



the pioneer

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



Congress angry with me for participating in Ganesh Puja:

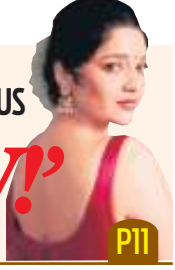
Modi

FASHION FORWARD, PLANET APPROVED



'I can't wait to take on the villainous

ROLE NOW!

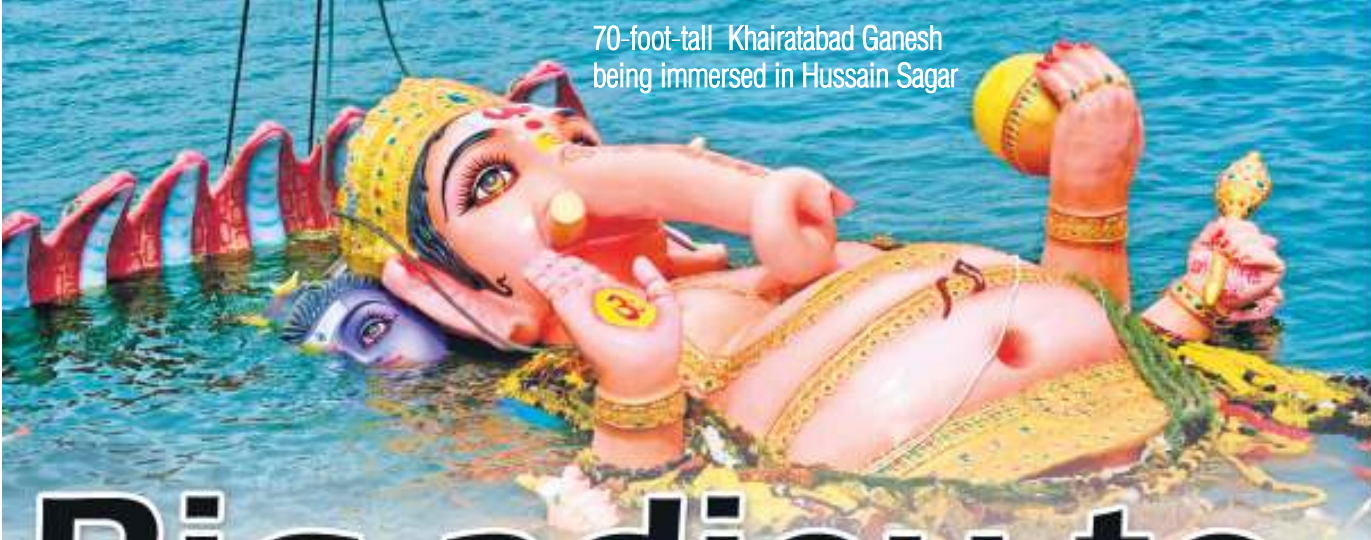


QUOTE OF THE DAY

Revanth Reddy insulted Telangana Thalli. He installed the Rajiv Gandhi statue at the place meant for installing the Telangana Thalli statue. We will shift the Rajiv Gandhi statue to Gandhi Bhavan respectfully if we come to power. Revanth should install the Rajiv Gandhi statue in his Jubilee Hills residence if interested. I am saying on Ganesh Nimajjanam Day that we will certainly remove the Rajiv Gandhi statue installed near the Secretariat



- KT Rama Rao, BRS working president



70-foot-tall Khairatabad Ganesh being immersed in Hussain Sagar

Big adieu to Bada Ganesh

Religious fervour marks immersion ceremony

The jumbo eco-friendly Ganapathi idol started the grand procession (Shobha Yatra) in the morning, and around one lakh devotees took part in the procession. The lane from Khairatabad to NTR Marg bore a festive look with devotees dancing to drums and chanting 'Ganpati Bappa Morya, Agle Baras Tu Jaldi Aa'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
The Shobha Yatra carrying the 70-foot-tall Khairatabad Ganesh idol concluded at around 1:45 pm with its immersion in the Hussain Sagar amid Jai Ganesha chants. The immersion was done by crane No: 4 installed at NTR Marg, within a record time of 10 minutes. After the yatra, the immersion of thousands of Lord Ganesh idols in water bodies began on a grand scale on Tuesday.

The jumbo eco-friendly Ganapathi idol started the grand procession (Shobha Yatra) in the morning, and around one lakh devotees took part in the procession. The lane from Khairatabad to NTR Marg bore a festive look with devotees dancing to drums and chanting 'Ganpati Bappa Morya, Agle Baras Tu Jaldi Aa'. As the immersion was scheduled during the early hours of the day the city did not see the usual huge traffic jams that used to delay immersion functions. According to the officials of the Ustav Committee everything took place as per schedule. A special pooja for the Khairatabad Ganesh began at midnight at



the pandal. The loading of the idol began at around 2 am on a special trailer used to carry the idol. By 4 am, welding was completed. The grand procession from the Khairatabad Pandal began at around 7 am and reached NTR Garden at 11 am and the final puja along with the Kalash puja was conducted. Immersing the idol required considerable time, as the dismantling of the iron welding of the giant Ganesh idol took almost an hour. This year around 25 lakh devotees visited the puja pandal during the last 10 days. The Telangana government made elaborate arrangements for the immersion of the idols. Around one lakh idols are expected to be

immersed this year. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy took part in the idol immersion procession and inspected arrangements for the immersion. He directed that special supervision should be made at the Hussain Sagar and other water bodies. He also advised to assign duties to drivers and other staffers in three shifts and that steps should be taken to prevent untoward incidents and to warn the police to be alert at all times. The immersion in GHMC limits was supervised using 733 CCTV cameras and 15,000 personnel, including sanitation, engineering and others worked in three shifts for 24 hours for the immersion.

HYDRAA unstoppable: CM

Says that it will continue to ensure Hyd's future

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (HYDRAA) would continue its operations to ensure the future of Hyderabad. Telangana was liberated from the shackles of Nizam on September 17, 1948, and merged with India. The government organised People Governance Day on Tuesday to remember that day, he said. During his speech at the Public Gardens, the CM said that earlier

Hyderabad was called a city of lakes but now it has turned into a flood city because of the BRS rule in the last 10 years. That's why the Congress government constituted HYDRAA. "HYDRAA has been set up to demolish encroachments in lakes and other water bodies. Future generations will have to pay a heavy price if lakes, ponds and canals are not protected," he said. "Telangana's economy has been ruined with a debt of Rs 7 lakh crore in the last 10 years."



20 Mbps internet for all houses by December: Sridhar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

IT Minister D. Sridhar Babu said the state government has decided to provide Internet facility to all houses with 20 MBPS speed through T-Fiber with the Centre's cooperation. He said the government is ready to provide Internet to 9,000 villages and there is a need to provide Internet connectivity to 5,000 more villages. The government asked the Centre to give Rs 9,000 crore for this project, he added. Addressing the Prajapalana

Dinotsavam celebrations at Karimnagar on Tuesday, Sridhar said the government selected three villages for a pilot project to provide Internet. They are Sangupeta village in Sangareddy district, Maddur village in Narayanpet district and Adavi Srirampur village in Peddapalli district. He said that people can avail Internet facilities as well as cable TV. He said that those villages will get the services of 360-degree CCTV cameras and AI technology.



'Does not apply to HYDRAA'

Ranganath on SC order on demolitions

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The recent Supreme Court ruling on demolition drives in Delhi's Jahangirpuri does not apply to HYDRAA's operations in Hyderabad, the Commissioner of the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Monitoring and Protection Agency (HYDRAA), AV Ranganath, said. "The Supreme Court's verdict does not apply to HYDRAA. HYDRAA demolishes only encroachments on lakes, drains or government land and not properties belonging to criminals or accused individuals," Ranganath said in a statement.

SC halts 'bulldozer justice' till Oct 1

Atishi set to be next CM of Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior AAP leader Atishi was set to be the next chief minister of Delhi after Arvind Kejriwal resigned from the post on Tuesday in a move seen as a bold gambit to seize the initiative ahead of assembly elections due in five months. "I will work with one goal for the next few months... to bring back Kejriwal as the chief minister," said the 43-year-old, who along with Kejriwal and other party leaders met Lt Governor V K Saxena and staked claim to form the government after being elected

Waive interest on loans taken for irrigation projects: Uttam



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy has appealed to the Centre to waive or reduce the interest charged on loans taken by the BRS government for irrigation projects as they have now become a burden on the government. He said that if possible the interest on these loans should be waived entirely or partially. Uttam Kumar Reddy was speak-

ing at the International Water Week Conference being held from Tuesday at the Bharat Mandap in New Delhi under the auspices of the Union Water Ministry. Inaugurated by President Draupadi Murmu, the conference is being attended by the minister as well as irrigation officials. The conference will continue for four days.



BALAPUR LADDU YIELDS

₹ 30 lakhs



Keerthi Vilas laddu fetches Rs 1.87 cr

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a significant auction, a Ganesh laddu at Keerthi Richmond Villas, Bandlaguda, Hyderabad, was sold for an astounding Rs 1.87 crore on Monday night. This year's price marks a Rs 61 lakh increase from last

year, when the laddu was auctioned for Rs 1.26 crore. The identity of the buyer remains undisclosed. The Keerthi Richmond Villas laddu auction has grown to become one of the most expensive offerings during the Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations in Telangana, with the 2022 auction having concluded at Rs 60 lakh. The much-anticipated 21 kg

Balapur Ganesh laddu auction concluded on Tuesday has fetched a remarkable Rs 30.01 lakh. The Bangaru laddu, which is believed to bring good luck, health, wealth and prosperity, was purchased by Kolan Shanker Reddy, a local resident. Last year, the laddu was auctioned for Rs 27 lakh and was bought by Dasari Dayanand Reddy.



Driven to the wall, BRS may go back to its basics!

The political atmosphere in Telangana may take a serious turn if, going by indications, the Bharat Rastra Samiti (BRS), while struggling to keep its flock of legislators from being poached by the 'akarshek' Congress, latches on to 'anti-Andhra sentiment' as a way out of the present maze in which it finds itself.

No doubt, anti-Andhra sentiment had helped BRS (formerly Telangana Rashtra Samithi) in taking the reins of India's youngest state, formed following the bifurcation of combined Andhra Pradesh. The BRS had joined hands with the Congress after having blamed the latter for depriving people of Telangana a state of their own for long. In the initial years, it had an electoral alliance with the Congress for the 2004 Assembly elections of undivided Andhra Pradesh.



The Congress had liberally allotted seats to TRS headed then also by K. Chandrasekhar Rao. But TRS contested 14 seats in addition to the ones allotted by the Congress. The TRS lost 30 seats out of the 56 seats it contested. Still, the Congress accommodated TRS leaders in Central and state cabinets. The honeymoon ended after TRS began to be assertive over the Congress. Then the Congress government in undivided AP, headed by Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy, decided to admit legislators from TRS. As a result, 16 TRS legislators switched their loyalty to the Congress.

The TRS was marginalised further in the 2009 Assembly elections as it got only 10 seats, despite being a partner of the Grand Alliance led by Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party (TDP).

The political scene turned favourable towards the creation of Telangana state following the tragic death of Dr. YSR in a helicopter crash on 2 September, 2009. Soon after the exit of YSR's son and peeved MP YS Jaganmohan Reddy from the party, the Congress veered towards bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh.

The political scene turned favourable towards the creation of Telangana state following the tragic death of Dr. YSR in a helicopter crash on 2 September, 2009. Soon after the exit of YSR's son and peeved MP YS Jaganmohan Reddy from the party, the Congress veered towards bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh. Then Congress president Sonia Gandhi acted against the ideological considerations espoused

by Congress stalwarts Pandit Nehru and Indira Gandhi with regard to the creation of new states and gave her nod for the creation of Telangana. Pandit Nehru, on his part, reportedly wanted to continue with then Hyderabad State (erstwhile princely state of Nizams that became part of the Indian Union following 'Operation Polo' in September, 1948 under the watch of then Union home minister and Deputy Prime



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Minister Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel). In absence of Dr. YSR, TRS redoubled its efforts towards bifurcation of AP which yielded results in 2014 with the creation of new state of Telangana. With TRS choosing not to merge with the Congress fol-

lowing bifurcation, the subsequent polls were fought between the Congress that 'granted' Telangana and the TRS, which 'achieved' the new state.

Unlike in the cases of the formation of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand (later Uttarakhnad), the prescribed procedure was given the go-by the Congress-led UPA government at the Centre.

The TRS eventually got people's mandate in 2014 and the people of Telangana reposed confidence in KCR for realisation of their own state. He retained power in the advanced polls of 2018. During his rule that lasted a decade, KCR oversaw the decimation of the Telugu Desam Party in Telangana and eventually deprived the Congress of its position of principal opposition party in the Telangana Assembly.

Voters' disenchantment with BRS paved the way for the return of the Congress to power in Telangana. Anumala Revanth Reddy, who had switched to the Congress when TDP was on its last legs in Telangana, was targeted by BRS for the yellow party's Andhra roots. Still, Revanth could attain the Chief Minister's post due to his appreciable negotiable skills with the party's high command in his capacity as TPCC president.

Presently, the practice of admitting BRS MLAs into the Congress fold has resulted in a crisis in the BRS, which is the principal opposition party, starting with 39 members in the Telangana Assembly. Since then, 10 of BRS have switched their loyalty to the Congress. So, the Congress, in a way, returned the compliments.

The issue of Congress 'granting' the Public Accounts Committee Chairman post to Serilingampalli legislator Arikepudi Gandhi has hurt BRS' feelings; for, though he had joined hands with the Congress, he could be technically treated as a member from the principal opposition. Traditionally, the post of PAC chairman has always gone to a member of the principal opposition party. Gandhi's nativity has been highlighted by BRS legislator Padi Koushik Reddy (Huzurabad).

Gandhi, who has switched parties thrice since he was elected to T-Assembly in 2014, hails from Krishna district of AP. This flashback on the political screen has reignited regional feelings in political circles. The face-off between the Congress and the Bharat Rastra Samithi over Gandhi is seen as the subtext of the latter subtly adopting 'anti Andhra sentiment' again.

Revanth politicking using his CM post: Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is politicking using his CM post, the BRS's Siddipet MLA, T. Harish Rao, asked the CM to stop his petty politics and provide good governance to the people.

The people should ascertain whether Revanth is doing good or harm to the state. He said that Revanth should work for the interests of the state and that no Chief Minister has behaved like him so far.

Harish was speaking at a media conference at the BRS's Medak district office on Tuesday. He said that the CM spoke lies during his People's Governance Day speech.

Harish asked Revanth why his government did not fully implement his party's six guarantees within 100 days.

He said that farmers were cheated by promising them that their loans would be waived on December 9.

He reminded that KCR gave a pension of Rs 2,000 in the first month when he became the CM. The Congress government promised Rs 4,000 as pension but that has not been implemented.

Harish said the loans taken by the Congress government till March 2024 are being pushed on to the BRS government. He said that he had earlier said that the loans taken by the BRS government were Rs 4.26 lakh crore. Harish said that CM is now saying that the state has a debt of Rs 7 lakh crore.

He said that those who did not say Jai Telangana are now paying homage to the statue of Telangana martyrs.

Computers were introduced in India by Tata Group, not Rajiv: KTR

'We will certainly remove Rajiv's statue from its present spot at the Secretariat area'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Lashing out at Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for stating that former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi introduced computers in India, BRS Working President KT Rama Rao said that it was the Tata Group which introduced computers in India in 1955.

KTR ridiculed the CM saying that Charles Babbage invented the computer and not Rajiv Gandhi.

Celebrating National Integration Day on September 17 at the Telangana Bhavan, KTR said that the CM installed Rahul Gandhi's father's statue



in front of the secretariat instead of the statue of Telangana Thalli. Revanth installed Rajiv Gandhi's statue to raise his stock with Rahul

Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi, KTR said.

"Revanth insulted Telangana Thalli. He installed Rajiv Gandhi's statue at the

place meant for the Telangana Thalli statue. We will shift the Rajiv Gandhi statue to Gandhi Bhavan respectfully if we come to power. Revanth should install Rajiv Gandhi's statue in his Jubilee Hills residence if he is interested. I am saying on this Ganesh Nimajjanam Day that we will certainly remove the Rajiv Gandhi statue installed near the Secretariat," he said.

KTR said that the state is facing a medical emergency as people are suffering from all kinds of fevers. However, the CM is focusing only on criticising KCR and the BRS keeping governance aside.

CM to launch MSME Policy today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With the aim of boosting the growth of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) under the people's government (Praja Palana), Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy will launch the MSME Policy 2024 on Wednesday at 11:00 am at Shilpakala Vedika. Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, along with IT Minister D Sridhar Babu, will be the guests of honour.

This policy focuses on developing innovative MSMEs, seen as the back-

bone of Telangana's economy. It aims to address challenges faced by MSMEs, promoting comprehensive growth, employment and improved productivity.

The policy will integrate industry 4.0 technologies to enhance development. A special department, overseen by a high-level committee, will be set up to promote MSMEs.

Additionally, the policy will prioritise six key sectors, positioning Telangana as a leading industrial hub in the country by providing the necessary infrastructure and support for MSMEs.

TIMINGS FOR PERMIT ROOMS

Raj Gopal to discuss with CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Pointing out that liquor addiction will adversely affect families, the Congress MLA of Munugode, Komatireddy Raj Gopal Reddy, said that he will discuss with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy allowing liquor shop permit rooms to stay open till 6 pm.

He said he would discuss with the CM the possibility of launching a pilot project from Munugode and later expanding it to the entire state.

Raj Gopal visited liquor shops in Munugode head-

quarters in Nalgonda district and enquired whether liquor shops sell spurious liquor or bona fide ones.

He also spoke to those consuming alcohol in permit rooms and told them about how consumption of liquor in the morning could affect them and to think about their families.

Raj Gopal said that liquor shop owners should set up one sub-shop for five villages and sell liquor only between 5 pm and 8 pm. He said that this would increase revenue and control belt shops.

TG's history maliciously suppressed, alleges Kishan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Pointing out that the fact that Telangana got freedom only on September 17, 1948, that is, a full 13 months after the country attained freedom on August 15, 1947, is not known to many of the current generation, the Union Minister of Coal and Mines, G. Kishan Reddy, said that some people had maliciously suppressed the true history of Telangana.

"There is nothing more evil than concealing such a great struggle, the real history, the sacrifices, and the freedom achieved. Although the TG government did not observe 'Telangana Liberation Day', the Centre felt that it should organise official celebrations. A gazette notification has also been released regarding this. Official celebrations started in 2022. It will continue in future as it was one of the greatest freedom struggles in history," Kishan said.

Addressing Telangana



'Waqf Bill intended to protect assets, solve disputes'

The Centre introduced the Waqf (Amendment) Bill-2024 to resolve disputes regarding the maintenance of Waqf assets and to protect Waqf lands from encroachers, Union Minister of Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy said.

Liberation Day celebrations at the Parade Grounds on Tuesday as the Chief Guest, Kishan said the struggle of the TG people

Speaking to the media after attending Telangana Liberation Day celebrations at the Parade Grounds on Tuesday, he said the Centre decided to extend the Ayushman Bharat Scheme to all people who have crossed the age of 70.

against the Nizam is an incredible moment not only in the country's history but also in the history of the world.

Atishi's 'meteoric' rise from Delhi govt adviser to CM-designate

New Delhi, Sep 17 (PTI)

From being an adviser to the Delhi government to becoming a key face of the cabinet in the absence of senior AAP leaders, Chief Minister-designate Atishi's ascent in the party and government is believed to be "phenomenal" and "meteoric".

Atishi, 43, who holds the highest number of portfolios in the Delhi government, will also hold the distinction of being only the third woman after Sushma Swaraj and Sheila Dikshit to become the chief minister of the national capital.

She was unanimously chosen as chief minister designate during the legislature party meeting here on Tuesday.

In her first remarks after being chosen to replace Kejriwal, she thanked him and called him her elder brother.

Crediting the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), she said it was

approve and fast track key projects and policies like the Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana and the Electric Vehicle 2.0 Policy among others.

Atishi was a founding member of AAP and played a pivotal role in shaping its policies, including as a key member of the 2013 Manifesto Drafting Committee. Known for her articulate advocacy, she has been a consistent voice for the party's principles. She spent seven years in a Madhya Pradesh village, focusing on organic farming and progressive education. This experience played a crucial role in strengthening her dedication to political change, according to a party functionary.

only possible here that a first-time politician could be given such a huge responsibility.

Being chosen just months short of Delhi polls, Atishi has her task cut out. She will have to hold cabinet meetings to

Kejriwal to focus on galvanising AAP cadre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Arvind Kejriwal, who resigned as Delhi chief minister on Tuesday, is likely to focus on galvanising the AAP cadre and rebuilding trust among the people before the assembly polls, a senior functionary said.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) cadre has "weakened" due to Kejriwal's prolonged arrest

on corruption charges, the functionary added.

Kejriwal, who is also the AAP convener, is going to hold a massive poll campaigning in Haryana, where the election is scheduled on October 5. He may also hold road shows in places where the party hopes to do well in Jammu and Kashmir where the elections are happening in three phases till October 1, the functionary said.

accordance with law and be brought to a logical conclusion.

"In view of the aforesaid discussions, the writ petition (Criminal) Nos. are allowed. The proceedings pursuant to

NAGALAND OPERATION IN 2021

SC closes criminal proceedings against 30 army men

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a relief to 30 Army personnel, the Supreme Court on Tuesday closed the criminal proceedings initiated against them by the Nagaland government for allegedly killing 13 civilians in a 2021 botched operation to ambush militants in Mon district for want of prosecution sanction.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and PB Varale noted that the Centre had on February 28 last year declined to grant sanction to prosecute the personnel under section 6 of the

Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) of 1958.

Section 6 of the AFSPA says, "No prosecution, suit or other legal proceedings shall be instituted except with the previous sanction of the Central Government, against any person in respect of anything done or purported to be done in exercise of the powers conferred by this Act."

The bench said, in case sanction is granted at any stage under Section 6 of the AFSPA, the proceedings pursuant to the impugned FIRs may continue and may proceed in



accordance with law and be brought to a logical conclusion.

"In view of the aforesaid discussions, the writ petition (Criminal) Nos. are allowed. The proceedings pursuant to

major rank officer, who sought closure of the case lodged by Nagaland police.

The top court also refused to accept the prayer of the Nagaland government to direct the Army to initiate proceedings against the accused personnel on the administrative side.

"The said submission does not merit consideration by this court as that would be at the sole discretion of the armed forces whether or not to carry on disciplinary proceedings against its officers. As such, we are not inclined to issue any such directions.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Purnima: Sep 17 11:44 AM to Sep 18 08:04 AM
Krishna Paksha Prati-pada: Sep 18 08:04 AM to Sep 19 04:19 AM
Krishna Paksha Dwitiya: Sep 19 04:19 AM to Sep 20 12:40 AM

Nakshatram:
Purva Bhadrapada: Sep 17 01:53 PM to Sep 18 11:00 AM
Uttara Bhadrapada: Sep 18 11:00 AM to Sep 19 08:04 AM

Rahukalam: 12:10 PM to 1:40 PM
Yamagandam: 7:38 AM to 9:09 AM
Variyam: 07:25 PM to 08:50 PM
Gulika: 10:39 AM to 12:10 PM
Amritakalam: 03:51 AM to 05:15 AM
Ahijit Muhurtham: Nil

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 31°C
Humidity: 62%
Sunrise: 6:05 AM
Sunset: 6:16 PM
Updated: September 17, 2024 5:00 PM

CITY EVENTS

MSME Policy 2024

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to unveil. Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and Minister for I & T D Sridhar Babu to be guests of honour.

Venue

Shilpakala Vedika, HITEC City, Hyderabad September 18, 11 am

First Flagship Store

To reveal latest collection by Machender Pishe, Ketan Pishe & Naveen Pishe (Partners of PN Rao)

Venue

Metro Pillar Number C1604, 228, Rd Number 36, Jawahar Colony, Jubilee Check Post, Hyderabad September 18, 10.30 am

Live Handloom Silk Expo

An Exhibition-cum-Sale of 'Silk Mark' certified silk products exclusively designed For weddings & festivals

Venue

Sathya Sai Nigamagamam, Srinagar Colony, Hyd September 18, 3:00pm

Santoor Scholarship Program

An initiative by Wipro Consumer Care with a mission and vision for women's education.

Venue

Radisson Blu Plaza, Banjara Hills September 19, 11.45 am onwards

Rivaayat

An evening of Sufi and classical musical journey with Ustad Puran Chand Wadali and Lakhwinder Wadali. After two decades, the legendary Wadali family returns to Hyderabad for an unforgettable evening of Sufi and classical music.

Venue

Shilpakala Vedika, Madhapur Sunday September 21, at 6.30 pm

City Pioneer



HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | SEPTEMBER 18, 2024

03

GANESH IMMERSION, MILAD-UN-NABI FESTIVITIES COINCIDE

Charminar brims with devotees

DEEPIKA PASHAM
deepikapasham2015@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD

On the last day of bidding adieu to Ganesh, not only Khairatabad but the iconic Charminar also saw large crowds as majestic Ganesh idols passed by on the eleventh day of immersion.

The Bhagyalakshmi temple near Charminar was beautifully decorated, attracting more devotees, with a stage set for various cultural performances. The Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi organised events to share the history of Ganesh Chaturthi and welcomed all idols passing through the route.

Charminar was a must-visit for anyone, as on the other side, preparations were in full swing for Milad-un-Nabi. In one lane, Ganesh idols were loaded into vehicles for the procession, while in the opposite lanes, Muslims were preparing banners and decorations for their celebration.

Speaking with The Pioneer, Razim, a local resident, said, "The Ganesh immersion day and Milad-un-Nabi fall around the same time. So, we hold meetings to coordinate and ensure that our processions do not clash. We also participate in helping each other so that everything goes peacefully." A visitor from Warangal shared, "We came for the eleventh day from Warangal. This is our first time and we wanted to see the Ganesh procession. Khairatabad was too crowded, so we came to Charminar and prayed to Ganesh here." A special highlight of the day was the charitable act of Mohd Ghouse, AIMIM ex-corporator, who for the past 20 years has been distributing food to devotees at Charminar. Under the leadership of Barrister Asaduddin Owaisi, AIMIM president, the Old City Ganesh procession was welcomed. Mohd Ghouse, along with his son Mohammed Sahil Akber, AIMIM Corporator from Ghansi Bazar, distributed veg pulao, lemon rice, saag puri, sweets and water bottles to devotees at Charminar.



1,317 fire dept staff deployed for immersion

Telangana Disaster Response and Fire Service department (TGDRFS) said that from all the 33 districts they have deployed 1,317 fire department staff at Ganesh immersion procession. Director General of the TGDRFS Y Nagi Reddy has instructed all the District Fire officers of 33 districts to be available at headquarters, monitor the standby duties and coordinate with other departments to meet any emergency. Department personnel have been alerted to be available round-the-

clock and teams to stay at their respective standby places till the immersion of the last idol. TGDRFS deployed 126 water tenders, 11 boats, 19 Light Rescue Tenders, 66 mist bullets and 30 rope and rescue teams for the procession of Ganesh immersion in the State. In the Hyderabad district, the department deployed 19 water tenders, three boats, 4 Light Rescue Tenders, two rescue teams, 16 mini bullets and 305 firefighters.

Peaceful Ganesh immersion underway in TG: DGP Jitender

Director General of Police of Telangana Dr. Jitender has stated that the Ganesh immersion is taking place peacefully in the State. He said that coordination meetings have been held for some time as part of the preparatory measures for Ganesh immersion. He said that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and the Hyderabad in-charge Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar have held review meetings from time to time and discussed with officials from all departments. The government has made necessary arrangements to conduct the Ganesh immersion in a peaceful atmosphere. The immersion has been completed in

other important areas of the State and efforts are being made to complete the immersion as soon as possible as Wednesday is a working day. He also said that the immersion is being conducted according to the route map as per the plan made in coordination with the Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Rachakonda Police Commissioners. The DGP requested all the people to conduct the immersion with devotion and faith without causing any untoward incidents. Additional DGP for Law and Order Mahesh M Bhagwat, Multi Zone-I IGP Chandrasekhara Reddy, AIGs and others participated in the meeting.



More than 1 lakh idols immersed in city

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) on Tuesday said that a total of 1,02,510 idols were immersed in 71 ponds and lakes of 30 circles in the city. In all, 2,674 idols were immersed in Kapra circle, 2,414 idols immersed in Uppal circle, 228 idols immersed in

Hayathnagar circle, 446 idols immersed in LB Nagar circle, 2,453 idols immersed in Saroornagar circle, 139 idols in Malakpet circle, 94 in Santoshnagar circle, 1,155 idols in Chandrayangutta circle, 11,710 idols in Rajendranagar, 721 in Mehdiapatnam, 808 in Karwan, 83 in Goshamahal,

12,659 idols in Khairatabad, 428 in Yousufguda, 561 in Jubilee Hills, 1,406 idols in Serilingampally circle, 3,559 idols in Chandanagar, 3,284 idols in RC Puram and Patancheru, 28,676 idols in Moosapet, 3,417 idols in Kukatpally, 2,839 idols in Quthbullapur, 4,370 idols in Gajularamaram, 6,862 idols in

Alwal, 6,719 idols in Musheerabad, 345 idols in Amberpet, 1,522 idols in Malkajgiri, 412 idols in Secunderabad, and 2,168 idols were immersed in Begumpet circle.

These idols were immersed in excavate ponds, baby ponds, portable ponds and lakes.



Gudur Narayana Reddy felicitated

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Lok Sabha member E Rajendar and Rajya Sabha member K Laxman were present on the occasion. The movie has shown the fight of people of Telangana from the tyrannical rule of Nizam, like happening before our own eyes. It has brought the 13-month fight of the people of Telangana, from August 15, 1947 to September 17, 1948, to the present generation.

Large office spaces lead leasing in Hyd in first half of 2024

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad's office space leasing market saw a strong rise in the first half of 2024 with large office spaces (100,000 sq ft or more) leading the way.

According to Knight Frank India, these large spaces made up 61% of total transactions, covering 3.08 million sq ft. This marks a 109% year-on-year increase compared to 1.47 million sq ft in H1 2023.

According to the report, overall Hyderabad's office leasing market grew by 71% YoY, with 5 million sq ft of space leased in H1 2024. The demand for large office spaces was driven mainly by Global Capability Centres (GCCs) and flexible workspace operators.

Mid-sized office spaces (50,000 to 100,000 sq ft) accounted for 26% of transactions, growing by 200% from 0.43 million sq ft in H1 2023 to 1.29 million sq ft in H1 2024. Small office spaces (under 50,000 sq ft) made up 13%, with 0.67 million sq ft transacted.

Joseph Thilak of Knight Frank India noted that Hyderabad's growth is supported by its quality of life, infrastructure and skilled workforce.



Aarogyasri Health Care Trust staff plan stir over dues

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Employees of the Rajiv Aarogyasri Health Care Trust in Telangana, including Arogya Mitras, will begin an indefinite strike from Wednesday to demand due payments.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the employees said, "There will be an indefinite strike of Arogya Mitras starting Wednesday." The staff plan to besiege the Aarogyasri office in the morning. Despite giving prior notice to the government, there has been no response, prompting the employees to move forward with the strike.

The decision to strike had been made earlier but was temporarily postponed due to the recent floods in the State. However, the employees have now announced that the strike will begin as scheduled.



Meesho directed to pay Rs 4,000 to a customer

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Rangareddy District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission ordered Meesho to pay Rs 4,000 and Rs 193 with nine per cent interest from October 2022 till realisation to a customer.

Complainant K Chandra Shekar booked one Men's Henley Color full Sleeves T-shirt at Rs 193 after a discount offer on October 2, 2024.

The complainant said that Meesho him the order will be delivered on or before October 20, but the com-

plainant found the consign-ment track status showed on October 9 that the order was delivered. But he did not receive it. Though he has complained to the company, they did not try to settle the issue.

"Despite service of notice, the opposite party (Meesho) remained absent and set-ex parte," the court order mentioned. After hearing the complaint, the forum ordered Meesho to pay the money to the customer within 45 days from the date of receiving the copy of order.

Truck drivers' daughters to get scholarships

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

New scholarships to daughters of truck drivers under Mahindra Saarthi Abhiyaan was announced by the Hyderabad's Mahindra Truck and Bus Division (MTBD), part of the Mahindra Group, on the occasion of Drivers Day 2024 on Tuesday.

This initiative aims to support the higher education of deserving girls by awarding a scholarship of Rs 10,000 and a certificate recognising their achievements.

According to Mahindra Saarthi Abhiyaan, over 10,029 girls have already benefited. The scholarships will be distributed through 75 plus transport hubs across India using a transparent process. A total of 1,000 new scholarships will be awarded between February and March 2025.

President of Trucks, Buses, CE, Aerospace & Defence Businesses, Mahindra, Vinod Sahay expressed the company's dedication to empowering young girls.

Cops nab one person; seize hashish oil worth Rs 4,30,000

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The SOT Maheshwaram Zone team, along with LB Nagar Police, apprehended one person near the service road of NTR Nagar Vegetable Market, LB Nagar, while he was trying to deliver narcotic substance 632.98 g of hashish oil worth Rs 4,30,000 on Monday and seized the drug along with one mobile phone from him.

Accused Ghasiram Pangi, (26), native of Odisha State, has been frequently coming to Hyderabad to sell seasonal fruits at Sultan Bazar, along with his cousin Jagannadh Kaumudi. As the duo could not make sufficient earnings from their fruit business, they hatched a plan to sell hashish oil to customers at higher prices to earn quick money.

As per their plan, on September 15, Jagannadh Kaumudi sent the accused to Hyderabad by providing him with 632.98 grams of hashish oil, concealed within custard apples. Jagannadh instructed him to wait for further



instructions regarding the delivery of the contraband.

After selling fruits at Sultan Bazar, the accused proceeded to the NTR Nagar Vegetable Market at LB Nagar, waiting for a call from Jagannadh for the delivery. Acting on a tip-off, the sleuths of SOT, Maheshwaram Zone team, along with LB Nagar Police, apprehended him. Efforts are afoot to apprehend the Jagannadh Kaumudi. A case

was registered under CR. NO. 1040/2024 U.S. 8 (c) r/w 20 (b) (ii) (B) of NDPS Act of LB Nagar Police Station, Rachakonda.

The arrest was made under the direct supervision of G Sudheer Babu, Commissioner of Police, Rachakonda and under guidance of K Muralidhar, DCP, SOT, LB Nagar-Maheshwaram, SOT, Maheshwaram Team, Chaitanyapuri & LB Nagar Police personnel.

'Cops should work in harmony with people'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Following the decision of the Telangana State government to organise Public Governance Day on September 17, Rachakonda police officials organised it on Tuesday at Amberpet Armed Police Headquarters under Rachakonda Commissionerate. Rachakonda Commissioner of police Sudhir Babu stated that development and a harmonious environment will be possible only with the maintenance of peace and security.

He said that Telangana State has developed in all fields since Independence, it has railway system, education system, communications, state-of-the-art hospitals and transport system. The State is continuing in harmony with different sects, castes, religions and cultures and stands as a symbol of unity in diversity. It is suggested that the police should be redeployed to civil services, people should have faith in the police system and work in harmony with the people.

Cleanliness drive in all villages till Oct 2

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Urging everyone to actively participate in the Swachhata Hi Seva 2024 programme held from September 17 to October 2 in all villages, Minister for Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, Rural Water Supply and Women and Child Welfare, Dhanasari Anasuya Seethakka emphasised that India can only progress if the villages develop and remain healthy.

Seethakka, along with MP Porika Balaram Naik and District Collector Divakar, launched the Swachhata Hi Seva 2024 programme and inaugurated a medical camp in



Mulugu gram panchayat. Speaking at the event, Seethakka explained that the Swachh Bharat Mission launched the Swachhata Hi

Seva initiative last year to honour Mahatma Gandhi's vision. She highlighted that special cleanliness drives will be organised to mark Gandhi Jayanti.

Seethakka also encouraged officials to prioritise sanitation, stating that clean environments lead to healthier communities. She urged all villagers to actively join these 15-day programmes, plant saplings, hold gram sabhas and organise competitions to raise awareness on cleanliness.

The event concluded with the unveiling of the Swachhata Hi Seva posters and the administration of the Swachhata pledge.

'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign by SCR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

South Central Railway has undertaken the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' cleanliness campaign from September 14 to October 1, 2024 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the launch of Swachh Bharat Mission with the theme of 'Swabhav Swachhata - Sankskaar Swachhata'. Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager, SCR administered the Swachhata pledge to officials and staff on Tuesday at Railway Sports Complex, Secunderabad.

The General Manager also led a walkathon to spread awareness among the public and promote the Swachh

Bharat mission. He planted saplings towards strengthening the green environment during the program. Railway staff and students of Railway school also participated in large numbers. The Swachhata Hi Seva campaign will culminate on October 2, 2024 and will be celebrated as Sewa Diwas (Community Service Day) to mark the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

The campaign aims to bring awareness on the importance of 'Swachh Rail Swachh Bharat' mission among the public, Rail users and Railway fraternity. Towards this direction, several activities are scheduled to be undertaken to bring further



improvement in the level of cleanliness at Railway stations, trains and Railway offices. Extensive awareness campaigns

will also be carried out to educate people on observing good cleanliness habits. Arun Kumar Jain advised the

staff and students to adhere to the Swachhata pledge and actively participate in the Swachhata campaign. He also advised family members and neighbours to take part in the Swachh Bharat mission. He stated that Swachhata is not just a one day activity but should be followed each and every day. We should always strive to keep our surroundings clean whether it is at home or at the workplace.

Neeraj Agarwal, Additional General Manager, SCR; Principal Heads of the Departments, Divisional Railway Manager, Hyderabad Division and other officials were also present.

Will fulfil all promises, asserts Bhatti Vikramarka

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

In line with the implementation of election promise made to people, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu has announced that Rs 12,000 will be directly credited into the accounts of landless poor families this year.

The Deputy Chief Minister distributed financial assistance sanction documents worth Rs 15.32 crore to 847 beneficiary families of Dalit Bandhu second phase at Nagulavancha village in Chintakani mandal in Madhira constituency on Tuesday.

Addressing a meeting organised on the occasion, Vikramarka Mallu said that people's government has declared September 17 as People's Governance Day to mark liberation of Telangana State from oppressive tyrannical rule. Democracy was established on the day.

"September 17 was declared by the people's government as People's Governance day inspired by the Constitution. Those who opposed the observance of the People's Governance Day are against the Constitution," he pointed out. The political parties' leaders who have different views on liberation day should welcome declaration of September 17 as Day of People's Rule.

People's rule became a reality as a result of struggle by sev-



Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka distributing financial assistance sanction documents to Dalit Bandhu beneficiaries Nagulavancha village on Tuesday

eral selfless people to free the State from autocratic rule to people's rule. Constitution and democracy are sacred in this country and everyone who respected these should welcome and respect September 17 as Day of People's Rule, Mr Bhatti said.

Bhatti also announced that construction of Indiramma houses throughout the State will be taken up soon. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy already initiated the scheme in Bhadrachalam. State government will extend Rs 6 lakh to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes beneficiaries and Rs 5 lakh to other beneficiaries

under the scheme. Observing that people are increasingly preferring organic agriculture products, he suggested that farmers focus on organic farming in line with the demand from people. Priority will be given to Chinthakani mandal for encouraging organic farming. Government will take initiative for marketing of food products produced by farmers through organic farming and facilitate direct agreement between purchasers and farmers.

Along with farm loan waiver, crop insurance, Rythu Bhima, subsidised power, State

government will soon introduce solar agricultural pump sets. Siripuram village in Madhira constituency has been selected as the pilot project for installation of solar agricultural pumpsets.

The surplus solar power after utilising for the solar power agricultural pump-sets, will be bought by the government and this will generate additional income to farmers, he said.

Bhatti also disclosed that the People's government has taken a policy decision to involve SHG women as partners in solar power generation.

'Cong govt will make Telangana a model State'

The people's government in Telangana will make Telangana a model state. The Congress government will develop the State in such a way that it will compete with developing nations in areas of education, health, agriculture, employment generation, irrigation, industrial development and application of modern technology, said Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka. He was participating as the chief guest at People's Governance Day celebrations held at the district police parade grounds here on Tuesday. He inspected a guard of honour presented by the police and hoisted the national flag.

Addressing the gathering, he dwelt at length on literary movement and the significant role played by Khammam district from liberating Telangana from Nizam rulers. He spoke about Andhra Maha Sabha held in Khammam and Madhira. He recalled how the revolutionaries waged an armed struggle from Mudigonda, Gokinepalli, Venkatayapalem, Madhira, Teldarupalli, Yerrupalem, Ravinutala, Govindapuram and other places. Eminent people like Bommakanti Satyanarayana, Ravella Satyam, Ravella Venkata Rama Rao and others took up arms against the Nizam. Scholars like C Narayana Reddy, Dasaradhi Krishnamachary and many other writers formed Telangana Writers' Association and kindled the revolutionary spirit by touring towns and villages, he recalled. On September 17, 1948 the Hyderabad state merged with Indian Union. The Deputy Chief Minister dwelt at length on the welfare and development schemes implemented in Telangana soon after the Congress came to power. Collector Muzammal Khan, Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt, Additional Collectors P Srija and Deeksha Raina, DRDO Sanyasaiah, district officials, elected people's representatives and others took part in the celebrations.



Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy at People's Governance Day celebrations in Warangal on Tuesday

Action plan to develop Warangal on par with Hyderabad: Ponguleti

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy has said that the state government is making efforts to make Warangal city the second capital of Telangana.

Participating in Telangana People's Governance Day celebrations held here on Tuesday, the Minister, who hoisted the national flag, said that the Congress government focused specially on development of Warangal. An action plan is being prepared to develop Warangal, which was once ruled by the Kakatiya rulers. The city will be developed on a par with Hyderabad.

Explaining the significance of September 17 in Telangana State history, he said that on that day Hyderabad State merged with the Indian Union. The day will be celebrated annually as Praja Palana Dinotsavam, he said. The people of the State became free because of

the struggles waged by stalwarts, he said, underlining the need for recalling all those who had sacrificed their lives to overthrow the Nizam ruler.

The Minister said that measures have been initiated to save Warangal from inundation and drainage system is being developed across the city for the smooth flow of flood water.

Measures are being initiated to restore the dilapidated Kakatiya period historic temples and to ensure that daily rituals are performed there.

The previous BRS regime neglected the construction of Kaloji Kala Kshetram and did not pay attention to it after laying the foundation stone.

However, the Congress regime upon coming to power completed the Kalakshetram works on a war-footing, he said, adding that the Kalakshetram would be inaugurated on a grand scale.

Martyrs will be honoured, says Council Dy Chairman

PNS ■ KUMURAMBHEEMASIFABAD

Telangana Legislative Council Deputy Chairman Banda Prakash on Tuesday paid tributes to the youth who sacrificed their lives for statehood to Telangana. He hoisted the national flag at the People's Governance Day celebrations held at the Collectorate on Tuesday.

Addressing the gathering, he said that the glorious struggle for the Statehood to Telangana would be remembered.

People always green would always remember the movement for statehood to Telangana, he said, underlining the need for honouring the martyrs.

As part of implementing the six guarantees promised by the Congress government, it invited "Praja Palana" applications from eligible persons to benefit the eligible persons under the guarantees, he said. In all, 1,45,549 applications were received under 'Praja Palana', he said.

BOUNTY ON RAHUL GANDHI'S TONGUE Cong MP lodges a complaint against Shiv Sena MLA



Bhongir MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy handing over a complaint to a police officer at Shalgouraram Police Station in Nalgonda district on Tuesday

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Bhongir Lok Sabha member Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy on Tuesday filed a police complaint against Maharashtra MLA Sanjay Gaikwad for committing a crime by offering bounty on chopping Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi's tongue.

Kiran Kumar Reddy handed over the complaint to a police officer at Shalgouraram Police

Station. Senior Congress leader and former Rajya Sabha member V Hanumantha Rao was also present. The MP quoted Maharashtra MLA as offering bounty of Rs 11 lakh to anyone "who chops off" Rahul Gandhi's tongue. The threat made by Sanjay Gaikwad went viral on social media.

Sanjay Gaikwad, Kiran Kumar Reddy said, had exhorted his followers, mostly belonging to Shiv Sena (Eknath

Shinde group) to cause bodily harm to Rahul Gandhi. The speech was widely circulated on social media. The hate speech was aimed at promoting ill-will among different groups of society and was prejudicial to maintaining public tranquility. It was also anti-national, he said.

The MP urged the police officer to register first information report and action against Sanjay Gaikwad.



Advisor to Chief Minister Vem Narendra Reddy speaking at a meeting in Rangareddy district on Tuesday

People's Governance Day celebrated in RR dist

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

In a grand celebration held at the Ranga Reddy District Integrated District Offices Complex in Kongarakalan, Telangana Governance Day was observed on Tuesday. The event was marked by the presence of prominent officials and leaders, including Vem Narendra Reddy, Advisor to Chief Minister. He emphasised the government's commitment to the welfare of farmers, women, and youth.

Vem Narendra Reddy highlighted that the mission of the people's government is to work for the betterment of all sections of society with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy focusing on providing freedom and social justice. He further added that the Chief

Minister had earlier promised to declare September 17 as People's Governance Day, a promise that has now been fulfilled.

The celebrations were attended by MLAs Mal Reddy Ranga Reddy, Veerapalli Shankar, and Prakash Goud, along with MLC Mirza Rahmat Baig and Road Development Corporation Chairman Mal Reddy Ram Reddy.

The national flag was hoisted by the dignitaries, alongside District Collector K Shashanka. Former MLA K Lakshmareddy, Additional Collector Pratima Singh, District Revenue Officer Sangeeta, and other public representatives, officials, and students were also present at the event.

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkata Reddy on Tuesday stated that the credit for Telangana's statehood goes to martyrs. He emphasised that September 17 is a significant day in Telangana's history, marking the day when the people of Telangana gained freedom from the oppressive rule of the Nizam.

To commemorate Telangana People's Governance Day, he hoisted the national flag at the Police Parade Grounds in Nalgonda district on Tuesday.

In his address on the occasion, the Minister noted that although India gained independence on August 15, 1947, Hyderabad State did not join the Indian Union at that time. The then Nizam declared that Hyderabad would remain independent. Under the Nizam's autocratic rule, the feudal land ownership system, jagirdari system, forced labor, and tax collection were deeply exploitative, leading the people of Telangana to launch a resistance against the Nizam's regime. Farmers, women, and common people united to intensify the struggle for Hyderabad State's merger



Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkata Reddy taking salute at a parade held on the occasion of celebration of People's Governance Day in Nalgonda on Tuesday

into the Indian Union. The Andhra Jan Sabha and Andhra Mahasabha leaders played a crucial role in awakening the Telangana people, with Nalgonda district playing a pivotal role in the armed struggle.

Realising the increasing attacks on people by Razakars and landlords in Hyderabad State, then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel deployed the army to integrate Hyderabad State into India. On September 17, 1948, the Nizam announced Hyderabad's merger with the Indian Union, which is why this day is celebrated as People's Governance Day, he said.

The government is implementing promises made during the elections, including new job opportunities through job calendars, free RTC bus travel for women under the Mahalakshmi scheme, increasing the Aarogyasri limit, and providing gas cylinders at a subsidized rate. The Indiramma Housing Scheme is being launched, providing free electricity up to 200 units under the Gruha Jyothi scheme, and farmers are receiving loan waivers. In Nalgonda district, 1433 crores of loan waivers have been given to 1,73,000 farmer families. The Minister assured continued support to Nalgonda district farmers.

Sit-in by Sainagar residents demanding repairs to road

PNS ■ KUMURAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

Residents of the Sainagar in Asifabad on Tuesday staged a sit-in on the road disrupting movement of traffic demanding the authorities to undertake repairs to the main road linking the national highway in the district.

The police tried to disperse the demonstrators, but they refused to relent till resolution of their problem. The Gundi road linking the national highway is being neglected, they alleged. Buses and heavy vehicles are using the road leading to formation of ditches on the road. It became difficult for the people to travel along the road, they said.

Rain water stagnated in the ditches formed on the road leading to sev-

eral two-wheeler drivers meeting with accidents, they said.

When the matter was represented to former Collector Hemant Borkade, he directed the Roads and Buildings officials to carry out repairs to the road and also asked them to widen the road. However, the orders were ignored.

For want of a culvert on the road, drain water through a pipe is flowing on the road and the garbage water stagnated and emitting foul smell.

The transformer of the electricity department at the road corner has been posing a threat to the people and became hazardous. The Collector asked the officials to remove it, but there was no action on it. Therefore, the vexed residents of Sainagar colony staged a sit-in.

Govt keen on welfare measures: Damodar Narasimha

PNS ■ MEDAK

Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha has said that the Congress government has focussed on the people's welfare and implementing the welfare schemes ensuring that the fruits of the welfare and developmental schemes reach the beneficiaries in phases. The government is committed to fulfilling all promises.

On account of observing September 17 as Praja Palana Dinotsavam here, the Minister hoisted the national flag at the Integrated District Office Complex here on Tuesday. The celebrations were held with much fanfare here. The district administration made elaborate arrangements to conduct the celebrations.

TGIIC Chairman T Nirmala



Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha participating in People's Governance day in Medak on Tuesday

Madhuri, SP Rupesh graced the occasion.

Participating as chief guest in the celebrations, the Minister garlanded Telanganatalli statue on the premises of the Collectorate and paid rich tributes. Later, he paid glowing tributes to the Telangana martyrs.

Later, he hoisted the national flag. Subsequently, he inspected a guard of honour presented by the police. He conveyed his Praja Palana Dinotsavam greetings to the people. He addressed the gathering explaining them the significance of the September 17 and churned out the progress achieved in the district.

He paid tributes to the farmers of the Telangana Armed struggle on the occasion of Telangana Praja Palana dinotsavam.

OBSERVANCE OF LIBERATION DAY Cong govt adopting double standard: Raghunandan Rao

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Medak Lok Sabha member M Raghunandan Rao has charged the Congress government in Telangana with adopting double standards as far as observing Telangana liberation day on September 17 and accused the previous BRS regime of adopting the same policy in the past.

The Congress has abandoned the task of fulfilling the aspirations of the people by observing September 17 as Telangana Liberation Day for fear of inviting the wrath of the MIM, he said.

He was taking part in a blood-donation camp held at NSV Blood Bank here on Tuesday on the occasion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday.

The camp was held under the aegis of BJYM district president Neelam Dinesh.

Later talking to the media, he observed that the Congress government in Karnataka has been celebrating the Telangana Liberation Day officially, but why is the Congress regime in Telangana not celebrating the event.

The Maharashtra Government officially celebrated the Telangana Liberation Day by hoisting the national flag. If the Congress party's stand is the same on celebrating the Telangana liberation Day, why the Congress governments in two states take divergent stand on the issue, he questioned and maintained that the BJP when it came to power in Telangana would celebrate September 17 as Telangana Liberation Day.

ACROSS THE STATES



Man drowns in Beas after Ganesh idol immersion

A person drowned in the Beas river in Himachal Pradesh's Hamirpur district on Tuesday and another man is missing, police said here. They said it happened near Choru village when people were taking a bath in the river after the immersion of Lord Ganesh idols. According to eye witnesses, while people were coming out of the river, Soni realised Vinay Kumar was missing and jumped into the water to look for him. He, however, became trapped in the iron bars of an idol and drowned in the river, they said. Soni was fished out by rescuers and taken to the Nadaun hospital, where he was pronounced dead, according to police. Nadaun police in-charge Babu Ram said police were conducting a search operation for Vinay Kumar of Natti village who is feared drowned. Police have registered a case and an investigation is on, he added.



NCC launches its first air wing in Udhampur

The National Cadet Corps (NCC) has launched the first flying Air Squadron in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district to provide ground-breaking opportunities for students of the Union Territory in aviation and related fields, a defence spokesman said. This initiative marks a significant step in enhancing educational opportunities for youth in the region. "Schools and colleges are encouraged to apply for enrollment in the NCC Air Wing," the spokesman said. This new initiative aims to provide a unique and enriching experience for students from schools and colleges across the state. "NCC has launched its first air squadron (flying) in Udhampur. The NCC Air Wing is designed to offer students unparalleled exposure to aviation and related fields, fostering a deeper understanding and interest in these areas," the spokesman said.



7,500 idols immersed in Mumbai on last day

More than 7,500 idols of Lord Ganesh and Goddess Gauri were immersed in Mumbai as of Tuesday evening as devotees in the city and the rest of Maharashtra bid farewell to their beloved elephant-headed deity. No untoward incident was reported anywhere during the immersion, said officials of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). Of the idols immersed in the sea, lakes and artificial ponds in the city by 6 pm, 7,227 were household Ganapatis, 300 belonged to 'sarvajnik mandals' (community groups) and about 50 were of Goddess Gauri. Of these, 2,880 idols were immersed in artificial ponds. The immersion procession of 'Lalbagcha Raja', a famous 'sarvajnik' (public) Ganesh in central Mumbai who draws lakhs of devotees during the festival, reached Chinchpokli around 6.30 pm while on its way to Girgaum chowpatty or beach.

Does not apply to..

Continued from page 1

The Supreme Court's interim order was passed in response to multiple pleas against demolition drives. The court ruled that no demolitions should occur without its permission although it clarified this did not apply to unauthorised buildings on public spaces like roads, footpaths or water bodies. This ruling arose due to concerns about demolitions being used as punitive measures against individuals accused of crimes. However, HYDRAA's operations in Hyderabad are focused solely on addressing illegal buildings, Ranganath said.

BALAPUR LADDU..

Continued from page 1

The 21 kg gold-coated laddu with 2 kg silver plate is auctioned off amid crowds of devotees, gathered for the Ganesh Visarjan procession. The auction of Laddu was organized under the aegis of the Balapur Ganesh Utsav Samithi, which has been taking up this for the last 30 years and first auctioned the laddu in 1994 which went for Rs 450. Since then, this sweet grew in popularity and price. The money is

spent on welfare activities mainly in the education sector. In another significant auction, a Ganesh laddu at Keerthi Richmond Villas, Bandlaguda, Hyderabad, was sold for an astounding Rs 1.87 crore on Monday night. This year's price marks a Rs 61 lakh increase from last year, when the laddu was auctioned for Rs 1.26 crore. The identity of the buyer remains undisclosed. The Keerthi Richmond Villas laddu auction has grown to become one of the most expensive offerings during the Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations in Telangana, with the 2022 auction having concluded at Rs 60 lakh.

KOLKATA RAPE-MURDER CASE
CBI status report 'disturbing'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it was disturbed by the findings given in a status report filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the rape and murder of trainee doctor at R G Kar government hospital in Kolkata but refused to divulge the details, saying any disclosure may jeopardise the ongoing investigation.

Seeking a status report from the CBI on its probe into financial irregularities allegedly committed by jailed former principal of R G Kar Medical College and Hospital Sandip Ghosh, the top court, referring to the rape and murder case, said the agency is not 'sleeping over' the investigation and it needs to be given time to 'unearth the truth.'

"What the CBI has revealed in the report is really disturbing. What you are flagging is of utmost concern. We ourselves are concerned, CBI has flagged it for us. We are ourselves disturbed by what we have read," the top court



top court directed that the "valuable" inputs furnished by him should be duly considered by the investigating officer.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CBI, assured the court that the investigating agency will maintain contact with the parents of the deceased junior doctor and keep them informed about the ongoing probe to assuage their genuine concerns.

As the hearing commenced, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the West Bengal

government, sought stopping of the live proceedings in the case. He alleged that women lawyers working in his chamber were facing threats of acid attacks and rape.

"I have great concerns at what is happening. What happens when you livestream matters like this which has huge emotive implications. We are not representing the accused. We appear for the state government and as soon as the court is making a comment our reputation is getting destroyed overnight. We have 50 years of reputation," Sibal said.

"We will not stop the live streaming of the proceedings. It is in public interest," the bench said.

During the hearing, the apex court took objection to the West Bengal government's 'Rattier Saathi' programme which prescribes night duty avoidance for women doctors and says that their duty should not exceed 12 hours at a time.

HARYANA POLLS

BJP aims for hat-trick
Resurgent Cong poses challenges

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

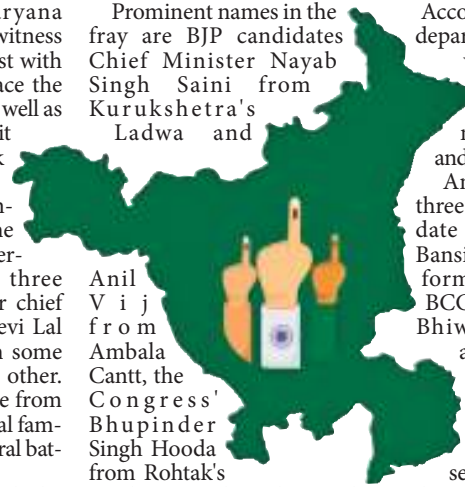
The high-stakes Haryana assembly election will witness a multi-cornered contest with the ruling BJP set to face the anti-incumbency test as well as a resurgent Congress as it looks to script a hat-trick in the state.

Among the 1,031 candidates in the fray for the October 5 polls are several kin of Haryana's three famous 'Lals' -- former chief ministers Bansi Lal, Devi Lal and Bhajan Lal -- with some even taking on each other. The entry of a few more from other prominent political families has made the electoral battle an interesting one.

Besides the BJP and the Congress, AAP has also fielded candidates for the polls. The Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) and Azad Samaj Party are contest-

ing the election in alliance, as are the INLD and the BSP.

Prominent names in the fray are BJP candidates Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini from Kurukshetra's Ladwa and



Anil Vij from Ambala Cantt, the Congress' Bhupinder Singh Hooda from Rohtak's Garhi Sampla-Kiloi and Vinesh Phogat from Julana, JJP's Dushyant Chautala from Uchana Kalan, INLD's Abhay Singh Chautala from Ellenabad

and AAP's Anurag Dhanda from Kalayat.

According to the election department, over two crore voters are eligible to cast their votes in the state -- 1,07,75,957 men, 95,77,926 women and 467 transgender voters.

Among the kin of the three 'Lals', Congress candidate Anirudh Chaudhry, Bansi Lal's grandson and former treasurer of the BCCI, is contesting from Bhiwani's Tosham seat against his cousin and ex-MP Shruti Choudhry, fielded by the BJP.

From the Dabwali seat, Devi Lal's grandson Aditya Devi Lal, an INLD candidate, will take on the JJP's Digvijay Singh Chautala, the great-grandson of the former deputy prime minister.

Rahul playing politics over Agnipath scheme, says Shah

PNS ■ LOHARU (HARYANA)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday attacked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over the Agnipath military recruitment scheme, saying he is playing politics over the issue.

Shah also alleged that Gandhi and National Conference leader Omar Abdullah have an agenda to release all terrorists after the (Jammu and Kashmir) elections and hold talks with Pakistan.

He was addressing his first rally for October 5 Haryana polls in favour of BJP's Loharu candidate J P Dalal.

Shah lashed out at the Congress for not implementing the 'One Rank One Pension' scheme and said it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who implemented it.

"The Agniveer scheme has been implemented. The Congress especially Rahul 'Baba'



Shah lashed out at the Congress for not implementing the 'One Rank One Pension' scheme and said it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who implemented it. 'The Agniveer scheme has been implemented. The Congress especially Rahul 'Baba' (Rahul Gandhi) is playing politics,' he alleged.

(Rahul Gandhi) is playing politics,' he alleged.

He said the Home department and the state police forces in the country gave 20 per cent reservation to the Agniveers.

"I want to tell Haryana's youth that 'Hooda and company', whose job is to spread lies, are saying what will happen to Agniveers later...but what I say, I do it," he said.

"If any Agniveer returns, he will not be without a job and the BJP takes responsibility for

this," he said. Further attacking the Congress while referring to polls in Jammu and Kashmir, Shah said Rahul 'Baba' and Omar Abdullah have an agenda to release all terrorists after the elections and hold talks with Pakistan.

At the rally, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, party's Haryana in-charge Biplab Kumar Deb, MP Kiran Choudhary and other senior leaders were also present.

SC halts 'bulldozer justice' till Oct 1
Says illegal demolition against ethos of Constitution

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There will be no demolition of properties, including of those accused of crime, till October 1 without its permission, the Supreme Court said on Tuesday while observing that even one instance of illegal demolition was against the "ethos" of the Constitution.

A bench of Justices B R Gavi and K V Viswanathan clarified that its order will not be applicable to unauthorised structures on public roads, footpaths, railways lines or public places like water bodies etc.

"Stand over to October 1 at the request of the Solicitor General. However, we direct that till the next date, no demolition without seeking leave of this court," the bench said.



"Even if there is one instance of an illegal demolition... it is against the ethos of our Constitution," the top court observed while hearing pleas which alleged that properties of accused were being demolished in several states illegally.

The bench also referred to statements made after the September 2 hearing in the

matter during which the apex court had said it proposes to lay down certain guidelines on the issue that would be enforceable across the country.

"After that order, there have been statements that the bulldozer will continue... and it all depends in whose hands the steering is," the bench said, adding it was refraining from

saying anything further on that.

"Mr Mehta (solicitor general), after these directives are laid down, we will seek your assistance on this glorification and grandstanding... You will assist us on how to stop this. If necessary, we will ask the Election Commission also," the bench said.

Referring to the glorification, grandstanding and justification of the demolition action, the bench said, "Now, whether this should happen in our country... Whether the Election Commission can be noticed so that some kind of a thing can be laid down?"

At the outset, a counsel appearing for the petitioners said even after the September 2 hearing demolition was carried out in the country.

Congress dwindling force in Tripura: CM Manik Saha

PNS ■ AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Tuesday described the Congress as a "dwindling force" trying to maintain its relevance in the state's political landscape with assistance from the communists.

"The Congress has only three legislators in the state, but they are not united. One MLA is attempting to portray himself as a significant leader by making baseless allegations in the Assembly," Saha said during the inauguration of the state-level Swachhata Seva Campaign 2024 in Gomati district.

The two-week programme, launched on the occasion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday, will culminate on October 2.

In the recent Assembly session, Congress MLA Sudip



Roy Barman had accused the state's Tribal Welfare Minister Bikash Debbarma and an officer on Special Duty (OSD) of corruption.

Claiming that the Congress has become a "dwindling force", Saha criticised Roy Barman for forming an alliance with the communists to retain his Agartala seat.

"He is always busy on the phone, but whenever there is a problem, his mobile is off. He is a switched-off leader," Saha said.

HYDRAA..

Continued from page 1

We took over the reins in difficult conditions. We have been paying Rs 6000 crore to clear debts and as interest on loans every month. We have taken it as a challenge to implement the Six Guarantees and put the economy on the right track. We are trying hard to get Central funds," the CM said.

"I went to New Delhi many times and met all Union Ministers and the Prime Minister and submitted memoranda," the CM said. "Some political parties are criticising my Delhi tours. I am not a farmhouse Chief Minister. I am a Chief Minister who works hard. I am not going to Delhi for personal business," the CM said. The CM said the state government made strong arguments before the 16th Finance Commission for more funds and demanded that 50 per cent of Central taxes should be given to the states.

Atishi set to be next CM of..

Continued from page 1

the leader of the AAP legislature party.

Atishi will be Delhi's third woman chief minister after Congress' Sheila Dikshit and BJP's Sushma Swaraj. It was confirmation if any were needed that Kejriwal's grip on the party remains firm and this move is aimed at giving him space to set the agenda.

Beset by charges of corruption over the excise scam and released from jail last week, the AAP supremo submitted his resignation to the Lt Governor in the evening, virtually seeking a referendum on his 'politics of

Continued from page 1

Around 468 cranes were set up for the immersion. Around 25,000 policemen were deployed to ensure security for the immersion.

The Hyderabad Traffic Police had imposed restrictions for the smooth conduct of the

honesty". Though Atishi was a frontrunner for the post and considered close to both Kejriwal and his second in command Manish Sisodia, the speculation over who would succeed him was intense. Ending the debate, Kejriwal proposed the name of the Kalkaji legislator at a meeting of the AAP legislature party and it was accepted unanimously. Up next, the LG will forward Kejriwal's resignation letter to President Droupadi Murmu for her acceptance. He will also send Atishi's letter to form a new government for the president's nod, an official said.

Once the resignation is accepted, the LG will invite

bada ganesh..

immersion which is expected to go on for 24 hours.

Minister Ponnam Prabhakar said the Hyderabad immersion programme will be carried out peacefully with the coordination of all departments.

Atishi to form the government and give a date for the oath-taking ceremony, the official said, adding that the process may take a few days.

The new chief minister will prove the majority of her government in the Delhi Assembly and its session has been called by the ruling AAP dispensation on September 26-27.

As a minister in Kejriwal's Cabinet, Atishi, with 14 portfolios including finance, education and revenue, was amongst those holding the fort while he was in jail.

"We have staked claim to form a new government. I will protect the interests of Delhi people," she told reporters after Kejriwal's meeting with the LG.

Waive interest on loans..

Continued from page 1

Speaking at the conference, Uttam said the TG government is giving priority to irrigation and that every year around six lakh acres are being irrigated afresh. He said that Rs 29,000 crore has been allocated to this sector in the current budget.

Uttam said that in addition to the efforts of the state government, there should be adequate assistance from the

Centre. The Centre is allocating lakhs of crores for infrastructure and the same should be allocated for the construction of irrigation projects, he said. He appealed to the Union Water Power Minister to provide clearances as well as funds from the Centre for irrigation projects.

Uttam held talks with representatives of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank for loans to fund irrigation projects.

20 MBPS internet for..

Continued from page 1

He said the government will test this in the three pilot project villages for two months and it will be expanded to cover the whole of Telangana by December. He said the government installed the Rajiv Gandhi statue at the Secretariat as Rajiv Gandhi 'sacrificed' his life for the

nation. "Why is the BRS opposing the Rajiv Gandhi statue? BRS leaders are creating a ruckus regarding the Rajiv Gandhi statue only to get into the good books of PM Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah and it is part of their attempts to get close to the BJP," he said. Sridhar said that HYDRAA is intended only to protect state resources.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

First 100 days of Modi 3.0

As PM Modi marks 100 days, his Govt has achieved significant milestones, but new challenges demand nuanced approach

As the Narendra Modi-led NDA Government completes 100 days in office, a reflective assessment reveals notable accomplishments, emerging challenges, and key shifts from its earlier tenures. The Government continues to advance its vision of a "New India," driven by development, global leadership, and inclusive growth. However, the complexities of governance and the evolving political landscape have also introduced fresh hurdles that demand careful navigation. The biggest shift has been in the composition of the Government. Though PM Modi retained his previous cabinet with minor changes but the reliance on allies makes his third term depart from his earlier two terms where he had complete say in governance and policy making. The coalition compulsions led to roll back on 'lateral entry' and rethink on 'broadcast bill.' However, there is continuity in the policies. One of the key achievements of Modi's third term is the continued expansion of India's global footprint. His high profile visit to Ukraine and Russia



where he implored the two sides to "to sit down and talk" won him praise. Besides, furthering his "Act East" initiative got a push through his visit to Singapore and Brunei. Indeed, the government has also taken bold steps in shaping foreign policy, such as balancing its relations with the US, Russia, and China. In its first 100 days the Government approved projects worth Rs 3 lakh crore, focusing on roads, railways, ports, and airways. Capital expenditure was raised to Rs 11.11 lakh crore to spur job creation. Significant efforts were made in the agriculture sector, with Rs 20,000 crore distributed to 9.3 crore farmers under the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme, while MSP hikes

benefited 12 crore farmers. The GENESIS program was launched to support startups in Tier-II and Tier-III cities, alongside a Rs 2 lakh crore package for youth employment, targeting 41 million over five years. Women empowerment saw the recognition of over 1 crore 'Lakshmi Didi.' On security front, a peace deal was brokered in Tripura, and steps were taken to counter cybercrime with initiatives like the 'Samanvay' platform and a Cyber Fraud Mitigation Center. Despite big ticket announcements and policy decision the Government will have to be mindful of the challenges that must be addressed immediately. Despite a development push, India faces rising inflation, particularly in food prices, affecting the average citizen. The political climate has become increasingly polarised. The government is facing opposition over economic policies, controversial legislative moves like the Uniform Civil Code, and rising social tensions. The upcoming assembly elections, especially in Jammu and Kashmir would be a referendum of its policies. The Government did well to built upon the successes of its earlier terms, but now it faces new challenges that demand nuanced responses. From fortifying India's global position to tackling domestic concerns like inflation, economic growth, and social unity, the Government's approach will be crucial for shaping the future of the nation.

PICTALK



Devotees take part in a procession to immerse an idol of Lord Ganesha at the end of the Ganapati festival, in Mumbai. PTI

Kejriwal's resignation: Theatrics at its best

Beneath Kejriwal's impassioned speech lay contradictions, omissions, and questionable parallels aimed at swaying the electorate

Kejriwal's expertise in political charade was on show when he spoke to his party members on 15th September, two days after being released from Tihar jail on interim bail granted by the Supreme Court subject to stringent, limiting conditions. He made this out to be an acquittal when it was only a reprieve and an initial indictment. He started with Vande Mataram, Bharat Mata ki Jai, and Inqalab Zindabad, invoking Hindutva, patriotism, and the anti-government revolutionary sentiment of our freedom struggle. He likened himself to Bhagat Singh by quoting from his diary and drawing parallels with the legendary freedom fighter. He sought the sympathy of the electorate by making out the Central Government to be more cruel than the British rulers and to be wanting to destroy him and AAP. He made himself out to be the Messiah of Democracy trying to save the Constitution, which is why, he claimed, he had not resigned earlier. The coup de grace was his



announcement that over the next two days, he would quit as Delhi's CM and not sit on the CM's chair until and unless the public judges him to be honest. He reminded his audience of the Agnipareekshathat Sita had to undergo, after Lord Rama's 14 years-long exile, to prove her innocence. He was, he said, willing to undergo a similar trial-by-fire to prove his innocence by seeking the public's mandate. Not even once, did he name the BJP or Modi; both were subsumed in the innocuous pronoun "they". It was a masterly performance of demagoguery. In the hoodwinking of the Indian masses, Kejriwal is miles ahead of other politicians. He evokes emotions and

obscures facts, sometimes even twisting them. Consider these omissions and contradictions. If Kejriwal wanted the people's verdict, to assuage his "conscience", he should have resigned much earlier, when he was sent to Tihar. Why do it after the SC has severely limited your powers as CM? Bhagat Singh was fighting for the country's independence and was accused of sedition, Kejriwal for his political survival after being found prima facie guilty of corruption by court. Bhagat Singh was hanged by the British rulers. Gol is unlikely to do that with Kejriwal. The parallel drawn was specious, the basis given — of the undelivered letter to LG — crafty. He boasted of the freebies he has been able to give because of his uncorrupted government — free electricity and free bus travel for women — unmindful of the burden that the honest taxpayer has to bear to fund his vote-buying spree and the damage it does to the national capital's exchequer.

His claim of improved medical care and better government school education would be contested by many Delhi-ites. His mohallaclinics are ministered to by unqualified doctors who visit on an ad hoc basis. Many government schools are short of teachers and have poor infrastructure. As always, he appealed to the emotions of the gullible electorate of the slums, announcing that he would not sit on the CM's chair unless and until the public judges him to be honest by voting him into power in the next assembly elections. Surely, he would have known that, given the serious corruption charges against him, his honesty would be judged not by the common man on sentiment but by erudite judges, well-versed in law, based on concrete evidence admissible in law. (The writer, a former banker, has turned in his mellow years to column-writing out of his love for nonviolence, social harmony and universal brotherhood; views are personal)



PRADEEP BAJPAI

Madam — The Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal's decision to resign to the post is not surprising since the Supreme Court's bail conditions have restricted his access both to the physical office to the CM office and its official authority. But Kejriwal's strategy to face elections and secure fresh mandate in order to get the "certificate of honesty" from the people isn't easy. Last time Kejriwal resigned as CM, he returned to office with a landslide win. Much water, and waste, has flown in the Yamuna since. Over it, hangs almost a decade's worth of anti-incumbency. This can't simply be wished away by replaying the resignation card. AAP has tasted success by getting accorded as national party. While it has a super majority in the Punjab assembly and five seats in Gujarat, Delhi is crucial to further its political base and Kejriwal's ambitions. In BJP, it has a relentless opposition and the party remains in good health. In the other hand, AAP doesn't have this luxury at all. As its principal campaigner, Kejriwal has to deliver big. But he now doesn't enjoy the unblemished image being an accused in multi crore excise scandal. Only time will decide the fate and future of the Kejriwal and his party. But in all this drama, the capital's citizens find themselves lost and unheard. At the end of elections, the national capital will hope to have a normal Govt. N Sadhasiva Reddy | Washington

KEJRIWAL'S RESIGNATION

Madam — Reference: HM shah to wrap up first round of High voltage campaign in Jammu (September 16). The conclusion of HM Shah's high-voltage campaign in Jammu marks a significant moment in the region's political landscape. This campaign has seen fervent discussions on development, security, and local concerns, bringing national attention to the area. However, it's crucial that the energy from this campaign translates into tangible actions that address the everyday struggles of the people. Amit Shah Campaigns in Jammu

AMIT SHAH CAMPAIGNS IN JAMMU

Madam — This is in response to the news report titled "Hindi, other languages are friends: Shah" (September 15). Based upon my "limited knowledge", ideal friends would share even a piece of bread equally, how tiny crumb it might be! But the language of few North Indian states are so "friendly" that it dominates over all other languages in this huge democratic land of diversities not only in Centralised sphere, but also in pusillanimous states like West Bengal where Hindi gets brutally imposed

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

India brokers peace



As a further escalation in the Russia-Ukraine conflict appears likely, India's possible role in peace negotiations have come into sharp focus, in the wake of recent diplomatic activity, mainly of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and National Security Ajit

Doval. Given India's unique placement on the spectrum of positions on the conflict, based on its historic, strong ties with Russia, can New Delhi belatedly step up as a possible peacemaker in the conflict persisting for well over two years? The Ukraine's Ambassador to India Oleksandr Polishchuk said that Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had proposed a retrospective move by India to join the peace process ahead of plans for a second Peace Summit in October or November this year, and that Ukraine had more "ambition" than for India to play "post office" between the leaders. We hope that PM Modi's visit to Ukraine and conversations with President Zelenskyy indicate India's support for the peace-building effort. Jayanthi Ramani | Coimbatore

Promises made should be followed by clear timelines and transparent policies, ensuring that the political enthusiasm doesn't fade post-election. The people of Jammu need long-term solutions, not just campaign rhetoric. It's vital that this momentum is maintained, and leaders remain accountable to the commitments they've made during this charged political engagement. As the campaign wraps up, eyes will be on the next steps and whether real progress follows the promises made. Priya Gupta | Kushinagar

ALL LANGUAGES MUST BE TREATED ALIKE

Madam — This is in response to the news report titled "Hindi, other languages are friends: Shah" (September 15). Based upon my "limited knowledge", ideal friends would share even a piece of bread equally, how tiny crumb it might be! But the language of few North Indian states are so "friendly" that it dominates over all other languages in this huge democratic land of diversities not only in Centralised sphere, but also in pusillanimous states like West Bengal where Hindi gets brutally imposed

in Railway Banking Postal sectors. Hindi is so "friendly" with others that it enjoys more Central fund for its "promotion" than the amount allotted for rest of the Indian languages put together! Yet, it remains the fact that there lies no provision of any "National Language" in the Indian Constitution. Hindi is just another language of this multi-lingual India; the latter's right over the country is neither superior nor inferior to the other languages. Thus, those who zealously project Hindi as "numero uno" and imposing it over all are merely assailing the very basis of the Constitution — posing a fatal assault upon all norms of democracy and equality. The Government should see to it that all funds related to promotion of languages do not get usurped by Hindi. Thus if an equitable distribution of Central resources is ensured, it would benefit the cause of all languages and dialects to a great extent. Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata



ASHOK K MEHTA

Myanmar Junta on the backfoot

For the first time, the military junta is losing ground to a powerful alliance of Ethnic Armed Organisations and the People's Defence Force

On 3 September, the palace in Mandalay, (HQ Central Command), the second biggest city in Myanmar after Yangon, faced its first rocket attack. The Southwest Rakhine state could fall shortly with two strategic ports overlooking the Bay of Bengal-Sittwe leased to India and Kyaukphu leased to China- and Manaung left in Junta's possession in Rakhine. Military coups in the past have not failed in Myanmar. It has the biggest military in southeast Asia not unfamiliar with coups. Thailand holds the dubious record of 32 coups since 1932. More than nearly four years later, Gen Min Aung Hlaing-led Junta in Myanmar is fighting a losing battle but this time not against Buddhist monks and civil society but against a well-coordinated alliance of Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAO), local militia and the new People's Defence Force born out of ousted Aung San Suu Kyii's National League for Democracy which is calling itself the National Unity Government (NUG). They are the Resistance. The junta had so far managed rebels and revolts seeking autonomy/independence through ceasefire agreements. The junta is a formidable triservice force adept in counter-insurgency. For it to be flailing is surprising. Battlefield losses have been unprecedented in both territory and manpower through battle fatigue and fighting its people has been taxing on the psyche of soldiers and Generals. An implosion is no longer fanciful. Reliable sources place 70 per cent loss of territory. The Resistance does not control all the territory that the Junta retreated from as it does not have holding capability. But it does control key sectors along the borders that the junta ceded due to surrender/desertions. Stretched for troops Junta has followed a scorched earth policy: indiscriminate bombings by artillery, helicopters and aircraft to avenge defeat that UNHRC's Volcker Tolker(?) has called genocidal. This has led to nearly 400,000 IDPs with many having crossed over into neighbouring Bangladesh, India, China and



Thailand. Junta has had to abandon trade routes to China in the northern Shan state; along the Karenni National Army-controlled border with Thailand at Myawaddy; in Rakhine state with Bangladesh and parts of Mizoram in Chin state and in Sagaing region opposite all of Manipur except Ukhrul and Moreh that PDF controls. The Kuki-Zo-Chin people in Chinland are ethnically similar to Mizos. Chinese have had active links with the Arakan Army in Rakhine state which traverses India's Multi-Modal Kaladan river connectivity project originating in India-operated Sittwe Port in Rakhine, the key to India's Act East policy. So, with the Junta forced out of Chin, Rakhine, Sagaing and Magwae, contiguous with the Indian border, New Delhi must engage these new power wielders. But it is dithering which could lead to Chinese fishing in troubled waters in a region where Manipur is breaking into a new dangerous phase of inter-ethnic conflict. Earlier in September embattled Gen Hlaing warned civilians in territory captured by Resistance that it will soon counterattack to regain ground. He also declared the Three Brotherhood Alliance in Shan state as a terrorist organization. It is these groups including the Arakan Army, that have captured the prestigious Army's North East Command at Lashio and in

THE JUNTA IS A FORMIDABLE TRISERVICE FORCE ADEPT IN COUNTER-INSURGENCY. FOR IT TO BE FLAILING IS SURPRISING. BATTLEFIELD LOSSES HAVE BEEN UNPRECEDENTED IN BOTH TERRITORY AND MANPOWER THROUGH BATTLE FATIGUE AND FIGHTING ITS PEOPLE HAS BEEN TAXING ON THE PSYCHE OF SOLDIERS AND GENERALS

Shan state and now Mandalay's Central Command headquarters, is threatened. How much longer the junta can fight on multiple fronts is unclear even as Gen Hlaing has continually extended the emergency while advocating holding of election which is most unlikely. He is disinclined to use the good offices of pro-Junta countries in ASEAN like Laos, its current chair, Cambodia and Thailand to start a dialogue which the PDF and EAOs will reject as they see the balance of advantage with them. With the economy in grave distress, this war cannot go on indefinitely. China has and continues to play a crucial role in supporting the Junta and selected EAOs in the north and west. China and Russia are the junta's main sources of military hardware though India too has provided non-lethal military equipment. Army tanks, artillery and small arms are Chinese. So are most of the transport and fighter aircraft. The same goes for the Navy though India has provided Coast Guard vessels. Russian MiG 29 and Su30 aircraft have been serviced by HAL and India has provided aviation fuel which is a sanctioned item. New Delhi has called for a ceasefire and a return to a democratic process but its support for the Junta is undiminished as it burnt its fingers two decades ago in supporting NLD in preference to

the Junta which led to Chinese ascendancy. Although the Junta has a love-hate relationship with Beijing it is forced to take its support due to its proximity and domination of the economy. Still, India must review its policy due to the changed ground reality and engage the forces that control the border areas. A working relationship with the Arakan Army and Chinland authorities is essential to restore stability to troubled Manipur. It should also consider establishing humanitarian corridors to provide succour and relief to people bombed out of their habitat. India can keep reciting the import of its Act East policy to Asian neighbours but its implementation is contingent upon the operationalisation of connectivity projects like the trilateral highway through Myanmar to Thailand and the Multi-Modal Kaladan river project from Sittwe Port to Paletwa and on to Mizoram. India's eastern and western flanks are both vulnerable especially the east which is sandwiched between Bangladesh and Myanmar. A triangulation of threats from Pak-China-Bangladesh cannot be ruled out. (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views are personal)

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FIRST COLUMN

LEARNING IS A LIFELONG PROCESS

Life is a continuous education, every experience shapes our understanding



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

From the time we are born till the day we die; we keep on learning something in life. Irrespective of whether we want it or not, we can't stop learning because there is no existence of life without the process of learning. Our whole life is a bundle of experience and in turn, an education, where we all are in ever learning mode, every moment and everywhere. As conscious beings, having sense organs, also known as the five doors of knowledge, we, by our very nature, cannot remain without creating perception.

Our ears are always open, so we are constantly listening. The words that go through our ears to our brains are like lessons that we receive constantly. Similarly, we see the whole world through our eyes which also results in learning good things as well as bad things. The electrical impulses that we receive through our skin or taste buds, reach our brain which is also a kind of learning for us. However, one must understand the fact that all the above mentioned processes of learning take place by awareness or consciousness that is present in our brain without which learning is next to impossible. Once we finish our studies, we feel that the education phase of our life is finally over and now it's time for us to go out in the world & attain the highest level of success. But doesn't this sound too casual & an odd idea? That only a quarter of our lives should be devoted to learning, and then we should simply rest on our laurels for the remaining part of our lives? Well!! It is said that learning never exhausts the mind, so why do we restrict the process of learning until we are pursuing formal education? Just because you've



finished your formal education, doesn't mean that your education is over! It's quite an erroneous idea, but unfortunately, the majority of us have absorbed it subconsciously. Remember!! It is only a dead body that ceases to participate in the process of learning & not the ones who resonate with life. Our life is a series of experiences, each one of which makes us enlightened, even though many times it is hard to realize this. We must always remember that the setbacks and grieves that we endure help us in our marching onward. Hence, we must always make it a point to learn something about everything and everything about something. Throughout our journey of life, we constantly learn some such lessons that result in the formation of sanskaras according to our karma. Hence, if we know clearly that learning is unavoidable and that we are always learning good or bad things, resulting in good or bad sanskaras that lead to happiness or sorrow, then we will never say that we have no time or no interest in learning. Likewise, if we know that our sanskaras go along with our life after life, then we will be more careful in learning good things and in giving up bad things because education seems to be an elixir that can bring us a healthy mind & body along with a lasting fruitful life. We all need to be enlightened & we urgently need to improve the quality of our thoughts, speech and actions. Since we cannot avoid learning, even if we wish, why don't we then learn to inculcate, in us, moral values, virtues or good qualities so that we may make progress towards perfection? What do we gain by making lame excuses, saying that we have no time or that we are not interested? What is it that we are interested in? Are we interested in our downfall, decay or doom? In sinking and drowning deep down in the quagmire of vices, evils and mud? Remember!! The more we delay, the worse will be our condition and the more difficult it be to rectify our ways.

The process of learning, as was said earlier, is ceaseless and continuous and hence someone has rightly said "we learn everyday & shed the ego and the perception that I know everything". Hence we cannot stop it even if we try our best, putting all our might into it. So why not remain alert & follow the right path that saves us from tragedies, traumas, tensions and turmoil of life? The answer lies within us.

(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist, views are personal)

Karnataka's dilemma: Conservation vs development



B K SINGH

Buffer zones, designed to protect water bodies, biodiversity, and forest ecosystems, are under threat as development pressures in Karnataka intensify



The buffer Zones are contemplated to secure the core area of streams, water bodies and biodiversity sites and definitions in each case are supported by respective statutes, government guidelines and Court orders. The flow of water in stormwater drains and urban lakes needs to be regulated at the time of cloud bursts in the city causing flooding. Karnataka State Board for Prevention and Control of Water Pollution was amended in December 2021 to locate red industries beyond 500 meters from the centre of the stream and also at the same distance from the outer boundary of the lake. 75 meter buffer Zone is fixed for orange industries and 30 meters for non-polluting green establishments.

Zonal regulation of Bangalore Development Authority also prohibits any development within 30 meters from the outer boundary of the lake and similarly primary, secondary and tertiary drains have a buffer zone of 50, 25 and 15 meters from the centre on either side. Karnataka government is contemplating utilising barren buffer Zone areas for development and this would not go well with the environment conservation ethos and would have wide ranging repercussions like destroying the natural drainage pattern of the landscape and would bring misery to the people at the time of flash floods. It is recommended to evict encroachments from buffer areas and plant up with native tree species.

To protect the integrity of the forests and to minimize the interference of communities around, rule 41 of Karnataka Forest Rules, 1969 specifies a buffer Zone of 100 meters from the periphery of Reserved Forests. The rule in effect prohibits the grant of any revenue land within 100 meters from the fringes of the forests without express approval from the Forest Department. Legislatures in 1969 knew that if revenue land abutting forests is granted to any individual or used for community projects, the forests would be subjected to anthropogenic pressure and



THE GROUP OF POLLUTING INDUSTRIES LIKE MINING, QUARRYING, ETC HAS BEEN PROHIBITED IN ESZ, WHILE SOME BUSINESSES LIKE RESORTS, TREE FELLING ETC ARE TO BE REGULATED AND ECO-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES LIKE AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE DEVELOPMENT ARE TO BE PERMITTED

would be encroached and degraded. Today we find that the provision has not been implemented in true spirit and there has been large-scale unauthorized occupation of forest lands after plundering the tree growth. Revenue lands are also lost in the process. If the provision is not properly regulated, even the deemed forests will be plundered and tree growth and lands will be lost. Forests are the mothers of rivers. The origin and catchments of many rivers are notified by Tiger Reserves (TRs). The original TRs that have been carved out of forests, Sanctuaries and National Parks are its core areas.

By an amendment in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 in 2006, it was mandated to include areas surrounding the core, as buffer areas. In respect of several TRs, buffer areas have already been notified, but many more are still pending. The buffer areas of the TRs include forest areas, sometimes even part of the Sanctuaries and National Parks interspersed with villages and agricultural lands. With the apprehension that the area commands a higher degree of protection and it may be difficult to divert any portion of it for public projects later, many state Governments are holding back the notification.

Buffer for Nagarhole TR in Kodagu district of Karnataka has not been notified even after 18 years of amendment. Cores and buffers of TRs comprise luxuriant forests and are an important source of water, air, carbon sequestration, and controlling disease-spreading viruses necessary for the survival of humans and all other forms of life on earth. Taking a cue from the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the

Supreme Court of India earlier laid down an 'Eco Sensitive Zone' (ESZ) of 10 km from the periphery of National Parks and Sanctuaries, which are not TRs. It led to a huge public outcry and that resulted in several state Governments moving the Court for modification. Finally, the Court has relented and prescribed a minimum width of 1 km. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has categorized industries into three groups.

The group of polluting industries like mining, quarrying, etc has been prohibited in ESZ, while some businesses like resorts, tree felling etc are to be regulated and eco-friendly activities like agriculture and horticulture development are to be permitted. Mining and quarrying lobby located on the fringes of National Parks and Sanctuaries, who aspire to expand the activities, prevail on public representatives and government to lower the width of the strip and postpone ESZ notification.

Many ESZ proposals are caught in the crossfire and are held back either by respective state governments or central governments, making the conservation of biodiversity and protection of soil and water more difficult. This makes National Parks and Sanctuaries insecure. Anshi National Park and Dandeli Sanctuary of Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka have ESZ strip of zero meter width along some portion of the boundary. The origin of river Kali, on which we are dependent for power, is kept out of ESZ and made insecure.

To make way for the Saravathi pump storage project near Jog Falls, the width of the ESZ strip around Saravathi Sanctuary is reduced from the proposed 2 km

to 1 km. Energy experts have questioned the viability of such projects, where excess power generated during the night time is utilized to pump the same water to the upper reservoir, which in turn can again be utilized for power generation by allowing it to flow down to the lower reservoir under gravity. We have also to sacrifice 200 ha of virgin forests of the Western Ghats in this case. This author had an opportunity to visit a similar project site "Purulia Pump storage project" in West Bengal in 1993 while working in the Government of India. Against the recommendation, the project was approved by the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

We destroyed 200 ha of wonderful Sal forests and today the project is a failure. Sal forests are the source of artisan wells and we lost them. The tragedy in Wayanad in the wee hours of 30th July 2024 is also attributed to the diversion of wooded areas for tea plantations and mining causing a major shift in land use pattern and exposing the earth rich in clayey soil to absorb water during incessant rains, swell sufficiently to become unstable and prone for landslides. Expert Committees headed by Madhav Gadgil and Kasturirangan have recommended Western Ghats areas be notified as Eco-Sensitive Areas (ESA) so that environmentally hazardous activities like deforestation and diverting lands for mining, industries etc are prohibited. Both the states of Karnataka and Kerala have not come on board to notify section of Western Ghats areas in the state as ESA.

(The writer is retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Head of Forest Force, Karnataka; views are personal)

India must address the growing crisis of spinal cord injuries

As India faces an alarming rise in spinal cord injuries, the call for a comprehensive support system has never been more urgent

As India faces the staggering reality of thousands of fatalities and with 15 lakh people living with spinal cord injuries (SCIs), the call for a robust support system is now more critical than ever. On the occasion of SCI Day (September 5), the healthcare experts and leaders geared up to strongly advocate for a holistic and inclusive solution that includes surgical interventions and comprehensive rehabilitation programs.



VIKAS TANDON

another 12 lakhs are seriously injured in road accidents in India. India has 15 lakh people with SCIs and nearly 20,000 people are added each year. SCI is devastating, with morbidity not only limited to physical aspects but emotional, social, and vocational life areas too. Violence stands as one of the top three causes of SCIs in India, according to a recent study by the Indian Spinal

Injuries Centre (ISIC). Analyzing data from 2012 to 2022, the study revealed that road RTAs accounted for 44% of SCIs, followed closely by falls from heights at 38.3%. Violent incidents, including stabbings and shootings, also significantly contributed, highlighting the diverse factors leading to these life-altering injuries. The study encompassed 1,537 SCI patients admitted between 2012 and 2022, maintaining consistency with earlier findings from 2002 to 2010, which reported RTAs at 45% and falls at 39.64%. In the last 10 years, the Centre treated nearly 200 SCI patients who were victims of violence.

This year's theme of SCI Day is "End Violence - Protect Spinal Cord." It is very crucial

to intensify awareness and preventive and curative efforts. Spinal cord injuries are not just physical afflictions; they profoundly alter every aspect of life, including emotional well-being, social interactions, and vocational capabilities. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive, multifaceted approach that includes policy recognition, accessibility, enhanced safety measures, and robust treatment and rehabilitation services. Rehabilitation is vital for improving the functional abilities of persons with SCIs. This multifaceted process includes physiotherapy, occupational therapy, peer counselling, plastic surgery, psychological mentorship, nursing care, assistive technology, uro-



logical care, and vocational support—often essential following surgical stabilization of the spinal column. Rehabilitation, which is critical in teaching patients to adapt to their new normal post-injury, remains inadequately covered under existing government schemes and

insurance plans. Unfortunately, rehabilitation costs are rarely covered by government schemes like CGHS, DGEHS, and ECHS, nor by many insurance companies, posing significant financial challenges for SCI patients. The Delhi High Court's 2023 directive to include disabled

persons in insurance schemes is a significant step toward equality, especially for SCI patients facing ongoing medical expenses. The 2016 Disabilities Act expanded recognized disabilities but excludes spinal cord injury (SCI) as a separate category. Including SCI would grant patients access to key benefits like reservations and vocational support. Despite progress in accessibility under the Accessible India Campaign, universal access and vocational opportunities for SCI patients remain incomplete. On the treatment and care part, all solutions under one roof are needed with highly experienced, internationally trained, and dedicated spine surgeons. The Centre has also established India's first dedicat-

ed neuro-urology department to take care of SCI patients who suffer considerably after spine surgery and are neglected. Institutions like ISIC provide essential surgical, rehabilitation, and vocational training, but gaps remain in broader societal support, particularly in accessibility and long-term healthcare affordability. It should be a mission to create holistic and inclusive solutions for those battling spinal cord injuries, aiming to build a society that truly values diversity and inclusivity. There is a need to provide more facilities and services for all SCI patients, including those who are victims of violence.

(The writer is chief of Spinal Services, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, New Delhi; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



India to host Global Food Regulators Summit

India will host the second edition of Global Food Regulators Summit during September 19-21 in the national capital, where delegates of more than 70 countries will brainstorm on key regulations. The summit is being organised by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) under the aegis of the Union Health and Family Welfare ministry. The first edition of this summit was held in July 2023 in India as a co-branded event of G20. According to a background note, delegates from more than 70 countries are expected to participate in this summit to discuss and prepare strategy on key regulatory issues. The summit aims to foster international collaborations and knowledge-sharing on food safety and regulatory issues. It also seeks to promote dialogue on critical aspects such as food safety, risk assessment, analytical competence and capacity building initiatives. The summit would also highlight India's commitment to leading global efforts in enhancing food safety standards and ensuring food security.



Redcliffe Labs raises \$42 million

Diagnostic services provider Redcliffe Labs on Tuesday said it has raised USD 42 million (about Rs 352 crore), which will be used for expansion across Tier II and III cities in India. The funding round was led by Denmark's IFU (Investeringstjenesten for Udviklingslande), which invested USD 20 million, followed by existing investor LeapFrog Investments with USD 15 million. Redcliffe's existing shareholders HealthQuid and Spark Growth Ventures also invested in the round. "This fresh injection of capital will fuel Redcliffe's expansion plans, focusing on deepening its presence in Tier II and III cities across India," a company statement said. Founded in 2018, Redcliffe Labs offers services across more than 200 cities in India. "With this raise, we're poised to increase accessibility to advanced diagnostic services across the nation with a commitment to empower individuals with the knowledge on healthcare."



LIC cuts holding in DCM Shriram Industries to 4.66 pc

Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) on Tuesday said it has pared its stake in DCM Shriram Industries by more than 2 per cent to 4.66 per cent over a period of about three years. In a regulatory filing, LIC said there is a net decrease of 2.016 per cent in its holding in DCM Shriram during the period October 8, 2021, and September 13, 2024. The shares were sold at an average price of Rs 110.072. "...the Life Insurance Corporation of India has decreased its shareholding in equity shares of DCM Shriram Industries Ltd from 58,06,760 to 40,52,635 i.e., 6.675 per cent to 4.659 per cent of the paid-up capital of the said company," LIC said. DCM Shriram Industries is primarily engaged in production and sale of sugar, alcohol and industrial fibres. Shares of DCM Shriram Industries settled 1.77 per cent lower at Rs 194 apiece on the BSE.

India, UK may hold next round of talks on trade pact in Oct

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and the UK are expected to hold the next round of talks for a proposed free trade agreement in October to resolve the pending issues and close the negotiations, a senior official said on Tuesday.

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said the officials of the UK are briefing their new ministers about the proposed free trade agreement (FTA).

The two sides have already taken stock of the progress of talks at secretary and minister levels.

"The briefings are going on in the UK...they are briefing their new ministers and based on that, the negotiations will start. We are hoping that in October, the negotiations should resume," Barthwal told reporters here.

He also said India is progressing on all FTAs, but there are certain things which are not in control of anyone.

The India-UK talks for the proposed FTA began in January 2022. The 14th round of talks stalled as the two nations stepped into their general election cycles.

Due to the elections in



India and Britain, both the countries lost that period.

There are pending issues in both the goods and services sectors.

The Indian industry is demanding greater access for its skilled professionals from sectors like IT and healthcare in the UK market, besides market access for several goods at nil customs duty.

On the other hand, the UK is seeking a significant cut in import duties on goods such as scotch whiskey, electric vehicles, lamb meat, chocolates and certain confectionary items.

Britain is also looking for more opportunities for UK

services in Indian markets in segments like telecommunications, legal and financial services (banking and insurance).

The two countries are also negotiating a bilateral investment treaty (BIT).

There are 26 chapters in the agreement, which includes goods, services, investments and intellectual property rights.

The bilateral trade between India and the UK increased to USD 21.34 billion in 2023-24 from 20.36 billion in 2022-23.

The Labour Party's election manifesto for the recent polls also committed to clinching the deal.

A virtual meeting between

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Jonathan Reynolds, UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade was held on July 11 to discuss next steps on the pact.

Talking about the trade agreement with Australia, the secretary said that the two sides are looking at ways to conclude the negotiations before December.

He added that chief negotiators of both the sides are meeting on the pact, besides the trade ministers.

India and Australia implemented an interim pact, officially dubbed as Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) in December 2022 and now are in negotiations to expand its scope.

He added that FTAs are long-term negotiations as these are comprehensive in nature involving over 20 chapters.

"They are time-taking. But I must say that we are moving forward on all our FTAs except Canada. We had paused (that). All other FTAs are progressing very well," he said.

Govt asks edible oil firms not to hike retail price

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has asked edible oil processors not to hike retail prices following recent increase in import duties, as there is enough stock of cooking oils that were shipped at a lower duty.

The food ministry said the stocks imported at lower duties would easily last 45-50 days, and therefore the processors should refrain from increasing maximum retail prices (MRP).

Last week, the Centre implemented an increase in the basic customs duty on various edible oils to support domestic oilseed prices.

Effective September 14, 2024, the basic customs duty on crude soyabean oil, crude palm oil, and crude sunflower oil has been raised to 20 per cent from nil, making the effective duty on crude oils to 27.5 per cent. Additionally, the basic cus-

oms duty on refined palm oil, refined sunflower oil, and refined soyabean oil has been increased from 12.5 per cent to 32.5 per cent, making the effective duty on refined oils to 35.75 per cent.

On Tuesday, Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra chaired a meeting with the representatives from Solvent Extraction Association of India (SEA), Indian Vegetable Oil Producers' Association (IVPA) and Soyabean Oil Producers Association (SOPA) to discuss the pricing strategy.

"The leading edible oil associations were advised to ensure that the MRP of each oil is maintained till the availability of edible oil stocks imported at 0 per cent and 12.5 per cent Basic Customs Duty (BCD) and take up the issue with their members immediately," an official statement said.

Gold imports doubled to record high of \$10.06 bn

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold imports more than doubled in August to a record high of USD 10.06 billion, mainly on account of a drastic cut in customs duty and ongoing festive demand, according to the Commerce Ministry data.

Gold imports stood at USD 4.93 billion in August 2023.

On record high imports, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that the tariff rates on gold have been reduced drastically so that smuggling and other activities can come down.

"And this is the time when jewellers start stocking for their inventories to be sold in the festive season," he told reporters.

In the Budget, the government slashed the duty from 15 per cent to 6 per cent.

India's gold imports, which have a bearing on the country's current account deficit (CAD), dipped by 4.23 per cent to USD 12.64 billion during April-July 2024-25.

In 2023-24, India's gold imports surged by 30 per cent



to USD 45.54 billion.

Switzerland is the largest source of gold imports, with about 40 per cent share, followed by the UAE (over 16 per cent) and South Africa (about 10 per cent).

The precious metal accounts for over 5 per cent of the country's total imports.

The jump in gold imports pushed the country's trade deficit (difference between imports and exports) to USD 29.65 billion in August.

India is the world's second-biggest gold consumer after China. The imports mainly take care of the demand by the jewellery industry.

India recorded a current account surplus of USD 5.7 billion or 0.6 per cent of GDP

in the March quarter. For FY24, the current account deficit narrowed to USD 23.2 billion or 0.7 per cent of GDP against USD 67 billion or 2 per cent of GDP in FY23.

A current account deficit occurs when the value of goods and services imported and other payments exceeds the value of the export of goods and services and other receipts by a country in a particular period.

India is seeking review of certain provisions of the free trade agreement with the UAE, which came into force on May 1, 2022.

The review assumes significance as experts have raised serious concerns over the spurt in imports of precious metals from the UAE under the trade agreement.

Seeking an urgent review of the pact, think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) has stated that the India-UAE CEPA allows unlimited imports of gold, silver, platinum, and diamonds from the UAE into India with zero tariffs in the coming years.

India should come up with bio-plastics policy: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India should come out with a national bio-plastics policy with fiscal incentives like capital subsidy as well as government support for research & development, according to a report.

The report titled 'Incentivising Bioplastics, a Biopolymer' by EY and ASSOCHAM outlines a strategic vision for transforming India's bio-plastics industry through targeted government interventions and regulatory changes along with educational campaigns and leveraging India's agricultural strengths to enhance sustainability and environmental performance.

To establish India as a premier hub for production of

bio-plastics, the report calls for comprehensive National Bio-Plastics Policy in India.

It suggested fiscal incentives like capital subsidies of up to 50 per cent on eligible capital investments over five years to encourage the development of bioplastics manufacturing and infrastructure.

The report also called for regulatory framework mandating use of bio-plastics, implementing QCOs (quality control orders), imposing import restrictions, and rationalising GST rates required for the growth of industry.

Government support for research and development, job creation and infrastructure within these clusters is essential for advancing technological innovation and ensuring economic viability, it added.



ELI SCHEMES Labour ministry to move Cabinet note, says Mandaviya

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday said the ministry will move a Cabinet note on the employment-linked incentive (ELI) scheme announced in the Union Budget 2024-25 in July.

The minister emphasised upon the importance of a robust mechanism to ensure that the benefits of the ELI Scheme reach the true beneficiaries. "The ministry is finalising a Cabinet note on ELI scheme and it will be soon placed before the Cabinet for approval," he told reporters here. The ELI Scheme aims to create over 2 crore jobs in the country in a period of 2 years. This will significantly contribute to increasing employment opportunities and enhancing livelihood. Three schemes for 'Employment Linked Incentive' were announced in Union Budget 2024-25.

NIFTY SCALES FRESH PEAK ON POSITIVE GLOBAL TRENDS Sensex closes above 83,000 for 1st time

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex rose by nearly 91 points to close at a fresh lifetime high while Nifty settled above the 25,400 level for the first time in a range-bound trade on Tuesday amid firm global trends ahead of the much-awaited US Fed's decision on interest rates.

Extending its record-setting spree for the second day, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 90.88 points or 0.11 per cent to settle at a lifetime high of 83,079.66. The key index settled above the 83,000 level for the first time. During the day, it rose by 163.63



points or 0.19 per cent to 83,152.41.

The NSE Nifty gained 34.80 points or 0.14 per cent to settle above 25,400 level for the first time at 25,418.55 - its

record closing high.

Among 30 Sensex firms, Bharti Airtel, NTPC, Mahindra & Mahindra, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Titan, Larsen & Toubro, ICICI Bank, Bajaj

Finance, Hindustan Unilever and Reliance Industries were the biggest gainers.

Tata Motors, Tata Steel, Adani Ports, JSW Steel, ITC and Asian Paints were the biggest laggards.

"The Indian market exhibited a subtle positive momentum, driven by the anticipation of a rate cut cycle by the US FED. Although a 25-bps cut is largely factored in, the market remains attuned to the FED's comments on the health of the economy and the future trajectory of rate cuts," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Sitharaman reviews capex plan of Railways Ministry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday reviewed the capex plan of the Railways Ministry and asked officials to focus on safety and convenience of commuters.

Sitharaman also told the officials to expedite the implementation of Kavach system (India's indigenous Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system) in a phased manner and meet the allocated capex target in the stipulated timeframe.

MoR officials informed the Minister that Kavach-related works are currently in progress in over 3000Rkm (route km) on the Delhi-Howrah and Delhi-Mumbai sections.

"Underlining the focus of the government on providing 'ease of living' for citizens, Sitharaman urged the officials of the Ministry of Railways to focus on capacity augmentation, safety and commuter convenience, including doubling and electrification of

existing railway tracks and also laying of new railway lines across the country as per the capex outlay provisioned in the Union Budget," a finance ministry statement said.

Sitharaman also stated that the Railways Ministry should expedite the conversion of 40,000 normal rail bogies to Vande Bharat standards as announced in the Interim Budget 2024-25 in order to enhance the safety, convenience and comfort of passengers.

Sitharaman exhorted the officials to ensure that capex target for FY 2024-25 is achieved in a time-bound manner and take forward the momentum achieved in the first 100 days of this Government, the statement added.

This meeting is a part of the series of review meetings that have been scheduled with Ministries/Departments with significant capex outlays in the Union Budget.

Rs 32.45 L cr investment pledged in renewables

PNS ■ GANDHINAGAR

Union New & Renewable Energy Minister Pralhad Joshi on Tuesday said a total investment of Rs 32.45 lakh crore is committed in renewable energy projects till 2030.

This assumes significance in view of India's ambitious target of over 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030. Addressing a press conference at the fourth Global Renewable Energy Investment Meet & Expo (RE-INVEST), Joshi said that state governments have given 'Sankalp Patra' (commitment) of 520 GW.

TRADE DEFICIT WIDENS TO 10-MONTH HIGH Exports plunge 9.3 pc to \$34.71 bn

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's exports registered a steepest decline in 13-month falling 9.3 per cent in August to USD 34.71 billion due to global economic uncertainties, while the trade deficit soared to a 10-month of USD 29.65 billion.

According to the government data released on Tuesday, imports increased by 3.3 per cent to USD 64.36 billion, which is a record high, due to a significant jump in the inbound shipments of gold and silver.

While gold imports more than doubled to USD 10.06 billion in August from USD



4.93 billion in the same month last year, silver imports swelled to USD 727 million in the month under review from USD 159 million in August 2023.

Due to a decline in petrole-

um prices, crude oil imports dipped by 32.38 per cent to USD 11 billion. The dip in prices has also impacted the merchandise exports.

The trade deficit, or the gap between imports and

exports, in October 2023 was USD 30.43 billion. The merchandise exports in July last year contracted by over 10 per cent.

India's merchandise exports dipped by 1.5 per cent in July. Exports during April-August this fiscal increased 1.14 per cent to USD 178.68 billion, and imports grew 7 per cent to USD 295.32 billion.

Merchandise trade deficit during April-August 2024 was USD 116.64 billion compared to USD 99.16 billion during April-August 2023.

Briefing the media on data, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that in the current global situation, exports is

a huge challenge.

Reasons like slowdown in China and continued recession in the EU and the US too are impacting the exports; dipping oil prices and rise in transportation cost due to the Red Sea crisis are hurting the shipments.

"There are a lot of challenges in trade," Barthwal told reporters here.

However, he added that despite these issues India's exports during the first five months of this fiscal have registered a positive growth.

Exports of petroleum products declined by 37.56 per cent to USD 5.95 billion during the month.

NORTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED
CIN No. U40109TG2000SGC034119

SHORT TENDER NOTICE NO. 02/2024-25 OF SE/OPI/HNK
Sealed tenders are invited from TSNPDCL registered contractors of Warangal District (Enzville) for Extension of supply to 1No. NDS load of 1c29KW duty extension of 1c29KW(DOTR) to M/s. Kapil property developers Ltd on request of Managing Director, Akavale Sanjeev, S/o. Sarangam at Peddapendur (N) of Dharmasagar section of Hanamankonda Rural Sub-Division in Hanamankonda Rural Division of Operation Circle Hanamankonda. The details of the works and other information can be obtained from our website www.tnspdel.in Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Operation Circle, Hanamankonda

Tender Notice No. 13/24-25 of DE/OPN/KOTHAGUDEM.
With Specification No. 01.02.03.04 & 05/2024-25
Sealed tenders are invited from TSNPDCL registered Contractors of Bhadradi Kothagudem circle for fixing of agency for various works in A.R. Pally, Dammameta Sections of Kothagudem Division & Palorcha Division. The details of the tender can be obtained from our website www.tnspdel.in Sd/- Divisional Engineer, Operation, Kothagudem
P.O. No. 428/PP/UD/W/11/02N-25. Dt. 17-08-2024

Hyderabad



FASHION FORWARD, PLANET APPROVED

PNS|HYDERABAD

Under the golden September sun and the manicured lawns of The Bristol Hotel, the highly anticipated Global India Couture Week took center stage, captivating the global fashion elite with a celebration of design, sustainability and cultural mastery. From September 11 to 15, 2024, the week shimmered with a rare elegance, offering a harmonious blend of India's rich artisanal heritage and the bold innovations shaping the future of fashion.

With the festival's theme, "Sustainability is Future," at the forefront, GICW 2024 was not just a visual spectacle but a clarion call for the fashion world to rethink its relationship with the planet. At the heart of it all? The artisans, designers and forward-thinkers who, through every thread and stitch, reminded us that the future of fashion is as much about revering the past as it is about embracing change.

Runway of tradition and tomorrow
The GICW runway was a visual masterpiece, a seamless journey through time, tradition and the future of fashion. India's finest designers captivated the audience with collections that honoured ancient crafts while embracing innovative, eco-conscious aesthetics.

Robert Naorem, a fashion entrepreneur, designer and makeup artist from Manipur, transported the audience to his homeland, where folk art and sustainability converged in a stunning showcase of men's and women's wear crafted from handloom fabrics. Opening the festival with his collection, Naorem celebrated the beauty of handloom and sustainability. Speaking to *The Pioneer*, he shared, "Our collection is deeply rooted in the craftsmanship of handloom, with a subtle infusion of modernity. The fabrics we use are incredibly versatile, capable of being dyed and re-dyed multiple times. All of our dyes are natural and organic, reflecting our dedication to sustainability."

Backstage, Naorem elaborated on his process: "We've also repurposed fabrics from previous showcases by re-dyeing them and adding intricate embroidery, giving them a completely new and refreshed look." His passion for heritage shone through, underscoring his belief that tradition is the heart of modern fashion. And the true show-stealing moment came when Urvashi Rautela, the showstopper for Robert Naorem, walked the runway in a traditional Manipuri wedding dress—a stunning red potli. Her ensemble was beautifully complemented by gold jewelry, including necklaces, earrings and bangles, all of which epitomised the elegance and cultural richness of Manipuri heritage. She looked absolutely breathtaking!

Manoviraj Khosla, one of India's ace fashion designers, showcased his latest men's wear collection on Day 2 of the GICW.



Under the opulent September skies, Global India Couture Week 2024 captivated the world with an extraordinary blend of India's rich artisanal heritage and avant-garde sustainability. From intricate handloom masterpieces to revolutionary eco-conscious designs, this year's festival set a new benchmark for fashion's evolution, seamlessly merging tradition with tomorrow's vision. *The Pioneer* covers it all!

"Sustainability is not about cutting corners—it's about going deeper," Khosla emphasised. His collection, often influenced by the Punk Revolution—with elements like green hair, jewellery, and rat tails—seamlessly incorporated sustainability through the use of recycled materials.

Model Nikhil Hariwansh praised Khosla's work, saying, "Manoviraj Khosla's collection beautifully reflects the theme of sustainability, merging innovative, eco-friendly fabrics with his distinctive style. His dedication to using sustainable materials and thoughtful craftsmanship shows how fashion can be both forward-thinking and environmentally conscious. Working with Khosla is always a pleasure. The atmosphere at his shows is fun and dynamic, and with his longtime collaborator and show director Prasad Bidapa, the event takes on an added flair, making it truly unique."

Craftsmanship reimaged

Designer Anandana Gaur Singh's latest collection showcased long-forgotten motifs and weaving techniques, beautifully highlighting the vibrant colors of Indian silk yarn. "We blend bright and pastel hues to create lightweight, versatile pieces that are wearable for all occasions," she told us.

Banarasi, a brand deeply rooted in its legacy, holds a special place in our hearts. Stuti Weaves, as an organisation, is deeply committed to ensuring consistent work opportunities for our weavers and their families. Singh emphasised, "With the rise of machine-dominated textile production, our efforts are crucial in safeguarding the rich tradition of handwoven textiles from being overshadowed by mass-produced, machine-made fabrics."

Their handwoven products are not just steeped in heritage; they transcend the transient nature of fast fashion. These pieces are meant to be cherished, preserved and passed down through generations. For instance, the dupatta worn by the showstopper was over 100 years old—a testament to the enduring beauty and timelessness of our craft.

"It's about more than just wearing these garments—it's about celebrating the artistry, sharing it with the younger



generation, and embracing sustainability. Just as a bride wears her mother's saree on her wedding day, we too can honor our rich cultural heritage and tradition. Let's ensure that sarees don't remain confined to the pages of textbooks but instead are proudly embraced as a living part of our legacy," the designer said with a beaming smile.

On day four of GICW, Saloni Panwar and Salman of Gulabo Jaipur showcased their latest festive collection, aptly named Nayab. From co-ord sets in shades of off-white, green, black and more to stunning Anarkali suits and dresses, Nayab truly lived up to its name. The iconic diva Karisma Kapoor walked the runway as the showstopper, exuding grace and elegance.

Set to the nostalgic tune of *Mehndi Hai Rache Wali* in the background, Karisma captivated the audience in a striking black kurta-skirt ensemble adorned with intricate golden handcraft work, paired with a black dupatta. Her look oozed the rich legacy of Jaipuri craftsmanship.

Her hair was styled in a sleek, elegant bun adorned with roses, while her makeup perfectly highlighted her features, with smoky eyes, blushed cheeks, shimmering eyeshadow and glossy lips. A gorgeous maangtika and jhumkas complemented her look, adding a touch of traditional elegance. As she waved to the crowd and blew kisses to a few lucky fans, Delhi was left utterly enchanted.

Artisanal excellence in every corner

Beyond the glamorous catwalk, the festival came alive in the form of vibrant stalls, where visitors were invited to dive deeper into India's storied traditions. Several meticulously curated stalls dotted the festival ground, each a testament to the skill and dedication of artisans from across India's diverse regions.



Buyers, collectors and fashion enthusiasts flocked to the stalls, where sustainable clothing, hand-crafted jewellery, and eco-friendly accessories dazzled under the sky.

To conclude day 4, actress Nushratt Bharuccha walked the runway as the showstopper for Taniya Khanuja, a distinguished luxury prêt-à-couture brand celebrated for its commitment to conscious luxury. Founded by Taniya Khanuja, the collection showcased by Khanuja featured a sophisticated range of structured ensembles, bodycon dresses, elegant sarees and power pantsuits.

Nushratt Bharuccha, radiant as ever, donned a stunning creation that perfectly captured the essence of Taniya Khanuja's vision. As she walked the ramp, her elegance and poise added a final flourish to an evening that celebrated fashion's ability to be both stylish and sustainable.

The grand finale of Global India Couture Week 2024 brought together some of fashion's finest. NIFD Global

Jaipur impressed with innovative designs, showcasing their creative edge. Rajdeep Ranawat mesmerised with his fusion of traditional Indian craftsmanship and modern silhouettes, while O:Live Couture dazzled with its contemporary, sophisticated bespoke pieces. Anju Modi closed the show with her rich handloom fabrics and intricate embroidery, paying tribute to India's cultural heritage. Together, these brands highlighted the perfect blend of tradition and modernity in Indian couture.

FASHION'S NEXT CHAPTER: Sustainable, bold and bright

As the final model sashayed down the runway and the applause filled the night sky, one thing was certain: GICW 2024 had done more than just present collections. It had shifted the conversation. In a world grappling with environmental challenges, the festival's focus on sustainability was more than timely—it was visionary.

The Global Fashion Festival has left an indelible mark, not just on India's fashion scene but on the global fashion landscape. It's a reminder that fashion isn't just about what we wear—it's about the stories we tell, the lives we touch, and the future we create.

And if GICW 2024 is anything to go by, the future of fashion is looking brighter, bolder and most importantly, sustainable.

Small feet, big impact: Vunnam duo's journey from classrooms to clean-ups

AARTI SREENATH
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At just 9 years old, Teerdha Vunnam embarked on an entrepreneurial journey that many only dream of, starting Foodite, a company dedicated to healthy snacks for children. What sparked this interest in business at such a young age?

Teerdha fondly recalls in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, "When my sister Bilwa won *Milo Evaru Koteswari*, the Telugu version of *KBC*, they opened a bank account for her. I thought, 'Maybe I should have one too!' But I wondered, 'What will I put in it?' That's how I got interested in entrepreneurship."

Driven by the desire to fill her new bank account, Teerdha began to think critically about the habits of children her age. "I noticed kids of my age would eat healthy meals but snack on junk food. That's when I thought, Why not introduce healthy snacks?" Thus, Foodite was born, offering nutritious snacks that reflected the healthy eating habits Teerdha grew up with.

As a young entrepreneur, Teerdha's journey wasn't without its challenges. "The biggest hurdle was people questioning my age. They saw me as just a kid and didn't think I was serious about entrepreneurship. They assumed it was a phase I'd grow out of, but I was determined," she explains.

But Teerdha's story is far from singular. Her sister, Bilvoa, played a significant role in shaping her environmental consciousness and entrepreneurial spirit. Bilvoa recalls, "Our family has always been eco-friendly and my mom, in particular, was deeply involved in environmental causes. When I was two, I began holding placards and spreading awareness alongside her. Teerdha and I have always supported each other, bouncing ideas off one another." The sisters' bond also extended to philanthropy. Both have been active in supporting causes such as Hyderabad Urban Makeover and the Robin Hood Army. "It's about doing good for society and the environment," says Teerdha, who adds, "I've always wanted to contribute and these organisations provided the perfect platform."

One of Teerdha's proudest moments came from her initiative, Adopt a Tree and Save Earth, where she distributed over 35,000 saplings to the public. "People thought I was selling them, but I told them, 'It costs a promise—to keep it alive for three years!'" she smiles. Three years later, when participants showed her the grown trees, it was a truly fulfilling moment.

Bilvoa, equally passionate about environmental causes, shares how they spearheaded the Lake Revival project in their school and initiated Project Recycle Bin, where students collected recyclable waste and set up dustbins in their neighbourhoods. "It was a great way to learn about the circular economy and the importance of recycling," she recalls.

In 2022, the sisters co-founded the Ozon Run, a movement dedicated to raising awareness about the ozone layer's depletion. "During the pandemic, the ozone layer began to heal, but as soon as people returned to normal life, the depletion resumed," says Bilvoa. Each year, the Ozon Run adopts a new goal to spread environmental awareness. "In the first year, we focused on increasing the green cover in Hyderabad by distributing saplings. The second year, we introduced the concept of 'organic festivals' by giving away seed Ganesha idols to participants."

This year's Ozon Run took on the issue of road hygiene in Hyderabad, with participants signing a petition to improve cleanliness. "We handed the petition to the respective authorities, making it a collective effort," says Bilvoa, emphasising the importance of public participation.

The petition submitted by the Vunnam sisters focused on

In an exclusive discussion with *The Pioneer*, the Vunnam sisters Teerdha and Bilwa take us through their extraordinary journey of doing their bit for the betterment of the environment in Hyderabad



addressing the increasing waste on the roads in their community. Teerdha highlighted that despite being taxpayers—or, in her case, a taxpayer's daughter—the cleanliness of the roads was not being maintained. The petition not only detailed the specific community and school backing it but also emphasised why the petitioners felt compelled to act, including how poor road conditions could lead to health concerns, like viral fever.

Teerdha shared how she personally approached the GHMC commissioner to voice these concerns, explaining that as taxpayers, they expected cleaner roads. She noted that it wasn't a matter of inability on the authorities' part but rather a lack of will to maintain consistent efforts. Her conversation with the commissioner led to the roads being cleaned in less than 24 hours, a moment that demonstrated how persistence and action could bring about tangible results.

In addition to their petition efforts, the sisters spearheaded the *Green Steps initiative*. This project, co-authored by Teerdha and her sister Bilvoa, is a book-cum-journal aimed at encouraging individuals to adopt more sustainable practices in their daily lives. The journal includes sections where people can track activities like watering plants, organic festivals, practicing yoga and monitoring plastic usage. The guide also provides tips on sustainability and introduces concepts like circular economy and reducing plastic waste. Furthermore, it encourages group involvement, where one community or school can challenge another to participate in clean-up drives or other eco-friendly activities. Teerdha and Bilvoa ensured that *Green Steps* was made available online to minimise paper waste, aligning with their eco-conscious approach. Their overarching goal with this initiative was to make sustainability a habit, akin to brushing your teeth or segregating waste, so it becomes a natural part of daily life. Teerdha's role as a Climate Action Ambassador further deepened her commitment to these causes.

When asked how she balances her time between being a student, entrepreneur and activist, Teerdha attributed her ability to time management. Starting young, she developed a natural rhythm that allowed her to focus on school while dedicating time to her entrepreneurial and environmental pursuits. Schoolwork required only a small portion of her day, leaving room for her passions.

Funding for their initiatives primarily comes from sponsorships and fundraisers. Teerdha shared that while they receive government support in the form of permissions and certifications—like for their lake revival project—the financial backing largely comes from their efforts and the support of individuals who believe in their cause. Teerdha concluded the interview with advice for other young people who want to make a difference but don't know where to start. "It doesn't matter how small or big it is," she said. "What matters is that you start and that it impacts at least one person—even if that person is yourself."

Posture's impact on shoulder health

Good posture can not only make you look confident and well-aligned but can also help in maintaining overall body health, especially when it comes to your shoulders. For that, you must first understand the shoulder-spine relationship.

The shoulder is a ball-and-socket joint, which means it's designed to have an extremely mobile joint. The shoulder is connected to the spine by numerous muscles, ligaments, and tendons that help support it and allow it to move. The primary connections are formed where the scapula (shoulder blade) meets the clavicle (collar bone) and humerus (upper arm bone), thus creating the shoulder joint, and where the thoracic spine in your upper or mid back supports the scapula, allowing your shoulder to move. Muscles such as your trapezius, rhomboids, and rotator cuff muscles all link your spine to your shoulder, so you need stability but also mobility.

How poor posture affects the shoulders?

When you have bad posture, like slouching or hunching over, it will create an imbalance in the shoulder-spine relationship.

● **Rounded shoulders:** This is a posture problem where your shoulders are in front of the midline region. It usually occurs because of sitting for long hours or working on a computer. This position shortens the chest muscles and overstretches the upper back muscles, leading to an imbalance.

● **Forward head posture:** When your head is pushed forward, it puts a strain on the neck and upper back muscles. This shift leads to the shoulders internally rotating, consequently increasing the risk of impingement and other injuries.

● **Kyphosis:** Increased forward thoracic spine curvature can impede the scapular motion and cause an unequal stress distribution at the shoulder joint.

Consequences of poor posture

● **Muscle imbalance:** Bad posture creates a muscular imbalance between the front and back of your body. This can put strain on the shoulder as the chest muscles tighten and the upper back muscles weaken.

● **Joint misalignment:** Shoulders and spines with misalignment increase the wear and tear on joints that are liable to be

injured, more like rotator cuff tears and shoulder impingement.

● **Reduced range of motion:** A misaligned spine reduces the range of the shoulder, so it is difficult to perform everyday tasks and increases the possibility of getting strains or dislocations.

● **Increased injury risk:** When your posture is poor, it leads to an unstable base for your shoulder movements, which means that the risk of acute injuries (e.g., dislocations) and chronic conditions (e.g., tendonitis) skyrocket.

Tips for improving posture and shoulder health

Improving posture and shoulder health requires multiple approaches. First, set up a proper workstation. Make sure your computer screen is at eye level or slightly below, your feet are flat on the floor or on a small footrest and your chair supports the natural curve of your lower back. Strong posture-specific exercises targeting the

muscles of the upper back and shoulders can help, with exercises such as rows, scapular retractions, and shoulder blade squeezes being helpful. Regular daily stretching of the chest, neck and shoulders is also vital to promote flexibility and balance between opposing muscle groups. In addition to these specific strategies, it is important to be mindful of your posture throughout the day in both sitting and standing positions.

Most importantly, if you are struggling with chronic and persistent pain and limited movement, consider seeing a physical therapist for an expert evaluation to get specific recommendations on exercises and adjustments that you personally need in order to improve your posture and mobility.

The shoulder-spine connection is a critical aspect of overall physical health. Poor posture can lead to various shoulder problems, including muscle imbalances, joint misalignments, and increased injury risk. By understanding this connection and implementing strategies to maintain good posture, you can significantly improve your shoulder health and reduce the risk of injuries. Small adjustments and regular exercises can make a big difference in maintaining a healthy shoulder-spine relationship.

(The author, Dr. Gurdeep Avinash Ratra, is a Consultant - Orthopedics at Manipal Hospitals.)



what's brewing?

Retired AP High Court Judge Justice B Chandraraj, along with Dr. Amit Sadhukhan from Tata Institute of Social Sciences and several other senior artists, marked their presence at the International Art Show 2024, held at Chitramayee State Gallery of Art in Jubilee Hills.

Cheityna Latha
Janny
Roja
Maredu Ramu
Monika
Madhuri
P J. Stalin and MGR
Labhya

Apple unveils 'more with imagine' offers

Imagine by Ample - Apple's Premium Partner - India's Most Trusted Apple Expert is thrilled to announce its exciting new offers for the launch of the highly awaited iPhone 16. Under the "More with Imagine" campaign, customers can pre-book the iPhone 16 from 13th to 19th September for just 5,000 and enjoy a range of exciting vouchers and rewards from brands like Asics, Bose, Mynta and Swiggy.

Adobe Express launches updates in Indian languages

Today, Adobe (Nasdaq: ADBE) announced exciting Indian language updates to its all-in-one content creation app Adobe Express, enabling millions of people across the country to make stand-out designs to promote their ideas, passions and businesses. The interface for Adobe Express on Desktop Web and mobile is now available in Hindi, Tamil and Bengali, allowing users the comfort of leveraging features in their native languages. Aimed at enabling local content creation, the Translate feature in Adobe Express for Desktop Web now supports eight Indian languages - Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Punjabi, Tamil and Telugu.

Zee Cinemalu marks 8th anniversary

Zee Cinemalu, the one-stop destination for Telugu movie buffs, is celebrating its eighth anniversary with a stunning rebranding that promises an even livelier and engaging viewing experience. This milestone adds a new level of excitement as the channel, with its tagline "Dil Pai Super hit", continues to captivate with its subtle yet impactful enhancements in presentation and design. Its vibrant new identity focuses on enhancing the viewer experience by optimising its content universe for a more immersive feel. This transformation comes with a promise to entertain the viewers with more engaging films featuring legendary characters and epic stories, offering an unmatched cinematic experience. The channel introduces a bold and vibrant colour palette of orange, red, green and white, symbolising joy and confidence.

Fort Jadhavgad celebrates Ganesh Chaturthi

As Ganesh Chaturthi unfolded, Fort Jadhavgad embraced the festival with grand celebrations in true Marathimola style. Central to the festivities was the historic Ganapati Mandir within the fort, a revered religious site dedicated to Lord Ganesh. Built over 300 years ago, the temple holds a significant place in the hearts of the local community and visitors alike and recently was the focal point of ongoing Ganesh Utsav activities.

Heartbeat of India's rock scene

With 'Dirty 30', India's bedrock of mainstream rock is celebrating the ethos of the festival, which encapsulates the anti-establishment rigour of the rock genre, on November 16 and 17, 2024. The sprawling, open-air Bayview Lawns in Mazagon will house the 30th Edition of Mahindra I-Rock. During the 29th edition, the acts sent the rockers into a trance, along with the surprise act of Parikrama featuring Farhad Wadia.

Rahul Mishra foray into Hyderabad

Rahul Mishra is pleased to announce the opening of its latest flagship store in Hyderabad's tony Banjara Hills expanding the global design house's presence within India. With this new and first-of-its-kind retail space designed by Amit Chhabra, Rahul Mishra now has 4 stores across the country including Mumbai, New Delhi and Hyderabad.

Swiggy Instamart quick commerce to 42 cities

As the festive season approaches, Swiggy Instamart, India's pioneering quick commerce platform, is expanding its reach, bringing its total operational cities to 42. The quick commerce platform has launched in 10 new cities over the past two months, including Thrissur, Mangalore, Kanpur, Udaipur, Warangal, Salem, Amritsar, Bhopal, Varanasi and Ludhiana, introducing the convenience of quick commerce to many of these cities for the first time. This expansion is part of Swiggy's commitment to making everyday needs accessible and convenient for customers across India.

India Design ID 2024

After twelve successful years of India Design ID in New Delhi, they bring the country's most definitive design week to Mumbai this year. Exhibiting bespoke furniture, lighting, furnishings, decor, collectibles and luxurious interior solutions, this is the nation's pioneering platform for all things design. ID Mumbai will be held from 27-29 September 2024 at Jio World Garden, BKC.

PARTY
Photos by- SV Chary

MGM Healthcare announced the launch of its cutting-edge In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) services. The newly established Varam IVF centre at MGM healthcare aims to provide advanced fertility treatments and personalised care, utilising latest technologies. The centre located on the 6th Floor of MGM Healthcare in Aminjikarai, Chennai, brings together renowned specialists with state-of-the-art technology and extensive ancillary services all under one roof.

Novotel Hyderabad Airport has announced its Seafood Nights to raise the dining experience bar, a limited-period gastronomic celebration in the city, inviting guests to indulge in the finest delicacies of the ocean. Every Saturday till 28th September 2024, guests are invited to indulge in a carefully crafted menu by the hotel's renowned culinary team, showcasing the finest ocean delicacies and offering an unforgettable experience.

FUN

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	
5				6
7		8		
9			10	
12	13	14	15	
17			18	
19				

NANCY

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- In a bottle
- A baking ingredient
- A clothing size
- One or the other
- A heavy metal
- A small sharp carpet nail
- Lump of gold
- A smell
- A body organ
- A minder of sheep
- A feeling of fondness or liking
- An inscribed flat stone beside a grave
- Speak unclearly
- Fabric
- Protect from danger
- Hold tightly

SOLUTION

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

DOWN

- White frozen dew
- Grow vegetables here
- Have a conversation
- A health professional

'I can't wait to take on the villainous role now!'

Actress Ritika Singh, who is currently basking on the success of her latest venture, *Bench Life*, speaks to *The Pioneer* about balancing acting and mixed martial arts simultaneously and also takes us back through the shooting sets. She also shared some exclusive insights about her upcoming South project

SHIKHA DUGGAL

One must-watch jewel in the ever-expanding Telugu digital world is Sony LIV's most recent original series, *Bench Life*. With a distinctive blend of sympathetic characters, intriguing storylines and an authentic representation of everyday life, this captivating series, directed by Manasa Sharma and produced by Niharika Konidela's Pink Elephant Pictures, has been making waves.

Bench Life is a fascinating contribution to the Telugu storytelling scene with its novel viewpoint, subtle performances and careful examination of subjects that appeal to audiences. The lead actress, Ritika Singh, accords with us as well!

She vocalises, "In the series, my character experiences hardships and I recall going through similar things in my own life. Acting was my full-time career, but I never neglected to set aside time for martial arts practice. See where it led me! I participated in the global championship last year. I learned karate from my father, but let me just say that not every actor receives the same kind of support. He has only ever asked me to choose my roles wisely throughout my entire life."

Her career has featured a distinctive fusion of grounded, daily characters like those in *Bench Life* and action-packed roles like those in *Irudhi Suttru*. But how did she manage to balance these opposing roles? Well, the mixed martial artist supposes, "On



I WISH I LOOKED A BIT THINNER IN BENCH LIFE, BUT I COULDN'T HAVE ACCOMPLISHED IT BECAUSE I WAS SIMULTANEOUSLY SHOOTING FOR MY FORTHCOMING SOUTH VENTURE, WHERE I AM MEANT TO PLAY TWO ROLES

the sets of *Bench Life*, it was difficult for me to control my enthusiasm because, well, in actual life, I get really excited easily. Given that my character wasn't in the best of moods, I was expected to play the part of a nice girl. As a result, I played it cool and subtle in *Bench Life*. Since that was the whole point, I'm sure that when people saw my series, they must have felt cut off from my character."

As we have all seen, a lot of young professionals identified with the themes of *Bench Life*, which included pursuing ambitions and being dissatisfied in the workplace. Based on the same assumptions, the Filmfare awardee

hypothesises for us, "I'm glad to see that people are straying from those conventional careers. I can locate them going on an exploration! I get really excited when I hear young ladies wanting to be hairstylists or nail artists. Barriers are finally being broken by globalisation. The situation was entirely different six years ago; nowadays, we have coaching classes for everything. We created this series for precisely this reason."

But it goes beyond that. Ritika, for instance, says, "I am all for risks in real life (she titters a little). I'm addicted to adrenaline. I enjoy living in danger!

Engaging with a risky individual doesn't even bother me, hehe. If not, my existence would be far too monotonous. I actually don't like an organised existence and I'm not trying to come across as poisonous at all. Taking chances is always enjoyable."

Continuing on a more general note, she says, "I have given numerous self-defense workshops throughout my life, so for me, I can remember performing a particular song called *Kalapakkaara* with Dulquer Salmaan and receiving criticism asking why I did it! For the sake of representation, they expected me to play a very strong part. They thought I was promoting myself to become famous. However, the song was not even filmed from a compromising position, so why the outcry? And come on, I'd want to respond to people that my co-star Dulquer is also a highly responsible actor—he never permits anything obscene to occur on set. Therefore, an actress can still film a special song even if she plays an independent role. A special song like *Kalapakkaara* meant nothing more to me than to celebrate women. I can still have hot looks on-screen. Furthermore, I never support shady behaviour in the industry."

With great anticipation, the *Oh My Kadavule* fame says, "I wish I had looked a bit thinner in *Bench Life*, but I couldn't have accomplished it because I was simultaneously shooting for my forthcoming South venture where I am meant to play two roles. People have been complimenting me on my appearance in *Bench Life*, so I guess I did okay. I am happy with it. I can't wait to take on a villainous role now! I want to be in charge and mix it up with chic action sequences."

CHOREOGRAPHER'S CASE

It is a case of sexual harassment at workplace: REDRESSAL PANEL

The woman choreographer who lodged a police complaint on choreographer Jani Master is a serious case, feels the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce Sexual Harassment Redressal Panel.

"It is not the case of two individuals; it is sexual harassment at the workplace and it is a serious case," said Jhansi, the Chairman of the Panel. She added that she approached the panel a few days ago and they recorded the statements of both parties.

"There are no proper guidelines here because the film industry is not a single organisation, so we follow the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace (POSH) guidelines," she said.

She added that they formed a committee in the industry in 2018 and from then onwards they are working on it. "Since the government and committee must meet and establish appropriate norms for the workplace, we are forced to work much harder because we lack a structure and set of rules."

She continued by saying that they are currently handling problems as they arise. "Till now we only have single-digit cases, because some women may not come forward because of fear and also worry about if they file a complaint, they may not get work, so that's the one reason most of the women are not coming forward if something happened at their workplace," she said.

The committee openly addressed the choreographer issue on Tuesday to raise awareness among women facing challenges at work. "If the person is talented, she/he can get work in the industry and it is proved in the present case. The female choreographer who complained about a male choreographer is working with top production houses and top actors. Actually, both choreographers are extremely talented," said Jhansi.

Thammareddy Bharadwaj, one of the members of the panel, said that the victim had first approached him with her problems. "She told her problems and we got her a choreographer card and also spoke to their association. When the issue got serious, we asked her to go for a police complaint and she did. They will start

their enquiry and we have already started our enquiry," said Thammareddy Bharadwaj.

He explained that they have been doing this for several years now, but still many women haven't been comfortable coming forward to address their issues. "If anything wrong happened to a woman at her workplace, she should come forward courageously and can file a complaint with our panel; that's why we are addressing the present issue openly," said Thammareddy.

The victim had joined the industry as a minor at a very tender age, said Jhansi. "The accused is a very big person in position and authority, so we are not supporting one individual; we are taking the facts and strong evidence," she said. She added that it is sexual harassment at the workplace and working on the fast track.

"Enquiry is in the process; we have 90 days to finish, but we are on the fast track and want to complete it in fewer days," said Jhansi.

The panel convenor, Damodara Prasad, said that they asked the Dancers and Choreographers Association to put aside the choreographer from the top post. "He is holding the top post in the Telugu Film and TV Dancers and Dance Directors Association, so we asked the association to keep him aside from the post till the case is closed," said Damodara Prasad.

Everyone knows that the accused party has filed a complaint with the police department and registered an FIR. So the panel also wants to address this case openly because it gives awareness among the people, especially women who are suffering at the workplace. "We are putting a box at our Film Chamber office and they can drop their complaint; we will maintain the confidentiality of the member," said Damodara Prasad. Apart from it, they are also providing a phone number (9849972280) and an email (complaints@telugufilmchamber.in) which anyone can complain about.

"We solved a few issues that have come up over the years and we also found that there are two false cases too. After our enquiry, if anything proves against them, we will punish them according to the guidelines," he said.

Satya Dev's Zebra set to dazzle this Diwali

Satya Dev is a skilled actor, yet unfortunately, he hasn't had any great opportunities in the past years. The film *Krishnamma*, his latest release this year, earned him praise but did not perform well financially.

Currently, the actor has teamed up with Kannada actor Daali Dhananjaya for the movie *Zebra*. Eashvar Karthic holds the position of director, while SN Reddy, S Padmaja, Bala Sundaram and Dinesh Sundaram serve as producers. On Tuesday, the makers released a motion poster showcasing the main characters and revealed the film's release date. The motion poster releases the intense looks of Sathyaraj, Satya Akkala, Jennifer Piccinato, Sunil, Priya Bhavani Shankar, Daali Dhananjaya and Satya Dev. One of the most captivating elements of the motion poster is its depiction of a chess game, which symbolises the central conflict and strategic maneuvering that will drive the narrative.

According to the makers, the film is going to be an action film with some intense scenes. Ravi Basur provided the background score for this film. The makers announced that they are planning to release *Zebra* on October 31 in all south Indian languages and Hindi on the occasion of Diwali.



Pawan Kalyan is planning to shoot his films in Vijayawada!

Pawan Kalyan, the Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, is currently occupied with various responsibilities. Despite being an actor, he is now more engaged in politics. Prior to entering the latest elections, the actor-turned-politician agreed to star in three Telugu movies, including *Ustaad Bhagat Singh*, *Hari Hara Veera Mallu* and *OG*. He began filming all three movies before the elections,

but once he assumed the role of Deputy Chief Minister, he has been pretty much held off with the duties.

His much-anticipated film *OG* still needs a few more days to finish, while another film *Hari Hara Veera Mallu* has already completed 60% of its shooting, according to a source.

Now, the Deputy Chief Minister reassured all the producers of these films that he

intended to finish it. "It is not possible for him to come to Hyderabad and shoot here in studios because he is the Deputy CM and he needs full security. Thus, he asked the producers to erect a set in Vijayawada and they can shoot there and complete it," said the source. The producers are pleased to receive the news and have also made plans to do the same in Vijayawada.

However, the city of Vijayawada experienced severe flooding due to heavy rains, causing significant hardship for many residents. Due to this, the source also shared that the shooting plan was also postponed. Now, with the city coming a little under control, the source reveals, "The producers are making plans to erect a set in Vijayawada near the Deputy CM's house, so that he can complete the shoot. The producers are now searching for a suitable place to get the shooting. They want to shoot using the blue mat so that they can add graphics later. Pawan Kalyan wanted to complete *OG* first and then look after the other films."



TELUGU SHORT FILM AT CHICAGO SOUTH ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL

Emerging filmmaker Santhosh Ram Mavuri's Telugu short film *Weave of Culture* will have its Chicago debut at the Chicago South Asian Film Festival on September 22, 2024. The screening is scheduled at the Matrix Club in Naperville and will present viewers with a touching depiction of identity, diversity and the relationships that go beyond cultural differences. Director and producer Santhosh Ram Mavuri expressed that *Weave of Culture* was created out of a

strong admiration for the richness of their Handlooms and their potential extinction. "It's a celebration of the beauty that comes from understanding, embracing and learning from our own heritage," said Santhosh.

Winner at various international festivals like the 14th Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival, 8th Indian World Film Festival, World Fest Houston and Panther City Film Festival, *Weave of Culture* has already received quite a lot of recognition.



'Bahirbhoomi' came in when I was contemplating stepping away from smaller projects'



Actor Noel hasn't been appearing in many films off late. In fact, he only appeared in *Rangbali*, which was released last year. However, he is starring in a movie named *Bahirbhoomi*, which is being directed by Ram Prasad Konduru. Machha Venu Madhav serves as the producer, while Rishitha Nellore takes on the role of the female lead. The film's first look has been released, with a theatrical

release anytime soon. "From the beginning, Noel has supported me for this film. The scenes between Noel and Jabardasth Phani are going to be the highlight of the film. You will get to know the significance behind the title *Bahirbhoomi* once you watch this film," said director Ram Prasad. He further stated that he emphasises the wealth of our culture when compared to Western influences in the movie. The lead-

ing actresses, Rishitha and Garima Satendra, received high praise from the director for their outstanding performances in the film.

Meanwhile, the lead star of the film, Noel, stated that he got this film at the perfect moment.

"*Bahirbhoomi* arrived at the crossroads in my career, when I was contemplating stepping away from smaller projects. This film is built on the strengths of producer Venu Madhav, director Ram Prasad

and the entire team. I am excited for audiences to experience it," said Noel. Producer Machha Venu Madhav stated that his team played a crucial role in bringing *Bahirbhoomi* to reality.

"While many recent films have opted for English titles associated with 'toilet', we boldly chose *Bahirbhoomi*, emphasising its uniqueness," said the producer. He added that he will announce the release date soon.

NEW SUPPORT STAFF WILL HAVE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE, BUT NO PROBLEM AS OF NOW: ROHIT SHARMA

PTI ■ CHENNAI

India captain Rohit Sharma on Tuesday said head coach Gautam Gambhir's style is different from his predecessor Rahul Dravid but insisted he shares a good rapport with the new appointee, and the rest of his fresh set of support staff. Gambhir, a World Cup-winning former opener, took charge of India in July during a white ball tour to Sri Lanka, and will now helm the team in its first Test series under his tutelage against Bangladesh, beginning here on Thursday. In Gambhir's first outing as coach, India swept the T20I series against the Islanders 3-0, but lost the ensuing ODI series 0-2. "Obviously, Rahul bhai, Vikram Rathour (former batting coach) and Paras Mhambrey (former bowling coach) were a different team and it is only acceptable that the new support staff will bring different perspective," Rohit said in the pre-series press

conference here on Tuesday. "But the matches that we engaged in (with the new staff) in Sri Lanka, they seemed to be sensible and understanding. They began to learn things pretty quickly within the team," he added. Dravid's tenure ended after India's T20 World Cup triumph in the West Indies and he will next be seen heading the coaching staff of IPL side Rajasthan Royals. Rathour and Mhambrey were replaced by Abhishek Nayar (assistant coach) and South African Morne Morkel (bowling coach), while former Dutch all-rounder Ryan ten Doeschate also joined as an assistant coach. While Nayar joining the team was largely a given, Morkel and Doeschate, who worked with Gambhir at the Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL, beat former pacers R Vinayakumar and L Balaji in the race to spots among the India support staff. Rohit used his long association with Gambhir during the latter's playing days, and with



Abhishek Nayar in the Mumbai dressing room to underline his comfortable working relation with them. "It's a new (support) staff for sure, but I have known Gautam

Gambhir and Abhishek Nayar long enough. Every support staff has its operating style, and that's what we were expecting. "I have worked with different coaches over 17 years of my

career, and it's vital to understand that all of them have a unique perspective (about cricket), and it's a must that you adjust with them," said Rohit.

While Rohit has never worked alongside Morkel and Doeschate, the 37-year-old said he has enough knowledge of them from their days as cricketers to strike a comfortable equation. "I have also played matches against Morne Morkel and Ryan ten Doeschate. I have some close encounters with Morkel, but not so much with Ryan, may be a couple of matches. But that doesn't matter. "As of now, there have been no issues or problems as such (with the new set of support staff). We have a great understanding of each other. "Good understanding is important, and I have that with them," he added on his dynamics with the new head coach and his team. In his first media interaction after taking charge in July, the 42-year-old Gambhir had also rejected apprehensions about his equation with the team's senior players by citing his familiarity with them during his playing days.



Massive hike in Women's T20 WC prize fund as ICC announces pay parity

PTI ■ DUBAI

In a landmark decision, the International Cricket Council on Tuesday announced equal prize money for men and women in World Cups, starting with next month's women's T20 showpiece, the purse for which has been hiked by a staggering 225 per cent to USD 7.95 million. The winners of the women's T20 World Cup will walk away with USD 2.34 million from this fund, a 134 per cent increase on the USD one million awarded to Australian women when they clinched the title in South Africa in 2023, said the ICC in a statement. Men's T20 World Cup champions India had received USD 2.45 million in cash prize earlier this year. "The ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 will be the first ICC event where women will receive the same prize money as their male counterparts, marking a significant milestone in the sport's history," said the ICC. The decision ensures that the ICC reached its prize money equity target seven years ahead of its schedule of 2030. The runners-up at the showpiece event next month will get USD 1.17 million, an increase of 134 per cent in comparison to the USD 500,000 South Africa received for reaching the final on home soil at Newlands Cricket

Ground. The two losing semi-finalists will earn USD 675,000 (up from USD 210,000 in 2023), with the overall prize pot totalling USD 7,958,080, a massive increase of 225 per cent from last year's total fund of USD 2.45 million. Each win during the group stages will see teams take home USD 31,154, while the six teams who fail to reach the semi-finals will share a pool of USD 1.35 million depending on their finishing positions. In comparison, the equivalent pool for the six teams in 2023 was USD 180,000, shared equally. Teams who finish third or fourth in their group will take USD 270,000 each while the teams who finish fifth in their group will both receive USD 135,000. "This move is in line with the ICC's strategy to prioritise the women's game and accelerate its growth by 2032. Teams will now receive equal prize money for the equivalent finishing position at comparable events as well as the same amount for winning a match at those events," the ICC added. The ninth edition of the tournament will take place across two venues in the UAE - Dubai and Sharjah - from October 3 to 20. All group matches will be completed before October 15. The semi-finals are scheduled for October 17 and 18, followed by the final on October 20.

Playing against India is the best challenge you get nowadays: Bangladesh coach

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha feels playing against cricketing powerhouse India will give his team a fair assessment of where it stands internationally, as he looks forward to relishing the challenge against Rohit Sharma's side in the two-Test series commencing on Thursday. Bangladesh are coming off a triumphant 2-0 away Test-series win against Pakistan, having annihilated the Shan Masood-led side by 10 wickets in the opening game, following which they won the second match by six wickets. However, India, currently leading the World Test Championship (WTC) table, are expected to pose a much stronger challenge to Bangladesh despite the eastern neighbours riding high on confidence.

"We are encouraged by playing the best team in the world, and coming to India and playing against them is the best challenge you get nowadays. Playing against the best always gives you the perception of where you stand, and as sports persons, we always look forward to it," said Hathurusingha, the former Sri Lankan all-rounder, who was appointed Bangladesh coach early last year, during a pre-match press conference on Tuesday. Bangladesh, following the two-Test series against India, will also play three T20Is starting October 6. Hathurusingha, when asked if the Test series whitewash of Pakistan had created pressure of expectation on his side coming into the series against India, said that though the victories had boosted the team's confidence, it also knew its strengths and weaknesses.



"It's (win against Pakistan) certainly given us a lot of confidence coming into this series. Keeping the outcome aside, the way we played the series and we handled certain situations, like lagging and coming back, and the people who contributed to it -- all give us a lot of belief for this series" "Pressure (of playing against India) is

a privilege. We understand where we stand, along with our strengths and limitations," he said. The Bangladesh squad comprises eight specialist batters, six bowlers and two all-rounders and Hathurusingha called it the "most rounded" side across departments. "This is probably the most rounded team produced by Bangladesh. We have covered a lot of bases and have got a lot of fast bowlers," he said. "We also have an experienced spin attack, besides also having a great depth in our batting. Also, two of our spinners are genuine batters with Test hundreds. It all gives a great balance to our side, along with confidence." Bangladesh will continue to have the services of veterans like Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mehidy Hasan Miraz. While Shakib was decent across departments in Pakistan, Mushfiqur

emerged as the side's highest run-scorer in the series, while Miraz was their top wicket-taker. "Shakib has always played a huge part in Bangladesh cricket, and he always gives us the luxury to balance the team the way we want, thanks to his all-round abilities," he said. "His adaptability and experience add to it. He is coming off a county stint and is in good shape. Miraz has been the most-improved Bangladesh cricketer in the last 5-6 years and is ready to take over whenever Shakib moves out. "He has been batting well, and his bowling has always been his number one strength, while he has also been great on the field lately," added the Sri Lankan. Speaking about the track, which has a fair sprinkling of red soil, Hathurusingha said it looked like a "sporting wicket".

Gillespie backs Australia bowlers to do the job against red-hot India

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia's formidable bowling attack featuring Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon "can do the job" against "red hot" India in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy later this year, believes head coach of Pakistan's Test team Jason Gillespie. Since 2014-15, Australia have failed to lay their hands on the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with India winning four consecutive series, including the historic triumphs Down Under in 2018-19 and 2020-21. But Gillespie, who claimed 259 wickets in 71 Tests, feels Australian bowlers can reverse the trend. "I will be backing them in and I am sure they can do the job," the former Australian pacer told 'Fox Sports'. "They are the best bowlers in the country. Their records speak for themselves. This quartet, including Nathan



Lyon, is the best possible bowling attack that Australia can put out in the park," he added. The Rohit Sharma-led Indian team hasn't lost a series in the ongoing WTC cycle with India defeating West Indies (away) and England (home) and holding South Africa (away) to

a draw. However, Gillespie is confident that Australia can beat the visitors. "They are red-hot, they are playing some good Test cricket for a while now. Even though they have beaten Australia in recent times. I think Australia have a chance to beat India this time around," he said. The series, a part of the World Test Championship, gets underway from November 22 in Perth. It is also for the first time since 1991-92 that India and Australia will play five Tests for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Following David Warner's retirement, Steve Smith had moved up to fill the void in the opening slot but he has not fared well, averaging a mere 28.50 in four Tests with only one fifty to his name. Gillespie said he would expect Smith to return to the coveted No 4 slot - where the batter is 34 runs short of completing 6,000 runs in Tests. "Players like David Warner are pretty tough to replace. I didn't mind the idea of Steve Smith going up in the order. I have a feeling that he might have slot back in the middle order to bat at 4," Gillespie added. The finalists of the last WTC cycle, India and Australia occupy the top two.

ICC delegation to review security and other arrangements for Champions Trophy

PTI ■ KARACHI

A five-member delegation of the International Cricket Council (ICC) will land in Karachi on Tuesday for an inspection visit for next year's Champions Trophy in Pakistan. Top officials of ICC's Events and Security Departments and the General Manager Cricket and Production Manager are part of the delegation. Andy Atkinson, the ICC Pitch Consultant, had also visited Pakistan on

three different occasions since April. According to details, the ICC delegation would discuss the tentative schedule of the tournament which was prepared and sent by the Pakistan Cricket Board to them some months back. "The tentative schedule is important because it involves the Indian team being based in Lahore and playing all their matches in the city," a well-informed source said. The source said a scenario where the Indian government does not allow the

Indian travel to Pakistan will also be discussed. The delegation would inspect the ongoing construction work in Karachi and the team hotel arrangements before flying to Islamabad and Lahore for the same purpose. "The delegation which includes their ICC Security Manager would also get briefings from security officials in Pakistan." The source said it is entirely up to the ICC when they decide to finalise and announce the tournament schedule.

MLC franchisee keen on signing James Anderson: Report

PTI ■ LONDON

Former England pacer James Anderson could return to T20 cricket after a decade following a Major League Cricket team's interest in hiring his services for the upcoming 2025 season. The 42-year-old, who retired from international cricket in July, has not played any white-ball cricket since 2019. His

last T20 match was the 2014 NatWest Blast final for Lancashire while his last T20 assignment for England was in 2009. However, "senior figures with at least one MLC team have had their interest pricked by Anderson's comments last month about a return to white-ball cricket," according to a 'BBC Sports' report. The franchise is looking to hire the services of England's

all-time leading Test wicket-taker for the third edition of the T20 league in United States next year. The short stint in MLC could make Anderson, who took 704 wickets in 188 Tests, richer by 135,000 pounds (approx 1,49,00,000). Last month, Anderson had said he is "still fit enough" to continue his cricket career and will consider a move into white-ball cricket.



Harmanpreet, Sreejesh shortlisted for FIH Hockey Stars Awards

PTI ■ LAUSANNE (SWITZERLAND)

India captain Harmanpreet Singh was on Tuesday nominated for the player of the year award by the FIH while the legendary PR Sreejesh will be in contention for goalkeeper of the year honour. The International Hockey Federation's (FIH) announced the shortlisted candidates. Both Harmanpreet and Sreejesh played vital roles in India's splendid campaign in the Paris Olympics where the team claimed a bronze medal. Skipper Harmanpreet led from the front with 10 goals - most for any player in the tournament. Harmanpreet will compete with Thierry Brinkman (Netherlands), Joep de Mol (Netherlands), Hannes Müller (Germany), and Zach Wallace (England) for the award. Playing in his last tournament for India, the venerable Sreejesh put forth resolute display of defence throughout the campaign, especially against the Great Britain

when the team was reduced to 10 men in the second quarter of the quarterfinal. India beat Great Britain 4-2 in penalty shootout to reach the semifinal and later on defeated Spain 2-1 to win the bronze medal contest. Sreejesh has competition from Pirmin Blaak (Netherlands), Luis Calzado (Spain), Jean-Paul Danneberg (GER), and Tomas Santiago (Argentina). "The list of nominees was established by an Expert Panel composed of players, coaches and officials selected by each of their Continental Federations," the FIH said on its website. "The expert panel was provided access to match data from all international matches held in 2024, including Test matches, the FIH Hockey Pro League, FIH Hockey Nations Cups, FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers and the Olympic Games Paris 2024 before establishing the final list of nominees." The voting process will remain



open till October 11 for national associations (represented by their respective national teams' captains and coaches), fans, players, coaches, officials and media. "The votes of the Expert Panel count for 40 per cent of the overall result. Those from National Associations count for a further 20 per cent. The fans and other players (20 per cent) as well as the media (20 per cent) will make the remaining 40 per cent," the FIH added. The expert panel consists of Janne Muller-Wieland (Germany) and Simon Mason (England) from Europe, Tahir Zaman (Pakistan) and Ms Deepika (India) from Asia, Soledad Iparraguirre (Argentina) and Craig Parnham (USA) from Pan America, Sarah Bennett (Zimbabwe) and Ahmed Youssef (Egypt) from Africa and Amber Church (New Zealand) and Adam Webster (Australia) from Oceania. NOMINEES FOR FIH HOCKEY STARS AWARDS: Women: Gu Bingfeng (China), Yibbi Jansen

(Netherlands), Nike Lorenz (Germany), Stephanie Vanden Borre (Belgium), Xan de Waard (Netherlands). Men: Thierry Brinkman (Netherlands), Joep de Mol (Netherlands), Hannes Müller (Germany), Harmanpreet Singh (India), Zach Wallace (England). GOALKEEPER OF THE YEAR AWARD: Women: Cristina Cosentino (Argentina), Aisling D'Hooghe (Belgium), Nathalie Kubalski (Germany), Anne Veenendaal (Netherlands), Ye Jiao (China). Men: Pirmin Blaak (Netherlands), Luis Calzado (Spain), Jean-Paul Danneberg (GER), Tomas Santiago (Argentina), PR Sreejesh (India). RISING STAR OF THE YEAR AWARD: Women: Claire Colwill (Australia), Zoe Diaz (Argentina), Tan Jinzhuang (China), Emily White (Belgium), Linnea Weidemann (Germany). Men: Bautista Capurro (Argentina), Bruno Font (Spain), Sufyan Khan (Pakistan), Michel Struthoff (Germany), Arno Van Dessel (Belgium).