is as compelling as the character he plays, an engineer turned artist whose words have the power to linger long after they're spoken. His portrayal of Shayar Raheem was not merely about delivering lines; it was about the rhythm and cadence that transformed those lines into something unforgettable. "You gave me the cue to answer the question," he says, almost instinctively. "The lines were impactful intrinsically. I just had to step away from their way." For him, *shayari* is more than just poetry; it's a medium that compresses emotions into metered verses, leaving just enough space for the audience to project their imaginations. "What we fill in is always more powerful," he adds, highlighting the art of saying more with less. But before the world of *shayari* and cinema beckoned, he was entrenched in the logical world of engineering at the Manipal Institute of Technology. His transition from constructing equations to constructing characters might seem like a leap, but for him, it was a natural progression. "Engineering is equational and logical. You have to put one brick after another in the best proportions to build a stable structure," he reflects. It's this methodical approach that he carried into acting, where each layer of a character is meticulously crafted. "The most important lesson I've learned is that we need a good mix of intensity and consistency." The depth of Raheem's roles speaks volumes about his dedication. From playing a Down Syndrome patient in *Mai* to a homosexual man in *Taj: Divided By Blood*, he's drawn to characters that challenge him and push him to explore the unfamiliar. "The extraterrestrial nature of these characters compared to my personality compelled me to explore more about their lives, the differences and the similarities with myself," he shares. This desire to delve into the unknown, to stretch the limits of his own experiences, is what makes his performances resonate so deeply with audiences. Being part of a historical drama like *Taj* presented a unique challenge. He found himself navigating not just physical, mental and psychological spaces but a new, 'historical' space as well. "One has to be careful not to play into the clichéd mould of historical portrayals," he warns. Yet, the experience was markedly different from his work on *Mirzapur*. "The difference is that *Taj* didn't have the flowery abuses Raheem has and if I had killed Lala in the *Taj* era, I would've been paid in gold coins," he quips with a smile. His influences are as diverse as his roles. From Kader Khan to Hugh Grant, from Olivia Coleman to Tabu, his list of inspirations is both eclectic and extensive. "From each, I learn something different—flamboyance from some, craft from others and wildness from the rest," he notes. It's this amalgamation of styles and influences that has shaped his own unique approach to acting. Balancing the emotional intensity of his roles with his personal life is no easy feat, but he has found his own way. "Diving into the emotionality of a character has some rub-off into personal life," he admits. After a long day on set, it's his close circle of friends who help him disconnect and return to himself. "They make a fuss and humiliate the hell out of the character, like all friends do. They're the mad hatters I need," he laughs. His journey through *Mirzapur* has been filled with both intense moments and lighter ones. He recalls the feeling of leaving a part of himself behind after wrapping up his last shot for *Mirzapur 3*. "It strangely felt saddening. But when the bank account got credited, I felt happy again," he says with a grin, perfectly encapsulating the bittersweet nature of his work. Navigating the digital space as an actor comes with its own set of challenges, but he is determined to remain authentic. "I still don't have very stark boundaries between my personal and professional life on social media," he confesses. But he's optimistic about maintaining a light-footed, candid approach to the digital world, trusting that his audience will allow him the space to evolve. Looking to the future, he is eager to explore genres that blend realism with fantasy, drawing from his love for stylised, escapist cinema. "I was drawn to cinema by escapist, stylised, fantastical and action films, whether it be Karan Johar Sir's films or those by Tarkovsky and Almodóvar," he says. He envisions a future where Indian cinema is recognised as the best and most potent form of entertainment, both creatively and financially.

Pallav Singh, the breakthrough star of *Mirzapur 3*, talks candidly about his incredible journey from the realm of engineering to the big screen in an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*. Pallav is well-known for his eerie depiction of Shayar Raheem



Eczema care for newborns

Every new parent knows that the arrival of a newborn into their home entails massive changes. For example, the house would have to be baby-proofed, with every corner padded and every socket sealed. It's also important to keep the environment calm, without loud noises or bright lights that could bother their baby's sensitive eyes and ears.

Likewise, your baby's skin is equally sensitive and needs special care. In fact, during this time, newborns are susceptible to conditions like eczema. As a new parent, it can be really stressful to see your little one uncomfortable. But don't worry - while it might seem scary at first, eczema is manageable. It might take some trial and error, but together, you can figure out what works best for your baby.

What is Eczema?

The primary symptoms of eczema include dry, itchy skin, redness, and inflammation. Sometimes, the affected skin may become cracked and scaly or develop small, fluid-filled blisters. There is much debate about the exact cause of this disease, but the common understanding is that it may be genetic or triggered by the environment. For example, certain soaps, detergents, fabrics or food items may cause these symptoms to appear in your baby. Irrespective of its severity, it can cause discomfort and irritation. The inability to help the baby in spite of their best intention can overwhelm parents and lead to a desperate search for help. The good news is that plant-derived, toxin-free products are available in the market to help manage the situation.

What type of products can help deal With Eczema?

The number one rule in managing eczema in newborns is to keep their skin moisturised and hydrated. Baby lotions and moisturisers may help, especially those containing nourishing ingredients with hydration effects. Take, for example, Pentavitin. This extract, derived from corn kernels, closely mimics the skin's own moisturising properties. Thus, it has the potential to provide instant hydration and prevent the skin from drying out.

Saffron may also help reduce redness and make the skin brighter and smoother. Natural butters nourish and protect the baby's delicate skin. For example, ghee or

clarified butter is rich in fatty acids and Vitamins A and E help maintain the skin's moisture balance. Shea butter offers antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits, while mango butter is known for its hydrating ability. Moreover, natural oils derived from almonds, hemp seeds, and pomegranate seeds can aid in combating skin issues.

What more can be done to help your baby?

In addition to using products comprising the mentioned ingredients, you can help your baby by identifying the triggers of their eczema and eliminating them. Exclusive breastfeeding till six months of age can significantly reduce the appearance of eczema in babies with high risk. Consuming probiotics during the later stages of pregnancy can also help strengthen the child's immune system and prevent disease development.

It is also advised to remove all chemical-containing products such as soaps and shampoos from your baby's hygiene routine. Replace them with products that are safer and toxin free. After a bath, pat dry your baby using a soft cloth to prevent water getting trapped in the skin folds. Make sure that you don't rub or irritate the skin.

You can also make your child wear mittens and clip their nails carefully, so that they don't hurt themselves while scratching. If the baby gets too uncomfortable, consult a professional and get help.

Eczema can be frustrating for both babies and their parents. And it's completely normal to feel worried when you see your child experiencing such discomfort. However, with a little help and research, you can find the right products made of natural ingredients to ease their symptoms and manage the condition better. It is also a good idea to read the product label and check for certifications from international bodies like EWG and Ecocert before making a purchase decision. Moreover, available in the market are solutions that are cellularly proven, which means that the products are tested at the cellular level for safety and efficacy. So, with patience, research, and the right products, moms can help their children navigate through the frustrations of eczema and provide them with the comfort and care they deserve.

(The author, Taru Mayur, is the Co founder of AroVeda.)

New Zealand pick 5 spin options for Tests against Afghanistan, Lanka

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

New Zealand on Monday named a strong squad, which includes five spin bowling options, for next month's one-off Test against Afghanistan and the ensuing two-match rubber against Sri Lanka.

While the one-off Test against Afghanistan will be played in Greater Noida, India, from September 9-13, the Black Caps will fly to Sri Lanka for the two ICC World Test Championship matches, starting September 18 and 26, respectively.

Veteran pacer Tim Southee will lead the side which includes the likes of Kane Williamson, Devon Conway, Glenn Phillips and Rachin Ravindra, while Tom Latham continues to be the vice-captain.

However, head coach Gary Stead hinted that if conditions call for a different balance, the skipper too may have to sit out for a game or two.

"Test tours to the sub-continent can ask some really tough questions of pace bowlers due to the nature of the pitches and the heat and humidity," Stead said.

"While we're going over with an open mind around conditions, there is an understanding that all our bowling options may be needed across the different Tests."

"Tim and I have discussed this, and the need during these overseas tours to balance the work-loads of the pace



bowlers, including himself, to ensure the team is best served," he added.

Spin bowling all-rounder Michael Bracewell returned to the squad for the first time in 18 months after an Achilles injury, which was followed by a

broken finger in February, had kept him out of action. Bracewell will shoulder the spin duties alongside left-

armers Mitchell Santner, Ajaz Patel and part-timers Glenn Phillips and Ravindra. "Michael had to show plenty of

resilience to rehabilitate from his injuries and force his way back into the BLACKCAPS across all three formats," Stead

said. "His all-round skills, and ability to take the ball away from the left-hander make him

a great asset, especially on what we expect will be turning wickets in India and Sri Lanka," he added.

Pacers Will O'Rourke and Ben Sears have been rewarded with maiden overseas Test call-ups. The 23-year-old O'Rourke claimed 11 wickets in his first two Test outings, including the best match-figures by a New Zealander on Test debut (nine for 93 v South Africa in February) before a groin injury ruled him out of the second Test against Australia.

Sears, on the other hand, debuted in the second Test against Australia in March, claiming four for 90 in the second innings.

New Zealand currently occupy the third spot in the ICC WTC points table behind last edition's finalists, Australia and India.

"We know how important the points in Sri Lanka will be to our chances of pushing for a final spot in England next year. "We managed one win from the two Test series in challenging conditions in Bangladesh last December and are keen to build on that. "The whole squad is looking forward to test their skills in the longest form of the game in the sub-continent," he said.

SQUAD:

Tim Southee (captain), Tom Blundell, Michael Bracewell, Devon Conway, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Will O'Rourke, Ajaz Patel, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ben Sears, Kane Williamson, Will Young.

Duleep Trophy first round match shifted to Bengaluru; stars barring Ashwin, Bumrah to play



PTI ■ BENGALURU

With some of the India regulars, except pacer Jasprit Bumrah and senior spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, likely to appear in the first round of the Duleep Trophy, the BCCI has decided to shift one of the opening matches from Anantapur to Bengaluru. Senior batters Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma also might get an exemption, and the choice of appearing in the tournament is entirely on them.

The Duleep Trophy was earlier scheduled to kick-off with two sets of first round matches at Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh from September 5, but now one of those games has been shifted to the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here to reduce the

logistical inconveniences. Anantapur is approximately 230 kms away from Bengaluru and the city is not connected via flight.

"The decision has been made to accommodate some of the top players, so that they get a feel of the red-ball cricket ahead of the (Test) series against Bangladesh," a source close to the development told PTI. India are slated to play two Test matches against Bangladesh - from September 19 at Chennai and from September 27 at Kanpur.

While it is up to Rohit and Kohli to play in the event, some other prominent players such as Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, KL Rahul, Shubman Gill, Shreyas Iyer, Kuldeep Yadav etc are expected to be available for this tournament fully or

partially. However, Bumrah and Ashwin are unlikely to take part in the tournament at any stage as they are expected to join the India squad directly ahead of the Bangladesh series.

The selectors are also deciding on giving a go to Rishabh Pant in the Duleep Trophy, and if it happens then this will be his first red-ball assignment after coming back from that horrific car accident in 2022. Since his return, Pant has been a part of India's white-ball set-up and the wicketkeeper batter also donned the national jersey in the T20 World Cup.

Mohammed Shami, who has been recuperating from a surgery, will not feature in the tournament.

However, the availability of the top players will also be subject to the dates of the preparatory camp that the team management is mulling to hold in Chennai ahead of the Tests against Bangladesh.

But the decision to shift the match also aligns with the shared vision of the BCCI and the team management that the top players should feature in domestic cricket competitions whenever they are free from national duty. It may be recalled that India's T20I skipper Suryakumar Yadav (Mumbai) and out-of-form wicketkeeper batsman Ishan Kishan (Jharkhand) have made themselves available to play the Buchi Babu Trophy, starting from August 15.

Graham Thorpe took his own life after battling with depression and anxiety, reveals wife

PTI ■ LONDON

Former England cricketer Graham Thorpe took his own life after a struggle with depression and anxiety fuelled by his failing health in the last two years, his wife Amanda has revealed.

The 55-year-old passed away on August 5. Thorpe's demise was announced by the England and Wales Cricket Board and now his wife has revealed in an interview to former England captain Michael Atherton that he had a long mental and physical battle with himself before he took his own life. "Despite having a wife and two daughters whom he loved and who loved him, he did not get better," Thorpe's wife was quoted as saying by "The Times". "He was so unwell in recent times and he really did believe that we would be better off without him and we are devastated that he acted on that and took his own life."

A ceremony was held before the start of a match between the Farnham Cricket Club and the Chipstead Cricket Club last Saturday in memory of Thorpe, which was attended by his wife and their daughters Kitty (22) and Emma (19).

"For the past couple of years, Graham had been suffering from major depression and anxiety. This led him to make a serious attempt on his life in May 2022, which resulted in a prolonged stay in an intensive care



unit," she said. His wife revealed that despite his work assignments, Thorpe continued to suffer. "Despite glimpses of hope and of the old Graham, he continued to suffer from depression and anxiety, which at times got very severe. We supported him as a family and he tried many, many treatments but unfortunately none of them really seemed to work," she said.

The report added that the family is now considering starting a foundation in his name. Thorpe's daughter Kitty said he was "not the same person" after a point and that he "could not see a way out". "He had loved life and he loved us but he just couldn't see a way out. It was heartbreaking to see how withdrawn he had become," she said.

"It was strange to see this person trapped in the body of Dad. That's why we've been so happy that the many reflections have been about his life before this illness took over. "I am glad that's how everyone does remember him, rightly so, as the complete character he was," Kitty added.



South Africa and West Indies settle for a draw in rain-hit 1st test

AP ■ PORT OF SPAIN (TRINIDAD)

Both South Africa and West Indies had hopes of winning the rain-hit first Test before having to settle for a draw.

South Africa set West Indies a target of 298 runs on the fifth and final day at Queen's Park Oval, with Alick Athanaze leading the hosts' chase with 92.

West Indies finished on 201-5 in its second innings as each team started to run out of overs to get the required runs or wickets amid light checks in the evening session.

South Africa had earlier resumed on 30-0 from five overs in its second innings - an overall lead of 154 - and declared at 173-3 from 29

overs. Tristan Stubbs hit 68 and was bowled by Kumar Roach on the last ball before the declaration, which came in the morning session.

Rain had affected every day so far - only 15 overs were bowled on the first day - and lunch was called five minutes early Sunday with West Indies 11-1. The start of the afternoon session was also delayed and, despite Athanaze reaching his half-century, a draw still seemed the likeliest result with West Indies 121-3 at tea. The hosts needed 177 more runs in a maximum of 34 overs remaining.

West Indies quickly lost Kavem Hodge, caught behind for 29 in a wicket maiden for left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj.

Jason Holder came out to join Athanaze at 127-4 and the pair shared a 65-run partnership before Maharaj effectively ended the chase having Athanaze caught for 92 after top-edging to Ryan Rickelton. With no more than 10 overs left and West Indies at 192-5, still 106 runs from victory, the hosts proceeded to score only three runs in the next three overs.

The draw was agreed after Holder (31 not out) smashed a six to lift the West Indies to 201-5. Maharaj took 4-88 in 26.2 overs. South Africa scored 357 in its first innings and West Indies 233. The second and final Test starts on Thursday at Providence, Guyana.

High hopes, disappointing show: Indian boxers come a cropper at Paris

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian boxing contingent, that featured two reigning world champions in Nikhat Zareen and Lovlina Borgohain, entered the Olympics hoping for an unprecedented medal haul, only to crumble under pressure, leaving behind a trail of disappointment in a medal-less campaign.

Boxing became a medal hope for India after Vijender Singh's historic bronze at the 2008 Beijing Games. MC Mary Kom added a women's bronze to it in 2012.

Although the 2016 Rio Games saw the boxers return without a medal, Borgohain clinched a bronze at the Tokyo Olympics to revitalise the sport.

Expectations were high from Paris and observers of the game felt at least one, if not two medals, could be expected from the six boxers who qualified.

Two-time world champion Zareen (50kg), Borgohain (75kg), and 2023 world champion bronze-

medallist Nishant Dev (71kg) were all seen as strong podium contenders.

POOR SHOW: But when it came to actual competition, the Indians never seemed to have the momentum needed to go deep into the tournament.

With the exception of Nishant, who was denied a podium finish after a contentious result in his quarterfinal, the rest struggled with Borgohain and Zareen unable to overcome formidable opponents, and Amit Panghal (51kg) failing to match his previous form. Borgohain, Panghal and Nishant needed just two wins to secure medals.

Although Borgohain and Zareen were handed challenging draws, with both encountering formidable opponents in their second rounds. However, given that they entered as reigning world champions, the two were expected to overcome such challenges or, at the very least, put up a resilient fight. However, they succumbed rather meekly to their Chinese counterparts.



Zareen, who was considered a potential gold medallist, was markedly off-colour in the second round and later revealed that she had been taking some extreme measures to stay inside the prescribed weight limit, that left her exhausted for actual competition.

She opened her campaign with a scrappy win and then lost to Wu Yu in the second round. Borgohain once again fell to old foe Li Qian, who seems to have the Indian's number, having defeated her in three of their four meetings. Among the men, Panghal looked a pale shadow of his



sharp and aggressive self against Zambia's Patrick Chinyemba, who lost in the very next round. Jaismine Lamboria, who came in after dropping down to 57kg weight class from her more comfortable 60kg division, expectedly lost to Tokyo Olympics silver-medallist

Nesthy Petecio. Nevertheless, Preeti Pawar (54kg) delivered a commendable performance in her bout against reigning world silver-medallist Yeni Marcela Arias. **GOVERNMENT FUNDING:** A total of 17 national camps and 23 foreign exposure trips

were conducted in the build-up to the Paris Olympics for nine core TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme) boxers and 20 development pugilists. Sports Ministry spent Rs 60.93 crore on this.

Significant funds were also allocated to individual athletes, most notably Rs 91.71 lakh for Zareen, Rs 81.76 lakh for Borgohain, Rs 65.90 lakh for Panghal, and Rs 65.86 lakh for Nishant.

COACHING INSTABILITY AND SELECTION POLICY: The Boxing Federation of India's inability to provide a stable environment was a key issue in the build-up to the Games. Since the Tokyo Games, coaches have come and gone, denying the boxers the stability that is crucial to an Olympic campaign. Women's High Performance Director Raffaele Bergamasco was the first to depart right after Tokyo followed by men's HPD Santiago Nieva in May 2022. Narendra Rana succeeded CA Kuttapa as the men's head coach, only for Kuttapa to be

reinstated later. Bhaskar Bhatt was briefly appointed as the women's head coach before he quit the position in June 2023 while HPD Bernard Dunne, who was appointed in October 2022, stepped down from his post four months before the Olympics, leaving Indian boxing in a lurch. Foreign coach Dmitriy Dmitruk was the last coach appointed in February last year.

The new selection policy that replaced the trial system was also a talking point. Panghal remained out of the national team until the last qualifier with Deepak Bhorja getting the nod based on the assessment system that relied on camp performance as well as competitive results to evaluate the boxers. However, Panghal was sent to the final qualifier, and while he secured a quota, the Haryana boxer struggled to shake off the rustiness after being away from international competition for an extended period.

DUBBING DYNAMITE: RCM RAJU'S 'RAKAA' ROARS WITH UNIQUE TELUGU TWISTS

AARTI SREENATH

A Nandi Award-winning dubbing artist with a career spanning over two decades, RCM Raju has brought countless characters to life across various genres and languages. His recent role as Rakaa in Disney's *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes* has once again highlighted his exceptional talent and creative prowess. We had the pleasure of delving into Raju's experiences and insights about this unique project.

"Rakaa is a truly remarkable character," the *Rangasthalam* voice artist begins. "I'd like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Disney for entrusting me with this role. Dubbing Rakaa was an extraordinary experience, particularly due to the unconventional approach required for this character."

Raju explains that the primary challenge was adapting to a form of Telugu that deviated from grammatical norms. "The direction I received was to use a non-standard, almost haphazard form of Telugu. This was a departure from my usual practice, where I adhere to proper grammatical structures. Breaking these rules and delivering Rakaa's dialogue in a fragmented, less formal style was both a challenge

Dubbing artist RCM Raju, known for his impeccable performances be it in *Kalki 2898 AD* or the latest *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes* speaks to *The Pioneer* about voicing for character of Rakaa, the challenge of being the voice of an ape and more.

and a novel experience for me."

The complexity of Rakaa's character, he says, extends beyond his dialogue. "In typical dubbing roles, my focus is on 'Savika Abhinayam', which involves subtle emotional expressions as per *Natya Shastra*. For Rakaa, synchronising these expressions was particularly challenging because he is an ape, not a human. This required a different approach, adding an extra layer of dif-



iculty to the dubbing process. But despite the challenges, it was a highly rewarding experience."

When discussing his preparation for Rakaa, he reflects on the distinctiveness of the role. "My usual roles often involve villains who are aggressive and intense. Rakaa, however, is a character defined by his helpfulness and wisdom. He supports Caesar's ideology and embodies a blend of seriousness and humour. For example, there's a humorous scene where Rakaa contrasts human and ape attributes in a light-hearted way."

The man behind Ashwathama's voice notes that Rakaa's character was both inspiring and emotionally complex.

"One of the most poignant scenes is when Rakaa sacrifices himself to save the heroine. This act of bravery and selflessness was deeply moving. Rakaa is a character who believes in the greater good, and his sacrifice at the waterfall scene reflects his unwavering commitment to this principle."

The integration of digital effects and voice acting presents its own set of challenges. He provides insight into how he balanced his performance with the film's visual elements. "In high-tech films like *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes*, the visuals are often completed after the voice work. This means that I had to adapt my performance to align with the final animation. Even though the visuals were not fully rendered during my dubbing sessions, I had to ensure my voice matched the character's movements and emotions."

His extensive experience in dubbing has equipped him with the skills to navigate such challenges. "Having worked on over a thousand films, I'm accustomed to adapting my performance based on the visual context. The final animation and emotional depth added by the graphics were critical in shaping my vocal delivery."

He reflects on some of his favourite moments as Rakaa. "One scene that stands out is Rakaa's sacrifice to save the heroine. It's a powerful, emotional moment that highlights his bravery and selflessness. I also enjoyed the sequence

where Rakaa humorously comments on human and ape traits while sitting on a horse. These moments made Rakaa a deeply impactful character."

He further expresses, "I would love to play Rakaa again if the opportunity arises. The role was a significant and fulfilling part of my career and I'm eager to explore more such impactful characters. The blend of digital effects and human performances in this film has set a high bar and I'm excited about the possibility of contributing to similar innovative projects in the future."

Going ahead in this chat, he shared his reflections on his career, including that of his role in *Kalki 2898 AD*, where he voiced the character of Ashwatama. "It was an honour to lend my voice to such a prominent character, especially given that Amitabh Bachchan also voiced a character in the film. Playing Ashwathama was a significant opportunity for me and receiving feedback that my performance was comparable to Bachchan's was a tremendous compliment."

He concludes with a broader perspective on his work. "Voice acting is a deeply immersive experience for me. I approach each role with the mindset of 'If I were the character,' which helps me bring authenticity to my performances. Whether it's for a digital character like Rakaa or a mythological figure like Ashwathama, my goal is always to create a performance that resonates with the audience."

Suriya makes furious entry in Pan India!

Kanguva, made under the banner of Studio Green, is undoubtedly one of the biggest films of 2024. With its tantalisingly thrilling posters and the absolutely amazing *Fire Song*, the excitement for the film is continuously rising to a fever pitch. Now, after a long wait, the trailer of *Kanguva* has finally been released and it's indeed extraordinary and out of this world, with *Kanguva* looking like it's going to rule the box office.

The trailer of *Kanguva* showcases that the South Indian film industry is leaving no stone unturned in creating something out of the box. After *Kalki 2898 AD*, *Kanguva* is yet another example of amazing content from the South. Suriya's character is portrayed as a ferocious daredevil and the superstar is making a ravishing entry into the Pan-India market. It's fair to say that the trailer is Suriya's lion's roar across India. The trailer beautifully depicts both prehistoric humans and future. With the trailer release, the makers wished the director Siva as he celebrates his birthday. They further jotted down the caption: "Wishing the master storyteller and the maestro of cinematic experiences a birthday as unforgettable as his films Here's to a blockbuster year and abundant success for our #DirectorSiva Sir Wishes from Team #Kanguva #HBD Siva"

Kanguva is the biggest and most expensive film of this year. With an estimated budget of over 350 crore, it's bigger than the likes of *Pushpa*, *Singham* and several other big films. Moreover, the film has been shot across seven different countries on various continents of India. The makers had a very specific look in mind, as this is a very unique film showing the prehistoric period. The makers hired experts from Hollywood for the technical departments like action and cinematography. The film has one of the biggest war sequences, featuring over 10,000 people. Studio Green has signed up with top distribution houses to release the film on a massive scale across the globe on October 10, 2024.



Vidaamuyarchi: Regina shares her startling first look!

Regina Cassandra has enthralled her fans with her powerful character portrayals in *Rocket Boys*, *Naanbaaz Hindustan Ke* and *Farzi*. Now, the actress is all set to take on a unique role in *Vidaamuyarchi*. The film also features Ajith Kumar, Trisha Krishnan and Arjun Sarja amongst others.

Sharing the first glimpse of her character, Regina posted her first look on social media, expressing, "Efforts never fail! Quick stop by on the gram to let you all know that I am on a new journey called #Vidaamuyarchi and giving all my efforts to this one lately! Super thrilled and excited for you all to witness this and I am grateful to have a wonderful team to support me through it!" The first look has already received a lot of love from fans, who are eagerly anticipating Regina's role in *Vidaamuyarchi*.

Balakrishna and Bobby rain down action in Rajasthan

Nandamuri Balakrishna and filmmaker Bobby have collaborated on an untitled action film, which wrapped up its lengthy production cycle in Rajasthan. The team has returned to Hyderabad.

Director Bobby announced the completion of the Rajasthan filming on social media by posting a selfie with Balakrishna in an airport lounge.

The shooting was cut short as it began to rain. However, the crew was able to complete the intended sequences. Nandamuri Balakrishna, Shraddha Srinath and other actors took part in this hectic program. The film stars three heroines: Urvashi Rautela, Shraddha Srinath and Pragya Jaiswal. The film's title has not yet been announced. Bobby announced the upcoming release of the title teaser. Naga Vamsi, of Sithara Entertainment, is producing the film.



Daniel Caltagirone recalls working with Pa Ranjith

British actor Daniel Caltagirone, known for his roles in films like *The Pianist* (2000) and *Tomb Raider* (2018), plays the antagonist in Pa Ranjith's *Thangalaan*.

In a recent interview, British actor Daniel Caltagirone shared insights into his experience working on the much anticipated Tamil film *Thangalaan*. Caltagirone, who plays the role of Lord Clement, revealed his initial expectations and the profound impact Ranjith's direction had on him.

"I assumed there would be dancing and singing. Ranjith is one of the best social commentators around!" When the actor's agency initially told him about the chance to work with an Indian director, he expressed interest in the director's use of the camera and his ability to push his actors.

Drawing parallels between Ranjith and other celebrated Hollywood directors, Caltagirone further added, "His style reminded me of Spike Lee, there is a tiny element of (Quentin) Tarantino as well." When asked about the expectations Caltagirone had for Lord Clement's character going into the film, he said, "I thought I'd be portrayed as the cliché English character who plays an out-and-out bad guy and then dis-

appears. But Ranjith wanted me to be the co-star with Vikram. I didn't know who Vikram was at that point, but I assumed he was a big Indian star. Ranjith said, 'I don't want to go black-and-white with you. This will be a fleshed out character.'"

Daniel Caltagirone noted their discussions on social issues and Ranjith's commitment to addressing them through his

films, which in turn helped him understand the Indian caste system better. "Ranjith would talk to me about breaking the final chains of the caste system. We spoke about how it's subtle in the West and that's why we have no right to say that the West is ahead of others. It'd be easier for Ranjith to become this wealthy filmmaker, who does glossy films, but he has always made films about people who

lead difficult lives," he concluded. *Thangalaan* is going to be yet another cinematic spectacle from the South. It is a real story of Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) when KGF was discovered by the British who exploited and looted it for their own purpose. The film is going to take ahead the spree of the South industry of bringing unique concepts to the audience. It's yet another film from the South with an unusual concept!



KANNAPPA: SAMPATH BHILLU INTRODUCED AS FEARSOME 'CHANDUDU'

The Manchu family is poised to make a significant mark in the film industry with their highly anticipated project, *Kannappa*. This grand production, with an impressive budget of approximately Rs. 100 crores, is being spearheaded by the Manchu Mohan Babu, often referred to as the "Collection King" of Telugu cinema.

The film features Manchu Vishnu in a prominent lead role and it is generating considerable excitement due to its ambitious scope and high-profile cast. Set against a historical backdrop, *Kannappa* is expected to be a cinematic spectacle, drawing interest from fans across various film industries. The film's cast includes notable stars such as Prabhas, along with other top names from Bollywood and

Kollywood, promising a diverse and star-studded ensemble. The directorial reins are held by Mukesh Kumar Singh, who has garnered acclaim for his work on the *Mahabharata* serial, ensuring that the film will have a strong narrative and visual appeal. As the film progresses through its production phase, which is currently moving at a rapid

pace, the makers are gearing up for a planned release in December. In the lead-up to the release, the team has been progressively revealing details about the cast and their respective roles, heightening the anticipation surrounding the project.

The latest revelation from the *Kannappa* team is the casting of actor Sampath Ram Bhillu as Jati Dora Chandudu. This character is depicted as the fierce leader of the Bhilla tribe, a group known for their formidable presence and traditional stone axes. The tribe is portrayed as a menacing force, with their reputation for terror underscored by their fearsome practices. The newly released poster introduces Chandudu with the striking tagline, "Abhishekam



with the blood of enemies," emphasising the intense and dramatic nature of his role. With its substantial budget, star-studded cast, and historical setting, *Kannappa* is set to be a landmark film for the Manchu family and is eagerly awaited by audiences. The combination of a high-profile production team and a compelling narrative promises to make this film a major event in the coming months.

The President of India, Draupadi Murmu, has extended an invitation to Sandhya Raju, the Kuchipudi dancer and critically acclaimed Telugu actress, to attend the prestigious "At Home" reception at Rashtrapati Bhavan, Delhi, on the occasion of the 78th Independence Day celebrations in 2024!

STANDALONE

