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The Biggest celebration of the decade! Loan waiver festival for Farmers!



Up to **Rs.1,50,000** **Farmer's Loan** waived off

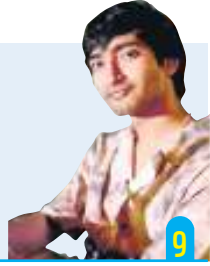
Directly credited into farmers' loan account

From **Rs.1,50,000** to **Rs.2,00,000**
loan waiver by **15th August, 2024**

Path of Progress... Welfare of All... People's Governance

Published by : Department of Agriculture, Government of Telangana

Embracing simplicity & sweetness with **Savera**



GLOBAL INVESTORS EYEING INDIA



Thiragabada Saami is all about how man turns victim of **CIRCUMSTANCES**



QUOTE OF THE DAY
 The pioneer
 If the government cannot undertake development projects in Adilabad, allow us to merge with Maharashtra. There is a significant Marathi-speaking population in Adilabad who would be open to the idea. In Maharashtra, tribal areas are well developed with good roads and other facilities, unlike in Adilabad. If we had known that Adilabad would not have been neglected after the formation of Telangana and we would not have supported the demand for Statehood by.

- Dr Palvai Harish Babu, BJP MLA

P2

DON'T MISS...

Women expect more than...

Many Women who attended Prajavani complained that no welfare has been provided by the new administration except for the Free Bus Scheme. They cried out that many are suffering due to unapproved pensions and unresolved grievances. A total of 455 people submitted their grievances at the Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Praja Bhavan on Tuesday, with many women submitting applications for 2BHK housing and pension issues. When asked, Fathima from Outhullapur, said she submitted a grievance about...

-PAGE: 4

Weaver weaves sari that...

A silk sari and shawl, woven by a weaver from Sircilla, Nalla Vijay Kumar, which fit into a matchbox, was presented to Sri Rajarajeshwara Swamy temple at Vemulavada temple on Tuesday. Besides the sari, a shawl that fits into a matchbox, was also presented to the presiding deities. Vijay Kumar shot to limelight by weaving such items. Along with his family members, he had darshan of Lord Shiva and performed special pujas. Temple priests blessed the weaver and his family members...

-PAGE: 5

Pulses import jumps 90% in...

India's import of pulses rose 90 per cent annually to 47.38 lakh tonnes during 2023-24 to meet domestic demand, the government informed Parliament on Tuesday. "All India production of pulses has increased from 163.23 lakh tonnes during 2015-16 to 244.93 lakh tonnes during 2023-24 (as per 3rd Advance Estimates)," the Minister of State for Agriculture Ram Nath Thakur said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha. In 2021-22, import of pulses stood at 26.99 lakh tonnes, while exports were at 3.87 lakh tonnes...

-PAGE: 8

17-year-old McIntosh...

Canadian phenom Summer McIntosh claimed the first gold medal of her just-burgeoning career Monday night with a dominating victory in the 400-meter individual medley at the Paris Olympics. The 17-year-old McIntosh collected her first medal of any color on the opening night of swimming, taking a silver in the 400 freestyle behind Ariarne Titmus - and ahead of Katie Ledecky. Now, McIntosh has the most prized color of all. "I try to take every event very individually and just do my..."

-SPORTS

Justice Madan Bhim Rao Lokur to head PPA probe

The state government has issued orders appointing Justice Madan Bhim Rao Lokur as the new Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry into Power Purchase Agreements. Justice Lokur had earlier served as the Chief Justice of the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh High Court and was also a judge of the Supreme Court. It is known that the BRS leader KCR knocked on the doors of the court which led to Justice L. Narasimha Reddy stepping down.

2



Landslides wreak havoc

At least 123 dead, 128 injured in Kerala
 Rescuers race against time to find survivors

PNS ■ WAYANAD

In one of the worst natural disasters in Kerala, at least 123 persons were killed and 128 injured in massive landslides triggered by torrential rains in Wayanad on Tuesday. With hundreds trapped under the debris, sparking fears of mounting fatalities, rescue agencies were racing against time to pull out any survivors. Government sources said 123 people have been killed so far in the tragedy. Heart-wrenching scenes and phone conversations of several people crying and pleading to be rescued, as they were either trapped in their houses or had no way to move out of places where they were stranded, were witnessed after the landslides that left a trail of death and destruction in the picturesque hamlets of Mundakkai, Chooralmala, Attamala and

Noolpuzha. Earlier, speaking at a press conference in Thiruvananthapuram about the massive tragedy, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said: "Due to the intense rainfall, landslides occurred, and an entire region has been destroyed. Ninety-three bodies have been recovered so far." He said 128 people are undergoing treatment at various hospitals. "Children who went to sleep last night, including infants, are among those who lost their lives in this disaster and are now buried under the earth. The floodwaters swept away many people. Sixteen bodies were recovered from the Chaliyar River in Pothukallu in Malappuram district (neighbouring Wayanad), and body parts were also found," Vijayan said.

2

Varma to take oath as TG Governor today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Jishnu Dev Varma, who has been appointed as the Governor of Telangana, is set to take the oath of office on Wednesday.

The Raj Bhavan announced that the swearing-in ceremony will take place at 5:03 pm at the Raj Bhavan. Two days ago, the Central government appointed new governors for nine states. Jishnu Dev Varma served as the Deputy Chief Minister of Tripura from 2018 to 2023. He was born on August 15, 1957, coinciding with India's Independence Day. He has also previously served as the president of the Badminton Association of India.



A member of the Tripura royal family, he joined his party in 1990 during the challenging times of the Ram Jannabhoomi movement. Since then, he has played a crucial role in the party. During his tenure in the Tripura government, he held ministerial positions in the departments of Power Purchase, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Finance, Planning, Science and Technology and Environment.



The glow of water flow

Heavy inflow of flood waters
 Seven gates opened at Srisailem Dam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The inflow of floodwaters into Srisailem reservoirs from upstream areas has increased significantly. Consequently, the authorities have raised seven crest gates by 10 feet to release water into the Nagarjuna Sagar. On Tuesday, 19,653 cusecs of water were released from the Jurala project after power generation, and 2,61,543 cusecs through the crest gates. An additional 1,07,246 cusecs

of water from Sukesula reached the reservoir by evening, totalling an inflow of 3,88,460 cusecs. The reservoir subsequently released 4,13,178 cusecs downstream. The reservoir's full water level is 885 feet, and it currently stands at 883 feet. While its full storage capacity is 215 TMC, the current storage is 207 TMC. From the right bank power station, 25,684 cusecs, and from the left bank power station, 35,315 cusecs were released downstream after power generation.

With the gates of the Srisailem reservoir lifted, the roads leading to Srisailem have become bustling with tourists from Hyderabad and other regions. However, CI Prasad Rao warned people to avoid visiting the area as a precautionary measure to prevent any untoward incidents due to the rising floodwaters. Notices have been issued to tourism officials and fishermen on Tuesday morning, advising them not to operate boats until the water flow subsides.

Second freedom for farmers

August brought Independence to India, TG makes ryots debt-free: CM

- Rs 6,198 crore released under phase 2 of farm loan waiver scheme
- 6.40 lakh farmers gain from waiver of farm loans up to Rs 1.50 lakh
- August brought freedom from loans to TG farmers: CM



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

While India attained Independence in August, the farmers of Telangana got their freedom from debts in the same month after the Congress government waived farm loans up to Rs 2 lakh, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said on Tuesday. July and August are being

remembered as the most significant months in the country's history, the CM said. The government proved its commitment to farmers by waiving debts of Rs 12,000 crore in just 12 days, the Chief Minister said. He said the Telangana government's waiver of farm loans by allocating a whopping Rs 31,000 crore

created a new record in the country's history. No state in the country has waived such a large amount of loans taken by farmers so far, the CM said. The CM said that political parties usually remember farmers only during elections and lure them with promises.

2

TG witnesses marathon Assembly Budget sessions

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Assembly proceedings lasted nearly 16 hours on July 29 and is likely to run for the same duration on July 30 too.

It is one of the lengthy sessions held in Telangana. The marathon session began at 10 am on Monday and was adjourned at around 3.15 am on Tuesday. Again the session began at 10 am on Tuesday and is still in progress at the time of publishing. Ministers were seen estimating that it would take almost the same time. The Appropriation Bill has to be passed by July 31. So the government is making all out efforts to

complete the session by Wednesday. Most members from both the treasury and opposition benches were present when Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar said this. Legislators had just over six hours and returned to the Assembly. Some fell sick like Harish Rao while many ended up with a sore throat. Working lunch and dinner was provided to all members.

The debate on the Demands for Grants 2024-25 were discussed on Monday and Tuesday. Marathon debates past midnight 2 am are rare in an Assembly's history. There was only a short tea break on Monday and another break for launching the loan waiver scheme on Tuesday.

17,625 posts vacant in Food & Consumer Affairs Ministry: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 17,625 posts are lying vacant under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution including institutions, agencies and autonomous bodies, the government informed Parliament on Tuesday.

In a written reply to Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Nimuben Jayantibhai Bambhaniya said the number of permanent and temporary posts under the Ministry including institutions, agencies and autonomous bodies in 2014 stood at 45,915 and 19, respectively.

2

ADB commits US\$ 200 mn loan for solid waste management in 100 Indian cities



P8

No permission to increase engineering seats

BRS leaders owning colleges facing tough time

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

- Colleges owned by them had to reduce seats
- Some tried to meet CM and requested intervention
- No Govt stopped permissions in last 2 decades, say MLAs

BRS leaders owning engineering colleges are facing a tough time ever since the TG admin changed as they are not being allowed to increase seats.

While one MLA was not given permission to increase seats, the seats were reduced in another MLA's college. Some MLAs like Ch. Malla Reddy, Palla Rajeshwar Reddy and

Marri Rajashekar Reddy own engineering colleges. Some MLAs met the CM and requested his intervention too but with no luck. A BRS MLA said, "We wanted to increase seats for which we applied

for permission to State University and AICTE. We got both permissions and now the government should approve that. But they didn't. Due to this I may have to reduce staff. I have been running colleges for more than two

decades. Many governments have changed, but no government did like this. Even past Congress governments didn't stifle growth." BRS MLAs said that Congress MLAs who own colleges got approvals for increasing seats. A MLA said, "Nearly 80% got approvals and those that were stopped largely belong to other parties. Some BJP MLAs also got approvals."

2

NIRBHAYA-LIKE INCIDENT IN TG

Driver rapes woman in moving bus in TG

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A woman passenger was allegedly raped by the driver of a private sleeper bus travelling from Nirmal district of Telangana to Prakasam in Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday. Osmania University Police Station officials said the 26-year-old survivor had called 'Dial 100' and informed the police about the incident after Monday midnight when the bus was on the outskirts of Hyderabad.

She said that one of the bus drivers had placed a blanket on her mouth and had raped her on the moving bus even though there were other passengers in the bus. Immediately, the police intercepted the bus. When the vehicle slowed down near the Mettuguda area, the suspect driver fled and



the woman was admitted to a hospital. Meanwhile, the person who was driving the bus was taken into custody and is being questioned. A case was registered at the Osmania University Police Station.

Three held for cheating IndusInd Bank of Rs 40 cr

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Economic Offence Wing (EOW) of Cyberabad Commissionerate have arrested an IndusInd Bank manager, a bank employee and a film producer for cheating Rs 40 crore of bank money.

Two accused were arrested on July 24 in Hyderabad, while accused-3 was arrested on July 29 in Delhi.

Zonal Head Operations of IndusInd Bank Manikandan Ramanathan had lodged a complaint against their bank employees K Ramasamy, S Rajesh and others.

According to the complaint, Ramasamy and Rajesh facilitated unauthorised debit transactions from the account of Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited.

These transactions were carried out without proper authorisation or instructions from the account holder and the funds were subsequently transferred to various other accounts.

Techie raped by two friends

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A tragic incident spread shock waves among the residents of Vanasthali puram where a software engineer was raped by two persons on Monday. According to Vanasthali puram ACP Palle Kasi Reddy, the 24-year-old victim had thrown a party at Bommarillu Bar and Restaurant in Omkar Nagar after she secured a new job.

Following the party, her two friends raped her on the way home. The victim was intoxicated and did not realise what was happening. The next day, she found out that she was raped. She immediately filed a police complaint.

City Pioneer



HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | JULY 31, 2024

04

Women expect more than free bus scheme

Flood Prajavani with their grievances

SAMUEL JOSHUA ■ HYDERABAD

Many Women who attended Prajavani complained that no welfare has been provided by the new administration except for the Free Bus Scheme. They cried out that many are suffering due to unapproved pensions and unresolved grievances. A total of 455 people submitted their grievances at the Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Praja Bhavan on Tuesday, with many women submitting applications for 2BHK housing and pension issues.

When asked, Fathima from Quthbullapur, said she submitted a grievance about errors in her Aadhaar and ration cards. She said that while some benefit, thousands face disadvantages. Fathima mentioned that ward officials claimed there were no edit options to correct mistakes and suggested to apply afresh.

She expressed frustration that important applications online were being handled by unqualified individuals, resulting in mistakes, referring to applicants, but the mistakes are being done due to government negligence. After being directed to go to various ward and Meeseva officials for months, Fathima called for serious action against the injustice and for qualified professionals to handle applications to prevent repeated errors.

Meanwhile, Nageswaramma from Uppal, who is 68-year-old, cried out that her pension has not been sanctioned for six years

despite applying seven times. She expressed hope that the new administration would address her issue. Although officials promised resolution within two months, no progress has been made. Nageswaramma stated that, with limited time left in her life due to old age, she and other elderly deserve the promised Rs 2,000 pension. In another issue, Jamulamma and Vimalamma from a village in Gadwal district said that their 8 acres of agricultural land had been occupied by two brothers of the village, who promised to return it after harvest but continued to occupy it. Jamulamma said, after submitting the grievance, officials advised them to wait for 15 days. She also said that the local sarpanch and police are negligent and called for government to solve their problem.

Subbamma from Janagaon also submitted a grievance, stating that apart from the bus scheme, the new administration has done nothing useful. She claimed that 1BHK, 2BHK, and Indiramma houses remain locked while the poor suffer. She mentioned that Prajavani officials only respond when "the application is in process."

According to the officials, 94 applications from the Revenue department were received along with 77 from Consumer Affairs, Food, and Civil Supplies, 45 from Energy, 44 from Housing, 40 from Panchayat Raj & Rural Development, and 155 from other departments.

Quote: Prajavani officials' only response is "the application is in process."

455 people submit grievances at Prajavani on Tuesday, 94 applications from the Revenue Department were received along with 77 from Consumer Affairs, Food, and Civil Supplies, 45 from Energy, 44 from Housing, 40 from Panchayat Raj & Rural Development and 155 from other departments



Bharat Gaurav train to start from city on Aug 4

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Following the success of previous tours across South Central Railway, Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has planned another journey of the Divya Dakshin Bharat Gaurav Tourist Trains. The train will commence its journey from Secunderabad on August 4 and will cover important tourist places in the southern States of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

According to SCR officials, the nine-day tour of Divya Dakshin Yatra with Jyotirlinga provides a great opportunity for rail passengers/pilgrims from the States of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to visit important sites such as Tiruvannamalai [Arunachalam], Rameswaram, Madurai, Kanyakumari, Trivandrum, Trichy and Thanjavur. Significantly, the train provides boarding /de-boarding facilities for the passengers at Secunderabad, Kazipet, Warangal and Khammam stations in Telangana as well as Vijayawada, Tenali, Ongole, Nellore, Gudur and Renigunta stations in Andhra Pradesh.

"The train includes all travel facilities (both rail as well as road transport) and accommodation facility. The whole trip will be covered throughout 8 nights / 9 days from August 4 to 12. The bookings have been opened and interested passengers can either visit IRCTC website:

<http://www.irctctourism.com> or approach counter bookings by contacting 040-27702407/ 9701360701.

AI and robotics units drive new office space in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

AI and Robotics companies accounted for 57% of new office space absorption in Hyderabad in Q2 2024, according to Vestian's report, The Connect Q2 2024. The global rise of AI and a supportive ecosystem have boosted office space demand in the city. Overall, the IT-TES sector led the absorption.

Bengaluru had the highest pan-India absorption at 25% in Q2 2024, followed by Hyderabad and Mumbai at 20% each. Hyderabad's absorption was 3.40 million sq ft in Q2

2024, up from 2.27 in Q1 2024, and 2.30 in Q2 2023, marking a 50% Q-o-Q change and a 48% Y-o-Y change.

Hyderabad's new completions were 2.90 million sq ft in Q2 2024, up from 2.50 in Q1 2024, and down from 4.10 in Q2 2023, marking a 16% Q-o-Q change and a -29% Y-o-Y change.

Shrinivas Rao, CEO of Vestian, said, "Despite global geopolitical challenges, India's office markets saw robust real estate activities in Q2 2024, setting the tone for strong leasing and construction activities for the year."

According to Knight Frank India's 'India Warehousing Market Report - H1 2024', Hyderabad saw a 35% drop in transactions, from 2.4 million sq ft in H1 2023 to 1.5 million sq ft in H1 2024.

Hyderabad's average rent rose 2.5% year-on-year, from Rs. 20 in H1 2023 to Rs. 20.5 in H1 2024.

Hyderabad saw a 35% drop in warehouse transactions, from 2.4 million sq ft in H1 2023 to 1.5 million sq ft in H1 2024

TIGRESS TARA GIVES BIRTH TO TWO YOUNG CUBS

Tiger population increases, estimated to be 3,682

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As part of World Nature Conservation Day and International Tiger Day celebrations, Dr Elusing Meru, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and Chief Wildlife Warden(FAC) and I/c PCCF (HoFF), Telangana, stated that as per the tiger census, the population of tigers in India has increased and estimated to be 3,682 as on 2022.

Elusing attended the awards presentation ceremony organised by the Nehru Zoological Park on Tuesday and presented certificates and trophies to the winners of drawing, painting, quiz and elocution competitions that were conducted on July 23.

Elusing congratulated all the winners in the competitions. He said, "Our State is blessed with rich flora and fauna, conserving wildlife, especially in conservation of tigers in their natural habitat. Our State is hosting two tiger reserves namely Amrabad Tiger Reserve and Kawal Tiger Reserve."

He said, "I am very glad to



announce that a female white tigress namely Tara gave birth to two young cubs (one male, one female) on June 9, 2024 and I request you to suggest names for our cubs on this

email id:- nzphyderabadzoo@gmail.com. The park is playing an important role in creating more awareness via educational programmes on all the eco days," he added.

Dr Sunil S. Hiremath, Director (FAC) and Curator, Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad, said that International Tiger Day is celebrated across the world to create awareness and educate the citizens about the importance of tigers.

He congratulated all the winners for actively participating in the competitions though it was raining the entire day. Even then 682 students from 38 government and private schools participated in the event.

Later, the zoo management provided an opportunity to all winners to visit the zoo along with their parents and teachers in the battery operated vehicle wherein they were shown maintenance of and night houses, breeding programme, prophylactic measures taken up by the zoo behind the scenes.



Officials conducting GIS mapping survey in the city on Tuesday

GHMC starts GIS mapping survey in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has started a Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping survey in the city on Tuesday. This survey will facilitate accurate mapping of all properties for geographical identification and tax collection.

This field survey was conducted in Uppal, Hayat Nagar, Hyder Nagar, Kukatpally, KPHB Colony, Miyapur and Chandanagar areas. The survey will continue in all other parts of the city.

The drone data will be supplemented by a ground survey for collection of field data and surveyors are deployed to capture the data of build-

ing permission details, occupancy details, latest property tax receipt, water bill, electricity bill, owner's ID details, trade licence number (for commercial properties).

GHMC officials said that the mapping would help in solving problems related to property tax and online payments will become easier. In addition to property mapping, a high-resolution map of Hyderabad would be created.

This map will detail various assets managed by the GHMC, including roads, parks and public utilities.

The high-resolution map will also include maintenance-related information for each asset, ensuring that citizens are informed about the upkeep and management of public resources.

Raja Singh appeals to hand over GST case to CBI

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP MLA from Goshamahal T Raja Singh addressed a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah appealing the latter to shift the GST scam case that came out in Telangana State to the CBI.

It may be recalled that Rs 1,400 crore scam took place in the Commercial Taxes department and the police filed the case making former chief secretary Somesh Kumar as

A-5. On the other hand, the State government issued orders transferring the case to the CID. The officials identified in their auditing that the higher officials of Commercial Tax department, IIT Hyderabad Professor and former chief secretary Somesh Kumar extended their support to the GST tax evaders.

In this context, Raja Singh appealed to Union Home Minister Amit Shah to hand over the case from the CID to the CBI.



'Domestic violence is not just physical'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a coordination meeting at Cyberabad Commissionerate on Tuesday, representatives from Bharosa centres said domestic violence includes any form of violence suffered by a person from a relative, but typically is the violence suffered by a woman on account of a male member of her family or relatives.

The abuse is not necessarily physical. It also extends to verbal, emotional, sexual and economic spheres leaving her shattered and unable to stand up for her rights. Many laws were enacted to curb domestic violence.

ASHA workers demand fixed income

Insurance cover, jobs to kin of deceased sought

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) on Tuesday held a protest demanding a fixed monthly income of Rs 18,000 along with benefits including Provident Fund.

Over 1,000 ASHA workers from across Telangana gathered for the protest demanding life insurance and jobs for the kin of the deceased.

Speaking of their issues, Parvathamma, an ASHA worker said, "We have been working as contracted employees since 2006. Today we have gathered here to demand a fixed monthly income of Rs 18,000 and regularisation of ASHA workers. About 1,000 workers died during COVID-19 pandemic and those positions remain

vacant; The jobs should be offered to the kin of the deceased. However, these issues have not been addressed yet.

The government should also provide an insurance cover of Rs 50 lakh." Padma, an ASHA worker from Jagtial said, "Before coming to power, the Congress promised to regularise us and increase our income; At that time Seethakka joined us in one of the protests and promised to resolve the issue upon being elected. We need an ESI card for covering expenses in case of a health emergency.

There must be some post-retirement benefits; the salaries are being credited almost at month end. There is no fixed timing we have to rush to government hospitals as and when required."



ASHA workers staging a dharna



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Taking on the dragon

S Jaishankar admits strained relations with China but rules out third-party mediation

In what can be construed as a candid admission by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, he has categorically stated that relations between India and China are not on an even keel. His recent statement underscores the ongoing diplomatic tension between India and China. Even earlier he had said that China is a bigger economy, implying that we should think twice before acting against China. The Minister's assessment of the current state of the India-China relationship highlights the challenges that persist despite various diplomatic efforts and high-level engagements. One of the key aspects of Jaishankar's statement was his firm rejection of third-party mediation in resolving the disputes with China. The Foreign Minister emphasised that India prefers to handle its issues with China bilaterally, without external intervention. This stance aligns with India's long-standing policy of managing its international relations directly. Jaishankar's comments reflect India's approach to maintaining sovereignty and autonomy in its foreign policy. By ruling out third-party mediation, India is signalling its intention to address its differences with China through direct dialogue and negotiation. This position underscores India's commitment to resolving disputes through established diplomatic channels while rejecting external influence that might complicate or hinder the process.



Prime Minister Modi had personally taken a keen interest in resolving the issue but to no avail. Chinese Premier Xi was invited and given a grand welcome but that did not break ice and the tension on borders continued. In the complex web of geopolitics, India has drifted closer to the US which wants to use India to contain Chinese influence, naturally much to the consternation of China. The Chinese unease is reflected in its actions on the border which had remained peaceful from 1962 to 2017 when the Doklam incident happened. India-China relations are complex and multifaceted, influenced by historical, political, economic, and strategic factors. The two countries share a long border. The most notable conflict occurred in 1962 when the Sino-Indian War broke out over border disputes in the Aksai Chin region. Ironically trade relations between the two countries have grown despite border disputes. China is one of India's largest trading partners. However, recent years have seen border skirmishes and strategic rivalries. In recent years, the relationship has been marked by both cooperation and contention. The Doklam skirmish in 2017 was a prominent example of border tensions. The confrontation occurred in the Doklam plateau, an area disputed between China and Bhutan. Additionally, the 2020 clashes in the Galwan Valley further highlighted ongoing tensions. Despite these challenges, India and China have continued to engage diplomatically and economically. Both nations must recognise the importance of managing their differences while pursuing mutual benefits, given their significant roles in the global economy and regional geopolitics.

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PICTALK



Clouds hover over the hill town of Shimla

Kolkata's healthcare transformation into world-class medical facilities

Over the past two decades, Kolkata's medical facilities have transformed significantly, reducing the exodus of patients to Chennai and Vellore

The hordes of medical pilgrims filling up berths in Coromandel Express and Madras Mail have thinned substantially over the years, as Kolkata's private healthcare sector scrambles to make up for lost time. Kolkata was not always best served in matters of healthcare, and for patients with serious ailments and often with not-so-serious conditions, Chennai, Vellore or Mumbai were the default destinations. It was also a matter of perception as most Kolkatans believed they would receive superior care in outpatient hospitals only. However, the healthcare landscape in Kolkata has been undergoing a paradigm shift over the past two decades, riding the tailwinds of private sector initiatives, as the bed count continues to soar. The availability of able doctors was never a problem in the city and now that the pool of healthcare experts has increased significantly with a steady reverse traffic of medical practitioners coming back from the NHS in the UK and other advanced countries' health systems to cater to the growing demand



back in their hometown. Over time, the city has gradually regained its confidence in its private hospitals seeing that they aren't short of modern facilities and latest equipment anymore. The faith is beginning to trickle back, ounce by ounce, and the Coromandel isn't as packed with south-bound patients as before. Of course, it hasn't happened overnight, and there is still a long way to go. Kolkata's progress in terms of private sector participation is in sync with the national scenario as analysts say between 2016 and now, the country's healthcare industry has grown at a CAGR of 22% and the Centre's allocation of Rs 90,658.63 crore for the sector in the interim Budget for 2024-25 reflects this uptrend. However, restora-

tion of faith in any service, not the least healthcare delivery, takes a lot of commitment and meticulous planning. After all, like any other customer, a patient has a retail choice and can switch allegiance if expectations are not met. It is well known that a big and significant milestone in this medical makeover of Kolkata was the unveiling of the Rabindranath Tagore International Institute of Cardiac Sciences in 2000 by Narayana Health Group's Founder, Dr. Devi Shetty. This set the ball rolling and many other world class hospitals started their services in Kolkata. It was the flagship venture of the founder which he started in his favourite city, Kolkata. The journey began over two decades ago with a single speciality hospital and has grown into a network of four super-speciality hospitals in Kolkata. Now Kolkata can boast of super-speciality tertiary care, these facilities offer over 35 specialities such as Cancer Care, Mother & Child Care, and Orthopaedics. The healthcare sector in India, serving a vast population of

1.4 billion, faces challenges like inadequate infrastructure, doctor shortages, poor rural facilities, and limited health insurance access. Addressing these issues, the Group plans a 1,000-bed hospital in New Town and a 100-bed facility in Mukundapur. The New Town hospital will treat 5,000 to 7,000 OPD patients daily. Kolkata's hospitals also serve patients from neighbouring countries, managing a growing load of non-communicable diseases. The adoption of cutting-edge technology and modern treatment protocols has reduced the average hospital stay from six to four days, optimizing resources. A future-ready approach aims to increase smiles by saving lives. Healthcare evolution, on desirable lines, is crucial in the region. This would lead to a higher stage of advancement, guided by the principles of compassion, innovation, and deep dedication that were envisioned over two decades ago. (The Author is the Group Chief Operating Officer of Narayana Health. Views expressed are personal)



R VENKATESH

Honouring the legacy of Bal Gangadhar Tilak



RAJDEEP PATHAK

As the nation commemorates Tilak's 168th birth anniversary, we reflect on his profound influence on the independence movement and his contributions as a reformer

In 1921, Mahatma Gandhi's visit to the Nellore district marked a significant moment in India's freedom movement. He inaugurated the Satyagraha Ashram in Pallepadu and delivered significant speeches at the Town Hall and V.R. College. At the Rebala Lakshmi Narasa Reddy Town Hall, he unveiled a portrait of his political mentor, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, emphasizing Tilak's profound patriotism and leadership, which galvanized the freedom movement. Gandhi extolled Tilak's legacy, invoking the ideals of "Swaraj" (self-rule) and characterizing the Non-Cooperation Movement as an act of "self-purification". He urged contributions to the "Tilak Swaraj Fund", established in 1920, to support educational institutions, Khadi promotion, and Swadeshi efforts. It was a successful mobilized mission. July 23, 2024, marked the 168th birth anniversary of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, also revered as "Lokmanya" and "The Lion of Maharashtra". This is for his dual role, as a freedom fighter and social reformer. His impact has also been underscored by notable figures, such as British journalist Valentine Chirol who termed him "the father of Indian unrest", while Jawaharlal Nehru hailed him as "the father of the Indian revolution" and Mahatma Gandhi recognized him as "the Maker of Modern India". A distinguished Sanskrit scholar and thinker, Tilak was also a visionary leader. Sri Aurobindo, in his collection of Tilak's writings and speeches, emphasized Tilak's transformative influence on the Indian National Congress, reshaping it from its occidental characteristics to embrace mass participation in the freedom struggle. In "The Intellectual Biography of Bal Gangadhar Tilak" published in the Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science, Raj Hans Ojha, contends that "The story of Tilak is the story of India's Swaraj, of the Indian National Congress, coming to its adulthood, and of the rise of Indian masses for the first time in quest of 'Home Rule' and 'Independence'". Lokmanya Tilak believed that "Swaraj is the foun-



ation and not the height of our future prosperity. We have to build a new nation, develop a new character, live the principles, which we advocate, faith in spiritual values, love of country and tolerance for views from which we differ." Tilak's intellectual contributions were many. His works such as, "The Orion and Research into The Antiquity of The Vedas" (1893) and "The Arctic Home of Vedas" (1901), complemented his political activism. Despite his devotion to independence, he expressed a preference for academia, a path cut short by his untimely death on August 1, 1920, at age 64. His educational contributions are equally noteworthy. He co-founded institutions like the 'New English School', the 'Deccan Society for Education', and 'Fergusson College', and presented a comprehensive educational blueprint to the Hunter Commission (1882 & 1919). Bal Gangadhar Tilak was a strategist, transcending the roles of an idealist and philosopher, and his multifaceted contributions continue to resonate in India's historical and educational landscape. As a formidable journalist, Tilak was renowned for his fearless and impartial stance in his weekly publication, 'Kesari'. He championed a rigorous

HE WAS AMONG THE FIRST MAINSTREAM POLITICAL LEADERS IN INDIA TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT "THE NATION THINKS NOT WITH THE BRAIN BUT WITH AN OVERHEATED HEART. IT IS ONLY IN THE THROES OF TUMULT THAT NATIONS ARE BORN"

approach to journalism, asserting that 'Kesari' would boldly address all issues, resisting the prevailing trend of appeasing the British and embodying its namesake's courage. Bal Gangadhar Tilak also leveraged his paper 'Maharashtra Advocate for the People', drawing upon Hindu scriptures and the Bhagavad Gita to support his arguments. His profound contributions as a patriot, scholar, and politician had a significant impact on Mahatma Gandhi, who, in a March 4, 1905, article, lauded Lokmanya's scholarship, particularly his astronomical findings that traced Indian scriptures to over 10,000 years old, recognizing him as a luminary whose intellectual influence extended beyond national borders. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was imprisoned in 1908. He strongly believed that "There are higher powers that rule the destiny of things and it may be the will of providence that the cause I represent may prosper more by my suffering than by my remaining free." Gandhi and Tilak had great mutual respect for one another. In his reflections in The Indian Opinion, Gandhi praised Tilak for his readiness to endure suffering for the cause of India's freedom. While they were ideologically different in their thoughts and actions, both

Lokmanya Tilak and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi fought for one cause, which was 'freedom'. Mahatma Gandhi maintained a profound respect for Tilak's contributions and acknowledged his unparalleled influence and the reverence he commanded among the masses. In his tributes and public statements, Gandhi consistently lauded Tilak's selfless service, burning patriotism, and magnetic leadership. Tilak's mantra, "Swaraj is our birthright, and I shall have it", resonated deeply with Mahatma Gandhi, who adapted it to his philosophy of truth and non-violence, and thus, Tilak's assertive nationalism blended with Gandhi's principles of peaceful resistance. Mahadev Desai, recalls Mahatma Gandhi's views on Lokmanya Tilak, which he expressed on 24 July 1934 at Cawnpore (Kanpur today), in one of the meetings. Mahatma Gandhi said: "If Tilak Maharaj taught us that 'swaraj is our birthright', he also taught us that 'selfless service' is the key to win it. Selfless service may have been in existence before Tilak came, but he was who systematized it." Tilak's life was a demonstration of this great ideal of Karma Yoga. (The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UNAUTHORISED PG MUSHROOMING

Madam — Paying guest accommodations (PG) for women have made headlines following the brutal murder of a woman in one such facility located in a posh Bengaluru locality. It is crucial to take strict action against unauthorized PGs. The police argue that without a formal complaint, securing PGs is not inherently their responsibility, and this claim is understandable. Nonetheless, increased patrolling in sensitive areas where these accommodations are situated should not be overlooked. Thus, the responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of female residents falls on the PG owners. It is alarming to note that many PGs in India lack security guards. Security personnel should thoroughly frisk strangers seeking entry into PGs. The importance of a biometric fingerprint system for all entrants cannot be overstated. Additionally, providing kitchens that prepare hygienic food is essential to prevent women from frequently venturing out for meals, enhancing their safety. Troublemakers such as hawkers and beggars should be kept at bay. Regular presence and unwavering supervision by the owners at the PGs can significantly boost residents' morale. Overall, a collective commitment is vital.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

USE OF TRIBALS IN THE SCHOOL NAMES

Madam — The Madras High Court has strongly criticised the Tamil Nadu government for using the term "Tribal" in the names of government schools. This issue arose with schools in the Kalvarayan Hills being named "Government Tribal Residential School." The court rightly observed that this terminology is inappropriate, especially for a secular government. The use of caste or community names in school titles is astonishing and deemed unacceptable by the court. The court emphasised that labeling a school as a "Tribal School" could stigmatise the children attending it, making them feel their school is inferior to others. This could lead to an inferiority complex among the

Grand spectacle of Paris Olympics



The Paris Olympics 2024 have begun, filling the city with excitement and drawing visitors from around the world to witness this grand sporting event. While the Olympic games promise thrilling spectacles, Paris offers many other activities to enrich your visit. If you're a food enthusiast with a penchant for history, indulge in iconic Parisian bites

that offer a delightful journey through time and taste. Wander through charming streets and savor culinary delights that are integral to Parisian culture. For those seeking unique experiences, venture beyond the usual tourist spots and discover offbeat attractions that provide a different perspective on the city. Additionally, Paris offers various free activities that allow you to enjoy the city's charm without breaking the bank. From serene parks to historical landmarks, there's no shortage of cost-free ways to immerse yourself in the Parisian ambience. Lastly, don't miss out on the must-see attractions that define Paris. Iconic sites such as the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, and Notre-Dame Cathedral are timeless treasures that captivate visitors. Jayanthi Subramaniam | Mumbai

students. Caste and community play a significant role in the political arena as vote banks.

The caste system is deeply entrenched in government policies and programs, leading to reverse discrimination. The principle of "all are equal in law" is often neglected, with reservation in education and employment based on caste. Some states have defied the Supreme Court's directive to limit reservations to 50 percent, extending them to over 75 percent, which adversely affects merit. If some communities feel deprived of fair representation in education and employment, the government may consider pro-rata reservations for all communities as a solution.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS

Madam — Since independence, our country has undergone significant changes. While we have adopted many new governance systems, we still retain some from our colonial past. One such legacy is the role of governors acting as representatives of the President in all states, a practice that

continues unchanged. Recently, the Supreme Court agreed to consider separate petitions from opposition-ruled Kerala and West Bengal. These petitions allege that the respective governors refused to assent to bills passed by their assemblies. This is not an isolated incident; similar cases have been brought before the Hon'ble Supreme Court numerous times. West Bengal, for example, claimed in its petition that the Governor had withheld assent to eight bills. I believe the position of governors has never been impartial in this country. The office has become increasingly politicized; a study found that between 1950 and 2015, only a quarter of governors completed a five-year term, with 37 percent serving less than a year. Defying traditions, governors are typically appointed by the ruling party without consulting the elected state government, leading to strained relations between federal and state governments.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN CURIOUS MINDS ENGINEER CHANGE

Mental re-engineering can infuse life with renewed vigor and purpose



RAVI VALLURI

Often, conventional and commonplace way of thinking only results in clambering the ladder. A person leading a ho-hum existence cannot re-engineer his/her personality. Tale of an old man Aeon ago, lived an elderly gentleman who in the winter of his life decided to embark on a spiritual journey to transfigure his personality. The pater now embarked on the spiritual sojourn and enrolled in a monastery. Upon completing his tutelage, armed with various nuances of Zen teachings, he left for his small town. He stepped out of the portals of the temple of knowledge and involuntarily slipped into a rivulet. "Oh, the old monk falls in the river!" chortled some young tutees.

He was to dramatically declare that the re-engineering processes and techniques he acquired had enabled him to accommodate water into himself and not the other way around. "We are shaped by our thoughts, we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves," said Gautama Buddha. The thought process, thinking patterns, building blocks of thought, organised thinking and goal direction are five keys to re-engineer the mind to metamorphose and refashion our lives. An ingenious individual to re-engineer his life has to change the existing pattern. He should begin by identifying the problem. In the swathes of his mind, such a process represents and delineates the problem; as he/she is mindful and discerning, solutions and a set of sub-goals are outlined. The quick-witted individual then selects the balm for the misadventure and executes it with precision.

The human mind is now brim-full of ideas and it is time to evaluate the outcome and once again rethink and redefine problems and arrive at new solutions. It was the time of Sakhya Muni Gautama Buddha when an animated group of denizens were involved in a rambunctious argument about Divinity and various religions. In sheer exasperation, they arrived at the feet of Lord Buddha. The Compassionate and Enlightened One smiled and ruminated for a while. Lord Buddha then asked his disciples to arrange for an elephant and for four persons to be blindfolded. And so, it happened that the first of the blindfolded persons felt the elephant's leg and exclaimed that God appeared as a pillar. The second person



touched the elephant's tummy and opined that Almighty God was a wall. The third gentleman stroked the elephant's ear and observed that God was a piece of cloth. The fourth man grazed the tail and described that God was a piece of rope. Once again, the group of four was engaged in a raging debate on the form of Almighty God. After the exercise was completed, Buddha asked the assembled disciples and citizens.

The four blindfolded individuals felt the same elephant, but provided varying answers, so what could be the correct answer? The episode just proved that no one individual or thought process is complete. One should always be prepared to accept that one might be correct in parts and that other streams of thought could be complementary. Techniques for training the spiritually inclined can re-engineer their lives by undertaking the bouquet of courses imparted by the Art of Living, or pursue Vipassana; attempting to mutate their minds through the practice of yoga, pranayama and meditation. Others have a logical bent of mind and charter a different path.

They need to develop a passion, take up a sport, and read inspirational literature among other things. But it is elemental and foundational to re-engineer the mind and thought processes at regular intervals to live life with gusto.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Balanced budget reflects Modi's vision of 'Vikasit Bharat'



K S TOMAR

PM Modi's "self-reliant India" vision is central to the 2024-25 Union Budget. It boosts domestic production, supports SMEs, and fosters innovation to reduce import dependency

Prime Minister Modi's vision of a "self-reliant India" (Atmanirbhar Bharat) is a recurring theme in the budget. This vision emphasizes self-sufficiency in critical sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and technology. The budget outlines measures to boost domestic production, support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and encourage innovation. These initiatives are designed to reduce import dependency and create a robust, self-sustaining economy. At the same time, the budget reflects Modi's understanding of India's interconnectedness with the global economy. The focus on enhancing India's export competitiveness, attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), and participating in global value chains underscores the dual approach of strengthening domestic capabilities while engaging with the global market.

This balanced approach is crucial for India to navigate the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly complex global economic landscape. The Union Budget, a cornerstone of the country's economic planning, may serve as a reflection of the government's strategic priorities and vision for the future. It is being billed as a path-breaking foundation of Reforms for the next 5 years. According to some experts, under the leadership of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, the budget has been targeted to foster economic growth, address social inequalities, and position India as a key player on the global stage. The latest budget unveiled amidst a backdrop of global economic uncertainty, showcases a balanced approach, combining domestic development with an international outlook.

CHALLENGES BEFORE FM

In light of the 2024-25 Union Budget, the BJP-led central government faces scrutiny over its dealings with opposition-ruled states, which allege discrimination in fund allocation and policy implementation. Experts say that Central Schemes and Fund Allocation; The Budget reveals a 15% increase in allocations for flagship schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and Ayushman Bharat. However, opposition states argue that their share of these funds does not reflect their proportionate needs. For instance, Tamil Nadu has claimed that despite a significant allocation under PMAY, delays in fund release and implementation hinder effective utilization. The central government's response involves reiterating the equitable distribution based on various factors, but opposition states view these explanations sceptically. Implementation Issues; Critics point to inefficiencies in scheme implementation as evidence of discrimination. The opposition-ruled states have raised concerns about delays and insufficient execution of these schemes.

The central government needs to ensure that these funds are utilized efficiently and that implementation is monitored closely to address these grievances. Political Dynamics; Allegations of political bias also come into play. Opposition leaders argue that central agencies are used to target political rivals, exacerbating feelings of discrimination. With the BJP's political rivals accusing it of manipulating central resources, the government must navigate these complex political dynamics carefully.

STEPS TO ADDRESS THE CONCERNS



To mitigate allegations of discrimination, the central government should adopt multiple strategies which include Enhanced Transparency: Provide detailed reports on fund allocations and expenditures to ensure transparency and address concerns of inequitable distribution. The focus should be on the efficient and timely execution of central schemes, particularly in opposition-ruled states, to demonstrate commitment to equitable development. The Centre must engage in regular discussions with opposition state governments to address grievances and ensure that their concerns are heard and addressed. A Balanced Approach for Sustainable Growth; The Indian Union Budget, under the leadership of Modi, presents a balanced blueprint for growth, combining a focus on domestic development with a strategic international outlook. The emphasis on infrastructure, healthcare, education, and financial inclusion reflects the government's commitment to inclusive growth.



THE BUDGET REVEALS A 15% INCREASE IN ALLOCATIONS FOR FLAGSHIP SCHEMES SUCH AS THE PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA (PMAY) AND AYUSHMAN BHARAT. HOWEVER, OPPOSITION STATES ARGUE THAT THEIR SHARE OF THESE FUNDS DOES NOT REFLECT THEIR PROPORTIONATE NEEDS

At the same time, the focus on global partnerships, defence manufacturing, and renewable energy highlights India's aspirations to be a key player on the world stage. Domestic Positives: A Focus on Inclusive Development; The budget's primary focus is on inclusive growth, ensuring that the benefits of economic development reach all sections of society. A significant allocation has been made towards infrastructure development, including roads, railways, and digital infrastructure. This not only promises to create jobs but also lays the groundwork for long-term economic resilience. The emphasis on renewable energy and green technology is another forward-looking aspect, aligning with global trends towards sustainability. Healthcare and educa-

tion have not received substantial attention. The substantial increase in funding for public health infrastructure is a must, especially after the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, investments in education, particularly in digital and vocational training, will equip the younger generation with skills for the future job market.

This focus on human capital development is critical for sustaining economic growth in the long term. The government's commitment to financial inclusion continues with initiatives to expand the reach of banking and financial services to rural areas. This effort is crucial for integrating rural populations into the formal economy, enhancing their economic opportunities, and reducing regional disparities. Moreover, targeted welfare schemes for farmers, women, and marginalized communities underscore the government's intent to address social inequalities and ensure a more equitable distribution of resources. Extreme evidence of a discriminatory approach exhibited in the union budget estimates for 2024-24 pertains to the allocation of Rs 11,500 crore for flood mitigation to Bihar whereas Himachal as well as Uttarakhand faced unprecedented catastrophe in July/August 2023 which suffered extensive damages to the tune of over Rs 12,000 crore and Rs 4,000 crore respectively but figures have not been mentioned in the budget.

Himachal government is in a quandary as 550 lives were lost and rehabilitation of lakhs of hapless people had been undertaken by the state government by making provision of Rs 650 crore hence expected a liberal Special Package from the union finance minister who preferred to just give an assurance about financial assistance to the state but no allocation

of the budget. Inordinate delay in the announcement of a "Special Package" had affected relief and rehabilitation works though the state demanded immediate help of Rs 9,042 crore from the centre in Aug 2023. Chief Minister, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu regretted the apathy of the centre which gave nothing for one year. The finance minister skipped Punjab also which witnessed devastation owing to heavy rains and floods in 21 out of 23 districts and damages were more than Rs 1,680 crore. About 70 lives were lost and the state government has been demanding financial assistance which has been ignored in this budget. Contrary to it, Bihar has been chosen for special treatment and the finance minister allocated Rs 11,500 crore for flood mitigation which is being interpreted as a Reward for helping BHP to form a government after its reduced strength in Lok Sabha. Experts say that Bihar has been India's most flood-prone state with 76% of the population of north Bihar living under recurring threat of devastating floods for decades hence it deserves a special package but not by ignoring other states that suffer an identical natural disaster every year. As India navigates the challenges of a post-pandemic world, the budget's provisions for economic resilience, social equity, and environmental sustainability provide a solid foundation for future growth. Modi's vision of a self-reliant India resonates throughout the budget, offering a roadmap for the country's economic and strategic aspirations. This holistic approach, balancing domestic priorities with international engagement, positions India well for a sustainable and prosperous future.

(The writer is a political analyst and senior journalist based in Shimla; views are personal)

How persistence and empathy can cure tuberculosis

Tuberculosis is a 'curable infectious disease linked to inequities, it is therefore crucial to invest in partnerships that address these disparities with empathy

A year ago 20-year-old Tahira was convinced she was going to die. A fever that refused to go accompanied by a persistent cough, a loss in appetite and extreme weakness had confined her to the bed for months. Her husband, a rickshaw puller, had neither the means nor the time to take her to a doctor. It was only when her brother came to visit her in Kolkata and saw her failing health that he decided to take matters into his own hands. He brought Tahira back with him to her natal house in Seemapuri, Delhi. This decision was to save her life. Around this time, Humana People to People India (HPPPI), a not-for-profit, was reaching out with information and guidance on tuberculosis (TB)



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

as a part of their Project LEAD (Leveraging Educating, Advocating to Disrupt TB transmission). Working in close coordination with the government's National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP), LEAD focussed on the oft-ignored and overlooked marginalized communities living in low-grade urban slums, the homeless and migratory population in four cities, Delhi, Mumbai, Howrah and Hyderabad.

Persistence Pays When LEAD field officer Shanti met Tahira, she immediately knew what had to be done. First, she was taken for a chest X-ray. When it showed Tahira presumptive for TB, sputum microscopy was conducted which confirmed TB. Once this became clear, the diagnosis was reconfirmed through the WHO-recommended molecular test via the Cartridge-Based Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (CBNAAT) and drug susceptibility test via Line Probe Assay (LPA) provided free at the government GTB Hospital. The drug susceptibility test is done to ensure that the TB bacteria (Bacillus Mycobacterium Tuberculosis), that infects a person is not resistant to the medicines they are treated with.

Realising there was no time to waste, Shanti quickly enabled her registration on Ni-Akshay, the government's NTEP real-time patient management web system, so that her card could be made and her treatment started the same day. As a trained worker, Shanti knew time was of the essence and treatment adherence critical. So, for the next six months, Shanti would become Tahira's shadow. She kept a watchful eye and followed up doggedly with 40 visits to ensure Tahira didn't miss out or falter in sticking to the drug regimen. Her persistence paid off when Tahira tested negative a couple of months ago and is now completely cured. The Techno CATTB being an infectious disease, early detection and



treatment is vital especially as it spreads when persons with the illness expel the bacteria into the air, mostly by coughing. Here is where technology can play a role. Cough Against TB (CAT) an innovative application AI-powered cough-sound-based screening tool to assess the likelihood of pulmonary TB developed by Wadhvani AI, resulted in a 10.8% presumptive rate and a positivity yield of 15.6%.

One of the important outcomes of using CAT was its detection of asymptomatic cases, which otherwise would have been missed. While technology has been an enabling tool, the real success of screening over 600,000 individuals, identifying 3,182 people with TB (PwTB), and supporting 98% of them in Delhi with treatment adherence has been due to the commitment and compassion shown by the women field workers. The project findings at the end of the one-year project indicate that the female field officers proved to be more effective than their male counterparts in TB awareness and screening because of their empathy. A Human Touch How a human touch can make all the difference was seen in Tahira's

case. Shanti's support to Tahira during her challenging treatment journey was not just by counselling but also through food ration supplements every month through her contacts with an NGO. Additionally, she also linked her to NTEP's Ni-Akshay Poshan Yojana, the government scheme to provide Rs 500 per month for PwTB to buy food. Deploying women now cured of TB as activists and field workers have also worked wonders to reach out to those who fall through the cracks. They know what it means to live with TB and the societal stigma that have to face. Their determination to help others in similar situations has boosted early detection and treatment. It is a known fact that those most at risk are people residing in poorly ven-

tilated and overcrowded conditions, suffering from malnutrition and diseases and with limited access to healthcare. Project LEAD has shown that women field officers are more successful in persuading TB screening and treatment adherence among the vulnerable and marginalized because of their understanding and sensitivity. TB researchers Dr Anurag Bhargava, Dr Madhukar Pai and Dr Madhvi Bhargava reiterate that TB is a "curable" infectious disease linked to inequities, it is even more imperative to invest in more partnerships that bridge these inequalities with empathy.

(The author is a journalist writing on development and gender. The views are expressed are personal)

MONEY MATTERS



6 cr ITRs filed for FY24; 70% under new tax regime

About 6 crore income tax returns have been filed for income earned in 2023-24, of which 70 per cent were filed under the new simplified tax regime...



BE gets WHO pre-qualification status for oral polio vaccine

Biological E. Limited (BE) on Tuesday announced that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has granted pre-qualification status to its Novel Oral Polio Vaccine type 2 (nOPV2)...



Sebi bans Omaxe, its head, MD from mkt for 2-ys

Sebi on Tuesday barred real estate firm Omaxe, its chairman Rohitas Goel, managing director Mohit Goel and three others from the securities market for two years...

Qualcomm unveils India-specific chip to democratise 5G

In a bid to make 5G more affordable and accessible in India, American chipmaker Qualcomm on Tuesday launched the Snapdragon 4S Gen 2 chipset...



Global investors eyeing India

Don't miss this 'golden chance': PM to India Inc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said India is firmly on the path to becoming the world's third-biggest economy within next five years...

whole world is looking at India and you (industry). Policies of the government and commitment and investment are becoming foundation of global development...

the prime minister informed the industry about his call in the recent NITI Aayog meeting to state chief ministers for creating investor-friendly charters...

Today, the whole world is looking at India and you (industry). Policies of the government and commitment and investment are becoming foundation of global development...

come to India. World leaders are filled with positivity for India. This is the golden chance for the Indian industry and we should not lose this opportunity...

duce atmosphere for investment. With high growth and low inflation, he said, India is a beacon of growth and stability in a world which is facing high inflation and low growth...

Today,



ED declares 9 defaulters as fugitive economic offenders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has declared nine defaulters as Fugitive Economic Offenders, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary informed Parliament on Tuesday...

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The RBI on Tuesday issued a Master Direction on the Treatment of Wilful Defaulters and Large Defaulters under which banks and NBFCs will have to examine the 'wilful default' aspect in all non-performing asset accounts...

RBI Master Direction on Treatment of Wilful Defaulters and Large Defaulters. The lender shall identify and classify a person as a 'wilful defaulter' by following a specified procedure...

FTA moving slow, but India pursuing: Goyal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The negotiations to review the free trade agreements (FTAs) implemented with Japan, Korea, and Asean are moving slow but India is pursuing those talks...



helpless to change it until we close the negotiations.

"We are under re-negotiations but obviously when they (Japan, Korea, Asean) realise that the Congress's agreement was better for them (Japan, Korea, Asean), they are happier to keep that rather than change the agreements... they are going very slow, (but) we are also pursuing," he said while speaking at a CII programme on Viksit Bharat.

He said these agreements were signed and implemented during the UPA regime.

These pacts are hurting the domestic industry and almost all firms stated that they are "unfair" agreements, Goyal said.

"I am helpless as those agreements (came into effect) before we came to power. I am

Sensex, Nifty rise for 3rd day

Gains in Tata Motors, HDFC Bank

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty eked out gains in volatile trade to settle at record high levels on Tuesday, extending their gaining streak to the third day on the back of buying in Tata Motors and HDFC Bank.

day high of 81,815.27. The NSE Nifty edged up 21.20 points or 0.09 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,857.30.



The 30-share BSE Sensex closed higher by 99.56 points or 0.12 per cent at 81,455.40 - its all-time closing high -- with 16 of its components advancing and 14 ending lower.

The domestic market ended flat, due to profit-booking at higher levels.

Gold jumps Rs 550 to Rs 71,600 per 10 g

Gold prices jumped by Rs 550 to Rs 71,600 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday following strong demand from jewellers and firm global trends.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices jumped by Rs 550 to Rs 71,600 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday following strong demand from jewellers and firm global trends.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 71,050 per 10 grams. Silver prices, on the other hand, remained flat at Rs 84,500 per kg on Tuesday, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also bounced by Rs 550 to Rs 71,250 per 10 grams from the previous close of Rs 70,700 per 10 grams.

Check for 'wilful default' in NPA accounts exceeding Rs 25 lakh: RBI to banks

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The RBI on Tuesday issued a Master Direction on the Treatment of Wilful Defaulters and Large Defaulters under which banks and NBFCs will have to examine the 'wilful default' aspect in all non-performing asset accounts with outstanding amounts of Rs 25 lakh and above.

RBI Master Direction on Treatment of Wilful Defaulters and Large Defaulters. The lender shall identify and classify a person as a 'wilful defaulter' by following a specified procedure...

borrower or a guarantor who has committed wilful default, and the outstanding amount is Rs 25 lakh and above.

"The lender shall examine the 'wilful default' aspect in all NPA accounts with an outstanding amount of Rs 25 lakh and above...from time to time," it said.

Pulses import jumps 90% in to 47.38 lakh tonnes: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's import of pulses rose 90 per cent annually to 47.38 lakh tonnes during 2023-24 to meet domestic demand, the government informed Parliament on Tuesday.



3.87 lakh tonnes. During 2022-23, imports of pulses stood at 24.96 lakh tonnes, while exports were 7.62 lakh tonnes. In 2023-24, the imports of pulses were 47.38 lakh tonnes and exports stood at 5.94 lakh tonnes.

"During the last ten years i.e. 2014-15 to 2023-24 (as per 3rd Advance Estimates), total pulses and oilseeds production has increased by 43 per cent and 44 per cent, respectively," Thakur said. In reply to a separate question, the minister

said the government has substantially enhanced the budget allocation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare from Rs 27,662.67 crore in BE (budget estimate) during 2013-14, to Rs 1,25,035.79 crore BE during 2023-24.

Answering another query,

Thakur said the National Commission on Farmers (NCF), constituted under the Chairmanship of MS Swaminathan in 2004, inter alia, recommended that Minimum Support Price (MSP) should be at least 50 per cent more than the weighted average cost of production.

ADB commits US\$ 200 mn loan for solid waste management in 100 Indian cities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asian Development Bank and the Government of India recently signed a US\$ 200 million (about Rs 1,700 crore) loan to improve solid waste management and sanitation in 100 cities across eight states in the country.



Country Director for Asian Development Bank (ADB) - India Resident Mission, the Manila-based multilateral funding agency said in a statement on Tuesday.

After signing the loan agreement, Mukherjee said that the programme supports the objectives of the government's Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission - Urban 2.0 by enhancing sanitation and solid waste management infrastructure, including waste segregation, collection and disposal.

The signatories to the loan agreement for the Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 - Comprehensive Municipal Waste Management in Indian Cities Program were Juhi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, Finance Ministry, and Mio Oka,

NIZAMABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION TENDER NOTICE. EOJ Notice No. ME/NMC/05/2024, Dated: 30.07.2024. EOJ is invited from the Reputed agencies for Installation, Commissioning and Maintenance of GPS System to All Municipal Vehicles in NMC for the period of 2 Years.

Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority Tender Notice. EOJ Notice No. 284/PPCL-AGENCY/NT/2024-25, Dated: 30.07.2024. EOJ is invited from the Reputed agencies for Installation, Commissioning and Maintenance of GPS System to All Municipal Vehicles in NMC for the period of 2 Years.



SHIKHA DUGGAL

Fans are incredibly excited about Roshan Mathew's next film, *Uljah*, as seen by the quick sell-out of its special preview showing in several cities. The film's team quickly scheduled fan screenings in Delhi, Mumbai, Jaipur, Ahmedabad and other cities after releasing its gripping trailer. As previously indicated, we have the prominent actor with us today who shares the secrets and is well-known in Malayalam cinema.

"I am happy knowing that I have been called an unconventional actor; however, to break the bubble, I don't specifically go out looking for one," Roshan, who is well-known for his unique choices, said as we started this exclusive conversation. "For me, it's always a combination of what naturally interests me, whether or not I find the character appealing and whether or not I want to collaborate with the actors! For me, that has always been the deciding factor. I'm Roshan, the actor and those who know me that I don't travel with any preconceptions. For instance, it would take something really unique to convince me to work on a Malayalam film. Give me a good enough excuse to go outside and shoot!"

And with *Uljah*, he says, "The first and most evident reason to support a film is to recognise a strong script! You won't believe me when I say that I read the entire script in one sitting out of intense curiosity about what would happen next. I think the decision by the filmmakers to cast Janhvi Kapoor in the lead role was an intriguing one. I can admit, though, that I was most thrilled to be placed opposite Gulshan because I have always respected his work."

Hollywood action filmmaker Nick Powell has planned stunt sequences for this spy thriller, *Uljah*. He is well-known for his stunts in Hollywood productions like *The Last Samurai*, *Gladiator* and *Born Identity*. Aside from this, Roshan informs us, "I contacted my director very early on to learn more about the subjects of espionage and diplomacy. He sent me a prepared list of interviews and books—oh my goodness! Accounts from former diplomats and embedded agents at an embassy were also available. I had no idea this was the world. I'm not connected to any embassy! Though I wish I had, I'll never

Well-known for his stint in Malayalam cinema, actor Roshan Mathew will soon be seen in *Uljah*, starring Janhvi and Gulshan. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, the actor discusses his unique choices, getting on board for *Uljah* and his camaraderie with co-stars.

'I READ THE ENTIRE SCRIPT OF ULJAH IN ONE SITTING'

mind (he laughed) and ring them up to find out more information. I also turned to a few literary allusions."

Continuing on a lighter note, he says, "I truly enjoy the research aspect of my work. Every film I see reveals a different side of me! I have to suddenly become someone I didn't know anything about before. That's really awesome! I am strolling past my bookshelf while I speak with you right now. To be honest, *Bridge of Spies* was also a big help. This piques our interest, since acting can be incredibly draining otherwise. These movies provide us with a secret goal to strive toward!"

The actor also declares, "I have very few scenes with Gulshan that I am particularly disappointed about," in reference to his fellow actors in *Uljah*. "What a talented actor he is! I've been a huge fan of this guy for a long time, even before I did my first movie. I had never met any of the co-actors previously, so my first encounters with them all occurred during the workshop sessions. Janhvi's maturity really impressed me,

I must admit! She didn't have any temper tantrums and I observed her being quite available for all the tasks she was requested to complete. *Uljah* was only elevated by Janhvi Kapoor. I had one of the trickiest scenes with her; we had to film for nearly the entire night and we were having a lot of trouble. Dear God!"

More exclusive details were revealed by Roshan to *The Pioneer*, who reported, "It was my first time in London and I had a great time. My sister spent some time there. She was a student in Edinburgh! I began my career in theatre and as we all know, London theatre has a global following. During my free time, I would investigate everything and attend as many performances as I could. I walked a lot, had the renowned London coffee—what more could one need in life? (He laughed aloud.) The *Uljah* schedule in London was fantastic. Yes, we had a full schedule in Bhopal as well! However, we were astute and didn't portray it as Bhopal." Well, that was quite enlightening.

ther ado, *The Pioneer* connects with the artist to learn more about her art.

Inspired by Mother Nature, she has always loved to explore art since childhood. "Life becomes much simpler by enjoying the simple pleasures of nature," shares the self-taught artist, who finds this thought to be her driving force. "I began my journey by experimenting with numerous fine art forms. Doing art is like meditation for me and I practice it almost every day to excel in my craft."

Nature, she says, has undeniably been her biggest guru. Basically, when she started taking workshops with T-Works, she got to explore the art of finger painting. Discovering her true passion for developing intricacy in a contemporary setting, she enjoys amalgamating abstract, textured backgrounds against tribal elements. In regards to finger painting, "I have learned how colours work and how we can mix different colours. This art aids in sensory integration, improving fine motor development by strengthening finger and hand muscles." This art not only helps the kids but also people of different age groups, strengthening their senses and motor skills.

It was certainly a challenge for her to create a niche here, coming from a different background. She recalls, "It was very difficult for me to connect with galleries to conduct workshops. But with my dedication, hard work, and courage, I am now able to pursue my art career. Throughout my journey, my family has been my biggest support and has always pushed me forward so I could achieve my goals. Doing art is like meditation for me, and I practice almost every day to excel in my craft."

With this skill, she has taken part in various competitions and group shows at the national level and received several accolades for her work. It was in 2019 that she conducted her first solo exhibition at the Alliance Française of Hyderabad, followed by IconArt Gallery in 2022.

But what sets finger art apart? "I love finger painting because it allows me to express myself in unique and creative ways," she gleefully shares, adding that it helps her create unimaginable art using this technique.

As we head towards the end of this chat, she goes on to enunciate, "I want people to know the value of art in our daily lives and how art is important for mental well-being. In the future, I will be conducting more such creative workshops and keep working on developing my art and style so that anyone can paint with me irrespective of their age."

EMBRACING SIMPLICITY & SWEETNESS WITH SAVERA

TEJAL SINHA

Baatein ye saari main tumse hi karna chaahoon has certainly been that feeling we have for that special person. We always look forward to sharing the good and bad of our day. Making this feeling of ours much easier to express and appreciate, Iqlipse Nova and Anubha Bajaj have made it simpler with their latest track, *Savera*.

Iqlipse and Anubha, known for their previous works *Khwab* and *Lamhey*, respectively, collaborate on this debut single. This lovely romantic song beautifully conveys the enchantment of everyday love, giving listeners a musical comfort akin to a warm cup of *chai* on a rainy evening. The gentle guitar strums and comforting vocals in *Savera* create a musical experience that brings about feelings of warmth and nostalgia. The song skillfully mixes current indie pop with traditional Indian musical components, crafting a sound that is both ageless and up-to-date.

The Pioneer connects with the duo for an exclusive chat and brings you more interesting insights on the song and the making of it.

EXCERPTS FROM THE INTERVIEW:

Take us through your inclination toward music.

Iqlipse: I was in class 7 when I was watching this concert by Julio Iglesias on TV. I was like, There's this guy who is singing this one song and people are going crazy about it. At that point in time, I was like, *Mujhe yehi karna hai*.

Anubha Bajaj: I've been interested in music ever since I was a little kid. I always wanted to learn guitar. For me, it was like one thing that led to another. I started off by learning the guitar and I fell in love with it. Then I learned piano and I fell in love with that too. Eventually, I got into songwriting. Now I'm at a stage when I'm releasing my songs, so it's pretty much been that journey of me knowing what I want and just going after it.

First single together, how excited were you both for the same?

Iqlipse: I was very excited because I've always admired what she does and I was the one texting her on Instagram about making a song together. So somewhere, I knew whatever we do together was going to be amazing.

Anubha: It's pretty much the same for me as well. I was very excited when he texted me on Instagram. Both of us coming together was like two powerhouses coming together and making a project. I had an inkling at the very beginning that this would be an amazing song.

Tell us about *Savera*.

Anubha: When we were writing this song, we were talking about someone who was just about one call away. That one person we call when something new happens in our lives, He (Iqlipse), was the one who came up with the sentence, *Baatein yeh saari main tumse hi karna chaahoon*. I was very skeptical in the beginning—is it a good beginning to the chorus and he was like, 'no, trust me and stick with it'. I had full faith and that's how it just became a full romantic song.

How did you get the idea of *Baatein yeh saari*.....?

Iqlipse: We were trying to make the song at Anubha's home studio and we jammed for like 3 hours and nothing came out. There are days when the music doesn't come out of you. And we were like, Chalo, it's fine and we would write something new. I was just leaving and I had booked my cab and just then, she came up with the melody, the chorus melody. The moment she sang it, I was like, It is so cool and just instantly I wrote the line, *Baatein Yeh saari mai tumse hi karna chaahoon*. It was so random. We tried to stick to it and wrote the entire song around it. My idea was that the entire song has to be around that special person and be an expression of appreciation for that person.

***Savera* is a song that symbolises love in its purest form. What would you like to say about it?**

Anubha: In this song, I was more involved in the production aspect of it. I was less involved in the lyrics. I would give more credit to him for the lyrics. Ultimately, I was happy that I was going to do a romantic song and I just wanted to be part of the song where I was involved in writing romantically. I am happy that I got the opportunity to work with the guy himself, who had sang songs like *Uda Parindaa* and *Dil Besabar*. I knew he had been making so many songs about love, dating and being single. I knew if, from the writing point of view, he took the front foot, it would be better for the song.

Take us through the musical journey of *Savera*.

Iqlipse: The musical journey was like a hell of a ride. The problem with the song was that my comfortable scale was different than that of Anubha. She sings on a lower scale and that's why we had to come to a conclusion—a common point where both of us sound good. We settled down at a particular scale and the song was composed in such a way that when both of us sang it together, it would sound better than just one of us singing.

Mastering creative canvas through finger painting art



RASHMI BHUMIREDDY

Remember of the first time you painted with your tiny fingers to create an adorable picture? Yet at that time, we were unaware of our skill in finger painting. Are you amazed, just like we are?

Well, we had come across how this art that we did back then has been gaining immense popularity and is indeed such a meditative therapy!

Neha Jain, a finger painting artist, has perfected this skill and has created numerous intricate paintings using only her fingers, without using any brushes. Her artistic pieces resonated with the members of the Hyderabad Arts Society and her works were chosen and exhibited at the Salarjung Museum and State Gallery of Arts.

After experimenting with numerous fine art forms such as Tanjore, Oil and acrylic, Folk and tribal arts, Neha discovered her true passion for developing intricacy in a contemporary setting. She amalgamates abstract, textured backgrounds against tribal elements—a unique style for which she is being recognised. Without any fur-

Finger painting art has been a fun form of art that has created a stir. *The Pioneer* presents Neha Jain, an artist from Hyderabad, who has dedicated herself to promoting and creating awareness about this art form.





At the 6th Investiture Ceremony of the Telangana Chamber of Events Industry (TCEI), which took place on Tuesday at the Dr. MCR HRD Institute of Telangana amid a spectacular ceremony attended by TCEI members, a new Executive Committee was inaugurated. Surat Singh Malhotra, Founder President of TCEI, Counsel General Lesotho, Vishala Reddy Vuyyala, startup entrepreneur, chief election officer-TCEI, Ashok Ramkumar, designated senior counsel, High Court of Telangana and Rosi Reddy, Retd IRS, election officer-TCEI, elevated the occasion as guests of honour.



Thryve Digital has launched its new eco-focused CSR programme, *Thryve Eco Warriors*. This initiative commemorates World Nature Conservation Day with a commitment to plant one tree for every Thryve Digital employee in Hyderabad.



Old School Rituals is pleased to announce the wonderful Old School Brindavanam, an extension of Old School Rituals in Hyderabad. Another milestone in their quest to divulge the age-old secrets of wellbeing is Brindavanam. It is an area devoted to art, healing and self-care that offers a special fusion of conventional methods with contemporary elegance.



PARTY



COOL HOSTELS SURROUNDED BY NATURE TO BOOK AROUND THE WORLD!

Staying in a hostel is perfect for young travellers looking for a communal environment to interact and socialise with others whilst at the same time being easy on the pocket. With 66% of global travellers and 72% of Indian travellers stating that accommodations with access to nature add value to their trip, why not combine the great outdoors with more affordable accommodation? With that in mind, Booking.com has delved into its inventory of more than 29 million listings in over 175,000 destinations worldwide to present some cool hostels immersed in nature, ideal for young travellers looking for a memorable and unique experience.

Pipe House Playa Grande located in Playa Grande, Costa Rica offers a quirky stay to young travellers - here they can stay in repurposed concrete pipes transformed into cylindrical rooms. Offering a more affordable option without sacrificing comfort, the hostel is within walking distance of the beach, making it a convenient base for watersport activities nearby such as surfing and fishing.

Paradise Cave Hostel & Guesthouse, Hvolsvöllur, Iceland, is located just a few minutes away from Seljalandsfoss waterfall, one of

Iceland's most iconic and picturesque waterfalls. The hostel is situated in a lush, green landscape during the summer months and a winter wonderland during the winter. The photogenic waterfall has a footpath, allowing visitors to walk behind it and take unique shots, perfect for the ultimate sunset shot. Guests staying at this hostel will enjoy a calming and peaceful environment, ideal to relax and unwind from daily life.

Trippers Hostel, located in Darjeeling, India, offers budget-friendly accommodation for solo travellers, groups and backpacking enthusiasts alike. The hostel is approx. 7.3 km away from Tiger Hill, where travelers can enjoy beautiful views over the Himalayas. Travellers can visit the nearby tea estates to learn about tea production or meet and connect with fellow guests in the hostel's serene environment. Darjeeling is also home to the UNESCO World Heritage Site Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.

YHA Grampians Eco, Halls Gap, Halls Gap, Australia, is a beautiful hostel within the Grampians National Park, in Halls Gap, Victoria. The property supports a variety of eco-friendly accommodation practices, including low-energy lighting, a solar hot water system, recycling stations, and

rainwater tanks to flush. Visitors can relax in one of the several seating areas in the garden or take leisurely strolls and connect with nature without leaving the hostel grounds. A complimentary herb garden is offered, as well as free-range chicken eggs.

The Batukaru Coffee Estate, Tabanan, Bali, Indonesia hostel is located on a working coffee plantation surrounded by a protected jungle and guests can learn about the coffee production process from bean to cup in one of the hostel's coffee tasting sessions. Overlooking the lush tropical landscape, the rooms at Batukaru Coffee Estate feature traditional Balinese architecture with wooden structures and thatched roofs.

The PAD, Silverthorne, United States is combining eco-friendly design with a community-oriented atmosphere and modern amenities. The Pad is a beautiful hostel located in Silverthorne, in the heart of Colorado's Rocky Mountains. This modern hostel is surrounded by a variety of natural attractions and activities, making it perfect for outdoor enthusiasts. Travellers can discover the popular Blue River Trail, a paved trail along the nearby Blue River, or have a relaxing picnic in one of Silverthorne's parks.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



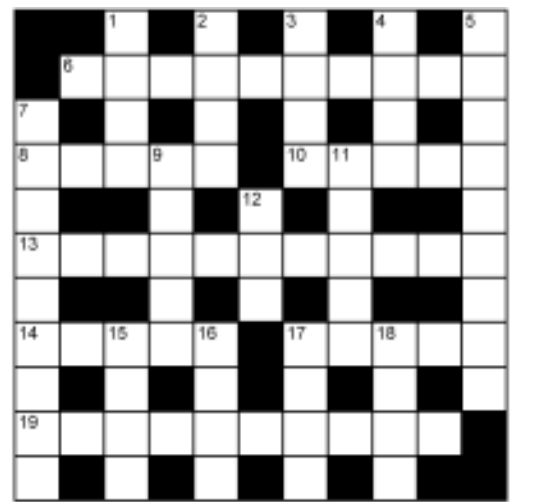
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

- 6 A large naval ship
- 8 Feeling very annoyed
- 10 A South American dance
- 13 A very wealthy person
- 14 Gets closer to
- 17 A soft type of hat
- 19 A grower of fruit trees

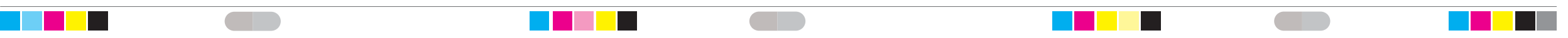
DOWN

- 1 Gun sound
- 2 Don't go
- 3 A strap for trousers
- 4 Skinny
- 5 The people you play against in a game
- 7 A court game played with rackets and a shuttlecock
- 9 A measuring stick
- 11 Astonish
- 12 Female deer
- 15 Curved part under a bridge
- 16 A sewed joint in material
- 17 Hospital patients lie in these
- 18 Go quickly

SOLUTION

S	A	T	U	R	N	I	S	T
F	O	R	D	N	E			
A	C	I	N	E	F	U	N	C
T	O	E	R	B	O	V		
R	E	L	A	R	B	A		
P	E	A	L	L	E	R		
C	E	A	N	T	E	N		
N	P	A	K	E	S	O	T	
G	R	A	S	E	D	A	R	M
T	I	L	E	R				
L	A	M	E	P	O	P	L	E

GINGER MEGGS





Prabhas has an exciting lineup ahead!

Prabhas, the reigning pan-India superstar, continues to push the boundaries of cinema with his groundbreaking blockbusters. His latest release, *Kalki 2898 AD*, has not only captivated audiences nationwide but also set a new benchmark as the highest-grossing Indian film of 2024 and the sixth highest-grossing Indian film of all time, among numerous records for Telugu and Indian cinema.

But Prabhas isn't stopping there. He's gearing up for an even more impressive lineup with major projects on the horizon, including *The Raja Saab*, *Salaar: Part 2—Shouryaanga Parvam* and Sandeep Reddy Vanga's *Spirit*.

The excitement has already started building with the release of the teaser poster for *The Raja Saab*,

which showcases a fresh look for Prabhas and promises to elevate the anticipation even further. Scheduled for release in April 2025, this film is expected to be a major highlight. Following that, Prabhas will appear in *Salaar: Part 2—Shouryaanga Parvam*, one of the most awaited sequels. He will also star in Sandeep Reddy Vanga's highly anticipated film, *Spirit*.

With such a stellar lineup of grand films, Prabhas is poised to make a massive impact at the box office. His dedicated fans can look forward to a series of spectacular blockbusters that promise to deliver on the high expectations they have come to cherish.

THIRAGABADARA SAAMI IS ALL ABOUT HOW MAN TURNS VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCES

K. RAMYA SREE

As the release date for *Thiragabadara Saami* approaches, producer Malkapuram Shiva Kumar shared his insights on the film and his career in an exclusive interview. The film, featuring actor Raj Tarun and directed by A.S. Ravikumar Chowdary, has been generating substantial buzz. With Malvi Malhotra in the lead role, the movie promises a blend of romance, sentiment, high-voltage action and emotional depth.

Malkapuram Shiva Kumar revealed that the project began in 2023, and he was immediately drawn to the story presented by Director A.S. Ravikumar Chowdary. "When I heard the story, I was captivated instantly. I decided to move forward with it in one sitting," he said. From the outset, the team believed Raj Tarun was the ideal choice for the role.

Discussing the film's content, Shiva Kumar explained that the story involves elements of violence that are integral to the narrative. "In this film, a person's behaviour is shaped by their circumstances. The situations they encounter can transform someone who is normally quiet into someone who acts violently. Raj Tarun has delivered an exceptional performance in this context."

Reflecting on his journey in the film industry, Shiva Kumar recounted his

start with the film *Bhadradi*, supported by Srihari Garu. "Director Bobby also made his debut as a writer with that film. Since then, I've been focused on introducing new talents. In *Surya vs Surya*, I introduced Karthik Ghattamaneni and in another project, Tridha Chowdhury. Now, in *Thiragabadara Saami*, we're introducing Malvi Malhotra and working with a new director."

Producer Malkapuram Shiva Kumar, coming up with his next film, *Thiragabadara Saami*, shares his journey in the industry and insights about the film



When asked about what audiences can expect from *Thiragabadara Saami*, Shiva Kumar described it as a reflection on the bonds between husbands and wives. "The film is a testament to how couples should remain connected in their relationship. The content is engaging and will resonate with a wide audience," he said.

Mannara Chopra's role in the film, playing the negative female lead, has been praised by Shiva Kumar. "Mannara's role is crucial throughout the movie. She has portrayed the character exceptionally well," he noted.

The production experience was notably enjoyable for Shiva Kumar, with the majority of shooting

taking place in Zaheerabad. "We had nearly 400 people involved in the daily shoot and it was a very homely and enjoyable experience," he added.

On the financial side, Shiva Kumar expressed satisfaction with the film's progress. "The film has worked out very well from a business perspective, which is why we're releasing it with great happiness," he said. Reflecting on his career as a producer, Shiva Kumar admitted that, while the financial rewards have been modest, the industry offers a unique opportunity to create employment and support others. "Even if a film breaks even, it provides opportunities for new talents and helps sustain the industry," he shared.

Looking ahead, Shiva Kumar is excited about his Bollywood projects, including a film directed by his friend Raj, currently in post-production. "We are also working on a web series titled *Rahu Ketu* and another series based on Tirupathi Balaji," he revealed. Additionally, new projects on the horizon include a film featuring J. D. Chakravarthy, Naresh Agastya and Seerat Kapoor, which will introduce a new director named Shivan.



Toofan impresses with high-voltage action sequences

Hero Vijay Antony's highly anticipated film, *Toofan*, is gearing up for a spectacular release on August 2. The movie is produced by Kamal Bora, D. Lalitha, B. Pradeep and Pankaj Bora under the Infinity Film Ventures banner, known for backing previous Vijay Antony hits like *Raghavan* and *Hathya*. Directed by Vijay Milton, *Toofan* promises to deliver a poetic action entertainer.

The newly released sneak peek features a high-octane action sequence that is expected to be one of the film's standout moments. In the clip, a police officer interrogates a young hotel owner and his mother about a mysterious individual named Dolly and a troubling incident at a mall. Tensions rise as the police, accompanied by several villains, storm the hotel to confront their target. A thrilling fight scene between the hero and the antagonists adds to the growing excitement surrounding the film.



'EVERY SEQUENCE OF THANGALAN HAS MYSTIC ELEMENTS MAKING IT MAJESTIC'

Pa. Ranjith's upcoming film, *Thangalaan*, has been creating a buzz nationwide, with anticipation reaching new heights. Known for his visionary approach, Ranjith is celebrated for infusing each project with unique elements, and *Thangalaan* is no exception. His innovative style ensures that every frame of the film is meticulously crafted, making it essential for audiences to pay close attention to catch all the intricate details and subtext. A source close to the director revealed, "Pa. Ranjith has truly excelled with *Thangalaan* by integrating mystical elements into every action sequence. The film is filled with majestic, larger-than-life moments, like the mesmerizing day-to-night transition scene shown in the trailer, which will keep viewers on the edge of their seats."

Adding to its intrigue, *Thangalaan* is set against the real-life backdrop of the Kolar Gold Fields (KGF), distinguishing it from fictional narratives and highlighting a unique historical context. This film exemplifies the innovative spirit of South Indian cinema, showcasing fresh narratives and groundbreaking approaches. Produced by Studio Green, *Thangalaan* stars Chiyaan Vikram, Malavika Mohanan, Parvathy Thiruvothu and others. Directed by Pa. Ranjith, the film is produced by Pa. Ranjith, K. E. Gnanavel Raja, Jyoti Deshpande and G. Dhananjayan, with music composed by G. V. Prakash Kumar. Mark your calendars: *Thangalaan* is set to hit theaters on August 15, 2024.



Varnikha Visuals to release Ashwin Babu's Shivam Bhaje overseas

Ganga Entertainments is gearing up for the theatrical release of their prestigious debut venture, *Shivam Bhaje*, hitting screens worldwide on August 1. The Ashwin Babu-starring film is already generating significant buzz ahead of its release.

Producer Maheswara Reddy Mooli has secured the overseas distribution rights for the film through Varnikha Visuals. With the release date drawing near, excitement for *Shivam Bhaje* continues to build. In response to growing anticipation, Varnikha Visuals has scheduled the film's overseas premieres for July 31, a day before the official release.

Directed by Apsara, *Shivam Bhaje* is a new-age divine suspense thriller featuring Digangana Suryavanshi as the lead heroine, opposite Ashwin Babu. Notably, Bollywood actor Arbaaz Khan will appear in a surprising and pivotal role.

Musical family entertainer Santhana Prapthirasthu first look show up!

Vikranth and Chandini Chowdary star in the forthcoming film *Santhana Prapthirasthu*, produced by Madhura Sreedhar Reddy and Nirvi Hariprasad Reddy under the banners of Mathura Entertainment and Nirvi Arts. The film is directed by Sanjeev Reddy, who is also a producer on the project. Reddy is known for his work on ABCD with Allu Sirish and the web series *Aha Naa Pellanta* with Raj Tarun, and recently earned acclaim for creating an anti-drug advertisement featuring Megastar Chiranjeevi for the Telangana government.

The screenplay for *Santhana Prapthirasthu* is penned by Sheikh Dawood Ji, recog-

nized for his work on films like *Venkataadri Express*, *Express Raja* and *Ek Mini Katha*. The movie is set to be a musical family entertainer.

In celebration of Vikranth's birthday, a special poster for *Santhana Prapthirasthu* has been unveiled. The poster, featuring the actor, creatively incorporates themes around increasing sperm count, highlighting approaches such as a healthy diet, medication, exercise, yoga, stress management, and educational resources.

Director Sanjeev Reddy aims to create an engaging film that tackles contemporary issues. The film is currently in the midst of regular shooting.



Kalyan Ram's intense climax shoot on 1000 artists completed

The climax of *#NKR21*, starring Nandamuri Kalyan Ram and directed by Pradeep Chilukuri, has been successfully wrapped up. This crucial segment was filmed over thirty days on an elaborate set built on the outskirts of Hyderabad. The filmmakers spared no expense on this pivotal scene, investing a remarkable Rs 8 crore, making it the most expensive single episode in Kalyan Ram's career and underscoring the grandeur and scale of the sequence.

Brahma Kadali, renowned for his exceptional set designs, crafted the elaborate and visually stunning environment for the climax. Action choreography was managed by Ramakrishna, ensuring that the fight sequences and stunts were both exhilarating and meticulously executed. The climax sequence features nearly 1,000 artists, highlighting the significant financial and creative investment in this

segment, which plays a crucial role in the film's narrative.

The film, known for its high-octane action, stars Vijayashanthi in a powerful role as an IPS officer, adding a dynamic presence to the cast. The ensemble also includes Sohail Khan, Saiee Manjrekar and Srikanth, contributing depth to the storyline.

Produced by Ashok Vardhan Muppa and Sunil Balusu under Ashoka Creations and NTR Arts, and presented by Muppa Venkaiah Chowdary, *#NKR21* boasts a top-notch team of technicians. Ram Prasad handles cinematography, capturing intense moments with precision, while Ajaneesh Loknath provides a compelling musical score. Tammiraju is the film's editor, and Srikanth Vissa has crafted the screenplay, ensuring a gripping and cohesive narrative.

Kaalam Rasina Kathalu release date announced

Passionate filmmaker MMV Sagar is gearing up to release his latest project, *Kaalam Rasina Kathalu*. Not only is Sagar the producer, but he is also directing the film. On Tuesday, actor Sivaji unveiled the film's release date poster and extended his best wishes to the team.

At the event, Sivaji expressed his excitement, stating, "The film's title and concept are intriguing. I wish the entire team great success."

Director-Producer MMV Sagar shared insights about the film, saying, "The majori-



ty of the shoot was done around Pedana in Machilipatnam. *Kaalam Rasina Kathalu* is a youthful love and family entertainer featuring a host of emerging talents. The story focuses on the conflicts between five couples and includes enough twists to keep audiences engaged. Particularly, the scenes involving Lord Shiva in the second half are set to be a highlight. We've already received a positive response to the teaser and songs. We are excited to announce that the film will be released on August 29."



Mannara is taking the internet by storm with her stunning appearance on the cover of a well-known magazine. And we are unable to look away!

P I C

T A L K

US men's soccer team close to reaching knockouts of Olympics for first time since 2000

AP ■ SAINT-ETIENNE (FRANCE)

The United States men's soccer team is closing in on qualification to the knockout phase of the Olympics for the first time since Sydney 2000. Argentina is back in control of its destiny after its first game was marred by violence and chaos - and a shock defeat to Morocco. The group stage of the men's soccer tournament at the Paris Games concludes on Tuesday and with only Spain and Japan guaranteed their place in the quarterfinals tensions are likely to be high as a host of nations battle for a place in the final eight. The U.S. is competing in its first Olympics since Beijing 2008 and the 4-1 win against New Zealand last week has put it in a strong position to advance. "I said, even before coming here, when people ask me what they can expect from us, I said one thing: I promise that this group is going to give everything on the field and where that's going to take us, I don't know. But I know that they're going to give everything," U.S. Coach Marko Mitrovic said.

The Americans face Guinea at Stade Geoffroy-Guichard in Saint-Etienne after the win against New Zealand saw Mitrovic's team bounce back from an opening 3-0 loss to France in Group A. The U.S. is in second place, level with New Zealand on three points, but ahead on goal difference. France, which is top on six points, plays New Zealand in its final match and is expected to secure the win or draw needed to be certain to advance. There is the potential that three teams could be tied on either six or three points, depending on results in the final round of games. That would mean goal difference or other tiebreaker criteria is required to determine which teams advance. **GROUP B:** Argentina plays Ukraine and is on top of Group B on goal difference, with all four teams tied on three points. Argentina beat Iraq 3-1 in its second game after its opening loss, which was marred by violent scenes when Moroccan fans rushed the field and forced a delay of around two hours. Ukraine's late 2-1 win against



Morocco means all four teams won and lost their opening two games and a tiebreaker could be required if there are two draws in the final round of fixtures. "We're not thinking about the next round. First we have to beat Ukraine," said Argentina coach Javier Mascherano. **GROUP C:** Spain (6 points) has qualified after back-to-back wins in Group C but could still have a big say over who joins it in the next round. Spain plays second-placed Egypt (4 points), which needs a draw to guarantee it advances. Third-placed Dominican Republic (1 point) plays already eliminated Uzbekistan (0 points). **GROUP D:** Any one of three teams could join Japan and advance from Group D. Japan (6 points) is into quarterfinals after back-to-back wins and plays last-placed Israel (1 point), which needs a victory to stand any hope of qualifying. Second-placed Paraguay (3 points) plays Mali (1 point). A win for Paraguay would guarantee its place in the quarterfinals.

Carlos says he has been dealing with groin muscle problem since Wimbledon

AP ■ PARIS

Carlos Alcaraz took a medical timeout for what he said is a lingering groin muscle issue in the second set of his 6-1, 7-6 (3) singles victory over Tallon Griekspoor at the Paris Olympics. Alcaraz is scheduled to play doubles for Spain with Rafael Nadal on Tuesday - and the opponents happen to be the Dutch pair of Griekspoor and Wesley Koolhof. "It's a pain that I've been dealing with. I know what I have to do ... To deal with this pain," said Alcaraz, a 21-year-old who won the French Open at Roland Garros, the same site being used for Olympics tennis, last month, and Wimbledon this month.



Gabriel Medina from Brazil made Olympic history on the waves, receiving the highest score in Olympic surfing history - a 9.9, just shy of a perfect 10. After the ride he launched himself into the air, raising his right arm and pointing towards the sky in a gravity-defying moment. At times water safety patrol staff on jet skis pulled surfers from the water after their rides, towing them to calmer waters before jettling them back out to the wave. "It's really dangerous out there. It's super shallow ... You can see the corals," Medina said after his win against Kanoa Igarashi from Japan. On land, emotions ran high. Expletives were commonly heard from losing surfers coming back to shore. Broken boards, snapped from the power of the waves, were laid on the ground and inspected by teams shaking their heads. Staff of opposing teams going head-to-head whistled in awe and clapped at their opponents rides, marveling as surfers reappeared from being inside heavy barrels of water. Blustery winds swept in around midday, turning the surf conditions sour, marring the men's final heats and causing the women's competition being postponed. Monday was the last men's competition day before the quarterfinals, semifinals and gold medal heats take place on the fourth and final day of competition.

Ex-NBA player Chase wins beach volleyball debut in Paris

AP ■ PARIS

Chase Budinger has never forgotten how badly he played in his first NBA game. He'll have only good memories from his Olympic debut. The former Arizona and professional basketball player and his partner, Miles Evans, beat host France in straight sets on Monday to coast through their opening match of the Paris beach volleyball tournament. "I really tried to use my basketball experience of playing in front of big crowds to be composed the whole time," Budinger said after a 21-14, 21-11 victory. "But it definitely was not like that inside." Budinger spent seven years in the NBA, mostly as a bench player for the Rockets and Timberwolves, before turning to beach volleyball to fulfill an Olympic dream. His first game, he still remembers, "I played awful."



"On the bus ride over here, I was telling Miles about my first basketball game, of how nervous I was and how the nerves really got to me," Budinger said. "I was 0-for-2 (from 3-point range), had two turnovers and one of my shots I had was an airball. So the nerves affected my game play." At the Eiffel Tower Stadium on Monday the jitters didn't get to him - even against a French team that had won the last three matchups on the international tour. "It took me six years. It took me a long time to finally achieve this goal and I am here competing at the Olympics," Budinger said. "And there is no better feeling." Budinger and Evans scored the first three points and never trailed in the first set. In the second, France did eke out a 3-1 lead before the Americans won the next three points and finished the match in just 32 minutes. "It's one of the best starts we could imagine," Evans said. "I had all these bad scenarios in my head going into this match. I am super thankful we were able to overcome that." Unlike the NBA debut against the Portland Trail Blazers back in 2009, Budinger said, "I felt like out here, I was able to get a couple of points early. That helped relieve some of that stress, those nerves and allowed me to play my game more without it affecting me as much." In other notable beach action on Monday, Americans Kristen Nuss and Taryn Klothe beat Tokyo silver medalist Taliqua Clancy of Australia and her new partner, Mariafe Artacho del Solar, in straight sets to improve to 2-0 in Paris. France swept Rio gold medalist Laura Ludwig of Germany and her new partner, Louisa Lippmann. Qatar, the bronze medalist in Tokyo on the men's side, beat top-ranked Sweden 2-1 to improve to 2-0 in pool play.

"I will try to recover as soon and as (best) as I can tonight," he said, "to be ready ... 100 percent tomorrow in my doubles." Alcaraz said he watched part of Nadal's 6-1, 6-4 loss to Novak Djokovic in singles earlier Monday, before preparing to face Griekspoor. "When Djokovic is playing at this level, it's really, really difficult to play against him. Really aggressive, no mistakes, moving very, very well," Alcaraz said. "I saw Rafa playing decent, let's say. Not his best tennis, for sure. But when Djokovic is like this, he's almost unbeatable." That last word is one often used to describe Alcaraz, who was the first teenager to reach No. 1 in the ATP rankings, was the youngest man to win major titles on hard, grass and clay courts, and defeated Djokovic in each of the past two Wimbledon finals. "One of the best players there is," Griekspoor said about Alcaraz. "Someone who likes to play on this court. He made it very difficult for me in the first set." That was clear. But in the second, Griekspoor began to serve better and hit more aggressively, and suddenly it was a much tighter match. After Alcaraz left the court with a trainer while trailing 5-4 in that set, he returned and was a single point from being pushed to a third. Griekspoor couldn't convert that chance, which Alcaraz erased with a volley winner that he celebrated with a right uppercut and a yell of "Vamos!" Soon, in the tiebreaker, he was back in full control. "I didn't see any problems with him," Griekspoor said when asked how Alcaraz seemed in the second set. "I don't know what the problem was, but it's not like he fell down or twisted his ankle and couldn't walk anymore. He was still all over the place." Griekspoor said he would prepare for the rematch of sorts by going back and taking a look at the first-round doubles victory for Nadal and Alcaraz to help figure out a game plan. Giant barrels and steady swells for men's third day of surfing competition Teahupo'o (France), Jul 30 (AP) With the ceremonial blow of a conch shell and blare of a judge's horn, the third day of the Paris Olympics surfing competition in Tahiti began on Monday with the men's surfers going head-to-head, some reaching the end of the road in their quest for gold. Stunning waves and steady swells in the morning heats brought a fresh surge of energy to competitors and spectators, after Sunday's lackluster conditions, while conditions rapidly tapered around midday due to a storm, postponing the women's afternoon competition. "Today is probably gonna be one of the most exciting days... There's some serious waves out there," said Jordy Smith from South Africa, who lost to Peru's Alonso Correa in the day's first heat. "I got pounded a couple of times." Coming out of a barrel and riding across a wall of nearly 10-foot cerulean blue water, French Polynesian surfer Kauli Vaast raised his arms to the air, an enormous smile on his face as he cruised to victory in his heat, knocking out Griffin Colapinto from the United States. "I just came out, after a great ride, great takeoff and great wave," Vaast said. "That one felt good, and I was just too happy and enjoying the moment." Colapinto's loss was the first for the U.S. Team during the Paris Olympics surfing competition, after the entire team won their heats the first day of competition thus directly qualifying for Monday's round. John John Florence from the U.S. Was also eliminated from the competition. Brazil also suffered its first surfer being knocked out of the competition, after Filipe Toledo lost to Japan's Reo Inaba.

Chase Budinger and Miles Evans, beat host France in straight sets on Monday to coast through their opening match of the Paris beach volleyball tournament. "I really tried to use my basketball experience of playing in front of big crowds to be composed the whole time," Budinger said after a 21-14, 21-11 victory. "But it definitely was not like that inside." Budinger spent seven years in the NBA, mostly as a bench player for the Rockets and Timberwolves, before turning to beach volleyball to fulfill an Olympic dream. His first game, he still remembers, "I played awful."

Chennaiyin FC on Tuesday announced a 22-member squad for the 133rd edition of the Durand Cup being played from July 27 to August 31. Chennaiyin FC are placed in Group D along with ISL side Jamshepur FC, Indian Army and Assam Rifles with all six games of the stage to be played at the JRD Tata Sports Complex in Jamshepur. The Marina Machans will face Indian Army in their opening game on Wednesday as the group winners and possibly the second-placed team will advance to the knockouts. "The squad features a blend of senior team members and promising reserves, including notable players such as Vincyl Barretto, Bikash Yunnam, Irfan Yadwad, Samik Mitra, balanced team across all positions." Chennaiyin FC, who reached the quarterfinal stage in the 2022 and 2023 iterations of the Durand Cup, will take on Jamshepur FC on August 4 followed by their last group stage game against Assam Rifles on August 11. "We are going there to win games. We are not going there to take part. As a team, we are going to be together, on the field, off the field. There's going to be unity. We are going to go on the field and fight and give our 100 per cent," said CFC assistant coach Noel Wilson, who joined the club ahead of this season. **CHENNAIYIN FC SQUAD:** **Goalkeepers:** Mohanraj K, Samik Mitra, Malhar Umesh Mohol **Defenders:** Niketh N, Bikash Yunnam, Alexander Romario Jesuraj, Rujjak Ali SK, YV Praful Kumar, Aby S, Shanu Stellus, Sachu Siby **Midfielders:** Ngangom Raman Singh, Ganeshpandi S, Solaimalai R, Jayasurya, Vivek S, Karthik T, Vincyl Barretto, Komal Thatal, Lalpekhlua

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Chennaiyin FC announces 22-member squad for Durand Cup

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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Alexander Romario Jesuraj, and Sachu Siby," the club said in a statement. "This mix of experience and youth is reflected in the roster, which comprises three goalkeepers, eight defenders, nine midfielders, and two forwards, ensuring a well-

AP ■ NANTERRE (FRANCE)

Canadian phenom Summer McIntosh claimed the first gold medal of her just-burgeoning career Monday night with a dominating victory in the 400-meter individual medley at the Paris Olympics. The 17-year-old McIntosh collected her first medal of any color on the opening night of swimming, taking a silver in the 400 freestyle behind Ariarne Titmus - and ahead of Katie Ledecky. Now, McIntosh has the most prized color of all. "I try to take every event very individually and just do my work, but starting off for me - getting on the podium - is definitely a great way to start," McIntosh said. "You try to continue to get better and better." She pushed the pace hard through the first half of the grueling race - the butterfly and backstroke legs - to leave everyone in her wake except American Katie Grimes. McIntosh was under her own world-record pace, but couldn't keep it going. She touched in 4 minutes, 27.71 seconds, more than three seconds off the mark of

17-year-old McIntosh wins gold in 400-metre IM

4:24.38 she set at the Canadian trials in May. But it was more than enough to blow away the field in the Olympic final. McIntosh seemed to take it all in stride. Maybe it's because she competed at the Tokyo Olympics at age 14, so she sort of feels like a veteran now. "Every single time I get to race on the world stage, I learn more and more about handling mentally and physically and emotionally and trying not to get too high or too low," McIntosh said. She's got a grueling schedule in Paris which includes two more individual races - the 200 butterfly and 200 IM. There are no plans to celebrate just yet. "I mean, obviously I'm super happy with this gold," McIntosh said. "But now I'm all about the 200 fly on day five." Grimes, who is also swimming the open water event in Paris, held on to claim the silver in 4:33.40. The Americans also grabbed the bronze



when Emma Weyant touched in 4:34.93. **ANOTHER TEEN RULES:** David Popovici made the teenagers 2-for-2 on the night when he pulled off a thrilling victory in the men's 200 freestyle. The 19-year-old Romanian was among three swimmers who swapped the lead back and forth on the final lap. First, it was American Luke Hobson edging in front. Then Britain's Matthew Richards, out in Lane 1, pushed to the lead. Finally, it was Popovici mustering everything he had to get to the wall in 1:44.72 -- a mere two-hundredths ahead of Richards, with Hobson just 0.07 back to earn the bronze. Britain's Duncan Scott, the silver medalist in Tokyo three years ago, finished in 1:44.87 to miss out on the podium this time. The top four were separated by a mere 0.15 seconds. **GOLD FOR ITALY, AGAIN:** Thomas Ceccon gave Italy its second gold in as many nights at La Defense Arena, rallying to win the

men's 100 backstroke. China's Xu Jiayu led at the turn, just ahead of American Ryan Murphy - the 2016 gold medalist. Ceccon was third, but he switched to another gear on the return lap. The Italian, who has held the world record since the 2022 world championships in Budapest, now has a gold medal to go with it after finishing in 52.00. Xu claimed the silver (52.32), while the 29-year-old Murphy settled for the bronze for the second Olympics in a row at 52.39. Ceccon followed Nicolò Martinenghi, who grabbed Italy's first gold at the pool with a victory in the 100 breaststroke Sunday night. **LOOKING AHEAD:** In the only semifinals of the night, Australia's Kaylee McKeown and Regan Smith of the U.S. Set up a much-anticipated duel in the women's 100 backstroke. They each won their heats, with McKeown posting the fastest time (57.97) ad McKeown right on her heels (57.99). McKeown is the reigning Olympic champion and former world-record holder - a mark that Smith snatched away with time of 57.