

sunday pioneer

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All communities must join hands to fight terrorism
Jitendra Singh

India a preferred investment DESTINATION for investors: Goyal

Bhongir BACKBENCHER

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer
Kamma is like Amma. Kammams are known for their hard work and affectionate demeanour like a mother's love. We wanted Venkaiah Naidu to be the President. The absence of Telugus at the national level is noticeable. We should encourage Telugus to excel nationally transcending caste and religion.
- Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister TG

DON'T MISS...

Govt will support flood victims...

State I&PR and Housing Minister Kolu Parthasarathy said that the government will help the flood victims in all possible ways. MLAs Ch Balaraju, Ch Prabhakar, Songa Roshan Kumar, Eluru District Joint Collector B Lavanyaveni and other district officials met the flood victims of Kukkunur and Velerupadu mandals on Saturday to inquire about their problems. The minister inspected flood-damaged houses in Velerupadu mandal, Allurinarayan and Medipally and spoke to the family. The flood victims requested...

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Heavy rain forecast for...

The Meteorological Centre has forecasted heavy to very heavy rain at isolated locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 24 hours. On July 21, heavy rain is expected at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and also in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema within the next 24 hours. Thunderstorms with lightning and strong surface winds, reaching speeds of 30-40 km/h, are anticipated at isolated locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next 48 hours...

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Study estimates 11.9 lakh excess...

In India, 11.9 lakh excess deaths occurred in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, 17 per cent higher compared to 2019, an international study has found. The estimate is about eight times higher than the official COVID-19 deaths in India, and 1.5 times the World Health Organization's estimates, researchers, including those from the University of Oxford, UK, said. Using data of over 7.65 lakh individuals, the study estimated changes in life expectancy at birth, by gender and social group between 2019 and 2020 in India, a country where one-third of global pandemic excess deaths are thought to have occurred, according...

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ONGC acquires Equinor stake in...

ONGC Videsh Ltd, the overseas investment arm of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), has acquired Norwegian firm Equinor's stake in an Azerbaijan oilfield and an associated pipeline for US\$ 60 million, the firm said in a statement. OVL "has signed a definitive sale purchase agreement (SPA) for directly acquiring 0.615 per cent participating interest (PI) in offshore Azeri Chirag Gunashli (ACG) oil field in Azerbaijan from Equinor. The agreement also includes acquiring 0.737 per cent shares of..."

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CM NAIDU TO TDP MPs

Secure projects, funds

MPs urged to engage with Union Ministers on various issues

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister and TDP president Nara Chandrababu Naidu directed party MPs to prioritise securing projects, funds from the Centre, and new schemes for the State during the forthcoming Parliament session.

At the Telugu Desam Parliamentary Party (TDPP) meeting, which included State Cabinet Ministers, Chandrababu Naidu assigned specific responsibilities to various MPs for engaging with Union Ministers on different issues. The TDPP has developed a strategy to coordinate closely with both State Cabinet Ministers and Union Ministers to secure Central funds for State development.

Instructing Ministers to maintain regular contact with Union counterparts, the Chief Minister emphasised the importance of upholding law and order. He criticised former chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy for what he termed "fake politics" and accused him of politicising personal attacks. Chandrababu Naidu warned that no one, regardless of their political guise, would escape justice if involved in criminal activities. He urged police officials to take strict action against those engaging in crime, expressing concern over the ongoing criminal



- CM emphasises the need to maintain law and order and criticises former CM Jagan Mohan Reddy for politicising personal attacks.
- He warns that no one would escape justice for criminal activities and called for stringent police action.
- CM says despite financial challenges, the government is committed to implementing five key promises.
- MPs' performance in securing funds and project approvals to be reviewed every three months.
- Naidu stresses the need for proactive steps to win the 2029 elections and advised regular visits to the party office.

culture and attributing it to systemic failures.

Chandrababu Naidu reiterated his commitment to maintaining law and order and vowed that measures would be implemented to ensure accountability for criminal

acts. He highlighted that maintaining public trust and demonstrating both development and welfare were paramount. Despite financial challenges, the government has resolved to implement five key promises.

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GANGRAPE-CUM-MURDER OF MINOR GIRL

Mystery shrouds death of suspect in police custody

PNS ■ NANDYALA

A man allegedly held by the police in connection with the sensational gangrape and murder case of a 13-year-old girl at Muchumari village died under suspicious circumstances on Saturday.

According to family members, Yohanu (35), also known as Hussain, was detained by police for questioning in the case. They reported being informed that Yohanu died due to illness.

The body of Yohanu was shifted to the Government General Hospital (GGH) in Nandyala. Family members claimed that the



body bore marks of injuries and alleged that he died due to custodial torture. Media personnel were not allowed into the GGH by the police.

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Depts allocated to officials in CMO

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The AP government has issued an order outlining the allocation of departments to four officials in Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu's office. Principal Secretary to the CM, M Ravichandra, has been entrusted with the oversight of the CMO, GAD, Home, Finance, Excise, Revenue, and Endowments Departments. AV Rajamouli will supervise Water Resources, Energy, Mines, Agriculture and CMRE.

Pradyumna has been assigned the responsibility for Transport, Municipal Administration, Panchayat Raj, RTGS, Forest, and Civil Supplies Departments. Karthikeya Mishra will oversee Finance, IT, NRI Affairs, Information and Citizen Relations, and Industries, and will coordinate the CM's Delhi office and foreign visits.



Lokesh comes to aid of stranded AP worker in Saudi

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

IT and Education Minister Nara Lokesh has once again come to the aid of a Telugu person in distress, this time rescuing an individual stranded in Saudi Arabia. Virendra Kumar posted a video on X (formerly Twitter) describing his plight after being deceived by a fake agent. Promised a job in Qatar, Virendra was instead abandoned in the harsh Saudi desert, living among camels and suffering from severe illness.

Minister Lokesh, upon seeing the video, assured Virendra of his return to his hometown. This marks the second such case in less than a week, where individuals have been victimised by fraudulent agents.

In a similar incident, Minister Lokesh responded to a video showing a worker being tortured in Kuwait. Through the combined efforts of the NRI TDP team and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Central Government, the worker was successfully brought back to Andhra Pradesh.

Yet another major IAS shake-up in AP

62 officers transferred across the State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In yet another massive administrative shake-up, the Andhra Pradesh government has implemented a major reshuffle of 62 IAS officers. The changes were formalised through Government Order RT No 1288, issued by Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad on Saturday.

Ch Sridhar, who has been awaiting a new posting, has been appointed as the Commissioner for Minorities Welfare. He will also hold full additional charge as Vice Chairman and Managing Director of the Minorities Finance Corporation until further notice. MV Seshagiri Babu, currently the Commissioner for Labour, has been transferred to serve as the Inspector General of Stamps and Registrations, succeeding V Ramakrishna, IRS.

G Rekha Rani has been moved from her position as Secretary to the Government, Public Enterprises Department, to become the Commissioner for Handlooms and Textiles.

Meanwhile, Chevuru Hari Kiran will take over as Director of Public Health and Family Welfare and will also assume full additional charge of the MD of the National Health Mission.

G Veerapandian, previously VC

& MD of AP Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd., will now be the Chief Executive Officer of the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP), as his services have been transferred to the Panchayat Raj & Rural Development Department. M Harinarayanan has been appointed as the Director of Municipal Administration.

Other key appointments include Lathkar Srikanth Balaji Rao as Director of Survey, Settlement & Land Records, and Dr. Mallikarjuna A as Director of BC Welfare, with additional responsibilities as VC & MD of the Backward Classes Cooperative Finance Corporation.

Prasanna Venkatesh V is now assigned to the Social Welfare Department as Secretary of the AP Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (APSWREIS). Girisha PS, formerly Managing Director of AP State Housing Corporation Ltd., will now serve as VC & MD of AP Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd.

Dr. Manazir Jeelani Samoon is appointed as Managing Director of AP MARKFED, with additional duties as VC & MD of the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh.

Over 170 villages submerged in AP

35,000 acres of farmlands under rainwater

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Incessant rainfall and ensuing floods have caused widespread devastation for the second consecutive day across West Godavari, East Godavari, and Visakhapatnam districts. Over 170 villages and residential areas have been submerged, affecting livelihoods and displacing residents. In addition, crops across more than 35,000 acres have been inundated, compounding the agricultural losses. Tragically, the heavy rains have resulted in two fatalities.

The persistent rainfall, attributed to a low-pressure system, has led to the overflowing of the Shabari River, numerous streams, and drains, particularly affecting the Srikakulam district. The National Highway 316 has also been severely impacted, with breaches occurring between Chintoor and Kalleru villages, disrupting vehicular traffic.



Minister V Anita has engaged with Collectors from Vizianagaram, Srikakulam, and ASR districts to coordinate relief efforts, ensuring provisions of essential supplies such as food, water, and medicines to affected communities.

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'Onus on all allies to fulfil promises'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Union Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu on Saturday said that all the constituents of the ruling alliance in Andhra Pradesh -- TDP, BJP and Jana Sena -- have the responsibility to pitch in and fulfil the assurances promised during the recently held polls.

The Aviation minister highlighted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan gave the assurances combinedly to the people of the southern state. "We also want to fulfil and satisfy the assurances that we have given before the election. It has been combinedly given by Chandrababu Naidu, Pawan Kalyan and Narendra Modi. So, everyone has the responsibility to pitch in and help in fulfilling the assurances," Naidu said near the CM's residence in Undavalli.



Without elaborating further on the assurances, he observed that there is immense responsibility on NDA both in the state and the Centre, especially at a time when the state is reeling under a "financial crisis" due to the erstwhile leadership of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy who allegedly left the state bankrupt. According to the minister, Andhra Pradesh is inundated with debts of over Rs 10 lakh crore, which makes it very difficult for the state to move forward towards development. However, he noted that the state is receiving a "positive" response from the Centre, while

"Modi has also promised" that he will help in rebuilding the state and bringing back its lost glory.

Following a Telugu Desam Parliamentary Party meeting today, the union minister noted that TDP MPs are going ahead with a new way of coordination between the state and Centre by keeping the parliamentarians as a bridge here. Terming YSRCP's plan to undertake a protest in New Delhi on July 24 as strange, he alleged that the opposition party leader, Jagan Mohan Reddy, is running away from the Assembly session which is starting from Monday.

"The Assembly is the greatest platform for you (Reddy) to speak if you want to speak about issues. The only feeling we get and especially the people of Andhra Pradesh is that he wants to run away from the Assembly. He doesn't want to show his face in the Assembly," said Naidu.

UPSC chairman Manoj Soni quits citing 'personal reasons'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



UPSC chairman Manoj Soni has resigned citing personal reasons before the expiry of his tenure in May 2029, official sources said on Saturday.

His resignation is "not in any way connected to controversies and allegations surrounding the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) after probationary IAS officer Pujja Khedkar issue came to the fore," they said.

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Start relief works in rain-hit dists, Energy Minister tells officials

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi held a meeting with APEPDCL officials in response to the incessant rains across the state due to a low-pressure system in the Bay of Bengal. The Minister instructed the officials to remain vigilant as heavy rains continue in many districts. He spoke to the officials of the rain-affected districts and assessed the situation.

The Minister instructed the authorities to start relief operations in areas where electricity poles and trees have been uprooted. Measures

should be taken to prevent interruptions in the power supply. He emphasized that people in low-lying areas should be moved to safer places and that special attention should be paid to those in river catchment areas.

Instructions were issued to take measures to prevent loss of life and property due to rains and floods.

Following the Minister's instructions, villagers from Modepalli in Eluru district, who were stranded by the floods, were relocated to safer places.

OBTUSE ANGLE



Pilgrim amenities improved at Tirumala: TTD EO

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

TTD Executive Officer (EO) J Syamala Rao emphasised his commitment to maintaining the serenity and sanctity of Tirumala, highlighting recent improvements for the benefit of the multitude of visiting pilgrims.

During a press conference held at Gokulam Rest House on Saturday, the EO stated that Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has tasked him with revitalising the existing mechanisms concerning Darshan, Annaprasadam,



Laddus, IT, and other core areas to serve pilgrims better. Following detailed departmental

review meetings over the past month, significant changes have been implemented. These include streamlining the outside queue line system, enhancing the taste of Annaprasadam at MTVAC, improving the quality of Laddus, and introducing several IT reforms in Darshan and accommodation bookings. Efforts have also been made to maintain sanitation standards.

"Beyond these changes in the TTD setup, we are focusing on the health security of the tens of thousands of pilgrims visiting Tirumala," said Rao.

"We have collaborated with Food Safety Department authorities to take action against large canteens (hotels) that do not comply with Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) norms. Recently, we shut down a major canteen for failing to maintain proper sanitation, overcharging, providing low-quality food, and neglecting to pay the required license fees despite multiple notices. We have also launched a mobile lab that tests around 80 ingredients."

The EO also mentioned that hoteliers in Tirumala must adhere to

TTD quality and pricing guidelines and avoid sub-leasing to others. He announced that a new policy addressing these and other aspects will soon be enforced.

Furthermore, Rao highlighted the need for an exclusive laboratory with advanced equipment and improved testing standards in Tirumala. This facility would verify the quality of at least 10-12 key ingredients used in Srivari Prasadam and Anna Prasadam, such as ghee, rice, pulses, jaggery, sugar, and tamarind.

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BRS social media: a Frankenstein monster for KTR

The Bharat Rashtira Samithi's social media wing seems to have gone beyond the control of those shaped it and its sutradhari. This is a given among journalists who are active on social media platforms, particularly 'X'. In fact, many journalists have complained to the party's social media conveners about the way they are being constantly trolled. The conveners have proved to be incapable of stopping the trolls. So, some of the targeted scribes complained to party working president and legislator K T Rama Rao. It is learnt that the BRS' social media wing is a divided house when it comes to justifying the need to troll journalists. Whatever be the rationale of its trollers, they need to know who BRS' opposition is. Are they journalists simply doing their job or Congress as well as Bharatiya Janata Party leaders? If the BRS' social media wing continues in its weird ways, it might end up becoming a Frankenstein monster for KTR, who relies heavily on it. Interestingly, it is unlikely that they want to beat the Congress' social media wing. For, the Congress' SM wing is weak; so, their armies end up trolling journalists who call a spade a spade. Already journalists are discussing that KTR's tweets, which once used to serve as peg for news of the day, hardly figure anywhere in the mainstream media these days.

panions, including six-month-old son and other family members. They laid their life for justice and humanity. Although a few people did point out the incongruity, the tweets continue to fester as unintended wounds in the social media sphere. This is not the first time. On Bakrid, Bhongir MLA Kumbam Anil Kumar Reddy's greetings on social media included a graphic image of a cow. After the not-so-dolce post sparked a political row; he removed it, and apologised for the 'inadvertent error'.

No phalam from palabhishekam

To simulate public gratitude to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for initiating the implementation of the farm loan waiver scheme, Congress workers banded together people to perform palabhishekam, which involves ritualistic bathing of the images of venerable personalities. And there was Kadiyam Srihari, who performed palabhishekam on the portrait of

jelu, chekkalu, jonna ragi mixture, hara boondi, sarva pindi, and hot punugulu. While chatting among themselves, the Mayors posed for photographs along with the Mahila Shakti canteen organizers. While Vijayalaxmi appreciated the snacks for their 'very good taste', Sudharani replied that they prepare these items at home and have them regularly. Taking her at her word, Vijayalaxmi asked Sudharani: "Why don't you send them to me?" Sudharani replied: "I will definitely send them soon". Much to the satisfaction of the canteen organizers, Vijayalaxmi purchased a bottle of pickle for use at her home. The Mayors had landed at the Secretariat to congratulate K Keshava Rao, who has taken charge as Government of Telangana's Public Affairs Advisor.

When KCR talks of good governance

With legislators competing with one another to deflect the anti-defection law and switch sides depending on which way the wind blows, Bharat Rashtira Samithi leaders were not surprised the other day when their supremo declared with supreme confidence "good days are ahead" for them. Amid the talk of 'BRS merger with BJP' in some circles, they read between the lines that KCR has still not given up his plan to topple the Congress government. If they had any doubts about their leader's chamatkar, those were cleared when KCR told them one 'senior politician' told him that he would bring about 40 Congress MLAs. This implies that KCR can do it if the Bharatiya Janata Party government at the Centre is ready to help him. The BJP has eight MLAs while the BRS has 28 MLAs post defections. Thus, the toppling game can begin only if 25 Congress MLAs evince interest to defect. That is a tall order going by the mood among Congress MLAs. People and some of BRS' circles feel that KCR would do well to protect his flock, instead of still scheming to topple the Congress government.

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

REPORTERS' DIARY

Indiscretions that put Cong's 'secular' credentials at stake

There has to be a visible correlation between a political party's professed secular credentials and its outreach to minority communities during festivals and solemn occasions. In Telangana, the Congress' thought leaders and the state government's wordsmiths are not able to always word properly greetings and messages to suit the occasion. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's social media handle conveyed inappropriate wishes on Muharram. Similar was the case with DGP's handle and that of TPCC working president B Mahesh Kumar Goud. The Chief Minister's handle said: "Wishing everyone a blessed and prosperous Muharram". Muharram is day of mourning and it is not a day of celebration. This is a day of martyrdom of Imam Husain (The Prophet's grandson) & his 71 com-

his daughter Kadiyam Kavya, Member of Parliament from Warangal. Not to be left behind, AICC secretary Sampath Kumar was seen pouring milk on his own photo. Naughty netizens, especially those believed to be sympathizers of the Bharat Rashtira Samithi, had fun with these visuals. Well, palabhishekam without phalam sounds gratuitous.

Mayors' day out at Mahila Shakti Canteen

In a strange coincidence, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation Mayor Gadwala Vijayalaxmi and Warangal Mayor Gundu Sudharani, both of whom quit the Bharat Rashtira Samithi and joined the Congress recently, had a day out at the Secretariat Mahila Shakti canteen on Saturday. The Mayors, along with corporator Mamatha and their followers, relished their favourite items from the lavish spread of sweets and savouries that included sakinalu, murukulu, ariselu, sunnundaalu, belam gavalu, boondi laddu, ragi laddu, gar-

SPECTACULAR 'GIRI PRADAKSHINA'

Thousands turn up for event at Simhachalam

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a remarkable display of faith and devotion, thousands of devotees from across the district gathered at Simhachalam on Saturday to celebrate the revered annual 'Giri Pradakshina' festival. Despite persistent showers, participants of all ages embarked on the 32-kilometer pilgrimage around the Simhachalam hill range at dawn, equipped with umbrellas and raincoats. The city, having experienced moderate rain over the past two days, demonstrated excellent organization. Authorities established nearly 300 medical camps, numerous drinking water stalls, and mobile toilets along the route, ensuring the comfort and safety of the pilgrims.

By the afternoon, as the rain eased, the area at the foothills of Simhachalam, known as 'Tholi Pavancha', transformed into a vibrant sea of worshippers. Devotees traditionally broke coconuts before starting their trek. To manage the large crowds,



authorities set up around 50 queue lines and nearly 100 coconut-breaking grills. The festival saw strong support from volunteers, NGOs, civil society groups, resident welfare associations, and political representatives, who distributed essential supplies such as drinking water, buttermilk, energy drinks, and a variety of foods including upma, vegetable biryani, halwa, and pulihora. Former Union Minister and hereditary trustee of the temple,

Pusapati Ashok Gajapathi Raju, led special prayers with the 'Pushparatham'; a flower-adorned chariot carrying a replica of Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy. The chariot set off around 4 p.m., with hundreds of devotees joining the 'pradakshina', chanting 'Govinda Govinda' and 'Jai Sri Ram'. Saraswati, a housewife from Akkayyapalem, shared, "This is my 10th year of 'Giri Pradakshina, excluding the COVID-19 pandemic years, and the third year for my wife. I

believe in this pradakshina, as my wishes have come true earlier with the deity's blessings."

Many devotees attributed their participation to the favorable weekend and weather conditions. Women, many with children in tow, eagerly joined the trek. Rajeswar Rao, a senior manager at State Bank of India from MVP Colony, commended the arrangements: "For the past few years, I missed 'Giri Pradakshina' due to a tight schedule. Tomorrow being Sunday, I can rest after completing the trek," he noted, appreciating the event's timing.

Some devotees opted to circumambulate around the main temple atop the hill 32 times, equating it to the 32-kilometer trek, adding to the festival's spiritual significance. The 'Giri Pradakshina' festival continues to stand as a testament to the unwavering faith and community spirit of the devotees, upholding a cherished tradition year after year, regardless of weather or personal challenges.

UPSC chairman...

Continued from Page 1

"The UPSC chairman had tendered his resignation citing personal reasons over a fortnight back. It is yet to be accepted," a source said. Eminent educationist Soni, 59, took over as a member of the Commission on June 28, 2017. He took oath as the UPSC chairman on May 16, 2023 and his term was to end on May 15, 2029.

Sources said Soni was not keen on becoming the UPSC chairman and had requested to be relieved. However, his request was not accepted then, the sources said. They said Soni has now desired to devote more time to "socio-religious activities." The development assumes significance as the UPSC on Friday said it has lodged a criminal case against Khedkar for faking her identity to fraudulently avail attempts in the civil services examination beyond eligibility, and taken steps to debar her from future selections.

Jagan fostering culture of violence: Anagani

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Revenue, Registration, and Stamps, Anagani Sathya Prasad, has accused YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and the YSRCP of fostering a culture of political violence.

Speaking to the media at the CM's residence on Saturday, the minister alleged that Jagan Mohan Reddy was attributing all the State's murders to the coalition government for personal reasons.

Minister Anagani said that the TDP government does not endorse political violence. He claimed that YS Jagan had conspired to eliminate several TDP leaders, including Thota Chandraiah, and criticised Jagan's plan to hold a protest in Delhi against the State's alleged atrocities and murders. He pointed out that during the past five years, despite



TDP's efforts on various public issues, Jagan Mohan Reddy continued to disrespect Chandrababu Naidu, the former chief minister. He also highlighted instances of crimes against Dalits under the YSRCP rule, noting that despite being reduced to just 11 seats, Jagan Mohan Reddy remained obstinate.

Minister Satya Prasad suggested that Jagan Mohan Reddy should refrain from politicising tragedies and

instead attend assembly sessions to engage in meaningful discussions for the public good.

Anagani also expressed irony over Jagan Mohan Reddy's call for President's rule, given what he described as the state becoming a hub of crimes and atrocities over the past five years. He cited instances such as the brutal murders of Amarnath Goud in Raypalle, Thota Chandraiah in Macherla, and Fatima in Madanapalle during the YSRCP regime.

He concluded by suggesting that if Jagan Mohan Reddy wants the President's rule in the State within a month of the NDA coming to power, then Jagan himself should be held accountable and possibly expelled for the crimes and atrocities that occurred under the YSRCP's governance.

Pilgrim amenities...

Continued from Page 1

For the convenience of devotees, a new shed accommodating 6,000 people has been set up at the Narayangiri queues.

"Three Assistant Executive Officers (AEOs) have been assigned to ensure the provision of drinking water, milk, Annapradasams, and sanitation measures for the waiting devotees," Rao said.

Additional counters and toilets have also been established to serve Annapradasams to pilgrims in the outside queue lines.

TTD is committed to further strengthening the IT system and addressing errors in the booking of Arjita Sevas, Darshan, accommodation, and other services.

To reduce waiting times for pilgrims, the weekly quota of SSD tokens has been increased from 1.05 lakh to 1.47 lakh.

"More reforms will be introduced in the future to benefit the numerous pilgrims visiting Tirumala," Rao asserted.

JEO Veerabrahmam and Chief PRO Dr T Ravi were also present at the press conference.

Experts, unions demand remerger of RINL with SAIL

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Several senior management experts from Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) and numerous trade union leaders have urged the Union government to promptly sanction a working capital grant of Rs 5,000 crore, ensure raw material security, and guarantee the production of 7.3 million tonnes by operating all three blast furnaces. Additionally, they have called for the consideration of remerging with Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL).

RINL, the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), is teetering on the brink due to heavy debt, skyrocketing production costs, and a severe working capital crisis. Despite a phased expansion that increased its capacity to 7.3 million tonnes for Rs 16,300 crore, only two of its three blast furnaces are operational, hindered by raw material shortages and financial

constraints. Efforts to monetize assets have fallen short, and the looming threat of privatization, announced by the Centre in January 2021, casts a long shadow over the plant's future.

At a recent workshop organized by the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), attended by former RINL CMD Y. Siva Sagar Rao, former Director (Operations) K.K. Rao, All India CITU General Secretary Tapan Sen, State General Secretary Ch. Narsinga Rao, Steel Workers' Federation India (SWFI) General Secretary Lalit Mishra, Steel Plant Employees' Union President Y.T. Dasu, and Honorary President Ch. Ayodhya Ram, a resolution was adopted. This resolution calls for the Centre to approve a comprehensive revival package to restore RINL to profitability.

Tapan Sen emphasised the success of a peaceful workers' struggle in saving the HISCO Steel Plant at Burnpur from

privatization, advocating for similar collective efforts to rescue RINL. Siva Sagar Rao highlighted that, with India's steel production targets set at 300 million tonnes by 2030, merging SAIL and RINL into a single, giant public sector steel entity would be a strategic move. Narsinga Rao, speaking to The Pioneer, criticized management for ill-conceived decisions contributing to RINL's current plight. He called for united efforts to facilitate RINL's turnaround by infusing the proposed working capital grant and increasing production to full capacity.

This call for RINL's revival underscores the urgent need for strategic interventions to ensure the survival and growth of this vital public sector enterprise. Implementing these proposed measures could steer RINL back to profitability and secure its future in India's burgeoning steel industry.

Secure...

Continued from Page 1

The Chief Minister informed the MPs that their performance in securing Central funds and project approvals would be reviewed every three months. He instructed them to ensure that the commitments made under the State Bifurcation Act were met.

Looking ahead to the 2029 elections, Chandrababu Naidu emphasized the need for proactive measures and positive actions that benefit the people. He stressed the importance of close coordination between government officials and party members, recommending that every Minister and MP visit the party office at least once a week.

Yet another...

Continued from Page 1

Kritika Shukla will step in as Director of Intermediate Education, taking over from Nidhi Meena, and will also hold full additional charge as Secretary of the Board of Intermediate Education and Director of Adult Education. Pattanshetti Ravi Subash has been appointed Chairman & Managing Director of CPDCL, while Lakshisha G will take over as MD of the Andhra Pradesh Medical Services & Infrastructure Development Corporation (APMSIDC) and will also retain full additional charge as CEO of NTR Vaidya Seva. M Venugopal Reddy will serve as Director of Women's Development & Child Welfare, and P Raja Babu has been transferred to the Housing Department as MD of AP State Housing Corporation. Nishant Kumar has been posted as Director of Excise & Prohibition, while GC Kishore Kumar will head the Mission for Clean Krishna Godavari Canals.

Other notable changes include M Vijaya Suneetha as Director of Agriculture Marketing, Dr K Srinivasulu as Director of Horticulture, and B. Lavanya Veni as Director of Social Welfare. Muttimbaku Abhishikhth Kishore will be the MD of APHC and also hold full additional charge of VC & MD of APTDC. Dr A Siri, formerly Special Commissioner - SVAMITVA, has been transferred to Director of Secondary Health with additional responsibilities as MD of APSACS. S Rama Sundar Reddy will now serve as Commissioner R&R and Commissioner CADA. This extensive reshuffle aims to streamline administrative functions and enhance efficiency across various government departments in Andhra Pradesh.

58 B.Tech grads get degrees at IPE's 4th convocation

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

IPE-Visakhapatnam hosted its 4th Annual Convocation on Saturday, marking a significant moment for the institute. The event was a celebration of academic excellence and a call to action for the graduating class to drive innovation in the energy sector.

The highlight of the ceremony was the conferral of the institute's first Ph.D. degree to Gouri Sankar Das. Das was recognized for his pioneering research on "Advanced Nanocarbons from Waste and Biomass for Renewable Energy Technologies, Green Hydrogen Production, and Fabrication of Flexible Electronics."

In addition to this groundbreaking achievement, 58 B.Tech. graduates received their degrees in Petroleum and Chemical Engineering, symbolising a pivotal milestone in



IPE's history. Aayushi Jagat Gangwar was awarded the prestigious President's Gold Medal for her outstanding academic performance and significant contributions to extracurricular activities. Notably, top performers in each discipline were also honoured with gold and silver medals, with Abdul Rahman S. and B Abhinav Tryambakrao recognised in Chemical and Petroleum Engineering, respectively, and Ayush Ranjan and Aayushi Jagat Gangwar receiving silver medals.

Chief Guest Prof. VVSS Sarma, Chief Scientist at CSIR-

NIO Regional Centre, commended the graduates and encouraged them to lead advancements in the energy sector. He emphasized the critical need for innovative solutions to address climate change and underscored the importance of ethical practices in the energy industry. Prof. Sarma also highlighted the 'Make in India' initiative, stressing its role in enhancing India's global stature in energy production.

Prof. Shalivahan, Director of IPE, extended his congratulations to the graduates and their families, outlining the

institute's strategic vision for the future. He emphasised priorities such as international collaboration, industry partnerships, and tackling current challenges in the oil and gas domains. Prof. Shalivahan also shared updates on the ongoing construction of IPE's permanent campus, expressing optimism that the next convocation would be hosted at this new facility.

The ceremony concluded with Prof. Shalivahan acknowledging IPE's remarkable placement record and expressing gratitude to the faculty, staff, and stakeholders who have contributed to the institute's success. Overall, the 4th Annual Convocation not only honoured academic achievements but also charted a visionary course for future energy innovation, leaving a profound impact on the graduating class and the broader energy sector.

Mystery hrouds...

Continued from Page 1

It is noteworthy that the police had previously detained three minor boys in connection with the gangrape and murder case of the minor girl. Subsequently, two more individuals were arrested on July 16, although the police have yet to locate the body of the minor girl.

In response to the case, a Circle Inspector (CI) and a Sub-Inspector (SI) were suspended for dereliction of duty. As part of the investigation, Yohanu, the maternal uncle of one of the minor boys, was detained on Thursday.

Over 170 villages...

Continued from Page 1

According to official reports, one of the casualties includes Ghantasala Venkatesh (56) from Teerugudem village in Nidadavole mandal, East Godavari district, who has swept away in the Yerrakalava. In another tragic incident, Koppanathi Rambabu (38), a fisherman from Konaseema district, lost his life while fishing in the Upputeru drain.

East Godavari district has appointed nine district-level special officers to monitor flood conditions across its mandals. Several villages including Ganti Pedapudi, Burugulanka, Pedapudilanka, Arigelavari, Udumudi, and Udumudilanka have experienced severe road disruptions. The district Collector P Prashanthi expressed dissatisfaction over the maintenance of flood relief centers during a surprise inspection at Anatapalli in Nallajerla mandal, noting the absence of designated officers.

In West Godavari district, the Yanamaduru drain has reached critical levels due to heavy inflows, prompting authorities to issue a Level 2 warning with water levels reaching 32 feet. Reports indicate that over 16,000 acres of paddy fields have been submerged in the district.

Konaseema district has also witnessed extensive flooding, particularly affecting thousands of acres of paddy fields along the Godavari and Yerrakalava rivers. To manage the crisis, control rooms have been established at the district, RDO, and Tahsildar offices to coordinate relief efforts and information dissemination. In the ASR district, the Shebari and Sileru Rivers have swelled significantly, impacting road connectivity. Meanwhile, in the Eluru district, the Tammileru River is experiencing heavy inflows, prompting Collector K Vetri Selvi to mobilize resources and establish control rooms across 12 mandals.

Start relief...

Continued from Page 1

Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar advised the public to exercise caution during the rains and urged residents to inform local authorities immediately if power lines are disturbed and poles are uprooted due to the severe weather.

People are advised not to leave their homes unless it is very urgent and to avoid touching electric poles and wires. Villagers were also advised to keep their cattle away from electricity poles.

HEAVY INFLOW OF FLOODWATER

8 gates of Prakasam Barrage lifted

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Due to continuous rainfall, the Prakasam Barrage in Vijayawada has seen a heavy inflow of floodwater over the past few days. The Full Reservoir Level (FRL) at the barrage rose to 12 feet prompting authorities from the Water Resources Department to take action. On Saturday, they initiated the release of surplus water downstream by lifting eight out of 70 gates by one foot.



Irrigation officials released floodwater from River Krishna in Vijayawada on Saturday.

Officials from the Irrigation Department, Vijayawada Circle, decided to discharge excess water into the sea for the first time this monsoon season. With rainfall intensifying in the Krishna River catchment area, inflows into the barrage steadily approached the FRL of 12 feet. By 7 am, officials had commenced releasing 3,000 cusecs of water into the sea through the adjusted gates.

The area experienced heavy rainfall, recording 991 mm in the NTR district, with an average of 49.55 mm on Saturday. Consequently, numerous streams and rivulets overflowed, channelling rainwater towards the barrage. In response, officials from the irrigation department acted swiftly to release the surplus downstream.

Executive Engineer PVR Krishna Rao of the Krishna

Central Division reported that approximately 7,125 cusecs of water had reached the barrage. To maintain the water level at 12 feet, they discharged about 5,816 cusecs of surplus water into the sea by adjusting eight gates by one foot. An additional 1,309 cusecs were directed into the canals.

In light of the persistent rainfall, local administrations in the Krishna and NTR districts issued alerts to residents

living along the banks of the river Krishna. Control rooms were established in Machilipatnam and Vijayawada to monitor the situation closely.

District Collector DK Balaji of Krishna district directed officials to remain vigilant amidst the ongoing rains. He mandated the formation of committees at both divisional and district levels to manage flood responses, assess maintenance needs for irrigation canals and drains, and address agricultural losses and other damages in the district.

Meanwhile, NTR district Collector Dr G Srijana held discussions with district officials regarding the prevailing weather conditions. She instructed departments including revenue, panchayat raj, and health services to be on high alert and ensure prompt action on all reported incidents through the district's control room.

Govt will support flood victims: Kolusu

● LOSS TO BE ENUMERATED AFTER FLOODWATER RECEDES

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State I&PR and Housing Minister Kolusu Parthasarathy said that the government will help the flood victims in all possible ways. MLAs Ch Balaraju, Ch Prabhakar, Songa Roshan Kumar, Eluru District Joint Collector B Lavanyaveni and other district officials met the flood victims of Kukkunur and Velerupadu mandals on Saturday to inquire about their problems. The minister inspected flood-damaged houses in Velerupadu mandal, Allurinarag and Medipally and spoke to the family. The flood victims requested the Minister to help them as they have lost everything in the flood.

Responding to them, the minister said that the government will support the victims in all ways. Apart from providing houses to those who have lost their homes completely, compensation will be provided



to those who have lost their crops and cattle. He said that as soon as the flood water recedes, the officials of the respective departments will enumerate the losses in the flood-affected villages and compensation will be provided to the victims.

Since the onset of heavy rains, CM Chandrababu Naidu has alerted the district administration to take precautionary measures in Kukkunur, Velerupadu, Polavaram and other mandals where Godavari floods are likely to occur. He said that food and accommodation facilities will be provided to the victims at the flood relief centers until the flood water recedes. The minister directed the officials to provide morning breakfast, lunch and dinner in the evening to the people who are far away from

the relief center. Medical camps will be set up at the relief camps and ensure that there is no shortage of drinking water. The affected families should be provided essential commodities like rice, dal and edible oil.

Minister Parthasarathy said pregnant women nearing delivery time should be taken to the nearest government hospital immediately and children and elderly should be taken to safe places. The minister directed the animal husbandry department officials to provide the necessary fodder to the cattle. Due to the damaged roads between the villages, the connectivity roads should be urgently repaired so that the relief operations are not hindered due to disruption of traffic. The minister directed the DMHO to set up medical camps in the flood affected villages. The minister said that relief operations should be carried out without negligence.

ILLEGAL PRACTICES AT PVT HOSPITALS

Take strict action, DC tells officials

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

District Collector, Dr BR Ambedkar, has ordered a crackdown on illegal practices within the healthcare sector. The move comes after a recent advisory committee meeting focused on the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, which highlighted potential violations.

Dr Ambedkar voiced deep concern over a possible gender imbalance in the district, suspecting it to be a consequence of unlawful sex determination during pregnancies. He declared a zero-tolerance policy for such practices, warning of strict legal repercussions for violators. This firm stance follows a survey of 88 scanning centres that unearthed irregularities, prompting Dr Ambedkar to emphasize the crucial role of qualified medical



professionals in managing these facilities. He has proposed stricter vetting procedures to ensure that only qualified personnel are granted permission to operate scanning centres.

In a bid to strengthen transparency and accountability, Dr Ambedkar has mandated the creation of a centralized online portal. This portal will serve as a repository

for documented details of all deliveries and abortions performed in private hospitals within the district. Additionally, he has ordered a thorough review of the services offered by these hospitals. This review process carries the possibility of license revocation for institutions found to be non-compliant with regulations.

Engg students to report at colleges by tomorrow

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Director of the Technical Education Department, Dr B. Navya, has instructed students who have received engineering seat allotments through the Engineering, Agriculture, and Pharmacy Common Entrance Test (EAPCET) counselling to report to their respective colleges by July 22. Students can report either physically or via the designated online portal by this date.

In a press release, Dr. Navya emphasized that

students must adhere to the reporting deadline; otherwise, their allotted seats will be considered vacant. These vacant seats will then be included in the available seats for the second phase of EAPCET admission counselling, which begins on July 23.

Dr. Navya also urged all engineering college management to promptly update the joining details on the portal as soon as candidates report. She clarified that all joining details must be updated by July 23.

Nadda to attend national seminar in Vijayawada

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The National Seminar on the New National Education Policy 2020 is scheduled to take place at the School of Planning and Architecture in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, on August 3 and 4, 2024. Prof. Sirikonda Ramesh, Director of the School of Planning and Architecture, announced that the seminar will focus on the challenges faced in implementing the new national education policy.

During a brochure unveiling event at the school on Saturday, Prof. Ramesh elaborated on the seminar's agenda and notable attendees. Union Minister of Health, Family Welfare, and Medical Education JP Nadda will be the Chief Guest and is set to inaugurate the seminar. Narla



The School of Planning and Architecture, announced that the seminar will focus on the challenges faced in implementing the new national education policy.

Vinay Kumar, Academic Advisor at Siddhartha Academy, will be the Guest of Honour, and G. Luxman, National Joint Organising Secretary of Akhil Bharatiya

Rashtriya Shaikshik Mahasangh (ABRSM) from New Delhi, will deliver the keynote address.

Prof. R. Sivarama Prasad, Dean of the Department of Commerce and Management at Acharya Nagarjuna University, will serve as the convener of the seminar. Dr. Balasubramaniam, a political science faculty member at SRR & CVR Government Degree College, will act as the organising secretary.

Prof. Ramesh highlighted that the seminar will see participation from academicians, professors, lecturers, and teachers from across the country. Discussions will cover the benefits of the new national education system, the expected goals, the challenges encountered in its implementation, and potential solutions.

Krishna, NTR DCs directed to address rain-related issues

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Amid heavy rains lashing the region, Minister for Mines & Geology and Excise, Kollu Ravindra, has directed Krishna District Collector DK Balaji and NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana to urgently address the mounting issues faced by residents and farmers.

Ravindra attributed the overflowing drains in these districts to the previous government's lapses, underscoring the need for immediate remedial measures including desilting and disease prevention.

Speaking from his camp office in Machilipatnam on Saturday, Minister Ravindra held discussions with the district collectors, municipal commissioners, and health department officials. "Due to the relentless downpour, several areas are submerged, exacerbating the challenge of rainwater disposal," he noted, emphasizing the imperative

for swift action by concerned authorities.

Highlighting negligence by the former YSRCP administration over the past five years, Ravindra pointed out the severe repercussions faced by the public, including the outbreak of seasonal

diseases linked to choked drains. He affirmed the current government's commitment to tackle these long-standing issues with a comprehensive strategy, urging officials to prioritize the reinforcement of canal and drain embankments and the removal of impediments.

"In addition to grappling with incessant rainfall, farmers engaged in Kharif cultivation are experiencing significant setbacks," Ravindra acknowledged, urging officials to ensure uninterrupted irrigation to protect crops from inundation. He noted the heightened water levels at the Prakasam Barrage in Vijayawada due to upstream inflows.

National ST panel warns against injustice to tribals

PNS ■ PADERU

National Scheduled Tribes (ST) Commission member Jatohi Hussain Nayak issued a stern warning to district officials, emphasising that injustice against the tribal population would not be tolerated. During his visit to the Alluri Sitarama Raju district on Saturday, Nayak received 40 complaints from the tribal community, prompting a pointed challenge to the district officials.

Nayak questioned the officials, asking whether the numerous complaints were indicative of an institutional failure or if they represented issues within the tribal community that local authorities were unable to resolve. He cautioned against creating situations that might necessitate intervention from higher authorities, hinting at potential consequences for negligence. Criticizing the rampant practices of bribery and neglect, Nayak highlighted how these severely undermine the rights of tribals, including their right to build houses. Emphasizing the power vested in the ST



Commission, he underscored the urgent need to address the needs and rights of the tribal community.

During the meeting, Nayak brought attention to several critical issues affecting the tribals, including soil testing, crop insurance, the operation of single-teacher schools, and the lack of proper school buildings. He stressed the importance of education for tribals, pointing out that its absence contributes to problems like marijuana cultivation and drug addiction.

District Collector AS Dinesh Kumar presented a comprehensive overview of the district's demographics, tribal habits, agriculture, education, healthcare, alternative crop programs, coffee cultivation, health issues, and water supply

methods. Following this presentation, Nayak received complaints from the tribals and directed the officials to ensure prompt resolutions.

Among the complaints were reports from K Koti Babu of Hukumpeta Mandal and P Raju of Paduru regarding house demolitions targeting tribals while non-tribals were allowed to build freely. Tribal association representative Ramarao Dora complained that 60% of teachers in tribal schools are from plains areas and often pay local villagers to teach in their stead, leading to their prolonged absence from school duties.

Another significant complaint highlighted the inadequate implementation of the 1/70 Act, which allows non-tribals to claim rights in tribal

areas despite rulings against them. Suresh Babu alleged that a tahsildar demanded five cents of land to transfer 35 cents of ancestral land into his name. Nayak also emphasized the need to control the issuance of false certificates, reduce infant mortality rates, and prevent diseases prevalent in tribal areas.

The meeting was attended by Joint Collector Bhawna Vashisht, ITDA project officer V Abishek, SP Amit Bardar, Sub-Collector Dhatri Reddy, DRO B Padmavati, and representatives from various tribal associations. Nayak's visit and the subsequent meeting underscored the ongoing challenges faced by the tribal community and the urgent need for administrative and systemic interventions to ensure their rights and well-being.

Graft high in S'kulam sub-registrar offices

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

Corruption at the sub-registrar offices (SROs) throughout the Srikakulam district has reached a critical juncture, sparking widespread public anger and intense scrutiny from authorities. These 15 SROs, pivotal for the registration of essential legal documents—such as sale deeds, marriage certificates, and society registrations—are marred by systemic abuse of power, significantly eroding trust in these crucial institutions.

Despite government mandates that stipulate fee structures to keep services affordable, citizens are frequently confronted with exorbitant charges. The official fee for an Encumbrance Certificate (EC) spanning 29 years is set at Rs 300. However, reports indicate that several SROs are demanding upwards of Rs 500, exploiting the urgency of service requests. Similarly, a public copy, officially priced at Rs 400, is being sold for Rs 600 or more. Essential documents,

including sale and partition deeds, often incur additional illicit fees that can soar to Rs 15,000 or more, facilitated by middlemen and document writers.

The severity of the corruption crisis was underscored by a recent incident involving a resident from Chintada village in Srikakulam Rural. The individual was confronted with a staggering bribe demand of Rs 25,000 when attempting to register a rectification deed at the Amadalavalasa SRO. Left with no viable options, the resident was forced to seek registration services at the Ponduru SRO. Kasibugga SRO has also gained notoriety for routine bribe demands, exacerbating the distress of the local populace.

In response to the mounting complaints and growing public outcry, district authorities have commenced a vigorous crackdown on these corrupt practices. The district registrar has launched surprise inspections at Kasibugga and Mandasa SROs.

VMC acts swiftly to address rainwater issues

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr A Mahesh, the In-charge Commissioner of Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC), conducted inspections on Saturday to address the inconvenience caused by overflowing drain water in several areas. His proactive measures aimed to mitigate the impact on locals were observed across various key locations including National Highway Road at Benz Circle, Gurunanak Colony, ESI Hospital Road at Gundada, Komaraiah Street, Old Raja Rajeswaripeta, and Nizam Gate.

During his inspections, Dr. Mahesh personally supervised the clearance of silt obstructing rainwater flow in drains. He also directed the engineering and public health departments to maintain vigilance throughout the rainy season. At Benz Circle, he oversaw the removal of stagnant rainwater from roads



using advanced Airtech equipment.

Moving to Gurunanak Colony, Dr Mahesh promptly addressed road damage issues and instructed authorities to fill road holes with wet mix to prevent further inconvenience to residents. At ESI Road, he ensured effective drainage by supervising silt removal with an excavator.

During his inspections, Dr. Mahesh personally supervised the clearance of silt obstructing rainwater flow in drains. He also directed the engineering and public health departments to maintain vigilance throughout the rainy season

Attention was also given to Komaraiah Street, where rainwater blockage on Eluru Road posed a threat. Dr Mahesh immediately instructed engineering officials to clear drain silt for uninterrupted water flow.

Furthermore, Dr Mahesh emphasised the importance of sanitation maintenance across the city and directed officials to keep hill area residents informed and prepared for any potential risks during heavy rains. He stressed the need for proactive measures to ensure the safety of residents, with strict warnings against any negligence from VMC officers and staff.

In conclusion, Dr A Mahesh's comprehensive inspections and directives underscored VMC's commitment to resolving rain-related issues promptly and ensuring public safety throughout Vijayawada.

'Justice will be done to farmers'

● MP's assurance to land donors for Nagpur-Vijayawada express highway

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni) assured the farmers who sacrificed their lands for the construction of the Greenfield Express Highway 163 (G) from Nagpur to Vijayawada that he would take the necessary steps to ensure they receive compensation. Farmers who have not received award copies and compensation met MP Kesineni Chinni at his office, NTR Bhavan, in Gurunanak Colony, Vijayawada, on Saturday.

Farmers from Kavuluru in G Konduru mandal in the NTR district met MP Chinni and expressed their concerns about not receiving award copies and compensation for their lands. Approximately 170 farmers



MP Kesineni Chinni holding a meeting with Kavuluru farmers at his office in Vijayawada on Saturday.

gave their lands for the construction of the Nagpur - Vijayawada Greenfield Express Highway 163 (G) between the Khammam - Vijayawada stretch. Out of these, 60 farmers have received compensation. However, of the remain-

ing 110 farmers, only 20 have received award copies, while the rest have not received any award copies from the NHAI.

During the meeting with MP Kesineni Chinni, the farmers explained their concerns, highlighting that although the

NHAI authorities had installed survey stones on their agricultural fields, their names were not listed in the gazette notification. As a result, they have not received any compensation so far. The farmers urged the MP to ensure justice for them.

In response, MP Chinni assured the farmers that he would strive to resolve their issues after discussing the matter with revenue and NHAI authorities. He also promised to work towards providing compensation to all farmers who sacrificed their lands for the construction of the highway.

TDP leaders J Seetharamiah, Bhogineni Ravindra Rao, Cherukuri Venugopala Rao, Ch Subba Rao, B Ashok, and others participated in the meeting.

Autonomous colleges should focus on skill development: Pola

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Commissioner of Collegiate Education Dr Pola Bhaskar emphasized the need for autonomous colleges to focus on integrated skill development to ensure their growth and urged other degree colleges to follow suit.

A three-day workshop for principals and other key personnel of autonomous colleges, held under the aegis of the Faculty Development Academy at Government College (Autonomous), Rajahmundry, concluded successfully on Saturday.

Organised by the Commissionerate of Collegiate Education, the workshop aimed to enhance leadership qualities among the staff of autonomous colleges, thereby fostering the comprehensive development of these institutions. Principals, IQAC Coordinators, Academic Coordinators, and Controllers of Examinations from 26 autonomous colleges across



the state participated in the workshop.

The inaugural event was presided over by Dr. Ramachandra R. K., Principal of Government College (A), Rajahmundry. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Pola Bhaskar

highlighted the reforms introduced during his tenure, such as internal continuous assessment, internship, community service project, job portal, learning management system, the establishment of studios, and the creation of the Faculty Development Academy.

Dr. Chappidi Krishna, Joint Director of Collegiate Education, and Regional Joint Directors from the Collegiate Education Department also attended the event. Special Officers from the Commissionerate of Collegiate Education, Dr. K. Vijaya Babu and Dr. Anil Kumar, along with various resource persons, contributed to the programme.

Certificates were awarded by the Commissioner to students and faculty members from Government College (A), Rajahmundry, who recently participated in an educational

tour to Malaysia. Following the event, the principals of autonomous colleges honoured Dr. Pola Bhaskar for his contributions.

The program officer of the Faculty Development Academy, Nujilla Srinivas, delivered the vote of thanks. Faculty members and non-teaching staff from the college were present at the workshop.

The three-day workshop focused on several key areas, including institutional development plans for autonomous colleges, publication of research papers, funding for research, best practices for managing academic councils and boards of studies, curriculum design, continuous internal assessment, innovations, incubations, examination reforms, digital methodologies, and other crucial topics. Experienced resource persons provided training to equip the staff for the progressive development of autonomous colleges.



Siblings killed as tractor hits bike

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

In a tragic road accident, two school-going siblings were killed when a tractor hit the motorcycle at S Kothapalli village in Gummagatta mandal on Saturday. Police said that the deceased Arun Tej (7) and his sister Chitti (10) were going to school on a motorcycle being ridden by their maternal uncle. A speeding brick-laden tractor hit the bike killing both the siblings on the spot. The deceased siblings were studying at a private school in Rayadurgam and their paternal uncle used to drop them at school daily. The school students paid homage to the two deceased students by observing two minutes of silence and later the school management.

Collector reviews services at Ambedkar Memorial

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G. Srijana has instructed officials to facilitate all necessary arrangements for visitors to the Dr B.R. Ambedkar Social Justice Statue at Swaraja Maidanam in Vijayawada. She emphasized that any issues should be addressed immediately.

Collector Srijana visited the Ambedkar Smritivanam on Saturday and held a steering committee meeting at the Mini Theatre. The meeting covered topics such as greenery, RO plant maintenance, vehicle parking, security, and other relevant issues.

Later, Collector Srijana stated that Smritivanam is being developed into a prominent tourist attraction, expected to draw visitors from across the country. Key attractions include the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Social Justice Statue, a musical fountain, Kudya photos, and the Ambedkar Chaitya Experience Centre. She urged all related departments to work



NTR District Collector Dr Srijana addressing a meeting at the Mini Theatre on the premises of the Dr BR Ambedkar Smriti Vanam on Saturday

collaboratively to ensure a smooth experience for visitors. She also directed officials to focus on providing adequate drinking water, sanitation, and toilet facilities. Additionally, she requested measures to prevent traffic congestion caused by visitors. The meeting also discussed the installation of a special municipal water pipeline for the fountain, security staff tenders, and other

matters. Vijayawada Municipal Corporation In-Charge Commissioner Dr. A. Mahes, Additional Commissioner (Projects) K.V. Satyavathi, Social Welfare Department Officer K. Srinivasa Rao, APIIC Zonal Manager K. Sitaram, KPC Projects Limited representative Vasudeva Rao, and others attended the meeting

Crops in over 10,000 hectares damaged in EG: Collector

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

East Godavari District Collector P Prashanthi has said that as per the preliminary assessment, crops in over 10,000 hectares were damaged and assured of taking steps to extend crop loss insurance.

Collector Prashanthi visited some of the flood and rain-affected areas on Saturday in Nallajerla mandal. The Collector directed the officials to shift people living in flood-prone areas to the relief centres. She visited a relief centre and interacted with the flood victims.

Collector Prashanthi directed the officials to provide all required facilities to the flood victims in the relief centres. She reviewed the Yerrakalva devastation with the Tahasildar and other officials.

Talking to the media on the occasion, the Collector said that crops in over 10,000



hectares and many villages were inundated in the Yerrakalva flood water, adding that the incessant rain did not do major damage to the district.

The paddy crops in thousands of acres have been in flood water for the last three days and it takes time to assess the exact loss, he made it clear. "Crops in over 10,000 hectares have been marooned in flood water in Nidadavole and Nallajerla mandals. The worst affected is the paddy

crop," she said, adding that motors will be used to drain out water from the low-lying areas.

She said that steps would be taken to extend input subsidy to the affected farmers as soon as the report on the crop damage was received. Sub-collector Asuthosh Srivatsava, Agriculture office S Madhava Ro, DWMA PD P Mukhalingm, DMHO Dr.K Venkateswara Rao and other officials who accompanied her.



CM promises to resolve grievances

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu received grievances from citizens and party workers during a visit to the Telugu Desam Party central office in Mangalagiri on Saturday.

He listened to their concerns directly, with individuals and activists detailing issues they faced, including grievances related to property seized during the previous YSR Congress party government.

Members of Dwacra associations also reported issues with animators who allegedly forged signatures and took out loans from banks.

Heavy rain forecast for north coastal AP

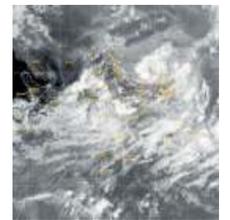
PNS ■ GUNTUR

The Meteorological Centre has forecasted heavy to very heavy rain at isolated locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 24 hours.

On July 21, heavy rain is expected at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and also in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema within the next 24 hours.

Thunderstorms with lightning and strong surface winds, reaching speeds of 30-40 km/h, are anticipated at isolated locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next 48 hours.

From July 22 to 24, strong surface winds with speeds of 30-40 km/h are expected at isolated locations in



On July 21, heavy rain is expected at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and also in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema within the next 24 hours

South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next week.

The southwest monsoon has been vigorous in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and active in Rayalaseema. Extremely heavy rainfall has been reported at isolated locations in the Alluri Sitarama Raju district of Coastal Andhra Pradesh, while heavy to very heavy rainfall occurred at isolated places in the Anapapalli district.

Heavy rain was observed at isolated locations in Eluru, Alluri Sitarama Raju, Anapapalli, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, Parvathipuram Manyam, Srikakulam, and Anapapalli districts of Coastal Andhra Pradesh, as well as in Nandyal of Rayalaseema over the past 24 hours.

Rainfall was widespread in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and at many places in Rayalaseema during the same period.



AICC member opposes Jagan's Delhi dharna

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

All India Congress Committee (AICC) member Kolanukonda Shivaji vehemently objected to former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's proposed dharna in New Delhi.

Talking to the media here on Saturday, Kolanukonda Shivaji objected to Jagan Mohan Reddy politicizing the murder of Sk. Rasheed which took place in Vinukonda in Palnadu district.

Though the police clarified that it was not a politically related murder, Jagan Mohan Reddy went to Vinukonda and consoled the bereaved family. Jagan Mohan Reddy had never consoled the bereaved families when he was the Chief Minister, he pointed out.

Later the former Chief Minister came down heavily on the 45-days-old Chandrababu Naidu-headed government and announced the staging of a dharna in Delhi in protest against the violence in AP. Moreover, Jagan Mohan Reddy demanded President Rule to be imposed in AP.

Congress party senior leader Shivaji questioned Jagan Mohan Reddy whether he ever staged a dharna in Delhi demanding the granting of Special Category Status (SCS) to AP and fulfilling the AP Reorganization Act provisions during his five-year tenure.

"The Jagan Mohan Reddy-headed YSRCP had over 30 MPs previously.



8 red sanders logs seized; one smuggler arrested

PNS ■ TIRUPATHI

The Task Force police seized 8 red sanders logs and arrested one smuggler at the Sanipai forest

area in Annamaya district. DSP Chenchu Babu told the media here on Saturday that on the directions of Task Force SP P Srinivas, a police team led by RI (Operations) Suresh Kumar Reddy and RSI Lingadhar conducted a combing via Avuladari, Saraswati Kauva and Mudumpadu forest area.

They spotted some smugglers carrying red sander logs. Noticing the police, the smugglers dumped the logs in the forest and started fleeing. However, the police chased and apprehended one of the smugglers while others managed to escape.

The arrested red sander smuggler was identified as Ramesh, who belongs to Attipattu village in Thiruvannamalai district in Tamil Nadu. CI Suresh Kumar registered a case and investigated.

SRM University-AP hosts 'Nano Jatha' event



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of the 13th edition of the Bengaluru India Nano 2024, heralded by Bharat Ratna recipient and renowned chemist Prof. CN R Rao, SRM University-AP was selected as one of the 21 universities across India to host "Nano Jatha," an intensive science outreach programme aimed at educating undergraduate students on the emerging trends in nanotechnology. The Nano Jatha programme, organized in multiple venues, aimed to raise awareness about

nanoscience and technology through technical presentations by expert scientists and a distinctive live experiment demonstration of nano kits showcasing nanoscience ideas. SRM University-AP was carefully selected as a prestigious venue for the event and successfully hosted the programme.

The event featured two expert talks by eminent dignitaries. Prof. BLV Prasad, Director of the Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS) at the Department of Science and Technology, Govt,

and the Nodal Officer for organizing Nano Jatha events, delivered a session introducing nanoscience and technology. "Nanoscience and technology are often foretold as the technology of the future. This multidimensional technology will revolutionize our understanding of every natural phenomenon and every aspect of human life," remarked Prof. Prasad in his session.

Prof. CP Rao, Senior Professor at the Department of Chemistry, SRM University-AP, presented the second expert talk on the applications of nanomaterials. The session delved into the properties of covalent molecules and their assemblage leading to cutting-edge technology. The programme also featured an exhibition showcasing experiments on gold nanoparticles, galvanization reactions between metals, piezoelectric pavement for futuristic applications, humidity sensors for real-world applications, and many more.



NTR dist CP visits Durga temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhara Babu, accompanied by his wife, visited the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam on Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada for darshan of the deity. During their visit, they performed special pujas in honour of the presiding deity.

Executive Officer (EO) of the Durga Temple, KS Rama

Rao, extended a warm welcome to the couple and facilitated their darshan of the goddess. Subsequently, Vedic scholars offered their blessings to Commissioner Rajasekhara Babu and his wife at the Veda Ashirvachana Mandapam.

As a token of respect and appreciation, EO Rama Rao presented them with Sesha Vastram (a sacred cloth), Laddu Prasadam (a sweet offering), and a Portrait (a likely commemorative portrait).

Health camp organized by Andhra Hospitals

Health camp held for schoolkids

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A school health camp was organized by Andhra Hospitals at Burripalem village, adopted by cine star Mahesh Babu, on the occasion of his daughter Sitaras's birthday on Saturday, July 20, 2024. The Andhra Hospitals team, including Dr. Syed Mudassar, Dr. Keerthana, and several nurses, participated in the camp.

All children from Ghattamaneni Nagaratnamma High School in Burripalem attended the camp. The team

from Andhra Hospitals also conducted awareness sessions on seasonal diseases such as viral fever, dengue fever, gastroenteritis, malaria, and typhoid. Tests were conducted for around 157 children during the health camp. Parents, children, and teachers received advice on preventive measures when to seek help from paediatricians, treatment at home, maintaining cleanliness, and the importance of a balanced diet.

Dr. P.V. Rama Rao of Andhra Hospitals mentioned



that Superstar Mahesh Babu, in association with Andhra Hospitals, is committed to developing Burripalem as a "Model Health Village" in Andhra Pradesh. This event marked the 40th camp held at

Burripalem. School Headmaster Rambabu, teachers Pemmasani Srinivas Rao, Sakamuri Chalapati Rao, and other school staff were also present at the camp.

'Hard work and affection in the community's DNA'

Kamma is Amma, says CM at Kamma Global Summit

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy attended the Kamma Global Summit in Hyderabad on Saturday and said that Kamma is like Amma. "It's in Kamma's DNA to help, don't lose it," he said.

In his speech, he emphasized the values and contributions of the Kamma community. Revanth said the term 'Kamma' signifies hard work and maternal affection, noting that the community is known for its presence in fertile areas. He praised the basic character

of Kammias, who are known for their hard work and willingness to help others, and acknowledged the respect and affection they have for him. He reflected on the influence of NTR, stating that many, including himself, had benefited from NTR's library, which helped them reach high positions.

He credited NTR with creating a brand of leadership and providing political opportunities through coalition politics. "When the country was witnessing the Indira Gandhi

wave, coalition politics was introduced by NTR. The BJP won two seats and one was from Telangana which was due to the coalition," he said. Revanth appealed to the Kamma community to join hands for promoting Hyderabad as a global, cosmopolitan city, assuring that his government is ready to support their skills.

He reiterated the government's commitment to non-discrimination, emphasizing respect for all castes and creeds. "Dissent is a right in democracy. You have seen the conse-



quences when attempts were made to control dissent on December 3, 2023," he said. He asserted that staging protests is a democratic right and warned against suppressing citizens' rights. He also addressed the lack of Telugu leaders in national politics.

All communities must join hands to fight terrorism: Jitendra Singh

PNS ■ DODA/JAMMU

Asserting the government is focused on improving security situation, Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday said all communities must join hands to fight the menace of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Singh, the minister of state in the Prime Minister's Office, was in Doda, part of his Udhampur parliamentary constituency which was rocked by several terror incidents in over past three months, claiming the lives of 10 security personnel and a village defence guard (VDG).

Addressing a public rally before holding a general "public durbar" lasting over three hours, the union minister reaffirmed the revival of VDGs.

"The security agencies have a strategy in place to control

the security situation in Doda and its adjoining areas in view of the recent incidents of terror, but such strategies are not discussed in public", he said.

Singh said the VDGs are being revived in the militancy-infested areas with an objective to empower them to fight terrorists.

"The government has also decided that if and wherever needed, VDGs will be deployed as part of the multi-pronged strategy to confront the challenge posed by terrorists," he said.

Singh announced that weapons, including SLR rifles, may be provided to the VDGs so that they can negotiate the challenge effectively.

The minister made a fervent appeal to all communities to put up a united front against terrorism.

"Doda did not succumb to



terrorism even during the 1990s when it was at its peak. As inhabitants faced the menace tooth and nail, they were successful in preventing migration of the people from here," he said.

Talking about infrastructure development of Doda, Singh said in the last 10 years of the government, a network of highways has been created in order to improve connectivity

to remote areas, reduce travel time and enhance passengers' comfort.

"When completed, the strategically important Lakhampur-Basohli-Bani-Bhaderwah-Doda National Highway will reduce distance on this route by more than 100 Kilometres," he said, adding "this will also create job opportunities for the local youth and boost tourism in the area."

In the same way, the all-weather under-construction Khellani Tunnel will cut travelling time for the inhabitants of the districts of Doda and Kishtwar both to Srinagar and Jammu, he said.

The minister said the government has been working tirelessly to ensure equitable development of all regions of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Modi government overcome the shortcomings of the previous regime and completed the unfinished and delayed infrastructure projects in J&K," he underlined.

Singh emphasised that the government provided LPG connections and built houses under PM AWAS, without taking into consideration caste, creed or religion of beneficiaries, as it is driven by the motto of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas'.

Will protect tribal lands, rights in Jharkhand, says Amit Shah

PNS ■ RANCHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said rampant infiltration has led to the shrinking of the tribal population in Jharkhand and added that if the BJP forms the next government in the state, it will release a 'White Paper' on demography to protect tribal lands and rights.

Shah expressed confidence in the BJP forming a government in Jharkhand, noting that the party won in 52 of 81 assembly segments in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Addressing party workers at Prabhat Tara Ground during the BJP's extended executive committee meeting, he said, "After forming a government in Jharkhand, we will bring out a 'White Paper' on demography to protect tribal people, their lands, reservation, and rights."

Without naming Hemant Soren, he accused Jharkhand's tribal Chief Minister of being



involved in "Love Jihad" and "Land Jihad" due to his "vote bank and appeasement policy," which Shah claimed was causing demographic changes.

He alleged that thousands of infiltrators were entering Jharkhand, marrying tribal women, obtaining certificates, and buying land, thus usurping jobs meant for local people. Shah criticised Soren for focusing on increasing his vote bank and alleged that his welfare measures primarily benefited his family.

"Infiltrators are usurping jobs meant for local people and Hemant Soren is busy increasing his vote bank. His welfare measures means welfare of his family," he alleged.

Shah also targeted INDIA bloc and Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, accusing them of "showing arrogance" despite losing the Lok Sabha polls and being involved in scams worth Rs 12 lakh-crore, appeasement, dynastic politics, and compromising national security.



AAP launches 'Kejriwal's guarantees' for Haryana

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita Kejriwal on Saturday launched five "Kejriwal's guarantees" for poll-bound Haryana, promising free electricity, free medical treatment, free education to people, Rs 1,000 per month to every woman in the state and employment for youngsters.

The Haryana Assembly polls are due later this year. Besides Sunita Kejriwal, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders Sanjay Singh and Sandeep Pathak were also present during the launch of "Kejriwal ki five guarantees" in Panchkula.

The Delhi chief minister, who is also the AAP national convener, is currently in judicial custody in an excise policy-related case.

While seeking people's support for the AAP during the Haryana Assembly elections, Kejriwal's wife Sunita hit out

at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of putting the Delhi chief minister behind bars as he was "jealous" of his works.

Calling her husband as "Haryana ka laal" (son of Haryana), she asked people that not even a single seat should go to the BJP and said "it is not about Kejriwal, it is about Haryana's honour".

Speaking about Kejriwal's "guarantees", she said there will be free electricity for domestic category and there will be round-the-clock electricity in the state if her party is voted to power.

"Like in Delhi and Punjab, there will be 'mohalla clinics' in cities and villages. The condition of government hospitals will be improved and there will be free and good treatment for everyone," she said.

The condition of government schools will also be improved where good and free education will be provided, she added.

"Each woman will get Rs 1,000 per month," she said. "It

Shed paternalistic approach towards junior lawyers: CJ

PNS ■ MADURAI (TAMIL NADU)

Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Saturday asked the advocates to shed away paternalistic approach towards junior lawyers and said paying them pretty low amounts leads to 'gatekeeping' of the profession.

After inaugurating celebrations here to mark the 20th anniversary of the setting up of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court, the chief

justice hailed the contribution of the bench in serving as a repository of data and software backup for the Delhi High Court.

Raising the issue of entry-level juniors getting paid a "meagre" salary, Justice Chandrachud said "please shed away the paternalistic approach that they have come to learn and get exposure and experience, and that you are mentoring them."

He pointed out that there was



much to learn from the junior lawyers. Paying lower amounts such as Rs

5,000 per month to the juniors leads to "gatekeeping" of the profession, he said. Maintaining that the juniors were particularly more cognizant of the contemporary realities, he advocated that the junior lawyers should be provided a "dignified sum commensurate with their hard work."

"This over-romanticisation of hard work, especially work without sufficient pay, is not merely rhetorical, it leads to people being expected to work

for long hours with less sleep and for lesser monetary value," Justice Chandrachud said and stressed that the entire Bar should raise competent lawyers unfettered by their social or economic background.

Lauding the Bench for its latest "remarkable feat", the CJ said the Delhi High Court had set up a Disaster Recovery Centre at Madurai Bench this year to ensure regular backup of its data and softwares.

BJP demands K'taka CM's resignation

PNS ■ BALLARI (KARNATAKA)

BJP Karnataka unit president B Y Vijayendra on Saturday demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over the alleged Rs 187 crore scam in a government-owned corporation.

He said scams can take place only if there is an incompetent Chief Minister or if there was his verbal consent.

Referring to the embezzlement of Rs 187 crore in the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation, Vijayendra said not only the scammers enjoyed the hard earned money of the taxpayers and they also splurged it during the Lok Sabha election in Ballari.

When the ED said that the money was used in other states as well, should the officials alone be held accountable for that, he wondered.

"You should resign in connection with this scam as you hold the Finance portfolio. It

VALMIKI CORPORATION SCAM



is unlikely that the Finance Department did not know about the transfer of money from its accounts to various accounts of the individuals," Vijayendra told reporters here. He said, "You (Siddaramaiah) said that you will investigate the scams of the BJP government. Who is stopping you? But, you should answer our questions first."

The scam came to light after the Accounts Superintendent of the Corporation Chandrasekharan P took his own life on May 26.

In the suicide note, Chandrasekharan alleged that

there was an illegal transfer of Rs 187 crore belonging to the Corporation to various accounts.

The Congress government thereafter constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT), which has so far arrested 11 people in connection with the case.

The CBI is also probing the case after the Union Bank of India lodged a complaint with it regarding the illegal transfer of money.

Nagendra, who resigned after the scam came to light, is presently in the Enforcement Directorate custody.

PM Modi, his New Zealand counterpart agree to advance bilateral ties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a congratulatory call from his New Zealand counterpart Christopher Luxon on his re-election as the two leaders agreed to advance their bilateral ties in sectors such as trade and economic cooperation, animal husbandry, pharmaceuticals, education and space among others. Modi's office said in a statement on Saturday that both leaders noted that India-New Zealand relationship is anchored in shared democratic values and close people-to-people ties, reiterating their firm commitment to take bilateral cooperation to new heights in the years to come.



Airline systems across airports working normally: Minister

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Airline systems across airports, which were impacted due to a global IT outage on Friday, have started working normally, and all issues are likely to be resolved by noon on Saturday, Civil Aviation Minister K Ramamohan Naidu said.

The ministry is constantly monitoring the operations at airports and airlines to ensure travel readjustments and refunds are taken care of, he added.

"Since 3 AM (Saturday), Airline systems across airports have started working normal-



ly. Flight operations are going smoothly now," Naidu said in a statement.

On Friday, in one of the biggest-ever IT outages, an update of a product offered by global cybersecurity firm

CrowdStrike triggered problems with Microsoft's Windows across the planet, hitting operations at financial sector companies and airlines while hospital operations got postponed and some television channels went off air.

Airports across the country witnessed chaotic scenes after the online passenger booking, reservation and boarding systems turned to manual mode due to the outage, resulting in higher passenger handling processing time and consequently hundreds of flights were delayed and many cancelled.

There is a backlog because of disruptions on Friday, and it is

getting cleared gradually, according to the statement.

"By noon today, we expect all issues to be resolved," the minister said.

The reservation and check-in systems of most of the airlines, including IndiGo, Spicejet, Akasa and Air India Express, are now operational, according to a source.

"I am going to Ahmedabad. Online printing (Digi Yatra) is convenient, which wasn't happening yesterday. Everything's fine today. Flights are on time. What happened yesterday was a network issue. No one can do anything about that," said a passenger at Delhi Airport.

Four members of Indian family in Kuwait killed in fire in apartment

PNS ■ DUBAI/KUWAIT CITY

In a tragic incident, an Indian couple and their two children were killed in a fire that broke out in their flat in Kuwait City, local authorities said on Saturday. The tragedy happened on Friday night, the same day they returned from Kerala after vacation.

Mathews Mulackal, his wife Lini Abraham, and their two children, all hailing from Neerattupuram in Alappuzha, suffocated to death on Friday night due to the fire caused by a short circuit in the air conditioner at around 8 pm in their second-floor flat in Abbasiya area, The Arab Times newspaper reported.

"The family had returned to

Kuwait from a vacation in Kerala, arriving around 4 pm local time on Friday. Mathews Mulackal worked at Reuters, while his wife Lini was a staff nurse at Adan Hospital in Al Ahmadi Governorate. Their children attended Bhavans School in Kuwait," the newspaper said.

"Mathew has been working there for the past 15 years. They left for Kuwait after their vacation on Thursday night from Nendubassery Airport," a relative told the media in Kerala on Saturday.

The Indian Embassy in Kuwait said it is in touch with the family in Kerala and will ensure the early repatriation of the mortal remains of the four Indians.

Study estimates 11.9 lakh excess deaths during pandemic

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In India, 11.9 lakh excess deaths occurred in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, 17 per cent higher compared to 2019, an international study has found.

The estimate is about eight times higher than the official COVID-19 deaths in India, and 1.5 times the World Health Organization's estimates, researchers, including those from the University of Oxford, UK, said.

Using data of over 7.65 lakh individuals, the study estimat-

ed changes in life expectancy at birth, by gender and social group between 2019 and 2020 in India, a country where one-third of global pandemic excess deaths are thought to have occurred, according to the authors.

The data was taken from the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5).

The life expectancy in women fell by 3.1 years, while it fell by 2.1 years in men, the authors said. Gender inequalities in healthcare and resource distribution within households could be possible reasons, they



said. The patterns contrast with those seen in high-income countries, where excess deaths

were higher among men than women during the pandemic, the authors said in the study published in the journal

Science Advances.

Looking at social groups, the researchers found that high caste Hindu groups experienced a life expectancy decline of 1.3 years, whereas Muslims and Scheduled Tribes experienced a 5.4-year and 4.1-year drop in their life expectancies.

The pandemic exacerbated the disparities already faced by these marginalised caste and religious groups in terms of life expectancy, the authors said.

"Marginalised groups already had lower life expectancy, and the pandemic further increased the gap between the

most privileged Indian social groups, and the most marginalised social groups in India," said first author Aashish Gupta, a research fellow at the University of Oxford.

Further, the researchers found that deaths in India increased across age groups, most prominently among the youngest and the oldest, whereas drops in life expectancy in high-income countries were largely driven by increased deaths in those aged 60 years and above.

Excess deaths among the youngest could be explained by

Student stabs schoolmate in Delhi, sent to juvenile home



A class 11 student was allegedly stabbed by another here in a government school in northwest Delhi's Jahangirpuri area, police said on Saturday. The victim was rushed to a hospital immediately where he is undergoing treatment. The incident happened over a minor dispute between the two students on Friday, they said. Police said the juvenile accused of the stabbing was taken into custody. During investigations, it was found that he stabbed the victim over something the latter had said the previous day. He carried the knife he used to attack the victim in his school bag, they said. Police said he was taken into the custody and sent to the juvenile home after the police produced him before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), an officer said.

Odisha: Padma Shri awardee Kamala Pujari dies at 74



Padma Shri awardee and noted organic farmer Kamala Pujari died on Saturday after suffering from kidney-related ailments, CMO sources said. She was 74, and is survived by two sons and two daughters. Pujari, who was admitted to the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack two days ago with kidney-related ailments, breathed her last on Saturday morning. She was being treated by a four-member medical team. She was brought to Cuttack from Jeypore District Headquarters Hospital after her condition deteriorated. President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled her death. "I am saddened to hear of the passing away of Smt. Kamala Pujari, an eminent social worker and agriculturist of Odisha. She was honoured with the Padma Shri for her remarkable efforts towards conservation of rare and endangered seeds of various varieties of rice and other crops. she promoted organic farming among farmers, especially women farmers. Her contribution to organic farming and environmental protection will always be remembered. My deepest condolences to her bereaved family and friends," President Murmu said in a social media post. Taking to X, Prime Minister Modi said:

Student stabs schoolmate in Delhi, sent to juvenile home

A TALE OF TWO COUNTRIES INDIA AND CHINA BEYOND BINARIES

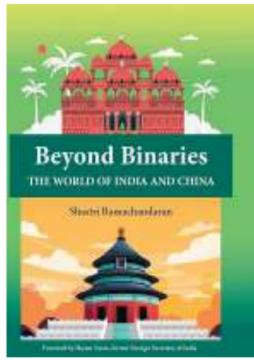
There is more to India and China relations that meets the eye and a lot goes behind the curtain in the people's republic of China writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

The book "Two Binaries: The World of India and China" by Shastri Ramachandran has generated significant interest. It explores several issues confronting the two countries and their bilateral relations. The author has ostensibly analysed why they behave as they do and what prevents the two countries from coming closer. Shastri Ramachandran is a journalist and well-versed in Chinese culture, having spent considerable time there, which makes him an authority on the subject. Indeed, he knows more about China than many so-called experts here. Although I haven't read the book, I recently participated in a discussion organised by the publishers to promote the book and initiate an informed debate. The discussion was chaired by Professor Madhu Bhalla, with veteran journalist Paranjay Guha Thakurta and Professor Arvind Yelary as other panelists. The discussion certainly achieved its purpose and initiated a debate on Indo-China relations and our skewed understanding of China as a country beyond TV news and newspaper articles, often superficial in nature. China is always on the minds of most Indians. We have a love-hate relationship with it: we love it when we use its cheap products and buy them to profit in the domestic market. As Paranjay Guha Thakurta pointed out, most businesses would struggle without Chinese imports. Most pharmaceutical companies use raw materials from China, as do many car companies which import Chinese spares.



Indeed, India and China represent 40 percent of humanity and wield enormous power by sheer population size. However, coming together requires overcoming many obstacles. Shastri has the benign notion of making this the Asian century, which is not possible without India and China burying their hatchet. But that is easier said than done. They have historical and geographical factors that keep them apart. Shastri sees Western influence, amplified by our media, as a root cause of strained relations. He praises the Chinese people and believes it is possible to bridge the divide between the two peoples, as we are more than two countries – two

civilizations. However, there is a problem with perception. He sees China as a country painted by the West as evil, and we are expected to accept that view. We do so happily, gulping down Western propaganda as the gospel truth. There is some truth in that. The West has a powerful media with unparalleled reach, capable of making or breaking anyone's image. But that is only part of the truth. Giving China a clean chit is definitely oversimplifying the situation. Let's put it this way: China and the Chinese government are two separate entities often at cross purposes. When you interact with Chinese



people, you encounter individuals who are nice, like people anywhere else. However, when you deal with China as a nation, you deal with its government, which is reactionary and dictatorial. Shastri makes a distinction between Chinese and Arab dictatorships in their construct, but the end result is the same: an oppressive, intolerant, and regressive structure focused on self-preservation. Simply assuming a communist facade does not make one truly communist. Let's face it: Stalin was a dictator, Nicolae Ceaușescu was a dictator, Kim Jong Un is a dictator, and so is Xi Jinping. Having a party like Hitler's doesn't

qualify one to be called a Communist (a much-abused term, but I would think of Lenin as one). A fun fact here: Hitler's party was officially called the National Socialist German Workers' Party! On October 22, 2022, Hu Jintao, former General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, was escorted out of the hall at the closing ceremony of the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. He was pulled from his seat by two men while Xi maintained a stoic face. Was it a Western construct? When Shastri says, and I quote, "Nancy Pelosi leads a delegation to Dharamshala with business stakes in Taiwan, and the Dalai Lama

receives treatment in the US, making clear what is happening," he trivializes the Tibetan struggle and casts aspersions on the Dalai Lama's credentials. The human rights violations and systemic cleansing in Tibet are beyond the scope of this piece. It is not just about Tibet; the Uyghur province, dominated by Muslims, has seen enough misery. The Uyghur province of China has witnessed a series of human rights violations. It includes mass arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearances, mass surveillance, cultural and religious persecution, separation of families, forced labour, sexual violence, and violations of reproductive rights. Many of the cases are well documented. And by the way, there is nothing capitalist about the students' protest in Hong Kong. I wish someone on the panel had spoken about these issues too. Most of them were fixated on Doklam and Galwan and relished Chinese cuisine and the great economic strides China made and how everyone wants to have a piece of the Chinese pie. Interestingly, after taking advantage of Chinese largesse, many African and Asian countries are now waiting their turn to go bankrupt. China's 'Belt and Road Initiative' is turning out to be a noose around hapless economies. China is doing in the 21st century what the West did in the 19th. Do we have a locus standi in criticising China's human rights violations when we have skeletons in our cupboard? Sure, we do. Martin Luther** King Jr. said, and I quote, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere!"

INSPIRATIONS BEHIND ZAIRA AND AUTHORSHIP JOURNEY

Professor **VINITA DHONDIYAL BHATNAGAR** shares the personal inspirations behind her novel **ZAIRA** and reflects on her journey from literature scholar to published author

What inspired you to write Zaira? Were there any personal experiences or specific events that sparked the idea for this novel?

Zaira was inspired by many events and incidents. I saw a terrible accident on a flyover near my office. The young man was hurled across the parapet and crashed onto the road below. The blood was trickling from his head like a rivulet. This scene has stayed with me and informs one of the most pivotal moments in the plot. The awareness as a mother and as a college teacher about the vulnerability of our young population also played a part. This is the age of experimentation and exploration, which is fantastic. But they should not fall prey to addictions or to habits that endanger their lives and their futures. This inspired me to write about the cynical, profiteering men who might make a fortune by luring people into consuming drugs.

Can you share your journey as a writer? What were some of the key moments or turning points that led you to become a published author?

I have been studying literature since 1985 and have a Phd in literary studies. So I have a long history of reading. It took guts to jump into writing especially because in my mind I kept comparing myself to the literary greats I had studied. I kept writing and kept getting rejected. Part of the problem was that my characters were not gripping enough. My father passed away in 2010 and his last words to me were not to give up. I am going to keep to that. The publishing industry has changed drastically in the last few years. Maybe my time was now. My editor friend, Kaneez, told me of Book Bakers, my literary agent and they helped place my book.

How do you balance your roles as a professor and a writer? Do you find that your



academic work and storytelling complement each other?

In my fantasies I would have been a full time writer, locked up in a room with my thoughts for company. In reality I am juggling a home, and a job in which I have seventy young people in a classroom and they come from far off places and with distinctive personalities and life stories of their own. I now recognise this as strength. It may give me less time to write but it gives me deeper compassion and understanding. I teach communication skills and my purpose in writing is primarily to communicate rather than impress. My book has been written primarily for the type of people I teach.

The characters in Zaira are richly detailed and complex. Can you share your process for developing characters like Zaira, Rajyawardhan and Jai? Did any of them change significantly from your initial concept?

Thank you! As you know characterization is what I have struggled with the most. So your words are a healing balm to my soul. Frankly, Zaira is based on a friend of mine who is like a daughter to me. The story is not hers. The

character is. I asked her at points "What would you wear to this?" or "What would you eat?" "Since I understood her well I could imagine what her responses might be in certain circumstances. Rajyawardhan is based partially on my favorite film star. I saw him on VIP road in Bhopal and I said to myself, "This man will be a legend." I think he is on his way to becoming one. I won't say more or I might be sued! With Jai I was thinking of the migration of the Sindhis to Bairagarh near Bhopal after partition. A character carries the history of his people and I hope some of that is reflected in Jai's story. What changed significantly throughout the course of the writing was the relationship outcome of Jai and Zaira's story. I was so keen to write a romance. Alas!

Zaira is filled with unexpected twists and suspenseful moments. How do you approach plotting a story to maintain tension and keep readers engaged?
My professor Malashri Lal suggested I start storytelling to live audiences. It's a very difficult art. Listeners get restless and children are bound to say "I am bored" when they are bored. That gives my writing urgency. I don't want to bore you. I don't want to waste your precious

time and attention.

The book touches on serious issues like drug trafficking and personal trauma. What kind of research did you conduct to ensure these aspects were portrayed accurately and sensitively?
I didn't do specific research on these topics but I have always stayed aware of these issues in society. I listened to ex-drug addicts speak about the fear of slipping back into the habit and of the humiliating lives they had led when they were in the grip of addiction. I knew a fantastic young man who just slipped away. It makes me sad. It makes me angry. We are letting our younger generations down if we don't do enough to protect and inform them. I was in the process of losing my mother as I wrote the book. I didn't know it then at a conscious level. But at a subconscious level, something inside me was preparing to let go. That rawness, that vulnerability and ache found itself on to the pages.

Fyodor Dostoevsky works often explore deep psychological and moral issues. How has Dostoevsky influenced your writing, particularly in Zaira? Are there specific aspects of his work that resonate with you?
During my MPhil days at Delhi University, I attended a seminar course of Russian Literature. (I must tell you the first four years of my life were spent in Russia. They believed then that the only privileged class should be children and I was treated accordingly.) I think I am obsessed with him because my uncle once dismissed somebody else's writing as "He is no Dostoevsky" Since then he has become my standard of good writing!

As a storyteller, are there any elements of Fyodor Dostoevsky's work that have influenced your writing, particularly in Zaira?
Ha Ha! I am arrogant enough

to really crave that comparison. Dostoevsky doesn't bother with facts as much as with states of mind. I find it difficult to add irrelevant details just to enhance the literariness of the language or story. He explores the two radically opposing sides of a character or situation. When I read his morally ambiguous characters I feel "This could be me, I could respond like this in this situation." I am hoping readers will feel the same way about my work.

You've mentioned that no change is possible unless the story touches the hearts of its readers. How do you ensure your stories have this emotional impact?
Even as a teacher I am aware miracles can happen and mountains can move if you can touch the hearts of your students. I do have a worldview, an urgent sense of how I think things should be. If I wrote them in a pamphlet it would be thrown away. So I weave a story. One of my favourite writers just revealed that he cried through the writing of his book. He knew the reader could feel the emotion because he felt it first. That is my greatest challenge. Years of struggling with literacy issues of theme, character, plot and conflict means I have a head first approach. I have to get in touch with my own heart to write. When we communicate heart to heart, we understand each other better. That's all I am going for.

What do you hope readers will feel or think about after finishing Zaira? Is there a particular message or feeling you want to leave them with?
I am hoping they will feel energised and empowered. Mistakes happen. So what? Why be afraid of heartbreak and betrayal to an extent where we forget to live? There are possibilities and opportunities all around us. We have a story to live. Let's make it grand!

BOOK REVIEW

A GRIPPING TALE OF AMBITION, THRILLER AND SELF-DISCOVERY

Zaira is a gripping thriller that blends suspense with societal critique, following a young woman's perilous journey through Bollywood and drug trafficking to uncover the truth behind her idol's death, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

ZAIRA by Prof. Vinita Dhondiyal Bhatnagar is a compelling young adult thriller that masterfully blends suspense with social commentary. Set against the glamorous backdrop of Bollywood and the dangerous world of drug trafficking, the novel follows the journey of Zaira, an ambitious college student from Bhopal, as she navigates the complex intersection between her dreams of fame and the traditional expectations of her family. The book introduces key characters like Jai, who provides stability and support to Zaira and Rajyawardhan Singh, Layla's charismatic lover whom Zaira admires. Rajyawardhan's presence adds complexity to the story, intertwining with Zaira's ambitions and the dangers she faces. Bhatnagar skillfully portrays Zaira's internal conflict as she navigates her relationship with Jai, initially a source of joy and comfort, which becomes a lens for her own desires and aspirations. Jai plays pivotal roles in shaping Zaira's journey, enriching her character development. Rajyawardhan also influences Zaira's decisions, adding depth to the narrative dynamics.



One of the most striking aspects of the book is its exploration of societal pressures and their impact on individuals, especially women. Zaira, initially portrayed as a somewhat naive and idealistic young woman, faces judgment and ridicule from her peers for her choices. The dialogue between Shikma and Deepa, who mock Zaira for her slipping grades and newfound relationship, highlights the harsh scrutiny that women often face. This criticism is not merely about academic performance or personal relationships but is deeply rooted in societal expectations and the pressure to conform to traditional roles. The book grips you from the first page to the last, urging you to finish it in one sitting as you delve into every character and their stories. Author beautifully portrays Zaira's journey, creating a remarkable reading experience. The subplot involving

Rajyawardhan Singh adds suspense and danger, Zaira's involvement in a dangerous drug trafficking investigation and the subsequent threats to her life bring a sense of urgency and tension. Her time in isolation, grappling with fear and turmoil, showcases her inner strength, particularly in her struggle to maintain sanity and self-awareness. Bhatnagar's writing is engaging and evocative, drawing readers into Zaira's world from the first page. The pacing is well-managed, balancing the thriller elements of the drug trafficking investigation with moments of introspection and character development. The author's ability to weave together personal growth, suspenseful plot twists and broader societal issues is commendable. The novel's exploration of the complexities of human relationships and emotions adds depth to the narrative. Zaira's evolving relationships with her family members, her romantic entanglements and her changing perception of Layla (whom she initially idolizes) all contribute to a human connection and growth.

ZAIRA is more than just a thrilling page-turner; it's a profound exploration of personal growth, societal pressure and the quest for justice. Bhatnagar's nuanced characters, engaging plot and evocative writing create a story that resonates long after the final page is turned. Once you start reading, you'll be eager to finish it in one go, drawn to explore every character and their stories. The book is highly recommended for readers who enjoy emotionally rich narratives combined with cultural authenticity and suspenseful elements. ZAIRA stands out as a remarkable contribution to contemporary Indian literature. It offers a thought-provoking experience that prompts readers to reflect on their own life choices and the societal forces that shape them. Vinita Dhondiyal Bhatnagar has crafted a novel that is both a gripping thriller and a sensitive portrayal of a young woman's journey to self-discovery, making it a must-read for fans of the genre and beyond.

LOBSTER LOVE

PAWAN SONI discovers how Delhi is experiencing a culinary renaissance with new venues offering world class ingredients



PAWAN SONI
Food critic and founder
of the Big F Awards

Getting high-quality lobster in Delhi can be quite a challenge. This is why I make it a point to attend most crab and lobster festivals in the city, where the freshness and quality of these exquisite sea creatures are guaranteed. I have enjoyed several memorable meals at Shang Palace, Shangri-La Eros Delhi, and the ongoing 'Clawsome Chobster' meal was no exception. This special menu features dishes made with both chicken and lobster, likely to appeal even to those who don't typically enjoy shellfish. We began with a lobster and mango salad, a perfect summer dish. The sweetness of the lobster meat and fresh mangoes, combined with the coconut sauce, was perfectly complemented by the texture of lettuce and the acidity of lemon. For those who enjoy Chongqing chicken with its bullet chili heat, the lobster version is a must-try. The lobster, with its meat still clinging to the shell, is truly a palate pleaser. After tasting this, I wonder if I'll ever enjoy the chicken version as much. The only chicken dish we tried in starters was the bang bang chicken. Coated with the panko/breadcrumbs for the extra crunch for this juicy chicken breast filling, it surely had the bang. Though for the sauce, I missed the mayonnaise in the dip which is normally



mixed with sweet chilly sauce. In the dim sum selection, we tried the kaffir lime lobster dumplings served with oscietra caviar. Though the kaffir lime flavor was somewhat subdued, these beautifully crafted dumplings were delightful. The lobster and chicken sui mai were expertly made with thin skins and juicy fillings. Feeling quite full after the starters, we decided to skip the carbohydrate dishes, which

included fried rice with lobster, chicken, and egg. Another intriguing option was the Chobster, a whole grilled chicken served with lobster rice. This dish, as our server mentioned, requires about 45 minutes to prepare, so we opted for the chili pepper lobster tail instead. During our meal, Mr. Abhishek Sadhoo, General Manager of the hotel, stopped by, and we exchanged pleasantries. When

asked about the sourcing of their lobsters, he proudly shared that they are flown in from Canada. I am eagerly anticipating their new festival offerings, which will feature an abundance of lobster, reflecting their commitment to bringing top-quality seafood to India. Shhh... keep this secret between us. Delhi is experiencing a culinary renaissance, with new venues offering world-class

ingredients. If you love seafood as much as I do, don't miss this special menu, available only until July 21, 2024.

(Author is a food critic and founder of the Big F Awards. He can be reached at

Pawan.Soni@indianfoodfreak.com)
Address: Shang Palace, Shangri-La Eros, 19 Ashoka Rd, Janpath, Connaught Place, New Delhi, Delhi
Phone: 011-41191919



A CULINARY COACH

Introducing Capital Diner, a unique restaurant located in a refurbished railway coach, providing travelers and locals with a nostalgic and immersive dining experience at the New Delhi Railway Station

Nestled within the bustling confines of New Delhi Railway Station lies Capital Diner, an enchanting escape that seamlessly blends the nostalgia of old-world train journeys with the flair of contemporary dining. This innovative restaurant, housed within a meticulously refurbished railway coach, promises an unforgettable culinary experience for travelers and locals alike. Stepping into Capital Diner is equivalent to embarking on a journey through time.

Capital Diner offers a unique blend of history, ambiance and exquisite cuisine, making it an ideal spot for travelers and locals alike. Upon entering Capital Diner, guests are transported back in time, as the restaurant's design combines the charm of American diners with the luxury of old-world train journeys. The interior, fashioned from a retired Indian Railways coach, exudes an air of elegance and charm reminiscent of the bygone era of train travel. Rich brown vertical stripe wallpaper, evoking memories of the legendary Orient Express, complements plush mallard shade booth seating and tasteful mosaic tiling. Soft beige LED lighting strips cast a gentle, starlit glow, enhancing the ambiance with a touch of luxurious warmth. Beyond its captivating aesthetics, Capital Diner delights diners with a diverse menu that celebrates both traditional Indian flavors and international cuisines. From hearty kadhai paneer paired with freshly baked naan to creamy penne tomato pasta with succulent chicken, every dish is crafted with meticulous attention to detail and premium ingredients. Each bite is a witnessed to the culinary expertise of the restaurant's dedicated chefs, ensuring a gastronomic journey that satisfies even the most discerning palate.



railway travel meets the sophistication of modern dining," shares Mr. Harish Kumar Arora, Founder of Capital Diner. "Our aim is to create a dining experience that not only tantalises the taste buds but also evokes cherished memories of train journeys past."

Capital Diner stands as a testament to innovation in the culinary landscape of New Delhi, offering more than just a meal but an immersive experience that celebrates the cultural heritage of India's railway history. Whether seeking a quick bite before catching a train or a leisurely dining experience amidst the station's vibrant atmosphere, Capital Diner promises an unparalleled fusion of nostalgia and culinary excellence.

So, next time you find yourself at New Delhi Railway Station, don't just pass through - immerse yourself in the allure of Capital Diner. Indulge in the ambiance, savor the flavours and rediscover the magic of train travel through a dining experience like no other.

FAST FACTS

Circulating Area, New Delhi Railway Station, Near Ajmeri Gate, Connaught Place, New Delhi. Hours: 11 AM to 11 PM
Price for Two: INR 600 Instagram: @capital.diner

EMBRACING VEGANISM IN ZURICH

When considering a trip to Switzerland, famous for its chocolate and cheese, you may question if it suits vegans. Yet, surprisingly, Switzerland is an exciting destination for vegans, offering unexpected delights. In Zurich, there are chances to explore innovative sustainable dining options

BY AKANKSHA DEAN

REDEFINING GASTRONOMY

Switzerland pleasantly surprised me with its vegan options. Local supermarkets carry a variety of vegan products such as plant milk, tofu, lentils, and Swiss vegan brands like New Roots Cheeses and Planted Vegan Meats. The cities like Zurich, Geneva, Lugano, Bern, and Lucerne offer many vegan-friendly restaurants listed on Happy Cow. Zurich and Geneva stand out in the vegan scene, but other cities also provide for vegans. Be sure to check food labels for hidden dairy ingredients. Swiss cities feature diverse vegan eateries like Tibits and Hiltl serving global cuisine. Do try the traditional Swiss dish Rösti. During my month-long stay in Zurich following a vegan diet, I discovered the city's vibrant vegan scene, surprising given its reputation for banking and luxury shopping. Haus Hiltl, the world's oldest vegetarian restaurant on Sihlstrasse 28, 8001 Zürich, offers classic dishes like house-made meatballs and rich Bolognese bowls. Guests can enjoy a la carte options or the vegetarian buffet, allowing them to savour various flavours. Hiltl Sihlpost near the main train station offers buffet options for breakfast and other meals. One remarkable aspect of Haus Hiltl is its carefully curated menu, making it a top choice for those with specific dietary needs like gluten-free, nut-free, or soy-free preferences. Discover and savour these top dining destinations in the city.

Zizi Hatab, a Moroccan immigrant raised in a multicultural setting near the Mediterranean coast of Spain, is redefining gastronomy with plants. Despite starting with a background in Spanish fishing gastronomy, Zizi's journey led her to Barcelona for engineering studies, where she balanced hosting dinners in her student dorm with exploring tapas venues. Transitioning to a corporate engineering role in Switzerland, Zizi's passion for cooking persisted. Without professional culinary experience, she boldly approached top Swiss chef Andreas Caminada, securing an internship at his renowned restaurant, Schloss Schauenstein. Returning to Zurich in 2019 to prepare for the launch of her debut restaurant, KLE, Zizi made a bold decision to offer an exclusively plant-based menu and lifestyle. Despite scepticism from various quarters, Zizi remained steadfast in aligning her values with her culinary vision, believing in the transformative power of a plant-based diet and food's ability to connect people. Through KLE, Zizi aims to inspire a change in consumer habits by offering a culinary experience based on love, innovation in plant-based cuisine, and sustainability. Emphasizing locally sourced ingredients and sustainability, Zizi creates a welcoming atmosphere for both her teams and guests, fostering memorable dining encounters. Her pioneering work in plant-based



fine dining at KLE has garnered recognition both locally and internationally, solidifying her influence in the gastronomic realm. Her second establishment, DAR, swiftly became recognized and was highlighted as a top spot by The 50 Best. Particularly noteworthy is DAR being awarded a distinguished Green Michelin Star in 2022. This accolade marks Zizi as the first Swiss vegan chef to attain such an honour, affirming her status among the global culinary leaders. In the same year, Zizi was honoured as one of the 10 emerging chefs influencing the evolution of gastronomy in the 50 Next prestigious list.



ELEGANT YET APPROACHABLE FINE DINING AT KLE

Located in the vibrant District 3 of Zurich, KLE's diverse team brings a multicultural flair to Zurich's dining landscape, creating an intimate and welcoming atmosphere. An inviting outdoor terrace provides a charming setting for open-air dining when the weather is pleasant. Recently awarded both a green and red Michelin star, KLE stands out as Switzerland's first plant-based restaurant to receive such recognition, a testament to the chef's dedication to culinary excellence. Each dish emphasizes quality ingredients, such as the 'black pearl mushroom' with a

sauce crafted from 25 locally sourced elements like Weggis lemongrass. The house bread, reminiscent of Moroccan buns, served with egg-free aioli made from 'aqua-faba' and Moroccan hummus, along with unique pickled vegetables, showcases the chef's inventive twists on traditional flavours. Sauerklee, a cherished ingredient in various cuisines, highlights KLE's blend of local and global culinary influences, inviting diners to savour a sensory exploration of the chef's culinary heritage.

DAR & ITS COCKTAIL BAR

My visit was truly eye-opening. DAR, meaning 'to give' in Spanish, fuses Moroccan and Spanish influences to create a remarkable plant-based dining experience. The menu showcases fresh seasonal vegetables, artisanal bread, and delectable desserts, inviting diners to explore global flavours like salted lemon mustard buns and turmeric-infused roasted beets. Opting for the chef's selection treats guests to a well-curated array of snacks, entrees, and sweets that leave a lasting impression. Reserving ahead is essential for a table at DAR, especially for the popular weekend vegan brunch featuring delightful honeycomb-shaped pancakes. Adjacent, the Cocktail Bar offers sustainably crafted vegan drinks that embody the vibrant tastes of Spain and Morocco. This 'slow fast food' concept extends to enjoying homemade vegan burgers while respecting the environment.

DAR's atmosphere celebrates guilt-free pleasures that blend taste, tradition, and ethical dining, offering a truly gratifying experience.

PINTXOS AND WINE AT COR

Cor on Weststrasse is a hidden treasure in the heart of Zurich, offering a cosy atmosphere where wine and tapas are the stars. Zineb and Bernd Vogel's love for Catalan cuisine is evident in the carefully crafted plant-based tapas and pintxos. The wine selection, featuring mainly Spanish and French wines, adds elegance to the experience, promising a diverse culinary journey with each bottle. Savouring delights like stuffed peppers and 'pa amb tomaquet' reveals Cor's dedication to organic, local ingredients. What distinguishes Cor is its innovative wine menu, constantly evolving to complement the diverse menu offerings. Whether for an impromptu aperitif or a relaxed dinner, Cor's charming ambiance and delicious offerings make it a top choice in Zurich's dining scene. A visit to Cor promises a delightful blend of flavours, setting, and warmth that truly elevates the dining experience in Zurich.

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.

India a preferred investment destination for investors: Goyal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday appealed to the Indian diaspora of the US to help promote the country as a preferred investment destination, highlighting the vast opportunities available in various sectors.

He said that the government has taken a series of measures to attract investments and those steps include promoting ease of doing business, reducing compliance burden, opening sectors like space and eface for foreign direct investments.

Goyal also asked the diaspora to participate in making India a developed nation by 2047.

"Help promote brand India as a premium investment destination. Investing in India has tremendous growth potential and we saw NRI deposits (increasing to) US\$ 3 billion between April and May, and that is four times what it was last year. I am sure many of you



"I would invite all of you to invest in India. India's growth story will continue unfettered at a scorching pace. India would continue to lead the world economy and will continue to be the most favoured destination for investment, and manufacturing," Goyal said.

would be looking at investment in the Indian stock market, bond market, banking systems, fixed deposits, depending on your appetite for risks," he said while virtually interacting with the Indian diaspora of the US.

He added that though at present the US is attractive for investors because of high interest rates, going forward India provides huge opportunities for businesses.

"I would invite all of you to invest in India. India's growth story will continue unfettered at a scorching pace. India

would continue to lead the world economy and will continue to be the most favoured destination for investment, and manufacturing," Goyal said.

On clean energy, he said that India has the world's largest renewable energy programme of 500 GW.

"We already have 200 GW and we are ramping it up and may be on Tuesday's budget, let us wait and watch what further initiatives in these directions of sustainability are brought," he said.

Replying to a question about

social media confusion during the general election, the union minister said "we have" lessons to learn as every election teaches a lot of new things.

"I can assure you that we are all working to understand evolving dynamics, what changed, what we need to focus on. After an election, there is always a period of time when anybody who has performed better than expected does have a little more arrogance and somebody who has performed less than expected does take time to introspect and course correction.

Tea industry seeks higher RoDTEP rates to make exports competitive

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The tea industry has sought higher rates under the RoDTEP scheme to make exports more competitive in the overseas markets.

Leading industry body Indian Tea Association (ITA), in its pre-budget memorandum, said that the present RoDTEP rate for bulk tea is 1.7 per cent (free on board) subject to a cap of Rs 6.70 per kilogram. The association urged the government to increase the reward base rate under the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) for black tea in bulk to remain competitive in the international markets.

The RoDTEP scheme ensures that exporters receive refunds on embedded taxes and duties that were previously non-recoverable. Another industry body Tea Association of India (TAI), in its pre-budget proposal submitted to the government, said the RoDTEP rate for tea should be

higher than the earlier MEIS (merchandise exports incentive scheme) of five per cent to enable Indian tea to retain its competitiveness in the global market.

Since its inception in January 2021, the RoDTEP scheme has already provided support amounting to Rs 42,000 crores to more than 10,500 export items, an official statement said in March. The association has also sought for imposition of an anti-dumping duty on imports of Nepal tea.

The TAI said that this measure would prevent the dumping of cheap and duty-free tea from Nepal and boost exports of genuine Darjeeling tea.

Such a measure would also thwart the passing off of Nepalese tea as a geographical indication (GI) tag product.

The ITA said that the government should exempt tea from levy on TDS on cash withdrawals due to a lack of banking infrastructure in the tea-growing areas in the country.

MONEY MATTERS

Kotak Mahindra Bank Q1 profit rises 2% to Rs 3,520 cr



Kotak Mahindra Bank on Saturday reported a 2 per cent rise in net profit to Rs 3,520 crore on standalone basis for the first quarter ended June 2024. The private sector lender had posted a net profit of Rs 3,452 crore in the

same quarter of the previous fiscal year. Total income during the period grew to Rs 15,675 crore as against Rs 13,183 crore in the year-ago quarter, Kotak Mahindra Bank said in a regulatory filing. Interest income increased to Rs 12,746 crore from Rs 10,500 crore in Q1 FY24. On the asset quality front, the bank's gross non-performing assets (or bad loans) remained flat at 1.39 per cent of gross advances. Similarly, Net NPAs dropped to 0.35 per cent from 0.40 per cent in the same quarter a year ago. Capital Adequacy Ratio of the bank stood at 22.41 per cent at the end of June 30, 2024, against 21.12 per cent at the end of the same quarter a year ago.

Pearl Global Industries raises Rs 149.5 cr through QIP issue



Apparel manufacturer and exporter Pearl Global Industries has raised Rs 149.50 crore from qualified institutional investors for repayment of certain debt and inorganic growth, among others. The qualified

institutional placement (QIP) attracted notable investors such as HDFC Mutual Fund, HSBC Mutual Fund, ICICI as Prudential Mutual Fund and Goldman Sachs Fund," it said in a statement on Saturday. The company has "successfully completed the QIP by raising Rs 149.50 crore", it said. Pearl Global said it issued 20,45,143 equity shares of the face value of Rs 5 each at a price of Rs 731.00 per equity share. "Total shares outstanding post allotment are 45,642,367," the company said. PGIL plans to use these funds for funding working capital requirements, repayment of certain outstanding borrowings, inorganic growth initiatives and general corporate purposes. "By strategically allocating these funds, we aim to strengthen our market presence, innovate our product offerings, streamline our ESG initiatives, and invest more in sustainable products and business operations," Pearl Global Industries Ltd (PGIL) Managing Director Pallab Banerjee said.

Yes Bank Q1 net profit surges 46.7% on lower provisions



Private sector lender Yes Bank on Saturday reported a 46.7 per cent growth in net profit to Rs 502 crore for the June 2024 quarter, helped by a reduction in provisions. The city-headquartered bank's core net interest income rose 12.2 per cent to Rs 2,000 crore.

Its net interest margin stayed flat at 2.4 per cent. The deposits, on which a good part of the system is struggling, were up by over 20 per cent. The other income line grew 5.1 per cent to Rs 1,141 crore during the quarter. Its overall provisions declined 41.2 per cent to Rs 212 crore, and a senior official credited the same to the recoveries on bad assets, which were transferred to JC Flowers Asset Reconstruction Company. There was a writeback of Rs 318 crore on provisions on investments against an outgo of Rs 144 crore in the year-ago period, while provisions for taxation increased to Rs 171 crore from Rs 116 crore, and the same on non-performing assets jumped to Rs 513 crore from Rs 314 crore as the provision coverage ratio increased. On the asset quality front, the bank acknowledged some stress in the problematic unsecured advances portfolio and added that it has led to a cautious approach in the segment.

Credai wants tax sops for homebuyers, incentives for builders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Realtors' body Credai on Saturday urged the government to provide more tax benefits to homebuyers, offer incentives to builders to develop low-cost homes and streamline the approval process to undertake real estate projects in the upcoming Budget.

Credai, in a statement, said it has given various recommendations to the government for further growth of the real estate sector.

These recommendations emphasise the importance of measures like streamlined approval processes and subsidies for developers investing in affordable housing

projects, the association said.

"With its significant contribution to the GDP, employment generation and infrastructure development, the Indian Real Estate sector looks forward to a supportive budget that addresses certain long-standing challenges and sets the platform for sustainable and sustained growth.

"Our recommendations are aimed at sustaining demand through a slew of measures, including increasing in interest exemption for home buyers, reintroduction of CLSS (credit linked subsidy scheme), and steps required to boost Affordable housing," Credai President Boman Irani said.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Imported items sourced from local suppliers and royalties, technical charges paid out of India as well as supply of repackaged or refurbished goods will be excluded from the calculation of local content, an official said.

These changes are included in the modified public procurement norms with an objective of giving maximum preference to companies that use higher levels of local content in their products. The government prefers made in India goods in their purchases, which run into lakhs of crores of rupees every year.

Major preference in government purchases is given to companies whose goods and services

CHANGES IN PROCUREMENT NORMS

Imported items sourced locally excluded from local content calculation



have 50 per cent or more local content, a move aimed at promoting 'Make in India' and making the country self-reliant.

The Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India), Order 2017, has introduced a concept of Class-I, II and non-local suppliers, based on which they will get preference in government purchases of goods and services. Making modifica-

tion to the definition of 'local content', the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has revised the 2017 order, the official said. "Imported items sourced locally from resellers/distributors, license fees/royalties paid/technical charges paid out of India, procurement/supply of repackaged/refurbished/rebranded, shall be excluded from the

calculation of local content," the order said. It also said that the procuring entities will have to obtain from bidders, the cost of such locally-sourced imported items (inclusive of taxes) along with break-up on license/royalties paid/technical expertise cost sourced from outside India.

OEM (original equipment manufacturer) certificates for country of origin have to be provided for the items sold by the bidder as resellers, it said. It added that this will also address the concerns of the stakeholders regarding import of refurbished/rebranded/repackaged goods and services being shown as Make in India and also being included in the local content calculation for becoming Class-I local supplier.

MICROSOFT SYSTEM OUTAGE

All exchanges, clearing corporations remain unaffected

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

All stock exchanges and clearing corporations remained unaffected due to a global outage of Microsoft systems, bourses said in a joint statement on Saturday. On Friday, there was a global outage of Microsoft systems. This technical glitch has caused disruptions across various sectors globally.

"In India, all exchanges and clearing corporations functioned without any impact," the statement noted.

Out of the over 1,400 trading members ecosystem, 11 trading members reported disruptions to their operations, which were



either resolved during the day or are being resolved, it added. Overall, exchanges and clearing corporations have not witnessed any significant impact on the trading and clearing activities in the Indian securities market, the statement noted. The widespread Microsoft outage disrupted flights, banks, media outlets and companies across the world on Friday.

Besides, several traders in India faced operational disruption on Friday as a global service outage of Microsoft systems affected many brokerages, including 5paisa, IIFL Securities, Motilal Oswal and Angel One. Some brokerages later stated that their systems were restored. The glitch not only affected broking firms but also disrupted airlines' operations.

ONGC acquires Equior stake in Azerbaijan oilfields

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

ONGC Videsh Ltd, the overseas investment arm of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), has acquired Norwegian firm Equior's stake in an Azerbaijan oilfield and an associated pipeline for US\$ 60 million, the firm said in a statement.

OVL "has signed a definitive sale purchase agreement (SPA) for directly acquiring 0.615 per cent participating interest (PI) in offshore Azeri Chirag Gunashli (ACG) oil field in Azerbaijan from Equior. The agreement also includes acquiring 0.737 per cent shares of the Baku Tbilisi Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline company through its wholly-owned subsidiary ONGC BTC Limited," it added.

The acquisitions, expected to be completed in the upcoming months, involve a total investment of up to US\$ 60 million. OVL currently has a 2.31 per cent stake in the ACG field and 2.36 per cent in the BTC pipeline.



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The buyout of Equior will help raise its stake. Equior, in December last year, announced an agreement to sell all its remaining assets in Azerbaijan to SOCAR (State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic).

The assets comprised a 7.27

per cent non-operated interest in the Azeri Chirag Gunashli oil fields in the Azerbaijan sector of the Caspian Sea, 8.71 per cent interest in the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline and 50 per cent in the Karabakh field.

AiDash opens AI centre of excellence in Bengaluru

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

AiDash, an enterprise SaaS company focused on making critical infrastructure industries climate-resilient and sustainable with satellites and AI, has announced the launch of its new AI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru.

The facility seeks to become a hub of innovation and advanced research, dedicated to driving significant advance-

ments in artificial intelligence (AI), remote sensing, and geospatial analytics.

The launch of Bengaluru AI Centre of Excellence - spread over 8,000 square feet - follows a funding round of USD 58.5 million in April this year, bringing the company's total funding to USD 91.5 million.

In addition to teams in the US and the UK, AiDash has over 300 employees in its Gurugram and Bengaluru offices.

"While most of AiDash's revenue comes from the U.S. and UK markets, India holds particular significance to AiDash's operations due to its outstanding technological capabilities and the extensive talent pool available. With the launch of the AI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, the company plans to double the size of its team in the next two years," according to a company release.

EPFO officers raise concern over inadequate IT infra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Employees' Provident Fund Officers' Association (EPFOA) said it has been regularly submitting requests for urgent interventions to upgrade the EPF IT systems - software, hardware, IT manpower - which are causing acute strain on EPF manpower and adversely affecting EPFO ser-

vices. The situation has now turned serious with officers and offices reporting significant system deficiencies on a daily basis, the association said.

Severely inadequate EPFO IT systems and resultant service bottlenecks are adversely

affected EPF services, it added.

The EPFO application software serves as the foundational component of its service delivery infrastructure.

The body said it is the primary platform through which our regional offices process and adjudicate member claims. In recent times, the software

has exhibited significant instability, characterised by frequent outages, it stated.

Over the past several weeks, the application's performance has deteriorated, manifesting in frequent system slowdowns, involuntary user logout and complete system failures, it pointed out.

The minister also asked the industry to focus on reducing imports, research & development and skill improvement.

Nadda also launched the brochure for the 13th edition of India Chem.

IndusInd Bank plans to raise Rs 30,000 cr

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Private sector lender IndusInd Bank on Friday said it plans to raise Rs 30,000 crore through debt securities and share sales. In a stock exchange filing, the lender said its Board of Directors approved the fund raise at a meeting held on Friday.

The Board has approved "raising of funds through debt securities in any permitted mode on a private placement basis as may be decided, for an aggregate amount of Rs 20,000 crores or its equivalent amount in permitted foreign currencies". This is subject to the approval of shareholders and regulatory/statutory approvals.

Govt to address challenges faced by chemical industry, boost growth: Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda on Saturday said the government will make necessary interventions in its policies and programmes to address challenges faced by the chemicals and petrochemicals industry and boost the sector's growth.

The minister was speaking after launching the 13th edition of the India Chem 2024 event to be held in October this year in Mumbai.

"The Prime Minister desires that we have to become a US\$ 5 trillion economy. If we have to become a 5 trillion economy, we have to



align our programmes or policies accordingly, to see to it that this petrochemical industry chemical industry also goes in the same way and aligns itself, so that we all

together contribute to that US\$ 5 trillion economy," Nadda said.

The minister mentioned that industry representatives have talked about the chal-

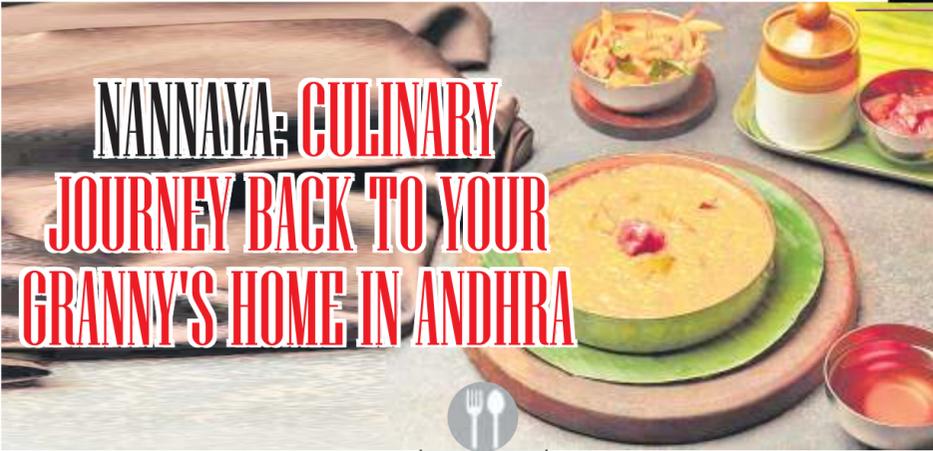
enges faced by the chemicals and petrochemicals industry and also offered various suggestions to address those issues.

"I, as a minister, can assure you that whatever interventions are needed in policies, in programmes, whatever changes in the strategies are needed, the government is committed to it, and we will go forward with that commitment," Nadda said.

The minister also asked the industry to focus on reducing imports, research & development and skill improvement.

Nadda also launched the brochure for the 13th edition of India Chem.

'FORK'LORE



AARTI SREENATH

NANNAYA: CULINARY JOURNEY BACK TO YOUR GRANNY'S HOME IN ANDHRA

FOOD
Food- Must try - Avakaya, Muddha Pappu Rice, Mango Pappu rice and Ghee Pongal.

DECOR
Rustic charm with traditional Telugu aesthetic, earthy tones, wooden furniture, vibrant culture wall art.

PRICE
Reasonable prices, delightful yet affordable experience.

VERDICT
★★★★★

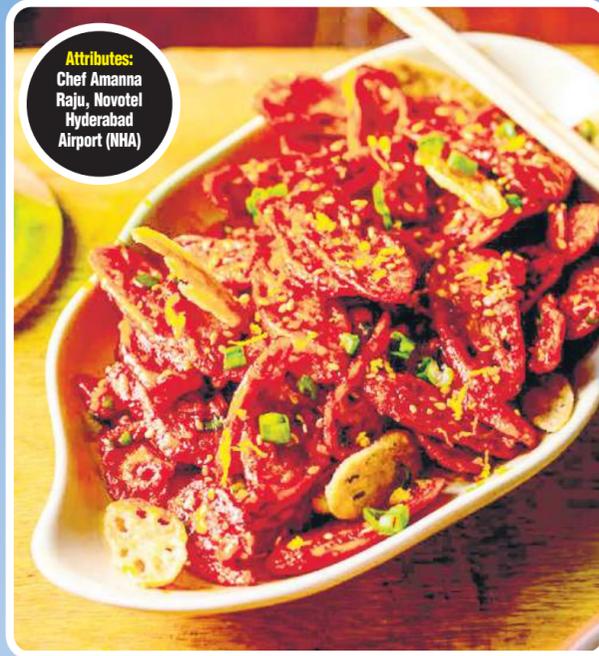
all served in classic combinations that highlight their authentic flavours. Seasonal delights like *puri* with *aamras* and *kesari poori* add an extra touch of nostalgia and delight.

The *bhojanam* combos were a highlight, featuring beloved traditional dishes such as *ghee avakaya mud-dapappu rice*, *ghee sambar rice*, *ghee pachipulusu mud-dapappu rice*, *ghee mango pappu rice*, *ghee gongura rice* and *veg pulao*. The Nannaya special platter offers a curated feast of these delicacies, making it a perfect choice for those who want to experience the full spectrum of Telugu flavours. On weekends, the menu expands with additional specials, ensuring there's always something new and exciting to try.

If you yearn for vegetarian fare that transports you back to your grandmother's kitchen in Andhra Pradesh, Nannaya is the place to be. For a refreshing summer treat, their thick and tasty *badam milk* is a must. The *puri* with mango pulp is another stand-out that shouldn't be missed!

The combo of three types of rice with aloo fry offers great value for money. And last but certainly not least, their frothy filter coffee, perfect for the monsoon season, is an absolute must-try.

Dining at Nannaya is more than just a meal; it's a nostalgic journey that rekindles memories of familial warmth and the rich culinary heritage of Andhra Pradesh.



Attributes:
Chef Amanna Raju, Novotel Hyderabad Airport (NHA)

LOTUS STEM AND WATER CHESTNUT, BUTTER GARLIC SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

- Lotus stem - 100 grams
- Water chestnuts - 100 grams
- Corn flour for dusting - 50 grams
- Oil sunflower - for deep frying
- Butter yellow salted - 50 grams
- Garlic chopped - 15 grams
- Fresh Cream - 30 ml
- Salt - to taste
- White pepper powder - 5 grams
- Veg aromatic seasoning powder - 5 grams
- Chopped spring onion - 10 grams
- Bell pepper juliennes - 15 grams

- Step 1.** Wash and slice lotus stem and keep it in water.
- Step 2.** Dice water chestnut and dust both water chestnut and lotus stem with corn flour.
- Step 3.** Deep fry them in sunflower oil until crispy. Keep it a side
- Step 4.** Now take Chinese wok, make a sauce with butter, garlic, fresh cream on medium flame.
- Step 5.** Add crispy fried water chestnut and lotus stem tossed them in sauce.
- Step 6.** Season with salt, pepper and aromatic powder.
- Step 7.** Sprinkle with chopped spring onion and serve hot.



AUSTRALIAN LAMB CHOPS

INGREDIENTS

- Australian Lamb chops - 3 no's (1/2 thick 140 grams approx.)
- Chopped garlic - 20grams
- Red wine - 10ml
- Rosemary pricks - 5grams
- Olive's oil - 20ml
- French mustard - 20grams
- Chopped parsley - 10ml
- Crushed black pepper corn - 5grams
- Salt - 5 grams
- Potatoes - 70grams
- Assorted bell peppers-10 grams
- Zucchini -10grams
- Baby corn -10grams
- Mushroom - 10grams

METHOD

- Step 1.** Take a clean plate and place the lamb chops in it. Pat them with dry paper towels before marinating.
- Step 2.** Make a marinade with mustard paste, chopped garlic, red wine, rosemary, crush peppercorn, salt
- Step 3.** Marinate lamb chops in it.
- Step 4.** Dice exotic vegetables and blanch and sautee them in garlic and olive oil on high flame for 2 minutes. Season with chopped parsley, salt and pepper.
- Step 5.** Peel potatoes and dice them in square shape and par boil. Season them with salt and pepper. Then roast in oven for 10 mins in 170 c degrees.
- Step 6.** Sear lamb chops on hot plate and roast them in oven for 8 mins 200c degrees.
- Step 7.** Serve them hot along with diced potatoes and sauteed vegetables and demi glaze.

TEEJ KI MEETHI REET

Haldiram's recently unveiled its Teej campaign, "Teej ki Meethi Reet," which aims to highlight the focus on celebrating the timeless traditions of Teej, which underline the onset of the monsoon season and the perennial bonds of love and togetherness. Teej aligns seamlessly with the age-old cultural celebration with a selection of Ghevar in flavours to suit diverse palates. During the special occasion of celebrating Teej, it has introduced a special range of Ghevar and Feni gifting hampers, including the Teej Ghevar Box, Teej Ki Mithaas Tray and Teej Ki Mithaas Hamper. Each hamper contains a sumptuous assortment of Ghevar and Feni, including Malai Ghevar, Kaju Cream Ghevar, Kesari Ghevar, Plain Ghevar, Rose Ghevar, White Feni, Kesari Feni, etc., among others.



RAUNAK-e-SEEKH

INGREDIENTS

- 150 Gram mutton (keema, minced)
- 2 tsp ginger-garlic paste
- 1 tsp onion paste
- 1 tsp red chilli powder
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 3/4 tsp pepper, powdered
- 1 tsp dried mango powder
- 1/4 tsp saunth (dry ginger powder)
- 2 tsp oil
- 1 1/2 tbsp cashew paste
- 1 1/2 tbsp cream
- 2 tsp besan
- 1 Egg yolk
- to taste salt
- for garnishing coriander leaves

METHOD

- Step 1.** In a bowl take the mutton mince.
- Step 2.** Add ginger-garlic paste to it along with onion paste, red chilli powder, coriander powder, cumin powder, powdered pepper, dried mango powder, saunth, oil, cashew paste and cream. Mix nicely.
- Step 3.** Add Besan (chickpea flour) and egg yolk to bind. Mix well.
- Step 4.** Add salt to taste. Mix. Cover and keep in the fridge for 1 hour.
- Step 5.** Skewer the kebabs onto oiled skewers and grill or roast till the outside is nicely browned. Baste frequently with oil while grilling.
- Step 6.** Once the kebabs are cooked, remove to a serving platter and garnish with onion rings, fresh coriander leaves and lemon wedges.



EMBRACE MONSOON GLOW WITH OLD SCHOOL RITUALS

Cinnamon & mango toner mist is perfect for sensitive skin that's prone to moisture loss and damage from exposure. Infused with cinnamon's antibacterial goodness and mango's cleansing benefits, it gently clears impurities and keeps your skin beautifully hydrated.

Price: INR 950/-

WHAT'S NEW

NEW LIP BARRIER OIL

The Skin Diet Company has launched an innovative formula that combines the power of tri-peptides, acai berry, avocado oil, jojoba oil and hyaluronic acid in a new lip barrier oil. The newly launched lip barrier oil is infused with power peptides and builds collagen. It can be used alone for a natural glossy look or as a hydrating base under lipstick, or you can top it with your favourite lip colour.



SPIRIT OF TODAY'S FASHION

Priya Parikh Clothing, founded with a vision to blend elegance and modernity, the new collection encapsulate the spirit of today's fashion while staying rooted in timeless traditions. It embodies the essence of elegance, energy and enigma through its thoughtfully curated designs.



TADAA'S SWEET CORN KERNELS

Tad战略's sweet corn kernels are packed within hours of harvesting to preserve their fresh flavour, texture and colour. These hand-podded, steamed whole kernels are high in fibre and antioxidants, making them an energy-boosting snack. They have four spice options in the tray pack: Peri-Peri for extra heat, Salt & Pepper for zing for all age groups, Pani Puri for a tangy flavour, and Masala Masti for a traditional Indian flavour.

PATTERN LAUNCHES HAIR CARE RANGE

Pattern's Advance Care range is a luxurious treat that your hair deserves. This range is a haircare gem that brings life back to damaged, overprocessed hair and encourages a healthy scalp. The conditioner hydrates and softens hair while creating a protective layer that guards against damage. It leaves hair feeling soft, shiny and fresh, just like it would after an indulgent spa.



CRYSTAL-HEALED ESSENTIAL OILS

The tapegaasi, crystal-healed essential oils embody sublime healing, offering natural remedies that provide immediate relief and support long-term well-being. Their essential oils, meticulously crafted from ingredients sourced from their indigenous regions, ensure the highest quality and potency.



AREOVEDA STRETCH MARK CREAM

Introducing AreoVeda stretch mark cream is specially formulated to support pregnant women by reducing the appearance of stretch marks and enhancing skin health. Crafted with natural ingredients like strobil, sodium hyaluronate, ghee and cryo coffee, this cream offers visible results in 28 days, long-lasting moisturisation and soothes itchy skin while reducing redness. It also improves skin texture, elasticity and firmness. Price: 299/-



WEEKLY HOROSCOPE JULY 21 - 27

ARIES

Feeling dull can make you averse to harmony. Your tenacity, creativity and charisma will be rewarded. Balance work with the family to enjoy good health.

TAURUS

Proceed with your plans. Consult a counsellor for guidance. Enjoy moments of love. Take a vacation to recharge. Consult your family before making decisions.

GEMINI

Your generous qualities bring joy, but unreliability may harm your career. Enthusiastic energy attracts people. Overcome illusions and use your stamina purposefully.

CANCER

You'll find a stimulating partner. Harmony will prevail. Novel ideas will require coworker support. Avoid hallucinations from poor health. Maintain marital love.

LEO

Relax and enjoy the benefits of your efforts. Consult a counsellor for work-related issues. Postpone project changes. Propose to a close friend. Take a vacation.



VIRGO

Siblings will support your dreams. You're strong and energetic. Start a new venture. Invest stamina in the right places. Avoid depression from missing pastimes.

SCORPIO

Your experimental nature will gain notice. Seek therapy for relationship difficulties. Be gentle under pressure. Protect and support loved ones. Maintain innovation.

SAGITTARIUS

New project ideas will arise; experiment to choose the best. Stay confident and manage emotions. Avoid depression about delays. Seek advice for security.

CAPRICORN

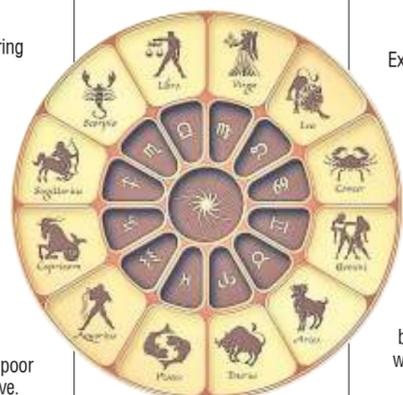
Experimenting will help sort the budget and win the praise of superiors. Stay calm in emotional situations. Continue dream project despite delays. Avoid self-pity.

AQUARIUS

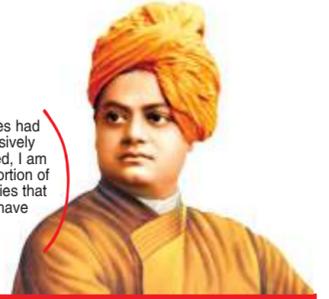
Depend on reliable support due to nervousness. Hard work yields deserved benefits. Manage expectations with siblings. Expand with new project approval.

PISCES

Reflect calmly amidst the chaos. Hard work pays off; stay alert. Improve your health and work. Transform negatives into positives. Clarify doubts in relationships.



"If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practiced, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished"
— Buddha



A MODEL FOR INDIA'S SMART CITY ASPIRATIONS

From integrating advanced technologies to fostering community engagement, New Taipei City offers a wealth of lessons that can guide Indian cities towards a smarter and more sustainable future, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

New Taipei City, Taiwan's most populous city, has emerged as a leading example of smart city development, integrating advanced technology, sustainable practices, and citizen-centric services. As India embarks on its ambitious Smart Cities Mission, there are valuable lessons to be learned from New Taipei City's approach to urban planning and management.

One of the biggest achievements of New Taipei City is its involvement of citizens in various facets of planning and execution and participation. New Taipei City actively involves its citizens in the planning and decision-making process. "Through public consultations, digital platforms, and community programs, residents are encouraged to participate in shaping the city's future. This collaborative approach has fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility among citizens," says Dr Tih-Ju Chu, deputy mayor of New Taipei City, Government of Taiwan.

As far as the Indian smart city concept is concerned, it has been a bureaucratic exercise where citizens have had hardly any role to play. Engaging citizens in the smart city development process is crucial for ensuring that the initiatives meet the needs and aspirations of the people. Indian cities should leverage digital tools and community engagement strategies to involve residents in planning, implementation, and monitoring of projects. We embarked upon making Varanasi into Kyoto but have reached nowhere. Perhaps the biggest reason for this has been the government's top-down approach where people come last. Local people know their city better than any bureaucrat or politician and their input can go a long way in preserving the cultural heritage of the city and modernising it at the same time.

New Taipei City fosters a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, providing support for startups and encouraging technological advancements. The city has established innovation hubs, incubators, and co-working spaces

“ONE OF THE BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENTS OF NEW TAIPEI CITY IS ITS INVOLVEMENT OF CITIZENS IN VARIOUS FACETS OF PLANNING AND EXECUTION AND PARTICIPATION. NEW TAIPEI CITY ACTIVELY INVOLVES ITS CITIZENS IN THE PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. “THROUGH PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS, DIGITAL PLATFORMS, AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS, RESIDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN SHAPING THE CITY'S FUTURE”



that nurture talent and drive economic growth. Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship should be a priority for Indian smart cities too. By creating supportive ecosystems for startups, providing access to funding, and facilitating collaboration between academia, industry, and government, Indian cities can become hubs of innovation and economic development. After all, no city can thrive without a robust locally sustained economy. People must find jobs and reasons to settle in a smart city, else it may end up like several ghost cities of China. Yet another initiative that makes New Taipei City a model is sustainability. "The city mayor places a strong emphasis on sustainability, incorporating green building practices, renewable energy, and

efficient waste management systems. The city has extensive green spaces, promotes the use of public transportation, and encourages eco-friendly practices among residents," says Dr Tih-Ju Chu. Indeed, sustainable urban development should be at the core of India's smart cities initiative. By prioritising green infrastructure, renewable energy projects, and comprehensive waste management systems, Indian cities can reduce their environmental footprint and enhance the quality of life for their residents. New Taipei City has implemented intelligent transportation systems (ITS) to enhance mobility and reduce traffic congestion. These systems include smart traffic signals, real-time traffic monitoring, and integrated public transportation

networks. The city's focus on multimodal transportation options has made commuting more efficient and accessible. Unfortunately, traffic and commuting are one of the biggest challenges. In a city like Bengaluru, India's IT hub, commuting is a nightmare. To address urban mobility challenges, Indian smart cities should invest in ITS, including smart traffic management, real-time public transport information, and infrastructure for non-motorized transport. Developing a comprehensive and efficient transportation network can alleviate congestion and improve the overall commuting experience. One of the cornerstones of New Taipei City's success is its adoption of cutting-edge technology to

streamline governance. The city has implemented an integrated digital platform that connects various departments, enabling real-time data sharing and decision-making. This has resulted in efficient public service delivery, reduced administrative costs, and improved transparency. Indian smart cities can benefit from creating unified digital platforms that foster inter-departmental collaboration, enhance service delivery, and promote transparency. Investing in robust ICT infrastructure and data analytics can drive more informed policy decisions and optimize resource allocation. Situated in a region prone to natural disasters, New Taipei City has prioritised building resilient infrastructure and robust disaster management systems. The city employs advanced monitoring and early warning systems, conducts regular drills, and has developed comprehensive emergency response plans. Implementing early warning systems, conducting regular drills, and involving communities in disaster management plans can significantly reduce the impact of disasters.

Let us face it, India's smart city project faces several significant challenges that hinder its progress. Foremost among these is the bureaucratic approach that often sidelines citizen participation and local insights, resulting in top-down planning that lacks community buy-in. Additionally, there is a persistent lack of robust infrastructure and technological integration, impeding the development of effective digital platforms and smart solutions. Moreover, coordination between various government departments and private stakeholders is often fragmented, leading to inefficiencies and delays. Without addressing these fundamental issues, the ambitious vision of India's smart cities may remain unfulfilled. We must be open to such initiatives outside of India and there would be no harm in trying the best practices from around the world. The lessons from New Taipei City serve as a blueprint for India's smart cities to follow, ensuring that they meet the needs of their residents while addressing the challenges of the 21st century.

CHAT-O-CINO

'FOR ME, *KILL* HAS OPENED UNFORESEEN DOORS IN INDUSTRY'

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Actor Raghav Juyal has finally made it to the media and critics after working hard every day! To put it another way, as we all say, he has arrived. His most recent project, *Kill*, has opened up to glowing reviews about Raghav, something he had no idea would become a global success. The revelation for the entire *Kill* cast and crew on the Hollywood remake of the action movie was even more significant and widely reported. Our interviewee went crazy, along with the rest of them. The dancer-turned-actor couldn't contain his joy and spilled it all in an exclusive phone interview with us. Sincerity be damned, we could sense the energy of achievement during a phone call.

An even more modest actor now says, "I am enjoying these interviews with the media because my film is doing really well internationally." However, what drew the audience members in? Let's hear it straight from the trending actor now, who declares, "I read the script for *Kill* more than seven times to tell the truth. Folks, I'm not lying. I was in repeat mode, as you can see! You'd never believe... I became aware of a change in my behaviour. You know what? It has to do with reading! You will undoubtedly make new discoveries thanks to them."

He goes on to provide us with more detailed information, saying things like, "I read about this Indian gang named 'Kachcha Baniyan.' The act of applying oil to their bodies prior to committing a crime drew me in and inspired me to create my own persona in *Kill*. I had the impression that they were some sort of professional

killers as I continued to read about them. They seemed so "emotionless" in the wake of a murder, which is why I connected with them." We were forced to pay even closer attention to him as he shared some additional insights with us. For instance, as soon as he said to us, "My dad practices criminal law, therefore I began questioning him to find out what really happened to these offenders? After talking with my father extensively, I made the decision to look as regular as possible because I would be seen on large displays, so why not add some flair as well? I worked with my director for over three months, primarily concentrating on psychological preparations to really inhabit my role in *Kill*."

Even when the movie is doing well at the box office, it's still fascinating to think back on remarkable incidents that happened while making a hit movie. Former TV host remembers, "I was asking my director all kinds of random questions to really understand my character. The action scene we shot on the train was my favourite. Consider how skillfully the action director orchestrated the scene in such a tiny area despite the space constraints! My heavens, he's a technical genius. Unbelievable, I had to go through nine months of action training. Yes, I was also hurt and covered in bruises. Ouch!" He also thought it was great because "our action scenes were never overly clichéd, thanks to my action choreographer. No, forty men weren't flying with a single blow of mine. I acted in a raw manner! Both the item number and the *chaiya chaiya* are absent. The fact that word-of-



Actor Raghav Juyal talks about how the global hit *Kill* helped him become famous. He shares the rigorous training, behind-the-scenes tales and close relationship with co-star Lakshya Kapoor that contributed to this movie becoming a turning point in his career. In this exclusive conversation, see how Raghav went from being a dancer to becoming a worldwide celebrity.

mouth spread about my film and led to its premiere has truly touched me." We can understand his emotions over the overwhelming success, since it is true that *Kill* continues to be popular even with the simultaneous release of Kamal Haasan's *Indian 2* and Akshay Kumar's *Sarfira*. "It's the triumph of Indian cinema, not mine personally. At first, we were up against *Kalki*'s superstars! In contrast to *Kalki*, which was produced for over 300 crores, my movie was the small-scale production that gained significant international acclaim," adds Raghav.

He also recalled an occasion when he had to temporarily stop the shooting. An additional intriguing tale directly from the set of *Kill*: "Yes, I was meant to stab a fellow actor. I requested the crew wait for a moment because I found that scenario to be so horrible. I was experiencing strange feelings. I promise you that when I was on the sets of *Kill* for that particular time, I was completely off." Overall, Raghav, went above and beyond in this regard. He revealed further details about the incident, saying, "Every day, Lakshya and I got bruises on the sets of *Kill*. I am able to tell you this since I used to experience unbearable discomfort as soon as I took a shower. I can tell you that *Kill* brought back a lot of memories for me. In the vanity van, I detest sitting! I never did that; instead, I asked the crew to put up a tent for me so that I

could get to know the actors who played my clan in the film. As we became closer, those forty goons began to feel like brothers. In that tent, there was a vibe! Basically, I wanted to give it a *Bihari* flavour. We desired a "kabila" atmosphere."

Having heard so much about Lakshya, Raghav at last shares everything there is to know about his co-star with such love and assurance that he mentions, "He has become my best friend in Mumbai. Every day, we hang around. We have an extremely good relationship off-camera! We laugh and drink together and that's how we bond. That "beer" *wala* connection. Or playing tricks on one another! You'll see us collaborating soon. This is a special byte meant only for your newspaper."

Going on in this fascinating discussion, the *ABCD* star states, "I could remember a lot of *Sholay* scenes while I was doing *Kill*. I had the vibe of an old-school action movie. Another fantastic example of a reference is *The Burning Train*. Then I was just astounded to learn that a movie was being remade in Hollywood. I am receiving calls from all over the world, which is crazy. Can my life be any better after being featured in the New York Times? Anurag Kashyap has been praising me back in India and the Indian business as a whole has also acknowledged me greatly. For me, this movie has opened doors and transformed my life."

Finally, he recalled how low-key everything had been at the TIFF, which is when all of this madness started. "No expectations were held. There are some very passionate movie enthusiasts out there. After the first scene, Lakshya and I just looked at each other while the reviewers screamed and laughed. What just took place? The following day, *Kill* was all the rage on Toronto's streets. It's been a long time since I've seen a commercial that is as passionate but lacks superstars."

HEALTH

Weighing health and harm from water fasting!

TEJAL SINHA

While fasting has been considered most beneficial technique for weight loss, there have been other variants, one of which is water fasting. Water fasting has been all over the 'gram', but is it genuinely beneficial? *The Pioneer* brings to you a detailed analysis of it this week for Health Talk.

It seems so easy: no cooking, no calorie counting. Simply refuse food and begin fasting to lose weight quickly. Despite its popularity, fasting is a centuries-old practice that is essential to many cultures and religions.

While there have been diverse types of fasting, are you aware that there's also a type of fasting that only involves consuming water?

Basically, when one fasts on water, they just consume water. It is also known as prolonged fasting. Most water fasts last between 24 and 72 hours. Although this method has been used for thousands of years, it has just recently gained popularity. Many give it a shot in an effort to lose weight and enhance their health.

Craze of water fasting

Dr. Sharad Malhotra, Senior Consultant & HOD, Gastroenterology Hepatology & Therapeutic Endoscopy, Aakash Healthcare, says, "The craze for water fasting appears to be driven by promises of rapid weight loss, detoxification and health benefits, despite limited scientific evidence and potential risks without medical supervision."

That said, medically supervised water fasting may offer benefits like lowering blood pressure in people suffering from hypertension. Additionally, it could aid in

reducing inflammation and LDL (bad) cholesterol levels. It could lead to increased sensitivity to leptin and insulin in certain people. These hormones work better when they are more sensitive, may reduce the risk of diabetes, heart disease and cancer, among other chronic conditions. Additionally, it could encourage autophagy, a mechanism that recycles and breaks down unused cell components. To encourage autophagy, further study is necessary before making this recommendation.

What does research have to say?

To date, very few studies have explored the health effects of water fasting.

Twelve middle-aged men participated in a brief study conducted to determine the safety of water fasting. The researchers noticed notable alterations in the subjects' blood and urine indicators following an 8-day fast. They also observed changes in reported stress levels and body composition, including weight loss. The researchers came to the conclusion that although an 8-day water fast was safe, continuing the fast could have had a negative impact on the participants' health.

It's crucial to remember that none of the individuals had a history of chronic illnesses and were nonsmokers. At the beginning, they were all in good health, had attempted water fasting previously and had normal blood pressure and weight.

How does water fasting work?

"There are no rules when it comes to water fasting. Some people ought to give fasting serious thought or limit their fasting to times when a doctor is present. This group includes children and adolescents, adults 65 years of age and older, expecting or nursing moms, and individuals with eating problems," enunciates dietician Dr. Deepa Shetty.

Who should not fast?

Water fasting is not safe for everyone. People for whom fasting may not be safe or appropriate include:

- Those underweight
- Those having issues with their heart
- Those with type 1 diabetes
- Those having uncontrolled migraine
- Those undergoing a blood transfusion
- Those who are taking medications

Post-fast phase

Experts suggest restoring food gradually after a fast. "It is also recommended that one prepare their body for a fast by doing this before beginning one. Breaking up your daily food intake into five smaller meals—breakfast, lunch, dinner, and two snacks—is one method to achieve this. One has to avoid processed foods both before and after fasting. Red meat is typically not chosen over lean proteins like fish," explains Dr. Jyoti Chadda, a dietitian and pediatrician. This may lead to refeeding syndrome, which can be prevented by reintroducing food to the body gradually after fasting, especially if the fasting period is longer. Elevations of electrolytes and fluids fluctuating quickly might cause medical problems. Seek advice from a medical practitioner before considering a water fast.

PEOPLE SHOULD THINK ABOUT PREPARING THEMSELVES FOR FASTING BY:

- Eating well before the fast, preferably with high-energy foods
- Choosing a time that will allow for rest, such as a day when they are not at work
- Avoiding fasting if they are sick or extremely tired
- Thinking about gradually building up to fast
- It's crucial to spread out your water intake throughout the day and during the fast



ARABICA VS ROBUSTA:

Find out what makes your coffee beans different

Coffee enthusiasts around the world enjoy their daily brew, but many may not be aware of the key differences between the two most popular coffee bean varieties: Arabica and Robusta. As demand for premium coffee continues to soar, understanding these differences can greatly enhance the coffee-drinking experience for aficionados and casual drinkers alike.

Origin and growing conditions

Arabica and Robusta beans come from distinct regions and thrive in different growing conditions. Arabica beans, which constitute about 60-70% of the world's coffee production, are primarily grown in Latin America, Eastern Africa, Asia and Arabia. These beans flourish at higher altitudes, typically between 2,000 and 6,000 feet, in cooler climates. The specific terroir where Arabica beans are cultivated significantly influences their delicate flavours and acidity. Conversely, Robusta beans are mainly grown in Africa, Indonesia and Vietnam, the latter being the largest producer of Robusta coffee. It plants thrive at lower altitudes, from sea level to around 2,000 feet and are more resistant to pests and harsh weather conditions. This resilience makes these beans easier and cheaper to cultivate.

Flavour and aroma

One of the most notable differences between Arabica and Robusta beans is their flavour profile. Arabica beans are renowned for their smooth, complex flavour, often exhibiting hints of fruits, berries, nuts and even floral notes. They also tend to have higher acidity, which contributes to their bright and vibrant taste. This makes Arabica beans a favourite for specialty coffee and high-quality blends.

In contrast, Robusta beans have a stronger, more robust flavour with a distinct earthiness and bitterness. They contain higher levels of caffeine, which contributes to their more intense and less nuanced taste. The higher caffeine content also gives Robusta coffee a heavier body and a thicker crema, making it a popular choice for espresso blends.

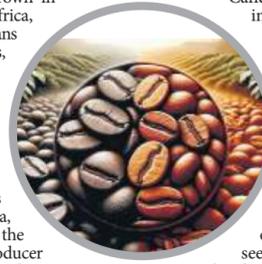
Caffeine content and health benefits

Robusta beans generally contain about twice the caffeine content of Arabica beans. This higher caffeine level not only influences the flavour but also impacts the health benefits associated with each variety. Caffeine is known for its stimulating effects and the higher caffeine content in Robusta can provide a more potent energy boost. Additionally, caffeine has been linked to various health benefits, such as improved cognitive function and increased metabolic rate. However, Arabica beans, with their lower caffeine content, are often preferred by those who seek a milder cup of coffee with less bitterness and acidity.

Economic and environmental impact

Arabica beans, being more delicate and requiring specific growing conditions, are generally more expensive to produce. This often results in higher prices for Arabica coffee on the market. Robusta beans, on the other hand, are hardier and more resistant to diseases and pests, making them cheaper and more sustainable to cultivate. This makes Robusta a more viable option for mass production and commercial blends.

(The author, Rajat Agrawal, is the CEO of Barista Coffee.)



TRENDING

KARDASHIAN SISTERS

Person
Excitement was in the air in B-town when the Kardashian sisters arrived. Kim and Khloe, who are well-known for their influence, brought even more glitz to the already extravagant event.

DASHAVATAR

Video
At the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre, Nita Ambani presented *Dashavatar*, a cultural event that features the 10 incarnations of Lord Vishnu.

STREE 2

The residents of Chanderi are once again yelling at the top of their lungs. A new ghost is watching their village after they bestowed upon the previous ghost, "stree," a position as divine as if she were a goddess. It's headless this time, though and it's chasing women instead of men. The trailer for *Stree 2*, is now available.



MERE MEHBOOB MERE SANAM

Song
A new song featuring Vicky Kaushal, Ammy Virk and Tripti Dimri has been released by the makers of *Bad Newz*. The famous song *Mere Mehboob Mere Sanam* from Shah Rukh Khan's movie *Duplicate* is being remixed again.

WRAPPED IN LOYALTY

Picture
Following Trump assassination attempt, since then, his fans have shown their support for him by donning white ear wraps on their right ears.



BACKBENCHER AT SCHOOL

Born and brought up in Nalgonda, I have one sister Manjula Rani. I was a backbencher during my school days in Nalgonda. My mother Aruna is a homemaker and my father Vasudeva Reddy is a farmer. My parents were not with me throughout the period of my education. It was my grandmother who raised me in a remote village in Nalgonda. My grandmother Ranganayakamma had four children and she took care of us—eight grandchildren in all—while our parents were busy with farming and other jobs. She ensured we studied in a good English medium school. Most of us succeeded in our careers, with one cousin becoming a paediatrician. My sister is a doctor in the US, while other cousins are into software development. As a kid, I was quite mischievous and did not excel academically. I stayed with my grandmother until the 10th standard, after which I went to Narayana Residential Junior College in Nellore for my Intermediate studies. I failed in Intermediate in one subject.

TAXI DRIVER IN AUSTRALIA

Although my parents pushed me to pursue medicine or engineering, which were common ambitious courses back then, I was not interested. In 1993, influenced by a cousin, I decided to go to Cyprus for doing hotel management. Later, I moved to the UK for further studies in hotel management, then to Germany, and eventually to Australia in 1995. In Australia, I did various jobs, including as taxi driver. I later ran a restaurant, saving money before returning to Hyderabad in 2002. I managed to cover my expenses abroad by doing part-time jobs after my father paid the fees for my first semester. During my stint as taxi driver in Australia, one day a passenger whom I had picked up from the airport gave me some life-changing advice. As we were travelling, he asked me about my work and aspirations. I told him that I was a young student working hard and aiming to become rich. He then shared a profound piece of wisdom with me: "Nobody in this world will become rich by just working hard. People become rich when the money they make starts working for them." This advice struck a chord with me and changed my perspective on wealth and investments. I realised that merely earning a salary or business income was not enough. To truly grow my wealth, I needed to save diligently and invest wisely. Every rupee saved should be put to work so that it multiplies itself over time. This approach led me to explore various investment opportunities, particularly in real estate.

CONSULTANCY TO SEND STUDENTS ABROAD

After returning to India in 2002, I was determined to leverage my international experience and network. Recognising the growing demand for higher education abroad, I founded ANZAC Consultancy in 2003 with the aim of assisting students in navigating the complex process of studying overseas. Starting with a small office in Hyderabad, my initial investment was modest, but my vision was clear: to provide personalised, comprehensive guidance to students aspiring to study in countries like Australia, the UK, the USA and Canada. My time abroad had allowed me to build a robust network of contacts in the education sector. I utilised these connections to establish partnerships with numerous universities and colleges across these countries. These relationships were instrumental in enabling me to gain credibility and win trust in the industry. The consultancy quickly gained a reputation for its thorough and reliable services. Word-of-mouth referrals from satisfied students and parents played a crucial role in this growth. To meet the increasing demand, I expanded ANZAC Consultancy, opening branches in multiple cities.

WORKING IN YOUTH CONGRESS

Despite not getting the opportunity to contest, I decided to start working for the party. I began my journey with the Youth Congress, where I initially took on the role of a district secretary. This position was not highly sought after, but I saw it as a stepping stone. My active involvement caught the attention of party leaders, and I was soon recommended for the state committee as a secretary. As I continued to work hard, my dedication led me to Delhi several times. During one of these visits, I presented my resume to Ashok Tarwar, then national president of the Youth Congress and he saw potential in me. With his support, I began taking on more significant responsibilities. One pivotal moment was when Rahul Gandhi, who became the General Secretary of the party in 2006, launched the *Discovery India* program. This initiative aimed to understand the diverse issues across the country by visiting different states and interacting with various groups, including professionals and students. I was selected to be part of the advance team for this program, tasked with preparing the groundwork for Rahul Gandhi's visits. My ability to manage logistics and my self-sufficiency impressed the party leaders. My role in the Youth Congress grew as I became in charge of states like Orissa and Karnataka, organising events and membership drives. One notable program was *Aam aadmi ka sipahi*, which aimed to empower Youth Congress workers to act as watchdogs for the common man, ensuring the effective implementation of government schemes and spreading awareness about rights and information. I played significant role and from 2006 to 2010, my involvement with the Youth Congress continued to expand. I became the coordinator for multiple states and, in 2008, I was appointed as a YC General Secretary. My dedication and hard work did not go unnoticed; Rajiv Satav, my president at the time, supported me and I played a crucial role in various party activities. Satav's rise to becoming an MLA in 2009 and later the national president of Youth Congress was partly due to our collaborative efforts. He picked me as his general secretary. This elevation brought new challenges into my life. Rajiv was relatively new to the national party position and some party members believed that I was running everything behind the scenes, due to which many in the organisation became my enemies, both in Delhi and in other states.



SUSPENDED FROM PARTY

When I was in charge of the Tamil Nadu unit, there were significant internal conflicts, particularly with influential members who had their own agendas. This resulted in my being suspended from my position. I faced controversy when there were allegations of making statements against Rahul Gandhi and accusations of forging signatures. The accusations were baseless, with the slanderers merely repeating what opposition parties had said without understanding the context. In the past, I made a statement criticising the approach of hiring people in the Youth Congress, highlighting that political systems do not operate like corporate entities with firing mechanisms. This statement was taken out of context, leading to a misinterpretation of my intentions and eventually, I was expelled from the party. The expulsion was a tough blow. I had always been a genuine person without any hidden agendas, and Rajiv Satav, could not defend me adequately. This situation left me feeling betrayed and disheartened, and I decided to step back from politics for a few years.

SOUGHT TICKET TO CONTEST FOR ZPTC

My connection with the Congress party runs deep, going back to my childhood. My family, including my parents and sister, have been long-time supporters of the Congress. We grew up watching my grandfather's cousin contesting elections under the Congress symbol and my grandmother even had a photograph taken with Gandhi during a tour to Delhi. Her admiration for Gandhi and her deep connection to the Congress profoundly influenced me. In 2005, encouraged by friends, I contested in the local ZPTC elections. My friends in the village encouraged me to run, thinking it would be a great chance to become the chairman should I win. I was not particularly ambitious about politics at that point, but the idea intrigued me. However, when I went to file my nomination on the last day, I discovered that the Congress party had already chosen another candidate; so, I wasn't given the opportunity to contest.

BHONGIR BACKBENCHER

Member of Parliament from Bhongir Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, first time parliamentarian, made it to the august House after a challenging academic journey, serial entrepreneurial endeavours, and challenging navigation in the rough and tumble of politics. In an interview with Naveena Ghanate of *The Pioneer*, he speaks about his childhood, treasured moments with grandmother who raised him primarily, and more.



REVANTH CALLED ME 'UNMARRIED WIDOW'

In 2017, Revanth Reddy joined the Congress party. I met Revanth through a mutual friend, Palatolla Karthik Reddy. We immediately connected over our shared experiences in politics. Revanth knew about my history with the Youth Congress and had a lot of data and jokes about my political journey. He termed me as an unmarried widow. Our initial conversation was light-hearted and humorous, establishing a comfortable rapport. Revanth often joked about his political aspirations, confidently stating that he would become the chief minister someday. I would retort saying you have not had the chance to become a minister, how will you even become Chief Minister. But his unwavering confidence and self-belief were infectious. Even though I teased him about his ambition, but deep down, I admired his determination and vision. I told him that he had moved from a smaller political pond to the vast ocean of Congress. Although I initially had my doubts, his confidence and vision were compelling. We began meeting regularly, spending hours discussing politics, strategies, and our vision for the future. When Revanth Reddy became the TPCC president, my political career saw significant elevation as I was appointed to oversee media relations, a role that allowed me to utilize my skills and experience effectively. Over the next two to three years, I took on numerous tasks, contributing to the party's strategies and operations, and our partnership flourished.

EMOTIONAL TURMOIL & RETURN

During this period, my family went through a lot of emotional strain for almost two years. I had reached a point in national politics where I was close to significant leaders and handling important states like Kerala. But suddenly I found myself sidelined. For the next four to five years, I stayed away from active politics, reflecting deeply on my situation. In 2014, Rajiv Satav became an MP and during one of my visits to Parliament to meet him, Girish Chodankar, the then PCC president of Goa, encouraged me to return to politics. He believed that the organisation needed people like me. Although I was initially reluctant, Rahul Gandhi called Uttam Kumar Reddy to bring me back to the party. I rejoined but remained inactive for about a year without any position.

GOOD AT ELECTION MANAGEMENT

After some time, I decided to become a spokesperson for the party. Despite the large number of spokespersons, I managed to secure a position but still found it challenging to get media space. I continued to help friends in every election, leveraging my skills in election management. Over time, I developed a reputation for understanding people and effectively managing election campaigns. My ability to identify and utilise the strengths of individuals, whether they were donkeys or horses, became a key asset. I used these skills repeatedly in many states. Election management is about understanding people, connecting with them, and keeping things organised. I realised that knowing who could perform which tasks and training them accordingly was crucial. This approach allowed me to contribute significantly to many successful campaigns, reinforcing my belief in the importance of strategic thinking and interpersonal skills in politics.



WIFE AND TWO DAUGHTERS

My wife is Dimple and ours was arranged marriage. My strength comes when my wife encourages me and starts my day on a positive note. It gives me confidence to face the world. We have two daughters. The elder one, Saahiti Kiran, completed her 10+2 last academic year and has gone to the United States to pursue further studies. The younger one, Keerthi Kiran, is in eighth standard. My elder daughter is quite reserved and takes good care of herself. On the other hand, my younger daughter is more like me—energetic. Reflecting on my role as a father, I realise how different my involvement is compared to my own father's during my childhood. I spent a significant part of my early years in boarding school and was primarily raised by my grandmother. When I got married, I was keen on starting a family and ensuring that my children had a stable and nurturing environment.



WIFE'S CONCERN, CONDITIONS

When I returned to active politics after suspension, my wife Dimple was concerned. She noticed that I was becoming a 24/7 politician again, much like in the past. This worried her because she remembered how, after my exit from politics in 2010, it took me two years to reintegrate into regular family life. She was concerned about the toll that this lifestyle could take on our family. My wife made me promise that I would maintain a balance and not let politics consume me entirely. She insisted that if I ever decided to quit politics again, I should do so immediately and never bring political discussions into our home. Understanding her concerns and the importance of maintaining a healthy balance, I agreed to her terms.

ALWAYS ASKED BHONGIR TICKET

I would have become MLA in 2009 but my constituency became reserved due to delimitation. Since I was powerful general secretary in the country, I would have got another seat. I did not want to be a parachute leader and go to another constituency in last moment. Y S Rajashekar Reddy was not close to me as I was surviving in Delhi. Despite my strong connections and influence, state leaders often saw me as bypassing them, which created tensions. As a result, I had to rely heavily on support from national leaders like Rahul Gandhi. In 2009 and 2019, I asked for the Bhongir seat but could not get it. By the 2024 elections, I was determined to contest from the Bhongir constituency. There were 28 applicants and many of them influential. I decided to put everything I had into this opportunity, using my resources without asking for financial support from the party. I wanted to prove myself as a self-made individual accountable only to my vision and the people.

WORKING WITH KOMATIREDDY BROTHERS

In 2024, many doubted my chances due to the strong factional politics and the significant OBC factor in Bhongir. However, I was confident in my ability to connect with the electorate and address their critical issues. Revanth Reddy was very sure that I would win. In fact, I told him not to come to campaign as I might lose two days for preparations. My doors opened when both Komatireddy brothers became MLAs. I was very careful about managing the influence of the Komatireddy brothers. One significant factor in my campaign was pacifying Komatireddy Rajgopal Reddy by proposing that he become the parliamentary coordinator. This move aligned our interests and consolidated our efforts, ensuring his support for my campaign. He is very friendly man, I realised during campaign. When I got my seat, I felt everything was falling in place. Despite working hard, I was not getting anywhere. But I could feel a driving power and everything was happening in place was designed to. I expected 2.5 lakh majority and victory was not just a personal achievement but a collective success for everyone who believed in the vision of a better future for Bhongir.

BACKBENCHER AGAIN

Entering Parliament for the first time as an MP was an overwhelming experience. I felt a surge of excitement and responsibility as I stepped into the House, surrounded by the stalwarts of Indian politics whom I had admired for so long. I sat through the sessions, absorbing everything until midnight, listening intently and participating actively. One of my most memorable moments was when I found myself shouting in the well of the House during the Prime Minister's speech. I initiated a protest on the Manipur issue, leading the charge with my fellow MPs. The objective was to disrupt the Prime Minister and draw attention to our concerns. My efforts did not go unnoticed. My boss was very pleased, commending me for keeping up the pressure for two hours and twenty minutes. It was a challenging task, maintaining our slogans and ensuring that our voices were heard despite the limited number of us who could effectively participate. The experience reminded me of my school days as a backbencher, where I could speak my mind freely. In Parliament, I realised I had the platform to ask hard-hitting questions and fight for justice, whether it was questioning the Speaker's impartiality or addressing issues impacting my constituents. The environment felt like a classroom where I could engage in debates, challenge the status quo and



RAPID FIRE

- Happiest moment:** When my family is happy about my achievements
- Sad moments:** Always failing in initial days. I failed one subject in Intermediate.
- Movies:** I enjoy watching on Netflix. I liked watching *Marcos*
- Favourite colour:** green.
- Fav food:** I enjoy eating chicken
- Fav song:** I listen to music specifically those which were released during my younger days as it makes me nostalgic
- Favourite actor:** I admire Krishna for his roles as an advocate in movies
- Strength:** My confidence and my family
- Weakness:** I lose control and confidence when I am stressed
- Favourite politician:** Abraham Lincoln for his perseverance and resilience despite numerous failures