


QUOTE OF THE DAY
 The pioneer

What has the Telangana Congress government achieved to celebrate? Is it for failing to disburse the promised Rythu Bharosa money during Rabi and Kharif seasons? Is it for deceiving farmers by placing restrictions on farm loan waiver? Is it for leaving farmers in distress by not providing them compensation for crop losses? Is this farm loan waiver drama a trick to gain the upper hand in 'local body' elections?
 - Bandi Sanjay Kumar, MoS Home Affairs



Quota bill in next Cabinet meet to clear doubts: K'taka CM



'I TOOK MY OWN TIME TO EXPERIENCE POLISH CULTURE & FOOD'



Ashwin Babu discusses the depths of SHIVAM BHAJE



DON'T MISS...
HC adjourns hearing to...
 Following the protests to defer the District Selection Committee (DSC) exam, 10 unemployed candidates filed a petition in the Telangana High Court to postpone the exam, on Wednesday. A hearing was held in the court on Wednesday on the petition. Senior Advocate Ravichander advocated for the unemployed stating that as per the notification given by the State government, it gave only four months time for the examination. The DSC notification was given in February. Due to this, the unemployed raised several concerns...
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Irregular sleep for a week can lead...
 Weeklong irregular sleep can increase the risk of type 2 diabetes in middle-aged and older people by 34 per cent, a new study has found. Even as researchers acknowledged assessing sleep duration over seven days may not capture long-term sleep patterns, they said changing this lifestyle factor can help lower the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. According to the study published in the journal Diabetes Care, the link was "more pronounced" among those sleeping for longer durations and...
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Two South Eastern Coalfields blocks...
 Gevra and Kusmunda blocks of state-owned South Eastern Coalfields have secured second and fourth spots, respectively, in the list of the world's 10 largest coal mines in terms of production volume released by WorldAtlas.com. Located in the Korba district of Chhattisgarh, the two mines produce more than 100 million tonnes (MT) of coal annually accounting for about 10 per cent of India's total coal production. South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL) said in a statement on...
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India begin Women's Asia...
 The Women's Asia Cup is set for a blockbuster start when defending champions India take on arch-foes Pakistan in a prime-time clash here on Friday, with the eight competing teams hoping to firm up their combinations ahead of the T20 World Cup in October. Harmanpreet Kaur's India are the team to beat going into this iteration of the Asia Cup, having won the competition three out of four times in the T20 version and each of the four times in 50-overs format. Additionally, India are also the most successful...
 -SPORTS

TG launches loan waiver scheme

Gujarat is not the model, TG is the role model, asserts CM Revanth
 Hands out loan waiver cheques to 10 farmers • Says BRS MLA Harish need not resign

- Revanth clarifies that ration cards are not the criterion for loan waiver, and that the passbook is the criterion
- By the end of August, Rs 31,000 crore will be credited to farmers' loan accounts: CM



CM Revanth Reddy handing over a cheque to a woman as part of the launch of crop loan waiver scheme at the Secretariat on Thursday

Revanth declared that his government will complete the loan waiver at one go by releasing Rs 6,098 crore to waive loans up to Rs 1 lakh initially, followed by waivers for loans up to Rs 1.5 lakh and Rs 2 lakh in subsequent phases. By the end of August, Rs 31,000 crore will be credited to farmers' loan accounts.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Chief Minister Revanth Reddy announced that the state government will be a model to the country after the implementation of the Rs 2 lakh farm loan waiver scheme. He said that this day will remain unforgettable in his 16-year political career.

The Chief Minister launched the loan waiver programme at the secretariat on Thursday, addressing farmers through 577 Rythu Vedikas. During the programme, the CM interacted with farmers from all over the state via video conference and remembered the promises by Rahul Gandhi on May 6, 2002, in Warangal and reiterated by Sonia Gandhi on September 17, 2023. He emphasised that the Congress has kept its promise to waive farm

loans, proving once again that the promises of the Congress are as strong as messages engraved on stone. Referring to MLA Harish Rao's challenge, the CM said, "Hear, those who throw challenges. We are not asking you to resign because you will run away." The CM criticised the BRS government for failing to implement the loan waiver scheme despite being in power for a decade. He accused KCR of breaking

promises twice, first by waiving only Rs 12,000 crore of the Rs 16,000 crore and then Rs 9,000 crore out of the Rs 12,000 crore. The total loans waived in 10 years did not exceed Rs 21,000 crore. Revanth declared that his government will complete the loan waiver at one go by releasing Rs 6,098 crore to waive loans up to Rs 1 lakh initially, followed by waivers for loans up to Rs 1.5 lakh and Rs 2 lakh in subsequent phases. By the end of August, Rs 31,000 crore will

be credited to farmers' loan accounts. The Chief Minister clarified that ration cards are not the criterion for loan waiver, and that the passbook is the criterion. The Chief Minister handed out loan waiver cheques to 10 farmers

Cong plans thanksgiving public meet with 5 lakh people **Bhatti to banks: Sanction new loans immediately after waiver**

Loan waiver scheme is drama for local body elections, alleges Bandi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Declaring that the farm loan waiver scheme is intended for making political gains in the forthcoming local body elections, the Union Minister of the State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, asked Congress workers to explain what they had achieved to organise celebrations across the state. "Is the celebrations meant for evading Rythu Bharosa in the Rabi and Kharif seasons? Or is it because the farmers were cheated for reducing the loan waiver amount? Or is it for troubling farmers by not giving ex-gratia? Why didn't the government give Rs 15,000 to farmers and tenant farmers and Rs 12,000 for



farm labourers in the last Rabi and Kharif seasons," Sanjay said. He asked the TG government whether it is correct on the part of the Congress government to trouble farmers in the name of Rythu Bharosa Sadassulu.

Govt held back Rythu Bharosa money: BRS
 The Congress, which came to power through lies, is continuing with the same deceit, said former Minister Niranjan Reddy. He asked whether farm loans can be waived with just Rs 6,000 crore. He said the government held back Rythu Bharosa funds. "Today, while claiming to have waived loans amounting to Rs 1 lakh, they are announcing it as if loans up to Rs 2 lakh were waived," he said.
 Continued on Page 2

Will build irrigation project on Pranahita river, announces CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Chief Minister Revanth Reddy announced that an irrigation project would be constructed on the Pranahita River at Tummidetti to supply water to Adilabad district. Speaking to farmers across the state through video conference from the secretariat, the CM discussed the farm loan waiver programme. During the interaction, he spoke to Mahender, a farmer from Bandlanagapur village in the Tamsi mandal of Adilabad district. The CM discussed with Mahender about his farm and the impact of the loan

waiver. Mahender expressed happiness about the waiver of his Rs 50,000 loan and hailed the Chief Minister's attempts to understand the challenges faced by farmers and tribal communities. The CM asked Mahender to share information about the loan waiver on social media and assured him that the project at Tummidetti would soon provide water to his district. The Chief Minister also discussed with Mahender the upcoming thanksgiving meeting in Warangal which Rahul Gandhi is scheduled to attend.

CM reviews Kodungal Lift Irrigation Project



Chief Minister Revanth Reddy reviewed the progress of the Kodungal lift irrigation project and asked officials to focus specifically on the district's irrigation projects to ensure their timely completion. He also directed officials to prepare proposals for the establishment of a fish market in Kodungal, highlighting the importance of developing local infrastructure and markets to support the community. Regarding the construction of the Maddur Residential Campus, the Chief Minister provided several suggestions to improve the project and ensure that it meets the required standards. Revanth said that he will review the Kodungal lift irrigation project every four weeks to tackle problems promptly.

Delhi court refers Kavitha to AIIMS for medical check-up

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 A Delhi court on Thursday referred BRS leader K Kavitha, lodged in Tihar jail in two cases related to the alleged excise scam, to AIIMS for a medical check-up. The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) MLC was taken to Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital after she developed some gynaecological

problem and high fever on Tuesday. After staying in the hospital for two hours, she was sent back to jail, an official said. "Kavitha was taken to DDU Hospital after she developed some gynaecological problem and high fever around 4.30 pm. She was kept under observation and underwent some tests," an official said.
 Continued on Page 2

Peddavagu flooded, 41 rescued

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The gates of the Peddavagu in the Aswaraopet area of Khammam district were lifted resulting in floodwaters inundating downstream areas. Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy directed officials to alert the public regarding the intensity of the flood in the Peddavagu. He emphasised the need for immediate steps to ensure that no harm comes to the people. A swift rescue operation



using helicopters saved 28 farmers who got trapped in the floodwaters in Bhadradi Kothagudem district. The incident occurred due to large-scale flooding of the Ashwaraopet

Pedda Vagu stream after heavy rains. Fifty-one people were caught in the floodwaters. Boats of the District Disaster Response Force (DDRF) and a Navy helicopter from Eluru in Andhra Pradesh successfully rescued 41 individuals. Efforts are on to rescue the remaining 10 people. Ponguleti called the Bhadrachalam Collector and SPs from Hyderabad to get detailed updates on the situation.
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SC: Declare centre-wise results of NEET-UG

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the National Testing Agency (NTA) to declare by 12 noon of July 20 the centre and city-wise results of NEET-UG 2024 while masking the identities of aspirants. As it strove to address the allegations of malpractices in the conduct of the examination, a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud said any order for conducting it afresh has to be on concrete conclusion that the sanctity of the entire process was affected. The top court will resume hearing the arguments on July 22 on a batch of pleas seeking cancellation, re-test and a court-monitored probe



into the allegations of large-scale malpractices in the prestigious test held on May 5. During the day-long hearing, the bench asked the counsel for the aspirants to establish their claim about extensive irregularities in holding the examination, including leak of question paper, warranting cancellation and a re-test.

Sridhar calls for 20-year roadmap for using AI in admin

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu expressed his satisfaction about the partnership between the state government, the British High Commission and Ernst & Young (E&Y) in the fields of Artificial Intelligence and cybersecurity. Sridhar met representatives of the British High Commission and E&Y at the secretariat on Thursday. During the meeting, he requested their cooperation to establish global competency centres. The Minister suggested developing a roadmap for the next 20 years on using Artificial Intelligence in the administration and the industrial sector.



Sridhar expressed his desire to see the British High Commission and E&Y becoming key partners in the AI City being established by the Telangana government on 200 acres. He hailed the British High Commission's initiative to conduct training and awareness programmes in cyber security. The meeting was attended by Laura Baldwin of the British High Commission, Vikas Agarwal, Naveen Kaul and Kiran Vinjamuri from E&Y, and Venu Prasad, the Joint Director of the state IT department.

'TG may defer Group-II exam'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 The state government may postpone the Group-II examination as per the demand of candidates. Congress leaders Bhongir MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, MLC Balmoori Venkat, Manavatha Roy, Charan Kaushik, Bala Laxmi, Kiran Yadava and others met unemployed candidates at the Tourism Plaza Hotel on Thursday regarding this. Congress leaders enquired about the demands of Group-II hopefuls and why they are demanding postponement of the examination. The leaders assured the Group-II hopefuls that they will draw the attention of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to their demands. Speaking to the media MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy said,

"Students appearing for the Group-II exam met me on Thursday and our CM and Ministers had asked me to talk to them. Their simple demand is that the gap between Group-II exam and the DSC test is just a day and this leads to problems. The DCS test was postponed to this date and the exam dates are clashing. They are requesting to postpone the DSC exam." "We will try to get a favourable decision as demanded by the hopefuls. The gap between DSC and Group-II exams is very small and is just a few days. The demand of the applicants is justified. We will take this issue to the CM and will see that a favourable decision comes from the CM. We will announce the job calendar and will not deceive the unemployed like the BRS government," MLC Balmoori Venkat said.

The true colour of the new 'criminal' law

For the record, the *Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita* (BNS), the *Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita* (BNSS) and the *Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam* (BSA) replaced the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, respectively.

Before the new criminal laws were enacted, police custody was permitted for a maximum period of 15 days; further, it could be sought only in the first 15 days following the arrest. Thereafter, BNSS allows the police to make requests for custody beyond 15 days. On the face of it, it appears sweeping enough for extending the powers of the police to request custody up to the initial 60

days, after the arrest.

8. Dangerous police remand. The so-called new reforms of criminal law 2023-24 made such provisions extending police remand. It is a very dangerous provision. For, the limit of police custody within the first 15 days from the time of arrest is removed, permitting the magistrate to order police custody for a period of 15 days anytime during the initial 40-60 days of custody, which means police lock-up. "The earlier bar on seeking police custody once the remanding magistrate grants judicial custody is now lifted."

9. Shifting to judicial custody: Based on the mag-

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istrate's order, any accused person can be shifted from judicial custody back to police custody at any time beyond the first 15 days of arrest, even if he has been granted judicial custody. The police can use this order conveniently.

10. Hitting the custodial jurisprudence: The new law seriously hits the jurisprudence around custodial power in our country, where the police have not been trusted to ensure the safety of people in their custody. It is against the morality and spirit of



PROF MADABHUSHI SRIDHAR ACHARYULU
Professor of Law, Mahindra University, Hyderabad

the Indian Constitution.

11. The mighty power of the police and influencing

people makes the suspected person suffer because he is even called 'accused', and exposed to torture intimidation, and all possible other dangers.

12. 'Justice instead of punishment!' The Home Minister claimed that the new laws would ensure "justice, instead of punishment" and "speedy trial, instead of delays", and that justice would be delivered "up to the level of Supreme Court" within three years of an FIR being registered. It is very beautifully said, but the reality is different.

"Justice can be received up to the level of the Supreme Court within three years of the registration of the FIR. The new laws bring in a modern justice system, incorporating provisions such as Zero FIR, online registration of police complaints, summons through electronic modes such as SMS, and mandatory videography of crime scenes for all heinous crimes". With the implementation of the new laws, India would have the most modern criminal justice system in the world, the Government claimed.

14. Hope against Hope: 99.9 per cent conviction, do we have conviction? "The

new laws have made forensic investigation mandatory in offences punishable by seven years or more, which will help speed up justice and take the conviction rate up to 90 per cent. 99.9 per cent of police stations across the country have been computerized and the process of generating e-records started in 2019. The new laws also set a deadline for the completion of all procedures, full implementation of the laws will end the endless wait for justice," the Home Minister said. Let us all hope for the best.

(Concluded)

Congress plans thanksgiving public meet with 5 lakh people

CM Revanth going to New Delhi on July 20

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that if the Congress gives its word it will stick to it come what may. The CM said the party will organise a public thanksgiving meeting at Warangal with five lakh people by this month end where the farm loan waiver scheme was announced by the AICC former chief Rahul Gandhi. He said that he will go to New Delhi on July 20 along with the Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and other Ministers and will meet the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, and invite him to the proposed Warangal public meeting.

Participating in a video conference with farmers on the occasion of the launch of the farm loan waiver scheme on Thursday at the secretariat, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that Telangana has got an opportunity to be a role model

He said that former AICC chief Sonia Gandhi gave a word and fulfilled the aspirations of four crore people by giving the Telangana state. In the same manner, the Congress government is implementing the assurance (of Rs. 2 lakh Loan Waiver Scheme) given by Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi, CM said.

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the assurance (of Rs. 2 lakh Loan Waiver Scheme) given by Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi, CM said.

Alleging that the previous BRS government deceived farmers forcing farmers to commit



suicide, he said the BRS government paid Rs 12,000 crore in the first five years and that it did not implement the farm loan waiver scheme effectively.

Cong leaders celebrate launch of farm loan waiver scheme

Congress leaders celebrated the launch of the farm loan waiver scheme across the state. AICC in-charge General Secretary Deepa Das Munshi, TPC Campaign Committee chairman Madhu Yashki Goud, Fishermen Corporation Chairman Mettu Sai Kumar, DCC President Rohin Reddy, official spokespersons Sathyam Srirangam, Kamal and others attended the celebrations at the Gandhi Bhavan on



Thursday. They burst crackers, distributed sweets and danced to drum beats to mark the launch of the Rs 2 lakh loan waiver scheme. They also conducted a milk bath on a flex carrying the picture of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. Speaking on the occasion, Madhu Yashki Goud said that it is the first time in the country that a state government spent Rs 31,000 crore to waive farm loans up to Rs 2 lakh at one go benefiting lakhs of farmers.

Harish criticizes CM's comments on resignation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Harish Rao criticised Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's comments and accused him of betraying the Telangana movement by not resigning his post and fleeing. He pointed out that Revanth had vowed to retire from politics if he was defeated in Kodangal, but failed to uphold his vow and disappeared.

Harish highlighted his own commitment to the people and contrasted it with Revanth's history of running away. He emphasised that while Revanth remained silent for political positions, he had given up his ministerial and MLA posts, considering them insignificant compared to public service.

Harish asserted that posts are neither new to him nor are resignations.

Bhatti to banks: Sanction new loans immediately after waiver

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu has asked banks to ensure that the funds released for waiving farmers agricultural loans should be utilised only for that and must not be adjusted against other loans. Farmers should not be inconvenienced under any circumstance, he said.

Speaking at a meeting with bankers on the farmers' loan waiver scheme here on Wednesday, Bhatti said that Rs 31,000 crore would be released before August-end for waiving the loans of farmers.

He said that on Wednesday 4 pm around Rs 6,000 crore would be released under the loan waiver scheme to around 11 lakh farmers. The second instalment would also be released in July itself to cover



farmers with loans up to Rs 1.5 lakh. Later, loans of farmers up to Rs 2 lakh would be repaid. For farmers with loans of over Rs 2 lakh, bankers should recover the excess amount over Rs 2 lakh and use the Rs 2 lakh to be released by the government to ensure that no farmer owed money to banks, Bhatti said.

Describing the loan waiver scheme for farmers as a historical decision, Bhatti said that no state has waived farmers' loans amounting to Rs 31,000 crore.

He recalled that before coming to power, PCC President Revanth and he himself had launched the Congress election campaign after signing the loan waiver guarantee. "We are bound by our word and are implementing the loan waiver scheme in letter and spirit," he said.

The government would deposit Rs 31,000 crore in 40 lakh bank accounts, he disclosed. This is the first time in the Indian banking history that such a huge amount is recovered at one go, he pointed out.

Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express derails; two dead, 34 injured

PNS ■ GONDA

Two passengers were killed and 34 injured when eight coaches of the Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express derailed near Gonda in Uttar Pradesh on Thursday, an official said. Ambulances and medical teams were rushed to the spot between Motiganj and Jhalahi railway stations, about 150 km from the state capital, as news of the derailment came in.

The loco pilot heard the "sound of a blast" before the derailment, an official told reporters. But he did not elaborate.

There was confusion initially over the death toll.



Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak told PTI that four people were killed, with district magistrate Neha Sharma too giving out the same number to the media. But about five hours after the 2.35 pm accident, the authorities revised the figures with Sharma saying there was one death. "Prima facie, when teams reached the spot people were

laying scattered there in bad shape due to which confusion prevailed," she said.

One more passenger died later in the evening while being taken to Lucknow for medical treatment, UP Relief Commissioner G S Naveen said. The Railways too had reported two deaths. The dead were identified as Saroj Kumar Singh (31), a resident of Araria in Bihar, and Rahul (38) from Chandigarh.



Gadkari worships at Tirumala

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday offered prayers at Sri Venkateswara temple here at around 4 am.

In a post on 'X', Gadkari said, "Blessed with the darshan (visit) of Sri Venkateswara Swamy ji temple in Tirumala, Tirupati today." On arrival, the temple officials accorded a grand reception to the Union Road Transport and Highways Minister, followed by priests escorting him into the sanctum sanctorum. "After darshan, Gadkari was offered vedasirvachanam (blessings) by Vedic pundits at Ranganayakula Mandapam.

Will use Social Stock Exchange to fund welfare schemes: Sridhar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government plans to use the Social Stock Exchange framework developed by SEBI for collecting money to fund welfare schemes, IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu said.

Sridhar conducted a high-level review meeting at the Secretariat, discussing a strategy to invite investments from major industrial and commercial entities complying with SEBI and RBI regulations.

Representatives from the investment collection firm Equipp Desi, the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and Secretaries attended the meeting.

Sridhar expressed urgency in exploring alternative methods for fundraising within the limits set by the RBI's Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) guidelines. He said the Social Stock Exchange is part of a broader strategy to align social welfare goals and market-based funds.

No tunnel found inside inner chamber of Ratna Bhandar: Justice Rath

PNS ■ PURI

As the mystery surrounding the existence of a tunnel inside the inner chamber of Ratna Bhandar (treasury) at the Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri continues, Gajapati Maharaja Divya Singha Deb on Thursday suggested that the ASI could employ modern technology to investigate. Deb said this while replying questions on the possible existence of a tunnel or secret chambers inside the inner chamber of the Ratna Bhandar. Many local people believe that

there is a secret tunnel inside the inner chamber of temple's treasury. "The ASI could utilise advanced tools like laser scanning to evaluate the condition of the chamber," Deb said.

A survey using such technology could provide insights into any existing structures, such as tunnels," Deb said. However, Justice Biswanath Rath, chairman of the supervisory committee and former judge of the Orissa High Court, who spent over seven hours inside the inner chamber with ten other members, reported otherwise.

SC: Declare centre-wise results of..

Continued from page 1

The court said it prima facie appeared that the question paper leak was limited to Patna and Hazaribagh, and nothing of this sort can be said to have happened in Godhra in Gujarat.

In Patna and Hazaribagh, the question papers allegedly got leaked, while in Godhra

there were claims that a person involved in holding the test took money for filling up the OMR sheets of certain candidates. Questioning the claims about leak of question paper on social media platform 'Telegram', the bench said, "You have to bear in mind that the idea of somebody doing this was not to make a national charade.

People did it for money. So, it was not to bring disrepute to the exam and somebody was doing it to make money which is evident. Mass leakage requires contacts also at that level so that you connect to all such key contacts in different cities."

The bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, which com-

mented the crucial hearing on a batch of petitions related to the controversy-ridden medical entrance exam, said it has "social ramifications".

The top court adjourned the cases listed ahead of the NEET-UG plea, saying "We will open the case today. Lakhs of young students are waiting for this, let us hear and decide."

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Trayodashi: Jul 18 08:44 PM to Jul 19 07:41 PM
Chaturdashi: Jul 19 07:41 PM to Jul 20 05:59 PM
Nakshatram: Moola: Jul 19 03:25 AM to Jul 20 02:55 AM
Purva Ashadha: Jul 20 02:55 AM to Jul 21 01:48 AM
Rahukalam: 10:45 AM to 12:22 PM
Yamagandam: 3:36 PM to 5:12 PM
Varjyam: 01:38 AM to 03:26 AM
Gulika: 7:32 AM to 9:08 AM
Amritakalam: 08:44 PM to 10:17 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:56 AM to 12:48 PM
HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Rain
Temp: 29°
Humidity: 89%
Sunrise: 5:51 AM
Sunset: 6:53 PM
Updated: July 18, 2024 5:00 PM

Will build irrigation...

Continued from page 1

Ellayya, a farmer from Warangal, promised to bring other farmers to the meeting. Revanth spoke about the loan waiver declaration made by Rahul at the Warangal Arts College Ground and emphasised the fulfilment of the promise. Ellayya expressed joy over the loan waiver and called it a historic event. Revanth asked if Ellayya had attended the declaration meeting in Warangal to which he said yes. Ellayya assured the Chief Minister that he would bring fellow farmers to the thanksgiving meeting held to thank Rahul for the fulfilled promise. Chief Minister

Revanth Reddy stressed the importance of education while interacting with Sitaram, a farmer from the V. Venkatayapalem village of Raghunathapalem mandal in Khammam district. Sitaram shared his relief over the waiver of his Rs 78,000 loan and expressed his gratitude. Revanth encouraged Sitaram to ensure that his children continued their education. Sitaram spoke about his two daughters, one in Intermediate and the other in Class 10. The Chief Minister urged Sitaram to prioritise their education and not to stop it. Sitaram assured the Chief Minister that his daughters would continue their studies.

Ravi, a farmer from Bodhan, expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for the loan waiver during the video conference. Ravi shared his scepticism about government promises due to past experiences but now felt reassured. Ravi, overwhelmed with emotion, thanked the Chief Minister and compared him to YS Rajasekhara Reddy for his support to farmers. Revanth informed Ravi that Rs 225 crore has been allocated for loan waivers in Nizamabad district. In a lighter vein, the Chief Minister asked Ravi if he would treat him to Ankappur chicken to which Ravi cheerfully agreed.

Peddavagu flooded...

Continued from page 1

He asked the Irrigation Department and other authorities to ensure continuous monitoring to avoid mishaps.

He also advised relocating residents from low-lying areas like Narayanapuram to safer locations. Considering the involvement of areas in Andhra Pradesh, Ponguleti assured that he would communicate with the Andhra Pradesh government to tackle any problems caused by the flood in the Peddavagu.

Around 25 persons were trapped in the floodwaters and helicopters were pressed into service to rescue them.

Govt held back...

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"If you examine the false propaganda of the Congress government, even Goebbels would faint. They have not paid Rs 2,000 crore payable as per the Rythu Bandhu scheme during the Yasang season alone and Rs 6,000 crore according to the Rythu Bharosa scheme. There is no mention of Rythu Bharosa for the kharif season. Even if they claim to provide it for 1.3 crore acres, they owe Rs 10,000 crores at Rs 7,500 per acre to farmers," he stated.

"Now, under the guise of loan waiver, they have given Rs 6,000 crore, but they owe Rs 10,000 crore as per the Rythu Bharosa scheme. The Congress government owes Rs 2,500 per month to 1.73 crore women in the last seven months. Around Rs 41,700 crore is required annually for its implementa-

tion," he pointed out. "The government has to pay 40 lakh pensioners and disabled people Rs 2,000 per month for the last seven months. The government has to pay Rs 4,000 per month to 30 lakh unemployed youth. This has not been paid in the last seven months," he pointed out. "There are 6.5 lakh tenant farmers in the state who are owed Rs 15,000 each amounting to Rs 975 crore. The Congress government promised to give Rs 12,000 annually to farmhands. As there are around 52 lakh employment guarantee workers in the state the admin owes Rs 6,240 crore to them," he added. "They have also defaulted on paying a bonus of Rs 500 per quintal for 1.3 crore tonnes of paddy amounting to Rs 6,500 crore, and have not paid the promised bonus even for procured grain," he remarked.

Loan waiver...

Continued from page 1

He said the government has to pay more than Rs 20,000 as Rythu Bharosa funds to farmers in the Rabi and Kharif seasons. However, the government diverted Rythu Bharosa funds to fund the farm loan waiver scheme and is giving the impression that the Congress government did something for farmers. He said that farmers have become defaulters due to the BRS government's foolishness and that the government has the responsibility to make banks give a no dues certificate to farmers by paying all dues owed by farmers who took Rs 2 lakh as loan. He asked the Congress government to prove its sincerity by making banks give new loans to farmers as it assured during elections.

PLEA ON POSTPONEMENT OF DSC

HC adjourns hearing to Aug 28

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Following the protests to defer the District Selection Committee (DSC) exam, 10 unemployed candidates filed a petition in the Telangana High Court to postpone the exam, on Wednesday. A hearing was held in the court on Wednesday on the petition.

Senior Advocate Ravichander advocated for the unemployed stating that as per the notification given by the State government, it gave only four months time for the examination. The DSC notification was given in February. Due to this, the unemployed raised several concerns to postpone the exam.

Group 1 examination was also conducted in a similar manner and confused the candidates. Moreover, the candidates have attempted several exams during the four-month period. Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) was conducted on June 3.

Additional Advocate General Rajinikanth Reddy, who argued on behalf of the government, stated that about 2.45 unemployed people cannot be sacrificed for 10 people. Lakhs of unemployed youth

have prepared for the exams as there are four months for the exam.

During the proceedings, the court asked the petitioners if they had applied for the DSC exam.

The counsel for the petitioners disclosed that they have applied for DSC along with Group 1 as well as DAO. The court objected to the non-submission of DSC hall tickets and asked the petitioners why

not even one of them submitted the DSC hall ticket. It adjourned the further hearing to August 28. But the DSC exams commenced on Thursday and will conclude on August 5.

85% candidates attempt DSC exam, say officials

Amidst ongoing protests and calls for a boycott of the District Selection Committee (DSC) exam, aspirants from across the city attempted the exam on Thursday. The officials stated that the exam was conducted peacefully.

According to the Education department officials, overall, the exams were conducted peacefully across 54 centres in Telangana and no untoward incidents were reported. Around 85 per cent of candidates appeared for exams in the 14 districts of Telangana.

On February 29, the government released the notification for 11,056 teaching posts, including positions for School Assistants, Language Pandits, Physical Education Teachers and SGTs. Despite appeals from candidates to postpone the exams and

increase the number of vacancies, the State government proceeded with the scheduled dates. This year, the DSC exams were conducted in online mode. P Ananth said, "The exam is very easy. I hope my years of hard work will now bear fruit." Sowmya, another aspirant said, "Despite the exam being easy, I have some issues with the online mode as I have never attempted an exam in online mode. I hope I will clear the exam with the good results." Kavya said, "This is my first attempt. I have given my best efforts. I hope I can clear the exam." Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy wished the candidates all the best for the exam via Twitter. He said, "After 2012, it has been happening again. Let your dreams come true through this DSC. To shape

the future citizens of India, into the sacred profession of teaching, may your wish come true. I want it wholeheartedly." The opposition party, BRS members reacted to the CM's tweet by stating, "In 2017, the KCR government filled 8,792 teacher posts in the name of DSC through TSPSC as TRT (Teacher Recruitment Test). Maybe you were busy with litigation land settlement at that time, you don't know." They also released data from the Telangana State Public Service Commission (TSPSC)-TRT that was conducted in 2017. As per the data, out of 8,792 posts - 1,941 were posts for School Assistants for all subjects, 1,011 posts for Language Pandits, 416 posts for PET, 5,415 posts for SGT and nine posts for School Assistants PD.

ASHADA FESTIVITIES

Stage set for Ujjaini Mahankali temple Lashkar Bonalu festival

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ujjaini Mahankali temple is all geared up for Lashkar Bonalu celebrations. Elaborate arrangements are being made ready for the D-day and two-days annual events which would be held on July 21 and 22. The temple has been decked up with floral decorations.

Senior officer of Ujjaini Mahankali temple said, "This year, the Lashkar Bonalu celebration would be held in a grand manner like every year and all the arrangements are made based upon it. This year we are expecting more than 40-lakh devotees for the two-day festival."

In 2023, 35 lakh devotees visited the temple. A special saree would be offered to the deity from Pochampally. A gold Bonam by the temple would be offered to the Goddess. For Ranganam procession for the deity, this year an elephant from the Veera Thapavi Veerabhadra Shiva Charyaru Samasthanam Muth, near Kalaburgi (Gulbarga) Karnataka would be requisitioned.



The State government has sanctioned Rs 16.50 lakh for the festival. The arrangements include installation of CCTV cameras - 25 cameras are installed inside and 20 cameras outside the temple premises; ban on movement of vehicles on RP Road, battery cars for senior citizens; CCTV camera command control room at Mahankali police station and LED screen would be placed at

the strategic points. The temple authorities, GHMC, HMWSSB, HMDA, TSSPDCL and the police department are leaving no stone unturned to make the annual State festival a grand affair. A waterproof shed would be put up at the temple premises to protect the devotees against rain and sun. Toilet facilities for both men and women will be set up by the GHMC.

Pre-launch offer scam by MD busted

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Cyberabad Police Commissionerate has busted a pre-launch offer scam led by Guntupalli Srinivasa Rao, Managing Director of GSR Infra Group Pvt. Ltd. Srinivasa Rao, along with associates, allegedly cheated people by promising residential villas at Kollur village through fake pre-launch offers.

According to the police, the accused released colorful brochures and media advertisements to attract customers by promising to build villas in Kollur village. They offered pre-launch prices, convincing the complainant, Kartheek Motamarri Rao and 31 others to deposit about Rs 60 crore into their accounts. The accused provided unregistered sale agreements, promising to complete the villas in three years or return the money with 24% interest. However, they failed to start construction, claiming legal issues with the land.

The Police advise the public to be cautious of such frauds and avoid committing to property purchases without thorough investigation.

In a first, govt holds meet with Joginis on Ashada Bonalu

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Shailaja Ramaiyer, State Principal Secretary of the Endowments Department, held a special meeting with Joginis at the office of the Endowments department on Thursday. This was the first time the government held such a meeting with the Joginis, who unanimously agreed to fully cooperate with the government's measures.

On the occasion of Ashada Masam Bonalu, Shailaja Ramaiyer appealed to everyone to practice self-restraint during the grand celebration of the Ujjaini Mahankali Jatar in Secunderabad on July 21 and 22. Authorities stressed the importance of maintaining law and order and informed the Joginis that only five persons, including Joginis and Shivshaktis, would be permitted.

Additional CP Vikramsingh Mann, North Zone DCP Rashmi Perumal, State



Endowments Department Commissioner M Hanumanth Rao and Hyderabad District Collector Anudeep Durishetty attended the meeting. They requested the Joginis and Shivshaktis bringing Bonams for the festival to arrive at the Bata Chowrasta from 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm.

They praised the role of Joginis in the Bonalu Jatar, which has given Telangana a unique recognition. They also announced that eatery push-

carts would be closed at midnight. To ensure a grand celebration of the Mahankali Jatar, robust security, drinking water facilities, and queue lines have been arranged.

Joginis Shyamala, Vaishnavi, Radhika, Vennela, Visakha, Shruti, Kranti, and others spoke at the meeting, expressing their gratitude for the opportunity and agreeing to cooperate with the government.

Cyber criminals target loan waiver scheme beneficiaries

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Cyber criminals targeted farmers of Telangana now. Cyber criminals targeted the Loan Waiver Scheme beneficiaries as the government is depositing Rs 7,000 crore in the accounts of farmers.

Cyber criminals have been sending messages in the name of banks and links in the name of bank profiles to WhatsApp groups by targeting the farmers who benefited from the loan waiver scheme on Thursday.

The Cyber criminals are sending messages in the form of APK Files to farmers asking them to check whether the loan waiver scheme money is deposited or not?

They are also sending links asking the farmers to check loan waiver scheme money deposited in their bank account or not by opening the link. However, the Cyber

Security Bureau has given a call to the farmers to be alert in this regard.

On the other hand, some cyber criminals are sending some amount through Google Pay and PhonePe to the loan waiver scheme beneficiaries and sending messages asking the farmers to open the link for the remaining loan waiver scheme amount. The Cyber Security Bureau appealed to the farmers not to respond to such messages. Not to open such links in hurry and suggested the farmers

to enquire while making a phone call to the banks to know whether the money is deposited in their accounts or not or to go to the bank directly to know the details.

The Cyber Security Bureau suggested the farmers make a call to 1930 immediately if anyone loses money mistakenly due to cyber criminals acts.



Special cover on TG's 3rd century CE on Buddhist tradition unveiled

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Dr PVS Reddy, Chief Postmaster General, Telangana Circle, on Thursday released a postal special cover on 'Telangana's 3rd Century CE Phanigiri Thorana depicting 'Dhamma Chackka Pavattana Sutta - Ashadha Purnima 2024' at Dak Sadan, Abids, Hyderabad.

Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta - Ashadha Purnima is regarded by Buddhist tradition as the first teaching of the Buddha at the age of 35 to a group of five monks in the deer park, near Samath, Varanasi, UP. The teaching was given by the Buddha on Ashada Purnima, two months after his full awakening on Vaisakha Purnima in Bodhgaya.

The teaching came to be called as Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta as it involved the turning of the wheel of truth aimed at ending the cycle of samsara. It marked the beginning of the 45 year old teaching career of the Buddha Dhamma and the establish-



ment of the first Sangha under Buddha's dispensation. The Phanigiri Thorana depicts Buddha, along with human and divine audience, referred to in the Dhamma Chakka Pavattana Sutta. The Sutta encapsulates the essence of Buddha's full awakening and has played a significant part in the spread of Buddha's core teaching of four noble truths, the eightfold path and the middle way in Telangana and South India way back in 3rd Century CE.

The special cancellation comprises two deers symbolising deer park, Samath and the wheel in the middle represent-

ing the Majjima Patipada explained by the Buddha more than 25 centuries back. Telangana Postal Circle issues the special cover to highlight over 1700-year old rich cultural heritage of Telangana on Dhamma Chakka Pavattana Sutta coinciding with the Ashada Purnima 2024 falling on July 21, 2024. The special postal cover with special cancellation is priced at Rs 25 and without cancellation is priced at Rs 20, along with an information brochure and will be available for sale at all the philatelic bureaus (all Head Post Offices) and online @ epost office.gov.in.

Over 3 lakh street dogs in city; HC asks how sterilisation helps

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government informed the High Court on Thursday about the stray dog problem after a dog attack resulted in the death of a one-and-a-half-year-old boy in Jawahar Nagar.

During the investigation, the High Court asked what measures are being taken to prevent dog attacks. The Advocate General stated that there are over 3 lakh street dogs in the city.

In response, the government said it has formed State-level committees to prevent dog attacks and established six dog sterilisation centres in the city, sterilising about 200 dogs per day at each centre. The High Court questioned



how sterilisation helps reduce dog attacks. A lawyer representing Animal Welfare suggested that the problem would be solved if the dogs were moved to shelter homes, referring that around 90,000 dogs were placed in shelter homes in Nagpur. After considering the lawyer's suggestions, the High Court adjourned the hearing for two weeks.

Regularisation of ANMs under NHM demanded

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) on Thursday demanded regularisation of the Auxiliary nurses and Midwives (ANM) under the National Health Mission (NHM).

Members of the AITUC protested in front of the NHM Commissioner's office. AITUC State deputy general secretary M Narasimha said, "AITUC will continue to fight until the second ANMs who have been working in the National Health Mission for the past 17 years are made regular."

Protesting ANMS demanded regularisation of second ANMs as a condition, to fulfill the previous promises made by the government, to release the PRC dues immediately, to merge the apps and reduce the work pressure.



Narasimha further said, "The regularisation issue was raised several times during the previous government. During the protest last year, Congress leaders visited us and assured that the ANMs would be regularised under the Congress government."

The deputy general secretary further said, "After the Congress came to power, we met MLAs, MPs and gave a

representation to the Chief Minister at the Praja Bhavan. However, no action has been taken yet."

State honorary president of the Second ANM Union Thota Ramanjaneyulu said, "The government had appointed a committee during the strike last year, but the committee has not held a meeting so far. A lifetime gratuity of Rs 5 lakh should be provided at the time of retirement to all those who are above 53 years of age who do not have the opportunity to write the exam. ANMs working in UPHC are facing high work pressure."

He further demanded an additional Rs 10,000 to the sub-centre where one ANM is working in PHCs and UPSCs. On this occasion, he asked the government to provide health insurance of Rs 10 lakh and life insurance of Rs 10 lakh.

Call to expedite process of civil works tenders

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Amrapali Kata on Thursday directed the engineering officials concerned to expedite the process of various civil works tenders undertaken under Jubilee Hills Circle after inspecting the Lotus Pond, Pathway and Park at Magnolia Bakery.

The Commissioner advised the officials concerned to remove the sewerage connections in the Lotus Pond and install a mesh to prevent storm water and floating material from entering the canals. Damaged pathways should be repaired immediately. The concerned engineering officers were advised to complete the process of civil work tenders related to undertaking road and sewerage works.

Identify mosquito-breeding hot spots: GHMC Chief

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Commissioner Amrapali Kata has instructed authorities to identify mosquito-breeding hot spots in the city and take measures to prevent mosquitoes reproduction.

In a teleconference with the Zonal Commissioner, Additional Commissioner UCD, Health, Chief Entomology, and Call Centre OSD on Thursday, she emphasised the importance of identifying and addressing these areas. Amrapali highlighted that as part of dengue-prevention efforts, awareness programmes in schools and colleges should be completed quickly. Special focus should be placed on slums, construction sites, dormitories and open spaces,

ensuring that workers in these areas take preventive measures against mosquitoes.

She advised the Additional Commissioner of Sanitation to recognise and reward effective garbage collection on a circle and zone basis as recommended by swachh auto drivers. Action should be taken against

swachh auto drivers with poor attendance, and appropriate measures should be taken if an auto owner who has completed their EMI fails to attend and collect garbage properly.

In cases where EMI is incomplete and attendance is irregular, interested unemployed persons should be considered for allotment.

The Commissioner also urged to speed up the process of identification of families who do not dispose of garbage in swachh autos.

Body of deceased returned to wife without post-mortem

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Gandhi Hospital on Thursday returned the body of a deceased to his wife without a post-mortem based on the directions of Health Minister Damodar Rajanarasimha to the Superintendent.

The Minister ordered that Sambasiva Rao's body in the mortuary should be handed over to his wife without a post-mortem. Sambasiva Rao was found dead under the limits of Gandhi Hospital Metro station. His body was shifted to the hospital's mortuary and was kept there as an unidentified body.

Affordable Art India set to debut in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Renowned product-designer Srila Chatterjee's Affordable Art India is set to debut in Hyderabad, offering a diverse variety of art from across the country.

The debut is open to all and will take place from August 2 to 4, 2024, from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm at the Crafts Council of Telangana, 2nd Floor, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad.

According to Srila Chatterjee, Affordable Art India will feature a broad spectrum of artistic expressions, from modern contemporary pieces to traditional vintage



works. Visitors can look forward to Anita Alvares captivating illustrations and urban sketches, Ashish Malakar's stunning Sholapith sculptures, ornamentation and indoor lampshades. Additionally, Banoo Batliboi's unique paper art crafted from old books and

Dolon Kudu's masterfully shaped clay pieces, earning her the title "pinch potter," will be showcased. Artist Zainab Tambawala will present a special collection of watercolor artworks that beautifully capture the essence of Hyderabad. Gitanjali Das, a

rare female artist in Oriya Pattachitra, paints on silk fabric and palm leaves, depicting stories of gods, goddesses, forests and nature in exquisitely intricate detail.

The curator Srila Chatterjee, said, "We believe that art should be accessible to everyone. By showcasing a diverse range of styles, we hope to create an inclusive environment where art lovers and newcomers alike can find something that resonates with them."

She also said, "This event offers a rare opportunity to discover and acquire original artworks."

Admissions for MTech courses from July 26

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The University of Hyderabad (UoH) announced on Thursday that it will conduct spot round admissions for MTech courses from among the GATE qualified candidates on July 26.

Interested candidates may report on July 26, 2024 (Friday) at 9:30 am in CE's office Conference Hall, Admin. Building, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad-500 046.

In regards to vacancies in MTech courses, 17 seats belong to Bioinformatics, 18 seats to Materials Engineering, 18 seats to Nano Science and Technology, 18 seats to Manufacturing Science and Engineering, 15 seats to Integrated Circuits Technology and three seats to Microelectronics and VLSI Design.

The officials stated that candidates are instructed to bring the original certificates and copies of all the certi-

icates - 10th certificate, 12th certificate, BTech/ M.S/ BE/other qualifying degree grade sheet or provisional degree or original degree and valid GATE score card.

All those who are offered a seat will be required to pay the fee on the spot to secure admission.

For more details, especially on course details or prospectus, candidates are requested to visit the official website <http://acad.uohyd.ac.in>.

No State waives crop loans involving Rs 31,000 crore, says Komatireddy

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that no State government in the country has so far waived farm loans to the tune of Rs 31,000 crore in one go.

In the wake of the state government's order to waive crop loans up to Rs 2 lakh, the first installment of funds to waive loans up to Rs 1 lakh was released on Thursday.

Celebrations were held at all Rythu Vedikas across the district. Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy was the chief guest at the celebrations held MNR function in Nalgonda.

Earlier in the day, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy interacted with farmers from different parts of the State. The Chief Minister also spoke to



Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy leading a procession of farmers in Nalgonda on Thursday on the occasion of Telangana government waiving crop loans

Raju, a farmer from Tipparthi mandal in Nalgonda district, on loan waiver

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Venkat Reddy said that as part of the state govern-

ment's loan waiver, a rally was taken out for distance of 5 km from Nalgonda. He said that 78,757 families out of 83,121 farmers' were benefited in the first instalment in the district.

A total of Rs. 481.63 crore was allotted to Nalgonda district. If any farmer found that his account did not reflect the credited amount, the Minister advised the farmers to get in touch with the District Collector. He assured the farmers that their crop loans up to Rs lakh would be waived by August 15.

District Collector C Narayana Reddy said that as part of the crop loan waiver announced by the state government, all farmers with loans up to Rs 1 lakh were benefited.

Additional Collector J Srinivas, Municipal Chairman Burri Srinivas Reddy, former ZPTC, Market Committee Chairman, other public representatives, District Agriculture Officer Sravan, Agriculture officials and others attended the programme.

CS directs officials to be vigilant in wake of floods in Bhadrachalam

Chief Secretary Santi reviews flood situation via Teleconference on Thursday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Officials have been directed to remain vigilant amidst wide-spread rains in the state.

Chief Secretary Santi Kumari reviewed flood situation in Pedda Vagu via teleconference. In response to the significant flood in the Pedda Vagu of Bhadrachalam district's Aswaroepeta, Chief Secretary Shanti Kumari held a teleconference this evening with the Bhadrachalam District Collector, Superintendent of Police, and senior officials from the Irrigation Department to review the relief and rehabilitation measures.

Director General of Police Jitender, Director General of Disaster Management, and Irrigation Department Secretary Rahul Bojja also participated in the teleconference.

Santi Kumari emphasised that the Chief Minister has issued clear instructions to avoid any loss of life. Due to the lifting of three gates of Pedda Vagu, floodwaters entered four nearby villages, trapping 28 farmers in agricultural fields.

Revenue and Disaster Management teams promptly deployed and rescued the trapped individuals with the



assistance of two helicopters, relocating them to safe areas, according to the District

Collector. The process to evacuate another 20 people to safe areas is ongoing. NDRF and state rescue teams are currently engaged in relief and rehabilitation activities. District Collector Jitesh mentioned that the evacuation of residents from Gummadivelli, Koyagudem, Kothuru, and Gajulapalli villages to relief camps is in progress. Shanti Kumari reiterated the priority of ensuring the safety of lives and assured that necessary assistance from Hyderabad is available.

She also instructed district authorities to take preventive measures to prevent breaches in nearby tanks and ponds.

DGP Jitender stated that the police force has been instructed to assist in the relief efforts. Rahul Bojja of the Irrigation Department explained that the gates had to be lifted due to a sudden inflow of 40,000 cusecs of floodwater, although the situation has since improved. Senior officials, including the CE, are en route to the affected area.

CPI-ML Mass line leader commits suicide

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

CPI-ML Mass Line leader Rayala Chandrashekhar committed suicide by jumping in front a running train here on Thursday.

His body was found on the railway track at Danavaigudem near here on Wednesday late night. His friends believe that family disputes and issues in the party could have compelled him to end his life.

He used to take part in left wing politics since his school days. He worked in PDSU and went underground after joining CPI-ML in 1975.

Chandrashekhar played a key role in the emergence of CPI-ML in Khammam district.

Two arrested in murder of woman in RR district

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

The Keshampet Police have arrested two persons in connection with the murder of a 45-year-old woman, identified as Venkatapuram Parvathamma. Her decomposed and maggot-ridden body was discovered on the outskirts of Vemula Narva Village on July 16.

The suspects were apprehended at the Ippalappally Bus Station on Thursday and various items, including gold and silver ornaments, a two-wheeler, three cell phones, and Rs 1,96,800, were seized from them, the police said.

The victim, Parvathamma, a resident of Bodhanampally Village, was found dead near Nambaiha Gutta. Initial investigations revealed that she had been strangled by towel and struck with a granite stone.

Her murder was committed for the theft of her gold and silver ornaments.

Using technological tools and thorough investigative methods, the police identified and arrested the suspects. The arrested are Kundella Anjamma, 48, and Pebbe Yadaiah, 50. The suspects had become acquainted with the victim three months prior, during a visit to her village for a street drama performance. This acquaintance developed into an illegal relationship between Parvathamma and Yadaiah. Noticing the victim's newly acquired gold and silver ornaments, the suspects planned her murder.

On July 12, the suspects lured Parvathamma to a party near the Venu Gopala Swamy Temple at Nambaiha Gutta. After she drank alcohol, the suspects strangled her to

death by towel. They then stole her ornaments and fled the scene on a motorcycle.

Her arrests were made under the supervision of the Commissioner of Police, Cyberabad, Avinash Mohanthy, with guidance from Deputy Commissioner of Police, Shamsabad Zone, Rajesh, and ACP, Shadnagar Division, N. Ch. Ranga Swamy. The operation was led by CI of Police, Shadnagar Rural, B. Satyanarayana, SI Keshampet, T. Raj Kumar, SI Kondurg, Krishnaiah, and their team, including Head Constables Bikshapathy and Venugopal, and PCs Shiva Kumar, Ashok Kumar Reddy, Srinivas, Mallesh, and Bheemraju.

The swift resolution of the case within 36 hours earned commendations and rewards for the officers who investigated the case.

Malabar Jewellery to invest Rs 750 crore in Maheswaram Production Centre: Sridhar Babu

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Information Technology and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu revealed that the gold and diamond jewelry manufacturing unit established by Malabar in Maheswaram is the largest in the country. The minister stated that Malabar has already invested Rs 183 crores in the first phase of the production center, with a total planned investment of Rs 750 crores over three years.

On Thursday, representatives from

the Malabar Group met with Sridhar Babu at the Secretariat. The Minister announced that by the end of the year, the manufacturing unit would commence operations with 1,500 employees, providing indirect employment to another 1,250 individuals.

Sridhar Babu urged Malabar, a company with a rich history in the jewelry sector, to support local goldsmiths by introducing them to new designs. He appreciated Malabar Chairman MP Ahammed for selecting 120 women to train in jewelry making at the

Maheswaram unit. He also suggested setting up a full-fledged training centre to train rural youth in jewelry manufacturing and marketing. The minister directed officials to establish a special freshwater pipeline for the Maheswaram unit and complete all infrastructure-related works within a month.

The meeting was attended by Malabar Group Chairman Ahammed, along with representatives K.P. Abdul Salam, A.K. Nishad, Ilangovan, Nandakumar, and Shafeeq.

Advantage Congress in defection battle

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

The ruling Congress is in an advantageous position regarding the defection of BRS MLAs.

Ten BRS MLAs have joined the Congress so far. These MLAs joined separately. As per the Anti-Defection Act these 10 MLAs have to be disqualified.

But no ruling party anywhere in India is bothered about enforcing the Anti-Defection Act. The BRS did the same when it was in power. The BRS is now making all-out efforts to prevent the defection of its MLAs.

The BRS has filed a complaint with the Assembly Speaker requesting to disqualify the 10 BRS MLAs who joined the Congress going against rules specified in the Anti-Defection Act.

If two-thirds of MLAs of a party decide to join another party they will not face action under the Anti-Defection Act. The BRS won 39 Assembly seats in the 2023 elections. One MLA died and in the by-election the Congress won the seat.

Now, the number of BRS MLAs has come down to 38. If 25 MLAs among the 38 pass a resolution to merge with the

Congress Legislature party (CLP) then the Anti-Defection Act will not become applicable to them.

So far 10 BRS MLAs have joined the Congress and that to escape the Anti-Defection Act 15 more BRS MLAs have to defect.

BRS leaders say that only one or two MLAs more may join the Congress and that another 15 MLAs defecting is not possible. Keeping this in view the BRS has complained to the Assembly Speaker to disqualify them. The BRS also went to court regarding the disqualification of its MLAs who defected. If the Speaker or the

court disqualifies these MLAs as requested by BRS there is nothing to lose for the Congress. If these MLAs are disqualified, by-elections will have to be held for these 10 seats.

In the present political circumstances it is not possible for the BRS to retain all these 10 seats. If the Congress wins even one seat it will score a political point over the BRS.

The BRS fared badly in the Assembly and LS elections. If by-elections are held the same thing can happen again and it may not prevent defections by BRS MLAs. In that case the BRS will face deep trouble.

Ensure 45,882 farmers receive loan waiver benefit: Collector

PNS ■ MEDAK

Collector Rahul Raj has asked the bankers and Agriculture Department officials to ensure that 45,882 beneficiaries of the loan waiver scheme receive Rs 241.82 crore waived by the government and directed them to work in coordination.

In the first phase, 1.52 lakh farmers of undivided Medak district - 47,978 farmers belonging to Medak district, 53,128 belonging to Siddipet district and 51,164 belonging to Sangareddy district

were benefited by the first phase of Rs 1 lakh waiver implemented by the state government.

He was reviewing the implementation of the scheme with bank controllers and bank manager and enquired them about the



details of the beneficiaries bank wise and primary agricultural cooperative society wise.

He wanted the lead bank manager to prepare the list of the beneficiaries of the loan waiver first phase with the full list of the beneficiaries. He asked the bankers to furnish detailed information to the lead bank manager. All loans obtained during

December 12, 2018 and December 9, 2023 will be benefited.

A grievance cells should be set up in each mandal headquarters town with bankers and Agricultural officials, he said.

The government is going to waive the loan availed by farmers in the PACS too, he said asking the bankers to furnish him daily report on the use of the loan waiver amount and the total number of failed transactions.

A senior official in the Agricultural Department should monitor the process, he said.

District Agriculture Department Official Govind, LDM Narasimha Murthy, bank controllers, bank managers, coordinators and others took part in the event.

No-confidence motion passed against vice-chairman

PNS ■ ADILABAD

Bharat Rashtia Samithi (BRS) on Thursday successfully moved no-confidence motion against Adilabad Municipal vice chairman Zaheer Ramzani. The BRS moved the non-trust motion against the vice-chairman after he crossed over to the Congress party. While 25 councilors of the BRS and nine from BJP voted in favor of the motion, councilors belonging to the Congress and AIMIM did not participate in the voting held in a special meeting chaired by Revenue Divisional Officer Vinod Kumar. Adilabad municipal council has a total of 49 councilors.

TG CID nabs man involved in Rs 1L theft after 14 years

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana CID on Thursday arrested a man accused of Rs 1,00,000 fraud after 14 years.

The accused was identified as Pappu Patel, a native of Mumbai.

The incident occurred in 2010; complainant Sangala Prabhakar, a native of Warangal stated that he was an account holder in the ICICI Bank. On May 31, 2010, he Prabhakar received an email from the bank asking him to update account details.

On June 2, the victim learnt that Rs 1 lakh was transferred from his account to the accused's account in Mumbai.

Based on the complaint, a case was registered by the cyber-crimes department of the CID against five persons. Patel was absconding and was booked under Sections 66 (C and D) of the IT Act and 420 of the IPC.

Based on the orders of CID Additional Director General of Police Shikha Goel, the CID team nabbed Patel on July 16 from Dharavi police station limits.

The accused was sent to judicial custody on July 17.

CM to open Kamma Global Summit in city tomorrow

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Drawing attention to the idea that the world has become a global village, the Kamma Global Federation, an internationally registered and trademarked organisation is hosting the Kamma Global Summit in the city. The summit invites all Kamma members from across the globe to participate. Over 12 decisions will be finalised for the uplift of poorer Kamma communities and to raise awareness on the role and initiatives of Kammans in society.

Addressing the media at the Press Club on Thursday, founder president of Kamma Global Federation, Jetty Kusuma Kumar, announced that the Global Summit will be conducted on July 20 and 21 at the HICC Novotel, with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, inaugurating the summit in the morning. He said,

"This summit is planned to create a world stage for like-minded people with the objective to tell the world what the

Kamma community has done for society, along with uplifting the poor and doing good for other communities in need."

Kusuma Kumar added that various sessions will be conducted over these two days, with over 300 industrialists attending from around 23 countries and delegates from Telangana, Andhra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, totaling over 1,500 where the limit has been extended to 2,000 due to huge response from across the globe.

behaving in a highly inappropriate manner with the citizens. I hope you conduct sensitisation classes to change the behaviour of the policemen who are in direct contact with citizens," read the post.

Following the complaint, the Telangana Police initiated action against the sub-inspector and transferred him to Cyberabad police headquarters.

Action against traffic SI for assaulting truck driver

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Police on Thursday launched an investigation against a sub-inspector for assaulting and abusing a truck driver at Gandhi Maisamma, Quthbullapur.

Action was initiated against the sub-inspector after Bharat Rashtia Samithi (BRS) working president KT Rama Rao raised the issue on X and pointed out that inci-

dents of police high-handedness were increasing in the State.

"What absolute garbage language is this @TelanganaDGP ? Is this acceptable behaviour? Please remember that it is the citizens who pay the salaries of the policemen & officials. My tweet is not just about one incident but have been watching several videos in social media where cops are

behaving in a highly inappropriate manner with the citizens. I hope you conduct sensitisation classes to change the behaviour of the policemen who are in direct contact with citizens," read the post.

Following the complaint, the Telangana Police initiated action against the sub-inspector and transferred him to Cyberabad police headquarters.

Lifer for financier in dowry murder case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

LB Nagar II Additional District Judge (ADJ) Court on Thursday awarded life imprisonment, along with a fine of Rs 1,000 to a chief financier for committing a murder in 2017.

According to the police officials, Muhammad Nasiruddin, chief financier, harassed and murdered his wife for dowry within the limits of Pahadi Shareef police station. A case was registered under U/S 498(A), 302 IPC, SC NO 779/2017.

Podcast offering insights for parents launched

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Narayana Educational Institutions launched a podcast, Guidecast, on Thursday to address topics like mental and physical health to help parents strengthen relationships with their children. The first season is focused on mental well-being, offering guidance and support for students facing challenges.

The institution also conducted a Disha programme to support students' mental and

emotional well-being, recognising that academic success is just one aspect of development. With over 100 psychologists, Disha reaches 283 schools and 279 colleges, conducting 3,500 group interactions annually. Last year, they supported over 300,000 students, with 15,000 receiving individual support, showcasing the institution's commitment to holistic student development.

Dr P Sindhura, Director at Narayana Educational Institutions.

Traffic safety awareness meet for school kids

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Assistant Commissioner of Traffic G Shankar Raju on Thursday conducted an awareness programme on traffic safety for school children. Addressing the students from Government High School, Risalabazar, Bollaram, Shankar Raju said, "Children should be made aware of traffic rules from childhood, and that road safety and rules should also be included in their curriculum."

INDIA CORNER

Indian crew member of capsized oil tanker dies: Officials

An Indian crew member of a Comoros-flagged oil tanker that capsized off the Oman coast has died, officials said on Thursday. Last night, the Indian Navy said eight Indians and a Sri Lankan national were rescued by Indian warship INS Teg while carrying out a rescue operation to trace the crew members of the cargo ship. The vessel had capsized about 25 nautical miles southeast of Ras Madrakah in Oman on July 15 and search and rescue efforts are underway, the officials said. Minister of state for external affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh said the body of the Indian has been retrieved. The tanker MT Falcon Prestige has a 16-member crew including 13 Indians and three Sri Lankans, according to Oman's Maritime Security Centre (MSC). "Spoke to our Ambassador in Oman, Amit Narang, to get an update on the capsized vessel MV Prestige Falcon."



BJP MPs getting houses of poor demolished: AAP

AAP on Thursday alleged the BJP MPs are making the poor homeless by getting their houses demolished through the departments under them. Addressing a press conference, AAP leader and MLA Durgesh Pathak said houses were "demolished illegally" in Civil Lines, and the people living there since independence were made "homeless". "Now the railways has given a notice to demolish the slums of Brar Square on July 22, the BJP MP from New Delhi Bansuri Swaraj has not gone there to meet the people," he said. Hitting back, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that the Aam Aadmi Party and its leaders now understand well that Delhi residents, especially the economically weaker sections living in unauthorised colonies, slums, and rehabilitation settlements, have decided to reject AAP and will choose BJP and development in the January 2025 Assembly elections.



Delhi HC seeks Centre stand on woman's plea seeking LPG subsidy

The Delhi High Court Thursday sought the Centre's stand on a petition by a woman, a ration card holder belonging to "extremely poor" background, against non-grant of LPG subsidy to her under the Ujjwala Yojana because she already had a prior gas connection. Justice Sanjeev Narula issued a notice and asked the government to file its response to the petition which asserted that the subsidy should be extended to her as well. According to the petitioner, in spite of fulfilling the requisite criteria, she cannot get enrolled and become a beneficiary of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) which mandates that the scheme would only apply to those without a gas connection. "Discrimination between two categories of people i.e. PMUY beneficiaries viz-a-viz non-PMUY beneficiaries for the purpose of grant of subsidy is discriminatory, arbitrary and in violation of Article 14 of the Constitution of India," the petition said.



Quota bill in next Cabinet meet to clear doubts: K'taka CM

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said his government has decided to withhold the bill mandating job reservation for Kannadigas in private sector due to "certain confusion." He said the bill will be taken up for discussion in the next cabinet meeting to clear the doubts. "On Monday, complete discussion (on the topic) could not take place in the cabinet meeting. By then reports had appeared in the media," he told the Karnataka assembly. "There was some confusion. We will clear those confusions in the next cabinet meeting. Let's have a detailed discussion." The CM was replying to Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka's demand to clarify the state government's stand on the bill.



He said the Chief Minister changed his message on 'X' thrice. Ashoka recalled that Siddaramaiah in his first post said that the cabinet has decided 100 per cent reservation for Kannadigas in the private sector and then deleted it. The Chief Minister then posted another message saying that there will be 50 per cent reservation in the management category and 70 per cent

in non-management category for Kannadigas. "Finally, you announced putting the bill on hold. There appears to be a Tughlaq government in Karnataka," he said. In his reply, the Chief Minister said, "There is no Tughlaq government, but Siddaramaiah government. We will take up the bill in the next cabinet meeting." The state cabinet had on Monday cleared the Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates in the Industries, Factories and Other Establishments Bill, 2024, which makes it compulsory for private firms to reserve jobs for Kannadigas. "Any industry, factory or other establishments shall appoint fifty per cent of local candidates in management categories and seventy per cent in non-management categories," the bill read.

'Infosys to comply with regulations'

Infosys will comply with whatever regulations and guidelines Karnataka comes up with, a top company official said on Thursday on the proposed reservations for locals in private firms in the state. Infosys employs over 3.15 lakh people at present across the globe. "We are planning to work with all the regulations of the state and central governments. We will work on, we support whatever regulations and guidelines will come. We'll wait and see what they look like as time develops, but our approach in general is to make sure we are aligned to the new laws and regulations that come out," Infosys CEO Salil Parekh said.

Remarks inciting violence often used against PM Modi: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday accused the Opposition of often using remarks, which incite violence, against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said words like 'maut' and 'hinsa' should not be used in speeches to target political rivals. Information and Broad casting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the Opposition should maintain decorum and seriousness in its political discourse as the use of such inciteful words have a psychological impact in society, promoting violence and raising unnecessary tensions. "The choice of words is very important. The kind of comments used by the Opposition for PM is a matter of grave concern," he said. The minister and BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi cited a write-up of a former IPS officer to highlight that rhetoric used for short-term political benefits at times incites violence.

VIOLENT PROTESTS

India asks its citizens in Bangladesh to avoid travel

PNS ■ DHAKA

India on Thursday advised its citizens residing in Bangladesh to avoid travel and minimise their movement after ongoing protests demanding reforms in the quota system in government jobs turned violent and left at least six people dead across the country. The violence prompted the government to close all public and private universities along-side schools and colleges across Bangladesh for an indefinite period on late Tuesday asking residential students to leave dormitories. "In view of the ongoing situation in Bangladesh, the Indian community members and members of the Indian students residing in Bangladesh are advised to avoid travel and minimise their movement outside their living premises," the Indian High Commission here



said in a statement. The mission also provided multiple 24-hour Emergency numbers for any assistance. There were approximately 7,000 Indians in Bangladesh, according to the high commission's website. The clashes erupted on Monday as activists of ruling Awami League's student front confronted the protestors who insist the existing quota system was largely debarring the enrolment of meritorious students in government services. Demonstrators accused the ruling party's student wing, Bangladesh Chhatra League of attacking their "peaceful protests" with backing from police. Student protesters have decided to enforce a complete nationwide shutdown on Thursday.

SC attains full strength as 2 judges take oath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir High Court, Justice N Kottiswar Singh on Thursday took oath of office and became the first judge to have been elevated to the Supreme Court from Manipur. Acting Chief Justice of Madras High Court R Mahadevan was also sworn in as judge of the apex court. Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud administered the oath of office to both judges at a function in the apex court premises here. With the swearing-in, the top court has attained its full strength of 34 judges, including the Chief Justice of India. The Supreme Court will function with 34 judges until Justice Hima Kohli retires on September 1, 2024, followed by CJI Chandrachud, who superannuates on November 10 this year. Two posts have fallen vacant after the retirement of Justice AS Bopanna and Aniruddha Bose. The Centre has cleared the recommendation of the Supreme Court collegium on July 16. On July 11, the five-member

collegium presided over by the CJI had recommended to the Centre the names of Singh and Mahadevan for elevation to the apex court. "His appointment as a judge of the Supreme Court will provide representation to the North-East, and in particular he will be the first judge from the state of Manipur to be appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court," the SC Collegium said on July 11 while recommending Justice Singh's name along with that of Justice Mahadevan. Justice Singh was appointed as a judge of the Gauhati High Court in October 2011. Following the formation of the Manipur High Court, he was transferred there. In February 2023, he was appointed as chief justice of the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court and will demit office in February 2028 on attaining the age of 65 years. While recommending Justice Mahadevan's name for elevation, the collegium had noted that he belongs to a backward community from Tamil Nadu and his appointment will bring diversity to the (SC) Bench.



EC allows Shiv Sena (UBT) to accept public contributions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Thursday authorised the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) to accept voluntary contributions from public, days after it accepted a similar demand of NCP-Sharad Pawar. In a communication issued on Thursday, the poll authority authorised the party to "accept any amount of contribution voluntarily offered to it by any person or company other than a government company" as per provisions of the Representation of the People Act which governs the contribution to all political parties. The party had requested the Commission to issue a communication or certificate recording the status of the party for the purpose of accepting voluntary contributions from public. A delegation of Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) led by its general secretary Subhash Desai also met the Commission here Thursday. Earlier, it had allowed the NCP-Sharad Pawar to accept public contributions. In February last year, the Election Commission had recognised the Eknath Shinde-led faction as the real Shiv Sena and ordered allocation of the "bow and arrow".

No end to human ambition, people should work for mankind: RSS

PNS ■ GUMLA (JHARKHAND)

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday asserted that people should work relentlessly for the welfare of mankind, since there is no end to the pursuit of development and human ambition. In the course of self-development, a man may want to become 'superman', then 'Devta' and 'Bhagwan' and aspire for 'vishwaroop', but nobody is certain what lies ahead, Bhagwat said. Addressing a village-level workers meeting, organised by a non-profit organisation Vikas Bharti here, he also said that

some people, despite being human, lacked human qualities and they should inculcate it first. "After achieving human qualities, man aspires to become superman with supernatural powers and then attain the status of 'Devta' and 'Bhagwan'. He then aspires for vishwaroop (the supreme power's all-pervading form). What is beyond that, no one is certain," Bhagwat said. There is no end to the development of the inner and outer self and one should work relentlessly for humanity, he said adding that a worker should never be satisfied with his or her work, he said. "Work should continue, one

should strive to work constantly in areas of environment, education and health...There is no end to it and constant work in different areas is the only solution...We should strive to make this world a beautiful place as is the nature of India," the RSS chief said. He said the nature of India is imbued from fields and jungles and 'Sanatan Dharma' came from it. "The Sanatan Sanskriti and Dharma did not come from royal palaces but from Ashrams and forests. With changing times, our clothes may change but our nature will never change," said the RSS head.

NGT suggests steps to prevent throwing of offerings in Ganga, Yamuna

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To prevent the throwing of religious offerings in rivers Ganga and Yamuna, the National Green Tribunal has suggested additional steps, including developing dedicated places for holding ceremonies, rituals and immersion of idols. The tribunal also directed the district magistrates of Garhmukteshwar, Kanpur, Bithur, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Agra and Mathura to mark and monitor the spots, which were prone to throwing or immersion of such offerings. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) was hearing a matter where it had taken suo motu (on its own) cognisance of a newspaper report regarding the throwing of worship offerings of flowers and garlands, which were packed in polythene bags in rivers Yamuna and Ganga. In a recent order, a bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava said the problem of pollution because of throwing worship materials

and garlands had persisted despite the tribunal's earlier directions and various decisions of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) and the high-level committee formed to deal with Yamuna pollution. The bench also comprising judicial member Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi and expert member A Senthil Vel noted the DPCC's report dated June 26, according to which, by May 31 this year, the committee had issued 3,916 challans for dumping of construction waste and illegal parking on Yamuna floodplain and around Rs 1.06 was recovered as fine. It said that some additional steps could be taken for proper implementation of the tribunal's earlier orders to prevent pollution in rivers Yamuna and Ganga. These included the installation of display boards mentioning not to throw religious offerings and about the imposition of fines for violating the direction.



Naxalism issue will be resolved in 3 years: Chhattisgarh Dy CM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma on Thursday said the Naxalism issue will be resolved within three years in the resource-rich state. Addressing an event here, Sharma said the Vishnu Deo Sai-led BJP government will also implement the Uniform Civil Code in the state. He said the state government favours dialogue with Naxalites and aims to bring them into the mainstream.

"I believe the Naxalism issue will be resolved in three years. You will be able to sit peacefully on the banks of the Indravati in three years time. This is possible due to the strong leadership of Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai," Sharma said. On Wednesday night, two personnel of the Special Task Force (STF) were killed and four others injured after Naxalites detonated an improvised explosive device (IED) in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district.

Sharma said Naxalism cannot be ended with gun power. "We are working on several aspects and taking a comprehensive approach. We are ready for unconditional talks with Naxalites. There should be dialogue. We can even talk on the phone or via video call. I have even issued Google forms for feedback," he added. Sharma further said the state government will completely "eradicate" the foreign powers intervening in the state's internal affairs.

Irregular sleep for a week can lead to diabetes risk

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Weeklong irregular sleep can increase the risk of type 2 diabetes in middle-aged and older people by 34 per cent, a new study has found. Even as researchers acknowledged assessing sleep duration over seven days may not capture long-term sleep patterns, they said changing this lifestyle factor can help lower the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. According to the study published in the journal Diabetes Care, the link was "more pronounced" among those sleeping for longer durations and having a lower genetic risk of diabetes. "Our findings underscore

the importance of consistent sleep patterns as a strategy to reduce type 2 diabetes," Sina Kianersi, a research fellow at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in the US and lead author of the study, said. The researchers followed more than 84,000 participants from the UK Biobank dataset who were aged 62 years on average and did not have diabetes to begin with. Over seven years, they monitored the development of the metabolic disease through medical records. The authors wanted to find out if irregular sleep lengths could promote diabetes by disrupting the body's biological clock. They also wanted to examine the effects of irregular



changed by less than 60 minutes. However, after adjusting for lifestyle, health conditions, environmental factors and body fat, the risk among these individuals was found to drop to 11 per cent. The researchers said they were interested in exploring the biological reasons why sleep irregularity increases the risk of diabetes. They also plan to study participants from younger age groups and with diverse racial backgrounds.

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AAP to go solo in Haryana, will contest all 90 assembly seats

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday said it will contest all 90 assembly seats in Haryana, where people want "badlav" (change) and are looking at it with great hope. The AAP said it will announce party national convener Arvind Kejriwal's guarantees on July 20. The Haryana Assembly elections are due later this year. Addressing the media here, Sanjay Singh said the AAP will fight the Haryana Assembly polls strongly. "The AAP will contest all 90

seats," said the Rajya Sabha MP, who was flanked by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, senior AAP leaders Sandeep Pathak and Anurag Dhanda, and party state unit president Sushil Gupta. Though the AAP has contested multiple elections in Haryana, it has yet to taste electoral success. The AAP had contested the recent Lok Sabha elections in alliance with its INDIA bloc partner Congress. While the Congress won five of the nine Lok Sabha seats it contested, the AAP unsuccessfully contested the Kurukshetra seat.

Haryana Congress leaders, including Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Uday Bhan, have hinted that the party might go solo in the assembly polls, with both saying that it is capable of contesting all 90 seats on its own. Singh targeted the BJP government in Haryana over the issues of unemployment, law and order, and the Agnipath scheme. "Today, there is an industry of extortion in Haryana. We saw how farmers were crushed during their agitation. Unemployment is also a big problem in Haryana," he said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Bill of woes

Karnataka Govt puts local job quota bill on hold after the State's IT industry reacts strongly

The Karnataka government has put on hold a bill requiring reservations for locals in the private sector following significant backlash from the industry. The Government will reconsider the bill before presenting it to the state Assembly. This decision came just hours after the state cabinet approved the bill, which proposed reserving 50 per cent of management positions and 75 per cent of non-management positions for Kannadigas in the private sector. The Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates in the Industries, Factories, and Other Establishments Bill, 2024, was to be presented in the Assembly on Thursday. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, along with his ministers, praised the bill, emphasising their "pro-Kannada" stance and stating that their main priority is to "ensure the welfare of Kannadigas." However, the bill met with tough resistance from the IT industry that criticised the bill, arguing that it would hinder the growth of the tech sector in Bengaluru and negatively affect the IT industry in Karnataka. The rationale behind the bill was to address the high unemployment rates among the state's residents and to ensure that local talent is given priority in job opportunities within Karnataka.



But industry leaders felt that a quota system for locals would hinder the ability of companies to hire the best talent available, potentially compromising their competitiveness and productivity. Besides, if implemented this bill would have legal and constitutional issues. The bill could violate the right to equality and freedom of movement, as enshrined in the Indian Constitution and could face significant hurdles in courts, leading to prolonged legal battles. Furthermore, the proposed bill raised concerns about increasing regionalism and social tensions. It was feared that such a policy could create divisions between locals and non-locals, leading to a less cohesive society and potential conflicts. According to a report by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce (FICC), Karnataka's overall unemployment rate is 2.7%, which is lower than the national average of 4.2%. But these figures hide the low employability of the local populace. But to correct it with populist measures is not the best solution. Instead of mandating job reservations, the Government should focus on improving education and skill development programs for locals. Enhancing the quality of education and providing better vocational training could empower local youth to compete effectively in the job market. Now that the bill has been withdrawn it could come back later in a different form. The decision to put the bill on hold has significant political implications. The Karnataka Government has averted a standoff with the IT industry and other businesses but it may disappoint its support base which was expecting job opportunities. Nonetheless, suspending the bill will likely reassure businesses and investors. But the Government will have to focus on providing employable skills to locals, so that they could get employment in Karnataka's IT industry.

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Religion and politics in modern India



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Today, as memories of Partition fade with each passing generation, the intertwining of religion and politics continues to shape the nation's discourse

A community is also known for the issues it raises and seeks to debate. The national narrative over the last 100 years or more has been severely overloaded with religious contention. India is probably the only country in the world that got its independence with conditions in which the imperial power worked assiduously to debate/impose decisions in areas that were subjected to be tackled with the investiture of independence. The open threat and use of bloodshed in many parts of the sub-continent while sorting out such issues in the days preceding independence made the matter particularly gory. It was in many ways reminiscent of a civil war instigated for various reasons. Perhaps it will take still more time to coolly reflect on what happened, where and how, and indeed if it was at all avoidable. Interpersonal relationships, intertwined with religious overtones spilt over the streets and private homes in a matter which still makes one wonder how a noble cause of independence could so inextricably get mixed up with pre-disposed religious zeal and interpretation. Experience showed that partition did not solve the problem but only split the problem into two pieces. The two independent states of India and Pakistan are still to rise beyond the echoes of what happened. The price paid at the human level cannot be comprehended through the aid of books, cinematography, or visuals. As the generation that experiences it gradually passes away, the tremors of partition remain. This cannot be done well as a method of problem-solving for contentious issues. One wonders if the realization is sufficiently around to the effect that 'enough is enough'. The hatchet needs to be buried before the agony continues to reign with many real forms of misery. The subject is not just one of emotions, but how it has affected the very concept of nation-building in many ways, big and small. This cannot be the place to hope



for some permanent therapies or solutions. That may well prove to be more than a lifetime and generational effort. However, what can be done is to create certain awareness, which helps to restore a greater sense of balance and strengthen sanity all around. Election after election and contention after contention somehow veers around to undertones of communal issues. This is avoidable if a consensus can be built up not to go public with statements and actions on issues that are essentially communal. Many countries of the Third World broke away from the yoke of imperialism through the 20th century and beyond. In many cases, there was an undertone of violence that persisted. There was violence over race, there was violence over ideology, there was violence over the protagonist of the Cold War, but nowhere in the world was the post-independence issue so intertwined as an undercurrent with communalism as in the case of the sub-continent. Even a casual look at much of the media and listening to much of the media's drumming up of concerns shows how much of communication time is spent on overtones of communal concern. This is



A LEGITIMATE QUESTION THAT NEEDS TO BE UNDERSTOOD IS WHETHER ANYONE GAINING BY BRINGING RELIGION SO WIDELY INTO THE POLITICAL PROCESSES. IS IT POSSIBLE TO HAVE RELIGION BE A MATTER OF FAITH AND POLITICS A MATTER OF CONTROL OVER GOVERNANCE?

avoidable because it does not help development and it does not strengthen equity. Indians are known to be bright, intelligent, and have long traditions of intellectual excellence, which many parts of the world have not only recognized but gained strength from. To put it simply, a broad question can be asked: is it possible to freeze all talk from communal concerns as a public issue and let the concerns embedded in it be tackled only at the inter-community level? This needs to be done without blowing it up as a regional or national issue which begs support from communities that may not have even understood what was being debated. Whether Faizabad election results were determined by the nature and quantum of compensation to the communities is something on which the jury is still out. This issue needs to be understood in greater depth. However, one can avoid converting these concerns into fanning communally backed political support. In other words, can one simply delink religion from politics so that religion remains a matter of faith and politics deals with the struggle for control of the decision-making process? A legitimate question that needs to be understood is whether anyone gaining by bringing religion so widely into the political processes. Is it possible to have religion be a matter of faith and politics a matter of control over governance? All political talk needs to avoid reference to religion, if for nothing better than avoiding emotiveness and irrelevant dissipation of energy. Political discourse can deal with economics, sociology, even history, and more, anthropology can be brought in, and so can industrialization and agriculture, but avoid drawing in religious loyalties, and emotions. Attempts to draw upon eschewed fervour with self-defeating orientation need to be stopped. An attempt to eliminate communalized political narratives and contentions may be an option worth considering. Some nations have successfully achieved this, and while they may be experiencing various forms of violence, violence stemming from religious loyalties is not their failing. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A CALL FOR ACTION

Madam — It is disheartening to note that four army personnel sacrificed their lives fighting terrorists in Doda district, Jammu. This cowardly attack must be condemned in the strongest terms. Our intelligence sources seem unable to effectively address the challenges in Jammu & Kashmir, leading to repeated attacks on our army. Despite the brave efforts of the army in counterinsurgency operations, the situation is worsening, with increasing casualties. This raises serious questions about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's abrogation of Article 370, which was intended to bring peace to the valley.

There is a clear lack of coordination between the State and Central governments, and a trust deficit between local people and the army, contributing to these escalating attacks. It is high time for Prime Minister Modi to act decisively rather than relying on empty assurances, as ground realities are more precarious than they appear. This failure is not only an intelligence issue but also deeply demoralizing for our armed forces, who are currently engaged in counterinsurgency operations while also keeping vigil over Ladakh's sovereignty. The increasing attacks are eroding the morale of the troops and causing immense grief to their families. The government must prioritize tangible actions over rhetoric to ensure the safety and security of our soldiers and restore faith among the local population.

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Jalpaiguri

DO NOT IGNORE ENGLISH

Madam — Encouraging the use of one's mother tongue and regional languages is important, but it's equally crucial to ensure that English education is not neglected from childhood. English provides citizens, regardless of age, gender, or profession, with global opportunities in education, employment, business, and services. No state should impose any regional language on

Age-defying sportspersons



If technology is rapidly transforming our lives, can we overlook the role of competitive sports? Uncertainty is the only constant in world-class sporting events. Recent years have shown that age is no barrier to success.

Athletes like Serena Williams, Novak Djokovic, MS Dhoni, Tiger Woods, Rohan Bopanna, James Anderson, and recently, Lionel Messi, continue to outperform younger competitors. Their success can be attributed to advancements in medical science, financial support, rest, temperament, a balanced diet, exercise, a positive attitude, and a relentless passion for their sport.

Lionel Messi, despite participating in four major tournaments including the 2016 Copa America without victory, finally triumphed in this year's final, proving his skill and defying age. He has recreated the magic that Diego Maradona brought to soccer. We hope he continues to adapt and maintain his enthusiasm and spirit.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

SC'S BENCH FOR MONEY BILLS

Madam — It's good that the Supreme Court has accepted to form a constitutional bench to look into the controversial issue of money bills in parliament. The money bills do not need to get approval of Rajya Sabha as they may be connected to urgent financial affairs of the country. Of late, it has become a practice for the Government which doesn't have majority in Rajya Sabha to introduce and get passed some bills as financial bills in parliament in order to bypass the close vetting by Rajya Sabha. The Aadhaar Act and Prevention of Money Laundering Act have been passed in that manner, attracting criticism from many. Now the highest judiciary would step in to clear the air in this regard. The executive should respect the constitutionally mandated role of the legislature in true spirit. This move is essential for maintaining the delicate balance of power.

DVG Sankara Rao | Vizianagaram

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

PV Srinivas Sreelekha | Secunderabad

PICTALK



Shia Muslim mourners participate in an Ashura (10th Muharram) procession, in Mirzapur



NISHA SAHANI

The harsh reality of child labour in rural Bihar

Despite Government efforts, the economic realities force families to make children work, often resulting in their exploitation

Baiju (name changed), an 11-year-old boy from Telia village in Kudhni block, 22 km from Muzaffarpur in Bihar, wakes up every morning like other children. However, instead of going to school, he heads off to work as a labourer, a burden he has borne for the past three years. Baiju, who belongs to the Mahadalit community, used to attend school. Life changed after his father's death, as he was forced to drop out of school and start working to support his family. He explains that his mother's meagre income is not enough to sustain the six members of their family. Consequently, he had to give up his education and begin working. She does not have enough money to educate her children, forcing her to send Baiju to work. Child labour is a grave issue affecting millions of children worldwide, and in our country, it has reached alarming proportions. According to a UNICEF report based on the 2011 census, there are approximately 10.1 million child labourers in India, including 5.6 million boys and 4.5 million girls. Most child labour-



ers can be found working in domestic services, tea shops, and brick kilns. In India, child labour is more prevalent in rural areas compared to urban ones. Children from socially and economically disadvantaged communities are often compelled to work in these areas, stripping them of their fundamental right to education and perpetuating the cycle of poverty. This not only obstructs their education but also hampers their overall development. Children should be in school and playing, not toiling as labourers. Pinki Devi (name changed), a 45-year-old resident of Telia village, has two children who have left school to work as labourers. She explains that her husband, a daily wage labourer, is often ill. In such a situation, it became impossible to support the family with his income

alone, forcing her to send her children to work. Social worker Phuldev Patel points out that children from the most economically vulnerable Dalit and Mahadalit communities are predominantly involved in child labour. The dire economic conditions of their households compel them to abandon their education and start working. He asserts that in the actual number of child labourers is significantly higher than what official statistics reveal. The government provides free books, notebooks, uniforms, and mid-day meals under the Right to Free and Compulsory Education to encourage children to attend school. However, the harsh economic realities overshadow these provisions, pushing children into labour. He further notes that human traffickers exploit this vulnerability, selling children as labourers in other states. Local journalist Amritanj observes that, like Telia village, there are numerous remote rural areas in Muzaffarpur where children work as labourers. He notes that the government may not have official statistics

on this issue because it is carried out in a highly systematic manner. Although the strict child labour laws and the vigilance of the local administration have reduced the rate of child labourers in recent years, it has not been entirely eradicated. Even today, children can be seen working in brick kilns, tea shops, grocery stores, construction sites, and as domestic helpers. As in previous years, this year too, the World Day Against Child Labor was observed on June 12 in India and around the world. When children in a society begin working as labourers at a young age instead of attending school, it prompts deep introspection within that nation and its society. They must confront why a child is forced to abandon books for labour. When a child's right to childhood, is denied, and they are thrust into labour, they endure physical, mental, and social exploitation, transforming their childhood into one marred by labour—an ordeal known as child labour. (The author is a grassroots writer from Bihar. Views expressed are personal. Charkha Features)



FIRST COLUMN FALLOUT OF TRUMP'S ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

It could have far reaching implications for the US presidential elections and the US politics



KUMARDEEP BANARJEE

A week is a long time on the volatile chessboard of global affairs, however, the recent assassination attempt of former United States of America President Donald Trump would leave a deep impact on future courses of action. While several European leaders and some in the Middle East have been subjected to violent life-threatening attempts in the recent past, the bullet grazing past former president Trump's ears has left a shrill range of questions for world leaders. It may be too early to predict whether the assassination attempt would translate into a landslide victory for Donald Trump who is facing a rematch with current President Joe Biden in the November polls.

The Democrats in the US are a divided lot, with many leaders, internally questioning President Joe Biden's pitch for a second shot to the Oval Office, given his several public gaffes related to his age. Most of the public debates in the US and several other think tank zones across the world, have been debating President Biden's mental alertness and, if elected for a second time he would be able to complete his full four-year term. Any midway change due to a severe illness, which is being anticipated, would be a dampener for the US President's bid for a second run. Much like in every significant democracy, including India, the electorate in the US is a divided lot, with a deep gorge running right through the middle of the supporters of Trump and Joe Biden. The Democrat's attack on Trump and his supporters has been on the lines similar to what the opposition parties in India rallied around, during the recently concluded parliamentary elections.

The key message to their voters is to save the country from dictatorial forces (Trump /PM Modi), who will upend the constitution under their larger-than-life cult status leaders. This created a rift in the electorate, in an already ruptured society, constantly fed with an ocean of information primarily on social media, sending conflicting versions of the same events. Politics and rhetoric apart, it would be an interesting prism to watch the social messaging playing out with Trump coming back to the battlefield (election campaigns), after, he left the stage in Pennsylvania, with an iconic raised fist, and the US flag flying in the background. The pic-



ture is likely to define the resilience of the US democracy for a long time to come. Mr Trump in his few interviews, seems to have humbled down from the life-altering event, where he almost ended up being in the coffin rather than the Oval Office. It would be worthwhile to watch out if the former President sobers down on some of his key manifesto items such as immigration and freedom to choose (including the right to possess firearms for self-protection).

Immigration would be a closely watched topic from a global perspective, including India, where the largest chunk of immigrants land on US shores through legal or illegal routes. Donald Trump's Vice President choice JD Vance has a spouse who is a PIO. His wife's parents are immigrants from Andhra Pradesh and in a way, the choice defines the pluralistic nature of American Society. It would be a long shot to assume that if Trump gets a second term, his views and policies on immigration would be sobered due to his VP. Similarly, a Trump comeback could have a far-reaching impact on bilateral trade relations especially with India.

One may argue that India has bipartisan support in Washington DC on several defence and technology partnerships, carefully nurtured over a decade by PM Modi. PM Modi is perhaps the only PM, who has worked with three US Presidents in the last decade and is likely to see one of his former friends either Trump or Biden coming back in November. It may be uncertain times, however, the past relationships and promise for securing the future of the Indo-Pacific should be a super glue to hold India's US relationship under a new regime.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Rising political violence and struggles in the US



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

The attack on Donald Trump underscores the nation's turbulent political climate raising concerns about the stability of American democracy and society.

Is the United States hurtling towards an internal civil war? Alex Garland's recent film 'Civil War', which premiered earlier this year, depicts a fictional yet chillingly plausible scenario of such a conflict. This leads us to consider whether the repercussions of US-initiated wars in recent decades, aimed at maintaining supremacy, now echo ominously at home, haunted by the spectres of those who perished globally. That is the inexorable wheel of karma. The shocking assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, thrusts this issue into stark relief. In the aftermath, numerous conspiracy theories swirled around the incident, casting a spotlight on secret agencies whose heads have publicly voiced criticism against Trump. A police sniper had photographed the shooter, Thomas Matthew Crooks, just half an hour before the 20-year-old opened fire on Trump during the rally, suggesting multiple missed opportunities to prevent the attempted assassination, as reported. Despite the attack, Trump's political stature has only strengthened, evidenced by his selection of Republican Senator JD Vance as his running mate for the 2024 presidential election. Once a vocal critic of Trump, Vance now stands as a staunch ally, vigorously defending him and endorsing his policies.

The incident, which reshaped Trump's political narrative—where a bullet grazed his ear—left him wounded but resolute. This assault, though shocking, accentuates a longstanding history of political violence in the United States, a phenomenon entrenched since the nation's inception. Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president, was the first to be assassinated, shot by John Wilkes Booth in 1865. Lincoln's support for Black rights during the Civil War, marked by the Emancipation Proclamation, has been cited as a motive for his assassination. Subsequent presidents, including James Garfield, William McKinley, and John F. Kennedy, also fell victim to such violence, with Garfield being shot in 1881, McKinley in 1901, and Kennedy in 1963.

Each of these assassinations profoundly impacted the nation and its political structure. Political violence has not been confined to presidents alone. Presidential candidates like Robert F. Kennedy and George C. Wallace were also targeted, with Kennedy being killed in 1968 and Wallace being left paralyzed in 1972. Presidents like Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan survived assassination attempts, highlighting the persistent threat of violence in American politics. The United States today exemplifies how a state structure can deteriorate when policymakers focus more on external affairs, neglecting internal issues. For instance, the fentanyl crisis devastates U.S. communities, with toddlers and infants increasingly falling victim to the potent opioid, which is 50 times stronger than heroin, according to public health experts. While adults account for the majority of fentanyl-related deaths, more children under 5 are either dying or ending up in emergency rooms after testing positive for the drug, due to accidental ingestion or exposure at home. The number of child overdoses has surged even as overall drug overdose rates in the country have declined recently. California leads in total fentanyl deaths, with 6,473 reported in 2022, while West Virginia has



the highest death rate per capita. This is a prime example to understand how the internal structure is falling apart. This cannot be stopped by exporting ammunition stocks and advanced weaponry to Ukraine and Israel through front channels while to other proxy wars in Africa and elsewhere through back channels. In societies, the root issue often isn't just institutions but the erosion of core values. Without a cohesive value system, managing politics becomes daunting.

This dilemma arises: while progress demands new values, preserving core societal values is crucial for stability and harmony. Neglecting this balance risks societal chaos and moral crisis. The inevitable decline, akin to the setting sun, cannot be halted by force alone. The political climate in the United States reflects the consequences of its global actions, suggesting a looming downfall through unpredictable events. Trump is a product of long-standing policies that have often ignored domestic ramifications.

He represents a symptom, not the cause, of the systemic issues within American politics, stemming from a history of exploiting other nations at the expense of the American public. Needless to say, engaging in political violence is fundamentally misguided and counterproductive. What Americans are slowly leading into what American decision-makers have executed throughout the world in recent history at the expense of unarmed civilians. Taking someone's life, regardless of their role or perceived wrongs, is morally indefensible. Whether it's a political adversary, a troublesome neighbour who's pushed you to the edge, a stranger evoking fear, or anyone else who has crossed your path, resorting to violence only perpetuates harm and suffering without resolution.

However, the Trump assassination attempt raises numerous unanswered questions. There is no indication that gunshot detectors were in use at the rally, although

such detectors can rapidly triangulate and locate a shooter. The shooter, Thomas Matthew Crooks, used a gun that was legally purchased by his father, which he had access to at a gun range the previous Friday. Questions arise about whether the gun was bought specifically for him, as Pennsylvania law allows 20-year-olds to buy guns. Reports state the shooter was identified by DNA, suggesting family members provided samples. Additionally, the reports suggested that no effort was made to obscure the gun's serial number, and the shooter had recently purchased 50 rounds of 5.56mm ammunition.

Preliminary acoustic evidence suggests the potential involvement of multiple shooters in the incident aimed at Trump. Initial gunfire originated from the shooter's position, with subsequent bursts detected from unidentified sources, as reported by news sources. Despite Secret Service snipers reportedly firing a single shot to neutralise the threat, discrepancies with acoustic evidence persist, necessitating further scrutiny of ballistic recordings for clarity. Questions arise over security failures allowing a 20-year-old to breach measures and reach a rooftop near Trump, firing multiple shots. Thomas Matthew Crooks, identified as the primary shooter, raises speculation about a potential second shooter. Described as a loner without a social media presence, Crooks' unexpected role and the presence of explosives in his vehicle suggest possible exploitation.

Criticism of rally security focuses on inadequate building coverage, allowing the shooter an unimpeded view of Trump, and exposing significant security vulnerabilities. These shortcomings emphasise systemic flaws in pre-event security protocols and the need for rigorous reforms. Political violence, however, has rarely solved the issues it aims to address, often creating a climate of fear and leading to further crackdowns on dissent. Historically, such violence

has only resulted in cycles of disaster, undermining the causes it purported to support. What we can see is that nihilism pervades American culture, dealing a fatal blow to its cultural and spiritual development. This decline in values undermines democracy itself. Democracy, while liberating individuals from traditional constraints, necessitates self-judgement—a task hindered by the erosion of traditional Western values. Without a genuine guiding societal value system, the state structures of any nation inevitably falter in fulfilling their role in shaping individual decisions.

The collapse of collective ideas correlates closely with societal institutions and behaviours. As Wang Huning, a leading Chinese political theorist, argued in his book "America Against America," "The American spirit confronts profound challenges, compounded by the younger generation's unfamiliarity with traditional Western values. This spiritual shift raises critical questions about its impact on societal development and governance." The viability of any social system hinges not solely on legal frameworks but on collective belief in fundamental values guiding behaviour. If these values falter, the sustainability of the social order is called into question. The attempt on Trump's life demands a reevaluation of rhetoric and policies that normalise political violence. The incident calls for a reevaluation of gun laws and the broader societal acceptance of violence as a means to resolve conflicts. All sides of the political divide must recognise the danger of escalating violent rhetoric and its potential to incite further violence. This incident serves as a wake-up call to address the deeper issues within American society and politics, emphasizing the need for a shift towards reasoned discourse and humane policies. Ironically, America has been compelled to a point where it can't afford to lose Trump.

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

“ THE ATTEMPT ON TRUMP'S LIFE DEMANDS A REEVALUATION OF RHETORIC AND POLICIES THAT NORMALISE POLITICAL VIOLENCE. THE INCIDENT CALLS FOR A REEVALUATION OF GUN LAWS AND THE BROADER SOCIETAL ACCEPTANCE OF VIOLENCE AS A MEANS TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS.”

RTI implementation faces challenges as the CIC is short of staff

Despite the formation of a new government, vacancies remain unfilled, exacerbating delays and overwhelming the few remaining commissioners

On September 13 last year, the Central Information Commission (CIC) admitted a second appeal from this columnist under Section 19(3) of the RTI Act, 2005. The appeal, apart from seeking imposition of penalty on the CPIO, for denial of information, also contained a few relevant suggestions for better implementation of the Act. However, on November 6, Ms Saroj Punhani, the Information Commissioner who dealt with cases for that particular ministry retired at the end of her tenure. On the same day Uday Mahurkar, another Information Commissioner retired, whereas their colleague Suresh Chandra had retired two days earlier. Several other



PRIYADARSHI DATTA

Information Commissioners like Ms. Vanjana N. Sarna, Neeraj Kumar Gupta and Dr. Amita Pandove had retired earlier last year at the end of their respective tenures. Y. K. Sinha, the Chief Information Commissioner, retired on October 3 whereupon Heeralal Samariya, the Information Commissioner was elevated to the position of Chief Information Commissioner. The total strength of the

Commission plummeted to a mere three by the end of 2023, from the maximum permissible ten at the beginning of the year. Even after the formation of the new government last month, little interest has been shown in filling up the vacancies that exist.

The reduction in the strength of the Commission has led to a proportionate overload of second appeals and complaints at CIC Bhawan. The second appeal of this columnist, already pending for ten months, is likely to see an indefinite waiting period. The outcome could hardly be compared with a long wait in the judiciary. Information is fragile, and prone to obsolesce faster than justice. This is where this columnist's suggestions would have helped. In his

limited experience as an RTI activist since 2010, he has found the CPIOs (Central Public Information Officers) generally share the information dutifully. However, where they do not, the Appellate Authority, who are generally their senior officers in the department/ministry is of little help.

They collude with their juniors to suppress the information, apparently in exchange for favours/obligations in office politics. Uday Mahurkar, as Information Commissioner, reportedly disposed of 5056 RTI appeals in 2021-22, the highest since the year of enactment of the RTI Act, 2005. However, it is equally a reflection of the utter non-performance of the Appellate Authority. Had those cases

been satisfactorily disposed at the stage of the first appeal, within the department itself, there was little need for approaching CIC with a second appeal. Information could be suppressed for a variety of reasons. In rare cases, it could be that the CPIO has committed some action in his substantive capacity (as Section Officer or Under Secretary) which he wants to be probed. In the instant case, a person has been blacklisted, on trumped-up charges, despite not having any financial dealing with the ministry.

The blacklisting order was signed, though with approval of competent authority, by the CPIO in his substantive capacity as Under Secretary. When asked to provide the file notes, complaints if any, rules posi-

tion violated he deflected the matter saying the file was under submission (there is no such ground for denying information under the RTI Act, 2005 even if the file is submitted with the PMO or Rashtrapati Bhawan). This columnist requested the same information after the lapse of a year (thanks to the appeal pending for months in CIC) only to find that the file was still "under submission"! The conclusions are obvious. On both occasions, the First Appellate Authority, who is an IAS officer, helped the cause of suppression rather than transparency. Under Section 20(1) of the RTI Act, 2005 there is a provision for a penalty on the CPIO not exceeding Rs.25,000 for unjustified denial of information to the applicant. There

is, however, no penalty for the First Appellate Authority recognizably failing in his duty or acting in a mala fide manner. Endowing a member of the executive with quasi-judicial power without any scope of disciplinary proceedings is bait for misuse of power. The CIC notice for hearing of appeal is sent only to the CPIO and not the First Appellate Authority. The fear of dressing down by the Information Commissioner, in front of the CPIO, who is a junior officer, will ensure the integrity of action on the part of the First Appellate Authority.

Disciplining the First Appellate Authority is the key to reducing the load of pendency at the Central Information Commission's desk. The gov-

ernment has recently decided to commemorate June 25 as "Samvidhan Hatya Divas", a queer-sounding name, in memory declaration of Emergency in 1975.

Whereas the Emergency might have been anti-democratic, it was in itself not unconstitutional being declared under Article 352. If the government is interested in deepening democracy in the 21st century then rhetoric like "Samvidhan Hatya Divas" or even "India Mother of Democracy" will not work if the CIC's strength is curtailed. The RTI Act, of 2005 was a major tool for transparency, accountability and governance. (The writer is an author, independent researcher and RTI activist based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

Indian FinTech industry projected to reach \$420 bn by 2029

The Indian fintech industry is estimated to be around USD 110 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach about USD 420 billion by 2029, Ajay Kumar Choudhary, Non-Executive Chairman and Independent Director, National Payments Corporation of India, said. The sector, he said, is expected to continue to grow due to factors like favourable policies of the government. The government's push towards a digital economy, coupled with a young and tech-savvy population, is likely to propel the fintech sector to new heights, he added. "As of 2024, Indian FinTech Industry is estimated to be around USD 110 billion and by 2029, it is projected to reach an impressive number of around 420 billion at a cumulative annual growth rate of 31 per cent," industry chamber ASSOCHAM said in a statement, quoting Choudhary. It said the advent of the fintech ecosystem, driven by technology-linked innovation, has revolutionised traditional financial services and led to improvement.



Rupee falls 6 paise to close at all-time low of 83.64 against US\$

Rupee depreciated 6 paise and settled at its all-time low of 83.64 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, as the strength of the American currency in the overseas market and overnight surge in crude oil prices weighed on investor sentiments. Forex traders expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on strong US dollar and weak Asian as well as European currencies. The US dollar strengthened, while the pound weakened amid disappointing labour market data from the UK. However, positive domestic markets and foreign fund inflows cushioned the downside in the domestic unit to a certain extent. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.57, and touched an intraday high of 83.55 and a low of 83.66 against the dollar during the trading session. It finally settled at 83.64 (provisional) against the American currency.



Sebi disposes of case against Prudent Broking Services

Markets regulator Sebi on Thursday disposed of a case against stock broker Prudent Broking Services citing "lack of evidence" in the matter of Alpesh Furuya and connected entities trading ahead of recommendations made during market shows on a television channel. In its order, Sebi noted that Alpesh Furuya is an authorised person (AP) of Prudent Broking Services and carried out alleged fraudulent trades in the accounts of Alpesh Group entities. Further, the regulator noted that Prudent Broking Service was responsible for the alleged role of its AP -- Alpesh Furuya -- pertaining to the trading accounts of Alpesh Group. Disposing of the case, Sebi said that the investigation report has not provided the role played by Prudent Broking Services for the fraudulent trades of the AP as held by the regulator in its order passed in June 2024.



Revival in rural spending pushing demand conditions: RBI Bulletin

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The second quarter of 2024-25 has begun with signs of quickening momentum in the economy and the revival of rural spending has turned out to be a bright spot in the evolution of demand conditions, the Reserve Bank said in its Bulletin on Thursday. Global economic activity appears to be strengthening across advanced economies (AEs) and emerging market economies (EMEs) and global trade in goods and services is gathering momentum, said an article on 'State of Economy' published in the RBI's Bulletin. It further said monetary policy divergence is setting the tone for global economic developments.



The improvement in the outlook for agriculture and the revival of rural spending have turned out to be the bright spots in the evolution of demand conditions, it added

"In India, the second quarter of 2024-25 has begun with signs of quickening momentum in the economy," said the article. The improvement in the outlook for agriculture and the revival of rural spending have turned out to be the bright spots in the evolution of demand conditions, it added. The article also noted that consumer price inflation ticked up in June 2024 after three consecutive months of moderation as a broad flare-up in vegetable prices halted the overall disinflation that had been underway. The central bank, however, said the views expressed in the Bulletin article are of the authors and do not represent the views of the Reserve Bank of India.

Lupin ties up with Huons to market eye drug in Mexico

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug maker Lupin on Thursday said it has tied up with South Korea-based Huons Co Ltd to market dry eye treatment medication in Mexico. The company has signed a license and supply agreement with Huons for the registration and marketing of Cyclosporine Ophthalmic Nanoemulsion (0.4mL single-use vial) in Mexico, the Mumbai-based drug maker said in a statement. Cyclosporine Ophthalmic Nanoemulsion is a preservative-free Nanoemulsion that has been approved in South Korea, Peru and several countries in the Middle East for the treatment.

Sensex breaches 81,000 level, Nifty closes at record 24,800

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Stock markets remained on record-smashing course for the fourth straight day on Thursday with benchmark Sensex breaching the 81,000 mark for the first time and Nifty scaling the record 24,800 level driven by buying in IT, oil&gas and FMCG shares. Rebounding from its early lows, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 626.91 points or 0.78 per cent to settle at a fresh closing high of 81,343.46. The index opened on a weak note and hit a low of 80,390.37 points in early trade. However buying in IT shares TCS, Infosys and Tech Mahindra and index heavy-weight Reliance Industries helped the index pare losses in the afternoon session. The barometer surged 806 points or



0.99 per cent to hit a new record intra-day peak of 81,522.55. The broader Nifty also pared early losses and climbed 187.85 points or 0.76 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,800.85. During the day, it zoomed 224.75 points or 0.91 per cent to hit a fresh lifetime high of 24,837.75.

"The frontline indices firmed up in the second half, reaching fresh highs driven by renewed buying in IT stocks. Investor optimism for the sector grew after strong performance reports from the country's leading IT firms in the June quarter, coupled with a weakening rupee," Vinod Nair, Head of Research.

MSME sector for doubling loan limit under MUDRA to Rs 20 L

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi, Jul 18 (PTI) The finance ministry in the forthcoming Union Budget needs to double the loan limit to Rs 20 lakh under the MUDRA Yojana, and expand the credit guarantee cover for unsecured loans for MSMEs from Rs 2 crore to Rs 5 crore. MSMEs also want incentives from the government to help them sell products globally. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Union Budget for the current fiscal on July 23 in the Lok Sabha. On expectations from the Budget, Navin Saini, chief business officer (Retail & MSME), Arka Fincap said the government will continue its agenda to provide a strong



foundation for MSMEs, bolstering their growth. "To achieve this, they should consider increasing the loan limit of the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) scheme from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh and expanding the credit guarantee cover for

unsecured loans for MSMEs from Rs 2 crore to Rs 5 crore. "These measures will provide MSMEs with greater access to necessary financial resources, enabling them to thrive and contribute significantly to the economy," Saini said.

Easy customs norms, robust payment settlement to boost e-comm exports: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Measures such as easing customs procedures, robust payment settlement mechanisms and relaxing FDI norms for e-commerce entities will help the country's exports through online medium, a report said on Thursday. It also asked to allow FDI-funded e-commerce entities to hold inventory for sale in international marketplaces to facilitate global sales of Indian MSME products. The Indian government aims to achieve USD 200-300 billion in e-commerce exports as part of its USD 1 trillion

overall merchandise export target by 2030, which requires a 50-60 fold increase in current export levels, it said. Complex customs procedures, payment repatriation challenges, and restrictive policies are significant barriers, the EY-ASSOCHAM report said, adding that policy changes are needed in payments, customs, and logistics to help MSMEs access export markets and achieve the goal. It has suggested reduction in the cost burden of payment reconciliation, enhancing payment realisation timelines.

Gold zooms for sixth day in a row, rallies Rs 700 on buying support

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price surged by Rs 700 to Rs 76,400 per 10 grams in the local market here on Thursday on fresh domestic demand as well as depreciation in rupee. According to All India Sarafa Association, the yellow metal prices had closed at Rs 75,700 per 10 grams in the previous session. Extending its gains for the sixth straight session, the precious metal jumped by Rs 700 to Rs 76,400 per 10 grams in the national capital. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity zoomed by Rs 750 to Rs 76,100 per 10 grams. However, silver prices declined by Rs 400 to Rs 94,000 per kg from Rs 94,400



per kg in the previous session. Gold prices rose on account of sustained buying by local jewellers, the association said, adding weakness in the rupee also aided the rally in the yellow metal. The rupee depreciated by 6 paise to settle at its all-time

low of 83.64 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday. Commodity markets were closed on Wednesday on the occasion of Muharram. In the overseas market, Comex gold was trading at USD 2,466.80 per ounce.



'Tech transforming CIO roles into CDIOs; over 33 % rise in hiring'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

There has been a 33 per cent increase in the hiring and the creation of posts of chief digital and information officers (CDIOs) in the recent past following rapid advancements in technology, according to a study. The spike has been triggered by the transformation of the roles of chief information officers (CIOs) into those of

CDIOs, it said. The study is based on WalkWater's analysis drawn from a survey among profiles of 310 CIOs and CDIOs across 272 companies. In the landscape of modern business, the role of CIOs has undergone a profound evolution, transforming into what is now widely recognised as the CDIO, a study by executive search firms WalkWater Talent Advisors has revealed. "One in three companies

studied has recently established or filled the CDIO role, underscoring its growing importance in today's business landscape," the study added. It noted that the emergence of CDIOs signifies a shift towards not just managing technology but strategically leveraging it to drive business outcomes. This transition has been accelerated by the imperative for digital innova-

tion, propelled further by advancements in cloud computing, Software as a Service (SaaS), and AI-driven decision making. "Our study highlights the demand for CDIOs with global experience and diverse educational backgrounds, showing their vital role in shaping forward-looking, tech savvy organizations," WalkWater Talent Advisors Co-Founder and Director Rahul Shah said.

Shoppers Stop posts net loss of Rs 22.72 cr in Q1

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Retail chain Shoppers Stop Ltd on Thursday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 22.72 crore in the June 2024 quarter, hit by subdued consumption due to prolonged heat waves, elections and inflation. The company posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 14.49 crore in the corresponding period last fiscal, Shoppers Stop said in a regulatory filing. Consolidated revenue from operations in the quarter under review stood at Rs 1,069.31 crore as against Rs 993.61 crore in the year-ago period, it added. Total expenses were higher at Rs 1,104.51 crore in the first quarter compared.

NON-AFFIXATION OF FASTAG ON THE FRONT WINDSHIELD NHAI to charge double toll from vehicles

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To deter National Highway users from deliberately not fixing FASTag on the windscreen of the vehicle, NHAI has issued guidelines to collect double user fee from such users entering the toll lane with non-affixed FASTag on the front windshield from the inside, an official release said on Thursday. NHAI said deliberate non-affixation of FASTag on the windscreen leads to unnecessary delays at the toll plazas causing inconvenience to fellow National Highway users. "Detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) has been issued to all User Fee Collection Agencies and Concessionaires to charge double user fee in case of non-affixation of FASTag on



NHAI said deliberate non-affixation of FASTag on the windscreen leads to unnecessary delays at the toll plazas causing inconvenience to fellow National Highway users

the front windshield," it said. According to the statement,

the information will also be prominently displayed at all User Fee plazas, informing highway users about the penalties for non-compliance of entering a toll lane without a fixed FASTag on front windshield. In addition, the statement said CCTV footage with Vehicle Registration Number (VRN) at the fee plaza shall be recorded of the non-affixed FASTag cases. This will help in maintaining proper record regarding the fee charged and presence of the vehicle in the toll lane. In accordance with already established rules, the statement said NHAI aims to enforce the standard procedural guidelines for affixation of FASTag on the front windshield of the assigned vehicle from inside. The statement said any FASTag that is not

affixed on the assigned vehicle as per standard process is not entitled to carry out Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) transaction at a User Fee Plaza and will have to pay double toll fee as well as can be duly blacklisted. Issuer banks have also been directed to ensure fixation of the FASTag to the assigned vehicle on the front windshield at the time of issuance from various Point-of-Sale (POS), it added. NHAI collects user fee on National Highways as per the National Highway Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008. At present, user fee is collected for approximately 45,000 km of National Highways and Expressways at around 1,000 Toll Plazas on National Highways across the country.

Two South Eastern Coalfields blocks among world's 10 largest coal mines

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gevra and Kusunda blocks of state-owned South Eastern Coalfields have secured second and fourth spots, respectively, in the list of the world's 10 largest coal mines in terms of production volume released by WorldAtlas.com. Located in the Korba district of Chhattisgarh, the two mines produce more than 100 million tonnes (MT) of coal annually accounting for about 10 per cent of India's total coal production, South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL) said in a

statement on Thursday. "Gevra and Kusunda coal mines have secured the 2nd and 4th spot in the list of the world's 10 largest coal mines released by WorldAtlas.com," it said. Gevra mine has an annual production capacity of 70 MT.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
Parityat: Raj Engineering Department
Office of the Regional Officer,
PR Region, Nizamabad

E-Procurement Sheet Tender Notice No. 58 to 72/2024-25
Dt: 18.07.2024

Total No. of Works (20 New) Total ECV: 397.75
Lakhs tenders invited undersigned. Tenders can
download the tender schedules from 19.07.2024
10.30 AM onwards and last date is (7) working
days from date of publishing of each NIT in Online.
Further details can be seen on the online
www.tender.telangana.gov.in

Regional Officer,
PRD, Nizamabad

DPR No. 75-DGCL/ENR/1/2024-25

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
GANDHI HOSPITAL
WALKIN INTERVIEW

A Walk-in interview will be conducted at Conference Hall of Gandhi Hospital, Secunderabad regarding the recruitment for the post of **Clinical Embryologist Services** on contract basis for IVF centre at Gandhi Hospital for a period up to 08 months in Gandhi Hospital on **22nd July 2024 between 11:00 A.M. to 01:00 P.M.** The detailed information is given as follows.

Names of the Post & No. of Vacancies: CLINICAL EMBRYOLOGIST (01)

Qualification: Post-Graduate in clinical embryology from a recognised University with additional three years of human ART Laboratory experiences in handling human gametes and embryos. (OR)
Ph.D holder full-time PhD project shall be related to Clinical Embryology or assistant reproductive technology or Fertility from a recognised university with an additional two Years of ART laboratory experience in handling human gametes and embryos. (OR)
Medical graduate (MBBS) of Veterinary graduate (BVS) with a post-graduate degree in Clinical Embryology (full-time program) from a recognised University with additional two years of ART Laboratory experience in handling human gametes and embryos. (OR)
Post-Graduate in life science of Biotechnology, with a minimum of one year of on-site full time clinical embryology certified training in addition to four years experience in handling human gametes and embryos in a registered ART level 2 clinic.

Sd/- Superintendent
R.O.No: 1878-PP/CLADVT/1/2024-25, Dt: 18-07-2024
Gandhi Hospital, Secunderabad.

'I TOOK MY OWN TIME TO EXPERIENCE POLISH CULTURE & FOOD'

TEJAL SINHA

Just a week ago, beauty queens from different countries were seen competing at the Miss Supranational 2024 pageant in Nowy Sacz, Malopolska, Poland. Making India proud was Sonal Kukreja, who sashayed her way into the top 12.

After our exclusive interaction with the LIVA Miss Diva Supranational 2023 ahead of the pageant, we once again have her on board for our weekly segment of Travelogue, as we speak to her about her travel experience around the scenic natural landscapes, captivating historic sites and cultural artifacts.

Adding to her excitement about representing the nation, travelling was something she was exhilarated for. Sonal, in a telephonic interaction with *The Pioneer* begins, "I love travelling. It is something that helps you to get to know yourself better. It brings a fresh perspective on life and brings different experiences because you are stepping away from your daily routine. You give yourself an opportunity to get into new experiences. It also refreshes your mind."

Even when not travelling, her lessons from her past itinerant are something she keeps thinking of to have a fresh perspective. She got to experience Poland for a whole month and she has had great fun, especially travelling to abroad after quite a long time. Travelling to Poland, she says, was 'once in a lifetime experience'.

"Before my trip to Poland, I have been on many work trips," she recalls, adding, "I went to Kerala for a show. And I had gone to this beautiful place called Wayanad. It's a land of paddy fields and as you go there, you feel the fresh air. It is so refreshing. The landscape is so beautiful in Kerala and it's called 'God's own country'. The atmosphere, breeze are just so amazing. I went there to support the local tribes and I walked along with some of the tribal women. The raw involvement I got to experience in Kerala was amazing. I am lucky to be there and just imagine that it was a work trip. It was making the best of both worlds."

Sonal, however, makes sure that every time that she's on a work trip, she focuses and prioritises her work. "I like to be present. When you are on a trip and taking a car, or in Poland, I was walking around."

Poland has beautiful picturesque landscapes and buildings. It also has a beautiful European culture. People there like to enjoy and have fun. I did make the most of that and took my own time to experience the Polish culture and their food. Even the pageant had planned for us to travel. I had a really good time there."

"I am a daredevil when it comes to travelling solo," shares Kukreja, if she experiences something frightening while travelling.

India, she says, has so much and it's difficult to choose one place that is unique. "India is so diverse and beautiful. Even if you ask me about Mumbai, I will have ten places to name and talking of India, there are so many. We have so much richness, culture and tradition. There's so much that's special. Every city brings something beautiful. For example, I am from the Pink City and I love the streets, the tradition and the architecture of the city. For somebody to experience that, one has to come and stay in India for a while to even cover a portion of it."

The Pioneer is guided through Sonal Kukreja's journey and her passion for travel. Sonal represented India at the Miss Supranational 2024 pageant, which was held in Poland



TRAVELOGUE



PERIPHERAL ARTERY DISEASE (PAD)

When leg pain signals something serious!

Experiencing aching pain in the legs upon walking which causes you to stop for sometime can be pretty uncomfortable in everyday life. There could be several possible causes of pain in the legs, but one should be familiar with the most common: peripheral artery disease. PAD is one of the common problems of the circulatory system, in which narrowed arteries reduce blood flow to your limbs. So, in general, PAD is caused by the buildup of fatty deposits in the lining of your artery, also called atherosclerosis. This restricts blood and oxygen flow to the legs and feet. This condition mostly remains undiagnosed because it has symptoms that may sometimes be so subtle and simple, like leg pain; however, it is a serious health condition that requires immediate medical attention.

How is acute leg pain related to PAD?

Intermittent claudication is one of the significant symptoms of PAD. It is cramping or pain in leg or arm muscles associated with exercise or activity and relieved by rest. This happens when there is not enough blood flow to the muscles and, therefore, they cannot meet the oxygen requirement during exercise.

Causes:

The most frequent cause of PAD is a condition in which plaque builds up in the walls of arteries, or atherosclerosis, which is a result of:

- **Smoking:** Damage is caused to the inner lining of arteries by smoking, allowing plaque to accumulate and stimulating the arteries to go into spasm or constrict.
- **Diabetes:** Elevated sugar levels in the blood can cause damage to blood vessels and further expand the plaque buildup.
- **High cholesterol:** If you have too much cholesterol in your blood, it deposits into the inner walls of the arteries, causing atherosclerosis.
- **Hypertension:** Over the years, this condition weakens the arteries enough to make them prone to atherosclerosis.
- **Obesity:** It increases the person's risk of developing conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, increasing the chance of PAD.
- **Age:** The risk of PAD increases with age; the most common is above 50 years.
- **Family history:** A family history of vascular disease raises your risk of having a condition.

Symptoms:

The symptoms of PAD vary, but common ones include:

- **Leg pain:** This includes pain in the calf, thigh or buttocks after walking for sometime.
- **Coolness in the lower leg or foot:** This proportionally is more than in the other leg.
- **Sores or wounds:** Poorly healing sores or wounds on the toes, feet, or legs.
- **Colour changes:** The colour changes in the legs; this is often a sign of reduced blood flow, specially black tissues, known as gangrene.
- **Hair loss or slower hair growth on the feet and legs**
- **Weak pulse in the legs or feet.**

Prevention:

The only way to prevent PAD is to control or reduce the risk factors that lead to atherosclerosis. Quitting smoking, managing diabetes, controlling cholesterol and blood pressure, maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly and having a heart-healthy diet that is low in saturated fats, cholesterol and sodium may help prevent the disease.

Peripheral artery disease treatment:

Angioplasty and stenting: A small balloon is taken in the artery through a puncture and inflated. The balloon compresses the blockage and opens up the artery. The balloon is then removed, following which, a stent may be placed that keeps the artery open.

Bypass surgery: Using a vessel from another area of the body or the synthetic vessel, a graft bypass is created to take blood around the blocked artery.

Atherectomy: A catheter with a sharp blade at the end is inserted into the affected artery and the plaque is shaved off as a result.

Treatment for acute pain in legs: For patients suffering from acute leg pain with coldness, colour changes or loss of power, the cause may be sudden formation of clots. These should be removed immediately by surgery, to prevent loss of limbs or amputations.

PAD is a serious situation; if left untreated, it causes very painful sensations in the legs or other complications that might arise. It is very important to know the risk factors, symptoms, prevention strategies, and treatment options available for managing PAD. If one has leg pain while walking, or non-healing wounds with pain, it would be very important to see a doctor to rule out PAD as an underlying cause and determine appropriate treatment measures.

(The author, Dr. Tapish Sahu, is the HOD of Vascular And Endovascular Surgery, at Manjap Hospital.)

Local to International: Spreading his rhythm of 'Bol' across globe

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Tanmay Bichu, a frequent performer at Indian classical and world music performances, wowed the audiences at four prestigious concerts in the US and India. He began the year with a fully booked solo Kathak performance, where he accompanied the internationally renowned Kathak dancer Shambhavi Dandekar. Since then, he has performed with Pt. Raghunandan Panthikar, at an Ustaad Ali Akbar Khan tribute concert in San Francisco and at a three-day Indian classical music festival called *Ashavari Festival 2024* in California.

The extremely skilled tabla musician then gave us an exclusive interview in which he told us, "I think my maternal side of the family, with a rich Indian classical music heritage going back multiple generations, is where I get my musical genes from. Growing up, I was surrounded by music all the time, whether it was from my mother's singing classes or practice or from my uncle's tabla sessions. During my early years, I used to accompany my maternal uncle Shree Vinayak Naik to all of his tabla sessions, where I would sit on his lap while he played the tablas and instructed his students." Even when he was two years old, when he was able to sit up straight and reach up to the Tablas, which was taller than him, the sounds of the Tablas must have struck a chord with him the most! When his parents and uncle witnessed him playing the rhythms to hit songs on the radio, they discovered he had a natural aptitude for the tabla and rhythms. "I would use my entire palm to recreate the rhythms on the tabla, even though my fingers were too little. After we relocated to various places, I would spend all of my summer breaks at my maternal uncle's house, where I would attend all of his academy lessons and study tabla for more than eight to ten hours every day," the well-known tabla player continues.

He has his master, Pandit Ramdas Palsule, as an ideal model. Tanmay informed us that his guru, an engineer, operated a successful business out of his home office. Tanmay saw firsthand the extraordinary discipline he possessed in handling his work and his demanding practice regimen since Tanmay

Renowned tabla performer Tanmay Bichu dazzled the crowd at his most recent US and Indian gigs. In a special interview with *The Pioneer*, he talks about his family's musical history, his early preference for tabla and leaving a lasting impression on the world

used to spend a lot of time at his house learning from him during his undergraduate years. Tanmay has been influenced by him all of his life and tries to emulate him. We learned about the distinctive method through studying with a number of distinguished tabla masters from various *gharanas*: "My training in India came from the *Farukhabad Gharana*, which is the well-known tabla style in Maharashtra. Given that *Farukhabad* features a number of compositions that are primarily finger-based, I believe it helped me increase my finger strength and dexterity." Tanmay began studying under Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri, the leader of the *Lucknow Gharana*, after relocating to the United States. He has been studying carnatic rhythms for over 8 years and he has done a great job incorporating them into his repertoire. By adding a lot of dynamics to his performance, it enables him to demonstrate quite different playing styles (powerful and subtle) within the same performance when he is performing a tabla solo. Ustaad Zakir Hussain, unquestionably one of the most important Indian musicians of the time, has also been a teacher to him. He told us more, like, "Every performance is very dear to me and there is so much to learn every time I perform," making this chat so much more engaging. "Based on the recent shows, the *Ashavari Festival* is clearly unique. When renowned Tabla musicians like Pandit Samar Saha and Pandit Ashish Sengupta came to speak with me in person and bestowed upon me their heartfelt congratulations for my musical endeavours, I was ecstatic." Curious about his thoughts on conceptualising his excellent

collaborations, he said, "Preparing for a performance, especially when with other musicians, is a very abstract idea; as you know, Indian classical music is nearly totally improvised on stage. I consider it to be a lifelong process of preparation for every performance. When I was a child, cassette or CD recordings of Indian classical music were constantly playing in our home. Every time I came home, my dad insisted on having music playing in our home. That, I believe, had a significant impact on my musical journey." With a recent performance called the "Melodic Science" concert that left us speechless, he demonstrated the other side of music to us. He says, "Indian classical music is viewed as being very spiritual, but there has also been a strong scientific basis to this music. We decided to highlight this aspect and inform the audience about the science underlying Indian music because the connection with science is rarely discussed. Furthermore, we believed that the BMM Convention, which was taking place in Silicon Valley, would be the ideal audience for discussing this subject. We conducted extensive research on this subject and covered a wide range of subjects, including how the brain processes music, the reasons behind an octave's seven notes, the effects of



posture on music, the definition of perfect pitch and the effects of music on our mental states, including the chemical and neural reactions in our brains." He attempts to enter a meditative state during practice and strengthen his bond with his tablas because he devotes a lot more time to his *riyaz* than to performing on stage. However, he shared an extremely fascinating narrative that drew our attention: "When I perform in the USA, I frequently encounter audiences who are seeing tabla for the first time or who are even attending an Indian classical music concert for the first time. And that's where having an education helps."

In a kind message to our readers, Tanmay says that when you consider how much time has been invested in the development of this music to its current state, you will realise that a great deal of thought must have gone into creating it and that only ideas and concepts that were genuinely timeless could have endured over the years. Tanmay, therefore, thinks that traditional wisdom is crucial. The aim is to instill in the student a deep appreciation for music and foster an internal comprehension of musical aesthetics. This will ultimately empower the student to improvise and generate visually appealing ideas. He still listens to the works of the past maestros every day in order to be inspired by their timeless knowledge. "Traditional transmission is critical to the survival of our culture because it is the only way it can endure. However, I don't think I've yet reached the point where I feel completely prepared to teach. It is challenging to find time for teaching when you have a full-time engineering job in addition to a demanding practice and performance schedule for music. I currently dedicate all of my time to assimilating my Gurus' teachings, learning the subtleties of the many *Gharanas* and developing a solid theoretical and practical understanding of our music," he concludes.

what's brewing?



Divine Aura & Inner Voice, a solo painting exhibition by artist Chaitali Maji, took place. In the presence of artists, the show was opened by Smita Sabarwal, Member Secretary of the Telangana Finance Commission; Dr. K. Lakshmi, Director, Sports Authority of Telangana; M.V. Ramana Reddy, President, Hyderabad Art Society. Visitors will be able to view the display through July 21.

● Dr.K.Lakshmi

● Chaitali Maji

● Smita Sabarwal



● Sri



● Prakash and Janavi

Parliamentary candidate Etela Rajender opened the wedding collection house Rameshwari Silks on street no.8 in Habsiguda. Attendees included former MLA Betti Subhash Reddy, party in-charge of the Constituency Congress, Parameshwar Reddy and other dignitaries.

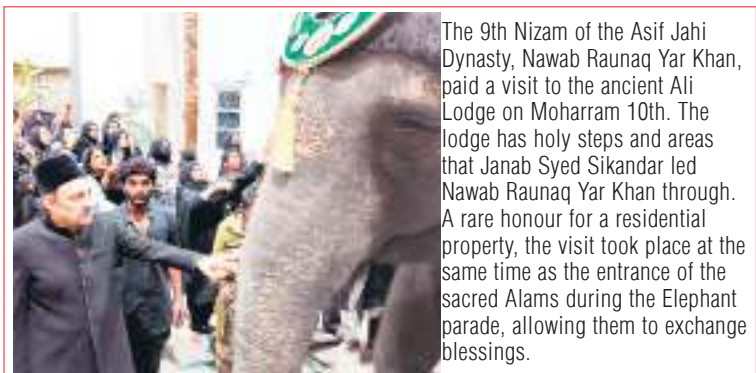


● Saikumar and Umamaheswari



Amid the grounds of his Madanapalle Ashram, nestled deep amid the gorgeous grasslands of rural Andhra Pradesh, spiritual master Sri M today sanctified a stunning, artistically crafted, huge pillared temple dedicated to Adinath Sri Guru Babaji. The temple was officially opened to the public following a moving Prana Pratishtha ceremony led by Minister of Road, Transport, and Highways, Nitin Gadkari. The ceremony featured a calm depiction of Babaji seated within a rough-hewn rock grotto in deep concentration.

PARTY



The 9th Nizam of the Asif Jahi Dynasty, Nawab Raunaq Yar Khan, paid a visit to the ancient Ali Lodge on Moharram 10th. The lodge has holy steps and areas that Janab Syed Sikandar led Nawab Raunaq Yar Khan through. A rare honour for a residential property, the visit took place at the same time as the entrance of the sacred Alams during the Elephant parade, allowing them to exchange blessings.



A highlight of India's motorsport calendar, the Indian Racing Festival is getting ready for its eagerly awaited 2024 season with the exciting addition of Bollywood icon Arjun Kapoor. With this partnership, Arjun makes his multi-year debut in the motorsport world.

Photos by - SV Chary



Savour the essence of Bonalu as The Park Hyderabad commemorates the occasion with an exclusive brunch. The celebrations will begin on July 21 and last through July 28. The brunch seeks to showcase the diversity of Telangana's cuisine and culture.



The opening of the Hyderabad-based School of Design Innovation has been announced by Mahindra University. Students will have the chance to learn from some of the top designers in the world and in India thanks to partnerships with the Pininfarina Design Academy in Torino, Italy and Shenoy Innovation Studio IDC IITB. August 15, 2024 is the first day of classes for the Bachelor of Design program.



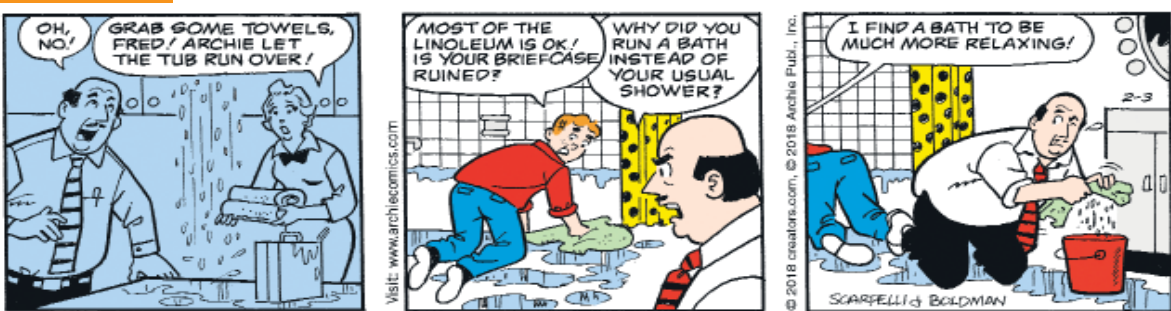
Apollo Diagnostics, a division of Apollo Health and Lifestyle Ltd., opened the nation's 140th processing lab in Tirupati. Aranii Srenevasulu, MLA, Tirupati Assembly Constituency, was the chief guest during the opening of the cutting edge Apollo Diagnostics facility. In addition to this lab, Apollo Diagnostics offers six patient care clinics in the area and 115 more centers in the state of Andhra Pradesh.



Veedol has signed up cricket legend Sourav Ganguly as its brand ambassador.

FUN

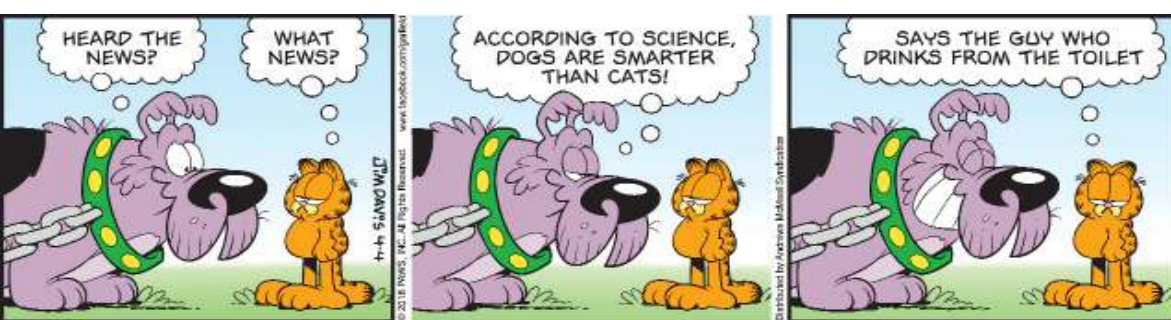
ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



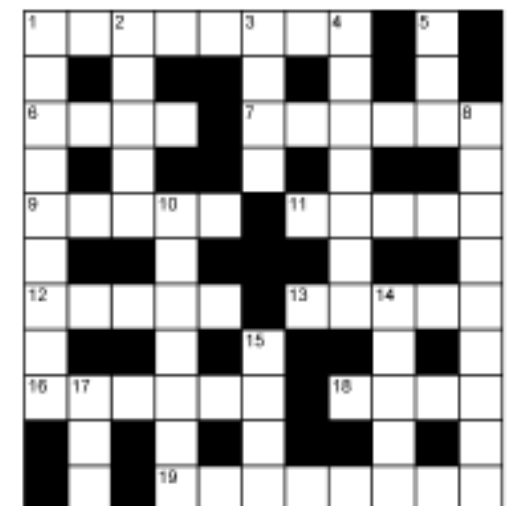
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

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

ACROSS
 1 A large extinct animal
 6 Do this in water
 7 Me
 9 A friendly word for a cat
 11 Feathered creatures
 12 The same in value
 13 This animal has no legs
 16 Turned over and over on the ground
 18 A group of players on one side in a game
 19 All the bones in your body

DOWN
 1 Vanish
 2 Hit these in with a hammer
 3 A large number of soldiers

4 A person from Moscow
 5 Unwell
 8 Someone who catches fish
 10 Houses for horses
 14 Wide awake and watchful
 15 Doing nothing, lazy
 17 A bird that hunts at night

SOLUTION

N	I	D	O	U				
L	O	C	M	O	T	I	V	E
A	D	V	E	R				
R	I	G	H	A	T	A		
S	H	I	N	G	H	E	R	
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GINGER MEGGS



Ashwin Babu discusses the depths of Shivam Bhaje

PNS | HYDERABAD

EXCERPTS FROM THE INTERVIEW:

Q: Can you delve into the unique aspects of your character in Shivam Bhaje?

Ashwin Babu: The story around my character is exceptionally unique, filled with deep emotions that really resonated with me. It was this emotional depth that initially drew me to the role. The character's journey is intricate and meaningful, which made the role very compelling.

Q: How did you prepare to embody a character within a rich and diverse narrative?

Ashwin Babu: I didn't prepare extensively for this role; instead, I placed my trust in the script and in the divine inspiration of Lord Shiva. I focused on staying true to the narrative and letting the character's essence guide my performance.

Q: How was your experience working with director Apsar and the rest of the cast?

Ashwin Babu: Working with director Apsar was a revelation. His script was impressive, especially given that he comes from an Islamic background and crafted a narrative centered on Lord Shiva's



divine power. It was truly remarkable. Digangana Suryavanshi is a dedicated and talented artist, and collaborating with her was a pleasure. The set was filled with memorable moments, and the camaraderie among the cast made the experience enriching.

Q: How did the technical aspects influence your performance and the overall storytelling?

Ashwin Babu: The teaser's success is a testament to the hard work of our entire crew. Our editor, Ravi, deserves special mention for his exceptional work, which was even praised by S.S. Thaman. This is my second film with him, and he consistently delivers top-notch results. The CG work, thanks to our director and producer, was meticulously executed within budget constraints, adding significant depth to the storytelling.

Q: What was your reaction to the audience's positive feedback and how do you think it sets the tone for the film's release?

Ashwin Babu: I'm thrilled with the positive response to the teaser. It's incredibly exciting to see the audience's enthusiasm. I believe the film will be even more thrilling than the teaser suggests and I'm confident it will exceed expectations upon release.

Q: How did Vikas Badisa's score contribute to the atmosphere of

Shivam Bhaje and do you have a favourite piece from the soundtrack?

Ashwin Babu: Vikas Badisa's score is indeed a highlight of the film. The track *Poonakalu Loading* is a showstopper and really stands out. I'm sure Vikas will become even busier with his talent being showcased in this film. His music added a significant layer of atmosphere and depth to the film.

Q: Is there a personal or spiritual connection you felt with the story or your character that influenced your performance in Shivam Bhaje?

Ashwin Babu: As a devotee of Lord Shiva, I felt a profound spiritual connection throughout the shoot. The divine and positive vibrations I experienced helped me deliver my best performance and brought a genuine authenticity to the role.

Q: After Shivam Bhaje, what types of roles or genres are you interested in exploring next?

Ashwin Babu: I'm always excited about exploring different and unique stories. Currently, I'm working on a suspense thriller, and we've completed about 40% of the shooting. I'm looking forward to bringing more diverse roles to the screen in the future.

Ashwin Babu's dedication to his craft and his enthusiasm for future projects suggest an exciting trajectory ahead. Fans eagerly await *Shivam Bhaje* and the promising work he has in the pipeline.

VARUN TEJ'S MATKA WRAPS UP RFC SCHEDULE, NEW PHASE IN VIZAG



Mega Prince Varun Tej is fully immersed in the production of his ambitious Pan-India film *Matka*, which is making significant progress. Directed by Karuna Kumar and produced by Dr. Vijender Reddy Teegala and Rajani Thalluri under Vyra Entertainments and SRT Entertainments, *Matka* is shaping up to be Varun Tej's most expensive and challenging project to date.

The film has recently concluded an extensive and pivotal shooting schedule at RFC. This phase saw the team working in meticulously crafted vintage sets that capture the essence and charm of Vizag from a bygone era. The schedule included the filming of crucial scenes, high-octane action sequences and vibrant retro-themed musical numbers. A new poster from the film showcases Nora Fatehi in a glamorous retro look, elegantly posing in a colorful pub setting. Known for her exceptional dance skills, Nora will shine in the retro songs choreographed by Jani Master, promising to highlight her dancing prowess.

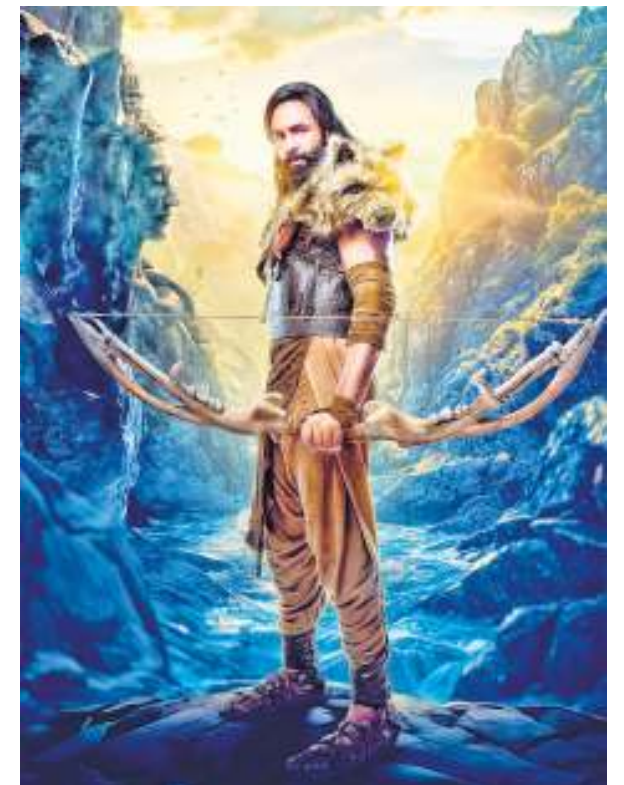
Currently, the production has shifted to a new schedule in Vizag, progressing rapidly. Varun Tej is tackling one of the most demanding roles of his career, requiring multiple makeovers as the narrative spans 24 years, from 1958 to 1982. Meenakshi Chaudhary also stars in the film, which is anticipated to be a landmark project in Varun Tej's career, thanks to its high production values and the authentic recreation of vintage Vizag.

OPERATION RAAVAN RELEASE PREPONED TO JULY 26

Rakshit Atturi, who gained acclaim with his performance in the 2020 hit *Palasa 1978*, is set to headline the upcoming bilingual thriller *Operation Raavan*. Originally scheduled for an August 2 release, the film's release date has now been moved up to July 26, as announced by the filmmakers.

The announcement was accompanied by a fresh set of posters featuring the tagline 'A Psycho Story,' which hints at the film's intense narrative. Produced by Dhyan Atturi, *Operation Raavan* is a modern suspense thriller directed and written by debutant Venkata Satya, with dialogues penned by Lakshmi Lohit Pujari. The film stars Radikaa Sarathkumar and Sangeethana Vipin in pivotal roles and includes a supporting cast of Charan Raj, Vidya Sagar, Rocket Raghava, Raghu Kunche, KA Paul Ramu, and Karthik.

The music for the film is composed by Saravana Vasudevan, while Satya Giduthuri handles editing. Cinematography is done by Nani Chamidishetty, and Nani T oversees the art direction. With its release now set for July 26, *Operation Raavan* promises to deliver a gripping cinematic experience.



December release locked for Kannappa

Actor Vishnu Manchu has officially revealed that his highly anticipated film *Kannappa* is set to hit theaters in December 2024. On July 18, Manchu took to X (formerly Twitter) to announce the release window, stating, "December 2024 #Kannappa #HarHarMahadev (sic)."

Kannappa is a grand mythological fantasy directed by Mukesh Kumar and is currently nearing completion. The film, which tells the story of a devoted follower of Hindu god Shiva, has already created a buzz in the film industry. The teaser, first showcased at the Cannes Film Festival in May, garnered significant attention and was officially released in India on June 14, receiving a warm reception from audiences. The film features a star-studded cast, including Mohan Babu, Sarathkumar, Mukesh

Rishi, Brahmanandam, Madhoo and Preity Mukundan. It also includes special appearances by Prabhas, Akshay Kumar, Mohanlal and Kajal Aggarwal.

Vishnu Manchu, who also penned the screenplay, has collaborated with Paruchuri Gopala Krishna, Eshwar Reddy, G. Nageswara Reddy and Thota Prasad for the film's production. The film's music, composed by Mani Sharma and Stephen Devasi, is expected to further enhance its epic narrative.

The film was shot in New Zealand, adding a unique visual flair to its mythological storytelling.

Produced by Ava Entertainment and 24 Frames Factory, *Kannappa* is poised to be a major release in December, with the official date to be confirmed in the coming months.

TEJUS KANCHERLA'S NEXT URUKU PATELA IS URIKIFIED

Rising star Tejus Kancherla, acclaimed for his performances in films like *Hushaaru*, is set to make waves with his new project, *Uruku Patela*. Known for his versatility and dedication, Kancherla is now channeling his energy into creating compelling and unique content that resonates deeply with audiences.

The much-anticipated first look of *Uruku Patela* has just been released, showcasing Kancherla in a captivating pose that piques interest. The poster features the actor in a dynamic action sequence against a rural backdrop, suggesting a blend of entertainment and emotional depth. The film's

tagline, "Get Urikified," hints at a distinctive cinematic experience.

Directed by Vivek Reddy and produced by Kancherla Bala Bhanu under Lead Edge Pictures, *Uruku Patela* promises a high-quality production with cinematography by Sunny Kurrapati and a soundtrack by Pravin Lakkaraju. With shooting completed and post-production underway, the film is gearing up for its theatrical release, with the date to be announced soon.

With a talented team and an engaging storyline, *Uruku Patela* is poised to captivate audiences and offer a fresh, creative perspective in Indian cinema.



Arivu makes a powerful comeback after 5-year hiatus

The Indian music industry is buzzing with excitement as Tamil Hip-Hop and Folk Pop sensation Arivu releases his highly anticipated album, *Valliamma Peraandi Vol. 01*. After a five-year hiatus, Arivu makes a monumental return with a 12-track album that promises to be the next big thing in the music scene.

Known for his ground-breaking single *Enjoy Enjaami*, which garnered 80 to 85 million audio streams and over 480 million YouTube views, Arivu's new album is poised to redefine the landscape of South Indian music. As one of the largest non-film album launches in South India, *Valliamma Peraandi Vol. 01* blends Pop, R&B, EDM, Drill, Romance, and Emancipation, all while maintaining Arivu's signature hard-hitting song writing.

Featuring standout collaborations like *Rasaathi* with Punjabi talent Rishmeet Kaur and *Sarbaaga* featuring Ambassa bandmates Gaana Balachandrar and Chellamuthu, the album showcases an unexpected and refreshing side of Arivu's music.

Fans will also be thrilled by tracks like *Thodadha* and *Kangaani* which stay true to Arivu's impactful lyrical style. The album explores the romantic side of Arivu with songs such as *Maala* and *Diamond Baby*, adding a new dimension to his artistry. Expressing his excitement, Arivu shared, "I am beyond excited to return with an album after five long years! This album is lots of fun, love, swag with a beautiful message. For the first time, I have experimented with many themes and soundscapes which are close to my heart. It's going to be a multi-genre experience with diverse influences ranging from drill rap to the most heart-melting melodies. Can't wait for it to release and can't wait to perform it live. Stay tuned! Brother Bigson Madela is coming!" From hard-hitting lyrics to soulful melodies, this album captures the essence of Arivu's artistry and his ability to connect deeply with his audience. *Valliamma Peraandi Vol. 01* delivers an eclectic mix of genres and emotions, creating an immersive experience that resonates with both long-time fans and new listeners.

Dheeraj Mogilineni addresses challenges faced for Peka Medalu

At the pre-release event for *Peka Medalu*, producer Dheeraj Mogilineni shared his concerns about the difficulties faced by small films in the current market. Despite the ticket prices being set at Rs 100, he noted the challenges in releasing smaller films and emphasised the need for support from the industry.

The film, which is set to release on July 19, has garnered significant backing from prominent figures such as Rana Daggubati, Adivi Sesh and Viswak Sen. Produced by Rakesh Varre and coming from Crazy Ants Productions, *Peka Medalu* features Vinod Kishan as the lead and Anusha Krishna as the heroine, with direction by Nilagiri Maamilla. The film focuses on women's empowerment and has received positive feedback from special shows in Vizag and Vijayawada.

Dheeraj Mogilineni, who is also distributing the film, expressed his appreciation for the support and outlined his promotional strategies. He stated, "I believe this film has the potential to resonate strongly with audiences if given the right exposure. The challenge lies

in attracting viewers to smaller films, especially when ticket prices are higher. To make it accessible, we've set ticket prices at Rs100 and planned paid premieres in multiple cities, including Vijayawada, Vizag, and Hyderabad, with tickets priced at Rs 50. The positive response from those who have seen the film

so far gives me confidence that it will be well-received." Director Nilagiri Maamilla also thanked the media for their support and described the positive response to the paid premieres as a promising sign. "I'm very confident about the film's success and grateful to Dheeraj for his support in bringing it to audiences. I

hope the film will be loved by the viewers."

Heroine Anusha Krishna expressed gratitude for the media's support and encouraged everyone to watch the film. "The passion we poured into this project will resonate with the audience. We hope the film's release on the 19th will be a success, thanks to everyone's support."

Hero Vinod Kishan was excited about the positive feedback from the premieres and highlighted the innovative promotions. "The response has been encouraging, and I'm hopeful that audiences will enjoy and support the film."

Producer Rakesh Varre echoed the sentiments of gratitude towards the media and supporters. "The media has been instrumental in promoting our film, and we appreciate all the positive responses. Special thanks to Dheeraj for his support and to Rana Daggubati, Adivi Sesh and Viswak Sen for their encouragement. We are optimistic that the audience will embrace *Peka Medalu* and make it a success." With its release approaching, *Peka Medalu* is set to make an impact, bolstered by strong industry support and a dedicated promotional effort.



INDIA BEGIN WOMEN'S ASIA CUP DEFENCE WITH CLASH AGAINST PAK

PTI ■ DAMBULLA

The Women's Asia Cup is set for a blockbuster start when defending champions India take on arch-foes Pakistan in a prime-time clash here on Friday, with the eight competing teams hoping to firm up their combinations ahead of the T20 World Cup in October. Harmanpreet Kaur's India are the team to beat going into this iteration of the Asia Cup, having won the competition three out of four times in the T20 version and each of the four times in 50-overs format. Additionally, India are also the most successful team in the Women's Asia Cup T20 with 17 wins in 20 matches. They beat Bangladesh in the final of the last edition in 2022.



India's record against Pakistan has also been stellar in the shortest format with 11 wins against three defeats in 14 matches so far and Kaur's team will lean on it in addition to the rich form shown in recent outings to clinch the Group A clash here. While India are coming off a 1-1 draw against South Africa earlier this month with the second of the three T20s being washed out, Pakistan will be short on game-time as well as confidence since their last outing was in England in May when the hosts blanked them 3-0.

Smriti Mandhana's rich form with the bat will be India's greatest weapon at the top of the order but the biggest gain from recent all-format outings has been the way their bowling has shaped up, with pacers and spinners putting on a combined show. India pacer Pooja Vastrakar's eight wickets across three outings against South Africa indicate her form but additionally, Radha Yadav's successful return to the mix of

spinners has been encouraging. The spin attack also includes Deepti Sharma, Sajeevan Sajana and the sprightly Shreyanka Patil. Even though Pakistan retained Nida Dar as skipper for the Asia Cup, the squad has undergone significant overhaul since the debacle in England. Three players, Iram Javed, Omaira Sohail, Syeda Aroob Shah, who have not played any matches so far this year, were included with the uncapped Tasmia Rubab

while six others were dropped. **Nepal, UAE look to make their mark** Also placed in Group A are Nepal and the United Arab Emirates who will face off here earlier in the day at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium. The top two teams from the group will play in the semifinals. While Nepal are returning to the competition for the first time since 2016, UAE are set for their second consecutive appearance and will be high on confidence having won more than half of their matches this year. The lack of game-time will be a concern for Nepal whose last outing was in mid February when they lost to Malaysia in the Asian Cricket Council's Women's Premier Cup. UAE were last seen in action in May when they lost in the T20 World Cup Qualifier semifinal to Sri Lanka. Teams (from):

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Uma Chetry (wk), Pooja Vastrakar, Deepti Sharma, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh, D Hemalatha, Asha Sobhana, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil, Sajeevan Sajana. **Pakistan:** Nida Dar (c), Aliya Riaz, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Gull Feroza, Iram Javed, Muneeba Ali, Najiha Alvi (wk), Nashra Sandhu, Omaira Sohail, Sadia Iqbal, Sidra Amin, Syeda Aroob Shah, Tasmia Rubab, Tuba Hassan.

Match starts at 7pm (IST) **Nepal:** Indu Barma (capt), Sita Rana Magar, Rajmati Airee, Rubina Chhetry, Dolly Bhatta, Mamta Chaudhary, Kabita Joshi, Kabita Kunwar, Kritika Marasini, Puja Mahato, Bindu Rawal, Roma Thapa, Sabnam Rai, Samjana Khadka, Kajal Sreshtha (wk). **UAE:** Esha Oza (c), Theertha Satish (wk), Emily Thomas, Samaira Dharnidharka, Kavisha Egodage, Lavanya Keny, Khushi Sharma, Indhuja Nandakumar, Rinitha Rajith, Rishitha Rajith, Vaishnav Mahesh, Suraksha Kotte, Heena Hotchandani, Mehak Thakur, Rithika Rajith.

Geoffrey Boycott undergoes successful surgery

PTI ■ LONDON



England cricketing great Sir Geoffrey Boycott has undergone a successful surgery to remove a tumour from his throat, his daughter Emma said. The former England batter had undergone extensive chemotherapy for the same in 2002. But in May, the 83-year-old learnt his cancer had returned. "Just to let everyone know my Father, Geoffrey, has successfully come out of surgery this evening after a 3 hour operation to remove his throat cancer. "Yet to see him but surgeon says it went well. He asked that I post an update," Boycott's daughter Emma tweeted from the cricketer's account on Wednesday. In his illustrious career spanning 1964 to 1982, Boycott scored 100 first-class hundreds while amassing over 8,000 runs in 108 Tests at an average of nearly 48. Former Australia player and head coach Darren Lehmann reacted to the news along with ex-England players Alan Butcher and Michael Vaughan, who posted a red heart on X. "Thanks for the update, please pass on our thoughts to the whole family and

glad the surgery went well," Lehmann wrote, while Butcher wrote, "Great news". While announcing his diagnosis last month Boycott had said, "In the last few weeks, I have had an MRI Scan, CT Scan, a PET Scan, and two biopsies, and it has now been confirmed I have throat cancer and will require an operation." "From past experience, I realize that to overcome cancer a second time I will need excellent medical treatment and quite a bit of luck, and even if the operation is successful, every cancer patient knows they have to live with the possibility of it returning. So I will just get on with it and hope for the best," he added.



Quintal becomes 1st Indian rider to compete at World Superbike

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Rider Kavin Quintal is all set to make a historic debut at the WorldSBK SSP300 competitions and become the first Indian rider to participate in a World Superbike Championship. Thanks to the opportunity provided by the Irish team, Team#109 Retro Traffic Kawasaki and its management company Gaman Racing Global Service, Quintal's entry was accepted for the SSP event in the fourth round which begins at Most, Czech Republic on Friday. SBK, founded in 1988, is an event for heavily modified production sports motorcycles and consists of a series of rounds held on permanent racing facilities. The 19-year Chennai star, Quintal, will be filling in for the Irish team's main rider, Spaniard Daniel Mogeda, who suffered an injury after leading the Supersport 300 class, in an unfortunate crash that paved the way for the Irish team to rope in the

Indian. Quintal, a world-class rider, is currently competing in the European Stock Championship within the FIM JuniorGP and in the Asia Road Racing Championship. In the three rounds of JuniorGP, Quintal had a top-10 finish. As a rider, who took his baby steps at 13, he was the youngest to earn points in the Indian National events. He went on to win the Talent Cup twice, in 2021 and 2023, in India. Later, after the Asia Talent Cup events, he soon blossomed into a mature rider, moving to Europe. "It is a great opportunity that I will try to learn and enjoy at the same time. I will be able to show my maximum level together with a great team that surrounds this structure. I would like to thank the team for this opportunity," Quintal said. The practice sessions will be on Friday followed by a race each on Saturday and Sunday at Most, Czech Republic.

Mandaviya to inaugurate phase 2 of talent identification programme

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Making use of the buzz around the upcoming Paris Olympics, Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya will inaugurate the second phase of the government's ambitious Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) programme here on Friday. The first phase of KIRTI was launched by Mandaviya's predecessor in the post, Anurag Thakur, in

Chandigarh on March 12. KIRTI aims to conduct 20 lakh assessments across the country throughout the year to identify promising athletes through notified Talent Assessment Centres. A scouting and assessment programme of this scale is a first in India. KIRTI's athlete-centric programme is conspicuous by its transparent selection methodology based on Information Technology, it



was stated in a press release. Data analytics based on Artificial Intelligence are being used to predict the sporting acumen of an aspiring athlete, the release said. In its first phase, out of 3,62,683 registrations across 70 centres, close to 51,000 assessments in 28 states and union territories have been made. Maharashtra and Haryana, two states which have always done well in Khelo India meets, have had the maximum

number of assessments - 9168 and 4820 -- respectively. Assam was third with 4703 assessments. Evaluation of aspiring athletes has happened in 11 disciplines - archery, athletics, badminton, boxing, football, hockey, kabaddi, kho-kho, volleyball, weightlifting and wrestling. Maximum assessments have happened in athletics (13804) and football (13483). Mandaviya will lay emphasis

on the project that aims to achieve 20 lakh assessment in the financial year 2024-25 by "onboarding all states and treating the district as a unit of assessment". The press release said this is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "vision to take sports to every child in the country through mass participation and ultimately achieve excellence through Khelo India's structured pyramidal programmes".

We are on way to making it to next Olympics: CFI secretary general Maninder Pal Singh

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Cycling Federation of India (CFI) secretary general Maninder Pal Singh on Thursday said the COVID-19 pandemic dashed their hopes of participation at Paris Olympics but asserted they "have plans in place" for 2028 Los Angeles Games. The country has won three medals in cycling at the Asian Games but is yet to see representation at the Olympics. When asked about India's failure to qualify for cycling at the Paris Games, Maninder said COVID-19 affected their plans during the qualification campaign. "Cycling is not a sport that you can equate to others when it comes to Olympic qualification. It takes two and a half years to qualify for the Games. Besides taking part in the qualifiers, one needs to



attain points from events of various classes," he told PTI in an interaction arranged by HCL. "This year, we were hopeful of our riders qualifying. But, because of COVID, events in Asia took a hit, unlike Europe, where the riders took the required points to qualify. "Nonetheless, we are well on our way to making it to the next Olympics (in Los

Angeles). We have our plans in place and are both hopeful and confident of qualifying for the first time." Maninder further explained the challenges faced by the sport in the country and said infrastructure has a massive role to play in preparing cyclists. "Cycling alone cannot thrive on its riders, but it is hugely dependent on its

infrastructure, not only the equipment but also the coaches. And, it's not easy to get since the infrastructure is very expensive. "About 4-5 years back, there were some velodromes that were not being utilised due to some problems. While Chennai already has one, there's one coming up in Kolkata and also one in the state of Odisha. Currently, we have about 16-17 velodromes in the country," Maninder was in the city on Thursday to launch a cyclothon event, an initiative of the CFI to promote the sport in the country. Besides the cyclothon, he affirmed that plans were in place to produce certified coaches along with some talent hunt programmes. "Other than cyclothon, we have a huge programme in place for the coaches' development.

FIFA RANKINGS India remain on 124th position, toppers Argentina consolidate position

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Success-starved India held on to the 124th position in the FIFA men's rankings released on Thursday, even as reigning world champions and Copa America winners Argentina strengthened their grip at the top of the pecking order. In the FIFA rankings released in June, the Indian men's national football team dropped down three places in the list after its failure to qualify for the third round of the 2026 World Cup Qualifiers after losses to Qatar and Afghanistan. Since December last year, India have been sliding down. They had broken into the top 100 last year, with a best ranking of 99, but since then it has been a downward spiral. In Asia, India remained on the

22nd position, behind the likes of Lebanon, Palestine, and Vietnam. Having successfully defended their Copa America crown, Argentina (1st) tighten their grip at the top of the table. France (2nd) remained their closest challengers, after reaching the semi-finals of EURO 2024. Newly crowned European champions Spain (3rd, up 5) have yet more reason to celebrate after hauling themselves into the top three of the ranking, while beaten finalists England (4th, up 1) were just behind the leading pack, having leapfrogged Brazil (5th, down 1). Belgium (6th, down 3) now find themselves outside the top five, with the Netherlands (7th) and Portugal (8th, down 2) just behind them.

Prannoy focussed on increasing speed ahead of Paris Olympics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

His body has been ravaged by a spate of illnesses, the most recent being a bout of chikungunya, but seasoned Indian badminton player H S Prannoy is unwilling to let it come in the way of a dream Olympic debut that is happening a tad late in his career. He is focussed on building his stamina for the grind that awaits him in Paris later this month and helping him is his coach and former player RMV Gurusaidutt. The 32-year-old Kerala shuttler, a 2022 Thomas Cup title winner and a world and Asian Games bronze-medallist, has battled past a chronic stomach disorder, a nagging back injury, and more recently a week-long bout of the mosquito-borne viral disease. "The preparations that we started after the Australia Open, those are on point, we are on the right track," Gurusaidutt told PTI. "The best thing about Prannoy in this entire journey is that though he was struggling, he was showing

up for training and giving his best. Of course now, since he had another rough patch, it is not easy to get into the winning momentum," he explained. But Gurusaidutt is confident nonetheless and does not feel that the latest illness will trigger "too many changes" in Prannoy's training routine. "He has been that kind of a player who steps up on big occasions. He's done that multiple times over the last three or four years. So, as a coach, me and Gopi sir (national coach Pullela Gopichand) have that confidence in him." Following the high of his world championship bronze in 2023, Prannoy was laid low by another stomach disorder, a condition which was similar to the chronic acid reflux problem that he had suffered in the past. Such was complexity of his illness that it was difficult for him to have a meal without wanting to throw up later. The result was six first-round exits and a semifinal and a quarterfinal appearance this year. But he has



persevered. Gurusaidutt said the coaching team has introduced some specific drills to address the minor issues,

mainly related to speed and enduring long rallies. "We wanted to introduce a few programs. Gopi sir thought he needed to play

longer matches...Based on the last 3-4 tournaments, I particularly felt people were trying to push him at the pace in terms of making him

move quickly. "...There is not too much time for him to get space between the shots. So that was something that we thought we could make it easier for him in training. Otherwise, it was about getting him confidence, and getting his fitness levels up. Those were the major aspects," he said. Elaborating on the need to step up his pace, Gurusaidutt said, "...We wanted work on it to prepare him for somebody playing some sharp shots, and cross-courts. So, it was meant to make him feel comfortable for those things. "So, once he picks those up, he gets into his style, that's where the game changes usually. If somebody is pushing at him constantly, once he is out of that, once he survives it then he gets into his zone again."

"Flexibility and unpredictability will be key" Gurusaidutt, a 2014 Commonwealth Games bronze-medallist, feels Prannoy also needs to move things up, be flexible but not predictable. "We should have a counter when someone is attacking him but also we need to make sure that he's not too defensive. He has to mix up a lot, not be predictable in one style of play." **Want to be a little pressure-free: Prannoy** It will be Prannoy's maiden Olympics and he said he wants to keep things "simple and usual" without taking unnecessary pressure. "I think everyone just wants to talk about Paris. But I just want to be a little bit more pressure-free, kind of enjoy it a little bit more and just take it as one more tournament in my career," Prannoy had said during an earlier interview with PTI. "So from a preparation point of view, I think for me it's really important to kind of get back to basics...I was not there mentally in a lot of matches. So I think that's what I tried to do and just try to be a little bit more simple and usual."