

Who will recognize BRS Chief K Chandrasekhar Rao if he crosses the state? Why did he not contest outside the state if he wants to become Prime Minister of the nation? Event management is taking place in KCR's farmhouse and as part of it the BRS leaders are shifting the party activists to the farmhouse.



- - Adi Srinivas, government Whip P4

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Published From: VIJAYAWADA HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN

Lalu claims Modi government could fall next month



'HYD'S HISTORY WHISPERS THROUGH ITS HAPPENING BAZAARS & MONUMENTS'



'I feel lucky to perform action sequence in my debut Tiragabadara SAAMI'



Crucial Telugu CMs' meet in Hyd today

Outstanding power dues between AP & TG may dominate talks

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy will meet at Praja Bhavan in Hyderabad on Saturday 6 pm. Officials have made all arrangements for the meeting, marking the first time that the Chief Ministers are addressing unresolved issues post-bifurcation. The Telugu state counterparts are expected to discuss matters related to Schedule 9 and Schedule 10.

One major topic on the agenda is the outstanding dues between the two states in the power sector. Telangana claims that the Andhra Pradesh government owes approximately Rs 24,000 crores, while Andhra Pradesh maintains that Telangana owes them Rs 7,000 crores. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has focused on resolving pending bifurcation issues since the Congress government took office. In March, a dispute regarding AP Bhavan in Delhi was resolved under the initiative of the Telangana Chief Minister. Recently, the disbursement of funds related to the Mining Corporation was also settled. So far, about 30 meetings have been held between officials of the two states concerning bifurcation disputes.

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- Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu and Telangana CM A Revanth Reddy to meet at 6 pm on Saturday at Praja Bhavan in Hyderabad.
- This is the first meeting between the Chief Ministers addressing unresolved post-bifurcation issues.
- Discussions are expected to focus on matters related to Schedule 9 and Schedule 10.
- Telangana claims Andhra Pradesh owes Rs 24,000 crore in the power sector, while Andhra Pradesh claims Telangana owes Rs 7,000 crore.
- Revanth Reddy has been prioritising bifurcation issues since the Congress government took office.
- In March, the AP Bhavan dispute in Delhi was resolved, followed by the settlement of Mining Corporation fund disbursements.
- The Sheilabedi Committee resolved asset distribution for 68 of 91 institutions in Schedule 9, with disputes remaining for 23 institutions.

Disputes over the distribution of 30 out of 142 institutions in Schedule 10, including Telugu Academy, Telugu University, and Ambedkar University, still remain unresolved.



AP Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu being welcomed by Telugu Desam Party activists at Begumpet airport in Hyderabad on Friday

TTDP accords grand welcome to Naidu

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TDP national president N Chandrababu Naidu arrived in Hyderabad for first time on Friday after assuming office as Chief Minister of the Andhra Pradesh state for the fourth time. Naidu reached

Begumpet Airport here after completing the Delhi visit. TTDP activists accorded a grand welcome to Naidu. The TTDP activists made special arrangements for welcoming him. The TTDP activists felicitated him with huge 'Gajamala' at Begumpet Airport.

Naidu greeted the fans and cadre. A huge rally was taken from Begumpet Airport to his Jubilee Hills residence. TTDP activists welcomed him with yellow arches and welcome flexis. The rally continued even in the rain. Police made special security arrangements on this occasion.

DON'T MISS...

Kingpins of red sanders smuggling..

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development K Pawan Kalyan has directed the officials to find out the kingpins of red sanders smuggling and arrest them apart from taking stringent steps to contain the illegal activities. The forest officials submitted a report to the Deputy Chief Minister on Friday on the seizure of 158 red sanders logs worth Rs 1.60 crore three days ago in Jaganna colony at Pottaladurthi village in YSR Kadapa district and informed him that four smugglers were arrested in this connection...

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Common environmental...

Toxins commonly present in the environment, such as nicotine and metals, have been linked with depressive symptoms like feeling hopeless or taking little interest in daily activities, according to a study conducted on US adults. Researchers found that inflammation brought about by these environmental toxins could be one of the possible underlying reasons. The team of researchers, including those from Peking University, China, analysed toxin levels in blood and urine samples of over 3,400 adults...

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Kerala set to become leading...

The country's first international Gen AI conclave will be held in Kerala next week and it will give an impetus to the state's efforts to become India's leading hub in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said on Friday. In a Facebook post, Vijayan said over a thousand delegates will take part in the two-day conclave being organised at Kochi by global technology company IBM in collaboration with the state government on July 11 and 12. In conjunction with the conclave, IBM is ...

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New look India start their...

A new-look Indian T20 team would embark on a journey of self-discovery without their constant talismans, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, hoping to unearth their mainstays for the future in a five-match series against Zimbabwe starting here on Saturday. Even as the euphoria of T20 World Cup triumph sweeps through the length and breadth of India, Shubman Gill, who was a reserve in that squad, will hit a refresh button along with a bunch of IPL performers. All the fresh faces are expected to make their ...

-SPORTS

Naidu seeks Central help for AP's financial recovery



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu met with several key Union ministers in Delhi on Friday as part of his official tour. Among those he engaged with were Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and Health and Chemical & Fertilisers Minister JP Nadda.

The Chief Minister brought multiple issues pertinent to their respective ministries to their attention and discussed mechanisms for effective coordination for timely intervention and action from the Government of India.

In his meeting with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, CM Chandrababu Naidu emphasised the need for short-term financial support from the Government of

India until Andhra Pradesh's finances improve. He requested additional borrowing space to meet the accrued debt service obligations post-bifurcation. Additionally, he advocated for a 90% grant component in Central Government schemes for sectors like micro-irrigation, drinking water, irrigation, and horticulture in the Rayalaseema, Prakasam, and North Coastal regions of Andhra Pradesh.

The Chief Minister also highlighted the need for industrial incentives for the backward regions of Andhra Pradesh as per the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act. He sought early approval of funds for the completion of the Polavaram National Irrigation Project and assistance for the development of the capital city, Amaravati.

Continued on Page 2

'Investor-friendly' IT Policy soon: Lokesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Information Technology (IT), Electronics, and Education, Nara Lokesh, announced on Friday that a new investor-friendly IT policy will soon be introduced to attract investments to the State.

Lokesh held a review meeting with senior officials to discuss the current situation of the IT and electronics industry in the state and the opportunities for setting up new units. The Minister directed the officials to take measures to build confidence among potential investors in the IT and electronics sectors.



Lokesh said that the State government is keen on developing an investor-friendly IT policy and

instructed the officials to formulate the necessary guidelines. He assured that better facilities would be pro-

vided to the entire IT and electronics industry.

Continued on Page 2

MLA, MLC quarters in 9 months: Ayyanna

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu has directed CRDA officials to complete the construction of quarters for MLAs and MLCs within nine months.

He was presiding over a coordination meeting with CRDA and Assembly officials in the Assembly Committee Hall on Friday, focusing on the maintenance of buildings and the progress of MLA and MLC quarters under construction in Rayapudi. During his inspection of the buildings,

Speaker Patrudu noted that 12 towers with 288 residences for State Legislative Assembly and Council members had been initiated by the previous Telugu Desam government. He stated that 77 per cent of the work was completed by 2019, and upon finishing the remaining work, these flats would be allocated to legislators.

Speaker Patrudu criticised the previous government for halting and neglecting the construction projects in Amaravati, leading to a standstill.

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Centre, NTA oppose pleas for nixing NEET-UG

'Re-test would hurt honest examinees'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the growing clamour for cancellation of the controversy-ridden NEET-UG, 2024 exam over alleged malpractices, the Centre and the National Testing Agency told the Supreme Court on Friday that scrapping it would be "counterproductive" and "seriously jeopardise" lakhs of honest candidates in the absence of proof of large-scale breach of confidentiality.

The National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducts the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses, and the Union Education Ministry have been at the centre of media debates and



protests by students and political parties over alleged large-scale malpractices ranging from question paper leak to impersonation in the test held on May 5. The Union Education Ministry and the NTA filed separate

affidavits opposing the pleas which have sought scrapping of the exam plagued by controversy, a re-test and court-monitored probe into entire gamut of issues involved.

Continued on Page 2

New dates announced for NEET-PG 2024

The NEET-PG 2024 entrance examination will be held on August 11 in two shifts, the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences announced on Friday. The exam was earlier scheduled to be held on June 23. "In continuation of NBEMS notice dated 22.06.2024, the conduct of NEET-PG 2024 examination has been rescheduled. It will now be conducted on August 11 in two shifts. The cut-off date for the purpose of eligibility to appear in the NEET-PG 2024 shall continue to be August 15, 2024," the Board said. The Union Health Ministry on June 22 postponed the NEET-PG entrance examination, scheduled to be held on June 23, as a "precautionary measure" in the wake of allegations on the integrity of certain competitive exams.

Continued on Page 2

TDP's Ramachandraiah, JSP's Hari Prasad elected unopposed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) candidate C Ramachandraiah and Jana Sena Party (JSP) candidate P Hari Prasad were unanimously elected as MLCs under the MLA quota in the Andhra Pradesh State Legislative Council. This announcement was made by MLC Election Returning Officer M Vijayaraju in the Assembly hall on Friday.

As the deadline for withdrawal of nominations to fill the two vacant MLC seats ended on Friday, only two candidates, C Ramachandraiah and P Hari Prasad, had filed nomi-



inations. Consequently, they were unanimously elected, as confirmed by Returning Officer Vijayaraju. Deputy Secretary Vanitha Rani was also present at the announcement.

AP Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu had selected former MLC C Ramachandraiah and Jana Sena Party official spokesperson and secretary of the party's political affairs committee, P Hari Prasad, as candidates for the two MLC seats under the MLA quota by-elections.

Both Ramachandraiah and Hari Prasad filed their nominations before the 3 pm deadline on Tuesday.

With no other nominations submitted, they were declared elected unanimously on the last date for withdrawal of nominations.

For Konda Doras, dusk brings darkness and desperation

Electrification is still a far cry for the tribals in their hill-top habitats

PNS ■ PADERU

In the remote villages of Buruga, Chinna Konela, Rayapadu, Bogija, and Benjeivala, home to the Konda Dora tribe, night-fall marks a complete cessation of daily life. Despite the Central Government's 2018 mandate for nationwide village electrification, these communities still struggle with the lack of fundamental necessities such as electricity. On Thursday night, Konda Doras of the particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) in Buruga and Chinna Konela villages in Alluri Sitamaraju district marched with traditional "kagada" torches as a mark of night-time protest walking 2 km in darkness. This symbolic act aimed to draw the attention of government officials to the urgent need for electrification in their villages.



"Due to a lack of a reliable water supply, we are forced to fetch water from unsafe streams, leading to health issues. When the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Department appealed for tap water connections, the lack of electricity prevented the installation of tap water systems. Our electricity demand is not driven by luxury or entertainment but by basic needs for survival. We need electricity to stay safe at night, access fresh drinking water, and commute during emergencies."

— Ramulamma, a resident of Buruga

The lack of electricity poses significant challenges for the Konda Dora tribe. With night-fall, residents are forced to rely on unreliable torches for essential tasks, exposing them to heightened risks from snake bites and encounters with wild animals. Furthermore, the absence of electricity significantly impacts their livelihoods, particularly those engaged in MGNREGA work and daily wage labour at brick kilns, as these activities must cease

before sunset," emphasised a local leader. The consequences of the electricity deficit extend beyond mere inconvenience. Recent incidents like a tiger attack on cattle and a snakebite fatality highlight the graver threats posed by the darkness. "Residents also face difficulties in accessing clean water due to

the lack of electricity required for operating water pumps and treatment facilities," noted another villager.

Electricity is crucial for safety, clean water access, and emergency mobility. "Due to a lack of a reliable water supply, we are forced to fetch water from unsafe streams, leading to

health issues. When the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Department appealed for tap water connections, the lack of electricity prevented the installation of tap water systems. Our electricity demand is not driven by luxury or entertainment but by basic needs for survival. We need electricity to stay safe at night, access fresh drinking water, and commute during emergencies," emphasised Ramulamma, a resident of Buruga.

Kothamma from Chinna Konela village pointed to the incomplete electrification efforts, with only partial installation of approved electricity poles along a critical 13-km stretch from Boddavalasa to Buruga village. "Out of 130 sanctioned poles, a mere 68 have been installed, covering 3 km. If they finish work in the remaining 10 km, all our villages will be electrified," she stated. Residents have made fervent appeals to various authorities, including the APEPDCL CMD, district collector, and Paderu ITDA Project Officer, requesting them to visit the villages and expedite the completion of the electrification project. This essential infrastructure project is crucial for improving living standards and ensuring the safety and well-being of the Konda Dora tribe.

Heavy rain likely in North Coastal AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Heavy rain is expected at isolated locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh on Sunday and Monday, according to the Meteorological Centre.

In a daily weather report, the centre noted that thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and strong winds with speeds of 30-40 km/h are likely to occur at isolated places in both North and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next five days. Similarly, thunderstorms with lightning are expected at isolated places in Rayalaseema during the same period.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are very likely to occur at many places, a few places, or at isolated locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next seven days. The southwest monsoon is normal in Coastal Andhra Pradesh but weak in Rayalaseema. Rainfall occurred at a few places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam and at isolated locations in Rayalaseema over the last 24 hours, the report added.

Overcrowding, staff shortage hit functioning of Vizag Central Jail

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM



The Visakhapatnam Central Jail stands as a stark reminder of the alleged neglect of the prison system under the YSR Congress Party (YCP) government over the past five years. Designed to hold only 914 inmates, the facility now houses between 1,700 and 2,200 prisoners, creating a perilous situation for both inmates and staff. The severe overcrowding in Visakhapatnam Central Jail has reached critical levels, posing significant safety and health hazards. Despite numerous appeals for land to build a new facility, the district has not received the necessary approvals from the government. This inaction has left the jail dangerously overcrowded, increasing the risk of violence, disease, and inadequate living conditions.

Adding to the woes, the Supreme Court mandates an annual review for potential amnesty for prisoners, which the YCP government has reportedly failed to prioritize. Eligible inmates, who have shown good conduct and met specific sentence periods, remain behind bars due to this neglect. In stark contrast, neighboring Telangana has released 230 prisoners under the amnesty program in the past five years, while Andhra Pradesh has not released any.

The state's prisons department is also grappling with a severe staff shortage, with over 500 constable positions vacant.

Adding to the woes, the Supreme Court mandates an annual review for potential amnesty for prisoners, which the YCP government has reportedly failed to prioritize. Eligible inmates, who have shown good conduct and met specific sentence periods, remain behind bars due to this neglect. In stark contrast, neighboring Telangana has released 230 prisoners under the amnesty program in the past five years, while Andhra Pradesh has not released any.

This lack of manpower exacerbates the challenges of managing the increasing inmate population. The continuous cycle of retirements without replacements further depletes the workforce, straining the remaining staff.

The Prisons Department had proposed the construction of a district jail to alleviate the overcrowding, but the proposal has reportedly received no response from the government. Visakhapatnam Central Jail Superintendent Kishore Kumar recently highlighted these critical issues to the Home Minister during her visit. He stressed the urgent need for solutions to address overcrowding, the lack

of amnesty, and the severe staff shortages.

The Home Minister reportedly assured that appropriate measures would be taken, with potential solutions expected soon. However, until tangible actions are implemented, the Visakhapatnam Central Jail remains a glaring symbol of the systemic issues plaguing the state's prison system under the current administration.

As the state grapples with these challenges, the call for immediate intervention becomes ever more pressing. The health, safety, and rights of the prisoners and staff are at stake, demanding urgent and effective solutions.

Crucial Telugu CMs' ...

Continued from Page 1

The Sheilabedi Committee of the Union Home Ministry has made decisions regarding the distribution of assets, liabilities, and cash balances of the 91 institutions listed in Schedule 9. There are no objections to 68 of these institutions, but the two states have not agreed on the distribution of the remaining 23. Out of the 142 institutions in Schedule 10, disputes persist over the distribution of 30 institutions, including Telugu Academy, Telugu University, and Ambedkar University.

New dates announced for ...

Continued from Page 1

Several meetings since then have been held with officials from the Union Health Ministry, National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) along with its technical partner Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), National Medical Commission (NMC) and Cyber Cell officials to evaluate the "robustness" of the system for the conduct of the exam, sources said.

The Ministry of Health had decided to undertake a thorough assessment of the robustness of processes of the NEET-PG entrance examination.

The National Eligibility Entrance Test-Postgraduate (NEET-PG) entrance examination is conducted by NBEMS along with its technical partner TCS for medical students.

Centre, NTA oppose pleas ...

Continued from Page 1

In their responses, they said the CBI, the country's premier investigating agency, has taken over the cases registered in different states.

"It is also submitted that at the same time, in the absence of any proof of any large-scale breach of confidentiality in a pan-India examination, it would not be rational to scrap the entire examination and the results already declared," the Centre said in its preliminary affidavit filed by a director in the Ministry of Education.

"Scrapping the exam in entirety would seriously jeopardise the lakhs of honest candidates who attempted the question paper in 2024," the ministry said.

The Centre said in any examination, there were competing rights, and interests of a large number of students who take it without adopting any unfair means must also not be jeopardised.

The NTA, in its separate affidavit, reiterated the Centre's stand and said: "The cancellation of the entire examination on the basis of the aforesaid factor, would be hugely counterproductive and significantly harmful to the larger public interest, especially to the career

prospects of the qualified candidates."

The agency said the entirety of NEET-UG 2024 exam was carried out fairly and with due confidentiality without any illegal practices, and the claim of "mass malpractice" during the exam is "completely unfounded, misleading, and lacks any basis".

"It is submitted that if the entire examination process is cancelled without their being any tangible factors warranting such actions it would be highly detrimental to the larger public interest involving the academic career of lakhs of students who have attempted the examination fairly without any wrongdoing or even an allegation of wrongdoing," the NTA said.

The ministry and the NTA said there was no proof of any large-scale breach of confidentiality in the examination which was taken by over 23 lakh candidates at 4,750 centres in 571 cities.

The Centre was committed to protecting the interests of lakhs of students who have attempted the question papers fairly and after years of hardwork, without trying to obtain any illegal advantage.

"Therefore, while genuine concerns based on proven facts must be addressed,

other prayers merely based on conjectures and surmises, without any basis in fact, must be rejected so as not to cause unnecessary suffering and distress to honest examinees and their families," the ministry said.

The government said it has constituted a high-level committee of experts to suggest effective measures for conducting transparent, smooth and fair examinations by the NTA.

The affidavit said the panel shall make recommendations on reforms in the mechanism of the examination process, improvement in data security protocols and structure, and functioning of the National Testing Agency.

"It is respectfully submitted that the government is committed to ensure the sanctity of examinations and protect the interest of students. To ensure transparency, fairness, and credibility in public examination, Parliament has enacted Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 on February 12, 2024," it said.

The affidavit said the Act was brought into effect on June 21, 2024 and provides for stringent punishment for offences related to use of unfair means in public examinations.

Keir Starmer's Labour wins landslide UK election, Rishi Sunak concedes defeat

PNS ■ LONDON

Keir Starmer on Friday promised a phase of "national renewal" as Britain's Prime Minister-elect after he led the Labour Party to a landslide victory in a landmark UK general election with a gain of over 200 seats, as outgoing leader Rishi Sunak conceded defeat with his Conservative Party suffering its worst election defeat in history.

Starmer, 61, now stands poised to take charge at 10 Downing Street after his audience with King Charles III at Buckingham Palace, following Sunak's meeting with the British monarch. As Labour crossed the halfway mark of 650 constituencies in the early hours of Friday to clinch the minimum 326 required for a majority in Parliament, Starmer stepped up to make his victory speech in London: "Change begins now. And it feels good. I have to be honest.

"A mandate like this comes with a great responsibility. Our task is nothing less than renewing the ideas that hold this country together. National renewal. Whoever you are, wherever you start in life, if you work hard, if you play by the rules, this country should give you a fair chance to get on. It should always respect your contribution and we have to restore that."

MLA, MLC quarters...

Continued from Page 1

He lamented the lack of basic maintenance, such as painting, and attributed the increased costs of restarting and completing the work to this mismanagement. He estimated that an additional Rs 300 crore would be required to finish the complex, partly due to rusted materials and theft over the past five years.

The Speaker emphasised that the facilities provided in Amaravati for MLAs, MLCs, and other officials are superior to those in Hyderabad. He urged CRDA officials to ensure completion within nine months.

Speaker Patrudu also announced plans for a library with legislative books to educate new members and an annex building for media and canteen facilities for officials and visitors.

Earlier, during a review meeting with APCRDA Commissioner Katamaneni Bhaskar and other officials,

Speaker Patrudu instructed the completion of MLA and MLC buildings within nine months, addressing leakages and whitewashing the Assembly building, and enhancing the Annex Building facilities.

He also proposed setting up rooms for Assembly committee chairmen and a small canteen on the premises.

APCRDA Commissioner Bhaskar confirmed that 77% of the construction was completed by 2019 and assured the remaining work would be done within nine months, focusing on the finishing touches.

He committed to improving the management of the existing Assembly building until the permanent structure is ready.

Assembly secretary general PPK Ramacharyulu, MLAs T Sravan Kumar and Vishnu Kumar Raju, Assembly officers Vijayaraju, PV Subbareddy, Vanitha Rani, CRDA CENRK Prasad, EE Vinod, DEE Trinath, and other officials were present at the meeting.

Rly varsity GSV, Airbus sign pact

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Indian Railways' Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) Vadodra and Airbus have entered into a collaboration to significantly strengthen the Indian aviation sector. Following the MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) signed in September 2023, a definitive agreement was signed at Rail Bhawan, New Delhi. The agreement was formalised by Rémi Maillard (President and Managing Director, Airbus India and South Asia) and Prof. Manoj Choudhary (Vice-Chancellor, Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya).

The signing ceremony was attended by Ashwini Vaishnav, Minister of Railways, Information and Broadcasting, Electronics and IT, who is also the First Chancellor of Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya, Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Ravneet Singh, Minister of State for Railways, Jaya Varma Sinha, Chairman and CEO of the Railway Board, Vumlungang Vualnam, Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, and other senior officials from the Railway Board.

The agreement includes a full scholarship programme



The agreement includes a full scholarship programme for 40 GSV students for the entire programme duration, the establishment of the Centre of Excellence at GSV, and the creation of the Airbus Aviation Chair Professor position at GSV. Furthermore, GSV and Airbus will collaborate on executive training programs for working professionals in the aviation sector.

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Speaking on the occasion, Ashwini Vaishnav stated, "Today marks the conversion from MoU to actual action. Congratulations to GSV and Airbus. Whatever has been promised is delivered, which is one of the hallmarks of Prime Minister Modi's government. In the spirit of 'Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas,' as our Prime

Minister says, there has to be the development of aviation, highways, railways, and road transportation. Practically, everything has to progress together. We will continue collaborating with all in the spirit of Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas. The reason GSV was established was to have a focused and specialized institution catering to all sectors of transportation. We started with railways, gradually moved to manufacturing, and the next sector is civil aviation. The next planned sector is shipping and logistics. We will start in a focused way, with one program from that sector, and then move to other sectors in transportation."

Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu also expressed his satisfaction, saying, "I am happy that the MoU is being signed with Airbus. Civil aviation is the fastest-growing sector in India. In the last ten years, the number of airports has nearly doubled from 74 to 157. The Udaan scheme has brought Tier II and Tier III cities onto the aviation map. We will continue to receive mentorship from Railways. The Ministry of Civil Aviation will fully collaborate and support Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya in the progress of the aviation sector, and GSV should prepare to launch Masters and Ph.D. programmes."

'Investor-friendly'..

Continued from Page 1

The Minister also called for the existing portal for supervising investments in the IT and electronics industry to be upgraded. He directed the officials to submit a report on the available plug-and-play infrastructure in Visakhapatnam. Additionally, Lokesh requested a detailed report on the availability of land in and around Visakhapatnam suitable for establishing new industries.

Lokesh instructed the officials to conduct periodic meetings with potential investors in the IT and electronics sectors and to provide them with necessary information while resolving any issues they might face. He stressed the importance of officials maintaining a friendly approach with industrialists.

The meeting was attended by Kona Sasidhar, Secretary of IT and Electronics; Surjit Singh, Joint Director (Promotions); Anil Kumar, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of AP Innovations Society; and other officials.

Naidu seeks Central ...

Continued from Page 1

Moreover, incentives for industrial development and necessary infrastructure for four identified industrial nodes were also discussed.

During his meeting with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, CM Chandrababu Naidu proposed the creation of a defence industry ecosystem in Andhra Pradesh to boost the state's industrial growth.

In discussions with Health Minister JP Nadda, the Chief Minister stressed the importance of upgrading health infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh.

While meeting with B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, CEO of NITI Aayog, CM Chandrababu Naidu sought close collaboration with the NITI Aayog in formulating and implementing a comprehensive development plan for Andhra Pradesh in the coming years. This includes the comprehensive develop-

ment of the coastal belt with a specific focus on Visakhapatnam and the north coastal regions and the development of Hindupur as a mega industrial hub between Chennai and Bengaluru. He also requested a study to examine the potential of the Blue Economy and coordinate with various GoI agencies and ministries to develop an action plan.

The Chief Minister also met with senior leaders of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), as well as potential investors, to explore growth and development opportunities for Andhra Pradesh.

These meetings were deemed productive and insightful, paving the way for future collaborations and progress, and ensuring a bright future for the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Kingpins of red sanders smuggling should be arrested: Pawan Kalyan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development K Pawan Kalyan has directed the officials to find out the kingpins of red sanders smuggling and arrest them apart from taking stringent steps to contain the illegal activities.

The forest officials submitted a report to the Deputy Chief Minister on Friday on the seizure of 158 red sanders logs worth Rs 1.60 crore three days ago in Jaganna colony at Potladurthi village in YSR Kadapa district and informed him that four smugglers were arrested in this connection.

Dy. Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan directed the officials to



bolster the vigil on red sander smugglers. "The kingpins, who are operating the red sander smuggling, should be identified and arrested. A large

number of red sander trees have been felled in the Seshachalam forest. Trace where the red sander logs were dumped. The red sander net-

work should be exposed and crippled," the Panchayat Raj Minister told the forest officials.

A strict vigil should be laid on those who were freed on bail and their activities, he said to the officials. He directed the forest and police officials to work in a coordinated manner to contain the red sander smuggling in the state.

Pawan Kalyan inquired with the officials how many red sander smugglers had been punished in the court and how many cases had been registered regarding red sander smuggling so far. He also directed them to take steps to bring back the red sander logs which were concealed in Nepal.

Jewellery with fake hallmark seized in BIS raids

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Vijayawada Branch Office successfully conducted two raids, seizing fake and spurious hallmarked jewellery at Sri Sudarshan Assaying and Hallmarking Centre and M/s Siripuri Hallmarking Centre in Tadipatri, Andhra Pradesh.

The raids targeted Malepati Sudarshan Babu, proprietor of M/s Sri Sudarshan Assaying and Hallmarking Centre, and Shaik Mohammed Althaf, proprietor of M/s Siripuri Hallmarking Centre. Both were found testing and marking gold ornaments without a valid BIS license, violating Sections 14 and 15 of the BIS Act, 2016.

IRRIGATION PROJECTS

'Maintenance work accelerated'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Water Resources Development Minister Dr Nimmala Ramanaidu announced that the maintenance work on numerous irrigation projects across the state is being accelerated. On Friday, the minister conducted a review meeting with the engineers of the Water Resources Department at the state secretariat to discuss precautions for managing irrigation projects during the rainy season.

Addressing the media, the minister emphasized the importance of monitoring the inflow and outflow of water, as well as maintaining the gates and locks of the projects, especially in the context of significant floodwaters entering the projects during the rainy sea-



son. He instructed officials to promptly remove silt and debris from the canals to ensure water reaches the tail end areas under the projects. Additionally, he directed the preparation of necessary fund estimates for these activities.

The minister highlighted that the maintenance work is being executed urgently to maximize water storage during the rainy season and ensure adequate irrigation water for the Kharif

season. Plans are also being developed to supply water to the Ayakal lands under the projects.

Dr. Ramanaidu criticized the previous government's negligence, citing the breakdown of gates at Gundlakamma, Pulichintala, and Annamayya projects. He noted that while the Pulichintala project was supposed to store 30 to 40 TMC of water, only 0.5 TMC was stored due to these issues. This lack of adequate water reserves, along with neglect of the Pattiseema project, led to drinking water shortages in the Krishna Delta.

The minister mentioned that the Pattiseema project's gates and bolts have deteriorated due to a lack of maintenance over the past four years. Out of the 24 pumps under the Pattiseema lift irrigation scheme.



Driver killed as truck hits RTC bus

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

The driver of an APSRTC bus was killed when a container truck dashed against the bus opposite to the Chilakaluripet RTC bus depot on Friday in Chilakaluripet.

Police said that when the ill-fated RTC bus, which belonged to Narasaraopet bus depot, was going to Narasaraopet, a speeding container truck dashed against the RTC bus. The RTC bus driver Khadar Mastan Baba (54) was killed instantaneously. Four passengers of the bus were also injured in the accident.

Following the accident, the traffic was disrupted for an hour. The police cleared the traffic.

Demand to cancel land allotted to Visakha Sarada Peetham

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra Pradesh Sadhu Parishad president Srinivasananda Saraswati has ignited a firestorm of controversy by demanding the cancellation of a contentious land allotment to Visakha Sharada Peetham in Kothavalasa. The allocation, encompassing more than 15 acres, was sanctioned during the tenure of former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Accompanied by Jana Sena corporator Peethala Murthy Yadav and representatives from several Hindu organizations, Srinivasananda personally inspected the hilly terrain where the disputed land is situated. Speaking to reporters during the inspection, Srinivasananda alleged that the land, originally earmarked for infrastructure development for Visakha Sharada Peetham, had been illicitly repurposed for commercial ventures under the previous administration. He con-



Accompanied by Jana Sena corporator Peethala Murthy Yadav and representatives from several Hindu organizations, Srinivasananda personally inspected the hilly terrain where the disputed land is situated

demned the allocation as driven by profit-seeking motives rather than serving the public interest.

Murthy Yadav echoed these sentiments, criticizing the allocation of a prime hillside property that was initially intended for the establishment of a Vedic school. He vehemently called for a comprehensive investigation into the ownership and utilization of Visakha Sharada Peetham's properties, both pre-and post-2019, alleging that the Peetham had previously func-

tioned as a political outpost for the YSR Congress Party.

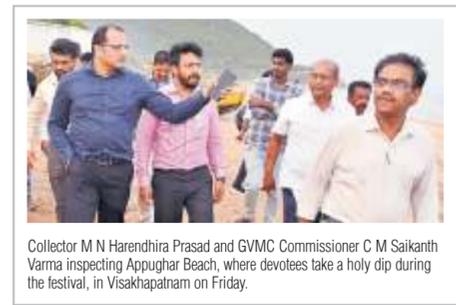
The burgeoning controversy has sparked widespread public outcry, with demands mounting for transparency and accountability in government land allocations. Calls for an official inquiry into the allocation process have intensified, underscoring the need for a thorough review of past decisions. As the debate unfolds, stakeholders and the public alike await further developments in this unfolding saga.

Vizag gears up for 'Giri Pradakshina' at Simhachalam Temple on July 20

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As the annual 'Giri Pradakshina' festival of Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at Simhachalam is scheduled for July 20, District Collector M N Harendhira Prasad has emphasised the need for meticulous preparations to ensure a seamless and spiritually enriching experience for all participating devotees.

On Friday, the District Collector, accompanied by GVMC Commissioner C M Saikanth Varma, Joint Collector Mayur Ashok and senior officials from various departments, conducted a comprehensive inspection of key locations along the 32-km Giri Pradakshina trekking route. The inspection focused on critical aspects like road repairs, sanitation facilities, availability of drinking water, uninterrupted electricity supply, deployment of mobile toilets, and designated areas for the traditional coconut-breaking ritual performed by devotees at



Collector M N Harendhira Prasad and GVMC Commissioner C M Saikanth Varma inspecting Appughar Beach, where devotees take a holy dip during the festival, in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

the commencement of the trek. The 'Giri Pradakshina' is considered highly auspicious by devotees, who will trek approximately 32 km around Simhachalam. According to Devasthanam authorities, the 'Giri Pradakshina' will commence around 3 p.m., featuring the 'Appanna Pushparadhama', a replica of Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy's chariot, from 'Tholi Pavancha' (downhill).

Nevertheless, many devotees begin their trek in the early morning hours.

Anticipating a significant influx of devotees, authorities are implementing elaborate arrangements. The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) will establish dedicated counters at Appughar Beach, a popular location for devotees to take a holy dip during the pilgrimage. Lumbini Park will also under-

go enhancements, including improved sanitation facilities, upgraded lighting infrastructure, and the installation of additional mobile toilets for the convenience of participants.

Meanwhile, Commissioner of Police Shanka Brata Bagchi conducted a review meeting involving traffic, civil and other police wings at the Police Commissionerate. He instructed personnel to make arrangements so that the public does not face any inconvenience. He asked them to ensure no traffic snarls along the Giri Pradakshina route. He also directed the sta to use body-worn cameras and drones to check the movement of the devotees during the trek. The Commissioner also cautioned about the steps to be taken to ensure there are no drowning deaths at Appughar Beach, where people take a holy dip. Joint Commissioner K. Fakeerappa, Deputy Commissioner of Police B. Lakshmi Narayana and others were present.

Vijayawada-Kurnool flights to take off soon



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Industries, Commerce, and Food Processing Minister TG Bharat announced that flight services between Vijayawada and Kurnool will commence soon. Minister TG Bharat met with Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu in Delhi, where he requested the provision of flight facilities for Kurnool Airport, including steps to enable night landings.

Minister Bharat shared that the Union Minister responded positively to the request and

confirmed that flight services between Vijayawada and Kurnool would start soon. The necessary arrangements for night landings are expected to be completed within a year. Orders have already been issued to the relevant authorities to initiate the required work.

TG Bharat emphasized that the availability of air services to Kurnool will facilitate travel for industrialists to the Orvakal industrial hub. He noted that improved infrastructure would likely attract more industrialists to set up operations in the region's industrial zones.

YSRCP demands CM to seek Special Category Status for AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former MLA and YSRCP leader TJR Sudhakar Babu demanded that the government secure all rights due to the state. Speaking to the media on Friday, he questioned why CM Chandrababu Naidu is not demanding special category status (SCS) for Andhra Pradesh.

Addressing a press conference on Friday, Sudhakar Babu noted that it has been a month since the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) came to power. He pointed out that people are still waiting for the implementation of TDP's alliance poll promises and urged for the fulfilment of all these promises.

Welcoming the meeting between Chandrababu Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Union Ministers, Sudhakar Babu stressed the importance of achieving every right from the Centre, including SCS. He claimed that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had kept the issue of SCS alive over the



past five years by continuing to demand it during every visit to Delhi. He questioned why Chandrababu Naidu is not raising the issue, especially when his NDA colleague Nitish Kumar is demanding SCS for his state. Sudhakar Babu emphasized that people believe Naidu has the influence to secure SCS now and urged him to pressure the Modi government to grant it to Andhra Pradesh.

Sudhakar Babu criticized CM Chandrababu Naidu for mentioning the state's finan-

cial deficit but failing to address the issue of SCS during his recent visit to Delhi. He also asked for national status for the Polavaram project and the release of funds for infrastructure development and industrial assistance. He asserted that SCS is the key to regaining Andhra Pradesh's strength and called on Naidu to follow Bihar CM Nitish Kumar's example in demanding SCS.

Sudhakar Babu also objected to the alleged discrimination by the ruling Telugu Desam Party in implementing the Rs. 7,000 social security pension (Rs. 4,000 regular + hiked Rs. 1,000 for three months). He claimed that Dalits who supported YSRCP in the elections were denied the increased pensions. He recalled that the Jagan Mohan Reddy government did not show bias in providing welfare benefits and urged the TDP government to offer welfare to all on a saturation basis.

Check diversion of PDS rice: Collector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana has instructed officials and staff to ensure the timely delivery of goods to cardholders according to government guidelines and to maintain vigilance to prevent the diversion of PDS rice.

On Friday, the Collector held a meeting with Civil Supplies Department officials to discuss various issues. These included the seasonal collection of grain, milling, the distribution of goods through MDUs, surveillance to prevent the diversion of PDS rice, registration of cases, and

investigations. It was noted that there are about six lakh cards in the district, with goods being provided to beneficiaries through 374 MDUs every month.



A comprehensive action plan for the Kharif-2024 paddy collection should be prepared in advance. Authorities from the relevant departments should take appropriate measures to ensure that the prices of essential goods remain under control in the open market.

Civil Supplies District Manager G. Venkateshwarlu and DSO G. Mohanbabu participated in the meeting.

CP lauds AR Police's role in maintaining law & order

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

City Police Commissioner Dr Sankha Brata Bagchi reviewed the parade by Armed Reserve personnel at the City Armed Reserve ground on Friday. Addressing the gathering, Commissioner Bagchi acknowledged the Armed Reserve's critical role in maintaining law and order throughout Visakhapatnam.

He emphasised the department's commitment to public safety and the integral role these officers play in achieving that goal. Recognising the demanding nature of police work, Commissioner Bagchi highlighted the launch of dedicated 24/7 support services for the police department staff, home guard personnel, and their families. These critical services can be accessed around the clock via calls, SMS, or WhatsApp at the designated phone number: 7995095799.

Since assuming his position on July 1st, Commissioner Bagchi has actively pursued collaborative efforts with various stakeholders within the community. This focus on col-



laboration extends to local industries.

Commissioner Bagchi specifically mentioned ongoing efforts to engage industrial partners interested in supporting the community through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Additionally, Commissioner Bagchi encouraged personnel to provide input on securing additional resources from both the government and private sectors, intending to enhance departmental well-being. Demonstrating a commitment to addressing officer concerns promptly, Commissioner Bagchi pledged to resolve issues related to leave entitlements, pending dues, depot matters, and any

instances of harassment encountered by officers. Highlighting a strong sense of partnership, Commissioner Bagchi declared, "Your problem is my problem. Your comfort ensures my comfort."

Commissioner Bagchi reiterated his unwavering support for the personnel. He promised to protect and encourage them throughout his tenure, commending their dedication and bravery in service to the Visakhapatnam community. Commissioner Bagchi closed by wishing them continued success in their vital role. Commissioner Bagchi reiterated his unwavering support for the entire department. He pledged to protect and encourage personnel throughout his tenure, commending their unwavering dedication and bravery in service to the Visakhapatnam community.

800 heritage trees identified in port city

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Vizag's urban landscape is about to get a well-deserved spotlight on its environmental giants. A group of passionate environmentalists, led by retired professors from Andhra University, have identified nearly 800 heritage trees within the city. These ancient wonders, some reaching 200 to 300 years old, hold immense cultural, historical, and ecological significance.

The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) Vizag chapter is now joining forces with the professors to formally document and protect these silent witnesses to Vizag's evolution. Imagine a tree near the Waltair railway office, proudly displaying its 130-year legacy on a sign - that's the kind of recognition these heritage trees deserve. "These trees, averaging 50-



100 years old, play a vital role in our environment," says Dr K Kameswara Rao, a retired professor of environmental science leading the initiative. He highlights their contribution to soil conservation, water recharge, and supporting local wildlife. For instance, a giant banyan tree at Andhra University is estimated to absorb 5,000 tonnes of car-

A group of passionate environmentalists, led by retired professors from Andhra University, have identified nearly 800 heritage trees within the city

bon dioxide over its lifetime! The project has another key player: Prof Y Venkateswara Rao, a retired botany professor lending his expertise. This past Sunday, the INTACH Vizag chapter took a big step forward with a three-hour heritage tree walk. Chapter leaders Dr. D. Rajasekhara Reddy and Dr. B. Surendra Kumar emphasized the importance of a comprehensive survey to identify and document these invaluable trees.

The walk wasn't just about identification; it was about building a community around conservation. INTACH members and environmentalists like Edward Paul, Jayshree Hatangadi, and Mayank Kumar Deo discussed ways to involve local communities. Ideas included awareness cam-

paigns, educational workshops, and even strengthening existing laws like the AP Biodiversity Act to offer these heritage trees stronger protection. Schools could also play a role. The discussion explored incorporating various school clubs of INTACH into the initiative.

Prof. Rao wasn't just documenting trees; he highlighted their ecological importance. He explained how these trees harbour diverse micro-organisms and support hundreds of other species. Some act as seed dispersers, while others contribute to the overall ecosystem's health by supporting other flora and fauna, even playing a role in rainwater conservation. Vizag's heritage trees are more than just scenery; they are the city's silent guardians.

Officials directed to expedite land acquisition for NH projects

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

District Collector C Naga Rani has directed the officials concerned to expedite the land acquisition process for the national highway projects. The Collector held a meeting with the national highway authority officials here on Friday and reviewed the widening works of NH 165 and 216.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Naga Rani directed the Bhimavaram RDO to expedite the land acquisition by 6 km.

The Collector explained that the NH 165 is being widened from Pamarru to Akividu via Digamarru for 104 km. The road widening works of NH 165 from Pamarru to Akividu for 64 km are being carried out.

She said that the construction works of the NH is going



on in the 64 km stretch from Palmeru to Aakiveedu, and the work has to be carried out in 17 km of the 40 km road from Akividu to Digamaru via Bhimavaram.

She told the officials to take steps to prevent seepage in the National Highway in Kalipatnam and Mogalthur Mandals in the middle of the road connecting Losari via Ongole NH-216 Narasapuram Digamaru from Kathipudi.

The NH officer explained to the Collector that it was

The Collector explained that the NH 165 is being widened from Pamarru to Akividu via Digamarru for 104 km. The road widening works of NH 165 from Pamarru to Akividu for 64 km are being carried out.

noticed that the seepage was being generated from the residential areas near to the NH. The Collector asked the officials to convene a meeting

with the villagers on the issue to resolve the problem.

Joint Collector CV Praveen Aditya, DRO J Udayabhaskara Rao, R&BSE Satyanarayana, R&B NHEE Sanjeeva Rayudu, NH Sub Divisional Deputy EE LS Subrahmanyam, Assistant Engineers N Venkataratnam and K Purushottam were among those who attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, Collector Naga Rani directed the Tahsildars to file disposals correctly in the courts regarding court cases. She reviewed the Land Acquisition, 22A, Issuance of Community Certificates, Redressal of Grievances, Issuance of Pass Books and door-to-door Distribution of Ration. She told the officials to expedite the issuance of community certificates.

Raymonds Group CMD meets TTD EO

PNS ■ TIRUPATHI

Raymonds Group Chairman and Managing Director Gautam Hari Singhania met Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Executive Officer J. Syamala Rao here on Friday.

During the meeting, they discussed various topics including the construction of Sri Balaji Mandir in Navi Mumbai. They also discussed the programs being implemented in Tirumala SV High School with the help of Singhania Educational Trust. The Singhania group of schools was managed by Raymond's group.

Supply drinking water without hindrances: DC

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector A Thameem Ansariya directed the officials to take steps to supply drinking water without obstacles to the areas which are facing acute drinking water scarcity.

The Collector held a meeting with the municipal Corporation and municipal officials and reviewed the drinking water scarcity and supply of water.

Ongole Municipal Commissioner Jaswanth Rao told the Collector that drinking water was sufficient to supply for two months.

Many tanks were filled with the water released from the Ramathirtham project, he told her. The Municipal Commissioner said that drink-



The Collector held a meeting with the municipal Corporation and municipal officials and reviewed the drinking water scarcity and supply of water.

Spiritual, eco-tourism will be developed: Minister

PNS ■ TIRUPATHI

Minister for Tourism Development and Cinema K. Chandrababu Naidu said that spiritual and eco-tourism would be developed in the State.

The Minister here on Friday conducted a surprise inspection of the AP Tourism office, located at Zoo Park. The Minister visited the site, buildings, office, State Institute of Hotel Management College of Tourism Department. The staff brought their problems to the attention of the Minister.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Chandrababu Naidu made it clear that steps were being taken to further develop the State Institute of Hotel

Management. He said that the Tourism department here has 45 acres of land of which five acres were being used while 37 acres of land lying waste.

The Minister said that out of the 37 acres of land, Devlok would be established in which the replicas of deities would be installed. It may be mentioned here that the previous YSRCP government had allocated 37 acres of land to the Oberai group of companies and the company failed to avail the land.

The teaching and non-teaching staff of Hotel Management are not being paid salaries for 18 months, he regretted. He alleged that tourism was badly neglected during the YSRCP regime.

Awareness drive in schools on mosquito prevention

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The officials of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) held awareness campaigns on Friday in various schools in the city. Awareness and health seminars are being held on mosquito prevention for students during prayers on every Friday. In these awareness and health seminars, public representatives, VIPs, GHMC officials and representatives of colony welfare associations are participating to create awareness. Chief Entomologist Dr Rambabu said that about 30,000 students from 150 schools in 150 divisions in six zones were educated by the officers & staff of the respective divisions.



PLIS pipeline leaks; many fields submerged

PNS ■ ELURU

Water gushed out from the pipeline of Pattiseema Lift Irrigation Scheme (PLIS) due to leakage at Itukalakoda village in Polavaram mandal on Friday. Minister for Irrigation Nimmala Ramanaidu released water at Pattiseema lift scheme on July 3. The 24 pump sets of the Pattiseema lift scheme were installed at Itukalakoda village to lift and pump the Godavari water to the Polavaram right canal. However, water gushed

out from the first pipeline due to leakage. The water from the leaked pipeline submerged the agricultural fields nearby. Pattiseema lift scheme DE Peddiraju and AE Vinod said that the steps were taken to plug the water leakage from the pipe. The Engineers said that some farmers turned on the valve of the pipeline resulting in water gushing out of the pipeline like a fountain. They said that the motor which was connected to the pipeline was switched off immediately.

14th century Sivalingam found



PNS ■ SRISAILAM

A Sivalingam was discovered during the construction work of a wall at Yaphi theatre near the famous hill shrine Srisailem on Friday.

Digging the open place was taken up using a JCB. A huge

Sivalingam and Nandi idol of stone was discovered when the JCB dug up the place.

The officials put on hold the digging works for the safety of the ancient Sivalingam. Inscriptions were found on a stone which was also discovered along with the

Shivalingam. The Srisailem temple officials took photographs of the inscriptions and sent them to the Archeological Survey of India in Mysore.

The Archeological survey of India Director Muniratnam examined the inscriptions and announced that the inscriptions were in Telugu and it belonged to 14 and 15 centuries. The inscriptions reveal that Kapiyaya belonged to Brahmapuri, consecrated the Shivalingam and the Nandi idol at Rudraksha mutt. Previously, a Chaturmukha Shiva Lingam, inscriptions on palm leaves, gold and silver coins were unearthed at the same place.

Devotees thronged to the place and started worshipping the Shivalingam.

IFFCO launches nano fertilizer promotion campaign

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

IFFCO has launched the Nano Fertilizer Usage Promotion Mahaabhiyan to promote the use of nano fertilizers among farmers. As part of this campaign, IFFCO has selected 200 model nano village clusters, encompassing 800 villages, to receive a 25% subsidy on Nano Urea Plus, Nano DAP, and Sagarika fertilizers. This plan includes 1,270 demonstrations of Nano DAP (liquid) in 413 districts and 200 trials of Nano Urea Plus (liquid) in 100 districts. These trials will be conducted with the assistance of

Krishi Vigyan Kendras, State Agricultural Universities, and other research institutions, with oversight from the Government of India. IFFCO will make nano fertilizers available at cooperative societies and other sales outlets. The organization is also providing 2,500 agricultural drones for spraying nano fertilizers. To support this, 300 Nano Drone Didis and drone entrepreneurs have been trained. Other types of sprayers are also available to help farmers apply nano fertilizers efficiently.

In support of this initiative, the Prime Minister has launched a 100-day action plan to increase nano fertilizer use in agriculture. This plan includes 1,270 demonstrations of Nano DAP (liquid) in 413 districts and 200 trials of Nano Urea Plus (liquid) in 100 districts. These trials will be conducted with the assistance of

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Inter-state bike lifters arrested; nine vehicles recovered

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

The police arrested two interstate two-wheeler thieves and recovered 9 motorcycles from them.

DSP Raghuveer Vishnu told the media on Friday that a police team led by C Lingappa and SI Babu conducted a checking of vehicles at Papepalli village. The accused who were going on a Pulsar bike, did not stop and tried to flee. The police chased and apprehended them.

During the questioning, they confessed to the crime of stealing motorcycles. The duo stole motorcycles not only in Andhra Pradesh but



also in Tamil Nadu. The police seized nine stolen motorcycles worth Rs 5 lakh. The police gave the names of arrested bike lifters as Prabha and Karthi

who are below 25 years of age. They were addicted to vices and to earn money easily they committed the theft of motorcycles, the DSP said.

Orientation for NSS cadets on combating crimes

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Women Safety Wing, Hyderabad, in collaboration with the National Service Scheme (NSS), conducted a comprehensive orientation programme on Friday which aimed at enhancing the understanding and skills of NSS cadets in safe and unsafe touch, Identification of victims, how to approach and whom to approach, to identify spy cameras and to ensure safe and secure environment.

TGANB nabs two medical students for consuming drugs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The sluths of Sultan Bazar Police, along with Telangana Anti Narcotics Bureau (TGANB), on credible information, apprehended one ganja peddler and two medical college students on Friday.

Ganja peddler Suresh Singh alias Tinku Singh, who is a habitual NDPS offender, was arrested while he came to Koti to sell ganja to medical students. He along with two doctors, who came to buy the ganja were arrested. Both doctors tested positive for the ganja in the urine test.

TGANB said, "So far, four medical students have been identified and efforts are in progress to identify other medical students who consumed drugs." TGANB said that the accused Suresh Singh has been peddling ganja since 2016 and he used to procure it from Dinesh Singh of Dhoopet and sell it to customers. He continued this for three years. During that period some medical students used to approach him to purchase ganja and through them many more students went to him and purchased ganja. Some of the students who used to come to him are K Manikandan, V

Aravind and other students. There are around 10 medical students who used to purchase ganja from the accused.

Police seized 10 sachets of ganja weighing 80 grams and two from Suresh Singh. A case has been registered under the Sections of NDPS Act-1985 at Sultan Bazar police station, Hyderabad.

"In recent times, we have seen several students getting addicted to drugs, committing crime and involving in other anti-social activities. Several families have become victims of this menace. It is an ardent request from Hyderabad City

Police to the students not to fall prey to drugs and request the parents to keep a watch on the activities of their children and feel free to approach police or pass information to police on phone through 8712671111 to curtail such anti-social activities and strive for drug-free city", TGANB said.

The arrests were made under the overall guidance of TGANB director Sandeep Shandilya and overall supervision of TGANB SP Seetharam and the supervision of DSP TGANB K Narsing Rao and staff of TGANB, along with Sultan Bazar Police, Hyderabad.

Adi Srinivas: Who will recognise KCR beyond TG?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Government Whip Adi Srinivas has sought to know who will recognise former chief minister K Chandrababu Naidu beyond Telangana.

Speaking to the media at Congress Legislature Party CLP Media Hall on Friday, Srinivas alleged that "event management" has been taking place in KCR's farmhouse and as part of it the BRS leaders are shifting the party activists to the farmhouse. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy hit two sixes (6 MLAs and 6 MLCs) and is going to hit another six soon. Who will recognize BRS Chief K Chandrababu Naidu if he crosses the state? Why did he not contest outside the state if he wants to become Prime Minister of the nation? Event management is taking place in KCR's farmhouse and as part of it the BRS leaders are shifting the party activists to the farmhouse. Government Whip Adi Srinivas



Government Whip Adi Srinivas speaking to the media at Congress Legislature Party office in Hyderabad on Friday

He made it clear that the Congress will stay in power not only for five years but also 10 years because of people's governance of the CM Revanth Reddy. He said that the government will implement farm loan waiver scheme and former Minister T Harish Rao has to get ready to resign as MLA.

There is no need for unemployed youth to agitate, he said, and added that the government would announce job calendar.

Srinivas alleged that former CM KCR has been telling cock and bull stories by sitting in the farmhouse to BRS activists. KCR is living in illusions and it is better for him to consult a psychologist, Srinivas felt.

"KCR may say in the coming days that he is Chief Minister of the farmhouse if one sees the condition of the farmhouse. Government Whip Adi Srinivas

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Ensure 75th birth anniv of YSR a grand affair: Sajjala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP State General Secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy has called for grand celebrations across the state to mark the 75th birth anniversary of former Chief Minister Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy. Acting on instructions from YSRCP President and former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, a teleconference was held on Friday. The conference included members of parliament, parliamentary constituency coordinators, party district presidents, legislative council members, legislators, and constituency in-charges to discuss the plans for the grand celebration of YSR Jayanti on July 8th (Monday). During the teleconference,



Sajjala provided various suggestions for organizing a service program in honour of Dr. YSR's 75th birth anniversary. The party has planned several

service activities statewide, continuing its annual tradition. One of the suggested activities includes cleaning Dr YSR's statues across the state.

Sajjala emphasised the importance of paying tributes to the late leader Dr. YSR and organizing service programs as done in previous years. He noted that this 75th anniversary is particularly significant as it also marks the 15th year since Dr. YSR's passing.

Jagan Mohan Reddy founded the YSR Congress Party based on Dr. YSR's ideals and principles, learning from him how to be a leader in tune with the people. Whether in power or opposition, the YSR Congress Party has always stood by the people. The party has a remarkable history of eradicating poverty, supporting the poor, and leading the state towards sustainable development and progress, providing equal opportunities for all.

Sajjala highlighted that the positive changes brought about by the party's good deeds are evident to all, regardless of the election results. He also mentioned that schemes implemented by the YSRCP have been adopted by the central government and other states.

Reflecting on the recent election results, Sajjala expressed hope that the beneficiaries of the party's schemes would support them through votes. However, he acknowledged that the Telugu Desam Party's false and unenforceable promises might have influenced the election outcome. He also mentioned the factional attacks and attempts to create terror that began even before the Telugu Desam Party came to power.

INDIA CORNER

Woman, six-year-old son charred to death; husband seriously injured

A woman and her six-year-old son were burnt to death while her husband was seriously injured in a fire in their house in West Bengal's Birbhum district on Friday, police said. The incident took place in Rajakpur village near Bolpur in the early hours when Rupa Bibi, aged around 30 years, and her son Ayan Sheikh, along with her husband Abdul Alim were sleeping inside their single storey house, he said. Alim, who is under treatment at Burdwan Medical College and Hospital, claimed that he had woken up and spotted someone throwing a blazing stick through an open window of the room they were sleeping in and the flames spread quickly, the officer said. Hearing their screams, the neighbours doused the blaze and brought out the three persons who were trapped inside. While the woman and her son were declared brought dead by doctors at Bolpur hospital, Alim was referred to Bardhaman for better treatment.



K'taka Governor appeals to younger generation to preserve religion, culture

Karnataka Governor Thaaarchand Gehlot on Friday stressed the importance of non-violence in Jain philosophy and appealed to the younger generation to embrace and preserve religion and culture. He was speaking after releasing a book titled "Jain Purana Part-3 Acharya Charitra" at a function organised by All India Jain Forum here. Gehlot emphasised the significance of religious literature in transmitting religion, culture, rituals and traditions from generation to generation. He highlighted the importance of religion in keeping society organised and its impact on individuals religiously, socially, and spiritually. He also stressed the importance of ahimsa (non-violence) in Jain philosophy and appealed to the younger generation to embrace and preserve religion and culture. The Governor termed the book "Jaina Purana Part-3" as useful for all.



BJP flays TMC MP Mahua Moitra over her remarks against NCW chief

The BJP on Friday flayed TMC MP Mahua Moitra over her comments against NCW chief Rekha Sharma and demanded that she be "sacked" from her party. This came a day after the TMC, commenting on a video posted on X showing the NCW chairperson's arrival at the site of a stampede that recently took place in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras, wrote, "She is too busy holding up her boss's pajamas". Reacting sharply, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla termed Moitra's comment on the microblogging site as "extremely indecent, objectionable and shameful", and said this is the "true face" of the TMC and the opposition parties' INDIA bloc. "MP Mahua Moitra who justified and remained silent during Sandeshkhali, Chopra Talibani flogging, silent on Swati Malivali now makes a disgusting comment at a women that too the NCW Chief," he charged.



RAHUL GANDHI ON HATHRAS STAMPEDE

'Don't want to make it political but administration made lapses'

PNS ■ HATHRAS/ALIGARH (UP)

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Friday said there were lapses on the part of the administration in the Hathras stampede incident that killed over 100 people, but added that he did not want to make it a political issue.



Gandhi, after meeting the victims of the stampede in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras on Friday morning, urged Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to release "maximum compensation" for the victims without any delay.

One of the family members who met Gandhi said he assured them that he will raise the issue in Parliament so that such incidents do not happen in future.

Speaking to reporters in Hathras on Friday morning,

Gandhi said, "It is a matter of grief that so many families have suffered, so many people lost their lives."

"I don't want to speak from a political prism, but there have been some lapses on part of the administration. There have been mistakes, which should be identified," the senior Congress leader said.

A total of 121 people, mostly women, died in the stampede at self-styled godman

Baba Bhole's satsang in Hathras on Tuesday.

Gandhi said this is a tough time for the victims and they would need the compensation quickly as they are poor. He urged the UP chief minister to provide "maximum compensation".

"They are poor people and they need it (compensation) now. If you give them after six months, after a year or delay it, then it will not benefit anyone.

Compensation should be given as soon as possible," Gandhi said.

The government has announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh for those killed and Rs 50,000 for the injured.

Gandhi also said that he had a "personal" interaction with the family members of the stampede victims.

"They said that there was a lapse on the part of the administration. They said that the police arrangement that should have been made was not there. But they are grieving and are in shock. I am trying to understand their situation," he said.

Before meeting family members in Hathras, Gandhi made a stop at Aligarh and met the kin of victims from the district. According to police, 17 people from Aligarh and 19 from Hathras were killed in the stampede.

Sanjay Singh appointed as chairperson of AAP Parliamentary Party

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh has been appointed as the chairperson of the AAP Parliamentary Party.

He has also been chosen as the leader of the party in Rajya Sabha.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has always given me the opportunity to raise my voice from the streets to the Parliament. I will fulfil the responsibility of the party's parliamentary group chairperson with utmost dedication. I am deeply grateful to Arvind Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party," he said in a post on X in Hindi.

Previously, Singh served as the leader of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the Rajya Sabha during his first term. He was re-elected to the Rajya Sabha and took his oath as a member of the Upper House on March 19 this year.

Lalu claims Modi government could fall next month

BJP says he is 'hallucinating'

PNS ■ PATNA

RJD president Lalu Prasad on Friday claimed that the Narendra Modi government at the Centre was "weak" and could "fall" as early as within a month.

The remark was promptly dismissed by the BJP, which said the ailing septuagenarian was "hallucinating" and that the recent general elections were a reaffirmation of the people's faith in Modi's leadership.

Prasad made these predictions at an event organised to commemorate 28 years of the formation of his party, which he founded by splitting the Janata Dal.

Prasad, who spoke in a weak voice for less than 10 minutes, with younger son and heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav by his side, said "the Modi government is weak (kamzor). It can



fall any time. It can fall in August."

He urged party workers to be prepared for such a scenario. He highlighted that in the recent Lok Sabha elections, the RJD had increased its seat count and vote share compared to five years ago.

"For quite some time, we have been the single largest party in the Bihar assembly. Unlike many others, we have

never compromised on ideology," said Prasad, a staunch opponent of the BJP, recalling his tenure and achievements, including the arrest of Lal Krishna Advani in 1990.

Prasad made the remark at a time most leaders of the NDA were at a BJP function where the newly inducted Union ministers, from Bihar, were felicitated.

Reacting to Prasad's statements later, Union Minister Nityanand Rai, a former Bihar BJP president, accused the RJD supremo of hallucinating, using a colloquial Hindi phrase "Mungeri Lal ke hasin sapne." "People have voted for Modi, who is now serving a record third term. Under his leadership and guided by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the NDA in Bihar will continue to defeat the opposition, which was disgraced during RJD's rule," Rai said.

Bill to curb malpractices in competitive exams tabled in Maha Provides for jail term, fine

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Amid concerns over exam paper leaks, the Maharashtra government on Friday tabled a bill in the state legislative assembly that aims to prevent malpractices in competitive examinations, and provides for a jail term of up to five years to the offenders.

The bill titled Maharashtra Competitive Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, was tabled by minister Shambhuraj Desai in the lower house of the state legislature.

Under the bill, the offences related to the conduct of competitive examinations shall be cognisable, non-bailable and non-compoundable.

According to the bill, those found indulging in unfair means and offences in the conduct of competitive examinations shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not less than three years, which may be extended to five years and with a fine of up to Rs 10 lakh.

In case of default of payment of fine, an additional punishment of imprisonment shall be imposed as per provisions of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023.

The service provider, who is engaged by the competitive examination authorities for the conduct of the exam, will be liable to be punished with a fine up to Rs 1 crore and the proportionate cost of examination shall be recovered from such provider. It shall also be barred from being assigned with any such responsibility of conducting any competitive exam for a period of four years, the bill says.

The salient features of the bill include making provisions to avoid disruption in the conduct of competitive exams, mandates it to specify duties of paper setters, to empower the officers not below the rank of deputy superintendent of police or assistant commissioner of police to investigate the offence.

The bill was tabled in the assembly in the wake of alleged irregularities in the conduct of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Under graduate). The NEET-UG exam was conducted on May 5 and the results were announced on June 4, but they were followed by allegations of question paper leaks in states such as Bihar, besides other irregularities.

Amid spike in dengue cases, awareness drive launched

PNS ■ MANGALURU (KARNATAKA)

Amid a spike in dengue cases in Karnataka, Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao on Friday launched an awareness campaign in this district headquarters town of Dakshina Kannada to eliminate breeding sites of Aedes mosquito that causes the vector borne disease.

He conducted a house-to-house inspection in parts of the city along with health workers and checked breeding areas of Aedes mosquitoes. Rao, who is also district in-charge Minister, inspected places where Aedes mosquito larvae were produced in water stagnated in coconut shells, tubs and tyres and observed the measures being taken by Health Department staff to destroy them.

He advised the local residents to be vigilant.

Speaking to reporters later, the Minister said the Department has launched a campaign to destroy breeding sites of Aedes mosquitoes every Friday for dengue control and urged the public to extend their cooperation. Health workers are engaged in creating awareness among people. People need to ensure that water does not stagnate in places around their houses.

Advocates in TN protest against 3 criminal laws, seek withdrawal

PNS ■ CHENNAI

A large number of advocates in Chennai and other parts of Tamil Nadu staged a protest on Friday against the Sanskritised Hindi names for the three new criminal laws that came into effect across the country from July 1 and demanded their immediate withdrawal.

The AIADMK advocates wing led by its secretary I S Inbadurai staged a demonstration in front of the Madras High Court protesting against the three new criminal laws - the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam and the Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita - replacing



the Indian Penal Code, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, respectively.

Inbadurai, a former legislator, later told reporters that these laws should immediately be revoked as they would cause confusion.

DMK advocate wing secretary N R Elango, who led a

similar protest here, alleged these three criminal laws were "anti-democratic and anti-constitutional as they are named in Sanskrit which cannot be done as per Article 348."

"Not only that, they are against the interests of the persons accused of the offence and persons who are victims of the offence. So, this cannot be implemented. They have to be abolished and revisited," Elango told reporters.

The Parliament, he said, has to take up the exercise of revisiting these laws. Otherwise the DMK's legal wing and advocate fraternity of Tamil Nadu will not rest, he added.

More rains likely in northern West Bengal

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The rain-drenched northern West Bengal is likely to receive more showers till July 9, the Met Department said on Friday.

A trough from Rajasthan to the Northeast and an active monsoon over northern West Bengal is likely to bring heavy rainfall in the region, it said.

Heavy to very heavy rain with extremely heavy rain in one or two places is likely in the sub-Himalayan districts of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and Coochbehar till July 9, the Met



Department said in a special bulletin.

The heavy downpour may cause landslides in the hill districts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong and waterlogging of low-lying areas in the plains, it said.

Water levels of rivers such as

Teesta, Jaldhaka, Sankosh and Torsa may rise owing to heavy rain, it added.

The sub-Himalayan districts have been receiving heavy rain for the last few days.

Alipurduar, bordering Assam, received the highest rainfall in 24 hours till 8.30 am in West Bengal at 280 mm, the weather office data said.

The other places that received heavy rainfall in northern West Bengal during the period are Pundibari (240 mm), Mathabhanga (210 mm), Chepan (200 mm), Barobishga (190 mm) and Bhutanghat (150 mm), it said.

Common environmental toxins linked with depressive symptoms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Toxins commonly present in the environment, such as nicotine and metals, have been linked with depressive symptoms like feeling hopeless or taking little interest in daily activities, according to a study conducted on US adults.

Researchers found that inflammation brought about by these environmental toxins could be one of the possible underlying reasons.

The team of researchers, including those from Peking University, China, analysed toxin levels in blood and urine samples of over 3,400 adults. The data was taken from the National Health and Nutrition Examination and Survey (NHANES), which tracks Americans' health and nutrition.



Depression in the participants was assessed using the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9), which can establish diagnosis, along with severity of

symptoms. The researchers found that toxins, including heavy metals, nicotine, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) present in paints and varnishes, increased the risk of depressive symptoms in the participants.

Those with detectable levels of MHBMA2, a VOC, were at 74 per cent higher risk of experiencing depression-like symptoms compared to those with undetectable levels, the authors found.

Further, men were found to be more vulnerable to the depressive effects of environmental toxins, compared to women.

The authors found that inflammation, measured through white blood cell (WBC) count, was one of the processes driving these links between toxins and depression-like symptoms.

Unexploded ordnance found in hospital

PNS ■ KARGIL/JAMMU

The Army Friday safely defused an unexploded ordnance found in the District Hospital Kargil during construction activities, officials said.

"Acting promptly on an information received from the Police regarding an unexploded ordnance, found in the District Hospital Kargil during construction activities, the fearless Sappers of Forever in Operations Division in coordination with local authorities shifted the unexploded ordnance to a safe location and destroyed it," Leh-based Fire and Fury Corps said on X.

Chhattisgarh: Man, two sons among five dead after inhaling suspected toxic gas inside well

PNS ■ JANJGIR-CHAMPA

Five people, including a man and his two sons, died due to suspected inhalation of poisonous gas inside an unused well in Chhattisgarh's Janjgir-Champa district on Friday, police said.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai expressed grief over the incident that occurred in Kikirda village under the Birra police station area in the morning.

He also announced a financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh to the kin of each deceased.

A team from the state disaster response force (SDRF) fished out the bodies from the well, they said.

Ramchandra Jaiswal (60),



Ramesh Patel (50), his two sons Rajendra (20) and Jitendra (25), and Tikeswar Chandra (25) have died in the incident, Inspector General of Police (Bilaspur Range) Sanjeev Shukla said.

As per preliminary information, Jaiswal entered the 30-

foot deep well on the premises of his house to retrieve a wooden strip that had fallen in, he said.

When Jaiswal fainted, his wife shouted for help, following which three others from the Patel family in the neighbourhood entered the water body, he said.

When none of them came out, Chandra entered the well, but he also fell unconscious, prompting locals to alert the police, the official said.

Prima facie, it appears that the men died after inhaling some poisonous gas inside the well. However, the exact cause of the deaths will be known after the autopsy, an official from the district administration said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Momentous meeting

The meeting of PM Modi with President Putin would solidify India's role as a key player in the emerging global order

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin. It was a meeting for which preparation was underway for a long but was delayed due to the elections. Indian Russian ties are historic but have become more important in the evolving multipolar world order. This will be Modi's first visit to Russia since the onset of the Ukraine war in February 2022. Despite the West's increasing isolation of Russia due to the Ukraine conflict, India has maintained a neutral stance. India has called for dialogue and diplomacy to resolve the dispute but has refrained from condemning Russia outright. This approach aligns with India's historical policy of non-alignment and strategic autonomy. India continues to buy Russian oil despite Western sanctions. India and Russia share a long-standing relationship dating back to the Cold War era. The two countries have traditionally enjoyed strong defence and economic ties, with Russia being a major supplier of military hardware to India. This relationship has persisted through various political changes and has been marked by cooperation in multiple areas, including nuclear energy, space exploration, and trade. Indeed, the Ukraine war has had far-reaching implications for global politics, economics, and security. The conflict has disrupted global energy markets and supply chains, contributing to inflationary pressures worldwide. India nonetheless did not snap ties with Russia despite its good relations with the US and the Western pressure. While maintaining its stance of neutrality, it has continued its trade relations with Russia, including increased imports of discounted Russian oil.



In this backdrop the meeting of Modi with Putin is significant. It is expected to cover a broad range of topics, reflecting the multifaceted nature of India-Russia relations. PM Modi may seek to secure long-term energy supplies from Russia to ensure stability in its energy markets. Both leaders may discuss ongoing and future defence projects, including the delivery of military hardware and the joint development of defence technologies. India's defence modernization plans, which include acquiring advanced weaponry and upgrading its military capabilities, are likely to be a focal point of discussion. Modi and Putin are expected to discuss the evolving international order and regional security issues. India's position as a rising global power and its role in regional stability will likely be a major point of discussion. The conversation may also touch upon India's vision for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, where it seeks to counterbalance China's influence. Bilateral trade has seen growth despite sanctions on Russia, and both countries may seek to expand this further by identifying new areas of cooperation. Though it may not augur well for the US which may frown but then for every country its interests are paramount. This balancing act could position India as a crucial player in mediating global conflicts and fostering international cooperation, enhancing its role on the world stage.

PM Modi may seek to secure long-term energy supplies from Russia to ensure stability in its energy markets. Both leaders may discuss ongoing and future defence projects, including the delivery of military hardware and the joint development of defence technologies. India's defence modernization plans, which include acquiring advanced weaponry and upgrading its military capabilities, are likely to be a focal point of discussion. Modi and Putin are expected to discuss the evolving international order and regional security issues. India's position as a rising global power and its role in regional stability will likely be a major point of discussion. The conversation may also touch upon India's vision for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, where it seeks to counterbalance China's influence. Bilateral trade has seen growth despite sanctions on Russia, and both countries may seek to expand this further by identifying new areas of cooperation. Though it may not augur well for the US which may frown but then for every country its interests are paramount. This balancing act could position India as a crucial player in mediating global conflicts and fostering international cooperation, enhancing its role on the world stage.

PICTALK



Locals move their belongings on a boat as they move to a safer place during floods, in Darrang district PTI

Give freebies only when essential and unavoidable

While 'freebies' schemes are intended to offer immediate relief to the targeted groups, their effectiveness and necessity remain suspect

Delhi Government on 1st July 2024 buckled down for implementing the Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana, which aims to provide aid of Rs 1,000 to Delhi women above 18, barring the taxpayers, government employees and other government pension plan beneficiaries. An amount of Rs 2,000 crore has been set aside for this scheme. Several such schemes or freebies are provided by different state governments across the length and breadth of the country. Many times these freebies of diverse nature are strategically planned to precede elections and are highly poll-driven in a bid for electoral success. These freebies or Rewari culture as mentioned by PM Modi, have been defined by the Reserve Bank of India report as "a public welfare measure that is provided free of charge". They are generally aimed at benefiting the targeted population in the short term and are different from long-term welfare schemes which are categorized as public/merit goods

and are a way of promoting social justice, equity, and human development. Some examples of welfare schemes are the Public Distribution System, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act



(MGN-

REGA), the mid-day meal scheme, etc. While freebies are frequently used by political parties to build public trust, it is worthwhile to analyse them as a necessity or waste. Such schemes stimulate economic growth by incentivising and increasing the productive capacity of the workforce along with providing necessities and social welfare to the poor and marginalized sections of society. For example, freebies such as uniforms, textbooks, bicycles or health insurance can improve the literacy, mobility, health, and quality of life of the needy and vulnerable groups. By increasing the

disposable income of the poor, freebies can stimulate demand for goods and services, thereby boosting economic activity. Besides, if rationally devised, they can also reduce income inequality. For example, loan waivers, or cash transfers can empower the weaker and indebted households by giving them access to assets, credit, or income support. However, freebies are like a double-edged sword, with heavy economic and social costs. Foremost, large-scale public expenditure comes with a huge and permanent fiscal burden and macroeconomic distortions. It leads to an immediate increase in demand, disrupting inflation; diverting funds from more productive and essential sectors such as infrastructure, agriculture, industry, etc. leading to resource misallocation. Besides the freebies in the form of free water, electricity, or fuel can lead to the deterioration of the environment, by encouraging their

overuse and wastage of natural resources. Freebies can also lead to negative externality by creating a dependency culture and loss of productivity, reducing the incentive for individuals to seek employment or improve their economic situation through their efforts. Additionally, cash vs. kind grants are always debatable and in general cash benefits generally lead to misuse of funds such as gambling, liquor consumption, adultery, etc. which leads to deviation from the desired benefits. In conclusion, freebies can play a crucial role in addressing immediate social and economic challenges, they must be implemented with careful consideration of their long-term impact and sustainability. A rational policy framework is needed foremost, to define the targeted section and then design the nature and amount of benefit to minimize inappropriate utilization of resources (The author is assistant professor at Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, University of Delhi; views are personal)



KAJLEEN KAUR

Nuanced shift in parliamentary conduct

As parliamentarians navigate new complexities, the emphasis remains on upholding the dignity, decorum, and effectiveness of legislative processes



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The 18th Lok Sabha has been ushered in with customary procedural formalities on the 25th of June, 2024. Certain rituals convert the reality of Lok Sabha into the sanctified existence of a group of people meant to lead this country through such vicissitudes as it may face. This is, as it should be, an extraordinary phenomenon. The nation can be legitimately proud of this event. Yet in certain ways, it's different from some of the preceding Lok Sabhas because this time there was no consensus on the identification of a Speaker for the Lok Sabha.

It is not as if in each of the preceding Lok Sabhas, the selection of the speaker was unanimous. There were instances when the Speaker was chosen by ballot and the Lok Sabha still, functioned with a fair degree of cohesiveness. The unique situation in the 18th Lok Sabha included a demand by the opposition to promise it a Deputy Speaker's position. In the preceding Lok Sabhas, it did not seem to matter to many people. An assurance here and now 'seemed to be the demand. The matter seems to have not been settled. The crux of the situation seems to be putting up the Deputy Speaker's position as a factor in negotiation. In the preceding Lok Sabhas, a consensus was built around these issues, which this time around did not seem to bother many people. This is a settled and yet important proposition about the style of conduct of affairs. An illustration may help to establish the point with better clarity. In one of the preceding Lok Sabhas, at a time when Jawahar Lal Nehru dominated the scene in Indian politics, there was a bye-election schedule from Muzaffarpur Constituency in Bihar. Then socialist parties sought to put up Acharya Narendra Dev as their candidate for election from this constituency. Jawahar Lal Nehru, who was one of the tallest figures in the political scene, seized this situation to make a point. He felt that even if Acharya Narendra Dev was a candidate for the opposition, yet there was



no bitterness that Congress as a party had towards him. Ordinarily, Congress was expected to win this election of the parliamentary seat to the Lok Sabha, yet Jawahar Lal Nehru felt that the Lok Sabha should have more different types of people, and therefore Congress would not contest for the Lok Sabha seat from Muzaffarpur against Narendra Dev. Those times were different. There was a predominantly universal sentiment for merit and goodwill, and Narendra Dev sailed home well on that argument. As stated, with the main opposition and Congress working together for Narendra Dev, it was not difficult for him to get elected to the Lok Sabha. Those times were different, and those times still resonate with many people as to what good traditions in the parliamentary system are all about. It's remarkable that during the arguments for Deputy Speakership, no one in public even recalled this episode from the perspective of parliamentary history. It is indeed a case for a two-tiered split on which way the parliamentary traditions could be heading. One can only hope that over time, the good sense and goodwill of parliamentar-

ians will prevail and matters take their course in a more enlightened way. Be that as it may, one is not quite sure what the adamancy of a prior commitment about the Deputy Speaker's position being given to the opposition has been all about. In any case, the convention has been for the Deputy Speaker's position to be given to the opposition, so ultimately, the contention was only about the timing of the formalization of this kind of prior agreement. It is indeed a small matter, but if the loftiness of parliamentary traditions were to be seen in its due weightage in the conduct of affairs, it is important. Running a parliament cannot and should not be solely about positions, it has also to be about patterns, graces, decency, and above all, dignified conduct in electoral and consensual politics. The people show their class through their representatives, behaviours, and the way arguments are made or not made. This becomes the algorithm for the conduct of public affairs. Every parliament loses at least 20 to 40% of its members who fail to return for various reasons or who

may only serve for one term. Therefore, being a member of parliament, especially the Lok Sabha, carries a huge moral weight that goes beyond simple political votes. Parliamentary traditions are important, and it may well be that the 18th Lok Sabha will have some daring challenges to its method of work, to which both the ruling party and the opposition, led by some old veterans, will need to adapt and take responsibility. This is a simplified version of what happens, as the method of working is nearly as critical as the methods of resolving differences. All said and done, even parliament has to operate within the bandwidth of rules, regulations, bylaws, practices, and more. It is best done through goodwill and grace. Senior members in the Lok Sabha need to conduct affairs with statesmanship and dignity. The Prime Minister has done well to emphasize that for a nation to work well, all must work together, not just the majority. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NEW BUILDING NORMS

Madam — This letter refers to the news titled "Haryana Permits Stilt plus Four-Floor Construction" published on July 3. In Haryana, the government led by Nayab Singh Saini has given approval for the construction of Stilt plus Four floors for homeowners, builders, and property dealers.

This decision has sparked a mixed response from both society and the construction industry. There is a requirement to obtain permission from neighboring plot holders before commencing Stilt plus Four construction. However, many Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) across the state have expressed opposition to the government's decision through various channels. The government's intention seems to be to increase the income of those involved in the construction sector, despite some technical and legal challenges. It is crucial, however, to strike a balance between the structural changes, such as the reconstruction of sewage systems, public facilities, and the concerns of the public.

For residents of builder floors, the use of parking spaces will be significantly improved. Nevertheless, the construction of Stilt plus Four buildings will present both opportunities and challenges.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

MAKE QR CODE PAYMENTS UNIVERSAL

Madam — There is a recurring problem with currency change across various services, including both government and private sectors such as transportation (RTC buses, metro trains), and e-seva centers. To address this issue, it is crucial to provide the option of QR code-based online payments everywhere. Additionally, offering a choice between partial cash payment and partial online payment would be beneficial. QR code payments are a secure, contactless method that reduces the risk of account hacking compared to credit or debit card payments. It would also be

Vigilance urged for Zika virus



Among Pregnant Women Dear Editor, The Union Health Ministry has called on states to maintain constant vigilance by screening pregnant women for Zika virus infection

and monitoring the development of fetuses in those who test positive. Each health facility and hospital has been assigned a nodal officer responsible for ensuring that the premises remain free from Aedes mosquitoes, the carriers of the Zika virus. States have also been directed to enhance their entomological surveillance and intensify vector control efforts in residential areas, workplaces, schools, construction sites, institutions, and health facilities. The spread of Zika has been reported in Pune, where two more cases have recently emerged, bringing the total to six, with both new cases involving pregnant women from Erandwane. The rising number of cases poses a significant health risk, and it is imperative that the government takes appropriate action to curb the spread of the virus across the country.

Shanthi Ramanathan | Ghaziabad

advantageous to install ticket vending machines inside metro coaches for last-minute passengers. This would enhance convenience for both employees and customers, reducing arguments, stress, and conflicts, ultimately leading to a more harmonious and healthy lifestyle. In any case the digital payment is the future so why not embrace it wholeheartedly.

PVS Sreelekha | Secunderabad

PM ON MANIPUR

Madam — Prime Minister's Response to Manipur Crisis Questioned Dear Editor, Regarding the news "Modi Silences Critics on Manipur" published on July 4, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, facing criticism from the opposition over the handling of the ethnic conflict in Manipur, broke his silence on July 3, claiming that violence in the state has been declining. This statement is characteristic of Modi's tendency to address issues long after they have escalated, often offering little more than empty promises. Despite

both central and state governments being under BJP control, there has been minimal action to address the crisis effectively. Kuki residents have been unable to use Imphal airport since May 3, 2023, and essential supplies have to be transported through Mizoram. Modi's recent comments seem insincere and detached from the reality on the ground. The Prime Minister, who has ample time for inaugurating projects and foreign visits, has not visited Manipur, which has been plagued by violence for the past 14 months. The Supreme Court has expressed its distrust in the Manipur government, reflecting the sentiment of the people towards Modi's assurances. Even as Manipur starts to stabilize, it is imperative for the Prime Minister to prioritize visiting the state and addressing the issues directly, rather than focusing on his image and political importance. Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN A TALE OF DECEIT, DESIRE AND DEVASTATION

Buddha once reflected, those captivated by lust fall into the cyclical suffering of existence



RAVI VALLURI

Those who are lust-infatuated fall back into the swirling current (of samsara) like a spider on its self-spun web," said Buddha. Aeon ago lived an old farmer whose wife was young and alluring. The prepossessing woman was not satisfied physically by her aged husband and fantasized about young men. She hardly attended to the household chores and was perpetually looking for the company of youngsters to fulfil her carnal desires. A trickster came to know about the quandary of the winsome one and seeing her alone went up to her uttering, "I am a widower. The moment I saw you I was ensnared by your voluptuous body. I beseech you to give me the pleasure of your company. However, I have very little wealth at my disposal." Delighted at the offer, the woman blurted, "O handsome one, my husband has plenty of lucre. He is old and infirm. I will embezzle the mammon and jewellery at our house and let us scoot from this place to some far away place where we can spend rest of our lives."

The stripling trickster possessing a chiselled frame became excited and asked the damsel to bring the loot and gold to a place where he would be waiting for her. "We will then leave the place as it darkens," he informed her. The farmer's wife waited till it was dark and when her husband fell asleep robbed the money and gold and left the house in the cover of darkness to meet her lover. The mountebank took the



bag full of money and gold on the pretext that he would carry it and they began their journey. After travelling some distance, they halted as there was a river to cross. The hoodwinker pondered, "What do I do with this libidinous woman? If someone were to set his eyes on her, he would perceive have to protect her. Let me scoot with the loot," he decided. His mind was cannonaded with all these thoughts, "Look, my dear, it would be arduous to cross the river. Let me first ferry the money bag to the other side of the river. I will come back and we can swim across to the other bank."

The ludicrous woman gave the bag to the young charlatan. He requested her to give up her apparel as the clothes could hinder swift swimming. The naïve lewd woman agreed to the proposal. The youthful trickster was now left with the bag and her clothes. Covering her naked body with her hands, the woman began waiting restlessly for the deluder to return. Suddenly a jackal with a piece of meat in his mouth happened to pass by. The jackal happened to see a fish that emerged from the water and in attempting to grab it dropped the piece of meat and ran towards it. However, the fish, seeing the rushing jackal, jumped back into the water.

Disappointed, the jackal went back to pick up the piece of meat. Unexpectedly a kite swooped and took it away before the jackal could reach it. The naked woman laughed at the jackal that had lost the fish and also the piece of meat. Hurt by the woman's behaviour, the jackal said, "You may be twice as intelligent as I am. But what is the use? You have lost your husband, your lover and your wealth too. The distraught woman realized her folly and entered a temple to pray for her sins as the priest draped her nudity and uttered, "Cover your nudity with the cloak of purity. Lust is ephemeral. Godliness is permanent."

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

Paper leak: Call for fair and a political resolution



GOURAV VALLABH

Paper leaks are not merely procedural failures; they erode trust in the examination system. This matter transcends political divides and requires a systemic reform



The recent NEET paper leak has caused a stir in the nation. Paper leaks are a serious issue that must be addressed sensitively and apolitically. No government can condone such malpractices, and addressing them must prioritize fairness over political gain. This issue needs to be handled sensitively and free from political agendas. Addressing the root causes and implementing robust measures are essential to ensure the integrity of the examination process and restore trust among students and their families. Paper leaks aren't new and have happened before. It's crucial to take this issue seriously and work on solutions. Understanding why parents and students are influenced by leaked papers and addressing these root causes will help maintain exam integrity and ensure a fair process. Instances of paper leaks have undermined trust in the examination system, leading to the temptation for guaranteed selection through illicit means. It is essential to stop this practice, implement stringent security measures, enforce strict penalties for malpractices, and ensure transparent and fair examination processes to restore trust and uphold the principle of merit-based success. We must remember that the National Testing Agency (NTA) was established as a premier, specialist, autonomous, and self-sustained testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for higher educational institutions.

The NTA is governed by a body consisting of esteemed members such as former UPSC Chairmen, Directors of IITs, NITs, IIMs, and Vice Chancellors of JNU and IGNOU, whose integrity should not be doubted. However, the issues lie at both the policy and execution levels, and solutions are needed at both levels. Here are some proposed solutions: For examinations with over 500,000 students, a two-tier filtering system should be



THE COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND INVESTIGATIVE AGENCIES LIKE THE CBI IS ESSENTIAL IN ADDRESSING SUCH MALPRACTICES AND RESTORING TRUST IN THE EXAMINATION SYSTEM

used, including preliminary and main exams. If the number of candidates exceeds 2,000,000, a more rigorous three-tier system should be adopted: preliminary, main stage 1, and main stage 2 exams. The final merit list should be based on the average marks obtained in main stage 1 and stage 2.

This approach ensures a comprehensive evaluation process, maintaining fairness and integrity by filtering candidates through multiple stages. Implementing this system would address the challenges of managing large numbers of candidates and reduce the malpractice risk, leading to a more reliable and credible examination process. It is important to designate certain cities or centres as sensitive or extremely sensitive, similar to how polling booths are identified by the Election Commission.

These centres should be under constant CCTV surveillance to maintain the integrity of the examination process, deter malpractice, and ensure fairness and transparency.

This proactive approach will help restore confidence in the examination system and mitigate the risk of irregularities. The distinction between the Examination of Selection and the Examination of Rejection must be clearly defined and resolved. High-stakes exams like NEET and JEE are designed to be rejection-based, aiming to filter out unqualified candidates. This means the primary goal is to eliminate those not meeting the necessary standards. To achieve this, paper setters need specialized training to craft exams that effectively serve this purpose.

Each question should act as a hurdle designed to bifurcate and challenge candidates and comprehensively test their knowledge and skills. This approach ensures that only the most capable and prepared students succeed. A strong question bank, online testing, and AI-based proctoring can enhance the credibility of exams. Involving all teachers in contributing to the question bank and testing items for difficulty promotes participation. Implementing global standard cybersecurity protocols is essential to maintain the integrity of the examination process. Implementing biometric verification for handling question papers can prevent incidents like the NEET 2024 leak. Technological measures like constant surveillance, digital encryption, and secure transmission methods are crucial for ensuring fairness and security. The recent government notification of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act on June 21 is a significant move to ensure the integrity of India's examination system. This Act introduces stringent penalties, including jail sentences of up to 10 years and fines of up to Rs 1 crore, for those involved in organized paper leaks and exam malpractices. It aims to combat examination fraud and restore public confidence in the examination process, clearly conveying that cheating and corruption will not be tolerated. This legislation deserves widespread support as it seeks to protect honest students' hard work and aspirations, ensuring a fair and transparent system for all. The grace marks system

should be eliminated as it relies on subjective measures like answering speed and accuracy, leading to inconsistency and unfair advantage. Examination bodies should avoid awarding grace marks to ensure a level playing field for all candidates, maintaining the credibility and fairness of the examination system.

The government's prompt action in conducting NEET again for 1,563 students in seven centres is commendable. Recently, the CBI was appointed to investigate NEET irregularities and has been rigorously probing the entire examination fraud, leading to the arrest of numerous brokers, teachers, principals, and others involved in the wrongdoing.

This swift response demonstrates the government's commitment to maintaining the integrity of the examination process and ensuring a fair opportunity for all students. The collaborative effort between the government and investigative agencies like the CBI is essential in addressing such malpractices and restoring trust in the examination system. Focusing on creating and enforcing fair exam policies is essential rather than engaging in political finger-pointing. Opposition parties should provide helpful solutions for issues such as exam leaks and fraud, and we need to come together to solve these problems proactively. We must prioritize students' well-being and create a secure, transparent exam environment to support their academic and career goals, positively impacting the country's future. (The writer is a professor and a BJP leader; views are personal)

How Assange redefined the political terrain for modern whistleblowers

Julian Assange has become a symbol of the complex battle for press freedom and the protection of whistleblowers worldwide

In recent years, the narrative surrounding whistleblowers and their impact on press freedom has garnered significant global attention. Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, remains a prominent figure in this ongoing discussion. His latest legal and personal developments provide a lens through which we can examine the broader issues of press freedom, whistleblower protection, and the intricate dynamics of state power.



SANTOSH MATHEW

Julian Assange is best known for founding WikiLeaks in 2006, a platform designed to publish classified, censored, or otherwise restricted information of political, ethical, diplomatic, or historical significance. WikiLeaks gained international notoriety in 2010 when it released a cache of U.S.

States, where he faces charges under the Espionage Act. His legal team argues that extraditing Assange would set a dangerous precedent for journalists worldwide, potentially criminalizing the publication of classified information in the public interest. His health has been a significant concern, with reports indicating deteriorating physical and mental well-being. Human rights organizations have repeatedly called for his release, citing the harsh conditions of his detention and the potential impact on global press freedom. In addition to his legal battles over WikiLeaks, Assange has faced rape allegations in Sweden. In 2010, Swedish authorities issued an arrest warrant for Assange on charges of sexual

misconduct, including rape. Assange denied the allegations, claiming they were part of a political smear campaign. He sought asylum in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London in 2012, where he remained for seven years until his asylum was revoked in 2019, leading to his arrest by British authorities. In 2019, Swedish prosecutors dropped the investigation, but the allegations continue to cast a shadow over Assange's public image. Julian Assange's influence on global journalism and transparency cannot be overstated. Named Time Magazine's Person of the Year in 2010, Assange's work through WikiLeaks has inspired a new era of investigative journalism. By leveraging technology to

expose hidden truths, Assange has empowered journalists and activists worldwide to challenge powerful institutions and demand accountability. Julian Assange's plight is part of a larger narrative that includes other notable whistleblowers like Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning. Snowden, a former NSA contractor, leaked classified information in 2013, revealing extensive global surveillance programs conducted by the NSA and its allies. Currently residing in Russia, Snowden continues to be an advocate for privacy and government transparency. Chelsea Manning, a former U.S. Army intelligence analyst, leaked classified military and diplomatic documents to WikiLeaks in 2010. Her disclosures included the infamous "Collateral Murder" video, showing U.S. helicopter gunship attacks that killed civilians in Baghdad. Manning was convicted in 2013 and sentenced to 35 years in prison, but her sentence was commuted by President Barack Obama in 2017 after seven years in custody. India, with its complex socio-political landscape, has its own history of whistleblowing and press freedom challenges. Cases like those of Sanjiv Chaturvedi, an Indian Forest Service officer who exposed corruption in the Haryana Forest Department, highlight the risks faced by whistleblowers in India. Despite the Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014, which aims to pro-

tection of whistleblowers is far from over. As governments continue to navigate the balance between national security and the public's right to know, the outcomes of these high-profile cases will undoubtedly influence future policies and the broader discourse on transparency and accountability. In the context of the Emergency period's media compliance, L.K. Advani's comment, "You were asked to bend, but you began to crawl," remains relevant today as a stark reminder of the dangers of compromised press freedom and the importance of journalistic integrity in holding power to account. (The writer is an associate professor, views expressed are personal)

protect individuals exposing corruption or wrongdoing, whistleblowers in India often face retaliation, including harassment, legal action, and even physical harm. The cases of Julian Assange, Edward Snowden, and Chelsea Manning illustrate the critical intersection of press freedom and whistleblower protection. While their actions have undeniably contributed to public awareness and accountability, they have also faced severe repercussions. These cases underscore the need for robust legal protections for whistleblowers and journalists to ensure that the pursuit of truth does not come at the cost of personal freedom and safety. In India and globally, the fight for press freedom and the

protection of whistleblowers is far from over. As governments continue to navigate the balance between national security and the public's right to know, the outcomes of these high-profile cases will undoubtedly influence future policies and the broader discourse on transparency and accountability. In the context of the Emergency period's media compliance, L.K. Advani's comment, "You were asked to bend, but you began to crawl," remains relevant today as a stark reminder of the dangers of compromised press freedom and the importance of journalistic integrity in holding power to account. (The writer is an associate professor, views expressed are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

Colruyt Group sets up IT Global Capability Centre in Coimbatore

Colruyt Group has inaugurated its second information technology global capability centre in Coimbatore, the company said on Friday. The first such facility has been set up in Hyderabad in 2007 and offers IT services to multiple business units of the Euro 10.8 billion Colruyt Group. The addition of Coimbatore facility is part of the company's India strategy to support the business continuity of the IT operations and services. "The opening of our new office in Coimbatore is of strategic importance as this augments our ambition to continuously add value to our group's strategic initiatives with a focus on digital enablement and transformation," said Colruyt Group India Managing Director Hari Subramanian in a company statement on Friday. "This decision also accentuates the business sustainability for all our operations from India. Coimbatore's rich and diverse entrepreneurial culture, a robust engineering hub and a solid educational ecosystem made this city an ideal investment for us," Subramanian added.



RBI launches quarterly survey on order books of manufacturing sector

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday announced the launch of quarterly "order books, inventories and capacity utilisation" survey of companies in the manufacturing sector -- a key input it uses to formulate the monetary policy. The RBI has been conducting the order books, inventories and capacity utilisation survey (OBIGUS) of the manufacturing sector on a quarterly basis since 2008. The information collected in the survey includes quantitative data on new orders received during the reference quarter (April-June 2024), backlog of orders at the beginning of the quarter, pending orders at the end of the quarter, total inventories with a breakup between finished goods, work-in-progress and raw material inventories at the end of the quarter. Item-wise production in terms of quantity and value during the quarter vis-à-vis the installed capacity from the targeted group and the reasons for changes in production/installed capacity during the quarter is also collected.



QMS Medical acquires 51% stake in Saarathi Healthcare

QMS Medical Allied Services on Friday said it has acquired a 51 per cent stake in Saarathi Healthcare for Rs 450 crore. Mumbai-based QMS MAS is engaged in the marketing and distribution of a wide range of medical products. "The acquisition of Saarathi is the natural extension of our services and another step of our expansion plan. Where QMS MAS specializes in patient screening, Saarathi specializes in disease management leading to better disease outcomes essentially enabling us to provide a comprehensive portfolio to our clients," QMS Medical Allied Services CMD Mahesh Makhija said in a statement. This move will have a significant addition to company's revenues and profitability from the onset of the next fiscal year, he added. Saarathi Healthcare Founder & CEO Ranjeeta Vinil said the companies will forge ahead with collective strength in products and services.



Govt infra push steers steel demand

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With a sustained momentum of investment across different sectors, overall steel demand in India is projected to grow at a CAGR of 5 per cent to 7.3 per cent over the next decade leading to a steel demand of 221-275 million tonnes by FY 34 (under different scenarios), according to a report by Deloitte released on Friday.

The report, released at ISA Steel InfraBuild Summit here, also said Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have established themselves as leaders in steel consumption, leading to 41 per cent of the total consumption in FY23.

"Government spending on infrastructure projects will



The report, released at ISA Steel InfraBuild Summit here, also said Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have established themselves as leaders in steel consumption, leading to 41 per cent of the total consumption in FY23

drive the initial growth phase in the next decade. The development of 11 industrial corridors comprising 32 projects, to

be developed in four phases under the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan, will be a key driver for steel consumption," the report explained.

From FY14 to FY24, India's finished steel consumption posted a CAGR of 5.67 per cent. In FY24, domestic finished steel consumption reached 136 million tonnes, marking more than 14 per cent year-on-year growth driven by sustained momentum across developmental projects and increased government spending in various end-use industries.

The steel industry plays a crucial role in Telangana's economic landscape as during the last fiscal, the state's steel consumption grew by 15.75 per cent year-on-year from 4.730 million tonnes in FY22 to

5.475 million tons in FY23, outpacing the national average, it said.

"Telangana's steel consumption in FY23 was 5.48 MT for a population of 3.5 crore which translates to a per capita steel consumption of 156.43 kg, significantly higher than the national per capita steel consumption of 93.4 kg. This not only underscores the state's robust industrial activity but also positions Telangana as a key driver of future economic growth," it said.

The rising growth of electric vehicles in Tamil Nadu will lead to an increased demand for electrical steel, while the growth of food processing industries will drive the demand for stainless steel, the report further said.

Govt, industry to discuss growth of Indian toy sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Government officials and industry will hold a detailed discussions on ways to further boost domestic manufacturing and exports of toys on July 8, an official said.

The meeting is organised by Invest India, an arm of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), in collaboration with the Toy Association of India.

The main issues that would figure in the meeting include growing opportunities

and regulatory developments in the toy sector to chart a path forward; making India a global toy hub; and ways to integrate Indian toy manufacturers in the global supply chain.

To showcase domestic products, an international fair is being organised from July 6-9

here at Pragati Maidan where over 150 foreign buyers from 35 nations are visiting. Over 400 domestic toy players will exhibit their innovative products, Gautam said, adding that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has mentioned about the sector in one of his

'Mann ki Baat' programmes and that has given an extra thrust for pushing growth of this labour-intensive sector.

He also suggested that government extend fiscal support measures to stall holders.

He added that the July 8 'Toy Industry CEOs Meet' will be attended by senior officials of the DPIIT, Invest India and domestic industry.

Toy exports have jumped 240 per cent since 2014 and imports declined 52 per cent during the period.

He added that huge opportunities are there for women and as per estimates, about 70 per cent of the workforce are women.

Further, he said construction work has started for the development of a big toy cluster in Noida.



Rupee rises 1 paisa to close at 83.49 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee pared initial gains and settled for the day almost flat at 83.49 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, as muted domestic equities and rise in crude oil prices capped gains for the local unit.

At the inter-bank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.48 and hit the intraday high of 83.45 and a low of 83.50 against the American currency during the session.

It finally settled at 83.49 (provisional) against the dollar, 1 paisa higher than its previous close.

On Thursday, the rupee pared its initial losses and settled for the day on an almost flat note at 83.50 against the US dollar.

Forex traders said rising crude oil prices at around

US\$ 87 per barrel weighed on investor sentiments and restricted the upside. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.19 per cent to US\$ 87.26 per barrel.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 104.96, lower by 0.16 per cent.

Foreign investors put US\$ 3.1bn in real estate in Jan-Jun: JLL-India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors infused US\$ 3.1 billion in Indian real estate during January-June this year, accounting for 65 per cent of the total institutional investment, according to JLL India.

Real estate consultant JLL India data released on Friday showed that the total institutional investment in real estate rose 62 per cent to US\$ 4,760 million in January-June 2024 from US\$ 2,939 million in the same period of last year.

In complete contrast, another property consultant Colliers

India, earlier this week, reported a 6 per cent decline in total institutional investment in real estate at US\$ 3,523.6 million during the first half of 2024 as



against US\$ 3,764.7 million in the year-ago period.

According to JLL India, institutional investments in real estate surged to US\$ 4.8 billion

in January-June this year.

"This already represents 81 per cent of the total investments in 2023, which amounted to US\$ 5.8 billion," the consultant said, adding that "unshakable investor confidence in India prevails amidst global uncertainties and the election season, exemplifying the country's robust economic growth story".

Out of the total inflows, the warehousing sector led at 34 per cent share of investments followed closely by residential at 33 per cent share and office at 27 per cent.

SAIL mulls Rs 6,500 cr capex

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Steel Authority of India Ltd will be investing Rs 6,500 crore towards capex during the current financial year as part of its Rs 1 lakh crore investment plan over the next few years, SAIL CMD Amarendra Prakash said on Friday. Speaking to media-persons on the sidelines of a programme organised by Indian Steel Association here, Prakash said the steel industry approached the government seeking measures to control the dumping of cheap metal by China into India and hoped that steps will be taken to address the menace.



"This year, the capex target is Rs 6,500 crore. We also have regular capex on maintaining our facilities, as well as debot-

lenecking exercises. Most of the capex expansion (Rs 1 lakh crore by 2030) will start flowing from FY26.

Central banks should have independence to deliver on price stability: US Fed official

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Central banks ought to own up for delivering on price stability and must be given the independence to act for achieving it, a top official from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York said on Friday.

In a talk at the Reserve Bank

of India (RBI) headquarters, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York President and Chief Executive John C. Williams -- who is also a member of the rate-setting panel of the US' Federal Reserve -- said uncertainty will continue to be the defining characteristic of monetary policy for the foreseeable future.

"Central banks must own the responsibility to deliver price stability and have independence to act to achieve it," he said, while delivering the fourth Suresh Tendulkar Memorial Lecture.

History has taught us that central banks can be more successful at delivering sustain-



ably low inflation rates when they are accountable and independent, he added.

He said in the 1970s, many central bankers believed monetary policy could only play a minor role in reducing inflation, while some also thought lowering inflation was completely outside of their control.

This led to persistent high inflation rates and economic stagnation, Williams added.

"Today, regardless of economic shocks, changes in fiscal policy, or globalisation and deglobalisation swings, central banks recognise that attaining and maintaining price stability is their job to do," he said.

GEN AI CONCLAVE

Kerala set to become leading hub of AI: Vijayan

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The country's first international Gen AI conclave will be held in Kerala next week and it will give an impetus to the state's efforts to become India's leading hub in the field of artificial intelligence (AI), Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said on Friday.

In a Facebook post, Vijayan said over a thousand delegates will take part in the two-day conclave being organised at Kochi by global technology company IBM in collaboration

with the state government on July 11 and 12. In conjunction with the conclave, IBM is also organising the WatsonX Challenge, he said.

The WatsonX challenge is the connecting of academic knowledge and real-life use cases using generative AI.

The CM said that the team that wins the challenge, in which over 50 startups working in the field of artificial intelligence will take part, will not only get an award, it will also get an opportunity to present their ideas in front of



investors from the global level. Vijayan, in his post, also said that besides IBM, various other companies were expressing willingness to invest in Kerala. The government expects

In a Facebook post, Vijayan said over a thousand delegates will take part in the two-day conclave being organised at Kochi by global technology company IBM in collaboration with the state government on July 11 and 12.

more artificial intelligence-based investments to flow into Kerala this year, he said.

The official website of the July 11-12 event was launched in June.

The state government had earlier said that the event will bring together industry leaders, policymakers and innovators to explore the transformative potential of AI and its impact on society and the economy.

This event will be a significant milestone in the advancement of AI in Kerala and the country, they had said.

Thapar Institute, NVIDIA to establish school on AI, data science

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology on Friday inked a pact with American chipmaker NVIDIA to establish Thapar School of Advanced AI & Data Science.

A memorandum of understanding was signed by R R Vederah, Chairman, Board of Governors at Thapar University and Vishal Dhapar, Managing Director - Asia South at NVIDIA.

Thapar School of Advanced



AI & Data Science (TSAAI) will be established at Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology (TIET) campus in Patiala, Punjab.

opportunity to establish this AI school, in technical collaboration with NVIDIA. This work will not only bridge the gap in AI (artificial intelligence) expertise but also pave the way for cutting-edge research and innovation in this transformative field.

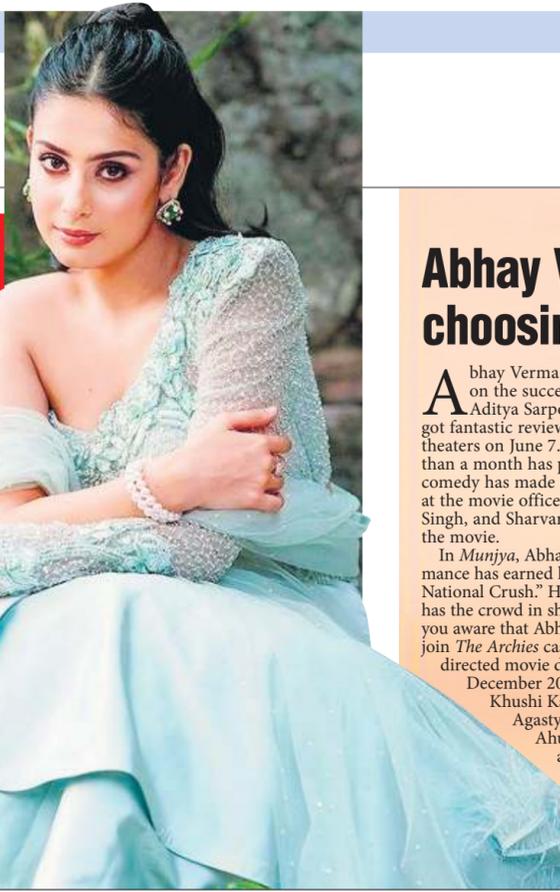
"This also establishes our vision of providing education that creates future-ready students," Padmakumar Nair, Director of Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, said.

ISHA MALVIYA DOES NOT WANT TO BE PART OF REALITY SHOWS!

Isha Malviya, a prominent face in the entertainment industry, gained widespread recognition for her role in the hit TV show *Udaariyaan*. Her stint in the reality show *Bigg Boss 17* further cemented her popularity, showcasing a different side of her personality to the audience. Isha opens up about her experiences post *Bigg Boss* and her thoughts on participating in future reality shows.

Isha's participation in *Bigg Boss 17* opened up her life to the public in unprecedented ways. Reflecting on her experiences, she reveals, "I've encountered many selfish people who were just using me and I didn't even realise it at the time. I regret those experiences, but I don't regret participating in *Bigg Boss*. I regret forming friendships or relationships with people who didn't respect me or understand my worth." Despite the negative experiences, Isha values the lessons learned and remains grateful for the platform that *Bigg Boss* provided her.

While Isha is open to exploring different opportunities, her passion for dancing stands out. "I don't think I would do more reality shows in general, but if it's something related to dancing, like *Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa*, I would love to participate. I've been dancing since I was six years old, so why not?" Her love for dance and her early start in the art form makes her keen on participating in dance-based reality shows, where she can showcase her skills and passion.



what's brewing?

Abhay Verma opens up on choosing *Safed* over *The Archies*

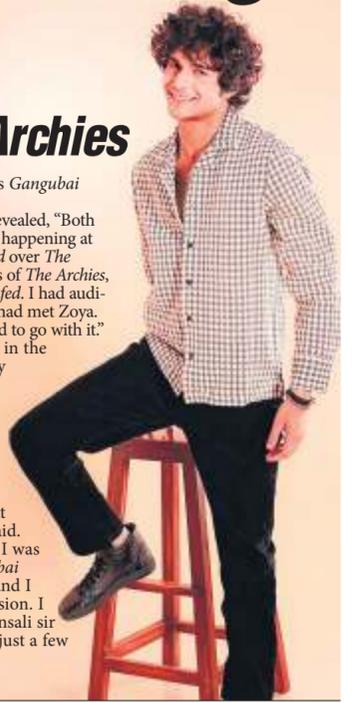
Abhay Verma is currently basking on the success on *Munhya*. The Aditya Sarpotdar-directed movie got fantastic reviews when it opened in theaters on June 7. Since then, more than a month has passed, and the horror comedy has made more over 100 crores at the movie office. Sathyaraj, Mona Singh, and Sharvari are also featured in the movie.

In *Munhya*, Abhay Verma's performance has earned him the title of "New National Crush." His portrayal of Bittu has the crowd in shock. However, were you aware that Abhay was supposed to join *The Archies* cast? The Zoya Akhtar-directed movie debuted on Netflix in December 2023. Suhana Khan, Khushi Kapoor, Aditi Saigal, Agastya Nanda, Mihir Ahuja, and Vedang Raina are among its stars.

Abhay explained his reasons for rejecting the film in an interview. He also explained his

exclusion from Alia Bhatt's *Gangubai Kathiawadi*. In an interview, Abhay revealed, "Both *The Archies* and *Safed* were happening at the same time. I chose *Safed* over *The Archies*. I was in the process of *The Archies*, but I really wanted to do *Safed*. I had auditioned for *The Archies* and had met Zoya. But, I got *Safed*, so I decided to go with it."

Abhay Verma disclosed in the same interview that Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Gangubai Kathiawadi* (2022) was meant to feature him. In the biographical drama, Alia Bhatt plays the main character. "I wish I could have done that film, but I had another project at that time," the *Munhya* actor said. However, a few days after I was unable to perform *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, Alia (Bhatt) and I met for a brand photo session. I had met Sanjay Leela Bhansali sir for *Gangubai Kathiawadi* just a few days prior."



When Michael Muhney denied rumours on sexual harassment allegations

Michael Muhney's portrayal of Adam Newman on the long-running soap opera *The Young and the Restless* was a fan favourite, despite the character's ruthless actions. However, Muhney's five-year run (2009-2014) came to an abrupt and controversial end. Adam Newman, the character played by Muhney, was a complex character who kept viewers on edge. His storylines often involved villainous deeds, including kidnapping and even causing a child's death. Despite the character's darkness, Muhney's performance garnered a loyal fanbase who appreciated his portrayal. The fans' disappointment was significant when Muhney's exit was announced. Shortly thereafter, reports surfaced alleging that Muhney's departure stemmed from a co-star's complaint of inappropriate behavior on set. The co-star was identified as Hunter King, who played Adam's niece Summer Newman on the show. As Adam Newman, the uncle of Hunter King, Michael Muhney spent five years as Adam

Neman on *The Young and the Restless*. According to TMZ, Michael Muhney's co-star King informed the producers shortly after he was fired in December 2013 that Muhney had touched her breasts without permission while they were filming. Actress Joey King's sister Hunter King allegedly threatened to call the police if Michael Muhney wasn't sacked from the program after telling producers that, despite being eighteen years older, Muhney made advances on her. He even came to Hunter King's defense after fans allegedly swarmed her social media with "hateful tweets". In Hunter King's defense in 2018, he posted: "Let me be absolutely clear: People sending hateful tweets to @HunterHaleyKing (Hunter King) about me must STOP. That internet rumor was FALSE. It never happened. She NEVER made those accusations. She's a talented actress; let her do her job without this nonsense." However, many co-stars backed Hunter King without revealing why Michael was fired. Meanwhile, since leaving *Young and the Restless*, Michale appeared in a 2017 episode of *The Good Doctor* and more recently portrayed the role of Martin Hayward over four episodes in the Apple TV series "Truth Be Told."



Lee Sang Yi and Han Ji Hyun onboard for new CEO romance drama

Actress Han Ji Hyun of *Penthouse* and star of *May Lee Sang Yi* are reportedly collaborating on an upcoming tvN production. The pair will play the lead roles in the yet-to-be-released spin-off of a romantic comedy. A Korean news outlet reports that the creators have officially revealed a brand-new CEO romance that will take the place of Shin Min Ah and Kim Young Dae's *Because I Want No Loss* (literal title).

Han Ji Hyun and Lee Sang-yi are set to feature in the next TVING original series, *The CEO's Meal Plan* (literal title), it has been announced by TenAsia. In a welcome response to the reports, the representatives of the actors, Goodfriend Company and SBD Entertainment, acknowledged their participation in the next program. Han Ji Hyun will play a corporate nutritionist, and Lee Sang-yi will play the CEO of the company.

Lee Sang-yi will portray a powerful CEO, while Han Ji-Hyun takes on the role of a dedicated company nutritionist. Their characters' love story will take center stage in *The CEO's Meal Plan*, premiering after the conclusion of *Because I Want No Loss*. With this exciting casting news, anticipation is surely simmering for both the original series and its delicious spin-off. With new scenes and plot developments, the narrative of Lee Sang Yi and Han Ji Hyun's characters from *Because I Want No Loss* is carried out in *The CEO's Meal Plan*. The performers' agencies claim that the series' filming is finished. It will debut immediately after *Because I Want No Loss* and be Lee Sang Yi's first romantic comedy starring role.



HUMA QURESHI TO PLAY FEMALE DETECTIVE IN BAYAAN

Actress Huma Qureshi is set to headline the upcoming investigative police procedural drama *Bayaan*. The film will go on floors this month in Rajasthan. Set against the backdrop of Rajasthan, the film follows the story of a father-daughter duo. Roohi, a female detective, is sent to a small town in Rajasthan to investigate the first case of her career as a lead investigator. She is, however, doomed to fail as her opponent's influence runs deep within the system.

The film is helmed by Bikas Mishra and features Chandrachur Singh, Sachin Khedekar, Avijit Dutt, Shampa Mandal, Priti Shukla, Vibhor Mayank, and Aditi Kanchan Singh.

Talking about the film, Huma said: "The sheer passion of the director-producer duo, Bikas and Shiladitya, moved me. Collaborating with such dedicated professionals who care deeply about filmmaking is truly exciting. It's a rare combination — a fantastic script, a talented crew, and their complete dedication to their work. Their energy is infectious. I'm excited about *Bayaan*."

The film is supported by the International Film Festival Rotterdam's Hubert Bals Fund and was developed at the Los Angeles Residency, part of the Global Media Makers (GMM) program of Film Independent. During the residency, Bikas was mentored by Craig Mazin and received advice on the script from writer Jeff Stockwell and story editor Ruth Atkinson.



FUN

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

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GINGER MEGGS

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Yesterday's solution

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Rules

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

DIFFICULTY RATINGS: ★★☆☆☆

'HYD'S HISTORY WHISPERS THROUGH ITS HAPPENING BAZAARS & MONUMENTS'

Back again with an interesting Hyderabad segment, Eshitha Guna, who hails from Chennai and has created her mark here in the 'City of Pearls', joins The Pioneer sharing her affinity for the city

AARTI SREENATH

Eshitha Guna isn't just a designer; she's a storyteller, the artist behind Andal Gems & Jewels. She's not just creating jewellery but also translating the vibrant energy of Hyderabad, into sparkling stones and exquisite designs.

"Hyderabad is home and heart for me in a nutshell," Eshitha shares, brimming with warmth. Born in Chennai but raised in the City of Pearls, her connection with Hyderabad runs deep. "I was born in Chennai, but my parents moved to Hyderabad when I was just months old. It's where I grew up and have all my wonderful memories. The city intertwines seamlessly with my identity and cherished memories, becoming the very essence of my upbringing and cultural foundation."

Eshitha's childhood memories are a treasure trove of inspiration. When asked about her journey in the city, her affection for Hyderabad shines through. "Hyderabad will always have my heart; it's a city with a 'giving' nature, offering opportunities all around for those who seek them. Personally, it's where my friends, family, and work are! The city by itself is beautiful, with a lot of variety in food, culture, and activities," she added.

For those migrating to Hyderabad and harboring apprehensions, she offers words of wisdom drawn from her own experience. "Moving to a

new place comes with its fears and excitement, but until you get into the shoes of a local and try it out yourself, you won't know the true essence of that city. Give it time, settle in and get a breath of the new air. Hyderabad is definitely a city of opportunities. The people here are warm, welcoming and open to trying new ideas. There are multiple areas one could venture into, be it F&B, IT, finance, fashion and many more. The city is brimming with variety."

Also a gemologist, she shares that Hyderabad's uniqueness lies in its well-segregated specialities. "If there's anything particular you're looking for, you know exactly where to go, which locality in particular. Hyderabad has a balance in living which may top it off on the list of cities in India, from the historic forts, palaces, parks, and Nizam's legacy to the ever-growing IT hubs, eateries, breweries, greenery, and lakes!"

"The city's history whispers through every happening bazaar and ancient monument," Eshitha explains. "It's a constant source of inspiration, from the intricate carvings on the Charminar to the kaleidoscope of colors in the local markets." This influence translates into her work, where traditional motifs find a new life alongside contemporary cuts and bold gemstones. Hyderabad becomes more than just a backdrop.

When prompted about the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of Hyderabad, Eshitha's response was heartfelt. "The people. My friends, family and team are majorly from Hyderabad. They mean everything to me! It'll always be my first thought. Apart from that, it's the ever-growing nature of the city to keep improving and upgrading, from new infrastructure to more fitness parks."

Her fondest memories are rooted back to her schooling days. "Schooling in Hyderabad is one special memory. The OG landmarks of the city like the Necklace Road drive, IMAX theater, KBR Park; these were some fond memories for me as a kid."

Hyderabad also plays a pivotal role in her career. "Hyderabad will always be the city of Andal's flagship. The people of Hyderabad have been so warm and appreciative; they are fun-loving and take the time out to celebrate the little

and big moments in life. That resonates with our brand ideology and also fits our category of products. The cherry on top is the work culture, which has a great balance as well."

Eshitha speaks passionately about Hyderabad's rich stone culture. "Hyderabad's stone culture is deeply rooted in its historical fascination with gemstone jewelry, initially favored by the Nizams for their warm-toned royal hues of rubies, emeralds and tourmalines. Today, this tradition has evolved into a vibrant market embracing a broader spectrum of colors, from pastels to vivid pops in gemstone jewelry. This shift reflects not only changing fashion trends but also a growing appreciation for diversity in gemstone aesthetics, catering to modern tastes while honouring the city's rich heritage in jewelry craftsmanship."

When asked about her likes and dislikes about Hyderabad, Eshitha noted, "I like the variety the city has to offer in terms of food and things to do. I am disliking the recent rise in traffic, which can make commuting a challenge."

Living in Hyderabad has allowed Eshitha to witness significant transformations. "I've seen a noticeable transformation characterised by rapid growth in every aspect. There are more high-rises dotting the skyline, offering a modern contrast to the city's historic architecture. The culinary scene has expanded dramatically, offering diverse cuisines and dining experiences. Likewise, there's been a surge in recreational activities, catering to varied interests and preferences. Amidst this growth, Hyderabad has also seen an increase in job opportunities and economic activities, making it a thriving hub with dynamic possibilities for residents and visitors alike."

When people from other cities visit Hyderabad, they always look forward to certain experiences. "Most people who visit Hyderabad want to take back Biryani! It is one of our specialties here. There are many great places for that. They also like to visit Charminar, Old City, Necklace Road and many more historic areas filled with charm and culture," she asserts.

For Eshitha Guna, Hyderabad is more than just a city; it is a place of profound emotional significance. "Home with all my heart," she concludes, her tone filled with affection and pride for the city.



'I can fit in any role and not just comedy'

TEJAL SINHA

Rajesh Kumar has been a popular name in the Television industry. And why not? Every time on screen, he sure turns out to bring out the best of his prowess. Often known for his character as Roshesh Sarabhai from Sarabhai vs Sarabhai, undeniably he has evolved with his craft over the years, now with his films and OTT shows. Undeniably, the actor has been on the verge of showing his prowess that goes beyond just comedic roles.

Currently seen in Zee5's *Rautu Ka Raaz* as sub-inspector Naresh Dimri, it has been a double bonanza for him to work on back-to-back shows not only on the streaming platform but also with Nawazuddin Siddiqui. *Rautu Ka Raaz* has received high praise from critics for its deft direction and superb acting from the performers. The narrative centers on Rautu, a small village in Uttarakhand with a remarkably low crime rate. And now, Deepak Negi and Naresh Dimri along with the team are on a quest to solve the case. Now to know what really happens, you got to head and watch the show.

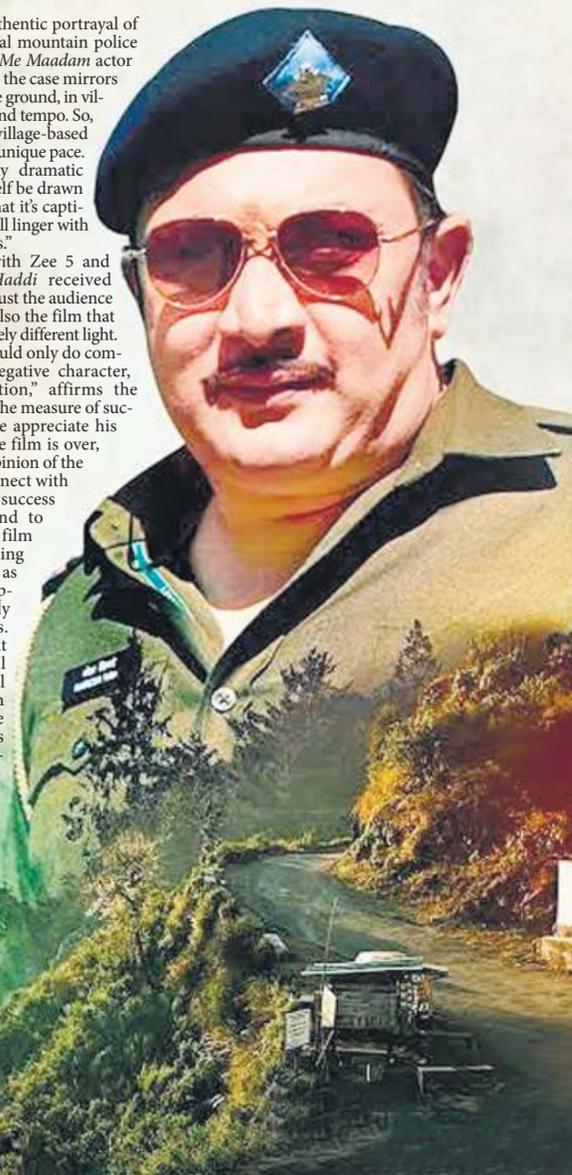
The *Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya* actor believes that with *Rautu Ka Raaz*, the audience will take away a realistic portrayal of a slow-paced murder investigation, offering a glimpse into how investigations in small towns unfold. Basically, "It's not a typical cinematic experience but rather a straightforward storytelling approach. The suspense builds throughout the film, keeping viewers engaged until the end, where they'll finally discover the resolution. I hope viewers who have watched the film refrain from spoiling it for others, allowing everyone to enjoy and uncover the identity of the actual murderer themselves."

The film does not perceive it to be a fast-paced

thriller, but rather as an authentic portrayal of the laid-back attitude of real mountain police solving a case. The *Excuse Me Maadam* actor shares, "The pace of solving the case mirrors what actually happens on the ground, in villages, with its own rhythm and tempo. So, immerse yourself in this village-based investigation, embracing its unique pace. Don't anticipate too many dramatic events, but rather let yourself be drawn into the story. You'll find that it's captivating and the characters will linger with you long after the film ends."

His previous venture with Zee 5 and Nawazuddin Siddiqui, *Haddi* received immense appreciation not just the audience but also the critics. It was also the film that showcased him in a completely different light.

"Those who thought I could only do comedy roles saw me in a negative character, broadening their perception," affirms the *Super Nani* actor. For him, the measure of success lies in whether people appreciate his performance even after the film is over, regardless of their overall opinion of the movie. "When viewers connect with your character, that's true success in my book. Reviews tend to compartmentalise, but the film as a whole leaves something lasting. *Haddi* changed me as an actor, altering the perception of those who primarily cast me in comedy roles. They now see that I can fit into any role. I'm hopeful that *Rautu Ka Raaz* will continue in that direction and I anticipate audience appreciation for the film as well," says the star on a concluding note in this chat.



Actor Rajesh Kumar, who continues to entertain the audience with his roles beyond just comedy, shares insights about his latest project *Rautu Ka Raaz*.

REBUILDING HOPE AFTER MISCARRIAGE

Experiencing a miscarriage can be an emotionally and physically challenging event, and preparing for a healthy pregnancy afterward requires a multifaceted approach. Here are some comprehensive tips to guide you through this sensitive journey. First, prioritise emotional healing. Grieving is a personal process and seeking support from loved ones or professional counselors can be immensely beneficial. Sharing your feelings and concerns can alleviate stress, which is crucial for your overall well-being and future pregnancy. Physical health is equally important. Schedule a preconception appointment with your doctor to discuss your health history and any potential risk factors. This consultation can help identify any underlying issues that need addressing before trying to conceive again. Your doctor may recommend a series of tests, such as hormone levels, thyroid function and uterine evaluations, to ensure everything is in optimal condition for pregnancy.

Maintaining a balanced diet rich in essential nutrients is vital. Make sure to eat a variety of healthy grains, fruits, vegetables, lean meats and healthy fats. Folate or folic acid supplements are particularly important as they help prevent neural tube defects. Consult your doctor for personalised vitamin and supplement recommendations.

Regular physical activity is another cornerstone of preparing for a healthy pregnancy. Engage in moderate exercises like walking, swimming, or prenatal yoga. These activities not only enhance physical fitness but also reduce stress and improve mood. Always consult your doctor before starting any new exercise regimen to ensure it is safe for your specific situation.

Managing stress is crucial for a healthy pregnancy. Incorporate relaxation techniques such as deep breathing exercises, meditation, or mindfulness practices into your daily routine. These can help calm your mind and body, creating a more favorable environment for conception and pregnancy. Adequate sleep is also essential. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night to support your physical and emotional health. Avoiding harmful substances is non-negotiable. Stay away from tobacco, alcohol and recreational drugs as they can adversely affect fertility and pregnancy outcomes. If you are on any prescription medications, review them with your doctor to ensure they are safe for pregnancy. Environmental factors also play a role. Minimise exposure to toxins and chemicals by using natural or organic products whenever possible. Avoiding exposure to pollutants, heavy metals and certain cleaning agents can reduce

potential risks to your reproductive health.

Understanding your menstrual cycle can improve your chances of conception. Track your cycle to identify your fertile window, the days in your cycle when you are most likely to conceive. Ovulation predictor kits, basal body temperature charts, or fertility tracking apps can be helpful tools. Fertility and pregnancy can be unpredictable and it may take time to conceive. Avoid putting undue pressure on yourself and acknowledge that each person's journey is unique. Engaging in open communication with your partner about your feelings, concerns, and expectations can strengthen your relationship and support system during this time.

Education is empowering. Read books, attend workshops, or join support groups for individuals who have experienced miscarriage and are trying to conceive again. Knowledge about the process, potential challenges and coping strategies can provide comfort and confidence. Financial planning is another aspect to consider. Pregnancy and raising a child come with financial responsibilities. Assess your financial situation, create a budget and explore insurance



options to ensure you are financially prepared for the journey ahead. Lastly, cultivate a positive mindset. Visualise a healthy pregnancy and a happy outcome. Surround yourself with positivity and avoid negative influences or stories that may cause undue worry. Positive affirmations and maintaining hope can significantly impact your mental and emotional state, fostering a conducive environment for pregnancy.

Preparing for a healthy pregnancy after miscarriage involves emotional healing, physical health optimisation, proper nutrition, regular exercise, stress management, avoiding harmful substances, understanding your menstrual cycle, practicing patience, and maintaining a positive outlook. By addressing these aspects, you can enhance your chances of a healthy pregnancy and create a supportive environment for yourself and your future child.

(The author, Dr. Tejashri Shrotri, is a Senior Consultant- Obstetrics and Gynecology, at Apollo Cradle and Children's Hospital - Chirag Enclave in New Delhi.)

New look India start their journey without Virat, Rohit against Zimbabwe

PTI ■ HARARE

A new-look Indian T20 team would embark on a journey of self-discovery without their constant talismans, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, hoping to unearth their mainstays for the future in a five-match series against Zimbabwe starting here on Saturday.

Even as the euphoria of T20 World Cup triumph sweeps through the length and breadth of India, Shubman Gill, who was a reserve in that squad, will hit a refresh button along with a bunch of IPL performers.

All the fresh faces are expected to make their international debut during the series scheduled to be played entirely in the Zimbabwean capital.

Two young men, who are lined for debut could be Punjab's Abhishek Sharma, who had a stupendous IPL for Sunrisers Hyderabad and the young Assamese lad Riyan Parag, who has given ample demonstration of his capabilities as a competent T20 batter. Both of them tick all the boxes for this format.

While over the past few years, Rohit and Kohli have skipped a lot of bilateral series, especially in the

shortest format, their international retirement from the format is bound to be felt more strongly. The skills and quality that the two modern greats brought to the table will be hard to replicate but as it is the order of nature, the old guard has to make way for the new one. Zimbabwe certainly isn't the most formidable opposition but in T20 format, the gulf between sides is comparatively lesser than the other two traditional forms of the game.

The hosts, led by the gutsy Sikandar Raza, who played for Punjab Kings in the IPL recently, could prove to be a handful on nippy afternoons at the Harare Sports Club where the ball will jag around during the afternoon starts.

Some solid performances in this series will keep these youngsters in contention for future when the first team players of the world champion side are back on national duty. Shivam Dube, Sanju Samson, and Yashasvi Jaiswal will be available from the third match onwards and some of the young men would only get a couple of games to prove their mettle.

In future, the likes of T20 captain-in-waiting Hardik Pandya, his likely deputy Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, and Kuldeep Yadav will also be back



playing the format and there won't be too many vacancies in the playing eleven. From now till the 2026 T20 World Cup in India, the national team will play 34 games in the shortest format.

While skipper Gill is expected to open, one needs to see whether his best friend Abhishek gets his maiden India cap or the seasoned CSK skipper and captain of the Asian Games gold medal-winning team Rituraj Gaikwad ends up being the chosen one.

In case Abhishek opens, Gaikwad could come in at No.3 or swap positions with the Punjab southpaw. Parag's chances of a debut are brighter compared to Abhishek as he can bat at No. 4 in the first match, a slot he made his own for the Royals.

Rinku Singh, the designated finisher of the Indian T20 team for years to come, is expected to arrive at No. 5 in this new look line-up while one among Jitesh Sharma or Dhruv Jurel will bat at No. 6 while donning the big gloves.

If one looks at selection pattern, Jurel was the second keeper behind Sanju Samson for this series and Jitesh was a late entrant because of the unavailability of the World Cup squad members.

Hence Jurel, who made an

impressive Test debut against England is likely play in the first two games before Samson arrives.

In the bowling department, Avesh Khan and Khaleel Ahmed, the two standbys during the T20 World Cup are certainties and Mukesh Kumar, who is a very steady death bowler could be the third seamer pipping Harshit Rana, who is a better slogger with the willow.

Washington Sundar with his all-round abilities will hold his place till Dube arrives while leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi is expected to play all games.

SQUADS
India (first 2 games): Shubman Gill (c), Rituraj Gaikwad, Abhishek Sharma, Rinku Singh, Dhruv Jurel (wk), Riyan Parag, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Avesh Khan, Khaleel Ahmed, Mukesh Kumar, Tushar Deshpande, Sai Sudharsan, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Harshit Rana.
Zimbabwe: Sikandar Raza (captain), Faraz Akram, Brian Bennett, Johnathan Campbell, Tendai Chatara, Luke Jongwe, Innocent Kaia, Clive Madande, Wessly Madhevere, Tadiwanashe Marumani, Wellington Masakadza, Brandon Mavuta, Blessing Muzarabani, Dion Myers, Antum Nazari, Richard Ngarava, Milton Shumba.



Kohli, Jadeja thank Mumbai Police for phenomenal job managing victory parade

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Floored by the grand reception and also the comprehensive police presence that ensured an orderly conduct of proceedings for most part, star India Virat Kohli on Friday thanked the Mumbai Police for doing a "phenomenal job" in crowd control during the victory parade of the T20 World Cup-winning Indian team here.

The side returned to a euphoric reception on Thursday after a 16-hour non-stop flight from Barbados. It was hosted for breakfast by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi before heading to Mumbai for the victory parade which was attended by lakhs of fans. It culminated into a felicitation

ceremony at the iconic Wankhede stadium where the players danced and took a victory lap after sharing their thoughts on the triumph that ended a trophy drought of 11 years.

"Deep respect and heartfelt thanks to all the officers and staff of @MumbaiPolice & @CPMumbaiPolice for doing a phenomenal job during Team India's Victory Parade. Your dedication and service is highly appreciated. Jai Hind," Kohli posted on 'X'.

The 35-year-old, who was adjudged player of the match in the seven-run final win over South Africa last Saturday, flew out to London early this morning after completing the engagements here.

He had announced T20 international retirement at the end of the final.



Fans also thronged the complex to catch a glimpse of him and he duly obliged amid heavy police presence, waving and smiling at them.

"...This is for you," read his post, prefixed with the emoji of the national flag, on 'X'.

Senior off-spinner R Ashwin, who was not a part of the squad in the Americas, said he felt overwhelmed while watching the celebrations.

"Watching all the videos and pictures from the celebrations yesterday in Mumbai just fills my heart. This nation has given and continues to give so much to the sport. Once again so proud of the champions," he said.

At least 11 persons were rushed to hospitals for sustaining minor injuries or feeling dizzy during the massive fan gathering.

Inspirational, emotional: New-Gen India stars hail T20 WC triumph, eye their own glory

PTI ■ HARARE

India's emotional and epochal triumph in the just-concluded T20 World Cup found its resonance in Gen-Next stars such as Shubman Gill and Riyan Parag who termed it as an "inspiration" while vowing to bring more glory to the nation in future.

The new line of Indian players is here to play a five-match T20I series against Zimbabwe, which is starting from Saturday at the Harare Sports Club.

Gill, who is leading the contingent here, was a travelling reserve with Rohit Sharma's men before returning to India after the group stage of the T20 WC which was held in the USA.

The 24-year-old rated the victory as a "feather in the cap". "This must have been very special for all of them, and special for me. They have been working very hard for this. So, it's a feather in the cap," Gill told BCCI while sharing his feelings about India's thrilling seven-run win over South Africa in the title match at Barbados last week.

Abhishek Sharma, who had a stellar run for the Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL 2024, had a special companion while watching the final - multiple World Cup winner Yuvraj Singh.

"I was watching the match (T20 WC final) with the one and only Yuvraj paji (Yuvraj Singh). He got very emotional when India won the final. Watching that, I felt very good and got very inspired.

"It's a dream for all of us to win an ICC trophy, and he has won it for India many times," Sharma said.

"I will never forget that moment, and then we went outside and celebrated. I think this World Cup was very special and now I am really motivated to win a Cup for the country," he added.

Riyan Parag, who is set to make his T20I debut against Zimbabwe, called the victory an inspiration to all budding players in the country.

"It's an inspiration for all of us, the young players here in this squad to win a World Cup, to win something this big in stature. I think it's motivating for all of us, and the young cricketers in India," said Parag.

Wicketkeeper batter Dhruv Jurel used inverse logic while watching the final.

Jurel did not want to jinx India's chances of winning the match, hence he was telling everyone that South Africa would lift their maiden World Cup. "I was thinking that if I say India will win, then SA might win. So, I was saying SA will win, and eventually India won. I was celebrating like a kid after that," Jurel chuckled.

Rituraj Gaikwad was delighted to see three modern day giants in Virat Kohli, Rohit and Ravindra Jadeja, his teammate at the Chennai Super Kings, retiring from T20Is with a title win.

"To have a win of this kind, where we were almost in the jaws of defeat, and then to come back from there and win is a special moment. Obviously, a great end to the

T20I career of three legends (Kohli, Rohit and Jadeja). For pacers Mukesh Kumar and Tushar Deshpande, the victory was nothing short of a "miracle".

"As we say, the game is not over, till it's over. The final was the best example for it. We believe that miracles can happen," said Deshpande.

Mukesh joined him. "God! It was a different feeling seeing them winning."

Pacer Avesh Khan shared the big moment with local fans and now he wants to create his own piece of history.

"There is a place near my native - Rajwada - where people gather in a public space to watch big matches. I also went there to watch the match. I celebrated with everyone.

"I feel so proud to watch those videos and photos coming out in social media after our trophy win, and we will strive to maintain this standard of performance in future too," he noted.

Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi exploited the luxury of loneliness inside a hotel room to scream his lungs out, while all-rounder Washington Sundar said the win has created an emotional chord with the country.

"It was a great feeling that day. I was alone in the hotel and I was screaming all along inside the room," said Bishnoi.

"It's a huge thing for all of us. We saw it on TV as it was emotional for every one of them. It's a huge inspiration and huge congratulations to every one of them," said Washington.

I want Sikandar to lead from front: Zimbabwe coach Sammons

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sikandar Raza's vast experience of playing in various T20 leagues would certainly come in handy for an inexperienced Zimbabwe outfit, which would like to punch above its weight against a talented Indian side full of IPL performers, head coach Justin Sammons said ahead of five-match series, starting Saturday.

"I think we're very fortunate to have a player like Sikandar Raza leading the side. He brings great experience. We want him to lead from the front. He's been superb in the changing room and taking the players under his wing. We want his bat to do the talking. As well as his bowling," Sammons told PTI Videos in an exclusive interview from Harare.

Over the years, Indian selectors have always rested its top players during the summer months when the team tours the African nation where a five-match T20I series' broadcast rights helps in keeping the host country's cricket board in good health and best of spirits. Even then three players from the T20 World Cup winning squad -- Shivam Dube, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Sanju Samson are expected to be available from the third game of the series and all four standbys, including skipper Shubman Gill are part of the set-up,



taking the count up to seven.

"This is an opportunity for this team to do that and to showcase their skills against the best and obviously to get an understanding of where they're at," said Sammons, who was South Africa's batting consultant between 2021 to 2023.

Sammons said that his focus is on the future and he wants to build a good team in next two years with players improving their game awareness and also honing their skills adequately for

the elite level.

"I don't want to dwell on what's happened in the past, but what I want to do is obviously focus on the future. We've created a clear vision in terms of where this team wants to go within the next two or three years..."

"We're encouraging players to continually want to up-skill and improve. And they know they're going to be taken out of their comfort zone in doing that," he added.

Sammons waxed eloquent about young

India skipper Shubman Gill, praising his work ethic which translated into a golden period of 18-odd months across formats.

"Shubman is a superb cricketer, I remember first seeing Shubman, I think I was with the Proteas. We were playing that Test series against India. I think it was December 2021. He didn't get any game time there, but you could see his work ethic and how professional he was in the way he went about his business in the nets during that test series was something exciting to watch. And like I say, his record speaks for itself."

Talking about the swashbuckling southpaws Rinku Singh and Shivam Dube, the coach said, "They're exciting, they're dangerous. They have proven records against their names. It's an amazing opportunity for us... I think as a youngster growing up you always dream of playing against the best in the world."

The coach also heaped praises on newbie Riyan Parag.

"We can see how dangerous Riyan Parag is. He had a great IPL, showed his worth there. Again, another exciting prospect for India. Again, it's another opportunity for our guys to test themselves against the best," he concluded.

Diksha rises to tied 4th in Aramco Series London, Tvesa makes cut

PTI ■ LONDON

Indian golfer Diksha Dagar shot an impressive bogey-free 5-under 68, best round of the second day, to rise 45 places to tied fourth spot at the Aramco Series London here.

Another Indian Tvesa Malik (73-77) was 4-over and T-41st, as top 60 and ties made the cut at the Par-73 Centurion Golf Club. Pranavi Urs, who had a disappointing 80 in the first round, retired with an injury.

Diksha, who was way down in T-49th place when the first round finally ended, made big amends in the second round as she carded 68 to get to 8-under for 36 holes to climb up

the leaderboard.

Diksha, who started her second round late in the afternoon from the 10th tee, had two birdies on the back nine on 11th and 16th. She added three more birdies on the first, seventh and ninth.

Another Indian making the cut was Tvesa, runner-up at the Swiss Ladies Open last week. She was T-24 after the first round but fell dramatically on the back nine. Even par for the first round, she parred the entire front nine but dropped shots on 10th and 11th. Then came a roller-coaster, as she birdied the Par-3 14th, but dropped a double bogey on Par-5 15th. Then she birdied Par-4 17th and dropped a second double



bogey on Par-5 18th to close at 4-over 77 and was T-41st.

Diksha, winner of two Ladies European Tour titles and third last year at Hero Women's Indian Open, is five shots behind the leader, Leona Maguire of Ireland. Maguire shot 66-72 for 8-under and England's Georgia Hall (70-70) was second at 6-under. Austrian Sarah Schober (67-75) was sole third while Diksha shared the fourth place with Welsh golfer Chloe Williams (69-74), Ines Laklalech of Morocco (72-71) and Laura Fuenfstueck of Germany (70-73) at 3-under.

In team competition, Team Nadaud with France's Nastasia Nadaud, Czechia's Kristyna Napoleova, Spain's

Mireia Prat and amateur George Brooksbank, set the early pace to reach 24-under.

They were joined by Team Hall, which had Georgia Hall, Hannah Burke alongside Morocco's Lina Belmati and amateur Shane Hart-Jones.

With both teams level on 24-under-par, they will feature in a play-off for victory at Centurion Club at the end of the third round on Saturday afternoon.

In the individual competition, Maguire holds a two-shot lead heading into the final round after carding a round of 72 (-1) to sit on eight-under-par.

The cut fell at +6 with 69 players making it through to the final day of the individual competition.

'I FEEL LUCKY TO PERFORM ACTION SEQUENCE IN MY DEBUT TIRAGABADARA SAAMI'

MALVI MALHOTRA, WHO WILL BE SEEN MAKING HER DEBUT IN THE UPCOMING WHOLESOME ENTERTAINER TIRAGABADARA SAAMI, INTERACTS WITH THE MEDIA SHARING INSIGHTS ABOUT HER ROLE AND THE MOVIE

K. RAMYA SREE

Director AS Ravikumar Chaudhary is helming a wholesome entertainer *Tiragabadara Saami* starring actors Raj Tarun and Malvi Malhotra in lead roles. Bankrolled by Malkapuram Sivakumar under Suraksh Entertainment Media banner, the already released promotional content from the film has garnered good response from the audience.

As the film is heading for a grand theatrical release soon, the lead actress Malvi Malhotra, in an interaction with the Hyderabad media, spoke about her role in the movie, background and more. Fresh off to the Telugu audience, this film marks Malvi's debut in the Telugu cinema after having starred in Hindi, Malayalam and Tamil films. What started off as a TV artist, Malvi, the Pahadi girl from Himachal Pradesh did theatre and is now all set to impress the audience playing the role of a diehard fan of Nandamuri Balakrishna in this Tollywood debut film of hers.

Speaking about the same, she expressed, "My character is very interesting. She is a very energetic and hyperactive girl. The entire story happens because of my character. It also has family elements and also has an action sequence. It can be related to

Balakrishna. There is no filter when Balakrishna speaks. He speaks his heart. My character is also like that. My character teaches women the importance of self-defense. I feel lucky that I got an opportunity to do an action sequence in the first film."

"I watch Balakrishna's movies. He has a huge fan following across all industries. He is very funny. I enjoyed his last film *Bhagwanth Kesari* very much," she added. Working with director Ravikumar, Malvi calls it a great learning experience as she feels Ravikumar is a director with a very good vision.

Asked what attracted her to sign *Tiragabadara Saami*, she answered, "It has many elements like emotions, action, drama, romance, fun. Raj Tarun's character is very interesting. A character who starts as silent and becomes violent. It has all the elements that the audience will enjoy."

Hailing from Himachal Pradesh, Malvi has watched a good number of Telugu films and Siddharth and Genelia starrer *Bommarillu* remains her all time favourite.

"Recently I watched the movie *Baby*. I love Rajamouli's movies. It is my dream to be part of his film. Also want to work with Mani Ratnam," she shares, but on the actor's front Nani is someone whom she adores. She explained, "I love all heroes in Tollywood. But as a theater artist, if I talk about the depth in the actor's eyes, I will say Nani. He is an actor who conveys wonderful expressions and emotions with his eyes. Love to work with him."

The newbie even before the release of her first film lined up a few other projects in Tollywood with whom she is in talks with and she is excited to reveal those details soon.



Bimbisara 2 announced

Nandamuri Kalyanram, has announced the epic fantasy thriller *Bimbisara 2* under his NTR Arts banner, promising an exciting prequel.

Known for his knack for unique scripts, Kalyan Ram has carved a niche as an actor who thrives on exploration and experimentation. *Bimbisara*, a monumental hit in his career, is now set to expand with its highly anticipated prequel.

The announcement of *Bimbisara 2* comes on Kalyan Ram's birthday on Friday, accompanied by a creative concept poster unveiling. Promising to reveal the legend who ruled Trigarthala ages before *Bimbisara*, the prequel has already heightened expectations. Kalyan Ram's portrayal of *Bimbisara* garnered acclaim, and the prequel aims to delve deeper into his character's backstory, offering a compelling narrative. As preparations advance, anticipation mounts for this cinematic journey back into the world of Trigarthala. Directed by Anil Paduri, acclaimed for *Romantic*, *Bimbisara 2* will be a grand production from the NTR Arts banner, set to deliver a visually stunning experience. With pre-production in full swing, shooting is scheduled to commence soon, promising an unparalleled cinematic experience.



Kalyan Ram's ferocious avatar from #NKR21 revealed

On his birthday, the makers of *#NKR21* treated fans with a striking new poster featuring Nandamuri Kalyan Ram. The poster showcases Kalyan Ram in a fierce demeanor, his fist engulfed in flames as he sits surrounded by goons, exuding an intense gaze. Sporting a stylish makeover, Kalyan Ram appears remarkably aggressive, seemingly setting the scene ablaze. Directed by Pradeep

Chilukuri, *#NKR21* promises daring stunts from Kalyan Ram, with this fiery action sequence set to be a standout moment in the film. Produced by Ashok Vardhan Muppa and Sunil Balusu under Ashoka Creations and NTR Arts banners, the film is presented by Muppa Venkaiah Chowdary. Vijayashanthi portrays a powerful IPS officer, adding to the film's dynamic ensemble which includes Sohail Khan,

Saiee Manjrekar, and Srikanth in pivotal roles. The production is currently underway, supported by a talented team of technicians. Ram Prasad handles cinematography, Ajaneesh Loknath oversees music, and Thammiraju edits the film, with screenplay by Srikanth Vissa. The teaser has already showcased the expertise of the technical crew, building anticipation for *#NKR21*, which promises to be a thrilling cinematic experience.



Rashmika Mandanna's suspenseful dimension to Kubera

Renowned filmmaker Sekhar Kammula is all set to captivate audiences with his highly anticipated mythological pan-Indian film, *Kubera*, featuring Superstar Dhanush and King Nagarjuna. Earlier, the makers teased audiences with glimpses introducing these two iconic stars, heightening anticipation for the film. National heartthrob Rashmika Mandanna plays a pivotal role in this cinematic venture.

On Friday, the makers unveiled Rashmika's first look and a character introduction glimpse, showcasing her in a distinct and intriguing avatar that has sparked immense buzz among fans. Rashmika's role bridges the narratives of Dhanush and Nagarjuna, adding depth and intrigue to the storyline. Her first look promises an exciting and suspenseful dimension to the film. Sekhar Kammula, known for his captivating storytelling, intertwines diverse characters in this eagerly awaited social drama. The teaser, nearly a minute long, tantalizes with glimpses of hidden wealth and insights into Rashmika's character. Set against a

backdrop of intricate plotting and backed by Devi Sri Prasad's powerful music, the teaser promises a compelling cinematic experience that blends anticipation with mystery. Sekhar Kammula's *Kubera* stands as one of the most anticipated pan-Indian films, featuring a stellar cast and crew with multiple National awards to their credit. The film, jointly produced by Suniel Narang and Puskar Ram Mohan Rao under Sri Venkateswara Cinemas LLP and Amigos Creations Pvt Ltd banner, is a multilingual production simultaneously filmed in Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi. Currently shooting in Hyderabad, the film is also undergoing simultaneous post-production to ensure a high-quality visual and narrative experience for audiences worldwide.



Shruti Haasan joins Rajinikanth in Coolie

Shruti Haasan has officially joined the cast of the highly anticipated film *Coolie*, starring Superstar Rajinikanth. Directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj, the film is set to deliver an action-packed drama, blending Rajinikanth's iconic screen presence with Kanagaraj's adept direction. On Friday, Shruti delighted her fans by sharing a picture from the film's set. Her inclusion in the cast has intensified the already soaring excitement and anticipation surrounding the movie.



Two stalwarts of Indian cinema, Superstar Rajinikanth and Collection King Mohanbabu, came together, capturing the essence of timeless friendship and mutual respect. As they shared a frame, their smiles reflecting years of mutual admiration and camaraderie, it was a reminder of the profound connections forged through their shared passion for storytelling and performance. The encounter serves as a testament to the power of friendship and the enduring legacy of these two icons in the world of cinema.

MLA Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy releases Saikumar's intense look from Pranayagodari

Known as the Dialogue King, Saikumar is celebrated for his ability to immerse himself in any role and captivate audiences. He is set to surprise viewers once again with his powerful portrayal as Pedakapu in the upcoming film *Pranayagodari*. Directed by PL Vignesh, the movie stars Sadan, from comedian Ali's family, in the lead role, with Priyanka Prasad as the heroine and Sunil Ravinuthala in a pivotal part. Produced by Paramalla Lingaiah under the PLV Creations banner, *Pranayagodari* is anticipated as a feel-good movie that showcases the natural beauty and lifestyle of the Godavari region. Telangana MLA Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy recently unveiled Saikumar's first look poster, prais-



ing the film and expressing confidence in its success. During the unveiling, MLA Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy congratulated Lingaiah, emphasizing his support for local talent and expressing hopes for the film's triumph. Lingaiah, in turn, expressed gratitude for the MLAs encouragement and highlighted the film's appeal as a fresh and entertaining experience for all audiences. Saikumar's character in the poster exudes power, adorned in traditional attire with a Rudrakshamala necklace, a bracelet, and a cigar, setting the tone for his impactful role in the film. The production team is gearing up to announce the release date soon, promising a narrative that promises to captivate and entertain viewers seeking something new and engaging.

World tour lyrical video released from Tuk Tuk

The upbeat comedy *Tuk Tuk*, starring Harsha Rohan, Karthikeya Dev, Steven Madhu, Saanve Megghana and Nihal Kodati in leading roles, is being produced under the

banners of Chitravahini and RYJ by Rahul Reddy, Lokku Srivaran, Sriramulu Reddy and Supreet C. Krishna. Directed by C. Supreet Krishna, the film's recently unveiled promotional posters have

garnered widespread attention. The first lyrical song from the movie, titled *World Tour Nazbhaja Ja... Ja... Ra Kathalenna Vinara... Mana Katha Vinnani Di Ra...*, has now been released. Composed and sung by Santhu Omkar, with lyrics by director Supreet himself, the song is geared towards the youth, featuring trendy and catchy tunes. Director Supreet expressed, "*Tuk Tuk* promises to be a delightful cinematic journey. The introduction of new fantasy elements will surprise the audience, offering a fresh and entertaining experience, particularly appealing to young viewers." He further added, "*Tuk Tuk* is an exhilarating cinematic adventure that we believe will resonate with audiences of all ages."



Pourusham - The Man Hood trailer launched

Directed by Sheraz Mehdi, *Pourusham - The Manhood* is an upcoming film produced by Ashok Khullar and Devendra Negi under UVT Hollywood Studios (USA) and Shriya Productions. The movie boasts a talented ensemble cast and is currently shooting, with the soundtrack nearing release. Simultaneously, the promotional activities for the film are in full swing. The theatrical trailer was unveiled, drawing attention at its launch event in Los Angeles. The event saw esteemed guests such as Dr. Olympia A. Gellini, Hollywood actress and singer Lumba Pam, Amber Martinez, Sage and Lenny Vitulli, co-producer at Hollywood Lux Angels Studios. The film stars a notable cast



including Suman Talwar, Meka Rama Krishna, Sheraz Mehdi, Ashok Khullar, Jyoti Reddy, Shailaja Tiwari, Ananth, Kanika, Jabardasth Kevvu Karthik, Jabardasth Heena, Jabardasth Kattappa, Bala Gangadhar, Vizag Sharif, Lakshmi, and Ravi Varma. Sheraz Mehdi handles the story, screenplay and music, with DV Prabhu serving as the editor. The trailer of *Pourusham - The Manhood* tackles themes of challenging traditional norms and the dynamics within joint families. Promising a blend of action and emotional family drama, the trailer resonates particularly well with today's audience, sparking heightened anticipation for the film.