

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
The pioneer

**Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is not a disciple of Andhra Pradesh CM N Chandrababu Naidu. He was a companion only and now they are Chief Ministers of neighbouring states. There is no meaning in the term 'guru-sishya'. Both are CMs, that's all.**

- Bhatti Vikramarka, Dy CM

**Cong, INDIA bloc spreading lies on NEET issue: Pradhan**

**'SUPERHERO' BATTLING THE DIGITAL REVENGE**

**Raj Tarun: Tiragabadarasami promises fresh action and ENTERTAINMENT**

**DON'T MISS...**

**Hyd office market jumps 40%...**

The Hyderabad office market is experiencing a period of phenomenal growth, fueled by a surge in demand from both domestic and global companies since the Congress government came to power. According to Cushman & Wakefield's latest report, Gross Leasing Volume (GLV) for H1 2024 is projected to reach an impressive 5 million square feet, a significant increase of nearly 40% compared to the 3.6 million square feet recorded in H1 2023. This positive momentum is attracting a wave of companies to...

-PAGE: 3

**3% babies with low birth weight...**

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, number of babies in India born with a low birth weight rose sharply -- by about three per cent, a new study has found. Babies born during the pandemic were also found to be at double the risk of having a low weight at birth. The increase in babies born with a low weight could impact the development of 'human capital' in the long term, as these infants are known to often 'struggle with school', corresponding author Santosh Kumar, an associate professor of...

-PAGE: 5

**Food services market in India...**

The food services market in India is expected to reach up to Rs 10 lakh crore by 2030 with the addressable customer base estimated to expand to up to 45 crore, according to a report. The online food delivery segment is estimated to grow at 18 per cent CAGR (compound annual growth rate) and penetration is set to rise from 12 per cent in 2023 to 20 per cent by 2030, said the report titled 'How India Eats' by Bain & Company and Swiggy. The food services market in India, which encompasses dining...

-PAGE: 8

**Gill-led Team India lands in Harare...**

A young Indian cricket team led by skipper Shubman Gill and with National Cricket Academy chief VVS Laxman as coach arrived here to play a five-match T20 International series against Zimbabwe beginning July 6. The team was seen exiting the airport with their luggage in a video posted by Zimbabwe Cricket on X. The entire squad had departed from Mumbai on Tuesday, while Gill, who was a travelling reserve with the T20 World Cup side in the Americas, arrived here from New York after a break...

-SPORTS

**PM Modi vows further crackdown on corruption**  
Says full freedom given to probe agencies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday vowed further crackdown on corruption and black money, saying the government has given 'full freedom' to the probe agencies for taking strongest action against the corrupt.

The prime minister said no one will be spared in the crackdown. He also took pot shot at the Congress for first levelling serious allegations with evidence against the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and later forming an alliance with it to fight the Lok Sabha elections.

Replying to the Motion of Thanks on the President's address, Modi asserted that taking action against corruption is a mission for the NDA government and not a matter of electoral gains. "I want to state without hesitation and also tell the countrymen that I have given full freedom to the agencies to take the strongest action against the corrupt and corruption. The government will not interfere anywhere," the prime minister said.

"Yes, they (probe agencies) should work honestly for honesty. No person embroiled in corruption will be able to escape the law. This is Modi's guarantee," the prime minister said.



**"Yes, they (probe agencies) should work honestly for honesty. No person embroiled in corruption will be able to escape the law. This is Modi's guarantee," the Prime Minister said.**

Referring to the opposition members' charge that the government is misusing the probe agencies, Modi cited statements made by opposition leaders like late Mulayam Singh Yadav who had accused the UPA government of using the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against

them. He also said even the Supreme Court had termed the CBI as a "caged parrot".

"Allegations have been made against the central investigative agencies. It has been said that the central government is misusing the investigative agencies."

"The AAP commits liquor scam, the AAP commits corruption, the AAP commits scam in building classrooms for children, the AAP even commits water scam..." The Congress complains against the AAP.

**Delhi court extends Kejriwal's custody till 12<sup>th</sup>**

**City schools declare holiday in view of bandh**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Schools in the city have notified parents via WhatsApp messages that Thursday will be a non-working day.

Various student organisations, including the Student's Federation of India (SFI), All India Students' Federation (AISF), and National Students' Union of India (NSUI), have announced a nation-wide educational strike on Thursday. The protest is in response to alleged irregularities in competitive exams such as NEET, overseen by the National Testing Agency (NTA).

As a result of the impending strike, some schools and colleges in Hyderabad have preemptively declared Thursday a holiday. A message from preschool read, "Dear parents, Greetings of the day! This is to inform you that tomorrow, Thursday, July 4, 2024, school will remain closed due to bandh called by the SFI. This decision is made to ensure safety of children and staff during school hours. We will be working on Saturday, 13th instead. Thank you."

**Govt relaxes ban on general transfers**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government on Wednesday relaxed the ban on general transfers of government employees imposed in 2018 by the erstwhile BRS government.

According to the latest orders issued by the Finance Department, transfers will take place between July 5 and 20. For this purpose, the government has decided to prioritize cases involving spouses, employees retiring before June 30, 2025, and employees with 70% disability or more.

The lifting of the ban for the period specified follows GO Ms. No. 80, issued by the Finance (HRM.I) Department on July 3, 2024. The ban on transfers will be re-imposed starting July 21, 2024.

The government had previously imposed a ban on transfers except in specified cases.

After careful consideration, the government has now decided to

relax this ban. As per the new guidelines, no person shall be transferred before completing two years of service at a particular station as of June 30, 2024.

However, this condition does not apply to transfer requests on spouse grounds.

Additionally, no employee will be retained beyond four years of service at a particular station as of June 30, 2024, unless they are retiring before June 30, 2025, and have not requested a transfer. To ensure minimal disruption of work, not more than 40% of employees in any cadre will be transferred. Priority will be given to employees based on various criteria, including medical grounds for serious health conditions and employees with mentally retarded children.

Departments such as Education, Commercial Taxes, Prohibition and Excise, Stamps and Registration, Transport, Forest, and Police will follow specific guidelines tailored to their needs.

**As per the new guidelines, no person shall be transferred before completing two years of service at a particular station as of June 30, 2024.**

**Jharkhand CM Champai resigns; Hemant stakes claim**



**TPCC CHIEF POSITION Consensus eludes Cong Cabinet expansion too may get delayed**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The selection of new president for the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) has been put on hold briefly due to lack of consensus among leaders of the party unit, it is learnt. The party high command may take a call in about a week, provided there is consensus on this among the top leaders of the party unit.

Incidentally, this could delay Cabinet expansion as some of the Ministers too are in the race of

TPCC chief position. It is understood that MLC B Mahesh Kumar Goud, former MP Madhu Yashki Goud, MP-Balaram Naik, Suresh Shetkar, and AICC secretary SA Sampath Kumar are among those trying seriously for the pivotal position in the normal course.

There is also talk of a 'campaign' going with Ministers-Dy CM Bhatti Vikramarka, N Uttam Kumar Reddy, and Seethakka also seeking the TPCC chief position.

Continued on Page 2

**Keshava Rao back 'home'**

Joins Cong in the presence of Rahul and Kharge



K Keshava Rao joined Congress in presence of Kharge, Rahul, CM Revanth AICC general secretaries KC Venugopal and Deepa Das Munshi on Wednesday in New Delhi

Seasoned politician and Rajya Sabha Member Kancharla Keshava Rao, who quit the Bharat Rashtira Samithi in March 2024, officially joined the Congress party on Wednesday in the presence of AICC president Mallikarjuna Kharge, Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Telangana Chief Minister and PCC president A Revanth Reddy,

Continued on Page 2

**Public detest Cong govt, they'll come looking for BRS soon: KCR**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtira Samithi president and ex-chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has asserted that soon people of Telangana would come looking for BRS party leaders as they detest the Congress government.

Addressing party workers here on Wednesday, KCR observed that the spell of 'dishiti (evil eye)' had passed with yesterday's defeat (Lok Sabha polls). It was a mere setback; BRS would bounce back with renewed vigor and gain greater public sup-



KCR surmised that there could be public rebellion against the Congress government, which had been 'acting contrary to people's

aspirations' driven solely by its hatred towards him. People's disenchantment with the Congress rule was evident at the grassroots level. So, KCR reasoned, people would flock to BRS for support with torches in hand. In this context, he urged party workers to remain accessible and fight for public issues until then.

KCR remarked that people of the state, having understood the true nature of the Congress, were regretting the mistake of voting it to power.

**KTR labels weaver's suicide as 'govt murder'**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtira Samithi working president KT Rama Rao, while expressing on Wednesday his deep sorrow over the suicide of another handloom worker of Sircilla, observed: "This is undoubtedly a government murder". KTR urged the state government to stop suicides by weavers, and to rescue the handloom sector from its present crisis.

death of Yadagiri, a weaver from Sircilla, who had hanged himself due to lack of employment. He blamed the tragedy on the Congress government's administrative failure.

KTR stated that it was not a suicide, but a 'murder committed by the government'. He criticized Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's administration, stating that the handloom sector had plunged into deep crisis under his rule.

KTR expressed his grief over the

**Sensex breaches 80,000 level for 1st time**



**'New policy to boost Telangana's tourism sector'**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana state aims to become a prominent tourist destination, while ensuring economic self-reliance and creating job opportunities among local communities. A new tourism policy has been drafted for the purpose, Tourism and Culture Minister Jupally Krishna Rao announced at a press conference here on Wednesday.

The Minister mentioned that the draft of the new tourism policy for Telangana had been prepared in line with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's pieces of advice and suggestions. He mentioned that he would soon meet Union Tourism and Culture Minister to seek funds for Telangana's tourism development.

The state government was exploring ways to develop tourist spots through public-private partnerships, while providing essential infrastructure to generate revenue streams.

The Minister criticized the previous government for neglecting



Tourism Minister Jupally addressing a press conference in Hyderabad on Wednesday

tourism, leading to mismanagement of sites like Taramati Baradari and Haritha Hotels. He expressed his confidence in achieving significant progress within the next six months through rapid tourism development.

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the Congress government had prioritized tourism, focusing on eco, temple, and medical tourism. Despite Telangana's rich natural beauty and heritage, the tourism sector had not fully tapped the state's potential.

**Hyd CP transfers 40 inspectors**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a fresh rejig, Commissioner of Hyderabad Police Kothakota Sreenivas Reddy on Wednesday transferred 40 inspectors.

Accordingly, P. Laxmikanth Reddy, currently SHO Kacheguda, has been transferred to Multi Zone II; A. Anjaneyulu, serving as SHO Tukaramgate, has been transferred to Central Crime Station; G. Nagarju, serving at IT Cell, has been posted as SHO Trimulgherry; Sukari Vijay, serving as SHO Trimulgherry, has been posted at Multi Zone II; D Madhusudhan Reddy, serving as SHO Madhuranaagar, has been



transferred to West Zone Police Control Room; Y. Ajay Kumar, serving at Multi Zone II, has been transferred as SHO Madhuranaagar; G Govardhan Reddy, serving as SHO Masabtank, has been transferred to Multi Zone II; Mohammed Asif, serving as SHO Kacheguda, has been transferred to Tappachabutra, has been transferred as SHO Kalapathar, and B. Abhilash, serving as SHO Kalapathar, has been posted as Detective Inspector of Tappachabutra.

All the inspectors have been asked to report to their new postings with immediate effect. The Commissioner transferred 20 inspectors in the previous two rounds of transfers.

**REVANTH & CHANDRABABU MEETING**

**Deputy CM Bhatti reviews steps**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu on Wednesday reviewed arrangements for the meeting between Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu scheduled for July 6 at Praja Bhavan here. Accompanied by State Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari and various departmental officials, Vikramarka inspected Praja Bhavan.

He instructed officials from various departments to ensure smooth arrangements and coordinate effectively for the meeting.



Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu on Wednesday reviewing arrangements for the meeting between Revanth and Naidu

The review saw participation from Principal Secretary (Finance) Ramakrishna Rao, Special Officer (Praja Vani)

Divya, Secretary (Roads and Buildings) Harichandana, Protocol Department Director Venkata Rao, and other officials.

# UNDIVIDED ASSETS WORTH OVER RS 1,42,601 CRORE Telugu states differ over distribution

**SNCN ACHARYULU**  
■ HYDERABAD

The total worth of undivided assets between the two Telugu states is about Rs 1,42,601 crore. These assets are pertaining to 245 institutions. The Andhra Pradesh government is claiming about Rs 75,000 crore worth assets as its share. The Andhra Pradesh State Reorganisation Act said that the assets should be distributed between the two states in the ratio of 58% to residuary. State of Andhra Pradesh and 42% to newly formed Telangana State. According to report prepared by the Andhra Pradesh government 91% of total assets are

located in the Telangana, particularly in and around Hyderabad city. According to the report, the value of the ninth schedule institutions is estimated to be Rs 24,018.53 crore, of which about 94% worth Rs 22,550 crore are in Telangana. The value of 10th schedule institutions is estimated to be Rs 34,642 crore, of which 88% worth over Rs 30,350 crore are in Telangana. Another 12 institutions with undivided assets worth Rs 1,759 crore are also in Telangana. The Andhra Pradesh government's argument is that the 91% of the undivided assets

pertain to institutions located in Hyderabad, have disproportionately benefited Telangana. But the argument of Telangana government is that these assets are developed with the taxes collected from the people of Telangana and hence that the assets should be distributed on geographical basis. That means the assets located in Andhra Pradesh region belong to AP and the assets located in the Telangana region belong to Telangana. The Telangana government also claims some of these assets were created by the erstwhile Nizam government and AP has no share in these institutions. In Andhra Pradesh, seaports were developed and several buildings were constructed in the combined Andhra Pradesh but they are not claiming any share in these assets.



## Assam flood situation worsens; 8 more dead, over 16 lakh hit

**PNS ■ GUWAHATI**

The flood situation in Assam continued to deteriorate with eight more people losing their lives and more than 16.25 lakh people reeling under the deluge across 27 districts on Wednesday, an official bulletin said. Till Tuesday, more than 11.3 lakh people were suffering in flood waters across 23 districts of the state.

According to the daily flood report of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), two persons died at Tezpur revenue circle of Sonitpur district, while one each drowned at Mayong of Morigaon, Naharkatia of Dibrugarh, Pub Mangaladi of Darrang, Dergaon of Golaghat, Halem of Biswanath and

Margherita of Tinsukia. With this, the total number of people losing their lives in this year's flood, landslide and storm has increased to 56. Besides, three more persons are missing and feared to be washed away by flood waters in Sonitpur, Sivasagar and Golaghat districts.

The report said more than 16,25,000 people are hit due to the floods in Barpeta, Biswanath, Cachar, Charaideo, Chirang, Darrang, Dhemaji, Dhubri, Dibrugarh, Goalpara, Golaghat, Hailakandi, Hojai, Jorhat, Kamrup, Kamrup Metropolitan, East Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong, Karimganj, Lakhimpur, Majuli, Morigaon, Nagaon, Nalbari, Sivasagar, Sonitpur and Tinsukia districts.

# 'BRS MLAs joining Cong as they failed to bear KCR's plots'

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Stating that the BRS MLAs are joining the Congress as they failed to bear the conspiracies of BRS chief K Chandrasekhar Rao to topple the Congress government, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said that the 'joinings' will be in phased manner.

Speaking to the media at Gandhi Bhavan on Wednesday, Bhatti Vikramarka said that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy already made it clear that he is not a disciple of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and was a companion only and now they are Chief Ministers of neighboring states.

Finding fault with the BRS leaders for demanding the merger of seven mandals, Bhatti said that the seven mandals merger was not there in the Division Act. However, the BRS handed over seven mandals through the ordinance that was brought by the BJP-led Centre. He alleged

**Bhatti alleged that the former CM KCR did not implement the Rs1 lakh loan waiver scheme in the last five years.**



that the BJP and BRS were the reason for the loss of seven mandals. Nobody believes cock and bull stories of former minister T Harish Rao, he pointed out, alleging that the BRS did nothing in the last 10 years.

Bhatti alleged that the former CM KCR did not implement the Rs1 lakh loan waiver scheme in the last five years. Bhatti said that the Congress government will implement Rs 2 lakh loan waiver scheme soon to make the farmers loan-free. He said that suicide of a farmer in Khammam district is painful.

The government already directed to punish the culprits severely conducting probe into the incident. Bhatti said that the government is implementing the schemes by studying them deeply. He said that the government already constituted a Cabinet Sub-Committee to prepare guidelines for the implementation of the scheme. He said that the government would utilise every paisa that is collected from the people through taxes. He said that the government will conduct workshops in the erstwhile 10 districts and prepare the report.

## Dead snake found in mid-day meal packet, claim parents

**PNS ■ SANGLI**

A tiny dead snake was allegedly found in a packet of mid-day meal meant for children at an 'Anganwadi' or government-run nursery school in western Maharashtra's Sangli district. The alleged incident was reported by the parents of a child at Palus on Monday, said Anandi Bhosale, vice-president of the state Anganwadi workers' union, though district officials could not be contacted to confirm it.

## Poverty declines to 8.5% from 21.2%

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Poverty in India is estimated to have declined to 8.5 per cent in 2022-24 from 21.2 per cent in 2011-12, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, according to a research paper by the economic think tank NCAER.

The paper titled 'Rethinking Social Safety Nets in a Changing Society', authored by Sonalde Desai of NCAER, used data from the newly completed Wave 3 of the India Human Development Survey (IHDS) as well as data from Waves 1 and 2 of the IHDS.

"According to the IHDS findings... poverty declined significantly between 2004-2005 and



2011-12 (from a headcount ratio of 38.6 to 21.2), and it continued to decline between 2011-12 and 2022-24 (from 21.2 to 8.5) despite the challenges posed by the pandemic," the paper said.

The paper said economic growth and poverty decline create a dynamic climate that requires nimble social protection programmes. Traditional strategies

designed to address chronic poverty in a large segment of society may be less effective as accidents of birth become less important than accidents of life, it added.

The paper noted that ensuring social protection systems keep up with the pace of social transformation will be a key challenge for India as it strives towards equitable development. According to the paper, during an era of economic growth, when opportunities increase, the long-term determinants of poverty may decline while accidents of life associated with natural disasters, illness and death, and changes in occupation-specific opportunities may become more important.

## Attire colour of Ram temple priests changes from saffron to yellow, mobile banned

**PNS ■ AYODHYA**

The priests at the Ram temple here have changed their attire and have been banned from carrying mobile phones to the shrine, according to officials of the temple trust.

Till now the priests in the sanctum sanctorum were seen in saffron clothes. They used to wear saffron turban, saffron kurta and dhoti.

The priests have now started wearing yellow (pitambari) dhoti with a kurta and turban of the same colour.



According to the temple officials, the new dress code has been made effective from Jul 1.

The new priests have been given training to tie the yellow turbans. The 'chaubandi' kurta has

no buttons and a thread is used to tie it. The yellow 'dhoti', a piece of cotton cloth, is tied around the waist and covers the legs till the ankles. There is a chief priest along with four assistant priests in the temple. Now each assistant priest is also accompanied by five trainee priests. Each team of priests renders its services for five hours in shifts between 3.30 am and 11 pm. The priests have also been banned from carrying mobile phones to the temple.

# Public detest Cong govt...

*Continued from page 1*

In contrast, every step in BRS' two-and-a-half-decade journey had been marked by remarkable successes, with no tales of failure. He emphasized that the challenging conditions under which he had set out to achieve statehood for Telangana could not be compared to the conditions today and that the BRS continued to advance, overcoming any obstacles and gaining greater public support.

KCR recounted the struggles he had faced, from the final stages of the movement when Telangana's very existence was at stake, to achieving statehood and 10 years of progressive governance thereafter. He recalled how the 'united Andhra forces', along with their media, were once formidable adversaries, dictating terms and controlling narratives.

KCR pointed out that standing up to the powerful 'Andhra systems' and opposing symbolic figures of united Andhra like then leader Chandrababu Naidu was no small feat. He assured the

gathering that just as statehood was achieved for Telangana by breaking those united Andhra conspiracies, the united Telangana society would overcome any future adversities.

The former CM declared that Telangana society had always stood by BRS beyond victories and defeats, and would continue to do so. He criticized the Congress government for misleading the public with unfulfilled promises and various gimmicks to sustain itself in power. He highlighted that Telangana society longed to return to the peaceful governance of the BRS, which, over 10 years had brought welfare and development.

KCR expressed his gratitude for the love and affection shown by Telangana society,

However, he requested the party workers and fans to visit him only after prior intimation. He observed: "Many people come daily, those invited and uninvited, to meet me. I thank you for your love, but it is challenging to stand for hours and take photos with everyone. To manage this better, we decided to invite visitors based on prior intimation. We will announce the names of two constituencies each week.

Only people from those seats can come, allowing us to have meaningful interactions without hassle.

Thank you once again for your love and support."

On Wednesday, KCR met with workers and leaders from Mahabubabad, Medchal, and Nalgonda districts at his residence in Erravelli.

## Rajnath 'lied' in Parl on compensation to martyr Agniveer families, alleges Rahul

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday alleged that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh "lied" in Parliament about the issue of compensation to families of "martyr" Agniveers and demanded an apology for it.

The Congress leader also shared a video on X purportedly of the father of a deceased Agniveer who stated that Rajnath Singh had claimed that Rs 1 crore compensation had been given to the next of



kin of martyred Agniveers but no such assistance was received by his family. In his video message, Gandhi said that he had stated in his speech in Parliament that the protection of truth is

the basis of every religion. "In reply, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, before Lord Shiva's photo, lied to the country, its armed forces and Agniveers about compensation," Gandhi said in the video. He then referred to the purported statement by the father of an Agniveer martyr, Ajay Singh. Ajay Singh's father said that Rajnath Singh made the statement that families of martyrs have been given Rs 1 crore compensation but no such assistance had been received by his family.

## '15 MLAs to quit BRS' Predicts BJP MP Raghunandan



**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

BJP MP from Medak M Raghunandan Rao on Wednesday predicted that 15 BRS MLAs are going to change their political affiliation before the commencement of the Assembly budget session.

Raghunandan Rao said, "Forget about coming to power again by KCR and it is better for KCR to protect the BRS party as it may not sustain in the coming 15 months. He alleged that KCR never met the MLAs and ministers when he was in power. He said that his word of 'today's defectors will explode tomorrow like artillery' has become a reality now in regard to KCR's encouragement of defections."

While addressing the media at the State BJP office on Wednesday along with former MLC N Ramachandrarao, Raghunandan Rao responded to the statement of KCR that the BRS will come

to power again and will be in power for 15-long years. Raghunandan Rao ridiculed KCR saying that KCR has been giving spots to the photos with ZPTCs, MPTCs, sarpanches and ward members and giving an impression that the party is in a strong position. However, KCR forgot the fact that his MLAs are quitting one after the other, he pointed out.

Alleging that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy is spending his total time for the sake of politics and is not thinking about the development of the State, Raghunandan Rao demanded Revanth Reddy government to solve the problems of the farmers immediately. He demanded Revanth Reddy government to implement the Rythu Bharosa scheme to all farmers. Raghunandan Rao alleged that the Congress gave several declarations before elections for the sake of power.

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha  
Tithi: Trayodashi: Jul 03 07:10 AM to Jul 04 05:54 AM  
Chaturdashi: Jul 04 05:54 AM to Jul 05 04:58 AM  
Amavasya: Jul 05 04:58 AM to Jul 06 04:27 AM

**Nakshatram:**  
Mrigashirsha: Jul 04 04:07 AM to Jul 05 03:54 AM  
Ardra: Jul 05 03:54 AM to Jul 06 04:06 AM

**Rahukalam:** 1:58 PM to 3:35 PM  
**Yamagandam:** 5:50 AM to 7:27 AM

**Variyam:** 12:22 PM to 01:59 PM  
**Gulika:** 9:05 AM to 10:43 AM  
**Amritakalam:** 07:11 PM to 08:46 PM  
**Abhijit Muhurtham:** 11:54 AM to 12:46 PM

**HYDERABAD WEATHER**

Forecast: Mostly Cloudy  
Temp: 32°  
Humidity: 64%  
Sunrise: 5:46 AM  
Sunset: 6:55 PM

Updated: July 3, 2024 5:00 PM

## 'New policy to...

*Continued from page 1*

Rao noted that countries like Singapore, Dubai, and parts of Africa, despite lacking resources, had made tourism their main source of revenue. The goal was to elevate Telangana's tourist spots to international standards so as to attract domestic as well as foreign tourists.

Krishna Rao highlighted that Somasila in the Krishna River backwaters could be developed into an ideal location for destination weddings and adventure tourism. The government plans to also promote Ramappa, Laknavaram, Nagarjuna Sagar and Ananthagiri Hills as prime destination wedding spots. Efforts are underway to establish a wellness tourism resort in Ananthagiri, incorporating cultural and traditional elements into wedding celebrations.

The Minister announced plans to raise Buddhavanam at Nagarjuna Sagar to international standards like Bodhi Gaya so as to attract tourists from Eastern and

Southern countries. He criticized the decline of the prestigious National Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management (NITHM) during the previous government and promised to restore the institution to its former glory. Culture encompassed a lot more than arts and artists; it reflected our way of life. "The government aims to bring ancient arts under one umbrella and promote dance forms like Perini. There are plans to organize flash mobs at tourist spots and shopping malls to promote cultural activities. The Minister mentioned that there would be grand celebrations for the centenary of D a s h a r a t h i Krishnamacharyulu and the birth anniversary of Kaloji Narayana Rao.

Tourism and Culture Principal Secretary Vani Prasad, Tourism Development Corporation Managing Director Prakash Reddy, and Tourism Department Director Ila Tripathi were present at the press conference.

## PM Modi vows...

*Continued from page 1*

The Congress drags the AAP to court and if action is taken then they abuse Modi," the prime minister said.

Modi said the Congress had presented so many proofs of AAP's scams before the country in a press conference. The Congress should now answer whether those proofs were true or false, he said.

Now the AAP and the Congress have become part-

ners, he said, and dared the AAP to demand an answer from the Congress. Modi asserted that he had vowed in 2014, when the BJP came into power at the Centre, that the government will work for the welfare of the poor and also take actions against corruption and black money.

"Action against corruption is a mission for us. It is not a matter of victory or defeat in elections for us," he added.

## Keshava...

*Continued from page 1*

AICC general secretary KC Venugopal, and in-charge general secretary Deepa Das Munshi at Kharge's residence in Delhi. Kharge welcomed Keshava Rao, popularly known as 'KK', into the Congress party by offering him the party's kanduva. Speaking on the occasion, KK recalled that AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi had made a phone call and invited him to join the Congress party. KK had quit the BRS party in March along with his daughter and Mayor Gadwal Vijayalaxmi. He mentioned that he had decided to join the Congress party. Later, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy too had a meeting with KK.

## Consensus eludes...

*Continued from page 1*

It is learnt that Bhatti Vikramarka has been asked for TPCC chief position on the lines of Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shiva Kumar, who is also the Karnataka PCC president now. Some circles in Congress unit say that the impending Cabinet expansion may not materialize on Thursday as Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy is seeking Cabinet berth for his wife, Kodada MLA Padmavathi Reddy, if minister post is given to Munugode MLA Komatireddy Rajgopal Reddy. It may be mentioned here that Rajgopal Reddy had been

openly stating for a long time that he had rejoined the Congress party because he had been assured of Minister position. However, some leaders in the party are strongly opposing this idea. It may be mentioned here that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had reportedly assured Minister post to Rajagopal Reddy should the latter ensure the victory of Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy. Rajagopal Reddy stated this at a public meeting held during the Lok Sabha election campaign in the Bhongir Lok Sabha constituency. All told, Congress sources say, Cabinet expansion may take place only after the selection of TPCC president.

**MUNICIPAL CORPORATION CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR (EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECH)**

Tel No.: (0240)2333536-40  
Fax No.: (0240)2331213  
Address: Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Municipal Corporation, Executive Engineer (Mech)  
Head Office : Town Hall, Pin No.4311  
E-Tender Call CSMC (For Help)  
Mob No : 9764999780  
No.CSMC/ Mech/448 /2024 Dt. 02/07/2024

**Corrigendum**

Ref: Tender ID No. 2024-AMCA-998054-1

As per the reference, tender called for Fabrication & supply of 70 Mtr. Hydraulic Platform for fire fighting and rescue operation with 10 years CSMC (01 No.). Regarding this tender corrigendum is published on www.mahatenders.gov.in portal. Rest of the condition remains unchanged.

Executive Engineer (Mech)  
Municipal Corporation  
Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

# Hyd office market jumps 40% to reach 5 M sqft

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad office market is experiencing a period of phenomenal growth, fueled by a surge in demand from both domestic and global companies since the Congress government came to power.

According to Cushman & Wakefield's latest report, Gross Leasing Volume (GLV) for H1 2024 is projected to reach an impressive 5 million square feet, a significant increase of nearly 40% compared to the 3.6 million square feet recorded in H1 2023. This positive momentum is attracting a wave of companies to Hyderabad, solidifying its position as a leading business destination.

During the first quarter of the year, the Hyderabad office market witnessed a healthy gross leasing of 2.5 million square feet, recording a significant 125% growth on a year-on-year basis, although it was a 19% decline quarter-on-quarter. The leasing activity



observed in Q1 surpassed the average quarterly leasing activity recorded in 2023 by 11%, primarily driven by occupiers' expansion initiatives. Notably, more than 60% of deals involved smaller-sized office spaces with area requirements below 50,000 square feet, a trend that remained consistent with the quarterly figures recorded in 2023.

Net absorption in the Hyderabad office market remained relatively stable at 1.6 million square feet, with a

slight year-on-year decline of 2%. The report states that demand for office space was primarily fueled by the BFSI sector, commanding a 36% share of gross leasing, followed by the IT sector with a 23% share.

Flexible workspace operators accounted for a significant 20% of the leasing activity in Q1, nearly doubling from the average quarterly volume recorded in the previous year. The prime submarket of Madhapur dominated leasing

activity, accounting for 89% of quarterly office space leasing. Several factors are contributing to Hyderabad's office market boom, according to the report.

The entire supply in Q1 was concentrated towards the Gachibowli submarket, leading to a 367 basis points rise in vacancy, which stood at 45.92%. Nearly 5.8 million square feet of new supply is expected in Gachibowli for the rest of 2024, thus pushing the vacancy rate to an expected 47% by the end of 2024. Rental values slightly elevated in key markets, as stated in the report. Over the next three quarters, approximately 13 million square feet of new supply is anticipated in Madhapur and Gachibowli combined, indicating a further increase in vacancy rates. This growth trajectory positions Hyderabad as a frontrunner in the Indian office space market, offering a vibrant and fertile ground for businesses of all sizes to flourish.



## Man who fled with breathalyser held

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Bowenpally traffic police on Wednesday arrested a man who fled with a breathalyser during a drunk driving test. The accused was identified as Kothapli Sravan Kumar (27), a car driver. The police were conducting drunk and drive checking in the early hours of June 27 at Pulla Reddy building when they stopped the accused.

The traffic official asked Kumar to blow into the breathalyser. However, he pushed the official away and drove with the machine.

Kumar was finally arrested by the police. The car was also seized.

# TG govt starts HY-CITI to complete pending works

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has started a new scheme named Hyderabad City Innovative Transformative and Infrastructure (HY-CITI) for the comprehensive development of basic facilities and infrastructure in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC).

On Wednesday, the GHMC mentioned that the previous government had started Strategic Nala Development Programme (SNDP), Strategic Road Development Plan (SRDP), Comprehensive Road Maintenance Programme (CRMP) for doing various works. Under the HY-CITI programme the pending works of those programmes would be completed.

The Telangana government has directed the GHMC officials to prepare proposals on the priority works which were undertaken in the past. The GHMC set a target of 42 works for the development of flyovers, road-over bridges (ROBs), under bridge and other roads for better transport



system as a signal-free city, out of which 35 works have been completed and 7 works are in various stages of progress.

A total of 58 works have been undertaken by SNDP in the first phase in the GHMC and peripheral areas and 39 of them were completed. A total of 69.49 km-long capacity canals have been targeted to be developed and 42.48 km canals have been completed.

In total 37 works have been completed in the limits of the GHMC. Also 7 works in GHMC and 12 works in remaining municipalities are at

an incomplete stage.

Among the works proposed to be undertaken by SNDP in the second phase, 35 works at an estimated cost of Rs 582.42 crore will be undertaken in the city through the HY-CITI programme. There are several works pending in the GHMC zones, which are, seven works should be completed in the LB Nagar zone, nine works in Charminar zone, three works in Khairatabad zone, seven works in Serilingampally zone, six works in Kukatpally zone and three works in Secunderabad zone would be completed.

# Special drive against child labour through Operation Muskan-10

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rachakonda Commissioner Tarun Joshi stated that the police officials launched a special drive from July 1 to July 31, 2024 through 'Operation Muskan-10' which aimed at rescuing and rehabilitating homeless children and forced children caught in begging and child labour during the Operation Muskan tenth coordination meeting.

The Commissioner said that child labour system has become like a disease in society and it is destroying the childhood of many innocent children. The main reason behind child labour is poverty of the parents which forces their children into the trap of begging, workers at construction sites and other harsh chores thereby ruining their golden future. The government is implementing many free schemes for the education of children and parents should take advantage of them regardless of their financial situation. He called for public participa-



tion in eradication of bonded labour and people should consider it as their moral responsibility. "Special teams have been formed for this purpose, consisting of a sub-inspector and four police constables (including a woman police constable). These teams rescue and rehabilitate trafficked children. A facial recognition software application called Darpan is being used to identify children who are separated or missing from their families due to various reasons," he added.

Furthermore, strict measures are being taken to eliminate human trafficking and child labour in Rachakonda. He also reminded that work-site schools are being run in their residential areas so that

the children of workers should not be deprived of education because of the bricks brought from other states like Odisha and Bihar.

DCP Women Safety Usha Vishwanath, ACP Venkatesham, Rangareddy District Welfare Officer Padmaja Ramani, Medchal District Welfare Officer Krishna Reddy, Rangareddy District CWC Chairperson Narendra Reddy, Medchal District CWC Chairperson Raja Reddy, Medchal District Medical Health Officer Dr Raghunath Swamy, Labour Department officials, Education Department officials, Bachapan Bachao Andolan representative Venkateswarlu and others were present.



CS Rangarajan along with Chilkur Balaji temple volunteers distribute notebooks to students of Chilkur Mandal Parishad Primary School

## Chilkur chief priest launches free notebook distribution

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief priest of Chilkur Balaji temple CS Rangarajan launched a notebook donation drive for distributing notebooks to students of Chilkur Mandal Parishad Primary School on Wednesday.

The drive was to sensitise the younger generation and make them aware of the value of things and promote quality education and a favourable environment. Rangarajan said, "It will inspire people of higher strata of the society and the affluent to participate actively

in such donation drives for poor school children. Further these types of programmes will inculcate the habit of giving among a huge population. We request urban school children to come forward and help the other underprivileged counterparts. The drive is a small step towards developing social responsibility and sustainable learning in the society." The books were distributed to the primary school students in the presence of Balaji temple volunteers led by Pavan Kumar and staff of Chilkur Balaji temple.

## Three held for duping people of Rs 23 lakh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Habeebnagar Police on Wednesday arrested three persons for duping people of Rs 23 lakh on the pretext of collecting money for qurbani during Bakrid.

The accused were identified as Mohammed Naseer (30) from Chandulal Baradari; Mohammed Zafar Ahmed (29) and Mohammed Ashfaq (27) both residents of Sun City.

D Uday Kumar Reddy, DCP (south west) zone said the trio started a 'Khidmat Foundation' and offered to arrange for 'hissa' (share) for animal sacrifice on Eid Ul Adha festival. "Naseer started Khidmat Foundation four years back. He set up counters in different places in the city and collected money from the public towards animal sacrifice. Several people paid him money for the purpose and after collecting it, Naseer, Zafar and Ashfaq went into hiding."



## GHMC Commissioner inspects sanitation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GHMC Commissioner Amrapali Kata made a surprise inspection on Wednesday on sanitation in several areas of the city. On this occasion, the Commissioner directed the officials to complete the process of allotment of market rooms constructed at Narayanguda cross-roads.

The Commissioner spoke to the driver of the garbage removal vehicle at Shankar Mutt and enquired about the details of garbage removal. Speaking to a student, the Commissioner explained that the environment should be kept clean, the garbage should be given to the clean autos and the fellow students should be made aware and try to work towards a clean Hyderabad.

## PHONE-TAPPING High Court orders govt to submit counter in 3 weeks

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The High Court has granted three weeks time to file counter petition over illegal phone-tapping of Justice Sarath Kaja and other persons.

A Bench comprising Justice Alok Aradhe and T Vinod Kumar gave the order on Wednesday. Respondents of the case are Union of India, Chief Secretary, the Director General of Police (Telangana), Principal Secretary of Home department and the Hyderabad Commissioner of

Police. Additional Advocate General submitted a detailed counter affidavit filed on Wednesday. In the meanwhile, if any, on behalf of the Union of India be filed on or before the next date of hearing.

The High Court took the case as suo moto based on a news item published in a newspaper. The newspaper published that the confessional statement of Bhujanga Rao revealed that High Court Justice Sarath Kaja's phone was tapped during BRS government tenure.

## Flaws in ticket booking via IRCTC app, website under fire

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Just like other government platforms, the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has collaborated with private payment apps to increase the rate of bookings by the customers through its official portal and app. However, a majority of people raised their grievances over irregularities of both the IRCTC portal and the app while booking train tickets.

Hyderabad activist Robin Zacheus criticised the railways officials by saying, "During the month of May, I was booking tickets from Delhi to Hyderabad through IRCTC app, but the app failed to book my tickets successful-

ly due to frequent app crashes and logouts. Also, a large number of passengers are attempting to book the tickets from 11:00 am to 11:30 am thereby leading to app crashes and frequent logouts. Apart from the frequent logouts and the app getting frozen, there is an issue with Captcha code which lacks AI. In regards to Tatkal booking including the premium version, a majority of people face issues with booking train seats from 10 am due to freezing issues or crash issues during the booking procedure. It's really pathetic for the customers to use the app for booking seats in trains. Also, as per the Right to Information (RTI) says user capacity of booking

train tickets is 26,000 per minute. However, the annual report of IRCTC states that the user capacity of booking train tickets is 28,000 per minute as per RTI."

He also said that Paytm app (third party) was showing the waiting list from 10:00 am - 10:20 am and was allowed to book the tickets with some surety of confirmation chances but not the official IRCTC app. According to the RailwaySeva, the partners and agents are not allowed to book the Tatkal tickets but paytm users were able to book the tickets with IRCTC login requirements. "Why the Indian Railways giving more preference to paytm than IRCTC officials?", Robin questioned.

## AITUC activists protest exploitation of contract workers

MOHAMMED BALEEGH ■ HYDERABAD

The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) on Wednesday held a protest at the Directorate of Medical Education (DME) regarding exploitation of contract workers at government hospitals.

Addressing the issue, AITUC Telangana president Mohammed Yousuf said, "Today's protest was held over three major issues, including non-payment of salaries as per the Government Order No. 60. Whenever the employees approach the contractor, he says the government hasn't released salaries. As per the law, contract workers should be given eight leaves for festivals and national holidays annually. There should be 16 earned leaves, which is not being given. As per the Supreme Court's judgement on September 26, 2016 our salaries must be increased including basic, dearness allowance and HRA. We had



Members of the AITUC protest at the DME office over exploitation of contract workers at govt hospitals

released a statement regarding implementation of the same. Today, the AITUC submitted a memorandum to a representative of the DME."

Yousuf further said, "We couldn't meet the DME. However, the representative assured us that the authorities would look into the demands and resolve the issue. The AITUC members will meet the DME in a couple of days."

Contract workers complained of increased workload at Gandhi, Osmani and Niloufer hospitals due shortage of attendants. The protestors further said that there are discrepancies in provident funds; While the PF amount of Rs 3,200 must be deposited, only Rs 1,500 is being put in their accounts. The contract employees accused contractors of corruption regarding the PF.

## Hyd CP holds review meet ahead of Bonalu, Muharram

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Kothkota Sreenivas Reddy on Wednesday held a review meet ahead of Bonalu and Muharram which will be observed on July 7.

The Commissioner appreciated the commitment and hard work put in by the Central Peace and Welfare Committee for the past several decades and requested for similar continuous cooperation to maintain the peaceful atmosphere in Hyderabad, which is appreciated across the world. He further requested the committee members for more frequent interactions with the police officers and share inputs relating to



the various problems and anti-social elements.

Srikishan Sharma, General Secretary, Central Peace & Welfare Committee, Hafiz Muzaffar Hussain, Chief Patron and all zonal presidents, Vikram Singh Mann,

Addl. Commissioner of Police, Law & Order and Chairman of the Committee, P Viswa Prasad, Addl. CP, Traffic; V Satyanarayana, Addl. CP, Hqrs. & Trg., DCPs and Addl DCPs of seven zones participated.

## Emphasis on youth involvement in environmental efforts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The G20 Global Land Initiative (G20 GLI) at the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), in

collaboration with the Heartfulness Institute, successfully concluded the "Youth Acts - Planting for a Sustainable Future" event at Kanha Shanti Vanam in Hyderabad on Wednesday. The event brought together 2,500 students from across the region for an enriching day dedicated

to environmental conservation and land restoration.

The event provided these young participants with hands-on experience in environmental conservation, focusing on the vital role of land restoration in combating climate change and enhancing biodiversity. It organised various interactive sessions, expert talks and engaging activities designed to instill a deep sense of environmental stewardship in participants.

## 38th Hyd Sailing Week begins at Hussainsagar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The 38th Hyderabad Sailing Week kicked off

with a spectacular display of talent and competitive spirit on the first day of races at Hussainsagar on Wednesday. The event witnessed sailors from across the country competing in various categories by showcasing their skills and determination on the waters.

Under International Laser Class Association (ILCA) 7 Category, Mohit Saini took the lead with his flawless performance and secured the first position followed by Mahaprabhu who demonstrated consistent technique and speed, earning him the second

place and Sikanshu Singh in third place.

In the case of ILCA 6 Women category, Ritika Dangi emerged victorious in the women's category, exhibiting remarkable skillset followed by Laveti Darani who secured second place and Neha Thakur secured third place in this category while in open category, Ram Milan secured the first place followed by Mohapatra in second place and Dilip in third place.

Under 470 class, Sharada Verma and RK Sharma secured the top place followed by Nancy Rai and Manish Sharma in second place and Uma Chauhan and Sudhanshu Shekar in third place.

# Village administration in disarray under Cong rule: Harish

PNS ■ DUBBKA

The administration in villages is in disarray since the Congress came to power, said former Minister and Bharat Rashtra Samithi leader T Harish Rao on Wednesday. Addressing MPTC members, Sarpanchs and ZPTC members in the Dubbaka Assembly constituency, the Congress government has been concentrating on targeted attacks on opposition leaders instead of focusing on administration. The employees in Panchaya Raj institutions are unable to focus on administration. Villages are no longer being kept clean and tidy.



Former Minister T Harish Rao, Dubbak MLA Kotha Prabhakar Reddy felicitating elected representatives of local bodies in Dubbak on Wednesday.

The former Minister was addressing at Atmiya meeting on the occasion of the tenure of representatives of local bodies came to end on Wednesday.

Harish Rao said there were no funds to even fill the diesel tanks of gram panchayat tractors, he said, adding that the government was not paying salaries even to Anganwadi workers.

In the regime of the Congress, which came to power by making false promises, all systems in the state had failed.

Salaries were also denied to the midday meals workers. In the otherwise prosperous Telangana, protests and sui-

cides became order of the day.

The suicide of a farmer in Khammam district highlighted the miserable condition of farmers in the state under Congress rule, he said.

Rape cases, murders and looting have become the order of the day. There was no betterment in the administration other than victimisation of the political rivals, he said.

Payment of Rs 4,000 pension per month to senior citizens under Asara, 24x7 power supply to agriculture sector, KCR kit, RytuBandhu, Kalyana Lakshmi disbursement were stopped, he said.

The farmers are uncertain when they should raise paddy nurseries as they did not know when the government would release water for irrigation, he said. There was no water in irrigation tanks, streams and ponds, he said, pointing out that the farmers were assured of irrigation facility under the KCRs regime. Power is being cut to the schools. The government hospitals have been ailing with various problems.

Dubbaka MLA Kotha Prabhakar Reddy, who presided over the meeting, told the elected people's representatives that their services to the rural Telangana were

unforgettable. He lauded for walking shoulder to shoulder with KCR in the development of rural areas.

Later, he felicitated the local bodies' elected people's representatives and nominated representatives.

ZP chairperson RojaSarma, state SC and ST Commission Chairman BakkiVenkataiah, Municipal Chairman GanneVanita Bhumi Reddy, senior leader BompalliManohara Rao, ZPTCs, MPPs, PACS chairmen, MPTCs, former market committee chairmen and others were present at the AtmeeyaSammelan.

# Two real estate firm employees held for sexually harassing woman in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Two men working as salespersons in a real estate firm were arrested here for allegedly sexually harassing a woman, police said on Wednesday.

The woman, in her complaint to police stated that on June 30 she went to Miyapur to work as a saleswoman where the two salesmen met her, and later they picked her up in a car from a hostel and proceeded to a site.

After completion of the meeting on the way in the night they halted their car at an under-construction building by telling her that the car



had broken down, the complainant said. The woman was then served a cool drink and sweet

removed the clothes she was wearing, touched her body parts and abused and beat the woman, a release from Cyberabad Police Commissionerate said.

Further, one after the other they harassed her sexually till the early morning hours of July 1 due to which she suffered severe body pain. Subsequently, they dropped her at the hostel and fled, it said.

Based on the complaint of the woman, a rape case was registered at Miyapur police station and during the course of investigation the two salesmen were arrested, police added.

# Govt set target of planting 66 lakh saplings in Nalgonda dist

PNS ■ NALGONDA

District Collector C. Narayana Reddy said that a target has been set to plant 66 lakh saplings in Nalgonda district this year under the Vanamahotsava programme.

On Wednesday, he held a video conference with district and mandal level officials on various issues from the district Collectorate.

Every sapling planted under Vanamahotsava should survive and the right places should be chosen for planting saplings. It is mandatory to plant saplings on both sides road, not to leave any office or road without planting.

He directed the DRDO to provide training for field assistant to make the planta-

tion programme a success. He said that if there is space on both sides of the roads, multi-tiered saplings should be planted, along with the district level programme, the constituencies should be prepared to plant saplings, the concerned legislators should be invited to the plantation programme and the district authorities should complete the plantation as per the target set for them. He asked the officials to protect the forest lands. The lands should be kept free of encroachments. Strict action should be taken against encroachers, he said.

The district collector said that sand should be supplied as per the rules, smuggling should not be allowed under any circumstances. He asked village level medical teams to all steps to ensure that seasonal

diseases do not break out.

District Medical and Health Department officials have been directed to organise awareness campaigns on infectious diseases.

District Superintendent of Police Sarat Chandra Pawar said that if any forest land is encroached, the police would provide protection to the officials to dismantle encroachments.

District Forest Officer Rajasekhara, Assistant Collector T.

Purnachandra, DRDO Nagireddy, ZDP CEO Prem Karan Reddy, Revenue, Police, Forest Department officials, Mandal RDOs, Tehsildars, MPDOs, Police, Forest Department officials, Rural Development Department officials, staff, etc. attended this video conference.

# 976 girls secure seats for in six-year BTech programme

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Girls secured a large number of seats in the six-year BTech programme offered by the Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT), Basar, for the academic year 2024-25. A list of candidates provisionally selected was released by Principal Secretary (Education), Burra Venkatesham, along with RGUKT Vice-Chancellor Prof V Venkata Ramana, on Wednesday.

According to RGUKT officials, 976 girls got provisional admissions as against 428 boys, translating the ratio of girls and boys among those selected to 69:31. Overall, 1,404 candidates were given provisional admission by the university in the first phase of

admissions. The list has been made available on the university website Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies, Basar.

The highest number of students was from Siddipet with 330 students being allotted seats followed by 157 students from Nizamabad and 132 from Sangareddy district. Among those selected, 95 per cent were from the government schools and remaining from the private schools.

The first phase of certificate verification will be conducted on the university campus from July 8 to 10. It is mandatory for all provisionally selected candidates to attend the counselling on the prescribed dates along with original certificates, said a senior officer of RGUKT.

# Elderly man hit by train in Telangana; body found hanging on Loco

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An unidentified elderly man died after he was hit by a train on the city outskirts and his body was found hanging on the Loco of an empty rake, Government Railway Police (GRP) said on Wednesday.

The incident happened on Tuesday between Bibinagar and Ghatkesar and some local TV channels showed a purported video in which the man's body was seen hanging on a moving Loco.

The deceased man is aged about 65-70 years, an Investigation Officer of the GRP, who visited the scene, said, adding he was hit by an empty rake while he was "trespassing" railway track and died on the spot. A case was registered at RPS Secunderabad. Further investigation including to identify the deceased person, was on.

# Cong govt fails to ensure development of Nagarkurnool: Marri

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

Former MLA Marri Janardhan Reddy has criticised Congress government in Telangana and asked it to focus on administration setting aside what he called revenge politics.

Talking to the media here on Wednesday, he objected to government removing the names of trust being run by him and his company at schools built by MJR Charitable Trust and Marri Retail Company.

When questioned, the officials said that they did it at the behest of the local MLA Kuchukulla Rajesh Reddy.



The former MLA said that people elected Rajesh Reddy only to do good to the people but not to hamper the development initiated by his trust. He said the Congress regime did not have any achievement to its credit so far.

He claimed to have built permanent buildings for the schools and improved medical and health services. He gave priority to agriculture, health, education when he was MLA from the constituency. He said that irrigation projects benefiting the farmers were built. He worked hard for all-round development of the district.

He also maintained that he did not include his name in any of the government schemes implemented during his regime.

# ACB nabs tahasildar taking Rs 8,000 bribe

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Wednesday red-handedly caught S Srinivasulu, tahasildar and Joint Sub-Registrar of Gopalpet mandal in Wanaparthy district while taking Rs 8,000 bribe.

On Wednesday, the ACB mentioned that the accused officer demanded and accepted a bribe from the complainant Mudavath Padu to do an official favour, which is 'for conversion of agricultural land of the complainant's wife into non-agricultural land.'

"Tainted bribe amount was recovered from the possession

of the tahasildar. Both hand fingers of the accused which came in contact with the tainted bribe amount yielded positive results in the chemical test. The accused performed his duty improperly and dishonestly to obtain undue advantage", the press note mentioned.

Therefore, accused Srinivasulu was arrested and produced before the ACB Court, Nampally, Hyderabad. The case is under investigation.

In case of demand of bribe by any public servant, the public are requested to contact toll free number of ACB, 1064 for taking action as per Law.

# Be punctual or face action: Collector to govt doctors

PNS ■ NALGONDA

District Collector C Narayana Reddy urged the doctors at the government hospital to provide better services to people.

He was holding a review meeting over the functioning of the government headquarters hospital here with the heads of various departments.

He stressed the need to provide quality medical under Aarogyasri in the district government main hospital. The services in the government hospital should be elevated on a par with private hospital for all patients, including those covered under Aarogyasri scheme.

The Collector warned the doctors of action if patients are advised to go private hospitals. He came to know that some



Nalgonda District Collector C Narayana Reddy reviewing the function of the headquarters hospital in Nalgonda on Wednesday

private hospitals have been sending patients to government hospitals only after their condition turn critical. Action would be taken against private hospitals, too, in such cases, if necessary he said.

He said that the doctors and staff of the hospital should be punctual He said that the staff should be adjusted according to

the work pressure in the respective departments and everyone should work as a team.

Additional Collector T Purnachandra, Chief Hospital Superintendent Nityanand, Principal Rajkumari of Government Medical College, Heads of Departments of Government Headquarters and others attended this meeting.

# Officials told to ensure wholesome food to inmates hostels

PNS ■ YADADRI BHUVANAGIRI

District Collector Hanumanth K Zengde directed officials to ensure wholesome food to inmates in hostels. He warned action if officials failed to provide all basic amenities in hostels.

On Wednesday, the Collector held a review meeting with Regional Coordinator of the hostels, Rajani, and the principals of the hostels at the conference hall.



Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Hanumanth Zengde holding a review meeting in Yadadri on Wednesday

The officials have been directed to take special care to ensure that wholesome food is provided. Cleanliness of the dining area is very important, frequent inspection of the goods and storeroom, strict adherence to the indent of goods and maintenance of registers, inspection of kitchen stock, fresh stock of rice, dal, cooking oil, groceries, etc. should be used for cooking. Since it is the rainy season, it

is advised to ensure the availability of cooking materials in the dry weather. He said that every student should take care of their health and if there is any minor health problem during the rainy season, it should be brought to the attention of the doctors and medical help should be provided.

The Regional Coordinator was directed that there should be field level monitoring of the functioning of the hostels.

# Muthineni Veeraiah elected as honorary president of PAAT

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Para Athletic Association of Telangana (PAAT), State committee unanimously elected Muthineni Veeraiah as the State Honorary President at the Railway Sports Ground in Secunderabad on Wednesday. Upon his election, Veeraiah inaugurated the first Juniors and Sub-Juniors Para Athletic Championship-2024.

After being elected as the State Honorary President, Veeraiah thanked Telangana's Chief Minister, Revanth Reddy, for establishing the para athletics section in sports.

Muthineni highlighted that the previous government had neglected para sports, ignoring repeated requests to appoint a para department. However, after the Congress government was formed, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy took special initiative, and on March 18, the Sports Authority of Telangana ordered the inclusion of para sports. He commended CM Revanth Reddy



Para Athletic Association of Telangana honorary president Muthineni Veeraiah being felicitated in Hyderabad on Wednesday

for becoming a guiding force for para-athletes.

He also mentioned plans to study para sports in other states and countries to promote and improve sports for the disabled in Telangana.

Para Sports Association of Telangana State President Singarapu Babu, General Secretary Gadipalli Prashanth, Wheelchair Indian Cricket Team Head Coach Saidulu, another Para Cricket India

Coach Chandra Ban Giri, Helen Keller Educational Institutions Chairman Umar Khan, Association Advisor Talari Sanjeevaiah, Treasurer Nuka Raju, Ragula Naresh Yadav, Damarupalla Ramadevi, Challa Pawan, Deerawat Mahesh, NIS Coach Kabir Das, and representatives of the association along with para-athletes from various disciplines participated in the program.

# NEWS FROM ANDHRA PRADESH

## 'People's capital' Amaravati will create wealth, jobs: CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, on Wednesday, declared that Amaravati is a people's capital which will be a centre for creating wealth, employment and poverty alleviation. Releasing a White Paper at the State Secretariat in Amaravati, the Chief Minister felt that the former Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy has totally betrayed the entire Telugu community by destroying Amaravati.

The Chief Minister is of the opinion that had the progress of Amaravati been continued it would have become another Hyderabad. Making it clear that the State government will certainly fulfil the commitment made to the people, the CM announced that the State capital will be rebuilt. "The

people have reposed faith in us and we will certainly fulfil it by rebuilding the capital," he said.

"When we were seriously contemplating the name of the capital, the media baron, the Late Ramoji Rao, after a detailed study suggested the name Amaravati, which he said will create history. People in the entire State have hailed this," Chandrababu pointed out.

Recalling how the foundation stone was laid for Amaravati, the CM said that the area has been selected as it is exactly in the middle of the whole State, 12 Lok Sabha constituencies on either side. Majority of the people in the State, too, had suggested to the Siva Ramakrishna Committee that the capital should be between Krishna and Guntur districts, he added.

INDIA CORNER

Police makes second arrest in Chopra flogging case

Police on Wednesday arrested another person for his alleged involvement in the public flogging of a couple in Chopra in West Bengal's Uttar Dinajpur district, an officer said. A team of officers of Islampur police station arrested Amirul Islam alias Badhua from near the state's international border with Bangladesh on Wednesday morning, the officer said. Islam, a resident of Chopra's Ghimar village, was spotted in the video grab which showed the other arrested accused Tajmul Islam alias 'JCB' mercilessly caning a couple who were allegedly involved in an extra-marital affair. The rest of the accused will be identified and arrested. Amirul was seen beside the prime accused JCB in the video, the police officer said. The police on Sunday registered a suo moto case after the video of the incident that happened on Friday went viral on social media, sparking widespread outrage. PTI could not independently verify the video.



RTI appeals pendency coming down every year: Union Minister Jitendra

Union minister Jitendra Singh on Wednesday said the pendency of Right to Information (RTI) appeals is coming down every year. The assertion came while chairing a meeting with Chief Information Commissioner Heeralal Samariya, who gave an update on the working and progress of the Central Information Commission. "The pendency of RTI appeals is substantially reducing from 35,718 appeals in 2019-20 to 29,213 appeals in 2021-22, further reducing to 23,087 appeals in 2023-24 and 22,666 appeals in 2024-25 which is remarkable," said Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel. There has been almost 100 per cent disposal of appeals, with pendency coming down every year, he was quoted as saying in a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry. The minister appreciated the progress made in reducing pendency and increasing the ease of providing information to citizens by the proactive role played by the Commission.



Woman accuses Goa policeman of assault, forcing to lick his shoes

A woman has accused a sub-inspector of Goa Police of assaulting her and forcing her to lick his shoes following which an inquiry has been initiated, an official said on Wednesday. A First Information Report (FIR) would be registered against the police officer after a preliminary probe, he added. The issue was raised by AAP MLA Venzy Viegas who on Tuesday met Superintendent of Police (South) Sunita Sawant with the woman complainant. As per the complaint, the police sub-inspector (PSI) attached to Colva police station called her and her husband to a spot on the border of Benaulim and Nuvem on June 22 after they were involved in an altercation with a truck driver following a minor road accident. The couple had asked the truck driver to pull over after they narrowly escaped a major accident, but the dispute was sorted out amicably, she claimed in the complaint lodged with Margao police station.



Cong, INDIA bloc spreading lies on NEET issue: Pradhan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Wednesday attacked the opposition alleging it is misleading students by spreading lies on the NEET issue and should stop its "cheat policy". Pradhan's comments came after Prime Minister Narendra Modi told the Rajya Sabha that the government will not spare those playing with the future of students.



Amid a raging row over alleged irregularities, including paper leaks, in competitive examinations such as the NEET and the NET, the opposition has been demanding a discussion on the issue in Parliament. "Congress has a history of cheating the country on past and present issues. This intention of theirs has come out in the open in the NEET case as

well. The intention of the INDI alliance to create instability by deviating from the issues with the help of lies and rumours is anti-national and anti-student," Pradhan wrote on X in Hindi. "During his speech in Rajya Sabha today, the Prime Minister has again told the youth of the country that youth power and their bright future is the priority of the govern-

ment and this government is with every young student of the country. No injustice will be allowed to happen to anyone. "The government is taking strict steps by bringing a law for this. The country is confident that no one guilty of irregularities in the examination will be spared. Now Congress party and Indi Alliance should stop their misleading cheat policy

on NEET issue," he added. In the line of fire over the alleged irregularities in the NEET and the PhD entrance NET, the Centre removed National Testing Agency (NTA) director general Subodh Singh last week and notified a high-level panel headed by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief R Radhakrishnan to ensure transparent, smooth and fair conduct of examinations through the NTA. While the NEET is under the scanner over several irregularities, including alleged paper leaks, the UGC-NET was cancelled as the education ministry received inputs that the integrity of the exam was compromised. Both matters are being probed by the CBI. Two other exams -- CSIR-UGC NET and NEET-PG -- were cancelled as a preemptive step.

Cop mowed down by tractor carrying illegally mined gravel

PNS ■ JAIPUR

A Rajasthan Police head constable was mowed down by a tractor driver who was transporting illegally mined gravel in the state's Tonk district, officials said on Wednesday. The incident occurred in the Kotwali police station area when Head Constable Khushiram Bairwa (35) tried to stop the tractor late on Tuesday night, police said. "Instead of stopping the vehicle, the driver hit the head constable and left him grievously injured. The policeman was referred to the Sawai Man Singh (SMS) Hospital, Jaipur where he died during treatment," Kotwali Station House Officer (SHO) Bhanwarlal Vaishnav said. The tractor driver, Javed, has been arrested and further investigation is underway, he said.

Jharkhand CM Champai resigns; Hemant stakes claim

PNS ■ RANCHI

Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren resigned on Wednesday and Hemant Soren, who is out on bail in a money laundering case, staked claim to form the government, hours after leaders of the JMM-led alliance in the state unanimously elected him as the legislature party leader. Champai Soren, who had taken oath as the 12th chief minister of Jharkhand on February 2 after Hemant Soren's arrest, met Governor CP Radhakrishnan at Raj Bhavan and tendered his resignation in the presence of the JMM executive president, capping a day-long drama full of speculations. Hemant Soren staked claim to form the government and the swearing-in ceremony is likely to be held soon. If sworn in, Hemant Soren will be the 13th chief minister of Jharkhand, which was carved



out of Bihar on November 15, 2000. "I have resigned as per the decision of the JMM-led alliance. Our alliance is strong," Champai Soren said after coming out of Raj Bhavan. "All know what had happened with Hemant Soren Ji... I was given the responsibility by the coalition partners. Now, the alliance has decided in favour of Hemant Soren Ji," he said. Hemant Soren told the media all formalities to form

the government are complete. "Everything will be disclosed soon," the JMM executive president said when asked about the swearing-in. Earlier, leaders and MLAs of the alliance during a meeting at Champai Soren's residence here unanimously decided to elect Hemant Soren as the JMM legislature party leader, party sources said. "A decision was taken in the meeting to make Hemant Soren as the Chief Minister of the state again," a party source said.

Delhi Police increases security outside Rahul's residence

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has stepped up security outside Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's residence following an intelligence input of disturbance by right wing groups, sources said on Wednesday. One platoon of paramilitary, including the local police personnel, have been deployed around Gandhi's residence, sources said. Gandhi's remarks against the saffron party had created ruckus in the Lok Sabha on Monday. Sources said an input regarding disturbance by right wing group members was received on Tuesday after which the security has been

increased around the Congress leader's residence in central Delhi. The police have suspected the people may gather with placard or hoardings outside his residence. The local police has been asked to increase the vigil for 24 hours around his residence, sources said. Gandhi enjoys Z plus security with ASL (advanced security liaison) category under the CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) personnel. On Wednesday, the Delhi BJP leaders and workers staged a protest here over Gandhi's remarks against the saffron party and sought an apology from him.

Govt constitutes cabinet committees on security, economic and political affairs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Modi government on Wednesday constituted various cabinet committees, including the country's highest decision making bodies on security, economic and political affairs. According to an official notification, the Cabinet Committee on Security comprises Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. Apart from PM Modi, the Cabinet Committee on



Economic Affairs comprises defence minister, home minister, finance minister, external affairs minister, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and Heavy Industries and Steel Minister H D Kumaraswamy. Others in the committee are: Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Minister of Panchayati Raj and Fisheries Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh. The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs comprises defence minister, home minister, finance minister, panchayati raj minister, Health Minister J P Nadda, Social Justice Minister Virendra Kumar, Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu, Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju, and Minister of Jal Shakti C R Patil. The special invitees in the committee are Union Minister of State for Law (Independent Charge) Arjun Ram Meghwal and Minister of State for Law L Murugan.



Pushing by Baba's security, slippery slope led to Hathras stampede, says prelim report

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chaos caused after Narayan Sakaar Hari's followers, who tried to reach near his vehicle to seek "darshan", were pushed by the godman's security and a "slippery slope" resulted in the stampede that killed 121 people in Hathras, a preliminary report of the SDM said. Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Sikandra Rao submitted the preliminary report on the stampede to the district magistrate (DM). The SDM, who gave permission for the 'satsang' (religious congregation), was also present at the venue when the incident occurred, according to the report. "A crowd of more than 2 lakh people was present in the satsang pandal. Shri Narayan Sakaar Hari (Bhole Baba) reached the satsang pandal at about 12.30 pm and the program went on for 1 hour. "After this, at about 1.40 pm, Shri Narayan Sakaar Hari (Bhole Baba) came out of the pandal to go towards Etah on National Highway-91," the preliminary report said.

PIL in Allahabad HC seeks CBI probe into Hathras stampede

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A public interest litigation was filed in the Allahabad High Court on Wednesday demanding a CBI inquiry into the stampede at a religious congregation in Hathras which claimed 121 lives. The PIL filed by advocate Gaurav Dwivedi said the district officials are "fully responsible" for the negligence that led to the stampede. In his petition addressed to the chief justice and other judges, Dwivedi has said that it was learnt through media that more than a hundred people had died and many were injured in the stampede that took place after the 'satsang' in Hathras district. The district officials have all the arrangements to deal with any untoward situation and the Uttar Pradesh government is spending a lot of money on the new technologies.

Tripura urges Centre to introduce inland waterway

PNS ■ AGARTALA

The Tripura government has urged the Centre to introduce inland waterway transport in the northeastern state. In a letter to Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal on Tuesday, Tripura Transport Minister Sushanta Chowdhury sought that linkage of Gomati River in Tripura with Meghna River system in Bangladesh be set up through the Sonamura-Daudkandi protocol route. "Initiative may be taken for linking Sonamura-Daudkandi waterway to ports in Bangladesh such as Ashuganj, Mongla and Chittagong... further connecting with important Indian rivers such Ganga, Brahmaputra, Barak and ultimately to connect Haldia port in West Bengal through sea routes and Sittwe port of Kaladan project in Myanmar," he stated in the letter. Experts have pointed out that the cost of transporting goods between India and Bangladesh will come down if the Sonamura-Daudkandi protocol route is operationalised. Chowdhury also requested the Centre to approve the proposal to purchase six to ten passenger vessels to boost tourism and ease crossing of Gomati River by commuters.

Delhi court extends Kejriwal's custody till July 12

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A court here on Wednesday extended till July 12 the judicial custody of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam. Kejriwal, who is in jail till July 12 in the CBI case related to the excise policy, appeared before the court of Special Judge Kaveri Baweja through video conference. The court, meanwhile, reserved for June 6 its order on Kejriwal's application to allow his wife Sunita Kejriwal to be present as an attendant during his medical checkup. During the proceedings, Kejriwal requested the court's permission to speak

but the court said he is already being represented through his counsels. Kejriwal said his wife was instrumental in managing his health over the years and as she had a detailed knowledge about his ailments and medical history, granting her access to his medical records every week was justifiable and essential. "Transparency in his medical care is not only a legal requirement but also a critical component of ethical medical practice. Therefore, the applicant (Arvind Kejriwal) and his wife must be duly informed of all aspects of the treatment being administered, ensuring their capability to make informed decisions about his health," the plea said.



People in India exposed to humid heat extremes increased by 67 crore: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

People in India exposed to extreme levels of humid heat during monsoons increased by at least 67 crore over the period 1951-2020, a research has found. Researchers investigated trends in hot and humid conditions or 'moist heat extremes', commonly seen in monsoons during the summer months, in terms of Wet-Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT). The researchers, including those from Cornell University,



US, found that area exposed to extreme and detrimental wet-bulb temperatures exceeding 31 degrees Celsius increased by close to 43 million square kilometres - representing over 67 crore people.

"The consistent increase in exposed area (of close to 43 million square kilometres above 31 degrees Celsius) can adversely impact the labour-intensive work during the monsoon break," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Earth's Future. They also found that the regions most vulnerable to moist heat extremes with wet-bulb temperatures higher than 38 degrees Celsius were primarily along the Indo-Gangetic plain and eastern coast.

3% babies with low birth weight born during pandemic

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, number of babies in India born with a low birth weight rose sharply -- by about three per cent, a new study has found. Babies born during the pandemic were also found to be at double the risk of having a low weight at birth. The increase in babies born with a low weight could impact the development of "human capital" in the long term, as these infants are known to often "struggle with school", corresponding author Santosh Kumar, an associate professor of development and global health economics at the University of Notre Dame, US, said.

"Children who have lower birth weight as infants often go on to struggle with school and this limits their capacity to develop what economists often call 'human capital' -- the key knowledge and skills that will affect their ability to earn a good living and support themselves and their families," Kumar said. Roughly one in every four babies (3 crore) around the world are born with a low weight, which the World Health Organization (WHO) defines as being less than 2.5 kilograms. About 95 per cent of these babies are born in low- and middle-income countries, with around half being born in South Asia, according to the authors of the study published in the journal Communications



Medicine. In this study, the researchers found that babies born between April 2020 and April 2021 weighed less than the WHO-defined limit, compared to those born before the pandemic. Over two lakh infants were analysed, of which 12,000 were born during the pandemic and

about 1,92,000 born pre-pandemic. Data was taken from the fifth round of the Indian National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), conducted during 2019-2021. "The low birth weight prevalence rate (among babies) is 20 per cent in the pandemic cohort and 17 per cent in the pre-pandemic cohort," the authors wrote in the study, which they claimed is the first one to look at how the pandemic affected birth outcomes in India using a nationally representative sample. On average, birth weights during the pandemic years were found to be lowered by 11 grams. The authors also found that babies born during the pan-

demic were at double the risk of having a low birth weight compared to those born pre-pandemic. While a significant number of pandemic-affected children were observed in rural areas and socially disadvantaged communities, the researchers found that a large number of babies from the richest households were also impacted. Multiple factors related to the pandemic, including COVID-causing SARS-CoV-2 virus, stress related to social distancing, economic upheaval and the disruption of maternal and neonatal care, may have affected the health behaviours of pregnant women and contributed to lower birth weights, Kumar said.



www.dailypioneer.com

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

PAPER WITH PASSION

## Innocent lives lost

Stampede at a satsang in Hathras kills at least 121, highlighting the urgent need for stronger regulations

In a tragic and devastating incident in the Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh, a stampede during a satsang resulted in the deaths of at least 121 people. Although the exact cause of the mishap will be determined after a detailed investigation, eyewitness accounts reveal that the stampede occurred when devotees surged forward to seek blessings from Narayan Sakar Vishwa Hari, also known as Bhole Baba. The devotees rushed to touch Bhole Baba's feet and attempted to gather soil from his path, a customary practice that led to the chaos. Many people fell into a nearby drain. Some eyewitnesses reported that after the satsang concluded, many followers rushed toward Bhole Baba to touch his feet or catch a glimpse of him as he departed in his car. People wanted to get his *darshan* and collect soil from the road on which his car left the venue. As the satsang ended, people started leaving in groups. Due to the rain, many slipped, and others fell on top of them, leading to a crushing cascade. Others maintain that people started rushing out due to the humidity when the incident occurred, and many followers, most of whom were women, felt suffocated.



The incident exposes many disturbing facts, ranging from the negligence of the administration to the unchecked influence of godmen over innocent people. Bhole Baba is reportedly absconding. First of all, the number of attendees far exceeded the permitted limit. The chief sewadar (organizer) of Baba's program estimated an attendance of around 80,000 people, but the actual number was significantly higher. Indeed, this breach of the permitted

capacity likely exacerbated the situation, leading to overcrowding in a venue that was inadequate. Now, after this horrific incident, the government is in damage control mode. Compensation for the deceased has been announced, and the Chief Minister is expected to visit Hathras. Additionally, a team has been set up to investigate the cause of the incident. However, in all probability nothing will change and that this incident will soon be forgotten like many before. As we mourn the loss of 121 lives and support the injured and their families, it is imperative to learn from this tragedy and implement effective measures to prevent such incidents in the future. We must prioritise safety, preparedness, and responsible management to ensure the safety of the people. Moreover, shouldn't there be a check on the activities of mushrooming godmen who exploit people's faith and endanger their lives? Many such godmen become so powerful that they are able to dictate terms to the administration and have considerable political clout which gives them power. However, the lack of awareness among people and their sense of helplessness contribute to the proliferation of these godmen who thrive on the ignorance and innocence of the people.

### PICTALK



Farmers carry paddy saplings for plantation in an agricultural field, in Nadia

# Pandemonium in Parliament

As the Modi Govt navigates a new power dynamic, the increased presence and assertiveness of the Opposition suggest a challenging path ahead



KALYANI SHANKAR

The 18th Lok Sabha has the potential for positive functioning. The Modi government said they wanted consensus. Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought agreement and criticised the Opposition for causing problems. Modi stated that in his third term, his Government would aim to build consensus. The Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, also emphasised the importance of the Opposition's role in representing the 'voice of the people' in the House. But at the start of the session, they couldn't agree on important issues. Congress leader Sonia Gandhi wrote in an editorial recently in an English daily that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was "Preaching consensus, provoking confrontation."

Sonia Gandhi criticised Prime Minister Modi for not acknowledging the electoral outcome and for promoting confrontation over consensus. She expressed disappointment with the first few days of the 18th Lok Sabha, pointing out that there's no sign of a changed attitude from the Prime Minister. The 18th Lok Sabha is a significant shift in Indian politics, marking the first time in a decade that Modi is leading a Parliament from a less dominant position. This shift in power dynamics requires him to navigate a coalition and contend with a more assertive opposition. The Modi government now relies on crucial support from two key allies - JD(U) and TDP. This means the NDA allies could significantly influence the Government's plans and actions, a departure from the substantial majority the BJP enjoyed in 2019 and 2014. The increased presence of the Opposition in various parliamentary panels is likely to generate greater engagement. The first session of the current Lok Sabha began with a strong Opposition asserting its rights. Before the session started, there was a dispute over the appointment of BJD M.P Bhartruhari Mahtab as the protem Speaker to administer. The Congress and the INDIA



bloc members felt that Congress MP Kodukkunil Suresh, elected eight times, should have been given the position. However, the BJP argued that they followed the rules. Mahtab was elected to the House seven times in succession, while Suresh lost two elections. This appointment is significant as the Speaker plays a crucial role in the Indian parliamentary system as the head of the Lok Sabha, responsible for maintaining order, conducting debates, and ensuring the House's smooth functioning. Secondly, Rahul Gandhi said he would back Om Birla, the NDA candidate, but only if the Deputy Speaker position, usually given to the Opposition, was assured. While Thambi Durai of the AIADMK, a BJP ally at the time, served as the Deputy Speaker from 2014 to 2019, the position remained vacant from 2019 to 2024. Article 93 states two Lok Sabha members will be selected as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker. Om Birla has been re-elected as the Speaker of the 17th Lok Sabha, bringing continuity and stability to the House. After being congratulated, the newly elected Speaker took out a paper and read a resolution against the 1975 Emergency imposed by



SOME OPPOSITION PARTIES THOUGHT THE PRESIDENT'S INAUGURAL SPEECH TO A JOINT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT IGNORED THE COUNTRY'S MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS. ALSO, THE OPPOSITION CALLED FOR REMOVING THE SENGOL, WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER HAD INSTALLED WITH MUCH FANFARE BEFORE THE ELECTION

late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. This surprising move caught many off guard and caused tension with Congress, as the Emergency was declared on the same date in 1975. This led the Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, to lead a group to the Speaker to express their objection to a political statement from the chair. Fourthly, some opposition parties thought the president's inaugural speech to a joint session of Parliament ignored the country's most serious problems. Also, the Opposition called for removing the Sengol, which the Prime Minister had installed with much fanfare before the Election. Fifthly, Rahul and other Opposition MPs proposed discussing the leakage of the NEET question paper first. The Speaker, however, insisted that a discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address, a significant issue, should be held first. The first week's confrontation shows despite the decrease in numbers, the BJP is unlikely to change its working methods. An energised opposition will also be belligerent. The proceedings in Rajya Sabha also saw disruptions and adjournments as Opposition members raised slogans demand-

ing a discussion on the NEET question paper leak issue. There was also a heated argument between the Chairman and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge. The functioning of the House lies with the Speaker, a position of utmost importance in maintaining order and ensuring fair debates. The Rajya Sabha Chairman presides over the Upper House. A functioning House is necessary and a prerequisite for a healthy democracy. The need for constructive cooperation between the Government and the Opposition cannot be overstated. The House functions effectively in addressing the pressing issues facing the nation. Both sides must recognise the truth and collaborate to make Parliament more organised. After all, the Government is accountable to Parliament. The parliamentary system emphasises collective responsibility, accountability, and flexibility. As former President Pranab Mukherjee said, its functioning is based on Debate, Dissension, and Decision.

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### CYBERCRIME ON THE RISE

Madam — Despite warnings, people are losing huge amounts of money to cyber criminals via stock market investments and online purchases. Fraudsters generally target the middle-aged and the elderly but youngsters are not spared. People are lured by attractive advertisements on social media platforms like WhatsApp, telegram, Instagram and facebook. When innocent citizens are asked to pump money through websites, they fall in line because the "profit accrued by similar investors" is prominently displayed in the common group. Furthermore, the fraudsters "train" the investors in stock market intricacies. Unsuspecting investors are unaware that another victim's money is transferred to his/her "account" to show profit. Duped investors sense something is amiss when they are asked to cough up a substantial commission and when their genuine queries go unanswered or are vaguely shrugged off. However, only when the scamster swindles the hard-earned money out of a person does the latter go to the cyber police. Since most states, if not all, have cyber crime helplines, it is vital to report the fraud very quickly because the cheaters are known to waste little time in hoodwinking the law. It is always a good practice to ask SEBI or RBI licence from the opposite party. Fake websites can always be checked. Sharing one-time password (OTP) is never a good idea.

Ganpathi Bhat | Akola

### RAHUL GANDHI MUST INTROSPECT

Madam — Rahul Gandhi's recent speech in Parliament was nothing short of a disgraceful spectacle. His attempt to lecture on Hinduism was an insult to the intelligence of the nation. By clumsily parroting platitudes about Hindu philosophy, Gandhi not only displayed his profound disconnect from

### Tragedy strikes Hathras



More than 100 people died and several others were injured in a stampede at a religious congregation in a village in Hathras district on Tuesday, 2 July, police said. Senior Superintendent of Police, Etah,

Rajesh Kumar Singh said the incident occurred at a 'satsang' in Pulrai village. The people had gathered large numbers for the event. The stampede occurred due to overcrowding, Sikandara Rao police station SHO Ashish Kumar said. Victims, dead or unconscious, were brought to the Sikandara Rao Trauma Centre in trucks and other vehicles. The bodies were laid outside the health centre as people milled around them. One video clip showed a woman crying, sitting among five or six bodies in a truck. Another picture showed a man and a woman lying lifeless in another vehicle. Eyewitness Shakuntala Devi said that the stampede took place while people were leaving the venue at the end of the 'satsang'. With this the tragedy struck at the Hathras.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

### CONCERNS ON NEW CRIMINAL LAWS

Madam — The editorial on the three new criminal laws (2-7-24) is welcome. In the name of extending justice, the government has hurried through at every stage keeping all democratic norms aside. The Bills were introduced after suspending around 140 opposition members in the parliament and were passed with the least discussion. Such an important Bill should have been placed before the public for widespread discussions and debates and the opposition members who are also elected by the people should have been involved in the process, besides consulting the luminaries in the field. Nothing is done. How such a law is going to ensure justice? Moreover, it may take quite a long time for all those in the legal field to get themselves familiarised with the new versions. It looks to be a case of smashing a mountain to catch a small rat.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

Sandeep Sharma | Bengaluru

## Modernising Govt IT: Imperative shift to a multicloud future



SRINIVASCHARY

This will ensure that services are not only delivered effectively but also in a cost-efficient and secure manner as it bolsters cybersecurity

From cybersecurity threats to unprecedented data management complexity to systems outages, outdated IT hinders the government's ability to provide important services in the safest and most efficient manner possible.



Our technology infrastructure should receive the same attention and investment as our roads, bridges, energy, and broadband infrastructure. Instead, current policies deter government IT leaders' ability to choose the best solutions to meet modern challenges. Public agencies are too often using outdated technology and face too many barriers to effectively modernize their systems. With modern technology and data availability, the government will be able to better track life-threatening illnesses, while policymakers would be armed with relevant data to chart robust policies for prevention and treatment. According to a Deloitte research report, BFSI sector is also investing more on cloud to transform systems.

Federal and state agencies have been slowly upgrading IT infrastructure over the past decade by shifting to a public cloud computing model. This is primarily driven by the promise of increased efficiency, lower costs, and improved continuity to enhance the services they offer to the public. While many government organizations have taken advantage of the flexibility public cloud computing offers, given privacy, compliance and security concerns, this approach does not work in every situation. It is critical that IT leaders have flexibility to choose the most cost-effective solutions. Government agencies should consider a multicloud by design approach,

where you use cloud services from multiple public and private cloud providers. While a single-cloud strategy might seem simpler, it limits service offerings and often commits organizations to a single vendor, which often costs more in the end. A multicloud approach to cloud computing is used for better data control, allows access to the best services from each provider, and offers more flexibility as IT leaders can optimize workload placement based on workload requirements. While government agencies - and ultimately taxpayers - that adopt multicloud approaches can also have greater control over cost, which is critical at a time when research firm IDC estimates that nearly two-thirds of organizations are spending more on cloud than initially budgeted. Policymakers need to make this multicloud modernization process a reality by investing in the technology modernisation fund allowing government agencies to replace legacy equipment with upgraded multi-

cloud computing solutions that will ensure agencies can provide critical services quickly and securely. This will require that all agencies conduct multicloud computing readiness assessments through an evaluation of current IT infrastructure, processes, and policies to determine the best path for adoption. The assessment should look at things like are the agency's applications considered cloud-enabled, what is the cost of migration, do cloud computing solutions meet security and compliance requirements, as well as what is the impact on civil service employees. We cannot fight off cyberattacks and provide the best services possible in the digital age with inadequate and outdated IT infrastructure. Adopting a multicloud approach will help securely manage critical data, cut costs, and allow for our government to use the solutions that are most effective to meet our citizens' needs. (The writer is Lead Solution Architect, Dell Technologies India; views are personal)



## FIRST COLUMN UNDERSTANDING THE DIVINE HAND

Recognise and reciprocate God's boundless efforts by embracing dharma



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We don't give credit to God, because we take it for granted that Creation will go on. How about a business? We are all aware that it has limited longevity, however long it may run. But Creation, which is God's business runs and runs. Why? Because God keeps it going. Just picture this. There are many nuclear-armed countries; some of whom have crazy leaders. How does God prevent an all-out nuclear war? Simple; God has access to our hearts. He knows what we are thinking. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 13.2) And He knows how to mould it if His Creation is at risk. God is fully alert all the time; there is no chance of a slip-up. And we may be thinking that God is sitting somewhere or even sleeping. If this task undertaken by the Lord was not too much, just imagine being available to all eight billion of us all the time. You pray and God has to respond appropriately, if at all warranted. Why? Because most of the prayers are ridiculous like a student, having not studied all year, who prays for passing.

How does God achieve this task? Lord Krishna explains, "Having limbs on all sides; having eyes, head and mouth on all sides; having ears on all sides, God is situated in this world pervading all. (13.13) God does it in His unmanifest form. (9.4) He doesn't have to be doing it in gross form like we perceive someone to do. God is different from us, very different. If this task is not onerous enough, God ensures that we are justly rewarded and yes, punished also. Justice is always done, and no one is rewarded at the expense of another. Imagine two teams playing and their supporters fervently praying for victory. Who wins? The team with the right karmaphalas of course, i.e. what was destined. We don't know how it was arrived at but be sure that this was the right result.

Yes, God responds to prayers, but only to those who deserve it. And He knows who deserves it; more praying is not sufficient. One must pray and also qualify for a favourable result. If we wish to know what is required to qualify for God's kripa (favour), God has given detailed instructions in bonafide scriptures like the Bhagavad-Geeta. Additionally, God is very keen to guide, us if we pray sincerely for it. Picture our requesting for guidance from a local if lost. What does the local do? He does his best



to help us. God is not different; He helps. God is very much in the picture to safeguard good people from demons, as there is always a tussle going on between divine and demonic forces. God sides with the divine forces without infringing dharma, as was done in the Mahabharata War and during Lord Ramachandra's incarnation; the Lord killed Ravana among many other demons. Not only big killing, God takes care of all big tasks as Karta (doer) for His devotees.

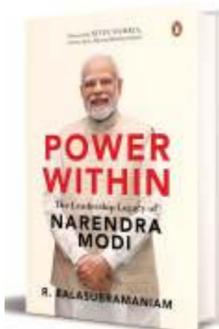
How do you think Arjuna was able to kill/maim big warriors? Because God controls all the relevant five factors for success; nobody else has this control; we can control only ourselves. The place of action is determined by circumstances. Similarly, the instruments at our disposal are limited, for example, a doctor is hampered if all the right medicines are not readily available. Our efforts are also limited because we are limited by our health, etc. And the providence is surely not in our control. (18.14) God has no such infirmities.

God is always very busy. Not only engaged, but God is very carefully engaged in action. Why? Because men follow His lead, God is the most superior entity. As pointed out earlier, God has taken upon Himself many tasks; I have pointed out only a few. What is the message of this article? That we should become aware of God's enormous contribution to our well-being if we choose to take His shelter and follow His instructions, especially dharma. What does God want in return from us? That we should work actively towards our progress and help and serve others so that they do likewise. God wants us to be useful just as God is. (The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

MADHU SEN

in-depth exploration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership journey, meticulously capturing his contributions to India's socio-economic landscape. Launched amidst notable dignitaries such as former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, NASSCOM President Debjani Ghosh, and Prof. B Mahadevan from IIM Bengaluru, the book is a testament to PM Modi's significant impact on the nation's

development, particularly in the realm of digital public infrastructure. Dr. Balasubramaniam, renowned for his pioneering work with rural and tribal communities, brings a unique perspective to the narrative. He contrasts Western trait-oriented leadership approaches with Indian practice-oriented philosophies, offering readers a comprehensive understanding of leadership dynamics. This blend of perspectives provides a nuanced view of Modi's fifty years in public life, from his formative years to his tenure as Prime Minister, underscoring the enduring qualities that have defined his leadership. The book is particularly compelling in its discussion of PM Modi's role in the digital trans-



formation of India. As highlighted by Amitabh Kant during the launch, under Modi's leadership, India has achieved an astounding 130 billion fast

payment transactions annually. This achievement, stemming from initiatives such as the 100 Digital Melas in 2017, reflects Modi's relentless and meticulous approach to enhancing digital public infrastructure. Kant's insights, drawn from his tenure as NITI Aayog CEO, provide a vivid illustration of Modi's forward-thinking vision and commitment to digital inclusion. Dr. Balasubramaniam captures these achievements through a series of poignant anecdotes and testimonies from Modi's colleagues, including Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The narrative paints a vivid picture of a leader dedicated to self-discovery and service, striving to uplift the nation through innovation and hard work. The

author's detailed exploration of Modi's leadership style, juxtaposing it with both Western and Indic leadership frameworks, offers valuable lessons for aspiring leaders and public servants. His work encapsulates wisdom on leadership and its true essence. He suggests that, "exercising leadership is a way of giving meaning to our lives by contributing to the lives of others. And such an opportunity to express leadership crosses our paths every day. What is required is the sensitivity to recognize purpose when it emerges and the courage to act on it as a labour of love." Notable figures such as Anand Mahindra, Chairman of the Mahindra Group, and Falguni Nayar, Founder and CEO of

Nykaa, have praised the book for its thought-provoking insights and its ability to shift perceptions on leadership. Mahindra hails it as a work that will "undoubtedly change perspectives and perceptions on powerful leadership," while Nayar emphasizes its relevance in understanding the dynamics that have propelled India to new heights. Power Within is more than a biography; it is a guide to understanding the essence of leadership. Dr. Balu's reflections on the nature of leadership, emphasizing the importance of sensitivity to purpose and the courage to act, resonate deeply. His portrayal of leadership as a labor of love, a way of giving meaning to our lives by contributing to others, is a pow-

erful message that underlines the entire narrative. The book is a must-read for anyone interested in leadership, public service, and the transformative journey of one of India's most influential leaders. Dr. Balasubramaniam's nuanced portrayal of Narendra Modi's legacy provides not just a look at the man behind the political figure, but also a roadmap for those aspiring to lead with purpose and integrity. Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi promises to be an essential addition to the library of anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of impactful leadership. (The writer is a senior journalist and an arts critic; views are personal)

# Wake-up call against rising plastic pollution



SRIRAJ KOTA

International Plastic Bag Free Day, observed annually on July 3, aims to raise awareness about the escalating crisis of plastic pollution



The International Plastic Bag Free Day is celebrated on Jul 3 every year. The awareness created due to observance of this day helps put focus on the threat of the silently growing footprint of plastic pollution. This is essential given the fact that plastic pollution, especially of Single Use Plastics (SUP) has now permeated all aspects of the environment. Today SUP and plastic microfibre pollution can be found from the highest point to the deepest part of the earth. The influx of 45,000 trekkers per year to Mt. Everest has unfortunately ensured that microplastic pollution can now be found in snow samples close to the peak of the world's highest mountain. Similarly, relentless marine traffic and indiscriminate disposal of garbage into the oceans has resulted in high microplastic pollution across the seas including in The Mariana Trench, Earth's deepest point in the Pacific Ocean, more than 11 km deep from mean sea level. As humanity achieves this dubious distinction of spreading litter to virtually all corners of the planet, India unfortunately is firmly at the forefront of plastic pollution spree. The figures speak for themselves. According to the Plastic Overshoot Day report by Swiss non-profit EA, Earth Action states that global plastic waste generation has risen by 7.11 per cent since 2021. The world is estimated to have generated 220 million tons of plastic waste this year, 70 million tons of which will end up polluting the environment. India is not far behind. India ranks 3rd globally contributing 5.5 KT of SUP and ranked ninety-fourth with per capita single-use plastic waste of 4 kg per year. The much-publicised SUP ban in India addresses only 11 per cent of the entire gamut of SUP plastic waste. India is among the twelve countries responsible



THE VARIOUS WATER BODIES IN THE COUNTRY ARE RIFE WITH MICROPLASTIC CONTAMINATION. IN THIS REGARD, INDIA CAN TAKE A LEAF OUT OF THE INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE TAKEN BY GERMANY. WASSER 3.0 IN GERMANY HAS PERFECTED THE PROCESS OF NOT ONLY REMOVING MICROPLASTICS BUT ALSO MICRO-POLLUTANTS FROM WATER

for 60 per cent of the planet's mismanaged plastic waste. With a population of more than 1.44 billion, India generates 26,000 tonnes of plastic waste every day. This is the equivalent of approximately 26,000 small cars. Unfortunately, only 8 per cent of this plastic is recycled. The Swiss report also states that India is poised to release 391,879 tonnes of microplastic into water bodies by the end of 2024. Second only to China. With abysmal conditions such as these, India's grip on plastic pollution can at best be described as feeble. The efforts to rein in the runaway plastic pollution have to begin at the grassroots level. The International Plastic Bag Free Day focuses on the same by increasing awareness about the harmful impact of plastic bag usage and pollution. Additionally, stress is also laid on encouraging individuals, businesses, and organisations to adopt sustainable alternatives for SUP products. The special day urges governments across the world to step up policy changes and introduce radical systemic solutions to reduce plastic use and waste. The current statistics of plastic pollution in India demand serious and innovative solutions that look beyond the traditional answers such as simple unsorted recycling of plastic, landfilling or co-processing. The need of the hour is ultra-innovative remedies that deliver scalable and sustainable results in

record time. While India continues to construct a circular economy that reduces plastic waste, the focus must now be firmly shifted to handling the plastic pollution problem on large scale basis. As a part of this India must set up large-scale waste sorting facilities that can use artificial intelligence-based algorithms to automatically sift through various types of plastic waste and identify the same. This as compared to traditional recycling methods can speed up the process of recycling and therefore increase the quantum of plastic recycled at the facility in one shift. This in turn can ensure that the facility can sort and recycle an entire district's monthly plastic waste within a week. An example in this regard is Sweden's plastic waste sorting facility called Site Zero which can handle up to 200,000 tonnes of plastic packaging every year, more than any other facility in the world, and enough to deal with the whole country's household plastic packaging waste. Similarly, microplastic pollution in water is a major concern. The various water bodies in the country and the seas are rife with microplastic contamination. In this regard, India can take a leaf out of the innovative initiative taken by Germany. Wasser 3.0 in Germany has perfected the process of not only removing microplastics but also micro-pollutants from water—that too without any filters.

The process followed is called "Agglomeration Fixation" which clumps microplastics together on the surface of the water after which they are simply skimmed off. The process is simple, scalable with no side effects and can be applied to a variety of water bodies be it freshwater, seawater or even wastewater. Furthermore, the science of biochemical research can be leveraged to access plastic-degrading enzymes that can degrade and consume plastic waste in record time. This can go a long way in accelerating a year's plastic waste recycling activity to a few months. With the aid of science, and artificial intelligence (AI) software the possibilities of innovative plastic pollution combat options are endless. AI aided by satellite support for instance can help India clean up its seas on a large-scale manner, special software-driven clean-up technologies can dredge up decades of plastic and other pollutants thereby providing a chance of survival for the delicate marine life. Plastic is in our everyday life and diet as well. A World Wildlife Fund study has revealed that an average human being ingests 5 gm of plastic every week. It is time to cut the growing footprint of this harmful substance to size in the interests of mankind and the environment. So next time we reach for that plastic bag, let us not. (The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

## Unveiling the leadership legacy of Narendra Modi: A definitive exploration

A new book, 'Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi,' offers a profound examination of Modi's leadership journey

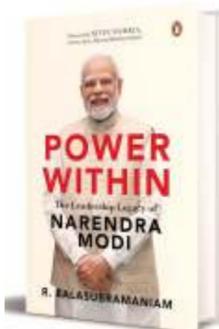
Last ten years have been dominated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the helm of affairs. An outsider as he would call him has made deep inroads into the Indian politics as also into the hearts and minds of the millions of Indians who adore him for his unwavering determination and fulfil his promise of making India a developed nation. His leadership is indeed exemplary and has provided the country with a sense of purpose and confidence. A new book delving into the leadership qualities of Narendra Modi is a treat. Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi, authored by the distinguished development scholar Dr R Balasubramaniam, offers an



MADHU SEN

in-depth exploration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership journey, meticulously capturing his contributions to India's socio-economic landscape. Launched amidst notable dignitaries such as former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, NASSCOM President Debjani Ghosh, and Prof. B Mahadevan from IIM Bengaluru, the book is a testament to PM Modi's significant impact on the nation's

development, particularly in the realm of digital public infrastructure. Dr. Balasubramaniam, renowned for his pioneering work with rural and tribal communities, brings a unique perspective to the narrative. He contrasts Western trait-oriented leadership approaches with Indian practice-oriented philosophies, offering readers a comprehensive understanding of leadership dynamics. This blend of perspectives provides a nuanced view of Modi's fifty years in public life, from his formative years to his tenure as Prime Minister, underscoring the enduring qualities that have defined his leadership. The book is particularly compelling in its discussion of PM Modi's role in the digital trans-



formation of India. As highlighted by Amitabh Kant during the launch, under Modi's leadership, India has achieved an astounding 130 billion fast

payment transactions annually. This achievement, stemming from initiatives such as the 100 Digital Melas in 2017, reflects Modi's relentless and meticulous approach to enhancing digital public infrastructure. Kant's insights, drawn from his tenure as NITI Aayog CEO, provide a vivid illustration of Modi's forward-thinking vision and commitment to digital inclusion. Dr. Balasubramaniam captures these achievements through a series of poignant anecdotes and testimonies from Modi's colleagues, including Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The narrative paints a vivid picture of a leader dedicated to self-discovery and service, striving to uplift the nation through innovation and hard work. The

author's detailed exploration of Modi's leadership style, juxtaposing it with both Western and Indic leadership frameworks, offers valuable lessons for aspiring leaders and public servants. His work encapsulates wisdom on leadership and its true essence. He suggests that, "exercising leadership is a way of giving meaning to our lives by contributing to the lives of others. And such an opportunity to express leadership crosses our paths every day. What is required is the sensitivity to recognize purpose when it emerges and the courage to act on it as a labour of love." Notable figures such as Anand Mahindra, Chairman of the Mahindra Group, and Falguni Nayar, Founder and CEO of

Nykaa, have praised the book for its thought-provoking insights and its ability to shift perceptions on leadership. Mahindra hails it as a work that will "undoubtedly change perspectives and perceptions on powerful leadership," while Nayar emphasizes its relevance in understanding the dynamics that have propelled India to new heights. Power Within is more than a biography; it is a guide to understanding the essence of leadership. Dr. Balu's reflections on the nature of leadership, emphasizing the importance of sensitivity to purpose and the courage to act, resonate deeply. His portrayal of leadership as a labor of love, a way of giving meaning to our lives by contributing to others, is a pow-

erful message that underlines the entire narrative. The book is a must-read for anyone interested in leadership, public service, and the transformative journey of one of India's most influential leaders. Dr. Balasubramaniam's nuanced portrayal of Narendra Modi's legacy provides not just a look at the man behind the political figure, but also a roadmap for those aspiring to lead with purpose and integrity. Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi promises to be an essential addition to the library of anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of impactful leadership. (The writer is a senior journalist and an arts critic; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

## ISMA urges govt to reconsider sugar exports amid surplus

Sugar industry body ISMA on Wednesday called on the government to reconsider allowing sugar exports, citing a projected surplus and the potential financial strain on mills. The Indian Sugar and Bio-Energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA) estimates a surplus sugar of up to 3.6 million tonnes in the 2023-24 season ending September, while experts predict closing stocks of 9.1 million tonnes. "This estimated surplus... can potentially lead to additional costs for the millers on account of idle inventory and carrying costs," ISMA said in a statement. The industry body argues that domestic consumption and availability are 'more than comfortable' and that the Ethanol Blending Programme can be managed effectively. ISMA Director General Deepak Ballani said allowing exports would ensure adequate domestic stocks, sustain the ethanol programme, and help maintain mills' financial liquidity for timely farmer payments.



## Vraj Iron shares settle nearly 22% higher in debut trade

Shares of Vraj Iron And Steel Ltd on Wednesday ended with a premium of nearly 22 per cent against the issue price of Rs 207. The stock listed at Rs 240, recording a jump of 15.94 per cent on both the BSE and NSE. It zoomed 21.71 per cent to settle at Rs 251.95 -- its upper circuit limit -- on the BSE. On the NSE, the stock climbed 21.73 per cent to settle at Rs 252 -- its highest trading permissible limit for the day. The company's market valuation stood at Rs 831 crore. In traded volume terms, 2.86 lakh shares of the company were traded at the BSE and 20.45 lakh shares at the NSE during the day. The initial public offer of Vraj Iron and Steel got subscribed 119 times on the last day of bidding on Friday helped by heavy participation from institutional investors. The Rs 171-crore initial share sale was entirely a fresh issue of equity shares with no offer-for-sale component. Shares were available for public subscription in the range of Rs 195 to Rs 207 per scrip.



## Karnataka government signs MoUs with two Korean firms

The Karnataka government on Tuesday signed two MoUs worth Rs 1,040 crore with DN Solutions and EMNI Company Limited in Seoul, South Korea. The MoUs were signed on the second day of the delegation's visit, led by Karnataka Minister for Large and Medium Industries and Infrastructure Development M B Patil. He participated in the 'Roadshow on Investment Opportunities in Karnataka' in Seoul, South Korea, which was organised by the Karnataka government and Embassy of India. A statement issued by his office said these strategic partnerships are set to advance the state's manufacturing, research and development, and battery technology sectors. "Karnataka secures Rs 1,000 crore investment from DN Solutions and has committed from the company for an investment of Rs 1,000 crore towards establishing machine manufacturing facilities, a research and development centre, and a technical support centre for Indian manufacturing companies," the statement read.



# India initiates anti-dumping probe into import of Chinese lift guide rails

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has initiated an anti-dumping probe into the import of Chinese lift guide rails following a complaint by a domestic player.

The duty is aimed at protecting the domestic industry from cheap imports.

The commerce ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) is probing the alleged dumping of 'T-Shaped Elevator/Lift Guide Rails and Counterweight Guide Rails' from China.

Savera India Riding Systems Company has filed an application for the initiation of an anti-dumping investigation on the imports of this product from China.

The applicant has alleged that material injury is being



caused to the domestic industry due to the alleged dumped imports and has requested for the imposition of anti-dumping duties.

"On the basis of the duly substantiated written application submitted by the domestic industry and having reached satisfaction based on the prima facie evidence submitted by the industry con-

cerning the dumping of the product...the Authority, hereby, initiates an anti-dumping investigation," the DGTR has said in a notification.

If it is established that the dumping has caused material injury to domestic players, the DGTR would recommend the imposition of anti-dumping duty on these imports. The finance ministry takes the final

decision to impose duties.

Anti-dumping probes are conducted by countries to determine whether domestic industries have been hurt because of a surge in cheap imports.

As a countermeasure, they impose these duties under the multilateral regime of the Geneva-based World Trade Organization (WTO).

# Sebi reduces face value of debt securities to Rs 10,000 to boost retail participation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Wednesday drastically cut the face value of debt securities to Rs 10,000 from Rs 1 lakh at present to boost participation of retail investors in the corporate bond market.

Market participants are of the view that lower ticket size of debt securities may encourage more non-institutional investors to participate in the corporate bond market which in turn may also enhance liquidity.

In a circular, Sebi said, "the issuer may issue debt security or non-convertible redeemable preference shares on private placement basis at a face value of Rs 10,000".

This, however, would be subject to certain conditions like the issuer should appoint at least one merchant banker, and non-convertible debentures and non-convertible redeemable prefer-



With respect to General Information Document (GID), which is valid as on the effective date of the circular, Sebi said the issuer may raise funds through tranche placement memorandum or Key Information Document at a face value at Rs 10,000 provided at least one merchant banker is appointed to carry out due diligence in respect of such issuances

ence shares be plain vanilla, interest or dividend-bearing instruments.

Sebi said that credit enhancements would be permitted in such instruments.

With respect to General Information Document (GID), which is valid as on the effective date of the circular, Sebi said the issuer may raise funds through tranche placement memorandum or Key Information Document at a face value at Rs 10,000 provided at least one merchant banker is appointed to carry out due diligence in respect of such issuances.

"Necessary addendum shall be issued by such issuer to the shelf placement memorandum or General Information Document, as applicable," it added.

In October 2022, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) reduced the face value of corporate bonds to Rs 1 lakh from Rs 10 lakh.

## Family offices increasingly investing in startups, diversifying portfolios: PwC India report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi, Jul 3 (PTI) Family offices are increasingly investing in startups, diversifying their portfolios, and seeking higher returns as they are shifting from traditional investments, a PwC India report said.

Currently, there are over 300 family offices in India, as against 45 such offices in 2018. The number is set to rise exponentially, with promoters building impressive businesses in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, the report titled 'Creating

Holistic Value for Family Businesses' said.



Noting that the Indian economy is on a roll, the

report said that contributing to its expansion are family businesses, both large conglomerates and small-to-medium-sized enterprises, spanning sectors such as manufacturing, retail, real estate, healthcare and finance.

"...family offices have catalysed the creation of jobs, entrepreneurship and a culture of self-reliance in the country, unlike those that have gone south owing to a lack of adaptability, succession planning, innovation, and effective governance," the PwC India report said.

# Institutional investments in Indian real estate up 20% to US\$ 2.52 billion: Colliers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Institutional investment in Indian real estate rose 20 per cent annually to US\$ 2.52 billion in the April-June quarter on higher inflow in warehousing and residential projects, according to Colliers India.

Real estate consultant Colliers India on Wednesday released the data, stating that the institutional investments in real estate stood at US\$ 2,528.5 million in the April-June quarter this year, up 20 per cent from US\$ 2,106.4 million in

the year-ago period.

As per the data, investments in office assets declined 83 per cent to US\$ 329.6 million from US\$ 1,900.2 million.

However, the inflow of funds in residential rose to US\$ 543.5 million from US\$ 72.3 million. Institutional investments in industrial & warehousing projects jumped sharply to US\$ 1,533.1 million during April-June 2024 from US\$ 133.9 million a year ago.

With 81 per cent share, foreign investors, predominantly from the US and UAE, drove real estate investments during the April-June period of this calendar year.

Domestic investors infused US\$ 0.5 billion in the second quarter of this calendar year, nearly three times from the year-ago period.

Bengaluru and Delhi-NCR cumulatively attracted about 23 per cent of the inflows in the last quarter.

During April-June 2024, institutional investments in the industrial & warehousing segment rose manifold, 11 times, compared to the year-ago period, led by select large deals in the segment.

"Amidst rising demand for superior quality Grade A supply and evolving supply-chain models, investor confidence in the segment has significantly improved."

## Gold rises Rs 50; silver jumps Rs 300

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose Rs 50 to Rs 72,550 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday in line with firm trends in the international markets, according to HDFC Securities.

The precious metal had closed at Rs 72,500 per 10 grams in the previous session.

Additionally, silver prices also jumped Rs 300 to Rs 91,300 per kg. It had settled at Rs 91,000 per kg in the previous session.

"In Delhi markets, spot gold prices (24 carats) are trading

at Rs 72,550 per 10 grams, up Rs 50 from the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities, said.

The yellow metal traded at Rs 74,650 per 10 grams in local markets in the national capital, marketmen said. Silver traded at Rs 92,300 per kg.

Gold traded within range with a modest gain on

Wednesday, as traders are awaiting the release of US macro data that could provide new insights into the timing of the Federal Reserve's interest rate cut, Gandhi said.

# Sensex breaches 80,000 level for 1st time

Nifty at record high on gains in banking shares

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex breached the historic 80,000 level intraday for the first time while Nifty raced more than 162 points to close at a fresh lifetime high on Wednesday following heavy buying in banking and FMCG shares amid firm global market trends.

The 30-share Sensex hit the historic 80,000 mark for the first time earlier in the day. It surged 632.85 points or 0.79 per cent to a record intraday high of 80,074.30. The index later closed near the 80,000 level at 79,986.80, up by 545.35

points or 0.69 per cent over the last close. As many as 24 Sensex shares closed with gains and six declined.

The BSE Sensex breached the 78,000 level on June 25 and

zoomed 183.4 points or 0.76 per cent to hit a fresh intraday record peak of 24,307.25. As many as 40 Nifty shares advanced, nine declined and one closed unchanged.

Among the Sensex pack, Adani Ports rose the most by 2.49 per cent. Kotak Mahindra Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank Axis Bank, IndusInd Bank, State Bank of India, Power Grid, JSW Steel, Bajaj Finance and Tata Steel were the biggest gainers.

On the other hand, Tata Consultancy Services, Titan, Reliance Industries, Tata Motors and Larsen & Toubro were the laggards.

## India's rating upgrade possible if fiscal deficit falls to 4%: S&P

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A sovereign rating upgrade for India in the next 24 months is possible if the central government is able to prudently manage its finances and bring down fiscal deficit to 4 per cent of GDP, an S&P Global Ratings official said on Wednesday.

S&P Global Ratings Director, Sovereign Ratings, YeeFam Phua, said the trigger for upgrade would be general government (Centre + states) deficit falling below 7 per cent of the GDP, and a lot of this would have to be driven by the central government.

"If the central government is able to bring down fiscal deficit to 4 per cent of the GDP, we will consider a rating upgrade over the next 24 months," Phua said.

The central government estimates to bring down fiscal deficit to 5.1 per cent of the GDP in the current fiscal, from 5.63 per cent in 2023-24.

As per the fiscal consolidation roadmap, the deficit -- the difference between government expenditure and revenue -- will be brought down to 4.5 per cent by 2025-26. The US-based rating agency had in May upgraded outlook for India to positive, from stable, while retaining the rating at 'BBB-'. Phua further said the Indian economy has clocked an average of 8 per cent growth in the last three years, driven by domestic consumption and infrastructure investment that has made real difference on the ground.



## Mcap of BSE-listed firms hit all-time high of Rs 445.43 L cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms hit a record high of Rs 445.43 lakh crore on Wednesday, driven by a sharp rally in equities, where the benchmark Sensex breached the historic 80,000-mark for the first time ever.

The 30-share Sensex hit the historic 80,000-mark for the first time earlier in the day. It surged 632.85 points, or 0.79 per cent, to hit a record intra-day high of 80,074.30. The benchmark later ended near the 80,000-level at 79,986.80, up 545.35 points, or 0.69 per cent.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of BSE-listed firms hit a record peak of Rs 4,45,43,642.29 crore (US\$ 5.33 trillion).

The BSE Sensex breached the 78,000 level on June 25 and 79,000 for the first time on June 27.

Markets continued their ongoing streak of making new highs supported by firm global trends.

# Food services market in India to reach Rs 10 lakh cr by 2030: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The food services market in India is expected to reach up to Rs 10 lakh crore by 2030 with the addressable customer base estimated to expand to up to 45 crore, according to a report.

The online food delivery segment is estimated to grow at 18 per cent CAGR (compound annual growth rate) and penetration is set to rise from 12 per cent in 2023 to 20 per cent by 2030, said the report titled 'How India Eats' by Bain & Company and Swiggy.

The food services market in

"This growth trajectory will be driven by robust fundamentals, including an expanding customer base, growing consumption occasions, and a rise in supply. Additionally, online food delivery is expected to grow faster at (around) 18 per cent CAGR, contributing 20 per cent to the overall food services market by 2030," the report said

India, which encompasses dining out and ordering in, is currently valued at Rs 5.5 lakh crore. The market is poised to grow at 10-12 per cent annually over the next seven years,

reaching Rs 9 lakh crore to Rs 10 lakh crore by 2030, it said.

"This growth trajectory will be driven by robust fundamentals, including an expanding customer base, growing con-

sumption occasions, and a rise in supply. Additionally, online food delivery is expected to grow faster at (around) 18 per cent CAGR, contributing 20 per cent to the overall food services market by 2030," the report said.

Swiggy Food Marketplace CEO Rohit Kapoor said the Indian food services market, especially food delivery, has witnessed buoyant growth over the last few years.

"Higher incomes, digitisation, improved customer experience, and an inclination to try new experiences have all contributed to this growth," he added.

## 'Tyre makers facing severe crunch in domestic natural rubber availability'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association on Wednesday said its members are witnessing a 'severe crunch' in the availability of domestic natural rubber and it may disrupt production unless supply issues of the raw material are addressed.

Despite high prices of natural rubber (NR), its availability has shrunk, Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA) said,

expressing apprehension that some "sections of natural rubber producing interests or trade are withholding the material in anticipation of an increase in the NR prices worsening the availability".

The 'tyre industry has been experiencing tightness in domestic availability of natural rubber for some time. However currently a severe crunch is being witnessed despite the fact that NR prices have touched a multi-year high.

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA TRIBAL WELFARE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT**  
 NIT No. SE/TW/HYD/3 to 12 & 277 to 576/2024-25 Dt: 02-07-2024  
 Name of work: Certain Building works 15 Nos for Rs.3685.10 Lakhs,  
 Bid Submission Starting Date: 06-07-2024 at 5:00 PM and Bid Submission  
 Closing Date: 22-07-2024 at 3:00 PM. Further details can be seen at 'e'  
 procurement market place @ <https://tender.telangana.gov.in/>.  
 Ph.No:9492770365. Sd/- Superintending Engineer  
 Tribal Welfare, Hyderabad  
 R.O.No.: 66-DPICL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2024-25

**GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
**E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE**  
 NIT No. 07/DIV.13 (Old-7B)/GHMC/2024-2025 Dated: 03-07-2024  
 Name of work: Civil Works (2 Nos). Estimate amount: Rs.14.50 Lakhs, Start date /  
 Last date & time for receipt of bids: For works at S.No.1 to 2 Starts from  
 03.07.2024 from 03.30 PM To 06.07.2024 upto 03.30 PM. Name & Address  
 of Officer Cell No.: Executive Engineer, Division No.13 (Old-7B) (KZ), GHMC,  
 Khairatabad, Hyderabad, Cell No. 9154960552. For further details can be seen at  
[www.tender.eprocurement.gov.in](http://www.tender.eprocurement.gov.in)  
 Sd/- Executive Engineer,  
 R.O.No.: 1465-PPICL/ADVT/1/2024-25, Dt. 03.07.2024

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA PUBLIC HEALTH AND MUNICIPAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT**  
 NITS/DB/D3/NZB/Plan Grants/2024-25 Dt: 03.07.2024  
 02 Nos. Works costing Rs. 234.00 Lakhs: Construction of Storm  
 Water Drain from Yaseen Masjid to Teen Kaman, Nikhil Sai Junction via  
 Devi Talkies to Phulong Vagu in Nizamabad Municipal Corporation under  
 Plan Grants 2017-18 Phase II available funds closing on 12.07.2024 @  
 04:30 PM; For details visit <https://tender.telangana.gov.in>.  
 Contact:-9154299724. Sd/- Superintending Engineer (PH)  
 West Circle, Hyderabad  
 DIPR R.O. No.: 58-DPICL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2024-25

## 'Superhero' battling the digital revenge

**THE PIONEER PRESENTS TO YOU OUR INTERVIEW WITH NAKSHATRA BAGWE, WHO IS FIGHTING AGAINST THE TIDE OF REVENGE PORNOGRAPHY, DESPITE ALL THE OBSTACLES IN HIS PATH AND IS FREQUENTLY REFERRED TO AS A 'SUPERHERO' BY THE VICTIMS HE HAS ASSISTED.**



TEJAL SINHA

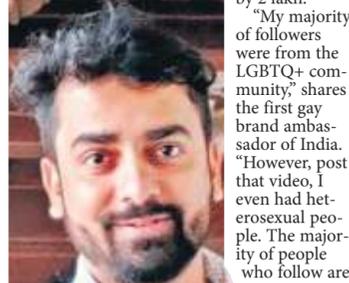
Undeniably, with the advent of technology, digital abuse has certainly been on the rise. And one such is revenge porn. It is a sort of digital abuse in which naked or sexually explicit images or films are released without the agreement of the individuals depicted. This type of nonconsensual pornography is directly related to sexual abuse. A current or former partner may release such photographs for "revenge" or threaten to distribute them as a form of blackmail.

With an aim to bring down such cases, we have Nakshatra Bagwe, hailing from a simple middle-class family, who dons multiple hats, including that of being an award-winning filmmaker, actor, LGBTQ+ activist, entrepreneur and most of all, an influencer. Coming from a family where a proper 9-to-5 job was considered an ideal one, he chose to go out of the box. In fact, it was his work that, in January 2024, he became the only Indian to win an International LGBTQ Association fellowship.

But you may wonder, how did his curb to bring down the cases of revenge pornography

happen? So here he tells us during an exclusive chat: "Back then, I was simply browsing through an adult site and realised there was this one video of a girl, and I realised, she was very uncomfortable in the video. It was clear that she was forced to do all of it and that video was up on the site. And somehow, I reported the video and got it down." However, in one such incident, what really kicked in was, "There was this app, which people used to go live and interact with each other. One day, a couple's video of them kissing each other had just gone viral on the internet. There was this user who was uploading it on site. I realised that there were more than 79 videos as such, and they were all non-consensual. I sat down one night and reported all such videos and within a week all these videos were deleted." This was something he knew was not the end, and there were many such cases. And so, more than him being inspired to work around the cause, he feels it was the cause that has chosen him to work on. Last year, he recalls how he made a reel showcasing how he helped

out a victim and showing the process of his work. The reel eventually went viral, reaching 16 million views and his followers increased by 2 lakh.



"My majority of followers were from the LGBTQ+ community," shares the first gay brand ambassador of India. "However, post that video, I even had heterosexual people. The majority of the people who follow are



doing so for help. I realised there were 10-12k people who were seeking my help and there are so many people who are victims but don't know how to help themselves."

But it was also not easy for him. It was during this that he revealed slipping into depression because of the intensity of these cases and people crying for help in his DMs. He realised that these cases had to be solved swiftly. "I had to take a 14-day break before I could get with it and I wasn't prepared for this Pandora box that opened in front of me. I didn't get viral because of dancing, singing, or doing any stupid things on social media, but it was for a cause."

But ironically, things turned out against him after people learned about his identity. Moving ahead, he shares, "Generally, I am not a hacker, which people believe me to be. What I am good at is the 'art of reporting' and I figured out how to effectively report. I finally created a tutorial for people to also know how they could help themselves or their loved ones in such cases. These tutorials had certainly turned out to be very helpful."

All the cases that are knocked into his DMs include a very intense level of negativity. Each case, he says, comes with a different set of trauma and on the other hand, he tries to keep positive for the victims to have hope. "There have been cases I have come across where the victim commits suicide, especially girls. All the cases come with their own trauma. There have been times I had to sit down until 2 or 3

in the morning personally to comfort them. There have been sleepless nights and they do keep me in negativity, but I need to make sure I'm strong because these people come to me as a hope."

Today, you go through his social media and he has now been called a 'Superhero'. However, he has a different perspective. "I have come across comments where people have come up and said that 'we love this gay guy because he is helping us'. And I feel that there are so many gay people out there who are not coming out but are working towards helping out people in need. I'm glad people like me for my work helping out innocent people. However, there is another section of people who end up unfollowing me because I post things like a pride flag or any romantic posts. I remember putting up a post on Valentine's Day, and people went so against it just because I expressed my love for a man. Ironically, it was the same people who were praising me for my work."

Being an award-winning filmmaker and an actor, he has worked in several films around the community and he shares that his agenda is to cast and sign people from the community. Currently, he is working on a film that has the entire cast and crew from the community. "The mainstream cinema may not give opportunity to all of us, so why don't I? I'm not a big-shot person and there are many other filmmakers more popular than me, maybe doing much better work than I do. However, I have a separate fan base for my work where I am recognised. I was recently contacted by YouTube India to create more content related to the community." On a concluding note, he believes that the film festivals are a private concept. However, he desires to create content that aims to raise positive awareness for people in his own community.



## NEERAJ GOYAT ON BIGG BOSS

### LESSONS LEARNED, HEARTS WON AND FIGHT AHEAD

AARTI SREENATH

Neeraj Goyat, known for his prowess in the boxing ring, recently made a memorable appearance on the popular reality show *Bigg Boss*. Despite a short stay, his presence left a lasting impression on viewers and housemates alike. Reflecting on his journey, Neeraj shared insights into his experience inside the *Bigg Boss* house.

"It was quite an eye-opening experience," Neeraj reminisced, "living in a house where we were cut off from the outside world—no phones, no communication—just us and our interactions. For someone accustomed to the rigors of competitive boxing, adapting to the unique dynamics of the *Bigg Boss* environment posed its own challenges."

When asked about memorable moments, Neeraj fondly recalled his bond with fellow contestant Deepak. "Taking care of Deepak Bhai stands out. I've never gone out of my way for someone like that before. It's something I'll cherish forever."

Neeraj acknowledged the brevity of his stay in the house, expressing

disappointment over not being able to showcase his full potential. "It was a brief stint and unfortunately, I couldn't even complete a round in the *Bigg Boss* house." Despite this, Neeraj remained philosophical about the experience, highlighting the unpredictability of human connections within the house.

Reflecting on his eviction, Neeraj expressed a mix of frustration and resilience. "Whatever happened was unfair. I went in with an open mind, but it's hard to truly understand people in such a short time." His departure, though abrupt, garnered an outpouring of support from fans across social media platforms, affirming his belief that he had indeed won hearts during his brief tenure.

Looking ahead, Neeraj's focus shifts back to his passion for boxing. "I have a big fight scheduled for November 15 at the

AT&T Stadium in Texas. It's a significant event for me, and I'm fully dedicated to preparing for it."

As he gears up for his upcoming bout, he remains grateful for the opportunity to connect with his fans through *Bigg Boss*. "I'm thankful for the love and support. I hope to continue sharing my journey and making my fans proud."

With determination in his eyes and a spirit undeterred by challenges, Neeraj Goyat exemplifies resilience both in and out of the ring, leaving an indelible mark wherever he goes.

In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, Indian boxer Neeraj Goyat discusses his brief appearance on the *Bigg Boss* show and his future sporting plans.



## Shedding light on importance of sexual wellness talks!



couldn't conceive naturally and wanted to proceed with fertility treatment. After evaluation, it was found that they weren't trying the right position during intercourse and hence couldn't conceive. They were completely oblivious about the whole process of sex. These incidents don't just highlight the scope of the issue at hand but also the unspoken pain and confusion among these people.

There has been a dire need of attention to be given to awareness and education about sexual issues, along with providing psychological support for couples undergoing sexual problems. This can be achieved through anonymous help-seeking mediums or platforms producing educational content. It is also important to provide accurate information on major media platforms to support individuals seeking help. This is why it's encouraged to use technological support to reach experts through their phones at their comfort. Nowadays, 24/7 support has become commonly available at no cost and consultations are provided at a subsidised cost. It is important to promote such educational and service-oriented healthcare platforms to the public.

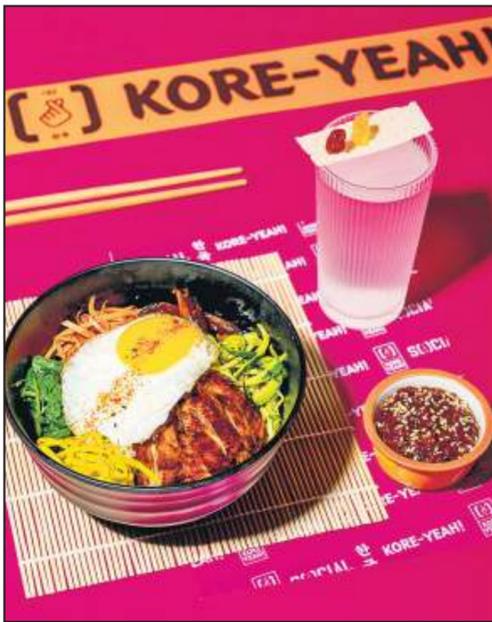
There are many women-oriented platforms providing consultation and free educational resources for sexual wellness awareness. Applications like *coto*, *Practo* and *Cult Fit* bring sexual experts to help individuals with psychological, sexual and fertility-related therapeutic counselling. Platforms like *Rocket Health* provide individual psychotherapy and sexual wellness consultations online at your convenience. Most women do not understand that libido depends on foreplay, communication, and relationship intimacy. Women who have been married for many years often come with issues of difficulty in climaxing. This is due to the psychological mindset of ignoring one's needs or not expressing their individual needs to their partner, which often leads to suppression and eventually avoidance.

Additionally, statistics reveal a 30% to 90% range of sexual dysfunctions among the general public, especially in India. The openness to talk about such issues, even with a healthcare provider, is a major struggle for couples. If many people are suffering silently, it is time to explicitly normalise the conversation through media platforms. This isn't an illness; it is an epidemic. If we do not help young people navigate their sexuality in a healthier way, we will see more people living in fear.

(The author, Mary Ann S, is a Psychologist and Sexual Health Expert at *coto*.)

# what's brewing?

## HALLYU KOREA IN HYDERABAD!



**S**OCCIAL is unveiling 'Kore-yeah', a one of its kind, immersive month-long Korean festival. An industry first initiative, the festival aims to celebrate the rich culture of Korea, giving SOCIALites across 53 pincodes a glimpse of the energy, the vibe and the wave that has taken over the entire world.

The 'Kore-yeah' festival features a special menu (K-Food), themed beverages (K-Drinks), and a variety of culturally enriching activities, including K-Pop karaoke and Korean workshops. Throughout July, it is offering engaging experiences such as *Kimchi* making workshops, K-Pop dance classes, chow-down challenges and pop-up markets. With Korean culture's growing popularity among India's youth, this festival transforms it into vibrant hubs for K-culture fans, offering an authentic Korean lifestyle experience.

The food menu has been curated by Chef Yen Valava—lkar and Chef Soonye Choi of Sattori Food Lab, alongside Chef Shamsul Wahid, Group Executive Chef, Impresario Entertainment and Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. The menu has been created using Korean ingredients such as Korean rice cakes, *Kim* (seaweed), *Kimchi*, *Gochujang sauce*, the ever-popular *Soju* and much more. The K-Food comes with a range of small plates, *Tteokbokki*, *Bibimbap*, Fried chicken and much more.

'Kore-Yeah' is an invitation to explore, savour and celebrate the richness of Korean culture in a fun and interactive setting. Guests can now experience the Korean Pop-Up at SOCIAL outlets till July 31, 2024, onwards and for online delivery through DotPe, Swiggy and Zomato.

The Gaudium School has embarked on a robust career development program for its students, spanning middle school and high school. In a significant move to enhance educational opportunities for its students, The Gaudium School has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Oregon State University (OSU), Corvallis.



Freedom Healthy Cooking Oils, as a part of their CSR initiative in association with T-Hub, Govt. of Telangana, announced the presentation of Dialogue in the Dark at T-HUB, Hyderabad. The three-day long presentation will end on July 6.

## Al Habtoor City launches gourmet festival

**F**oodies, get ready for some spectacular dishes with the launch of the Al Habtoor City Gourmet Festival. Teasing the taste buds of the city's gourmands till August 31, guests are invited to dive into a diverse gastro-adventure around the Al Habtoor City Hotel collection. The first edition of the festival will feature exclusive foodie experiences, showcasing specially curated chef's menus and themed feasts that cover the gastronomic spectrum from fine dining indulgences to tasty street food surprises. At Al Habtoor Palace, you can delve into French cuisine with a three-course meal at the gorgeous BQ French Kitchen & Bar. As you take your seat in arguably the most stylish venue in town, cast your eyes to the menu that begins with French Onion Soup or Burrata before being followed for mains by *Prawn Linguine*, Grilled Baby Chicken, or *Penne Arrabbiata*. Sweet lovers have a choice of *Pain Perdu*, Fruit platter, or Ice cream and *sorbet* to finish. Also, revel in a signature dining experience at the award-winning World Cut Steakhouse. The menu features *Black Truffle Fritters* and *Lobster Bisque* for starters and the mouth-watering *Argentine Grass Fed Beef Tenderloin* and *Australian Black Onyx Striploin* for mains. Don't worry if you're not a carnivore, as vegetarians are served with a delicious forest mushroom risotto. For dessert, it's all about *Baked Alaska*, *Salted Caramel Sundae*, or Warm Chocolate Cake with Vanilla Ice Cream. For those with a craving for Pan-American flair, make a beeline for *Zoco*, Curio collection. The lively venue is dishing out some of the most beloved Pan-American plates, including *Classic Guacamole*, *Sea Bass Tiradito*, *Skewers of Chicken Teriyaki* and *Prawn Tacos*. The mains serve up *Fish Melozo Rice*, *Chicken-breaded Panko Furai* and mixed mushrooms with *corn pepian*. A sweet ending comes in the form of tasty *Churros*, or caramel cheesecake. If you prefer your food with a side of sports action, head to Ribs & Brews, where the three-course menu sets you up with some exquisite gastropub favourites. Appetisers include slow-roasted tomato soup and Chicken wings, with mains coming in the form of Tomato flatbread, Salmon fish cake and, of course, Ribs & Brews Signature Burger. But don't forget to save some room for dessert, as the cheesecake, chocolate brownie, 'Granny Smith' apple pie and R&B sticky toffee pudding are must-try samples.



## Disney Cruise Line creating ultimate holiday destination

**S**ailing from Singapore in 2025, the one-of-a-kind Disney Adventure will offer families throughout the region the ultimate holiday at sea. The first Disney Cruise Line ship to homeport in Asia will be a destination itself, sailing on three- and four-night voyages designed with magical days at sea and filled with immersive storytelling and captivating entertainment like only Disney can do. The Disney Adventure will be both a journey and a destination, a voyage of limitless possibilities that brings to vibrant life the core pillars of Disney storytelling.

## Toyota Kirloskar Motor wins CII GreenCo Gold Rating Award

**T**oyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) is proud to share the achievement of its dealership, Rajesh Toyota, who won the prestigious GreenCo Gold Rated Company Award conferred by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Green Business Centre (GBC) at an awarding ceremony held recently in Chennai. Following a comprehensive assessment of the dealership's environmental initiatives, CII recognized Rajesh Toyota with a gold rating. This significant accomplishment underscores Rajesh Toyota's unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability, aligning with the broader vision as outlined in Toyota Environmental Challenge 2050 (TEC 2050).

## Grand Shopsy Mela brings many cheers

**S**hopsy by Flipkart, recently concluded the fifth edition of its much-awaited shopping carnival—the Grand Shopsy Mela. The six-day event, over June 11-16, witnessed a 50% growth in customers on Shopsy, out of which 43% were first-time e-commerce shoppers. During the sale, Shopsy observed record-breaking participation from Bharat, with sellers from across the country coming together to serve millions of customers. Shopsy aims to continue offering customers an expansive range of engaging products at affordable prices while being a value-based and reliable platform.

## Pride celebrations at Synchrony

**S**ynchrony celebrated Pride Month 2024 with a series of impactful initiatives aimed at advancing inclusivity and awareness within the organisation and the wider Hyderabad community through its Pride+ Network Employee Resource Group (ERG). This year's Pride March was a lively event that underscored the company's support for employees to be their authentic selves, nurturing LGBTQ+ inclusivity and transforming the diversity landscape. Synchrony employees and partners showed pride at the parade. They were joined by Jennifer Larson, U.S. Consul General, Hyderabad and over 350 participants who marched, honoring their commitment to empowering individuals through a positive workplace culture and comprehensive employee benefits.

## Shriram Farm Solutions launches 5 new products

**S**hriram Farm Solutions, a division of the DCM Shriram Ltd., launched its new age Crop Protection and Specialty Plant Nutrition products. The event took place at NSR Conventions, Telangana where prominent channel partners from the region convened to witness the electrifying launch of these innovative solutions. Addressing the challenges associated with weed management and cost elevation due to manual operations, Shriram Farm Solutions introduced SHIRAM BIKUTA, an early post-emergent selective herbicide designed to combat both broad-leaved and narrow-leaved weeds in cotton crops. To strengthen its insecticide portfolio, the company made the announcement of Shriram Saisho, Shriram Chrone and Shriram Trexter, the result of collaborations with leading global innovators.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU

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

**Yesterday's solution**

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

**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 Came on
- 2 A person who decides who wins a competition
- 3 A very small living thing that makes people ill
- 4 Overtakes
- 5 Reply
- 6 Short skirt
- 7 Rescued
- 8 A smelly vegetable
- 9 In poor health

### DOWN

- 10 Pieces
- 11 Puzzles with many pieces that make up a picture
- 12 From Russia
- 13 Sew with this
- 14 One third of twenty-one
- 15 From Ireland
- 16 A hard black fuel



■ THE FILM HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED IN A GRAND PUJA CEREMONY

# Venkatesh, Anil Ravipudi's film has two heroines



Victory Venkatesh and prolific hit-maker Anil Ravipudi have once again joined forces for a film that is being bankrolled by Dil Raju under his Sri Venkateswara Creations banner. This is the landmark 58th film of the production house. The hit combination worked together previously for *F2* and *F3* which were massive hits and they are reuniting for an intriguing new project. Presented by Dil Raju, the film is being produced by Shirish and was launched in a grand ceremony in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

At the auspicious muhurtham shot, Suresh Babu of Suresh Productions cranked the camera, while Allu Aravind of Geetha Arts clapped the board. Director Vamshi Paidipally handed over the script, and the legendary director Raghavendra Rao graced the occasion with his presence. This new film promises an extraordinary triangular crime tale, centered around three characters: the protagonist, his ex-girlfriend, and his formidable wife. Meenakshi Chaudhary and Aishwarya Rajesh play pivotal roles opposite Venkatesh. With their track record of delivering two blockbusters, fans have eagerly anticipated their next collaboration. A team of seasoned technicians is set to elevate every aspect of filmmaking, promising an unparalleled cinematic experience. Renowned composer Bheems Cecirole will score the music, with Sameer Reddy serving as the cinematographer. A S Prakash joins as the production designer, and Tammiraju as the editor. S Krishna and G Adhinarayana are the co-writers, while V Venkat handles the action direction.

## RAJ TARUN: *Tiragabadarasami* promises fresh action and entertainment

Actor Raj Tarun, who is on the spree of experimenting with new roles and movies, takes the lead in *Tiragabadarasami*, a wholesome entertainer helmed by director E.S. Ravi Kumar Chowdary. Malvi Malhotra stars as the lead actress in the film, produced under Malakpuram Shiva Kumar's banner, Suraksh Entertainment Media. The film's trailer has been launched recently and all the promotional content released so far is making good buzz amongst the audience. Starting with power-packed action sequences, the trailer captivates from start to finish. It stands tall with high-voltage action, family emotions, and gripping entertainment. Raj Tarun's action avatar shines brightly, showcasing a new dimension of his presence and energetic performance.

On why he came on board this project and what he liked the most about the film, the lead actor of the film, Raj Tarun, informed us, "Director E.S. Ravi Kumar Chowdary blends action and emotions extraordinarily. His direction is brilliant, and camera work, background music, and production values are top-notch, enhancing the high-octane action and emotional depth of the trailer." He continued, "We've put our hearts into this film more than anyone else. It's not just a great film; it's beyond that. Working with director E.S. Ravi Kumar Chowdary was a great experience. He didn't scold me even once (he laughed). It was a new experience for me to do such an action-packed role. He made it easy with his encouragement. The film looks more wonderful than ever."



## Vishva Karthikeya signs full-length comedy entertainer

Amravathi Touring Talkies celebrated the birthday of young hero Vishva Karthikeya by announcing their maiden production, *Production No. 1*. Vishva Karthikeya, who recently impressed audiences with dual roles in *Kalyugapattanamloo*, is set to portray a comedic character in this upcoming film, promising to be a full-length comedy entertainer. Teasing the ultimate fun to come, the makers unveiled a poster featuring a humorous dialogue: "Duniyaa La Zindagi Jilebi Lekkundale Chichha!" As hinted by the poster, Vishva Karthikeya will play an ardent fan of Nata Simham Nandamuri Balakrishna in the movie. Details regarding the director and the rest of the cast and crew will be disclosed shortly. Meanwhile, Vishva Karthikeya is preparing for an upcoming project in Indonesia, with filming scheduled to commence in mid-July.



## Rakshit Atluri's *Operation Raavan* locks release date

Rakshit Atluri's highly anticipated film *Operation Raavan* is set for a grand worldwide theatrical release on August 2. Starring Rakshit Atluri and Radhika Sarath Kumar in the lead roles, the film is produced by Dhyana Satya and directed by Venkata Satya, promising to be a contemporary suspense thriller. Sangeethana Vipin plays the female lead. *Operation Raavan* is a bilingual psycho thriller that has completed all production phases. The makers announced the theatrical release date for both Telugu and Tamil versions. The film's poster, tagged with the caption "A Psycho Story," features an intense action sequence with Rakshit Atluri, adding to the anticipation surrounding the film. Joining the cast are Radhika Sarath Kumar, Charan Raj, and Tamil actor Vidya Sagar in pivotal roles, contributing to the film's promising ensemble. With a confident team behind it, *Operation Raavan* is poised for success as it gears up for its global release on August 2.



## Vishwak Sen takes on the role of *Laila*!



Mass Ka Das Vishwak Sen is experimenting with a new genre once again with his latest venture, *Laila*, produced by Sahu Garapati of Shine Screens. We say experimenting because he portrays both a man and a woman. Known for his diverse film choices, Vishwak Sen takes on the role of *Laila* in this romantic action entertainer, penned by Ram Narayan, promising a character portrayal like

never before. Embracing such a challenging role requires immense courage and preparation, both physically and mentally.

On Wednesday, the makers unveiled the mesmerising eye look of *Laila*, portrayed by Vishwak Sen with captivating charm. The transformation is striking, with Vishwak Sen perfectly embodying the feminine grace of *Laila*. His expressive eyes convey the depth



and suitability of his portrayal. The enchanting gaze of *Laila* convincingly brings out the essence of the female character, leaving audiences eager to see Vishwak Sen's complete transformation into *Laila*.

The film commenced its journey with a ceremonial pooja. Renowned director Raghavendra Rao clapped the board for the inaugural shot, while director Harish Shanker initiated the camera roll. Producers Venkata Satish Kilaru and Gemini Kiran handed over the script to the production team.

Making her debut as the female lead opposite Vishwak Sen, Akanksha Sharma will contribute to the film's high technical and production standards. *Laila* boasts a talented crew, including writer Vasudeva Murthy, cinematographer Richard Prasad, music composers Tanishk Bagchi and Ghibran, editor Anwar Ali, and art director Brahma Kadali.

The makers have announced that *Laila* will hit theaters on February 14th, coinciding with Valentine's Day, promising an unforgettable cinematic experience.

## SARANGADARIYA RELEASING ON JULY 12

*Sarangadariya*, a family entertainer starring Raja Ravindra in the lead role, is set to have a grand release on July 12. Bankrolled by Saija Creations the film is directed by Padma Rao Abbisshetty (alias Pandu). Along with the teaser, the inspirational song *Andukova...* sung by legendary singer K.S.Chitra and the emotional lyrical songs *Na Kannule...* and *Ee Jeetmante...* have received a very good response. After making the release date official, producers of the film Umadevi and Sarath Chandra Challapalli said, "The teaser and songs released so far from our film *Sarangadariya* have received a very good response. Raja Rabindragari is going to be seen in a new role which has not been seen till now." Director Padmarao Abbisshetty said, "We will release the trailer of *Sarangadariya* movie soon. The story revolves around some conflicts in a middle class family. A good family entertainer. All the elements, like love and family emotions, are there."



## Women are not safe even in the land of Kaali: Vivek Agnihotri

In the light of a recent shameful incident in Bengal, Kerala Files filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri took to his social media to reflect on the history of West Bengal. Coincidentally, the teaser for the upcoming Vijay Yelakanti directorial pan-India film denoting the erased history of Bengal titled *Maa Kaali*, is all set to release tomorrow, starring Raima Sen and Abhishek Singh.

A Muslim woman was stripped naked and assaulted on the streets of Bengal for supporting BJP, over the week, the incident has received attention from the public owing to the viral videos on social media. Tracing the communal violence back to the brutal and horrifying massacres of Direct Action Day, Vivek Agnihotri took to his social media to voice his distress.

Vivek Agnihotri shares, "From Direct Action Day to Noakhali to today... Bengal, the great land of Hindu Renaissance, has been a victim of violence due to two nations and two constitution mindset. Women are not safe even in the land of Kaali. Sad, nobody... nobody... nobody even tried to stop it."

August 16, 1946 is etched in the pages of history for the haunting genocide, resulted by the motive of demanding a separate Muslim homeland. People Media Factory and Vijay Yelakanti through their film *Maa Kaali*, aim to shed

light on the erased history of Bengal, paying a homage to the lives lost in the massacre. Vivek Agnihotri, who is known for his film *Kashmir Files* which depicted the untold story of the atrocities subjected to *Kashmiri Pandits*, has raised his voice to address the concerns of Hindus in Bengal, the religious influence on the socio-political environment, and the history of the communal turmoil of the state.

Starring Raima Sen and IAS officer turned actor Abhishek Singh, *Maa Kaali* delves into the pivotal events of pre-partition Bengal.

The teaser of the film is scheduled to be launched on July 4, and the film is slated to release this year.



## Jani Master's b'day celebration turns into a heartwarming tribute

Popular choreographer Jani Master's birthday celebrations took an unexpected turn as he received an invitation from none other than Ram Charan, the Global Star himself. The occasion, held in the esteemed presence of Megastar Chiranjeevi and Upasana Konidela, turned into a deeply touching event. Expressing his overwhelming emotions, Jani Master reflected on the love and support he received. "He who renders timely help is hailed as God!" he exclaimed, recounting how his happiness multiplied upon meeting with such esteemed personalities.

The celebration also marked a poignant moment where Jani Master recalled the invaluable support received from Ram Charan and Megastar Chiranjeevi regarding the Dancers' Union. Their commitment to securing health insurance for over 500 families left an indelible mark. "It is rare to see such dedication turn into action," Jani Master remarked, expressing heartfelt gratitude on behalf of all beneficiaries. Jani Master extended sincere thanks to everyone who has supported him and emphasised the privilege of working alongside individuals who embody compassion and unwavering commitment. The event underscored not only a celebration of Jani Master's birthday but also a profound tribute to humanity and solidarity within the entertainment industry.

After launching her cosmetic brand in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, London, Mumbai and Bangalore, actress-entrepreneur Sunny Leone has launched her brand in Bhubaneswar. This collaboration between Sunny Leone and Sukirti Patnaik is expected to create a positive impact in the market. On the professional front, Sunny is preparing for the release of her upcoming Tamil film *Quotation Gang*. She has also garnered global recognition for her role in Anurag Kashyap's *Kennedy*, which premiered at Cannes last year and is set for a theatrical release soon.

Additionally, she has an untitled film with Himesh Reshammiya and Prabhudeva in the works and an untitled Malayalam project. Besides her film commitments, Sunny is also seen hosting TV reality show *Splitvilla X5*.

## SUNNY LEONE LAUNCHES HER COSMETIC BRAND



# GILL-LED TEAM INDIA LANDS IN HARARE FOR T20IS AGAINST ZIMBABWE

PTI ■ HARARE

A young Indian cricket team led by skipper Shubman Gill and with National Cricket Academy chief VVS Laxman as coach arrived here to play a five-match T20 International series against Zimbabwe beginning July 6. The team was seen exiting the airport with their luggage in a video posted by Zimbabwe Cricket on X. The entire squad had departed from Mumbai on Tuesday, while Gill, who was a travelling reserve with the T20 World Cup side in the Americas, arrived here from New York after a break. "We welcome T20 World Cup champions India," wrote ZC on Tuesday night in a post on X. Young top-order batter Riyan Parag, who will be making his India debut in the series, said in a video posted by BCCI that he had a childhood dream of travelling like this (with the national side).

"The feel of donning India jersey, travelling with the side is different. Coming from Assam, I had this dream of playing for India. Really happy. There will be a special connection for Zimbabwe when I play my first match. "That will be a special moment for that ground and myself, which would be very sacred," he said. "After misplacing my passport, to phones, we are finally here after a 20 hour journey. Now, really looking forward to the tour," Parag added. Another newcomer, medium pacer Tushar Deshpande, said the feeling of being in the national setup is "slowly sinking in and it's like a dream come true for me. Playing for the country is a very special thing." "Travelling with the team is the most important and getting to know them, knowing the atmosphere of the team and most important for me is the fun we have during travel," added



Deshpande. Big-hitting left-hander Abhishek Sharma said from the day he started playing cricket, he had only one dream, which was to play for the country. "I know if I continue working hard, I will get an opportunity but I didn't know I will get it outside India in Zimbabwe. "I got a call from (skipper) Shubman after my name was announced in the squad. Everyone has been giving me so much of affection. For me it was a very big thing," added Sharma. "When I reached home after my name had been announced, I saw my family members giving interviews. So, I think, that was one moment I will always remember," he said. India will play their opening match against the Sikandar Raza-captained Zimbabwe on July 6 at the Harere Cricket Ground. The remaining four games will also be played at the same venue. The series will

conclude on July 14. T20 World Cup travelling reserves Sanju Samson and Yashasvi Jaiswal along with all-rounder Shivam Dube were slated to join the Zimbabwe-bound group but are stranded in Barbados due to hurricane Beryl. Sai Sudharsan, Jitesh Sharma and Harshit Rana were on Tuesday named as replacements for trio in the Indian squad for the first two matches of the series. Samson, Jaiswal and Dube along with the other senior players will be arriving in India aboard a charter flight on Thursday morning. The players will later be felicitated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. Pacer Khaleel Ahmed and batter Rinku Singh, travelling reserves for the T20 World Cup, are also currently in Barbados. The BCCI has not named replacements for the duo even though they are in the squad for Zimbabwe series.



## Markram was brave, tactically astute while leading South Africa in T20 World Cup: Smith

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Aiden Markram was 'brave' and 'tactically astute' while leading South Africa to their first-ever appearance in the final of the T20 World Cup which they narrowly lost to India last week at Barbados, said former skipper Graeme Smith on Wednesday. South Africa had a near-perfect campaign in the T20 World Cup under Markram's captaincy with their only defeat coming in the final when India pipped the Proteas by seven runs. "Aiden was particularly good during the tournament. He was tactically astute, had good plans and was brave enough to make the big calls and then get all his players to commit to it," said Smith in a media release. "We have, of course, seen Aiden captain in this manner before over the course of the past two SA20 seasons, leading the Sunrisers Eastern Cape to back-to-back championship titles, but now he has transferred this experience to the international arena," added Smith, who is SA20's league commissioner. Smith said SA20, in its two seasons so far, has been able to prepare the South African cricketers to be ready for

pressure and challenges at the highest level. "From the outset, the league, alongside Cricket South Africa, has wanted to provide South African cricketers with the opportunity to be exposed to a higher level of domestic cricket where the players are able to rub shoulders and learn from some of the best the game has to offer," he said. "Players are exposed to high-pressure and competitive cricket and this experience stood them in good stead in the US and Caribbean," said one of the greatest South Africa captains. Smith praised Ottneil Baartman for his impressive performances, particularly in the group stage, wherein the right-arm bowler produced measly spells. "Ottneil is the epitome of a SA20 success story. A relatively unknown player before SA20 that has transformed and grown in confidence due to experiences with the Sunrisers Eastern Cape is phenomenal," Smith said. "Despite playing in his very first T20 World Cup, he backed his skills under immense pressure. The four wickets against the Netherlands and the last over against Nepal definitely stands out," he added.

## Hardik Pandya becomes first Indian to occupy top spot in ICC T20I all-rounders' rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

Hardik Pandya rose two places to become the first Indian to occupy the number one spot in the ICC's T20I all-rounders' rankings on Wednesday, as the country's cricketers improved their standings following their title-winning performance in the just-concluded World Cup. The 30-year-old, who handed telling blows to South Africa in the T20 World Cup final on July 29 by dismissing half-centurion Heinrich Klaasen and David Miller in his 3/20 effort, climbed up two places to go level with Sri Lankan star Wanindu Hasaranga as the top-ranked men's T20I all-rounder. Following a topsy-turvy IPL where he was the target of fans' boos as Mumbai Indians' new captain, Pandya turned it around in style in the T20 World Cup in the USA and the Caribbean.



Pandya made impactful cameos down the order with the bat and made breakthroughs with the ball when the team needed him to. He finished with 144 runs at a batting strike-rate of over 150 and also took 11 wickets in the tournament. His best performance came in

the final when he triggered a dramatic South African collapse after the Proteas needed 30 runs from 30 balls with Klaasen in full flow. Pandya gave the decisive blow by dismissing Klaasen in the first ball of the 17th over. He went on to bowl the tense final over and defended 16

runs to help India pip South Africa by seven runs and win their second T20 World Cup title.

### BIG MOVER BUMRAH

India's star fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah, who won the Player of the Tournament award at the T20 World Cup for his 15 wickets, moved up 12 spots to be just outside the top-10. He's at 12th, his highest position since the end of 2020. There were other movements in the top 10 of the T20I all-rounders' rankings, with Marcus Stoinis, Sikandar Raza, Shakib Al Hasan and Liam Livingstone rising by one spot each. Mohammad Nabi moved down four spots to go out of the top five. In the T20I bowling rankings, South Africa's Anrich Nortje rose seven places to a career-best second spot to be just behind top-ranked Adil Rashid with 675 rating points.

## Praggnanandhaa draws with Bogdan-Daniel, Alireza shines in Superbet Classic chess

PTI ■ BUCHAREST

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa was held to a draw by lowest ranked Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania in the sixth round of the Superbet Classic tournament, a part of the grand chess tour here. Iranian-French Grandmaster Alireza Firouzja shined with his moves against Wesley So of the United States. With the World Championship on his mind, India's D Gukesh seemed to keep in reserve his real weapons and signed for peace with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France. Praggnanandhaa tried his hand against the ever-solid Nimzo Indian defense. But it was an off day for the Indian who was confidently breached by the Romanian. Bogdan-Daniel matched Praggnanandhaa move for move and the game was drawn through repetition after 38 moves.



It was not so easy for Gukesh as well as he seemed to withhold his true preparation for the World Championship match against Ding Liren, scheduled in November this year in Singapore. Alireza stole the show on a dull day in the grand chess tour. He was at his best and crawled back with his second win of the tournament to be in striking distance of tournament leader Fabio Caruana of the United States. With just three rounds remaining in the USD 350000 prize money tournament, Caruana seems to be sitting pretty at the top, with three aspirants in Gukesh Praggnanandhaa and Alireza in pursuit.

## I had momentum, could have done better: Nagal on first-round loss in Wimbledon

PTI ■ LONDON

Indian tennis ace Sumit Nagal feels he had the momentum in the third set of the Wimbledon first-round tie against higher-ranked Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia but his relative inexperience on grass cost him the match. The 26-year-old Indian, who is set to participate in his second Olympics in less than a month, lost the Wimbledon men's singles opener to Kecmanovic, ranked 19 places higher than him, in a marathon four-setter lasting nearly three-and-a-half hours. Nagal lost 2-6, 6-3, 3-6, 4-6. The 71st-ranked from Jhajjar, making it to the Wimbledon main draw for the first time, won the second set to come

on even terms but the Serbian, ranked 52nd, won the next two to advance. "This is my first main draw at Wimbledon, and playing on the grass surface is not easy; you need a bit of experience. But I think I did whatever I could, I fought hard. I felt like I could have served better, and there were a few things here and there in the match I could have done better," Nagal told Star Sports. "Later on in the third set, the momentum was kind of shifting towards me. I think, like I said, if I could have broken him at 5-3, him serving, I think the match could have changed in a funny way." He said the SW19 experience was the one to cherish. "It was a great experience.



Obviously, when you play for three, three-and-a-half hours, you always feel like, 'this could have been done or that could have been done'. But like I said, if I could have changed things in the third set, I would have really liked that (broken the opponent at

5-3). Nagal said his aim is to keep climbing up the rankings ladder and he is looking forward to a good show at the Paris Olympics, where he will have to shift to clay courts. "I keep on climbing the rankings. There are a few

goals that I need to finish, and that will be one of them - to keep on climbing the rankings. "Now, I'm going back on clay to get ready for Paris. I'm looking forward to it; it's going to be my second Olympics, and I'm super, super excited for it." Nagal, who was ranked 160th during the Tokyo Olympics, had lost in straight sets to Daniil Medvedev in the second round. Tennis legend Mahesh Bhupathi also indicated that Nagal should have converted half chances. "Everyone's disappointed, but he's had a breakthrough year, he's played high-quality tennis. That guy's a good player and he had his chances there in the third set and that's

the way it is. In events like this, you've got to take your chances, otherwise, you're going to come out on the losing end." Former Davis Cupper Zeeshan Ali said Nagal should not get disappointed as he gave his opponent a tough time. "I feel that Sumit should not be very disheartened by this loss because he played a very good match. He played an incredibly good second set and he had a lot of chances. "Going forward, I think he definitely needs to prepare better to play in a tournament like Wimbledon, maybe get a couple of matches in before the main draw of Wimbledon starts, and that would definitely help him prepare better," said Ali.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Star Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty has "cracked" the service variation challenge and is focussing on "comprehensive physical and mental conditioning" to ensure peak performance at the upcoming Paris Olympics. Satwik, 23, and Chirag, 26, have been troubled by the wide variations of tumble, spin and wide serves that their opponents, mainly the Koreans and Indonesians, have employed against them during the recent tournaments. Chirag said they have addressed the "new challenge" and remains confident of negotiating it during the Paris Games. "Regarding serve variations, they are a new challenge, but placing complete importance on that wouldn't be right," Chirag told PTI in an email interview. "There was a time when we struggled with receiving them, but we eventually cracked it. We know what to do, we've been practicing, and we're confident we'll come out strong at the Olympics to counter that."

## Satwik-Chirag eyeing great things at Paris Olympics after cracking service variation challenge

The current world number 3 pair had narrowly missed out of a quarterfinal berth in the last Olympics when despite winning two of their three group matches, the duo couldn't qualify for the knockout stage as it was settled on the basis of the number of games won and lost. "The experience of playing in the Tokyo Olympics has been invaluable in our preparation for the Paris Games. Competing at such a high level has taught us crucial lessons about handling pressure, staying focused, and adapting to different playing conditions," Satwik said. Chirag added: "The intensity and atmosphere of the Olympics are unparalleled, and having been through it once, we now have a better understanding of what to expect and the initial jitters of being at the Olympics for the first time are also not going to be there. "Additionally, winning the



French Open has naturally given us a significant confidence boost." In the last couple of years, the duo worked its way to become the world number one after a

series of sensational performance, including winning the Commonwealth Games gold medal, a bronze at the World Championships in 2022, and gold in the Hangzhou Asian

Games. They also played a crucial role in India's epic Thomas Cup win in 2022. Satwik and Chirag have won the French Open and Thailand Open this

year after reaching the finals at the Malaysian Super 750 and India Super 750. "As the Olympics draw closer, our approach is becoming more focussed and strategic. We're fine-tuning every aspect of our game to ensure peak performance when we step onto the court in Paris," Satwik said. "This includes developing specific game plans for our potential opponents by studying their strengths and weaknesses in detail, concentrating on targeted drills, and enhancing our on-court positions and shot selections. "We are taking a holistic approach to our preparations. We're in a good rhythm and are eagerly looking forward to be back at the Olympics. Comprehensive physical and mental conditioning is at the heart of our preparation." The duo has been troubled sometimes by the left-right combinations such as Korean Seo Seung-jae and Kang Minhyuk and Danish Kim Astrup

and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen but Chirag feels they don't have any problem against any particular pair. "I can't really pinpoint a specific pair that we find particularly tricky to play against. On any given day, if a pair plays well, they can pose a challenge. However, I believe that if we play at our best, we can beat anyone," he said. "So, there's no specific pair or lefty-righty combination that particularly affects us. That said, all our competitors in the Olympics will be quite good..." On expectations and handling pressure at the big-ticket event, Satwik said: "We understand Olympics is the greatest, biggest tournament there is and naturally there are hopes and wishes from each Olympic-bound athlete. "We don't want to think so much about the pressures, we're looking to go out there, enjoy the atmosphere, have a great time on court and take it one game at a time and see

how it goes. We do not want to put ourselves under any pressure from the word go. "We're used to the expectations and pressures that come along in our game... We're primarily looking to go out there and do great things on the court and have fun while doing that." Chirag and Satwik are also mentors of PNB MetLife Junior Badminton Championship (JBC), which will begin on August 1 in the national capital. "JBC offers a fantastic opportunity to nurture budding badminton talent in India. JBC also offers players access to mentoring, coaching, and training from veterans in the sport. Badminton has significantly shaped my life, and I want to share its benefits with the next generation, helping them achieve their dreams," Chirag said. Satwik said: "As JBC mentors, we offer guidance on videos to young athletes on drills, techniques, strategies to improve their game, tips on mental resilience, and managing competition stress. Chirag and I will also be offering tips to players in person, whenever we visit any city edition matches."