

UNION BUDGET 2024-25

Tax Relief and Revised Tax Slabs in New Tax Regime

Income Slab	Rate
0-3 lakh rupees	Nil
3-7 lakh rupees	5 per cent
7-10 lakh rupees	10 per cent
10-12 lakh rupees	15 per cent
12-15 lakh rupees	20 per cent
Above 15 lakh rupees	30 per cent

Income tax saving of up to ₹ 17,500/- for salaried employee in new tax regime

Income Tax Relief for around Four Crore Salaried Individuals and Pensioners

- Standard deduction for salaried employees to be increased from ₹ 50,000/- to ₹ 75,000/-
- Deduction on family pension for pensioners to be increased from ₹ 15,000/- to ₹ 25,000/-

BUDGET 2024 BOOST TO JOBS, INFRA

NDA allies herald state-specific allocations



Modi 3.0
government's first budget

With rural distress and unemployment being blamed for BJP losing its majority in Lok Sabha, forcing it to rely on partners to form government, Sitharaman in her seventh straight budget provided Rs 2.66 lakh crore for rural development and maintained spending on long-term infrastructure projects at Rs 11.11 lakh crore to boost economic growth.



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday announced a marginal income tax relief for the middle class, a Rs 2 lakh crore outlay for job creation schemes over the next five years and a spending splurge for states run by parties that are needed to keep BJP in power as she unveiled Modi 3.0 government's first budget after the general elections.

With rural distress and unemployment being blamed for BJP losing its majority in Lok Sabha, forcing it to rely on partners to form government, Sitharaman in her seventh straight budget provided Rs



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presenting Union Budget in Lok Sabha on Tuesday

2.66 lakh crore for rural development and maintained spending on long-term infrastructure projects at Rs 11.11 lakh crore to boost economic growth.

She scrapped the 'angel tax' that was imposed on investors pumping money into startups, cut import

duty on mobile phones and key parts to benefit firms like Apple, slashed customs duty on gold and silver to curb smuggling, and made significant changes in capital gains tax. She, however, raised the securities transaction tax (STT) on futures and options of securities, which disappointed the markets. "India's economic growth continues to be the shining exception (in a world that is gripped by policy uncertainties) and will remain so in the years ahead," she said. "In this budget, we particularly focus on employment, skilling, MSMEs, and the middle class."



"Will act as a catalyst in making India the third-largest economy in the world (from fifth largest today) and will lay a solid foundation for a developed India".

- Narendra Modi



'Kursi bachao' Budget. Appease Allies: Hollow promises to them at the cost of other states. Appease Cronies: Benefits to AA with no relief for the common Indian.

- Rahul Gandhi



"The budget is a quid-pro-quo of the BJP for its allies. The Centre will give funds only to states ruled by parties which support it like Bihar and Andhra Pradesh.

- Revanth Reddy



"Whatever form the funds come in, they will be very useful for the state. These funds are crucial for the financially strained AP."

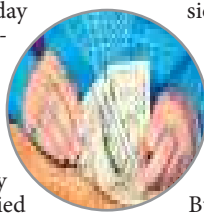
- Chandrababu Naidu

Big relief for salaried

50% hike in standard deduction to Rs 75,000

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

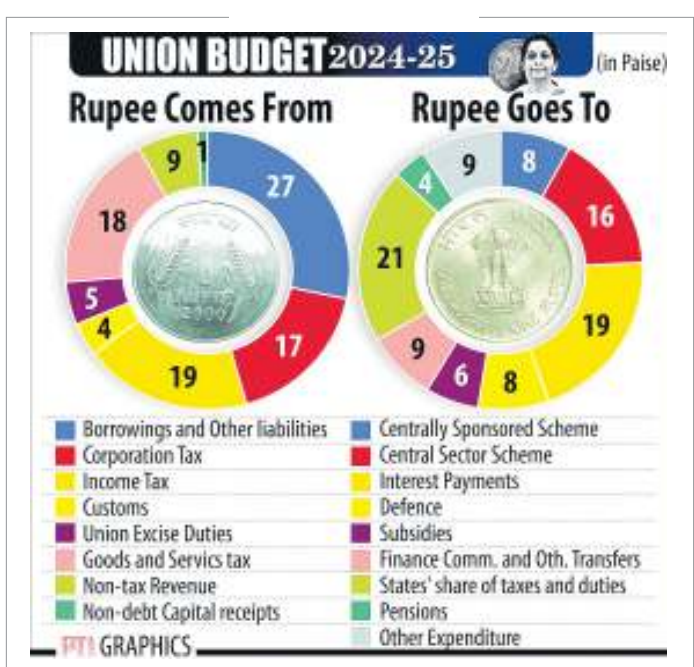
In sops for the middle class, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday announced a 50 per cent hike in standard deduction to Rs 75,000 and tweaked tax slabs under the new income tax regime to provide more money in the hands of salaried class with a view to boost consumption. She said salaried employees in the new tax regime could save up to Rs 17,500 in income tax annually following the changes announced in the Budget.



The standard deduction for salaried employees is proposed to be increased from Rs 50,000 to Rs 75,000 annually. Similarly, deduction on family pension for pensioners is proposed to be enhanced from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000.

"This will provide relief to about four crore salaried individuals and pensioners," Sitharaman said in her Budget speech.

In the last fiscal, more than two-thirds individual taxpayers have availed the new personal income tax regime. Over 8.61 crore I-T returns were filed in 2023-24 fiscal.



Union Budget exposes Centre's bias against TG: Revanth

Says NDA is 'Naidu, Nitish dependent alliance'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said the Union Government's budget reflects its 'vindictive' attitude towards Telangana and described it as a 'Kursi Bachao Budget'. "The Centre has adopted a vindictive stance towards Telangana," he stated. Addressing a media conference

here on Tuesday the CM said, "The budget is a quid-pro-quo of the BJP for its allies. The Centre will give funds only to states ruled by parties which support it like Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. The BJP is stifling the development of Telangana," the CM said. Revanth said that NDA is



nothing but a 'Naidu Nitish Dependent Alliance' and emphasised that he met the Prime Minister three times to request funds for Telangana's development and to maintain good relations between the Centre and the state.

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Import duty on mobile phones, chargers slashed



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Tuesday proposed slashing import duty on mobile phones, chargers and some components that are used for manufacturing of handsets in the Union Budget for fiscal year 2024-25.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said with a three-fold increase in domestic production and almost 100-fold jump in exports of mobile phones over the last six years, the Indian mobile phone industry has matured.

"In the interest of consumers, I now propose to reduce the BCD (basic customs duty) on mobile phone, mobile PCBA and mobile charger to 15 per cent," Sitharaman said.

Mobile phone industry body ICEA said that the move will enhance export competitiveness of India in the segment.

Direct, indirect taxes comprise 63 paise of every rupee in govt coffers



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

For every rupee in the government coffers, the biggest pie of 63 paise will come from direct and indirect taxes, according to the Union Budget 2024-25 documents.

The remaining 27 paise will come from borrowings and other liabilities, 9 paise from non-tax revenue like disinvestment, and 1 paise from non-debt capital receipts, the Budget documents said. In all, 36 paise will come from direct taxes, including corporate and individual income tax. Income tax will yield 19 paise, while corporate tax will account for 17 paise, it said.

Among indirect taxes, goods and services tax (GST) will contribute the maximum 18 paise in every rupee of revenue. Besides, the government is looking to earn 5 paise out of every rupee from excise duty and 4 paise from customs levy.

The collection from "borrowings and other liabilities" will be 27 paise per rupee, as per the Union Budget 2024-25 presented in Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday.

The Budget documents provide a fractional break-up for Re 1 that comes in and gets spent.

AP reaps rich in Budget

Rs 15,000 cr allocated for Amaravati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The major allocations to Andhra Pradesh in the Union Budget 2024-25, announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday, are a boon for the comprehensive development of the State, focusing on industrial development, infrastructure, and social welfare. The major allocations in the budget include Rs 15,000 crore for

Amaravati Capital City, Rs 10,000 crore for the Polavaram project, Rs 5,000 crore for the Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor, and more.

A special financial support allocation of Rs 15,000 crore has been earmarked for the development of Andhra Pradesh's capital city, Amaravati, in line with the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act.



the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act.

Continued on Page 2

Bonanza for Bihar

Over Rs 60k cr outlay for airports, e-ways and other projects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Budget for FY25 on Tuesday unveiled big-ticket measures for Bihar, proposing a total outlay of over Rs 60,000 crore for various projects, including funding for three expressways, a power plant, heritage corridors and new airports and sports infrastructure. In the annual Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced Centre's support for development of three road connectivity projects -- Patna-Purnea Expressway,

Continued on Page 2

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- Allocation to NHA retained at Rs 1.68 lakh crore for FY25
- Khelo India gets lion's share of Budget allocation for sports
- Govt proposes Rs 26,000 crore for various road projects in Bihar
- Defence budget pegged at Rs 6.21 lakh crore for 2024-25
- Govt slashes import duty on mobile phones, chargers, some components
- FM says will evolve solution on New Pension Scheme to address relevant issues
- FM cuts customs duty on lithium, cobalt for energy transition
- Union Budget pledges Rs 15,000 crore for AP capital Amaravati
- Customs duties on gold, silver slashed to 6 per cent in Budget 2024-25
- Jobs for youth, tax rejigs for salaried class
- Govt to abolish angel tax on investments in startups
- Customs duty on gold, silver cut to 6%
- Rs 5,000 monthly internship allowance announced for 1 crore youth
- FM allocates Rs 1.52 lakh cr for agri, allied sectors
- Budget provides Rs 1.48 lakh cr for education, employment, skill
- New Tax Regime standard deduction increased to Rs 75,000
- Rs 3 crore additional houses under PMAY have been announced



SC rules out cancellation of NEET-UG

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major setback to unsuccessful aspirants of NEET-UG 2024, the Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed the pleas seeking cancellation and re-test of the controversy-ridden exam, holding that there was no evidence on record to conclude that it was "vitiated" on account of "systemic breach" of its sanctity.

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Subsidy bill cut by 7.8% to Rs 3.81 lakh crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move that signals fiscal prudence, the government reduced its subsidy outlay for food, fertiliser, and fuel by 7.8 per cent in the full Budget for 2024-25, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. The total subsidy allocation stands at Rs 3,81,175 crore for the current fiscal, down from the previous year's figure of Rs 4,13,466 crore. This reduction aligns with the estimates projected in February's interim budget. Breaking down the allocations, the food subsidy has been set at Rs 2,05,250 crore, a decrease from the revised estimates of Rs 2,12,332 crore for the fiscal ending March 31, 2024.



This subsidy covers the difference between the economic cost of food grains procured by the government and their sales realisation under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and other welfare schemes, benefiting approximately 80 crore individuals.

The fertiliser subsidy has seen a more significant cut, with Rs 1,64,000 crore earmarked for 2024-25 against the revised estimates of Rs 1,88,894 crore for the previous fiscal.

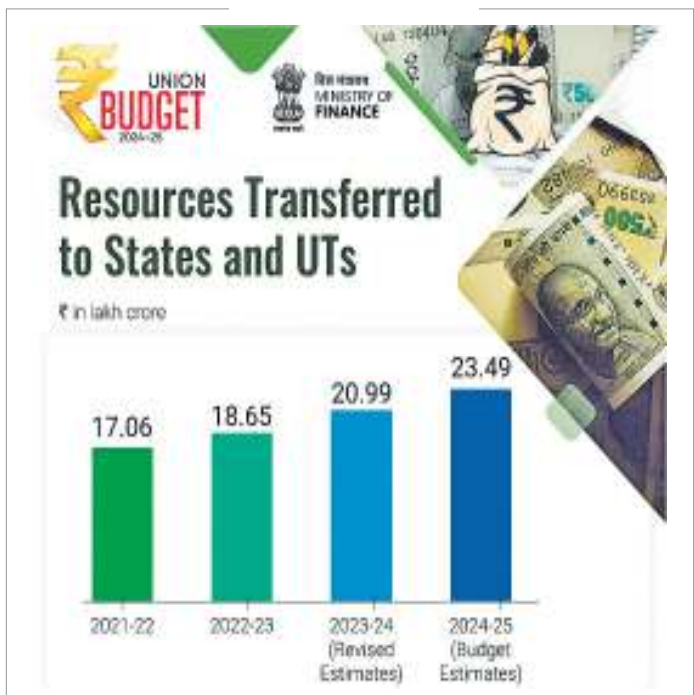
'Kursi bachao Budget'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday dubbed the Union Budget a "kursi bachao budget" and claimed it makes "hollow promises" to BJP allies at the cost of other states. The former Congress chief also claimed that the budget was "copy and paste" job of the Congress manifesto for 2024 polls and previous budgets.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the budget for 2024-25, her seventh straight presentation, surpassing the record of former prime minister Morarji Desai. This is the first budget in Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's third term in office.

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In 2017, the Rail Budget was merged with the Union Budget.

The lock-in that follows the 'halwa ceremony' is observed to maintain secrecy around the budget. For, the Union Budget was leaked in the year 1950.

Govt to set up working women hostels: FM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government will set up working women hostels to promote the participation of women in the workforce, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said while presenting the Budget in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday.



BJP leaders hail budget for focus on all-round, inclusive development

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior BJP leaders, including Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and J P Nadda, heaped praise on the budget on Tuesday, lauding its vision and focus on all-round and inclusive development.

Revanth moots meet of southern CMs against Centre's bias

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy mooted a meeting of South Indian Chief Ministers to highlight the Centre's discrimination towards southern states.



RS 1.5 LAKH CRORE IS FOR DEVELOPING HYD AND NOT FOR MUSI PROJECT ALONE: CM

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that Rs 1.5 lakh crore will be spent for Hyderabad's development in the next five years.

Riverfront Project but it covers the Regional Ring Road, Metro extension, sewage treatment plants and others. The CM also dismissed the claims of the KTR and said that they will go as per plan.

Unemployment biggest challenge, gov't response 'too little': Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Slamming the Union Budget, the Congress on Tuesday said unemployment is the "biggest challenge facing the country" and the government's response is "too little" and will have little impact on the "grave situation".

Govt announces 12 industrial parks near 100 cities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Tuesday announced the development of 'plug and play' industrial parks in or near 100 cities, in partnership with states and the private sector to boost manufacturing.

Mamata dubs Union Budget politically biased, anti-poor

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday dubbed the Union Budget "anti-poor and politically biased" and accused the central government of neglecting the state's interests.

The TMC supremo said people of Bengal will protest if the Centre continued to deprive the state. Banerjee, without naming anyone, criticised the BJP's allies in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government at the Centre for allegedly "sacrificing" ministerial positions for financial gains.

SC rules out cancellation...

Continued from page 1

The interim verdict, to be followed by a detailed and reasoned order, came as a shot in the arm for the embattled NDA government and the National Testing Agency (NTA), which were facing strong criticism and protests, on streets and in Parliament, over alleged large-scale malpractices like question paper leak, fraud and impersonation in the prestigious test held on May 5.

Home Ministry gets Rs 2.19 lakh cr; major chunk for CRPF, BSF, CISF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Budget 2024-25 on Tuesday allocated Rs 2,19,643.31 crore to the Ministry of Home Affairs with the majority of it -- Rs 1,43,275.90 crore -- being given to central police forces like the CRPF, BSF, and CISF which are responsible for internal security, border guarding, and security of vital installations.

after the abrogation of Article 370, Jammu and Kashmir was stripped of its special status in August 2019 and the erstwhile state was bifurcated into two Union Territories. In the budget, Rs 5,985.82 crore has been given to Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Rs 5,862.62 crore to Chandigarh, Rs 5,958 crore to Ladakh, Rs 2,648.97 crore to Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu and Rs 1,490.10 crore to Lakshadweep.

Budget is contractionary, won't address unemployment, inflation: Left parties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Left parties on Tuesday said the Union Budget is contractionary, does not address issues like inflation and unemployment and is trying to "mask the failures" of the government. Reacting to Modi 3.0 government's first budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the CPI(M) noted that there was no proposal of wealth or inheritance tax or any relief on the indirect tax burden on people and alleged that it will further impoverish the poor while the affluent will become richer.

Bonanza for...

Continued from page 1

Buxar-Bhagalpur Expressway, and Bodhgaya, Rajgir, Vaishali and Darbhanga spurs, and an additional two-lane bridge over river Ganga at Buxar. These four projects will have "a total cost of Rs 26,000 crore," Sitharaman said.

Fiery KCR gets emotional at BRSLP meet

- Says Kavitha jailed due to 'political vendetta'
● Asks: Will a father not feel pain when his child is jailed?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samithi chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao was at his fiery best while comparing himself to a 'volcano' as well as an emotional father while chairing the BRS Legislature Party meeting at the Telangana Bhavan on Tuesday.

KCR said that his daughter had been imprisoned due to 'political vendetta'. "Will a father not feel pain when his child is jailed," he then asked rhetorically. The former chief minister emphasised that Telangana was achieved under more challenging circumstances than the current political climate.

AP reaps...

Continued from page 1

This allocation will aid in the establishment of modern infrastructure and amenities, ensuring balanced urban development. An allocation of Rs 10,000 crore has been made to expedite the completion of the Polavaram Irrigation Project, crucial for the State's agriculture and water management.

Centre's Rs 48,000 bn budget ignored TG, 25 other states: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao expressed disappointment over the Union Budget and criticised the lack of significant allocations to Telangana. He said that despite the Central budget exceeding Rs 48 lakh crore, only a few states received major allocations and Telangana was not mentioned at all.

have gone unanswered, and there is no mention of additional funds for projects like the Mulugu University, the Bayaram Steel Factory or the Railway Coach Factory at Kazipet. Despite appeals for the national project tag for irrigation projects and the establishment of national institutes like the IIM, Telangana has received nothing. The requests for funds for industrial corridors linking Telangana to Mumbai-Nagpur, Hyderabad-Bengaluru and Hyderabad-Chennai have also been ignored, along with proposals for a new handloom and mega power loom clusters.

Big relief for...

Continued from page 1

The new tax slabs under the new income tax regime will be effective from April 1, 2024. (Assessment Year 2025-26). Sitharaman said income of up to Rs 3 lakh will continue to be exempted from income tax under the new regime. As per the proposal, a 5 per cent tax will be levied on income between Rs 3-7 lakh, 10 per cent between Rs 7-10 lakh, 15 per cent for Rs 10-12 lakh. However, 20 per cent tax will continue to be levied on income between Rs 12-15 lakh and 30 per cent for income above Rs 15 lakh.

'Kursi...

Continued from page 1

In a post on X, Gandhi said, "Kursi Bachao' Budget. Appear Allies: Hollow promises to them at the cost of other states. Appear Cronies: Benefits to AA with no relief for the common Indian. Copy and Paste: Congress manifesto and previous budgets." The Congress also slammed the Union Budget as being "more focused on posturing than action" and claimed that the "copy-paste government" has borrowed heavily from the party's manifesto for the Lok Sabha polls.

TODAY ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Tritiya
Chaturthi:
Panchami:
Nakshatram:
Shatabhishta:
Purva Bhadrpada:
Rahukalam:
Yamagandam:
Varjyam:
Gulika:
Amritakalam:
Abhijit Muhurtham:
HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Showers
Temp: 27°C
Humidity: 79%
Sunrise: 5:53 AM
Sunset: 6:52 PM
Updated: July 24, 2024 5:00 PM

Union Budget exposes...

Continued from page 1

"I met the Prime Minister personally thrice and requested him to sanction funds for Telangana's development," he said. "I requested the PM to play the big brother's role in developing states," he said. He said that, however, the word 'Telangana' was effectively banned from the budget, indicating deliberate discrimination by the Centre.

Development Project, the Regional Ring Road and the glaring omission of the ITIR project. "No funds have been allocated for the Musi Riverfront Development Project and the Regional Ring Road. The Union Budget did not even mention ITIR," he pointed out. The Chief Minister described the Centre's slogan "Sab Ka Saath Sab Ka Vikas" as bogus and accused the Prime Minister of excluding Telangana from the Viksit Bharat initiative.

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The centrepiece of the over Rs 48 lakh crore budget are employment, internship and skilling schemes, aimed at creating job avenues for the largest youth population in the world. Besides Rs 2 lakh crore provided over a five year period for schemes and initiatives to facilitate employment, skilling and other opportunities for 4.1 crore youth, "I have made a provision of Rs 1.48 lakh crore for education, employment and skilling," she said. For Bihar, where assembly elections are due next year, the finance minister announced spending of Rs 60,000 crore on infrastructure projects like expressways, power plant, heritage corridors and new airports.

BOOST TO JOBS...

the form of capital projects but not subsidy or cash dole. Similarly, for Andhra Pradesh, whose ruling TDP recently joined BJP-led NDA, she allocated Rs 15,000 crore in financial aid through multilateral agencies. A similar request for support to Bihar will be expedited, she said. For the middle class, she raised standard deduction -- a flat deduction from total salary earned by an employee in a year before calculating applicable income tax rate -- by 50 per cent to Rs 75,000 and tweaked tax slabs for taxpayers opting for the new income tax regime. This will lead to taxpayers under the new tax regime -- which offers lower rates of taxes but permits limited deductions and exemptions -- saving up to Rs 17,500 in tax annually, she

said. Commenting on the budget, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it "will act as a catalyst in making India the third-largest economy in the world (from fifth largest today) and will lay a solid foundation for a developed India". Modi lauded the budget's sharp focus on the youth, backward sections, women and middle class as also on manufacturing and infrastructure sectors, and asserted that the proposed employment-linked incentive schemes will create crores of new jobs. "This visionary budget will uplift and empower every stratum of our society, paving the way for a brighter future for all". The employment-linked incentives and internship programmes were first mooted by the opposition Congress party in

its election manifesto. In its comments on the budget, the party called two-tax system for individual tax payers as well as the changes in the long-term capital gains tax have created confusion. Moody's Ratings said the budget for fiscal 2024-25 maintains the fiscal consolidation path announced in the interim budget. To spur employment, the budget provided for incentives for companies, including paying for one-month salary for first-time employees, incentive at specified sale to both employee and employer with respect to their retirement fund contributions in the first four years of employment, and reimbursing employers up to Rs 3,000 per month for two years towards EPFO contri-

bution of each additional employee. Also, a programme to improve skills as well as internship for students and subsidised loans for higher education will be provided, she said. India's official unemployment rate in urban areas is pegged at 6.7 per cent but private agencies put it at much higher levels. The increase in benefit for employer's contribution towards NPS under new tax regime from 10 per cent to 14 per cent for non-government employees provides an avenue for tax saving for salaried employees. Buoyed by robust tax expectations and a higher-than-expected dividend receipt from the Reserve Bank, Sitharaman said the government's fiscal deficit -- the difference between the total revenue earned and total expenditure -- will be trimmed to 4.9 per cent of the GDP in 2024-25, below the 5.1 per cent figure estimated in the interim budget she presented in February.

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'Focus on right sectors like MSME and skilling'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Industry experts from the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) expressed satisfaction with the good allotment to MSMEs and the creation of skilling, employment and industrialisation. FTCCI president Suresh Kumar Singhal welcomed the proposal to open new SIDBI branches to serve all major MSME clusters within three years and provide direct credit. He said the opening of 24 branches this year would expand service coverage, and Telangana might also benefit. Chair of the Industrial Development Committee of FTCCI, Srinivas Garimella, said the budget was very good overall. He appreciated the Finance Minister for boosting MSMEs, including a Rs 100 crore credit guarantee scheme for manufacturing MSMEs. He noted the focus on easing business processes and simplifying many areas. Chairman of GST and Customs Committee of FTCCI, Irshad Ahmed, stated there was no significant change in the budget proposals but noted the good allotment to the MSME sector, which is critical for the Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India campaigns.k



hyderabad 03

HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | JULY 24, 2024

Allocation for Minority Affairs increased by Rs 574 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Minority Affairs has increased by Rs 574.31 crore to Rs 3,183.24 crore for 2024-25 as against the revised estimate of Rs 2,608.93 crore in 2023-24. The budget allocation for the ministry was Rs 3,097.60 in 2023-24. However, the revised estimate was Rs 2,608.93, according to official documents. The budget estimate for the Ministry of Minority Affairs this year is Rs 3,183.24. Of the proposed allocation for the ministry, Rs 1,575.72 crore is for education empowerment. The allocation for Pre-Matric Scholarship for Minorities is Rs 326.16 crore and for Post-Matric Scholarship for Minorities is Rs 1,145.38 crore. A total provision of Rs 2,120.72 crore has been made for the major schemes/projects of the ministry. An allocation of Rs 910.90 crore has been made this time for 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram', one of the major programmes of the ministry.

Push for farm sector; focus on research, tech

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday announced a Rs 1.52 lakh crore allocation for agriculture and allied sectors in 2024-25, outlining a comprehensive plan to boost research, promote sustainable farming, enhance oilseed and pulse production and integrate technology in the agricultural landscape. In her Budget speech, Sitharaman emphasised the need for a thorough review of the agriculture research setup to enhance productivity and develop climate-resilient crop varieties. "Our government will undertake a comprehensive review of the agriculture research set up to bring the focus on raising productivity and developing climate resilient varieties," the

Finance Minister said. The research funding will be challenge-based and open to private sector participation, with domain experts overseeing the conduct of research. Sitharaman announced that farmers will soon have access to 109 new high-yielding, climate-resilient varieties across 32 field and horticulture crops. To boost self-sufficiency in crucial crops, the Minister revealed plans for focused missions on pulses and oilseeds, aimed at strengthening their production, storage, and marketing infrastructure. "As announced in the interim budget, a strategy is being put in place to achieve 'atmanirbharta' for oil seeds, such as mustard, groundnut, sesame, soybean, and sunflower," Sitharaman



aid. The government's emphasis on research and crop diversification comes alongside a push for sustainable

farming practices. Sitharaman announced an initiative to bring one crore farmers into natural farming over the next two years, supported by certification and branding efforts. In a move to modernise the sector, she outlined plans to implement Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in agriculture, covering farmers and their lands in three years. This initiative includes digital crop surveys and the creation of farmer and land registries. "In the current fiscal, the government will conduct a digital crop survey for the Kharif season using the DPI in 400 districts. The details of 6 crore farmers and their lands will be brought into the farmer and land registries," Sitharaman said.

'Centre committed to development of TG'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar described the Union Budget as a national interest budget and reflects Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision. He said that the Centre allocated highest funds for basic sectors. The comments made by BRS and Congress leaders saying that they have shown a stubborn hand to Telangana are meaningless. Proof of their ignorance. Is the government in Telangana continuing without Central funding? Is development possible in the State without the cooperation of the Centre? One word in Delhi... another word in gully should be avoided. The Centre is committed to the development of



Telangana. Centre is going to allocate funds for the development of 150 backward districts in the country including Telangana. There will be clarity on this issue in department-wise budget, he said. If it was the UPA government of the day that only included in the State Re-division Act that it would look into

the feasibility of setting up Bayyaram steel factory...is it not true that KCR was the one who indulged in it? Is it not true that the expert committee formed on this has concluded that the Bayyaram steel factory is not possible? KCR, who boasted that the State government will set up a steel factory in Bayyaram whether the Centre cooperates or not, should answer what he has achieved in the past 10 years. Speaking to the media after introduction of the budget by the Centre on Tuesday, Sanjay Kumar said that the Centre gave importance to agriculture and education. He said that the Budget proposed to build houses for 3 crore people. "This is a budget that reflects development and welfare in equal parts like two sides of the

plough. Telangana has been given priority in the Central budget. Allegations saying that the Centre not providing funds to Telangana is a proof of the stupidity of Congress and BRS." He said that the Centre allocated funds to the backward districts of the country, including Telangana. The Union Minister asked the Congress and BRS to tell don't they know that 210 km of Hyderabad-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor is part of Telangana? In Telangana, the Central budget has given priority to the development of railways, roads and other sectors. The facts will be presented to the public after the full allocation of the budget by various departments.

Health Ministry allocated Rs 90,958.63 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union health ministry has been allocated Rs 90,958.63 crore in the 2024-2025 budget, an increase of 12.96 per cent over the Rs 80,517.62 crore 2023-24 revised estimates. The government has also announced customs duty exemptions on three cancer treatment drugs -- Trastuzumab Deruxtecan, Osimertinib and Durvalumab. "To provide relief to cancer patients, I propose to fully exempt three more medicines from Customs duties. I also propose changes in the BCD (Basic Customs Duty) on X-Ray tubes and flat panel detectors for use in medical X-Ray

machines under the Phased Manufacturing Program," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday while presenting the budget in Parliament. The budget allocation for the AYUSH Ministry has been increased from Rs 3,000 crore to Rs 3,712.49 crore. Out of the Rs 90,958.63 crore, Rs 87,656.90 crore has been allocated to the Department of Health and Family Welfare and Rs 3,301.73 crore to the Department of Health Research. The budget allocation for schemes under the Department of Health and Family Welfare has been increased from Rs 77,624.79 crore to Rs 87,656.90 crore.

Development oriented: NVSS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hailing the Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the Telangana BJP unit said, "It is a step forward towards attaining Viksit Bharat" and would fulfil the hopes and dreams of the people. Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, State party Vice-President NVSS Prabhakar said the budget is for the youth, is development oriented and would increase exports, production, attract investments and help self-employment. The Centre has earmarked huge funds for agriculture, irrigation, education, construction of houses for the poor and for providing infrastructure like rural roads, he said. The Modi government aims to construct three crore houses and has already built 2.5 crore houses



providing shelter to the needy, he said and added that Centre has also formulated an internship scheme paying Rs 5,000 a month for one crore youth which would help them to get self-employed. Referring to the delay in appointing Vice-Chancellors for various state universities, Prabhakar said the BJP strongly condemns delaying the appointments of VCs due to political pressure. The Congress

The Centre earmarked huge funds for agriculture, irrigation, education, construction of houses for the poor and for providing infrastructure like rural roads, he said government invited applications and had constituted search committees. But so far no decision has been taken, he said. He demanded that the Congress government should come out with clear procedures for appointing VCs and there is a need for a comprehensive inquiry regarding the VCs appointed by the BRS government who are now facing various charges.

It's a balanced budget: Kishan Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister for Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy described the Union budget as a balanced one. He said that the Narendra Modi-led NDA government introduced the budget aiming the construction of Athma Nirbhar Bharat. He said that the Centre announced tax saving for the middle class and upper middle class and budget will help to improve the national productivity. He said that Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the budget to benefit street vendors to farmers, industrialists and all. He said that the Centre took a decision to strengthen the poor and enhance the productivity

capacity of farmers as part of Sab Ke Sath Sab Ka Vikas. The Centre has proposed an investment of Rs 10 lakh crore in the budget to meet the housing needs of 1 crore urban poor and middle class families. It has made proposals in the budget with the aim of providing employment to 4 crore youth. For breadwinners, "We have put Rs 1.5 lakh crore in the budget for agriculture and allied sectors. The Modi government has made proposals worth Rs. 3 lakh crore for schemes to benefit women and girls. The Centre changed the tax slabs to provide relief to tax payers. In all, four crore people will be benefited by increased standard deduction.

Real estate not given much priority, say realtors

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Realtors, who construct the infrastructure for the future, are giving mixed reviews on the Union budget 2024-25. Telangana Realtor Association president Naragoni Praveen Kumar said that this budget has not given much priority to the real estate sector. "However, the government mentioned that states would be encouraged to lower stamp duties for properties purchased by women. But the government did not mention the percentage of reduction in the budget". For Urban development, the budget mentioned that 14 large cities with a population above

30 lakh will have Transit Oriented Development Plans. Basic facilities like water supply, sewage treatment and solid waste management projects and services would be provided for 100 large cities. Rental housing for industrial workers to be facilitated in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode. ANAROCK Group Chairman Anuj Puri said that from a real estate point of view, the first thing that stands out is the government's continued to focus on infrastructure with an allocation of over Rs 11.11 lakh crore, which is nearly 3.4 per cent of India's GDP. Improved infrastructure drives real estate growth.

The budget sanctioned 12 industrial parks under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme. The government allocated Rs 1.5 lakh crore provision for long-term interest free loans to support infrastructure investment by state governments. Knight Frank India Chairman and Managing Director Shishir Bajjal said, "The 12 industrial park projects identified under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme are massive undertakings with the potential to grow economic hubs and boost real estate development along their alignment."

Abolition of angel tax to benefit startups: T-Hub CEO

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Reacting to the Union Budget by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, T-Hub CEO Mahankali Srinivas Rao highlighted the abolition of the angel tax for all classes of investors, seeing it as a crucial boost for startups and a step towards making India a global innovation hub. He stated that the budget marks a significant step for the Indian startup ecosystem, with initiatives that will undeniably create innovation and growth.

IKEA India CFO Murali Iyer appreciated the budget's support for MSMEs and women, citing enhanced access to finance and infrastructure. He also noted the government's forward-thinking approach with schemes for youth internships and Digital Public Infrastructure, along with investments in infrastructure and tax relief for salaried employees is a good move. CEO of Marut Drones, Prem Kumar Vislavath, emphasised the Rs 1.52 lakh

crore allocation for agriculture, focusing on climate-resistant and high-yield crops is a good move. Prem Kumar Vislavath welcomed the exemption of lithium imports from customs, supporting domestic drone manufacturing. Freyr Energy Co-founder Saurabh Marda said the budget's ambitious renewable energy goals, including 500 GW of renewable power by 2030 and Rs 70,000 crore in solar subsidies for homes is a very good move.

Rs 309.74 cr for training of govt employees

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Tuesday allocated Rs 309.74 crore to the Union Personnel Ministry for the ongoing fiscal for the training of government employees, both in India and abroad. These provisions are under the Rs 2,328.56 crore earmarked for the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions for the current financial year. Of the total of Rs 309.74 crore, Rs 103.05 is for "Training Division, Institute of Secretariat Training and Management (ISTM) and Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA)", Rs 120.56 for "Training Schemes" and Rs 86.13 crore for "National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building" or Mission Karmayogi, according to the Union Budget 2024-25 presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday. The Training Division under the Personnel Ministry, ISTM in Delhi and Mussoorie-based LBSNAA arrange several programmes including "foundation courses, refresher courses, mid-career training, etc. so as to equip all levels/grades of secretarial functionaries."

Doctors' concern over rural health infrastructure

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

City-based doctors backed the interim health budget announced on Tuesday as the Finance Minister allocated Rs 89,287 crore to the sector. Expressing his view on the budget, Dr C Nagi Reddy, Chairman of Apollo Hospitals said, "The Union Budget aligns with the Finance Minister's earlier commitments, focusing on workforce enhancement, upskilling for manufacturing and welfare for women and girls, while also strengthening energy and infrastructure. With an alarming 1.46 million new cancer cases projected, the exemption of customs duties on three additional cancer medicines is a vital step toward easing treatment costs. Addressing gaps in cancer care requires collaboration between communities, health-care providers, and policymakers. Public insurance programmes like AB-PMJAY have made progress, but further public-private collaboration is crucial for affordability and accessibility." Expressing concern over rural health infrastructure, Dr

Mandap Karuna, a private practitioner said, "There is a 12% hike in the health budget as compared to the previous year. However, when the urban and rural health care is compared, the borrowing of rural people is higher than the urban according to a study it is 13%. There is a mismatch between out of pocket expenditure of people, what the government is providing and how much is actually reaching the ground level." Dr Gayatri Kamineni, COO of the Kamineni Hospital said, "The Union government's decision to exempt three cancer drugs from custom duties is a significant and commendable move. Cancer treatment is notoriously expensive, often placing an overwhelming financial burden on patients and their families. By removing these duties, the cost of these crucial medications will be substantially reduced, making them more accessible to a larger segment of the population. This measure is especially beneficial for those who struggle to afford the high costs associated with cancer care."

Primary edn cold-shouldered: Experts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The budget didn't prioritise school education, especially primary schools, according to experts. M Ravindar, Addle.G.S., TPTF said, "In the budget of Rs 48.25 lakh crore, only Rs 1.25 lakh crore was allocated for the education sector. This is 2.59 per cent of the total budget. It is obvious that these funds do not support any educational development. To provide infrastructure to the educational institutions, how can Vikasit Bharat be possible with meagre funds. With this we understand that the Central government is gradually moving away from its responsibility of giving education to the poor classes." Murali Radha, Member of Parents Association, Hyderabad said, "Despite

the Central government making significant allocations to higher education, not even a single rupee is focused on primary education or uplift of government schools and infrastructure." Associate Professor Dr Krishna Reddy Chittedi, University of Hyderabad, said, "One can say that youth is the major target of the budget. However, when it comes to skill centres, unfortunately one can witness that the majority of skill centres are not active currently across urban and semi-urban areas." Professor Bhagwan Chowdhry,

Indian School of Business (ISB), said, "The Union Budget did not offer big surprises, but a positive way of looking at it is that a few good initiatives that we expected came through." Prof Alok Kumar Mishra, School of Economics, University of Hyderabad said, "The budget has brought some positive development in the education sector. The Centre proposed Rs 1.48 lakh crore for education, employment, and skilling for over 1,000 ITIs across the country. It emphasises on upskilling industry ori-

ented skills among youth in order to excel in their fields. The government will provide financial support for loans up to Rs 10 lakh for higher education. However one should see how it bridges the gap between school education and higher education and other aspects such as free education programmes, digital education and infrastructure development." Prof Soumyo Mukherji, Senior Professor, Department of Electrical Engineering & Director, BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus, said, "One of the main focus areas laid out by the Finance Minister for Viksit Bharat is innovation, research & development. To bolster R&D and strengthen India's standing globally, the allocation of Rs1,000 crore towards venture capital in space technology is a welcome move."

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KCR neglected traditions of Assembly: Sridhar Babu

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Alleging that the former chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao neglected the traditions of the Assembly, Legislative Affairs Minister D Sridhar Babu said that the government has to introduce appropriation bill on July 31 or else a situation will arise when the government will not be in a position to give salaries and hence the government proposed to end the House on July 31. Sridhar Babu said that the government appealed to the Speaker to give a chance for the discussion on development and welfare programmes. The government has a plan to conduct the Assembly session for more days, he said. However, the session has to complete the discussion on the budget in three days. The Legislative Affairs



Minister said that former minister T Harish Rao knows about the Assembly proceedings. BRS leaders are trying to bluff the House, he alleged, saying that the previous BRS government did not conduct the House for more than 8 days though they had time. Making it clear that the government will not ignore a sin-

gle assurance, Sridhar Babu said that the government is moving forward while putting the financial system on track. The Minister said that Speaker's decision is final on running the House. However, the government will not go back on the discussion on public issues. He said that the Speaker

would take a decision on the issues proposed for discussion by the Opposition parties. The Opposition parties will have a chance to speak elaborately during the discussion on demands. He said that the BRS party has no right to speak on law and order, loan waiver and local bodies. He alleged that the BRS has been shedding crocodile tears, saying that the farmers are facing troubles. Dridhar Babu said that the government asked the Centre for funds to meet Telangana needs. He alleged that the BRS government failed to achieve funds supposed to come to the State as per law. Alleging that the Centre has been showing indifferent attitude towards Telangana, Sridhar Babu asked the BJP leaders to mount pressure on the Centre in regard to funds.

CM: 'Why don't you all do social boycott?'

SMITA ROW

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Smita Sabharwal's comments on reviewing disability quota has raked a sensation. When Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy was asked his reaction on her comments and whether it is government, he preferred to let it go. However he suggested during a chat, "Why don't you all do a social boycott?" Likewise, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka was asked to react, he said, "It is her personal opinion". Further Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy was also asked to react, he didn't want to comment and said he is not into controversies. It may be mentioned here that the disability quota was first implemented in 2003 for three IAS officers. In the year 2003, UPSC AIS aspirant Rigzin, DS Lokesh Kumar and Sridhar worked hard and secured a good rank. But instead of IAS posting, they were given IIS posting because of disability. They decided to take legal

action against UPSC. But before the courts could - the PMO intervened - initiated by the then PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee and completed by Man Mohan Singh.

The Disability Act was notified in 1996 but it was only much later due to the fight of people like Lokesh Kumar, did the government identify the departments in which PWD can

be recruited. Incidentally, Quota was fought and is in place because of Telangana cadre officer and ironically now from the same cadre Smita Sabharwal wants to it to be reviewed.

Smita's comments on disability quota in AIS condemned

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Panachyat Raj and Women and Child Welfare Minister D Anasuya Seethakka on Tuesday expressed disapproval over a social media post by senior IAS officer Smita Sabharwal that questioned the need for reservation for differently-abled people in the All India Services (AIS). In an informal interaction with media persons here, she said many persons with disabilities became great and pointed out that persons

like Stephen Hawking and Helen Keller have created history. She said the IAS officer's post must have come to the notice of the Chief Minister and that she would speak to him on the issue. Amid the ongoing row over the controversial appointment of probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar under the disability quota, Smita Sabharwal has courted controversy by questioning the need for reservation for differently-abled people in the All India

Services (AIS). Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi, some disability rights activists and others took exception to her view. It is not proper to speak about fitness while seeing disability, the Minister said making clear that she will take the Smita Sabharwal's issue to the notice of Chief Minister. Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said that the government has nothing do Smita Sabharwal's comments.

BRS MLAs, MLCs to visit Kaleshwaram Project tomorrow

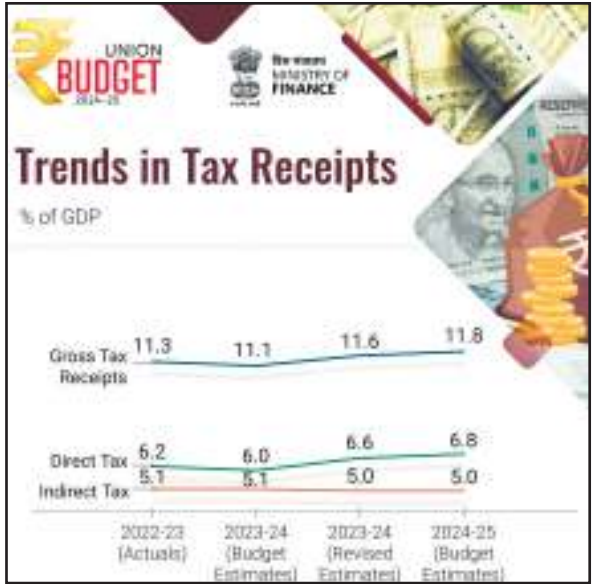
PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A team of BRS MLAs and MLCs will visit the Kaleshwaram Project on July 25, after the presentation of the budget in the Assembly. The team, led by the BRS brass will depart for Medigadda on the same day and visit the Kanepalli Pump House on July 26. The visit aims to address the issue of large quantities of water from the Godavari going to the sea due to the government's failure to use the pumps for pumping and storing water. Addressing a press meet at the Telangana Bhavan, former ministers Harish Rao, Sabitha Indra Reddy, Satyavathi Rathod, MLAs Chinta Prabhakar, Kova Lakshmi, Vijay and MLC

Surabhi Vani Devi criticised both the Congress and the BJP and said that these parties won't get anything for Telangana. Harish called on the Congress and BJP MPs from TG to wear black badges and protest in Parliament. The BRS Legislative Party meeting, chaired by KCR, lasted for three hours. The BRS Legislative Party will announce its office bearers soon. Harish said that the BRS plans to pressure the government to fill the Mid Manair, Kondapochamma Sagar and Ranganayaka Sagar projects with water to help farmers. He said the BRS has finalised an action plan at the BRS Legislative Party meeting to

highlight public issues and that the BRS will move an adjournment motion in the Assembly to discuss unemployment and also grill the Congress government on scams engineered by it in the last seven months. Harish added that they will raise the corruption in the Civil Supplies Department and expose the hidden forces behind attempts to introduce banned beer brands in the state. A discussion will also be held on how efforts to introduce banned beer brands were made without the Minister's knowledge. The party will address pending fee reimbursement payments in the Assembly and will highlight the payments cleared during the Kiran Kumar Reddy admin. Harish emphasised that the

government is a continuous process. The BRS will question the delay in recognising RTC employees as government employees and will pressure the government over delays in implementing the Rythu Bharosa scheme. The BRS will move forward with a well thought out strategy on deflections in the Assembly, he said. Questioning the meetings TG Ministers held for ensuring good relations with the Centre, Harish asked what Revanth will say now. He urged Revanth to make Rahul Gandhi speak on the injustices meted out to Telangana. Harish called for Congress MPs to protest in front of the Prime Minister's Office and the Parliament podium.



Traffic advisory issued in view of construction under Amberpet flyover

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Kothakota Sreenivas Reddy has announced traffic diversions in view of the construction under the Amberpet flyover. In a statement, the Police Commissioner said, "In exercise of the powers conferred upon me under section 21 clause (1) & (b) of the Hyderabad City Police Act, 1348 Fasli, I, K. Sreenivas Reddy, IPS., Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad City, do

hereby notify the below mentioned information to the public in general, in order to maintain smooth flow of traffic and to prevent danger and inconvenience to the public, the following traffic diversions will be implemented in the limits of Amberpet Traffic Police Station in view of the construction of the super structure of the Amberpet Flyover from 6 No Junction to Golnaka Junction on NH-163 (Old NH 202). It is proposed to divert the traffic from July 24 till the completion of work.

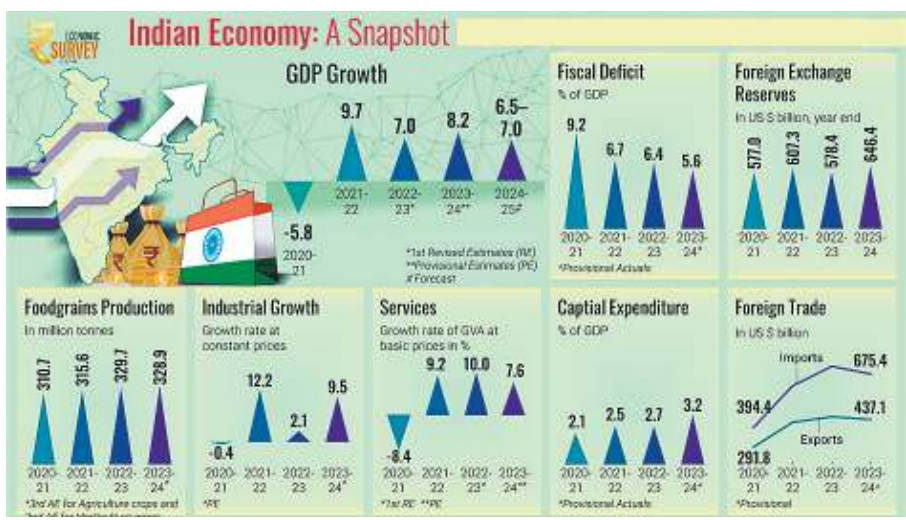
BJP bent upon 'ending' secularism, says Niranjn

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Central order allowing government employees to take part in RSS programmes signals the policies likely to be adopted by the BJP government and future developments in the country, TPCC Senior Vice-President G. Niranjn said. It is clear that the BJP is determined to 'end' secularism in the country, he added. "The RSS is known for its 'enmity'

towards other religions. No one has any objection if an organisation is confined to social activities. Similarly, no one objects if an organization works to promote its particular religion or community. But the RSS is generally considered as an organisation which 'hates' other religions," he said. Speaking to the media at the Gandhi Bhavan here on Tuesday, Niranjn said that it is not appropriate to allow government employees to participate in the pro-

grammes of such an organisation. "Government employees who take part in RSS programmes are 'not likely' to discharge their duties impartially. The objective of this decision is to fill the government machinery with RSS activists," he said. "The BJP is controlled by the RSS. Vajpayee, Advani, Gadkari, Amit Shah and Modi have RSS roots. The Centre's order is inappropriate and should be withdrawn," he said.



Turncoat BRS MLAs now backbenchers in Assembly

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Only four BRS MLAs joined the Congress out of the 10 who attended the Assembly on the first day of the budget session. The four MLAs, Pocharam Srinivas Reddy, Kadiam Srihari, Kale Yadaiah and Gudem Mahipal Reddy sat on a back bench in the BRS MLAs' row instead of sitting on their allotted seats. The four MLAs did not wear any party kanduwa, how-

ever, BRS MLAs came to the Assembly wearing the BRS kanduwa. In fact, no BRS MLA spoke with the four MLAs. However, there was a discussion among the MLAs indicating that the Leader of the Opposition, K. Chandrashekar Rao, would be attending the House from the day the government is introducing the budget, that is, July 25, and how the 10 BRS MLAs who joined Congress will act in the House.

Former Speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy may defend the defectors if anything comes from the BRS against them as he did not disqualify any of the 12 Congress MLAs who joined the BRS in 2019. Pocharam can train his guns against the BRS recalling his experience as Speaker in dealing with disqualification petitions submitted by the then Congress Legislature Party (CLP) against the 12 Congress MLAs, it is learnt.

Rachakonda Commissioner aims to reach people via social media platforms

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Aiming at bringing awareness among the public about Rachakonda Police Commissionerate's social media platforms and making

them accessible to all, Police Commissioner Sudheer Babu has unveiled QR code posters at the Rachakonda Police Commissionerate office here on Tuesday. The CP said that as part of

the law and order security measures in the Rachakonda area, social media accounts like Facebook, X, Instagram and YouTube channel are being maintained by the Rachakonda Police.

Revanth moots meet of southern states' CMs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy mooted meeting of South Indian Chief Ministers to call out discrimination towards Southern states by Central Government. He said, "We have sent information to Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Chief Ministers. If other States of Kerala, AP and Puducherry come along, it will be nice. If not these three CMs will coordinate and raise the discrimination towards Southern states". Revanth said, "BJP and Narendra Modi is treating South India States as voting machine and instruments to win seats. This discrimination won't sustain for long. If this discrimination continues, another agitation will take place". He added, "Delimitation of parliament seats, budget allocation and other permission issues will be taken up. The funds given to BIMARU states, why not other states. Why is this discrimination. We want to fight."

'Govt reduced budget session to merely 4 days'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former minister T Harish Rao criticised the government for not only evading its promises but also reducing the Assembly sessions. In a press meet at the Assembly Media Point, he stated that the government has condensed the budget sessions to four days, whereas they should be held for at least 15 days. Harish Rao questioned the rationale behind discussing demands for only two days, calling it outrageous. He pointed out that during KCR's regime, discussions on demands used to span nine days. He also took a jab at the Congress, questioning their current stance on increasing the working days of Assembly sessions, a demand they



had made while in opposition. He accused the ruling party of behaving irresponsibly, noting that the agenda for the next day hadn't been finalised yet. This late announcement, he argued, leaves members unprepared for discussions. Harish Rao emphasised the need to discuss the issue of unemployment the following day and listed nine issues they proposed for discussion. These include the failure of law and order, suicides of weavers, legal guarantees, restrictions on farm loan waivers, bonus for all crops, sanitary issues in villages and towns, funds for local bodies, fee reimbursement pay-

ments, and pending bills for previously sanctioned works. Harish Rao also criticised the Central Budget, noting that the word Telangana was not mentioned. He accused the Congress and the BJP of jointly doing injustice to Telangana, citing their focus on backward districts in Andhra Pradesh while neglecting those in Telangana. He highlighted the lack of national status for the Palamuru-Rangareddy project and questioned the contributions of BJP leaders Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay, despite the BJP winning eight MP seats from Telangana. He concluded by criticising the absence of the Kazipet Coach Factory and Bayyaram Steel Factory and declared that the BJP had done immense injustice to Telangana, giving the State nothing but a big zero.

TB-FREE MUNICIPALITIES

'Swasthya Nagaram' project launched in Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A model for tuberculosis-free (TB-free) municipalities, Project 'Swasthya Nagaram', was launched in neighbouring Medchal Malkajgiri district of Telangana on Tuesday. This model for TB-free municipalities is an innovative approach to demonstrate ending TB in urban settings, where social determinants have huge impact on increasing the TB burden, with an approach of surveillance, prevention and quality TB care with the engagement of multi stakeholders, an official release said. Active TB screening using a digital app and diagnosis using X-ray along with upfront molecular tests will be the primary focus of the

model to ensure early diagnosis and prevention, it said. The model will be implemented in urban settings of Peerzadiguda, Boduppal and Pocharam Municipal Corporation of Medchal Malkajgiri district over a period of three years. V Karnan launched the 'Swasthya Nagaram' project (virtually), unveiling the project brief. "This model will help in building ownership among urban local bodies towards the TB-free initiatives and create an open channel of communication through this model in urban settings will certainly help in restricting TB disease's spread beyond city limits," said Dr Rajendra P Joshi, Deputy Director General TB, Central TB Division, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India in his inaugural address. He further said the Central TB Division will extend its full support for making this project a successful model and further replicate in other urban settings, beyond Hyderabad. The project will also address the vulnerability to TB due to migration and urban behavioural changes towards health-seeking behaviour and demand-driven services.

Interventions through this model in urban settings will certainly help in restricting TB disease's spread beyond city limits," said Dr Rajendra P Joshi, Deputy Director General TB, Central TB Division, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India in his inaugural address. He further said the Central TB Division will extend its full support for making this project a successful model and further replicate in other urban settings, beyond Hyderabad. The project will also address the vulnerability to TB due to migration and urban behavioural changes towards health-seeking behaviour and demand-driven services.

Two chain snatchers arrested

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

In a significant breakthrough, the Crime Staff of Rajendra Nagar Police Station, in collaboration with Central Crime Station police in Rajendra Nagar Zone, apprehended "two notorious chain snatchers". The arrested are Mudavath Pandu and Mudavath Seva. Both are residents of Gunta Thanda, Pullagiri village under Thimmajpet mandal in Nagarkurnool district. The police said that they were involved in six cases under the jurisdictions of Rajendranagar, Shamshabad, and Shadnagar Police Stations. The police said that they recovered six gold chains weighing approximately 15 tulas, valued at ₹11,10,000.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Optimistic outlook

The Economic Survey for 2023-24 emphasises the urgency of addressing inequality and unemployment

The Economic Survey for 2023-24 released on the eve of the Union Budget is optimistic about the Indian story of growth and development; however, it also indicates the areas of concern on which it suggests the Central Government to act on priority. It is customary to have the Economic Survey just before the budget as it sets the tone of the budget and puts things in perspective. This year round it is buoyant on growth and pegs India's GDP growth at 6.5-7.0% in this fiscal year. The Economic Survey, a comprehensive report that reviews the developments in the Indian economy over the past year, forecasts robust growth in various sectors. This optimism is grounded in several factors, including strong domestic consumption, increased investments, and favourable government policies. Interestingly this is despite the fact that most economies around the world are struggling to attain much lower levels of GDP. The survey underscores the Government's focus on infrastructure as a critical driver of growth. Ongoing projects in road, rail, and port development are expected to boost connectivity and efficiency, facilitating smoother trade and commerce. Besides, the rapid expansion of the digital economy is another significant area of growth. Though open to criticism, the Survey maintains that the 'Make in India' initiative continues to show promising results.



The survey notes that boosting exports, particularly in high-growth industries such as pharmaceutical, electronics, and textiles, could significantly enhance India's global economic standing. The Survey also talks about the problem area of the Indian economy. Agriculture, the backbone of the Indian economy, remains a priority. The survey recommends further reforms to increase productivity and ensure sustainable growth in this sector. Innovations in technology and better access to markets are crucial to achieving these goals. The Economic Survey rightly numerates various factors which could pull down the economy and be an impediment in the national growth. The biggest stumbling block is of course inflation. The survey suggests a balanced approach to monetary policy to manage inflation without stifling growth. Unemployment yet another constraint needs to be addressed on priority. The survey calls for policies that support skill development and entrepreneurship to harness the potential of the burgeoning young population. PM Modi reaffirmed the government's commitment to fostering an environment conducive to growth. Indeed, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget for 2024-25 incorporates several suggestions made by the Economic Survey. Setting a roadmap for the third term of Modi Government, Union Finance Minister has defined nine priorities. These are agriculture, employment, human development, energy security, manufacturing, innovation, infrastructure and next generation reforms. These would indeed go a long way in reducing unemployment, curbing inflation and giving economy a push that would be inclusive and sustainable.

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PICTALK



Hindu devotees offer prayers during the holy month of Shrawan at the Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu

India backs Philippines in South China Sea standoff



ASHOK K MEHTA

As China continues its aggressive tactics, the Philippines, bolstered by international alliances, stands resilient against Beijing's coercion

My enemy's enemy is my friend is a fitting adage for India's support to the Philippines which is fighting a battle royale in the South China Sea with China. Chinese Coast Guards have been regularly intruding into the Philippines Exclusive Economic Zone (PEEZ) which they regard as part of the South China Sea under its default claim of 10 dash line that was rejected by an arbitration court at Hague under UNCLOS in 2016. Bash on regardless is PLA's dictum in coercing the Filipinos as they to us along LAC. Foreign Minister S Jaishankar visited Manila in May and expressed full support for the Philippines in its claims in PEEZ.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson after the 17 June clash said "We oppose destabilizing unilateral action to change status quo by force or coercion". Earlier in 2022 India made its first international sale of the Brahmos anti-ship missile system to the Philippines. I was in Manila last month, days after the 17 June incident comparable to our own Galwan clash on 15 June 2020. It was evident that the Chinese were bullying Filipinos in their waters. The 17 June incident has been flogged with Chinese but mainly Filipino accounts. In brief, Chinese Coast Guards are trying to force out Filipino Coast Guards from their outpost on Thomas Shoal 2 which they preemptively occupied in 1999 denying a free run to China in seizing unoccupied islands in PEEZ.

Like pirates, the Chinese Coast Guard are even poaching in EEZ of Asian countries. Chinese have unilaterally promulgated la in the South China Sea laws that allow them to seize for 60 days without trial, foreign vessels and even fire at them -which they have not done - if necessary.

Chinese Coast Guard is employing lethal weapons short of firearms like picks, axes, spears and rods to inflict casualties with medieval warfare equipment that the PLA used to surprise Indian troops in Galwan. Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam and Indonesia have quietly accepted Chinese bullying while the Philippines



backed by the US is pushing back. All these countries are hugely reliant on China for trade and BRI benefits. The Philippines like Taiwan is resisting Chinese coercion while balancing its economic relations with Beijing. Between 2000 and 2020 China committed a total of USD9.1 bn in financial support to the Philippines.

In Manila, after the violent incident near Thomas Shoal Chinese Coast Guard intercepted the Philippines Coast Guard that was trying to resupply its small island garrison. Seven Filipino sailors were wounded in the clash and one lost a thumb. Seven rifles were also impounded and have not been returned. President Bong Bong Ferdinand Marcos Jr who had recently warned China at Shangri-la Dialogue of 'consequences' and vowed not to yield 'even an inch or a millimeter' has been blowing hot and cold as have his ministers also.

The Philippines has a Mutual Defence Treaty of 1951 with the US whose conditions are more specific and binding than the US-Taiwan Act. Still, no one wants to invoke the Treaty over the 'territorial integrity of a Shoal'. American Ambassador to the Philippines Mary Carlsson said in Manila on 24 June that China should settle disputes by international law and "not bully our partners in their backyard". The US is wary of opening another



IN MANILA, AFTER THE VIOLENT INCIDENT NEAR THOMAS SHOAL CHINESE COAST GUARD INTERCEPTED THE PHILIPPINES COAST GUARD THAT WAS TRYING TO RESUPPLY ITS SMALL ISLAND GARRISON

front after Ukraine, Gaza and the Red Sea, even as the risk of accidental escalation or misunderstanding is high in the Taiwan Straits. The US plans to revive and modernize Subic Bay and adjoining Clarks Airbase and is deploying the deadly Typhon missile system at some of their ten bases in the Philippines.

The Indian Brahmos missiles are located in Luzon facing the South China Sea and can reach out to Chinese-occupied Mischief Reef, Thomas Shoal 2 and Scarborough Shoal. It is believed that some 3 to 400,000 Americans reside in the Philippines and US-Philippines relations under Marcos Jr are back to its heyday. The Philippines is actively collaborating with QUAD-US, India and Australia.

Japan and the Philippines signed a defence agreement this month that will allow the deployment of troops on each other's territory with Tokyo pledging to provide additional defence aid. Similarly, Manila and Seoul are coordinating maritime coordination and joint exercises.

South Korean shipyards are likely to receive orders to build Coast Guard vessels for the Philippines. Canada and even the European Union are coordinating maritime activities in PEEZ. None of the Philippines' brave calls for standing its ground in the South China Sea and pledges of support from its friends and allies has deterred China in its show of force.

It fielded its aircraft carrier Shandong and the world's largest Coast Guard vessel 5901 in PEEZ while at the same time, it held talks with Filipino officials on de-escalation measures this month. The code of conduct in the South China Sea under preparation for over two decades is expected to be finalized in 2026.

However, the most recent agreement is about establishing hotlines at various levels for stopping maritime incidents. From the US and Indian perspective, the Chinese claimed preeminence in the South China Sea has to be contested by QUAD, AUKUS, the new trilateral between Japan, the Philippines and South Korea. Further resistance to the reunification of Taiwan must continue and Taiwan Straits remain free for navigation and overflights.

As China's economy declines, and Asian economies grow through new supply chains and the realization of India's East Asia policy, Western collective deterrence will dampen Chinese bravado in the South China Sea. The Philippines will be the immediate natural southern pillar of the Indo-Pacific strategy.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. Views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THAT GOOD MORNING THUD

Madam — Day after day, month after month and year after year, I have waited, and have been rewarded with, the familiar thud of a bundle of newspapers at my doorstep. Two newspapers rolled into a cylindrical bundle, a Hindi one for my significant other, and an English one for myself, have made their presence felt at a fixed time, and at a designated landing spot — a coir doormat placed just outside of our front door. Kudos to our "paperwallah bhaiya" whose throw never misses the mat. And what's more, the bundle always aligns itself in the North-South direction, even after a seemingly careless throw. The soft thud is much like the firing of a starter pistol before a sprint, albeit much less noisy. The familiar thud signals that yet another day has begun, and we have no time to fritter away. What remains now is to pour the hot coffee into our waiting tumblers, put on our specs and try to take the world on our stride.

Avinash Godbole | Dewas

MAMATA'S GOODWILL GESTURE

Madam — This is in response to the news report titled "Opposition curses NDA Sarkar" (July 22). A state government might not have any locus standi to offer shelter to foreign citizens within its border, but West Bengal Chief minister Mamata Banerjee must be appreciated for displaying such warmth for the innocent Bangladeshis running away from internal unrest. After all humanity must reign supreme over petty artificial international borders. So instead of maligning Banerjee with all sorts of ridiculous accusations possible, BJP leaders must ask it's own government in New Delhi to act as gallant-hearted as Indira Gandhi (during the 1971 turmoil prior to formation of Bangladesh) and allow refuge to the escaping Bangladeshis in the neighboring Indian states including West Bengal.

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

Joe Bide backs Kamala Harris



US President Joe Biden has endorsed Vice-President Kamala Harris as the Democratic Party's presidential nominee, marking the end of his re-election bid. Kamala Harris pledged to do everything in her power to unite the nation. If nominated, Kamala Harris would be the second woman, following Hillary Clinton, to run for the U.S. presidency. If successful, she would make history as the first female president of the United States. Despite being the world's oldest modern

democracy, America has not yet elected a woman as president in its 236 years of electoral history. In contrast, India, a much younger democracy, elected Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister in 1966. Women face numerous hurdles in politics, including time poverty, lack of campaign funding, and fewer opportunities for political training and mentorship. Social media also facilitates personal attacks that disproportionately target women, potentially driving them out of politics, according to Silveria E. Jacobs, former Prime Minister of Sint Maarten.

If Kamala Harris breaks the American glass ceiling, it could inspire women worldwide to pursue politics and promote female leadership. Her achievement would symbolize progress and motivate more women to seek political office, enhancing gender diversity and representation in global political leadership.

Srinivas Madhav | Hyderabad

BANGLADESH BLUES

Madam — Apropos, "Trouble in Bangladesh," Jul 22. The tragic death of about 100 people in violence triggered by the students' protest demanding a roll-back of 30 percent job reservation for relatives of veterans who fought in the 1971 war in Bangladesh, has shown the Sheikh Hasina government in poor light. The quota provision has been under fire as it apparently benefits the supporters of PM Hasina, whose Awami League party led the independence movement.

She had defended it on the grounds that veterans deserved the highest respect for their contribution to the liberation, regardless of their political affiliation. However, the PM cannot afford to ignore the present realities. A merit-based system for jobs will help Bangladesh sustain its impressive economic march. Hopefully, the government will implement the apex court's order in letter and spirit. And there is also a lesson here for India, where unemployment is a major issue and sev-

eral states have witnessed an uproar over quotas. Prioritising political considerations over ensuring a level playing field for recruitments is fraught with grave consequences.

The tragic deaths resulting from the students' protest against job reservations have cast a shadow over the Sheikh Hasina government. While the PM defends the quota for veterans, a merit-based system is essential for Bangladesh's economic progress.

The government must heed the apex court's order to ensure fairness. This situation also serves as a cautionary tale for India, where prioritising political considerations in job quotas could have serious repercussions. Now the apex court of Bangladesh has toned down the quotas it is likely that Bangladesh will once again have peace and chart on its path to progress. It will also be good for India-Bangladesh relations.

N Sathasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

To mitigate heatwave effects we must prioritise innovations in RE



RATUL PURI

This climatic extremity underscores the urgent need for innovative solutions in the renewable energy sector

India is no stranger to scorching summers. Recently, the country has endured its longest and most intense heatwave in recorded history, with temperatures in some areas soaring to a blistering 50 degrees Celsius. Heatwaves in India typically occur between March and June, with May being the peak month. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) defines a heatwave as a period where temperatures exceed 40°C in plains, 37°C in coastal areas, and 30°C in hills, with significant deviations from average temperatures. When this deviation reaches 6.5°C or more, it is classified as a "severe heatwave." The public health implications of such extreme temperatures are severe. Heatstroke, dehydration, and heat exhaustion become common, exacerbating pre-existing conditions like heart disease and respiratory issues. Vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly, and outdoor workers, are particularly at risk. The heatwaves also impact wildlife, causing water scarcity, disrupted food chains, and habitat loss. Livestock suffers from



heat stress, affecting milk production and overall health. Global warming has raised average temperatures, creating conditions ripe for extreme weather events. Heatwaves, in turn, drive up electricity demand, straining power grids to their limits. A 2022 report from the World Meteorological Organization underscored the vicious cycle: greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel-based electricity production contribute to heatwaves, which increase power demand, further straining fossil fuel resources and exacerbating the climate crisis. This highlights the urgent need for large-scale renewable energy adoption. India has ambitious renewable energy goals, aiming for 500 GW of capacity by 2030. However, the very heatwaves that renewable energy seeks

to combat pose challenges, particularly for the solar energy sector. Solar panels, primarily using photovoltaic technology, are designed for optimal efficiency between 15 and 35 degrees Celsius. As temperatures rise, their efficiency drops, with prolonged exposure to high temperatures potentially reducing efficiency by 10-25%. This is because increased thermal agitation disrupts electron flow within the circuits, decreasing voltage output. To address this challenge, several solutions are being explored. Monocrystalline panels, known for their superior performance under stress, could be a viable alternative for heatwave-prone areas, despite their higher cost. Advances in technology like TOPCon (Tunnel Oxide Passivated Contact) are also promising, enhancing the efficiency and performance of solar components in harsh environments. Additionally, incorporating advanced cooling systems, such as ventilation within panels, can manage excess heat. Using heat-resistant materials in solar panel construction could also help

withstand high temperatures with minimal efficiency loss. The intense heatwaves in India underscore the urgency of climate action. The renewable energy sector must innovate continuously to develop efficient and affordable solar panels capable of withstanding India's diverse weather patterns, from extreme heatwaves to heavy monsoons. Local geographical factors must be considered in design and deployment strategies. The country's renewable energy sector must rise to the challenge by fostering resilient technologies that can withstand extreme weather events like heatwaves. This journey demands a multi-pronged approach to accelerate the development of heat-resistant solar technologies. Promoting public-private partnerships can facilitate the large-scale deployment of these advancements, making them more accessible and affordable. Only then can India ensure a cleaner, greener legacy for future generations. (The writer is the Chairman of Hindustan Power Group; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN HARNESSING THE POWER OF OPTIMISM

In the high-pressure maze of the corporate world, optimism emerges as a powerful antidote to stress



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

The corporate world is a maze of challenges, deadlines, and pressures that often leave an employee drained and disheartened. However, amidst this complex and mostly daunting environment, there lies a strong antidote: optimism. That very saying, "The whole world runs on hope," has within itself a very deep message that can turn around professional life and make it work wonders. Optimism, not pessimism, is not some feel-good philosophy but a very practical way to build resilience, increase productivity, and foster a more positive workplace culture. Long-term optimism is the positivity of thinking towards the occurrence of good things and ultimately positive results from our efforts. This mindset should be at the core of every working principle in a corporate setting. Projects may fail, market conditions may go for a toss, or other obstacles might impede; it is then that the optimist who views these obstacles not as insurmountable barriers but as opportunities for growth and learning.

Consider its effect on workplace morale. The optimistic frame of mind can make a lot of difference in the general feel of an office. If leaders or team members have bright, twinkling eyes and a positive outlook, this no doubt will breed others to emulate and follow in their footsteps, creating an upward spiral of sentiments. This sort of collective optimism yields openness to collaboration, increasing innovation, and a willingness to take calculated risks. A team that believes in the possibility of success is going to realize it far more than one that is bogged down in doubt and negativity. Optimism allows for an increase in resiliency. When faced with setbacks, an optimistic person is more likely to try again and views these failures as being transitory, or conquerable.

This elasticity can prove particularly useful in business circles where preservations are often what distinguish between giving up and breaking through to success. In its instance, the optimistic approach will make individuals keep themselves motivated and move consistently toward their goals, even when the odds are not favourable. Even so, optimism needs to strike a correct and delicate balance with realism. Blind optimism that is not based on the real situation brings over-optimistic expect-



tations with a sense of subsequent disappointment. The key here is to adopt realistic optimism: know the challenges, and uncertainties, but emphasise solving the problems and cultivating the outcomes. This balanced approach will keep one hopeful without losing sight of practical considerations.

One of the ignored facts about optimism is its relationship with the capability of stress management. The corporate world itself is a very stressful environment with great stakes and constant demands. Optimism hence acts as a defence mechanism against this stress and thus helps them cope better under pressure. Optimistic employees must, therefore, be more likely to resort to proactive coping strategies like problem-solving and seeking support than become prey to anxiety and despair. This kind of camaraderie enhances job satisfaction, reducing turnover rates and generally creating a stable and harmonious work environment. Inculcating optimism in professional life does not mean one gets oblivious to challenges and uncertainties in a business environment. Instead, it is a manner of relating to them with hope and activity. Without attachment to the outcomes, giving it our best creates the opportunity for a whole lot of possibilities to start unwrapping. Life itself, much like work, is unpredictable. Embracing that uncertainty optimistically makes us able to move through the corporate landscape resiliently, creatively, and in high spirits. Optimists by choice can build a workplace that is productive, enriching, and supportive. This means that optimism is not merely a personal virtue; rather, it is a business asset with its key to professional success and better careers.

(The writer is a motivator; views are personal)

Income tax amendment promises relief for MSMEs



UTTAM GUPTA

The biggest problem faced by small enterprises is delayed payment of their dues by large enterprises as it results in a shortage of working capital severely impacting their production



An amendment to the Income Tax Act, introduced through Finance Act 2023, and effective from April 1, 2024 stops businesses from claiming tax deductions for payments beyond 45 days to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) for supply of goods and services has caused much consternation. The MSMEs are ancillary units engaged in the production, manufacturing and processing of goods and commodities (mostly intermediate goods) which are supplied to large enterprises or master units. These units operate on a small scale and are further categorized into micro, small and medium enterprises depending on the 'investment' and 'turnover' threshold as defined under the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006.

A micro-enterprise is one where investment in the plant and machinery or equipment doesn't exceed Rs 10 million and turnover doesn't exceed Rs 50 million. A small enterprise is an entity where investment in the plant and machinery is less than 100 million and turnover doesn't exceed Rs 500 million. For a medium enterprise, the thresholds are set at Rs 200 million for investment in the plant and machinery or equipment and Rs 1000 million for turnover. According to the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, the share of MSME Gross Value Added (GVA) in India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is around 30 per cent. The share of MSME manufacturing output in all India Manufacturing output is even higher at around 36 per cent.

The share of export of MSME-specified products in all India exports has oscillated between 44 - 50 per cent during the last couple of years, according to the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIIS). As for employment, according to a report released by the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI), MSMEs in India contribute 62 per cent to the total. Looking at the omnibus 'informal' sector - apart from MSMEs, it also includes proprietary household and partnership establishments - its contribution to employment is even higher at more than 75 per cent whereas in GDP its share is almost 50 per cent. The MSMEs thus play a predominant-

ing role in shaping the prospects of the economy more so in promoting 'inclusive' development with particular emphasis on increasing employment and income and reducing income inequalities.

Yet, they have borne the brunt of far-reaching economic decisions implemented by the Modi - Government during its first two terms such as demonetization (2016) and introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), 2017 also the devastating impact of the Corona - pandemic (2020). The government has taken several mitigation steps including a Rs 500,000 crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for businesses/MSMEs; equity infusion of Rs 50,000 crore through MSME Self-Reliant India Fund; no global tenders for procurement up to Rs. 200 crores (it bolsters their chances of securing government contract); relaxing threshold for classification of MSMEs; extension of non-tax benefits for 3 years in case of an upward change in status of MSMEs; inclusion of retail and wholesale trades as MSMEs; launch of Udyam Assist Platform (UAP) to bring the Informal Micro Enterprises (IMEs) under the formal ambit for availing the benefit under Priority Sector Lending (PSL); launch of an online Portal "Champions" to cover various aspects of e-governance including grievance redress and handholding of MSMEs and so on.

Even as all these initiatives seek to address issues of credit availability, technology infusion, market support etc, a problem haunting small enterprises has to do with delayed payment of their dues by large enterprises. When they don't receive payment for the goods supplied by them, it results in a shortage of working capital severely impacting their ability to continue with production. To address this problem, Section 15 of the MSMEs Development Act 2006, had mandated payments to micro

and small enterprises within 45 days in case of written agreement (in case, there was no written agreement, the time limit was set at 15 days). In 2019, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs came up with the Specified Companies (Furnishing of information about payment to micro and small enterprise suppliers) Order that required large firms to file returns every six months even if there is no outstanding to MSME beyond 45 days.

Yet, the problem persisted forcing numerous firms to down shutters. This prompted the Union Government to look for a solution under the IT Act (1961). The Finance Act 2023, inserted Section 43B(h) in the IT Act (1961), which prescribes that if a larger company doesn't make payments to micro and small enterprises within 45 days in case of written agreements, it cannot deduct that expense while calculating the taxable income of the relevant financial year. How does it impact the large enterprises? To arrive at the profits during a financial year (FY) and hence the income on which tax is levied (known in IT parlance as 'taxable income'), a company deducts all expenses incurred on running the business from the total revenue it earns. The payments made by it for the purchase of goods from the MSMEs are an important item of expense; therefore it is deductible from the revenue.

If, it doesn't pay the small firm say Rs 5 lakh within the prescribed 45 days, Section 43B(h) will kick in and the large firm won't be allowed to deduct this amount in that FY thereby increasing its taxable income to that extent. So, it will end up paying more tax during that FY. Taking an effective corporate tax of 34.9 per cent (basic corporate tax of 30 per cent plus 12 per cent surcharge plus 4 per cent Health & Education Cess), the extra tax works out to Rs 174,500/-. This will

be a deterrent strong enough to dissuade large enterprises from holding back payments to MSMEs. It is not as if this extra tax ends up impacting the company's balance sheet forever. This additional tax paid (albeit due to delays in making payments to MSMEs) can be adjusted the following year when the company pays the supplier. The Section thus strikes a good balance between the interests of all stakeholders. Even while creating a strong incentive for large enterprises to prioritize payments to the MSMEs thereby bolstering the latter's financial health and growth, it doesn't unduly penalize the former. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs has also relaxed the reporting requirements under its 2019 Order. A notification issued on July 15, 2024, requires that "only those specified companies which are having payments pending to any micro or small enterprises for more than 45 days from the date of acceptance or the date of deemed acceptance of the goods or services under section 9 of the MSMEs Development Act, 2006 shall furnish the information". Earlier, they were required to furnish even if there was no outstanding to MSME beyond 45 days.

Yet, industries and businesses have asked Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to defer the implementation of the clause in the IT Act by a year to April 2025. At the same time, we see reports of large enterprises arm-twisting small firms by deciding not to buy from MSMEs; instead deal with those MSMEs that are not registered with the Udyam portal (It's an online system for registering MSMEs, launched by the Union MSME ministry) or from non-MSMEs. This must be avoided. Section 43B(h) of the IT Act should be given a fair chance to succeed.

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

A MICRO-ENTERPRISE IS ONE WHERE INVESTMENT IN THE PLANT AND MACHINERY OR EQUIPMENT DOESN'T EXCEED RS 10 MILLION AND TURNOVER DOESN'T EXCEED RS 50 MILLION

India introduces three new criminal laws: A shift from colonial past

While some legal bodies have criticised the new laws, other see these laws as a transformative step towards a modern justice system

At the onset, with the introduction of three new criminal laws, launched on July 1st, some of the legal bodies and other civil organisations opposed the move stating it to have been introduced without 'much discussion' in the Parliament. Whereas, some of legal experts consider it to be a 'New Avatar' that will enable the country to have a paradigm shift from favoured colonial laws to a contemporary India. The laws; of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) have replaced the almost 150 years ago laws of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPc) and the Indian



MANOJ VARGHESE

Evidence Act (IEA), formulated during the British regime. The new laws will bring in a modern justice system, incorporating provisions such as Zero FIR, online registration of police complaints, summonses through electronic modes such as SMS and mandatory videography of crime scenes for all heinous crimes. With around 20 new offences added, 40 offences amended, 83 new fines imposed and six community services introduced, the

new laws are all set to deliver speedy justice in the public interest. The new laws are framed on the lines of 'citizen first, honour first and justice first'. The general impression is that the police will now need to work with 'data' instead of 'danda' (baton). Universally, introducing and executing a change in any system is a challenging task. Above all, a change in the legal system is a complex mechanism for adaptation. "Change is inevitable, and progressive laws are good for any nation", says Prof Mahesh Verma, Vice Chancellor, of Indraprastha University. The police need to understand that they cannot refuse to register an FIR based on lack of jurisdiction or disputed

jurisdiction. It is tough for them to bring it into practice as the number of cases filed in their jurisdiction will bring in a bad repute for their respective Police station. They are now legally bound to register (Zero FIR) and transfer such a case to the respective police station. Section 37 of the BNSS requires a police officer in every police station, not below the rank of Assistant Sub-inspector, to be responsible for maintaining and prominently displaying information about the arrested persons. Justice M L Mehta, Former Judge of Delhi High Court says, "Law is a set of norms emulated by state for the welfare of the people. Law is the efficacious remedy for legal system. Delays are unavoidable mechanism in the legal system.



With only 20% cases reaching the court, over five crore cases are pending. It is a Herculean task and will take over 300 years to dispose of these pending cases." As per the BNSS, the new laws prioritise the investigations of crimes against women and children, ensuring timely completion within two months of recording information

(Section 193). Summons can now be served electronically (Sections 64, 70, 71). Courts grant a maximum of two adjournments to avoid unnecessary delays in case hearings (Section 346). The new laws mandate all state governments to implement the Witness Protection Scheme (Section 398). A new chapter has been added to the BNS specifically to address offences against women and children (Chapter V) and the introduction of community service for minor offences (Sections 4, 202, 209, 226, 303, 355, 356). For its effective implementation, and creating awareness among all stakeholders including police, prisons, prosecutors, judicial, forensic personnel as well as the general public, the

Government has organised several rounds of orientation and training programs. The awareness is happening at different levels to understand the legal system better concerning the newly introduced three criminal laws. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has made 23 functional modifications to the existing CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems) application to facilitate technology compatibility with new criminal laws, including the filing of an FIR. The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) has developed 13 training modules for capacity building of police, prisons, prosecutors, judicial officers, forensic experts and central police organisations.

The Bar Council of India has made it mandatory to include the three new criminal laws in the curriculum of universities and legal education centres from the academic year 2024-25. Justice Talwant Singh, Former Judge of Delhi High Court is all praise for the role of academicians in drafting the new laws. He suggests that in the days to come the country will require an ample number of forensic experts. In contrast, the more new laws are unfolded; the more is the possibility of its lacunae being exposed. Is growing incidents of crime good for police and lawyers, is a million-dollar question! (The writer is former editor with Free Press Journal and Media Advisor to Delhi Govt. Presently Media Advisor to GGSIPU; views are personal)



Gold prices crash by Rs 3,350 after govt cuts custom duty on bullion



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices tumbled by Rs 3,350 to Rs 72,300 per 10 grams in the local market here on Tuesday amid subdued demand by jewellers after the government announced the customs duty cut on the yellow metal and silver to 6 per cent.

Govt to rope in private sector to boost nuclear power: FM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday proposed roping in the private sector to boost the share of nuclear power in India's energy basket, as it aims to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2070.

Presenting the Union Budget, Sitharaman announced that the government will partner with the private sector to set up Bharat Small Reactors and in the research and development of small modular reactors.

Sitharaman said the government will also partner with the private sector for research and development of newer technologies for nuclear energy.

She said the Rs 1 trillion research and development funding, announced in the interim budget in



February, will be made available for the nuclear sector.

"Nuclear energy is expected to form a very significant part of the energy mix for a Viksit Bharat," the finance minister said.

In the interim budget presented on February 1, Sitharaman had announced a Rs 1 trillion corpus, with the provision of a 50-year inter-

est-free loan, to help finance research in technology.

"The corpus will provide long-term financing or refinancing with long tenors and low or nil interest rates. This will encourage the private sector to scale up research and innovation significantly in sunrise domains," Sitharaman had said in February.

Budget proposes steps to reduce litigation, 'Vivad Se Vishwas' scheme 2.0 in offing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To reduce litigation, the Budget on Tuesday proposed to come out with 'Vivad Se Vishwas' scheme 2.0, cut down the time limit for initiation of re-assessment proceedings and hiked the threshold for filing of appeals by taxmen before legal fora.

As per the Budget announcement, the I-T assessment can be reopened beyond three years from the end of the assessment year only if the escaped income is Rs 50 lakh or more, up to a maximum



'Govt has ears close to ground': Economists praise focus on jobs, inflation in Budget

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The focus of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget on employment generation, inflation management, and fiscal prudence augur well for the economy, eminent economists said on Tuesday.

Commenting on the the Budget 2024-25, former NITI Aayog vice-chairman Rajiv Kumar said it was good to see that the government has given the first priority to employment and skill development.

"Shows the government has its ears close to ground and is not being led by spurious claims on massive job generation as done by some economists," Kumar said. He also welcomed the

finance minister's proposal to reduce customs duty on gold imports to 6 per cent, saying this will reduce smuggling and lower prices.

Commenting on the finance



minister's proposal to raise the long-term capital gains tax to 12.5 per cent from 10 per cent, Kumar said it is not clear if this rate will apply uniformly for both financial and non-financial assets.

"This will perhaps dampen the flow of household saving to financial instruments," he said.

Commenting on the Budget, NIPFP distinguished professor Pinaki Chakraborty told PTI that a stable path of fiscal prudence needs to continue to reduce the Union government's debt and deficit to a level consistent with the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act.

"A comprehensive review of the Income Tax Act 1961 has been announced in the Budget. "Since modern-day tax system is driven by simplicity and an easy to administer tax system, this review of the Income Tax Act is a significant announcement," Chakraborty said.

DISINVESTMENT, ASSET MONETISATION

Govt estimates Rs 50,000 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has estimated to collect Rs 50,000 crore from disinvestment and asset monetisation in the current fiscal, DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Tuesday.

Besides, the government estimates a total of Rs 56,260 crore dividend from CPSEs (central public sector enterprises), more than Rs 48,000 crore estimated in the interim budget.

The budget also estimates that dividend from RBI, banks and



financial institutions would be Rs 2,32,874 crore in FY25, more than double of interim budget estimate of Rs 1.02 lakh crore.

The massive increase in the number is on account of the windfall dividend of Rs 2.11 lakh crore from the RBI.

As per the budget document, the government has estimated Rs 50,000 crore towards capital receipts. This is same as the amount provisioned for in the interim budget.

The revised estimates for last fiscal has been pegged at Rs 30,000 crore.

Pandey said that the amount includes proceeds expected from CPSE disinvestment and asset monetisation.

'Budget to address skill gap, boost job creation for youth'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

HR and Ed-tech industry experts on Tuesday said budget proposals on skilling, internship and job creation will help address the need for a skilled workforce and boost employment generation for youth.

Experts termed the Budget for 2024-25 presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as forward-thinking which aligns with the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat'.

Direct Benefit Transfer

(DBT) of up to Rs 15,000 is set to boost formal employment by making it more attractive for industries to hire new talent, they added. Sitharaman in the budget announced an outlay of Rs 2 lakh crore for several schemes targeting 4.1 crore youth. The minister announced a provision of Rs 1.48 lakh crore for education, employment and skilling programmes.

TeamLease Degree Apprenticeship Chief Strategy Officer Sumit Kumar said with targeted outreach to 4.1 crore

youth over five years, the initiative is poised to make a significant impact by seamlessly integrating education, skill development and employment.

"Up to Rs 15,000 in direct benefits will facilitate the transition of new entrants into the formal workforce, while additional incentives for job creation in the manufacturing sector and support for employers across various industries aim to promote widespread job creation and bolster economic activity.

Disappointed hospitality players say nothing specific for sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hospitality players on Tuesday expressed disappointment with the Budget for 2024-25 citing lack of policy announcements to facilitate the development of the sector.

They lamented that some

key demands to revitalise the tourism and hospitality sector such as granting of infrastructure status and bringing ease of doing business and policy reforms have not been considered in the Budget.

The Hotel Association of

India (HAI) President KB Kachru said the tourism and hospitality sector plays a crucial role in the growth of the Indian economy.

The continued focus on government spending on infrastructure development augurs well for the sector.

Will boost rural consumption, augment consumer purchasing power: FMCG

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Budget will help drive consumption, especially from rural areas, with its special focus on agricultural schemes and rural development, FMCG industry leaders said.

Terming the measures announced in the budget "positive", HUL CEO and MD Rohit Jawa said investment in infrastructure will have multi-year effect and help drive consumption.

"The new announcements today, increasing the investment rural

development, investment activities supporting urban poor, the schemes for youth, employment, especially skilling, are quite positive, especially for business like ours that serves consumers," said Jawa during an earning calls on Tuesday.

Budget size almost unchanged from interim, shows govt's commitment to fiscal prudence: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The overall size of the budget has remained almost unchanged from the interim one presented in February, indicating the government's strong commitment to move along the fiscal prudence path, said experts on Tuesday.

According to the Union Budget 2024-25 presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the total expenditure in Budget Estimates (BE) 2024-25 is estimated at Rs 48,20,512 crore of which total capital expenditure is Rs 11,111 crore.

The total expenditure in the Interim Budget presented in February was estimated at Rs 47,65,768 crore of which total capital expenditure was Rs 11.11 lakh



crore. Debadatta Chand, Managing Director & CEO, Bank of Baroda, said the Union Budget complements the main takeaways from the Economic Survey and focuses clearly on medium term development of the economy.

"The overall size of the budget has remained almost unchanged

from the interim one. The budget has shown strong intent on moving along the fiscal prudence path and targeted the fiscal deficit at 4.9 per cent for the year," he said.

The said action will keep the growth steady as well as robust not only for economy but also banking.

period of five years from the end of the assessment year.

Even in search cases, a time limit of six years before the year of search, as against the existing time limit of 10 years, is proposed in the Budget.

"This will reduce tax uncertainty and disputes," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her Budget 2024-25 speech.

Nangia Andersen LLP Executive Director Yogesh Kale said the reassessment regime under the Income Tax Act, 1961 was overhauled in 2021 by bringing in radical changes compared to the erstwhile reassessment regime.

Table with columns: Sl. No., S. No., Part, Name of land, Name of the Patta, Name of the Employer, Boundaries, and other details. Includes a section for 'GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA Revenue (Land Acquisition) Department Form-VI (PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION)'.

'I want to push myself, but not in an obvious way'

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Actress Nikita Dutta, who recently completed a Marathi film, is reaping several gains as she ventures into different cinema genres and acquires new knowledge. She told us in an exclusive interview that there are many more opportunities to advance in this field and that her efforts will ultimately have a lasting impact on her career.

"In *Gharat Ganpati*, my role has more to do with the movie and less to do with Kriti. To be honest, this movie belongs to my favourite genre. I have been dying to be a part of this variety! When I want to treat myself, I would like to see a movie of this type if I had the option," the lead actress sums up her delightful experience in her Marathi debut in this way.

Fans are thrilled for the actress' latest endeavour after seeing the highly anticipated movie's trailer. "I instantly said a 'yes' when reading the script," she exclaimed, expressing her excitement too. "For me, my role was introducing a relatable concept. Having to play a Maharashtrian girl fascinated me in so many ways at once. I knew very little about the strict Maharashtrian customs. Because Mumbai is such a global metropolis, I never really got to experience the heart of this state during my 23 years there. I'm sure a lot of readers will concur with me." Subsequently, the actress continues with the same phrase, stating, "This movie gave me a new perspective on Marathi, including its cuisine and culture. And let's not overlook the music and clothes! This new regional identity won my heart. I became accustomed to their eating habits, their speech patterns and my own habits whilst filming *Gharat Ganpati*."

Nikita, who is well-known for her impactful roles in Hindi movies such as *Gold*, *Kabir Singh* and *The Big Bull*, embarks on a new endeavour by joining the Marathi film industry. Isn't that interesting? She does, however, also remark, "I had never been involved in a regional movie. I had doubts! However, I didn't see much change in that regard. With my fourteen fellow actors, we made a stunning ensemble that didn't have any conflicts on the *Gharat Ganpati* sets. Due to the fact that the crew was Maharashtrian, there were moments when they would all start speaking Marathi and I would be left sitting there in complete confusion. Hehe!" However, following that, Nikita said to us, "I also began to notice the language. They began to include me in all of their attempts at conversation once they realised I was there. You perceive that as the beauty of a fresh set? To be completely honest, I just don't have chemistry with my leading man and when you

SINCE STARRING IN GHARAT GANPATI, NIKITA DUTTA HAS MADE HER SCREEN DEBUT IN MARATHI CINEMA. IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE PIONEER, SHE TALKS ABOUT LEARNING ABOUT THE RICH TRADITIONS OF MAHARASHTRIAN CULTURE

watch *Gharat Ganpati*, it's evident with all the other cast members as well."

Kabir Singh fame further says, "My film is extremely rich in showing the culture," while reminiscing about some of his happy moments spent on the *Gharat Ganpati* set. "For example, one thing Mumbai is well-known for is Ganesh Chavithi! It has been at this time that I have participated in several darshans. However, what's the deal? I learned from this movie that, up until it came out, my knowledge of this festival had been incredibly limited. I immersed myself in the 'mumbaiya' way of life. When it came to carrying out the rites, the director followed the text! I had the impression that I was celebrating all month long because we spent more than a month filming this movie. Because of *Gharat Ganpati*, I can now truly appreciate the significance of Ganesh Chaturthi."

Nikita recalls, adjusting to the part, "I was finding it difficult to respond to the sentences that were being uttered in Marathi. One of my main concerns while on the sets of *Gharat Ganpati* was seeing my fellow performers, who are adept at swiftly improvising on the scene. Sometimes they are known to stray from the plan. However, they used to give me hints, hehe. I had never worn a 'nauvari' saree, either. How difficult is it to wear that? Oh my goodness! It was exciting for me to know that I would be wearing it on screen, but I have to admit that shooting it was challenging." But her fondest memory was of, "My first marathi saree, which I wore, was an ancestral saree. Ages old and incredibly costly! To ensure I didn't dirty it, I constantly had a huge team standing on my head. Could you believe that the heritage saree was guarded? And not the main actress! Not to mention that the process of draping used to take over three hours. I used to have three people come help me drape the saree. I have been nagging my team to let me recreate that look again since I am so in love with it when I am doing my promotions."

Her character in *Gharat Ganpati* is Kriti Ahuja, a girl from North India who enjoys the colourful world of Maharashtrian traditions and sets out on a cultural odyssey. Nikita appears to be settling into the part with ease in the trailer, wearing a classic appearance that goes well with the touching story of the movie. As the interview was drawing to an end, the well-known actor from *Dybbuk* also said, "I haven't worked with any production houses, directors, or actors that I wouldn't want people to see any of my films with. I've prevailed there, then! Without coming across as corny, I want to push myself, but not in an obvious way. I signed up for a Marathi debut, why? There are two reasons: one, it's not my native tongue and second, I was meant to operate in an entirely different environment. Thus, why not? I don't always have to play out and audacious parts! It was difficult for me personally, but I'm glad I did it."



FURRY THERAPISTS

Surprising mental health benefits of pet ownership

Pets have consistently proven to be humans' best companions. A study by the University of Liverpool reveals, strong human-pet bonds, especially with dogs, provide emotional support that aids people suffering from mental health problems, including depression.

Post 2020 the pet industry is witnessing a growth at 22% per annum and aims to touch over 50% in 2026 in the post-pandemic era. In India, dogs and cats are cherished companions, rendering numerous invaluable benefits.

Reduction in stress and anxiety

Considering that 74% of Indians suffer from stress and 88% from anxiety, therapy pets are fast gaining traction. This is because physical interaction in the form of petting and playing raises levels of oxytocin, increasing feelings of relaxation. This has proven through various researches that a person owning a pet would have reduced levels of cortisol, a hormone causing stress and increased oxytocin, which promotes relaxation and reduces anxiety.

Having pets increases routine and responsibility, two aspects that are important in treating anxiety disorders. Pets provide companionship reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation. Walking a dog or playing around with it ensures physical activity and stimulation of endorphins enhancing an individual's mental wellbeing.

Enhanced mood and happiness

Pets give out unconditional love and happiness to the owners. It has been proven that pet interaction stimulates the release of dopamine and the serotonin between the carriers of happiness and a good mood.

One research study published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology found that pet owners tend to have greater self-esteem, are more physically fit and are less lonely than non-pet owners. Due to the playful demeanour of pets, it boosts self-esteem in households, bringing more joy and laughter.

Boost in self-esteem

Pet owners are comforted by pets' emotional petting and companionship amidst high demanding work schedules and economic pressures. They offer one valuable support: emotional petting and companionship. Unconditional love and acceptance can raise

one's self-esteem and self-worth enhancement.

It has been observed that most pet owners express that their pets make them feel needed and valued by them which can positively enhance the self-esteem of owners. Many pet owners reportedly convey that taking care of a pet makes them feel useful and satisfied, especially when some parts of life do not go well.

Enhanced emotional stability

Coming into the house with a friendly pet will do very much for emotional stability. Pets offer unremitting comfort and support that can be used for the resilience of coping in chronic stress and adversity.

The Human-Animal Bond Research Initiative (HABRI) is research-backed, whereby it is validated that pet ownership is allied to decreased rates of conditions like depression and anxiety, precisely because the pets can be grounding and affectionate. This emotional stability is thus what forms the cushion between the rough environmental conditions and mental well-being; it makes it hard to push an individual off-center or make a total derailment of a given mental state.

Combat isolation

In the rapidly urbanising Indian scenario, loneliness has become a modern concern, exacerbated by the experience of the recent pandemic. Pet ownership has emerged as a strong tool for social connection and to weaken loneliness among people.

The Pets and People (PaPs) Program at Monash University seeks to explore more of the benefits through animal-assisted activities within aged care settings and community programs. It promotes interactions of a like-minded group of individuals with shared responsibilities for pets, bringing forth the issue of loneliness within the promoted social well-being of a heterogeneous society.

As we delve deeper into this age-old symbiotic relationship between humans and animals, it becomes more prevalent that pets improve the quality and well-being of our lives. The companionship that we receive from them is meaningful and gives us a real sense of purpose in our lives. The unconditional love and acceptance that animals give us provide a form of support that is available all too rarely amongst humans.

But what we must understand well is that we as pet owners have an equally important role to play of providing. Providing their pets with love, time & timely healthcare. Creatures of love also must maintain the best of mental health and we as pet owners are responsible for that. Engaging them in mind stimulating games, good nutrition based on vet-recommended food plans, vet-recommended grooming products, wellness activities, regular playtime and more are some of the elements we must keep in mind for our pets & let them have access to it.

We are everything they have, we must provide for all that can keep them happy, loved, healthy & free from anxieties.

The most beautiful bond must be celebrated each day & be therapeutic for us and them.

(The author, Dr. Vinod Sharma, is the Head Veterinarian at DCC Animal Hospital.)



AARTI SREENATH

In the picturesque town of Suri, West Bengal, where tradition and culture merge seamlessly, Chaitali Maji first discovered her artistic talent. Now a prominent artist based in Hyderabad, she has transformed her early inspirations into a celebrated career, showcasing her work in galleries across India and abroad. Growing up in a Bengali family, she was immersed in a vibrant cultural milieu. "I was exposed to dance, music, art and other cultural activities from a young age. Suri's proximity to Shantiniketan, known for its art and culture, was influential in shaping my artistic path," she recalls. Her prodigious talent was evident early on; at just four years old, her drawing assignment astonished her teacher. "I remember vividly that, at four, my class teacher gave me a drawing assignment. My drawing was exceptional for my age and she asked me to recreate it in front of her. When I did it flawlessly, she encouraged my parents to nurture my budding talent." Transitioning from her educational years at Suri and Burdwan University to family life in Hyderabad, she faced the challenge of balancing her artistic passion with new responsibilities. "When I became a mother, it brought me a lot of happiness but also some personal unhappiness. I found myself searching for something that was missing, despite my material happiness. It was my passion for painting that filled that void," she explains.

Chaitali's path to becoming a professional artist was not straightforward. Initially working as an art teacher, she was urged by her family and friends to showcase her art in prominent galleries. "I started as an art teacher and with encouragement from my well-wishers, family members and friends, I began to exhibit my art in renowned galleries. This support was crucial in my transition to becoming a professional artist," she says. Her work has been showcased in prestigious venues, including the IHC, AIFACS, Artizen Art Gallery in New Delhi, the State Art Gallery, the HAS and Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad, the ICCR and Academy of Fine Arts in Kolkata and Dom Artysty Plastyka in Poland. "My painting has traversed through innumerable shows in these prestigious galleries. I believe that painting is the most powerful visual communication tool, making a profound impact on the human mind," she asserts.

She prefers working with acrylic on canvas but also enjoys exploring various mediums. "I prefer to work with acrylic on canvas due to its versatility. I also love working with watercolors, pencil sketches, graphite and soft oil pastels. My work often focuses on nature, animals, birds, mythology, cultural heritage, social awareness, and womanhood," she shares. Her artistic repertoire spans both realistic and contemporary styles. "I started with realistic art, which I believe is essential for developing skills. My current project, *Inner Voice*, is focused on realistic art. I feel that

ART VIA DIVINE AURA



mastering realism is important before exploring contemporary forms. Realistic art helps in developing the necessary skills." One of her significant projects is the *Divine Aura* series, which presents deities in a modern light. "I liked mythology from my childhood. My parents used to tell me stories from the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and other epics. I wanted to present God and Goddess in a contemporary way, which is reflected in my *Divine Aura* series. It represents the superpower in my own way, making it easier to embrace and comprehend," she explains. Her *Inner Voice* series delves into societal biases and the complex experiences of women. "Through *Inner Voice*, I represent various societal biases and how they impact women's lives. Some works highlight the captivity or subjugation women experience, while others showcase their passion and determination. My art often depicts women as powerful and profound, like Mata Durga, showcasing their resilience and depth," she elaborates.

Her creative process is deeply intertwined with her personal experiences and emotions. "What we see, feel and think in our surroundings first comes to my mind, then I convert it into a painting on a canvas. My artworks are experiences through my life," she reveals. Despite the challenges of her artistic journey, Chaitali remains deeply motivated. "Painting is my passion and love. I never feel bored with it. Whatever challenges come my way, I take them positively and enjoy my work."

Reflecting on her long-term goals, she is committed to using her art to drive societal change. "I am sure that someday my artwork will bring awareness to society and this is my long-term goal. I hope that my artwork will bring awareness to societal issues and drive positive change," she says. For aspiring artists, the renowned artist offers this advice: "Enjoy your work with full dedication and hard work. Remain committed to your passion and keep pushing forward." Balancing her personal and professional lives is crucial for her. "Daily, I allocate seven hours to my family and seven hours to my career. This balance is crucial for maintaining both aspects of my life," she explains. Chaitali Maji's art vividly illustrates the profound impact of creativity on both personal and societal levels. Her extraordinary journey from the small town of Suri to the international art scene highlights her resilience and dedication, demonstrating the powerful influence art can have in shaping and inspiring the world.

what's brewing?

BEAT THE BLUES WITH BREWS

The monsoon season is here, providing an opportunity to indulge in a cocktail menu that mirrors the essence of the rainy season. Cosy Box, known for being the official food partner at the Cannes Film Festival, is the perfect destination to relax and unwind, whether during the sunlit hours of brunch or the lively nights, along with its Mediterranean, Italian and modern Indian dishes.

The restaurant has recently launched an impressive Monsoon Cocktail Menu. Whether you're hosting a gathering or simply enjoying a rainy evening, the cocktails offered will transport you to the heart of Monsoon. Golden Harvest Combination of Corn Chilli & Tequila, Tea Time Combination of Voda, Masal tea syrup citrus & foamer, Cosy Rush Combination of Brandy, Pumpkin Spice Orange & Ginger and Monsoon Xpresso Whiskey, espresso, coffee liquor & caramel. These unique, cooling and exotic cocktails not only celebrate the season but also offer guests a unique sensory experience. Offering several delectable dishes like Pizza Ai Quattro Formaggio, a classic Neapolitan four-cheese pizza with honey chili sauce alongside mozzarella, scamorza and parmesan cheese and Turkish Urfa, a delectable wrap available in vegetarian and non-vegetarian variants. The culinary mastermind Chef Sedat Firatoglu, born in Adana, Türkiye uses his love for cooking and culinary skills to craft unique and mouth-tempting dishes.



Mine and Yours wedding shopping exhibition is all set to be featured in Hyderabad on August 3 and August 4, at Hotel Taj Krishna in Banjara Hills. The expo will have over 100 top fashion designers and jewellers from all across India.

Party

Photos by - SV Chary

Guests:

- Rashi Singh
- Anu
- Angad and Harpreet
- Sony
- Aiswarya
- Arpitha Lohi
- Akhila
- Urimila
- Chandu
- Aparna



Through their community program Move Together, H&M Move, an activewear concept, has partnered with Special Olympics Bharat. The cooperation aims to empower people with intellectual impairments by giving them opportunities to demonstrate their talents, gain confidence and integrate more completely into society. It also hopes to inspire worldwide movement in a more sustainable way.



At the Leo 11 location, the thrilling Hyderabad Super League Sub Junior Season 2, presented by Sreenidhi Deccan FC, came to an end. Football fans from all around the region were captivated by the intense 7-a-side competition between eight teams from June 9 to July 21. The competition came down to a close championship match, as Mohammed Aman Alam's Warriors FC won the Hyderabad Super League Sub Junior Season 2 championship.



Pegasystems Inc. (NASDAQ: PEGA), announced the opening of the Pega University Academic Program (UAP) Internship Immersion. The program's main goal is to upskill Indian engineering graduates who have earned their Certified Senior System Architect (CSSA) certification and increase their understanding of advanced Pega software skills. More than 100 CSSA-certified students were chosen through Pega UAP and customised curricula were created for them.

FUN

ARCHIE

THAT'S AN ODD PLACE FOR A TISSUE DISPENSER!

IT'S NOT A TISSUE DISPENSER!

THESE ARE PETITION SLIPS FOR TARDY STUDENTS!

WHIP!

CALVIN AND HOBBS

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW I'VE ANALYZED YOUR POOR SHOWING IN THE POLLS.

I'LL BET.

SEE, YOUR RECORD IN OFFICE IS MISERABLE AND THE CHARACTER ISSUE IS KILLING YOU. YOUR BASIC APPROVAL RATING AMONG SIX-YEAR-OLDS HARDLY REGISTERS.

IF ANYONE EVER NEEDED A SLICK AD CAMPAIGN, IT'S YOU.

LET ME GUESS WHAT YOU HAVE IN MIND.

"THE NEW DAD" I CALL IT.

GARFIELD

SALAD'S READY!

GARFIELD?

SALAD'S READY!

I'M NOT SURE WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THAT INFORMATION

REALITY CHECK

WELCOME TO THE CHANNEL 7 NEWS HOUR. I'M NANCY ANN CUNCI FILLING IN FOR MATT MANWEASEL WHO WAS JUST FIRED IN THE NEWS TONIGHT AS WE ONLY HAVE AN HOUR. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE EASIER TO LIST THE MEN WHO HAVEN'T BEEN ACCUSED OF INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL MISCONDUCT TODAY.

NEWS HOUR

SPEED BUMP

NO, THAT'S A TOURIST. I ONLY BAT LOCALLY GROWN.

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8	9		10	11
		12		
13				
14	15	16	17	18
19				

NANCY

NANCY AND SLUGGO ARE SUCH A PAIR. THEY'RE SO IN SYNC.

WE HAVE TO BE.

SLUGGO DOESN'T HAVE HIS OWN PAIR OF EARBUDS.

SUDOKU

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

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

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.

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

ACROSS

- Not finished
- Chewed up and swallowed
- Tongans live in this country
- Someone who works with wires, lights, switches
- A name for a doll
- Have a quarrel
- These are published daily
- To do something very well
- Happen
- Tongans live in this country
- Important rules
- The barks of a small dog
- Mountains
- A young woman

DOWN

- Weave wool with big needles
- Connect together
- A small mark
- A green feathery plant
- Something left over
- Cutting off a person's head

SOLUTION

S	I	S	T	E	R	W	A	N	D
O	G	K	R	O					
B	E	A	N	R	E	M	A	N	
F	E	A	R	I	N	G			
I	D	E	R	O	V				
A	N	T	E	R	S				
G	W	A	S	E					
S	W	O	R	D	S				
A	K	E							
W	E	E	R						

'I WASN'T VERY CONFIDENT ABOUT PULLING OFF THE ROLE IN BUDDY'

Prisha Singh is slated to make her Tollywood debut as one of the leading ladies in the upcoming Telugu film *Buddy*, which stars Allu Sirish. The actress will play an air hostess in the film, directed by Sam Anton.

Prisha reflects on how she got the part, saying that the producers discovered her through her portfolio images. Prisha was initially shocked by the offer and says, "I wasn't very confident about pulling off the role because it required a different personality and a pattern of exploits and doings. I had to prepare carefully, examining several flight hostesses, their body language, how they walk and communicate and so on. The filmmaker also gave some allusions, which helped me better grasp the role."

Prisha sees her experience in Tollywood as enlightening and she hopes to take on impactful roles that will allow her to exhibit her acting skills. She is an avid nature photographer in addition to her acting career. She just shared a series of Instagram photographs from a nature adventure. Prisha, a wildlife fanatic, enjoys travelling on safaris and documenting moments in nature. She has taken part in various wildlife trips.

"I adore photographing flora and fauna and safaris are one of my passions. For me, photography is more than just catching animals and wildlife; it's about capturing moments and feelings in their purest form," explains Prisha. "Looking at such images makes me nostalgic, gives me a sense of fulfillment and meaningful experience."

Her wilderness travels have given her a greater respect for nature's beauties. "Every capture has an interesting story to tell," she says, adding that wildlife photography has improved her acting abilities. "It has helped me embrace the camera more."

Tara Sutaria to make her South debut with *Toxic!*

KGF actor Yash's highly anticipated project *Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-ups* has added another Bollywood actress to its cast. Reports revealed that Tara Sutaria has been engaged in a crucial role in the action thriller helmed by Geethu Mohandas.

"Tara is overjoyed to have landed a prominent role in such a massive project. She plays one of the two romantic interests of the Kannada superstar, the other being Kiara Advani," an industry source informed us. The multi-lingual, big-budget film rides on a strong force of women characters and also features

Jawan actress Nayanthara and Huma Qureshi in lead roles. Nayanthara will play Yash's sister, while Huma is expected to take on a negative character.

Toxic, billed as an action-packed spectacle, is set in the 1950s and 1970s, during the rule of the drug mafia. Yash, who became a national star following the historic box-office success of *KGF Chapter 2*, will purportedly play a slick gangster in this high-stakes action picture. The project will take over 200 days of filming to achieve an unprecedented scale, giving fans an unrivaled visual film experience.

Toxic began shooting in June and is slated to continue throughout the year, with a theatrical release scheduled for April 10, 2025. Yash is presently filming Nitesh Tiwari's magnum epic, *Ramayana* and will continue production on *Toxic* in September. Despite the fact that filming is still underway, the producers have kept the cast a mystery. This film is produced jointly by Yash and Venkat K Narayana under their respective banners, Monster Mind Creations and KVN Productions.

Fire Song: Suriya dances his heart out with gigantic energy

Attention everyone! The makers of *Kanguva* released a brand new song from the film on Tuesday and it is trending heavily. Suriya, the film's main actor, dances his heart out in the new tune, *Fire Song*, while dressed in an elaborate costume. The song depicts a bleak society immersed in darkness, with Suriya standing out brightly as the power capable of changing it. Suriya appears in a never-seen-before appearance, complete with dreadlocks and severe makeup. The track was released in Tamil, Telugu and Hindi.

The Hindi version was sung by B Praak and Pavithra Chari, with lyrics by Raqueeb Alam. The Tamil rendition was sung by VM Mahalingam, Senthil Ganesh, Shenbagaraj and Deepthi Suresh, with lyrics by Viveka. The Telugu version was sung by Anurag Kulkarni and Deepthi Suresh, with lyrics by Sreemani.

Suriya will also appear in a production titled *Love Laughter War*. The makers unveiled the project in an Instagram photo with the remark, "An unveiling maverick, ready to conquer." Join the excitement for *Love Laughter War* and more! Happy Birthday to the one. #HappyBirthdaySuriya #HBDTheOneSuriya Best wishes from Team #Suriya44." Siva directed *Kanguva*, which also stars Disha Patani. The film was produced by K E Gnanavel Raja, V Vamsi Krishna Reddy and Pramod Uppalapati under the labels Studio Green and UV Creations. The film is scheduled for release on October 10. The film will compete with *Vettaiyan*, starring superstar Rajinikanth.



KARTHI'S CAMEO IN KANGUVA

Kanguva is one of the most anticipated films from South India for 2024. The producers are going above and beyond with their promotions.

According to the latest chatter in Kollywood film circles, Suriya's brother Karthi would make a spectacular appearance at the end of *Kanguva*. It is speculated that Karthi's appearance in the climax will act as the lead for the second installment. Tamil audiences are hopeful *Kanguva* will be Kollywood's first 1,000-crore grosser. Disha Patani is Suriya's love interest in this big-budget film that combines period drama with modern themes. Bobby Deol is the antagonist. *Kanguva* is produced by Studio Green and UV Creations. Devi Sri Prasad is composing the music. The film will be released in cinemas on October 10, 2024.

Aho! Vikramarka releasing in theatres on August 30

Dev Gill, known for his diverse roles and charismatic performances in several South Indian films, including the blockbuster *Magadheera*, is all set to debut as a hero. Dev Gill Productions presents *Aho! Vikramarka*, directed by Peta Trikoti.

The movie is set to release on August 30 in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi and Kannada languages. The makers have officially announced this with a release poster. In the poster, Dev, portraying a powerful police officer, is depicted delivering a powerful punch to the villain.

Hero Dev remarked, "With *Aho! Vikramarka*, we aim to showcase the courage and dedication of the police force. The film has shaped up wonderfully and we are thrilled about its pan-India release on August 30.

Audiences, who have seen one side of my acting so far, will witness a different aspect on the silver screen."

Director Peta Trikoti added, "Aho! Vikramarka highlights the valour of the police. The film has been meticulously planned and executed. The first look and teasers have received an excellent response. Dev will be seen in a new light."

BSS12 marks 'special significance' in Bellamkonda's career

Bellamkonda Sai Sreenivas has been choosing a variety of unique scripts lately, with each recent project differing from the last. His 12th film was announced today, directed by Ludhir Baireddy in his debut and produced by Mahesh Chandu under Moonshine Pictures, with Shiven Ramakrishna presenting.

Marking a decade in his acting career, this film holds special significance for Bellamkonda Sai Sreenivas. The official announcement coincided with the 75th birth anniversary of Kоди Ramakrishna.

The announcement poster features a spiritual theme, depicting Bellamkonda Sai Sreenivas in front of a 400-year-old temple, hinting at the film's plot centered around this temple. *BSS12* is described as an innovative occult thriller, promising a fresh experience for the audience. The intriguing poster has already sparked considerable interest. Music and cinematography will be managed by Shivendra and Leon James, respectively.

Shivam Bhaje's thrilling trailer teases its release

Following the success of *Hidimba*, Ashwin Babu's latest film, Shivam Bhaje, promises to enchant audiences once more. The film's buzz has already begun, owing to an intriguing trailer and the release of a captivating first track. *Shivam Bhaje*, directed by Apsar, is scheduled to open in theatres on August 1, 2024.

With the release date quickly approaching, the promotional campaign has gained traction. The trailer of the film was premiered at AAA Cinemas in Hyderabad and it began with a frightening scene involving China's surprise threat to India. As the trailer progresses, we see Ashwin Babu as the character of a chemical engineer at a pharmaceutical business on a mission to discover the identity of a notorious criminal on a killing rampage.

The video reveals the villain's motivations and Ashwin's relationship to the unfolding drama, leaving viewers curious to see how it all plays out on the big screen. While the trailer is entertaining, the evocative score really lifts it.



Meanwhile, director Apsar thanked Anil, Thaman and Vishwak Sen for attending the event. He also shared that he believed the story and the film will resonate with everyone.

Digangana Suryavanshi, the leading lady further added, "The trailer is fantastic and I'm grateful for the opportunity. The *Shivam Bhaje* team feels like family, and Ashwin has been a great support. We're all looking forward to the August 1 release."

Ganga Entertainments presents this highly anticipated debut, which features a captivating storyline, partnerships with top industry talent and excellent production elements. The film's female lead is Digangana Suryavanshi, who is joined by a great cast that includes Hyper Aadi, Murali Sharma, Sai Dheena, Brahmaji, Tulasi, Devi Prasad, Ayyappa Sharma, Shakalaka Shankar, Kashi Vishwanath Inaya Sultana and many others. Vikas Badisa is the musical director.

ARJUN RAMPAL AS PRIMARY ANTAGONIST IN RANA NAIDU 2

Netflix India has announced that filming for *Rana Naidu Season 2* is moving quickly, with exciting action scenes revealed in a teaser. It has been announced that Arjun Rampal will play the primary villain this season, while Rana Daggubati will return with much more ferocity.

The next season, directed by Suparn Verma and Karan Anshuman, will feature both returning *Season 1* characters and new faces. For those unfamiliar, *Rana Naidu* is the Indian adaptation of the critically successful American television series *Ray Donovan*.



ASALANKA TO LEAD SRI LANKA IN T20I SERIES

PTI ■ PALLEKELE

Charith Asalanka was on Tuesday named captain of the Sri Lankan T20 team for the three-match series against India, starting here on July 27, replacing spin all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga, who stepped down after the team's early exit from last month's T20 World Cup.

The 27-year-old comes with considerable captaincy experience. In the absence of Hasaranga, who was facing suspension due to ICC code of conduct violations, Asalanka had captained Sri Lanka in two T20Is on the tour of Bangladesh earlier this year. A former Sri Lankan U-19 captain, he also led Jaffna Kings to the Lanka Premier League title last week. Sri Lanka Cricket Selection Committee opted for several changes following the team's dismal show at the T20 World Cup, where the island nation managed to win only one game and made an early exit. Overall, the 16-member squad is a good mix of experience and youth.

The seasoned pair of all-rounders Angelo Mathews and Dhananjaya de Silva, wicketkeeper Sadeera Samarawickrama and left-arm pacer Dilshan Madushanka have been left out of the squad. Returning to the squad are 34-year-old Dinesh Chandimal, who last played a T20I in



February 2022, and Kusal Janith Perera. Uncapped all-rounder Chamindu Wickramasinghe has earned a maiden call up. Right-arm seamer, who had been training at the MRF Pace Academy in India, has been rewarded for his breakout LPL season.

Pacers Binura Fernando and Avishka Fernando also find themselves back in the national fold. Sri Lanka will play the first of the three T20Is on July 27 here, followed by games on July 28 and 30. The Indian team, which will be led by a new captain in

Suryakumar Yadav as well, landed here on Monday night for the series, which also features three ODIs scheduled next month.

SRI LANKA SQUAD:

Charith Asalanka (capt), Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Janith Perera (wk), Avishka

Fernando, Kusal Mendis (wk), Dinesh Chandimal, Kamindu Mendis, Dasun Shanaka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Dunith Wellalage, Maheesh Theekshana, Chamindu Wickramasinghe, Matheesha Pathirana, Nuwan Thushara, Dushmantha Chameera, Binura Fernando.



Rahul Dravid screamed and cried, recalls Ashwin on India's T20 World Cup celebrations

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Virat Kohli handing over the T20 World Cup trophy to former coach Rahul Dravid after India's title triumph in Barbados and the much revered coach 'screaming and crying' in joy is something that will remain etched in his memory, Ravichandran Ashwin has expressed. After India pipped South Africa in a tense final last month to win their second T20 World Cup, former coach Dravid was seen letting out his emotions in a rare show while holding the trophy aloft. Ashwin admitted it was indeed a special moment for the 51-year-old Dravid, who could not win an ICC title as a player but finally redeemed it as a coach.

"My moment was when Virat Kohli called Rahul Dravid and gave the cup... I saw him hug the cup and cry," he said in a video on his YouTube channel. "Rahul Dravid screamed and cried. I saw him enjoy it. I felt that a lot." Ashwin also reckoned that Dravid was scared being at the helm of another campaign in the Caribbean, for the team under his captaincy had made a group-stage exit in the 2007 ODI World Cup. "I want to talk about a sacred person. (In) 2007, (the) 50-over World Cup. India gets knocked out. Rahul Dravid (was) the captain then. He does not captain the one-day side after that," he said. "He has been with the Indian team. If something does not go well, if the Indian team goes out, or if they lose a match,

immediately they ask what Dravid is doing." Ashwin also acknowledged the hard work done by Dravid during his stint as India coach, saying he brought balance to the team and changed in approach. "I know what he has been doing with this team for the past two to three years. I know how balanced he has been. I know how hard he has worked to change this approach," Ashwin said. "I know what he has given each of his players. Even when he is just sitting at home, he has been planning how to do this and that," he added. Under Dravid, India reached the finals of the World Test Championship and the ODI World Cup but lost to Australia on both occasions.



Bernard dubbed Olympics' godfather; here's how he built LVMH's fortune

AP ■ PARIS

For decades, France's LVMH has been the face of luxury for the wealthy who tote Louis Vuitton bags, don Christian Dior clothing, spritz Bulgari perfume and sip Veuve Clicquot Champagne. This week, the world's dominant luxury group - home to 75 high-end brands across fashion, jewellery, watches and alcohol - will be the face of a global event for the masses: the Paris Olympics, with its billions of viewers around the planet. With a major sponsorship role aimed at burnishing the image of the Games and the French capital, it's a new chapter in LVMH's speciality of selling exclusivity at a grand scale under its chair and CEO, Bernard Arnault. Assembling and growing dozens of exclusive labels under one powerhouse roof has put Arnault, 75, at the very top of Forbes' list of the world's richest people. As recently as June 3, Forbes

estimated his wealth at USD 207 billion, narrowly ahead of Tesla's Elon Musk and Amazon founder Jeff Bezos. With ever-shifting stock-market prices, the three men often trade places (according to Forbes' real-time billionaires list on Tuesday, Arnault and his family are currently No. 3). LVMH's cosmetics brand Sephora sponsored the Olympic torch relay. Berluti designed France's opening ceremony uniforms. Jeweler Chaumet crafted the Olympic medals. Those will rest in cases designed by Louis Vuitton, whose headquarters at 2 Rue Pont Neuf will be hard to miss as the opening ceremony parade floats by on the Seine River. "We tried to find a way to do it, to do something else than just signing a check and getting billboards on the side of the streets," Antoine Arnault - LVMH's head of environment and image and Arnault's eldest son - told The Associated Press on Monday.

Purnima's sacrifices for elusive archery medal

PTI ■ PARIS

Purnima Mahato didn't even know when her son Siddharth and daughter Archisa turned 17 and 10 as she would often feel guilty of being a perennially absentee mother. But in her three-decade career as an archery coach, the myriad desire to see one of her wards stand on the Olympic podium allowed her to make sacrifices and also demand a bit of it from her children. "We have everything but an Olympic medal. Archery has become life for me. My children grew up on their own and I didn't even realise," the Dronacharya Awardee coach told PTI in an exclusive interaction. "I hardly got to spend any time back home all these years with my kids. I left my son (Siddharth) at home when he was not even a year old. He is now all grown up and 17 years old, preparing for his 12th standard board exams. My daughter (Archisa) is 10 years old. It seems they have sacrificed way more than me for this Olympic medal," she gets a touch emotional. She has not even stayed at home for a week in 2024. "I went home for four days this year busy with the trials and camp, this has been the story so far. We have got all the medals but the Olympic medal is still a work in progress," she rued. BETTER EQUIPPED TO KEEP EMOTIONS UNDER



CHECK: The heartbreak of missing the 'Inner 10' when it matters is way too familiar a feeling for Purnima, who is again in charge of the women's team at the Paris Games where she wants veteran Deepika Kumari and her compatriots to focus on process rather than thinking about the end result. "Medal layenge, medal layenge yeh baat tum dimaag se nikal do (a medal will never come if you chase after a medal, just focus on the processes)," she has told the trio of Deepika, Ankita Bhakat and Bhajan Kaur. "They are now better placed to control their emotions and overcome the nervousness in big matches. It's (an Olympic medal) just a matter of time now." A CWG medallist, Mahato took up coaching at Tata Academy after leaving the sport in late 90s. She first coached the national team in an Olympics during the Beijing

edition where Dola Banerjee and V Praneetha were part of the squad. It was a 10-team draw and India got a bye to quarters as they needed to win two matches for their maiden Olympic medal. They were pitted against China, where they lost by big five-point margin and their story of heartbreaks continued since then. Every time the Olympic approaches, the expectation reaches its peak for the archers. And this time, it is no different. The women's team, who finished the Olympic cycle as World No. 8, topped the rankings among the non-qualified nations to earn the team quota. The men also made it on rankings by finishing the Olympic cycle as world No. 2. Paris, as a venue, has also been lucky for the Indian team. The women's team had won a silver and bronze medal in the World Cup Stage 3 in 2022 and

2023 in Paris, while senior archer Deepika Kumari has an individual gold here from World Cup Stage 3 in 2021. "The Koreans and the Chinese also have hearts that beat faster but they know how to control it by being mentally strong," Mahato said. "It's about following the process, stay engaged and relaxed without looking at scoring a perfect 10." "I don't want them to focus on the opponent's team, it's about keeping the atmosphere relaxed, by humming a song or focusing on the breath when your turn comes," she said. STRATEGY AND CODE WORDS: In the team event, Ankita will shoot first followed by Bhajan while Deepika with all her experience has the responsibility to play the role of the finisher. "Whenever one archer goes to the shooting line, the other has the job to keep the mood light by using their respective code words," Mahato said. This time the women's coach has the added responsibility after being awarded the Padma Shri three months back. "It's not a burden but an added responsibility, whenever you get a recognition you have an extra responsibility. I've been coaching for the last 28 years now and our players also do well but never got a medal. "But everyone in this team comes into the Olympics after doing well in the World Cups held during the current Games cycle. We have medals across all categories," she signed off.



Vidhatri eyes back-to-back wins on Hero Women's Pro Tour

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Talented golfer Vidhatri Urs, who captured her first title as a professional on the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour last week, will look to make it two in a row as she tees up at the 10th Leg of the tournament at the par-72 Prestige Golfshire here on Wednesday. The field is once again very strong in the presence of the current Hero OOM leader Hitaashee Bakshi and last year OOM winner Sneha Singh, who have won twice each this year. The field also has Anvitha Narendar, winner of the eighth leg, the experienced Amandeep Drall, winner of the fifth Leg, and Neha Tripathi. While Amandeep seeks greater consistency, Neha is trying to make a comeback from a back injury.

Vidhatri, who is related to one of India's top pros Pranavi Urs, has been in excellent form. She was third in her first two appearances and then grabbed a win last week. Some of the other young pros waiting to make a mark include Durga Nittr, Jasmine Shekar, Gourabi Bhowmick and Karishma Govind. The amateurs have also shown a lot of promise with the prominent ones being Saanvi Somu and Mannat Brar, who have also played for India in international teams chosen by the Indian Golf Union. Apart from the in-form Saanvi Somu and Mannat Brar, the other amateurs are Aaradhya Shetty, Anuradha Chaudhuri, Keerthana Rajeev and Kaya Daluwatte of Sri Lanka. The event carries a purse of Rs 13 lakhs and will have a total 38 players including six amateurs.

Woods watches 15-year-old son Charlie shoot a 12-over 82

AP ■ BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP (MICHIGAN)

Charlie Woods, the 15-year-old son of Tiger Woods, covered his face with his cap after shaking hands with his playing partners on the 18th green at the Oakland Hills North Course. Woods shot a 12-over 82 on Monday in the U.S. Junior Amateur, a tournament he played his way into. "He still qualified," Tiger Woods said to his son's caddie after the rough round. "That's what I keep telling him," caddie Luke Wise said. Woods earned a spot in the field of top juniors from around the world when he shot a 1-under 71 to win his qualifier last month in Coral Springs, Florida. He will have to have quite a turnaround Tuesday on the Oakland Hills South Course, which Ben Hogan called "The Monster," to be among the low 64 scorers from a field of 264 players from 40 states and 35 countries. Charlie Woods is the only

one in the world who knows what it's like to be the son of Tiger Woods, and now he's fully aware of what it's like to compete with all eyes on him. At an event that usually draws a few hundred people for the championship match, about 100 were waiting on the first tee to see Charlie play while his dad watched, and at least that many spectators followed them for hours. Oakland Hills had six members assigned to assist with crowd control. That wasn't enough, and 10 more men were dispatched to hold ropes to give the players - and Tiger - some space. After Charlie hit his tee shot on the seventh hole and left behind his tee, adorned with a palm tree, a fan took it out of the ground to keep as a memento. "I feel like he's feeling pressure," said 35-year-old John Pinch of Warren, Michigan. "If his dad could talk to him, he would probably try to get him to

US JUNIOR AMATEUR AT OAKLAND HILLS



settle down. "You can tell he's really down on himself." Charlie was frustrated and let it show, slamming and swinging clubs into the ground after errant shots and shaking his head from side to side. His father was relatively helpless because rules prevent parents from coaching their children during the tournament. After a brief exchange prior to the round on the practice green, Tiger didn't say a word to his son and didn't appear to even make eye contact as he watched from afar while surrounded by police officers - at least one of whom snapped photos - and security personnel. Without a doubt, Tiger wished his son could hear him on the 181-yard, par-3 fourth. A rules official gave Charlie relief because his ball landed on a metal cap on the right side of the green. "He gets a club length," Tiger said, standing out of earshot

of his son. Tiger wanted his son to place his ball to the left, but Charlie elected to take relief to the right. "No, no, no," Tiger muttered to himself. "Go the other way." Charlie ended up with his first of five double bogeys at No. 4 to go with four bogeys and two birdies - on both of the par 5s. He was wild off the tee - often missing to the right - came up short on a series of flop shots out of thick rough and sailed some approaches over greens. Tiger was 14 when he qualified for his first U.S. Junior and reached the semifinals. He won his first U.S. Junior a year later and went on to become the only player to win the tournament three times in a row. Tiger traveled to suburban Detroit from Scotland after matching his highest 36-hole score as a professional at the British Open, missing the cut for the third straight time in a major.