

There is nothing to worry about those leaving the party and joining thieves. The BRS will mould new leaders and will remain strong even if some people leave the party. The people were duped by false propaganda and the BRS was defeated. We should work hard whether ruling or in the opposition. The Jagityal MLA joined thieves. He was also groomed by the party.

- K. Chandrashekar Rao, BRS Chief

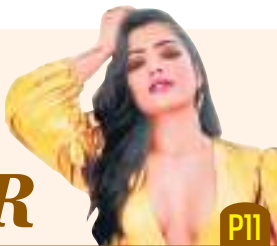
P2

Veershaiva-Lingayat seer pitches for **positions now**

'HYD IS NOW COMPETING WITH SOME MAJOR CITIES IN WORLD'

Rashmika Mandanna begins shooting for **SIKANDAR**

Rashmika Mandanna begins shooting for **SIKANDAR**



P11

DON'T MISS...

Special plans for industrial...

Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy stated that the State will progress further with the establishment of industrial corridors. He added that the Regional Ring Road being constructed by the R and B department will give a new direction for the State's future and will be a significant game-changer. Inaugurating the Kala Utsav Exhibition organised by the Hyderabad Regional Chapter of the Indian Institute of Interior Designers at Hitex, the Minister mentioned that...

-PAGE: 3

Centre asks depts to review...

Irked over non-adherence to its directives, the Centre has asked all ministries to timely review the working of the employees so that the non-performers are prematurely retired from service. In an order, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) asked ministries concerned to direct the public sector undertakings (PSUs), banks, autonomous institutions and statutory bodies under their administrative control to undertake the exercise...

-PAGE: 5

India, US extend digital tax...

India and the US have decided to extend a 2 per cent equalisation levy or digital tax on e-commerce supplies until June 30, the finance ministry said on Friday. In a major reform of the international tax system, India and the US have joined 134 other members of the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework (including Austria, France, Italy, Spain, and the UK) in reaching an agreement on October 8, 2021, on the statement on a two-pillar solution to address the tax...

-PAGE: 8

Last Tango: Possibly final...

This Saturday afternoon in Barbados, no Indian fan would want Rohit Sharma to drag his jaded body towards the dug-out trying to hide a tear welling up at the corner of his eye. No Indian fan would want to revisit Virat Kohli's blank stare towards the podium where the coveted ODI World Cup trophy rested exactly seven months and 10 days back. What they would surely want is to see the two greats do a memorable tango in probably their 'Last Dance' in the game's shortest format...

-SPORTS

LS adjourned amid Oppn ire over NEET

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The proceedings of the Lok Sabha were adjourned for the day on Friday as the opposition demanded a discussion on the alleged irregularities in the conduct of the medical entrance exam NEET.

When the House reassembled at 12 noon, opposition members continued with their demand for a discussion on matters related to the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET).

Speaker Om Birla and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju told opposition members that they can discuss the matter during the course of the Motion of Thanks on the President's address.



Parl should give message that Govt, Oppn together: Rahul

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Friday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to hold a 'respectful' and good discussion in Parliament on the issue of alleged irregularities in the conduct of the NEET exam as it concerns the country's youth and their future. Addressing reporters in Parliament complex, Gandhi said the NEET issue should be discussed before the Motion of Thanks on the President's address is taken up. The NEET issue is the most important issue of the day.

Continued on Page 2

BRS seeks Assembly resolution opposing NEET

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former MP Boinpalli Vinod Kumar criticised the Central and state governments for their indifference towards the growing nationwide protests against NEET. He pointed out the widespread concern over the NEET

question paper leak and the unanimous resolution passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly demanding cancellation of NEET. He urged the Telangana government to convene the Assembly immediately and pass a similar resolution to scrap NEET and to conduct admissions based on EAMCET.

Man from Hyd among 193 booked in US\$ 2.75 bn health care fraud in US

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

At least one Indian and two Indian-origin persons were among 193 medical professionals charged by the US for their alleged participation in massive health care fraud schemes involving approximately USD 2.75 billion in intended losses and USD 1.6 billion in actual losses, the Justice Department has said.

The Justice Department on Thursday announced the 2024 National Health Care Fraud



Enforcement Action, under which criminal charges were filed against 193 defendants, including 76 doc-

Five killed, nine hurt in Shadnagar reactor blast

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY/ HYDERABAD

Five people were killed in an explosion in the company South Glass Pvt Limited on the outskirts of Chintaguda village in Shadnagar. One person is critical and nine others were severely injured. The explosion which occurred in a reactor injured many workers seriously.

Initial reports said that injured workers were taken to private hospitals in the town and some were later moved to government hospitals for treatment. The police arrived at the scene and are investigating the cause of the



explosion. Eyewitnesses described a horrific scene with body parts scattered all over the place due to the blast. The authorities are trying to collect more information and ensure that the injured get medical attention. The cause of the explosion remains unknown. Details are awaited as an investigation is on. Learning about the incident, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy ordered officials to give medical assistance to the injured.

Chief Minister directed that revenue, police, fire department, labour, industries and medical teams should remain at the scene and coordinate relief efforts.

Chevella BRS MLA Yadaiah joins Cong

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Following the convention set by BRS chief K. Chandrashekar Rao who inducted Congress MLAs into the BRS when he was in power, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is now hitting back by inducting BRS MLAs into the Congress.

On Friday, the BRS's Chevella MLA, Kale Yadaiah, quit the BRS and joined the Congress in the presence of Revanth Reddy and AICC in-charge General Secretary Deepa Das Munshi and others in New Delhi. Revanth Reddy and Deepa Das Munshi offered the party kanduva to Kale and welcomed him into the Congress. With Kale Yadaiah joining the Congress, the number of BRS MLAs in the Congress increased to six.

Race hots up for Telangana BJP president post

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Leaders from all communities in the BJP are trying to grab the Telangana BJP President post. However, leaders from BCs and OCs are making all-out efforts to bag the post. However, the appointment of Telangana BJP president will take place only after the appointment of BJP national president, it is learnt.

It is learnt that the BJP leadership may take a decision only after the Congress appoints the TPCC president. The BJP may select a BC

leader as its Telangana unit President if the Congress appoints a BC leader as the TPCC President. BC leaders like Malkajgiri MP Eatala Rajender, Nizamabad MP Dharmapuri Arvind and some others are trying to grab the Telangana President post. Meanwhile, OC leaders like Medak MP M. Raghunandan Rao and former MLC Ramchander Rao and some others are also trying to bag the Telangana BJP President post.

'Farmers may have been stopped, but their reps are in Parliament'

HC reserves order over KCR's plea on Justice Narasimha panel

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Friday reserved its order on the maintainability of a writ petition filed by former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, seeking a stay on the proceedings of the Justice L. Narasimha Reddy Commission investigating the power purchase agreement with Chhattisgarh

and the construction of the Bhadradi and Yadadi Thermal Power Plants during the tenure of the BRS government. A division bench, comprising Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice Anil Kumar Jukanti, reserved orders after hearing the arguments of Advocate General A. Sudharshan Reddy.

'Amarnath Yatra is symbol of faith, unity'



PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Amarnath Yatra is a symbol of faith and unity, and the people of Jammu and Kashmir feel privileged to be part of the holy pilgrimage, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said here on Friday.

Sinha attended an event organised by civil society, trade fraternity and citizens at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) here to welcome pilgrims of Amarnath Yatra.

The first batch of pilgrims reached the valley on Friday. "Glad to have attended an event organised by civil society, trade fraternity & citizens to welcome pilgrims of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra. People feel privileged to be part of holy pilgrimage and contributing to make the journey safe and a truly fulfilling

spiritual experience," the LG said on X. He said the spiritual journey to the holy cave is the symbol of faith and unity.

"For centuries, it has been collective responsibility of the society to make every step of this journey blissful. J-K has glorious heritage of harmony, tolerance and brotherhood. It is the land of almost all religions known to mankind. These values deeply embedded in society are expressed in this yatra and everyone irrespective of religion and caste participates in serving the pilgrims," Sinha said.

Speaking to reporters at the SKICC, the LG said for the past three-four years, a tradition has been established in Jammu and Kashmir to hold discussions with religious leaders, elected representatives, civil society members, and various district officials before the yatra.

HC extends interim order on arrest of Yediyurappa

PNS ■ BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court on Friday extended by two weeks its interim order restraining the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) from arresting former Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, in connection with a case registered against the BJP leader under PCOCSO Act.



The bench of Justice Krishna S Dixit continued its June 14 order, as it permitted the prosecution to file its objections to the petition filed by

Yediyurappa seeking quashing of the case.

The Special Public Prosecutor sought time to file objections, and maintained that Yediyurappa's petition may not survive as a chargesheet has already been filed. The court then said: "Call these matters week after next at request of learned Special Public Prosecutor for filing statement of objections if any. Interim order granted earlier to continue till next date of hearing."

Weather models 'fail' to predict Delhi rains; meteorologists baffled

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Forecasting models "failed" to predict the extreme weather event that took Delhi residents by surprise early Friday, resulting in a record 228.1 mm of rainfall, meteorologists said.

This amount is more than three times the June average of 74.1 mm and the highest for the month since 1936.

An IMD official explained that the monsoon winds interacted with the remnants of a western disturbance, causing heavy rains in Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir.

Independent scientists suggested that a thunderstorm over North Delhi could have triggered the torrential rains. On June 26, the IMD had predicted only light to moderate rain and thunderstorms with gusty winds for Friday (June 28).



On Thursday afternoon, the Met office noted that a trough extended from a cyclonic circulation over central Gujarat to west Bihar in the lower tropospheric levels. In the weekly weather briefing uploaded on the IMD's YouTube page, scientist Soma Sen Roy said this trough was pumping moisture into north and central India.

"The east-west trough is likely to strengthen during the week and rainfall will increase over north India," she

explained.

The IMD's extended range forecast issued on Thursday night predicted "fairly widespread to widespread light to moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning over northwest and east India during the next five days".

It also suggested "very heavy rainfall" over Delhi on June 29 and June 30, but no one expected the torrential rain on Friday morning.

At 4:58 am on Friday, the IMD issued an alert, stating "light to moderate intensity rain with heavy intensity rain over a few places and winds of 20-40 kmph would occur over and adjoining areas of entire Delhi and NCR, Gannaur, Sonapat, Kharkhoda, Jhajar, Sohna, Palwal, Baraut, Baghat, Khekra, Pilakhua, and Sikandrabad during the next two hours".

Continued on Page 2

SEETHAKKA'S REVIEW WITH IRRIGATION OFFICIALS

Geotubes for constructing Godavari embankment

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The construction of the Godavari River embankment will begin immediately using the new technology of Geotubes, Minister Seethakka said.

During her visit to Ramanna Gudem and Mangapeta embankments, she conducted a review meeting with Irrigation officials and stressed the need for rapid implementation of the Geotube technology to strengthen the embankment.

She noted that the delay was due to the Model Election Code and highlighted the



importance of protecting the embankment from floods caused by upstream rains. Seethakka instructed officials to prevent the submergence of villages and to repair the corroded shutters promptly. During the review meeting

at the Eturunagaram ITDA office, Seethakka, District Collector Diwakar TS, ITDA Project Officer Chitra Mishra and Additional Collector P. Sreeja discussed various aspects of embankment construction. Seethakka stressed

the importance of finding a permanent solution to the embankment issue, stating that temporary fixes had caused problems during monsoons for years. The new Geotube technology will ensure a durable embankment, she said.

She directed officials to conduct a thorough examination of the Ramanna Gudem and Mangapeta embankments and take steps to prevent flooding in nearby villages. She also ordered the repair of corroded shutters in the irrigation department. The minister emphasised the urgency of starting construction immediately.

Harish meets Kavitha in Tihar jail

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Nearly 105 days ago, Kavitha was arrested in the Delhi Excise policy case on March 15. Harish inquired about Kavitha's condition during the meeting and asked her to be brave. Recently, former ministers Satyavathi Rathore, Sabita Indra Reddy and KTR met Kavitha.

It is known that the judicial custody of MLC Kavitha, who is on remand in the Delhi liquor policy case, has been extended once again. The Rouse Avenue Court issued an order extending her custody till July 5.

Nothing to worry about those joining thieves, says KCR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Addressing the BRS workers of Jagtial and Kortula former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao declared that the BRS is strong despite defections to the Congress.

He said that there is nothing to worry about those leaving the party and joining thieves. He reassured workers that the party and not individual leaders shape political success.

He highlighted the BRS's role in nurturing leaders and expressed confidence in meeting the hopes of the Telangana people. KCR encouraged workers to continue working diligently for the state's progress.

He acknowledged the recent defections but stressed that the



not in individual leaders. He reiterated the importance of achieving the remaining milestones for Telangana's development, noting that only the BRS understands the hopes of the people.

He called for a united effort to fulfil unachieved goals, emphasising that the party's ultimate aim is the welfare and development of Telangana.

KCR expressed his appreciation for Korutla MLA Dr K. Sanjay Kumar who has been serving people both as a doctor and as an MLA.

"People were duped by false propaganda and the BRS faced defeat. But we should work whether we are ruling or in the opposition. The Jagtial MLA joined thieves. He was also groomed by the party.

'I will become TPCC chief, CM in 10 yrs'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TG Congress party including Chief Minister-cum-TPCC President Revanth Reddy is busy in New Delhi holding talks with the high command on selecting the new TPCC President. However, TPCC Working President T. Jagga Reddy said that he was confident that he will become the TPCC President and Chief Minister in the next 10 years.

Speaking to the media at the Gandhi Bhavan on Friday, Jagga Reddy said that nobody had consulted him on the TPCC President issue.

"Whatever decision Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi take, I will obey. I am ready to become an attendant at the Gandhi Bhavan if the Congress high command directs so. However, I will become the TPCC President in the next 10 years and also the Chief Minister," he said.



Jagga Reddy criticised Prime Minister Modi for speaking about Emergency now.

He said that Modi has authority as the Prime Minister as the BJP-led NDA is in power. However, Modi will not have any power if he steps down. But Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi have permanent authority in the Congress, he stressed. Modi's authority is temporary and he will not have any power if he steps down, he pointed out.

Jagga Reddy said that people expected Modi to talk about issues that would be useful to the people after coming to power a third time.

TPCC hails CM's proposal for integrated residential schools

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC Intellectual Cell Chairman Shyam Mohan Anantula said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's recent initiative to establish "Integrated Residential Schools for OCs, BCS, SCS, STs and minorities in all Assembly constituencies is highly commendable." It would surely level up the multi-caste and multi-religious society and lead to several positive socio-economic and political transformational changes," he said.

He said that Revanth Reddy had announced that pilot projects of Integrated Residential Schools would be started in his own constituency, Kodangal, and in Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka constituency, Madhira, and 20 acres have been allotted in both places. The next step is to launch this scheme all over the state.

'Adani group to collect electricity bills in old city'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy in a chat with journalists in Delhi on Thursday indicated that the responsibility for power distribution in the old city of Hyderabad is to be handed over to the Adani

Group as a pilot project.

The Chief Minister cited the reasons for this decision, stating that electricity bills in the old city are not being paid properly, and electricity staff are facing assaults when they go to collect dues. The Chief Minister reportedly stated that

following the pilot project in the old city, the responsibility for power distribution will be gradually handed over to Adani Group across Hyderabad and then throughout the state.

According to the Chief Minister, 75% of the revenue

collected by the Adani Group will go to the state government, while the remaining 25% will go to the Adani Group. The Chief Minister mentioned that discussions have already been held with the Adani Group, and they have agreed to the terms.

Guv prorogues Assembly, Council

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

CP Radhakrishnan, Governor of Telangana, has prorogued the Legislative Assembly and the Council.

As per notification, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-clause (a) of Clause (2) of Article 174 of the Constitution of India, the Governor has prorogued the 20th session of the Telangana Legislative Council and the second session of the third Telangana Legislative Assembly, with effect from June 27. Both sessions had commenced on February 8.

Haritha Haram renamed Vanamahotsavam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has decided to change the name of 'Haritha Haram' to 'Vana Mahotsavam' and the Chief Minister has approved the new logo.

During BRS rule, this programme was named 'Telanganaku Haritaharam'. The name was changed after the Congress came to power.

When the Congress was in power in United Andhra Pradesh, a programme to increase greenery named 'Vana Mahotsavam' was launched. Although the programme was started in 1950, the TG government has given the new name 'Vajrotsava Vana Mahotsavam' to it as it has completed 75 years.

Chevella BRS... Budget session 2...

Continued from page 1

Earlier, BRS MLAs Danam Nagender, Kadiam Srihari, Tellam Venkatrao, Pocharam Srinivas Reddy and Dr Sanjay Kumar had joined the Congress. The practice of making opposition MLAs join the ruling party was introduced by KCR in 2019. Now, the Congress CM, Revanth Reddy, is following the same practice. In 2019, the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) tried a lot to protect its MLAs. However, Congress MLAs joined the then ruling BRS one after the other, giving shocks one after the other to the CLP. In the end, KCR succeeded in stripping the Congress of its main opposition party tag. This practice will weaken opposition parties as they do not know who will quit. Now, the ruling Congress is also trying to strip the BRS of its main opposition party tag by inducting BRS MLAs one after the other.

Continued from page 1

Even if there is a one per cent decrease in the interest rate Rs 700 crore can be saved by the government every year. We are talking to the Centre regarding this. We are also trying to get more funds from the Centre by considering issues much before the budget introduction. Our ministers have met Union ministers once," the CM said.

"We will not make the mistakes made by KCR. There are no power cuts in Telangana. With the women's free bus travel scheme, the TSRTC has been saved. Revenue increased due to the free travel scheme for women and the RTC received more than Rs 350 crore every month from the government. The occupancy ratio increased from 30 per cent to 80 per cent. The government is giving priority to welfare even though it is a burden on the exchequer," the CM

said.

He said a caste census would be taken up only after appointing new members to the BC Commission. The current BC commission's tenure is ending in August.

The Chief Minister said that only leaders who contested elections with a Congress B-form will get a chance to join the Cabinet.

He said the high command will decide the TPCC President after considering social equations. The Chief Minister said it would be good if the TPCC chief's post is given to a woman.

"I will bring the suggestion of journalists to the notice of the high command. Anyone can join the TPCC prez race. Defections are happening everywhere. MLAs defected in Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Earlier, the BJP inducted four TDP MPs. It is not right to blame free schemes.

Centre urged to reopen..

Continued from page 1

He highlighted that the Adilabad CCI cement factory, with a capacity of four lakh tonnes per year, was given 2290 acres, including 2100 acres of limestone quarries free of cost. He urged the Centre to revoke the decision to privatise the unit.

He also pointed out that Telangana offers favourable conditions for new industries like land, water and electricity and emphasized the state's strong performance in Ease of Doing Business. He highlighted the availability of skilled manpower in Telangana, with ITI, diplomas and engineering degrees.

Union Minister Kumaraswamy responded positively and assured that he would visit Hyderabad soon to discuss these matters with officials.

LS adjourned..

Continued from page 1

Birla said there are certain norms of Parliament that have to be followed and committees have to be formed to which Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi said students are not aware of it. They are only demanding justice. As members from the Congress, TMC and DMK parties stormed the Well, Rijiju said it is for the first time that the opposition is seen demanding a

discussion on an issue before the House takes up the Motion of Thanks on the President's address.

"I assure the opposition we will answer any issue that you raise during the Motion of Thanks discussion," Rijiju said. As members continued with sloganeering, Birla said the people have elected members to this House so that they can raise and discuss issues, and not disrupt the proceedings.

Weather models... HC extends interim..

Continued from page 1

Also, it declared the arrival of the monsoon in Delhi on Friday noon, less than 15 hours after it had projected that the primary rain-bearing system would reach Delhi within two to three days.

"Not much rainfall was happening due to the eastern arm of the monsoon in West Bengal, Bihar, and up to Uttar Pradesh. The eastern arm monsoon moved slowly. But one pulse suddenly arrived from the Madhya Pradesh side. Nobody expected this massive amount of moisture," an IMD official said, requesting anonymity.

The models could not capture it.

The CID on Thursday filed a chargesheet at the Fast Track Court 1 for POCSO Act cases here against Yediyurappa and three of his aides in connection with the case based on a complaint by the mother of a 17-year-old girl who alleged that he sexually assaulted her daughter during a meeting on February two this year, at his residence in Dollars Colony here. A Bengaluru court on June 13 issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against Yediyurappa in the case registered against him on March 14 this year.

The High Court on June 14 restrained the CID from arresting Yediyurappa, while directing him to appear before it for probe. Yediyurappa was questioned for over three hours by the CID on June 17. The 81-year-old Yediyurappa has been charged under Section 8 (punishment for sexual assault) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and Sections 354A (sexual harassment), 204 (destruction of document or electronic record to prevent its production as evidence) and 214 (offering gift or restoration of property in consideration of screening offender) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Today Almanac

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Ashtami: Jun 28 04:27 PM to Jun 29 02:20 PM
Navami: Jun 29 02:20 PM to Jun 30 12:19 PM
Nakshatram: Uttara Bhadrpadada: Jun 28 10:10 AM to Jun 29 08:49 AM
Revati: Jun 29 08:49 AM to Jun 30 07:34 AM
Rahukalam: 9:04 AM to 10:41 AM
Vayagandam: 1:57 PM to 3:35 PM
Varjyam: 08:11 PM to 09:42 PM
Gulika: 5:48 AM to 7:26 AM
Amritakalam: None
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:53 AM to 12:45 PM

Hyderabad Weather

Forecast: Mostly Cloudy
Temp: 31°C
Humidity: 68%
Sunrise: 5:45 AM
Sunset: 6:54 PM
Updated: June 28, 2024 5:00 PM

Race hots... Man from Hyd...

Continued from page 1

It is learnt that the main contest is between Malkajigiri MP Eatala Rajender (BC) and former MLC N. Ramchander Rao (OC). However, Raghunandan is backing Eatala Rajender in case the high command does not consider his name.

In the melee, Goshamahal MLA T. Raja Singh said the party should give a chance to a leader who is aggressive and who has an understanding of the nation, society and dharma. However, making his intentions of becoming the Telangana BJP President clear, Eatala Rajender countered Raja Singh's comments sharply saying that he had faced five CMs and is ready to face Revanth Reddy also. He said that he is not a street fighter but is a state fighter and will hit the bull's eye.

Continued from page 1

Dr Vijil Rahulan, 52, of Hyderabad, was charged with conspiracy to commit health care fraud and health care fraud in connection with an alleged scheme to fraudulently obtain over USD 82 million in Medicare funds.

"Rahulan caused the submission of false and fraudulent claims for durable medical equipment and genetic testing that were medically unnecessary or otherwise ineligible for reimbursement through Medicare because they were not the product of a doctor-patient relationship and examination," according to the case summary.

The indictment further alleged that his fraudulent

conduct resulted in over USD 28.7 million being paid by Medicare.

Jaspreet Jagpal, the owner of One World Therapy, was charged with insurance fraud and an enhancement for aggravated white-collar crime in connection with billing for behavioural analysis services not rendered to five minor children.

The 34-year-old's fraudulent scheme caused a loss of approximately USD 166,755.50 over ten months, the case summary said.

As alleged in the complaint through which he was charged, the California resident claimed that behavioural analysis services were provided to minor children that never occurred.

Parl should give...

Continued from page 1

and the opposition parties have agreed that it should be taken up for discussion before anything else, the Congress leader told reporters.

"The youth are worried and they do not know what is going to happen. A message and assurance should go to the youth from Parliament that India's government and the opposition are together in raising the concerns of students," he said.

Gandhi said the INDIA bloc thinks this is the most important matter.

"I request the prime minister that since this is an issue concerning the youth, there should be a good and respectful discussion on the issue concerning the youth," he said, urging them to join the discussion.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

INDIA CORNER

Elderly man injured as Railway safety wall collapses near Thane station

A portion of a Railway safety wall collapsed near a platform at Thane station on Friday morning amid rains, injuring a 62-year-old man, civic officials said. The 60x20 feet wall caved in near Platform No. 2 at the busy train station on the Central Railway route at around 11.45 am, said Yasin Tavdi, chief of the Disaster Management Cell of the Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC). The wall fell on a pedestrian who was passing by on an adjacent road, injuring him, he said. The man, Narendra Koli (62), was rushed to the Kalwa Civic Hospital where he is undergoing treatment, said Tavdi. Thane Fire Brigade and Regional Disaster Management Cell (RDMC) personnel later cleared the debris, he said.



UP: Three children drown while bathing in Gomti river

Three children drowned in the Gomti river here while bathing, police said on Friday. The incident happened in the Barua area on Thursday when Farhan (12), Abid (10), Hasnain (13) and some other friends went to the river, they said. The three boys got trapped in the waves while bathing. Seeing this, their friends started calling for help and passersby rushed to the spot, they said. District and police officials also reached the spot after getting information. Local divers searched for the boys till 11 pm but failed to trace them, Inspector Sriram Pandey said. A team of State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) from Ayodhya was on Friday morning deployed for the rescue operation and the bodies were fished out from the river after an hour-long effort, he said. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem, he added.



Ex-Jharkhand CM Soren released after HC grants bail in money laundering case

Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren was released from Birsa Munda Jail here on Friday after the high court granted bail to him in a money laundering case linked to a land scam, an official said. As Soren stepped out of the jail, a large number of JMM supporters cheered and raised slogans in favour of him. Soren's wife Kalpana Soren, a JMM legislator, thanked the judiciary and people for their support. "Heman Soren was released from the jail after completion of legal formalities," the official said. Soren, on his release from the jail, was seen waving at people and seeking blessings from his father and JMM supremo Shibu Soren. A single bench of Justice Rongon Mukhopadhyay granted bail to the former chief minister of Jharkhand earlier in the day. "...The petitioner is directed to be released on bail on furnishing bail bond of Rs 50,000 with two sureties of the like amount each," said the order passed by Justice Mukhopadhyay.



COMMUNITY LOBBING FOR CM & DCM POSTS

Veershaiva-Lingayat seer pitches for positions now

PNS ■ CHIKKODI (KARNATAKA)

A prominent Veerashaiva-Lingayat seer on Friday said Ministers from his community should be considered for the Chief Minister's post in case there is a leadership change, a day after a Vokkaliga one publicly urged Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah to give up his position in favour of his deputy D K Shivakumar. Also pitching for Veershaiva-Lingayat ministers to be considered in the event of creation of additional deputy chief minister post, Srisaala Jagadguru Channa Siddharama Panditaradhya Swamiji claimed that his community's votes were "decisive" for Congress to come to power in the state. "Karnataka state political developments and news that is emerging are in discussion. In case there is a change in the chief minister post and if additional deputy CM posts are cre-



ated -- in such a situation, I urge the party (Congress) and government to give priority to ministers from the Veerashaiva-Lingayat community," the seer said. Speaking to reporters here, he said: "The reason is, during the government formation, Veerashaiva-Lingayat votes were decisive. So Veerashaiva-Lingayat ministers should be given priority. There are ministers like --

Eshwar Khandre, M B Patil, S S Mallikarjun -- such people should be considered and their experience should be utilised. I urge that they should be given an opportunity." Reacting to this in New Delhi, CM Siddaramaiah said there is no "relationship between swamiji and politics." "There is no need to give much importance to swamiji's statement. What is the relationship between swamiji and a political party? Who has to

decide about the Chief Minister? It has to be done by legislators in a democracy and the high command," he said. Vishwa Vokkaliga Mahasamastana Math seer Kumara Chandrashekarathana Swamiji on Thursday had raised the pitch for Shivakumar at the Kempegowda Jayanti event here to commemorate the birth anniversary of Bengaluru's founder, in the presence of both Siddaramaiah and the deputy chief minister on the dais. Shivakumar, who is also the state Congress President, is a Vokkaliga -- a dominant community in the southern parts of the state. Currently, he is the only deputy chief minister. The comments of the seers come amid demand by a few ministers, believed to be close to Siddaramaiah, to have three more deputy chief ministers -- from Veerashaiva-Lingayat, SC/ST and minority communities.

Bengal CM flayed over comment on women feeling unsafe

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Amid an impasse over the oath-taking of two newly elected TMC MLAs, the office of West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose on Friday criticised Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for her remarks suggesting women allegedly felt unsafe going to Raj Bhavan, stating it is expected of public representatives not to create "erroneous and slanderous impressions." Baranagar MLA Sayantika Bandyopadhyay and Bhagabangola legislator Rayat Hossain Sarkar have refused to take oath at Raj Bhavan as requested by Bose, instead staging a dharna in the assembly complex since Thursday, insisting that the swearing in take place in the Vidhan Sabha. "It is expected of public representatives to uphold Constitution and refrain from creating erroneous and slanderous impressions that may cast aspersions on the Governor," the Raj Bhavan said on X.

Bhujbal fomenting communal tension, alleges Jarange

PNS ■ JALNA

Maratha reservation activist Manoj Jarange on Friday accused Maharashtra minister and OBC leader Chhagan Bhujbal of fomenting communal tension, and urged Chief Minister Eknath Shinde to rein him in. He was speaking to media persons at Mahakala village in Jalna district in the wake of sloganeering and stone-pelting in his native Matori village in neighbouring Beed district. The incident took place on Thursday night when some people from nearby villages were passing through Matori to take part in a rally of OBC quota agitators Laxman Hake and Navnath Waghmare. Jarange claimed that Bhujbal had orchestrated the attack to wrongly blame the Maratha youths. "Bhujbal himself asked his men to hurl stones on their (OBC activists') vehicles and then blamed the Maratha youths. The chief minister and the home minister should rein him in for fomenting



communal discord," he said. Jarange also claimed that the police were harassing the Maratha youths and also accusing them of being involved in the stone-pelting incident. "The police are harassing the Maratha youths and blaming them for the stone-pelting. This injustice must stop," he said. He warned the government that the Maratha community would not remain quiet if such "targeted harassment" continued. Jarange claimed that on earlier occasions as well, Bhujbal had tried to disrupt peace in his Antarwali Sarati village, but his efforts were foiled.

"Bhujbal incited people and created a communal rift, but we foiled his plan," he asserted. OBC activists Hake and Waghmare's fast was a government-sponsored protest, Jarange said, adding that Bhujbal himself accepted that both were their activists. Jarange, who has brought the Maratha quota issue to the centre stage in the state, has been demanding the implementation of the draft notification that recognises Kunbis as 'sage soyare' (blood relatives) of Maratha community members. Kunbi, an agrarian group, falls under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category, and Jarange has been demanding that Kunbi certificates be issued to all Marathas, thus making them eligible for quota benefits. However, OBC activists Hake and Waghmare have opposed Jarange's demand for the issuance of Kunbi certificates to the Maratha community, asserting that the state government must not take any decision that affects OBCs.

'J-K police like sword, war against terror cannot be won without it'

PNS ■ KATHUA/JAMMU

Describing the Jammu and Kashmir Police as a sword in the fight against terror, its chief R R Swain on Friday said no war against a terror ecosystem can be won without the police. Pointing to a series of recent terror attacks in the Union Territory, the DGP said terrorists can neither defeat the force nor diminish its resolve. He made the remarks at an event to regularise nine special police officers to the rank of constables, recognizing their contributions in eliminating two terrorists in the Hiranagar border belt of Kathua district. "The Jammu and Kashmir Police is like a sword against



the terror ecosystem. If this sword, which belongs to the people, is not properly maintained, victory in this war against terrorism cannot be achieved," Swain said. He said the Union government has also realized the importance of the police and is working to support them

accordingly. Two terrorists and a CRPF jawan were killed while a civilian was injured in an encounter between security forces and militants in Saida Sukhal village in Kathua district's Hiranagar area near the International Border on June 12. The DGP said while terrorists may inflict some harm, they cannot defeat the police forces and their resolve. "Rest assured, we will defeat them. It is our resolve," Swain said. He also said the police are well-equipped with advanced weaponry, including arms from Israel and Germany. "We have no weaknesses as far as arms are concerned," the DGP said.

One killed, six hurt after portion of roof collapses

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A cab driver died and six people were injured after a portion of a canopy at Delhi airport's Terminal-1 collapsed on cars amid heavy rain early Friday, leading to suspension of flight departures, according to officials. Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu visited Terminal-1 (T1) to take stock of the situation. He said he was monitoring the situation and the injured had been hospitalised.



Delhi Fire Services (DFS) officials said three fire tenders were rushed to Terminal-1 (T1) of the airport after a call about the incident was received around 5:30 am.

Besides the roof sheet, the support beams collapsed, damaging the cars parked in the pick-up and drop area of the terminal. A search operation was conducted to make sure no one was trapped inside the damaged vehicles, they said. The injured have been admitted to Medanta Hospital near the airport. One of them was rescued from a car on which an iron beam had fallen. He was later identified as Ramesh Kumar, they added. Work was underway to clear the debris.

AAP demands Rs 1 crore compensation for Delhi airport incident victim's kin

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Friday demanded compensation of Rs 1 crore for the kin of the person killed in the airport roof collapse incident. Addressing a press conference, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Jasmine Shah said the BJP-led central government should come in forefront and

explain the reasons for the incident. "A very sad incident happened today," he said. Shah demanded a high-level investigation into the matter. "We demand that the kin of the deceased be awarded compensation of Rs 1 crore for the kin of the deceased and Rs 50 lakh for those who were injured in the incident," he said.

'Farmers may have been stopped, but their reps are in Parliament'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Farmers may have been stopped from entering Delhi during the 2020-21 protests, but their chosen representatives cannot be stopped from entering Parliament and their issues will be raised strongly in the 18th Lok Sabha, according to CPI-M MP Amra Ram. The farmer leader, who has been with the All India Kisan Sabha and was also involved with the 2020-21 farmers' protests, said people have taught a lesson to the ruling BJP in the recent elections. In an interview with PTI, Amra Ram, who won from



Sikar in Rajasthan as a candidate backed by the INDIA bloc, said the agrarian crisis loomed over the country and the farmers' protests, as well as issues like Agniveer scheme, led to the reduction of BJP's

numbers in Lok Sabha. Amra Ram, who chose a tractor to reach Parliament on his first day but was not allowed to take it inside, said he did so to send out a message that the government may have stopped farmers from entering the national capital, but they have elected and sent him to Parliament. Asked about the Lok Sabha elections, Amra Ram said, "It is the result of the struggles that have been going on for the last 10 years against the BJP's poor governance, whether farmers, youths or labourers." "BJP was at 303 in 2019, and they are at 240 today.

MeT issues 'orange warning' for seven districts in Himachal for next two days

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Heavy rains lashed Shimla and surrounding areas on Friday and the MeT department issued an 'orange warning' indicating "very heavy rain", thunderstorms and lightning at isolated places in seven of the 12 districts in the state over the weekend. The MeT also issued a 'yellow warning' of heavy rain, thunderstorms and lightning at isolated places on July 1 and 2 and predicted a wet spell in the state till July 4. Delayed by five days, the southwest monsoon had hit several parts of Himachal Pradesh on Thursday. It issued an orange warning for the Chamba, Kangra, Kullu, Mandi, Shimla, Sirmour and Solan districts on Saturday and Sunday. Earlier on Friday, debris from drains littered the roads at several places in Shimla and three vehicles parked near a drain were buried in the muck on the Malyana Surala road. No casualty was reported, officials said. In another incident, four roads -- two in Kangra and one each in Kinnaur and Kullu districts -- have been blocked for vehicular traffic following

rains as per the state emergency operation centre. State capital Shimla and surrounding areas received heavy rains and Jubbarhatti in the suburbs received 136 mm of rain on Thursday evening while Shimla received 84 mm of rain. Gohar received 42 mm of rain, Mashobra 38 mm, Slapper 34.6 mm, Kufri and Shilaroo 24.2 mm, Sarahan and Berthun 22 mm each, Ghagas 18.8 mm, Karsog 18.2 mm, Kahu 16 mm and Pandoh 12 mm as per the data released by the MeT. The MeT has cautioned of damage to plantation, horticulture and standing crops, partial damage to vulnerable structures, minor damage to kutch houses and huts due to strong winds and rain, disruption in traffic and water logging in low-lying areas. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said that reports of damage have also poured in from Nerva near Chopal in Shimla district. "I request the people of the state to stay away from Rivers and drains as the level of water rises following cloud bursts which could prove fatal and people should take precautions.



RETIRING NON-PERFORMERS PREMATURELY

Centre asks depts to review employees' working

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Irked over non-adherence to its directives, the Centre has asked all ministries to timely review the working of the employees so that the non-performers are prematurely retired from service. In an order, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) asked ministries concerned to direct the public sector undertakings (PSUs), banks, autonomous institutions and statutory bodies under their administrative control to undertake the exercise of periodic review of employ-

ees. It said instructions have been issued from time to time for undertaking periodic review of the government servants' performance with a view to ascertaining whether they "should be retained in service or retired from service prematurely, in public interest". The administrative ministries and departments have repeatedly been requested to adhere to guidelines issued in this regard and furnish a report to this effect to the DoPT, said the order issued to the secretaries of all central government departments.



However, it has come to notice that various ministries and departments are not adhering to the said guidelines resulting in delay in identifying the government employees due for review under relevant provisions of Fundamental Rules (FR)-56 (J)/(I) and Rule 48 of Central Civil Services or CCS (Pension) Rules (now, revised as Rule 42 of CCS (Pension) Rules, 2021), it said. These rules lay down the policy of periodic review and

premature retirement of government servants and to ensure efficiency, economy and speed in the disposal of the government functions. "In view of the above, the ministries/departments are requested to take immediate action to identify the employees due for review under relevant provisions of Fundamental/Pension Rules and ensure that their cases are expeditiously submitted for consideration before the duly constituted review committee as per extant instructions," read the order dated June 27. Further, all the ministries,

departments and organisations have been asked "to strictly adhere" to the timeline mentioned in DoPT's order issued in this regard in 2020 "for undertaking the exercise of review of performance of the government servants and for the employees of PSUs/banks/autonomous institutions/statutory organisations under their administrative control to ensure that the employees with doubtful integrity or found to be ineffective are not allowed to continue in government", according to the order.



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Presidential address

President's address, while highlighting various Govt achievements, fell short of raising some serious concerns

As the inaugural session of the 18th Lok Sabha progresses, it is evident that this Lok Sabha would be way livelier and more eventful than the previous one. Thanks to a more evenly distributed treasury and opposition benches. This was evident from the day one and in the address by President Droupadi Murmu to both houses of Parliament. Her address drew significant attention and controversy. In the customary joint address, President Murmu made a mention of the various achievements of the government, including its pervasive welfare schemes and the resilience of the Indian economy. The address, while highlighting various achievements of the Government was silent on various issues of national importance. For this the Opposition was vocal in criticising its content and omissions, especially the exclusion of the ongoing violence in Manipur. The Opposition response was not ill founded but rooted in deeper political and social tensions prevailing in the State. The address, intended to set the tone for the parliamentary session, included references to several critical issues and achievements. Notably, it highlighted irregularities in examinations and touched upon the historical context of the Emergency imposed in 1975. The reference to the Emergency was frowned upon by the Congress which dubbed it as an effort to deflect attention from the current political scenario. However, the glaring omission of the escalating violence in Manipur stood out starkly. President Murmu addressed the troubling trend of examination paper leaks, acknowledging the impact on the credibility of academic processes. She emphasised the government's commitment to transparency and reform in examination systems, underscoring the need for stringent measures to ensure fairness and integrity. The mention of the Emergency, referred to as the 'biggest and darkest chapter of direct attack on the Constitution,' was a strategic move that dug up the historical blunder. This reference, while aimed at highlighting the Government's commitment to democracy, struck a nerve with the Congress, reminding them of a period they would prefer to distance themselves from. The most contentious aspect of President Murmu's speech was the omission of any direct mention of the violence in Manipur. The President's speech did acknowledge the government's broader efforts in the Northeast, citing increased allocations for development and initiatives under the Act East Policy, but this was seen as insufficient by many. The exclusion of the Manipur violence from the President's speech was perceived by the Opposition as an attempt to downplay the crisis and avoid accountability. The speech did not adequately address the concerns of the day and call for action from the Opposition regarding various pressing issues. Engaging with these concerns and outlining a collaborative approach to resolve the crisis could have fostered a more constructive political dialogue and demonstrated Govt's willingness to work across party lines.



President Murmu addressed the troubling trend of examination paper leaks, acknowledging the impact on the credibility of academic processes. She emphasised the government's commitment to transparency and reform in examination systems, underscoring the need for stringent measures to ensure fairness and integrity. The mention of the Emergency, referred to as the 'biggest and darkest chapter of direct attack on the Constitution,' was a strategic move that dug up the historical blunder. This reference, while aimed at highlighting the Government's commitment to democracy, struck a nerve with the Congress, reminding them of a period they would prefer to distance themselves from. The most contentious aspect of President Murmu's speech was the omission of any direct mention of the violence in Manipur. The President's speech did acknowledge the government's broader efforts in the Northeast, citing increased allocations for development and initiatives under the Act East Policy, but this was seen as insufficient by many. The exclusion of the Manipur violence from the President's speech was perceived by the Opposition as an attempt to downplay the crisis and avoid accountability. The speech did not adequately address the concerns of the day and call for action from the Opposition regarding various pressing issues. Engaging with these concerns and outlining a collaborative approach to resolve the crisis could have fostered a more constructive political dialogue and demonstrated Govt's willingness to work across party lines.

Suu Kyi spends another birthday in jail

Despite the Junta's desperate measures, including heightened repression and forced conscription, the resistance continues to gain ground



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

On June 19, 2024, Aung San Suu Kyi spent yet another birthday in prison, as she completed 79 and stepped into her 80th year. No one knows where she is. Even her son, Kim Aris, has not heard from her since receiving a thank-you note from her in January this year for a package he had sent her. Yet not a squeak was heard from leaders of Western democracies who were, not so long ago, condemning her incarceration and Myanmar's ruling junta which had usurped power through a coup on February 1, 2021, and unleashed savage repression as protests surged throughout the country. Clearly, Myanmar is no longer visible on the radar of the democratic world's concerns. There are doubtless possible explanations. Member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) are engrossed with the war in Ukraine and the possibility of the latter turning into a wider European War, if not World War III. Liberal elements in several European countries are alarmed by the gains made by right-wing forces in the recent elections to the European Parliament. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak of the United Kingdom and President Emmanuel Macron of France are facing elections. Growing popular anger over Israel's continuing offensive in Gaza, which has caused around 40,000 deaths, a large part of whom are women and children, is worrying governments that continue to support the Netanyahu regime. President Joe Biden's worries range from Israel's war, the conflict in Ukraine, immigration, and fending off the challenge posed by Donald Trump in the November presidential elections in the US. Whatever the reasons, the fact is that Myanmar is no longer the global concern it was. Such things have happened before. Public and governmental spans of attention are proverbially ephemeral. It is this transience that mostly sustains autocracies. There is a perceptible process. The initial response to a coup is condemnation by democracies and



often, the imposition of sanctions. Not all countries, however, react this way. Given the dynamics of global power play, some countries, mainly autocracies themselves, do not join the chorus of outrage. Rather, they rally behind the usurper. Mostly thanks to them, the sanctions do not work. The junta that had staged the coup carries on. New developments on the global scene consume the attention of countries condemning the coup. The junta is replaced by another entity as the principal target of outrage. Slowly, opposition towards it declines and there is a gradual trudge towards normalization of ties, particularly if the uniformed dictators relax their tyranny a little while retaining their grip on power. Is this what is going to happen in Myanmar? One does not know. It will, however, be of no credit to the world's democracies if this does not happen and the people of Myanmar are able to overthrow the junta forcibly, which, by the look of things, is by no means a remote possibility. The Sit-Tat (which, and not Tatmadaw, is the real name of the junta's army), has been suffering reverse after reverse ever since the opposition Three Brotherhood Alliance (henceforth the Alliance) launched its current offensive, codenamed

THE JUNTA'S GROWING DESPERATION IS REFLECTED IN THE STERN MEASURES IT HAS BEEN TAKING AGAINST THOSE IT REGARDS AS SURRENDERING OR DESERTING, THE KILLING OF ALL SUSPECTED OPPONENTS AND HEIGHTENED EFFORTS AT CONSCRIPTION GIVEN THE REFUSAL OF PEOPLE TO SERVE IN ITS FORCES

Operation 1027, on October 27, 2023. Comprising the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDA) operating in the Kokang Special Region of Northern Shan State, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), also active in Shan State, and the Arakan Army, based in the Rakhine State in the country's western part, it has been acting in close cooperation with the National Unity Government's military arm, the People's Democratic Force (PDF), and other ethnic armies like the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), the Karen Liberation Army (KNA), the Karenni Nationalities Defence Force (KNDF), and one of the country's most powerful armed ethnic organisations, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA). According to an analysis in the website *The Irrawaddy*, dated June 22, 2024, the junta has lost, since its coup on February, 2024, to the resistance forces one Military Regional Command, three Military Operational Commands, seven headquarters of the Border Guard Police Battalions, and 63 of the 545 military battalions besides more than 2,500 frontline bases including tactical and frontline bases of military divisions.

Among the latest gains by the resistance forces, Moinga Matters lists the Chin Brotherhood Force's capture of the junta's battalion station 304 in Chin State's Matupi township on June 17, 2024, and the KNLA's capture of Sukali military station, south of Myawaddy city, on June 18. The Junta's growing desperation is reflected in the stern measures it has been taking against those it regards as surrendering or deserting, the killing of all suspected opponents and heightened efforts at conscription given the refusal of people to serve in its forces. Indeed, those sentenced to death include Brigadier-General Zao Myo Win for surrendering to the MNDA. The junta has also killed a highly respected Buddhist monk, Bhaddanta Manindabhivamsa, who has been strongly critical of it by shooting at his car on June 19, Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday. Given its faltering conscription scheme, the junta has reportedly been planning to conscript women in some parts. Needless to say, all this only serves to swell the tide of anger against it sweeping the country. Time is running out for Myanmar's uniformed tyrants. (The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

PICTALK



Sadhus shout slogans as the first batch of pilgrims leaves for the Amarnath Yatra, in Jammu

PTI

Directive on doctor's fees sparks controversy in Bihar

The debate over how much doctors should charge for consultations has heated up in Bihar after Pappu Yadav capped fees in his constituency

Pappu Yadav, an independent Member of Parliament from Purnia in Bihar, has sparked a heated debate by instructing doctors in his constituency to cap their consultation fees at 500 rupees. This directive has not only caused an uproar in medical and political circles but has also highlighted a long-ignored issue: the regulation of doctors' fees for patient consultations. Amid the political backlash and ongoing arguments, several critical questions arise: Who sets the consultation fees for doctors? Is there any mechanism to control the exorbitant fees that doctors often charge? What roles do the Indian Medical Association (IMA) and the Medical Council of India (MCI) play in regulating these fees? Unfortunately, the answers appear bleak for patients. The IMA has distanced itself from the responsibility of setting doctor's fees, citing the "Clinical Establishments Act" as a reason for their inaction. In reality, doctors charge consultation fees ranging from 500 to 2,000 rupees per visit, with no standardization or over-



sight. Adding to the problem is the unethical practice of government doctors running private clinics, sometimes even during official hospital hours. In Bihar, it is common knowledge that government doctors often skip their hospital duties to treat patients privately. Many of these patients had initially visited them at government hospitals. Despite this rampant issue, the IMA has not implemented any regulations to curb this behavior, instead deferring the matter to state governments, stating they will follow any rules set by the states regarding private practice. In Bihar, however, such rules are frequently disregarded. Historically, whenever a state government has attempted to ban private practice for government doctors, the medical community has reacted with strong opposition, organizing protests and strikes, which have left many patients without care. This ongoing struggle highlights the urgent need for regulatory reform in the medical sector to ensure fair and ethical treatment for all patients. The controversy ignited by Pappu Yadav's directive to cap consultation fees at 500 rupees underscores the urgent need for regulatory reform in India's medical sector. The outcry from both political and medical circles highlights the long-standing issue of unchecked and exorbitant consultation fees, which often range from 500 to 2,000

rupees, with no standardization or oversight. The Indian Medical Association (IMA) and the Medical Council of India (MCI) have largely abdicated responsibility, citing the "Clinical Establishments Act" as a reason for their inaction. Meanwhile, unethical practices persist, such as government doctors running private clinics during official hours, exacerbating the problem. In Bihar, the issue is particularly severe, with government doctors often neglecting their duties in public hospitals to treat patients privately. Attempts by state governments to regulate this practice have faced fierce opposition from the medical community, leading to protests and strikes that disrupt patient care. This situation reveals a critical need for comprehensive reforms to ensure fair and ethical medical practices. By addressing these challenges, regulatory bodies can create a more equitable healthcare system that prioritizes patient welfare over profit, ultimately fostering a more just and efficient medical landscape. (The author is a columnist, views are personal)



GYAN BHADRA

THE PLIGHT OF GIG WORKERS

Madam — The alarming unemployment rate and the availability of cheap labor in India enable multinational companies to dictate terms and exploit poor gig workers with low wages. Over the years, there has been significant outcry in the U.S. and Europe about companies like Amazon, which have been fined and investigated for poor working conditions for non-permanent employees. These commercially driven giants often prioritize profit over worker welfare. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken cognizance of the dire working conditions in Amazon warehouses, where workers are forced to endure inhumane conditions without breaks, often in extreme heat. Despite regulations like The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, which aims to ensure the safety, health, and social security of contract laborers, the situation remains dire. To meet unrealistic and dangerous targets, unemployed youths are compelled to work under miserable and unhealthy conditions. Consumer indifference further exacerbates the situation, allowing such exploitation to continue unchecked. Regulatory agencies and consumer awareness can make a significant difference. It's crucial to recognize that the gig economy relies on underpaid employees, whose rights and well-being should be central to national development. Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

PRESERVING DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

Madam — This refers to the article, "The Dark Days of India's Emergency" (27-6-24). When India achieved independence, many doubted its ability to sustain a democratic republic for long. However, the Indian people have consistently demonstrated their wisdom, commitment to democracy, and their ability to resurrect it whenever it has been threatened. Indira Gandhi's declaration of the Emergency, despite being an act that stifled democracy, required considerable boldness. The hardships endured during that peri-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Integrity of India's education system



Scams and the Integrity of India's Education System The National Testing Agency (NTA) is under immense pressure following irregularities in this year's NEET-UG (medical), NET (teaching), and JEE (engineering) exams. The plight of the affected candidates, who prepared for months and traveled long distances to their exam centers, is heartbreaking. They now face the

daunting task of preparing for re-examinations, which could have a detrimental effect on their morale and undermine their faith in the system. These candidates come from diverse backgrounds, including corporate employees, housewives, and educators, making it difficult to balance their jobs and studies, let alone prepare for re-exams. There are significant flaws in the examination system, necessitating stringent legal actions and severe punishments for those responsible for these scams. Re-examinations only delay the admission process without addressing the root causes of the problem. Political parties should focus on addressing the underlying issues rather than exploiting the situation for political gain. They need to cooperate and propose constructive solutions to tackle this urgent matter. The states must collaborate with the central govt to restore the integrity of the education system. Dimple Wadhawan | Kanpur

THE SPEAKER'S ELECTION

Madam — The election of Om Birla as Speaker was a foregone conclusion, serving merely as a formality to placate opposition parties. The tradition of allotting the Speaker's post to the ruling party and the Deputy Speaker's post to the opposition has been abandoned. Although AICC President asserted the INDIA bloc would not withdraw its candidate, Jairam Ramesh admitted they did not seek a division. Consequently, the opposition has forfeited its right to demand the Deputy Speakership. The trust deficit between the treasury benches and the opposition necessitated the election. Ideally, an agreement could have been reached where the opposition conceded the Speaker's post to the ruling party in exchange for the Deputy Speakership. This trust, if honoured, would have exposed any ruling party's deception. KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com





FIRST COLUMN DISCOVERING WISDOM THROUGH A ZEN TALE

The truth is that the world around us is often a reflection of our inner world



RAVI VALLURI

There was a man who stumbled upon a Zen story which in several ways typified his state of mind, thought process, attitudes and his reactions and responses to various adverse situations in life.

Zen Story

Aeon's ago two men visit a Zen Master. The first man says, "I am thinking of moving into this town. What is it like to inhabit this place?"

The Zen Master pondered for a while and then questioned the man, "What was your old town like?"

The first man responds, "It was dreadful living in the town. Everyone was hateful. I loathed staying in the town. This therefore is the reason why I am looking for a fresh place to dwell."

The Zen Master replied instantly, "This town is very much the same. I do not think you should move here. You will discover the place to be resentful and you would end up hating and disliking everyone." This left the first man flummoxed and speechless.

The first man left in a disarray and the second one entered the room of the bearded Zen Master. The room was dimly lit but the virtuous one was incandescent with radiance, sitting silently.

The second man posed the same question, "Master I am thinking of moving to this town. What is it like?" The Zen Master was once again thoughtful and asked the second man, "What was your old town like?"

This man blessed with a cheery disposition exclaimed, "Oh, Master! It was wonderful. Everyone was brimming with confidence and zest; people were friendly and I was jollity personified. Right now, I am interested in a change of place though I am comfortable in the old place of dwelling."

The Zen Master nodded his head and with a twinkle in his eye replied, "This town is very much similar to your old one and I am positive that



you would feel at home in the new township. Welcome aboard."

Life is full of vicissitudes. There are high points and low ones. The first man faced constant misadventure in his old township. He squabbled with his wife, snarled at his children and was at odds with his superiors, juniors, and peers. He was not at peace with himself, with his energy/prana/chi levels at a low ebb.

While the second person, accepted all situations and people as they were. This resonates with one of sutras of the Art of Living, "Accept people and situations as they are." Such people do not find fault with any situation and are at peace with themselves. This becomes the state of their mind.

This Zen story pivots on the idea of karma. Whatever happens to anyone is the result of their own actions. We may travel around the world in the hope of escaping a life we condemned. What we will find instead is that we continue to carry our baggage with us wherever we go. Verily it applies to a positive mindset too, in that happiness is a matter of one's choice.

Upon reading the Zen story the man whose life was like that of the first individual decided to make a metamorphosis in his life and opted to be positive like the second man. He made a 360 degree turn in his thought process and broke the glass ceiling of negativity and accepted all challenges in life. "Invoke the valour in you. Just say, 'Okay, whatever comes, I am going to take it as a challenge.' When you invoke this energy, fear vanishes," says the spiritual master Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

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

Challenges ahead for RaGa as Leader of the Opposition



KS TOMAR

Rahul Gandhi's new avatar enhances his ability to foster the Opposition unity and effectively counter the BJP's influence within Parliament

Rahul Gandhi's decision to accept the Congress Working Committee's (CWC) offer to become the new Leader of the Opposition in Parliament may serve a dual purpose. Firstly, it will provide him with a statutory position under the law, positioning him as a direct rival to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the 2029 elections, compelling Modi to take him seriously, unlike in the past. Secondly, despite being the strongest critic of the Prime Minister both inside and outside Parliament, Gandhi's voice has often been drowned out by the BJP's "shouting brigade" over the past decade. However, this scenario is poised to change as the BJP enters the Lok Sabha with a reduced strength of 240 MPs, down from 303 in the previous Lok Sabha. In contrast, the Congress has almost doubled its strength, increasing from 52 to 102 MPs, including three independents.

This bolstered presence will enable the Congress to counter the BJP's tactics more effectively. A tit-for-tat dynamic may emerge in Parliament: if the BJP's "shouting brigade" attempts to silence Rahul Gandhi, Congress MPs may respond by disrupting the Prime Minister's speeches. The overall parliamentary balance of power has shifted as well. The combined strength of the NDA (BJP and its allies) will be reduced to 294, down from 336 in the previous term. Meanwhile, the Congress-led UPA has increased its seats from 90 to 234, including several new additions, posing a significant challenge for the ruling party.

Challenges as Leader of the Opposition As the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in Parliament, Rahul Gandhi will face numerous challenges requiring a dedicated and full-time commitment. The role cannot be managed on an ad hoc basis as it demands continuous effort and strategic planning. Key responsibilities and strategies include:

Regular Interaction with Allies: Gandhi must engage regularly with leaders of allied parties to formulate strategies aimed at cornering the weakened BJP-led alliance in Parliament. Building and maintaining strong relationships with diverse political groups will be essential.

Aggressive yet Mature Approach: It will be crucial for Gandhi to demonstrate aggression balanced with maturity, particularly when highlighting issues of public importance. His ability to address these issues effectively in Parliament will be key to his success.

Unifying a Fragmented Opposition: One of the most significant challenges will be unifying a fragmented opposition. The diverse political ideologies and regional interests create a complex landscape, making consensus-building a critical yet difficult task.

Countering the Ruling Party's Narrative: Despite the BJP's reduced majority, countering its dominant narrative remains a formidable challenge. The ruling party's stronghold on media and public perception necessitates a strategic and compelling opposition narrative.

Scrutiny of Leadership Style: Gandhi's leadership style and communication skills will be under constant scrutiny. Establishing his credibility and demon-



RAHUL GANDHI MAY ALSO GAIN AN IMPORTANT POSITION AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE, WHICH PRIMARILY EXAMINES REPORTS FROM THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL

strating robust leadership in parliamentary debates and public forums are crucial for gaining public trust and support.

Responsibilities as LoP

Holding the Government Accountable: Gandhi will lead the opposition's efforts in holding the government accountable. This involves articulating the opposition's stance on various issues, participating in debates, and ensuring effective representation.

Rallying Opposition Parties: He will need to rally opposition parties, build consensus, and coordinate their efforts. This can be challenging given the diverse ideologies and interests of different parties.

Effective Communication: Gandhi must communicate effectively within and outside Parliament. His speeches, statements, and interactions with the media will shape public perception and influence political discourse.

Strategic Decision-Making: Making strategic decisions regarding when to cooperate with the ruling party and when to oppose them requires astute political judgment. Balancing these choices will be crucial.

Mastery of Parliamentary Procedures: Understanding parliamentary rules, procedures, and tactics is crucial. Gandhi will need to master these to effectively challenge the government.

Raising Critical Issues: People expect the LoP to raise critical issues, propose alternatives, and offer constructive solutions.

Meeting these expectations will be key to Gandhi's effectiveness as LoP.

Rahul Gandhi may also gain an important position as the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, which primarily examines reports from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG). The PAC has a majority of government nominees and typically decides issues by vote. Additionally, as LoP, Gandhi would be part of various collegiums alongside the Prime Minister and Chief Justice of India (or government nominees), responsible for selecting the heads of key investigative and transparency agencies including the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Lokpal, Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), Chief Election Commissioner/Election Commissioners, and Chief Information Commissioner (CIC).

Historical Parallels: Indira Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi are an amended version of Karl Marx's quote suggests that history repeats itself first as tragedy and not necessarily as farce; hence its recurrence has ended up enhancing Rahul Gandhi's prestige as LoP. Political observers note two stark similarities between the late Mrs. Indira Gandhi's comeback in 1980 and Rahul Gandhi's recent resurgence. Indira Gandhi earned the title "Bechari" in the eyes of the people due to the excesses and humiliation inflicted on her by the Janata Party after losing power, a fallout of the

Emergency's dark era. In the late 1960s, she was derisively called "Goongi Gudiya" (Dumb Doll) by her detractors, which ultimately helped her emerge strong and bounce back to power in 1980. Similarly, Rahul Gandhi's rejuvenation as a credible LoP in 2024 comes after being dubbed "Pappu" by the BJP.

At this juncture, experts suggest that the common people witnessed a privileged member of the Gandhi family walking in scorching heat and biting cold, highlighting their problems. This might have changed their opinion about him, leading them to perceive him as a "Bechara Shehzada" (Poor Prince), earning their sympathy and contributing to the BJP's undoing in the 2024 polls.

The NDA government's focus on Hindutva, anti-Muslim rhetoric, and tall promises failed to address people's real issues. Prime Minister Modi can be credited for popularizing the term "Shehzada" (Scion) for Rahul Gandhi, but this campaign ultimately transformed his image from "Pappu" to a credible national leader. Overall, Rahul Gandhi's leadership as LoP will significantly impact India's political landscape. To effectively represent the opposition in Parliament, he will need to rise to these challenges, demonstrating strong leadership and a commitment to addressing the concerns of the Indian people.

(The writer is a senior journalist and a policy analyst; views expressed are personal)

Union budget needs to adopt all-inclusive approach to health

India needs to spend more on infrastructure development, innovation, and accessibility for universal health coverage by 2030

As India anticipates the unveiling of the first comprehensive Union Budget under the Modi 3.0 government, the healthcare sector finds itself at a crucial crossroads. The interim budget has set a preliminary roadmap, yet achieving a transformative overhaul of the healthcare ecosystem requires a robust and unified effort. It is imperative to prioritize increased funding for healthcare infrastructure, innovation, and accessibility to create a new ecosystem that can support India's ambitious healthcare objectives. One of the primary expectations from the forthcoming budget is the reclassification of hospitals as infrastructure investments. This reclassification has the potential to attract substantial



SUGANDH AHLUWALIA

private sector investments, which are vital for the development of state-of-the-art healthcare facilities across the country. Additionally, extending interest rate subventions for medical equipment could alleviate the financial strain on hospitals, facilitating the modernization of technology and improvement in service delivery. A significant step forward for India's healthcare system

would be the formulation of a roadmap to boost public healthcare expenditure to 3% of the GDP. According to the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Reserve Bank of India estimates, healthcare expenditure needs to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 18.9%. The current goal is to achieve 2.5% public expenditure on healthcare by 2025-26 and 3% by 2030-31. While these targets are ambitious, they require meticulous planning and strategic execution to be realized. The economic burden of healthcare costs is a major concern for the lower and middle-income groups in India. High out-of-pocket expenditures, coupled with escalating healthcare costs and insurance barriers, neces-

sitate immediate government intervention. Incorporating advanced treatment methods into the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) and encouraging private health insurance companies to adopt similar practices can significantly enhance healthcare accessibility for these groups. The government must also place a strong emphasis on rural healthcare in its budget allocations. Direct investments in healthcare infrastructure and medical personnel, along with targeted incentives to attract doctors and hospitals to underserved areas, are critical. This approach will expand healthcare coverage and spur innovation in insurance products, making comprehensive health-

care accessible to all, especially in rural regions where the need is most pressing. Physical infrastructure along with the human resources is essential for delivering quality healthcare. Rational regulations and policies are critical to supporting India's aspiration to achieve UHC by 2030. Such regulations should enable seamless collaboration among all stakeholders, ensuring that quality healthcare services are accessible to all citizens, regardless of socio-economic status. This approach will help address health disparities and improve overall health outcomes in the country. The private sector has a pivotal role in delivering quality healthcare services. Bridging the critical gaps in service delivery is

essential for achieving UHC, particularly in addressing the dual burden of non-communicable and communicable diseases. Health insurance is a vital component in the journey toward "Health for All." With low insurance coverage, many individuals face substantial out-of-pocket expenses when seeking healthcare services. Implementing mandatory health insurance and gradually expanding coverage to include self-employed professionals and other currently excluded groups can pave the way for a more equitable healthcare system. This strategy would ensure that all citizens have access to essential health services without financial hardship. Access to quality healthcare is fundamental for everyone, and UHC

is key in this regard. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), UHC means access to essential health services, including affordable medicines and vaccines, without financial difficulty. Strengthening health systems and essential infrastructure is vital for achieving UHC. The private sector's investments in healthcare infrastructure and training health workers are significant contributions toward this goal. Achieving the goal of Healthcare for All by 2030 in India presents numerous opportunities but also requires overcoming significant barriers. A multi-faceted approach is essential for increasing access to and delivery of quality healthcare. Developing a

sustainable healthcare business model that integrates primary, secondary, and tertiary care systems is crucial. Such a model should emphasize affordability and high quality, enhancing the reputation of Indian healthcare. Substantial support for the hospital sector is also necessary, including a combination of investments and tax reliefs, to build infrastructure assets and provide top-tier healthcare services across the country. Bridging the rural-urban divide in critical care facilities is imperative to reaching the goal of Healthcare for All by 2030. *(The author is Chief Strategy Officer at Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)*

'HYDERABAD IS NOW COMPETING WITH SOME MAJOR CITIES IN WORLD'

SHRADDHA NEWARE

Sukhbir Singh is no stranger to the city of Nizams, as he first came to Hyderabad back in 2011 on January 17. Pacing out 12 years later, he was once again back in the city last year, this time as the General Manager of Novotel Hyderabad Airport.

After working in the hospitality industry for more than twenty years, he seems to know every nerve of the business. Speaking to us about his association with Hyderabad, the Jamshedpur-born says, "The city was extremely kind to us. It's an easy city to live and grow in, and it does not have too much discrimination for people from outside the city or within. The warm and kind nature of people in the city continues to be so even now."

Comparing his hometown, Jamshedpur, to the city of Hyderabad, the former director of sales and marketing shares, "My hometown is a small industrial town and we grew up in a township. People work on shifts and that's about it. There's not too much hustle, bustle, or trade that happens. Hyderabad is a bustling metropolis today, competing with some of the major cities in the world."

Coming to the changes he has witnessed in the city since his last tenure here, from 2011 to early 2014, the former General Manager of Accor Mumbai area speaks to us about the changes he has witnessed: "The traffic has of course gone up in the last 10 to 12 years. But I think there's been a lot of infrastructure developed. The city was designed to make people's lives easier."

He further shares a titbit with us about the land behind Novotel Hyderabad Airport: "In 2011, we were a hotel, 40 kilometers away from the city. The space behind the hotel used to be nothing but rugged terrain, and we would advocate for the SUV car companies to bring them here so that they could do a bit of a trial run for the customers."

As a person now associated with the development of hospitality, he has contributed to many sustainable projects, one of which includes a small patch of exotic vegetables being farmed to sustain the hotel.

Talking about a life-changing memory, he

mentions that it relates to both his work and family because he wanted to be a hotelier. From a salesperson into an operational role, he shares, "I had come in here as a director of sales and marketing. From my family's perspective, I think they were elated with the idea and supported my decision. When you are making transitions, there's a lot of hard work that needs to be done. My wife made sure that she supported the entire endeavour as much as possible. Now I am in my 11th year as a general manager, thanks to Hyderabad and the hotel."

He further compares driving in Mumbai versus Hyderabad from his residence to work. He says, "What was different from Mumbai was that I used to calculate the distance in time. Whereas the people in my team, who were local, used to calculate that in terms of kilometers. So for me, Banjara Hills was 30 minutes away and for them, it was 37 kilometers away."

He explains people being puzzled at this, but for him, driving 30 minutes from his residence, which is 2400 sq. ft. according to him, unlike the 700-800 sq. ft. ones in Mumbai, was a welcome thing. He adds, "Language is not a problem, which is typically what people believe in the north—that when you go down to South India, you could have a barrier from a language point of view. We didn't have that."

For him, his wife has been a shadow throughout. He gleefully shares, "My wife loves that song, *Tu jahan jahan chalega, mera saya saath hoga*. She's been my shadow, and she has been with me for the last 20 years. Having to move every two and a half or three years, my wife has gotten too good at packing up her old house in

two days and then moving pin codes and moving states. He shares that his wife had a big influence in making the decision to move to Hyderabad since she too enjoys the city.

Kind is the word that comes to his mind when thinking of Hyderabad, saying, "The city has been very, very kind to us."



HYDERABOND

For our special Hyderabadond segment, Sukhbir Singh, who is from the industrial town of Jamshedpur, joins *The Pioneer* and shares his affinity, love for the city.

Heat wave worsens kidney stone crisis for younger people

Having a stone in your kidney can be a painful and recurrent condition that is increasing in the younger population. Recently, it has been seen that there is a rise in kidney cases among youngsters. Kidney stones are deposits of minerals and salts that are formed inside the kidney. They affect parts of the urinary tract, from the kidney to the bladder. When the stone moves through the urinary tract, it causes a urinary tract infection, severe pain, vomiting and can cause other complications like fever and sepsis.

ed an increase of 30% in emergencies for kidney stones during the summer months.

Factors contributing to the rise

• Dehydration

It is the most direct consequence of a heat wave. The body loses more fluids, due to which urine becomes concentrated and increases the risk of kidney stone formation. Younger individuals are more vulnerable to it as they are more active and stay outdoors.

• Dietary habits

Modern eating habits include a high intake of processed foods, sugary beverages, and high-sodium food products, which contribute to kidney stone formation. When these eating habits are combined with dehydration, they create the perfect environment for the development of kidney stones.

• Sedentary lifestyle

The rise in sedentary lifestyles among urban youth increases the risk. Lack of physical activity leads to obesity, which is another risk factor for kidney stones.

Preventive measures

• Hydration

It is important to stay hydrated, as water helps dilute the substances in urine that cause stones. Individuals should aim to consume at least 3 litres of liquid daily.

• Dietary adjustments

Decreasing the consumption of salt, animal protein, and sugar lowers the risk of kidney stone formation. It is beneficial to add high-water-content fruits and vegetables to the diet.

• Regular check-ups

Routine medical check-ups help in the early detection of kidney stones and make it easy to manage them. Individuals with a family history of kidney stones should be more aware.

• Public health

The rise in kidney stone cases among the young population brings a whole new challenge to public health. It leads to an increase in healthcare costs, lost productivity, and long-term complications. Public health campaigns that are focused on prevention, awareness, and early intervention are essential. The sudden surge in kidney stone cases in India, especially among young adults, is a pressing health concern due to rising heat waves. Addressing the issues leading to the stone formation by creating awareness, taking preventive measures, and providing timely intervention. As there is a change in climate and its impact on global weather patterns, the importance of health measures becomes crucial.

(The author, Dr. Amit Tiwari, is a consultant-urology, at Manipal Hospital.)

The impact of heat waves

Recently, India has been experiencing scorching heat, with temperatures above 45 degrees Celsius in many regions. This extreme heat causes various direct and indirect health impacts, which include dehydration and an increased risk of kidney stones. Dehydration causes a reduction in the volume of urine, which allows minerals to crystallise and form stones.

Rising incidence among younger populations

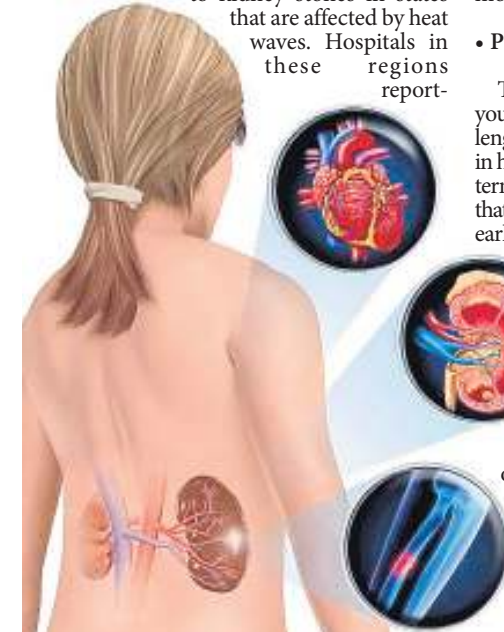
Traditionally, kidney stones were seen among older adults. However, according to recent trends, there has been an increase in the number of younger adults being diagnosed with kidney stones. Various factors contribute to the rise, including sedentary lifestyle, environmental factors like heat waves, and eating habits.

Study insights

As per a study done by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), it was shown that there has been an increase in kidney stone cases among teenagers. The researcher also added that it is caused by longer exposure to high temperatures, sweating, reduced liquid intake and a higher concentration of stone formation in urine.

Recent news reports

There is a sudden surge in cases related to kidney stones in states that are affected by heat waves. Hospitals in these regions report-



Rautu Ka Raaz. Slow burning crime drama with compelling narrative

TANISHA SAXENA

Plot: Sangeeta, the corrupt and regressive warden of Sewadham, a school for the blind in the village of Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, has been found dead. As Inspector Deepak Negi (played by Nawazuddin Siddiqui) and his team investigate the case, layers of the

Review

DIRECTED BY : Anand Surapur

PRODUCED BY : Umesh Bansal, Shariq Patel, Chintu Srivastava, Anand Surapur

CINEMATOGRAPHER : Sayak Bhattacharya

CAST : Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Rajesh Kumar, Atul Tiwari

STREAMING ON : Zee5

RATING : 3/5

story begin to unravel. The prime suspects include the school's trustee, Manoj Kesari (played by Atul Tiwari), the principal, and a few others.

Highlights : *Rautu ka Raaz* is a slow burning crime thriller set in the backdrop of the hilly terrain of Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand. Unlike any typical crime thriller *Rautu ka Raaz* is a subtle portrayal of village life.

Siddiqui's performance is a tour de force, blending stoic resilience with a palpable sense of vulnerability. His portrayal of a man grappling with his inner demons while unraveling external mysteries is nothing short of mesmerising. Complementing Siddiqui's gravitas is Rajesh Kumar, who plays Sub Inspector Naresh Dimri. Kumar's body language and dialogue delivery make this character a uniquely compelling sub inspector, significantly enriching the narrative.

The supporting cast is equally impressive, with standout performances from Narayani Shastri, Samridhi Chandola, Harshit Verma, and others, adding depth to the film's intricate web of characters. Each role, no matter how small, feels essential to the fabric of the story, creating a living, breathing community that is as much a part of the mystery as the crime itself.

What sets *Rautu ka Raaz* apart from other crime thrillers is its pacing. This is not a film that rushes to reveal its hand. Instead, it slowly peels back the layers of its narrative, allowing the audience to savour each revelation. This deliberate pace is both a strength and a challenge; it demands patience but rewards

viewers with a richly textured story that stays with them long after the credits roll.

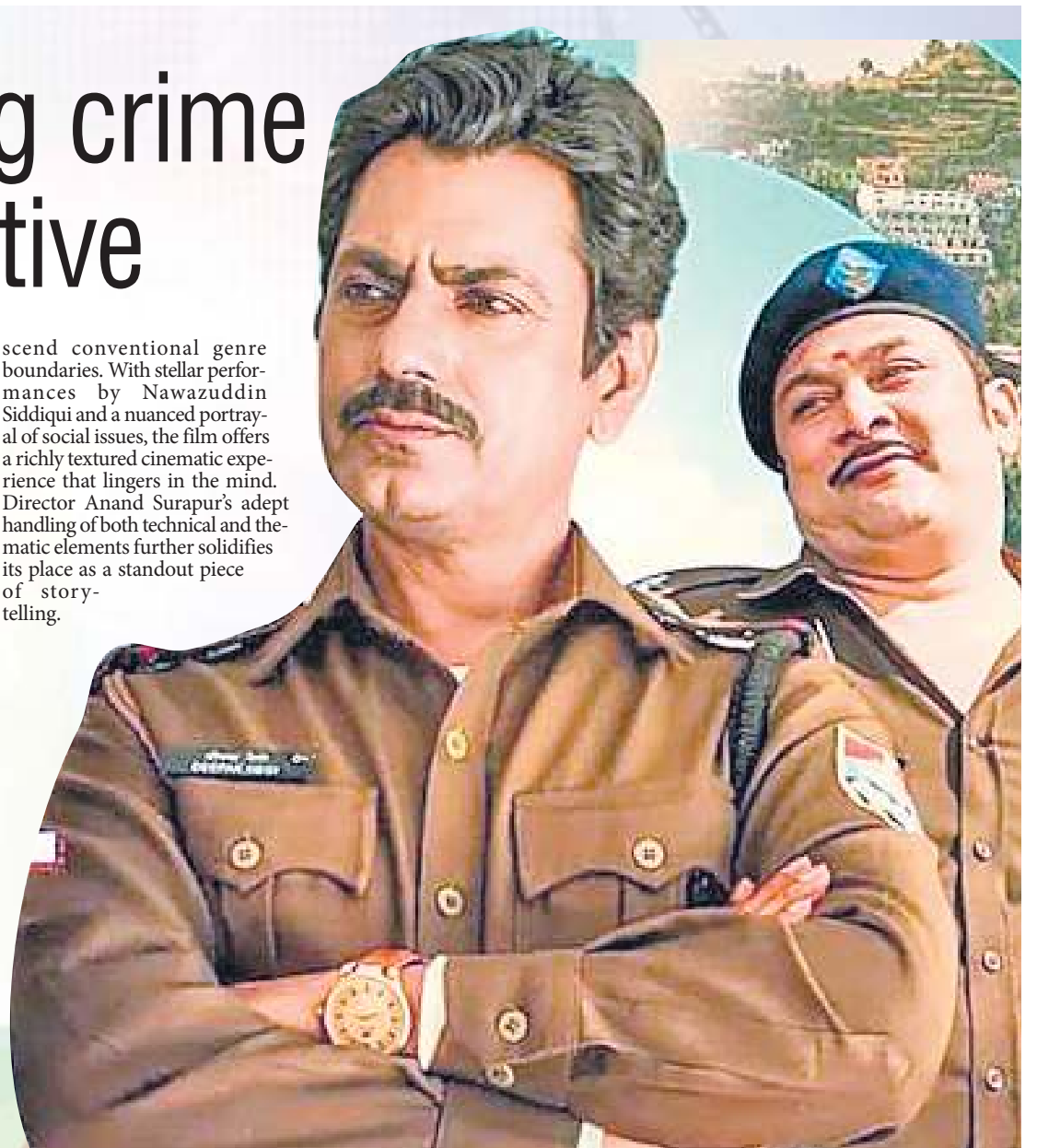
In the compelling narrative of the crime thriller, an unexpected focus emerges on pivotal social issues, particularly the urgent necessity to improve facilities for visually impaired children. Going beyond its primary storyline, the film eloquently portrays the multifaceted lives of visually impaired individuals, subtly emphasising their equal participation in the spectrum of human experiences. A poignant moment unfolds when Rajat, who is blind, inadvertently overhears a conversation revealing unjust treatment by the warden. What is truly commendable is how seamlessly and poignantly these themes are interwoven within the framework of a crime thriller. Moreover, the film's ending is profoundly touching.

Drawbacks : While *Rautu ka Raaz* excels in its narrative depth and character development, some viewers might find its slow pacing challenging, especially those accustomed to faster-paced thrillers.

Technical aspects : From the opening frame, the film captures the breathtaking vistas of the Garhwal foothills. The lush, rolling terrain, shrouded in mist, provides a beautiful backdrop that becomes a character in its own right. Cinematographer Sayak Bhattacharya's lens transforms the hills into a labyrinth of mystery, where every twist and turn reveals a new layer of intrigue.

Verdict : *Rautu ka Raaz* is a must-watch for aficionados of slow-burn crime dramas and those intrigued by narratives that tran-

scend conventional genre boundaries. With stellar performances by Nawazuddin Siddiqui and a nuanced portrayal of social issues, the film offers a richly textured cinematic experience that lingers in the mind. Director Anand Surapur's adept handling of both technical and thematic elements further solidifies its place as a standout piece of storytelling.



what's brewing?

● Amith Raj

The fifth edition of Hyderabad Regional Chapter's flagship event, "IIIID Showcase Insider X 2024," with the theme "Design Intelligence," was held. It will conclude at Hitex Exhibition Centre on June 30.

● Bella Mode

● Sona Chatwani

● Sudha

● Maya Patel

● Namita

● Kajal

● Pallavi

● Sushila bokadia

The Maha Tambola, a charitable event organised by Phankaar Innovative Minds in partnership with Hoonar Creations. All proceeds from the event will be donated to the girl child

● Kajal. Ranka

● Kirti

● Latikha

● Neena

● Vishakha

At the opening of the Desire Designer show at N-Convention in high-tech city, fashion enthusiasts from the city made a statement. June 30 is the last day of the exhibit.

PARTY

Photos by - SV Chary

The largest and most upscale movie theatre operator in India, PVR INOX Limited, has announced the opening of a new four-screen theater in Hyderabad with 4K laser projection in every auditorium.

The ITC Kohinnor in Hyderabad hosted the 10th Machinist Super Shopfloor Awards. Visweswara Reddy N won the Business Leader of the Year award during the event.

YR Gaitonde Medical Educational Research Foundation (YRGMERF) announced the Suniti Solomon Memorial Symposium on Friday, which is organised by YRGCARE. The distinguished Dr. Suniti Solomon, founder trustee of YRGMERF, will be honoured for her lifetime legacy and her enormous contributions to healthcare at this conference.

Prepare to go on a unique fashion adventure during Max Fashions' highly anticipated Max Mania sale, which starts at just Rs 399. At the Max Mania Sale, discover the ideal balance between fashion freedom and bargains.

FUN

ARCHIE

WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO TODAY? OH, THE USUAL!

GRAB A NAP OR TWO... LISTEN TO SOME TUNES... CATCH UP ON SOME COMIC BOOKS... SNACKS... GAME BOY...

I MEANT AFTER SCHOOL!

HENRY SHERBELL COME BACKMAN 7-15

CALVIN AND HOBBS

I DON'T BELIEVE YOUR DUMB OLD SECRET ABOUT MY PARENTS GETTING ME AT A FLEA MARKET. IT'S TRUE.

IT IS NOT, AND IF ALL YOUR SECRETS ARE LIES, YOU CAN JUST KEEP THEM TO YOURSELF.

YOU JUST DON'T WANT TO HEAR HOW LITTLE YOU WENT FOR.

OH, HUSH UP. THIS BOOK ALSO SAYS TIGERS WON'T SHARE THEIR TERRITORY WITH OTHER TIGERS.

I CAN SEE HOW OTHER TIGERS WOULD GET ON ONE'S NERVES. THAT'S HOW MUCH YOU COST.

GARFIELD

I'VE BEEN GIVING THE FUTURE A LOT OF THOUGHT AND, WELL...

I DON'T SEE ANYTHING WHAT A WASTE OF YOUR PAST

REALITY CHECK

KING ARTHUR SEARCHES FOR HIS ANCESTRY.

RESULTS: YOUR MOTHER WAS A HAMSTER AND YOUR FATHER SMELLED OF ELDERBERRIES

YOUR DISAPPOINTMENT IS HALF ENGLISH AND HALF PIG-DOG

SPEED BUMP

WHAT? WHAT DID SHE DO?

CROSSWORD

NANCY

I DON'T GET THIS STUFF ABOUT FRACTIONS! LET'S FIGURE IT OUT TOGETHER

RING I'LL GET IT

SORRY, MR. FUMBLE... AUNT FRITZ CAN'T COME TO THE PHONE NOW... SHE'S DOING HOMEWORK

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

DIFFICULTY RATINGS: ★★★★★

ACROSS

- One of the continents
- Opposite of false
- A short letter
- Repairing
- Went red in the face
- A game with bat and ball
- A king's son
- Come to an halt
- Sprinkle this on food
- A bird that can be trained to race
- Four times twenty
- You need this to be allowed to drive a car
- The world's largest bird
- Wine is made from these
- Middle
- Young woman
- Twirl

DOWN

- A female relation
- A baby's toy
- Water from the sky

SOLUTION

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

Kamal Haasan gets high praise for his role in **KALKI 2898 AD**

During a special press conference in Chennai, Kamal Haasan finally talked about the reaction *Kalki 2898 AD* has been receiving. The actor is presently occupied with the promotion of his next film, *Indian 2*, which will hit theatres on July 12. He has found time in his hectic schedule to view the movie and talk about *Kalki 2898 AD*. "In *Kalki*, I have played a small role that makes an appearance for a few minutes only," the actor started. "I haven't even started my actual role in the movie yet; I have more work ahead of me in the sequel. I was shocked when I saw this movie as a fan."

"*Kalki 2898 AD* is one of many signifiers that Indian cinema is moving towards global entertainment. Nag Ashwin approached mythology with caution and impartiality toward all religions. The storytelling legacy of India is unmatched by any other culture, with the exception of Greece, Japan and China. By bringing everyone together, Ashwin has selected stories from that and carried them out very patiently."

After seeing the movie, Kamal complimented Amitabh Bachchan's performance and stated that he wasn't sure how to classify him. "I'm not sure if he qualifies as a new actor or a veteran. He did a really good job on the movie. It appears like the

movie was created with kids in mind. Now, don't question how a white-haired man can watch these kinds of movies. This movie makes you realize that every adult has a child inside of them. I think this is a fantastic attempt and I'm glad to be involved. The fact that this adventure will continue makes me delighted," he continued.

The cast of *Indian 2*, which features Kamal Haasan and Shankar, will soon be travelling to Singapore to promote the film. This will be Senapathy's feature film comeback. The actor will also feature in *Thug Life*, a 2025 release directed by Mani Ratnam.



Kalki 2898 AD collects Rs 191.5 cr globally on day one

Nag Ashwin's 3D spectacle *Kalki 2898 AD* registered a record opening at the global box office, earning Rs 191.5 crore gross on day one of its release, the makers said on Friday. Touted as a marriage of Hindu epic *Mahabharata* and science fiction, the big-budget film is produced by Vjayanthi Movies and was released on Thursday in six languages: Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Hindi and English. It features a star cast led by Prabhas,

Deepika Padukone, Amitabh Bachchan and Kamal Haasan, along with Disha Patani, Saswata Chatterjee and Shobhana. Vjayanthi Movies shared the opening day figure of the movie on its official X page through a poster which stated that *Kalki 2898 AD* earned Rs 191.5 crore in gross box office collection (GBOC). The film's day one earnings is the third highest opening day collection for any Indian film. It is behind *SS Rajamouli's RRR* (Rs 223 crores) and

Baahubali 2 (Rs 217 crores), which also featured Prabhas in the lead role. On Thursday, trade pundits had predicted that the film might earn around Rs 200 crore globally on its opening day. Previously titled *Project K*, it is arguably the most expensive feature film in Indian cinema history, at a reported Rs 600 crore. Large crowds were seen outside theatres in several cities, including Hyderabad and Mumbai. The initial reviews were also favourable.

Prithviraj Sukumaran & wife Supriya Menon acquire stakes in Kochi FC

Pan-India star Prithviraj Sukumaran, known for his impeccable roles in *Aadujeevitham*, *Saala: Part 1* and many other blockbusters, has acquired stakes in a football team in the Kerala Super League. The power couple, Prithviraj Sukumaran and Supriya Menon, have invested in Kochi FC, one of the six teams competing in the league.

Their involvement brings a new level of excitement and visibility to the league. This move is not only an investment, but also a passionate effort to enhance the local sports culture. By acquiring Kochi FC, the couple aims to provide a platform for budding football talents in the region, creating opportunities for players to shine.

Mathew Joseph, CEO of Super League Kerala,

emphasised that actor Prithviraj's involvement in the league will create a unique blend of entertainment and sports in Kerala. This exciting development is set to unfold during the 60-day league, starting at the end of August this year.

On the work front, Prithviraj Sukumaran has fans eagerly awaiting his upcoming directorial blockbuster, *L2: Empuraan*, a sequel to the critically acclaimed *Lucifer*.



First song from **Double Ismart** to be out on July 1

Ustaad Ram Pothineni and dynamic director Puri Jagannadh are set to dazzle audiences once again with their upcoming Pan-Indian film *Double Ismart*, proudly produced by Puri Jagannadh and Charmme Kaur. The film has been scheduled for release on August 15, 2024, on the eve of Independence Day.

The makers are gearing up for the musical promotions, with renowned composer Mani Sharma returning after delivering a chart-buster album and captivating BGM for the first part. The first single titled *Steppa Maar* is set to release on July 1.

A striking poster has been unveiled, featuring Ram Pothineni exuding stylish vibes and dancing in front of a Lord Shiva statue. The song promises to be an electrifying tune that will instantly captivate the masses, with Ram's dance moves expected to be a major highlight. Choreographed by Jani Master, the lyrics are penned by Bhaskara Bhatla and Anurag Kulkarni has lent his vocals.

Described as a mass action entertainer, *Double Ismart* has generated immense hype, especially with Sanjay Dutt playing the main antagonist and Kavya Thapar starring as the female lead.

The film will be released in

Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi languages.

K'taka murder case: Naga Shaurya defends Darshan

Actor Naga Shaurya has expressed his support for Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, who is currently in custody in connection with the alleged murder case of Renukaswamy. Naga shared a photo on his Instagram, showing Darshan tying a watch on him.

Addressing Darshan as "anna" (brother), Naga wrote in his post that Darshan is not someone who could ever harm anyone and expressed confidence in Darshan's innocence. "My heart goes out to the family of the deceased, and I genuinely wish them strength during this difficult time," Naga Shaurya wrote in his Instagram post. The actor expressed disappointment at people rushing to conclusions about the issue.

He stated, "Darshan Anna is not someone who could ever harm anyone, even in his worst nightmares. Those who know him well can attest to his generosity, kind-hearted nature, and unwavering commitment to helping others. He has always gone out of his way to support

those in need and has been a pillar of strength for many." Naga Shaurya also conveyed his faith in the judicial system, believing that the truth will soon come to light. He emphasised the need for privacy and respect for the families involved in the challenging situation.

"We must also remember that another family is suffering greatly as well. They deserve privacy and respect during this challenging period. I firmly believe that Anna, known for his integrity and compassion, will be proven innocent and that the real culprit will be brought to justice," he concluded in his post, adding a folded hands emoji. For those unfamiliar with the situation, Darshan and his friend Pavithra Gowda were arrested on June 11 in connection with the alleged murder of Darshan's fan Renukaswamy. According to police officials, Renukaswamy had allegedly sent obscene messages to Gowda, which reportedly led to the tragic incident.



Raa Raja trailer hints it's a new concept film

The trailer of the film *Raa Raja*, directed by B. Shivaprasad and starring Sugi Vijay and Mounika Maguluri as the lead hero and heroine respectively, has been released under the banner of Sri Padmini Cinema. The trailer was impressive with its unique



concept, extraordinary taking and brilliant background score. Without revealing the character faces, the concept designed is very interesting. The horror thriller elements have created a lot of curiosity. The new concept of *Raa Raja* will give audiences a very different experience when they see the trailer. Shekhar Chandra is providing music for this film, while Rahul Srivatsav is handling the DOP. Uppu Maruthi is the editor, and Ramachandrayulu is the art director. Makers have announced to make the release date of this film official very soon.

Raghava Lawrence's **Benz** to star Fahadh Faasil & SJ Suriya

In an exciting update from the world of cinema, Raghava Lawrence is all set to helm his next directorial venture titled *Benz*, which promises to be a captivating thriller featuring two acclaimed actors in antagonistic roles. The film has garnered attention with sources confirming that Fahadh Faasil and SJ Suriya will portray pivotal villainous characters. Raghava Lawrence, known for his dynamic filmmaking style and penchant for blending action with emotional depth, has chosen a compelling narrative for *Benz*. The inclusion of Fahadh Faasil and SJ Suriya, both renowned for their versatility and intense portrayals on screen, adds an intriguing dimension to the project.

Bakkiyaraj Kannan, celebrated for his directorial prowess showcased in films like *Remo* and *Sulthan*, brings his distinct vision to *Benz*. The collaboration between Lawrence, Kannan and the ensemble cast promises a cinematic experience that will keep audiences on the edge of their seats. Speaking about

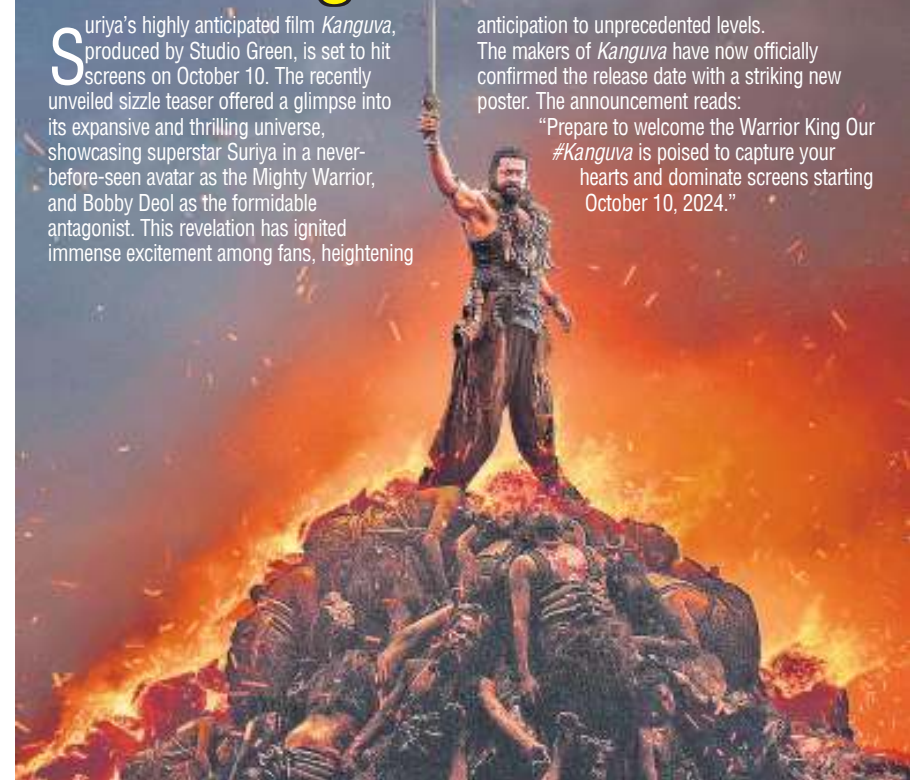
the film, Raghava Lawrence expressed his enthusiasm for working with Fahadh Faasil and SJ Suriya, highlighting their ability to bring depth and complexity to their respective characters. He shared his excitement for the audience to witness their performances in roles that challenge traditional perceptions of antagonists in Indian cinema. *Benz* is poised to be a milestone in Raghava Lawrence's career, marking his foray into a genre that blends high-octane action with intricate storytelling. As anticipation mounts for further details about the film's plot and production, fans and critics alike eagerly await its release to witness the clash of titans portrayed by Fahadh Faasil and SJ Suriya. With production underway and the groundwork laid for a gripping narrative, *Benz* is set to redefine the boundaries of cinematic storytelling, promising audiences an unforgettable cinematic journey into the world of intense drama and thrilling confrontations.



Suriya's **Kanguva** releasing on October 10

Suriya's highly anticipated film *Kanguva*, produced by Studio Green, is set to hit screens on October 10. The recently unveiled sizzle teaser offered a glimpse into its expansive and thrilling universe, showcasing superstar Suriya in a never-before-seen avatar as the Mighty Warrior, and Bobby Deol as the formidable antagonist. This revelation has ignited immense excitement among fans, heightening

anticipation to unprecedented levels. The makers of *Kanguva* have now officially confirmed the release date with a striking new poster. The announcement reads: "Prepare to welcome the Warrior King Our #Kanguva is poised to capture your hearts and dominate screens starting October 10, 2024."



Odela 2 begins crucial schedule in Hyd

Odela 2 is a proud production of Madhu Creations and Sampath Nandi Teamworks, with director Ashok Teja of *Odela Railway Station* fame.

The first look poster of superstar Tamannaah Bhatia as the wise Naga Saadhu "Bhairavi," which was previously released, went viral throughout the nation and greatly increased anticipation for the movie.

The multilingual supernatural spectacle has finished filming in a number of gorgeous sites in India as part of its first schedule. With the almighty blessings of Mahadev Lord Shiva at his sacred home of Varanasi, the film's filming got underway in March.

Now, the makers have announced that the team has begun a crucial schedule for the film in Hyderabad. According to the

makers, the team is currently canning key action sequences that are being choreographed by top stunt masters!



RASHMIKA MANDANNA BEGINS SHOOTING FOR SIKANDAR

The excitement around Salman Khan's upcoming film *Sikandar* has intensified as the shooting progresses in Mumbai, with the recent addition of Rashmika Mandanna to the sets. Directed by renowned filmmaker AR Murugadoss and produced by Sajid Nadiadwala, *Sikandar* is slated for an Eid 2025 release.

According to sources, the actress is currently in Mumbai and has joined the shooting of the film. Salman Khan, a Bollywood icon known for his charisma and box-office prowess, headlines *Sikandar* alongside Rashmika Mandanna, marking her eagerly anticipated debut opposite Khan. The film promises a blend of action, drama and entertainment, characteristic of Murugadoss's directorial style.

Sikandar is set to captivate audiences with its compelling storyline and stellar performances. With production in full swing and Mumbai providing the backdrop for pivotal scenes, anticipation is building among fans eager to witness Khan and Mandanna's on-screen chemistry.

As the Eid 2025 release date draws nearer, *Sikandar* is poised to be a blockbuster, offering viewers a cinematic treat filled with excitement and emotion.

PIC TALK



The stars of *Indian 2* arrived for their movie promotions in Malaysia. Kamal Haasan, Siddharth and SJ Suriya, landed in the vibrant city amidst cheering fans and flashing cameras on Friday. The makers took to their social media handles to share the image of the trio having their moment in Malaysia as they landed there.

Proteas will succumb to unplayable Axar, Kuldeep in final: Sarandeep

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India cricketer Sarandeep Singh feels the "unplayable" spin combination of Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel will be too much for the South Africans to handle during the T20 World Cup final in Bridgetown, Barbados on Saturday. Wrist spinner Kuldeep has taken 10 wickets in four games with a best of 3/19, while Axar has grabbed eight from seven games with a best of 3/23. Both left-arm spinners are expected to play in the final. "If you ask me, who are the two players who will win it for India in the final, I will say Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel. They are outright match-winners in spin-friendly conditions," Sarandeep told PTI Videos on Friday. "We are having at the world's best spinners at the moment. Look at the way Kuldeep and Axar came in, they are winning all the games. They are unplayable. Everyone is talking about Kuldeep. He is going to destroy the South African middle order. "He has done it against Australia (in Super 8s) and

England (in semifinals). Now it's the turn of South Africa. Axar is also a very dangerous slow left-arm orthodox bowler. An outright match-winner. Indian spinners will win the final." India and South Africa are coming into the final having not lost a single match in the World Cup. While South Africa won all their eight games, India were victorious in seven as the tie against Canada in Florida was washed out due to rain. Sarandeep, who played three Tests and five ODIs, added that Axar and Kuldeep would be even more potent on the spin-friendly Bridgetown wicket. "Axar starts getting wickets from the sixth over. It's not easy for Axar to bowl in powerplay. He comes, bowls, and makes things easy for the rest of the bowlers. Kuldeep and Axar are complementing each other so well. "The wickets in West Indies are not easy to play especially if you have world-class spinners like Kuldeep and Axar. It was not easy for England, it will not be easy for South Africa as well,"



Sarandeep observed. The former India off-spinner added that skipper Rohit Sharma was spot on in his assessment of Caribbean conditions and opted for four spinners. "Rohit opted for four spinners but (Yuzvendra) Chahal is not in the scheme of things. The reason is, others have done their job exceedingly well. (Ravindra) Jadeja is the senior-most player but he is not coming into powerplay. Axar knows how to bowl in these conditions. He is the best option for us to bowl into the powerplay. He is giving the results as well," he added. On whether South African spinners Keshav Maharaj and Tabraiz Shamsi could also trouble the Indian batters, Sarandeep said, "Yes they will. Keshav and Shamsi are also very good. Let's see how Indian batsmen handle the spinners. "India has a very strong middle order. India has left-handers like Rishabh Pant, Shivam Dube, Axar, and Jadeja. Four left-handers in the middle order. It will be interesting to see how Maharaj and Shamsi are going to tackle

them. And vice-versa. This will be a big challenge for them also." Sarandeep added that India has the best batting and bowling lineup in the world. "Bumrah's economy is 3.5 or 3.6. This is so unreal. Other bowlers go over 9 or 10. Even after eight games, his economy is 3.5. This is so unreal. What else can you ask from him? India is the favourites not only in batting but bowling as well." The former cricketer played down Virat Kohli's lack of form. Virat has scored only 76 runs in seven innings. "Virat is waiting for the final to perform. He is a world-class player, no doubt. He is mentally very strong. He is a team man. He is playing for the team. And there is some plan given to him. "Normally he opens only in the IPL. But here he had been given a clear-cut role. Virat is trying to hit from the first ball and trying to put more pressure on the bowlers. But somehow he is getting out quickly. But I am not worried about him. He is a big-match player. And that big game is coming. His big innings is coming against South Africa."

Buttler admits tactical mistake of not bowling Moeen Ali on turning Providence track

PTI ■ GEORGETOWN (GUYANA)

Admitting that they were completely outplayed by India in the T20 World Cup semifinal, England skipper Jos Buttler said in hindsight it was a tactical mistake on his part to not bowl Moeen Ali on a turning Providence pitch here. Indian spin twin of Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav claimed three wickets each as the defending champions folded for 103 in 16.4 overs in their pursuit of 172 in a rain-interrupted semi-final here on Thursday. "Yeah, disappointing. I think we were outplayed by India. They fully deserved the victory," Buttler said in the post-match media interaction. "They had an above-par score. I was hoping to restrict them to 145-150 probably on that pitch. It was always going to be a tough chase from there." Having won the toss, the England skipper went in with an unchanged XI and it was Adil Rashid and Liam Livingstone who were his chosen spinners, overlooking Moeen Ali perhaps to deal with the damp conditions. Rashid and Livingstone conceded just 49 runs in their eight overs with the former also ending the explosive innings of India skipper Rohit Sharma for a 39-ball 57 in the 14th over. Asked if there was a failure of plans or execution, Buttler said: "A little bit of both. I thought they played well as well. I thought we bowled a little bit without luck in the power play, a few close calls there. "But, yes, I think the benefit of hindsight and reflecting, I



would have got Moeen (Ali) in the game of course. So, yes, bits and pieces here and there," Buttler admitted. The ball was turning viciously and staying low as Rohit placed close-in fielders that resembled playing Tests in India. "I think everyone knew what to expect from this wicket. I think traditionally the bounce is low. And yeah, I thought India played really well and they played the conditions better than we did." Asked about their playing combination, Buttler said: "We thought long and hard about selection, about whether we kept the same balance that had been working well, or did we need four seamers on that particular wicket. That was a really tough call that we made and we ended up sticking with what we had."

"India played a really good game of cricket, whatever team or whatever happened at the toss -- they were going to be a tough team to beat and we had to be at our best if we were going to win the game and we were short of our best today." India will face South Africa in the final and Buttler feels it will be a game of close margins. "The two top sides in the final is going to be a game of small margins and it's going to be a great game. Two really good teams," he said. The Buttler-led side managed to beat only one Test playing nation -- West Indies -- in this tournament and were on the brink of early elimination after a washout against Scotland and a defeat to Australia in the group stage. However, Australia handed them a lifeline by beating Scotland and they narrowly

managed to make the Super 8s beating Namibia via DLS method. "Reaching a semi-final of a World Cup is an achievement. We wanted to obviously go all the way. That was what we came here for," said Buttler, who led them to the T20 World Cup title in 2022 after taking over white-ball captaincy from Eoin Morgan. "We faced lots of challenges and adversity throughout the whole tournament and we've stuck together well and played well enough to get to this stage. But unfortunately, at this stage, we've fallen short." "I think everyone has made progress and we've played well and not well enough, but I think the stuff that we've been doing behind the scenes, the way we've prepared, the way we've trained, the way we've played in patches has been really good. "There's a lot of talent in the team. And yes, we came up against a top team today in these conditions," he said. Asked if there would be fresh faces the next time, he said: "Yeah, I think... I can't do that. I haven't taken in the defeat. Very much thinking about this game and what happened and yeah, I think they say there's some time between today and the next matches, and we can see what happens." On his future plans and whether he would stay on as captain until the Champions Trophy in Pakistan in February, he said: "To be honest, I'm just looking forward to some time away from the game. "As I sit here, emotional after a loss, I don't need to dive too deep into it right now. I just look forward to some space from the game."

Plan was to make it difficult for England without doing anything extraordinary: Axar

PTI ■ GEORGETOWN (GUYANA)

His exploits in the powerplay set up India's massive win over England and left-arm spinner Axar Patel said keeping things simple was the key as it helped him make life difficult for rival batters "without doing anything extraordinary". Coming in to bowl in the fourth over, Axar (3/23) removed England skipper Jos Buttler off his very first delivery before dismissing Jonny Bairstow and Moeen Ali in consecutive overs to derail England's chase as they eventually folded for 103 in pursuit of 172 in the T20 World Cup semifinals here on Thursday. "Obviously in powerplay, it is difficult (to bowl) but when you know that you are getting help from the wicket, then without thinking much, without doing anything extraordinary, I thought that the more I keep it simple, the easier it would be for me," Axar said during the post-match press conference.



"We spoke in the dressing room that it's not an easy wicket (for batting), and I knew that the batsmen will charge at me. It wasn't going to be easy to hit me down the ground and also (they) couldn't hit off the back foot because the ball wasn't coming on the bat. "So my plan was to make it difficult for them, force them to think of playing some other shots, and, that's what hap-

pened on the first ball. So that was the plan." Axar sent his first ball from round the wicket and Buttler, looking for the reverse-sweep, ended up lobbing it up for wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant to do the rest. "I hadn't really planned to get a wicket on the first ball. My mindset was to put the ball in the right areas. Obviously, when you play knockouts, you want to start and finish well with the first and last ball," said Axar, who was adjudged the Player-of-the-Match. "I think it was difficult to hit big shots, to sweep and reverse sweep because some balls were keeping low on this wicket, so you can't connect it so easily." India scored 171 for 7 after being asked to take first strike and Axar said they were confident of defending the total. "I think 170 was a par score, we could defend it. Rohit bhai said after he finished batting that it was very difficult to hit big shots because the odd ball was spin-

ning, it was staying low and skidding as well. "When we made 170, we knew that we had scored 10-15 runs extra, which we could have defended." Batting at number eight, Axar also hit a six during his 10-run cameo and he said it gave him an idea about the nature of the surface as the pacers were bowling slower balls in the death overs. "Obviously, I got a clue from that (batting) as to what I could do and what I couldn't. When I went to bat, everyone was bowling slower, the ball was not coming at the speed I wanted so I couldn't connect properly. So giving pace would have made it easy for them. It was important to hit the ball at a good area. "It's also about pressure. When you are chasing, and you know that the wicket is helping the bowlers, as an opener, or anyone in the top four, they think of cashing in on the powerplay as much as possible but it didn't work out."

Shafali Verma becomes fastest woman double-centurion in Test cricket

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Dashing India opener Shafali Verma smashed the fastest double-century in the history of women's Test cricket, eclipsing Annabel Sutherland of Australia during the one-off Test against South Africa here on Friday. Shafali, 20, scored her double ton off just 194 balls, bettering Sutherland's feat, which came off 248 balls against South Africa earlier this year. Shafali also became the second Indian after former skipper Mithali Raj to hit a double century in Test cricket after almost 22 long years here. Mithali's 214 had come off 407 balls and the former India skipper achieved during



the drawn second Test against England at Taunton in August, 2022. Shafali struck 23 fours and eight maximums during her attacking knock. She brought up her twin ton with consecutive sixes of off-spinner Delmi Tucker, followed by a single. Shafali was finally run out at 205 off 197 balls. Besides, her opening partner Smriti Mandhana also made an attacking 149 off 161 balls with the help of 27 boundaries and one six to stitch a formidable opening partnership of 292 runs, which came off in just 52 overs. India are going great guns against South Africa on the opening day scoring at close to a run-a-ball.

Last Tango: Possibly final time Rohit and Virat will play for India in T20I format

New Delhi, (PTI)

This Saturday afternoon in Barbados, no Indian fan would want Rohit Sharma to drag his jaded body towards the dug-out trying to hide a tear welling up at the corner of his eye. No Indian fan would want to revisit Virat Kohli's blank stare towards the podium where the coveted ODI World Cup trophy rested exactly seven months and 10 days back. What they would surely want is to see the two greats do a memorable tango in probably their 'Last Dance' in the game's shortest format, at least in India colours. If one understands the drift of Indian cricket's ecosystem, whether it is the BCCI mandarins or the national selectors, they want the troika of Kohli, Rohit and also Ravindra Jadeja to go out on a high from the format. This is because next month's Zimbabwe series would certainly usher in a new dawn keeping in mind the 2026 T20 World Cup in India. To prepare for any global trophy,

the core needs to be finalised two years in advance and in 2026, a 39-year-old Rohit or a nearly 38-year-old Kohli or even Jadeja are unlikely to fit in. At this point, with the focus firmly on the final, no one wants to use the sensitive 'R' word as far as T20Is are concerned but it is believed that if India can beat South Africa in Barbados on Saturday, both skipper Rohit and Kohli would know that in this format, they have nothing more left to achieve. There may or may not be a formal announcement as they would continue to be a part of IPL, where they are still two of the biggest brands apart from Mahendra Singh Dhoni and the non-cricketer -- Shah Rukh Khan. For Kohli, it will be the completion of a cycle with all three ICC white-ball trophies (2011 ODI World Cup, 2013 Champions Trophy) in his cabinet. Just like Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara decided immediately after beating India in that 2014 T20 World Cup final that they would both quit the



shortest format, one doesn't know if the two greats would do something similar. Kohli and Rohit, the two generational talents with 8334 T20I runs, six centuries, 69 fifties and 119 catches between them are the last bridge between the old and new and they both

deserve to be in the same frame with that trophy in hand. Both are World Cup winners but those two victories belonged to the Dhonis, Sachin Tendulkars, and Yuvraj Singh's way more. This trophy would rightfully belong to them. Champions have egos -- some have pretty pronounced ones, while few others keep them concealed. One could gauge the pain in Kohli's eyes after he got out against England and if anyone wants to count the 'King' out of the final, do it at your own peril. For Rohit, if one wants to sum up November 19, 2023 for him, the apt coinage would be Sudhir Mishra's 1996 cult classic 'Is Raat Ki Subaah Nahin'. Even if he asserts that he has moved on, the wounds have healed, he would still be itching for a closure. One can say with a degree of certainty that had India won the 2023 ODI World Cup, Rohit would not have been desperate to play this edition of the T20 World Cup. He wants some kind of closure as far as white ball global triumph is

concerned. A T20 World Cup triumph would give him that. His popularity is organic. Dhoni was 'Mahi bhai' to his juniors, a man they revered. Kohli earned respect with his humongous on-field achievements. But Rohit gets love, unadulterated -- from peers as well as juniors. No wonder Ravichandran Ashwin chokes while narrating how the skipper asked one of the team physios to accompany the spinner to Chennai after his mother had a health scare and that too in the middle of a Test match. They have seen the crests and troughs of Indian cricket together for more than a decade. They had arrived when Nokia 3310 was in vogue and in their twilight zone, they are witness to change in nature of fandom -- every third android phone owner is either a 'Viratian' or a 'Rohitian'. Thankfully for Rohit and Kohli, there is nothing more to prove. If Saturday indeed is their 'Last Dance' in T20Is, the void will be difficult to fill not just in terms of quality but also, and perhaps more so, emotionally.