

The Telangana government announced this year's Gaddar Award on December 9 and called upon prominent film industry persons to bring proposals. For some reason, movie folks didn't consult the government and there was no response. The TG government announced even before the cine industry asked. Like Nandi Awards, we want to take up Gaddar Awards on December 9. Film Industry folks should come forward with new proposals

— CM Revanth Reddy

P2

EAM Jaishankar rules out any role for third party

'I AM BOTHERED BY LESS SCREEN SPACE'

Double Smart comes up with two UPDATES

DON'T MISS...

Lecturers raise concern over...

Following the decision taken by the higher authorities of the Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions (TMREIS), the Telangana residential schools and colleges are forcing the University Grants Commission - National Eligibility Test (UGC NET) and State Eligibility Test (SET) qualified lecturers to perform night watchman duties. Several lecturers raised their voice against the decision taken by the higher authorities. The TMREIS authorities issued the Whatsapp message to all principals of residential schools....

-PAGE: 3

'Vegan diet linked to lower ...

Going vegan for eight weeks was found to be linked to lowering of biological age, according to a study published in the journal BioMed Central (BMC) Medicine. Researchers looked at the molecular effects of the plant-based diet that abstains from consuming animal food products, such as dairy. The diet largely includes eating fruits and vegetables, along with grains, beans and nuts. The researchers, including those at Stanford University, US, found that consuming the ...

-PAGE: 5

RBI plans web series to ...

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is planning a five-episode web series to provide an in-depth presentation about its functions and its 90-year journey. The web series is proposed to be for nearly three hours, with each episode having a duration of 25-30 minutes, according to an official document. The RBI, which was set up in 1935, completed 90 years in April this year. The bank is desirous of creating a web series of five episodes of approximately 25-30 minutes each, which can be aired on national TV ...

-PAGE: 8

Rohit, Kohli among India players to...

India skipper Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and a few other players will start their training from Monday ahead of the three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka starting August 2. While the Indian T20I team under Suryakumar Yadav will play the third and final match on Tuesday in Pallekele, Rohit, Kohli and a few others like rookie Harshit Rana will train in Colombo after reaching the island nation's capital on Sunday. Rohit, Kohli and Kuldeep Yadav will hit the ground running nearly a month after they helped India win the....

-SPORTS

BRS powered by scams

RS 8,000 CRORE MASSIVE SCAM IN PROJECT CONTRACTS: CM SAYS HE IS READY FOR DEBATE ON BRS'S 10-YEAR RULE ON AUGUST 1ST AND 2ND

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

There was a Rs 8,000 crore scam in awarding contracts for executing power projects, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said in the Assembly on Monday.

He criticised the BRS government's decisions and said that he is ready for a debate on August 1 and 2 on the BRS's 10-year rule.

He criticised the BRS government for handing over a supercritical power plant project to BHEL although it could have been awarded to some other company at 18 per cent less cost.

Revanth accused BRS leaders of corruption stating that the entire civil work contracts given to BHEL were subcontracted to proxies, relatives and camp followers.

He pointed out that the Bhadradi Power Project launched in 2015, faced substantial delays and cost overruns with the project's completion pushed from 2017 to 2022 and costs increasing from Rs 7,290 crore to Rs 10,515 crore.

The Chief Minister criticised KCR's comments on power purchase agreements and noted that the government had accepted the BRS leaders' demand for a probe into the

Revanth accused BRS leaders of corruption stating that the entire civil work contracts given to BHEL were subcontracted to proxies, relatives and camp followers



agreements with Chhattisgarh and the construction of the Yadadri and Bhadradi thermal power projects.

However, he said that opposition leaders had approached the court without presenting their arguments before the commission.

The Supreme Court ordered that the investigation should continue by appointing a new chairman for the commission, which the government plans to appoint any time.

Revanth addressed the BRS leaders' claims of abundant power gen-

eration in the state and attributed the continuous power supply in Hyderabad to decisions of the YSR admin. He emphasised that the assets used for power generation belong solely to the state and highlighted Jaipal Revanth's role in ensuring a fair distribution of electricity between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The Chief Minister

accused KCR of misleading the Assembly and cited his own expulsion from the House by Marshals.

2



Second phase of loan waiver today

CM to launch the scheme on Assembly premises

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will launch the second phase of the farm loan waiver scheme to waive loans ranging from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1.5 lakh on the Assembly's premises on Tuesday. Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageshwara Rao would also attend the function.

It may be recalled that the state government had launched a farm loan waiver scheme on July 19 and waived loans up to Rs 1 lakh. However, technical problems arose in the first phase of the loan waiver scheme due to mistakes in the Aadhaar numbers of farmers. The government

has already announced that it will complete implementing the loan waiver scheme by August 15. The state government will deposit money for waiving the farm loans of farmers in the bank accounts of farmers during the scheme's second phase.

Meanwhile, Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageshwara Rao in a statement issued on Monday stated that arrangements are being made for live telecast of the programme in Rythu Vedikas.

He asked farmers that they should clear their doubts on the first phase of the farm loan waiver scheme with officials and bankers and later watch the launch of the second phase of the farm loan waiver scheme.

CID to probe Rs 1400cr commercial tax scam involving Somesh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Government has taken a key decision on the commercial tax scam case and has reportedly issued an order transferring the case to the CID. The case is supposedly transferred to the CID as this case is linked to many states.

A case has been registered by the police against former Telangana Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar and four others in connection with an alleged



GST fraud amounting to Rs 1,400 crore. Continued on Page 2

Furore over PPAs in Assembly

Min Komatireddy BRS MLA Jagdish resort to war of words



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Assembly was shaken by the challenges and counter-challenges hurled by Roads and

Buildings (R&B) Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and former BRS Power Minister G. Jagdish Reddy during a discussion on electricity on Monday.

The war of words between a former and a current Minister involved personal allegations too.

Intervening during the speech of Jagdish Reddy, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said the BRS government had engaged in corruption involving thousands of crores regarding Power Purchasing Agreements (PPAs) and in the execution of the Bhadradi and Yadadri



power plants. The CM said that former Chief Minister KCR and former Power Minister G. Jagdish Reddy had engaged in huge corruption.

2

'CM misleading the House'

BRS MLA Harish to move privilege motion against Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharatha Rastra Samithi MLA Harish Rao accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of consistently misleading the House by raising false issues whenever the ruling party was cornered. He said that he would move a privilege motion regarding that and pointed out that this has been a recurring pattern in every session.

Harish emphasized that a leader should be a model of integrity, but instead Revanth has been speaking lies in the Assembly. He cited past sessions when retired engineers



reported that the Kaleshwaram Project was unviable near the Medigadda Barrage which KCR had ignored thereby misleading the

House. Harish also accused the CM of using fabricated documents to mislead the Assembly on electricity meters in the recent session. He alleged that Revanth read selective sentences and omitted the rest and this led to the submission of a post-ponement motion.

He said that their intention is to move a privilege motion against the CM. On the issue of agricultural pump meters Harish said that KCR did not agree to install meters but created a misleading impression by referencing the Uday scheme agreement.

Continued on Page



Three gates of Srisaillam Dam opened

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Three gates of the Srisaillam Dam were opened on Monday after heavy rains lashed the upper reaches of the Jurala and Tungabhadra

projects led to large-scale flooding. Nearly four lakh cusecs of water from these projects will reach the Srisaillam reservoir now. As a result, the Srisaillam Dam has reached its full storage capacity. Continued on Page 2



CENTRE NOTIFIES GUIDELINES

Bagless days for classes 6-8

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union education ministry on Monday notified guidelines for implementation of bagless days for classes 6-8 and making learning in schools more joyful, experiential and stress-free. The guidelines, developed by PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education, a unit of the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), were released on the fourth anniversary of the new National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.

The NEP, 2020, had recommended that all students in classes 6-8 participate in a 10-day bagless period.

"The idea behind 10 bagless days is to make them an integral part of the teaching learning process rather than an add-on to the existing scheme of studies of education from classes 6-8.

2

Difference in votes polled versus counted

DISCREPANCIES FOUND IN 89K VOTES IN AP AND 15K VOTES IN TG IN LOK SABHA: ADR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Poll rights body Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) has claimed that there is a discrepancy in the number of votes polled and the number of votes counted in 538 constituencies in the Lok Sabha election.

According to an analysis by the ADR released in a press conference on Monday, in the recent Lok Sabha polls a total of 5,54,598 votes counted are less than the votes polled in 362 parliamentary constituencies while a total of 35,093 votes have been counted in excess of the votes polled in 176 parliamentary constituencies. A reaction from the



Election Commission was awaited on the matter. "In addition, the inor-

dinate delay in the release of final voter turnout data, absence of

disaggregated constituency and polling station figures in absolute numbers and whether the elections results were declared based on final reconciled data has raised concerns and public suspicion regarding the correctness of the election results," said ADR

According to an analysis by the ADR, in the recent Lok Sabha polls a total of 5,54,598 votes counted are less than the votes polled in 362 parliamentary constituencies while a total of 35,093 votes have been counted in excess of the votes polled in 176 parliamentary constituencies

founder Jagdeep Chokkar while addressing a press conference.

ADR, however, did not specify that in how many seats these difference of votes would have resulted in a different outcome.

The report said the Election Commission has so far failed to give any reasonable explanation in declaring the election results before releasing the final and authentic data on vote count, the mismatch in EVM votes polled EVM votes counted, increase in voter turn-out, non-disclosure of number of votes polled in numbers, unreasonable delay in release of votes polled data and the clean-up of certain data from its website.

2

'States must supervise coaching centres functioning'

Pradhan says no politics over IAS aspirants' death

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday said there are clear guidelines for running coaching centres and it is the duty of the state governments to supervise their functioning.

Taking part in a short debate in the Rajya Sabha over the death of three students due to flooding of the basement of a UPSC coaching centre in

Delhi's Old Rajinder Nagar following heavy rains on July 27, he termed the incident unfortunate and said there should be no politics over it.

Nothing would compensate for the loss the bereaved families have suffered, Pradhan said.

"We must fix responsibility so that such incidents do not recur," he said, adding, "There should be no politics..."

2

LAW & ORDER ISSUE

Akbaruddin warns govt of approaching HC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

AIMIM floor leader Akbaruddin Owaisi warned the state government that he will approach the High Court on the law and order issue in Hyderabad if the government did not respond on it.

Participating in the discussion on demands on Monday in the Telangana Legislative Assembly, Akbaruddin said that three murders took place on Saturday on the very next day the government replied to BRS MLA T. Harish Rao after Harish raised the law and order issue and said the law and order situation in the state was alarming. Recalling the City Police Commissioner's statement that the police will not be asked to do anything, Akbaruddin questioned the City Police Commissioner to explain whether he wants an 'enemy police'. Akbaruddin said the government should reveal facts regarding the law and order situation in Hyderabad. The job of the Task Force Police is to catch culprits but they are carrying out lathi charges immediately after night falls.

Movie industry didn't respond on Gaddar awards, says CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed disappointment over the lack of response from the film industry regarding Gaddar Awards. During the Vishwambhara Dr C. Narayana Reddy National Literary Award function held at Ravindra Bharathi, he called on the film industry to come out with proposals to support the awards.

Revanth lauded the immense contributions of C. Narayana Reddy as a poet, Vice-Chancellor and Rajya Sabha Member. He noted that Narayana Reddy's works made the entire Telugu community proud and highlighted his inspiring journey from a remote area.

The Chief Minister emphasized that Narayana Reddy's life remains an inspiration to many and his deeply immersive works are



Revanth lauded the immense contributions of C. Narayana Reddy as a poet, Vice-Chancellor and Rajya Sabha Member. He noted that Narayana Reddy's works made the entire Telugu community proud and highlighted his inspiring journey from a remote area.

remembered even today. The Chief Minister

announced that the government would soon decide on a suitable commemoration for C. Narayana Reddy and assured state support for publishing his works.

Revanth also mentioned that despite previous announcements about presenting Gaddar Awards akin to the prestigious Nandi Awards on December 9, there was no response from the film industry. He urged film industry personalities to come forward with proposals regarding the Gaddar Awards.

Revanth congratulated the literary award recipient and Tamil author and Saraswati Samman awardee, Shrimati Sivasankari. The event was organized by the Sushila Narayana Reddy Trust on the occasion of Dr C. Narayana Reddy's 93rd birth anniversary. The event saw the presence of several dignitaries and literary figures.

INDIA bloc will break govt's 'chakravyuh': Rahul in LS

• Says it will ensure MSP legal guarantee, caste census

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Using the 'chakravyuh' metaphor as a leitmotif, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday claimed that an atmosphere of fear prevails all around with a group of six trapping the entire country in a 'chakravyuh' he promised would be broken by the INDIA bloc.

Participating in the debate in the Lok Sabha on Budget 2024-25, Gandhi said the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) will ensure that a legal guarantee for MSP as well as a caste census is passed by the House.

In a speech that invoked the Mahabharat and led to an uproar in the House, prompting Speaker Om Birla to intervene frequently, the former Congress chief alleged that the sole aim of the Union Budget is to strengthen the



framework of big businesses, political monopoly that destroys the democratic structure, and the deep state or the agencies.

"There is an atmosphere of fear and that fear has pervaded every aspect of our country. In the BJP only one man is allowed to dream to be the prime minister. If the defence minister wants to be PM, there is a big problem, there is fear. This fear has been spread throughout the country...why is it that my friends in the BJP are terrified."

'End restrictions on media in Parl'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Monday requested Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to remove the restrictions imposed on the media within Parliament premises. "Sir, I would request you to allow the media, who have been restricted to a cage, to move out," Gandhi said in the Lok Sabha.

Media persons have been recording comments from members of parliament on camera near the entry and exit points of the Parliament building but now they have been restricted to an enclosure made for them.

BJP demands House panel on power sector irregularities

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP demanded that the Congress government should appoint a 'House Committee' on irregularities in the power sector. The BJP said that nothing will happen if the government installs smart meters on motors under the Uday scheme and nobody will object to the government if it gives free power to farmers.

The BJP said that if there are no smart meters on motors there would not be any accountability. Participating in the discussion on demands on Monday in the Assembly, the BJP MLA from Kamareddy, Katipally Venkataramana Reddy, said that the ruling Congress and opposition BRS were throwing challenges and counter challenges with each other regarding power sector corruption. It is better for the Congress government to set up a House Committee to probe the irregularities in the power sector to know facts, he said.

Assembly time has been going on with allegations and counter allegations and personal chiding, keeping public issues aside. He said that he is not new to politics but he is new to the House.

He said that how much of the budget is allocated to the power sector is not important but what is important is how much it benefits farmers. He said that farmers are not getting proper power in the state.

Venkataramana asked the state government to set up electric depots in all new districts as people are going to erstwhile districts' electric depots only. He also demanded the state government to clear high tension wires on houses across the state and alleged that farmers are not getting transformers even though they had filled DDS.

He also demanded the government to recognize low level power employees as artisans in SPDCL as it recognized the SPDCL limits and do justice to the meter reading employees.

BJP appoints Konda Vishweshwar Reddy as its LS Whip

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP MP from Chevella, Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, has been elected as the party's Whip in the Lok Sabha along with 15 others. The BJP Parliamentary Party submitted the list to Speaker Om Birla on Monday. The BJP Parliamentary Party selected Dr Sanjay Jaiswal as the Chief Whip.

The Whips are Dilip Saikia, Gopaljee Thakur, Santosh Pandey, Kamaljeet Sehrawat, Dhaval Laxmanbhai Patel, Devusinh Chauhan, Jugal Kishore Sharma, Kota Srinivas Poojary, Sudhir Gupta, Smita Uday Wagh, Ananta Nayak, Damodar Agarwal, Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, Satish Kumar Gautam, Shashank Mani and Khagen Murmu.

All eyes on relationship between CM and Guv

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

After appointing Jishnu Dev Varma, who is very loyal to the BJP leadership, particularly to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as the new Governor to the Telangana State, now all eyes are on the relationship between Governor Varma and Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy in the coming days. Political circles feel that the BJP-led Central government appointed Varma as a Governor of Telangana to strengthen the party in the State.

In the BRS regime, after appointing Tamilisai Soundararajan as the governor, the relations between chief Minister KCR and the governor were very critical. Both the chief minister and the governor were angry at each other. The governor created troubles to the BRS government. But now Chief Minister Revanth Reddy



maintained cordial relations with governors Tamilisai Soundararajan and CP Radhakrishnan. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy may try to maintain cordial relations with new Governor Varma, who is taking charge on July 31. But the BJP high command may not keep quiet and try to create problems to the State government through the Governor like with Tamilisai in the past, the political observers opined. The ultimate goal of the BJP is to come to power

in Telangana in the next Assembly elections. After becoming Chief Minister, Revanth Reddy got good response from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The reason for this was for defeating the BRS and KCR in the Assembly elections and Prime Minister Modi did not have any special affection towards Revanth Reddy. In the funds allocation to the Telangana State in the Central Budget proved that Prime Minister Modi is treating CM

Revanth like he treated KCR in the past. CM Revanth also started serious criticism against PM Modi for not giving importance to Telangana State in the Union Budget. In the coming days the Congress and the BJP will increase the criticism against each other.

When CM Revanth makes criticism against PM Modi, the Governor automatically gets angry. This may lead to differences between the Governor and the Chief Minister. If CM Revanth wants to adjust with the Governor, the Congress high command may not agree. Moreover, the main Opposition BRS has branded CM Revanth as a BJP man because of his past political history. Under these circumstances, confrontation between the Governor and the Chief Minister may become inevitable like between KCR and Tamilisai in the past.

'CM misleading...'

Continued on Page 1

He refuted Revanth's allegations regarding the Pothreddy Padu Project during YS Rajasekhara Reddy's term stating that they had resigned from the cabinet even before the GO was issued citing Pothreddy Padu as one of the reasons.

Harish criticised Revanth for not making any sacrifices for Telangana, while they had resigned when the Telangana state declaration was delayed. He noted that Revanth did not

even submit a fake resignation. Harish blamed individuals like Revanth for the sacrifices that had to be made during the Telangana movement. He asked whether any leader had a resignation history like KCR, whose fast led to the announcement about the formation of Telangana state.

He accused Revanth of never working for Telangana during the 14-year struggle for a state and claimed that Revanth would have remained with Chandrababu if not for KCR's efforts.

Harish also pointed to Revanth's contradictory statements about LRS, questioning his past and present stance. He also mocked the CM's claim that the BRS story is over, pointing out that the Congress never ceased to function despite setbacks.

Harish criticised Revanth for misleading the Assembly thrice already with false claims and urged the media to expose the lies. He concluded by accusing Revanth of spreading Goebbels-like propaganda about farm loan waivers.

'States must...'

Continued on Page 1

Negligence has happened and someone has to take responsibility so that a solution can be found." Stressing that education is in the concurrent list and is the responsibility of the Centre as well as the state, Pradhan said the coaching centres have responsibilities too. The Government of India sent advisories related to coaching centres to the states and Union Territories in 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2024, the Union education minister said.

The advisories suggest 'registration of coaching centre and minimum standards for that, what kind of safeguards it should take for students and continuous monitoring, including levying penalty if someone goes against it'.

Some states such as Goa, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Manipur have their own regulations. "Considering this, the government in January 2024 sent an advisory to states. That is already in public. Had the state governments followed it, this unfortunate incident would not have happened," Pradhan said while asserting that it is the states' duty to implement it.

Difference in...'

Continued on Page 1

"The ECI failing to address and take appropriate steps against the egregious incidents of violations, illegalities and irregularities seen in the Lok Sabha, 2019 and Lok Sabha Election 2024 elections has led to the trepidations in the mind of the electorate. These apprehensions must be seriously addressed and put to rest," Chokkar said. The report said while declaring the results of the General elections 2024 votes polled and counted showed significant discrepancies in 538 parliamentary con-

stituencies (PCs), except Amreli, Attingal, Lakshadweep and Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman Diu.

"Surat PC was uncontested. Hence the total discrepancies in 538 PCs are 5,89,691 votes," the report said. Independent journalist Poonam Aggarwal who also addressed the press conference said she found the exact same result while analysing the data of the votes cast and the votes polled. During the 17th General Elections, while for the first 6 phases of the election, the voter turnout app displayed the exact number of voters, however, in the last phase i.e. the

7th phase of voting only percentage figures were given and previous data was removed by the Election Commission.

As per the research conducted by a team of experts and ADR, serious discrepancies were found between the number of voters in different constituencies and the number of votes counted. "The master summary of 542 constituencies showed discrepancies in 347 seats. 195 seats were without discrepancies whatsoever. The discrepancies ranged from 1 vote (lowest) to 101323 votes at 10.49 per cent of the total votes (highest).

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Dashami
Ekadashi

Nakshatram:
Krittika: Jul 29 10:55 AM to Jul 30 03:55 AM
Rohini: Jul 30 10:23 AM to Jul 31 10:12 AM

Rahukalam: 3:34 PM to 5:10 PM
Yamagandam: 9:10 AM to 10:46 AM
Varjyam: 02:16AM to 03:51 AM
Gulika: 12:22 PM to 1:58 PM
Amritakalam: 08:02 AM to 09:36 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:57 AM to 12:48 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Cloudy
Temp: 27°C
Humidity: 77%
Sunrise: 5:51 AM
Sunset: 6:47 PM
Updated: July 29, 2024 5:00 PM

BRS powered..

Continued on Page 1

He criticized the BRS government's boasts about solar power generation and pointed out that private companies generate the bulk of it with the government contributing only one MW.

Revanth detailed the corruption in awarding contracts for electro-mechanical and civil works to BHEL and accused the BRS government of violating laws by using outdated sub-critical technology for the Bhadradi Power Project.

He said that 16 officials are facing a probe due to the mismanagement and delays in executing the project. During the debate, Revanth pointed out the Supreme Court's rejection of KCR's plea to abolish the

commission of inquiry on power agreements. He criticised the cost overruns and delays in executing both the Bhadradi and Yadadri power projects and attributed the increased costs to corruption.

He pointed out that the NTPC generated power at a lower cost than Yadadri, which he claimed was generating power at a cost of Rs 8.64 crore per MW, while the NTPC's cost was only Rs 7.38 crore per MW.

Revanth accused the BRS government of cheating in the NTPC and emphasized Congress's role in permitting NTPC to generate power. He asserted that the opposition is misleading people by using provisions introduced by the Centre in 2023 to cover up their mistakes from 2015.

Three gates of Srisailem..

Continued on Page 1

The full storage capacity of the Srisailem Dam is 215 TMC and it has now touched 180 TMC. Gates 6, 7 and 8 of the Srisailem Dam are releasing 27,000 cusecs of water downstream from each gate at a height of about 12 feet.

Kurnool Chief Engineer Kabir Bhasha formally opened the dam's gates on Monday. Officials lifted the four gates of the dam by 12 feet on Monday at 4:12 pm to release water into the Nagarjuna Sagar reservoir.

Currently, the water level in the dam is 876 feet, with the full water level being 885 feet. The massive flow of water has exceeded the dam's storage capacity.

Furore over PPAs..

Continued on Page 1

He said that Jagdish Reddy has been speaking in the Assembly like he did in Chanchalguda jail and that he has a criminal record as he was jailed in a ricemill theft case in Suryapet. The CM also said that R&B Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy will reveal the criminal record of Jagdish Reddy.

Venkat said that Jagdish was involved in three murder cases and had been going around courts for 16 years. Venkat Reddy said that Jagdish Reddy was A2 in Panchayati Samithi president Madan Mohan Reddy's murder case. Jagdish Reddy and his father were A6 and A7 in another murder case respectively.

He was also accused in a theft case in the looting of rice mills and petrol bunks. Reacting to Venka's allegations, Jagdish said that there is

Bagless days for..

Continued on Page 1

It will not only reduce the boundaries between the bookish knowledge and application of knowledge but also expose children to the skill requirements in the work areas, thus helping them to decide the future career path," the guidelines stated. "Every student will take a fun course during classes 6-8 that gives a survey and hands-on experience of a sampling of important vocational craft such as carpentry, electric work, metal work, gardening, pottery making, etc, as decided by states and local communities and as mapped by local skilling needs," they added. The ministry said all students would participate in the 10-day bagless period sometime during classes 6-8 during which they would intern with local vocational experts such as carpenters, gardeners, potters, etc.

CID to..

Continued on Page 1

Based on a complaint filed by an official of the Commercial Tax Department the FIR was registered by the Central Crime Station (CCS) a wing of the Hyderabad police on July 26, which also names an Assistant Professor of IIT-Hyderabad.

The case was registered on charges of criminal breach of trust, criminal conspiracy among others and other relevant sections of the IT Act, police said. "On preliminary verification of (11) cases which were masked by IIT-Hyderabad, evasion of more than Rs 400 crore was identified. One such masked case was that of Telangana State Beverages Corporation Limited. Evasion of more than Rs 1,000 crore was unearthed through fraudulent cases detected.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

UoH to organise Model UN meet today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
University of Hyderabad will be organising a Model United Nations conference themed on Lifestyle for Environment Initiative (LIFE) on July 30. The conference will focus on "Green Horizons: Navigating the Clean Energy Transition" under the vision Viksit Bharath@2047. Delegates from various countries will explore the global importance of climate change, sustainable development goals, economic implications, technological innovations, energy security, social justice and international cooperation. The conference aims to foster diplomatic negotiations and collaborative policymaking. Approximately 40 students will represent different countries around the world, discussing solutions for a sustainable energy future. The event is coordinated by Dr Krishna Reddy Chittedi, Associate Professor, University of Hyderabad.

Lecturers raise concern over non-teaching responsibilities

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Following the decision taken by the higher authorities of the Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions (TMREIS), the Telangana residential schools and colleges are forcing the University Grants Commission - National Eligibility Test (UGC NET) and State Eligibility Test (SET) qualified lecturers to perform night watchman duties. Several lecturers raised their voice against the decision taken by the higher authorities. The TMREIS authorities issued the Whatsapp message to all principals of residential schools. As per the message, "All the principals are hereby informed to instruct the staff who are on night duty to share their inspection photos for every two hours in the night and further they should know night stay is not meant for coming and having sleep in the institution but supervise the dormitories to avoid any untoward incidents which is quite essential for residential pattern for

which they are allowed to avail next day off. It doesn't mean they shouldn't take rest but vigilance must be

Moreover, those who are rendering duties as a night caretaker, are required to upload inspection photos every two

issue and lessen the burden of teachers by removing non-teaching responsibilities or duties," he added. A Sampath Kumar, a lecturer said, "Since 2018, the TGMREIS has been extracting extra work



TMREIS

there on students." The lecturers raised concern over increasing workload and non-teaching responsibilities imposed on them in Telangana residential schools and colleges. Naseer Mohammed, a lecturer said, "Highly qualified teachers, including those with NET and SET qualifications, are assigned watchman duties during night hours. This not only undermines their expertise but also jeopardises their safety and well-being.

hours (unofficial orders), an unreasonable workload and sleepless nights. Teachers working on holidays receive no additional compensation, despite the extra burden it places on them." He also said that the female lecturers keep on requesting male members to swap their duties thereby leading to mental health disturbances. "We can't do daily night study hours and night duties allotted to the female faculty. I request the government to look into the

The lecturers raised concern over increasing workload and non-teaching responsibilities imposed on them in Telangana residential schools and colleges

from me. The authorities are making us work even on the second Saturday, which is usually a holiday.

TO LEARN FROM STARTUP ECOSYSTEM Officials from Tanzania, Kenya visit Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
A delegation comprising officials from Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA) and Tanzania's Ministry of Information, Communication and Information Technology on Monday visited Hyderabad to gain insights on successful public sector-led initiatives that nurture startup ecosystems in India. The delegation visited two projects funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) - Telangana Startup and Innovation Ecosystem Strengthening Project implemented by Telangana State Innovation Cell (TSIC) and Campus Development Project of Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad (IITH). During the two-day visit, the delegation interacted with key stakeholders and explored innovative solutions developed by startups and learnt about the role of government in effectively implementing these activities at the ground level. The delegation visited IITH campus and held discussions with IITH Director Prof. BS Murty and the Deans, and representatives from the Suzuki Innovation Centre (SIC), the Centre of Healthcare Entrepreneurship (CfHE), the Technology



Members of the Kenya, Tanzania delegation at T-Hub

Innovation Hub on Autonomous Navigation (TiHAN), the School of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SCIENT) and the Technology Research Park (TRP). The delegation also visited innovation facilities in Hyderabad such as T-hub, T-works and We-hub that are supported by the Telangana Startup and Innovation Ecosystem Strengthening Project, and learnt about how India's flagship programmes led by public organisations support the startup ecosystem. These interactions provided insights into building and sustaining a robust startup environment through public sector initiatives and con-

tributed to triangular cooperation between India and Japan. SAITO Mitsunori, Chief Representative of JICA India, said, "This cooperation among India, Japan, Kenya, and Tanzania marks a significant milestone in our shared commitment to promoting startups and unlocking the entrepreneurial potential of people in India, Africa, and around the world. The role of startups in driving economic growth and advancing entrepreneurial innovation is crucial. Our goal is for these initiatives to act as catalysts for innovation and to strengthen the entrepreneurial foundations of their nations' futures."

TGSRTC to start 13 more e-charging stations in State

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
To reduce the pollution emissions in the State, Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) has ordered 1,000 electric buses in the city. To charge these vehicles, a total of 13 charging stations have been commissioned at various depots in the State. After completing them, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy would be inaugurating them soon. Those buses would be delivered in phases to the corporation. The buses would be procured in the Gross Cost Contract (GCC) model, which is a type of PPP model. In this model the corporation pays the electric vehicle suppliers per kilometer basis for maintenance. In those 1,000 buses, more than 500 buses would be run in the city. A source said that TGSRTC is commissioning the charging stations at MGBS, JBS, HCU, Hayathnagar-2, Ranigunj, Kukatapally, BHEL, Hyderabad-2, Warangal, Suryapet,



Karimnagar-2 depot, Nizamabad-2 depot and Nizamabad depot. At every charging station, there would be 20 to 25 charging guns to charge the vehicles, which means at a time at least 20 vehicles would be charged at a bus stop. The buses would be run in passengers' rush routes like Suryapet, Warangal, Nalgonda, Karimnagar and Nizamabad. Source said that after the electric buses are launched in

the city, at HCU, Hayathnagar and some other depots, diesel buses would be replaced with electric vehicles. Replaced buses would be sent to district services and those would ply in rural areas. TGSRTC is running more than 100 electric buses for passengers. Out of them, 49 Pushpak buses are running in airport routes. In all, 10 E-Garuda vehicles are travelling between Vijayawada and Hyderabad.

Three TG districts declared as educationally backward

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Three districts from Telangana were identified as aspirational districts by the Union Minister of Education during the Lok Sabha session on Monday. In response to the query raised by Dr Nishikant Dubey and Malvinder Singh Kang, Members of Lok Sabha, Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan stated that 112 districts in 26 states and one Union Territory are identified as aspirational districts. In Telangana, Asifabad, Bhoopalapally and Bhadradi-Kothagudem have been identified as educationally backward districts. The Union Minister stated that the Department of School Education and Literacy had

identified Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB) in States/UTs, where the female rural literacy rate was below the national average, under the erstwhile Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) were sanctioned in EBB as residential schools at upper primary level for girls belonging to disadvantaged groups such as SC, ST, OBC, Minority and Below Poverty Line (BPL).

However, with the launch of the Aspirational Districts Programme by NITI Aayog in January 2018 to improve the social outcomes of the backward districts, the programmes of the government are now aligned to fill in the infrastructure and learning gaps in the aspirational districts of the country.

Aspirational districts

In Telangana, Asifabad, Bhoopalapally and Bhadradi-Kothagudem have been identified as educationally backward districts. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) were sanctioned in EBB as residential schools at upper primary level for girls belonging to disadvantaged groups

CM to meet 30,000 promoted teachers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy will meet nearly 30,000 teachers who were recently promoted in the State on August 2. The meeting is scheduled to take place at 3 pm at the LB Stadium in Hyderabad. State Chief Secretary Shanti Kumari held a teleconference on Monday evening with senior officials to discuss the arrangements for this event. Officials who attended the teleconference included DGP Jitender, SC Development Department Principal Secretary Sridhar, Education Department Principal Secretary Burra Venkatesham, Roads and Buildings Department Secretary Harichandana, Hyderabad

Commissioner of Police Srinivas Reddy, GHMC Commissioner Amrapali Kata and Special Commissioner for Information Hanumantha Rao. During the teleconference, Shanti Kumari mentioned that this is the largest number of promotions ever given to teachers in the State. She emphasised that the Chief Minister will address the promoted teachers directly during this meeting. She instructed that a rain-proof tent should be set up at LB Stadium to accommodate the 30,000 teachers. Additionally, adequate parking and other facilities should be arranged for teachers coming from various districts. She also stressed the need for necessary drinking water, sanitation and other amenities at the meeting venue.

17 areas in city in danger zone- MLA Vivekananda

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Qutubullapur BRs MLA Vivekananda Goud criticised the State government's Budget allocation, stating it is insufficient for the development of Hyderabad. He highlighted that many colonies were saved from floods in the past due to SNDP, but currently, 17 areas are in the danger zone. Goud emphasised that the honeymoon period of the new government is over, urging them to focus on work. He warned that if the government does not pay attention, there is a danger that nalas will overflow and water will enter houses. He also noted that the previous government under KCR had allocated 15 per cent reservation in liquor tenders to the Gowda community.

SCR launches SpeedoMeter app

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager, South Central Railway (SCR) launched SpeedoMeter app (SPM) during the review meeting on safety of train operations at Rail Nilayam, Secunderabad on Monday. The SPM app is an in-house developed application which evaluates crew performance for safety and punctuality, while working on trains by checking the speed, braking distance, signal adherence; visual and computer reports aid in this assessment process. It facilitates comprehensive analysis of crew performance on various aspects, ensuring high standards of safety and punctuality in the train operations. The General Manager stated that the SPM app is a wonderful tool to get detailed analysis within a short duration. It will not only ensure safety but is essentially helpful in monitoring mobility, speed and other aspects of the loco.



USE KIDS' IMAGES TO OBTAIN SIM CARDS Fraudsters use fake Aadhaar cards

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
A study by the Cyber Security Bureau revealed that fraudsters are using counterfeit or outdated Aadhaar cards with children's images to falsely obtain SIM cards for malicious activities. Telangana Cyber Security Bureau, in joint collaboration with the Indian School of Business (ISB) Institute of Data Science and the Centre of Excellence for Cyber Security, has conducted a study titled, "Telecom SIM Subscription Frauds: Global Policy Trends, Risk Assessments and Recommendations". The study found that fraudsters are using fake Aadhaar cards to falsely obtain SIM cards for malicious activities. The study found that 64.5 per cent of Indian consumers prefer digital KYC (Know Your



Customer) for SIM registration, with Aadhaar being the preferred ID. Notably, 89 per cent of alternate numbers provide dare not linked to Aadhaar, indicating a significant gap in verification processes. The study also highlighted the vulnerabilities of OTP-based authentication and identified irregular practices by Point of Sale (POS) agents. The study also showed gaps in real time subscriber authentication and ineffective OTP-based authentication. It was seen that often the alternate numbers used for authentication were linked to other criminals. TS Cyber Security Bureau Director Shikha Goel said that this study brings to light the

pressing issue of SIM card fraud. It emphasises the importance of not sharing personal information and reporting lost or stolen SIM cards promptly. As law enforcement officers, we urge everyone to remain vigilant, protect your personal information, deal only with verified agents, and report suspicious activities immediately. In this digital age, your safety is paramount and hinges greatly on your vigilance. The study utilised subscriber data from Customer Acquisition Forms (CAFs) stored across all telecom service providers. In all, 1,600 CAFs from various police stations got phone numbers belonging to criminals reported by the people across Telangana and real-time analysis of the data from these PDF-format CAFs was extracted using AI models.

More than 43 lakh migrant workers in Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Telangana State has more than four districts population who are migration workers but one of the lowest number in the country. According to the ministry of labour and employment, a total of 43,90,876 people have been registered from Telangana in the eShram portal, since the portal was launched in August 2021, which means they are willing to work anywhere in the State or country. As on July 24, 2024, around 29.83 crore of whom in Odisha more than 1.34, crore unorganised workers, including migrant workers have registered in this portal. The Ministry of Labour and Employment has launched eShram portal, on August 26, 2021. The main

objective of the eShram portal is to create a national database of unorganised workers, including migrant workers seeded with Aadhaar and facilitate registration under existing Social Security and welfare Schemes to such workers, including migrant workers. Out of the five southern states of India, Telangana has the lowest number of registrations in eShram portal.



'Visible policing decreases crime rate'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Rachakonda Commissioner Sudhir Babu stated that visible policing plays a very important role in the maintenance of law and order along with the use of technology, as it gradually decreases crime rate. He said that officers, Blue Colts and Petro Car police personnel are responding quickly to complaints received through Dial 100 and 112 to curb crime and increase public confidence in the police and are working to reach the victims as quickly as possible. Along with Blue Colts and Petro Cars, they have started



Blue Colts and Petro Car police personnel are responding quickly to complaints received through Dial 100 and 112 to curb crime

patrolling by bicycles, and already 3 to 5 bicycles have been distributed to each police station under the jurisdiction of the commissionerate. In order to increase the role of women police in bringing

services closer to the people, women personnel are performing the duties of Blue Colts and Patrol Cars through the measures taken by the Commissioner without any problems for women personnel

in the performance of duties at the field level. Necessary measures are being taken for the welfare of Rachakonda women staff. Special teams are protecting women from harassment in the society and strict action is being taken against those who commit crimes against women, children and the elderly. Furthermore, the Commissioner stated that Aharnishala is working to provide speedy justice to the people and will ensure that public problems are resolved quickly. He called on the officers and staff to work in coordination and control crime so that people do not have to fear crime.

Asaduddin: FM should bring in 'berozgar tax'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) president and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi on Monday said that the Union Finance Minister should introduce a 'berozgar tax' and tax the unemployed. Reacting to the Union Budget, Owaisi said, "It appears as if the Prime Minister is saying that the first right over middle class properties is that of our allies."



He further said, "There are 17 crore Muslims in India, the largest minority in the country. I want to ask if there are no poor, no youth, no farmers or

backward classes among Muslims. The Muslim population is the poorest. Data from the All India Debt & Investment Survey (AIDIS) and the periodic Labour Force Survey (PLF) suggest that Muslims have low job enrollments as compared to other minorities. Muslims face disadvantage in overall welfare." The Hyderabad MP further criticised the government for cutting scholarships for minority students and stressed on the dropout rate among Muslims.

Railway line route map discussed by CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Chief Engineer of the Railways, Subrahmanyam, met with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy in the Assembly to discuss the route map for the Vikarabad-Krishna railway line. The proposed railway line will pass through Vikarabad, Parigi, Kodangal, Narayanpet, and Makhal. The 145 km railway line, which is estimated to cost Rs 3,500 crore, received several suggestions from Chief Minister Revanth Reddy regarding the route map. The meeting was attended by MLAs Rammohan Reddy, Vakati Srihari, Parnika Reddy and other officials.



Siva Kumar used to run a bakery in Potturu village. He became acquainted with Burra Pranay of Ganneru Varam when he went there to procure bakery items. They used to buy marijuana from an unidentified person in Karimnagar and used to smoke cigarettes filling them with ganja.

Sircilla Circle Inspector Mogali announcing the arrest of marijuana peddlers in Sircilla on Monday

Two held, 105 grams of ganja seized from them

PNS ■ RAJANNA SIRICILLA

The police on Monday arrested two persons at Batukamma Theppa on Vantadupula Road under Illantakunta mandal while trying to sell marijuana and recovered 105 grams of contraband from them. They were sent to judicial remand. The arrested were identified as Siva Kumar of Potturu village of Illantakuntamandal of

the district and Burra Pranay of GanneruVaram.

Siva Kumar used to run a bakery in Potturu village. He became acquainted with Burra Pranay of Ganneru Varam when he went there to procure bakery items. They used to buy marijuana from an unidentified person in Karimnagar and used to smoke cigarettes filling them with ganja.

Not content with the income

Siva Kumar was earning from baker to lead a luxury life, he thought of selling marijuana along with Pranay to make a fast buck.

In the process, they were waiting at Vantadupula Road when they were caught by the police. The police said that special kits were sent to all police stations to apprehend marijuana smokers and drunk drivers.

Harish Rao submits 17 Cut Motions in Assembly

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Harish Rao has submitted 17 cut motions in the Telangana Legislative Assembly, highlighting various issues across multiple departments. The motions were presented as part of the demands for grants for the fiscal year 2024-2025, aiming to reduce the allotments by Rs 100 each for several departments.

Among the departments targeted were Fiscal Administration, Planning, Surveys and Statistics; Energy, Municipal Administration and Urban Development, Excise Administration, Home Administration, Transport Administration, Backward Classes Welfare, School Education, and Medical and Health.

Harish Rao pointed out several issues in the Fiscal Administration, Planning, Surveys and Statistics department, aiming to reduce the



In the Energy sector, Harish Rao proposed to reduce the allotment of Rs 2086,27,27,000 due to budget allocations for transformers and poles, and addressing the problems of Yadadri Power Plant.

allotment of Rs15876, 20,81,000. He cited problems related to seniority standards, pending bills, and other irregularities. Additionally, he highlighted the backlog of 5 DA bills, PRC issues, and pending

GPF bills as reasons for the proposed reduction.

In the Energy sector, Harish Rao proposed to reduce the allotment of Rs 12086,27,27,000 due to budget allocations for transformers

and poles, and addressing the problems of Yadadri Power Plant. He emphasised the need for better financial management and resolution of these critical issues to ensure uninterrupted power supply. For the

Municipal Administration and Urban Development department, he suggested reducing the allotment of Rs 15533,21,44,000. He pointed out the pending FC bills and development issues in Siddipet and other towns, stressing the importance of timely completion of urban development projects for the welfare of the citizens. Regarding the Excise Administration, he focused on issues related to specific brands such as Som distilleries, Bhoom Bhoom Beer, and Beeriyan Beer, proposing to reduce the allotment of Rs 413,01,90,000. He emphasised the need to address these issues to streamline the excise duties and ensure proper regulation. In the Home Administration department, he proposed reducing the allotment of Rs 9563,68,43,000 due to various incidents of crimes such as murders, dacoits, chain snatching, and robberies.

KGBVs told to maintain sanitation in campus

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Additional Collector Madhusudhan Naik on Monday made a surprise visit to Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) at Raghunadhapalli, Kamapalli and Singareni mandals. He warned the KGBV's staff of action if they fail to ensure sanitation.

He went round the campus, inspected the classrooms, store room, toilets, kitchen and asked the students about quality of food being served to them and whether they were being served eggs and fruits. He also enquired about the provision of cosmetics to them.

He gave instructions to KGBV staff on preserving vegetables and other essential com-



Khammam Additional Collector Madhusudhan Naik inspecting KGBV at Rahunadhapalli in Khammam district on Monday

modities. He enquired about the conduct of classes, supply of textbooks and uniforms.

Later, he inspected the offices of Tahsildars at Singareni, Mudigonda, Raghunadhapalem, Nelakondapalli and sought the status of the dharani represen-

tations. He asked the Tahsildars to give priority to disposal of pending representations on Dharani portal. He wanted them to fix daily targets and implement an action plan to dispose of the representations as early as possible.

Wall poster against human trafficking released

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Deputy Commissioner of Polce Naresh Kumar has called for united action to tackle human trafficking, which he called very disgusting.

In connection with observing anti-trafficking day on July 30, he released a wall poster against anti-human trafficking in his chamber in an event organised in association with Action for Integrated Development and the police department's anti-trafficking unit.

Organising such events on July 30 help sensitise people against human trafficking and to protect the rights of the trafficked persons. He called for making efforts to check human trafficking, modern slavery and exploitation. In case of emergencies, he appealed to people to call 100 or 1098 or 112 or 87126 or 56858 to get instant assistance.

Anti-human trafficking day was observed for the first time in 2014 by UNO.

Utnoor PHC groaning under shortage of doctors

PNS ■ UTNOOR

The Utnoor Primary Health Center (PHC) was upgraded to a 100-bed hospital in 2023. But, it remains understaffed. There are no technical personnel in the hospital to operate special equipment, which has been gathering dust.

The PHC, recognised as the Telangana Vaidya Vidhana Parishad Hospital, has only 13 medical officers against the required 60.

The State government has set up several hospitals like the PHCs, Area Hospitals and district hospitals. But for want of adequate facilities, including doctors and specialist doctors, the equipment in these hospitals has fallen into disuse and unable to provide timely medical assistance to the needy, especially the tribal people risking their lives.



The PHC at Utnoor was originally conceived as a 50-bed hospital, but it was upgraded to that of a 100-bed facility in 2023. Since 2018, the hospital has the recognised as the Telangana Vaidya Vidhana Parishad Hospital. Because of the inadequate staff strength of doctors here, the people are being denied medical assistance.

Many patients from the Adilabad and Asifabad districts frequent the PHC at Utnoor. But many of them are

being referred to RIMS at Adilabad for want of specialist doctors. There were several instances of patients requiring emergency medical care dying en route to the RIMS.

The poor people cannot afford to approach private hospitals. Therefore, people have been appealing to the government to appoint all kinds of specialist doctors in the PHC and save the lives of the patients requiring emergency treatment.

Vigilance team seizes 5 vehicles

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Vigilance and Enforcement Officials of Karimnagar unit conducted a surprise road check on Rajiv Rahadari between Karimnagar and Peddapalli Road and imposed a fine about Rs 1 lakh on vehicles and seized five vehicles for violating rules.

The vehicles had violated Motor Vehicle act like overloading, without fitness, Insurance, Pollution certificates, Tax Penalties and other violations.

The seized vehicles were kept on the premises of Road Transport Office (RTO) of Karimnagar and Peddapalli for custody and one drunk drive case initiated against lorry driver in Peddapalli police station.

Also imposed Goods and Service Tax (GST) fine amount of around Rs 1,00,000 and Royalty amount of Rs 52,000 for mining violations.

Man clubs wife to death, before ending his life

PNS ■ RAJANNA SIRICILLA

A 54-year-old man allegedly clubbed his wife to death in a fit of rage because of the family problems and later committed suicide by hanging in his house in Shanti Nagar locality of Sircilla town, reports reaching here said on Monday.

He was identified as

DoosaRajesam, 54. The body of the wife, Lakshmi (50), was found lying on the bed in the bedroom, while his body was found hanging from the ceiling fan. Before committing suicide, Rajesam clubbed his wife hitting her on her face putting her to death. The police said that Rajesam committed the crime in a fit of rage.

The couple had two sons - Venu and Venkatesh and a daughter Mounika.

The couple celebrated marriages of Venu and Mounika. Rajesam's both the kidneys were damaged and is surviving on dialysis.

His eldest son complained to the police that his father ended his life after putting his mother to death.

VRA steals Rs 2.10 lakh farmer's house

PNS ■ MEDAK

A Village Revenue Assistant (VRA) has been put behind bars on charge of stealing money and gold from a farmer's house at Makta Venakatapuram village in the district.

According to Circle Inspector Renuka Reddy, the VRA, Nirudi Ganeswar, was addicted

to online gambling. As he had lost heavily in the gambling, he had resorted to theft, the police officer said.

The VRA stole Rs 2.10 lakh and a little more than 29 grams of gold from the house of farmer, Sangappa. The farmer kept the money in his house to buy fertiliser and other inputs. The VRA broke into the house

and stole the money.

As the farmer found that his house was burgled and cash and gold were stolen, he reported the matter to the police. He told the police that he had borrowed money for agricultural purpose.

Based on the complaint by the farmer, the police investigated the case and arrested the VRA.



Medak Inspector Renuka Reddy announcing the arrest of Villa Revenue officer in Medak on Monday

Govt will prosecute those involved in power sector irregularities

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that the BRS government behaved irresponsibly throwing the power sector into a mess, the Congress MLA representing Munugode, Komatireddy Raj Gopal Reddy, said the Congress government will certainly prosecute those involved in irregularities in the power sector.

Initiating the discussion on demands in the Assembly on Monday, Raj Gopal asked former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao to reveal why he did not come to the Assembly when a discussion was going on about the power sector.

"BRS MLAs say that they are enough to tackle the Congress government. Everybody knows the status of BRS MLAs. Why was KCR made the Leader of the Opposition? Someone has to take the Leader of the Opposition post instead of KCR," he said.



Raj Gopal said that he had said in the year 2018 that the Yadadri Power Plant is beneficial. But the government now has to spend Rs 11,000 crore more to finish construction of the Yadadri Power Plant.

Raj Gopal said the government is conducting a probe into power sector irregularities after appointing an inquiry com-

mission. He said the BRS government looted thousands of crores through its deals. Raj Gopal said that he had

said in the year 2018 that the Yadadri Power Plant is beneficial. But the government now has to spend Rs 11,000 crore more to finish construction of the Yadadri Power Plant.

The Division Act says that a power plant should be established at Ramagundam but why did the BRS government construct the power plant in Nalgonda district which is 250 km away from SCCL from where coal comes to the Yadadri power plant. Instead of constructing the Yadadri Power Plant the government could have purchased power from Chhattisgarh at a lesser cost, he said.

Raj Gopal said the BRS government had used subcritical technology although supercritical technology was available when the Bhadradi and Yadadri power projects were launched. He said that the government had nominated contractors for constructing the power plant instead of inviting global tenders.



74 gates of Yellampalli project raised to release flood water

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

On account of copious rains in the upper reaches of Sri Pada Yellampalli project, it is receiving heavy inflows. The reservoir of the project is brimming with water. The water level rose to 17.51 tmc ft as against the full reservoir level of 20.17 tmc ft.

The project has been receiving 6,203 cusecs from Kadem project. The total inflows into reservoir are put at 16,081 cusecs. The Yellampalli project supplies 331 cusecs of water to Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply. Similarly, the pro-

ject supplies 15,750 cusecs Nandi Pump House through lift-irrigation.

Meanwhile, the Sundilla Parvati barrage is discharging 3,471 cusecs downstream by lifting 74 gates of the barrage because of the reservoir is receiving heavy inflows due to heavy floods the upper reaches of the barrage.

Peddapalli Collector Koya Sri Harsha on Monday evening visited Peddapalli project and interacted with the project officials and enquired about the inflows into the reservoir. He asked the officials to remain the alert round-the-clock.

People along course of Krishna river urged to be on alert

PNS ■ NALGONDA

District Collector Narayana Reddy, in a statement, appealed to people in villages along the course of River Krishna in the district to be on

alert as the Srisailem project engineering officials were opening the radial crest gates and releasing water downstream in view of the continuing flood from the upstream of the Srisailem project and the

reservoir nearing full capacity. According to Srisailem Project Engineers, the full reservoir capacity of Srisailem project is 215,807.0 tmc ft. The Srisailem Project Engineers lifted the radial crest gates of

the Srisailem project and released the water keeping in view that the inflow into the project was 437,680 cusecs at 10 am on Monday and the reservoir would reach its full capacity on 30th of this month.

INDIA CORNER



Penguin to publish English version of Kamba Ramayana

Penguin Random House India (PRHI) on Monday announced the publication of the first complete multi-volume English translation of "Kamba Ramayanam", a Tamil version of the epic Ramayana by 12th-century poet Kampan. The monumental project, undertaken by six scholars and translators of the Tamil language, is expected to be released between 2028-30. Widely considered as the Tamil literary tradition's greatest poem, Kampan's Ramayana is celebrated for its innovative use of language, the psychological depth of its characters, and its profound engagement with themes of power, truth, and divinity. The six books of Kampan's Ramayana, consisting of 42,000 lines of verse, will be divided into seven volumes along with an introductory volume -- "Volume 1: Bala", "Volume 2:



Ex-APSC chief sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment

Former Assam Public Service Commission chairman Rakesh Paul was on Monday sentenced to 14 years of imprisonment by a special court in connection with a cash-for-jobs case related to recruitment of agricultural development officers in the state. Two other former APSC members -- Basanta Kumar Doley and Samedur Rahman -- were awarded 10 years of imprisonment, while 29 others will serve jail sentence of four years. Special Judge Dipankar Thakuria said in his order. Paul and the two former members were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of seven years in connection with a case of cheating, another seven years for forgery, and 10 years for cases registered under various sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act. In the case of Paul, the sentence will run consecutively, but with the CrPC stating that a person convicted in such a case can be in prison for a maximum of 14 years, he will serve the sentence for 14 years. In the case of Doley and Rahman, the sentence will run concurrently and they will be in jail for 10 years.



14 Naxalites surrender in Chhattisgarh

As many as 14 Naxalites, one of them carrying a bounty of Rs 1 lakh, surrendered before security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Monday, police said. The Naxalites turned themselves in before senior officials from the police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) here, citing disaffection with atrocities committed by senior cadres and "inhuman" and "hollow" Maoist ideology. Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Kumar Yadav said. They were active in the Usoor-Pamed, Bhairamgarh and Ganganalor area committees of Maoists, he said. Among them, woman cadre Nagi Podiyam (38) was active as the head of the Krantikari Adivasi Mahila Sangathan (KAMS- a frontal wing of Maoists) in Marubadka village and carried a reward of Rs 1 lakh, the official said. Podiyam was allegedly involved in murders, firing at police teams and damaging roads, he said. The surrendered Naxalites will be provided facilities as per the state government's surrender and rehabilitation policy.



INDIA'S BORDER DISPUTE WITH CHINA

EAM Jaishankar rules out any role for third party

PNS ■ TOKYO

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday ruled out any role for a third party in India's border dispute with China, saying the two neighbours have an issue and it is for them to find a way out.

"We are not looking to other countries to sort out what is really an issue between India and China," Jaishankar said while responding to a series of questions at a press conference in Tokyo. Jaishankar, who is here to attend a Quad foreign ministerial meeting, also said that India's relationship with China is not good and it's not doing well. "We have a problem, or, I would say, an issue between India and China...I think it is for two of us to talk it over and to find a way," he said.



"We are not looking to other countries to sort out what is really an issue between India and China," Jaishankar said while responding to a series of questions at a press conference in Tokyo.

"Obviously, other countries in the world would have an interest in the matter, because we are two big countries and the state of our relationship has an impact on the rest of the world. But we are not looking to other countries to sort out what is really an issue between us," he said, recalling his meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi twice this month. Jaishankar and Wang met last week in the Laotian capital where they participated in the meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). During their meeting, they agreed on the need to give strong guidance to complete the disengagement process following the military standoff in eastern Ladakh in May 2020. India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas. Jaishankar's remarks came amid

the dragging border row in eastern Ladakh that entered its fifth year in May. On July 4, Jaishankar and Wang met in the Kazakh capital city of Astana on the sidelines of the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). The Indian and Chinese militaries have been locked in a standoff since May 2020 and a full resolution of the border row has not yet been achieved though the two sides have disengaged from a number of friction points. The ties between the two countries nosedived significantly following the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades. The two sides have so far held 21 rounds of Corps Commander-level talks to resolve the standoff.

India only country where petrol, diesel prices declined in last 3 years: Puri

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Monday said India is the only country where rates of petrol and diesel have come down between November 2021 and April 2024. Replying to various queries during Question Hour in Rajya Sabha, the minister also informed that the government is encouraging dialogue between Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) and dealers regarding margins for the latter.

Puri noted that petrol and diesel were deregulated during the UPA government. Deregulation means that prices of the commodity in the market are not set by the government, he added. "Prices here being high and elsewhere being low. It's exactly the opposite. In India today, the prices are the lowest and is the only country where prices have actually come down," Puri said. He attributed this to very bold, ambitious and farsighted decisions taken by the Prime Minister. "The prices in the world, I am giving you a two-year reference period between November 2021 and April 2024.

EXCISE 'SCAM' HC reserves order on Kejriwal's bail plea in CBI case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday reserved its order on the bail plea by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the corruption case stemming from the alleged excise policy scam. The verdict was reserved by Justice Neena Bansal Krishna after hearing the counsel appearing for the AAP leader as well as the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The CBI opposed Kejriwal's bail plea in the case, saying he was the "sutradhaar" of the excise scam and if released, he

could influence the witnesses. "The investigation could not have been concluded without his arrest. Within a month we filed the charge sheet," said CBI's counsel advocate D P Singh. Earlier in the day, the CBI filed its final charge sheet in the trial court against the chief minister and five others, including AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak. Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Kejriwal, contended that the arrest was an "insurance arrest" to ensure that he does not come out of jail.

'Ready to discuss Mokedatu project implementation with TN'

PNS ■ MYSURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said his government was ready to discuss with Tamil Nadu regarding implementation of Mokedatu project across river Cauvery, but the neighbouring state was not coming forward despite it not "causing any problem to them". If the Centre gives necessary permissions, the State is ready to implement the project, he told reporters here. Siddaramaiah along with Deputy Chief Minister D K



Shivakumar, several Ministers and officials today offered 'bagina' (traditional thanksgiving) to river Cauvery at Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) dam in Mandya district. It is customary to offer a 'bagina' to the rivers in the state, when the dams are filled

to their maximum capacity. "We are ready to discuss. Despite Mokedatu not causing any problem to them (Tamil Nadu), they are not ready to discuss. If the central government gives permission we are ready to construct the Mokedatu reservoir," Siddaramaiah said. He was responding to a question on whether he will hold discussions with Tamil Nadu or the Centre for a "concrete programme" as a lot of water is flowing into the sea, with Mettur dam in Tamil Nadu expected to fill up in a couple of days.

'Vegan diet linked to lower biological age'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Going vegan for eight weeks was found to be linked to lowering of biological age, according to a study published in the journal BioMed Central (BMC) Medicine. Researchers looked at the molecular effects of the plant-based diet that abstains from consuming animal food products, such as dairy. The diet largely includes eating fruits and vegetables, along with grains, beans and nuts. The researchers, including those at Stanford University, US, found that consuming the plant-based diet was related



with changes in how a gene expressed itself, or gene behaviour, without changing the DNA itself. Specifically, they looked at DNA methylation, known to be able to "turn off" or "silence" a gene, thereby not allowing it to express itself. Higher levels of DNA methylation is associated with a higher biological age. It is one of the epigenetic processes, which affect the behaviour of a gene by altering its environment. For eight weeks, the team

followed 21 pairs of adult identical twins -- one half of each pair consumed an omnivorous diet, including meat, eggs and dairy, while the other consumed a vegan one. Identical twins share a significant amount of their genetic make-up. On average, the participants were aged 40 years and had a body mass index (BMI) in the overweight category. About 77 per cent of the group were women. After eight weeks, the researchers observed a 'younger' heart, liver, inflammatory and metabolic system among the participants consuming the vegan diet.

TEESTA WATER SHARING

Bengal govt opposed to any pact between India, Bangladesh: Mamata

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday asserted that her government is opposed to any agreement between India and Bangladesh over sharing of the Teesta river water. Maintaining that she loves the people of Bangladesh, Banerjee said sharing of Teesta water will mean "depriving north Bengal of even drinking water", let alone any provision for irrigation purposes. Speaking in the assembly on a resolution regarding erosion control and flood mitigation in West Bengal, Banerjee said the Teesta river has very little water during the winter and summer seasons. Banerjee also alleged that the state government was not invited to discussions between

India and Bangladesh over renewal of the Farakka Treaty, stating that her state is a stakeholder in the issue, as river Ganga flows into the neighbouring nation from West Bengal. Last month, Banerjee had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, expressing "strong reservation" over the Centre "excluding" the West Bengal government from discussions with Bangladesh regarding Teesta water sharing and the Farakka Treaty. Banerjee, in the communication, had also blamed the construction of a "series of hydropower projects in Sikkim, deforestation in upper catchment and impact of climate change" as reasons behind the Teesta river's health suffering.



Teesta water sharing and the Farakka Treaty.



www.dailypioneer.com

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

PAPER WITH PASSION

Talk tough, act tougher

Despite PM Modi's stern warning to Pakistan, crossborder terrorism is showing no signs of waning

Despite warnings, increased presence of troops and diplomatic manoeuvres cross-border terrorism remains a grim reality. In what must be a grave concern for all, the Indian Army has reported the loss of its 12th soldier this month, further straining the already tense relations between India and Pakistan. Rifleman Mohit Rathour was killed, and a Major along with three other soldiers were wounded in an unprovoked attack by Pakistanis Border Action Team (BAT) on an Indian forward post during an operation against terrorists attempting to cross the LoC at Kamkari in Machhal sector, north Kashmir. BAT, comprising Pakistani military personnel and terrorists, often provides cover fire for intruders crossing the LoC. In this latest assault, Pakistani personnel exploited poor weather and low visibility to attack the Army post with grenades and gunfire, resulting in a prolonged gunfight that critically wounded two soldiers, one of whom later died. In response to the surge in terror attacks, security in J&K



has been tightened, with the Government deploying two BSF battalions, totalling over 2,000 personnel, to the Union territory. The recent attack comes a day after the India Prime Minister warned Pakistan of dire consequences.

On Kargil Vijay Diwas, Prime Minister Narendra Modi issued a stern warning to Pakistan, asserting that the evil designs of the masters of terror will never succeed and that India will overcome every terror challenge. This strong message came amidst a rise in terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, including a deadly attack on a bus carrying pilgrims. But the PM's warning had little effect on the perpetrators.

The ongoing skirmishes along the Line of Control (LoC) and heightened insurgency activities in Jammu and Kashmir have contributed significantly to these casualties. While Pakistan's alleged support for militant groups continues to stir trouble, India must chalk out a comprehensive strategy to end such activities and ensure the safety of citizens and secure borders. Indeed, it is a tough task, given the difficult terrain but we must show resolve to take on terrorism and give fitting reply when such an incident takes place. Isolating Pakistan on international forums, especially at the UN, can work provided we present our case discreetly with proof. So far, despite the provocations, India has been steadfast in its efforts to normalise the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The Government's approach includes developmental initiatives, infrastructural investments, and engagement with local communities to foster peace and stability. But clearly, it is not enough and terrorists must be dealt with more vigorous force using high-tech solutions. The martyrdom of the soldiers should not go waste and we should strengthen India's resolve to pursue peace and stability in the region. Cross-border terrorism must stop now and we should have zero tolerance towards infiltrators to protect our borders and the people.

PICTALK



'Kanwariyas' gather at Har Ki Pauri ghat to collect 'Ganga jal,' in Haridwar

BRS faces existential crisis as KCR falters

Despite substantial party funds, the BRS now faces an existential crisis, compounded by internal defections and declining support



KALYANI SHANKAR

The Bharatiya Rashtra Samithi, formerly the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, sets itself apart from other declining political parties. Led by the ambitious K. Chandrababu Naidu, or KCR, the party's national expansion has been marked by setbacks, including its failure to retain power in Telangana. This fate is shared by many political parties and their leaders, as most eventually fade away after holding power at a state or national level. The downside continued as BRS suffered a significant and sudden setback with no Lok Sabha seat in 2024. Despite having around Rs 1,000 crore in party funds, KCR's hopes of national expansion were dashed. Rao renamed his party BRS in 2022, dropping the word Telangana, and KCR opened branches in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Those units are defunct now.

This is a stark example of how the political landscape can change instantly. Having lost power in the 2023 Assembly elections to Congress in the wilderness for the past ten years, the BRS is now facing a significant struggle for survival. The BRS has no representation in the Lok Sabha for the first time after the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. The party, which dominated Telangana politics for about two decades and ruled the state for almost a decade, has now been voted out of the Lok Sabha in 2024. Just last week, BRS received a further setback. BRS MLA A. Gandhi defected to the ruling Congress, which reflects the party's decline.

The Congress now boasts 75 M.L.A.s, including 65 from Congress, one from C.P.I., and nine former BRS. Members. In 2001, KCR made a historic decision to resign from the Telugu Desam Party (T.D.P.). He believed that creating a separate state was the only way to end the discrimination in the Telangana region, sparking a demand for separation. TRS was formed to achieve separate Telangana, a seemingly impossible regional objective. He was 47 at the time. T.D.P. was the second-largest party in the National Democratic Alliance. In



2004, the TRS. Joined forces with the Congress and secured five Lok Sabha seats. Following this, KCR was appointed the Union Minister for Labour and Employment in the United Progressive Alliance (U.P.A.) government, headed by U.P.A. Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. He continued his struggle inside and outside Parliament. In 2009, he initiated a hunger strike to demand the introduction of the Telangana Bill in Parliament.

After a few days, the Centre conceded to his demands. Shortly before the 2014 election, the U.P.A. government announced the formation of Telangana state. The TRS, performed well in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, winning 11 seats, its highest tally. However, it lost power to the Congress in the 2023 Assembly polls. On December 9, 2022, TRS, was officially renamed BRS., indicating KCR's intention to pursue national ambitions.

Now that the BRS, has failed to win even a single Lok Sabha seat in the state and its vote share has dropped to only 16.69%, the party faces a genuine existential crisis. The BRS, lost power last year, with just 35 seats in the Assembly.



UNLIKE CHANDRABABU, WHO HAD THE BACKING OF THE KAMMA COMMUNITY, KCR LACKS SUPPORT FROM ANY CASTE GROUP EXCEPT VELAMAS, A SMALL GROUP

The BRS chief struggled to keep the party together during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. It could not implement plans to field candidates in other states. KCR's attempt to establish a dynastic rule by appointing his son, nephew, and daughter to significant positions has been a point of contention. It was seen as a deviation from the party's founding principles and a sign of increasing autocracy. Secondly, like many dictatorial leaders, Rao failed to develop a second tier of leadership, which is an asset for any political leader except promoting his family. Thirdly, KCR, who rose to power through agitation and protests, steadily withdrew from public spaces. His inaccessibility and his aversion to media have significantly contributed to the disconnect between him and his leaders and workers. Rao surrounded himself with people who lacked substance and only praised him. As a result, he could not see the reality and fell into the trap of his sycophants, who presented false facts. Unlike Chandrababu, who had the backing of the Kamma community, KCR lacks support from any caste group except Velamas, a small group.

This political isolation is a significant factor in his decline. Fifthly, there were allegations of corruption. His daughter Kavitha is now in jail for alleged corruption in the Delhi liquor case. Sixthly, instead of concentrating on the state, KCR began dabbling in national politics and went around the Opposition-ruled states with a naked ambition of becoming Prime Minister. But he failed.

This wavering resulted in BRS. Unable to form the government in the 2024 polls. Seventhly, he thought he and his party were unbeatable and would continue to rule Telangana indefinitely like many other tinpot dictators. Eighthly, BRS. Faced defections.

However, he also induced defections when he was the chief minister. KCR has now joined a group of once-influential leaders such as Sharad Pawar, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Edapadi Palaniswamy, Deve Gowda, Mayawati, Uddhav Thackeray, and others who have previously held power but are now struggling. In politics, it's like playing a game of snakes and ladders.

(The author is a popular columnist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DO NOT SUBVERT NITI AAYOG

Madam — Boycotting NITI Aayog Meetings Undermines Democratic Processes. Boycotting NITI Aayog meetings by some political parties contradicts the principles of cooperative federalism. With parties from the INDIA bloc attending, it was expected that others, including the Congress party with its significant representation in Lok Sabha, would also participate.

The central government's allocation of more funds to Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, seen as politically motivated, should be addressed through dialogue rather than boycotts. Cooperation between the government and opposition is essential for national interest. Opposition parties staying away from NITI Aayog meetings miss the opportunity to voice their concerns and influence critical decisions.

Boycotts serve as ineffective protests, harming democratic processes and national unity. Continuous stalling of official processes by the opposition, since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tenure began, undermines the democratic framework. For citizens, the concern is about the smooth functioning of democracy. The opposition's confrontational approach hinders cooperative federalism, affecting national interest.

Addressing grievances through participation, not boycotts, ensures a healthier democratic process. Same Old Story Educated middle-class citizens often await the budget with anticipation, only to feel disappointed afterward. The recent budget, though promising in terms of infrastructure, employment, and other areas, fell short of transformational changes, particularly in taxation. The Finance Minister missed an opportunity to significantly alter the taxation structure, leading to disillusionment among the middle class. This cycle of expectation and disappointment continues, echoing Indiana Jones' sentiment: "Same old, same old."

Dorai Ramani Suresh | Ghaziabad

Ensure safety norms at coaching centres



The coaching institutions at Old Rajinder Nagar in Delhi are endangering the lives of UPSC aspirants, who face numerous hardships to pursue their dreams of becoming IAS officers. The recent tragic incident where three aspirants drowned in a basement flooded with rainwater underscores the dire state of India's coaching centers. Previously, such stories were common from Kota, but now Old Rajinder Nagar has also gained

notoriety for exploiting students for profit. This area, known as the UPSC hub, is filled with overpriced, poorly maintained apartments rented out to students from low and middle-income families who struggle to afford them. The Delhi government must take immediate action against negligent property owners and coaching institutions, enforcing strict standards to ensure the safety of the aspirants. These standards should include regulations on the number of students per batch, proper ventilation, parking facilities, and reasonable rent for student accommodations.

Additionally, a toll-free number should be established for students to report grievances related to their living and studying conditions directly to the police, ensuring their safety and empowering them against exploitation. These measures are crucial to protect the lives and aspirations of future officers and uphold societal responsibility.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

CELEBRATING PARENTS DAY

Madam — Parenting responsibilities are a testament to the unconditional love, support, and sacrifices parents make throughout their lives. This day emphasizes the importance of family values, fostering stronger relationships, and promoting gratitude and respect towards parents. Parents guide us with unwavering love and support, enduring countless silent and selfless sacrifices to ensure our happiness.

Despite the challenges of raising children, including teenage tantrums and door slams, their disciplined approach aims to provide us with a better life. As we transition into adulthood, parents continue to support us, often silently, checking on us and ensuring our well-being. Their selfless gestures speak volumes, even if they are not always expressive. It is time to show our appreciation and thankfulness for the support and love parents provide. The young generation must understand that one day they would be parents too!

MR Jayanthi | Mumbai

NAIL THE MYTH

Madam — Scientific facts have broken several myths and misconceptions. Will it put a break to political rhetoric in India which advocates population control based on false assumptions that the minority population is growing at a faster pace than its majority counterparts. Now that the pandemic period is over, the focus must be to release the 2021 census based on latest survey conducted so as to ascertain a clear picture of the socio economic scenario rather than targeting any particular community or area. It is absurd to predict about the future only on narrow rhetoric and political compulsions rather than using the demographic dividend for the progress of the country. So, no single community or religion be held responsible for rising population since it can falsify facts. If the Minority phobia is real or a mechanism to gain political dividends is a million dollar question.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Monsoon mayhem: The pothole predicament

Despite millions being spent annually by road authorities to ensure safe travel, the recurrence of potholes raises serious questions about where the money is going

The arrival of the monsoon season brings relief from the scorching heat, but it also brings along a familiar foe: "Potholes". This issue constantly frustrates commuters and raises doubts about the effectiveness of road maintenance. Every year, the Road Authorities spend millions of rupees to ensure a smooth and secure journey for travellers. However, these hazardous holes continue to deface the roads. All that money—where is it going? The other day I had to take a chance and walk the distance between the Amar Business Zone and the Hinjewadi Bus Stop. The rain was so intense that vehicles and cabs were unavailable, so I had to face it on my own. I prayed while I walked, hoping that I wouldn't hurt myself. The flooded streets and obscured footpaths turned the walk into a risky journey, where every step held the risk of either finding solid ground or plunging into an unseen pothole.



they are on foot or in their vehicles. The unpredictable nature of the road, obscured by the coverings of water, is risky. Potholes, which are frequently hidden beneath murky pools, become silent causes of numerous accidents, damaged vehicles, and occasionally fatal injuries. This issue demands urgent attention and a lasting resolution.

The persistence of potholes is a glaring testament to a systemic failure. Despite the annual financial outlay, the roads remain in a perpetual state of disrepair. One can't help but wonder about the quality of materials used, the thoroughness of the repair work, and the accountability

season, can help identify potential trouble spots and address them preemptively. Employing advanced materials and technologies in road construction can also play a pivotal role in enhancing durability. Clear records must be kept of how the funds are spent and allocated. Citizens have the right to know where their money is going and, more importantly, to hold the authorities accountable for standard work. It may be worth considering a public-private partnership to enhance the expertise and efficiency in road maintenance.

In conclusion, the monsoon, while a welcome relief from the heat, should not bring with it the dread of navigating pothole-ridden roads. It's high time the Road Authorities move beyond mere patchwork solutions and invest in lasting infrastructure improvements. For the sake of every commuter's safety and sanity, let's pave the way for smoother, safer journeys, rain or shine.

(The author is a freelance writer and a motivator; views are personal)



RACHNA LAKHPATRI



FIRST COLUMN THE HIDDEN ENEMY WITHIN

By keeping their ego in check, we can create a positive and productive work environment that will foster innovation and sustained success



SAKSHI SETHI

Today, many of us insist the main impediment to a full, successful life is the outside world. The most common enemy that lies within an individual is the three-letter word 'Ego'. At the beginning of the career, it impedes learning and the cultivation of talent. With the progress, it blinds to their faults and sows future problems and in failure, it magnifies each blow and makes the recovery more difficult. The ego, which is often defined as a person's sense of self-esteem or self-importance, is often viewed as a necessary trait for leaders. However, when ego inflates to unhealthy levels, it becomes a significant obstacle to effective leadership thereby stifling personal growth, distorting decision-making, eroding trust and ultimately jeopardizing the success of an organization. Collaboration is a cornerstone of effective leadership. Great leaders understand the importance of harnessing the collective intelligence and diverse perspectives of their team.

Apart from collaboration, Constructive feedback is also essential for personal and professional growth. Leaders who embrace feedback can adapt, learn and improve continuously. While a healthy level of self-confidence is essential for leadership, an inflated ego can have detrimental effects. Leaders with big egos often believe their ideas are superior, which can prevent them from valuing the input of their team. This attitude can stifle creativity and innovation, as team members may feel undervalued and less motivated to share their ideas.

Moreover, such leaders may resist feedback, seeing it as a threat to their authority or self-image. This resistance can prevent them from growing and improving, leading to repeated mistakes and missed development opportunities. Above all, ego can erode trust within a team. If team members feel that their leader is self-serving, they may become disengaged and less loyal to the organization. For a high-functioning team, it is the trust, and clear accountability mechanisms, that can allow leaders to build strong relationships with their team members thereby fostering a positive work environment where individuals feel safe, valued and motivated to contribute their best efforts.



The absence of the said factors can lead to a toxic work environment as leaders with large egos may struggle to admit when they are wrong which will ultimately prevent learning from mistakes and perpetuate problems. For an organisation to flourish, it becomes vital to acknowledge the mistakes continuously for continuous improvement and to build a culture of honesty and transparency. There is no denying the fact that leaders with inflated egos may prioritize short-term gains and personal accolades over long-term success and sustainability. This can lead to decisions that provide immediate benefits but can harm the organization in the long run. The only way to mitigate this is by encouraging leaders to engage in self-reflection and seek feedback; creating an environment where open communication is valued and establishing clear accountability mechanisms that can help them become more aware of their ego and its impact.

By addressing and learning from their failures, leaders can drive continuous improvement and inspire their teams to do the same. Moreover, leaders who practice humility and openness, encourage a culture of collaboration, thereby fostering an environment where ideas can flourish and the best solutions can emerge. Remember, ego in the workplace leadership can be a double-edged sword. By promoting self-awareness, fostering a culture of humility, encouraging open communication, setting clear accountability, and leading by example, organizations can mitigate the negative impacts of ego and cultivate more effective and empathetic leaders. In an era that glorifies social media and other forms of shameless self-promotion, the battle against ego must be fought on many fronts. Great leaders recognize the importance of humility, empathy and a commitment to the collective goals of their team and organization.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Equitable revenue sharing is must for fiscal federalism



A S MITTAL

Punjab's declining GDP reflect the broader issue of uneven development. Addressing these disparities is essential for promoting holistic growth and preventing social distress across states



The current state of India's fiscal federalism is significantly detrimental to the states. The system needs to be reoriented to spur a competitive environment across the country, not just within some individual states. The recent union budget was expected to set a comprehensive five-year economic agenda for the country's wholesome growth. In Budget 2024-25, unique packages were granted to Bihar of Rs 26,000 crore and Rs 15,000 crore to Andhra Pradesh in exchange for political support, resulting in an even wider fiscal imbalance. It's essential to ask why a similar approach has yet to be taken to address the economic growth of other financially distressed states. For example, Punjab, as a landlocked border state facing locational disadvantages, requires a fair platform to compete on an equal footing. Once a prosperous and progressive state, Punjab grapples with a significant problem of unchecked unemployment stemming from distressed farming and an imbalanced industrial base dominated by 99.7% of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Punjab accounts for only 5% of industrial units in the country, with a 3.6% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) in the industrial sector over the last five fiscal years, ranking 12th. In contrast, the neighbouring state of Haryana has demonstrated higher growth rates at 5.9%. Punjab ranked first in GDP in 1981 and fourth in 2004. In the fiscal year 2023-24, with a GDP of Rs 6.98 lakh crore, the state was ranked 16th. In comparison, the neighbouring state of Haryana's GDP stands at Rs 11.20 lakh crore, ranked 12th. Interestingly, Bihar, once part of the economically challenged states known as 'BIMARU' (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh), is now a fast-growing economy with a growth rate of 10.6% and a GDP of Rs 8.59 crore in FY 2023-24. Allowing lopsided economic development in a sensitive state like Punjab will have serious repercussions. Failing to ensure



ONCE A PROSPEROUS AND PROGRESSIVE STATE, PUNJAB GRAPPLES WITH A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM OF UNCHECKED UNEMPLOYMENT STEMMING FROM DISTRESSED FARMING AND AN IMBALANCED INDUSTRIAL BASE DOMINATED BY 99.7% OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISE

holistic development will ultimately lead to accusations of inefficiency in managing human resources. Unemployment exacerbates various issues in distressed areas, including mental health, crime, and drug abuse. Substantial evidence links drug abuse and law and order problems directly to unemployment. These issues must be addressed assertively to ensure the overall progress and well-being of Punjab. Economic distress in Punjab has led to unemployment and a significant migration of its human resources to Canada, which has created a breeding ground for radicals and anti-Indian Khalistani extremist activities on Canadian soil; it is a globalised challenge that must be addressed promptly. Secondly, the Pakistan border has been adversely affecting Punjab's economy. This, along with illegal arms supply and drug-related terrorism, has severely impacted Punjab's social fabric and law and order. The central government has not adequately compensated Punjab for its unique challenges compared to other states. The revenue-sharing disparity is a pressing issue causing significant, alarming socio-economic distress in Punjab. The state receives only 51 paise for every rupee it contributes to the Centre's tax pool, compared to states like Bihar, which receive Rs 1.20. This highlights the urgent need for equitable revenue sharing to ensure Punjab's socio-economic well-being. Currently, Punjab's contribution to the country's tax kitty stands at approximately 3%, and it only receives 1.8% of the divisible pool of taxes allocated by the Fifteenth Finance Commission. It

is concerning that Punjab only received 1.8% of the Rs 8,16,649 crore distributed by the Centre to the states during 2022-23. However, the large areas and population figures of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar provide them with additional leverage from the central tax pool. Uttar Pradesh received the highest share at 18% (Rs 1,46,525 crore), and Bihar received the second-highest share of 10%. This highlights why Punjab and other states argue they must receive a fair share of funds despite contributing more to the exchequer. During the fiscal year 2022-23, Punjab contributed Rs 32,800 crore to the central taxes fund, which included CGST, income tax, corporation tax, wealth tax, union excise duty, customs, and service tax. However, in return, the state only received Rs 14,756 crore. Punjab has raised the issue with the Sixteenth Finance Commission, which believes it deserves a fair share of central tax. The Finance Commission recommends the distribution of tax revenues between the Centre and States. Despite recommendations to allocate 42% and 41% of net tax revenue to States, their share of gross tax revenue fell to 35% in 2015-16 and 30% by 2023-24. For 2024-25, the Gross Tax Revenue (GTR) is projected to grow at 11.7%, raising concerns about adequacy in meeting state fiscal needs. The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Act has had significant and varying consequences on fiscal federalism. It has given the Centre more extensive taxation powers, altering the budget landscape and transforming budgetary federal-

ism in the country. While GST has led to revenue growth, it also restricts the financial autonomy of the states. In a recent memorandum submitted to the 16th finance commission chairman, Punjab highlighted the loss on account of GST introduction, indicating that the state would have earned more than Rs 45,000 crore with VAT versus the budgeted GST of Rs 25,750 crore in FY 2024-25. This gap is expected to increase to Rs 95,000 crore with VAT and GST at Rs 47,000 crore by 2030-31. The Way Forward: In the current fiscal federalism, it is crucial to adopt a comprehensive and inclusive approach to budgetary prudence, local employment generation, and social harmony, regardless of demographic and political differences. Devolve more fiscal powers to states, enhancing their flexibility in revenue generation, expenditure planning, and borrowing limits. Reforms are necessary to address imbalances in the revenue transfer system. A Finance Act amendment is still pending to establish fairness and accountability in managing the resource imbalances between the Centre and the States, which has led to growing regional tensions. Ultimately, fair, competitive, and effective fiscal federalism is essential to ensure that resources result in improved services and infrastructure for citizens. (The Author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika IITL Group, Vice-Chairman of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board, Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council. Views expressed are personal)

India's population: A liability or an untapped asset with immense potential

As the world population nears 8 billion, it becomes imperative to reassess the impact of population dynamics on sustainability and progress.

Much is being written and spoken about India's teeming human population. Huge concerns are being raised on the spectre of the burgeoning population becoming a severe liability for national survival. India's population was 1.44 billion in January 2024 and could be a shade above this at present. This population has been growing at the rate of nearly 1 per cent per year during the last decade. People say that the country cannot progress economically and become a developed nation unless population growth is checked. Or, in other words, a big population is a most severe dampener to national growth and development. How far is this true and is there historical precedence to cor-



ATUL SEHGAL

roborate this concern? The subject of the population needs to be analysed from a larger, global perspective. The population of the world is close to 8 billion today and has trebled over the last 100 years. The core issue regarding population being considered an asset or liability pertains to the current paradigms of tapping and using global material resources and the huge disparity in ownership of those resources. Humans do not and cannot

produce babies at will like goods are produced in a factory. Humans can only cohabit and copulate, like lower animals. This is borne out by the fact of decreasing fertility in many parts of the world despite the professed advancements of modern medical science. Scientists and medical professionals can help with the process of fertilisation of reproductive cells but cannot achieve conception at will. It stands to reason that babies are produced in the factory of nature by the subtle action of a supernatural, omnipotent entity. You can call him Creator or God who is also the controller and regulator of the world and the larger universe. This is a prime scientific fact if science is correctly under-

stood as the systematic and logical treatment of any subject. Hence population growth or decline is a subject more of God than of man. If population growth is high and humans fear that it will make human life unsustainable, their Creator knows better. He makes humans learn and realise their mistakes through natural disasters like climate change, wildfires, cyclones, tornados, earthquakes, floods and epidemics. These serve to balance out the excessive population from time to time. It has to be admitted that modern science has done a lot to conquer life-threatening illnesses and increase the longevity of humans. Average life expectancy globally today is almost double compared to what it was 200



years ago. But this increase has come at the cost of the environment. We have used chemical fertilizers for crops abundantly which have undermined the quality and fertility of soil. We have used chemical, reductionist formulation-based drugs and vaccines aplenty whose serious, sneaky side effects are slowly coming into evidence. But we cannot go on doing it ad infinitum without seriously prejudicing sustainability. Today, humans

are ravaging and pillaging global material resources like never before. They are enhancing human comforts at the cost of the environment. Life expectancy is rising at the cost of life quality. Infectious diseases are being combated through strong chemical formulation drugs, while insidiously inviting chronic diseases and newer ailments unheard of before. Humans are unwittingly proceeding towards a situation of unsustainable existence. Let us go back to the prime metaphysical truths of existence. God regulates all life. He is the source of all knowledge which is enshrined in the divinely revealed scriptures called Vedas. These scriptures are the repository of all knowledge including science and technology.

Vedic hymns declare that each human couple should produce 10 children. The same Vedas exhort humans to live up to at least 100 years, healthy and fit. In the above backdrop, the human population is an asset, not a liability. We should know how to utilise the manpower productively and fruitfully. If we follow the modes of agriculture and food production as per Vedic sciences, using technologies based on such sciences, we will never have to compromise the quality or fertility of the soil and can produce bumper crops season after season. We can achieve this through strictly organic farming and protect our environment and ecosphere. Following assiduously the principles of Ayurveda, we can ensure

sound health and high longevity without recourse to synthetic chemical drugs. All we have to do is change our systems and paradigms of living to reduce the stark wealth disparity witnessed today where 20 per cent of the global population holds 80 per cent of global resources. Our instinct of self-aggrandisement, driven by capitalism based on the banal baser element of greed has led to the present situation. Population needs to be considered an asset and it will be regarded as an asset if we change our living paradigms to align with nature and embrace environment-friendly technologies expounded in our ancient Vedic scriptures. (The author is a management consultant based in New Delhi; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS



HP unveils its most powerful AI PCs

HP unveiled its most powerful PCs yet, which are designed and engineered around the Snapdragon X Elite processor 5 and Neural Processing Unit (NPU) 6, on Monday. The newly launched laptops include the HP EliteBook Ultra and HP OmniBook X, being HP's first Copilot+ PCs, run on NPU 6 that is capable of 45 trillion operations per second (TOPS) to run language models and generative AI locally on the device, said a press statement issued by the company. "We are at the beginning of a new era of AI PCs that will redefine what a personal computer can do. We believe this innovation is all set to unlock new possibilities and transform the future of work. Our next-gen AI PCs are designed to enhance work efficiency, boost security, and offer personalized experiences for hybrid workstyles. We are excited to see how these innovative devices will drive India's digital transformation and economic growth," said Ipsita Dasgupta, senior vice president and managing director, HP India.



Airlines asked to exercise moderation in pricing of tickets

Airlines have been advised to self-regulate as well as sensitised to exercise moderation in pricing of air tickets, the civil aviation ministry told the Rajya Sabha on Monday. There have been persisting concerns over high airfares, especially during peak and festival seasons. Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said the ministry holds consultation with airlines and the representatives are advised to self-regulate and keep passengers' interest in mind while fixing the airfares. "Airlines have also been sensitised to exercise moderation in pricing and to keep passengers' interest in mind. The airlines have committed to ensure that airfares do not surge during events such as natural disasters, calamities, etc," he said in a written reply. Under current regulations, airfares are neither established nor regulated by the government after the repeal of the Air Corporation Act in March 1994. "Globally, most countries have deregulated their aviation sector, i.e., removing government-imposed entry and price restrictions on airlines. Deregulation has led to increased competition between airline carriers, leading to decrease in airfare."



India okays export of 1,000 tn of non-basmati rice to Namibia

India on Monday allowed the export of 1,000 tonnes of non-basmati white rice to Namibia through National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL). Though exports of non-basmati white rice have been banned since July 20, 2023, to boost domestic supply, exports are allowed on the basis of permission granted by the government to certain countries to meet their food security needs on request. "Export of 1,000 MTs of non-basmati white rice to Namibia is permitted through NCEL," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said. India's export of non-basmati white rice was USD 122.7 million in April-May and USD 852.53 million in the entire 2023-24. The country has earlier also allowed such exports to countries like Nepal, Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea, Malaysia, Philippines, and Seychelles. NCEL is a multi-state cooperative society. It is jointly promoted by some of the leading cooperative societies in the country, namely Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), popularly known as AMUL, Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Ltd (IFFCO), Krishak Bharati Cooperative Ltd (KRIBHCO), and National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED).



Negotiating teams to restart India FTA talks as soon as possible: UK

PNS ■ LONDON

The process of getting negotiating teams back in the room will kick-start soon to deliver a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India, the UK's newly elected Labour government announced on Monday as it set out its trading priorities.

Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds spelled out his department's approach to international trade deals, which he said will put economic growth at the heart of the negotiations to achieve high-quality pacts that give British businesses access to international markets and boost jobs.

The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) said it also plans to publish a trade strategy which aligns with the government's industrial strategy.

enhances economic security and supports net zero ambitions.

"Boosting trade abroad is essential to deliver a strong

"Boosting trade abroad is essential to deliver a strong economy at home. That's why I've wasted no time taking stock of progress and getting ready to press on with trade talks with our international partners," said Reynolds

economy at home. That's why I've wasted no time taking stock of progress and getting ready to press on with trade talks with our international partners," said Reynolds. "From the Gulf to India, our trade programme is ambitious and plays to the UK's strengths to give British businesses access to some of the most exciting economies in the world.

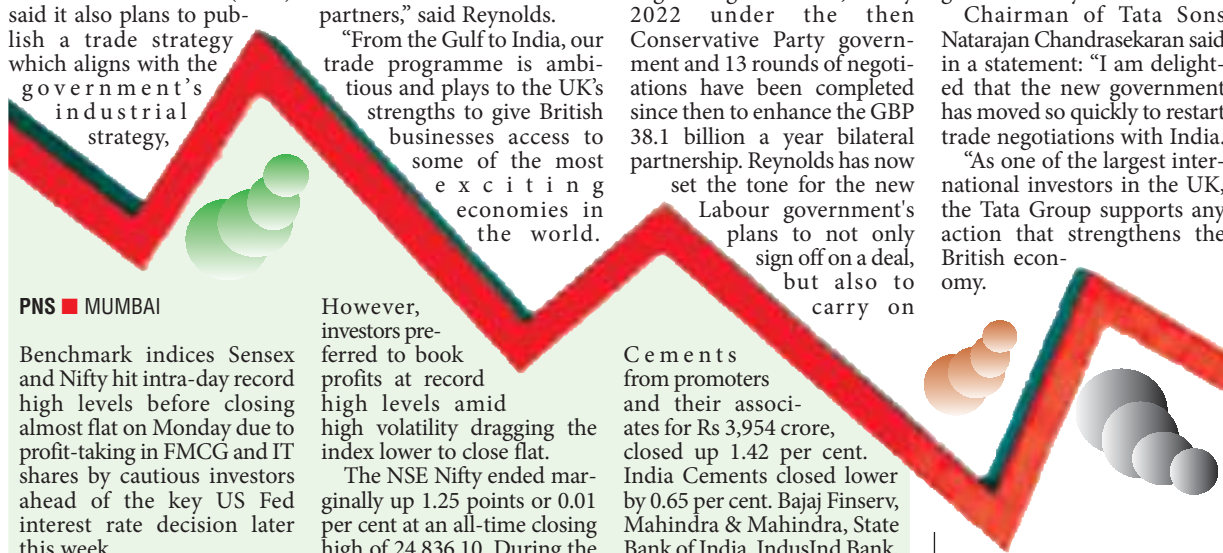
Our teams will be entering negotiating rooms as soon as possible, laser-focused on creating new opportunities for UK firms so they can support jobs

the process from where it was left off in the fourteenth round of discussions amid general elections in both countries.

"India, with which the UK is negotiating a Free Trade Agreement and Bilateral Investment Treaty, is projected to be the world's third largest economy by 2027. A trade deal would give UK businesses better access to its burgeoning market of middle-class consumers, projected to grow to over a quarter of a billion consumers by 2050," notes the DBT.

The announcement follows Foreign Secretary David Lammy's visit to India last week to discuss economic and global security.

Chairman of Tata Sons Natarajan Chandrasekaran said in a statement: "I am delighted that the new government has moved so quickly to restart trade negotiations with India. As one of the largest international investors in the UK, the Tata Group supports any action that strengthens the British economy."



PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hit intra-day record high levels before closing almost flat on Monday due to profit-taking in FMCG and IT shares by cautious investors ahead of the key US Fed interest rate decision later this week.

However, investors preferred to book profits at record high levels amid high volatility dragging the index lower to close flat.

The NSE Nifty ended marginally up 1.25 points or 0.01 per cent at an all-time closing high of 24,836.10. During the

across the country and deliver the growth we desperately need," he said.

India and the UK began negotiating an FTA in January 2022 under the then Conservative Party government and 13 rounds of negotiations have been completed since then to enhance the GBP 38.1 billion a year bilateral partnership. Reynolds has now set the tone for the new Labour government's plans to not only sign off on a deal, but also to carry on

Cements from promoters and their associates for Rs 3,954 crore, closed up 1.42 per cent. India Cements closed lower by 0.65 per cent. Bajaj Finserv, Mahindra & Mahindra, State Bank of India, IndusInd Bank,

Sensex, Nifty retreat from record highs

Close flat ahead of key US Fed rate decision

The 30-share BSE Sensex closed higher by 23.12 points or 0.03 per cent at 81,355.84 -- its all-time closing high -- with 16 of its components advancing and 14 ending lower. The index opened higher and jumped 575.71 points or 0.70 per cent to hit a new intra-day record peak of 81,908.43 in late morning deals following a decline in US bond yields.

day, it surged 164.9 points or 0.66 per cent to hit a fresh lifetime peak of 24,999.75. From the Sensex pack, Larsen & Toubro rose the most by 2.77 per cent after it announced bagging new large orders worth Rs 2,500 crore to Rs 5,000 crore.

UltraTech Cement, which announced the acquisition of 32.72 per cent stake in India

Reliance Industries and Sun Pharma were among the biggest gainers.

On the other hand, Titan Ltd fell the most 2.38 per cent. Bharti Airtel (2.22 per cent), ITC (1.33 per cent), Kotak Mahindra Bank (1.04 per cent) and HDFC Bank (0.68 per cent) were among the major losers, dragging the key indices from record highs.

Hindustan Zinc will explore avenues of zinc applications in batteries

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vedanta group firm Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) on Monday said it is committed to being future-ready and will explore new avenues of zinc applications in batteries.

The company will explore avenues of zinc applications in

batteries alongside its focus on volume enhancement, reduction in cost of production and creating value for stakeholders. Hindustan Zinc Chairperson Priya Agarwal Hebbbar said in a statement. Hindustan Zinc Ltd in its efforts to support the ongoing global energy transition and thrust on emerging

clean tech, will explore new avenues of zinc applications in batteries, the statement added.

"With the world undergoing an energy transition, developing climate-friendly technologies will be highly mineral intensive, and the metals and mining sector will have a big role to play to support this transition.

Gold tumbles Rs 950; silver nosedives Rs 4,500

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices tumbled by Rs 950 to Rs 71,050 per 10 grams in the local market here on Monday due to weak demand from jewellery.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 72,000 per 10 grams in the previous session on Saturday.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also plunged Rs 1,650 to Rs 70,700 per 10 grams. On Saturday, it closed at Rs 72,350 per 10 grams. Silver also declined Rs 4,500 to Rs 84,500 per kg on decreased offtake by coin makers and industrial units.

This marks the biggest single-day fall in silver prices in 2024. It ended at Rs 89,000 per kg in the previous session.



Traders saw reduced demand from jewellery as well as retail buyers led to the fall in gold prices. "Last week, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Budget announced a customs duty cut from 15 per cent to 6 per cent, weighing on the domestic front."

"Post the cut in import duty, gold premiums in India jumped to their highest level in a decade," Manav Modi, Senior Analyst of Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Comm min for anti-dumping duty on Chinese glass mirror



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce ministry's arm DGTR has recommended imposition of US\$ 234 per tonne anti-dumping duty on Chinese unframed glass mirror for five years to protect the domestic industry from cheap imports.

The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) has recommended the duty after conducting an investigation into dumping of the product from the neighbouring country.

Unframed glass mirror is mainly used in architecture and furniture manufacturing. It is also used as a decorative and functional material for the decoration of interiors in the construction business.

"The authority recommends imposition of the anti-dumping duty on the imports of subject goods originating in or exported from the subject countries (China), for a period of five years," the DGTR said in a notification.

A representation was received from the All India Mirror Manufacturers Association stating that the increase in dumped imports of these goods from China is hurting the domestic industry.

The directorate in its findings has concluded that the domestic industry has suffered due to the dumped imports.

While DGTR, which is under the commerce ministry, recommends the duty, the finance ministry takes the final decision to impose the same within three months of the recommendation.

Countries initiate anti-dumping probes to check if their domestic industries have been hurt because of a surge in below-cost imports. As a countermeasure, they impose duties within the multilateral regime of the WTO (World Trade Organization). Anti-dumping measures are taken to ensure fair trade and provide a level-playing field to the domestic industry.

ACC Q1 net profit down 22.5% to Rs 361 cr



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Cement maker ACC Ltd on Monday reported a decline of 22.46 per cent in its net profit to Rs 361.40 crore in the first quarter ended on June 2024.

The company had posted a profit of Rs 466.14 crore in the April-June quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from ACC, now a part of Adani Cement.

Its revenue from operations was marginally lower at Rs 5,154.89 crore during the quarter under review.

It was Rs 5,201.11 crore in the corresponding period a year ago.

Indian economy likely to record over 7% growth: NCAER

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian economy could grow higher than 7 per cent and possibly closer to 7.5 per cent in the current fiscal on the back of normal monsoon and receded electoral uncertainty, economic think tank NCAER has said.

In its July 2024 issue of Monthly Economic Review (MER), NCAER said real GDP

grew by 8.2 per cent in FY 2023-24, driven by stable consumption demand and steadily improving investment demand.

"Based on the momentum in the high-frequency indicators, normalised monsoon, a relatively benign global outlook and receded electoral uncertainty, both in India and in the rest of the world, growth will likely turn out to be higher than 7 per cent, and possibly closer to 7.5 per cent," NCAER director general Poonam Gupta said.

Gupta said the Union Budget 2024-25 lived up to the expectations of unwavering commitment to fiscal consolidation, prudence, and quality.

The Budget has kept the fiscal deficit target at 4.9 per cent of GDP and capital expenditure at 2.4 per cent of GDP during 2024-25.

According to the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), the short

term to medium-term growth strategy is based on six key areas -- private sector capital formation,

green transition financing, MSME development, agricultural transformation, Education and skill development, and enhanced state capacity. The NCAER-NSE business confidence index (BCI) increased to 149.8 in the first quarter (Q1) of FY25, up from 138.2 in the fourth quarter (Q4) of FY24, indicating an improvement in business sentiments.

RBI plans web series to showcase 90-year journey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is planning a five-episode web series to provide an in-depth presentation about its functions and its 90-year journey.

The web series is proposed to be for nearly three hours, with each episode having a duration of 25-30 minutes, according to an official document.

The RBI, which was set up

in 1935, completed 90 years in April this year.

"The bank is desirous of creating a web series of five episodes of approximately 25-30 minutes each, which can be aired on national TV channels and/or OTT platforms, commemorating 90 years journey of RBI," it said in the document inviting bids through e-tendering for Production and distribution of



Web Series Commemorating 90 years of RBI.

The five-episode series will serve as a valuable resource for enhancing public understanding of the central bank's vital role in the economy, fostering greater engagement, and building trust and confidence in its operations and policies, it said.

For the web series, the RBI has invited proposals from interested production houses, TV channels, and OTT platforms.

The primary objective of this project is to create a comprehensive and engaging series that provides an in-depth exploration of the RBI functions and operations over its 90-year journey.

This series should highlight the central bank's vision and mission, showcase its significant achievements and initiatives, and provide insights into ongoing developments and collaborations, the document said.

Sebi launches chatbot 'SEVA' for investors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Monday launched a chatbot, 'SEVA', an Artificial Intelligence (AI) based conversation platform, for investors.

The Beta version of chatbot SEVA (Sebi's Virtual Assistant) includes features like citations for generated responses, speech-to-text and text-to-speech functionality for accessibility, and

follow-up questions, among others, the regulator said in



a statement. The chatbot is presently

enabled to answer questions relating to general information on the securities market, latest master circulars, grievance redressal process, etc.

Based on the feedback received from the users, additional areas will be added to the chatbot. Sebi said that the beta version of the chatbot is available on SEBI's investor website and SAARTHI mobile app (both Android and iOS)

'I AM BOTHERED BY LESS SCREEN SPACE'

TEJAL SINHA

Not all actors need the opportunity to showcase their prowess with a large screen space or full-fledged lead roles. There are a few extremely talented ones who can shine bright even in a small role, creating a much greater impact. Thanks to Indian cinema, we have so many such actors, who are no less than an inspiration. One of these masterly ones is Purva Parag. We are sure many 90s kids would remember sitting with their moms in front of the television watching her play not the 'atyachari' but rather 'pyaari' saas. Popularly known for her stint in shows like *Jai Santoshi Maa* and *Sarojini*, she feels ecstatic to have played a good mother-in-law (MIL). Mumbai has certainly been the 'city of dreams' and with so many opportunities coming her way, she too has shifted to the city. A journey, she describes as not like that of a 'fairy-tale' but rather, she

ful for to date is, "People still remember me for the work I have done in the past. Today, makers approach me with good work. I feel very lucky."

Would you believe it if we said that Purva, being an outsider in the industry, got her first character on Sab TV's *Dhaba Junction*, the next day that she had shifted to Mumbai? Well, that's true! How lucky, isn't it?

Going ahead, the *Grehan* actress has also been one of those actresses who has never shied away from working on different mediums, simultaneously.

For instance, while she was doing *Gafla*, she recalls also work-

who worships her work with all her heart and soul. Well, it's just not us saying it, but she agrees to it too. She further goes on to recall how, in 2023, she was continuously working on films like *Kachchey Limbu*, *Gangster Ganga* and *Sarfira*. Just not this; along with these projects, she was also working on around three TV shows too.

This pretty much sums up that the work she is a part of

matters before anything else. Off late, she has been referred to as the 'Rising Star of Indian Cinema.' "I don't believe in such things, haha," shares the *Jasoo Vijay* fame. "I am an actress; whether I am doing small roles or big ones, I just aim to give my best to them. Sometimes in projects like *Barfi* and *Madaari*, though I played small characters, the projects were successful and I got a lot of fame from these projects. But again, there have been times when I have done good work, but was not recognised. So, I just believe in hard work."

Meanwhile, talking of her work, recently, we saw a different Purva altogether in the Akshay Kumar and Radhika Madan-starrer *Sarfira*, directed by Sudha Kongara Prasad. She was seen donning a Maharashtrian look along with the accent, which certainly was a challenge for her.

"*Sarfira* is a beautiful movie of its own. Though I had read the script and knew everything about the film, there was a different excitement while watching it. The pace of the film keeps you intact. In fact, when we were shooting, there was a different pattern we got to experience with Sudha (the director). She had a different attitude for every scene."

However, on the other hand, talking about her character and the transformation, she shares, "I speak Hindi, so for me to learn Marathi and to act in flow with an accent, it was challenging, yet there was an actor's preparation excitement. Working with the living legends was an experience in and of itself. Seema Biswas, Ashok Lokhande, Akshay and Radhika were all so talented and performers. The atmosphere was full of good energy. Let me tell you about this incident, where there was this wedding song (*Chaat*) in the film. The hook-step was so mind-blowing that I went and told Ganesh sir, "Please don't show us on-screen, but even I want to do this dance!"

She goes on to share that, though she had a small role in *Sarfira*, she did have a great experience being a part of the project. For instance, she recalls, "Radhika and I have

worked together in *Kachchey Limbu* as well. Now, what really happened was that in *Sarfira*, we had a completely different look, a Maharashtrian look, while in *Kachchey Limbu*, it was more towards a western one. So she did not really recognise me and was like, 'Mai pehchanti hoon aapko, but kaun hai?' And then I told her about our previous project."

Meanwhile, working with Akshay Kumar was certainly a fan moment for her. "I'm a big fan of him. In my first scene, he was standing behind me and Radhika. Though I couldn't see him, there was an exciting factor for me, not as an actor but as a fan."

Going ahead, one of her most memorable projects, she says, has been *Madaari*, starring the late actor Irrfan Khan. Recalling her 'humble' experiences of working with him, she speaks with no less than honour, "I had first met Irrfan sir in my shot. Getting to work with him, I had all kinds of mixed feelings, from fear to excitement and happiness. Basically, I knew Nishikant Sir, so there was a comfort zone. Both Irrfan Ji and I are from the National School of Drama (NSD). We had an amazing conversation about it, just like how we talk to our seniors. There was no such attitude in him that he was such a big star! He was so calm and used to do all of the work with ease that there was a small issue that had happened on the sets of *Madaari* with the co-actors and trust me, he handled it so well! It was then that I understood that he is such a great actor that he wasn't bothered about anything else, but giving his best."

The *Hasee Toh Phasee* actress has some projects coming up in Jio Cinema and has also been shooting for a few, as we discuss. As we come to the end of the chat, she shares that she is looking forward to playing more of the diverse characters and doing something that challenges her as an actor. "I wouldn't say I'm never bothered; I am bothered by the less screen space. I do want to create big, effective and impactful characters. But yes, again, I believe that if you are doing a good job, then that little work of yours does not become a problem. Even today, people talk about and ask me about my *Madaari* or *Barefoot to Goa's* characters, which is so overwhelming. I believe that even after playing or doing even one scene, people remember you, which makes a big impact on the actor as well as the audience. It's a win-win."

Actress Purva Parag has created her own niche in the entertainment market with her prowess in different fields. She speaks to *The Pioneer*, discussing her journey, her remarkable stint in *Sarfira* and *Madaari* and more tidbits.



ing on multiple TV shows simultaneously. In fact, there was also a time when she was already doing back-to-back shows, when she also began working on a few episodes of the Indian police procedural television show *C.I.D.* "I had always preferred to be approached for good roles," says the *Koyelaanchal* fame. "I try not to say no to any project. For me, work is work, irrespective of its medium."

She is one of those

humorously says, "Entering the industry, I have managed things just like Ajay Devgn successfully rides two cars at the same time in his action films (she laughs)." However, over the years, one thing that she has learned pretty well is that "success and failure both play an important part in any actor's life and so has it been for me."

Just like any working mom, she too had her own conditions in between. To make it simple, the *Sarojini* fame though had her hands full, there was a time in her journey that she had to take a break of around 4 years for her son back then. Though she has had a lot of on-and-off moments in her journey, one thing that she is very grate-

Vegan athlete turning heads in Telugu cinema

Actor Arvind Krishna, recipient of the 'Vegan Voice' award at the Vegan India Conference, engages in an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, sharing his experience at the event, his workout routine and providing insight into his upcoming project *Masterpiece*.



SHIKHA DUGGAL

Jacqueline Fernandez and actor Arvind Krishna were caught a sight of at the Vegan India Conference, where Arvind was also presented with the "Vegan Voice" award! However, learning that he is a former basketball player, now turned actor, made us even more curious to learn around his journey. That's when we got wind of this exclusive interview!

We spoke with the Telugu actor who is currently shooting for the next schedule of his film. "I had an eye-opening experience at the vegan conference," begins the *Shukra* fame. "From physicians to dietitians to campaigners, I witnessed an entire panel. Ask me about the advantages of becoming vegan; I'm quite delighted about it (He laughs)! I'm sure you'll notice if you see me." The *SIT* fame goes on to say, "We had a lot of discussions on the inceptions of protein... all this while, me turning into a

vegan has only taught me how to have a balanced diet." Not that his busy schedule prevents him in any way, though. "I observe that a lot of individuals place too much emphasis on eating enough protein! You know what? Not many other supplements are as beneficial."

We found it quite agreeable that he is also an athlete and that his veganism and physical prowess go hand in hand. In the same vein, we inquire, "Being vegan has improved my recuperation times from workouts significantly. I enjoy working out a bit more these days. My respiration and endurance have improved with them, which is something else I've observed. This is really helpful to me as an actor because, well, look at that skin and hair! You see, it also provides me with an advantage." For our viewers in the south, he provided a revelation: "I am working on my upcoming Telugu film titled *Masterpiece*. Hurray, I am a superhero in the film. I spent 19 hours nonstop filming a sequence in which I had to battle 12 different fighters. The entire

team was shocked to see me punching and kicking without eating for a whole day at the end of the shoot. Look at the endurance it provided me, guys—it's all because I rigorously adhere to a vegan diet. To me, that seemed like a win."

The JNTU Hyderabad alum says, "As you rightly pointed out, whether or not shooting, the day is definitely demanding for me," when describing a normal day in his routine. "Since my shooting schedule has begun, I get up really early to work out. My fitness regimen consists of workouts that enhance my strength on the court, such as strength exercises. Keeping up with my nutrition while travelling is the true challenge."

In case you're wondering about the passionate athlete's future, he shares with us the story of how he won a basketball title in front of 60,000 spectators. "And the host team was our opponent. Every audience member was watching us because we defeated the home team. I could see the change right away because they began to stand by us. I believe we played a really hard game." Naturally, what a sight to see!

And when he was in Japan, it was really, really cold. Being the sole Indian player on the team was another aspect of the experience that he cherished.

A fervent supporter of "show, don't just tell," he pronounces, "With *Masterpiece*, we are giving India their own native sci-fi movie with a lot of mix of mythology in it," says *Alasyam Amrutham* fame. "It's an ambitious pro-

ject that I have been working on for the last three and a half years. We are looking at the release later this year, as an international production studio is handling all of the CGI. I'm going to be in another film, this time as a travel photographer. The other is a police officer! But let me just say that because it's all about conviction, I've found that playing the part of a superhero has been the most difficult."

Well, we hope readers are aware that he has collaborated with major celebs like Rajnikanth and Ravi Teja. Here are a few unique anecdotes in case it's not! "It's a funny story because I said, 'Who is Rajnikanth?' when the production team contacted me to say they were from his movie. I could never have envisioned landing a role in the movie *Thailava*, but when it finally dawned on me, I thought, 'Oh my god, superstar Rajnikanth.' Bringing intense media glare to basketball as an actor is another goal of mine."

While the actor is currently held up with the shoot of the film, Arvind on the other hand, has also been wishing to spread more awareness about a healthier and sustainable lifestyle through veganism.



FOOD REVIEW

WORK, PLAY, 'KIMCHI' ALL DAY!

AARTI SREENATH

Social Hyderabad, hosted its Kore-yeah Food Festival, at the vibrant hub of Mindspace. This event was a tempting exploration of Korean cuisine, blending traditional

flavours with innovative twists. Here's a detailed account of my gastronomic adventure. The experience began with *Budae Jjigae*, a hearty hotpot stew brimming with diverse flavours. This stew, a nod to its roots, combined Maggi noodles, Korean ramen and chunks of succulent chicken ham. The rich, savoury broth wrapped each ingredient in warmth, making every spoonful a comforting delight.

Then comes the *Hallyu Litchi Boba*, which stands out to be an absolute star. This vibrant drink featured a base of blue pea tea mixed with litchi juice, punctuated by juicy litchi boba pearls. The drink's essence was a perfect blend of tangy blueberry notes and the sweet, fragrant flavour of litchi. It was refreshing and unique, making it my top recommendation for anyone visiting the festival.

Next, I sampled the *Ginger at Your Service*, a beverage crafted for those who prefer a less sugary palate. This drink was a revelation, with its potent ginger infusion providing a soothing yet invigorating experience. Enhanced by *blueberry boba pearls* and served over a block of ice, it was garnished with ginger candy, adding a touch of sweetness to balance the bitterness. This drink is a must-try for ginger tea enthusiasts.

The main course, the *tofu bibimbap*, was a feast for both the eyes and the palate. This traditional Korean dish featured a colourful array of fresh vegetables atop a bed of soft-boiled jasmine rice. The tofu was perfectly seasoned with a hint of masala and salt, while the mix of raw and boiled vegetables added a nutritious crunch. This dish is a delightful option for vegetarians and tofu lovers alike, presenting a harmonious blend of flavours and textures. As a big fan of bold flavours and masalas, I found this dish to be a mild for my taste. While it was well prepared, it didn't quite deliver the vibrant kick I usually enjoy.

The starters set the tone with the Korean potato mille-feuille. This dish featured crispy layers of potato topped with *Choi's epic kimchi* and a sprinkle of parmesan. It was a delicate balance of flavours that left you wanting more, much like a cliffhanger in a K-drama. Despite being

a potato dish, it was light and not overly salty, making it a great choice for those mindful of their sodium intake.

The ambience very well matched the culinary experience, with cozy, pop-orange lighting and a vibrant atmosphere, providing an ideal setting for both casual dining and a lively club vibe. The decor and lighting made it a fantastic spot to enjoy the unique dishes and soak up the energetic environment. Each dish was crafted with care and creativity, offering a delightful fusion of traditional tastes and modern twists.

During the food festival, the ambience was transformed with vibrant orange and yellow hues radiating throughout the space. Posters celebrating Korean culture adorned the dining area, enhancing the festive theme and creating an inviting and energetic atmosphere. Social

Hyderabad's Kore-yeah Food Festival was a remarkable journey through the flavours of Korea.

Whether you're a fan of Korean cuisine or simply looking to explore new flavours, this festival is an unmissable experience, which is going to end today (July 30).



What's good: *Hallyu Litchi Boba*
Insider tip: Offers both indoor and outdoor seating, allowing you to enjoy the scenic natural beauty or opt for a cozy, dimly-lit environment for your workspace

Cost for two: Rs. 1500 (Approx)

How to get there: Survey 64, Ground plus level, Hitech City, Hyderabad



what's brewing?



Arshiya, a proud alumna of Lakhotia College of Design and the creative force behind Raynees Wedding Wardrobe, presented a kids' fashion show at the Marriott Convention Center, Hyderabad. The event, organised by IKFW, celebrated the theme "Fairy-Tale to South India," capturing the imagination of all in attendance. The fashion show featured a delightful collection that beautifully blended fairy-tale elements with South Indian cultural aesthetics. The young models dazzled on the runway, showcasing intricate designs that highlighted Arshiya's unique vision and craftsmanship.



PARTY

Photos by - SV Chary

Samsung India launches new range of ACs

Samsung, India's largest consumer electronics brand, announced the launch of its latest innovation – the new WindFree Air Conditioners in the Chilled Water Indoor category. This new range features the Wind-Free and 3600 Bladeless Technology in Chilled Water-based Cassette Units, designed to offer a superior cooling experience without the discomfort of direct cold draft for the user. The chilled water-based cassette units allow users to set a desired temperature, and the WindFree cooling technology gently disperses cool air up to 15,000 micro-air holes at wind speed of 0.15m/sec. In addition, the advanced airflow system cools rooms faster while operating quietly, generating only 24 dB(A) of sound at its lowest level, akin to a whisper, making it ideal for bedrooms, studies, and baby rooms.

Future-ready career programmes in NU

Limited seats are available for admission to the cutting-edge career programs in the University of the Future, NIIT University (NU). The final round of admissions will be closing soon. Candidates from Southern India who haven't secured their desired stream in state counseling have the chance to secure their preferred stream at NU, with up to 100% merit-based scholarships available.

Workshop on child sexual abuse

On World Parents Day, Tempest Advertising organised a workshop on Child Sexual Abuse - Awareness and Prevention. This initiative aimed to educate parents and youngsters about the gravity of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), its causes, and preventive measures. This workshop was conducted by Sailaja Pillula, a Clinical Psychologist, Trainer, and a Volunteer at Project Masoom and Young Indians. While the theory of child sexual abuse is known to many, the realistic approach to responding to the heinous crime and the way forward is the tricky challenge.

Bajaj Finserv Large Cap Fund

Bajaj Finserv Asset Management Limited has announced the launch of Bajaj Finserv Large Cap Fund, a unique fund in this category with a high active share and a concentrated strategy focusing on select 25-30 stocks. Through this unique approach, the fund aims to provide better risk-adjusted returns over the long term. Bajaj Finserv Large Cap Fund will have a concentrated portfolio with a high-conviction stock selection approach, aiming to deliver outperformance over the benchmark in the long term by employing a high active share strategy. The scheme will be available in both direct and Regular plan via growth and IDCW options with minimum investment of Rs. 500 for lumpsum as well as SIP.



The GYMQUINN 2024 All India Gymnastics Level-wise Competition was successfully held at Gaudium Sportopia by the Gaudium School on July 27 and 28. 600 gymnasts from throughout the nation competed in this important event, displaying incredible talent and sportsmanship.



World Nature Conservation Day was observed at all of Kangaroo Kids International Preschool's locations across the country. The purpose of the event was to involve parents and kids in a cooperative environmental activity, encourage environmental responsibility, strengthen family ties and implant foundational qualities like constancy. As part of the Kangaroo Kids curriculum, the event also helped young learners learn about the wonders of plant growth and development while fostering the development of 9 future skills and 15 critical mental habits.

FUN

ARCHIE



GARFIELD



NANCY



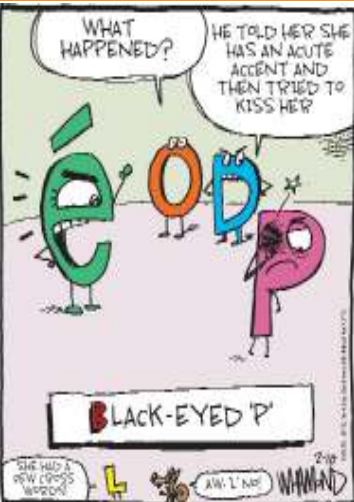
GINGER MEGGS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



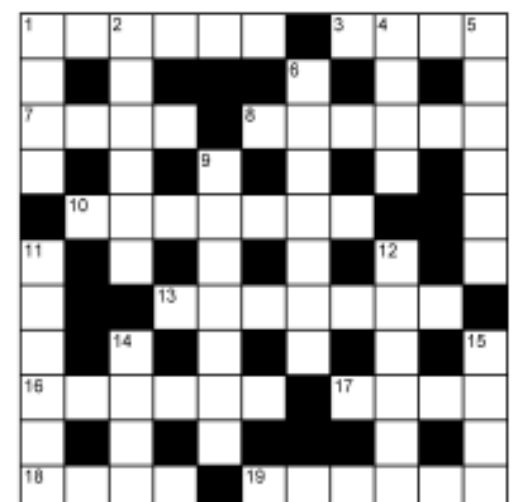
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- Sixth planet from the sun
- Pieces
- Teenager's skin problem
- A ship's chimney
- A song for a baby
- An insect's feeler
- Stopped
- A large group of soldiers
- A young sheep
- A dog with curly hair that is often clipped

DOWN

- Something to sit on
- The muscle in your mouth
- Hotels
- A precious metal
- Blow soapy water to make these
- A covering for a bed
- Something to write with
- Made noises while asleep
- The inside of your hand
- A rubber cover for a wheel

SOLUTION

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

AAAY RELEASING ON AUGUST 15

GA2 Pictures, in association with Bunny Vas, Vidya Koppineedi, Narne Nithiin and Anji K. Maniputhra, proudly announces the paid premieres of their highly anticipated film, AAY, on August 15, Independence Day.

This production from GA2 Pictures features the dynamic Narne Nithiin and the stunning Nayan Sarika in the lead roles, with debutant director Anji K. Maniputhra at the helm. Produced by the talented Bunny Vas and Vidya Koppineedi, AAY is generating buzz with its captivating promotional material. The film's recently released songs have become chart-toppers and are spreading rapidly across social media through a wave of reels and shorts. The movie will have its global theatrical release on Independence Day, with paid premieres on August 15.

Set against the beautiful backdrop of Godavari, AAY promises to be the ultimate fun entertainer of the season. Narne Nithiin is expected to charm audiences with this nostalgic Godavari-based film.

The project brings together top-notch talent both in front and behind the camera. Renowned producer Allu Aravind presents the film, while art direction is by Kiran Kumar Manne, cinematography by Sameer Kalyani, and music by Ram Miryala.



Tamannaah carries 'Bonam' for Odela 2

Tamannaah Bhatia is set to enchant audiences once more as she teams up with Madhu Creations and Sampath Nandi Teamworks for the eagerly awaited sequel, *Odela 2*. Following the success of the 2021 hit *Odela Railway Station*, this sequel is directed by the innovative Ashok Teja. The release of initial promotional materials—including the first look, teaser and behind-the-scenes footage—has already stirred considerable excitement and speculation among fans, raising anticipation for the film.

Currently, the high-budget multilingual film is in the midst of a dramatic climax shoot at the Odela Mallanna Temple, located in RFC, Hyderabad. A meticulously crafted, high-budget temple set has been erected for this pivotal scene, featuring Tamannaah Bhatia and other actors, alongside 800 junior artists.

In celebration of Hyderabad Bonalu, the filmmakers have unveiled a new poster showcasing Tamannaah Bhatia draped in a saree, carrying a 'Bonam' on her head, exuding serenity and contentment. The timing is serendipitous, as the Bonalu episode is being filmed amid the ongoing Bonalu festivities. Tamannaah Bhatia has undergone rigorous training and rehearsals to deliver an electrifying performance, promising to keep audiences on the edge of their seats with her intense action scenes.

Sampath Nandi, renowned for his talent in blending high-octane action with engaging storytelling, is at the helm of this ambitious project. Under his guidance, *Odela 2* is set to deliver a thrilling experience filled with emotional depth and adrenaline-pumping moments.

The film also boasts an exceptional behind-the-scenes team: Ajaneesh Loknath, celebrated for his work on *Kantara*, is composing the music; top cinematographer Soundarrajan is capturing the visuals; and Rajeev Nair is handling art direction. With such a stellar lineup, *Odela 2* is shaping up to be a must-watch cinematic event.



Exciting developments for Simbu fans

In a flurry of exciting news for fans of Silambarasan TR, aka Simbu, two major updates regarding his upcoming film projects are here.

The highly anticipated film, tentatively titled *STR48*, is set to begin shooting in February or March 2025, say sources. Directed by the talented Desingh Periyasamy, Simbu will take on the role of producer for this film, promising a personal touch and a strong commitment to the project. Fans are eagerly awaiting more details about the film's storyline and cast, but the combination of Periyasamy's directorial expertise and Simbu's production acumen has already generated substantial excitement.

Before *STR48* hits the sets, Simbu has another major project on the horizon. Directed by Jude Anthony Joseph, this film is set to start shooting later this year. Sources say that Jahnvi Kapoor and Kiara Advani will play lead roles in these films. An official announcement regarding the same will be made soon.

Double Ismart comes up with two updates

The romantic melody of the season, *Kya Lafda*, from the highly anticipated film *DOUBLE ISMART*, has been released. Featuring Ustaad Ram Pothineni and Kavya Thapar, this track is set to become a monsoon favorite.

Following the success of the first two singles, which have gone viral and topped music charts, *Kya Lafda* stands out with its unique and invigorating composition. Credit goes to music director Mani Sharma for seamlessly blending techno beats with vibrant vocal performances. The song's infectious groove instantly lifts the listener's spirits and sets a lively tone.

The track's catchy hook and stylish programming add to its charm, making it a delightful and memorable listening experience. Vocalists Dhanunjay Seepana and Sindhuja Srinivasan deliver a romantic touch, while Sri Harsha Emani's lyrics further enhance the song's allure. The sizzling chemistry between Ram Pothineni and Kavya Thapar adds a visual appeal that perfectly complements the song's energetic and romantic essence.

Excitement is building for the film, with the teaser receiving an enthusiastic response from audiences. As the release date approaches, the makers continue to generate buzz with regular updates and promotions.

Sanjay Dutt stars as the antagonist in this Pan-India film, produced by Puri Jagannadh and Charmme Kaur under the Puri Connects banner. The film also features impressive cinematography by Sam K Naidu and Gianni Gianneli. *Double ISMART* is set to debut in theaters worldwide on Independence Day, August 15th. In celebration of Sanjay Dutt's birthday, a special making video showcasing his intense role as the BIG BULL was released. The video highlights his menacing presence and his strong bond with Ram and director Puri Jagannadh. It also features Sanjay Dutt dancing alongside Ram, adding an extra layer of excitement to the film.

As post-production wraps up, promotional activities are in full swing. With the buzz building around the newly released songs and teaser, *Double ISMART* promises a thrilling blend of mass appeal, high-octane action, dramatic depth and pure entertainment.



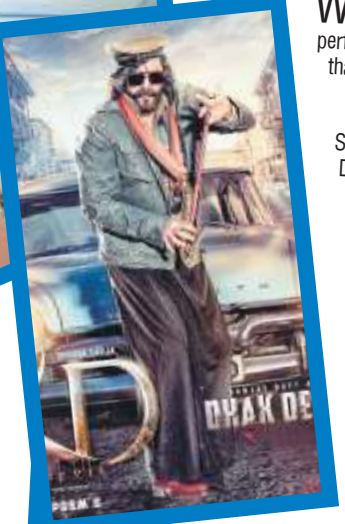
DHAK DEVA STEPS INTO KD'S BATTLEFIELD

While Sanjay Dutt dishes memorable performances the next one that has got his fans very excited is in *KD - The Devil*. The first look of Sanjay's character Dhak Deva from the film was revealed on his birthday.

As the actor joins the Epic world of Dhruva Sarja's *KD-The Devil*, this is being billed as one of his special films. Talking about the same, *KD-The Devil*'s director Prem says, "Who doesn't know the mammothness of Sanjay Dutt in the film industry? He comes with so many impactful roles. His *Munnabhai* is still celebrated so much, I feel very thankful and blessed that he agreed to do this film and it was a pleasure working with him."

On joining *KD - The Devil*, Sanjay Dutt says, "I am excited to be a part of *KD - The Devil*. I loved the way Prem Sir had envisioned the world that the film is set in. It's a period actioner and a pan India film. I thoroughly enjoyed being part of a team which had some of the best minds in the industry collaborating for this project."

Other than Sanjay Dutt, *KD - The Devil* also stars Shilpa Shetty, Nora Fatehi, Ramesh Aravind, V Ravichandran and Dhruva Sarja in important roles. A period action entertainer based on true events from 1970s Bangalore, *KD - The Devil* is presented by KVN Productions and directed by Prem.



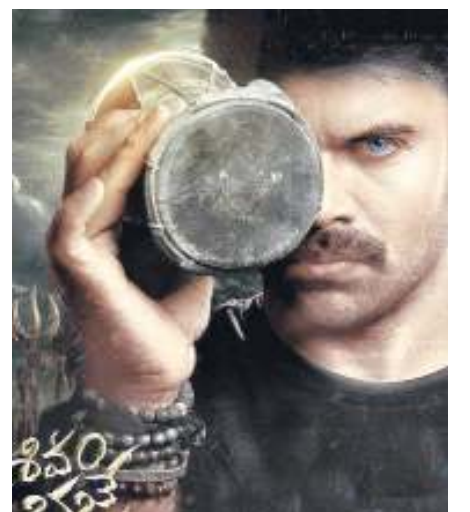
Mythri Movie Makers LLP to release Shivam Bhaje in Nizam

Ganga Entertainments is excited to announce the release of their prestigious debut film, *Shivam Bhaje*, hitting theaters worldwide on August 1. The film's trailer has already captivated audiences and generated considerable buzz.

Producer Maheshwara Reddy Mooli is thrilled to share that *Shivam Bhaje*, featuring Ashwin Babu in a standout role, will be distributed by Mythri Movie Makers LLP in the Nizam region. This collaboration promises to make the August 1 theatrical release even more

significant. *Shivam Bhaje* is a gripping blend of international crime, murder mystery, secret agents and Lord Shiva's cosmic intrigue. With Vikas Badisa's mesmerising background score and Sivendra Dasaradhi's stunning visuals, the film is set to offer a visually and audibly enthralling experience. Ashwin Babu's performance is poised to make a major impact.

Directed by Apsar, this contemporary divine suspense thriller stars Digangana Suryavanshi as the leading lady opposite Ashwin Babu.



SANGHARSHANA RELEASING ON AUGUST 9

Mahindra Pictures announced the release of its Production Number 1 film, *Sangharshana*, directed by Chinna Venkatesh and produced by Valluri Srinivasa Rao. This Telugu and Tamil bilingual film has successfully wrapped up both its filming and post-production stages and is set for a grand theatrical release on August 9.

Sangharshana is a suspense thriller that seamlessly integrates elements of romance and family drama. The film

stars Chaitanya Pasupuleti and Rasheed Bhanu in lead roles, with cinematography by Sudhakar and KV Prasad.

Distributed by Parthu Reddy through One Media, *Sangharshana* features a compelling musical score by Adithya Sri Ram. The film is expected to offer an engaging experience for a diverse audience. Producer Valluri Srinivasa Rao expressed his excitement about presenting a film that is anticipated to resonate well with viewers, emphasising the pleasure of delivering a well-received movie.



Super Good Films' Bhavanam promises fun-filled horror comedy

Super Good Films, renowned for delivering blockbuster hits, is set to captivate audiences with its latest project, *Bhavanam*. This horror-comedy entertainer, directed by Balachari Kurella and featuring an ensemble cast including Saptagiri, Dhanraj, Shakalaka Shankar, Ajay, Malavika Satish and Sneha Ullal, is set for a grand worldwide release on August 9.

At the recent trailer launch event, hero Saptagiri expressed his excitement, stating, "It's a privilege to be part of Super Good Films' 95th production, marking their first foray into the horror-comedy genre with such a talented cast of comedians. Working with this production house has been a long-standing dream. I am grateful to director Balachari Kurella for the opportunity and to RB Chowdhary for the unwavering support. The music by

Charan Arjun is fantastic. I hope this film brings great success to everyone involved. I encourage all audiences to watch and support the film in theaters on August 9."

Heroine Malavika Satish expressed her gratitude, "This film is a delightful horror-comedy with elements of family drama. I am thankful to everyone who worked on this project. I look forward to seeing everyone on August 9."

Director Balachari Kurella reflected on his journey, "RB Chowdhary allowed me to direct *First Student* and now *Bhavanam*. I will never forget their support. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this film. The actors and technicians did an outstanding job. Special thanks to RB Chowdhary and Wakad Anjan Kumar. The film is going to be great and will entertain everyone."



SDT: Audience should make Usha Pariyanam a theatrical hit

Director Vijaya Bhaskar, known for his knack for crafting engaging family dramas, has unveiled his latest film, *Usha Pariyanam*, subtitled *Love is Beautiful*. This feel-good entertainer is set to hit theaters on August 2nd, with the pre-release event taking place this past Sunday. The event was graced by the esteemed Supreme Hero Sai Durga Tej, who served as the chief guest.

The film is produced by Vijaya Bhaskar Kraft and marks a significant entry for Sree Kamal, Vijaya Bhaskar's son, who takes on the lead role. Tanvi Akaanksha, a rising talent from Telugu cinema, is introduced as the heroine, making her much-anticipated debut.

At the pre-release event, Sai Durga Tej spoke fondly of his connections to the film and its cast. "I am here as the elder brother of Tanvi Akaanksha," he said, adding, "I had previously been set to star in a film directed by Vijaya Bhaskar, titled *Prema Kavali*, but unfortunately, I missed the opportunity. Meeting Kamal at the gym, I found him to be a dedicated and hard-working individual. The music by RR



Dhruvan is exceptional and Tanvi, who is very dear to me, earned her place in this film through her perseverance and work in short films. I encourage everyone to support this film, as it represents the promising new talent in our industry."

Director Vijaya Bhaskar expressed his deep appreciation for the support received during the film's production. "It's been wonderful seeing Sai Durga Tej after fourteen years; he embodies the generosity and

warmth reminiscent of Chiranjeevi garu. This project was made possible with the backing of my family and a dedicated team. Dhruvan's music adds a special touch to the film. Tanvi is a delight to work with and the entire crew contributed their best to bring this film to life," he remarked.

With its blend of family warmth, romantic undertones, and a fresh new cast, *Usha Pariyanam* is poised to captivate audiences when it premieres on August 2.

'Fan India' glimpse brings back Prabhas' vintage charm!

Following the monumental success at the box office, Prabhas, famously known as the Rebel Star, is all set to win the audience once again with the much-anticipated PAN India film, *The Raja Saab*. The makers unveiled a thrilling first glimpse of the film, with Prabhas looking dashing and bringing back his vintage energetic charm. The glimpse also revealed that *The Raja Saab* is slated for a grand theatrical release on 10th April 2025, promising a proper feast for fans. Prabhas is seen in vintage car and he is all set to charm everyone with romantic horror comedy. Maruthi



presented Prabhas in a stylish look that satisfied movie lovers and darling fans. Currently, 40% of the film's shoot is completed and another massive schedule is set to commence from August 2nd. The film features music by composer SS Thaman, with Ram Laxman Masters and King Solomon handling the fight choreography, guaranteeing whistle-worthy moments on the big screen.

Baahubali fame Kamalakannan R.C. is in charge of the VFX, ensuring a visual spectacle is delivered on the big screen. Directed by Maruthi and produced by Viswa Prasad under the banner of People Media Factory, *The Raja Saab* will be released in five languages: Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Hindi. People Media Factory is producing the movie *The Raja Saab* in a grand manner without compromising anywhere with huge production values.

Madhubala is a daring spirit as 'Pannaga' in Kannappa

Team *Kannappa* is thrilled to unveil Madhubala in the role of Pannaga, a character that embodies strength and courage. As the chief of her clan, Pannaga is not just a leader but a formidable force with a fierce and daring spirit.

Madhubala's portrayal of Pannaga promises to be nothing short of extraordinary. With her commanding presence and intense performance, she brings to life a character who stands as a beacon of resilience and power. The film *Kannappa*, crafted on a grand scale, is set to be a visual extravaganza with its extensive use of VFX! The filmmakers are dedicating significant time to perfecting the post-production phase. This project represents a monumental endeavour for Vishnu, who is leaving no detail overlooked to ensure a spectacular presentation for the audience. The movie's teaser has already generated global buzz, having made a

significant impact at the Cannes Film Festival. It has also been met with enthusiastic responses from Indian audiences, setting high expectations for the film's release. *Kannappa* stands as a groundbreaking Indian film, distinguished by its ambitious scope and compelling narrative. The film delves into the rich cultural heritage of India, recounting the revered story of Bhakta Kannappa, known for his profound devotion to Lord Shiva. This theme of devotion and loyalty is timeless and promises to resonate with viewers across the globe.

Directed by Mukesh Kumar Singh and produced by Manchu's AVA Entertainment and 24 Frames Factory, *Kannappa* features a stellar cast including Mohan Babu, Prabhas, Akshay Kumar, Mohan Lal and Kajal Aggarwal. *Kannappa* is planned for a worldwide release in December.





Rohit, Kohli among India players to train ahead of ODIs against Sri Lanka

PTI ■ COLOMBO

India skipper Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and a few other players will start their training from Monday ahead of the three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka starting August 2. While the Indian T20I team under Suryakumar Yadav will

play the third and final match on Tuesday in Pallekele, Rohit, Kohli and a few others like rookie Harshit Rana will train in Colombo after reaching the island nation's capital on Sunday. Rohit, Kohli and Kuldeep Yadav will hit the ground running nearly a month after they helped India win the T20 World Cup in the

Americas for the second time. The ODIs against Sri Lanka will also mark the return of Shreyas Iyer into the national side. It was in late 2023 that Iyer last played a limited-overs match for India, against South Africa in December. The squad also features Delhi all-rounder Rana, who was a member of the IPL-winning

Kolkata Knight Riders' team earlier this year. These players will train under India assistant coach Abhishek Nayar in Colombo. Each of the three ODIs will be played at the R Premadasa Stadium here. While the first match is on August 2, the second and third ODIs are on August 4 and 7 respectively.

Players will fight tooth and nail to be there: Dravid on cricket's Olympic debut at LA 2028

PTI ■ PARIS

An ardent supporter of cricket's inclusion in the Olympics, former India head coach and batting legend Rahul Dravid says the "serious dressing room conversations" that he has heard indicate that players are going to "fight tooth and nail" to be there at the world's biggest sporting event. Dravid was in the French capital on Sunday to attend a panel discussion on 'Cricket at the Olympics: Dawn of a New Era', celebrating the sport's inclusion in the 2028 Los Angeles Games, at the recently inaugurated India House.

"I've already heard a few conversations in the dressing room. People are talking about the 2026 T20 World Cup, there is an ODI World Cup in 2027, and you hear people saying there is the Olympics in 2028," Dravid, who also caught up on some tennis action at the Games before coming for the event, said during the discussion.

"People are going to want to win that gold medal, stand on the podium, and be a part of the Games Village, a great sporting event, and interact with so many athletes. 'As you get closer, I have no doubt that teams will be preparing and checking out facilities. They will take this seriously, and players will fight



tooth and nail to be out there," he added. The Test great had ICC CEO Geoff Allardice for company during the discussion at India House here. "You grow up watching the Olympics, seeing Carl Lewis winning the gold medal, watching the great athletes perform. You always want to be part of great events like this. The environment, the energy -- it's a dream come true." Dravid hoped that India would win both the men's and women's gold medals at the LA Games. "The dream for me to have a fantastic cricket tournament, hopefully Indian men and women winning the gold which would be nice.

"Unfortunately, I won't be able to play, but I will make every effort to be in LA in some capacity or another. If not anything else, I will try to get a media job," joked Dravid, who ended his tenure as India head coach after the recent T20 World Cup triumph in the West Indies. The men's and women's cricket competitions will run concurrently at the LA Olympics. As far as Allardice is concerned, he said cricket will be one of the "star attractions" in LA four years from now. "It's quite surreal to be here in Paris, seeing the energy around sport and how it's getting together. Cricket is starting to dawn on the global sporting

community. "I think cricket will be one of the star attractions in Los Angeles...When you see global stars of big sports around the world competing in one city at a time -- watching Rafael Nadal at tennis this afternoon -- and then if you are in LA, you can watch the best tennis players, best golfers, and the best cricketers. "We are going to be very, very strong come 2028," he said. **WOMEN'S CRICKET IS GOING FORWARD:** Dravid also shared his thoughts on the growth of women's cricket, saying it is progressing well and increasing participation by young players is making the sport more inclusive and attractive. "Women's cricket is already going forward. I don't think it needs anything else. It's fantastic to have it going on concurrently. Even when you talk to people at the grassroots level, to coaches, one of the things they constantly tell you is the level of participation from young girls. "Every year in every academy, the percentage is growing exponentially, sometimes even more than the boys. Cricket is becoming a lot more inclusive and attractive. This could potentially be a career. You would not have said that five or six years ago. That's what we want to see."

Clinical India eye series whitewash against wobbly Lanka in third T20I

PTI ■ PALLEKELE

There will be no let-up in intensity as a ruthless India, under the leadership of new coach Gautam Gambhir and captain Suryakumar Yadav, seek to exploit Sri Lanka's weaknesses and push for a series whitewash in the inconsequential third and final T20I here on Tuesday. The fate of the series was decided after India swept aside Sri Lanka in the first two games, leaving the possibility of an embarrassing whitewash hanging over the hosts' heads.

India secured a seven-wicket victory on Sunday in a rain-shortened match in the second T20I, thwarting Sri Lanka's charge once again. Despite the hosts' flying start, their fight fizzled out for the second consecutive game due to subpar batting. On the same day, the Sri Lankan women's team beat tournament-favourites India in the final for their maiden Women's T20 Asia Cup title in Dambulla but it seemed to have no impact on the men's side which continued to grapple with existing issues.

Sri Lanka's embarrassing batting collapses in the middle overs is the prime reason of their undoing in this series so far, while India have gone about their business like a true world champion side.

India has proven to be the superior side by a significant margin, demonstrating greater confidence in their plans, skills, and execution, and never faltering under pressure. There have been moments when Sri



Lanka have appeared to be running away with the contest but each time India has found their way back, particularly with their incisive bowling, to keep their upper hand. The 'bowlers' captain' Suryakumar has not only marshalled his troops with precision to make effective bowling changes, but he has looked to lead from front with the bat having scored 58 and 26 in the two outings so far.

India have remained aggressive right from the word go to reap rich benefits, putting a 200 plus score in the opener. In the second game, a slight change in the batting line-up delivered a seven-wicket win which helped them seal the series.

It remains to be seen if vice-captain and opener Shubman Gill is fit in time for

this contest after he missed the second game due to a stiff neck. His replacement, Sanju Samson had to wait for over an hour to face his first ball due to a rain break and when his chance arrived, the right-hander missed one from Maheesh Theekshana for a golden duck. Samson and India will be seeking improved performances from the batter, who has been a fixture around the T20I squad for some time, including serving as a non-playing member of the World Cup-winning team. But at the other end, Yashasvi Jaiswal has looked to go all-out with his attacking game to rake up 70 runs in two outings and he remains one of the biggest threats for the Lankans.

For the hosts, Pathum Nissanka (111 runs) and Kusal Perera (73) have provided the fireworks at the top but Sri Lanka's middle-overs struggles have led to their downfall.

India spinner Ravi Bishnoi, who helped script a win in the second game with 3/26, highlighted Sri Lankan batters' inability to navigate spin bowling in the series. "They play spin really well but I do not know what (has) happened, they are collapsing in the middle overs," Bishnoi said after the second T20I.

"They are known as a good spin-batting team but I think something has gone wrong," said Bishnoi, possibly hinting at the lack of skills and aptitude among Sri Lankan players generally which has led to their struggles across formats.

With the ball, Matheesha Pathirana returned an expensive 4/40 in the opening game but Sri Lanka will want a lot more from their bowlers.

TEAMS (FROM):

India: Suryakumar Yadav (c), Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rinku Singh, Riyan Parag, Rishabh Pant (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Khaleel Ahmed, Mohammed Siraj. **Sri Lanka:** Dinesh Chandimal, Avishka Fernando, Kusal Mendis (wk), Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Perera, Charith Asalanka (c), Wanindu Hasaranga, Kamindu Mendis, Dasun Shanaka, Chamindu Wickramasinghe, Binura Fernando, Asitha Fernando, Dilshan Madushanka, Matheesha Pathirana, Maheesh Theekshana, Dunith Welalage.

PTI ■ PARIS

India's star athlete Neeraj Chopra will have a special supporter at the Paris Olympics: a Kerala cyclist who has travelled all the way from Calicut, riding more than 22,000 kilometers over two years.

Fayis Asraf Ali's arrival in the French capital was the culmination of a long journey on his Surly bicycle that took him across 30 countries, beginning on August 15, 2022.

Ali set off with a mission to cycle from "India to London to spread peace and unity". Having cycled across 17 countries, he stopped in Budapest one August afternoon last year, when he came to know that the Tokyo Olympics gold medalist was staying across the street.

The ace javelin thrower was with the athletics contingent for the World Championships in which claimed another historic win. A few hurried calls to a "known Kerala coach" led to a "dream meeting" with his sporting idol.

"I got a few minutes to talk to the Indian athletes and Neeraj told me since 'you are going to London why don't you come to Paris for the Olympics,'" Ali told PTI

during an interaction after ending his journey at India House here on Sunday. "I thought it would be a wonderful opportunity to see him again in Paris so I altered my plan a bit and procured the required visa and cycled to the UK before ending my journey here.

"I am so excited to meet him again. I've requested PT Usha ma'am (IOA chief). I'm here to see him create history again. We will cheer for him (on August 8)," he added. He carries four pairs of clothes, a tent, a sleeping bag and a mat that takes the total weight of the cycle to 50kgs.

"I never stay in a hotel and get some sponsors on the way and that's it. In between twice, I flew to Kerala to arrange visas. "Visa is all you need to cross the border, a cyclist does not need any other documentation," he added.

Is he not tired or facing any health issues? "No, never. The love of the people and the warm reception I get everywhere keeps me going. I'm here and so excited," added Ali, who was greeted by star cricketers Chris Gayle, Harbhajan Singh and Suresh Raina while he was in the UK.

An engineer by profession, Ali was into his fourth year in Saudi Arabia when his father

was diagnosed with a heart ailment in 2015. His father died in 2018.

Being the only son, he had to return to India to look after his father. He had quit his job and was back home in Calicut. His wife is a medical professional and he has two sons.

He also has a thyroid issue that makes him put on weight. "Those three years made me realise that health is the most important thing in life, not money. One fine morning I saw a couple of cyclists touring and thought of starting riding," he recalled.

He first bought a Rs 13K bicycle to get used to riding and then chalked out plans for his maiden solo ride: Calicut to Singapore. Then he upgraded it to a Rs 1 lakh cycle, especially designed for long trips. For the trip to Paris, he had to buy a more advanced bicycle, costing Rs 2.5 lakh. He set out on his first trip on August 7, 2019 and reached Singapore on November 21, clocking 8000kms across seven countries.

"Rotary arranged my trip and I got a few sponsors. But my biggest supporter was my wife who took care of both my kids and the family. So I just had to embark on my journey," he said.

India's tennis campaign at Olympics ends in single day

PTI ■ PARIS

India's tennis campaign at the Paris Olympics lasted just one day as Sumit Nagal and the men's doubles pair of Rohan Bopanna and N Sriram Balaji bowed out after losing their respective opening matches to French challengers, here Sunday. Nagal was first to take court, but his strong baseline game didn't seem to be enough against mercurial Corentin Moutet, who earned a stylish three-set win.

In his second appearance at the Olympic Games, Nagal bounced back after losing the first set but fell 2-6 6-4 5-7 in two hours and 28 minutes at a packed court seven at the Roland Garros.

In the Tokyo Games, Nagal had lost in the second round to Russian Daniil Medvedev but could not make the most of a manageable opener today. He was up 2-0 in the decider with an early break but allowed Moutet to claw his way back and win. Later in the day, Bopanna and Balaji went down fighting 5-7 2-6 against Edouard Roger-Vasselin and Gael Monfils, who replaced injured Fabien Reboul in the home team at the last minute. India have won only one Olympic medal in tennis,

when Leander Paes bagged a bronze in the 1996 Atlanta Games. Monfils' big-hitting helped the home team that was egged on by the partisan crowd.

It was probably the last time Bopanna represented India in a multi-sport event. The 44-year-old has already announced his retirement from Davis Cup. The doubles match featured several fiery baseline exchanges between Bopanna and both the French players. The French ploy of engaging Bopanna in long rallies from the back took Balaji out of the picture on many points, and it largely denied the debutant opportunity of a quick finish at the net.

The Indians dropped serve first when Bopanna went down 0-40 in game six following a long rally that ended with Indian teams' enforced error.

Bopanna and Balaji though got the break back in the next game on Roger-Vasselin's serve. Down by a breakpoint, Monfils could not put away a volley. The match was back on serve. Eventually, Balaji came out to serve at 5-6 to stay in the set. Feeling the nerves, he struggled to put first serves in and committed a double fault to get to 15-30. A long rally

ensued, which ended in home team's favour. At second set point, Bopanna netted a backhand volley.

Balaji could not hold serve in the second set, as Bopanna too struggled to cope with the powerful strokes of the French players.

The match ended with Indian team's enforced error. It has always been a battle of attrition between Nagal and Moutet with three of their last four outings being three-set affairs and it was no different today.

Nagal had got the better of Moutet in their last meeting in Grand Prix of Hassan in the Moroccan city of Marakkech in April this year. Nagal didn't seem to have a plan B but Moutet had a few tricks in his bag to unsettle his rival. He served underarm a number of times and used the drop shots, the forehand slice and the backhand slice very effectively.

The chants of Coco-Coco, Aale-Aale and Moutet-Moutet certainly gave the home player the energy required in such a slugfest. Nagal had a nervy start with a boisterous crowd behind Moutet. A drop volley error at 30-all put him down by a break point. Another unforced error cost him the opening game.



The French player began with an underarm serve, much to the amusement of the home fans. He, however, ended up serving a double fault. It was an easy hold for the southpaw even as Nagal also bounced

back with a hold at love. Nagal said he was expecting underarm serves from him but obviously didn't appreciate that. Moutet struggled a bit with his first serve but fed Nagal a

lot of high balls and attacked his backhand more to build on the break. Nagal had his chances to get the break back in game four but squandered four breakpoints.

He was down by another break point in game five but saved and held when Moutet just missed the line with his return. The crowd favourite again amused the gathered supporters at court seven as he crossed over the court to check the spot if the ball landed inside the line.

It was crucial for Nagal to hold serve after falling behind 2-4 but he erred on overhead volley at breakpoint. Moutet pocketed the opening set when Nagal's forehand return soared over the baseline.

The second set was not a one-way traffic with Nagal finding his rhythm. The free points were not given. The set remained in serve till game five.

After playing two deuce points, Moutet again served underarm, and this time he got the point as Nagal netted the return. Nagal was furious but the crowd loved the moment.

Nagal finally had his first break of the match when Moutet's dropped shot crashed into the net.

Before that on the second break point, when he netted the return, Nagal had banged his racket on the court, letting go of the frustration. However, he gathered himself with the crucial break. The

crowd stood and began singing the national anthem to egg on their favourite.

Nagal though, consolidated the lead with a hold and levelled the match by breaking his rival in game eight when Moutet netted a volley return.

The French player yet again resorted to giving high balls and drop shots to Nagal to break the momentum, and almost succeeded, but Nagal too stuck to his guns, avoiding an early break.

He then broke Moutet when he double faulted while facing his fourth break point.

Leading 2-0 in the decider, Nagal had a perfect opportunity to run away with the match but found himself down 0-40. He saved the first breakpoint but a drive volley error from him meant that the set was back on serve.

Serving at 5-5, Nagal began by netting a forehand, and Moutet found a stunning forehand slice passing-winner on the run. Another forehand error put Nagal down by three break points. He lost fourth point in a row when he could not pick up a half volley. It was not difficult from there for Moutet to close the match. He will play either Australian world number six Alex de Minaur or Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff next.