



sunday pioneer

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Constitutional morality a restraining factor on state: CJI

Confident of over US\$ 800 bn EXPORTS IN goods, services this fiscal: Goyal'

Baddie on screen, BUDDY elsewhere

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The pioneer
BRS MLC Kavitha who is now in Tihar Jail is going to turn approver. Her close relatives T. Harish Rao and KT Rama Rao are trying to convince Kavitha regarding this. KCR is trying to put on a brave face. No one is going to his farmhouse even though he is inviting many people. All BRS MLAs are now going to New Delhi

- Yennam Srinivas Reddy, Congress MLA P4

DON'T MISS...

Aadhaar linkage to end middlemen...

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) aims to enhance transparency in its pilgrim services by linking them with Aadhaar, which is expected to eliminate the interference of middlemen, according to TTD Executive Officer J. Syamala Rao. During a review meeting with UIDAI officials, TCS, Jio, and the TTD IT team on Saturday, the TTD EO highlighted that the initiative was part of a broader effort to offer a transparent and accessible range of services, including Srivari Darshan, room...

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Experts outline priorities for...

Echoing the urgency of healthcare reforms ranging from restructuring of Ayushman Bharat Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to accelerating the digital health mission, experts and industry leaders have outlined key priorities for the Modi government in its third consecutive term. Their statements highlight the importance of prioritising preventive healthcare measures, strengthening infrastructure, and increasing healthcare spending. Healthcare experts have expressed concerns about whether the government in its new term will make any difference...

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Egypt, EU hold an investment...

Egypt and the European Union on Saturday opened a two-day investment conference to advance the implementation of their strategic partnership agreement that includes a 7.4 billion-euro (US\$ 8 billion) aid package for the cash-strapped Middle Eastern nation. The March aid package includes both grants and loans over the next three years for the Arab world's most populous country. Most of the funds — 5 billion euros (US\$ 5.4 billion) — are macro-financial assistance to help Egypt shore up its economy, which is hit by...

-PAGE: 6

Why Earth has only one moon...

Connecticut, On Earth, you can look up at night and see the Moon shining brightly from hundreds of thousands of miles away. But if you went to Venus, that wouldn't be the case. Not every planet has a moon — so why do some planets have several moons, while others have none? I'm a physics instructor who has followed the current theories describing why some planets have moons and others don't. First, a moon is called a natural satellite. Astronomers refer to satellites as objects in space that orbit larger bodies. Since a moon isn't human-made, it's a natural satellite. Currently, there are two main theories for why some planets have moons. Moons are either gravitationally captured if they are within...

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OBTUSE ANGLE



CM's OPEN LETTER

Enhanced pensions to take effect tomorrow

Govt committed to fulfilling hopes & aspirations of people'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu issued an open letter to pension recipients across the State on Saturday, emphasising the government's commitment to fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the people. The CM announced that the revised "NTR Bharosa Pension" will be delivered to beneficiaries at their homes starting July 1.

In his letter, CM Naidu stated that the State government is dedicated to the welfare of its people. As promised in the manifesto, the pensions will increase by Rs 1,000. He expressed satisfaction with the revision of pensions for the disabled, which will now be Rs 6,000 per month. From July 1, these increased pensions will be distributed directly to the beneficiaries' homes. Addressing potential financial challenges, he assured that the government is making decisions to support

- Pensions will increase by Rs 1,000, with the disabled receiving Rs 6,000 per month.
- Enhanced pensions will add Rs 819 crore monthly to government expenses.
- Pensions retrospectively provided for April, May, and June will be disbursed on July 1.
- Pensions for various groups will rise from Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000 per month.

● Disabled persons' pensions will increase from Rs 3,000 to Rs 6,000, and multi-disabled persons to Rs 15,000.

● Chronic disease pensions will rise from Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000.

● CKDU dialysis and severe haemophilia pensions remain at Rs 10,000 per month.

● Sainik welfare, Amaravati Landless Poor, and Abhaya-hastam pensions remain unchanged.



public welfare from the very beginning.

The CM mentioned that the increase in pensions will result in an additional monthly expenditure of Rs 819 crore for the government. He criticised the previous administration for the difficulties faced by ben-

eficiaries in receiving their pensions, particularly during the elections when beneficiaries endured hardships in the summer heat. The CM reaffirmed that the increased pensions will be retroactively provided for April, May, and June.

Continued on Page 2

Pawan fulfils his vow at Kondagattu temple in TG



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development K Pawan Kalyan visited the famous Kondagattu Anjaneya Swamy in Jagtial district in Telangana state on Saturday.

Pawan Kalyan went to the temple in the afternoon, performed puja and fulfilled his vow. Temple EO Chandrasekhar and the chief priest of the temple Kapeendra Swamy welcomed Pawan Kalyan at the temple.

Pawan Kalyan participated in a special puja in traditional attire in the temple and the priests blessed him and gave prasadam.

Earlier, Pawan Kalyan was accorded a rousing welcome by a large number of people standing on either side of the road while going to the temple. The admirers of Pawan Kalyan garlanded him with a giant garland. JSP vice-president B Mahendra Reddy, Telangana JSP in-charge Nemuri Shankar Goud and a large number of leaders were among those who accompanied him.

EXCISE 'SCAM' Court sends Kejriwal to judicial custody till July 12

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A court here on Saturday sent Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to judicial custody till July 12 in a corruption case related to the alleged excise scam.

Kejriwal was produced in the court by the CBI after the end of his three-day custodial interrogation. The CBI sought 14 days jail for Kejriwal, saying his incarceration was required "in the interest of the investigation and justice".

Allowing the plea, Special Judge Sunena Sharma said that Kejriwal was produced in the court on July 12. A detailed order from the court is awaited. Kejriwal was arrested by the CBI in connection with irregularities in his government's excise policy. On March 21, he was arrested by the ED in a money laundering case linked to the now-scraped policy. He was granted bail by a trial court that was stayed by the Delhi High Court.

Naidu to take part in pension disbursement at Penumaka

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu will participate in a pension distribution programme on July 1 at Penumaka village in the Mangalagiri constituency. The event will commence at 6 am, after which the Chief Minister will interact with the beneficiaries.

The government plans to distribute Rs 4,408 crore to 65,18,496 beneficiaries statewide on this single day. As part of this initiative, the Chief Minister, along with all MLAs and MPs from across the state, will actively participate in the pension distribution program.



CS outlines pension distribution plan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The NTR Bharosa Pension will be distributed to 6,518,496 beneficiaries across the State starting at 6 a.m. on July 1, announced Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad on Saturday. During a video conference with District Collectors in Vijayawada, Prasad outlined the distribution plan.

Prasad revealed that Rs 4,399.89 crore has been allocated for distributing pensions to 6,518,496 beneficiaries on July 1, with village and ward secretariat staff handling the distribution.

District Collectors have been instructed to involve staff from other departments to ensure smooth operations.

The Chief Secretary emphasised the importance of flawless execution, noting that this is a major government initiative.

He directed that the first pension distribution should commence at 6

- Stern action in case of negligence in pension distribution
- Action plan evolved for full pension distribution in one go on tomorrow
- CM's letter to accompany pension payments

a.m. in all village and ward secretariats. Additionally, each beneficiary will receive a letter from the Chief Minister along with their pension payment.

Prasad instructed Collectors to develop a plan for distributing 100% of pensions on July 1 and to aim for completing over 95% of distributions on the first day. Collectors are also required to monitor the distribution process hourly. The directive includes distributing the total dues for April, May, and June, alongside the Rs 4,000 pension for July.

Continued on Page 2

Gazette notification issued for govt complexes in Amaravati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) has issued a gazette notification designating 1,575 acres of land in Amaravati for government complexes. This area spans Rayapudi, Nelapadu, Lingayapalem, Sakhamuru, and Kondamarajupalem villages. The notification, issued under Section 38 (3) of the APCRDA Act of 2014, is part of the Amaravati master plan, which outlines the construction of government buildings on this land.

The boundaries of the designated government complex area are as follows: the northern boundary includes parts of Rayapudi village; the eastern



boundary includes Rayapudi, Lingayapalem, Kondamarajupalem, Nelapadu, and Sakhamuru villages; the southern boundary extends into Sakhamuru village; and the western boundary encompasses Nelapadu, Kondamarajupalem, and Rayapudi villages.

Following the general election results announced on June 4, the TDP-led NDA alliance formed the government, with Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu reaffirming his commitment to developing Amaravati as the state capital.

Since assuming office, Naidu has personally inspected the progress of Amaravati, including government buildings and residential complexes for all-India service officers, judges, legislators, and members of Parliament. Naidu has instructed the APCRDA to commence work, including clearing the jungle around the construction sites and roads. The APCRDA has engaged several machines for this purpose.

Continued on Page 2

Major fire at Saraca chemical plant in Srikakulam



No casualties reported; reactor explosion cause of blaze

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

A massive fire erupted at the Saraca Chemical Industry in Pydibhimavaram following a reactor explosion on Saturday. The

explosion, which occurred around midday, sent thick plumes of smoke billowing from the site, causing alarm within the local community.

No casualties have been reported as employees were out for lunch when the incident occurred.

Continued on Page 2

5 soldiers killed after T-72 tank swept away

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Five soldiers, including a junior commissioned officer (JCO), were killed during an exercise early Saturday as their Russian-origin T-72 tank was swept away following flash floods in the Shyok river near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, officials said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said he was deeply saddened by the unfortunate accident that occurred in the river near Saser Brangsa.

India clinch T20 World Cup

PNS ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

On an emotion-filled day, India ended their 11-year wait for a global trophy, overcoming South Africa, who choked at the business end of the match by seven runs to emerge champions in the T20 World Cup here.

It was India's second T20 World Cup victory after they had won it in 2007 under the legendary MS Dhoni in South Africa, and first since winning the Champions Trophy in 2013.

Star batter Virat Kohli, who was an upcoming cricketer 17 years ago, made his first fifty of this tournament in the final - a classy 76 off 59 balls with six fours and two sixes that carried India to a competitive 176 for seven.

Then the Indian bowlers, led by Arshdeep Singh (2/20) and Jasprit Bumrah (2/18), worked their magic as they did throughout this tournament, limiting South Africa to 169 for eight to propel India to their second T20 World Cup. There were pockets of fight from the



Proteas, who were playing in their maiden World Cup final. Heinrich Klaasen threatened India with a 52 off 27 balls (2x4, 5x6) but Hardik Pandya (3/20) snatched the crucial wicket to bring the game decisively in favour of India.

But a large chunk of the credit should go to Kohli for anchoring the innings and pushing India to a fighting total. He completed his fifty in 48 balls, but the knock was what precisely India needed - the early dismissals of skipper Rohit Sharma (9), Rishabh Pant (0) and Suryakumar Yadav (3), which had reduced India to a worrying 34 for three.

3 IAS officers directed to report to GAD

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The state government has issued orders requiring three IAS officers to report to the General Administration Department (GAD). The officers are B. Anil Kumar Reddy, OSD of the Pulivendula Area Development Authority (PADA), Nanda Kishore Mullangi, VC and MD of the New and Renewable Energy Development Corporation of Andhra Pradesh and K. Neelakanta Reddy, MD of the Infrastructure Corporation of Andhra Pradesh (INCAP).

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(6) BENGALURU	ENGLISH
(7) FARIDABAD	(4) BHOPAL (MP)
	ENGLISH
	(5) RAIPUR (CHHATTISGARH)
	ENGLISH & HINDI
	(6) RANCHI (JHARKHAND)
	ENGLISH
	(7) BHUBANESHWAR (ODISHA)
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KCR's farmhouse is now his 'simple' residence

When Bharat Rashtra Samithi president K Chandrasekhar Rao was in power, both his farmhouse and official residence Pragati Bhavan were targets of opposition parties' criticism and mud-slinging.

ing affection towards KCR, Kavitha and even Harish Rao, but disaffection towards KTR. They say KTR's complacency stems from his arrogance.

What it means to be a Congressman

Congress karyakartas are normally proud to be part of the grand old party. Although Revanth Reddy became the

dedicated Media Hall, where newly elected MLAs interact with scribes almost every day, reminding scribes of the good old days before bifurcation.

How Revanth made leaders of both BRS and Cong happy

Congress-bound turncoat MLAs with an eye on Cabinet berth had to swallow their pride and listen to some hard talk by Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who declared in Delhi after meeting party brass that such legislators cannot be accommodated.

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

REPORTERS' DIARY

Chief Minister much against the wishes of some leaders in TPCC, the 'original Congress leaders' are proud of how the party handles crisis.

When reporters get more than what they bargained for

Under normal circumstances, it is difficult for media persons to get leaders of the ruling party to talk on burning issues and policy matters, given intra-party curbs and insistence on flow of information through a 'proper channel'.

Blaming it on KTR's 'arrogance'

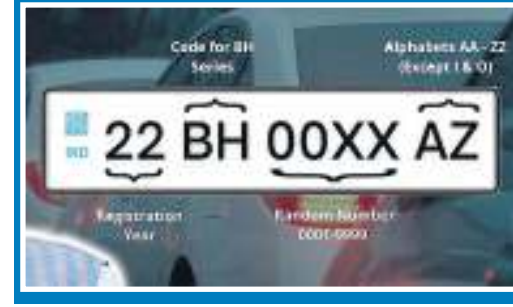
Telangana's former chief minister and BRS chief K Chandrasekhar Rao has seen unprecedented defeat, his daughter Kavitha has been in jail for 106 days, and he fell in the bathroom injuring his hip.

Andhra Pradesh hesitating over revenue implications

'BH' SERIES REGISTRATION

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra Pradesh has shown reluctance to adopt the 'BH' series registration, a key component of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways 'One Nation One Registration' policy.



Despite government's hesitance, there is growing interest among motorists and vehicle dealers for the 'BH' series. The primary appeal lies in its lower tax rates.

why the YSRCP government did not adopt the 'BH' series. The current government, under Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, has yet to decide on its adoption.

vehicle's ex-showroom price, compared to at least 13% under the state system. The 'BH' series also allows vehicle owners to pay the lifetime tax in seven instalments over two years.

quently inquire about it with us. However, Deputy Transport Commissioner G.C. Raja Ratnam clarified a significant misconception. He emphasized that owners of 'BH' series registered vehicles must still pay state tax if they are transferred to Andhra Pradesh.

'Will Nitish walk the talk on special status'



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hours after BJP ally JD(U) passed a resolution reiterating its demand for special category status for Bihar, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh asked if Chief Minister Nitish Kumar would actually walk the talk on the issue.

He also questioned NDA partner Telugu Desam Party for not pressing for the special category status for Andhra Pradesh.

"The JD(U) has just passed a resolution reiterating demand for special category status and central assistance to Bihar. Will the CM summon the courage to have the state cabinet also pass such a resolution. Will the CM of Bihar walk the talk?" Ramesh said in a post on X in Hindi.

AP REORGANISATION ACT

Minister reviews assets under dispute

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A decade after the state bifurcation, the settlement of common properties between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana remains unresolved. With the term of Hyderabad as the joint capital having expired as per the Reorganisation Act, disputes over assets worth thousands of crores persist.



According to the AP Housing Board's calculations, Telangana owes Andhra Pradesh approximately Rs 5,170 crore. Minister Narayana has instructed officials to expedite the resolution of pending cases related to these assets in the Supreme Court and High Court.

Urban Development Minister Narayana convened a meeting with Housing Board officials at the CRDA headquarters in Vijayawada to address these concerns. Previously, the assets and liabilities of the AP Housing

Board and Deccan Infrastructure and Land Holdings in Hyderabad were divided based on population. The committee of officials proposed a partition plan, which has been reviewed by an expert committee and includes several recommendations. These recommendations have been submitted to the central government and are awaiting action. According to the AP

Housing Board's calculations, Telangana owes Andhra Pradesh approximately Rs 5,170 crore. Minister Narayana has instructed officials to expedite the resolution of pending cases related to these assets in the Supreme Court and High Court. Special Principal Secretary Anil Kumar Singhal from the Department of Municipal Administration and Urban Development also attended the meeting.

Connectivity crisis grips tribal villages in Anakapalle district

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

In a compelling display of frustration and determination, residents from several interior tribal villages in Anakapalle district staged a protest on Saturday, underscoring their desperate need for improved mobile network connectivity and easier access to essential supplies.



Kalyanalova but also by neighboring villages such as Rechiponuku, Gangampeta, Tatiparthi, Peddagaruru, Rayapadu, Neredubandha, Kadagadda, Jayapuram, and Bangarubandala. "We have to travel 13 kilometres to collect ration," lamented one of the villagers. "The weak signal force us to make repeated journeys, adding to our hardships." During the protest, impassioned demands were voiced for the immediate restoration of power to existing cell towers, a critical step towards ensuring a reliable network. This measure, villagers emphasized, would enable them to complete their ration collection in a single trip, significantly easing their burden.

Additionally, the protestors passionately advocated for the establishment of a sub-depot of the Girijan Co-operative Corporation (GCC) in Z Jogampet village. This strategic move, they argued, would drastically reduce travel time and distance for ration collection, thereby alleviating some of the prevailing hardships. The collective outcry of these marginalized communities resonates with a plea for basic infrastructure improvements and equitable access to essential services. Their fervent hope now rests on swift and decisive action from the authorities to address their pressing concerns.



CM receives grievances from public

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Hundreds of people gathered around Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu to present their grievances directly during his visit to the TDP central office in Mangalagiri on Saturday evening. Both ordinary citizens and party activists from various locations approached the CM to share their issues.

Chandrababu Naidu attentively listened to each representation and assured that steps would be taken to address their concerns. He also instructed party leaders to develop a special plan to efficiently manage the large influx of people seeking assistance.

Today Almanac section with dates, times, and weather forecast for June 29, 2024.

Enhanced pensions to...

Continued from Page 1

Under the "NTR Bharosa Pension Scheme," the enhanced pension amounts will be distributed to various groups on July 1. The monthly pension will increase from Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000 for Old Age Pensioners, Widows, Weavers, Toddy Tappers, Fishermen, Single Women, Traditional Cobblers, Transgender individuals, ART (PLHIV), and Dappu Artists. The pension for disabled persons will rise from Rs 3,000 to Rs 6,000, and for those with multiple disabilities or leprosy, it will increase to Rs 15,000.

CS outlines...

Continued from Page 1

The Chief Secretary clarified that the funds allocated for pensions should be withdrawn from banks by Saturday night. If any bank is unable to process the withdrawal by then, it must remain open on Sunday to complete the transaction. State Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Department Chief Secretary Shashi Bhushan Kumar announced the launch of a new app for the NTR Bharosa Pension Scheme's distribution. He instructed all pension distribution officers to download and use the app. Staff from village and ward secretariats, as well as other necessary departments, should be utilized for effective fund distribution.

Gazette notification...

Continued from Page 1

Since assuming office, Naidu has personally inspected the progress of Amaravati, including government buildings and residential complexes for all-India service officers, judges, legislators, and members of Parliament. Naidu has instructed the APCRDA to commence work, including clearing the jungle around the construction sites and roads. The APCRDA has engaged several machines for this purpose. This work is significant as no progress has been made in the past five years. The Chief Minister has taken swift action to ensure that Amaravati remains the state capital, aiming to prevent future governments from considering relocation. Additionally, the state government is receiving public donations to support the development of Amaravati.

Major fire at Saraca...

Continued from Page 1

Quick evacuation and strict adherence to safety protocols ensured that all personnel remained unharmed. Local fire departments responded swiftly, deploying multiple fire tenders to the scene. After several hours of intense effort, firefighters successfully brought the blaze under control, preventing it from spreading to nearby facilities. Videos captured by onlookers, now widely circulated on social media, depict the explosion and the ensuing smoke, highlighting the severity of the incident. Authorities have launched a thorough investigation to determine the exact cause of the explosion. Preliminary reports indicate a possible short circuit in one of the reactors. Safety inspectors and industry experts are currently examining the site for further information to prevent future occurrences. The local administration has assured the public that all necessary measures are being taken to ensure the safety of the industrial area. Saraca Chemical Industry management has pledged full cooperation with the investigation and is committed to enhancing safety protocols to prevent future incidents.

CEO Meena inspects secured EVMs & VVPATs in NTR dist

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Mukesh Kumar Meena inspected the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPATs) secured at the godown on the premises of the NTR district collectorate in Vijayawada on Saturday. He was accompanied by NTR district collector Dr. G. Srijana and political party leaders. CEO Meena provided instructions for the security of the EVMs and VVPATs and directed district officials to ensure the presence of political party leaders during inspections every three months. Dr. G. Srijana explained that her administration has imple-



mented all necessary security arrangements for the EVMs and VVPATs, submitting detailed reports to the CEO's office. She emphasised that inspections are conducted every three months in the presence of political party lead-

Vijayawada RDO Bh. Bhavani Sankar, Collectorate Election Cell Superintendent M. Durga Prasad, TDP leader Y. Ramaiah, YSRCP leaders Y. Anjaneya Reddy and L. Sivarama Prasad, Congress Party leader B. Kiran, and others.

In a related event, Additional CEO MN Herendhira Prasad and Krishna district collector DK Balaji inspected the EVMs and VVPATs at the Machilipatnam collectorate godown. Prasad verified records in the presence of political party leaders.

Participants in this inspection included DRO K. Chandrasekar Rao, EVM Nodal Officer Nityanandam, In-charge RDO Sri Devi, and others.

Enhance 'laddu' quality: TTD EO

PNS ■ TIRUPATHI

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) Executive Officer J Syamala Rao on Saturday evening directed officials to take immediate measures to enhance the taste and quality of Srivari 'laddus'.

Addressing a review meeting with TTD officials and dairy experts here, Rao directed the officials to utilise superior quality ghee and that quality testing of ghee should be done on more scientific lines. He urged the dairy experts to suggest new technologies of testing and also other changes needed to improve the quality of laddus. During the meeting, eminent dairy experts Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, and Surendranath Reddy presented a PPT on the ISI mark of ghee used by TTD and the Agmark conditions set by the Food Safety Authority of India.

VMC intensifies efforts to check diarrhoea

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar held a meeting with officials at the main office on Sunday to discuss comprehensive measures to prevent the spread of diarrhoea and vector-borne diseases among residents.

During the meeting, Commissioner Pundkar emphasized the importance of addressing health issues caused by weather changes, such as diarrhoea, malaria, and dengue. He instructed officials to establish a 24/7 Command Control Room to receive diarrhoea-related complaints, with staff available in three shifts to ensure immediate response and resolution of issues.

Commissioner Pundkar urged the public to report diarrhoea-related complaints via WhatsApp at 8181960909 or by calling 08662422515, 08662424785, 08662424172, or 08662422400. He directed each circle to implement stringent water quality measures,



including regular water sample collection and continuous testing to ensure the supply of clean water. Additionally, side drains should be regularly cleaned to prevent contamination of drinking water pipes.

To combat malaria and dengue, Commissioner Pundkar instructed officials to increase the workforce dedicated to prevention efforts, implement anti-larvae operations, and spray ML oil where necessary. He also emphasized the importance of regularly cleaning stagnant water.

Health secretaries are to conduct door-to-door campaigns to educate the public on essential hygiene prac-

tices. Residents should be advised to drink boiled water, keep their homes clean, clean overhead tanks with bleach weekly, consume only hot food, handle food with clean hands, and wash their hands thoroughly after using toilets.

Zonal Commissioners Ramya Keerthana, Prabhusa, Sivarama Krishna, Chief Medical Health Officer P. Ratnavali, SE Narasimha Murthy, Executive Engineers ASN Prasad, Srinivas Rao, Samrajyam, Venkateswara Reddy, Assistant Medical Health Officers Dr. Suresh Babu, Dr. Rama Koteswarao, Dr. Babu Srinivas, Biologist Surya Kumar, and others participated in the meeting.



Ornaments worth Rs 40 L donated to Durga temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Residents of Hyderabad, Maganti Satyanarayana Murty and Madhu Rao, donated ornaments worth Rs 40 lakh to Malleswara Swamy at the Durga Temple atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Saturday. They handed over the ornaments to the temple Executive Officer (EO) KS Rama Rao on the temple premises.

The donated ornaments include gold-coated copper items such as Nagabharanam, Jatajutam, Panamattam, Naga Padaga, Daarapattam, and Makara Toranam. After receiving the ornaments, EO Rama Rao facilitated darshan for the Maganti Satyanarayana Murty and Madhu Rao family members. He also presented them with Laddu Prasadam and a portrait as tokens of appreciation.

TTD EO pitches for Aadhaar linkage to end middlemen menace

PNS ■ TIRUPATHI

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) aims to enhance transparency in its pilgrim services by linking them with Aadhaar, which is expected to eliminate the interference of middlemen, according to TTD Executive Officer J. Syamala Rao.

During a review meeting with UIDAI officials, TCS, Jio, and the TTD IT team on Saturday, the TTD EO highlighted that the initiative was part of a broader effort to offer a transparent and accessible range of services, including Srivari Darshan, room bookings, Arjita Sevas, donations, and Srivari Seva voluntary services. These services are intended to cater to devotees worldwide.

However, the EO noted that the current online system was vulnerable to middleman interference, an issue that Aadhaar linkage could resolve. He instructed IT officials to



assess the feasibility of integrating Aadhaar across all TTD services in coordination with UIDAI authorities. The discussion also covered important issues such as pilgrim identity verification, biometric verification, and the prevention of Aadhaar duplication. UIDAI officials presented a PowerPoint presentation on various aspects of Aadhaar

application linkage during the meeting.

Present at the meeting were UIDAI Deputy Director Ms. Sangeeta, TTD officials including JEOS Ms. Gautami and Veerabrahmam, Chief Vigilance Security Officer Narasimha Kishore, and Transport General Manager Sesha Reddy.

Volunteers rue quitting at YSRCP's behest before polls

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In the wake of the recent elections, a large number of Sachivalayam volunteers who resigned to campaign for the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) are now left in uncertainty, anxiously waiting for the State government's decision on their resignations. Following the formation of the new NDA government, which had promised higher pay, approximately 120 volunteers from Visakhapatnam and Anakapalli districts are concerned about their future.

Several volunteers allege that they were coerced by YSRCP leaders, presidents, and corporators to resign before the elections. "There was pressure on us to resign, and we had no choice. The YSRCP leaders assured us we

would be reinstated after the party returned to power. We are now helpless and don't know what to do," said Rama Lakshmi (name changed), a volunteer from Pendurthi.

Ramana Rao, another volunteer from One Town, shared a similar plight. While he was working as a volunteer, he financially supported his mother, who runs a small shop. Since resigning, he has taken up a job as a food delivery boy, waiting anxiously for the government's decision regarding his resignation. In light of the current situation, some volunteers have shifted their focus towards preparing for competitive examinations, such as the upcoming Mega DSC, which the state government is expected to conduct by the end of the year.

recently when a TDP Minister encouraged the volunteers to lodge complaints against the YSRCP leaders who had forced them to resign. This led to a case being registered against a former YSRCP leader. However, no such cases have been registered in Visakhapatnam so far.

Mahalakshmi (name changed), a volunteer from Bheemunipatnam, is among those who chose not to resign. She revealed that although she faced similar pressures to resign, she decided against it, anticipating that the NDA candidate would win the MLA seat in her constituency. As the volunteers await the government's decision, their future remains uncertain, with many grappling with financial difficulties and contemplating alternative career paths.

Father-son duo killed in road accident

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a tragic incident on Friday morning, a man and his son were killed while trying to report a lorry accident at Ithavaram in Nandigama Mandal, NTR district. The victims were identified as Sanku Rama Raju, 38, a supervisor at Keesara Toll Plaza, and his father, Sanku Madhava Rao, 55.

According to the police, the accident occurred around midnight on the National Highway at Ithavaram. The father and son heard a loud crash and rushed to the scene, where they saw a lorry blocking the highway. Concerned about potential traffic disruption, Rama Raju attempted to contact plaza officials while standing in front of the lorry. Tragically, another lorry

collided with the stationary lorry and struck both men. They were killed instantly. Police arrived at the scene and transported the bodies to the government hospital.

2 ganja peddlers held

In a separate incident, the Patamata Police have arrested two youths for illegally transporting ganja. The suspects, who were travelling from Gannavaram to Vijayawada on a motorcycle, were stopped by police on duty in Enkepadu, Vijayawada Rural Mandal. The youths attempted to flee but were apprehended after a brief chase. A search of their bag revealed packets of ganja. The individuals were taken to the Patamata police station, where a case was filed against them.

Suspect in trader's murder case held

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada City police swiftly apprehended the suspect involved in the recent murder of a trader at Brindavan Colony. On Saturday, the Krishna Lanka police arrested 26-year-old Gaddam Siva Manikanta, who had fled the scene after the crime.

According to South Zone ACP G. Ratna Raju, the victim, K. Sriramachandra Prasad, a trader from Bhavanipuram, was murdered two days ago. Manikanta allegedly killed Prasad with a knife after his romantic advances towards Prasad's

daughter were rejected. Despite harassment from Manikanta, Prasad's daughter refused his proposals based on her father's advice, leading to the tragic incident.

ACP Ratna Raju noted that, following instructions from Police Commissioner PHD Ramakrishna and under the supervision of DCP Adhiraj Singh Rana, special teams were formed. Krishna Lanka Inspector A. Muralkrishna and his team quickly located the suspect at Punnami Ghat in Bhavanipuram on Saturday and took him into custody. Manikanta was subsequently presented in court.

Health dept wins 4 national awards

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Four National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS) awards were won by the state Health, Medical, and Family Welfare Department. The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has selected four healthcare facilities, including the Community Health Centre (CHC) in Ponnuru and the Urban Primary Health Centre (UPHC) in Drivers Colony of Guntur District, the Primary Health Centre (PHC) in Garividi of Vizianagaram District, and the Health and Wellness Centre in Dondapadu of Krishna District. These facilities have been recognized by NQAS for meeting high standards in medical and health department services.

Nodal Officer Dr. Vijayalakshmi, PO Subramaniam, and Quality Assurance PO Dr. Ramadevi received the awards from Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Pratap Rao Ganapathy Rao Jadhav in New Delhi.

On this occasion, Commissioner of Health and Family Welfare and MD of NHM Dr. S. Venkateshwar congratulated the team led by Dr. Vijayalakshmi. The Commissioner suggested improving medical and health services to meet national quality standards. He urged them to work with dedication to gain recognition for the medical and health department among the public, following the directions of Special Chief Secretary MT Krishna Babu.

Yarlagadda thanks CM for restoring name of NTRUHS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vishwa Hindi Parishad national president Padma Bhushan Prof. Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad thanked Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu for reviving the name of NTR University of Health Sciences. It is commendable that the Chief Minister took this decision after coming to power.

It is known that Lakshmi Prasad resigned from the post of Chairman of the Official Language Board as well as the Chairmanship of Hindi Academy and Telugu Academy in protest over the change of name of NTR University of Health Sciences to YSR University of Health Sciences by the previous YSRCP government. On the other hand, Yarlagadda welcomed the CM's announcement that he will bring Bharat Ratna to NTR.



Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad said that Vishwa Hindi Parishad aims to show the importance of Hindi language all over the world and to make it one of the official languages of the United Nations. He said that the Parishad is working to bring recognition to the Hindi language at the international level. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is doing his best to popularize Hindi at the international level.

Turn Machilipatnam into 'Swachh City': Collector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector DK Balaji has urged the residents of Machilipatnam to maintain the city as a 'Swachh City' by cooperating with the Machilipatnam Municipal Corporation. He emphasized the importance of proper waste disposal and encouraged people not to dump garbage indiscriminately.

Collector Balaji held a review meeting with Municipal Commissioner Bapi Raju and Municipal Engineer Srikanth, along with other officials at the Corporation office. During the meeting, he inquired about the status of sanitation, drinking water supply, tax collection, and the corporation's income and expenditure. Following the meeting, he inspected the sanitation conditions at



Koneru Centre and engaged with the public through a microphone to gather feedback on sanitation maintenance.

Speaking on the occasion, he announced that a special sanitation drive would be conducted in all city divisions. He instructed officials to iden-

tify areas with significant garbage accumulation and to install dustbins to address these spots. He also suggested that the officials work towards making Machilipatnam a 'Dustbin Free City' by ensuring 100% garbage collection.

New lease of life for cancer patient

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A 42-year-old female patient from Guntur diagnosed with locally advanced breast cancer was successfully treated at the American Oncology Institute (AOI) in Mangalagiri, Vijayawada. The patient was presented with a lump in her right breast for six months, which measured 3.5x2.5 cm, along with palpable lymph nodes in the right axilla.

Upon evaluation, a biopsy confirmed the diagnosis of ductal carcinoma. Given the advanced stage 3B triple-negative breast cancer, the patient was started on neoadjuvant chemotherapy to shrink the tumour and evaluate the response post-surgery. An ultrasound after chemotherapy revealed no remaining tumour.

Recently, the patient underwent a modified radical mastectomy of the right breast. The report post-surgery indicated no residual tumour, a strong indicator of a good prognosis. The patient is currently receiving adjuvant radiation therapy and will be under regular follow-up to monitor her health.

Dr. Srujana Joga, Medical Oncologist, AOI Vijayawada commented, "Administering chemotherapy before surgery is the standard of care in early and locally advanced triple-negative breast cancers. While all triple-negative breast cancers do not have the same prognosis, in this case, the patient's complete response after chemotherapy and surgery confirms a good prognosis. This outcome is a testament to the advanced and personalized care provided at our institute."

Kollu launches 'Praja Darbar' in Machilipatnam

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Kollu Ravindra, Minister for Mines & Geology and Excise, inaugurated the 'Praja Darbar' at the TDP office in Machilipatnam on Saturday to address public grievances. During the event, he received and reviewed petitions from the public and committed to resolving their issues within the designated timeframe.



He also mentioned that the government will distribute Dr. NTR Bharosa pensions to beneficiaries at their homes starting July 1

Minister Ravindra announced that the 'Praja Darbar' will be held every Saturday to address citizens' concerns. He encouraged people to submit their grievances at the party office on other days. On the inaugural day, approximately 300 petitions were received, and

he assured that each would be addressed according to the severity of the complaints.

Additionally, Ravindra outlined plans to visit all divisions within the Machilipatnam Municipal Corporation to tackle issues related to drinking water, drainage, and sanitation. He also mentioned that the government will distribute Dr. NTR Bharosa pensions to beneficiaries at their homes starting July 1.

The event was attended by Jana Sena Party leader Bandi Ramakrishna, former Municipal Chairman M. Baba Prasad, former MPP Nageswara Rao, and other notable figures.



YSR statue set on fire by miscreants

PNS ■ BAPATLA

Unidentified miscreants set on fire the statue of former Chief Minister Y S Rajasekhara Reddy on the night of Friday at Addepalli village in Bhattiprolu mandal.

The miscreants poured petrol on the statue and set it on fire. The statue was completely damaged in the flames. The YSRCP leaders staged a dharna at the village in protest against the burning of the YSR statue.

Trainee IAS officers visit Polavaram project

PNS ■ ELURU

Trainee IAS officers visited the Polavaram project, being constructed across River Godavari at Polavaram, on Saturday.



The 2023-24 batch six IAS trainee officers visited the spillway, hill view, upper cofferdam and lower cofferdam and power project of the Polavaram project.

Executive Engineer Venkataramana explained to the trainee IAS officers about the construction works of the project. The trainee IAS officers who visited the Polavaram project were Ch Kalyani,

Damora Hima Vamsi, Pawan Swapnil Jagannath, Bollipalli Vinutna, HS Bhavana and Subham Nokwal. Polavaram Tahsilidar GV Prasad accompanied them.



SEB JD Suryachandra Rao calls on Collector

PNS ■ ELURU

Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) Joint Director N Suryachandra Rao called on District Collector

K Vetri Selvi here on Saturday.

He presented a flower bouquet to the Collector who took charge three days ago.

The Collector asked the SEB Joint Director to continue to curb the illicit liquor and ganja in the district.

She also asked him to keep a vigil on the illicit liquor and ganja sale and consumption in the district.

Campaign vehicle of ex-MP Margani burnt by miscreants

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

The campaign vehicle of YSRCP leader and former MP Margani Bharat Ram was set on fire by unknown miscreants at VL Puram on Friday night.

According to the police, the vehicle was parked on the premises of the MP's estate office. Locals noticed the vehicle in flames after midnight and informed Bharat Ram.

YSRCP activists alleged that unidentified miscreants were responsible for the arson. Upon learning about the incident, Margani Bharat Ram rushed to the scene. Prakash Nagar Inspector K. Satyanarayana and Bommur Inspector Umar arrived and registered a case. The campaign vehicle was destroyed in the fire.



Former MP Margani Bharat Ram condemned the act, stating that such violent behaviour

was unprecedented in the city. He expressed concern over increasing attacks on YSRCP officials and leaders across the state. Bharat Ram said he would report the incident to the Director General of Police (DGP) and urge stringent action to prevent future occurrences.

Emergency first responders programme conducted

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad City Security Council (HCSC), in collaboration with EMRI GVK and Young Indians, on Saturday conducted a day-long Emergency First Responders Programme for road safety.

As many as 100 traffic police officials from all zones of the Hyderabad Police Commissionerate underwent training.

They were trained for various emergencies, including emergency response system activation, scene safety and personal protection.

As part of the training, the officials were taught skills.

Rowdy-sheeter murdered in Malakpet

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In an incident reported from Malakpet Metro station on June 28 a rowdy-sheeter was stabbed to death by unidentified persons.

The incident happened under Chaderghat police limits. The deceased was identified as Najaf, a rowdy-sheeter, who was booked by the Rein Bazar police. The man was waylaid and killed by the assailants. Najaf's body was found on the staircase of the metro station. The incident was captured on the CCTV cameras installed at the metro station. Najaf was accused in three murder cases and a few attempted murder cases.

The police suspect this is a case of rivalry and Najaf's rivals were waiting for an opportunity to kill him. A case was registered under section 302 of the Indian Penal Code and the investigation is underway.

YSRCP complains to Guv about demolition of party offices

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Leaders of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) have met with Andhra Pradesh Governor S. Abdul Nazeer, urging immediate action to address the deteriorating law and order situation and the attacks on YSRCP members by Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Jana Sena supporters. The delegation, which included Rajya Sabha members Y.V. Subba Reddy and Alla Ayodhya Rami Reddy, presented a memorandum to the Governor at Vijayawada's Raj Bhavan.

Y.V. Subba Reddy reported that for the past 26 days, TDP and Jana Sena cadres have been targeting YSRCP workers across 26 districts. He alleged that the violence has included assaults on workers and damage to their homes. He expressed frustration with the police response and indicated



that the matter has now been escalated to the Central Government, including the President, Prime Minister, and Home Minister.

Subba Reddy also highlighted the harassment faced by Dalit families who support YSRCP and condemned the recent burning of Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy's idols. He claimed that for a week, TDP

and Jana Sena supporters have illegally entered YSRCP offices, threatening and vandalizing them under the direction of TDP leaders and legislators. He urged the Governor to intervene immediately to restore order.

Rajya Sabha member Alla Ayodhya Rami Reddy criticized the government's handling of opposition-related violence, asserting that it is the

government's responsibility to prevent attacks on YSRCP supporters and maintain law and order. He also defended the YSRCP's construction of party offices, stating that they are built according to the same guidelines established by the previous Chandrababu Naidu administration (2014-2019). Each office, measuring approximately 10,000 square feet, costs between Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 2,500 per square foot, totalling Rs. 2 crore to Rs. 3 crore per office. Reddy reported that 18 offices have been constructed at a cost of around Rs. 60 crore, refuting claims by TDP and Jana Sena that public funds are being misused.

Former Minister Velampalli Srinivas, MLC Marri Rajasekhara, former MP Modugula Venugopal Reddy, former MLA Malladi Vishnu, and other party leaders also participated in the meeting.

Certificate verification for posts in Veterinary Department from July 4

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Public Service Commission (TGpsc) will be conducting certificate verification for Veterinary Assistant Surgeon (Class-A & B) in Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Department between July 4 and July 8.

On Saturday the TGpsc released a press note, where it mentioned that the candidates who were picked up for verification of certificates for recruitment to the posts, could come to the TGpsc office at Nampally in Hyderabad. Link for web options will be provided from July 3 onwards.

"The list of candidates



picked up for certificate verification is available on the TGpsc's website. The short-listed candidates should download and bring checklist and attestation forms which are

available on commissions website, https:// www.tgpsc.gov.in along with all original certificates as mentioned in the Result Notification, press note mentioned.

New Criminal Law handbook, mobile application launched

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A New Criminal Law handbook, along with mobile application 'Samaahara', and awareness videos, was officially launched by Jitender, Principal Secretary for Home on Saturday. This launch marks a step towards the effective implementation and understanding of the new criminal laws in Telangana.



Principal Secretary for Home Jitender launching the New Criminal Law handbook and mobile application in Hyderabad on Saturday

The Prosecutions Department has prepared this comprehensive handbook on new criminal laws which will come into force on July 1, 2024.

This handbook includes brief descriptions of law sections, comparative tables, ready references, guidelines, and clarifications on all three major criminal laws. It will be a crucial resource for prosecutors and police officers. Under the guidance of G Vjayanthi, Director of Prosecutions, Telangana, the department has also developed a mobile application named 'Samaahara.'

This app provides easy access

to the new legal provisions and includes comparative tables for better understanding. Additionally, the department has created short videos and audio clips explaining the importance of the new laws. A dedicated team of prosecutors organized and simplified these legal provisions.

G Vjayanthi emphasised the importance of the handbook and mobile application, stating that they are uniquely designed to meet the needs of prosecutors and investigative agencies. The handbook and app contain an exclusive table with information on offenses, punishments, com-

parability, and triability, distinguishing them from other resources.

Jitender expressed appreciation for the initiative. He commended Vjayanthi and the Prosecutions Department for their significant efforts in designing and developing these resources.

He highlighted the importance of these tools in ensuring the effective and efficient implementation of the new laws and praised the department's forward-thinking approach to enhancing the criminal justice system in Telangana.

75th VANA MAHOTSAVAM Nehru Zoological Park conducts mega plantation campaign

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Nehru Zoological Park conducted a mega plantation campaign to celebrate the 75th Vana Mahotsavam as per the guidelines issued by the Central Zoo Authority, New Delhi. Promoting the campaign and encouraging citizens to plant a tree as a tribute to their mothers, a plantation program was held on Saturday in the Mazhar Garden area at Nehru Zoological Park.

Tree saplings of Peepal, Guava, Banyan, and other fruit-bearing and shade-giving plants were planted by Dr. Sunil S. Hiremath, Director (FAC) and Curator, N.Z.P. Hyderabad, along with A. Nagamani, Deputy Curator, Dr. M.A. Hakeem, Deputy Director (Vet), and other staff members.

Dr. Sunil S. Hiremath said, that under the Vana



Nehru Zoological Park officers planting saplings on the occasion of 75th Vana Mahotsavam in Hyderabad on Saturday

Mahotsavam program, more than 200 plant saplings were freely distributed to visitors at Nehru Zoological Park. Most visitors expressed their satisfaction and highly appreciated the program.

The following officers and

staff were present at the program, Dr. Sunil S. Hiremath, Director (FAC) & Curator, N.Z.P. Hyderabad; A. Nagamani, Deputy Curator, N.Z.P. Hyderabad; Dr. M.A. Hakeem, Deputy Director (Vet), N.Z.P. Hyderabad.

'Kavitha going to turn approver'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress's Mahbubnagar MLA, Yennam Srinivas Reddy, said that BRS MLC Kavitha who is now in Tihar Jail is going to turn approver.

Speaking to the media at the Gandhi Bhavan on Saturday, he said that BRS MLAs T. Harish Rao and KT Rama Rao are trying to convince Kavitha regarding this.

He said that former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao has been putting on a brave face and that it was KCR who first sought a judicial inquiry. However, the same KCR is now trying to escape from the inquiry, he said.

Srinivas said that leaders like former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao faced inquiries over minor things. "Compared to that who is KCR? He can't escape," he added.

He said that no one is going to KCR's farmhouse even

though KCR is inviting them. All BRS MLAs are going to New Delhi, he pointed out.

Srinivas ridiculed that only both the brothers-in-law will come to the Assembly on behalf of the BRS. He said that KCR bankrupted the state by contracting debts of Rs 7 lakh crore and endangered the future of Telangana.

Srinivas said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is trying to pay salaries to government employees in time by clearing the debts.

He said that KCR gave Rythu Bandhu funds for 42 lakh acres of ineligible lands. However, Revanth is giving sops only for actual land cultivated. He said that KCR grabbed thousands of acres using the Dharani Portal and that he has no guts to face Prime Minister Modi and insulted the PM without going to receive him when he came to Hyderabad.

Constitutional morality a restraining factor on state: CJI

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Maintaining that "constitutional morality" is a restraining factor on the state, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Saturday said it allows for conditions that respect diversity, promote inclusion, and pursue tolerance.

He said that India does not exist only in large cities, but it goes down to the smallest village and the smallest taluka across the nation, connected or not, accessible or otherwise. CJI Chandrachud said "constitutional morality", unlike morality, which he said is a restraint on the rights of citizens, is a restraining factor on the state. Constitutional morality addresses itself to every component of society and allows for conditions which "respect diversity, promote inclusion

and pursue tolerance", he said, delivering the keynote address at the two-day East Zone II regional conference of the National Judicial Academy.

The CJI said it also imposes a duty on the state to facilitate the achievement of the kind of society that the Constitution envisages.

"The Constitution uses the expression morality, but it does not use the expression constitutional morality," he said.

CJI Chandrachud said the Constitution allows for restrictions to be imposed by law on the right to freedom and expression on various grounds, including morality.

He said the Constitution also contemplates that restrictions can be imposed on the right to freedom of association on grounds of morality. At one level, constitutional morality is founded in the val-



Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud presenting a memento to a group of people at a conference.

ues which the Constitution's Preamble sets out, he said.

"Constitutional morality is an overarching principle which is derived from, but is not confined to, specific rights or values which are enshrined in the Constitution," CJI Chandrachud said.

According to him, it gives a unifying constitutional ethic so that every Indian citizen can

think and speak as he wishes to, worship as they intend to, follow whoever they want to, eat what they want to and marry whoever he or she wants to or not marry at all.

When judges are addressed as 'Honour', 'Lordships' or 'Ladyships', there is a grave danger that "we perceive ourselves as the deities in those temples" since the people say

the court is a temple of justice, he said.

The CJI said he would rather recast the role of the judge as server of the people, thus bringing in the notion of compassion and empathy.

He said these concepts of constitutional morality are key for not just the judges of the higher judiciary, but also for the district judiciary as engagement of common citizens begins at this level.

It is being increasingly found that judges write about their own ideologies in judgments, CJI Chandrachud noted.

He said personal perceptions of a judge as to what is right or wrong must not override constitutional morality.

"Please remember that we are servants of the Constitution, we are not masters of the Constitution," the CJI said.

Modi gov't committed to ensure safe, smooth Amarnath Yatra: Amit Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Modi government is committed to ensuring a safe, smooth and pleasant pilgrimage to the cave shrine of Amarnath and is making all possible arrangements to ensure that devotees do not face any inconvenience, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday. The annual Amarnath Yatra

began on Saturday as the first batch of pilgrims left the twin base camps in Baltal and Nunwan to start their journey to the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine in the south Kashmir Himalayas.

"Shri Amarnath Yatra is an eternal symbol of the traditionalism and continuity of Indian culture. This divine yatra is starting today. I wish all the devotees good luck for the darshan,"

Shah wrote on X in Hindi.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji, our government is committed to the safe, smooth and pleasant journey of the devotees and the government has made every possible arrangement to ensure that the devotees do not face any inconvenience. Har Har Mahadev," he added.



IMD warns of heavy rainfall in northwest and northeast for next 5 days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall in northwest and northeast India over the next four to five days.

A low-pressure area is currently situated over the north-west Bay of Bengal, adjoining the north Odisha-Gangetic West Bengal coasts, the weather office said.

Cyclonic circulations have formed over northeast Rajasthan, east Uttar Pradesh bordering Bihar, and northwest Uttar Pradesh at lower tropospheric levels, it added. An east-west trough extends from northwest Uttar Pradesh to the low-pressure area.

Due to these weather systems, isolated heavy rainfall is expected in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan from June 29 to July 3, the IMD said.

Chhattisgarh, Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha will likely receive heavy rainfall on June 29-30, and Bihar from June 30 to July 2.

The IMD has also predicted very heavy rainfall in isolated areas in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Uttar Pradesh, east Rajasthan, and west Madhya Pradesh during this period.

In the northeast, a cyclonic circulation over northeast Assam will bring light to moderate rainfall, thunderstorms, lightning, and isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall to Sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura over the next five days.

Isolated extremely heavy rainfall is expected in Arunachal Pradesh on June 29-30 and in Assam and Meghalaya on June 29.

SHIVAKUMAR URGES CONG LEADERS Refrain from comments on leadership issue in public

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Amid raging debate over the possibility of change in Chief Minister and demand for three more Deputy Chief Ministers in Karnataka, state Congress President D K Shivakumar on Saturday asked partymen and leaders to refrain from issuing public statements on the issue and warned of disciplinary action.

Shivakumar, who is also the Deputy Chief Minister urged partymen to "shut their mouth" in the interest of the party, as he also requested seers not to interfere in political matters. Minister K N Rajanna, who is at the forefront of the issue of three Deputy Chief Ministers, wondered what was wrong in asking for it, and said he won't heed the warnings.

There is growing demand within the state cabinet to have three more Deputy Chief Ministers -- from Veerashaiva-Lingayat, SC/ST and minority

communities. Currently, Shivakumar from the dominant Vokkaliga community is only the Deputy Chief Minister in the Siddaramaiah cabinet.

A Vokkaliga seer Kumara Chandrashekarathana Swamiji of Vishva Vokkaliga Mahasamastana Math on Thursday had publicly urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to step down and make way for his deputy Shivakumar.

Following this a Veerashaiva-Lingayat seer -- Srisaaila Jagadguru Channa Siddharama Panditaradhy

Swamiji on Friday said ministers from his community should be considered for the CM's post in case there is a leadership change, while also pitching for them to be given priority in the event of creation of additional Deputy CM posts.

"There is no discussion on any Deputy Chief Minister nor there is any question about the Chief Minister. Swamiji (Vokkaliga seer) out of affection towards me might have spoken about me. That's all. I request -- I don't need anyone's recommendation. For the work we have done our party high command will decide," Shivakumar said in response to a question whether he had taken up with the party high command the demand for more Deputy CMs during the Delhi visit.

Addressing reporters here, he said, "Kharge (AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge), Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and I, in the interest of the party, have decided how to function. So there is no need for any MLA or Minister or Swamiji to speak. If they (seers) bless us it's enough..."

There is no need for any Minister to comment on the CM or Deputy CM issue in public or before the media, Shivakumar said and warned that "if any MLA or anyone from the party raises it, the AICC or I will be forced to issue notice and take disciplinary action. Discipline is important in the party."

JD(U) seeks special category status or package for Bihar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Janata Dal (United) on Saturday appointed Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Kumar Jha as its working president and urged the Centre to consider either special category status or special package for Bihar, underlining the party's important role in the formation of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government.

The party's national executive meeting chaired by its president and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar flagged price rise and unemployment as "burning issues", as its political resolution expressed confidence that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government would take more effective steps to handle them.

The resolution called for extensive probe into paper leak cases to ensure stringent action against the guilty so as to maintain the credibility of central competitive exams.

There is also a need for Parliament to enact a strong law against leaks of examination papers, it added.

Kumar's decision to appoint his confidant as the party's working president, a position not held by anyone, suggests his efforts to maintain better coordination with the BJP and draw a helpful bargain as Jha enjoys good ties with the national party's leadership.

A former minister in Bihar, Jha was originally in the BJP and served as its link with Kumar before crossing over to the JD(U).



The JD(U)'s decision to include a special package as an alternative to its historical push for special category status for Bihar marked a pragmatic climbdown as the Modi government had cited the 14th Finance Commission's report to rule out special category status for any more states.

Seen as competent, likeable and low-key, the Mithilanchal leader has long been a trusted aide of his ageing mentor who has burnt his fingers in the past due to shifting loyalties of his ostensibly reliable colleagues, including former JD(U) president RCP Singh, now in the BJP.

Party sources said Kumar would expect Jha to maintain smooth relations with the BJP while working to get a positive response to his party's demands, including aide to Bihar.

The JD(U)'s decision to include a special package as an alternative to its historical push for special category status for Bihar marked a pragmatic climbdown as the Modi

government had cited the 14th Finance Commission's report to rule out special category status for any more states.

Following his appointment, Jha said his party's purpose was to get central assistance for Bihar to build on the foundation laid by the Kumar-led government since 2005, except for a short period when Jitan Ram Manjhi was chief minister.

"It does not matter in what name such a help is given. We will pursue it with the central government and are hopeful for a positive outcome," he said.

Asserting that everything would remain cordial between the BJP and the JD(U), he said the two parties were natural allies.

INDIA CORNER

Woman poisons 9-month-old son, dies by suicide



A 27-year-old woman poisoned her 9-month-old son, who survived, before hanging herself in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district, an official said on Saturday. The police have registered a case against the woman's husband and in-laws after her mother

accused them of harassing her daughter. Pallavi Vinod Dhoke fed some insecticide to her baby and hanged herself at her matrimonial home in Shegaon (Bk) village, about 60 km from the district headquarters, on Friday evening when other family members were away. After returning home, her family members called the police who rushed Pallavi and the baby to a hospital, where doctors declared her dead, the official said. The baby was then shifted to a private hospital in Chandrapur and he is said to be in a stable condition. However, Pallavi's mother accused her in-laws of torturing her daughter over money. On her complaint, police registered a case against Pallavi's husband and his parents, the official said.

India presents its priorities under Colombo Process



India has presented an action plan focusing on several of its priority areas for regional cooperation under the Colombo Process, a regional consultative forum comprising 12 Asian nations. India rolled out the plan while chairing a meeting of the

grouping in Geneva on Friday. In the meeting, India listed a range of its priorities that included reviewing the financial sustainability of the Colombo Process and broadening the grouping's membership by including new nations as members and observers. Muktesh Pardeshi, Secretary (consular-passport-visa division) in the Ministry of External Affairs, delivered the special address at the meeting. "He emphasised India's commitment to advancing the objectives of the Colombo Process and enhancing collaboration among member states," the ministry said. "India presented an outline of an action plan for the next two years, focusing on key priorities and initiatives to further strengthen the Colombo Process," it said. In May, India assumed the chair of the Colombo Process for the first time since its inception. "The Process continues to play a pivotal role in enhancing regional cooperation on migration issues, and with India's leading role, there is a renewed commitment to engaging all member states actively, improving migration governance, and fostering safe, orderly, and regular migration for organised overseas employment," the ministry said in a statement.

Court remands Revanna in judicial custody till July 8



A court here on Saturday remanded former JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna, who is facing charges of rape and sexual abuse of several women, to judicial custody till July 8. He was produced before the 42nd Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate court judge after his four-day Special Investigation Team (SIT) custody ended today. On

Monday, Prajwal Revanna was remanded to judicial custody till July 8. But, he was later sent to SIT custody till June 29 by the Magistrate court judge, after the police sought a body warrant through the Special Public Prosecutor (SPP). Four separate cases have been registered against the 33-year-old grandson of the former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda, all of which are being investigated

Poll results moral defeat for Modi: Sonia

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Saturday said the Lok Sabha poll verdict has signalled a "personal, political and moral defeat" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi but "he is continuing as if nothing has changed".

In a newspaper article, she claimed there is "not the slightest evidence that he (Modi) has come to terms with the electoral outcome or understand the verdict".

She said that when the prime minister's "emissaries sought unanimity for the post of Speaker", the opposition INDIA bloc agreed to support the government.

"But in keeping with convention and tradition, it was only



fair and to be expected that the post of deputy speaker would be given to a member from the ranks of the opposition," Gandhi said.

But this "perfectly reasonable request" was found unacceptable by the government, she

said, adding the opposition alliance is committed to restoring balance and productivity in Parliament.

"On June 4, 2024, the verdict of our country's electorate was delivered clearly and resoundingly. It signalled a personal, and moral defeat for a prime minister who had awarded himself a divine status during the campaign," the Congress leader said.

"Yet, the prime minister continues as if nothing has changed. He preaches the value of consensus but continues to value confrontation," she said. She also described the mention of Emergency by the prime minister, the Lok Sabha Speaker and BJP leaders as an attempt to divert attention from the "assault on the Constitution".

"It is a fact of history that in March 1977 the people of our country gave a categorical verdict on the Emergency, which was accepted unhesitatingly and unequivocally," Gandhi said.

RESTRUCTURING AB-PMJAY TO ELEVATING HEALTH BUDGET Experts outline priorities for Modi government

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Echoing the urgency of healthcare reforms ranging from restructuring of Ayushman Bharat Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to accelerating the digital health mission, experts and industry leaders have outlined key priorities for the Modi government in its third consecutive term.

Their statements highlight the importance of prioritising preventive healthcare measures, strengthening infrastructure,

and increasing healthcare spending. Healthcare experts have expressed concerns about whether the government in its new term will make any difference by increasing public expenditure on healthcare to the desired level in India.

Notably, the National Health Policy (NHP) 2017, which promises to increase public health spending to 2.5 percent of the GDP, remains overdue even as Indians rely heavily on private services.



Dr Girdhar Gyani, Director General, AHPI (Association of Healthcare Providers, India) said, "In the upcoming term, we

urge the government to prioritise a comprehensive approach to fostering a 'Healthy India'. This entails promoting preventive health measures focusing on sanitation, clean drinking water, and nutrition, alongside the rapid implementation of health and wellness Centres for preventive health education and screening."

Intensifying the 'Fit India Movement', strengthening occupational health schemes, and restructuring the Ayushman Bharat Yojana to

reach all SECC-2011 beneficiaries are also crucial steps, Dr Gyani said.

He also highlighted the importance of incentivising the private sector to establish tertiary care facilities in tier-III cities, promoting the indigenisation of medical equipment, and accelerating the National Digital Health Mission to address healthcare infrastructure gaps and achieve universal health coverage through increased government spending.

Confident of over US\$ 800 bn exports in goods, services this fiscal: Goyal

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India's goods and services exports are expected to cross US\$ 800 billion this fiscal despite global challenges, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday.

In 2023-24, the shipments stood at US\$ 778.2 billion (goods US\$ 437.1 billion and services US\$ 341 billion).

He said that the global situation is serious as war is still ongoing between Ukraine-Russia and Israel-Hamas, and the Red sea crisis. The minister added that there are also elections in some of the major democracies like in Europe.

"In such a situation it's a positive sign that our exports are growing (9 per cent growth in May) and ...this also reflects that the world wants to do trade and investments with India. We are confident that this year we will have over US\$ 800 billion exports and it will



"In such a situation it's a positive sign that our exports are growing (9 per cent growth in May) and ...this also reflects that the world wants to do trade and investments with India. We are confident that this year we will have over US\$ 800 billion exports and it will be a historic record," Goyal told

will increase, manufacturing will get a boost

India recorded a current account surplus of US\$ 5.7 billion or 0.6 per cent of GDP in the March quarter. This is the first time in ten quarters that the crucial metric of the country's external strength has turned into surplus mode.

In the year-ago period, the current account deficit stood at US\$ 1.3 billion or 0.2 per cent

of GDP, and the same was US\$ 8.7 billion or 1 per cent of GDP in the preceding quarter ending December 2023. India's merchandise exports rose by 9.1 per cent to US\$ 38.13 billion in May even as the trade deficit widened to a seven-month high of US\$

23.78 billion during the month, according to the latest government data. He added that focus on electric vehicles will help in reducing oil imports.

The ministry is also holding a series of meetings with plantation boards, including spices, rubber, tobacco, tea and coffee, to promote exports especially those of value added goods. Further, he said that India has taken up on priority the issue of ban on imports of Russian-origin unpolished diamonds by the European Union (EU) and G7 nations to protect the interest of the domestic diamond polishing industry.

"Our ministry and the gems and jewellery export promotion council are continuously in touch with the European Union and G7 nations," Goyal said, adding in the last meeting, India took up the matter strongly.

"Still we are in touch with them to ensure that Indian industry does not have an impact," the minister said.

Exporters' body urges Centre to restore IES benefits for all

PNS ■ KOLKATA

A body of exporters has written to Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, expressing concerns over the extension of the Interest Equalisation Scheme (IES) for only two months and exclusively for MSMEs.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) president Ashwani Kumar highlighted that the scheme has so far benefitted not only MSMEs but also merchant exporters and large manufacturing companies at a lower rate of two per cent for 410 tariff lines, covering labour-intensive products.

The current scheme, valid till June, provides pre and post-shipment rupee export credit, offers a two per cent interest equalisation rate for manufacturers and merchant exporters dealing with specified 410 export items, and a higher rate of three per cent for MSME manufacturers exporting under any of these items.

MONEY MATTERS

IFFCO withdraws plea from NCLT in Triumph Offshore case



Fertiliser cooperative IFFCO has withdrawn its plea filed in NCLT that restrained Triumph Offshore from issuing any share or securities to lenders for paying loans. The move came after IFFCO (Indian Farmer Fertiliser Cooperative) exited from Triumph Offshore by selling its entire 49 per cent stake to its joint venture partner Swan Energy Ltd

(SEL) for Rs 440 crore. IFFCO had approached the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) in March seeking to restrain Triumph Offshore and SEL from issuing any shares/securities to lenders for paying loans and passing any such resolution without its approval. In its petition, IFFCO had argued that it was pre-paying the debt and it may result into dilution of its shareholding in Triumph Offshore. A two-member bench of the NCLT allowed IFFCO to withdraw its plea. "Counsel for applicants seeks permission to withdraw the application. They have also filed an affidavit. In view of the same, permission is granted," said the NCLT order passed on June 27. Triumph Offshore was established as a joint venture to set up a Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU) with Swan Energy holding the majority stake of 51 per cent.

Businessmen, hawkers clash in Kolkata's New Market



Businessmen and hawkers clashed in the city's New Market area on Saturday, amid tensions over West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's directive to reduce hawkers' occupation of road space. According to a police official, trouble began when some hawkers objected to traders with permanent structures in

the heritage New Market complex and surrounding open spaces parking their vehicles there. The hawkers demanded as decided in a meeting between Mayor Firhad Hakim and their association members, the parking space in front of Simpark Mall in New Market compound be cleared of vehicles of permanent shop owners and hawkers be allowed to display their wares. As arguments escalated into physical altercations, businessmen blocked nearby S N Banerjee Road, disrupting traffic bound for Esplanade for about half-an-hour. Hawkers also organised a rally through various alleys of New Market-Chandni Chowk areas, alleging that shop owners were denying them their rightful space and jeopardising their livelihoods. Normalcy was restored following intervention by senior police and KMC officials, allowing both groups to resume their activities.

Titan launches jewellery brand Tanishq in Bangladesh



Titan Company on Saturday said it is launching its jewellery brand Tanishq in Bangladesh as part of expansion plans in the international market. On Friday, the Tata Group-managed firm signed a JV agreement to this effect with Rhythm Group which will make Tanishq available across

the Bangladesh market, according to a joint statement. The joint venture will commence with the opening of the manufacturing facility in Narayanganj, in Bangladesh, it added. Besides the domestic market, Titan is expanding Tanishq's presence in the international market and operates 17 stores across the UAE, US, Qatar, Singapore and Oman. Its watch business has a presence in SAARC, MENA (Middle East and North Africa), Southeast Asian regions. In the last few years, it has focused on growing its flagship jewellery brand Tanishq overseas. Rhythm Group is a prominent entity in Bangladesh that was established in 1972 to produce desi textile fabrics and since then it has expanded into several verticals. "Through this joint venture Titan aims to combine Tanishq's unparalleled artisanship and brand legacy with Rhythm Group's strong market presence and local expertise in Bangladesh, to manufacture and sell jewellery to discerning Bangladeshi consumers," it said.

Setty to become new chairman of SBI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Government appointment selection panel FSIB on Saturday selected senior-most managing director Challa Sreenivasulu Setty for the position of Chairman of country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI).



Setty, who was appointed managing director in January 2020, currently looks after International Banking, Global Markets and Technology verticals.

He will succeed Dinesh Kumar Khara, who will be superannuating on August 28, when he turns 63, the upper age limit for the position of SBI Chairman.

Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB), the headhunter for directors of state-owned banks and financial institutions, interviewed three candidates on June 29, 2024 for the position.

"Keeping in view their performance in the interface, their overall experience and the extant parameters, the Bureau recommends Challa

Sreenivasulu Setty for the position of Chairman in SBI," FSIB said in a statement.

As per the convention, the chairman is appointed from a pool of serving managing directors of SBI. Usually, senior-most managing director becomes chairman of the bank.

The final decision on FSIB recommendation would be taken by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Setty, who also headed various task forces/committees formed by the Government of India, had earlier looked after the retail and digital banking portfolio of the bank.



IBM, Gujarat govt ink pact to establish AI cluster at GIFT City

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IBM and the Gujarat government on Saturday inked a pact to establish and promote an AI cluster leveraging IBM's watsonx to drive innovation and collaboration among financial institutions in Gujarat International Finance Tec (GIFT) City.

Under this partnership, financial institutions will gain access to AI Sandbox, assistance in providing proof of concept, AI literacy programmes and digital assistant solutions, according to a release.

"IBM and the Department

of Science and Technology, Government of Gujarat today entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish and promote an AI Cluster leveraging IBM's watsonx to foster innovation and collaboration among financial institutions in Gujarat International Finance Tec (GIFT) City," the release said.

IBM's 'watsonx' is an AI and data platform built for business.

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said: "This MoU with IBM will help Gujarat to lead the country in efforts to adopt AI and drive digital transformation."

'Private banks should give more benefits to people'

PNS ■ BILASPUR

Private sector banks in the district should give more benefits to people under various government schemes, especially pension schemes, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Bilaspur Nidhi Patel said.

During a meeting with bankers' committee on Friday, she said as compared to government banks, private banks are opening very few accounts under social security pension schemes of the central government, which was shocking and asked why private lenders were lagging in this field.

Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Atal Pension Yojana are some of the important schemes of the central government.

She directed officials of ICICI Bank, Axis Bank and HDFC Bank to ensure opening of maximum number of accounts under the major social security pension schemes of the Centre, before the next quarterly meeting.

UK's Labour Party commits to stamping out anti-India sentiments

PNS ■ LONDON

The UK's Opposition Labour Party, hoping to win a mandate to form a government after the July 4 general election, has committed itself to stamping out anti-India sentiments within its ranks and building a strong strategic partnership with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led administration.

The party's resolution during an annual conference under former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn in favour of international intervention in Kashmir was widely seen as having cost it British Indian votes in the 2019 general election.

There have also been concerns over some Labour councillors espousing pro-Khalistan views. At a 'Political Hustings' event for Britain's South Asian community organised by 'Asian Voice' in partnership with City Sikhs and City Hindus Network in London on Friday evening, Labour Party chair and shadow secretary of

state for women and equalities Anneliese Dodds claimed that the party led by Keir Starmer is confident of having cleansed its ranks of any members with such extremist views.

"We would certainly never take any group of voters, wherever they're from, for granted;

state for women and equalities Anneliese Dodds claimed that the party led by Keir Starmer is confident of having cleansed its ranks of any members with such extremist views.

"We would certainly never take any group of voters, wherever they're from, for granted;



"we're working hard for everyone's votes," said Dodds, in response to a question posed by PTI on winning back Indian diaspora voters alienated in the last polls.

"If there is any evidence on that [anti-India sentiment], whichever group of people, I will do something about that," she stated, calling upon the "incredible diaspora" commu-

nity to "furnish her details" of any party representatives who may pose a threat to closer India-UK ties under a future Labour-led government.

"Going beyond warm words, we want to build that practical, strong relationship. Labour has talked a lot about a strategic partnership with India that covers trade... but we want to see cooperation in other areas as well such as new technologies, the environment, security," she said.

On the incumbent Conservative Party side, its candidate for Dudley North in the West Midlands region of England recently stoked controversy with an official campaign letter stating only he would speak up for Kashmir in the British Parliament.

Marco Longhi, who is contesting against Labour's British-Indian pick Sonia Kumar, also referenced Prime Minister Narendra Modi's re-election for a third term as a cause for concern for Britain's Kashmiris.

Delhi airport T1 shutdown: Over 20 flights cancelled

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 20 flights of IndiGo that were to operate from Terminal 1 of the Delhi airport were cancelled on Saturday, a day after the terminal was shut down following the roof collapse incident.

A source in the know said 23 flights of IndiGo and 2 flights of SpiceJet that were scheduled to operate from T1 were cancelled on Saturday. There was no immediate comment from IndiGo.

However, a SpiceJet source said it has shifted all T1 operations to T3 and all flights were operated on Saturday. Following the roof collapse



incident, the operations at T1 were suspended on Friday. The flights that were to be operated from the terminal have been shifted to Terminal 2 (T2) and Terminal 3 (T3).

On Friday, Delhi airport operator DIAL said it has set up a technical committee to probe the roof collapse at the airport's Terminal 1 and the primary cause of the incident seems to be continued heavy rainfall.

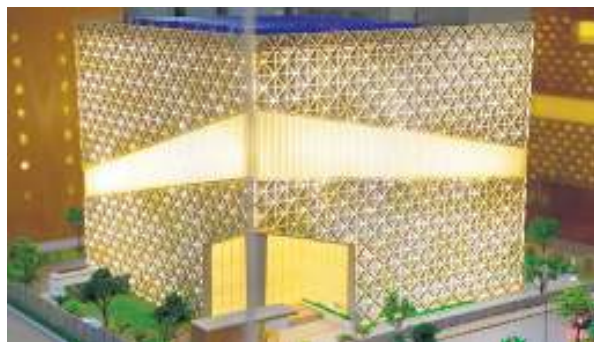
'European jewellers using services of Mega CFC for quality testing'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The services of a modern common facility centre developed at a special economic zone (SEZ) here are now being used by European jewellers for quality testing, an industry official said.

The Bharat Ratnam Mega CFC (Common Facility Centre) at the SEEPZ (Santacruz Electronic Export Processing Zone) SEZ in Mumbai was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in January. The centre has been operational since March 15.

Ravi Menon, CEO, Mega CFC, said that the CFC has state-of-the-art machines and



technologies and it is helping improve the output in terms of quality, productivity and yield of the finished jewellery and further boosting gem and jewellery exports.

"Besides Indian players using this facility, now European jewellers have also started using the services of the CFC for quality testing," Menon said.

He said that a team of senior officials of certain European jewellery firms has visited the centre earlier this month. Their lab managers have also visited the CFC, Menon added.

SEEPZ accounts for 10.26 per cent of total gem and jewellery exports from India and 85 per cent of studded jewellery exports.

Colin Shah, Head - Working Group, Bharat Ratnam Mega CFC said that the centre houses modern equipment, including Asia's first 3D metal printer, and smaller units can use these machines at a nominal fee which helps simplify manufacturing and boost productivity.

INFLATION AND FOREIGN CURRENCY CRISIS

Egypt, EU hold an investment conference to help Cairo

PNS ■ CAIRO

Egypt and the European Union on Saturday opened a two-day investment conference to advance the implementation of their strategic partnership agreement that includes a 7.4 billion-euro (US\$ 8 billion) aid package for the cash-strapped Middle Eastern nation.

The March aid package includes both grants and loans over the next three years for the Arab world's most populous country. Most of the funds — 5 billion euros (US\$ 5.4 billion) — are macro-financial assistance to help Egypt shore up its economy, which is hit by a staggering shortage of foreign currency and soaring inflation.

In his opening remarks, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi said the conference "sends a

powerful message of confidence and support from the European Union for the Egyptian economy and the economic reform measures implemented over the past 10 years".

The EU, represented by Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis, and Egypt will sign a memorandum of understanding for the short-term macro-financial assistance of up to 1 billion euros (US\$ 1.07 billion) to support Egypt's economic reform programme, the EU mission in Cairo said in a statement.

Other investment deals worth 40 billion euros (US\$ 42.8 billion) are scheduled to be signed with European companies as well as bilateral cooperation agreements with the EU to advance employment and skills, vaccines manufactur-



"In just 100 days, we have already brought new energy into our partnership. And this is just the beginning," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who attended the conference, said. "We are backing our new partnership with substantial public investments. But what truly makes a difference is that the private sector is also on board."

ing, food security and sustainable development, it said. "In just 100 days, we have

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who attended the conference, said. "We are backing our new partnership with substantial public investments. But what truly makes a difference is that the private sector is also on board."

El-Sisi's government embarked on a massive reform programme in 2016 in return for loans from the International Monetary Fund. The reform has centred on floating the local currency, substantial cuts in state subsidies on basic goods, reducing public investment and allowing the private sector to become the engine of growth.

Most recently, the government once again floated the pound and sharply increased the main interest rate in March. Commercial banks are now trading the US currency at

more than 47 pounds, up from about 31 pounds.

The measures are meant to combat ballooning inflation and attract foreign investment. They were also needed to meet IMF demands in order to increase its bailout loan from US\$ 3 billion to US\$ 8 billion.

The currency devaluation and subsidies cuts have inflicted further pain on Egyptians already struggling with skyrocketing prices over the past years. Nearly 30 per cent of Egyptians live in poverty, according to official figures.

The EU deal, which has drawn criticism from rights groups over Egypt's human rights record, came as concerns grow that economic pressure on Egypt and conflicts in neighbouring countries could drive more migrants to European shores.

TANGRA TALES

Kolkata, Bengalis the world over, and Tangra, share a very special culinary heritage and culture, going far back in history. **SHOBORI GANGULI** got to relive the bond at the Westin Gurgaon recently



Most people familiar with the trademark Chinese cuisine of Kolkata would know about Tangra. An erstwhile tannery on the eastern outskirts of then British Calcutta, soon to become famous as the city's Chinatown, this tiny colony was populated by Hakka origin Chinese folk who came to India to work in the tanneries, their craft and art soon to become synonymous with the finest leather accessories in the subcontinent. The womenfolk worked home kitchens to supplement meager household incomes. Today, the tanneries are all gone but Tangra has left its signature on a cuisine now globally known as Hakka Chinese. Recently, I had the fortune to relive some childhood memories of anniversaries and birthdays most often spent at some restaurant or the other in Tangra, wolfing down Golden Fried Prawns, Chicken dimsums, Hakka noodles, prawns sauted in garlic and red chillies, the list goes on. The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi, hosted a



CHEF HO CHI MING

nine day culinary pop up aptly called Tales of Tangra which promised an "explosion of flavours" from Kolkata's Chinatown. The event featured a specially curated menu by Guest Chef Ho Chi Ming from The Westin Pune Koregaon Park. By sheer geography, one can easily identify the unique Kolkata-Chinese culinary bond, the two regions in such close physical proximity, underlining the very special nature of the food not to be found anywhere else in the world despite Tangra's journey as an Oriental cuisine beyond the frontiers of Bengal. The menu at Westin was indeed meticulously planned by the Chef to capture the essence of this legendary fusion cuisine, tracing its roots back to an era long ago when Chinese immigrants in then Calcutta, blending their traditions with Indian culture to script and create Chinatown's culinary

proffess. Unfortunately, none of that history now remains, except in the hands of home and professional chefs, who still keep the history of Chinatown resonating with contemporary approaches, and of course, special twists given to recipes long lost. While Chef Ho did put up a great show with his Scallion Crepes, Homestyle Taro Cakes, Kari Fish Dumplings, Sweet and Sour Prawns, Four Season Green Beans, Crispy Chilli Garlic Potatoes, Tangra style authentic Hakka noodles, the menu had a huge vegetarian accent. With the world turning to vegetarianism each passing day, this is only understandable. But one fervently hopes that Hakka Chinese seafood will always have its patrons surviving in some corner or the other in the world. Chef Ho's passion for Asian cuisine was apparent in the innovations he brought to each dish. His approach, affability and commitment to authenticity were truly welcome. Chef Amit Dash, Multi Property Executive Chef for The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi said, "We are excited to host Chef Ho Chi Ming and present Tales of Tangra to our



patrons. This pop-up is a tribute to the rich cultural tapestry and culinary excellence of Tangra and a testament to our commitment to continue offering our guests diverse and exceptional dining experiences." The soups ranged from Manchow, Assorted Vegetables, Ginger, Cilantro Broth, Hot and Sour soup, non vegetarian bits like prawns and chickens were only add-ons. Personally, I feel a soup or broth must stew in its original juices and not be relegated to add-ons for a vegetable broth. It makes a critical culinary difference in terms of taste, texture and aromas. All in all, it felt good to taste a bit of Tangra far away from its original shores of Kolkata right in the heart of Delhi. Long live Tangra's signature Hakka cuisine.

Disappointing Service Mars Fine Dining Experiences



PAWAN SONI ventures to The China Kitchen at Hyatt Regency, New Delhi, famed for its Peking Duck. While the star dish impressed, but the experience is marred by inattentive services

I recently visited The China Kitchen at Hyatt Regency New Delhi, renowned for its exquisite Peking Duck, which I consider among the best in the National Capital Region. Some might argue that Hakkasan in Mumbai outshines it, but my personal experiences at Hakkasan in Abu Dhabi and a pop-up at Shangri-La Delhi didn't include the duck, so I can't compare. Nonetheless, my recent dining experience at The China Kitchen, despite the superb duck, left me dissatisfied, primarily due to subpar service. The evening began on a sour note with a lackluster welcome. We received no warm greetings or guidance to our table, and no one offered us menus or water, despite the sweltering Delhi summer. The absence of hospitality was in stark contrast to the standards one expects at a 5-star property. When we ordered our first dish, a gomai salad, I specifically requested extra sesame dressing on the side, a preference I had made clear to the server. However, the salad arrived without the extra dressing and was neither cold nor flavorful, lacking the acidity and vibrant tastes I anticipated. The China Kitchen could learn a thing or two from China Garden, which excels at this dish in the city. Fortunately, the other dishes like chicken shao mai dumplings, edamame dim sum, and honey chilli lotus roots were much better. Yet, the service remained mechanical and impersonal. There were no smiles, no proactive plate changes, and no clearing of the



table. Even the chef who came to carve the duck remained silent, possibly due to a language barrier, but a smile would have gone a long way. The hostess who prepared the pancake rolls also wore a stony expression while she stood near our table for some time preparing the pancakes. Despite enjoying most of our meal, we quickly finished and left, paying over Rs18,000 (including a 10% service charge) without any drinks. I contemplated asking for the service charge to be waived but refrained, considering how dependent the staff might be on these tips. I was particularly disappointed when my request for duck salt and pepper was denied because we had ordered only half a duck, a decision that seemed unnecessarily rigid. A little more flexibility and hospitality could have made all the difference, especially when very few order it. Attentive and friendly

service could have transformed our dining experience. Even though the food was largely enjoyable, the lack of warmth and attention overshadowed it. Similar was our experience just a day prior at Pullman hotel where a friend hosted his daughter's

birthday party at their all-day dining restaurant Pluck. Orders were mixed up, a sparkling wine cork flew in the air missing the patrons without any apology from the server, prawns vanished from the buffet spread, and orders either took a lot of time or were

completely missed. Something has happened to that smiley and polite star hotel service, especially after COVID. Fresh batches are seeing fewer takers, most experienced staff have either left the industry or are moving abroad for better wages and work

conditions. What remains is the new service levels. Either we will get used to it or start paying them the wages they truly deserve to retain deserving candidates. — Author is a food critic and founder of the Big F Awards. He can be reached at Pawan.Soni@indianfoodfreak.com

the pioneer agenda

"Disease is an experience of a so-called mortal mind. It is fear made manifest on the body"
— Mary Baker Eddy



ON A FUN FILLED PAWCATION!

Indulge in exciting activities with your pets and make a holiday with them truly special, writes SHARMILA CHAND

Whether indulging in gourmet cuisine for your pets, celebrating their birthdays, pampering them with grooming sessions or participating in fun activities, there's something to enrich every experience during a vacation with furry members. There are a range of pet-friendly hotels and resorts that are more than happy to welcome you and your loyal companion. From luxury resorts to cozy retreats, these properties ensure complete comfort and are a haven both for you and your four-legged buddy.

COMFORT MEETS LUXURY AT PRESIDENT, MUMBAI - IHCL SELEQIONS

Looking to celebrate your pet's birthday? Go for a Pawcation at President, Mumbai - IHCL SeleQions.

"We have curated a well thought out pet-friendly vacation concept known as Pawcations," says Afzal Khan, General Manager. "We understand that pets are cherished members of the family, and we strive to create a comfortable and enriching environment for them during their stay. Hence we provide pet-friendly amenities like plush pet beds and bedding, engaging toys, and a gourmet pet menu crafted by our culinary experts." Embracing a pet-friendly policy, the hotel team makes sure the guests' comfort is enhanced by offering the services of on-call pet caretakers, as per specific requirements. Moreover, if there is any health related issue, there is a specialist veterinarian on call. Not to forget pet grooming services with prior appointments, exclusive pet toiletries, and designated pet-friendly zones.

"We not only organize elaborate party with delightful high tea and fun outdoor activities for furry birthday boys and girls but also make sure the service is professional with warmth and care. Our team undergoes regular comprehensive training programs to understand animal behavior, hygiene protocols, and proper handling procedures. We also invite external pet trainers and behaviorists to train our staff regularly, ensuring they are well-equipped to interact with pets and provide top-notch service. Hence, we take great pride in being a pet-friendly destination," concludes Khan with a smile.



PAMPERING PETS AT 'OUR NATIVE VILLAGE ECO RESORT', BENGALURU

At 'Our Native Village Eco Resort', nestled in the serene village of Hesaraghatta, guests can indulge in a memorable vacay with the joy of bonding with their beloved pets amidst nature's embrace.

"Whether exploring our sprawling grounds or immersing yourself in our cultural experiences, every moment promises a harmonious blend of luxury, responsible tourism and eco-conscious living, adhering to our pet-friendly policy," tells Antharaj A, The Operations Manager.

He adds, "We get repeat guests who have enjoyed their staycation in seamless harmony with their furry companions. As a proud pet-friendly establishment, the retreat provides essential amenities, including a variety of dog foods, water bowls, leashes, floor mats, and cozy blankets. The sprawling grounds offer ample space for pets to roam freely amidst lush lawns and village paths, perfect for leisurely strolls and bonding moments." Designed with meticulous care, the dedicated pet bathing area combines comfort with rustic charm, ensuring a refreshing bath experience for furry companions. Specially prepared food ensures pets receive nutritious meals, supporting the commitment to sustainability by minimizing environmental impact. "Complete with all necessary amenities, the resort's natural charm

reflects our dedication to pampering pets just as we do for our human guests. While the guests rediscover childhood joys playing village games like gilli danda and kite flying, their pets act as best cheerleaders!" Antharaj says with a smile.

DISCOVER PET-FRIENDLY RETREAT AT MYSA ZINC JOURNEY BY THE FERN

Pet parents looking to take a break and hit the road with their fur babies, look no further than MYSA Zinc Journey by The Fern, a premier resort located in Nani Devati, Gujarat. Renowned for its serene ambiance and top-notch amenities, this resort stands out as a haven for pet lovers, offering an exceptional blend of comfort, luxury, and pet-friendly hospitality. Naveen Vaishnav, Squad Champion at the Resort says, "Committed to pampering four legged guests, at MYSA Zinc Journey by The Fern, pets are warmly welcomed and cherished. Furthermore, the property offers a range of facilities, making this resort the ideal choice for travellers with pets. The resort offers 24 elegantly designed rooms and villas, each providing ample space for you and your pets to relax."

Spread across 9 acres within the scenic Glade One Golf Resort, the resort features beautifully landscaped gardens and open spaces perfect for the four legged to explore and enjoy. For a leisurely stroll or a brisk walk, the serene pathways and green expanses offer a perfect retreat for pets and their owners.

"At the resort we offer dedicated services and facilities that include comfortable bedding and special dietary options for your furry friends. Our chefs cook as per pets' liking and specifications, we don't have printed menus as we believe in curating for them. While your pets enjoy the outdoors, you can indulge in a variety of resort activities. From the challenging 9-hole Gary Player-designed golf course to rejuvenating spa treatments and a sparkling swimming pool, here is the unique blend of luxury and pet-friendly hospitality. Located just a short drive from Ahmedabad, this resort provides a tranquil retreat where you and your pets can relax and rejuvenate," adds Vaishnav.

BONDING IN A NURTURING ENVIRONMENT

Nestled amidst the serene landscapes of Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa, Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa and The Yellow House, lies a haven not just for humans but also for their beloved furry companions. Embracing the bond between pets and their owners, we proudly declare ourselves a pet-friendly resort, where wagging tails and happy barks are as much a part of the atmosphere as the rustling of leaves and gentle lapping of waves. "As the pet's comfort is paramount, we provide cozy & comfortable beddings to ensure their good night's sleep. Offering a range of soothing amenities such as gentle shampoo, conditioner, and nourishing paw and nose butter - these products are carefully chosen to keep your pet looking and feeling their best throughout their stay. Beyond physical comfort, we cultivate a nurturing environment where every aspect of your pet's experience is thoughtfully considered. Our dedicated staff is trained to provide attentive care and ensure that all pets receive personalized attention and affection," says Sanchita Banerjee Rodrigues, MarCom for North Goa Resorts. Fitness is of utmost importance. Whether it's a leisurely morning walk or an evening romp under the setting sun, the scenic surroundings provide the perfect backdrop for the pets to stay active and happy. "Understanding that pets thrive when they can engage in physical activities, we offer a variety of opportunities for them to stay active and happy amidst our scenic

surroundings. Whether it's a leisurely morning walk along our lush trails or an energetic romp during the enchanting sunset hours, every moment outdoors is tailored to keep pets healthy and stimulated. Providing designated areas where they can engage in interactive play and socialize with other furry companions under the watchful eye of our attentive staff. These supervised activities not only keep pets physically fit but also mentally stimulated, ensuring a well-rounded experience during their stay." When it comes to pets' dining, Chef Nishant Diwakar Executive Sous Chef of Taj Fort Aguada being a pet parent himself takes keen interest in designing and planning of the pet menus of Taj North Goa Resorts. He firmly believes as important a balanced diet is to us humans, our furry friends require the same amount of attention. We provide specially curated menu for them to get the perfect amount of nutrient & a tasty treat. From dishes made with bacon & chicken bones to drool over to waffles made of yoghurt, banana & pumpkin. The team goes beyond basic sustenance to provide culinary experiences that enhance their stay and contribute to their overall enjoyment.

A PERFECT GETAWAY WITH PETS!

At Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield, there are special pet fiestas and brunches that create memorable moments for pets and owners alike. For long-staying guests, there is a unique touch of companionship - a small fish in a pot to keep them company. "At our hotel, we pride ourselves on providing an immersive experience with cozy beds, engaging toys, and meticulously sanitized play areas, creating a haven for our four-legged guests," tells Anjali Naik, Director of Sales and Marketing. She adds, "Pets have access to our dining outlets and lush lawns, where they can relax and play freely. Our exclusive pet menu offers health-centric, salt-free options for their dining pleasure. Our commitment to creating a pet-friendly environment goes beyond mere accommodation, offering a truly immersive and delightful experience for both you and your beloved companion."

—Sharmila Chand is an author and independent journalist who writes on Travel, Food and Lifestyle





FROM THE PEN OF A GROUNDED POET

It is important to note that Neerada is as much a Nature poet as she is a people's poet, says SWATI PAL

How many of us have had to be admonished for things not being aligned? The books in our book case in the days when books were bought and read? The clothes in our cupboard? The shoes in the closet? How many of us were ticked off at school perhaps for the tie being askew or the pair of socks not climbing up at the same place on each leg? Or the writing in our notebooks being asymmetrical? For the better part of my childhood and those of my friends, there was a constant, relentless push and shove towards alignment and well, we certainly rebelled at it as young people! A part of me still does and thus when I chance upon a poppy flower for example, in a neat bed of chrysanthemums in the college gardens, I cannot deny that my heart lights up with joy at this break in the order of things!

So when I was invited to read and speak on this utterly delightful collection of poems called 'Alignment' by Neerada Suresh, I cannot deny that my interest was instantly piqued by the title and I immediately read the title poem. Rohan Kaul's home and his partner, Promilla simply came alive by the word picture painted by Neerada Suresh in her rib tickling comparisons between the state of the house in the absence and presence of Rohan. There is a certain glee in the air when Rohan is away as things lie unaligned and unfettered; the same things, to quote, *But when Rohan Kaul is in, Newspapers stand stacked, Compressed, breathing in. Shoes align themselves Awed, open mouthed. Paintings, curtains, Cushions, sofas All tell a tamed tale.*

The fact is that while alignment is not only, politically speaking an important credo that nations strive for and while it may have its merits, alignment can often come at great cost. It may be the cost of freedom, it may be about being 'tamed' as Neerada put it; it may leave us in gaping fear and thus 'open mouthed'. The hope perhaps lies in Promilla who, as the poem ends with *defies*

A certain kind of alignment. Don't let the light and bubbling language deceive you, this poem has far greater implications if we read it closely and it is this deceptive mirth that the

poem has which makes the poem, like many others by her, such a joy to read. Neerada is a grounded soul. Her poems reflect that and she makes poetry out of the ordinary quirky eccentricities and foibles that fill all of our lives. A poem that really clicked with me is *Of Lists*. It has that elegant humour that seems to be a characteristic trait of Neerada's, the wonderful ability to laugh at one's self. It begins with the declaration *I am one For lists.* And then, with great good humour she narrates how fishing out her list from her bag full of things makes the list redundant as she involuntarily lists from memory and then she swears, *Under my breath Now to list down A set of instructions How not to forget Getting across The list you make.*

I cannot recall the uncountable times that I have had to strip my entire bag to find a list and then found it much later. It is such a relatable experience and that is what endears the reader to Neerada's poetry, the sheer relatability of the experiences. Life and the times as we live them are the focus of Neerada's poetry. We talk for example about how communication between people now is held ransom by the cell phone. Neerada converts our trite conversations into a poem which she entitles, *The New Normal.*

New normal is Sitting side by side On a sofa With no eye contact Chatting of this and that These are the first few lines and the poem ends with the sad fact that the new normal is: And at all times Not facing each other But thumb twitching On the mobile through Inane vicarious clips Of far and near ones And total strangers Never once glancing Directly or even sideways Smiling at each other. Modes of communication or rather the language of communication comes up again in another poem called *Version 3.0* where the poet talks about her journey from the deep south up north 'travelling light with nothing/more than

ALIGNMENT
Author:
Neerada Suresh
Publisher: DC Books
Price: ₹199



a bilingual tongue'. Subtly yet strongly commenting upon the Rashtrabhasha issue, she says, *At the workplace, monolingual, mute Biding time mastering a language National though notional, Opening floodgates of ecstasy mousing My own tongue, my mother tongue, At regional gatherings.* This is such a striking comment upon the way in which so much in our relationships with people, so much of our identity, so many of our needs, are determined by the fluency with which we speak different languages. But are we accepted because we speak the required language or do we remain strangers divided by our regional differences, not explicitly stated but always there? Do we, in turn, become one with the region of our profession or adoption or do we still dream of lands we associate most with the tongue that comes easiest and naturally to us, our mother tongue? These are questions to think about. Neerada makes you think.

She makes you laugh and cry as well, sometimes together. One such poem is *When my brother fell sick* in which the poet describes her brother who was bedridden after a botched eye surgery. She writes about his courage, *He still smiles as always. Not once did he Lament this plight, foul mouth The surgeon or contemplate Suing. Resigned at once To a possible, partial vision In his bad eye, pacified His wife, my raging sisier in law. His expressive eyes Now inscrutable Behind the dark glasses. But his smile had the same texture and tinge Of the smile he sported When Mother died And he lingered by her one last time.* The poem is such a beautiful reminder that warriors are not found only on the battlefield; there are many who soldier on heroically confronted by the vicissitudes of life. The brother you read about will surely capture your heart and become your hero.

One of the characteristics of Neerada's poems in 'Alignment' is that there is a lot said through implication which is sometimes sensuous and can get your heart beating a bit faster. For example, in the poem *Delete*, the poet writes about *Your unsolicited Picture on FB And she goes on to say, The familiar contours Of your face Traced out a trillion times Through summer and winter Stood out embossed On my finger tips. The best option now For the photo shopped version, Press delete To wipe out that sting Of dormant memories Off my fingertips.* This is a brilliant use of synesthetic imagery and one can literally feel the tingling in the tips of one's fingers. A poem that ends with a delightful twist is *Chrysanthemums* where the unnamed 'he' always came when the chrysanthemums bloomed and he always asked if they were dahlias or marigolds, and the poet says *Too polite to correct She'd smile- a wide smile*

Her lashes lowered and The chrysanthemums paled Into insignificance. The evening Stretched to its elastic limits Catapulted into night. What she didn't know was That he had always known They were chrysanthemums. There is the sweetness of romance in these lines that is unmistakable and so appealing; one can almost imagine the whole scene played out in one's head. Tea 1 carries the same fragrance of romance very delicately framed, implied through such lines as *While I made tea On a rusty stove He stood watching Leaning by the door Aand then said, I like the cut of your dress As though it were a cue To turn the stove on to sim And let the simmering within Come to a boil.*

Coming back to the pictorial quality of the poems, a reason why many of the poems in fact can be almost dramatically played out in the imagination is the kind of detailing that Neerada works into her poems. Take the poem *Of Haystacks*. This entire poem is literally painted with an eye for the minutest of details and it reads *The cotton tree stood In its slender trunk With its bursting pods Of parachuting blobs As the turbaned, earth hued Cart man, cushioned On bales and bales Of golden yellow straw Came swaying, swinging Whistling to the orchestra of The hoof clicking clap dance Of the ambling bullocks.* Colour, sound, movement all seemed fused almost like a motion picture being played out on the printed page. And of course the symbolism, the personification is discernible, as is the use of alliteration in the swaying swinging, cart cushioned, clicking clap. This lends a wonderful rhythmic motion to the scene and has been really cleverly used. Again, in *The Breadfruit Tree*, the poet describes the tree, *We didn't make much Of the breadfruit tree That stood sentry like*

*By the boundary wall Spilling its bickering spread Over the neighbour's roof Dropping yellow leaves Plopping crow eaten messy fruits Like I said, the tree, pretty much like the haystacks in the previous poem, comes to life in the mind's eye. If brevity is the soul of wit, Neerada really aces it in her short poems, two of which are *Absence* and *Sorrows*. *Absence, Distance Were surefire Terminators Of whatever was Between us I thought, But they Like rings in trees Add girth, depth Linking the past With the present, Casting shadows Of decay Into the future**

Direct and simple, the simile is so apt and new- the rings on the trees and the passage of time. It's important to note that Neerada is as much a Nature poet as she is a people's poet. In *Sorrows* she says, *Sorrows Like a newborn Arranged itself In my arms Purring in content As if to say Never let me go For the reward Of great truths To be reaped And revealed In the future.* Those who carry their sorrows with them will feel that the poem is made for them. But that's the magic of Neerada's pen, she will make her readers feel that the people, places, thoughts and experiences are theirs that she writes about. Read her, you will feel at home.

— Swati Pal, Professor and Principal, Janki Devi Memorial College, University of Delhi, has been a Charles Wallace; John McGrath Theatre Studies and Fulbright Nehru fellowship, scholar. She has published on theatre, creative and academic writing, education and translates from Hindi to English. In *Absentia* is a collection of her poems

Journey to an expanded self awareness

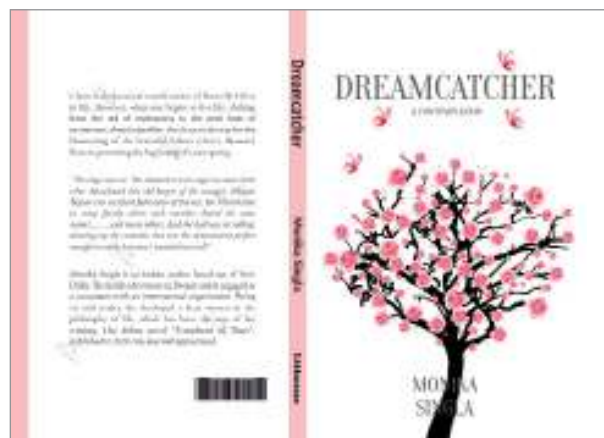
The book opens in the present-day scenario, where a rather unsure Loveena of mid-thirties is boarding a train to Pathankot.

Her already raw senses are over burdened by the onslaught of experience of a train station environment.

Yet her insecurities are deep seated in her psyche and are result of the generational trauma she endured during her growing up years by the hands of her equally tormented mother Neena, reviews DEEPAK KUMAR JHA

The ("Dreamcatcher") is the story of Loveena, the protagonist of the book who is a sensitive soul. It beautifully narrates the journey through her trials and tribulations, her realisations, her pains and her metamorphosis and an ultimate 'coming of age' which leaves her in a state of expanded awareness of self as well as her surroundings and people there in. Author Monika has orchestrated her sound knowledge of literature, language and the subject & object to bring on paper the story of a child Loveena, till she finds solace passing through life's labyrinth, unfortunately all nurtured in close walls of her family. The just published book revolves around Loveena's mother Neena who attained motherhood through Loveena after a long wait of ten years. Neena's intensity

thus shifted to being extra protective about her daughter from the negativities of the world. Having brought up in a rather affluent and rich family, she desires nothing less for her daughter. And even though Loveena had both her parents-Neena and her father Dev, it was her mother and mother's stories which were to carve her life and make her the person that she would become. And the story's trajectory thus turns to Loveena's mother Neena's life. Neena's husband Dev was a victim of his own sense of helplessness for his lack of understanding the business of Neena's father and inability to take it up for posterity, even though he was the sole son-in-law the family had. His job as an assistant professor of history in the university projected him as most suitable boy for Neena, when a friend of Neena's



father told him about Dev and his docile nature. Quite obviously Neena's father believed it to be the significant trait suitable for her pampered daughter. As Neena entered Dev's life and his house after her wedding, it was bustling with Dev's family. Neena was immediately overwhelmed by the sheer number

DREAMCATCHER
Author:
Monika Singla
Publisher: ISPCK
Price: ₹295



of people and was unable to adjust to this new environment which was totally unlike her solitary and exclusive upbringing in an affluent household. Sensing Neena's hesitation and reservations, Dev's family too accepted her into their family but without completely absorbing her into their lives. So, even though

Neena was married into Dev's family she could never truly become a part of it. Dev's detachment or lack of desire to correct this situation further acerbated the relationships. Troubled relations with in-laws, Dev's indifference clubbed with an anguishing wait of ten years to attain motherhood further fed Neena's sense of mistrust and suspicions and her belief that the world was a dangerously bad place. Loveena who was born as a happy child with a calm, pleasing, innocent disposition was always eager to embrace everybody, never earned approval for her behaviour from her mother. Neena always dismissed these traits as incompatible with the ways of world. Thus, growing up, Loveena's world protected by her mother, remained confined within the four walls of the palatial house with the house help Babli as a constant companion who

too gets married leaving behind a void in Loveena's life. Finally, Loveena finds her suitor in Sanand and her engagement to him was greeted as the most welcome news by everyone later on which did not worked due to triggers of Neena's fears. For Loveena this incident proved to be the one which augmented her belief in Neena's words that world is a bad place. Her father Dev too gone followed by passing of Neena. Loveena finally married, not to start a family but only to drown the haunting hollowness of her soul into joys and laughter. Vikram was a colleague of Loveena and the only thing she knew about him was that he was a divorcee with two grown up kids. Soon this too developed a marital conflict. Unable to handle this situation any longer Loveena decides that she needs to get

respite from her choppy life that and decides to leave the house and Vikram. She goes looking for solitude in a place away from the chaos of the city, away from the prodding eyes of the society. Her life's journey takes a new turn as she arrives at Pathankot where she embarks upon a spiritualistic journey. Armed with the strength of her soul and her renewed faith in life and self and the world in general, Loveena finally finds herself ready to go back to place from where she herself had once run away from all her life challenges a long time back. Her tumultuous relationship with Vikram's place was when she had shunned everything to cross over into next phase of her life. She was now ready to go meet Vikram as a new person. But this time she isn't running away. This time she is running towards meeting life head-on.



Only 17% of targets to improve life around world are likely to be reached by 2030, UN reports

The United Nations warned Friday that only 17% of its 169 targets to improve life for the world's more than 7 billion people are on track to be reached by the 2030 deadline.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres launched the annual report saying, "It shows the world is getting a failing grade." World leaders adopted the 17 wide-ranging development goals from ending global poverty to achieving gender equality in 2015, and set 169 specific targets to be reached by the end of the decade.

According to the report, nearly half the targets show minimal or moderate progress and over one-third are stalled or regressing — with just 17% are on track to be achieved.

"The takeaway is simple," Guterres said. "Our failure to secure peace, to confront climate change, and to boost international finance is undermining development."

The report also cited the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and said an additional 23 million people were pushed into extreme poverty and over 100 million more were suffering from hunger in 2022 compared to 2019.

"In a world of unprecedented wealth, knowledge and technologies, the denial of basic needs for so many is outrageous and unacceptable," Guterres said.

On the downside, the U.N. reported that for the first time this century, per-capita GDP growth in half of the world's most vulnerable nations is slower than that of advanced economies, threatening improvements in equality. And in 2022, it said, nearly 60% of countries faced moderate to abnormally high food prices.

The goal of quality education is far off track. Only 58% of students worldwide achieved minimum proficiency in reading by the end of primary school, and "recent assessments reveal a significant decline in math and reading scores in many countries," the report said.

As for gender equality, it said the world continues to lag: One in five girls still marry before age 18, violence against women persists, far too many women don't have the right to decide on their sexual and reproductive health — and at current rates it will take 176 years for women to reach parity with men in management positions. Guterres said the report

also has "some glimmers of hope." Mobile broadband is accessible to 95% of the world's population, up from 78% in 2015. Global capacity to generate electricity from renewable has been expanding at an unprecedented 8.1% annually for past five years, the report said. Increased access to treatment has averted 20.8 million AIDS-related deaths in the past three decades. New malaria vaccines being rolled out could save millions of lives.

WHY EARTH HAS ONLY ONE MOON WHILE OTHER PLANETS HAVE HUNDREDS?

Connecticut, On Earth, you can look up at night and see the Moon shining brightly from hundreds of thousands of miles away. But if you went to Venus, that wouldn't be the case.

Not every planet has a moon — so why do some planets have several moons, while others have none?

I'm a physics instructor who has followed the current theories describing why some planets have moons and others don't.

First, a moon is called a natural satellite. Astronomers refer to satellites as objects in space that orbit larger bodies. Since a moon isn't human-made, it's a natural satellite.

Currently, there are two main theories for why some planets have moons. Moons are either gravitationally captured if they are within what's called a planet's Hill sphere radius, or they're formed along with a solar system.

The Hill sphere radius Objects exert a gravitational force of attraction on other nearby objects. The larger the object is, the greater

First, a moon is called a natural satellite. Astronomers refer to satellites as objects in space that orbit larger bodies. Since a moon isn't human-made, it's a natural satellite

the force of attraction.

This gravitational force is why we all stay grounded to Earth instead of floating away.

The solar system is dominated by the Sun's large gravitational force, which keeps all planets in orbit. The Sun is the most massive object in our solar system, which means it has the most gravitational influence on objects such as planets.

For a satellite to orbit a planet, it has to be close enough for the planet to exert

enough force to keep it in orbit. The minimum distance for a planet to keep a satellite in orbit is called the Hill sphere radius.

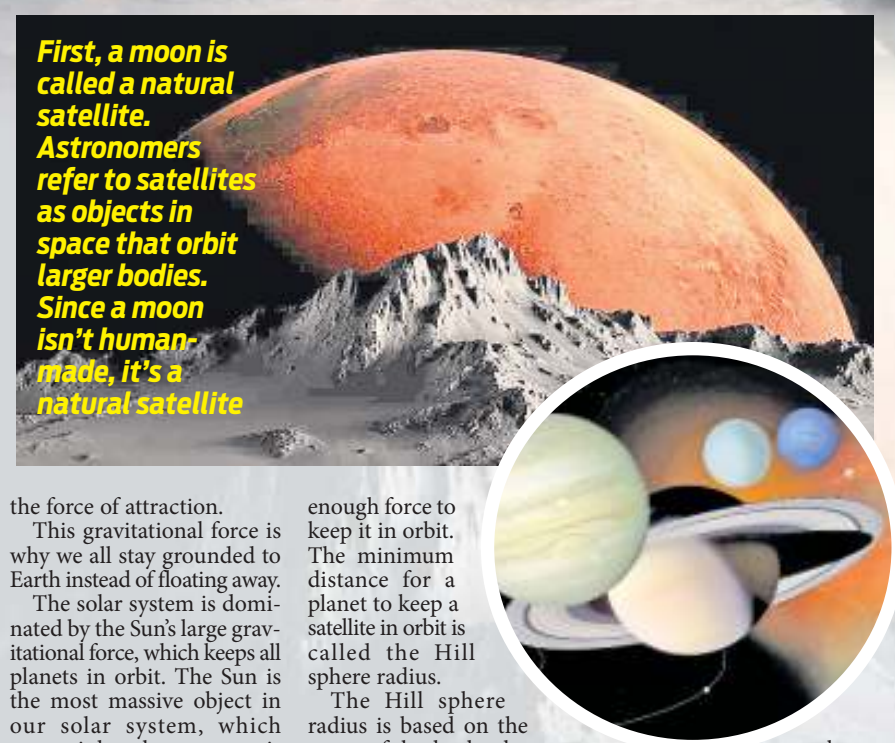
The Hill sphere radius is based on the mass of both the larger object and the smaller object. The Moon orbiting Earth is a good example of how the Earth's gravitational pull captures it. The moon orbits around the Earth, rather than

the Earth, because it is within Earth's Hill sphere radius.

Small planets like Mercury and Venus have a tiny Hill sphere radius, since they can't exert a large gravitational pull. Any potential moons would likely get pulled in by the Sun instead.

Many scientists are still looking to see whether these planets may have had small moons in the past. Back during the formation of the solar system, they may have had moons that got knocked away by collisions with other space objects.

Mars has two moons, Phobos and Deimos. Scientists still debate whether these came from asteroids that passed close to Mars' Hill sphere radius and got captured by the planet, or if they were formed at the same time as the solar system. More evidence supports the first theory, because Mars is close to the asteroid belt. Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune have larger Hill sphere radii, because they are much larger than Earth, Mars, Mercury and Venus and they're farther from the Sun.



'Children pacified with digital devices could have anger issues in future'

Pacifying children by handing them digital devices when they are throwing tantrums can disable them in managing emotions later in life, which can grow into anger management issues, a research has found.

Conversely, parents of children, who already had poor emotional control, were found to be overly relying on electronic devices to silence them, worsening the pre-existing conditions.

It is known that a child learns much about self-control, including how to choose a deliberate response over an automatic one, during the first few years of their life. However, a team of researchers from Hungary and Canada found that the recent trend of distracting children by showing them content on tablets and smartphones to control their unpleasant emotional responses can cripple their ability to effectively recognise and manage emotions later in life.

"Tantrums cannot be cured by digital devices. Children have to learn how to manage their negative emotions for themselves. They need the help of their



parents during this learning process, not the help of a digital device," Veronika Konok, a researcher at Eotvos Lorand University, Hungary, and first author of the study published in the journal Frontiers in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, said.

Following 300 parents of children -- aged two to five years old over a period of one year -- the researchers found that children, who were pacified using digital devices.



Indian Navy participates in RIMPAC naval exercise

The Indian Navy has joined the world's largest naval military wargame Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) in Hawaii. Twenty-nine nations, 40 surface ships, three submarines, over 150 aircraft and more than 25,000 personnel are going to train and operate in and around the Hawaiian Islands during the exercise, according to the US Navy. The Indian Navy has deployed frontline warship INS Shivalik for the RIMPAC.

"Indian multi-role stealth frigate INS Shivalik, mission deployed in South China Sea and North



Pacific Ocean, has reached Pearl Harbour in Hawaii to take part in the RIMPAC exercise," Indian Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal

said on Saturday. The harbour phase of the exercise is taking place from June 27 to July 7.

The sea phase of RIMPAC is divided into three sub-phases which will witness ships undertaking various exercises. The exercise will witness the participation of an aircraft carrier battle group, submarines, maritime reconnaissance aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles, remotely piloted surface ships and also an amphibious force landing operations.

UK's landmark postwar elections: When Labour ended 13 years of Conservative rule in 1964

Britain's upcoming general election is widely expected to lead to a change of government for the first time in 14 years. Many analysts believe it will be one of the country's most consequential elections since the end of World War II. Ahead of the July 4 vote, The Associated Press takes a look back at other landmark U.K. elections since the war. In 1964, the Conservative Party had been in power for 13 years

and was on its fourth prime minister, Alec Douglas-Home. That has echoes of the current Conservative government, which has been in power for 14 years and is now on its fifth prime minister of the period. Rishi Sunak, Douglas-Home had only become prime minister the year before, when his predecessor Harold Macmillan stepped down following a huge reversal in fortune. The buoyant economy had faltered, and Macmillan had

been snubbed by French President Charles de Gaulle in his application for Britain to join the recently formed European Economic Community. A sex scandal rocked his government and the British establishment, adding to the general feeling that the Conservatives had lost touch. Macmillan, known as "Supermac," stepped down soon after his minister for war, John Profumo, resigned for lying to Parliament over his affair with model and showgirl Christine Keeler. So the 1964 election was a race between the aristocratic Douglas-Home and Labour leader Harold Wilson, who was buzzing with ideas such as harnessing the "white heat of technology" to modernize the ailing British economy. Wilson also had the common touch, particularly important in the new world of television and with Britain showing signs of a cultural renaissance in the "Swinging Sixties."



Children get stroke; lack of awareness endangers their lives: Experts

The lack of awareness when it comes to paediatric stroke is so low and people are often stunned to hear that children can get stroke. Actors like Amitabh Bachchan need to talk about it to create awareness, said Dr Nirmal Surya, president of Indian Stroke Association (ISA) on Saturday.

Speaking at a press conference after the inauguration of the second national paediatric stroke conclave, he said, "Stroke is preventable, but globally paediatric stroke is the sixth leading cause of death in children."

The two-day conclave, organised by ISA, was inaugurated by Dr Devi Prasad Shetty, chairman and founder of Narayana Health. According to Dr Surya, lack of awareness is the biggest challenge that paediatric neurologists world over have to overcome. "In India, the situation is even worse. When people are not made aware of the possibility of stroke in children, time is lost on misdiagnosis. Time is of essence because stroke can often be treated with injection if the patient is brought within four and half hours," he added.

Stroke can occur even on the day one of the birth, reiterated Dr Minval V Kekatpura, paediatric neurologist at Narayana Health, Bengaluru and organising secretary of the conclave.

According to her, in fact, paediatric stroke is more common among neonates than older children. "In one lakh, there are about 25 neonates' cases as against 12 involving older children," added Kekatpura. Dr Pratibha Singhi, president of International Child Neurology Association, said often parents do not realise that the child is suffering from a stroke.

"We have had instances where parents brought their child seeking remedy for 'not very good at writing' and on checking we found that the child actually had suffered a stroke and is unable to move the hand properly," added Singhi.

According to Dr K P Vinayan, Paediatric Neurology Sub Section Chair of Indian Academy of Neurology, even adults suffering from stroke often are missing the window of opportunity to treat and face the increased chances of disability, if not death, in India. "There is such a lack of awareness when it comes to stroke. This needs to be set right first," he added. Visiting expert from Bern, Dr Maja Steinlin, vice-president of International Paediatric Stroke Organisation, also agreed with the Indian doctors about the absolute lack of awareness among the public. "Even in western countries, awareness is a big problem," she said, adding that India is not lagging behind because it does not have qualified people to treat stroke, but because people are not availing treatment on time. One of the biggest reasons for organising the conclave is to bring about this awareness, said Dr Arvind Sharma, secretary of ISA.

"We try to get more people on board, tell paediatricians and even general practitioners to refer patients to stroke ready hospitals if they show certain symptoms," added Dr Sharma. He also said there are about accredited 13 primary centres in India that are equipped to deal with stroke and about 30 stroke ready but not accredited facilities.

"We need about 1,000 accredited hospitals at least to deal with this disorder in India," added Sharma.



Federal funding for major science agencies is at a 25-year low

Government funding for science is usually immune from political gridlock and polarization in Congress. But, federal funding for science is slated to drop for 2025.

Science research dollars are considered to be discretionary, which means the funding has to be approved by Congress every year. But it's in a budget category with larger entitlement programs like Medicare and Social Security that are generally considered untouchable by politicians of both parties.

Federal investment in scientific research encompasses everything from large telescopes supported by the National Science Foundation to NASA satellites studying climate change, programs studying the use and governance of artificial intelligence at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and research on Alzheimer's disease funded by the National Institutes of Health. Studies show that increasing federal research spending benefits productivity and economic competitiveness.

I'm an astronomer and also a senior university administrator. As an administrator, I've been involved in lobbying for research funding as associate dean of the College of Science at the University of Arizona, and in encour-



At the National Science Foundation, only 1 in 4 proposals are accepted. Success rates for funding through the National Institutes of Health are even lower, with 1 in 5 proposals getting accepted. This low success rate means that the agencies have to reject many proposals that are rated excellent by the merit review process.

aging government investment in astronomy as a vice president of the American Astronomical Society. I've seen the importance of this kind of funding as a researcher who has had federal grants for 30 years, and as a senior academic who helps my colleagues write grants to support their valuable work.

Bipartisan support Federal funding for many programs is characterized by political

polarization, meaning that partisanship and ideological divisions between the two main political parties can lead to gridlock. Science is usually a rare exception to this problem.

The public shows strong bipartisan support for federal investment in scientific research, and Congress has generally followed suit, passing bills in 2024 with bipartisan backing in April and June.

The House passed these bills, and after reconciliation with language

from the Senate, they resulted in final bills to direct US\$460 billion in government spending. However, policy documents produced by Congress reveal a partisan split in how Democratic and Republican lawmakers reference scientific research.

Congressional committees for both sides are citing more scientific papers, but there is only a 5% overlap in the papers they cite. That means that the two parties are using different evidence to make their funding decisions, rather than working from a scientific consensus. Committees under Democratic control were almost twice as likely to cite technical papers as panels led by Republicans, and they were more likely to cite papers that other scientists considered important.

Ideally, all the best ideas for scientific research would receive federal funds. But limited support for scientific research in the United States means that for individual scientists, getting funding is a highly competitive process.

At the National Science Foundation, only 1 in 4 proposals are accepted. Success rates for funding through the National Institutes of Health are even lower, with 1 in 5 proposals getting accepted. This low

