

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer
Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is not a disciple of Andhra Pradesh CM N Chandrababu Naidu. He was a companion only and now they are Chief Ministers of neighbouring states. There is no meaning in the term 'guru-sishya'. Both are CMs, that's all.
- Bhatti Vikramarka, Dy CM, TG P4

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DON'T MISS...

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

3% babies with low birth weight...
 Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, number of babies in India born with a low birth weight rose sharply -- by about three per cent, a new study has found. Babies born during the pandemic were also found to be at double the risk of having a low weight at birth. The increase in babies born with a low weight could impact the development of 'human capital' in the long term, as these infants are known to often 'struggle with school', corresponding author Santosh Kumar, an associate professor of...

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

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

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

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, on Wednesday, declared that Amaravati is a people's capital which will be a centre for creating wealth, employment and poverty alleviation. Releasing a White Paper at the State Secretariat in Amaravati, the Chief Minister felt that the former Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy has totally betrayed the entire Telugu community by destroying Amaravati. The Chief Minister is of the opinion that had the progress of Amaravati been continued it would have become another Hyderabad. Making it clear that the State government will certainly fulfil the commitment made to the people, the CM announced that the State capital will be rebuilt. "The people have reposed faith in us and we will certainly fulfil it by rebuilding the capital," he said. "When we were seriously contemplating the name of the capital, the media baron, the Late Ramoji Rao, after a detailed study suggested the name Amaravati, which he said will create history. People in the entire State have hailed this," Chandrababu pointed out. Recalling how the foundation stone was laid for Amaravati, the CM said that the area has been selected as it is exactly in the middle of the

YS JAGAN TOTALLY DESTROYED AMARAVATI



whole State, 12 Lok Sabha constituencies on either side. Majority of the people in the State, too, had suggested to the SivaRamakrishnan Committee that the capital should be between Krishna and Guntur districts, he added. "Despite having a Rs 15,000-crore deficit budget, I wanted to build Amaravati with all my experience in building Cyberabad. Initially I felt whether land-pooling was possible. But, 34,400 farmers have come forward voluntarily," he added. "The Centre has agreed to extend

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

Rs 2,500 crore financial aid for building Amaravati," the CM said, adding that of this amount, Rs 1,500 crore was already released. Jagan Mohan Reddy, too, in his capacity as the then Leader of the Opposition, admitted on the floor of the Assembly that capital should be in the middle of the State. We all know how he has taken 'U' turn later and what kind of decisions he has taken, Chandrababu pointed out. Besides the World Bank, AIFB, JACA and other organisations have come forward to extend financial

Focus on safe drinking water and sanitation: CM to officials
Re-implement best practices followed during previous TDP regime



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has said that all the systems in the State failed and the people were forced to endure five years of destruction. The Chief Minister reviewed the situation in view of seasonal diseases on Wednesday. Officials of Municipal and Panchayat Raj Department along with Medical Health Department attended the meeting held at the secretariat. The CM said that the authorities should take steps in the case of seasonal diseases from the beginning. If they take action now, they will not get full results. The officials were directed to re-implement all the best practices followed during the TDP regime from 2014 to 2019 in the respective departments. The officials briefed the CM on the measures taken to prevent seasonal diseases. Officials explained

that they are taking measures to prevent malaria and dengue and are monitoring fever cases from time to time with special focus on high risk cases. They said that rapid tests for dengue and chicken pox are available in government hospitals. So far this season, 60 cases of diarrhoea have been reported in the State. Currently, there are 35 active cases of diarrhoea reported in six villages. They added that nine people died of diarrhoea this season and all of them fell sick after consuming contaminated drinking water. The Chief Minister said that due to the contaminated water, sanitation issues and lack of measures to prevent mosquitoes in villages and towns, people are suffering from diseases. He said that appropriate preventive measures should be taken against diseases and directed the officials to give high priority to safe drinking water and cleanliness.

Free sand policy in three months: Minister Kollu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 In a significant move, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has announced the continuation of the free sand scheme that was implemented five years ago under the Telugu Desam government. The decision has been made to resume the free sand distribution system starting from July 8. CM Naidu has directed Minister of Mines Kollu Ravindra to ensure the smooth implementation of the scheme. Speaking to the media, Minister Kollu Ravindra said that in the next three months, a free sand policy will be formulated and sand will be made available to all. "The Chief Minister is determined to restore the construction sector by implementing the free sand policy in the State and provide

Distribution system to be resumed from July 8
 sand policy followed by the previous government, the entire construction sector has been affected and the workers of 40 various sectors who depended on construction were left jobless. He said that workers have lost their livelihood as the previous government failed to generate income on sand and gave contracts to private agencies. He said that such situations should not be repeated in the State, and steps will be taken to ensure that sand is made available to all for free and construction continues uninterrupted. The Minister said that steps will be taken to resolve the technical problems faced in retaining the sand policy adopted by the previous government soon.
 The Minister said that due to the

Naidu leaves for Delhi

CM to meet Prime Minister, Home Minister, and Finance Minister
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu left for the national capital on Wednesday evening after releasing a White Paper on Amaravati. The AP CM will land in Delhi around 7.30 pm and stay there till Friday. During his stay, the CM will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman, other key leaders, and a few industrialists. According to sources, Naidu is likely to discuss pending irrigation projects, Amaravati capital project, infrastructure, State highways and roads, and a general report on the financial status of the State before returning to AP.

Will complete 8.02L houses by next March: Min

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 Under the 100-day action plan in the State, it has been decided to complete 1.28 lakh houses in the next three months, said State Housing, Information & Public Relations Minister K Parthasarathy. The Minister reviewed the Housing Department at the secretariat on Wednesday with the project directors, SEs and EEs of all the districts. Later, speaking to the media persons at the Secretariat, he reiterated that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has decided to complete 1.28 lakh houses in the next three months under the 100-day action plan in accordance with the orders of all government departments. Parthasarathy said that Rs 2,520 crore will be spent for this. He said that it has been decided to complete the 8.02 lakh houses under construction at various stages in the State by the end of next March. Similarly, it has been decided to do conversion of 6.08 lakh houses which are under construction. Parthasarathy stated that steps will be taken to utilise the fly ash from Thermal Power Stations in Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Nellore and Rayalaseema for the development of layouts where house constructions will be done. Similarly, the Minister explained that the problems related to the houses under construction under Option -3 will be discussed with the Chief Minister and appropriate steps will be taken. The Minister said that orders have been issued to the authorities to complete the reconciliation process by the end of this month regarding the construction of houses. He also said that the progress of housing construction will be reviewed with the authorities once in a month. During the review meeting with the officials of the Housing Department, the Minister said that the government is committed to realise the dream of the poor people across the State and instructed the officials to take all necessary measures. Since the government is determined to build houses for all the deserved beneficiaries, the minister ordered all the officials at the field level to work with sincerity to complete the construction of houses at the earliest. Earlier, the Minister reviewed the progress of housing construction in the districts under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) scheme, which started in 2015. The officials were directed to conduct field-level visits, find out the problems faced by the beneficiaries, and pay special attention to the funds to be received from the Central government for providing infrastructure facilities in the colonies.

Modi vows further crackdown on corruption

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday vowed further crackdown on corruption and black money, saying the government has given "full freedom" to the probe agencies for taking strongest action against the corrupt. The prime minister said no one will be spared in the crackdown. He also took part in the Congress for first levelling serious allegations with evidence against the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and later forming an alliance with it to fight the Lok Sabha elections. Replying to the Motion of Thanks on the President's address, Modi asserted that taking action against corruption is a mission for the NDA government and not a matter of electoral gains. "I want to state without hesitation and also tell the countrymen that I have given full freedom to the agencies to take the strongest action against the corrupt and corruption. The government will not interfere anywhere," the prime minister said. "Yes, they (probe agencies) should work honestly for honesty. No person embroiled in corruption will be able to escape the law. This is Modi's guarantee," the prime minister said. Referring to the opposition members' charge that the government is misusing the probe agencies, Modi cited statements made by opposition leaders like late Mulayam Singh Yadav who had accused the UPA government of using the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against them. He also said even the Supreme Court had termed the CBI as a "caged parrot". "Allegations have been made against the central investigative agencies. It has been said that the central government is misusing the investigative agencies. "The AAP commits liquor scam, the AAP commits corruption, the AAP commits scam in building classrooms for children, the AAP even commits water scam..."

PAWAN TO OFFICIALS: Find scientific solutions to stop sea erosion at Uppada



PNS ■ KAKINADA
 Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, K Pawan Kalyan asked the officials of Maritime board and astronomy ministry to ascertain scientific reasons for the sea erosion in the Uppada area. The Deputy Chief Minister visited the Uppada village in Pithapuram constituency and surrounding areas and saw the sea erosion on Wednesday. He discussed with the MariTime Board, Central Astronomy Ministry (Earth Science Ministry) officials and revenue officials about the sea erosion issue. Speaking on the occasion, Pawan Kalyan assured of extending all needed support in taking steps to prevent the sea erosion. He asked the officials to conduct a scientific survey and start the work. Appropriate instructions have been given to the authorities to find a permanent solution to the sea erosion. Surveyor Lakshmi Narayana explained to Pawan Kalyan that 84 acres of land had been merged into the sea due to sea erosion. He said that 1360 acres in 8 villages were affected by the sea erosion. Collector Shan Mohan Sagili, MP Uday Srinivas and other officials and leaders were among those who accompanied Pawan Kalyan. Earlier, Pawan Kalyan was accorded a rousing welcome by the villagers.

Ministerial sub-committee formed to control ganja

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
 The government has constituted a ministerial sub-committee to control ganja and other narcotics in the State. The sub-committee, formed by Home and Disaster Management Minister Anita Vangalapati, comprises Human Resource Development, IT Minister Nara Lokesh, Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra, Health and Family Welfare Minister Satya Kumar Yadav and Tribal Welfare Minister Gummadi Sandhya Rani. The first meeting of the committee will be held at the State secretariat at 11 am on Thursday. State DGP, CID Intelligence, Additional DGs and SEB Director will also attend the meeting, which will discuss the measures to be taken to control ganja and other narcotic drugs in the State.

Sensex breaches 80,000 level for 1st time



UNDIVIDED ASSETS WORTH OVER Rs 1,42,601 CRORE

Telugu states differ over distribution

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

The total worth of undivided assets between the two Telugu states is about Rs 1,42,601 crore. These assets are pertaining to 245 institutions. The Andhra Pradesh government is claiming about Rs 75,000 crore worth assets as its share.

worth over Rs 30,350 crore are in Telangana. Another 12 institutions with undivided assets worth Rs 1,759 crore are also in Telangana. The Andhra Pradesh government's argument is that the 91% of the undivided assets pertain to institutions located in Hyderabad, have disproportionately benefited Telangana. But the argument of Telangana government is that these assets are developed with the taxes collected from the people of Telangana and hence that the assets should be distributed on geographical basis. That means the assets located in Andhra Pradesh region belong to AP and the assets located in the Telangana region belong to Telangana. The Telangana government

also claims some of these assets were created by the erstwhile Nizam government and AP has no share in these institutions. In Andhra Pradesh, seaports were developed and several buildings were constructed in the combined Andhra Pradesh but they are not claiming any share in these assets.

Meanwhile, to resolve the issue of distribution of assets between the two Telugu states, as per Reorganisation Act, the Central government conducted around 30 meetings which were attended by the Chief Secretaries and other officials of both states. But the officials of both states did not arrive at a consensus and the deadlock is continuing after one decade of State bifurcation. The Central government appointed Sheela Bhide Committee to look after the distribution of assets of the institutions listed in the 9th and 10th Schedule of Reorganisation Act. The Sheela Bhide Committee submitted its report on this issue which was rejected by the Telangana government.

TET, Mega DSC candidates to get 90 days to prepare for exams

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has taken key decisions pertaining to the conduct of TET and DSC examinations. As per the request of the candidates appearing for the exams, they will be given 90 days each to prepare.

As part of pre-poll promises, after Chandrababu took oath as CM, the first file signed was the Mega DSC to fill 16,347 teacher posts. Minister Nara Lokesh has directed the officials to initiate action to complete this entire process within six months. Fresh BE and DE graduates will also be given an opportunity in Mega DSC.

Student union leaders, youth organisations and several MLCs had appealed to Minister Lokesh for more time to prepare for the TET and Mega DSC exams. After examining their appeals, the minister spoke to the higher officials of the Education Department and took the decision.

The government will soon announce the new dates for TET and DSC. Lokesh has reportedly ordered the officials to complete the whole process by December and to provide jobs by next January.

Manage water sources, ensure sufficient irrigation water: CM

Reviews water release for cultivation and crops in current Kharif season

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has directed the officials to manage the water sources properly in the irrigation projects and ensure that there is no shortage of water. The CM reviewed the preparation of the Agriculture Department in the cultivation of Kharif crops in the State with the officials of the Agriculture and Irrigation Departments. They discussed water release for cultivation and crops in the current Kharif season, during the meeting held at the Secretariat on Wednesday.

During the review, the officials explained the irrigation water release plan to the Chief Minister. They said that water was released to the Godavari delta on June 1, and water release started through Pattiseema, Pushkara, Tatipudi and Purushottamapatnam on Wednesday. They further said that there is no water in Pulichintala hence Krishna Delta will be irrigated only by the water coming from Pattiseema.

The officials added that the State received good rainfall



this season despite the heat wave in June. Only 45 mandals received deficient rainfall. An average of 50 per cent excess rainfall has been recorded. So far this season, 4,14,490 lakh acres are to be cultivated while 3,04,604 acres have been cultivated, they said.

The CM gave many instructions and orders to the officers. "Cultivation has become burdensome in the past five years due to the previous government policies. The farmers who have the most debts in the country are our farmers. Cultivation costs should be reduced through government subsidies and policies. The previous TDP government used to conduct regular soil tests and provide nutrients to

the farmers. Drip subsidies were also provided on a large scale in drought-prone areas like Rayalaseema."

The CM suggested that the zero-budget natural farming, which was ambitiously undertaken in 2018, has been considered. The farmers should be made aware of spraying insecticides with drones and methods of applying excessive pesticides to the crops should be stopped. Deploing that even the silt has not been removed from the crop canals for five years of the previous government's rule, CM Naidu ordered the removal of water hyacinth and algae creepers from all the crop canals. The CM advised the officials to use more water from the Krishna River to

Rayalaseema by using Godavari flood water to the Krishna Delta. He further advised to bring crop insurance again in the old system. Chandrababu said that the crop insurance system will continue with the participation of farmers.

Chandrababu said that the authorities should reassure the farmers who are facing severe losses and instructed IAS officials to go to the fields from the secretariat and talk to the farmers directly. Necessary instructions should be given to the rice (paddy) farmers and they should be made aware of the new cultivation methods. Minister for Agriculture K Atchannaidu and officials participated in the review.

SCS for AP, a closed chapter?

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NDA allies Chandrababu Naidu-led TDP and Nitish Kumar-led Janata Dal have demands to put before the BJP-led government at the Centre regarding the Special Category Status. Recently, JD (U) held a national executive meeting and passed a resolution demanding special status to Bihar State.

However, the recent statements made by Union Minister Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma indicate that the Modi government is in no mood to approve these requests.

Union Minister Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma says State was offered a special package instead of special status



While addressing media persons on Wednesday, Varma, who represents Narasapuram and serves as Union Minister

of State for Steel, stated that the Telugu State was offered a special package instead of special status.

Referring to Nitish Kumar's party resolution for granting the special status to the northern State, Varma wondered whether passing resolutions would help in achieving the Special Category Status to the State.

"Coalition governments are in power both at the Centre and in the State. Granting SCS

is not something that can be done through passing resolutions. Bihar is also seeking special status. The Centre is willing to support development through a special package instead," Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma told reporters.

He further said Chandrababu Naidu is visiting Delhi to meet MPs and discuss various State-related issues. The government will hold talks on all crucial issues, the Union minister added.

White Paper politically motivated: Adimulapu Suresh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Adimulapu Suresh said that White Paper on Amaravati released by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu was a bunch of lies. "It's not a White Paper, but a green paper," he said.

Addressing media persons on Wednesday, Adimulapu Suresh said that the White Paper was politically motivated without evidence, and said: "Why didn't Chandrababu, who claims to have a vision, complete Amaravati? He will create wealth. To whom is wealth created and given? All classes should be in the capital. We have given house plots for all communities to stay in Amaravati. Chandrababu should tell why he could not give lands to the poor in Amaravati. Before the announcement of the capital, large-scale purchases of land were made with the information of the government."

"Naidu made baseless allegations against the YSRCP regime. Amaravati smart city, core capital development etc. have been taken forward. We have settled all the debts of Chandrababu. How much did Chandrababu spend for Amaravati? It would have been better if he had mentioned all the debts of his government in his White Paper. Jagan also increased the pension of landless labourers in the capital region. We have opposed you as you will build with lakhs of crores in the name of nine cities in Amaravati. If all the money is spent in one place, we ask what will be the condition of the other areas," said Suresh.

Minister Suresh asked why Chandrababu, who wanted to build the capital, failed to at least give returnable plots to the farmers. Before the announcement of the capital, there was a large-scale land scam in Amaravati. Thousands of acres changed hands between June and mid-

December 2014, which is purely insider trading. Chandrababu should tell people how this happened. TD is responsible for the situation in the capital. Why was the seed access road not completed? The lights on that road were also installed during TD's regime. We have given 1,400 acres in the capital to 52,000 people. Why didn't Chandrababu mention it in his White Paper?" asked Suresh.

Regarding Amaravati development, Adimulapu Suresh said, "We have constructed 17 Anganwadi Centres and 14 schools in Amaravati. The construction of the West Bypass over Amaravati was done during our rule. Why is Chandrababu not talking about it? If Chandrababu's iconic bridge is shown in graphics, Jagan has built it in reality. Rs.841 crore has been provided to the farmers under annuity. We have provided Rs 580 crore as pension to the labourers in Amaravati."



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

PNS ■ AYODHYA

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

Till now the priests in the sanctum sanctorum were seen in saffron clothes. They used to wear saffron turban, saffron kurta and dhoti. The priests have now started wearing yellow (pitambari) dhoti with a kurta and turban of the same colour.

According to the temple officials, the new dress code has been made effective from Jul 1. The new priests have been given training to tie the yellow turbans.

'People's...'

Continued from Page 1

"But soon after YSRCP came to power, the destruction started by demolishing the Praja Vedika," Chandrababu said, observing that later three capitals were announced. Chandrababu made it clear that the remains of Praja Vedika are not being removed as the people should always recollect the "destructive rule" of YSRCP soon after having a look at these remnants.

The Chief Minister regretted that the very brand of Andhra Pradesh has been hit hard with the style of functioning of the previous rule. Making it clear that there is no question of going back on taking Amaravati much forward, Chandrababu said: "We will relaunch the works of the capital where they were halted and will resolve all the legal tangles."

Chandrababu promised to take steps to build houses for all those homeless and said that all the problems created by the previous YSRCP rule, like non-supply of water to AIIMS, will be overcome. Expressing serious concern, Chandrababu maintained: "I have never experienced this kind of situation wherein all the systems have collapsed."

Poverty declines to 8.5% from 21.2%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

According to the IHDS findings...poverty declined significantly between 2004-2005 and 2011-12 (from a headcount ratio of 38.6 to 21.2), and it continued to decline between 2011-12 and 2022-24 (from 21.2 to 8.5) despite the challenges posed by the pandemic," the paper said. The paper said economic growth and poverty decline create a dynamic climate that requires nimble social protection programmes.

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



The paper noted that ensuring social protection systems keep up with the pace of social transformation will be a key challenge for India as it strives towards equitable development.

According to the paper, during an era of economic growth, when opportunities increase, the long-term determinants of poverty may decline while accidents of life associated with natural disasters, illness and death, and changes in occupation-specific opportunities may become more important.

"Accidents of birth are more likely to affect long-term chronic poverty, accidents of life may have a transitory effect on moving in and out of poverty," it said. Earlier this year, NITI Aayog CEO B V R Subrahmanyam had said the latest consumer expenditure

survey indicates that poverty has come down to 5 per cent in the country and people are becoming prosperous both in rural and urban areas.

"If we take the poverty line and inflate it with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to today's rate, we see that the average consumption of the lowest fractional, the 0-5 per cent, is about the same. This means poverty in the country is there in the 0-5 per cent group only," the NITI Aayog CEO had said. The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, released data on household consumption expenditure for the year 2022-23 on February 24 that showed per capita monthly household expenditure more than doubled in 2022-23 as compared to 2011-12.

Focus on safe drinking water...

Continued from Page 1

The Medical and Health Department should pay more attention to the number of people affected by seasonal diseases, especially in the tribal areas. The CM commented that the systems have become weak everywhere. Even drinking water tests are not being conducted. Cleaning and chlorination of water head tanks were done regularly in the villages during the rule of the Telugu Desam government. He ordered the officials to revive the old best practices.

On the occasion, Minister Narayana said

that due to non-payment of Rs 14 lakh to the water quality checking lab, the services were stopped.

Now, the dues have been paid and the services have been made available. Chandrababu ordered the ministers and officials to hold a special meeting in this connection and go ahead with the action. The CM said that with sanitation works, continuous fogging and provision of safe drinking water, most of the seasonal diseases can be prevented. Ministers Narayana, Satyakumar Yadav and officials of three departments participated in the review.

Free sand policy in three...

Continued from Page 1

He said it is not possible to excavate sand from the reaches before September due to the rainy season. In the next two weeks, the officials will identify the stock points in the State and the sand available will be distributed free of cost to the people. It has been estimated that about one million tonnes of sand will be required for the next three months.

The charges of vehicles transporting sand from the stock points will also be controlled so that sand can be transported at minimum charges, instead of black marketing, appropriate measures will be taken, said the Minister.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Trayodashi: Jul 03 07:10 AM to Jul 04 05:54 AM
Chaturdashy: Jul 04 05:54 AM to Jul 05 04:58 AM
Amavasya: Jul 05 04:58 AM to Jul 06 04:27 AM
Nakshatram: Mrigashirsha: Jul 04 04:07 AM to Jul 05 03:54 AM
Ardra: Jul 05 03:54 AM to Jul 06 04:06 AM
Rahukalam: 1:58 PM to 3:35 PM
Yamagandam: 5:50 AM to 7:27 AM
Varjyam: 12:22 PM to 01:59 PM
Gulika: 9:05 AM to 10:43 AM
Amritakalam: 07:11 PM to 08:46 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:54 AM to 12:46 PM
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Mostly Cloudy
Temp: 35°
Humidity: 65%
Sunrise: 5:39 AM
Sunset: 6:44 PM
Updated: July 3, 2024 5:00 PM

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION CHHATRAPATI SAMBAJINAGAR
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Mob No : 9764999780
No.CSMC/Mech/448 /2024 Dt. 02/07/2024
Corrigendum
Ref: Tender ID No. 2024-AMCA-998054-1
As per the reference, tender called for Fabrication & supply of 70 Mtr. Hydraulic Platform for fire fighting and rescue operation with 10 years CSMC (01 No.). Regarding this tender corrigendum is published on www.mahatenders.gov.in portal. Rest of the condition remains unchanged.
Executive Engineer (Mech)
Municipal Corporation
Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

'Bhogapuram airport will transform Vizianagaram'

Project to catalyse rapid economic growth and infrastructure enhancement

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

Vizianagaram MLA Puspapati Aditi Vijayalakshmi Gajapathi Raju has declared that Vizianagaram city is set to undergo a transformative phase, propelled by the upcoming construction of an international airport at Bhogapuram. Under the initiatives of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, this project promises to catalyse rapid economic growth and infrastructure enhancement in the region.

The announcement came during a felicitation ceremony held in honour of Vijayalakshmi for her recent electoral victory to the Assembly. Attending dignitaries, including Vizianagaram Chamber of Commerce president Kapuganti Prakash and



secretary Ravva Srinivas, acknowledged her leadership and vision for the district.

Addressing the gathering, Vijayalakshmi underscored Vizianagaram's historical prominence as a hub of trade and commerce, expressing optimism that the forthcoming government initiatives will

revive its former prosperity. She assured close collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, which represents over 5,000 businesses, to incorporate their insights into comprehensive developmental strategies.

The event also saw Gudisha Jyothi, president, and Ravva

Manju, secretary of the Chamber's women wing, urging Vijayalakshmi to champion the cause of women entrepreneurs. Concurrently, K Subhash Chandra Bose, State vice-president of the Confederation of Real Estate Developers Associations, advocated for robust governmental support to bolster the construction sector, aligning with the anticipated growth spurred by the airport and other infrastructure projects.

With collaborative efforts and governmental backing, the city aims to reclaim its position as a thriving centre of commerce and innovation in the region. Chamber member Kapuganti Srinivas, former presidents Vusirikala Chandrasekhar, G Shivakumar, member KKK Raju also spoke in the meeting.

Shortage of vital medical supplies at KGH puts patients at risk

There is critical shortage of human immunoglobulin injections, essential for patients battling depleted protein levels

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

King George Hospital (KGH) in Visakhapatnam is grappling with a critical shortage of human immunoglobulin injections, essential for patients battling depleted protein levels. This scarcity, persisting for over a month at the region's principal government hospital, has severely affected those with severe health conditions.

Dr. P. Sivananda, Superintendent of KGH, has sounded the alarm, emphasising the urgency of the situation. "Our hospital requires 400 vials of immunoglobulin injections every month," Dr. Sivananda stated. "Due to the shortage, we are compelled to allocate funds from the Hospital Development Society and Aarogyasri to procure limited stocks for our most



critical patients."

The impact of the shortage is exacerbated by exorbitant costs in the open market, where each immunoglobulin injection commands a staggering ₹12,000. This financial burden has pushed many

patients to the brink. "The disruption in the supply chain between the State government's Vijayawada Central Drug Store and KGH has worsened the situation," explained Dr. Sivananda. Patients with compromised

immune systems, paralysis, and chronic diseases are among those bearing the brunt of this scarcity. "For some patients, these injections are not just treatment but a lifeline," revealed a doctor from KGH, speaking anonymously. "Approximately five patients across various departments rely on these injections daily."

Efforts are now underway to mitigate the shortfall. The Drug Distribution Department at KGH has launched urgent procurement procedures, yet challenges persist in sourcing supplies from Vijayawada. Dr. Sivananda has urgently called upon all hospital departments to submit their daily requirements, aiming to compile a comprehensive report for immediate action by the Health Ministry.

'Women in dairying will bolster AP's milk production'

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Varsha Joshi, Additional Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD), Government of India, has stated that the adoption of modern dairy practices, along with increased participation of women in dairying, will significantly enhance Andhra Pradesh's milk production. She made these remarks at Tirupati on Wednesday, while addressing the 10th anniversary celebrations of Shreeja Mahila Milk Producer Organisation - world's largest women-owned milk producer organisation, with a member base of over 1.20 lakh. The organisation procures eight lakh litres of milk per day.

Varsha Joshi said that Andhra Pradesh has made noteworthy progress in milk production in recent years, with organisations like Shreeja playing a major role. "The State currently ranks fifth in the country in terms of milk production and should aim to become one of the top three producers. As we gather here to celebrate Shreeja's 10th anniversary, there is no doubt about the milestone achieved, no matter how challenging it may have been. According to



data from the Department of Animal Husbandry, milk production in Andhra Pradesh has increased by 60 per cent from 96.56 lakh tonnes in 2014-15 to 1.54 crore tonnes in 2022-23."

Addressing a large gathering of women-dairy farmers, Dr Meenesh Shah, Chairman, National Dairy Development

Board and NDDB Dairy Services, complimented the farmers on completing 10 years and achieving numerous milestones along the way. Dr Shah stated that Shreeja started operations in the milk shed area of the erstwhile Chittoor District Cooperative Milk Producers Union Ltd. and has since expanded to 12 districts,

including neighbouring States.

It is worth noting that during the mid-1990s the Chittoor District Cooperative Milk Producers Union Ltd. was procuring around three lakh litres of milk. However, it eventually reached a point where losses mounted, milk procurement dropped to 65,000 litres per day and milk

payments to farmer members became unsustainable. The Board of Chittoor Cooperative Milk Union and its general body passed a resolution to hand over Balaji Dairy Tirupati (then a Unit of Chittoor Milk Union) to NDDB with a mandate to make operations viable and serve milk producers.

Corruption allegations engulf AU Distance Education Centre

Rapid increase of examination centres from 50 to 100 raises concerns

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A controversy has erupted at Andhra University's Distance Education Centre (AU DEC) with officials facing serious allegations of corruption and misconduct. The number of examination centres across districts has seen a significant increase, from 50 to 100 in just one year. This rapid expansion has raised concerns about overcrowding and potential irregularities in the approval process.

Sources allege that a newly appointed official, who previously worked at a private college, may have played a role in the surge in examination centres. There are reports that financial improprieties may have influenced the decisions regarding centre approvals, raising concerns about the integrity of the process.

The allegations extend to colleges that offer distance education programmes. These institutions are suspected of seeking approval for examina-

tion centres with the intent of providing improper assistance to students during exams, rather than ensuring a fair testing environment. The implicated officer, reportedly in collaboration with the former Vice-Chancellor, is accused of approving centres for select colleges, fueling rumours of bribery involving high-ranking officials. Furthermore, speculation suggests that the process of allocating examination centres may have been manipulated by an associate from a private college. These serious allegations have prompted the new Vice-Chancellor and other university officials to call for a comprehensive investigation.

AU DEC has witnessed a steady rise in student enrollment, with an annual influx of 10,000 to 15,000 new students. This surge has allegedly motivated some colleges to establish examination centres as a means to generate additional revenue. Students are reportedly being charged exorbitant fees, ranging from Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,000,

for purported "examination support". Those who refuse to pay these fees are said to be facing undue hardships, suggesting that some college administrations may be prioritising profit over academic integrity.

Previously, 10 study centres were established across districts to provide essential services to students, including admissions processing, fee collection, and book distribution. However, these centres were recently dismantled under the pretext of transitioning to online services. This move has caused inconvenience for students who relied on these in-person resources. The unfolding scandal at AU DEC underscores the critical need for robust accountability and transparency within the institution. As calls for a comprehensive investigation gain momentum, the academic community and students alike await decisive action to restore trust and ensure the integrity of the educational system.



VMRDA faces crisis as leadership void hinders development

No permanent Metropolitan Commissioner for past two years

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam Region Development Metropolitan Authority (VMRDA), tasked with overseeing the growth of Visakhapatnam, has been operating in a state of flux for the past two years due to the absence of a permanent Metropolitan Commissioner (MC). This leadership vacuum has resulted in concerns regarding the organisation's direction, accountability, and ability to deliver on its development goals.

The leadership gap began when Venkataramana Reddy, the former MC, was transferred to the position of Tirupati Collector. Dr A Mallikarjuna, the then Collector of Visakhapatnam, took on the additional role of MC until his transfer a week ago. During his tenure, Mallikarjuna rarely communicated VMRDA's progress to the residents of Visakhapatnam, creating a misleading impression of smooth operations.

The YCP government had assigned VMRDA the task of developing layouts and providing basic facilities to Jagannaba colonies in the Visakhapatnam district, using the organisation's funds for this purpose. As a result, approximately Rs. 500 crore of VMRDA funds were allocated to these colonies, nearly depleting the organisation's financial resources. Efforts to raise funds through land auctions faltered due to a sluggish real estate market under the YCP administration, despite promoting Visakhapatnam as the administrative capital.

Key projects have faced delays, including the multi-level car parking building in Siripuram and the rail over-bridge connected to the NAD junction flyover. Additionally, the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Natural History Park Museum has yet to be approved four years after its initial land allocation. Mismanagement has led to issues in Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and rent-

ed shopping complexes, with late interventions creating urgency. Notably, Rs. 2 crore was found to be due from a private operator of a circular train on Kailasagiri, resulting in a court case and seizure. Similarly, a shopkeeper in a Seethammadhara shopping complex vacated due to unpaid rent.

Furthermore, VMRDA lands lack proper protection, with lower-level personnel often inadvertently supporting other parties in court, leading to property attachments. These issues highlight the inefficiency of assigning additional responsibilities to the District Collector as MC. The absence of a full-time MC with a singular focus on VMRDA's mandate has demonstrably hampered progress. The appointment of a dedicated IAS officer to the position is seen as a critical step towards ensuring the organisation's effective management, and consequently, the development of Visakhapatnam.

Experts warn of environmental toxin threat

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As the world observes International Plastic Bag Free Day, experts in Visakhapatnam have urged caution about the long-term health risks associated with plastic use. Studies indicate that prolonged storage in plastic releases toxins that contaminate the environment and infiltrate the human body, disrupting ecosystems and posing serious health problems. City residents lamented the ubiquitous presence of plastic clinging to takeout containers and teacups.

INTERNATIONAL PLASTIC BAG FREE DAY

Prolonged storage in plastic releases toxins that contaminate environment and infiltrate human body

However, the true cost goes beyond mere inconvenience. Hot food can cause harmful chemicals to leach from these flimsy covers, contaminating meals and posing health risks. Improper disposal of plastic pollutes soil and water, inflicting lasting environmental damage.

Despite government bans on single-use plastics, particularly flimsy bags less than 50 microns



thick (impossible to recycle and taking centuries to decompose), their use continues to rise. The

port city generates a staggering 1,100 metric tonnes of daily waste, 150 tonnes of which is plastic. While some thicker plastics are recycled, a significant portion (50 tonnes daily) remains unprocessed, accumulating in landfills. Burning this plastic waste releases carcinogenic gases that pollute the air and contribute to respiratory problems and even cancer. Plastic waste also clogs

drainage systems, creating breeding grounds for mosquitoes and promoting the spread of diseases like dengue, malaria, and chikungunya.

The impact extends beyond terrestrial ecosystems. According to marine biologists, plastic pollution significantly jeopardises marine fauna. Ingestion of plastic by marine animals frequently results in fatalities. The central government has banned plastics less than 50 microns thick, and the Plastic Waste Management Act-2016 mandates State action.

Officials told to improve signalling system

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) Executive officer J Syamala Rao directed the officials concerned to take steps to improve the signalling system, especially so that the control room gets movement of the alarm signals on the movement of wild beasts roaming from the Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple to the seventh mile at any time.

This system would help in sending caution to the devotees and alerting them on time, Rao said at a review meeting held on the safety measures for the pedestrian devotees with the Government Forest, TTD Forest, Engineering, Vigilance, and Security Departments here on Tuesday evening.

The safety and security of



the pilgrims trekking the footpath routes to reach Tirumala hold paramount importance, he asserted, asking the officials to give high priority to the safety of the devotees going on the Alipiri and Srivari Mettu walkways.

Speaking on this occasion, EO said that apart from the existing trap cameras, more numbers should be set up to

track the movement of leopards and other animals. The officials were directed to write a letter to the Committee saying that the proposals given by the earlier joint committee were too expensive and suggested cost effective alternative structures and routes.

Earlier, the EO was briefed by the forest officials on when the footpath has high or low flow of devotees, times leopards are roaming in the area, through a PPT prepared by Wild Life Institution of India. It was brought to the notice of the EO that the devotees on foot should reach Tirumala at the prescribed times, and accordingly, changes should be made.

The EO asked JEO Veerabrahram and Chief Vigilance and Security Officer Narasimha Kishore to discuss with the concerned authorities and take appropriate measures as per the suggestions of forest officials. SV Zoo Park Curator Selvam, DFO Tirupati Satish, Deputy CF TTD Srinivas, Estates Special Officer Mallikharjuna, and others were present.

Meanwhile, referring to a news going viral on social media that TTD has decided to stop using organic rice for preparing Annasradams in Tirumala temple, considering the old practice of replacing it with normal rice, the TTD EO made it clear that it is absolutely void of truth. The EO had a meeting with the priests and the temple authorities the other day and discussed at length the Anna Prasadam and their importance only.

Apart from that, no decision has been taken on the preparation or increasing ditam of Annasradams, TTD said in a statement here on Wednesday, but some people are creating rumours on social media that changes have been made in the preparation of Annasradams in Srivari Temple, and it is completely incorrect. TTD appeals to devotees not to believe such false news making the rounds on social media platforms.

Minister releases water from Pattiseema Lift Project

PNS ■ ELURU

Minister for Water Resources Development Nimmala Ramanaidu released the Godavari water to the Krishna delta by switching on the motors of Pattiseema Lift Scheme at Pattiseema near Polavaram on Wednesday.

The Minister performed pooja and gave the traditional harati to the Godavari water and later switched on the motors in the pump house of Pattiseema lift scheme. Water gushed out of 2, 4 and 6 channels of Pattiseema project to the canal. The Minister was flanked by Eluru district Collector K Vetri Selvi and MLAs Ch Balaraju, P Dharma Raju and M Venkatesara Rao.

Later talking to the media, Minister Rama Naidu said that water released today through the Pattiseema, Tadipudi, Purushothapatnam and Pushkar lift irrigation projects. Releasing water through the four lift irrigation project is a record, the Minister claimed.

He informed that 8000 cusecs of water being released through the Pattiseema lift scheme, 875 cusecs of water through Tadipudi lift scheme, 3,500 cusecs of water through Purushothapatnam lift scheme and 1200 cusecs of water is being released through the Pushkar lift irrigation project. The Minister stated that



through the Pattiseema Lift Scheme, water was provided to the Krishna delta in 2016, 2017 and 2018. He said that 10 lakh acres were irrigated with the water supplied through the Pattiseema lift scheme. The farmers cultivated over Rs

40,000 crore worth crops using the water supplied through the Pattiseema lift project.

Releasing the Godavari water from the Pattiseema lift scheme enables the farmers to commence their kharif crop operations without waiting for rains,

he added. The Minister said that 20 TMCs of water would be supplied to the Krishna delta through the Pattiseema lift scheme.

Minister Ramanaidu described the Pattiseema lift scheme as a 'Bangaru seema' to

the Krishna delta. Stating that the Naidu headed government is giving priority for the irrigation projects, he said that all pending irrigation projects would be completed expeditiously.

He also made it clear that the water storage at Yeluru reservoir would be increased to provide drinking water to the people of north AP. Water would also be provided to the Visakhapatnam Steel plant, he added.

The erstwhile YSRCP regime made a historical blunder by changing the construction agency of Polavaram project. The Polavaram Project Authority had cautioned the YSRCP led government not to replace the construction agency but disregarding the advice, the then government changed agency consequently the works of the project came to grinding halt.

The Minister said that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu is determined to overcome the problems in the construction of the Polavaram project at the earliest and complete the construction of the project expeditiously. Minister Ramanaidu said that the problems of the displaced people will also be identified and resolved on priority basis. ITDA PO M Suryateja, RDO K Addayya, Irrigation SE Narasimha Murthy and a host of officials were present.

Godavari river bund being strengthened: Collector



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari district Collector C Naga Rani has said that the embankment of river Godavari is being strengthened to withstand even 25 lakh cusecs of flood water.

The Collector inspected the works of Godavari river bund at various places at Narasapuram on Wednesday. She inquired with the irrigation officials about the ongoing works. She inspected the breaches to the bund which took place during the last floods season.

She directed the officials to expedite the works and ordered them not to compromise on quality. This is the first visit of the river Godavari bunds to Naga Rani after taking charge as Collector.

Later talking to the media, the Collector said that the

river embankment Godavari breached when 22 lakh cusecs of flood flow in 2022 floods. The works to strengthen the Godavari river bund had been taken up and so far revetment works to a length of 250 meters had been completed at a cost of Rs 24 crore.

"Now the embankment of river Godavari is being strengthened such that it can withstand even 24 lakh cusecs of flood water," the Collector made it clear. Collector Naga Rani said that as per the metrological forecast, the river Godavari receives heavy floods during the months of July due to heavy rains in the catchment areas.

She said that the work for strengthening the embankment of the river Godavari is being carried out under the supervision of the quality control wing. RDO M Achyut

Ambarish, DRDA PD MSS Venugopal, Godavari right embankment AE Pawan Kumar and other officials were among those who accompanied the Collector.

Later the Collector visited the Alankruthi lace park at Sitarapuram South and the international lace trade centre located at Rustmbadh. The Collector inquired about the production and sales of the products. She interacted with the women working there.

The women requested the Collector to provide transport and marketing facilities to their products for which the Collector responded positively.

The Collector exhorted the women to avail the facilities being provided by the government and excel in making the lace products with new designs.

CHANDRABABU & REVANTH MEETING

TG Deputy CM Bhatti reviews steps



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

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

Vikramarka inspected Praja Bhavan.

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

The review saw participation from Principal Secretary (Finance) Ramakrishna Rao, Special Officer (Praja Vani) Divya, Secretary (Roads and Buildings) Harichandana, Protocol Department Director Venkata Rao, and other officials.

DGP congratulates AP Police officers on winning medals



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

DGP Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao has congratulated the police personnel on winning medals at the ninth All India Police Judo Cluster-2024 held in Guwahati. The Judo competition was held for six days and the Andhra Pradesh

Police Department players won nine medals (1 Gold, 2 Silver, 6 Bronze) by putting up their best performance.

The All India Police Judo Cluster-2024 was organised from June 24 to 30 in five disciplines related to professional skills (Judo,

Taekwondo, Karate, Pencak-Silat and Wushu). A total of 40 teams with more than 2,000 police personnel from 24 States, five Union Territories, and 11 Armed Forces participated in the competition. The AP team was led by IG KV Mohan Rao.

Officials conduct surprise inspections in hotels

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

The food safety officials conducted surprise inspections to some of the hotels in Tadepalligudem and found unhygienic conditions and poor quality of food items on Wednesday.

The officials inspected some of the hotels and restaurants and found the meat was poor in quality. They found the Biryani being served was in yellow colour. They collected samples of the food items and sent them to the laboratory.

Cases were registered against four hotels for not maintaining hygienic conditions and quality of food. Action would be initiated against the hotels and restaurants after receiving the laboratory reports, food inspector ASR Reddy said. Food controller M Sriivasa Rao was among those who took part in the raids.



158 red sanders logs seized; four smugglers arrested

PNS ■ KADAPA

The police seized 158 red sander logs worth Rs 1.60 crore and arrested four smugglers.

SP Siddhartha Kaushal told the media here on Wednesday that a police team led by Inspector R Eeshwaraiiah and SI M Bhaskar Reddy noticed a mini-lorry stationed on the Proddatur-Yerraguntla road suspiciously.

When the police approached the mini-lorry, on noticing the police, three persons tried to flee. The police chased and apprehended them. The police seized 44 red sander logs in the mini-lorry. On the information given by the three arrested persons, the police conducted a raid at Jaganna colony and seized 40 red sander logs while being transported in a tractor. The police arrested one person in this connection.

On the information provided by the arrested person, a police team conducted a raid on the house of Dudekula Basha in the Jaganna colony and seized 74 red sander logs which were concealed in the backyard of his house.



The police seized a total number of 158 red sander logs, worth 1.60 crore, one Eicher Mini-lorry worth Rs 20 lakh, a tractor Rs 10 lakh and a pulsar motor cycle worth Rs 1 lakh.

The Yerraguntla police registered cases UG PS Cr.No.146/2024 U/s 307 R/w

3(5) BNS Act and Sec 20(1)(d)(i)(a) r/w 20(1)(c) II, III, iv, x, 36(a) r/w 32A and Sec29(4)(a)(i) of the AP Forest Amendment Act, 2016. The police gave the names of four arrested red sander smugglers as Dudekula Basha, P Mohammad Rafi, Aravolla Rafi and Chelluboina Shiva Sai.



16 kg ganja seized during checking of parcel office godowns

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The district police have taken up raids and checkings at various places to curb the ganja sales and consumption in the district.

SEB DSP Venkatadi told the media here on Wednesday that on the directions of district Superintendent of police V Harshavardhan Raju, special police teams conducted raids and searches the parcel service godowns, luggage stores, and transport office godown and courier service offices at various places thoroughly as part of preventing ganja transportation through various modes.

During the searches and checking of godowns, the police found 16 KGs of ganja and seized it. The police also conducted searches at RTC bus courier service godown, railway parcel service godown, Navata and Bharat motor parcel services godowns also.

The police teams conduct searches for courier service stock points located at Renigunta. He said that the ganja sales and transportations are being oppressed with iron hand in the district. If anybody indulges in ganja sale, transportation and consumption stringent action would be taken against them.

Thunderstorms with lightning, strong winds likely in AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

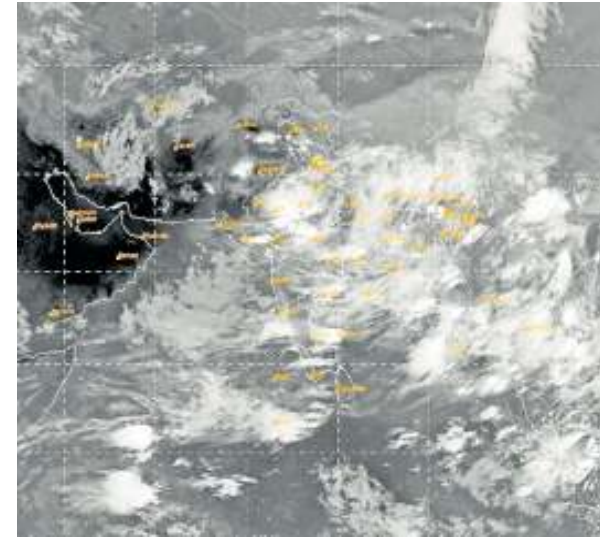
Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and strong winds with speeds 30-40 Kmph are likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next five days, the Meteorological Centre said on Wednesday.

In a daily weather report here, it said thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are likely to occur at isolated places in Rayalaseema during the same period.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at many places or at a few places, or at one or two places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yana, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema during the next seven days.

The monsoon is weak over coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema.

Rainfall occurred at one or two places over Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema, and dry weather prevailed during the last 24 hours, the report added.



Assistant Sub-inspector ends life

PNS ■ KADAPA

An Assistant Sub-inspector allegedly committed suicide by jumping before a running train at Kamalapuram railway station at Tappeta bridge on the night of Tuesday.

According to the railway police, the deceased Nagarjuna Reddy was working as ASI at Kamalapuram police station in the district.

After completing his duties on the night of Tuesday, he left the police station for home.

However he went to the railway track and jumped before a running train. He committed suicide after removing his uniform and putting on civil dress. The police found his body at Tappeta Bridge in Vallur mandal.

The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for postmortem. The exact reasons for taking extreme steps are yet to be ascertained by the police.



INDIA CORNER

Police makes second arrest in Chopra flogging case

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



RTI appeals pendency coming down every year: Union Minister Jitendra

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



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

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



Cong, INDIA bloc spreading lies on NEET issue: Pradhan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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



Amid a raging row over alleged irregularities, including paper leaks, in competitive examinations such as the NEET and the NET, the opposition has been demanding a discussion on the issue in Parliament.

"Congress has a history of cheating the country on past and present issues. This intention of theirs has come out in the open in the NEET case as

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

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

on NEET issue," he added.

In the line of fire over the alleged irregularities in the NEET and the PhD entrance NET, the Centre removed National Testing Agency (NTA) director general Subodh Singh last week and notified a high-level panel headed by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief R Radhakrishnan to ensure transparent, smooth and fair conduct of examinations through the NTA.

While the NEET is under the scanner over several irregularities, including alleged paper leaks, the UGC-NET was cancelled as the education ministry received inputs that the integrity of the exam was compromised. Both matters are being probed by the CBI.

Two other exams -- CSIR-UGC NET and NEET-PG -- were cancelled as a preemptive step.

Cop mowed down by tractor carrying illegally mined gravel

PNS ■ JAIPUR

A Rajasthan Police head constable was mowed down by a tractor driver who was transporting illegally mined gravel in the state's Tonk district, officials said on Wednesday.

The incident occurred in the Kotwali police station area when Head Constable Khushiram Bairwa (35) tried to stop the tractor late on Tuesday night, police said.

"Instead of stopping the vehicle, the driver hit the head constable and left him grievously injured. The policeman was referred to the Sawai Man Singh (SMS) Hospital, Jaipur where he died during treatment," Kotwali Station House Officer (SHO) Bhanwarlal Vaishnav said.

The tractor driver, Javed, has been arrested and further investigation is underway, he said.

Jharkhand CM Champai resigns; Hemant stakes claim

PNS ■ RANCHI

Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren resigned on Wednesday and Hemant Soren, who is out on bail in a money laundering case, staked claim to form the government, hours after leaders of the JMM-led alliance in the state unanimously elected him as the legislature party leader.

Champai Soren, who had taken oath as the 12th chief minister of Jharkhand on February 2 after Hemant Soren's arrest, met Governor CP Radhakrishnan at Raj Bhavan and tendered his resignation in the presence of the JMM executive president, capping a day-long drama full of speculations.

Hemant Soren staked claim to form the government and the swearing-in ceremony is likely to be held soon. If sworn in, Hemant Soren will be the 13th chief minister of Jharkhand, which was carved



out of Bihar on November 15, 2000.

"I have resigned as per the decision of the JMM-led alliance. Our alliance is strong," Champai Soren said after coming out of Raj Bhavan.

"All know what had happened with Hemant Soren Ji... I was given the responsibility by the coalition partners. Now, the alliance has decided in favour of Hemant Soren Ji," he said.

Hemant Soren told the media all formalities to form

the government are complete. "Everything will be disclosed soon," the JMM executive president said when asked about the swearing-in.

Earlier, leaders and MLAs of the alliance during a meeting at Champai Soren's residence here unanimously decided to elect Hemant Soren as the JMM legislature party leader, party sources said. "A decision was taken in the meeting to make Hemant Soren as the Chief Minister of the state again," a party source said.

Delhi Police increases security outside Rahul's residence

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has stepped up security outside Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's residence following an intelligence input of disturbance by right wing groups, sources said on Wednesday.

One platoon of paramilitary, including the local police personnel, have been deployed around Gandhi's residence, sources said.

Gandhi's remarks against the saffron party had created ruckus in the Lok Sabha on Monday. Sources said an input regarding disturbance by right wing group members was received on Tuesday after which the security has been

increased around the Congress leader's residence in central Delhi.

The police have suspected the people may gather with placard or hoardings outside his residence.

The local police has been asked to increase the vigil for 24 hours around his residence, sources said.

Gandhi enjoys Z plus security with ASL (advanced security liaison) category under the CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) personnel.

On Wednesday, the Delhi BJP leaders and workers staged a protest here over Gandhi's remarks against the saffron party and sought an apology from him.

Govt constitutes cabinet committees on security, economic and political affairs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Modi government on Wednesday constituted various cabinet committees, including the country's highest decision making bodies on security, economic and political affairs.

According to an official notification, the Cabinet Committee on Security comprises Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

Apart from PM Modi, the Cabinet Committee on



Economic Affairs comprises defence minister, home minister, finance minister, external affairs minister, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and Heavy

Industries and Steel Minister H D Kumaraswamy.

Others in the committee are: Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Minister of Panchayati Raj and Fisheries Rajiv Ranjan

Singh alias Lalan Singh.

The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs comprises defence minister, home minister, finance minister, panchayati raj minister, Health Minister J P Nadda, Social Justice Minister Virendra Kumar, Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu, Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju, and Minister of Jal Shakti C R Patil.

The special invitees in the committee are Union Minister of State for Law (Independent Charge) Arjun Ram Meghwal and Minister of State for Law L Murugan.

Tripura urges Centre to introduce inland waterway

PNS ■ AGARTALA

The Tripura government has urged the Centre to introduce inland waterway transport in the northeastern state.

In a letter to Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal on Tuesday, Tripura Transport Minister Sushanta Chowdhury sought that linkage of Gomati River in Tripura with Meghna River system in Bangladesh be set up through the Sonamura-Daudkandi protocol route.

"Initiative may be taken for linking Sonamura-Daudkandi waterway to ports in Bangladesh such as Ashuganj, Mongla and Chittagong... further connecting with important Indian rivers such Ganga, Brahmaputra, Barak and ultimately to connect Haldia port in West Bengal through sea routes and Sittwe port of Kaladan project in Myanmar," he stated in the letter.

Experts have pointed out that the cost of transporting goods between India and Bangladesh will come down if the Sonamura-Daudkandi protocol route is operationalised.

Chowdhury also requested the Centre to approve the proposal to purchase six to ten passenger vessels to boost tourism and ease crossing of Gomati River by commuters.

Delhi court extends Kejriwal's custody till July 12

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A court here on Wednesday extended till July 12 the judicial custody of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam.

Kejriwal, who is in jail till July 12 in the CBI case related to the excise policy, appeared before the court of Special Judge Kaveri Baweja through video conference.

The court, meanwhile, reserved for June 6 its order on Kejriwal's application to allow his wife Sunita Kejriwal to be present as an attendant during his medical checkup.

During the proceedings, Kejriwal requested the court's permission to speak

but the court said he is already being represented through his counsels.

Kejriwal said his wife was instrumental in managing his health over the years and as she had a detailed knowledge about his ailments and medical history, granting her access to his medical records every week was justifiable and essential.

"Transparency in his medical care is not only a legal requirement but also a critical component of ethical medical practice.

Therefore, the applicant (Arvind Kejriwal) and his wife must be duly informed of all aspects of the treatment being administered, ensuring their capability to make informed decisions about his health," the plea said.



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

People in India exposed to extreme levels of humid heat during monsoons increased by at least 67 crore over the period 1951-2020, a research has found.

Researchers investigated trends in hot and humid conditions or 'moist heat extremes', commonly seen in monsoons during the summer months, in terms of Wet-Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT).

The researchers, including those from Cornell University,



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

"The consistent increase in exposed area (of close to 43 million square kilometres above 31 degrees Celsius) can adversely impact the labour-intensive work during the monsoon break," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Earth's Future.

They also found that the regions most vulnerable to moist heat extremes with wet-bulb temperatures higher than 38 degrees Celsius were primarily along the Indo-Gangetic plain and eastern coast.

3% babies with low birth weight born during pandemic

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, number of babies in India born with a low birth weight rose sharply -- by about three per cent, a new study has found.

Babies born during the pandemic were also found to be at double the risk of having a low weight at birth.

The increase in babies born with a low weight could impact the development of "human capital" in the long term, as these infants are known to often "struggle with school", corresponding author Santosh Kumar, an associate professor of development and global health economics at the University of Notre Dame, US, said.

"Children who have lower birth weight as infants often go on to struggle with school and this limits their capacity to develop what economists often call 'human capital' -- the key knowledge and skills that will affect their ability to earn a good living and support themselves and their families," Kumar said.

Roughly one in every four babies (3 crore) around the world are born with a low weight, which the World Health Organization (WHO) defines as being less than 2.5 kilograms.

About 95 per cent of these babies are born in low- and middle-income countries, with around half being born in South Asia, according to the authors of the study published in the journal Communications



Medicine. In this study, the researchers found that babies born between April 2020 and April 2021 weighed less than the WHO-defined limit, compared to those born before the pandemic.

Over two lakh infants were analysed, of which 12,000 were born during the pandemic and

about 1,92,000 born pre-pandemic. Data was taken from the fifth round of the Indian National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), conducted during 2019-2021.

"The low birth weight prevalence rate (among babies) is 20 per cent in the pandemic cohort and 17 per cent in the pre-pandemic cohort," the authors wrote in the study, which they claimed is the first one to look at how the pandemic affected birth outcomes in India using a nationally representative sample.

On average, birth weights during the pandemic years were found to be lowered by 11 grams.

The authors also found that babies born during the pan-

demic were at double the risk of having a low birth weight compared to those born pre-pandemic.

While a significant number of pandemic-affected children were observed in rural areas and socially disadvantaged communities, the researchers found that a large number of babies from the richest households were also impacted.

Multiple factors related to the pandemic, including COVID-causing SARS-CoV-2 virus, stress related to social distancing, economic upheaval and the disruption of maternal and neonatal care, may have affected the health behaviours of pregnant women and contributed to lower birth weights, Kumar said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Innocent lives lost

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

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



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

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

PICTALK



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

Pandemonium in Parliament

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CYBERCRIME ON THE RISE

Madam — Despite warnings, people are losing huge amounts of money to cyber criminals via stock market investments and online purchases. Fraudsters generally target the middle-aged and the elderly but youngsters are not spared. People are lured by attractive advertisements on social media platforms like WhatsApp, telegram, Instagram and facebook. When innocent citizens are asked to pump money through websites, they fall in line because the "profit accrued by similar investors" is prominently displayed in the common group. Furthermore, the fraudsters "train" the investors in stock market intricacies.

Unsuspecting investors are unaware that another victim's money is transferred to his/her "account" to show profit. Duped investors sense something is amiss when they are asked to cough up a substantial commission and when their genuine queries go unanswered or are vaguely shrugged off. However, only when the scamster swindles the hard-earned money out of a person does the latter go to the cyber police. Since most states, if not all, have cyber crime helplines, it is vital to report the fraud very quickly because the cheaters are known to waste little time in hoodwinking the law. It is always a good practice to ask SEBI or RBI licence from the opposite party. Fake websites can always be checked. Sharing one-time password (OTP) is never a good idea.

Ganpathi Bhat | Akola

RAHUL GANDHI MUST INTROSPECT

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

Tragedy strikes Hathras



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

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

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

CONCERNS ON NEW CRIMINAL LAWS

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

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

Sandeep Sharma | Bengaluru

Modernising Govt IT: Imperative shift to a multicloud future



SRINIVASCHARY T

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

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



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

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

where you use cloud services from multiple public and private cloud providers. While a single-cloud strategy might seem simpler, it limits service offerings and often commits organizations to a single vendor, which often costs more in the end.

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

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

(The writer is Lead Solution Architect, Dell Technologies India; views are personal)

**FIRST COLUMN**
UNDERSTANDING THE DIVINE HAND

Recognise and reciprocate God's boundless efforts by embracing dharma



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

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

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

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



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

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

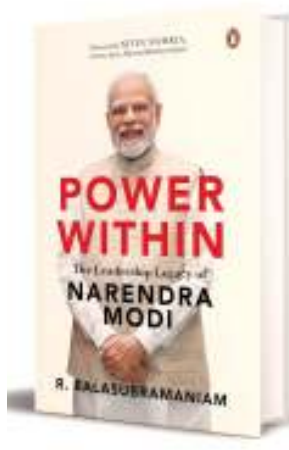
God is always very busy. Not only engaged, but God is very carefully engaged in action. Why? Because men follow His lead, God is the most superior entity. As pointed out earlier, God has taken upon Himself many tasks; I have pointed out only a few. What is the message of this article? That we should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



MADHU SEN

development, particularly in the realm of digital public infrastructure.

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



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

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

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

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

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

(The writer is a senior journalist and an arts critic; views are personal)

Wake-up call against rising plastic pollution

SRIRAJ KOTA

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



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



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

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

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

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

Unveiling the leadership legacy of Narendra Modi: A definitive exploration

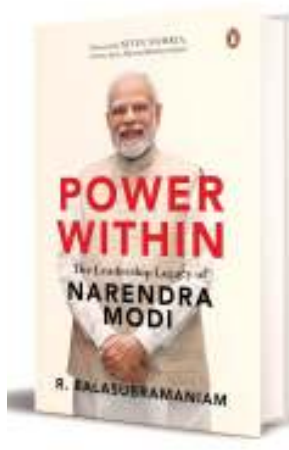
A new book, 'Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi,' offers a profound examination of Modi's leadership journey

Last ten years have been dominated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the helm of affairs. An outsider as he would call him has made deep inroads into the Indian politics as also into the hearts and minds of the millions of Indians who adore him for his unwavering determination and fulfil his promise of making India a developed nation. His leadership is indeed exemplary and has provided the country with a sense of purpose and confidence.

A new book delving into the leadership qualities of Narendra Modi is a treat. Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi, authored by the distinguished development scholar Dr R Balasubramaniam, offers an

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

(The writer is a senior journalist and an arts critic; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

ISMA urges govt to reconsider sugar exports amid surplus

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



Vraj Iron shares settle nearly 22% higher in debut trade

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



Karnataka government signs MoUs with two Korean firms

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has initiated an anti-dumping probe into the import of Chinese lift guide rails following a complaint by a domestic player. The duty is aimed at protecting the domestic industry from cheap imports. The commerce ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) is probing the alleged dumping of 'T-Shaped Elevator/Lift Guide Rails and Counterweight Guide Rails' from China. Savera India Riding Systems Company has filed an application for the initiation of an anti-dumping investigation on the imports of this product from China. The applicant has alleged that material injury is being



caused to the domestic industry due to the alleged dumped imports and has requested for the imposition of anti-dumping duties. "On the basis of the duly substantiated written application submitted by the domestic industry and having reached satisfaction based on the prima facie evidence submitted by the industry con-

cerning the dumping of the product...the Authority, hereby, initiates an anti-dumping investigation," the DGTR has said in a notification. If it is established that the dumping has caused material injury to domestic players, the DGTR would recommend the imposition of anti-dumping duty on these imports. The finance ministry takes the final

decision to impose duties. Anti-dumping probes are conducted by countries to determine whether domestic industries have been hurt because of a surge in cheap imports. As a countermeasure, they impose these duties under the multilateral regime of the Geneva-based World Trade Organization (WTO).

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Wednesday drastically cut the face value of debt securities to Rs 10,000 from Rs 1 lakh at present to boost participation of retail investors in the corporate bond market. Market participants are of the view that lower ticket size of debt securities may encourage more non-institutional investors to participate in the corporate bond market which in turn may also enhance liquidity. In a circular, Sebi said, "the issuer may issue debt security or non-convertible redeemable preference shares on private placement basis at a face value of Rs 10,000". This, however, would be subject to certain conditions like the issuer should appoint at least one merchant banker, and non-convertible debentures and non-convertible redeemable prefer-



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

ence shares be plain vanilla, interest or dividend-bearing instruments. Sebi said that credit enhancements would be permitted in such instruments. With respect to General Information Document (GID), which is valid as on the 'effective date of the circular', Sebi said the issuer may raise funds through tranche placement memorandum or Key Information Document at a face value at Rs 10,000 provided at least one merchant banker is appointed to carry out due diligence in respect of such issuances. "Necessary addendum shall be issued by such issuer to the shelf placement memorandum or General Information Document, as applicable," it added. In October 2022, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) reduced the face value of corporate bonds to Rs 1 lakh from Rs 10 lakh.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi, Jul 3 (PTI) Family offices are increasingly investing in startups, diversifying their portfolios, and seeking higher returns as they are shifting from traditional investments, a PwC India report said. Currently, there are over 300 family offices in India, as against 45 such offices in 2018. The number is set to rise exponentially, with promoters building impressive businesses in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, the report titled 'Creating

Holistic Value for Family Businesses' said.



Noting that the Indian economy is on a roll, the

report said that contributing to its expansion are family businesses, both large conglomerates and small-to-medium-sized enterprises, spanning sectors such as manufacturing, retail, real estate, healthcare and finance. "...family offices have catalysed the creation of jobs, entrepreneurship and a culture of self-reliance in the country, unlike those that have gone south owing to a lack of adaptability, succession planning, innovation, and effective governance," the PwC India report said.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Institutional investment in Indian real estate rose 20 per cent annually to US\$ 2.52 billion in the April-June quarter on higher inflow in warehousing and residential projects, according to Colliers India. Real estate consultant Colliers India on Wednesday released the data, stating that the institutional investments in real estate stood at US\$ 2,528.5 million in the April-June quarter this year, up 20 per cent from US\$ 2,106.4 million in

the year-ago period. As per the data, investments in office assets declined 83 per cent to US\$ 329.6 million from US\$ 1,900.2 million. However, the inflow of funds in residential rose to US\$ 543.5 million from US\$ 72.3 million. Institutional investments in industrial & warehousing projects jumped sharply to US\$ 1,533.1 million during April-June 2024 from US\$ 133.9 million a year ago.

With 81 per cent share, foreign investors, predominantly from the US and UAE, drove real estate investments during the April-June period of this calendar year. Domestic investors infused US\$ 0.5 billion in the second quarter of this calendar year, nearly three times from the year-ago period. Bengaluru and Delhi-NCR cumulatively attracted about 23 per cent of the inflows in the last quarter. During April-June 2024, institutional investments in the industrial & warehousing segment rose manifold, 11 times, compared to the year-ago period, led by select large deals in the segment. "Amidst rising demand for superior quality Grade A supply and evolving supply-chain models, investor confidence in the segment has significantly improved."



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

Gold rises Rs 50; silver jumps Rs 300

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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



The yellow metal traded at Rs 74,650 per 10 grams in local markets in the national capital, marketmen said. Silver traded at Rs 92,300 per kg. Gold traded within range with a modest gain on Wednesday, as traders are awaiting the release of US macro data that could provide new insights into the timing of the Federal Reserve's interest rate cut, Gandhi said.

Sensex breaches 80,000 level for 1st time

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex breached the historic 80,000 level intraday for the first time while Nifty raced more than 162 points to close at a fresh lifetime high on Wednesday following heavy buying in banking and FMCG shares amid firm global market trends. The 30-share Sensex hit the historic 80,000 mark for the first time earlier in the day. It surged 632.85 points or 0.79 per cent to a record intraday high of 80,074.30. The index later closed near the 80,000 level at 79,986.80, up by 545.35

points or 0.69 per cent over the last close. As many as 24 Sensex shares closed with gains and six declined. The BSE Sensex breached the 78,000 level on June 25 and zoomed 183.4 points or 0.76 per cent to hit a fresh intraday record peak of 24,307.25. As many as 40 Nifty shares advanced, nine declined and one closed unchanged. Among the Sensex pack, Adani Ports rose the most by 2.49 per cent. Kotak Mahindra Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank Axis Bank, IndusInd Bank, State Bank of India, Power Grid, JSW Steel, Bajaj Finance and Tata Steel were the biggest gainers. On the other hand, Tata Consultancy Services, Titan, Reliance Industries, Tata Motors and Larsen & Toubro were the laggards.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A sovereign rating upgrade for India in the next 24 months is possible if the central government is able to prudently manage its finances and bring down fiscal deficit to 4 per cent of GDP, an S&P Global Ratings official said on Wednesday. S&P Global Ratings Director, Sovereign Ratings, YeeFarn Phua, said the trigger for upgrade would be general government (Centre + states) deficit falling below 7 per cent of the GDP, and a lot of this would have to be driven by the central government. "If the central government is able to bring down fiscal deficit to 4 per cent of the GDP, we will consider a rating upgrade over the next 24 months," Phua said.

The central government estimates to bring down fiscal deficit to 5.1 per cent of the GDP in the current fiscal, from 5.63 per cent in 2023-24. As per the fiscal consolidation roadmap, the deficit -- the difference between government expenditure and revenue -- will be brought down to 4.5 per cent by 2025-26. The US-based rating agency had in May upgraded outlook for India to positive, from stable, while retaining the rating at 'BBB-'. Phua further said the Indian economy has clocked an average of 8 per cent growth in the last three years, driven by domestic consumption and infrastructure investment that has made real difference on the ground. "We see the medium-term growth potential for India at 7 per cent," Phua said.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

reaching Rs 9 lakh crore to Rs 10 lakh crore by 2030, it said. "This growth trajectory will be driven by robust fundamentals, including an expanding customer base, growing con-

sumption occasions, and a rise in supply. Additionally, online food delivery is expected to grow faster at (around) 18 per cent CAGR, contributing 20 per cent to the overall food services market by 2030," the report said. Swiggy Food Marketplace CEO Rohit Kapoor said the Indian food services market, especially food delivery, has witnessed buoyant growth over the last few years. "Higher incomes, digitisation, improved customer experience, and an inclination to try new experiences have all contributed to this growth," he added.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association on Wednesday said its members are witnessing a 'severe crunch' in the availability of domestic natural rubber and it may disrupt production unless supply issues of the raw material are addressed. Despite high prices of natural rubber (NR), its availability has shrunk, Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA) said, expressing apprehension that some 'sections of natural rubber producing interests or trade are withholding the

material in anticipation of an increase in the NR prices worsening the availability'. The 'tyre industry has been experiencing tightness in domestic availability of natural rubber for some time. However currently a severe crunch is being witnessed despite the fact that NR prices have touched a multi-year high. The paucity of natural price needs to be addressed at the earliest so that tyre production processes are not disrupted," ATMA Director General Rajiv Budhraj said in a statement. The Rubber Board had estimated the total domestic natural rubber stock available in the country at 3.7 lakh tonnes at the start of the current fiscal, it said, adding that "unfortunately, the visibility of such a high stock to support domestic demand is not there."



what's brewing?

Tabu looks back at her childhood bond with Ajay Devgn

Tabu and Ajay Devgn are an onscreen pair that has instant chemistry. The two have worked together on over ten films, including the upcoming *Auron Mein Kaha Dum Tha*.

Tabu and Ajay Devgn have known one another since they were teenagers. Tabu discussed their relationship, saying, "He was just like this. He hasn't changed much except that he's married and has children now. He was always quite enthusiastic about cinema. He aspired to be a filmmaker. He never aspired to be an actor. He used to create these short flicks. So that's how I remember him. So I believe my ease and comfort with him stem from the fact that I knew him long before we started acting together. That's the foundation of our friendship." Tabu explained how she met Ajay and became friends in the first place: "I've known Ajay since we were about 12 or 13. He's my brother's childhood friend. So we sort of grew up together. I don't know him from the movies. I believe that is why the equation is different. Except for him, most of the male co-stars with whom I've worked do not share this equation. Because I know him from a different time, it's a different relationship."

Meanwhile, she also shares how she likes the way he never tries to interfere with or influence her decisions and respects her space.

Auron Mein Kaha Dum Tha, which was originally scheduled for July 5, will now be released at a later date.



Cate Blanchett to receive 'Share Her Journey Groundbreaker Award'

Renowned Australian actor and producer Cate Blanchett is slated to receive the TIFF Share Her Journey Groundbreaker Award during the 49th Toronto International Film Festival, taking place on September 8 at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel in Toronto, Canada.

The two-time Oscar winner has made significant contributions to the film industry through movies such as *Tar*, *The Aviator*, *Blue Jasmine* and the *Elizabeth* franchise. Proceeds from the event will benefit TIFF's Every Story Fund, dedicated to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in film.

Blanchett, who is also set to participate in an "In Conversation With..." event reflecting on her career, has been lauded not only for her on-screen performances but also for her off-screen advocacy for equity and justice. TIFF CEO Cameron Bailey reinforced Blanchett's alignment with the goals of the Share Her Journey initiative, recognising her as a transformative force in storytelling. The award, introduced in 2022, has previously been received by Patricia Arquette and Michelle Yeoh. This year's TIFF runs from September 5 through September 15 and remains one of the world's most prestigious film festivals.



VIJAY UNFOLDS HIS TEDIOUS YET DELIGHTFUL EXPERIENCE OF PLAYING 'TYAGI TWINS'

As the release date of the highly anticipated *Mirzapur 3* draws near, the excitement among fans, industry insiders and the audience is palpable. For Vijay Varma, this season is particularly special, not only because it brings back one of the most successful OTT franchises but also due to his unique role of portraying the twin Tyagi brothers – Bharat and Shatrughan – across two seasons.

In an interview, Vijay opened up about the intricate process of playing twins on screen. He described the experience as both "tedious" and "delightful," saying, "The process is very technical and tedious, but it's the closest I have ever seen magic unfold. I did a little bit of one brother and I did a little bit of the other brother and then the director did something, and they edited it in a way that now it looks like a magic trick."

Vijay's portrayal of the Tyagi twins stands out as one of the most memorable characters in his prolific career. Reflecting on the experience, he shared, "It was nice to see two of these brothers roaming around in the frame and interacting with each other. The child inside me feels very good. Although I was dropped off this delight this season because we see only one Tyagi and the other one is resting in peace. But nevertheless, with such tragedy hitting the Tyagi family, there are so many reasons to come back and seek revenge."

Beyond *Mirzapur 3*, his impressive filmography includes notable works such as *IC-81 - The Khandahar Hijack*, *Ul Jalool Ishq*, and *Matka King*.



Parineeti Chopra acquaints herself with 'fake PR hit' films

Parineeti Chopra received critical and popular appreciation for her role as Amarjot Kaur in *Amar Singh Chamkila*, which also stars Diljit Dosanjh as the titular singer.

This musical biopic was Parineeti's first release in 2024.

In a new interview, Parineeti discussed the success of the Netflix release, saying it feels like a lifetime achievement award for her.

During the interview, Parineeti commented on the film's success, saying, "It's like a lifetime achievement award. You accept that the last two years of your life were dedicated to the film. Typically, the lifetime achievement medal is given after 50 years of service, but this one feels like a genuine, bona fide, authentic true hit. It is not a PR hit; it is not a fake hit. People truly like this film. In today's world, it feels better than any other characteristic." Parineeti continued, "It has been fantastic since the parts I am getting today are not the same as before. The directors noticed something in my performance as Amarjot Kaur that they hadn't seen in any other film before. One director contacted me and told me, 'There was something in your eyes throughout the film.' I never considered you for my film while I was writing it, but after seeing *Chamkila*, I can't think of anyone else to play the role. So, I believe the directors can perceive me in a different manner, which wouldn't have happened." Diljit plays the titular role in *Amar Singh Chamkila*, with Parineeti playing his singer-wife, Amarjot. The film tells the unsung true story of Punjab's original superstar of the masses, who ascended from the depths of poverty to the pinnacle of popularity in the 1980s thanks to the sheer power of his music, engaging many along the way and ultimately being assassinated at the age of 27. It debuted on Netflix on April 12.



JEREMY IRONS ABOARDS THE MORNING SHOW SEASON 4

Oscar-winner Jeremy Irons has joined the cast of the fourth season of the acclaimed drama series *The Morning Show*, alongside Jennifer Aniston and Reese Witherspoon.

Irons will portray the role of Martin Levy, father of Aniston's character Alex Levy, in the Apple TV+ show, according to reports.

The 75-year-old actor has been a part of projects such as *Lolita*, *The Mission* and *Eragon*, to name a few. His appearance in the upcoming chapter of *The Morning Show* will also mark his first series since Netflix's *The Pentaverate* in 2022.

The Morning Show has had three successful seasons since its first season premiered in 2019.

Season three finale ended with Witherspoon's character

Bradley Jackson being taken into FBI custody and Aniston's Alex Bradley outsmarting her love interest Paul (Hamm) when she realises that he was trying to take over the network by illegal means.

The show examines the characters and culture behind a network-broadcast morning news program. It also stars Billy Crudup, Mark Duplass, Nestor Carbonell, Karen Pittman, Greta Lee, Jon Hamm

and Nicole Beharie.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



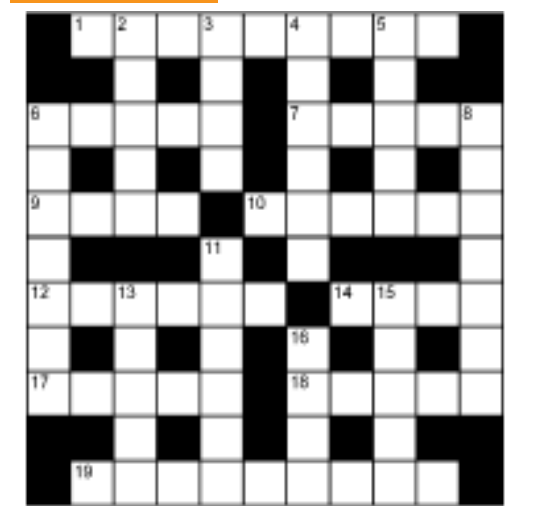
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution
 4 9 7 2 5 1 8 6 3
 8 3 2 6 9 7 5 1 4
 6 5 1 3 8 4 2 9 7
 7 2 9 5 1 3 6 4 8
 5 8 6 4 2 9 7 3 1
 3 1 4 7 6 8 9 2 5
 1 4 8 9 7 6 3 5 2
 9 7 5 1 3 2 4 8 6
 2 6 3 8 4 5 1 7 9

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

ACROSS

- 1 Came on
- 6 A person who decides who wins a competition
- 7 A large stream
- 9 A very small living thing that makes people ill
- 10 Overtakes
- 12 Reply
- 14 Short skirt
- 17 Rescued
- 18 A smelly vegetable
- 19 In poor health

DOWN

- 5 Pixies
- 6 Puzzles with many pieces that make up a picture
- 8 From Russia
- 11 Sew with this
- 13 One third of twenty-one
- 15 From Ireland
- 16 A hard black fuel



'Superhero' battling the digital revenge

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



TEJAL SINHA

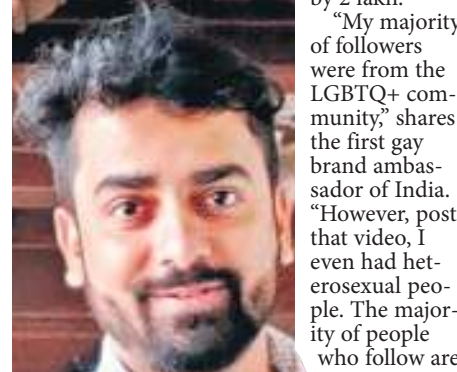
Undeniably, with the advent of technology, digital abuse has certainly been on the rise. And one such is revenge porn. It is a sort of digital abuse in which naked or sexually explicit images or films are released without the agreement of the individuals depicted. This type of nonconsensual pornography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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



NEERAJ GOYAT ON BIGG BOSS

LESSONS LEARNED, HEARTS WON AND FIGHT AHEAD

AARTI SREENATH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Shedding light on importance of sexual wellness talks!



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

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

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

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

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

One day, a couple with issues related to difficulty having sexual intercourse after being married for seven years, reached out to a counsellor. The husband avoided looking at the counsellor and the wife was extremely anxious to open up about her issue. She said, "I'm scared to do it." It was then that the mental health expert asked her if she had given it a try and she replied, "No." After the assessment, she was ruled out for vaginismus (a condition that makes it painful and uncomfortable for women to have sexual intercourse); rather, it was due to her fear stemming from conversations she had with her friends before marriage. She believed that sex would be extremely uncomfortable and that it would lead to pain and bleeding. In similar contexts, there have been many cases of couples coming with different explanations for avoiding intercourse, with the reason often being one: no proper sex education.

In India, many young women and men engage in unhealthy sexual activity without taking cautionary steps. The only instruction women receive before entering their auspicious first night is, "Do what he says." This creates a sense of confusion, uncertainty and neglect of marital rape! Women have also been told not to express their needs, and asking for it is considered shameful. The result of this secret suffering is an epidemic of women experiencing no sexual pleasure in relationships and men feeling shame, eventually leading to the complete avoidance of sexual activities.

This brings us to the discussion of rendering the right information for young men and women to understand their bodies and respect them in the right way. There have been cases of many young women falling into unhealthy attachment patterns and impulsive sexual behaviours to be loved and seen. The generational trauma and lack of self-esteem lead women to completely neglect their bodies for temporary pleasure. Instead of avoiding the 'sex talk', engage with your children to understand their uncertainties and confusions. Unfortunately, the current source of knowledge is often porn, which gives rise to unrealistic standards and expectations.

Couples face issues of lack of libido, discomfort, pain and difficulty in erection. A young man from Bihar once reported having anxiety issues due to a lack of erection. When asked about his issue, he mentioned that his erection issue was a consequence of masturbation. The lack of awareness affects not just their sexual performance but also their overall sense of self and well-being. In another case, a couple

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

PTI ■ HARARE

A young Indian cricket team led by skipper Shubman Gill and with National Cricket Academy chief VVS Laxman as coach arrived here to play a five-match T20 International series against Zimbabwe beginning July 6.

The team was seen exiting the airport with their luggage in a video posted by Zimbabwe Cricket on X. The entire squad had departed from Mumbai on Tuesday, while Gill, who was a travelling reserve with the T20 World Cup side in the Americas, arrived here from New York after a break.

"We welcome T20 World Cup champions India," wrote ZC on Tuesday night in a post on X.

Young top-order batter Riyan Parag, who will be making his India debut in the series, said in a video posted by BCCI that he had a childhood dream of travelling like this (with the national side).

"The feel of donning India jersey, travelling with the side is different. Coming from Assam, I had this dream of playing for India. Really happy. There will be a special connection for Zimbabwe when I play my first match.

"That will be a special moment for that ground and myself, which would be very sacred," he said.

"After misplacing my passport, to phones, we are finally here after a 20 hour journey. Now, really looking forward to the tour," Parag added.

Another newcomer, medium pacer Tushar Deshpande, said the feeling of being in the national setup is "slowly sinking in and it's like a dream come true for me. Playing for the country is a very special thing."

"Travelling with the team is the most important and getting to know them, knowing the atmosphere of the team and most important for me is the fun we have during travel," added



Deshpande. Big-hitting left-hander Abhishek Sharma said from the day he started playing cricket, he had only one dream, which was to play for the country.

"I know if I continue working hard, I will get an opportunity but I didn't know I will get it outside India in Zimbabwe.

"I got a call from (skipper) Shubman after my name was announced in the squad. Everyone has been giving me so much of affection. For me it was a very big thing," added Sharma.

"When I reached home after my name had been announced, I saw my family members giving interviews. So, I think, that was one moment I will always remember," he said.

India will play their opening match against the Sikandar Raza-captained Zimbabwe on July 6 at the Harere Cricket Ground. The remaining four games will also be played at the same venue. The series will

conclude on July 14. T20 World Cup travelling reserves Sanju Samson and Yashasvi Jaiswal along with all-rounder Shivam Dube were slated to join the Zimbabwe-bound group but are stranded in Barbados due to hurricane Beryl.

Sai Sudharsan, Jitesh Sharma and Harshit Rana were on Tuesday named as replacements for trio in the Indian squad for the first two matches of the series.

Samson, Jaiswal and Dube along with the other senior players will be arriving in India aboard a charter flight on Thursday morning. The players will later be felicitated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.

Pacer Khaleel Ahmed and batter Rinku Singh, travelling reserves for the T20 World Cup, are also currently in Barbados.

The BCCI has not named replacements for the duo even though they are in the squad for Zimbabwe series.



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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Aiden Markram was 'brave' and 'tactically astute' while leading South Africa to their first-ever appearance in the final of the T20 World Cup which they narrowly lost to India last week at Barbados, said former skipper Graeme Smith on Wednesday.

South Africa had a near-perfect campaign in the T20 World Cup under Markram's captaincy with their only defeat coming in the final when India pipped the Proteas by seven runs.

"Aiden was particularly good during the tournament. He was tactically astute, had good plans and was brave enough to make the big calls and then get all his players to commit to it," said Smith in a media release.

"We have, of course, seen Aiden captain in this manner before over the course of the past two SA20 seasons, leading the Sunrisers Eastern Cape to back-to-back championship titles, but now he has transferred this experience to the international arena," added Smith, who is SA20's league commissioner.

Smith said SA20, in its two seasons so far, has been able to prepare the South African cricketers to be ready for

pressure and challenges at the highest level.

"From the outset, the league, alongside Cricket South Africa, has wanted to provide South African cricketers with the opportunity to be exposed to a higher level of domestic cricket where the players are able to rub shoulders and learn from some of the best the game has to offer," he said.

"Players are exposed to high-pressure and competitive cricket and this experience stood them in good stead in the US and Caribbean," said one of the greatest South Africa captains.

Smith praised Ottneil Baartman for his impressive performances, particularly in the group stage, wherein the right-arm bowler produced measly spells.

"Ottneil is the epitome of a SA20 success story. A relatively unknown player before SA20 that has transformed and grown in confidence due to experiences with the Sunrisers Eastern Cape is phenomenal," Smith said.

"Despite playing in his very first T20 World Cup, he backed his skills under immense pressure. The four wickets against the Netherlands and the last over against Nepal definitely stands out," he added.

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

PTI ■ DUBAI

Hardik Pandya rose two places to become the first Indian to occupy the number one spot in the ICC's T20I all-rounders' rankings on Wednesday, as the country's cricketers improved their standings following their title-winning performance in the just-concluded World Cup.

The 30-year-old, who handed telling blows to South Africa in the T20 World Cup final on July 29 by dismissing half-centurion Heinrich Klaasen and David Miller in his 3/20 effort, climbed up two places to go level with Sri Lankan star Wanindu Hasaranga as the top-ranked men's T20I all-rounder.

Following a topsy-turvy IPL where he was the target of fans' boos as Mumbai Indians' new captain, Pandya turned it around in style in the T20 World Cup in the USA and the Caribbean.



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

His best performance came in

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

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

BIG MOVER BUMRAH

India's star fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah, who won the Player of the Tournament award at the T20 World Cup for his 15 wickets, moved up 12 spots to be just outside the top-10. He's at 12th, his highest position since the end of 2020.

There were other movements in the top 10 of the T20I all-rounders' rankings, with Marcus Stoinis, Sikandar Raza, Shakib Al Hasan and Liam Livingstone rising by one spot each.

Mohammad Nabi moved down four spots to go out of the top five.

In the T20I bowling rankings, South Africa's Anrich Nortje rose seven places to a career-best second spot to be just behind top-ranked Adil Rashid with 675 rating points.

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

PTI ■ BUCHAREST

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa was held to a draw by lowest ranked Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania in the sixth round of the Superbet Classic tournament, a part of the grand chess tour here.

Iranian-French Grandmaster Alireza Firouzja shined with his moves against Wesley So of the United States.

With the World Championship on his mind, India's D Gukesh seemed to keep in reserve his real weapons and signed for peace with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France.

Praggnanandhaa tried his hand against the ever-solid Nimzo Indian defense. But it was an off day for the Indian who was confidently breached by the Romanian.

Bogdan-Daniel matched Praggnanandhaa move for move and the game was drawn through repetition after 38 moves.



It was not so easy for Gukesh as well as he seemed to withhold his true preparation for the World Championship match against Ding Liren, scheduled in November this year in Singapore. Alireza stole the show on a dull day in the grand chess tour. He was at his best and crawled back with his second win of the tournament to be in striking distance of tournament leader Fabio Caruana of the United States.

With just three rounds remaining in the USD 350000 prize money tournament, Caruana seems to be sitting pretty at the top, with three aspirants in Gukesh Praggnanandhaa and Alireza in pursuit.

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

PTI ■ LONDON

Indian tennis ace Sumit Nagal feels he had the momentum in the third set of the Wimbledon first-round tie against higher-ranked Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia but his relative inexperience on grass cost him the match.

The 26-year-old Indian, who is set to participate in his second Olympics in less than a month, lost the Wimbledon men's singles opener to Kecmanovic, ranked 19 places higher than him, in a marathon four-setter lasting nearly three-and-a-half hours.

Nagal lost 2-6, 6-3, 3-6, 4-6. The 71st-ranked from Jhajar, making it to the Wimbledon main draw for the first time, won the second set to come

on even terms but the Serbian, ranked 52nd, won the next two to advance.

"This is my first main draw at Wimbledon, and playing on the grass surface is not easy; you need a bit of experience. But I think I did whatever I could, I fought hard. I felt like I could have served better, and there were a few things here and there in the match I could have done better," Nagal told Star Sports.

"Later on in the third set, the momentum was kind of shifting towards me. I think, like I said, if I could have broken him at 5-3, him serving, I think the match could have changed in a funny way."

He said the SW19 experience was the one to cherish.

"It was a great experience.



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

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

"I keep on climbing the rankings. There are a few

goals that I need to finish, and that will be one of them - to keep on climbing the rankings.

"Now, I'm going back on clay to get ready for Paris. I'm looking forward to it; it's going to be my second Olympics, and I'm super, super excited for it."

Nagal, who was ranked 160th during the Tokyo Olympics, had lost in straight sets to Daniil Medvedev in the second round.

Tennis legend Mahesh Bhupathi also indicated that Nagal should have converted half chances.

"Everyone's disappointed, but he's had a breakthrough year, he's played high-quality tennis. That guy's a good player and he had his chances there in the third set and that's

the way it is. In events like this, you've got to take your chances, otherwise, you're going to come out on the losing end."

Former Davis Cupper Zeeshan Ali said Nagal should not get disappointed as he gave his opponent a tough time.

"I feel that Sumit should not be very disheartened by this loss because he played a very good match. He played an incredibly good second set and he had a lot of chances.

"Going forward, I think he definitely needs to prepare better to play in a tournament like Wimbledon, maybe get a couple of matches in before the main draw of Wimbledon starts, and that would definitely help him prepare better," said Ali.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

Star Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty has "cracked" the service variation challenge and is focussing on "comprehensive physical and mental conditioning" to ensure peak performance at the upcoming Paris Olympics.

Satwik, 23, and Chirag, 26, have been troubled by the wide variations of tumble, spin and wide serves that their opponents, mainly the Koreans and Indonesians, have employed against them during the recent tournaments.

Chirag said they have addressed the "new challenge" and remains confident of negotiating it during the Paris Games.

"Regarding serve variations, they are a new challenge, but placing complete importance on that wouldn't be right," Chirag told PTI in an email interview.

"There was a time when we struggled with receiving them, but we eventually cracked it. We know what to do, we've been practicing, and we're confident we'll come out strong at the Olympics to counter that."

The current world number 3 pair had narrowly missed out of a quarterfinal berth in the last Olympics when despite winning two of their three group matches, the duo couldn't qualify for the knockout stage as it was settled on the basis of the number of games won and lost.

"The experience of playing in the Tokyo Olympics has been invaluable in our preparation for the Paris Games. Competing at such a high level has taught us crucial lessons about handling pressure, staying focused, and adapting to different playing conditions," Satwik said.

Chirag added: "The intensity and atmosphere of the Olympics are unparalleled, and having been through it once, we now have a better understanding of what to expect and the initial jitters of being at the Olympics for the first time are also not going to be there.

"Additionally, winning the



French Open has naturally given us a significant confidence boost."

In the last couple of years, the duo worked its way to become the world number one after a

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

Games.

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

year after reaching the finals at the Malaysian Super 750 and India Super 750.

"As the Olympics draw closer, our approach is becoming more focussed and strategic. We're fine-tuning every aspect of our game to ensure peak performance when we step onto the court in Paris," Satwik said.

"This includes developing specific game plans for our potential opponents by studying their strengths and weaknesses in detail, concentrating on targeted drills, and enhancing our on-court positions and shot selections.

"We are taking a holistic approach to our preparations. We're in a good rhythm and are eagerly looking forward to be back at the Olympics. Comprehensive physical and mental conditioning is at the heart of our preparation."

The duo has been troubled sometimes by the left-right combinations such as Korean Seo Seung-jae and Kang Minhyuk and Danish Kim Astrup

and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen but Chirag feels they don't have any problem against any particular pair.

"I can't really pinpoint a specific pair that we find particularly tricky to play against. On any given day, if a pair plays well, they can pose a challenge. However, I believe that if we play at our best, we can beat anyone," he said.

"So, there's no specific pair or lefty-righty combination that particularly affects us. That said, all our competitors in the Olympics will be quite good..."

On expectations and handling pressure at the big-ticket event, Satwik said: "We understand Olympics is the greatest, biggest tournament there is and naturally there are hopes and wishes from each Olympic-bound athlete.

"We don't want to think so much about the pressures, we're looking to go out there, enjoy the atmosphere, have a great time on court and take it one game at a time and see

how it goes. We do not want to put ourselves under any pressure from the word go.

"We're used to the expectations and pressures that come along in our game... We're primarily looking to go out there and do great things on the court and have fun while doing that."

Chirag and Satwik are also mentors of PNB MetLife Junior Badminton Championship (JBC), which will begin on August 1 in the national capital.

"JBC offers a fantastic opportunity to nurture budding badminton talent in India. JBC also offers players access to mentoring, coaching, and training from veterans in the sport. Badminton has significantly shaped my life, and I want to share its benefits with the next generation, helping them achieve their dreams," Chirag said.

Satwik said: "As JBC mentors, we offer guidance on videos to young athletes on drills, techniques, strategies to improve their game, tips on mental resilience, and managing competition stress. Chirag and I will also be offering tips to players in person, whenever we visit any city edition matches."



RAJ TARUN: Tiragabadarasami promises fresh action and entertainment

Actor Raj Tarun, who is on the spree of experimenting with new roles and movies, takes the lead in Tiragabadarasami, a wholesome entertainer helmed by director E.S. Ravi Kumar Chowdary. Malvi Malhotra stars as the lead actress in the film, produced under Malakpuram Shiva Kumar's banner, Suraksh Entertainment Media. The film's trailer has been launched recently and all the promotional content released so far is making good buzz amongst the audience. Starting with power-packed action sequences, the trailer captivates from start to finish. It stands tall with high-voltage action, family emotions, and gripping entertainment. Raj Tarun's action avatar shines brightly, showcasing a new dimension of his presence and energetic performance. On why he came on board this project and what he liked the most about the film, the lead actor of the film, Raj Tarun, informed us, "Director E.S. Ravi Kumar Chowdary blends action and emotions extraordinarily. His direction is brilliant, and camera work, background music, and production values are top-notch, enhancing the high-octane action and emotional depth of the trailer." He continued, "We've put our hearts into this film more than anyone else. It's not just a great film; it's beyond that. Working with director E.S. Ravi Kumar Chowdary was a great experience. He didn't scold me even once (he laughed). It was a new experience for me to do such an action-packed role. He made it easy with his encouragement. The film looks more wonderful than ever."

THE FILM HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED IN A GRAND PUJA CEREMONY Venkatesh, Anil Ravipudi's film has two heroines



Victory Venkatesh and prolific hit-maker Anil Ravipudi have once again joined forces for a film that is being bankrolled by Dil Raju under his Sri Venkateswara Creations banner. This is the landmark 58th film of the production house. The hit combination worked together previously for F2 and F3 which were massive hits and they are reuniting for an intriguing new project. Presented by Dil Raju, the film is being produced by Shirish and was launched in a grand ceremony in Hyderabad on Wednesday. At the auspicious muhurtham shot, Suresh Babu of Suresh Productions cranked the camera, while Allu Aravind of Geetha Arts clapped the board. Director Vamshi Paidipally handed over the script, and the legendary director Raghavendra Rao graced the occasion with his presence. This new film promises an extraordinary triangular crime tale, centered around three characters: the protagonist, his ex-girlfriend, and his formidable wife. Meenakshi Chaudhary and Aishwarya Rajesh play pivotal roles opposite Venkatesh. With their track record of delivering two blockbusters, fans have eagerly anticipated their next collaboration. A team of seasoned technicians is set to elevate every aspect of filmmaking, promising an unparalleled cinematic experience. Renowned composer Bheems Ceciroleo will score the music, with Sameer Reddy serving as the cinematographer. A S Prakash joins as the production designer, and Tammiraju as the editor. S Krishna and G Adhinarayana are the co-writers, while V Venkat handles the action direction.

Vishva Karthikeya signs full-length comedy entertainer

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

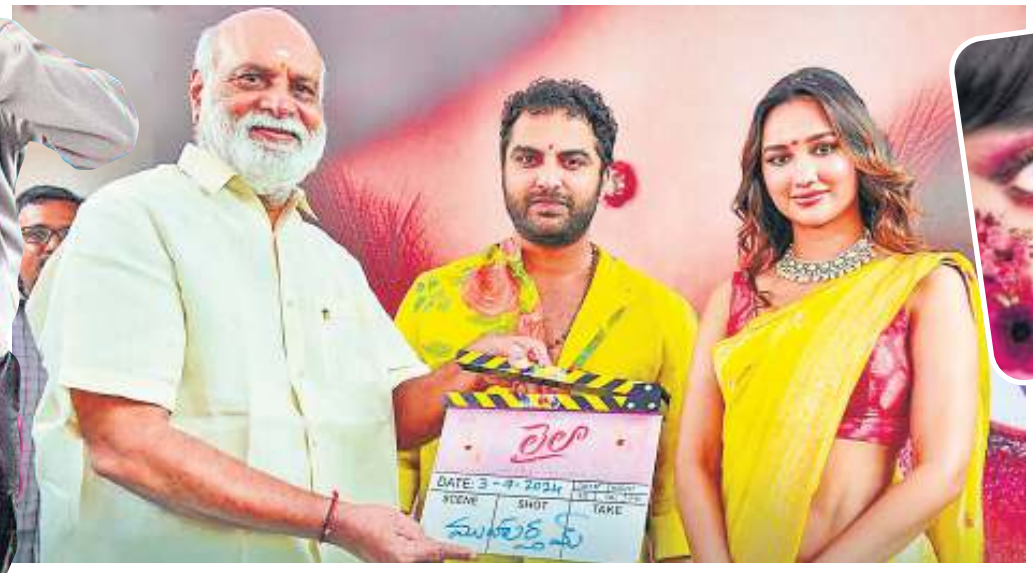


Rakshit Atluri's Operation Raavan locks release date

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



Vishwak Sen takes on the role of Laila!



Mass Ka Das Vishwak Sen is experimenting with a new genre once again with his latest venture, Laila, produced by Sahu Garapati of Shine Screens. We say experimenting because he portrays both a man and a woman. Known for his diverse film choices, Vishwak Sen takes on the role of Laila in this romantic action entertainer, penned by Ram Narayan, promising a character portrayal like never before. Embracing such a challenging role requires immense courage and preparation, both physically and mentally. On Wednesday, the makers unveiled the mesmerizing eye look of Laila, portrayed by Vishwak Sen with captivating charm. The transformation is striking, with Vishwak Sen perfectly embodying the feminine grace of Laila. His expressive eyes convey the depth



and suitability of his portrayal. The enchanting gaze of Laila convincingly brings out the essence of the female character, leaving audiences eager to see Vishwak Sen's complete transformation into Laila. The film commenced its journey with a ceremonial pooja. Renowned director Raghavendra Rao clapped the board for the inaugural shot, while director Harish Shanker initiated the camera roll. Producers Venkata Satish Kilaru and Gemini Kiran handed over the script to the production team. Making her debut as the female lead opposite Vishwak Sen, Akanksha Sharma will contribute to the film's high technical and production standards. Laila boasts a talented crew, including writer Vasudeva Murthy, cinematographer Richard Prasad, music composers Tanishk Bagchi and Ghibran, editor Anwar Ali, and art director Brahma Kadali. The makers have announced that Laila will hit theaters on February 14th, coinciding with Valentine's Day, promising an unforgettable cinematic experience.

SARANGADARIYA RELEASING ON JULY 12

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



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

In the light of a recent shameful incident in Bengal, Kerala Files filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri took to his social media to reflect on the history of West Bengal. Coincidentally, the teaser for the upcoming Vijay Yelakanti directorial pan-India film denoting the erased history of Bengal titled Maa Kaali, is all set to release tomorrow, starring Raima Sen and Abhishek Singh. A Muslim woman was stripped naked and assaulted on the streets of Bengal for supporting BJP, over the week, the incident has received attention from the public owing to the viral videos on social media. Tracing the communal violence back to the brutal and horrifying massacres of Direct Action Day, Vivek Agnihotri took to his social media to voice his distress. Vivek Agnihotri shares, "From Direct Action Day to Noakhali to today... Bengal, the great land of Hindu Renaissance, has been a victim of violence due to two nations and two constitution mindset. Women are not safe even in the land of Kaali. Sad, nobody... nobody... nobody even tried to stop it." August 16, 1946 is etched in the pages of history for the haunting genocide, resulted by the motive of demanding a separate Muslim homeland. People Media Factory and Vijay Yelakanti through their film Maa Kaali, aim to shed

light on the erased history of Bengal, paying a homage to the lives lost in the massacre. Vivek Agnihotri, who is known for his film Kashmir Files which depicted the untold story of the atrocities subjected to Kashmiri Pandits, has raised his voice to address the concerns of Hindus in Bengal, the religious influence on the socio-political environment, and the history of the communal turmoil of the state. Starring Raima Sen and IAS officer turned actor Abhishek Singh, Maa Kaali delves into the pivotal events of pre-partition Bengal. The teaser of the film is scheduled to be launched on July 4, and the film is slated to release this year.



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

Popular choreographer Jani Master's birthday celebrations took an unexpected turn as he received an invitation from none other than Ram Charan, the Global Star himself. The occasion, held in the esteemed presence of Megastar Chiranjeevi and Upasana Konidela, turned into a deeply touching event. Expressing his overwhelming emotions, Jani Master reflected on the love and support he received. "He who renders timely help is hailed as God!" he exclaimed, recounting how his happiness multiplied upon meeting with such esteemed personalities. The celebration also marked a poignant moment where Jani Master recalled the invaluable support received from Ram Charan and Megastar Chiranjeevi regarding the Dancers' Union. Their commitment to securing health insurance for over 500 families left an indelible mark. "It is rare to see such dedication turn into action," Jani Master remarked, expressing heartfelt gratitude on behalf of all beneficiaries. Jani Master extended sincere thanks to everyone who has supported him and emphasised the privilege of working alongside individuals who embody compassion and unwavering commitment. The event underscored not only a celebration of Jani Master's birthday but also a profound tribute to humanity and solidarity within the entertainment industry.

After launching her cosmetic brand in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, London, Mumbai and Bangalore, actress-entrepreneur Sunny Leone has launched her brand in Bhubaneswar. This collaboration between Sunny Leone and Sukirti Patnaik is expected to create a positive impact in the market. On the professional front, Sunny is preparing for the release of her upcoming Tamil film Quotation Gang. She has also garnered global recognition for her role in Anurag Kashyap's Kennedy, which premiered at Cannes last year and is set for a theatrical release soon. Additionally, she has an untitled film with Himesh Reshammiya and Prabhudeva in the works and an untitled Malayalam project. Besides her film commitments, Sunny is also seen hosting TV reality show Splitsvilla X5.

SUNNY LEONE LAUNCHES HER COSMETIC BRAND

