

# sunday pioneer


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**Ready to conclude FTA that worked for India and Britain**



**Will set up coop bank, milk PRODUCERS' union in every district**




**Daydream a lot OR STARE into space?**



**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
The pioneer

*There is no difference between the BRS and the Congress in inducting MLAs. The Congress said in its manifesto that public representatives must resign if they change their party, but they are not implementing their manifesto. Congress leaders have been claiming that 26 BRS MLAs are in touch with them. If they resign and by-elections are held the BJP will win all 26 seats and become the main opposition party.*

- Bandi Sanjay, MoS Home Affairs P4



**DON'T MISS...**

**Complete drinking water...**

Minister for Energy Gottipati Ravi Kumar directed the officials concerned to complete the drinking water works which were left in the middle of Addanki town. The Minister held a meeting with the officials and reviewed the pending works in Addanki Nagara Panchayat. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that it is irresponsible of officials to dig up the internal cement roads to carry out repairs to drinking water pipelines. He also expressed dissatisfaction with leaving the works in the...

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**Dalai Lama turns 89, says he is...**

Tibetan spiritual leader The Dalai Lama turned 89 on Saturday and in his birthday message said he is physically fit and is determined to continue his service to Lord Buddha's teachings. The Dalai Lama is in the US where he is recovering from a knee-replacement surgery. "I am nearly 90 now but don't feel unwell, except for the slight discomfort in my legs and would like to thank all my fellow Tibetans in and outside Tibet for your prayers on my birthday," he said in the text message issued here by his office. "Despite the..."

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**Only 7% of MSME credit to women...**

Reserve Bank's executive director Neeraj Nigam on Friday said low labour force participation among women is a barrier to financial inclusion efforts and also to broader economic growth. He said there is also a need to up the credit supply to women, pointing out that only 7 per cent of the overall outstanding loans to micro, small and medium enterprises are to women-led businesses. "One significant barrier for financial inclusion and indeed to economic growth and development is more participation of females in economic..."

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**BMI alone not sufficient...**

Obesity can no longer be just defined by body mass index (BMI) and rather should be about how body fat is distributed throughout one's body, researchers said while launching a new framework for diagnosing and managing obesity. Published in the journal Nature Medicine, the framework looks specifically at fat accumulated in the abdomen, measured as 'waist-to-height ratio' -- an increased value of which is related to a higher risk of developing cardiometabolic complications, according to the researchers. An 'important novelty' of the framework is including a waist-to-height ratio higher than 0.5, along with a BMI of 25-30, for diagnosing obesity, the authors, representing the European Association for...

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**OBTUSE ANGLE**



**NAIDU, REVANTH DISCUSS BIFURCATION ISSUES**

## 8 issues to be resolved in a fortnight



NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

The meeting of Chief Ministers seems to have come out with a positive outcome for Telangana. Sources said that Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari listed out eight issues which can be sorted out at the officer level. Then Deputy CM Bhatti suggested setting up an officials committee to which Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu gave his nod and reportedly said, "Okay agreed, that is the way."

The CS of AP also acknowledged the issues. The solution to it is likely to be achieved in a week. Sources indicated that there is some money pending as part of labour cess which is just lying in the bank which someone can use. Both states agreed to it.

It is learnt that Revanth spoke on drugs and the initiatives to curb

them in schools, pubs etc. Both states exchanged agenda items which include re-transfer of five villages, TTD recommendation etc. Among the issues listed, Andhra Pradesh is likely to positively respond to Telangana's request to re-transfer the five villages of Pichukalapadu, Kannaigudem, Yetapaka, Gundala and Purushothapatnam which were merged with Andhra Pradesh under the AP Reorganisation (Amendment) Act in 2014.

The officials' committee will study and recommend it. The five villages that were earlier in Khammam district were incorporated into Andhra Pradesh due to the transfer of seven revenue blocks to Andhra Pradesh.

Sources said that a letter will be sent to the Union Home Ministry requesting to transfer it back. Then an ordinance would be

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introduced in Parliament. In good news to the Tirumala devotees of Telangana, the recommendation letters issued by

Telangana public representatives may be accepted. Sources said the issue was listed and there might be a positive response. Another request placed by Andhra Pradesh is for a CM camp office in Hyderabad which could be used whenever they visit.

### Revanth, CBN decide to set up panels to solve problems

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The much-awaited meeting between Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and his Andhra Pradesh counterpart N. Chandrababu Naidu was held at the Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Praja Bhavan on Saturday to discuss inter-state issues. Ministers and senior officials

from both states are attending the meeting, focussing on resolving the issues arising out of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act 2014. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Ministers D. Sridhar Babu, Ponnambra Prabhakar and others welcomed CBN when he arrived at the Praja Bhavan in Begumpet at

around 6 p.m. The meeting lasted for around 1.30 hours. All pending issues of the AP Reorganization Act will be addressed through a new three-level committee system which will be constituted in a couple of weeks, announced Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu after the meeting.

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### Revanth gifts 'Naa Godava' to Naidu

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy presented the book 'Naa Godava' written by Kaloji Narayana Rao to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. Sources said the book is the heart of Telangana and that the CM is telling Chandrababu to listen to his 'Naa Godava'. With this book coming out, the famous words written in the book were extensively shared. Kaloji said, "We will shoo away the outsiders who loot us. If an insider does it we will bury him. If you are a friend, we will be your friend and give our life. This is the Telangana which is far from the coast. If you try to drown us, you will drown yourself."

## A time-wasting tactic: YSRCP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) and former MLA Gadikota Srikanth Reddy voiced strong opposition to the decision made during the meeting of the Chief Ministers of the Telugu states on Saturday evening in Hyderabad. They alleged that forming a committee of officers is merely a time-wasting tactic that will hinder Andhra Pradesh's progress on multiple fronts.

The leaders stated that both states are already aware of the disputes, unresolved issues, and assets that need to be distributed. They questioned the necessity of forming a new committee, arguing that it would only delay the resolution of these issues further.

The Union government had previously established the Sheila Bedi

### Opposes committee to be formed independent of Union govt officials



Committee to oversee the implementation of the Reorganisation Act. This committee made several recommendations regarding the property dispute during the undivided state, which were discussed over the last decade. However, some

recommendations were not accepted by the Telangana government and were not implemented. By forming a new committee, they believe the matter is being reset to square one.

Continued on Page 2

## Case filed against Kodali, 2 others

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A case has been registered against Vasudeva Reddy, the former Managing Director of AP Beverages, in Gudiwada. The case also names YSRCP leader and former minister Kodali Srivenkateswara Rao (Nani), and the former Joint Collector of Krishna district and current Collector of East Godavari, Madhavi Latha Reddy. Duggirala Prabhakar, a resident of Gudiwada Autonagar, filed a complaint at Gudiwada Two Town Police Station, alleging that Vasudeva Reddy and Kodali Nani were responsible for his mother's death. According to the complaint, liquor cases were broken and set on fire in their godown. Prabhakar also



accused Vasudeva Reddy and Madhavi Latha Reddy of insulting his family when they reported their grievances. He claims that his mother died of grief a few days after these events.

## Stalker stabs minor girl to death

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a gruesome incident, a 14-year-old girl was stabbed to death by a stalker in Rambilli village in Anakapalli district on Saturday. Police report that the accused, identified as Suresh, had been harassing the victim, Baddi Darshani, for several months. After the victim's parents filed a complaint, Suresh was arrested and charged under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Despite these charges, he was released on bail a month ago and resumed stalking the girl. Darshani, a 9th-grade student, was returning home from school in the evening when the incident occurred. Suresh allegedly forced his way into her house while she was alone and stabbed her multiple times. She died instantly from her injuries. Suresh fled the scene, leaving behind the weapon used in the attack. The police have registered a case and initiated a large-scale search to apprehend the suspect.

## Fulfil 5% quota dream of Kapus: Chegondi to Dy CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former MP and veteran Kapu leader Ch Harirama Jogaiah, who remained silent after the TDP-JanaSena-BJP alliance won the elections with a massive mandate, has resurfaced with letters to Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, offering unsolicited advice. Jogaiah congratulated Pawan Kalyan on the electoral victory alongside TDP and expressed hope that both Pawan Kalyan and Chandrababu Naidu would steer the State towards progress by balancing welfare and development. However, Jogaiah offered a piece of advice to the Jana Sena chief. He emphasised that the new government's schemes should fulfil the needs of the people rather than serve the political interests of the two parties. He also warned against concentrating all development in one region under the guise of the capital city and urged Pawan Kalyan to implement a 5 per cent reservation for Kapus, as desired by the community. Additionally, Jogaiah demanded that the Krishna district be renamed after Kapu leader Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga. He also advised Pawan Kalyan not to give up his acting career, suggesting he dedicate



half of his time to state administration and the remaining days to films. Before the assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh, Jogaiah frequently wrote letters to Pawan Kalyan on various issues, which reportedly irritated the latter. Jogaiah accused Pawan Kalyan of betraying the faith of the Kapu community by accepting just 21 assembly seats from the Telugu Desam Party in the seat-sharing alliance, at a time when he was projected as a prospective chief ministerial candidate. Though Pawan Kalyan largely ignored Jogaiah's letters, he expressed his irritation a few times during his election campaigns. Without naming Jogaiah, the Jana Sena Party chief mentioned that there was no need for seniors to advise him, as they had never stood by him in troubled times.

## JAGAN VISITS YOUTH BRUTALLY ATTACKED BY TDP WORKERS: P2

### NUMBER PLATE VIOLATIONS

## Police crack the whip on Jana Sainiks

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Finally, the Andhra Pradesh police are putting an end to the trend of using 'Pithapuram MLA Gari Taluka' stickers on vehicle number plates. This trend started days before the announcement of the Assembly election results, initiated by supporters of Jana Sena Party (JSP) chief Pawan Kalyan to show their support. Despite the TDP forming the gov-

ernment with the support of Jana Sena and BJP, traffic police had initially overlooked this practice. However, the use of these stickers, which replace the actual number plates, constitutes a clear violation of traffic rules. Supporters of Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan have been prominently displaying these stickers. A recent video circulating on social

media shows a traffic policeman stopping a scooterist and removing the sticker that obscured the vehicle's registration number. The officer explained the importance of displaying the correct number plate to the vehicle owner and let him off with a warning. This action by the police has received widespread support from netizens, who emphasised the necessity of adhering to traffic and road safety regulations.





## Revanth takes a leaf out of KTR's book

In Telangana, there seems to be a significant level of disguised employment among politicians. The other day Chief Minister Revanth Reddy held a three-hour-long 'meeting', following fiery protests by those battling for unemployed youth. Interestingly, those who attended the reactive meeting took everyone by surprise, giving chance for opposition Bharatiya Rashtra Samithi to mock at the participants. BRS said that CM Revanth Reddy had discussed the problem of unemployment with "the politically unemployed". Scribes have elephantine memory. Immediately, reporters could draw a parallel with BRS working president KT Rama Rao. A

bouquet and of course draped with a shawl. However, Revanth Reddy has been giving Nandi figurines to visiting dignitaries. He gave silver Nandi to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Earlier, he gave Nandi to Union Ministers JP Nadda and Manohar Lal Kattar. Sometimes he gives silver filigree items such as peacock to dignitaries. Social media has lumped them as 'Nandi Awards', including the ones that the CM gave to PM, HM et al. Fun apart, this led to a discussion on what happened to Nandi Awards which were renamed as 'Gaddar Awards' to better reflect Telanganiat. It looks like they have been postponed to next year. Ex-

did not encourage defections and has courage in fighting with the ruling Telugu Desam Party. People say Jagan is of the considered opinion that it is not wise to depend on defectors to remain relevant in politics.

### Taking scribes for granted

These days there is hardly any difference between a 'chit-chat' (informal conversation) and a 'Press meet' (formal interaction involving queries and responses) held in BJP's Telangana unit office. For, at least half a dozen leaders other than the main person who is supposed to interact with the media come

in advance and get on the nerves of scribes. The same thing happened on Saturday in the BJP state office, after newshounds entered the small room

where Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar was supposed to chat with the media. Dozen other BJP leaders trooped in, one after the other, but Bandi Sanjay Kumar kept media persons waiting. One of the scribes wondered whether it reflected another dimension of the 'discipline' that the saffron party leaders pride on. One of the scribes left the room after he got a call from his office. Another scribe observed that it had been the case usually whenever BJP Telangana unit president addressed the media. Now, Bandi Sanjay seems to be following suit, since he too has become a Union Minister. A senior scribe considered 'boycott' of the interaction, but junior members of the fraternity prevailed over him, saying: "those days are gone". Meanwhile, the office staff served snacks twice, followed by tea. After all that, Bandi Sanjay arrived, precisely one hour late. With the other BJP leaders seated beside him, Bandi Sanjay then chit-chatted with newsmen scattered at a considerable distance from him. His initial 'sorry' was not enough; it took him some time to pacify the scribes for his (OK, unavoidable) delay. The chit-chat lasted half an hour, prompting a scribe to exclaim: "It should have lasted at least the waiting period."

(With inputs from Naveena Ghanate, SNCN Acharyulu and K Venkateshwarlu)

## REPORTERS' DIARY

CM K Chandrasekhar Rao used to give Charminar, Kakatiya Kalathornam, and other such silver filigree items.

### Handling differing types of post-poll defectors

Like rats leaving a sinking ship, defections are quite natural in a political party that has been dumped by people in an election. However, defections that are engineered post elections are different. The stark contrast between the two types of defections and how a leader must face the consequences has become apparent in the wake of the defeat of the Yuva Jagan Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) in Andhra Pradesh and the washout of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) in Telangana.

In Telangana, ex-CM K Chandrasekhar Rao is worried over the defections of even his jigris from BRS and is moving heaven and earth to check them. However, in Andhra Pradesh, ex-CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is playing it rather cool. Unlike KCR, he is taking the defections in his stride. Jagan has been telling his aides during his pep talk: "If someone wants to leave the party, let them leave. Those who want to stay in the party will remain". People feel the difference in the attitudes and mentality of the two former Chief Ministers. They reason that KCR "encouraged defections and depends on defectors". But YS Jagan

### Congress needs helping hand for its social media wing

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi's social media warriors have gained an upper hand over their counterparts in the Congress post Assembly elections when it comes to sensitive posts. In fact, the counters of the ruling Congress are so bad that even BRS leaders feel that those behind the ineffective posts are doing "beginners' mistakes". Social media profiles that had been active during the Telangana Assembly election campaign are all of a sudden posting frantically again. Some of the handles attributed to poll strategist Sunil Kanugolu's team have been activated. Nonetheless, BRS is very confident that post elections, organic and real followers have come on social media without much effort. What keeps BRS' spirits high are the tell-tale signs that the Congress social media team is an abject failure without Sunil Kanugolu. If impending changes in TPCC result in recast of frontal organisations as well, then the new TPCC should consider revamping the party unit's social media wing.

### Did Revanth give Nandi Awards?

Generally when the Chief Minister of a state meets a dignitary, the latter is given

# Science can help turn waste into wealth: Pawan

The Deputy CM inaugurates an expo titled 'Garbage to Gold'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan inspected the Solid and Liquid Resource Management (SLRM) demonstration, emphasising that scientific methods can transform waste into wealth by creatively reusing solid and liquid wastes, thus overcoming sanitation problems. An exhibition titled "Garbage to Gold" was organised by SLRM Project Director C Srinivasan to showcase the procedures for managing solid and liquid waste in villages and the products that can be derived from them. The Deputy CM inaugurated the exhibition on Saturday.

State Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Principal Secretary Sasibhushan Kumar, SLRM Project Director C Srinivasan, and Legislative Council Member P Hariprasad participated in the program. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Chief Minister



Pawan Kalyan highlighted the challenges local organizations face in waste and sanitation management.

He noted that studies on solid and liquid waste management are being approached scientifically. The Deputy CM directed the Principal Secretary of Panchayat Raj and the Rural Development Department to organize a workshop with exper-

enced experts on this subject. He suggested that representatives from various communities and self-help groups, along with Panchayati Raj representatives, should participate in this workshop. Pawan Kalyan believes that such workshops will raise awareness of waste management and increase the potential for creating wealth from garbage, ultimately generating employment

opportunities and benefiting the environment.

During the event, Srinivasan explained the environmentally friendly procedures for waste management. He noted that burning leaves, branches, and dry garbage causes air pollution, but converting them into compost can provide valuable fertilizer. He urged local organizations to take appropriate measures in this regard. As part of the Swachh Bharat program, Swachandhra Corporation in Jupudi near Ibrahimpatnam has undertaken sanitation initiatives followed by planting trees.

The market demand for vermicast produced through waste management was highlighted, and special attention to its production was recommended. Srinivasan emphasized the importance of vermiculture in adding organic matter and nutrients to the soil and discouraged the use of non-recycled items.

## Jagan visits youth brutally attacked by TDP workers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party president and former chief minister, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, has strongly criticised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu saying had unveiled a harmful tradition of political violence in the State. Jagan warned that such actions would eventually backfire on Naidu and the Telugu Desam Party (TDP).

Jagan made these remarks on Saturday after visiting a party worker, Ajay Kumar Reddy, who is receiving treatment at RIMS. Ajay was injured in an attack allegedly carried out by TDP members.

"A 25-year-old Ajay was brutally beaten for voting for YSRCP. Such incidents have never occurred before. Chandrababu is fostering an atmosphere of fear in the state. His misdeeds are accumulating like those of Sisupala. He must understand that these actions will haunt him once power shifts," Jagan asserted.

He further stated that this type of violence has not been seen before in Pulivendula,



suggesting that such attacks are being carried out to create a climate of fear across the state. "Chandrababu, this bad tradition you are sowing will spread to your activists tomorrow. You must remember that you will not be in power forever. When power changes, the harmful traditions you are fostering will come back to you. Stop these misdeeds that are causing panic across the state," Jagan warned.

Jagan also criticized Naidu for losing 10 per cent of the votes due to unfulfilled promises, questioning the status of the Rythu Bharosa and unemployment allowance schemes. He

urged Naidu to focus on fulfilling his promises rather than instigating violence, emphasizing that leaders should never promote a culture of attacks.

On Friday, TDP members allegedly attacked YSRCP worker Ajay Kumar Reddy in Vempalle, leaving him severely injured. Ajay was transferred to Kadapa RIMS for treatment. During his three-day visit to Pulivendula in YSR Kadapa district, Jagan was informed about the attack. He went directly from Kadapa Airport to RIMS, assuring Ajay to remain strong and promising that the party would extend all necessary support.

### A time-wasting...

Continued from Page 1

During a previous meeting of Southern States' Chief Ministers held in Tirupati, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy emphasised to the Union Home Minister the importance of resolving the outstanding issues. The YSRCP leaders recalled his assurance that the problems would be addressed within a stipulated timeframe. Following this, discussions on bifurcation issues had gained momentum under the Union Home Ministry's supervision. The leaders now feel that setting up another committee without focusing on the existing issues will only regress the process. Moreover, this new committee is being formed independent of the Union government, which raises concerns since the Reorganisation Act was enacted by Parliament and is to be implemented by the Union government.

The previous YSRCP government exerted significant pressure on the Union government regarding the Rs 7,000 crore power dues owed to Andhra Pradesh. Despite instructions for payment, the case was later moved to court. The leaders criticized the lack of focus on resolving this issue in the current meeting.

They also highlighted the injustice Andhra Pradesh faces, particularly regarding water project management. The Telangana state's release of water from the left canal of Srisailem for power generation, while the Rayalaseema region struggles, is deemed unfair.

## Rising diarrhoea cases linked to water pollution

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

An alarming surge in Diarrhoea cases has gripped Andhra Pradesh, with water pollution identified as the culprit in Guntur, Vijayawada, and Kakinada. These outbreaks have claimed several lives. While the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) has responded with meetings and awareness campaigns, residents fear these efforts are insufficient. The root cause - contaminated water supply pipelines - remains undressed.

As the monsoon season sets in, the risk of drinking water contamination escalates. Preventative measures, ideally implemented in May and June, are crucial to avert such health crises. Without these measures, there is a significant danger of sewage infiltrating drinking water pipelines. Guntur has already experienced a severe diarrhoea outbreak due to polluted water, resulting in three fatalities. Less than a month ago, Vijayawada faced a similar outbreak, leading to five deaths and hundreds of hospitalizations. Recently, four cases were reported in the Chittoor district, and two each in the East Godavari district and Kakinada.

The State government has



issued comprehensive guidelines to local bodies, emphasising stricter precautions and public awareness. However, GVMC meetings seem to be the primary response in Visakhapatnam, leaving the crucial issue of pipeline relocation untouched.

GVMC manages approximately 320,000 tap connections, supplying 65 million gallons of water daily from reservoirs such as Eleru, Tatipudi, Raiwada, Mehadrigeeda, Mudasarlova, and Gambhiram. This water is purified and chlorinated before being distributed through 291 internal mini reservoirs. However, areas like Maharanipet, Kancharapalem, Malkapuram, Gajuwaka, Maddilapalem, One Town, Allipuram, Akkayyapalem, and Muslimthathichetlapalem face significant risks due to

pipelines running through drainage systems. During heavy rains, overflowing drainages can lead to sewage contaminating the tap water supply.

Residents have voiced their concerns about tap joints located within drainages, creating unpredictable and hazardous situations. GVMC staff report that officials are prioritizing meetings and awareness programs over the essential task of relocating these pipelines. Despite the evident risks and ongoing outbreaks, water supply department officials have denied the possibility of water pollution.

Immediate and decisive action is required to address this public health crisis. Without addressing the fundamental issues of water supply contamination, the state remains vulnerable to recurring outbreaks and preventable tragedies.

## Revanth, CBN decide to set up panels to solve....

Continued from Page 1

The committees will operate on three levels: an officers' committee, a ministers' committee and a final Chief Ministers' committee.

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Malu emphasized that the meeting was meant to resolve issues that remained unsolved after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh 10 years ago. He stated that they did not expect to resolve all issues from the Bifurcation Act in the first meeting itself, but there is a need to establish a system for solving problems.

Representatives of both states held talks and decided to set up committees to tackle the issues.

A three-member committee of Chief Secretary level high-ranking officials from both states will be constituted and will meet within

two weeks to explore solutions at their level. There will be three officials from each state in this committee. Issues that cannot be resolved by these officials will be addressed by a Ministers' committee from both states. The Chief Ministers will then approve the solutions found at the ministerial level. For issues that cannot be resolved at the ministerial level, the Chief Ministers will find solutions. Additionally, it has been decided to work together on issues causing problems to the people of both the Telugu states.

Bhatti said that the Telangana government, taking the narcotics issue seriously, will conduct a special drive led by an Additional DGP. There are significant concerns about cybercrime affecting common people and both states decided to coordinate to control these issues.

## Record 1,522 PSC sleepers replaced with TRT-909 in a single day

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a unique initiative, Vijayawada Division, SCR organized a tour to demonstrate the live operation of Track Renewal Train (TRT) 909 on the Gannavaram - Mustabad Section on Saturday. Narendra A Patil, DRM, Vijayawada inspected the Track Replacing Train working along with Engineering officials at the Gannavaram - Mustabad Section. DRM emphasized that this novel attempt highlights the magnanimous efforts of our Railway personnel in utilizing traffic blocks efficiently. He also assured the public that the current cancellations of trains are temporary and will be restored soon.

The live demonstration featured the TRT-909, which is more efficient and time-saving compared to manual sleeper renewal. The machine can renew up to 1 km in a block of 4 hours,



reducing the workload of manual labour and ensuring safer tracks. As part of traffic maintenance, a record 1522 sleepers were replaced during the day. The gigantic 59-metre-long Track Relaying Train commissioned with a cost of Rs.60 Crore has renewed sleepers for a length of around 148 km across Vijayawada Division since its commissioning on the South Central Railway Zone in August 2022.

Interacting with the media, Narendra A Patil said that the objective of this guided media tour is to convey to our esteemed passengers that these works are taken up in the larger interest of public safety which is long overdue but is our top priority. He said that the traffic blocks are being utilised to the fullest possible extent for the betterment of track and safety aspects. Due to this pending maintenance activity,

trains are being run with speed restrictions affecting the mobility over Vijayawada Division, he added. DRM also highlighted that a host of large-scale maintenance activities is being undertaken simultaneously at all the sections during these two months, owing to lean traffic season, completion of vacations & opening of schools for children. DRM assured that maximum efforts will be put to minimize the cancellations, and disruptions of services and restore all the cancelled trains at the earliest.

S Varun Babu, Sr Divisional Engineer Co-ordination, Mayank Upadhayay, DEN (Central), G Ajay Gopal, ADEN Track Machines, Vijayawada; Santosh Kumar, ADEN, Eluru; Nusrat M Mandrupkar, Public Relations Officer, Vijayawada Division and others were part of the live sleeper renewal by TRT-909 today at Gannavaram.

## NHRC notices to CSs of states, UTs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NHRC has issued notices to the chief secretaries and the police chief of all the states and union territories over reports that women are allegedly being forced into sex trade by anti-social elements on the pretext of providing them with lucrative job opportunities.

In a statement on Friday, the National Human Rights Commission observed the content of a news report quoting statements by women arrested during a raid, if true, raises a serious concern relating to the life, liberty, equality and dignity of women, irrespective of caste, religion and geographical boundaries.

"The media report, carried on July 1, indicates that most of the arrested women during a raid at a hotel in Ranchi, Jharkhand, got into sex trade out of compulsion and helplessness. Many of them were pushed into this web by their relatives and some of them were forced to enter into this ugly business to fulfil the needs of their families and could not come out of the vicious network of anti-social elements once got into their grip," it said.

The news report indicates that the victim women are natives of different places, "trapped in the name of a job" and their handlers are reportedly operating from distant locations.



# Implement free sand policy from tomorrow: Chief Secy

PNS ■ ELURU

The free sand policy of the Chandrababu Naidu-headed government will come into effect from

July 8 in the district. Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad held a video conference with Collector K Vetri Selvi,

SP D Mary Prashanthi and Joint Collector B Lavanya Veni on Saturday. He reviewed with the officials the steps being taken to implement the free sand policy from July 8.

He gave them directions in this regard. He directed Collector Vetri Selvi to take measures to implement a free sand policy in the district. He told her to set up a district-level committee for which the Collector should be the chairman to peg charges for sand.

The consumer can pay the charges online and the sand should be supplied on a first come first served basis.

According to the available sand reserves, appropriate measures should be taken without any hindrance to the supply, the Chief Secretary said, adding that along with the existing sand reaches, new sand reaches should be identified and made available.

"A lot of care should be taken regarding the internal and consumer permits required for transporting sand," the Chief Secretary told



the Collector. Later, Collector Vetri Selvi ordered the officials to set up

a district-level committee to pursue the implementation of the free sand policy. She

also told the officials concerned to install surveillance cameras at sand reaches to check illegal sand extractions and irregularities.

The Collector also asked the officials to set up a control room especially to monitor the implementation of the new sand policy. Additional SP Suryachandra Rao, deputy Transport Commissioner S Santhi Kumari, DPO Srinivas Viswanath and other officials were among those who were present.

## NTR dist fully geared, says Collector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr. G. Srijana announced that the district is fully prepared to implement the free sand policy starting Monday, July 8. On Saturday, State Government Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad held a video conference with the Collectors of all districts to discuss the implementation of the policy. District Collector Srijana attended this conference from the Collectorate along with other officials. Chief Secretary Prasad provided directives on the necessary steps to ensure



smooth implementation of the policy at the field level.

Collector Srijana detailed the district-level preparations, stating that all arrangements have been made according to state government guidelines. The district has a total of 554,384 metric tons of sand available across various stockyards: Pendyallu (29,672 metric tons), Magallu (54,549 metric tons), Kodavatikallu (14,570 metric tons), Allurupadu (4,560 metric tons), Anumanchipalli (85,230 metric tons), Polampalli (1,383 metric tons), Keesara (224,555 metric tons),

and Moguluru (139,865 metric tons). She also mentioned that a district-level sand committee meeting has been held to discuss the policy's implementation, and instructions have been issued to field officers regarding the procedures. Coordination among the Mines and Geology, Revenue, Panchayat Raj, Police, SEB, and other departments, the appointment of necessary human resources, and surveillance via CCTVs were also covered.

Deputy Director of Mines and Geology G. Venkateshwarlu, AD K. Venkatesh, and other officials participated in the video conference.

# We are committed to establishment of new railway zone: MP Sribharat

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) Sribharat Mathukumili flagged off the maiden Visakhapatnam-Puri Rath Yatra special train from Visakhapatnam Railway Station on Saturday. This initiative aims to facilitate pilgrims travelling to Puri for the auspicious Rath Yatra, providing them with a direct and comfortable journey to the sacred destination.

Speaking at the flag-off ceremony, MP Sribharat expressed his delight at the introduction of these special train services for the Rath Yatra pilgrimage. He urged the public to take full advantage of these provisions, highlighting the convenience and comfort they offer. "This special train is a step towards easing the journey for thousands of devotees. It is our commitment to enhance the travel experience for pilgrims," he remarked.

He further commended Indian Railways for their relentless efforts in improving passenger amenities and intro-



ducing high-speed services like Vande Bharat, which have set new benchmarks in rail travel. "Indian Railways has made commendable strides in ensuring a comfortable and efficient journey for passengers. The introduction of high-speed services is a testament to their dedication," he added.

MP Sribharat also reiterated his commitment to establishing a new South Coast Railway zone with its headquarters in Visakhapatnam, along with the Waltair railway division. "We are dedicated to the development of a new railway zone that will serve the region better. I will engage with the central government and the

Railway Ministry to make this a reality," he assured.

MP Sribharat revealed that tenders would soon be finalized for the development of Visakhapatnam Railway Station with an investment of Rs 600 crores. This development is expected to transform the station into a state-of-the-art facility, enhancing the overall travel experience for passengers.

During the event, MP Sribharat also interacted with Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Saurabh Prasad, discussing the ongoing development works under the Waltair Division. He urged for the completion of the railway track work between Visakhapatnam

and Vijayawada and the restoration of cancelled trains at the earliest. He specifically lauded the railway department for its efforts in ensuring safe and affordable travel for poor and middle-class families.

The event witnessed the enthusiastic participation of several prominent leaders, including Visakhapatnam TDP district president Gandi Babji, Visakhapatnam South Constituency MLA Vamsikrishna Srinivas, and other local leaders. Their presence underscored the collective commitment to improving railway services and supporting the spiritual and logistical needs of the region.

# Minister for aligning youth skill training with job market needs

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

State Minister for MSME, SERP, and NRI Affairs, Kondapalli Srinivas, has underscored the critical need to align youth skill training with current market demands to enhance job placements. During his recent visit to TTDC Skill College at VT Agraharam, Mahila Pranganam, Minister Kondapalli, accompanied by Vijayanagar MLA Pusapati Aditi



Vijayalakshmi Gajapathiraju, emphasized the government's commitment to bolstering employment training programs.

Minister Kondapalli lauded the successful implementation of training initiatives under the Society for Employment Generation and Enterprise Development in Andhra Pradesh (SEEDAP) and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Graameen

showcased available training and employment opportunities. Additionally, a visit to a local bouquet plant sales centre saw discussions on plant cultivation techniques and sustainability, underscoring the importance of green initiatives in the region.

Inspections of TTDC accommodation and garment manufacturing centres further illustrated the growing demand for skilled labour in sectors such as apparel production. Minister Kondapalli highlighted potential expansion opportunities and pledged support for enhancing training facilities to meet evolving industry needs.

Addressing stakeholders, Minister Kondapalli criticized past administrations for neglecting skill development programs and emphasized the government's resolve to bridge existing gaps. Specific plans were outlined to introduce tai-

lored training programs in pharmaceuticals and hospitality sectors, aimed at addressing regional employment challenges in Vizianagar and Visakhapatnam districts.

The Minister also announced initiatives to expand district training centres and empower women's associations through entrepreneurship training, underscoring the administration's comprehensive approach to economic empowerment. MLA Aditi Gajapathiraju, along with key officials including DRDA PD A. Kalyan Chakravarthy, AP Savitri, DD of Horticulture Jamadagni,

District Employment Officer D. Aruna, District Skill Officer Govinda Rao, and JDM Jobs Martin Luther, joined Minister Kondapalli on this insightful tour, highlighting collaborative efforts towards skill development and economic growth.

# Complete drinking water project works: Gottipati

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Minister for Energy Gottipati Ravi Kumar directed the officials concerned to complete the drinking water works which were left in the middle of Addanki town.

The Minister held a meeting with the officials and reviewed the pending works in Addanki Nagara Panchayat.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that it is irresponsible of officials to dig up



the middle without finishing them.

The Minister directed the officials to complete the works immediately and remove the electricity poles in the middle of the roads and drainage canals in many places. Minister Ravi Kumar suggested that steps should be taken to quickly complete the TIDCO housing complexes built at Singarakonda Party the Telugu Desam Party regime and provide them to the beneficiaries.

He also ordered the officials of the concerned departments

to immediately evolve plans to provide electricity and drinking water to the TIDCO houses. The drainage system in the area at the highway is chaotic, he said adding the drainage canals should be constructed properly.

The Minister told the officials that road accidents are taking place due to congested roads at Gopalapuram and Elchur villages and ordered them to take road widening works at the earliest. He instructed the officials to disburse compensation to the farmers for their lands which were acquired for the highway widening.

Minister Ravi Kumar asked the Municipal commissioner to take care of the drinking water pipelines to supply unpolluted drinking water in the town and take steps to carry out sanitation works from time to time to remove silt from the sewers, especially to involve voluntary organizations to control the use of plastic and bring awareness among the people. Earlier, the Minister paid tributes to former Deputy Prime Minister Babu Jagjivan Ram on his death anniversary.

# Power bill payment only through consumer apps: APCPDCL CMD

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

APCPDCL Chairman and Managing Director KVN Chakradhar Babu in a release on Saturday stated that following the RBI guidelines UPI apps Phonepe, Gpay, PayTM and others have disabled APCPDCL/APSPDCL/APEP DCL Discoms on their platforms and henceforth consumers would be not allowed to make electricity bill payments through these UPI payment platforms.

KVN Chakradhar Babu said consumers will be able to pay electricity bills online in two

ways i.e., on APCPDCL/APSPDCL/APEP DCL consumer apps which are available on Google Play Store and through officials websites of APCPDCL /APSPDCL /APEPDCL. He said consumers will be allowed to make UPI payments on the official app and website without any additional charges.

The APCPDCL CMD further said that consumers can pay their electricity bills through offline ERO counters, SCM agencies, RSDP counters, EPAY counters, ECSC counters, Mee Seva counters and TAWALLET counters.

# Free vax drive marks World Zoonoses Day

PNS ■ PARVATIPURAM

Sivala Manmatha Rao, District Animal Husbandry Department Officer, stressed the importance of vigilance and awareness in animal care during the commemoration of World Zoonosis Day at the Parvatipuram Chekali Belagum Area Veterinary Hospital. World Zoonoses Day, observed annually on July 6, raises awareness about zoonotic diseases - illnesses transferable between animals and humans.

The event featured a free anti-rabies vaccination camp to promote public awareness and disease prevention. Rao emphasized that understanding how these diseases spread and how to prevent them is crucial in mitigating their impact.



Implementing preventive measures protects both human and animal health.

Zoonotic diseases, caused by viruses, bacteria, and parasites, can be transmitted from animals to humans through various means, including direct contact and consumption of contaminated food. Rao cautioned against neglecting the health of pets, which are preva-

lent in modern households, highlighting diseases such as rabies, scabies, and anthrax as significant concerns. Rabies, a particularly fatal disease often spread by stray dogs, and anthrax, which affects both livestock and humans, were noted as critical examples.

To address these risks, Rao advised seeking veterinary help if you notice symptoms in

your animals and underlined the importance of timely treatment. He also championed regular deworming for pets to maintain their health. The event offered free rabies vaccinations for dogs, promoting proactive measures against this common zoonotic disease. This initiative aimed to safeguard animal well-being while strengthening community health through informed prevention strategies.

The World Zoonoses Day commemoration in Parvatipuram served as a timely reminder of our shared responsibility in preventing and managing zoonotic diseases. It highlighted the role of awareness and proactive veterinary care in fostering healthier communities.



# Paderu SHGs receive Rs 3 cr boost under 'Mee Kosam' initiative

PNS ■ PADERU

In a significant development aimed at empowering local communities, Collector AS Dinesh Kumar disbursed Rs 3 crore to 75 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Paderu mandal. Supported by the Union Bank of India (UBI), this initiative falls under the ambit of the 'Mee Kosam' program. This allocation marks a concerted effort to strengthen economic activities and uplift the livelihoods of rural residents.

Collector Kumar actively engaged with SHG representatives during the event, strategizing on how to optimize the use of these funds. The groups outlined their plans to invest in a variety of ventures, including vegetable cultivation, retail enterprises, clothing businesses, and vending essential commodities at local markets. This initiative not only aims to stimulate economic growth but also to enhance economic and health literacy within the Paderu community.

Acknowledging concerns regarding the prevalence of counterfeit products in weekly markets, Collector Kumar emphasized the crucial role SHGs can play in ensuring the sale of genuine goods. To address this issue, the admin-

istration has mobilized a task force comprising Civil Supplies Department vigilance officers, food adulteration control officers, and Panchayat secretaries to conduct regular inspections of suspicious vendors.

Sub-Collector Dhatri Reddy has been tasked with taking stringent action against traders found selling substandard and adulterated products. Additionally, ITDA project officer V Abishek has been directed to allocate market stalls to SHGs across villages, empowering their growth and long-term sustainability.

In a heartwarming display of community spirit, villagers of Tangellabanda, led by tribal leader K Govind, recently constructed a makeshift school to address the shortage of proper classrooms. Recognizing their proactive approach, Collector Kumar lauded the villagers' commitment to improving educational facilities for local children and pledged to inaugurate the new school soon. This initiative not only underscores the administration's commitment to development at the grassroots level but also highlights the transformative potential of collaborative efforts in fostering sustainable community growth.

# Vizag's floating restaurant set to dazzle this Dasara

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a major boost to Visakhapatnam's tourism, the eagerly awaited floating restaurant aboard the merchant vessel MV Maa is poised to open to the public this Dasara season, likely on October 12. It will be the first of its kind on the East Coast. Once an abandoned vessel of the Bangladesh Navy, the MV Maa has undergone a remarkable transformation into a luxurious dining and recreational destination, thanks to a Rs 30 crore joint venture between Shore and Ship Resorts and the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC).

Diners can expect an unparalleled experience. The floating restaurant boasts an open deck restaurant with multi-cuisine kitchens, an open-air cafe, and a spacious indoor dining area. For a truly unique touch, there's even an air-conditioned dining area with a skylight located within the ship's cargo

hold. But that's not all. The MV Maa offers a range of other amenities, including a seafaring yacht, cottages, and water scooters. On shore, a three-acre private and public beach area beckons, complete with shacks, shops, water sports facilities for beach volleyball, a children's park, and an outdoor gym. "We are awaiting environmental clearances from the Ministry of Environment as the area falls under Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ)," explained Surrender Singh Gill, promoter of Shore and Ship Resorts.

This innovative project was greenlit during the global investment summit held in February 2023. Shore and Ship Resorts handled the development of the ship and marine works in the first phase, while APTDC managed the shore-side infrastructure. Recognizing the project's proximity to popular tourist spots like Tenneti Park and Kailasagiri Hills, separate road and parking facilities are being



developed at Jodugullapalem Beach to ease traffic congestion, according to an APTDC official.

"The abandoned ship is set to be a major tourist draw. We've requested the developers to expedite the opening to accommodate tourists visiting Vizag

this winter season," the official told The Pioneer on Saturday. The MV Maa first captured public attention when it ran aground at Tenneti Park on October 12, 2020, drawing crowds eager to see and photograph the vessel.

Project officials highlighted

the engineering challenges involved, including correcting the ship's tilt, levelling the seabed for weight distribution, and mitigating wave impact. The solutions were as innovative as the concept itself, employing high-tension wires, geo tubes, and special struc-

tural frames. Sustainability is also a key focus, with the landscape featuring modern systems using solar and wave energy, along with recycled materials, all while preserving the natural beauty of the surroundings.

The 80-meter-long Bangladeshi vessel had anchored in Visakhapatnam on September 19, 2020, in ballast condition to load 2,800 tonnes of quartzite for the Port of Mongla in Bangladesh. However, strong winds on the night of October 12 caused the vessel's anchor chain to snap, leading to its grounding near Tenneti Park. The Andhra Pradesh government later floated the idea of converting the vessel into a floating restaurant, drawing parallels to the Telugu Desam government's previous, albeit unsuccessful, attempt to transform the decommissioned aircraft carrier INS Virat into a floating hotel during its 2014-2019 term.





### 'Ashada masam' celebrations begin at Durga temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Ashada Masam celebrations at Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri began on a grand note in Vijayawada on Saturday. The Vaidika committee members presented the first saree to Goddess Kanaka Durga on the inaugural day. Additionally, a group of 116 devotees presented the Siva Swamy saree to the Goddess. A large number of devotees thronged the Indrakeeladri temple on the first day of the Ashada Masam celebrations, which will continue until August 4. The temple authorities have made elaborate arrangements to ensure a smooth experience for the devotees visiting Indrakeeladri to present sarees to the presiding deity during the festivities.



## Minister inspects mid-day meal scheme at municipal school

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Minister for Water Resources Development Nimmala Ramanaidu visited the BRMV Municipal High School in Palakollu on Saturday. He enquired with the teachers about the facilities in the school. He interacted with the students and inquired about the mid-meals. He inquired about the quality of mid-day meals.

Later, the Minister had mid-day meals with the students in the school. He distributed the school bags and books to the students.

The Minister warned the school staff to take action if quality is not maintained in mid-day meals as prescribed.

The Minister reiterated that the development of the state is possible when priority is given to education, medical and health sectors, adding that the government is giving importance to the same.

"Education Minister Nara Lokesh heralded bringing



complete changes in the education sector. Along with education, skill development and technical training will also be imparted to the students which will be helpful to get jobs," the Minister maintained.

Minister Ramanaidu reiterated that efforts were being made to generate 20 lakh jobs in the state in the coming years.

Taking a dig at the YSRCP's erstwhile regime, the Water Resources Development Minister alleged that the previous government borrowed over Rs 12,50,000 crore loans

and made AP debt-ridden. The Naidu-headed government has inherited an empty exchequer, he lamented.

The new government has to repay the debts and it should also pay the interest on the loans, and at the same time, it should implement all welfare schemes, he disclosed.

However, the Minister exuded confidence in Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu stating his vast experience and ability would lead the state to development. Despite financial constraints, the devel-

opment and implementation of welfare schemes would go parallel, he announced.

The YSRCP government's unwise act forced over 6 lakh school students to join the private institutions in the state, he slammed.

"The Chandrababu Naidu headed government during 2014-19, filled up 1,80,000 vacant teacher posts by conducting Seven District Selection Committee (DSC) examinations.

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, immediately after taking the oath, signed on the file to fill up 17,000 teacher posts by holding DSC examinations," Minister Ramanaidu stated. The Jagan Mohan Reddy-headed government wasted crores of rupees in the name of the Nadu-Nedu programme by painting the schools without providing the required infrastructure. APC P Shyam Sundar, school headmistress C Jhansi Lakshmi Bai and other officials were present.

## Walkathon organised by ISKCON



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the auspicious occasion of Jagannatha Rathayatra 2024, ISKCON Vijayawada, in association with Earth Heroes Foundation, organised the Walkathon 2024 with the theme of Anti-Drug Addiction. The event aimed to raise awareness about the dangers of drug addiction and promote a healthier, addiction-free lifestyle in the community. The Walkathon was launched by ISKCON President Chakradari Das.

The event saw participation from hundreds of students

from various colleges across Vijayawada, along with volunteers, devotees, and community members from diverse age groups and occupations.

In addition to the walk, the event incorporated elements of value education, focusing on the importance of leading a life free from addiction and making informed, healthy choices. The large turnout and active participation highlighted the community's dedication to combating drug addiction, spreading awareness, and fostering a sense of unity and collective responsibility.

Hasini Reddy, Co-founder of Earth Heroes Foundation, played a significant role in organizing the event, demonstrating the foundation's commitment to this cause. The Anti-Drug Addiction Walkathon 2024 was a grand success, reflecting the combined efforts of ISKCON Vijayawada, Earth Heroes Foundation, and the vibrant community of Vijayawada, serving as a powerful platform for spreading the message of anti-addiction and promoting healthier lifestyle choices among the youth and the broader community.

## 'SVBC playing a vital role in spreading Sanatana Dharma'

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Acharya Krishna Murty, the Vice-Chancellor of National Sanskrit University said on Saturday that the Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel is playing a key role in spreading the ancient Hindu Sanatana Dharmic knowledge across the globe through a series of programs.

Participating in the 16th Anniversary of the SVBC, the VC complimented the channel for conceiving attractive religious programs for devotees which included from Suprabatham to Ekantha Seva at the Srivari temple. The program Sanskritam



Nerchukundam jointly produced by the university and the TTD has become very popular among Sanskrit lovers and beginners.

Acharya Rani Sadasiva Murti, the VC of SV Vedic University said the programs of SVBC are being followed by

Srivari devotees spread across the globe.

SVBC CEO Sri Shanmukh Kumar highlighted various innovative religious programs telecast by the SVBC and the huge following by devotees and highlighted the popularity of SVBC YouTube and Online Radio.

Thereafter prizes were distributed to the winners of several competitions held for the employees of SVBC as a part of the anniversary celebrations on the occasion. The event commenced after offering prayers to the idol of Sri Venkateswara Swamy in the SVBC office premises in Tirupati on Saturday.

## 53 red sanders logs seized; 3 arrested

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Task Force police seized 53 red sanders logs, worth Rs 20 lakh, and arrested three smugglers at Pothabaktimbavi village in Nagasanipalli forest range in Khajipet forest division.

Police said that on the directions of Tirupati district SP V Harshavardhan Raju, a police team under the supervision of Task Force SP P Srinivas, a police team led by RSI P Naresh conducted a combing



in the forest area. The police team spotted

some persons going on motorcycles suspiciously. When the

police approached them, they tried to flee but the police chased and apprehended them.

During the questioning, they informed the police that they concealed 53 red sander logs in a forest area to export them. The police team seized the 53 red sander logs and arrested three red sander smugglers Dadiboina Guruprasad, Tammishetti Venkatesh and Battala Shiva. The police seized the 53 red sander logs worth over Rs 20 lakh. CI Srinivasulu registered a case.

## Four killed as car collides with tipper

PNS ■ KADAPA

Four people lost their lives and another was injured when the car they were travelling in collided with a tipper lorry at Konda Bandlapalli village in Ramapuram mandal, Annamayya district, on Saturday.

According to police, the car, en route from Kadapa to Rayachoti, collided with the tipper lorry, resulting in the deaths of Anji Naik (29), Sheik Alim (32), Jitendra (22), and Sheik Afroj (30).

All four individuals died instantly. The injured person was taken to the Government



General Hospital in Rayachoti, where his condition is reported to be critical. Police have registered a case and sent the bodies to the GGH for postmortem examination.

## GITAM launches 4-year B.Sc. (Hons) course to enhance research skills

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

GITAM Deemed to be the University's School of Science has unveiled a pioneering 4-year Bachelor of Science (Honours) program designed to cultivate in-depth scientific knowledge and advanced research skills, preparing graduates for impactful careers in various scientific fields.

Speaking to the media here on Saturday, Prof. Krishna, Dean of the School of Science, and Prof. Vedavathi, Principal emphasized the program's focus on rigorous coursework encompassing a broad spectrum of scientific disciplines. These include Biochemistry, Biotechnology, Microbiology, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Statistics,



Electronics, Environmental Science, Food Science & Technology, and Computer Science with Cognitive Systems. A unique feature of this programme allows students to select from a diverse range of 31 minor disciplines, including Performing Arts and Visual Communications, at no additional cost, fostering well-rounded graduates with enhanced career opportunities. In addition to the under-

graduate program, GITAM announced the introduction of new two-year Master of Science (M.Sc.) programs in Applied Mathematics, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Biotechnology, Analytical & Organic Chemistry, Data Science, Electronics, Environmental Science, Microbiology, Food Science & Technology, and Master of Computer Applications. Professor Krishna reaffirmed the univer-

sity's commitment to providing cutting-edge research facilities with advanced scientific instrumentation, ensuring students gain practical research experience.

Professor Vedavathi outlined the admission process. Prospective students must submit applications by July 12th and participate in an entrance exam scheduled for July 14th, 2024. Merit-based scholarships are available for deserving candidates. Detailed information is available on the GITAM website. This initiative exemplifies GITAM University's unwavering commitment to advancing scientific education and research capabilities among its students. The programme equips them for successful careers in a multitude of scientific domains.

## Traders to sell goods at prices fixed by TTD

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

TTD on Saturday directed traders to sell products like water bottles, and other items to the pilgrims only at the prices prescribed by the TTD. Under the directions of TTD EO J Syamala Rao, under the supervision of TTD JEO Veerabrahmam, a team of Estate wing officials of TTD conducted an inspection at Srivari Mettu in the guise of pilgrims where they notified malpractices by a few traders.

They purchased a glass water bottle in shop no.3 for Rs 50 and on returning the empty bottle, the shopkeeper gave them back only Rs 20 instead of Rs 30 indicating that goods are being sold at higher prices to the devotees. The report submitted by the

team of officials also notified that besides selling the glass water bottles at higher rates, he is also selling lower quality plastic material water bottles against the norms and the shopkeeper has also not displayed any price list of the items.

The same person was already warned once earlier for the same mischief and was fined Rs 25,000. They warned him that if he was caught for one more time, his shop would be seized and he would have to forfeit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and Security Deposit (SD) also.

The officers also said the licence of the traders whose shop is cheating the devotees, will also be cancelled if the traders are found violating the TTD tender norms.

## 2 killed as tourist bus overturns

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

Two passengers were killed and 15 were injured when a tourist bus overturned at Basavaraju Kandriga village in Peddapanjani mandal in Palamaner constituency in the wee hours on Saturday.

As many as 30 people started in Kadapa for a south India tour in the private tourist bus. The bus overturned after hitting an electric pole on the

highway killing an elderly man and a woman instantaneously.

As many as 15 passengers, who were travelling in the bus, were injured and they were admitted to the Area Hospital in Palamaner. The vehicular traffic on the busy Bangalore highway was disrupted after the accident and the police cleared it by removing the ill-fated bus from the road.

## Goel urges journalists to remain updated

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A two-week Training Programme on Media Management for Media Professionals from Sri Lanka at Dr MCR HRD Institute concluded on Saturday. Sponsored by the Ministry of External Affairs under the Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, the training is event aimed to enhance media skills.

The Director General of the Institute and Special Chief Secretary to the Government of Telangana Shashank Goel emphasised the programme's importance given the rapid transformation in media driven by technology. He urged participants to keep their skills updated through continuous learning and professional development while maintaining honesty, integrity, and accountability.

As per the ITEC, the programme included sessions from senior professionals in print, electronic, and social media, as well as field visits to T-Hub, Deccan Development Society, Ramoji Film City, and the Hyderabad Police Command and Control Centre. Cultural and historical site visits to Hyderabad, Warangal, Nagarjunakonda, and Buddhavanam were also part of the timetable.

## Be careful as some are waiting to rake up TG sentiment: Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Welcoming the talks between the two Telugu Chief Ministers on pending issues connected to the Division Act, the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, appealed to Revanath Reddy and N. Chandrababu Naidu to be careful as some people are waiting like foxes at a burial site to rake up the Telangana sentiment once again.

Sanjay said the two Chief Ministers should hold talks in a manner useful to the people of the two states and added that the fish and prawn soup of former AP Minister Roja deceived KCR. "I may have my opinion regarding the



talks between the two CMs. However, as a Union Minister, I would appeal to the two that they should ensure that justice is given to the people of the two Telugu states. Some are waiting like foxes at a burial site to rake up the TG sentiment once again. I am appealing to the two not to allow that again," Sanjay said.

During a chat-chat with journalists at the state BJP office here on Saturday, Sanjay said that

there is no difference between the BRS and the Congress in inducting MLAs.

He said the Congress mentioned in its manifesto that public representatives have to resign their posts if they change parties. However, the Congress is now not implementing its manifesto. Moreover, Congress leaders have been saying that 26 BRS MLAs are in touch with them.

If that happens, by-elections will come and the BJP will win all the 26 seats and then the BJP would become the main opposition party. Keshava Rao resigned because there was no election for him. What about others? Congress leaders got jobs as KCR failed to give jobs to the unemployed.

### YSRCP MLC TO ALLIANCE GOVT

## Fulfil promises made to women

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

MLC Varudu Kalyani and president of the State YSRCP Mahila wing, has issued a compelling demand for the alliance government to honour its commitments to women, including the provision of Rs. 1500 per month, free bus travel, and three free gas cylinders annually for women aged 18-60. Speaking to the media, Kalyani underscored the urgency of implementing these promises. "The alliance leaders promised more benefits than those implemented by Jagananna, which led people to vote for them," she stated. Kalyani recalled how Chandrababu Naidu intro-



duced the "Super Six" schemes,

assuring voters with bond papers as a guarantee of his commitments. Despite Jagan Mohan Reddy fulfilling 99% of his promises, the additional promises made by the alliance swayed the electorate, leading to their vic-

tory. However, Kalyani expressed concern that over a month after the new Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister, and Ministers assumed office, no steps had been taken to fulfill these promises, causing significant distress among women across the state.

Kalyani highlighted the alliance government's track record of unfulfilled promises since 2014, including the failure to deliver on the Dwera loan waiver and zero-interest schemes, both halted in 2016. Other unfulfilled promises include Rs 25,000 for a girl child and house ownership for women. She criticized the current government for not imple-

menting the Rs 1500 per month scheme, leaving 1.72 crore eligible women waiting for support. She questioned whether any funds had been allocated or preparatory meetings arranged for these initiatives.

Kalyani praised Jagan Mohan Reddy's successful implementation of various schemes, such as Ammavodi, YSR Cheyutha, YSR Aasara, Vidya Deevena, and pensions. She pointed out that although Rs. 4,000 crores had been prepared for YSR Cheyutha, the money has yet to reach any woman, exacerbating their suffering. She urged the government to deposit the already collected funds into women's accounts immediately.

She also drew attention to Chandrababu Naidu's promise of Rs. 15,000 for every school-going child, criticizing the lack of released funds, which has left parents in debt. "The government needs to release Rs. 15,000 crores for one crore students immediately, as schools have started and fees need to be paid," she insisted. Kalyani further criticized the alliance's neglect of farmers, recalling how Jagan Mohan Reddy provided Rs. 13,500 to farmers annually, whereas Chandrababu Naidu's promise of Rs 20,000 per year remains unmet. With no preparatory meetings arranged, farmers are suffering and are forced to take high-interest loans.

## Chartered accountants told to adopt digital technology

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

NVS Reddy, Managing Director of Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HMRL), on Saturday emphasised the need to adopt digital technologies to stay ahead and make Indian cities global accounts processing hubs.

Participating as Chief Guest in the Chartered Accountants

Association's CA Day 2024 celebrations here, NVS Reddy urged chartered accountants to play a vital role in India's economic development with ethics, commitment, and innovation. He explained how Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and data analytics are transforming all professions and advised the Chartered Accountants to adopt these

digital technologies. He stated that adopting high ethical standards and careful auditing practices can prevent corruption and fraud. Ensuring financial integrity is essential for an emerging economy like India to attract significant foreign and domestic investments for infrastructure and industrial development.



# Ready to conclude FTA that worked for India and Britain

Keir Starmer tells Modi in first call as UK PM

PNS ■ LONDON

Britain's newly-elected Prime Minister Keir Starmer spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday morning and said he stood ready to conclude a Free Trade Agreement that worked for both sides, Downing Street said.



India and the UK have been negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) for over two years with a Conservative Party-led government but the talks were stalled in the 14th round amidst the general election cycles in both countries.

It is now expected to be picked up by the new Starmer-led Labour government, which was voted in with a landslide this week. "The Prime Minister [Starmer] said he looked forward to further deepening the strong and respectful relationship between both countries, and welcomed Prime Minister Modi's leadership on key global challenges, such as climate change and economic growth," the spokesperson noted.

The leaders are then said to have discussed the importance of the "living bridge" between both countries, and the 2030 Roadmap and are said to have agreed that there was a wide range of areas across defence and security, critical and emerg-

ing technology, and climate change, for the two countries to deepen cooperation on.

"Discussing the Free Trade Agreement, the Prime Minister said he stood ready to conclude a deal that worked for both sides. The leaders hoped to meet at the earliest opportunity," the spokesperson added.

Both sides have been working towards clinching a pact to enhance the GBP 38.1 billion bilateral trading partnership

since January 2022, when Boris Johnson was the British prime minister. The talks have since had to contend with political turmoil in the UK that first led to a short-lived Liz Truss premiership followed by Rishi Sunak as Britain's first prime minister of Indian heritage.

The Labour Party's election manifesto for Thursday's polls committed to clinching the deal, stating: "We will seek a new strategic partnership with India, including an FTA, as well as deepening cooperation in areas like security, education, technology and climate change."

The new Starmer-led government's new Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, is also on the record saying that he wants to "finish the job" on the FTA and said he plans to visit India within the first month of being elected.

## AIKS demands law against mob lynching, hate crime

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) on Saturday demanded a stringent law against lynching and hate crime, following a meeting with families of three cattle transporters who were killed after allegedly being chased by a mob in Chhattisgarh last month.

It was a "planned killing", the AIKS said in a statement issued after a delegation comprising its and the All India Agricultural Workers Union (AIAWU) members met the victims' families on Friday.

The delegation met the families of Teshim Qureshi in Banat town, and Chand Mian and Saddam Qureshi in Lakhnauti village of Uttar Pradesh and handed over cheques of Rs 1 lakh each, it said.

## ASSAM FLOOD SITUATION REMAINS GRIM

# Heavy rain disrupts daily life in U'khand, Himachal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Heavy rain disrupted daily life in vast swathes of north India, including Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, on Friday while the flood situation in Assam remained grim with major rivers flowing above the danger mark and nearly 24 lakh people affected.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma visited several flood-hit areas in Dibrugarh, one of the 30 affected districts in the state, which is reeling from the worst deluge in recent years.

In Uttarakhand, which has received heavy rain over the past few days, a five-year-old drowned in a rainwater-filled pit in Dehradun and a teenager in a Haridwar rivulet.

Daily life was disrupted in the hill state as the rain triggered numerous landslides, blocking key roads, including the nation-



highway leading to Badrinath. Heavy rain also lashed several parts of Himachal Pradesh, leading to the closure of 64 roads. The regional Met office warned of moderate flash flood risk in few areas of Kangra, Kullu, Kinnaur, Mandi, Sirmour and Shimla districts in the next 24 hours.

In Rajasthan, heavy rain continued to batter the state with Malpura in Tonk district recording 176 mm rainfall in a 24-hour period.

In Assam, 77 wild animals

have died -- either due to drowning or during treatment -- while 94 have been rescued from the flooded Kaziranga National Park as on Friday, an official said.

The flood situation was critical with nearly 24 lakh people affected in 30 districts and all major rivers flowing above the danger mark.

Chief Minister Sarma reviewed the situation in Dibrugarh town, which has been under water and facing severe power shortages for the past eight days. He visited some areas on foot and interacted with the people.

Two persons, including a child, were killed and another was injured in a landslide following incessant rainfall in the Dispur area of Kamrup Metropolitan district, taking the death toll in this year's floods, landslides and storms to 64.

## Delhi CM victim of political conspiracy, alleges Sunita Kejriwal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita Kejriwal alleged on Saturday that he was made the victim of a "deep political conspiracy" and arrested by the ED in the excise policy case based on a false statement by a witness.



In a video message, she said Arvind Kejriwal was arrested by the ED based on the statement of TDP MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy (MSR). The Telugu Desam Party is a constituent of the ruling NDA.

Sunita Kejriwal also asked people to support the Delhi chief minister, saying he is an honest, educated and patriot-

man, and if the public does not support him, no educated person would want to join politics given the treatment meted out to the AAP leader. She claimed that MSR changed his statement to the ED about his meeting with the Delhi chief minister after his son Raghava Magunta Reddy was arrested and bail was denied.

# VP Dhankar slams Chidambaram over 'part-timer' remark

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar on Saturday lashed out at Congress leader P Chidambaram over his comment that the three new criminal laws were "drafted by part-timers", terming it as "inexcusable" and urging him to withdraw his "derogatory, defamatory and insulting" observation.

Dhankar said he was "shocked beyond words" when in the morning

he read Chidambaram's interview to a leading national daily wherein he had said that "the new laws were drafted by part-timers".

"Are we part-timers in the Parliament? It is an inexcusable insult to the wisdom of the Parliament... I do not have words strong enough to condemn such a narrative being set afloat and a MP being labelled as a part-timer. I appeal to him (Chidambaram) from this platform, please withdraw this



derogatory, defamatory and highly insulting observations about the Members of Parliament (MPs). I hope he does it," the Vice President said while addressing the 12th convocation of the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) here.

Dhankar further said that "when informed minds knowingly lead you astray, we need to be on guard". "This morning, when I read a paper, an informed mind, who had

been the Finance Minister of this country, a Parliamentarian for long and currently a member of the Rajya Sabha, stunned me," the VP said.

Dhankar said that he took pride in the fact that the Parliament did "a great thing" by "unshackling us from the colonial legacy" and giving three laws that were of "epochal dimension".

"From Dand Vidhan (penal law) we have come to Nyay Vidhan (law of justice)," he said.

## Committed to create employment opportunities in Jharkhand: Soren

PNS ■ RANCHI

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Saturday said that his government was committed to creating employment opportunities in the state.

He encouraged the youth of the state to take up entrepreneurship and assured them that the government would provide full support.

Soren was addressing start-up conclave 'Srijan', organised by the Federation of Jharkhand Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FJCCI), at the Aryabhata Auditorium. "The government wants to

generate maximum investment and employment in the state. Our government will provide full support to the existing industries and those who want to set up industries here," he said.

He said the state government has already prepared a startup policy.

"Startups are a little behind in the state. But, the government will soon take concrete steps to strengthen and promote startups," he said.

"The government will move forward with the idea that youth should get employment through startups and also provide employment to others," he added.

## HATHRAS STAMPEDE

# Key accused held; police say he was contacted by political parties

PNS ■ NOIDA

Devprakash Madhukar, the main accused in the July 2 Hathras satsang stampede, was arrested from Delhi by Uttar Pradesh Police which claimed he was recently contacted by some political parties and suspected that self-styled godman Bhole Baba's events were "funded" by a political party.

Two more suspects -- Ramprakash Shakya, 61, and Sanju Yadav, 33, were held in Hathras in connection with the stampede that left 121 people dead, according to the police. Madhukar, 42, was arrested late Friday from Delhi's Najafgarh area by a Special Operations Group of Hathras police, Hathras Superintendent of Police Nipun Agarwal said.

The officer said Madhukar worked as a fundraiser for events of self-styled godman



Surajpal alias Narayan Sakar Hari alias Bhole Baba and collected donations. The police will apply for remand of Madhukar, he said.

"His financial transactions and money trails are being looked into, and call detail records are also being checked," Agarwal added.

However, on Friday night, Madhukar's lawyer A P Singh had claimed he had surren-

dered to the police in Delhi, where he had come for medical treatment.

Around 2.15 pm on Saturday, Madhukar was brought by the police to the Bagla Combined District Hospital in Hathras for a medical examination amid heavy security deployment in and around the government hospital.

Madhukar had his face covered with a handkerchief and a stole tied around his head.

Madhukar, the 'mukhya sevadar' of the satsang where the stampede occurred.

He is the only accused named in the FIR lodged at Sikandra Rao police station in Hathras in connection with the incident.

Agarwal said the investigation also revealed that some political parties had contacted him some time back.

## It is better DMK-Cong show compassion: Nadda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP president J P Nadda on Tuesday sought to corner the DMK-Congress government in Tamil Nadu over the murder of state BSP chief K Armstrong, saying the incident has reaffirmed its disregard towards the poor and marginalised sections of society.

He said on X, "Several of those affected by the spurious liquor tragedy were also from these sections of society.

It is better DMK-Congress show compassion instead of indulging in petty politics 24X7." The gruesome murder of Armstrong has angered the entire nation, Nadda said. "The killing of Thiru Armstrong has also reaffirmed what is widely known- the disregard of the DMK-Congress towards the poor and marginalised sections of society," the BJP chief said.

## INDIA CORNER

### Five Naxalites surrender in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district



Five Naxalites surrendered before the security forces in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Saturday, police said. Two of them together carried a reward of Rs 3 lakh on their heads. The Naxalites turned themselves in before senior officials of the police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) citing disappointment with atrocities committed by the

Maoists on tribals and the "inhuman and hollow" Maoist ideology, an official said. They were also "impressed" by the state government's Naxalism elimination policy and the Sukma police's rehabilitation drive 'Puna Narkom' ('new dawn' in Gondi language), he said. Of those who surrendered, Kartam Sukka alias Hadma carried a reward of Rs 2 lakh on his head. Siyam Badra carried a reward of Rs 1 lakh on his head. Madkam Hadma, a member of Sindurguda Revolutionary Party Committee, surrendered with a firearm, the official added. The surrendered Naxalites will get benefits as per the state government's surrender and rehabilitation policy, he said.

### President Murmu arrives in Odisha on four-day visit



President Droupadi Murmu arrived here on a special IAF flight on Saturday on a four-day visit to Odisha. Governor Raghubar Das and Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi received her at the Biju Patnaik International Airport. Murmu then went to a programme held on the occasion of the 96th death anniversary of Odia icon

'Utkalmani' Pandit Gopabandhu Das, who played a pioneering role in the formation of Odisha as a separate state in 1936. Murmu, who hails from Mayurbhanj district of the state, is also scheduled to witness the Rath Yatra in Puri on July 7, officials said. She will visit Udayagiri caves and interact with the students of Bibhuti Kanungo College of Art and Crafts and Utkal University of Culture the next day, they said. On July 8, the President will inaugurate the Divine Retreat Centre of Brahma Kumaris at Haridamadada village near Bhubaneswar and launch the "Lifestyle for Sustainability" campaign. Murmu will grace the 13th graduation ceremony of the National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER) in Bhubaneswar on July 9. She is scheduled to leave Odisha that day.

### Twin encounters between security forces, terrorists in J-K's Kulgam



A soldier lost his life as security forces and terrorists were engaged in gunfights at two places in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, officials said. The first gunfight took place in Modergam village of the south Kashmir district after security forces launched a

cordon and search operation there following specific inputs about the presence of terrorists, the officials said. The terrorists opened fire at the security forces and an encounter broke out. The officials said a soldier of the Indian Army sustained fatal injuries in the exchange of fire. In another gunfight, contact with terrorists was established in the Frisal Chinnigam area of Kulgam. "Police and security forces are on job. Further details shall follow," Kashmir Zone Police said in a post on X.

# Conduct NEET-UG again in transparent manner: Kcharge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday demanded that the medical entrance exam NEET-UG be conducted again and all "paper leak scams" thoroughly investigated under the Supreme Court's supervision.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kcharge alleged that it NCERT books or leakage in exams, the Modi government is bent on "destroying our education system".

The Congress also took a swipe at the government over the NEET-UG, 2024 coun-

selling session, which was likely to begin in the first week of July, now expected to start by the end of this month.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "The whole NEET-UG issue is getting worse by the day. The non-biological PM and his biological Education Minister are adding further proof to their demonstrated incompetence and insensitivity."

"The future of lakhs of our youth is simply unsafe in their hands," Ramesh said.

Amid the growing clamour for the cancellation of the controversy-ridden NEET-UG



2024 over alleged malpractices, the Centre and the National Testing Agency (NTA) told the apex court on Friday that scrapping it without any proof of large-scale breach of confi-

dentiality would be counter-productive as it could "seriously jeopardise" lakhs of honest candidates.

The 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 leaks to impersonation in the test held on May 5.

## One nation one election is essential: Tripura CM

PNS ■ AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Saturday asserted that "one nation one election" is the need of the hour as the model code of conduct imposed for various polls has been affecting the pace of development activities.

After the Lok Sabha elections, the Northeastern state is set to witness polls for three-tier panchayat, autonomous council and civic bodies, he said. "Development works get stalled for several months as elections are held in a cycle. The 'one nation one election' model is the need of the hour," Saha said at a government programme here.

A high-level panel headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind had, in March, submitted its report on 'one nation, one election' to President Droupadi Murmu.

It recommended simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and state assemblies as the first step followed by synchronised local body polls within 100 days.

During the programme, the chief minister urged government officials to complete their assigned work in the stipulated time. Saha said his government has already introduced e-Bidhansabha (Assembly), and e-cabinet as part of the digitisation of administrative work.

# Dalai Lama turns 89, says he is physically fit

PNS ■ DHARAMSALA (HP)

Tibetan spiritual leader The Dalai Lama turned 89 on Saturday and in his birthday message said he is physically fit and is determined to continue his service to Lord Buddha's teachings.

The Dalai Lama is in the US where he is recovering from a knee-replacement surgery.

"I am nearly 90 now but don't feel unhealthy, except for the slight discomfort in my legs and would like to thank all my fellow Tibetans in and outside Tibet for your prayers

on my birthday", he said in the text message issued here by his office.

"Despite the surgery, I feel physically fit and wish to ask you to be happy and relaxed," he said, adding "I am determined to continue my service to Buddha's teachings."

"Today, Tibetans inside and outside Tibet are celebrating my birthday with much joy and festivity and all Tibetans and people in the Himalayan regions also pray for me as well and I wish to say, thank you, everyone," he said. "I feel a little physical dis-



comfort but that is inevitable, isn't it, due to the ageing process.

Basically, I am doing very well. So, please relax and be at ease," he added.



# Will set up coop bank, milk producers' union in every district

PNS ■ GANDHINAGAR

Union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said the Centre has set a target to have a co-operative bank and a milk producers' union in every district of the country and also establish in the next five years multipurpose primary agriculture credit societies (PACS) in two lakh panchayats that have no cooperative institution.

Addressing the 'Sahkar se Samridhhi' (Prosperity through Cooperation) programme organised to mark the 102nd International Day of Cooperatives, Shah thanked the Gujarat government for announcing a subsidy of 50 percent on Nano-urea and Nano-DAP and said their use will increase production and save the soil.

He said the cooperative sector is making very important contribution in the rural and agricultural economy, and urged for the promotion of 'cooperation among cooperative' institutions.

"The Union Ministry of Cooperation has taken many important steps. The government has set a target that there

should not be any state or district in the country where there is not a viable district cooperative bank and a viable district milk producers' union. Even

a National Cooperative Policy, he said, adding that 1100 new Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) have been formed in the country,

2000 crore, Shah said. He urged National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and state cooperative banks to



today there are two lakh panchayats in the country where there is no cooperative institution. In the next five years, we will work to create multipurpose PACS in these two lakh panchayats," Shah said.

The Centre will soon bring

and more than 1 lakh PACS have accepted the new bylaws.

The National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) will be able to work for the welfare of more cooperative institutions with the issuance of bonds worth Rs

make arrangements for PACS and other cooperative institutions to open their accounts in the district or state cooperative banks, which will strengthen the cooperative sector and increase capital and confidence.



## 'PM Modi's goal to make India high-income country by 2047 unlikely to be achieved'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal of making India a high-income economy by 2047 is unlikely to be achieved, but the country should become an upper middle-income nation by then, Financial Times chief economics commentator Martin Wolf said.

Wolf further said that India would also become a superpower by 2047.

"India wishes to become a high-income country by 2047. That is unlikely to be achieved. But it should become an upper middle-income country by then," he said at an event

organised by CUTS.

Wolf noted that the slow-growing, shock-prone, and fragile world we now confront will make India's rise difficult.

"India will have to work hard to use its influence to shape that world in a favourable direction," he said, adding that it will also have to shape itself to exploit the opportunities it will have.

Prime Minister Modi in his Independence Day speech last year said, "I have an unwavering belief that in 2047, when the country celebrates 100 years of independence, my country will be a developed India."

## M3M India expects Rs 4k cr revenue from new Gurugram housing project

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Realty firm M3M India is expecting a revenue of around Rs 4,000 crore from its new luxury housing project in Gurugram.

The company has launched a new residential project 'M3M Altitude' on Golf Course Extension Road in Gurugram where it will build 350 luxury apartments. M3M will invest Rs 1,200 cr to develop this 4-acre project, while the estimated sales revenue is around Rs 4,000 cr.

The company is selling apartments in a price range of Rs 10 crore to Rs 30 crore each.

In a statement on Saturday, the company said it has already

sold about 180 units for Rs 1,875 crore. Sudeep Bhatt, President, M3M Group, said: "Since the unveiling of M3M Altitude, we have seen a huge influx of inquiries and interests from the home buyers."

This 4-acre project is a part of the 60-acre M3M Golf Estate township. According to real estate data analytic firm PropEquity, housing sales in Delhi NCR, sales rose to 10,198 units during April-June this year from 9,635 units in the year-ago period.

Gurugram housing market has seen strong housing sales in projects of many developers including DLF, Signature Global, and M3M.

## India has deep expertise, scalability to become global player in semiconductor industry: IT Secy

PNS ■ CHENNAI

India has the talent and deep expertise to become a global player in the semiconductor industry which is a vital sector for the country, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Secretary, S Krishnan said.

The government was helping industries to create the ecosystem to build the semiconductors, he said.

Krishnan made those comments at a conference organised by fabless semiconductor firm iVP Semiconductor Pvt Ltd here on Saturday.

Global management consulting firm McKinsey has predicted that the semiconduc-



tor industry is expected to become a trillion dollar industry worldwide, while India Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA) estimates the sector to touch US\$ 100 billion by 2030.

India is rapidly becoming one of the biggest markets for electronics, automotive, Electric

Vehicles and a significant hub for technical expertise. "The semiconductor industry is vital for the country and India has the talent, deep expertise and scalability to be a global player. The Government is helping the industry to create the ecosystem to build semiconductors"

Krishnan said.

Krishnan said the iVP Semiconductors Pvt Ltd plays an important role in creating demand to fill up the manufacturing capacity in wafer fab.

"I would like to congratulate iVP Semiconductor on the creation of an Indian fabless chip company," he said.

iVP Semiconductor Pvt Ltd Co-founder Raja Manickam said his company secured a US\$ 5 million pre-series A funding and has plans to set up a production test facility in Chennai and another in South India.

The company has targeted revenues of US\$70 million to US\$ 100 million in the next 3-4 years, he added.

## We should have done better, no secrets about it, says Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma on Saturday spoke about his learnings from the RBI action on Paytm Payments Bank, admitting that it was an emotional setback at a personal level while professionally it was a lesson learnt about fulfilling responsibilities better.

Without mincing words, Sharma said "at a professional level, I would say we should have done better, there are no secrets about it, we had responsibilities, we should have fulfilled much better."

Speaking at the 7th JIIF Foundation day, Sharma was asked about Reserve Bank of India (RBI's) action on Paytm Payments Bank and how it impacted him as a founder who had painstakingly built his company. Sharma said individually it was an emotional setback, and that professionally "obviously we learnt a lesson, and we are much better..." Sharma admitted he has



"But at a professional level, I would say we should have done better, there are no secrets about it, we should have understood better... we had responsibilities, we should have fulfilled much better," he said

been through more challenging moments.

"When I was fundraising 2013-2014-2015 timeframe, our funds were drying up... I thought if we disappear (go down) no one will be bothered. Today it matters. As a founder, metaphorically speaking... my company is

like my daughter... as a company we were getting mature... it is just as if a daughter who is a school topper has met with an accident on way to an entrance test... that is the kind of feeling which is little personal, emotional feeling. "But at a professional level,

I would say we should have done better, there are no secrets about it, we should have understood better... we had responsibilities, we should have fulfilled much better," he said.

Earlier this year, Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL) came under regulatory glare as RBI ordered it to stop accepting new deposits in its accounts and its digital wallet from March on the grounds of "material supervisory concerns" and non-compliance with rules.

On Saturday, Sharma addressed questions about his dreams and ambitions, and his highs and lows.

Sharma said that his personal ambition is to build a USD 100-billion company, and added that he wants the Paytm brand to be recognised globally, as an Indian company.

He further said that listing a company brings "lot more responsibility and maturity" which has its own value and joy.

## Labelling of salt, sugar, fat on packaged food items in bold letters, bigger font to be mandatory

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Food regulator FSSAI on Saturday approved changes in nutritional information labelling on packaged food items, proposing that total salt, sugar and saturated fat should be displayed in bold letters as well as bigger font size.

The FSSAI will issue a draft notification on this and seek comments from stakeholders.

In an official statement, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said it has approved "a proposal to display nutritional information regarding total sugar, salt and saturated fat in bold letters and relatively increased font size on labels of packaged food items".

The decision to approve the amendment in the Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020 regarding nutritional information labelling was taken in the 44th meeting of the Food

Authority, held under the chairmanship of Apurva Chandra, Chairperson, FSSAI.

"The amendment aims to empower consumers to better understand the nutritional value of the product they are consuming and make healthier decisions," the regulator said.

The draft notification for the said amendment would now be put in the public domain for inviting suggestions and objections.

The information regarding per serve percentage (%) contribution to Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) would be given in bold letters for total sugar, total saturated fat and sodium content, the FSSAI said.

The regulator said that regulation 2 (v) and 5(3) of FSS (Labelling and Display) Regulation, 2020 specifies requirements to mention serving size and nutritional information on the food product label, respectively.

## Only 7% of MSME credit to women; low female labour force participation drag on growth: RBI ED

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank's executive director Neeraj Nigam on Friday said low labour force participation among women is a barrier to financial inclusion efforts and also to broader economic growth.

He said there is also a need to up the credit supply to women, pointing out that only 7 per cent of the overall outstanding loans to micro, small and medium enterprises are to women-led businesses.

"One significant barrier for financial inclusion and indeed to economic growth and development is more participation of females in economic activi-



ties," he said, pointing out that official data suggested female labour force participation at 32.8 per cent in FY22, as against over 77 per cent in men. Women constitute only 7 per

cent of the outstanding credit to Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), he said, adding that this is very low when compared to nearly a fifth of the MSMEs being

women-led.

Speaking at the 'Financing Women Collaborative' conference organized by Niti Aayog and Transunion Cibil here, Nigam expressed satisfaction on the access to financial services front, pointing out that the Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) scheme and social security transfers have helped.

With the challenges on supply taken care of, he said there are issues on the demand side which warrant attention.

There are structural issues like low level of capital, labour participation, societal norms like restricting women from inheriting property that limit their

ability to show collateral for lending and also lower access to education and training.

Nigam also said that there is some "stereotyping" of women borrowers by financiers as well, like them being considered as higher risks which leads to higher interest rates, greater insistence on collateral or outright rejection of loan applications.

The RBI ED also flagged some "behavioural issues" among women borrowers including them being more risk averse, less confident in negotiating loan terms and are less likely to apply for new loans because of the fear of rejections.

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Fabless semiconductor startup iVP Semiconductor Pvt Ltd has plans to set up a production test facility as part of its drive to produce semiconductor chips in the domestic market, a top official said.

The company has also secured US\$ 5 million in a pre-series A Funding for its expansion plans, Co-founder and CEO Raja Manickam said.

An industry veteran, Manickam said his aspiration was to first serve the clients in the domestic market and later expand the company to become a 'global brand.'

## MONEY MATTERS

### 'Top line can grow to Rs 2.5 L cr in 5-10 yrs if we execute well'



Quick commerce unicorn Zepto revenue can grow multifold to Rs 2.5 lakh crore in 5-10 years if the company can execute the business well, a top official said on Saturday. Speaking at the 7th JIIF Foundation Day, Zepto Co-Founder and CEO Aadit Palicha said grocery and household essentials are the mother of all categories sold on leading e-commerce platforms Flipkart and Amazon in India. He said the grocery and household essentials market was around US\$ 650 billion in India in FY23 and is growing at 9 per cent CAGR (compound annual growth rate) and is expected to get to about US\$ 850 billion by FY29. "If we execute well, we can realistically take this business from Rs 10,000-plus crores in top line today to potentially to... Rs 2.5 lakh crore of top line over the next 10 years or next five years," Palicha said. "Your grocery is bigger than all the other categories that Amazon and Flipkart serve combined."

### Bandhan Bank appoints Ratan Kumar Kesh as interim MD & CEO



Ratan Kumar Kesh, executive director and chief operating officer of Bandhan Bank, has been appointed as interim MD & CEO of the private lender with effect from July 10. The present MD&CEO and founder of the bank will retire on July 9. In a regulatory filing with the stock exchange on Saturday, the lender said Kesh will be the interim MD

& CEO for a period of three months or till the new incumbent takes charge, whichever is earlier. The appointment of Kesh is pursuant to the approval of the Reserve Bank of India and on the basis of the recommendation of the nomination and remuneration committee and the board of directors of the bank at its meeting held during the day. Kesh is not debarred or disqualified from holding office of director by virtue of any order of the SEBI or any other such authority, the filing stated. The appointment of Kesh is also subject to approval of shareholders of the bank. Kesh has been the executive director and chief operating officer of Bandhan Bank since March 2023.

### Vedanta chairman and Odisha CM discuss collaboration



Vedanta group on Saturday said its Chairman Anil Agarwal met Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and discussed new areas of collaboration to

accelerate the state's transformative journey and enhance its industrial development. During the meeting, Agarwal reiterated the group's commitment to the progress of the state. Vedanta said in a statement. The discussion focused on identifying new areas of collaboration that could further accelerate Odisha's transformative journey, enhancing the state's industrial and socio-economic development, it said. "My meeting with Majhi Ji was highly productive, and we discussed our shared vision for Odisha's growth. Under his capable leadership, our longstanding partnership will continue to thrive, driving the state to greater heights," Agarwal said. Vedanta group has made significant investments in Odisha, amounting to more than Rs 1 lakh crore. This is the conglomerate's largest ever investment anywhere in the world. These investments have led to the establishment of the world's largest integrated aluminium smelter plant at Jharsuguda with a capacity of 1.8 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) and a world-class alumina refinery at Lanjigarh in Kalahandi district with a capacity of 3.5 MTPA.

### Govt meets auto industry to onboard firms on Right to Repair Portal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) held a meeting with automobile associations and companies on Saturday to encourage their participation in the newly launched Right to Repair Portal India, aimed at empowering consumers with easier access to product repair information.

The meeting, chaired by DoCA Secretary Nidhi Khare, focused on address-

ing consumer concerns about restricted access to repair tools, high costs, and service delays in the automotive sector, an official statement said.

Khare emphasized the need to "democratize repair manuals and videos" and foster a robust ecosystem for third-party repair services. She also suggested introducing a "repairability index" for vehicles to inform consumers about product lifespan and ease of repair.

## iVP Semiconductor eyes revenue of US\$ 70-100 million in 3-4 yrs

"Today domestic semiconductor industry is being served

An industry veteran, Manickam said his aspiration was to first serve the clients in the domestic market and later expand the company to become a 'global brand'

an Indian company. iVP Semiconductor is an Indian company and it would become a global brand," he said.

The company would focus on power sector including renewable energy, solar industry, wind energy. "We are going to be competitors to existing players with most of them being global companies," he said.

To a query, he said the company would set up a production test facility in Chennai and similar facility in southern parts of the country.

"To another query, he said, "We aim for a revenue of US\$ 70-100 million in the next 3-4 years," he said.

by several global companies. I want to serve the industry as



In an extraordinary celebration of music and heritage, the inaugural World Santoor Day brought the global music community together in a magnificent tribute to the legendary Santoor maestro, Pandit Bhajan Sopori. Hosted by the Sopori Academy of Music and Performing Arts (SaMaPa) last week, this event marked not only the birth anniversary of Pandit Bhajan Sopori but also established a new tradition in the world of classical music. The choice of 22 June for World Santoor Day is profoundly fitting, honouring the 76th birth anniversary of Pandit Bhajan Sopori, celebrated as the 'Saint of Santoor' and the 'King of Strings'. His unparalleled contributions to the Santoor and Indian classical music have left an indelible mark, and this day served as a perfect homage to his legacy.

The evening at Triveni Kala Sangam was nothing short of spectacular. The event featured an impressive lineup of performances by distinguished Santoor players like Pandit Abhay Rustum Sopori and Padmashri Pandit Satish Vyas. The programme included a rich tapestry of Indian classical music, Kashmiri Sufiana and international performances from Iranian, Chinese and Argentinian artists, showcasing the Santoor's universal appeal. The celebration began with heartfelt tributes to Pandit Bhajan Sopori, followed by a captivating performance of Kashmiri Sufiyana Mausiki by Ustad Shabir Saaznawaz. Maestro Siamak Aghaei from Iran mesmerised the audience with his classical Santur piece, while disciples of Pandit Bhajan Sopori, including Dr Mi Xuanye from China and Guido Estrada from Argentina, added an

# A RESOUNDING TRIBUTE TO PANDIT BHAJAN SOPORI

A symphony of strings fills the air as the world unites to celebrate the first World Santoor Day. This poignant tribute honors the legendary **PANDIT BHAJAN SOPORI**, the "Saint of Santoor," while ushering in a new tradition that celebrates the instrument's captivating melody and rich cultural legacy says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

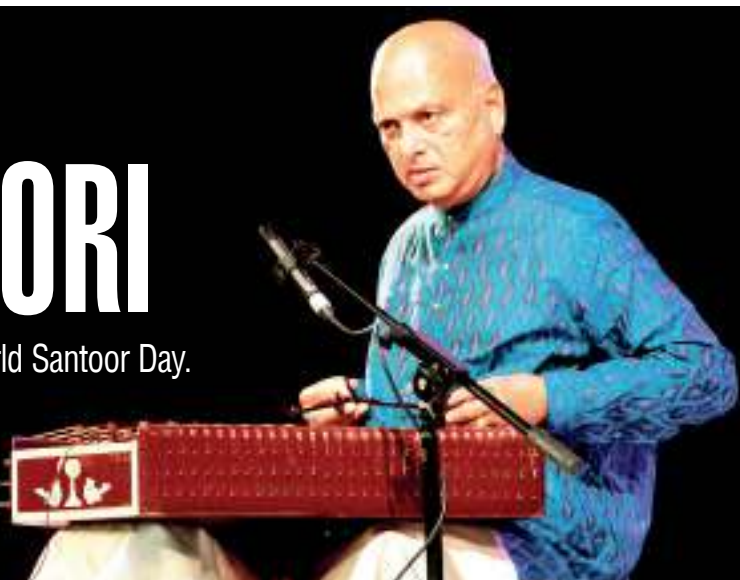


international dimension with their renditions, all presented via online projector. The live performances were a testament to the enduring legacy of Pandit Bhajan Sopori. Divyansh Srivastava, a disciple of Pandit Bhajan Sopori and Pandit Abhay Sopori, opened the live

segment with a mesmerising rendition of Raga Kaushik Dhvani, followed by a series of intricate compositions in the Sopori Baaj style. Pandit Abhay Rustum Sopori himself took the stage, presenting Raag Jog with a blend of Tantra and Gayaki, accompanied by Ustad Akram



Khan on Tabla. The evening culminated with Padmashri Satish Vyas, accompanied by Pandit Ram Kumar Mishra on Tabla, who performed Raag



Santouri in Greece, Yangqin in China, Hammered Dulcimer in America and Cimbalom or Hackbrett in Europe." Prof. Aparna Sopori, Chairperson of SaMaPa, emphasised the historical and cultural significance of the Santoor, noting, "World Santoor Day will spotlight the rich heritage, historical significance and legacy of the Santoor, or Shatantri Veena, on a global stage, emphasising its deep roots in Kashmir Shaivism culture." The event also saw tributes and wishes from renowned personalities through video messages, including AR Rahman, Kailash Kher, Anup Jalota, Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, Vidushi Sumitra Guha, Ustad Akram Khan, Ustad Rafiuddin Sabri, Siddharth Kak, Dr Agni Shekhar, and Utpal Kaul. The presence of many eminent musicians, such as Pt. Rajinder Prasanna, Pt. Chetan Joshi, Pt. Bholanath Mishra, Ustad Asghar Hussain, Ustad Saed Zafar Khan, Pt. Ajay P Jha, and Pt. Ajay Prasanna, added to the

occasion's grandeur. Sohrah Sopori expressed his gratitude and vision for the future, saying, "This first edition is being celebrated in cities across India and around the world. We are fortunate to have so many voices come together to mark 22 June as World Santoor Day. From next year, it will be organised in a grander way with more cities and musicians joining hands." Reflecting on Pandit Bhajan Sopori's enduring legacy, Pt. Vijay Shankar Mishra remarked, "Pandit Bhajan Sopori's legacy is great. He was a visionary, keeping things simple yet broad enough to touch the souls of music lovers through his music. His contribution is immense, and Abhay Rustum Sopori is carrying it forward to the next generation. He will always be among us." Padmashri Pandit Satish Vyas echoed these sentiments, stating, "It is a grand occasion and I am delighted to present my recital here and pay my tributes to Pandit Bhajan Sopori." Attending the first World Santoor Day was an experience steeped in both reverence and celebration. The event not only honoured the profound legacy of Pandit Bhajan Sopori but also showcased the Santoor's rich cultural heritage and its universal resonance. The evening's performances were a powerful reminder of music's ability to transcend boundaries and connect souls. As the Santoor's enchanting melodies filled the air, one couldn't help but feel a deep sense of gratitude for the maestros who continue to enrich our lives with their art. The first World Santoor Day was a resounding success, setting a high standard for future celebrations. It was a fitting tribute to a legend and a testament to the timeless beauty of the Santoor.



Photo: Pankaj Kumar

## A Celebration of Artistic Diversity and Creative Dialogue

Step into the dynamic realm of art at CONFLUENCE 24, where each masterpiece narrates an alluring tale. This lively gathering of established and emerging artists explored diverse creative practices, embracing art and community for an enriching week-long celebration. says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

In the world of art, where every individual in the exhibition appreciates and understands the worth of each artist, the immersive experience of CONFLUENCE 24 truly stood out. The Welham Old Boys Society (WOBS) proudly presented this spectacular event, a week-long art exhibition and community engagement initiative held at The Stainless Gallery, New Delhi. This second edition of CONFLUENCE 24 was an evolving platform that supported diverse creative practices and upheld constructive dialogue across multiple communities. During this eight-day group art exhibition, featuring established and emerging artists, architects, designers and photographers from diverse backgrounds, the exhibition featured prominent Indian artists Anupam Sud and Ananda Moy Banerji, both renowned for their significant contributions to art education. Akshay Raj Singh Rathore's artwork, grounded in social realities and Viveek Sharma's powerful pieces offered immersive and thought-provoking experiences for visitors. Amongst the artists from the younger generation, New York-based photographer Nanki Singh stood out with her focus on social documentaries. Her work, "Aaine Tak Ka Safar," was immersive and beautiful, featuring a series of photographs depicting survivors of acid attacks. Kunal Batra, a water-colourist photographer, enthralled viewers with his artwork that evoked the serene beauty of Himalayan landscapes, complete with charming huts that felt like scenes from a dreamy, fairytale-like midnight. Artist Divyam Raghunath, presented his work on subconscious interpretation, titled "Architectural Demise." His journey began with photographing Indian urban architecture, which he used as references in his paintings. However, the mesmerising aspect of his work was his ability to paint without direct

references, relying instead on his imagination. As he explained, "I let the brushstroke create curiosity within the painting," which added a unique beauty to his art. His architectural pieces formed abstract shapes, with one painting inspired by Bangalore's MG Road. Exhibition attendees perceived his work in diverse ways, some recalling the Durga Puja of Kolkata, while others were reminded of the streets of Japan, showcasing the varied perspectives his art elicited. Delhi-based sculptor Pratima Narang's iconic sculptures, 'Divide' and 'Gaze,' added significant value to the exhibition with their beautiful craftsmanship. A journal depicting a 'Trip to the Andamans' was also displayed, resonating deeply with visitors by capturing every detail of the journey in a visually appealing form. Artist Saksham Singh's paintings, created with natural pigments like turmeric and pomegranate, highlighted the connection to nature using everyday materials. His other works, made with indigo, were inspired by his experiences in the forests and grasslands of Bangalore and the Western Ghats. Singh aimed to help people connect with nature, finding landscapes within themselves as well as outside. Photographer Aliza Mirza's lino-cut depictions of the 'Nasreen Building' were truly immersive and glorious. Additionally, artist Guncha Sharma's beautiful depictions of European streets, adorned with pink bougainvilleas under the summer sun, and her hand-painted rhododendrons transported viewers back to childhood holidays in the hills. Her work combined the tactile texture of hand-painting with a vibrant mix of colours, creating an evocative and nostalgic experience for all who viewed it. CONFLUENCE 24 unfolded as a mesmerising window of artistic expression, showing a rich array of artworks by talents like Usha Chengappa, Archita Bharadwaj,

Harshi Agarwal and Tushar Sharma. The exhibition further illuminated the creative landscape with the contributions of educators like Nirupama Sekhri, photographers including Dr. Abhishek Gaurav and Harsh Bansal, wildlife conservationist Mohit Dang and the promising advertising student Ujjwal Gupta, captivating visitors with their unique perspectives and creative flair. After the well-deserved success of the first edition, Rohit Jaiswal, President of Welham Old Boys Society, and his team were enthusiastic about staging this year's CONFLUENCE 24. The focus on art education, particularly in regions facing multiple challenges, underscored the exhibition's commitment to assist and promote creative talent. As one artist at the exhibition poignantly noted, "Nothing is more valuable for us than having people here see every artwork and create their own understanding and thoughts. It feels surreal." CONFLUENCE 24, a week-long collective gathering featuring photography, architecture, design, conversations, sessions and more. This evolving platform supported diverse creative practices and encouraged constructive dialogue within and across multiple communities. Visitors at The Stainless Gallery witnessed the beauty and depth of CONFLUENCE 24, where every piece of art told a story and every individual found a unique connection. As the curtains close on CONFLUENCE 24, the echoes of creativity and the spirit of artistic expression linger on. The exhibition not only showcased the immense talent of artists but also served as a platform for meaningful conversations and reflections. It was a celebration of art, culture and creativity, reminding us of the profound impact of artistic expression on our lives. CONFLUENCE 24 was more than an exhibition; it was a tribute to the power of art to inspire, provoke thought and bring people together.

## CAPTURING HOPE THROUGH THE LENS

In the bustling world of photography, Nanki Singh stands out as a beacon of compassion and change. This young, New York-based photographer has made waves with her powerful exhibition "Aaine Tak Ka Safar" which shines a light on the lives of acid attack survivors in India. Singh's work goes beyond mere images; it's a call for empathy and action says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Photographers are the lens of everyone's life as they have the power to deliver a message that needs to be seen by everyone. Every photograph has the ability to share unspoken messages to the world that words can't express. This is where Nanki Singh excels, using her photography not just to capture moments, but to tell compelling stories that resonate deeply with audiences around the globe. Nanki Singh is an emerging New York-based photographer who is passionate about social photography. Her work reflects a deep involvement and an undeniable soul, making her lens a viaduct that connects the hearts and minds of viewers to diverse stories, emotions, and journeys. Focusing largely on the determined women of India, Singh offers a glimpse into their often challenging lives, creating powerful narratives that demand attention and inspire change. Nanki Singh's journey as a photographer began in an unexpected manner. As a shy and diffident schoolgirl, she struggled to express her thoughts until she started experimenting with her cousin's camera. It was during a holiday to Namibia at the age of 16, while shooting wildlife on a borrowed camera, that Singh discovered her voice. The diversity of the world around her became her muse, and through photography, she found a means to articulate her innermost thoughts and feelings. "Fashion, weddings, and product photography are enjoyable, and I love being in a studio, but it is photo-documentation that truly captivates me," Singh reflects. This love for capturing real-life stories led her to focus on social issues, with a particular emphasis on the struggles and triumphs of women in India. Singh's latest exhibition, "Aaine Tak Ka Safar," at the Confluence 24 art exhibition holds special significance for her. The title, which translates to "Journey to the Mirror," was inspired by the stories of acid attack survivors who found it



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

excruciatingly difficult to look at themselves in the mirror post-attack. While society often considers their physical pain, medical journey and psychological trauma, the everyday anguish of facing a mirror is frequently overlooked. Singh wanted to highlight this overlooked aspect and offer viewers a glimpse into the survivors' mirrors. Her collaboration with the Chhanv Foundation, an organisation supporting acid attack survivors, was pivotal. Singh's initial attempts to work with medical professionals were stifled by restrictions that threatened her artistic voice. However, Chhanv Foundation welcomed her interpretation, allowing her to portray the survivors not as victims, but as strong, resilient individuals who had worked hard to overcome unimaginable pain and trauma. Starting this project at the age of 18, Singh faced numerous challenges, the foremost being making the survivors feel comfortable and at ease. "I set very strict boundaries for myself," she explains. "I was always mindful of their trauma and decided to sensitively depict their story without sensationalising it. I gave them full agency over how they were portrayed, engaging them in discussions about their representation." Her creative process was slow and deliberate, nurtured over four years. She embraced a simple, documentary style, ensuring her subjects were depicted true to their personalities. "My work should aim to empower the subjects and give them a voice," Singh states. "It's crucial to represent women authentically and respectfully,



avoiding stereotypes and clichés." The reaction of the survivors to being photographed and having their stories shared was overwhelmingly positive. Singh's empathetic approach and long-term commitment made the survivors comfortable with her being their voice. They drew her into their lives with their positivity, resilience and strength. Singh always raises awareness and drives societal change by capturing and sharing the stark realities of issues like acid attacks in a way that is accessible and emotionally engaging." Through her visual storytelling, Singh humanises victims, educates the public, challenges societal norms, and inspires action. The impact of Singh's work is profound. By presenting these images to the public, she provokes deeper reflection on cultural and societal norms. "How does our society perpetuate conditions that

enable such acts?" she asks. "What roles do power dynamics, gender roles and lack of legal protections play?" These are the questions Singh hopes her work will inspire viewers to consider. Singh's exhibitions have garnered attention both in New York and New Delhi. While the Chelsea exhibition was a success, raising \$13,000 for the survivor's cafe, Singh found the Delhi exhibition particularly meaningful. "What made The Confluence '24 in Delhi exhibition better was the girl's presence," she says. "I have always felt it was their story and they were there that day to tell it." Nanki Singh's "Aaine Tak Ka Safar" is more than an exhibition; it is a powerful narrative of strength, resilience and hope. Through her empathetic and authentic approach, Singh bridges the gap between viewers and the often overlooked stories of acid attack survivors. Her work not only raises awareness but also inspires change, challenging societal norms and advocating for justice. In a world where brutalities like acid attacks reveal a disturbing undercurrent of violence and misogyny, Singh's photography serves as a beacon of hope and a call to action. Her lens captures not just images, but the very essence of human experience, making the invisible visible and the forgotten remembered. Through her work, Nanki Singh continues to prove that photography has the power to change the world. Nanki Singh is not just a photographer to watch - she's a vital voice in the ongoing dialogue about gender, violence and human rights in India and beyond.



“See how the Ganga flows by and what a nice building! I like this place. This is the ideal kind of place for a Math”  
— Swami Vivekananda



BKP SINHA

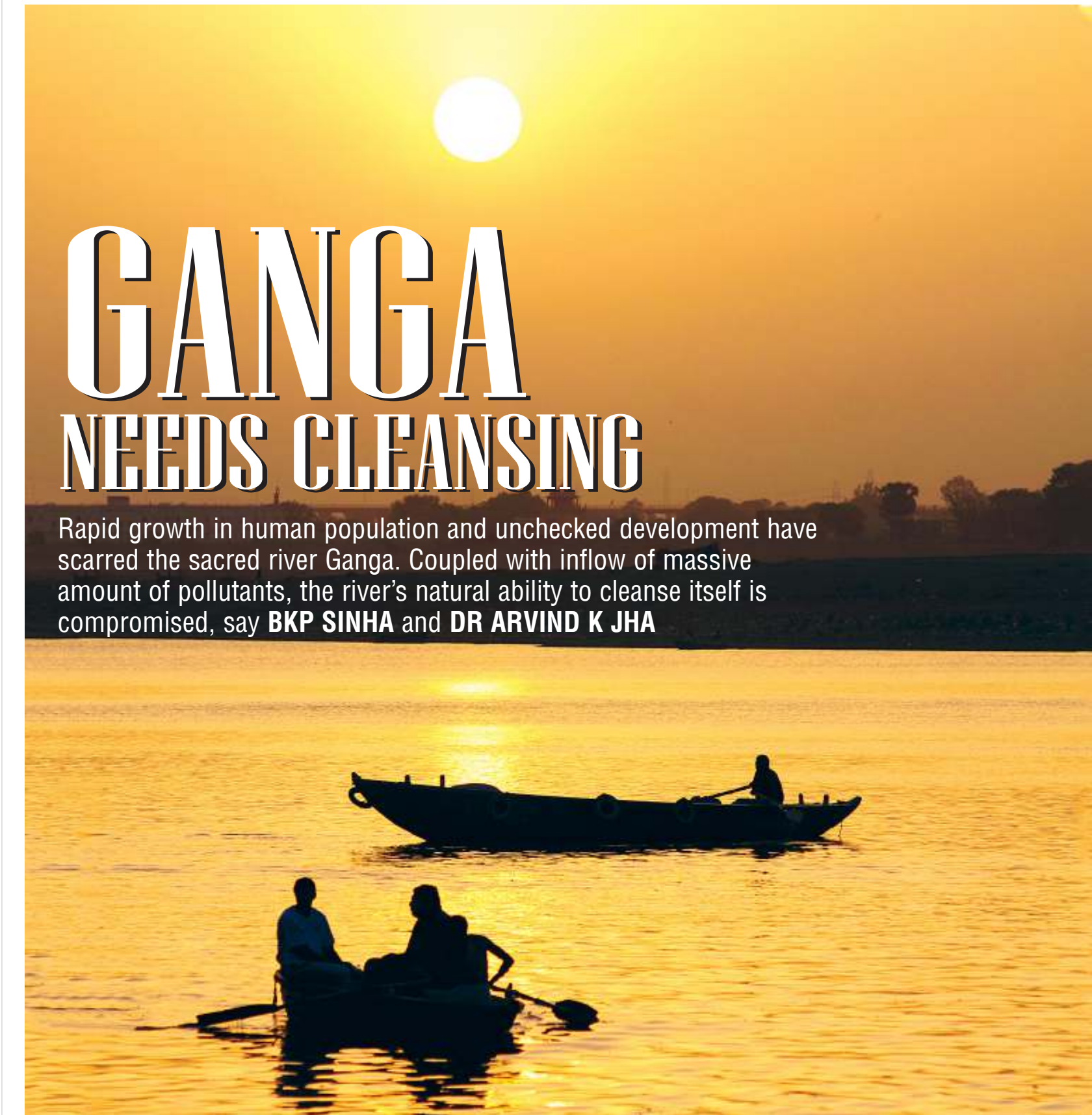


DR ARVIND K JHA

The Ganga River, also known as the Ganges, is the longest river in India with the most populated basin, the home to 600 million people. Originating from the Gangotri glacier in Uttarakhand, it embarks on a journey of 2,525 kilometers, meandering through five states - Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal before it merges with the Bay of Bengal. It nourishes a variety of life forms, provides livelihoods to people, and contributes to country's economy, trade, and commerce. The Ganga basin, spanning an area of 10.16 lakh square kilometers, contributes around 40% of the country's GDP. As per Hindu mythology, the river is believed to have descended from heaven when King Bhagiratha performed intense austerities for the river to descend to Earth. Considering river's immense force, Lord Shiva received the celestial river in his matted locks releasing it in a controlled flow. The Ganga is revered as a goddess; its journey symbolizes purity, life, and redemption; and its water is believed to wash away sins and facilitate *Moksha*, the liberation from the cycle of life and death. The Ganga itself, however, is under severe threat today.

The rapid growth in human population and unchecked development have degraded its catchments. With obstruction and diversion of its flow coupled with inflow of massive amount of pollutants from industrial, human, and agricultural sources, its natural ability to cleanse itself is compromised. The polluted water in the changed flow regime poses serious threat to humans and river's own biodiversity alike. While the future of 140 fish species and 90 amphibian species is threatened, Gharial and endangered Ganges River dolphin respectively are classified by IUCN as critically endangered and endangered. Severity of the issue that impacts the life, health and livelihoods of people and even undermines the cultural and spiritual significance of the Ganga deserves to be realized in its entirety and tackled with promptitude.

Efforts have been made to clean and preserve the Ganga. During the late 1980s the Ganga Action Plan was implemented. This initiative led primarily to



Photos: Pankaj Kumar/The Pioneer

## GANGA NEEDS CLEANSING

Rapid growth in human population and unchecked development have scarred the sacred river Ganga. Coupled with inflow of massive amount of pollutants, the river's natural ability to cleanse itself is compromised, say **BKP SINHA** and **DR ARVIND K JHA**

the construction of wastewater treatment facilities at selected places in addition to the closure of a number of polluting industrial plants along the river. In 2008, the Ganga was declared as the national river of India. Subsequently, in 2014, the Government of India initiated the Namami Gange project that aimed to rejuvenate and protect the Ganga River by addressing pollution sources and promoting sustainable practices for improving its biological richness. The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), popularly known as the Namami Gange Mission, was billed as a "scientific programme" by the Indian government that aimed to clean the river using advanced technologies at a project cost of INR 20,000 crores with the dual objectives of effective abatement of pollution and conservation and rejuvenation of the Ganga River.

“EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO CLEAN AND PRESERVE THE GANGA. DURING THE LATE 1980S THE GANGA ACTION PLAN WAS IMPLEMENTED. THIS INITIATIVE LED PRIMARILY TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES AT SELECTED PLACES IN ADDITION TO THE CLOSURE OF A NUMBER OF POLLUTING INDUSTRIAL PLANTS ALONG THE RIVER. IN 2008, THE GANGA WAS DECLARED AS THE NATIONAL RIVER OF INDIA”

The Ministry of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation (MWRRDG) issued a notification on 7th October 2016, defining the River Ganga to include the entire length of six head-streams in the State of Uttarakhand, namely, Rivers Alakananda, Dhaulti Ganga, Nandakini, Pinder, Mandakini and Bhagirathi, as well as the main stem of the river up to Ganga Sagar, including all its tributaries up to Ganga Sagar. The establishment of sewage treatment plants and sewerage networks with a primary focus on bioremediation figured predominantly in the Namami Gange project and accounted for about 80 percent of the overall project outlay. On the conservation and rejuvenation front, the Detailed Project Report (DPR) prepared in 2016 by Forest Research Institute, ICFRE, Dehra Dun had a projected outlay of Rs. 2,293.73 crores. Investments were planned to begin from 2016-17 itself. The five-year plan considers riparian corridors, nature of channel morphology, and the dynamics of the river. A unique geographical area of 83,946 km<sup>2</sup>

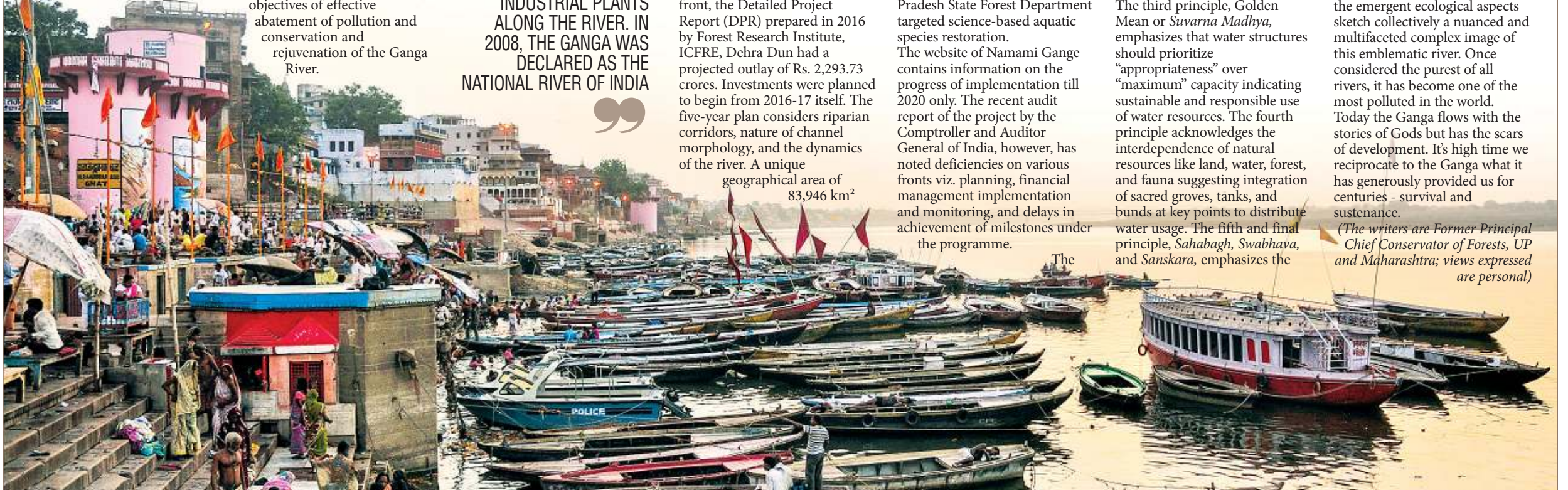
delineated as 'Ganga riverscape' along the Ganga has been identified for planning, assessment, and implementation of measures that include activities like reforestation or afforestation, managing vegetation to prevent soil erosion, and creating buffer zones to protect the river from pollutants. Further, the Wildlife Institute of India prepared the 'Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation' plan with focus on development of local level 'Ganga Prahari' volunteers for playing a crucial role in conserving the ecological integrity of the Ganga and reducing the direct dependency of locals on the river. The projects of the Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (CIFRI) and the Uttar Pradesh State Forest Department targeted science-based aquatic species restoration. The website of Namami Gange contains information on the progress of implementation till 2020 only. The recent audit report of the project by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, however, has noted deficiencies on various fronts viz. planning, financial management implementation and monitoring, and delays in achievement of milestones under the programme.

The current scenario warrants improvement not only on the above aspects but also introduction of innovative and effective approach. In this context, one can draw inspiration from an ancient text by Sage Kashyapa on agriculture. He outlined five principles for water resources development. The first principle, *Udhgamsthana*, suggests that conservation should commence at the river's source. This includes construction of temples for protection, management of upper catchments, and redirecting streams and rivulets to enrich river's source. The second principle, *Nyunatam Gati-avarodh*, advocates for minimal disruption to the natural flows of water and air to maintain the hydrological cycle. The third principle, *Golden Mean* or *Suvarna Madhya*, emphasizes that water structures should prioritize "appropriateness" over "maximum" capacity indicating sustainable and responsible use of water resources. The fourth principle acknowledges the interdependence of natural resources like land, water, forest, and fauna suggesting integration of sacred groves, tanks, and bunds at key points to distribute water usage. The fifth and final principle, *Sahabagh, Swabhava, and Sanskara*, emphasizes the

need for community participation that takes care of the needs of all stakeholders. The concept of Rejuvenation defined as 'restoring a living entity to a previously agreed state of health and wellness' is most relevant in the context of the Ganga. Given the definition of Ganga by the MWRRDG, it's high time that the rejuvenation approach for Ganga targets the entire riverscape in an integrated manner while drawing and utilizing funds from all concerned departments. All the tributaries require treatment to ensure they remain clean and flowing and contribute to the flow of the Ganga. In order to foster larger community engagement in the rejuvenation mission, catchment areas of tributaries can be named after revered personalities or temples at their origin, followed by the suffix 'Namami Gange Van'. For instance, the catchment of Ramganga, originating from the Doodhatoli ranges of Pauri in Uttarakhand, could be named 'Veer Chandra Singh Gadwali: Namami Gange Van'. Similarly, as the Ghagra river converges with the Ganga after the confluence of Mahakali (Sharda) at Tanakpur housing the Purnagiri temple, the catchment could be named 'Purnagiri: Namami Gange Van'. Likewise, the catchments of Gomati in Pilibhit could be named Vashishtha, that of Sai river meeting Gomti in Parsai village (Hardoi) as Adi-Ganga, that of Saryu and lower Ghagra as Ram, and those of Gandak, Kosi, and Budhi Gandak as Valmiki, Kausika, and Champakaranya respectively. The origin of Ganga's tributary, the Sone River at Amarkantak could bear the name Sone, the catchment of Punpun river originating in Jharkhand as Punpun, and the Namami Gange Van of Damodar, Mayurakshi, Ajay, Bansloi, and Ghumani could respectively be prefixed with the names Sarhul, Trikut, Ajay, Venu, and Rajmahal. Restoration of suitable forest cover, construction of water conservation structures, keeping river beds encroachment-free, prevention of water diversion, and curbing exploitative livelihood systems near the banks shall have to be prioritized in these areas as in the main stream of the Ganga.

The overarching strategy for rejuvenation must combine pollution prevention through stricter regulations and rigorous implementation in order to transform Ganga's biological profile making it 'NIRMAL' and the restoration of status of its stream to 'AVIRAL'. In 2017, the Uttarakhand High Court declared the rivers Ganga and Yamuna as 'legal persons' with all corresponding rights of a living person. Considering it together with the concepts of spiritual ecology and earth stewardship, one should come up with innovative strategies in the Indian context. Standing on its banks, one is left with a profound sense of awe and a lingering question—what will the next chapter in the Ganga's story be? The narratives connected with religious, mythical, political, historical, and the emergent ecological aspects sketch collectively a nuanced and multifaceted complex image of this emblematic river. Once considered the purest of all rivers, it has become one of the most polluted in the world. Today the Ganga flows with the stories of Gods but has the scars of development. It's high time we reciprocate to the Ganga what it has generously provided us for centuries - survival and sustenance.

(The writers are Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra; views expressed are personal)







CHESA VEGLIA ST MORITZ



THE NEWEST AND BIGGEST OUTDOOR POOL AT ST MORITZ



BADRUTTS PALACE

## ST. MORITZ SUMMER'S RICH ALPINE PALETTE

Apart from being famous for its enchanting winter charm, St. Moritz also changes its appearance during the summer. It unveils a collection of lush green scenery which offers plenty of opportunities to enjoy nature, engage in thrilling sports, and fully embrace the peaceful Alpine way of life

BY AKANKSHA DEAN

Setting off on an enchanting Swiss journey armed with an eight-day Swiss Travel Pass and a carefully crafted plan, my travels unfolded like a dream aboard a selection of prestigious panoramic trains - the Bernina Express, Glacier Express,

and GoldenPass. The quintessential Swiss adventure began with my first lengthy train ride from Zürich to Chur. Emerging from a dark tunnel, the train revealed a stunning mountain view against the vast sky, almost like a scene from a perfectly set movie. This

was the Switzerland I had always imagined - reminiscent of the landscapes found in Heidi's stories and the ads for Ricola. The sight of quaint chapels perched daringly on rocky cliffs amid lush meadows and glimmering peaks brought me immense joy. Changing trains at Chur, I arrived in the elegant town of St. Moritz. Despite its small year-round population of under 6,000 residents, this former host of the Olympics and luxurious mountain escape has captured the hearts of the wealthy and famous. During the summer, St. Moritz transforms into a place that feels more like the Mediterranean than northern Europe, with most days filled with abundant sunshine.

**A SUMMER EXTRAVAGANZA** With just a single word, Badrutts Palace exudes allure. It's renowned among a select few for its post-ski parties in the King's Social House, chance meetings with well-heeled billionaires in Moncler gear, and hosting one of the most sought-after New Year's Eve celebrations globally. Additionally, it conjures images of lavish bedrooms with views of the frozen lake, making it a top choice for winter getaways among the elite. Another facet of Badrutts, lesser-known but equally captivating, comes alive in St. Moritz during the summer. This version offers a fresh experience



waiting to be explored. During our stay, our suite featured a balcony opening to a picturesque terrace. On our first night, we enjoyed a horse-drawn carriage ride, soaking in the stunning scenery of the lake, the majestic mountains, and the vast Engadin valley. In the summer, the mountains transform from a monochrome landscape of snow and rock to a vibrant tapestry of colours and textures. From lush green forests hugging the calm blue lake to vivid emerald meadows and the rugged peaks dusted with remnants of winter snow, the view

from our balcony was awe-inspiring. Unlike many hotels that claim to be palaces, Badrutts lives up to its regal status. The grand state rooms exude a palace-like atmosphere, inviting guests to wander in elegant attire. While casual wear is allowed, formal dress seems more appropriate. In Le Restaurant and Le Relais, the elegant dining options call for formal attire to match the graceful setting. The ambiance is truly exceptional and sets Badrutts apart as a regal retreat where luxury meets sophistication effortlessly.

### SUMPTUOUS FEASTS, MOUNTAIN MAJESTY

As I set foot on Paradiso Mountain Club & Restaurant for my initial summer escapade under the stewardship of Badrutts Palace Hotel, I awaited eagerly the promise of sun-soaked days amidst stunning vistas. Paradiso, embodying a steadfast commitment to local traditions and unwavering standards of excellence and openness, presents a menu that encapsulates the essence of St. Moritz's Mountain lifestyle - a tribute to delectable fare, pure mountain breezes, and abundant sunshine. The dining experience at Badrutts transcended mere expectations. Our culinary voyage led us to the enchanting Chesa Veglia, a quaint heritage abode just

a skip across the street, metamorphosed into what can only be described as the epitome of high-class pizzerias. Here, within this tucked-away gem, Badrutts Palace seemed to unfurl a more carefree, laid-back persona, akin to a majestic retreat momentarily letting loose, bedecked in an Italian leather bracelet, relishing in copious servings of Ornellaia. The pizzas served were sheer perfection - a symphony of flavours that would satisfy even the most discerning pizza aficionado. The ambiance at Chesa Veglia exuded an air of joviality, with the staff mirroring the joy and enthusiasm of the guests, creating an atmosphere where every bite felt infused with a sense of shared merriment and contentment.

### RECHARGE IN ENGADIN

Nestled in the heart of Palace Wellness, we had the pleasure of enjoying a refreshing swim in the newest and largest outdoor pool in St. Moritz at a luxurious hotel in Engadin. The pool overlooks breath-taking views of the mountains and the lake, creating a picturesque backdrop for a delightful lunch at La Diala. The restaurant's name, which means 'mountain fairy' in Romansh, reflects its deep connection to the surrounding environment and offers a light and wholesome

menu. Even on the one cloudy day we experienced during our week-long stay, we found solace in the expansive indoor pool area, complete with its own artificial rock mountain perfect for kids to dive off. The deep-tissue massages at the spa were as rejuvenating as expected, adding to the overall relaxation experience in a mountain spa setting. St. Moritz's charm in the summer goes beyond extravagant lunches, indulgent spa treatments at Palace Coiffeur, savouring ice creams at Gelateria, and admiring the panoramic views of the lake. Engaging in activities like kitesurfing on Lake Silvaplana, sailing on Lake St. Moritz, and exploring the scenic nature trails by bike or on foot offers guests of Badrutts Palace a diverse range of outdoor adventures at their fingertips. Moreover, the distinction of Badrutts Palace as one of the World's 50 Best Hotels further solidifies its reputation as a top-tier destination for discerning travellers.

*Akanksha Dean is an independent food & travel writer, a chef and a catalyst and is the first Indian to have trained at Osteria Francescana, in Modena, Italy, rated as the world's best restaurant in The World's 50 Best Restaurants, in 2016 and 2018 and currently in the Best of The Best Category.*

# Rejoice in the Monsoon Magic This Season

Embark on a journey to charming monsoon retreats for a blissful vacation, writes SHARMILA CHAND

With monsoons round the corner, it is time to plan a vacation to soak in the beauty of nature. Immerse in the rich tapestry of exotic destinations across the country. From the mist-laden cliffs of the Western Ghats to the tranquil backwaters of Kerala, and lush green landscape of Goa, enjoy an alluring escape into nature's lap. Let the droplets of rain be musical notes and characteristic scent of the wet earth allure all your senses.

Rain Soaked Offerings At Radisson Blu Resort and Spa, Alibaug After braving a hot summer, you deserve to cool off and enjoy the rainy season, and a luxury resort lets you do that while providing every comfort your heart could desire.

Whether you are traveling on holiday or business, the Radisson Blu Resort & Spa, Alibaug invites guests to experience unparalleled luxury and the tranquility of natural beauty. Guests can enjoy a leisurely walk around the landscaped gardens, or simply sit beside the stillness of the Lotus pond. For adventure seekers, the resort offers activities such as guided cycling tours, nature trails, and bird watching. By being close to historical sites such as the Kolaba Fort and Alibaug Beach, there are also opportunities for exploration and adventure to ensure a rich and fulfilling stay for all. Radisson Blu Resort & Spa, Alibaug is designed around wellness and relaxation, with moments of mindfulness offered in the form of daily yoga and meditation sessions - the resort provides a sanctuary for rejuvenation of the body and mind.

### RAINDROPS AT THE MACHAN - A TREEHOUSE RESORT, LONAVALA

The Machan, a unique eco-resort located near Mumbai and Pune, offers a selection of tree-houses that ascend 30-45 feet above ground level, allowing visitors to stay in 'treetop' accommodations. Nestled in Jambulne, a 'biodiversity hotspot' as one of the 25 globally, The Machan is a great destination for nature lovers. On the property, visitors can participate in a number of



activities such as trekking, bird watching, and exploring historic sites. The resort also offers comfortably furnished chalets and "tree houses." Feeling a bit adventurous? Start your day with a rush of adrenaline by waking up in the 'Tree House' perched 30 to 45 feet above the forest floor in Jambulne. The experience of the monsoon season at the Machan will usher in a sense of tranquility as you enjoy your endless supply of hot beverages and snacks. Along with the unique and luxurious tree house accommodations, The Machan has much to offer to keep one busy during their stay. With guided nature walks, bird watching and historical forts and caves nearby, there's always something to do. A stay at the Machan during the monsoon season rewards you with abundant waterfalls, cool breezes and lush greenery for a truly ethereal experience as you enjoy your hot drinks and comforting snacks. Plus, the resort recycles 80% of its grey water and is almost entirely powered by renewable solar and wind energy. So when you book your monsoon getaway here, you aren't just rewarding your soul - you're doing your bit for sustainability.



### ENCHANTING VIEWS OF NERUL RIVER AT HILTON GOA RESORT

Nestled in the picturesque hills of Saipem, Hilton Goa Resort is a synonym for luxury and tranquility. It provides enchanting views of lush greens and Nerul River. The resort will offer you an incredible opportunity to escape from the hustle and bustle. Relax by one of the excellent four outdoor pools or break a sweat in the well-outfitted fitness center. The restaurant with a patio on the resort offers a unique dining experience with mesmerizing coastal views of Goa, while the Doce cafe and Coco lounge bar provide the taste buds with an extensive range of patisserie and Mediterranean flavors. When it comes to families, the kids club ensures your kids have a good time as you relax. The resort's location is convenient for exploring attractions such as Aguada Fort and Panjim, with Vagator Beach only being a 30-minute drive away for even more sea, sun and sand. If you are looking for a romantic getaway, family vacation, or corporate-relaxation, the resort's event facilities and group travel services offer all you will need. In Hilton Goa you can sip your morning coffee and watch the raindrops fall on the lush greenery outside as the

clouds wash away the heat of the summer. Take a dip in one of the four outdoor pools, hit the gym at the fitness centre, or simply walk about outside and enjoy the pitter-patter of the raindrops.

### WATCH RAINDROPS ON PADDY FIELDS AT EVOLVE BACK, COORG

One can only imagine what it feels like to be woken up by the smell of coffee and the cold mountain breeze. That's exactly what a monsoon trip to the 300-acre Evolve Back resort in Coorg will buy you. The private pool villas are traditionally furnished as they were in ancient times, making them perfect for outdoor experiences whether you are alone or with family members. For quiet moments, the Reading Lounge is an ideal spot. Here, you can enjoy a cup of freshly brewed coffee while watching the rain fall on the lush paddy fields, creating a perfect ambiance for relaxation and reflection. Visit to Evolve Back is incomplete without taking part in its rich coffee culture. Right inside this place is a Coffee Museum where people have opportunities to journey through history while learning about processes involved in growing coffee plants and beans. Just by stepping into the plantation field and walking across lush coffee farms one can find better appreciation for their favorite morning drink. The resort also offers a range of cultural and wildlife experiences that highlight the region's biodiversity and heritage. Guided nature walks, bird watching tours, and interactions with local artisans provide a comprehensive understanding of Coorg's rich ecosystem and traditions. Whether you're seeking

adventure, relaxation or want to curl up with coffee in the Reading Lounge while watching the rain fall on the lush paddy fields Evolve Back, Coorg is your destination.

### MISTY LANDSCAPES AT RIVERMIST RESORT CHIKMAGALUR

In the lap of the Western Ghats, Chikmagalur is known for its lush coffee plantations and misty landscapes. In the monsoons, it transforms into a vibrant tapestry of green, punctuated by cascading waterfalls and blooming flora, making it a sanctuary for rare bird species, elusive animals, and unique insects. Hidden amidst this mountainscape, is a boutique getaway called RiverMist Resorts. Perfectly situated with the Charmady Ghats in the backdrop, it provides guests with an authentic experience of this region. Traditional Malnad architecture, and local cuisine adds to its charm. Unique nature centric activities and luxury accommodations that offer mesmerising views of the mountains from wooden cottages on stilts to the Luxury Pavilion that features glamping tents with outdoor jacuzzis and showers, is an experience to behold. RiverMist Resorts is more than a place to stay; it's a story in itself. Upon arrival, guests cross a river in a 4x4 vehicle, setting the tone for the



### MONSOON BLISS AT COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT GOA COLVA

Courtyard by Marriott Goa Colva offers a unique and enchanting monsoon getaway. Its comfortable accommodations and amenities, combined with the lush beauty of Goa's landscape, provide an idyllic setting for relaxation and rejuvenation. Whether savouring local cuisine, exploring the lush surroundings, or simply enjoying a serene stay, guests are guaranteed an unforgettable experience that captures the essence of Goa's monsoon magic. The hotel's recent opening in the midst of the rainy season perfectly showcases a different, greener side of Goa, making it a must-visit destination for those seeking a blend of serenity and revelry. Located in the serene village of Colva in South Goa, the hotel offers an immersive experience of Goa's lush, rain-kissed scenery, surrounded by verdant paddy fields and swaying coconut farms. The monsoon season breathes new life into the region, and the resort provides the perfect setting to witness this transformation. As the rain begins to fall, the surroundings of the hotel come alive with a symphony of nature's sounds and sights. The paddy fields turn a vibrant green, creating a stunning contrast against the moody grey skies. The coconut palms, tall and graceful, sway gently in the breeze, adding to the picturesque scenery. The hotel is designed to blend seamlessly with this lush environment, offering guests a comfortable and welcoming retreat amidst nature's bounty. Nestled away from the bustling tourist hubs, the hotel

provides a peaceful haven where guests can truly relax and unwind. The monsoon amplifies this sense of tranquility, as the rains cool the air and the landscape transforms into a bright green paradise. Guests can take leisurely walks or cycle through the surrounding locale, breathing in the fresh, rain-scented air, or simply relax on their private balconies, soaking in the serene views.

Courtyard by Marriott Goa Colva is more than just a hotel; it is a tribute to the destination itself. It offers the serenity of South Goa married to the vibrancy of North Goa, presenting guests with a different side of the region. This blend creates a unique experience that combines relaxation with excitement, making it an ideal destination for all kinds of travelers. Dining at Courtyard by Marriott Goa Colva is an experience in itself, especially during the monsoons. Colva Kitchen, the hotel's all-day dining restaurant, offers a menu that celebrates the flavours of the region, with an emphasis on fresh, locally sourced ingredients. Guests can savor a variety of local delicacies, from traditional breakfast specials to flavourful Goan curries, ending with warm desserts. With its large glass windows, this dining area provides a perfect vantage point to watch the monsoon showers, with the sound of raindrops creating a soothing backdrop to the culinary delights.

The hotel also offers a range of activities designed to make the most of the monsoon season. Guests can indulge in spa treatments that utilize natural ingredients, providing a holistic and rejuvenating experience. The hotel's pool offers a unique opportunity to swim in the rain, adding a touch of magic to the monsoon experience. For those looking to explore, the hotel organizes guided tours of the surrounding village routes and paddy fields, providing an intimate glimpse into the local way of life. Families can enjoy quality time at the hotel's Kids Club, which offers engaging activities for children.

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# Nanoscopic motor proteins in brain build physical structures of memory

The puzzle of memory has intrigued philosophers and intellects for a very long time. Plato and Aristotle believed that memory was found only in the realm of the soul and the mind, but there was nothing corporeal or physical about it. Memory is closely tied to our sense of self and subjective experiences, but there are physical processes that are associated with remembering.

Modern analogy likes to compare computer memory to that of the brain, where the activity of brain cells called neurons are compared to the binary codes of the magnetic field patterns stored in a hard drive. However, computer devices don't change as a result of performing their jobs, unlike neurons.

Storing and processing memories uses nanoscopic motor proteins called kinesin that move materials around within neurons to construct the structural code of memory. These nanoscopic workers "walk" using alternating steps on long molecular tracks to deliver materials.

For 20 years, neuroscientists — including myself — have used cutting-edge microscopy technology in living animals to observe microscopic structures called dendritic spines constantly budding out, morphing and regressing on the dendrites of neurons.

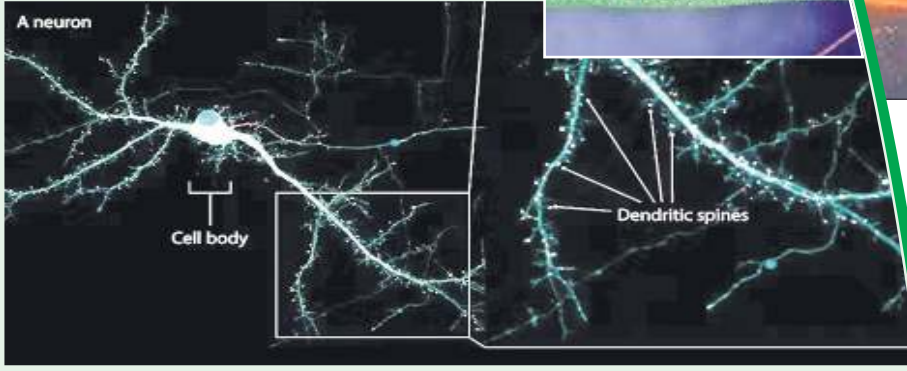
Dendritic spines are where neurons form contacts with other neurons and create electrical circuits throughout the brain. Dendritic spine plasticity, as this change of dendrite shape is referred to, is more than the random movement of neuronal structures in the brain.

## BUDDING SPINES TO STORE NEW MEMORIES

In our recently published study, the extent of dendritic spine plasticity is found to be highly correlated with memory performance of animals in our lab. We taught mice to fear a harmless tone by electrocuting them each time the tone was played; then, we taught the mice to overcome the same fear by presenting the same tone repeatedly in a harmless situation.

After two days, the degree of fear, as indicated by the length of time the mice were immobile for, represents memory performance. The greater the number of dendritic spines that budded on neurons, the shorter the amount of time they remained frozen.

Similarly, scientists discovered that motor memory — as indicated by how long mice can run on a rotating rod after training — is also cor-



related with the number of budding dendritic spines on neurons.

When these newly formed dendritic spines are scratched using a sophisticated technology called optogenetics, mice lose their motor memory and perform as if they had not trained at all.

This evidence strongly impacts how we understand the way memory is stored. Beyond the all-or-nothing activity of a whole neuron, the structural traces of memory are formed by the patterns of microscopic structures called dendritic spines on neurons.

## DELIVERING MOLECULAR CARGOES TO SPINES

This discovery raised another challenge: how do neurons know where specifically on their branches to "build" these memory codes? These locations must be specific as they correspond to contact points with different neurons in forming neural circuits relevant to different experiences.

Since most cellular materials are synthesized in the cell body, there must be a transporter to deliver materials within neurons to achieve the accurate construction of memory codes.

In our study, we speculated that kinesin was used to deliver molecular materials for "building" dendritic spines. To prove this, we tagged molecular cargoes known to be carried by kinesin with fluorescent markers, so that we could follow the movement of kinesin under the microscope.

Using this cutting-edge microscopy technology, we could track the movement of kinesin in the brain before and after creating and removing fear in the mice.

We also genetically removed kinesins from another group of mice to understand if the function of kinesin was indeed necessary for forming dendritic spine memory code. We found that in normal mice with kinesin, it took several hours as opposed to minutes for kinesin to move to a specific location on dendrites, where dendritic spines can bud out. If kinesin was removed from the brain, the tagged molecular cargoes showed reduced movement and as a result, the number of dendritic spines formed was completely altered and the stability of the ones formed was significantly hampered.

Without kinesin, the mice could not learn or form memory properly in our study.

## UNDERSTANDING MEMORY

This is the first time that the process of structural memory code formation has been visualized, identifying kinesin as the transport for building dendritic spines following a learning experience to construct the structural code of memory in the living brain. This structural memory code can provide an even more complex dimension than binary encoding of information. Further understanding and potential mapping of these dendritic spine structural codes on a large scale in the brain could open up new ways to manipulate memory functions in medical conditions.



# Daydream a lot or stare into space?

You might have cognitive disengagement syndrome

Do you find that you daydream a lot? Are you often sluggish and tend to disengage easily when doing a task? You might have cognitive disengagement syndrome, or CDS.

CDS was first described by psychologists in the 1960s and 1970s when they noticed that some people display these traits more persistently than others. But why is it considered a syndrome rather than just a quirky personality trait?

The distinction lies in the effect. For people with CDS, their behaviour significantly interferes with their daily lives, academic performance and social interactions.

While everyone daydreams occasionally, those with CDS find it hard to stay focused on tasks for extended periods. This isn't just about being inattentive or lazy, CDS is a persistent pattern that can disrupt a person's ability to succeed in various areas of life.

Unlike attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which includes hyperactivity and impulsivity, CDS is characterised by its "sluggish cognitive tempo" — an earlier name for the condition.

The condition is not recognised as a distinct "attention disorder" in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the standard classification of mental disorders used by professionals in the US. However, the growing body of research suggests that it deserves more attention and should be looked at separately from ADHD.

A way to look at the two is, if a

Parents and teachers often report this behaviour in children who seem "out of it" or who take longer to respond to questions and complete tasks.

Slow processing speed means that people take longer to take in information, make sense of it and respond. For example, at school a student with slow processing speed may take longer to answer a question or complete an assignment because they need more time to understand the material and



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person has ADHD, they are able to focus on something but they will probably become distracted and switch their focus to something else. If a person has CDS, they are unable to focus in the first place.

## HOW DO WE IDENTIFY CDS?

Diagnosis is tricky because there are no official criteria. However, some psychologists use a combination of questionnaires and behavioural observations to assess symptoms like frequent daydreaming, mental foggy and slow processing speed.

think through their response. This isn't due to lack of intelligence or effort — their brain simply processes information at a slower pace.

Support and treatment for CDS are still evolving. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is commonly used to help people develop better ways of coping and improve their focus.

Some researchers are exploring the use of stimulant drugs, similar to those used for ADHD, but the evidence is still inconclusive. Lifestyle changes, such as having a more stable sleep routine and incorporating regular exercise, are also recommended to help manage symptoms.

# Three ways to eat more nutritiously

When it comes to staying healthy, diet is one of the best things you can do to look after your body.

If you want to eat more nutritiously but don't quite know how, here are a few easy changes you can make that will benefit your health.

## BE ADVENTUROUS

Plenty of unusual or unconventional foods that might not be a normal part of your diet are full of nutrients and microorganisms that can have many health benefits.

Sea vegetables, for instance. These have existed for thousands of years and are a staple food in traditional Asian and coastal cultures.

These vegetables are nutrient-dense and contain antioxidants (molecules that neutralise harmful "free radicals" in the body), essential fatty acids, fibre, iodine and proteins not found in land-based foods.

This is due to the unique growing conditions and biological adaptations of sea vegetables, which lead to a distinct nutrient profile — making them a valuable addition to the diet. Some of their benefits include protecting against cancer and being antiviral, preventing blood clots, regulating cholesterol levels and having antioxidant properties. They may also prevent cardiovascular disease and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

Certain sea vegetables — such as algae — can be added to other foods to boost their taste and health benefits. Research shows that adding algae to foods such as cheddar cheese and toasted bread is a great way to increase protein content.

The blue-green algae spirulina is particularly beneficial — packed with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and protein. It's even used as a supplement by NASA astronauts on space missions.

Sea moss, edible seaweeds (such as nori) and algae (such as mozuku) are just some of the sea vegetables you might consider putting on the menu.

Bitter greens — such as dandelion, beetroot, nettles and mustard greens — are all nutrient-dense and have antioxidant properties. They're also shown to support gut health and digestion as they're packed with fibre.

Fermented foods, such as kimchi, sauerkraut and kefir, are associated with a lower risk of chronic disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer) and better weight management.

They're also rich in probiotics, which promote gut health and improve digestion.

## SEASON GENEROUSLY

Using a variety of herbs and spices when cooking not only enhances the overall sensory experience of your meal, they also provide several wellbeing benefits.

Spices such as turmeric, ginger, garlic, as well as cinnamon, cloves and oregano, are thought to have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties due to the array of chemical compounds they contain.

Many of these chemical compounds complement each other — and may even counteract several disorders, including heart disease, chronic inflammation and diabetes.

# Gaza soccer stadium is now a shelter for thousands of displaced Palestinians

Thousands of displaced Palestinians in northern Gaza have sought refuge in one of the territory's largest soccer arenas, where families now scrape by with little food or water as they try to keep one step ahead of Israel's latest offensive. Their makeshift tents hug the shade below the stadium's seating, with clothes hanging in the July sun across the dusty, dried-up soccer field. Under the covered benches where players used to sit, Um Bashar bathes a toddler standing in a plastic tub. Lathering soap through the boy's hair, he wiggles and shivers as she pours the chilly water over his head, and he grips the plastic seats for balance.

They've been displaced multiple times, she said, most recently from Israel's renewed operations against Hamas in the Shijaiyah neighbourhood of Gaza City. "We woke up and found tanks in front of the door," she says. "We didn't take anything with us, not a mattress, not a pillow, not any clothes, not a thing. Not even food." She fled with a group of 70 other people to Yarmouk Sports Stadium — a little under 2 miles (3 kilometres) northwest of Shijaiyah,



which was heavily bombed and largely emptied early in the war. Many of the people who ended up in the stadium say they have nothing to return to. "We left our homes," said one man, Hazem Abu Thoraya, "and all of our homes were bombed and burned, and all those around us were as well." Hundreds of thousands of people have remained in northern Gaza, even as Israeli troops have surrounded and largely isolated it. However, aid flows there have improved recently, and the

UN said earlier this week that it is now able to meet people's basic needs in the north. Israel says it allows aid to enter Gaza and blames the UN for not doing enough to move it. Still, residents say the deprivation and insecurity are taking an ever-growing toll.

"There is no safe place. Safety is with God," said a displaced woman, Um Ahmad. "Fear is now felt not only among the children, but also among the adults. ... We don't even feel safe walking in the street."

# BMI alone not sufficient, waist-to-height ratio more effective in diagnosing obesity: Researchers

Obesity can no longer be just defined by body mass index (BMI) and rather should be about how body fat is distributed throughout one's body, researchers said while launching a new framework for diagnosing and managing obesity.

Published in the journal Nature Medicine, the framework looks specifically at fat accumulated in the abdomen, measured as 'waist-to-height ratio' — an increased value of which is related to a higher risk of developing cardiometabolic complications, according to the researchers.

An "important novelty" of the framework is including a waist-to-height ratio higher than 0.5, along with a BMI of 25-30, for diagnosing obesity, the

An "important novelty" of the framework is including a waist-to-height ratio higher than 0.5, along with a BMI of 25-30, for diagnosing obesity, the authors, representing the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO), said.

authors, representing the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO), said. "The choice of introducing waist-to-height ratio, instead of waist circumference, in the diagnostic process is due to its superiority as a cardiometabolic disease risk marker," they wrote.

Accumulation of abdominal fat is a more reliable predictor of health deterioration, compared to BMI, even for individuals not meeting the current standard cut-off value for obesity diagnosis, which is a BMI of 30, the authors said.

They said that the current guidelines are based on evidence from studies in which participants meeting cut-off values were included for analysis, rather than on a "complete clinical evaluation". "The basis for this change is the



recognition that BMI alone is insufficient as a diagnostic criterion, and that body fat distribution has a substantial effect on health," they wrote. The researchers said that introducing the suggested changes in the

diagnostic processes could reduce risk of undertreatment in this particular group of patients — low BMI and high abdominal fat — in comparison to the current BMI-based definition of obesity.