

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
 The Lord Venkateswara Swamy temple at Tirumala is our most sacred temple. Every aspect of Tirumala was ruined by the Jagan government be it laddu or annaprashadam. It disgusts and pains me to say that animal fats were used in the preparation of the prasadam. The quality of the product was completely tarnished. Once we came to power, we immediately enforced the use of pure ghee

**N Chandrababu Naidu, AP CM**

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**Govt committed to plug loopholes, asserts Minister**

**INDIA STANDS OUT GLOBALLY, WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AT FAST PACE: FM**

**Ritesh Rana on cloud NINE!**

**DON'T MISS...**  
 Plans to set up AI hubs in city...

Following the launch of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Policy 2024, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) held a discussion with IT Minister D Sridhar Babu about the future of MSMEs in Telangana at the CII-Sohrabji Godrej Green Business Centre on Wednesday evening. Addressing industry members and the media, Sridhar Babu explained that the main challenge for MSMEs is capital. He gave the example of needing land from TGISC but facing challenges in building construction. To address this, the...

**Panel suggests 18 amendments**

Eighteen distinct amendments to the Constitution and other statutes would be required for the implementation of the Kovind committee's recommendations on simultaneous elections, according to the panel's report accepted by the Union Cabinet on Wednesday. The changes suggested include the amendment to the provisions of the Constitution relating to preparation of the electoral roll by the Election Commission of India in consultation with the State Election Commission(s) for the elections to the local bodies (Article 325). It would also require an amendment to a constitutional provision in order to have simultaneous elections for municipalities, panchayat along with general elections of the Lok Sabha and the state legislatures (Article 324A). The panel further said that under Article 368(2) of the Constitution of India, ratification by not less than half of the states will be required to carry out amendments to the Constitution as these matters are related to state affairs. Addressing the issue of a hung Parliament or assembly, the panel

# Cabinet nod for Jamili polls

**'We will seek to create a consensus over the next few months'**

**80 per cent of the respondents have given their positive support: Centre**

Moving ahead with its "one nation, one election" plan, the government on Wednesday accepted a high-level panel's recommendations for holding simultaneous Jamili polls for the Lok Sabha, state assemblies and local bodies in a phased manner after a countrywide consensus-building exercise. Asserting that several political parties are already on board, the government said even those parties that are opposed to it may now feel pres-



sure from within to change their stand due to the widespread support

on the issue from the people of the country. Announcing the Union Cabinet's approval to the proposal, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said an implementation group would be formed to take forward the recommendations of the panel headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind and detailed discussions would be held on various fora across the country over the next few months. "We will seek to create a consensus over the next few months.... Our government believes in creating a

consensus on items which affect democracy and the nation in the long run. This is a subject, a topic that will strengthen our nation...." Vaishnav

## KTR seeks clarity on approach

Although the Bharat Rashtira Samithi did not submit its view to the Ramnath Kovind Committee, the party's working president, KT Rama Rao (KTR), has emphasized the need for the Union government to provide "clear information" regarding its approach to One Nation, One Election, also known as Jamili elections. Speaking to the media on the matter, KTR underscored that the government must explain how it intended to proceed with the proposed elections and share further details of the processes involved.

## Necessary for nation's progress, says BJP

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) state office, Maheshwar Reddy expressed his support for the proposed simultaneous elec-

## India serves notice to Pak...

In a significant move, India has served a formal notice to Pakistan seeking a review of the 64-year-old Indus Water Treaty, citing "fundamental and unforeseen" changes in the circumstances and impact of persistent cross border terrorism. The notice was issued to Pakistan on August 30 under Article XII(3) of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), government sources said on Wednesday. India and Pakistan signed the IWT on September 19, 1960 after nine years of negotiations with a sole aim to manage...

## Nearly 50% of public infrastructure...

Nearly 50 per cent of public infrastructure in India is unprepared for disaster management, according to a survey by CBRE. The survey findings were released at a joint 'Infrastructure Management Conference 2024' organised by CBRE and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) here. On Wednesday, real estate consultant CBRE said as per its survey on select large infrastructure assets on risk management parameters, "nearly 50 per cent of the public infrastructure in India..."

## India look to spin a new story but ...

Littered largely with lopsided contests, India's hopes of walking down that familiar path will hinge on sorting an uncharacteristic batting infirmity against spin when they face Bangladesh in a two-Test series starting here from Thursday. Bangladesh, who are fresh from a recent 2-0 drubbing of Pakistan, are no pushovers this time and this will add to India's list of concerns as they look to take that bold first step into a long season that features 10 Tests, including a possible berth in the World Test Championship...

## PHONE TAPPING

### CBI moves for red-corner notice to nab two accused

**CHITHALURI REVANTH**  
 revanth.chithaluri@gmail.com Revanth Chithaluri ■ HYDERABAD

In a significant move, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has moved the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) to issue a red-corner notice against two of the accused in the phone-tapping case. As of now, the police have arrested four out of the six accused in the case. T. Prabhakar Rao and A. Sravan Rao are absconding. An official source said that the

CBI had moved INTERPOL a few days ago for issue of the red-corner notice. A source said that Prabhakar Rao was the main culprit in the case. If he is arrested, some more persons could be taken into custody in this case. A red-corner notice is a request to law enforcement agencies worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action. To get INTERPOL to issue the red-corner notice, the police took 73 CrPc (Warrant) from the court.

## START BUSINESSES OR BECOME ENTREPRENEURS, SAYS CM

### TG launches MSME policy with Rs 4,000 cr investment

**SAMUEL JOSHUA**  
 samueljoshuajmc@gmail.com Samuel Joshua ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy launched a new MSME Policy- 2024 to tackle six key challenges faced by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The policy involves a Rs 4,000 crore investment over five years. The launch took place at Shilpakala Vedika on Wednesday, with Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bharti Vikramarka, IT Minister D Sridhar

Babu, Special Chief Secretary Jayesh Ranjan, and several industry leaders and officials in attendance. Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy appreciated former prime minister PV Narasimha Rao's policies for opening India's economy through liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG). After the gathering, Ministers to visit Gandhi Bhavan twice a week

## TPCC slams Modi over silence on BJP leaders' remarks against Rahul

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Congress leaders staged a series of protests across Telangana in response to the remarks made by BJP leaders against Rahul Gandhi, condemning the alleged derogatory remarks made by BJP MLA Tarvinder Singh and Shiv Sena (Eknath) MLA Sanjay Gaikwad against Rahul Gandhi. In Warangal, a massive demonstration was held under the leadership of TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud, where he strongly condemned the derogatory comments by BJP members. Speaking at the event, Goud emphasised the



legacy of the Gandhi family, highlighting their sacrifices for the nation, and yet, Gandhi gave up their lives for the nation, and yet, "Indira Gandhi and Rajiv

## Ministers to visit Gandhi Bhavan twice a week

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president Mahesh Kumar Goud has issued instructions to the Gandhi Bhavan staff concerned to streamline procedures and prepare proper schedules for Ministers. In this context, Ministers are now expected to visit Gandhi Bhavan twice a week. Upon assuming office, Mahesh Kumar Goud had suggested that Ministers could visit Gandhi Bhavan every Wednesday and Friday. The move is aimed at improving coordination and ensuring that Ministers engage regularly with

party activities at the headquarters. The visits will commence from the upcoming Friday, marking a structured routine for Ministers' attendance at Gandhi Bhavan.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- The government must develop a legally tenable mechanism to restore the cycle of simultaneous elections.
- In the first stage, elections for Lok Sabha and all state legislative assemblies can be held together.
- In the second step, the elections to municipalities and panchayats will be synchronised with Lok Sabha and state assemblies in such a way that elections to municipalities and panchayats are held within 100 days.
- For the purpose of synchronising Lok Sabha and assembly elections, the president shall notify the date of the first sitting of the Lok Sabha after a general election as the "appointed date".
- The tenure of all state assemblies formed via polls after the "appointed date" and before the expiry of the full term of the Lok Sabha, will be only for the period ending up to the subsequent parliamentary polls.
- Fresh elections could be held to constitute a new Lok Sabha in the event of a hung House or a no-confidence motion, or any such event.



## TG govt appoints boxer Nikhat Zareen as DSP

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Two-time world boxing champion Nikhat Zareen was appointed as the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) to the Telangana Director General Police (DGP) on Wednesday. The Telangana government has recently appointed her as the DSP. After she was appointed as the DCP, the Telangana DGP posted on social media platform, "We proudly welcome two-time world boxing champion and Olympic athlete, Nikhat Zareen, as she takes on her new role as Deputy Superintendent of Police (Special Police). Hailing from Nizamabad, she submitted her joining report to me today."

## Direct flyover to the gutta temple

**India's 2<sup>nd</sup> longest network arch bridge coming up at Yadagirigutta**

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Minister for Forests, Environment, and Endowments Konda Surekha has announced the construction of a 64-meter network arch bridge -- the second longest of its kind in India -- at Yadagirigutta over the next three months. The bridge, being made from Macalloy steel, will provide



much-needed relief to devotees traveling to the Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy shrine at Yadagirigutta.

## Parents can open pension a/c for children

**Sitharaman launches NPS Vatsalya**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched the NPS Vatsalya scheme on Wednesday, allowing parents to save for their children's future by investing in a pension account. Parents can subscribe to NPS Vatsalya online or by visiting a bank or post office. The minimum contribution to open Vatsalya account is Rs 1,000. Subscribers will have to contribute Rs 1,000 annually after that. The guidelines for withdrawal from NPS accounts are being finalised.

## Razing of N Convention linked to unmet Rs. 400 cr demand

**Did actor face HYDRRAA bulldozer for 'non-compliance'?**

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Former Bharat Rashtira Samithi legislator Balka Suman shared with media persons on Wednesday that the talk in the film industry is that a Rs. 400 crore demand was made from actor Nagarjuna, and since he did not comply with it; his N-Convention center was razed for non-compliance by HYDRRAA. The BRS leader's allegation comes amidst studied accusations that the current Congress government has been selectively targeting properties while sparing other similarly placed ones in the identified illegal struc-



tures. Referencing the demolition of N Convention, Suman sought to know why similar action was not taken against Anand Convention, located near Himayat Sagar, considering it remained untouched till



# WB never nixed Amaravati: Sifting the political aspects

Contrary to claims by the YSR Congress Party, the World Bank never made a negative assessment of Amaravati as the capital; rather, the project got stalled due to the Jagan government's disinterest in pursuing the loan request.

The attacks on Amaravati as the capital of Andhra Pradesh continue to persist, even after a change in government. A recent controversy, fuelled by the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) and its supporters, revolves around claims that the World Bank found Amaravati unsuitable for building a capital city. These claims have been attributed to a supposed statement by Municipal Minister P. Narayana. In reality, the situation is far more nuanced, and the controversy stems from a minor slip of the tongue, which has been seized upon by political opponents to further a narrative against Amaravati.

During a press conference, Narayana emphasised how

Amaravati had remained unaffected during the unprecedented floods around Vijayawada, countering the narrative spread by the YSRCP that Amaravati was vulnerable to heavy rains and flooding. Narayana criticised the Opposition for their previous attempts to paint Amaravati in a negative light, even allegedly presenting a distorted view to the World Bank. In an unfortunate moment, however, Narayana appeared to misspeak, which was interpreted as if the World Bank itself had rejected Amaravati. This error has since been exploited to spread further disinformation about the city's suitability as the state capital.

The truth is, the World Bank never made any negative statement about Amaravati. In 2015, the then Telugu Desam Party government, under the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu, approached the World Bank for financial assistance under Amaravati Sustainable Infrastructure and Institutional Development Project (ASIIDP) to the tune of \$300 million to develop infrastructure in Amaravati.

**The truth is, the World Bank never made any negative statement about Amaravati. In 2015, the then Telugu Desam Party government, under the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu, approached the World Bank for financial assistance under Amaravati Sustainable Infrastructure and Institutional Development Project (ASIIDP) to the tune of \$300 million to develop infrastructure in Amaravati.**

Development Project (ASIIDP) to the tune of \$300 million to develop infrastructure in Amaravati. However, this initiative faced opposition from the YSRCP and several non-governmental organisations (NGOs), some of which filed complaints with the World Bank. These complaints accused the TDP government of forcibly acquiring land from local farmers for the Amaravati project.

In response, the World Bank initiated an investigation into these allegations. An investiga-

tive panel toured Amaravati and found no substantial evidence to support the claims. However, the Opposition continued to raise objections and attempted to stall the project by sending additional complaints to the World Bank. The international financial institution, in turn, considered conducting a further review.

Amid these developments, elections were held in Andhra Pradesh, and YS Jagan Mohan Reddy of the YSRCP assumed power. From the start of his tenure, Jagan expressed his



**RAMESH KANDULA**  
Chief Editor Swatantra TV and author

opposition to the development of Amaravati as the state capital. Even when the Union Finance Ministry inquired whether the new government wished to proceed with the World Bank loan for Amaravati, the YSRCP-led administration remained silent. Initially, the state government indicated that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy would review the project

before making a final decision, but no response came even after repeated reminders from the central government.

Finally, after months of inaction, the Union Finance Ministry notified the state government to make known its decision by July 15, 2019; failing which, the World Bank would be informed that Andhra Pradesh was no longer interested in pursuing the project. As no response was received, the World Bank was formally notified, and it officially withdrew its support for Amaravati. Contrary to politically motivated claims in certain quarters, even the World Bank's official statement in this regard reads: "On July 15, the Government of India (GoI) withdrew its request to the World Bank for financing the proposed Amaravati Sustainable Infrastructure and Institutional Development Project. The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors has been informed that the

proposed project is no longer under preparation following the government's decision."

The World Bank's explanation is unambiguous: its withdrawal was a consequence of the state government's decision, not due to any inherent flaws in the project itself. This refutes the false claims that the bank had concerns about the viability of Amaravati as a capital city.

In an interesting twist, World Bank officials recently visited Amaravati to assess the current situation. This visit comes after Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a budgetary allocation of Rs 15,000 crore for Amaravati in the 2024-25 financial year. The central government intends to provide this assistance through multilateral agencies, including the World Bank. The bank's recent visit to Amaravati signals that they are once again engaging with the project.

Despite the facts being clear, efforts to malign Amaravati per-

sist. The YSRCP and its supporters continue to propagate misinformation, suggesting that the World Bank had found Amaravati unsuitable for development. However, reality tells a different story. The World Bank's withdrawal was a political consequence of the state government's disinterest, not a technical verdict against Amaravati's viability.

As political dynamics continue to evolve in Andhra Pradesh, Amaravati's fate remains a contentious issue. However, the false narrative that the World Bank rejected Amaravati should be laid to rest. The evidence clearly shows that the decision to abandon World Bank funding was driven by the YSRCP government's reluctance to proceed, not by any assessment from international financial institutions. With fresh central funding on the horizon, Amaravati may yet have a future, provided political will aligns with developmental needs.

## HC orders to demolish BRS office in Nalgonda

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Wednesday was not inclined to the BRS party's prayer to stop the demolition of the BRS party office at Nalgonda. The court observed that the office was illegally constructed, without permission from the Nalgonda municipality.

The party prayed to the court that on July 20 the municipal authorities were given a notice. The BRS prayed the court to declare that notice as unconstitutional. But the court is not inclined to it as it is an illegal construction.

Justice Vinod Kumar heard a petition filed by the BRS, represented by Ramavath Ravinder Kumar on Wednesday. The court also ordered the petitioner to pay Rs 1 lakh to District Legal

Service Authority (DSLA) of Nalgonda for wasting the court's time.

When the counsel said that this is a construction of a political party, the court said that they are ordering the demolition of the illegal structures of citizens. "How are you different from them?" the court asked. The counsel for the petitioner said that after the construction, I made an application for the construction. The court said that post-facto applying for permission cannot be permitted.

It might be important to mention here that the BRS party has acquired 2 acres of land for Rs 3.50 lakh for its office at Nalgonda, though its market value was estimated to be hundreds of crores. The land is situated on Nalgonda-Hyderabad highway.

## HYDRAA-style action to protect Singareni assets

Corruption and illegal activities have no place in Singareni: CMD

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) is committed to maintaining a transparent and corruption-free work environment, said SCCL Chairman and Managing Director N Balaram.

Highlighting the responsibility of safeguarding SCCL's assets, including quarters, Balaram called on employees to contribute towards the preservation of company properties. He hinted at adopting HYDRAA-style measures to protect these assets from any threats. The video conference was attended by GM (Vigilance) Prasad Rao and other vigilance officers from Kothagudem.

During a video conference to review the Vigilance Department's activities, Balaram expressed concern over reports of a few individuals attempting to deceive innocent workers, promising strict action against such offenders. Balaram urged employees to report any wrongdoing and corruption-related information to the company's vigilance department at 9491144104 or via email at vig@scclmines.com.

He assured that informants' identities would be kept confidential and a reward of Rs 10,000 would be given to those providing concrete information. The company had already initiated inquiries with the Anti-Corruption Bureau and

CID regarding irregularities in the medical board process and based on the CID's recent report on agents involved in these activities, necessary action will be taken.

Additionally, Balaram warned that employees or others causing harm to the company would face severe consequences and unfit employees submitting fraudulent documents would have their terminal benefits suspended. Balaram emphasised the importance of vigilance in maintaining the quality of the contracts handled by SCCL, amounting to crores annually.

He stated that both contractors and officials found neglecting quality standards would face strict penalties.

## Govt approves Rs 24,475 cr subsidy on P&K fertilisers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday approved Rs 24,475.53 crore subsidy on phosphatic and potassic (P&K) fertilisers for the rabi season of 2024-25 to ensure supply of crop nutrients to farmers at affordable rates.

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) rates for rabi season 2024 (from October 2024 to March 2025) on P&K fertilizers.

"The tentative budgetary requirement for rabi season 2024 would be approximately Rs 24,475.53 crore," an official statement said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a post on X stated: "This step will also reduce the cost of cultivation for farmers".

**The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) rates for rabi season 2024 (from October 2024 to March 2025) on P&K fertilizers**

"To ensure continuous supply of fertilizers to our farmer brothers and sisters at affordable rates, we have approved the rates of nutrient-based subsidy for the Rabi season of 2024," Modi said.

Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers Jagat Prakash Nadda in a post on X said that this important decision will ensure the availability of fertilizers to farmers at subsidized and reasonable

prices, besides providing incentive for increasing Rabi crop production.

The government is making available 28 grades of P&K fertilizers to farmers at subsidized prices through fertilizer manufacturers/importers.

The subsidy on P&K fertilizers is governed by the NBS scheme with effect from April 1, 2010. "In view of the recent trends in the international prices of fertilizers & inputs i.e. urea, DAP, MOP and sulphur, government has decided to approve the NBS rates for Rabi 2024 on P&K fertilizers," the statement said.

The subsidy would be provided to the fertilizer companies as per approved and notified rates of N (nitrogen), P (phosphorus) and K (potash) so that fertilizers are made available to farmers at affordable prices, it added

## Kerala reports second monkeypox case in India amid global outbreak

PNS ■ MALAPPURAM (KERALA)

Kerala reported a confirmed case of monkeypox (Mpox) on Wednesday, marking the second known such case of infection in the country following the recent global outbreak of the disease.

Last week, a new case of monkeypox (Mpox) emerged in the national capital when a 26-year-old resident from Hisar, Haryana, tested positive for the virus and was admitted to the LNJP Hospital, a government facility in Delhi.

This was the first such case reported in India since the WHO declared the mpox outbreak a public health emergency of international concern.

Official sources the initial case does not belong to the ongoing outbreak, as genomic sequencing indicates it is a distinct viral strain from a separate clade. Sources added that in the Kerala case, the clade was yet to be confirmed.

According to the Kerala Health Department, a 38-year-old man from Malappuram district, who had recently returned from the United Arab Emirates, tested positive for the virus.

He had been hospitalised with symptoms consistent with monkeypox, Kerala Health Minister Veena George said in a statement. The minister appealed to the public, including those returning from abroad with any symptoms.

## 59% turnout in first phase of J-K Assembly polls: CEO

PNS ■ JAMMU

A turnout of about 59 per cent -- the highest in the past seven elections -- was recorded in the first phase of assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, Chief Electoral Officer P K Pole said, adding polling passed off peacefully.

However, he said the figures are tentative and there might be a fractional increase after the final reports are received from the remote pockets and postal ballots.

The first phase of polls covered 24 seats across seven districts.

## It destroys federalism: AIMIM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a post on X, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi said that he had consistently opposed the concept of 'One Nation, One Election' because it was "a solution in search of a problem". "It destroys federalism and compromises democracy, which are part of the basic structure of the Constitution".

Owaisi claimed that multiple elections were not a problem for anyone except Modi & Shah. "Just because they have a compulsive need to campaign in even municipal & local body elections does not mean that we need simultaneous polls."

Frequent & periodic elections improve democratic accountability," the AIMIM chief said.

## India's military preparedness must be of very high order: CDS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's military preparedness must be of very high order and it should be ready to confront short and intense conflicts as well as long duration wars, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan said on Wednesday amid the dragging border row with China in eastern Ladakh.

In an address at an event, Gen Chauhan also identified operational preparedness, modernisation of the armed forces, transformation and indigenisation of military hardware as key pillars to boost national security.

"In the most violent decade since World War II, there is a growing propensity amongst nations to use force to contain conflicts," he said. "The growing uncertainty



and insecurity is leading nations to renew their national security strategy and increase expenditure on defence," he noted, according to the defence ministry.

The Chief of Defence Staff was addressing a conclave for foreign service attaches (FSAs) hosted by the Defence

Intelligence Agency of headquarters Integrated Defence Staff.

"Our operational preparedness has to be of very high order," he said. "We got to be prepared for short and intense conflicts to a long duration kind of a war," he said.

## Govt mulling lifting ban on non-basmati rice export: Food Secretary

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is mulling lifting the ban on export of certain varieties of non-basmati rice, Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said on Wednesday.

"(Lifting of export ban on white rice) is also under consideration of the government. These things are dynamic and we will take an appropriate decision depending on the requirement and stocks available," Chopra told reporters.

Export of non-basmati white rice has been banned since July 20, 2023 to boost domestic supply. The government has extended 20 per cent export duty.

**TODAY**  
**ALMANAC**

**Month & Paksham:** Krishna Paksha  
Tithi: Dwitaya: Sep 19 04:19 AM to Sep 20 12:40 AM  
Trityaya: Sep 20 12:40 AM to Sep 20 09:15 PM

**Nakshatram:**  
Uttara Bhadrapada: Sep 18 11:00 AM to Sep 19 08:04 AM  
Revati: Sep 19 08:04 AM to Sep 20 05:15 AM  
Ashwini: Sep 20 05:15 AM to Sep 21 02:42 AM

**Rahukalam:** 1:40 PM to 3:10 PM  
**Yamagandam:** 6:08 AM to 7:38 AM  
**Varjyam:** 11:08 PM to 12:34 AM  
**Gulika:** 9:08 AM to 10:39 AM  
**Amritakalam:** 03:08 AM to 04:32 AM  
**Abhijit Muhurtham:** 11:45 AM to 12:33 PM

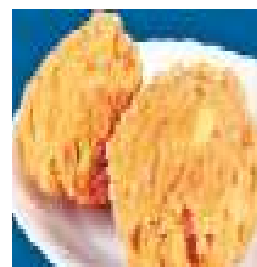
**HYDERABAD WEATHER**  
Forecast: Mostly Cloudy  
Temp: 32°C  
Humidity: 61%  
Sunrise: 6:05 AM  
Sunset: 6:15 PM  
Updated: September 18, 2024 5:00 PM

## CBN: Animal fat used in Tirupati laddu under YSRCP rule

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday alleged the previous YSRCP government had used substandard ingredients and animal fat in making the world renowned Tirupati laddu, a consecrated sweet.

The sought after Tirupati laddu is given at Sri Venkateswara temple in Tirupati, which is run by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD). "The Lord Venkateswara Swamy temple at Tirumala is our most sacred temple. Every aspect of Tirumala was ruined by the Jagan government be it laddu or annaprasadam. It disgusts and pains me to say that animal fats were used in the



preparation of the prasadam. The quality of the product was completely tarnished. Once we came to power, we immediately enforced the use of pure ghee". Claimed Naidu while addressing an NDA legislative party meeting here. However, the CM asserted, pure ghee was now being used and everything has been sanitised at the temple, leading to improved quality.

## Cabinet okays Venus orbiter mission

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a boost to the space programme, the government on Wednesday approved the Chandrayaan-4 mission to bring back moon rocks to earth, to send a spacecraft to orbit planet Venus and to expand the Gaganyaan project to build an Indian space station.

The Union Cabinet, at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, also approved a proposal of the Department of Space to build a Next Generation Launch Vehicle capable of placing heavier payload in orbits, which could also be key to achieving the targets of setting up a space station and landing an Indian astronaut on the moon.

"Great news for the space sector! The Union Cabinet

has approved the first step towards the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS), expanding the Gaganyaan programme," Modi said in a post on X.

"This landmark decision brings us closer to a self-sustained space station by 2035 and a crewed lunar mission by 2040," the prime minister said. Briefing reporters about the cabinet decisions, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that the government has allocated Rs 2,104 crore for the Chandrayaan-4 mission.

"A natural successor to Chandrayaan-3 is the demonstration of the ability to collect lunar samples and return them safely back to Earth," ISRO Chairman Somanath said.

The Chandrayaan-4 will involve multiple launches, and the premier space agency is set

to perform a space docking experiment later this year to develop its capabilities for the challenging endeavour.

The Cabinet approved Rs 1,236 crore for the Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM), which is expected to be launched sometime in March 2028. The VOM will be India's second interplanetary mission after the Mars Orbiter Mission that was launched on November 5, 2013, and entered the Martian orbit on September 24, 2014.

The Venus mission will study the surface topography of the planet, Venusian dust and clouds, lightning, volcanic activity, atmosphere, ionosphere, solar forcing and the Sun-Venus interaction.

"The Venus mission will also study the underlying causes of the transformation of Venus.

## HARYANA POLLS Cong announces 7 guarantees

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Haryana Assembly polls, the Congress on Wednesday announced seven guarantees, including the promises of a legal guarantee for MSP and a caste survey, if voted to power.

The guarantees were announced in the presence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Haryana Congress chief Uday Bhan, former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, AICC general secretary K C Venugopal, and AICC senior observers for the polls Ashok Gehlot, Ajay Maken and Partap Singh Bajwa.

Addressing the press confer-

ence, Kharge also promised to build a huge memorial in Haryana for the "martyrs" of the farmers' movement against the three farm laws that were withdrawn by the Modi government.

"All the farmers, who gave their lives and were martyred, we have promised to give jobs to their children," he said.

The other guarantees include women empowerment, strengthening social security, a secure future for the youth, welfare of families and houses for the poor.

"We will implement these guarantees and that is why we have named it 'Saat Vaade, Pakke Irade'," Kharge said.

**CITY EVENTS**

**GRUNDFOS**

Launch of Textile Verticle at Industry End User Fair 2024

**Venue**

The Address Convention and Exhibitions, Narisngi, Hyderabad September 19, 10.15 am

**First Flagship Store**

**Venue**

Anupam Store, 550F, Road No. 92, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad September 20, 4pm tp 7pm

**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 Lakhvinder 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

**Contaminated water affects 200 houses in Sanathnagar**

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Over 200 houses in the Sanathnagar constituency have been affected by contaminated drinking water after drainage water was found mixed with the supply. The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) is currently investigating the issue to identify the fault.

The problem was first reported by residents of DNM Colony after receiving their water supply from the HMWSSB on Tuesday. Upon discovering black water coming through the taps, they immediately informed authorities and Dr Kota Neelima, the in-charge of the Sanathnagar constituency.

On Wednesday, HMWSSB teams conducted a thorough inspection of the area using cameras to locate the fault in the pipeline. In the meantime, Dr Neelima has requested that water tankers be deployed to ensure residents have access to safe drinking water.

Local leaders and officials worked together to address the crisis, which posed a serious health risk, particularly to children. Dr Neelima emphasised that long-term negligence by municipal authorities has led to such issues. She assured that both immediate and long-term solutions are being coordinated with the relevant departments to prevent future occurrences.

# City Pioneer



HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

**IT MINISTER SRIDHAR BABU ON NEW MSME POLICY FOR TG**

## Plans to set up AI hubs in city

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Following the launch of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Policy 2024, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) held a discussion with IT Minister D Sridhar Babu about the future of MSMEs in Telangana at the CII-Sohrabji Godrej Green Business Centre on

Wednesday evening. Addressing industry members and the media, Sridhar Babu explained that the main challenge for MSMEs is capital. He gave the example of needing land from TGISC but facing challenges in building construction. To address this, the government is introducing flat industrial parks and lease-based land allotments to

reduce capital burdens. Sridhar Babu outlined the six key challenges addressed in the policy: land, financing, manpower, raw material, technology upgradation, and markets. He emphasised that MSMEs are crucial for creating jobs and apply the potential of the 20 to 25 lakh unemployed youth in the State, through cottage and small

industries. He suggested that MSMEs can help these youths find employment by easing government permissions and providing small bank loans. With the world advancing in technology, the Minister announced plans for AI hubs in the city with 20 to 30 seats, available for anyone looking to work at a faster pace.



IT Minister D Sridhar Babu speaking at the discussion on TG- CII's future of MSMEs in Telangana on in Hyderabad Wednesday

## Z CERTIFICATION Taskforce and reservations to back women entrepreneurs

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

With the launch of the New MSME Policy-2024 by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Wednesday, industry leaders shared their suggestions for empowering and strengthening Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). At the launch event, Chairman of CII Telangana, D Sai Prasad noted that Telangana has 26 lakh MSMEs, which are a key growth driver for the State. He mentioned that other parts of the State are not growing as quickly as Hyderabad. He emphasised that focusing on agriculture, adding value to agri-products, gender balance and promoting culture can

help achieve the goal of a \$1 trillion economy. FTCCI president Suresh Kumar Singhal welcomed the new policy and urged the government to hold quarterly meetings with industrial associations and stakeholders. This would help understand MSMEs' challenges and needs, allowing for valuable input and suggestions for future policy updates, he added. Chairperson of the Association of Ladies Entrepreneurs of India, K Rama Devi, appreciated the government for encouraging and supporting women and rural entrepreneurs. She requested reservations to aid their growth and proposed



Chairman of CII Telangana, D Sai Prasad giving suggestions at the New MSME Policy-2024 launch in Hyderabad on Wednesday

forming a task force, referring to former prime minister Manmohan Singh, who was the first to establish a task force for MSMEs. She also suggested implementing Z Certification for MSMEs to promote fair recognition and growth for women entrepreneurs.

**Boost from CII's Digital Saksham Project**

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector in Telangana is leveraging the benefit of digital technologies with the Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII) innovative initiative Project Digital Saksham. The Project Digital Saksham, in partnership with Mastercard centre for inclusive growth, is bridging the gap between digital tools and micro enterprises. It has made significant strides in Telangana, successfully completing its mission in Hyderabad and Pochampally with an outreach to 10,053 MSMEs, providing training to 2,132 businesses and achieving an adoption rate of 1,654 enterprises. M Ponnuswami, Co-Chairman, CII National MSME Council, said, "The Digital Saksham initiative has been transformative for Telangana's MSME sector. By equipping entrepreneurs with essential digital tools and skills. We're fostering growth, sustainability and global competitiveness. The programme's success in Hyderabad demonstrates the eagerness of local businesses to embrace digital transformation. To ensure maximum learning in Telangana, the content is being offered in Telugu, thus eliminating many barriers which were restricting micro enterprises in updating to digital business practices. In Telangana, we're focusing on enabling micro-enterprises to transition from physical to digital payments."



## MP Etala starts new Safilguda RS

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Etala Rajender, Malkajgiri Member of Parliament, dedicated the new Safilguda railway station building to the nation on Wednesday. Marri Rajshekar Reddy, Malkajgiri Member of Legislative Assembly, Lokesh Vishnoi, Divisional Railway Manager, Hyderabad Division and other railway officials were present on the occasion. MLA Rajshekar Reddy stated that it is a happy occasion as the new station building has been provided for the convenience of the people of Safilguda.

number of people. The new station building will facilitate the passengers in the area. The MP thanked the Railways for providing the new station building. He requested the officials concerned to complete various on-going railway works in Telangana region. He also purchased the first train ticket from the booking counter and interacted with the staff.

## Women need freedom and security in workplace, says Nerella Sharada

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Sexual harassment cases are increasing everyday and it has become a big problem for women in the society, said Telangana State Women's Commission Chairperson Nerella Sharada here on Wednesday. Speaking to media-persons, Sharada said that women are unable to come out and express themselves freely about the problems they are facing in the workplaces. The fear of losing the jobs and reputation of the family members are

the main reasons for that, she said. "Women need freedom in workplaces as well as in the society. We have seen the Kolkata incident, where the duty doctor was brutally sexually assaulted. There is also a law and two committees were also formed to take up these kinds of crimes against women," she said. Reacting to choreographer Jani Master's case, Sharada said that a case had been booked against Jani Master for allegedly sexually assaulting his colleague choreographer.

**'NOT UNUSUAL,' SAYS HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

## Infant mortality reaches 41 in Gandhi Hospital

**DEEPIKA PASHAM**  
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■ HYDERABAD

Concerns arose on Wednesday after a report highlighted 44 infant and 14 maternal deaths at Gandhi Hospital in August, with the majority from Hyderabad, Medak, Medchal-Malkajgiri and Siddipet districts.

When questioned by The Pioneer, Gandhi Hospital superintendent Dr Raj Kumari, explaining the figures stated, "There is no abnormality compared to previous years. The data circulating on social media is exaggerated. We are responsible for submitting it to higher authorities and action will be taken against those who leaked it."

According to Dr Kumari, the August data shows an average of 41 infant mortalities (IMR) and 13 maternal mortalities (MMR). "It is normal given the complexity of the cases we handle, with 260 to



270 inpatients daily. Many arrive in critical stages, often requiring mechanical ventilation."

In the same year there were 33 in July, 33 in June, 26 in May and 22 in April. It is seen as an increase but the stages of the cases have been complicated, she added.

Comparatively the numbers have been more than the previous months in both mater-

nal and infant mortality rate. According to State Health Minister Raja Narasimha, who also quoted a data report which said that MMR in previous months in July it was 12, June-6, May-8, April-7, March-10, February-5 and January-7.

In IMR the data says July-33, June-33, May-26, April-22, March-36, February- 25, January-25.

## Allegations against Gandhi Hospital hurts trust of poor: Min Raja Narasimha

Health Minister Raja Narasimha warned MLA KT Rama Rao that he should stop his conspiracy theory on government hospitals and his mudslinging that is affecting the morale of poor people. Health Minister Raja Narasimha has on Wednesday responded to MLA KTR, who has alleged that the government is trying to hide the data of infant and maternal mortality rate though there is an increase in the number of deaths. "It is deeply unfortunate that false allegations are being made against Gandhi Hospital, hurting the trust of the poor who rely on its services for treatment. During the previous government, corporate hospitals flourished at the expense of government facilities and the people have not forgotten how they attempted to dismantle public healthcare," said Minister Raja Narasimha. The BRS party, which has neglected institutions like Gandhi and Osmania Hospitals for the past decade now seeks to sabotage them while in opposition.

## Dream come true for this TN farmer's daughter

**B SRINIVAS REDDY**  
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■ HYDERABAD

Some people are so very determined towards realizing their dreams that they end up achieving their dreams at any cost. Sushmitha R, who has completed IPS training in Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy and ready to take part in the Passing out parade, passed the UPSC exam in her sixth attempt and undergone the IPS training in Hyderabad.

She cracked the 2023 UPSC exam with an All India Rank (AIR) of 528. She has been given Andhra Pradesh cadre for her first posting after the parade.



Belonging to the coastal district of Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu, she is the eldest daughter in the family. Her father is a farmer and her mother working in the State education department.

With big dreams in her head, Sushmitha graduated with Agricultural and Irrigation from College of

Engineering, Guindy (CEG) of Anna University in Tamil Nadu. Then she started preparing for the UPSC exam by taking coaching for a year. Later, she studied by herself for the UPSC exam.

In her first attempt, she has cleared the written exam. However, she was fixated and driven by her dream of becoming an IPS officer she cleared the exam in her 6th attempt. Speaking to the Pioneer, Sushmitha said that becoming an IPS officer was her dream, motivated by her mother. Interestingly her younger sister is also an IAS officer and currently she is working as additional collector in Thoothukudi district in Tamil Nadu.

## 2,050 nursing officers to be recruited

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

The Telangana State Medical and Health Services Recruitment Board has released a notification for the recruitment of 2,050 nursing officers (staff nurses) across various

departments. Out of the total posts, 1,576 positions will be filled in the Departments of Public Health and Family Welfare and the Directorate of Medical Education. Additionally, the Telangana Vaidya Vidhana

Parishad will recruit 332 nursing officers. The recruitment drive also includes 61 posts in the AYUSH department, 80 positions at MNJ Cancer Hospital and one post at the Institute of Preventive Medicine.

## POCSO case registered against Jani Master

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

The Cyberabad Police intensified its efforts to nab Telugu film choreographer Shaik Jani alias Jani Master on Wednesday, who had allegedly sexually assaulted a woman assistant choreographer.

The victim had made a complaint against Jani Master at the Raidurgam police station last week. Later, that case was transferred to Narsingi police station on the grounds of jurisdiction. The woman had alleged that she had joined Jani Master and started work-

ing as an assistant choreographer and during film shootings she was sexually assaulted by him several times. She also alleged that Jani Master had threatened to kill her if she revealed it to anyone. The police had information that the Jani Master had fled to

some location in North India and a team was sent there to nab him. Meanwhile, the police had booked a case under the Sections of POCSO Act after the victim, in her statement, said she was sexually assaulted by Jani Master since she was a minor.

## Arogyasri staff begins strike over pending hike

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

The employees of Rajiv Arogyasri Health Care Trust began an indefinite strike on Wednesday, after months of unresolved grievances. Despite continuous appeals to the government, including their petitions submitted to the Health Minister, Finance Minister, Principal Secretary and CEO of Arogyasri Trust, none of their issues have been addressed, say the employees.

The Arogyasris have been demanding the implementation of a salary hike to Rs 22,750, as per GO-60, but the issue has seen significant delays. Despite assurances from the CEO that the proposal had been sent to the government, no progress has been made. Union representatives had

discussions with the CEO on August 23 and were promised talks with the minister within a week, but no such meeting took place.

The Arogyasris are dissatisfied with the government's lack of action and are moving forward with their strike after a 45-day notice period. Their key demands include implementation of salary revisions as per GO No. 60, direct payment of salaries by the trust and removing outsourcing agencies.

Introduction of TA/DA facilities and a minimum wage of Rs 35,000, abolition of the shuffling system, re-appointment of experienced staff in PHCs and the filling of vacancies, health card facilities and compensation for employees who die in service, are their other demands.

## Minor girl sexually assaulted by 18-year-old

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

In a shocking incident, a 7-year-old minor girl was allegedly raped by an 18-year-old boy at Ramachandrapuram police station limits on Wednesday.

According to sources, the boy called the girl to watch TV in his house, when the girl was alone at her house. The boy has allegedly raped her and fled away.

After coming home, the girl's parents were shocked to see their daughter in a bad condition.

Immediately, the victim was admitted to the nearby hospital.

The victim's mother has lodged a complaint against the boy in Rama chandrapuram police station.

On the basis of a complaint given by the victim's mother, a case has been filed under POCSO Act.

## SVPNPA to host Dikshant Parade tomorrow

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

The Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA) will host the 'Dikshant Passing Out Parade' for the 76th batch of Regular Recruits of the IPS on September 20, said SVPNPA Director Amit Garg.

Speaking to mediapersons at SVPNPA on Wednesday, Amit Garg said around 188 IPS probationers along with 19 foreign officers from Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and Mauritius will pass out of the SVPNPA on Friday. Nityanand Rai, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, will be the chief guest for the function.

Explaining the training period, Amit Garg said that the first phase of 45 week training



Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy Director Amit Garg speaking to the media regarding Dikshant Parade on Wednesday

covered various topics including the newly introduced laws such as Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam.

The probationers were imparted training in internal security challenges, threat from drones, cyber-crimes and security, drug trafficking, crypto currency, financial

frauds, dark net, artificial intelligence and will now go for district practical training for 29 weeks before returning to the academy for second phase of basic course training for a period of nine weeks, director Garg said.

Eight IPS officers allotted to Telangana and AP cadre. In 188, a total of eight IPS officers were allotted to Telangana along with Andhra Pradesh cadre. Manisha Vangala Reddy, Deeksha, Hemant Boddu and Sushmita R are assigned to Andhra Pradesh cadre.

On the other hand, four trainee IPS officers Saikiran Pathipaka, Ruthwik Sai Kotte, Vasundhara Yadav and Manan Bhat have been assigned to Telangana cadre.

## 'Ganesh immersion went off peacefully'

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Hyderabad Police Commissioner CV Anand on Wednesday said that they have cleared all the junctions and flyovers for the regular traffic three hours before, when compared to last year's Ganesh immersion.

Speaking to mediapersons at Telugu Talli flyover, Commissioner CV Anand said that last year Ganesh immersion was completed around 1.30 pm the next day of the final immersion. This year Ganesh immersion has been completed around 10.30 in the morning, he said.

"We have completed the Ganesh immersion as per the plan, chalked out by the police department," he added.



## AYUSHMAN BHARAT

### 2.84 L senior citizens to benefit in undivided Rangareddy dist

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

In a major move towards enhancing healthcare for the elderly, the Union Cabinet has approved a new health insurance scheme that provides annual medical coverage of Rs 5 lakh for individuals above 70 years of age, regardless of income level. This decision, part of the broader efforts by the Central government to improve healthcare access, will benefit 2,84,350 senior citizens in the undivided Rangareddy district alone.

Until now, the Ayushman Bharat health scheme was available only to economically disadvantaged sections of the population. However, under this new initiative, all elderly people above the age of 70 whether wealthy or poor will receive health insurance up to Rs 5 lakh per year. The Union Cabinet approved the scheme four days ago, marking a significant expansion of the government's healthcare coverage for the elderly population.

This scheme is designed to ensure that senior citizens from all social classes, irrespective of their financial status, receive proper

medical care. The government has recognised that health problems increase with age due to factors such as lifestyle changes, poor diet, decreased physical activity, and higher mental stress, which contribute to the early onset of diseases. Medical expenses, particularly for senior citizens, are often higher than other costs, and many are unable to afford quality healthcare, according to doctors in the district.

The new scheme also provides flexibility for those already covered by other health insurance programs, such as the Aarogya scheme or the ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme. They can either continue with their existing plans or opt for the new Ayushman Bharat coverage. Additionally, new health cards will be issued to all seniors enrolling in the scheme.

Through this initiative, 80,251 elderly individuals in Medchal and Vikarabad districts will get the benefit of the health insurance, while 42,738 elderly residents of Rangareddy district will also benefit. Parigi constituency has the highest number of eligible senior citizens followed by Vikarabad and Kodangal constituencies.

## SCCL CMD to crack the whip on corruption

### Singareni Collieries Company Limited Chairman and Managing Director Balam Naik warns that action will be taken against 'corrupt'

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) Chairman and Managing Director Balam Naik has set his sights to check the 'corrupt activities' going on in the colliery for some time and made it clear that he is not going to spare anyone found guilty of corruption however high post he might be occupying.

He threatened to crack the whip on the officials, contractors and executing agencies who failed to adhere to quality specifications in the company works.



Balam Naik

Reviewing the activities of the Vigilance Department, the CMD said that the activities of the SCCL must be fully trans-

parent and free from corruption. However, some persons have been committing irregularities to dupe the innocent workers, he said, threatening to initiate stern action against such individuals.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau and other crime investigating agencies would probe into the activities of the medical board to give no room for any corrupt activity, he said, adding that once the CID submitted its report on the involvement of the middlemen in the medical board activities, action would be initiated

against those found guilty.

If employees and others are involved in causing loss to the SCCL, such information should be sent to the company's Vigilance Department along with evidence through email [vig@scclmines.com](mailto:vig@scclmines.com) or dialling 9491144104. Names of such persons would be kept top secret and they would be rewarded with a cash prize of Rs 10,000.

The CMD asked the vigilance department to keep an eye on the quality of the contract works worth several crores of rupees executed annually.

## Collector directs officials to verify voters' list thoroughly

PNS ■ MAHABUBABAD

District Collector Adwait Kumar Singh has directed Revenue Divisional Officers, Tahsildars and election officials to undertake door-to-door survey in the district to rectify the defects in the list of voters, if any, like removing names of the dead from the list, change the address, online forms received for changes in names using the IT tools, identify polling booths having more voters than the prescribed 1500 to include the voters in other polling booths.

He was reviewing the registration of voters, door to door survey, management of polling stations, SVEEP activities, changes to be effected to the list of voters and scrutiny along with the Chief Electoral Officer Sudarshan Reddy at the collectorate here on Wednesday.

Changes to be effected to voters' lists by the BLOs using the mobile application only through the online.

The photos, addresses should be cross-checked, all voters belonging to a family should be included under the same polling booth, he said.

The polling booths should be inspected and amenities like drinking water, toilets, electricity, compound wall should be ensured at the polling booth, he said.

## DMHO visits dengue patients at homes

PNS ■ WARANGAL

District Medical and Health Officer Dr K Venkata Ramana on Wednesday visited the houses of patients suffering dengue in the city, inspected the surroundings and made several suggestions to the Municipal Corporation personnel.

He also visited the Telephone colony in Keerti Nagar in 12th division and Sneha Nagar in doctors' colony in the 15th division and inspected the anti-larval operations, spraying of the insecticide.

The DMHO appealed to Municipal Corporation officials to take measures in coordination with the Medical and Health authorities to prevent the spread of seasonal diseases. He said that the Medical and Health Department would conduct a medical camp to sensitise people on seasonal diseases. He stressed the need to undertake fogging operations in evenings. He also asked the people to check the breeding of the mosquitoes and take precautions



Warangal District Medical and Health Officer Venkata Ramana interacting with people in Warangal on Wednesday

from mosquito bites. He laid emphasis on maintaining personal hygiene and maintaining hygiene of the surroundings. He insisted on drinking water only after boiling it.

Municipal corporation biologist Madhava Reddy, deputy demo Anil Kumar, Supervisors Sadanandam, Madhukar, Medical and Health staff Cornell, ANMs, ASHA workers, municipal personnel and others took part in the event.

## Draft Panchayat voters' list by Sep 21

PNS ■ KUMARAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

Collector Venkatesh Dhotre has called upon representatives of political parties to file their objections, if any, to the draft voters' list for the village panchayat elections. The objections should be brought to notice of panchayat secretaries and Mandal Parishad Development Officers on or before September 21.

He, along with Additional Collector Deepak Tiwari addressed an all-party meeting held at Collectorate here on Wednesday.

He said that the draft voters' list was published with ward-wise details of voters in all 335 village panchayats. The objections would be scrutinised till September 26 and the final list of voters would be out on September 28. The final list would be put on display at Gram Panchayat Office, Mandal Parishad Development Office, district panchayat office and can be accessed online <https://draftrolls.tsec.gov.in/gpwardwisevoterlist.html>.

## Komatireddy vows to bring golden days to Nalgonda district

PNS ■ NALGONDA

State Minister for Roads, Buildings, and Cinematography, Komatireddy Venkata Reddy, has suggested that he will bring golden days to Nalgonda district.

He was laying foundation stone for the construction underpass to be built at a cost of Rs 180 crore on Miryalaguda bypass in the district.

During the event, the Minister announced several upcoming projects. Starting in October, the State will issue new ration cards and construct Indiramma houses. He outlined that the state government is implementing six guarantees as promised, including free bus travel for 85 crore women, LPG gas connections at Rs 500, etc, he said.

Later at a press meet held in the camp office of local MLA Bathula Lakshmareddy in Miryalaguda, Venkat Reddy made several significant announcements regarding ongoing and upcoming developmental projects. The Minister announced that the construction of four underpasses in



Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkatreddy speaking at a meeting in Miryalaguda on Wednesday

Miryalaguda, initiated at a cost of Rs 180 crore, will be completed soon. "We will begin the work within a week, but until then, I urge people to exercise caution at the Y junction," he said.

On Hyderabad-Vijayawada National Highway expansion, he revealed, "We have Rs 1600 crore agreement with GMR, and tenders will be called on September 24. By the first or second week of November, we will commence the six-lane expansion work."

Commenting on irrigation efforts, the Minister said, "Farmers are currently using gravity to irrigate two crops through the Nagarjuna Sagar left canal up to ITI Pamula. By filling lakes, groundwater levels will increase. Once the SLBC project is completed, it will provide irrigation water to 4 lakh acres."

The Minister also spoke about the financial allocations for various projects. "We have secured Rs 516 crore through R&B in the last six months, and

we are planning to bring in more funds for road development across the district," he shared. He added, "With the support of NAAC, we are setting up a Steel Development Center in Miryalaguda at a cost of 710 crore."

He announced, "In December, we will supply power from one unit of the Yadadri Thermal Power Station, and by March, we will provide 4000 MW of electricity from two units."

## Cong activists burn BJP effigy for remarks against Rahul Gandhi

PNS ■ WARANGAL

District Congress Committee (DCC) president Durga Prasad has expressed concern over the 'undemocratic' approach adopted by the BJP leaders towards Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi. He condemned the BJP for threatening Rahul Gandhi and promoting ill will.

Speaking at a programme held at Sanjeeva Reddy Bhavan here on Wednesday, he alleged that the statements by the BJP and Shiva Sena were aimed at provoking violence. In response to a call given by the TPCC, he said that an effigy of the BJP leaders was burnt at the old bus stand circle here. One of the Shiv Sena MPs announced a reward of Rs 11 lakh to anyone who would chop off the tongue of Rahul Gandhi, former MLA of the BJP Tanvidhar Singh threatened publicly to kill



Congress activists burning effigy of BJP in Khammam on Wednesday

Rahul Gandhi the moment he stepped out of his house.

Either PM Modi or Home Minister Amit Shah failed to condemn the statements of

the leaders of the saffron party.

Congress leaders, activists and people of the country would stand by Rahul Gandhi and defeat the conspiracies by

the right-wing parties.

Later, former MLC and TPCC vice president Potla Nageswara Rao condemned the hate speech of the BJP leaders

## 2BHK allotment will begin in two months: MLA

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar announced that the government would allocate double bedroom houses to eligible people within the next two months. These houses, built in the limits of Kothur and Shadnagar municipalities in Rangareddy district, would be completed soon. The MLA's clarification came during an inspection of the housing projects on Wednesday, alongside Rangareddy District Collector K Shashanka.

During the visit, the MLA highlighted that some double bedroom houses remain unfinished and urged officials to expedite the construction. He emphasised the immediate need for



Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar interacting with people during inspection of double bedroom houses in Rangareddy district on Wednesday

essential infrastructure like electricity and water supply to be incorporated into the housing complexes. He assured the peo-

ple that beneficiaries would be selected based on merit, free from political bias, and encouraged officials to start the selection

process for deserving applicants.

District Collector Shashanka praised MLA Shankar's efforts in pushing for the timely completion and distribution of these homes. He directed local authorities to finish the remaining work promptly and provide necessary amenities to ensure the houses are ready for occupancy. The Collector also conducted a review meeting with officials, including Revenue Divisional Officer Venkata Madhavrao, to assess the progress of the project.

Several local leaders, including Municipal Chairman Narendar and Commissioner Cheema Venkanna, accompanied the inspection, along with various officials and political figures from the constituency.

## Voters urged to check their names in electoral rolls

PNS ■ BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM

The district administration on Wednesday invited voters to file objections, if any, to the voters' list meant for holding gram panchayat elections.

Additional Collector Vidya Chandana on Wednesday said that the electoral rolls had been released on September 13. She was holding a meeting with delegates from political parties to discuss the basic facilities to be provided at polling booths.

On the directions of the State Election Commission, the voters' list was prepared based on Assembly electoral rolls. There are 484 gram panchayats in the district. Elections to five panchayats would not be held as per the



Bhadradri Kothagudem Additional Collector Vidya Chandana at an all-party meeting in Kothagudem on Wednesday

directions of the Election Commission, she said. The panchayats for which elections are not held would not be held at Seethanagar, Shantinagar, Burgampadu, Sarapaka and ITC.

She appealed to the delegates

of the political parties to create awareness among voters and ensure that the voters in villages examine the electoral rolls and file objections, if any. She urged voters to verify whether their names figured in the voters' list. She urged the voters to report discrepancies, if any, to the administration. The voters were encouraged to verify whether their names figured in different electoral rolls.

The Additional Collector appealed to the voters to file their objections, if any, between September 14 and 21. District Panchayat officials would examine the objections and submit a report to the district administration on September 26, she said. There are a total of 6,23,940 voters in the district.

## Municipal worker dies during Ganesh idol immersion at Kagaz Nagar

PNS ■ KAGAZ NAGAR

A 46-year-old man died and another person sustained injuries during the course of the Ganesh idol immersion held at Peddavu in Kagaznagar on Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Lingampalli Nagesh, a municipal contract worker. Another worker Prem, 33, sustained minor injuries in the incident. Nagesh sustained critical injuries as legs were crushed under the wheels of a crane.

Sub-Collector Shradha Shukla and MLA Harish Babu visited the spot and made arrangements to rush Nagesh to Hyderabad for treatment. However, his condition turned worse when the ambulance

reached Karimnagar. He was rushed to a hospital there where he succumbed to injuries.

Following the tragedy, the Municipal workers suspended the immersion activity and resorted to protests leading to suspension of the Ganesh idol immersion. However hard the officials tried to persuade the municipal workers to resume work, they refused to yield. At last, the expert swimmers concluded the Ganesh idols immersion activity. The municipal contract and outsourced workers have been demanding that the government to pay a compensation of Rs 5 lakh to the bereaved family members of Lingampalli Nagesh and give job to one of the family members.

## ICFAI Legal Aid Society holds mentoring session on cybercrime

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

The Legal Aid Society of the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysis of India (ICFAI) Law School organised a digital safety mentoring session at SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya in Yeddumailaram village on Wednesday. The programme, aimed at students from grades 9 to 12, sought to educate them on cyber threats like hacking, phishing and online scams.

KV Ravi Kumar, a professor at ICFAI Law School, delivered the keynote speech, emphasising the importance of cyber safety and discussing the Digital Personal and Data Protection



ICFAI Legal Aid Society holding mentoring session in Sangareddy on Wednesday

Act, along with the role of parental supervision in online environments. The session included a poster presentation on the national cybercrime helpline 1930, a skit depicting social media scams, and an interactive exercise where students identified various digital crimes.

Around 250 students attended. Video demonstrations and practical tips on staying safe online were the highlights of the programme. The event was coordinated by Dr S Kannan and the Legal Aid Society, with the support of acting principal Madhuri and school faculty.

ACROSS THE STATES



File photo

**Tiger kills woman in Pench buffer zone, forest staff attacked**

A 65-year-old woman was killed by a tiger in the buffer zone of Pench Reserve in Maharashtra, an official said on Wednesday. The incident triggered an angry reaction in Jhunjhuriya village, leading to the attack on forest department personnel who had rushed to the spot on Tuesday evening after the woman was killed. Forest officials assured that the tiger on the prowl will be captured. The deceased, identified as Nita Kumbhare, was killed by a tiger on Tuesday evening, stated a release issued by Deputy Director of Pench Forest Reserve (Maharashtra) Prabhu Nath Shukla. When officers and staff of the forest department reached the spot they were attacked by the angry villagers, leaving some forest guards seriously injured, he stated. Senior police and forest officers held a meeting with villagers and pacified them, he added.



**Police officer arrested in RG Kar hospital case suspended**

The Kolkata Police on Wednesday suspended Tala police station's officer-in-charge Abhijit Mondal who the CBI arrested in connection with the rape-murder of the doctors at the RG Kar hospital, officials said. Mondal was suspended as per the service rules of the West Bengal government, they said. As per the rules, a government employee, in custody for a period exceeding 48 hours under any law providing for preventive detention or as a result of a proceeding either on a criminal charge or otherwise, shall be deemed to have been suspended by an order of the appointing authority. Mondal was arrested on September 14 for allegedly tampering with evidence and delaying the registration of the FIR. He is at present in CBI custody.



**MP: Seven killed, ten hurt in truck and 3-wheeler collision**

At least seven persons were killed and ten others injured in a collision between a dumper truck and a three-wheeler goods vehicle in Jabalpur district on Wednesday evening, an official said. The deceased included four men and three women, said Jabalpur district collector Deepak Saxena. "The injured persons include six men and four women," he said, adding that the incident occurred on the Sihora-Majhawan road. All the deceased and injured were residents of neighbouring Pratappur village.

**Parents can open ...**

Continued from page 1

Pension will come from the account only upon attainment of 60 years of age. NPS has generated 14 per cent, 9.1 per cent, and 8.8 per cent returns for investments in equity, corporate debt and G-Secs, respectively, Sitharaman said. NPS Vatsalya was announced in the FY25 Budget presented in July. Many lenders, including ICICI Bank and Axis Bank, have joined hands with the PFRDA to launch National Pension

Scheme (NPS) - Vatsalya. ICICI Bank inaugurated the scheme's commencement in Mumbai at its service centre by registering a few children's accounts under NPS Vatsalya. Financial Services Secretary Nagaraju Maddirala said the government will be receptive of subscriber feedback and improve pension scheme accordingly. "Ever since we announced the proposed launch of the PM Vatsalya scheme, we have been getting feedback and suggestions to improve the scheme.

**TG launches MSME ...**

Continued from page 1

He commended the IT Minister for making industrial opportunities accessible to Dalits and women, and for encouraging MSMEs. Revanth assured that his government will fulfill the previous administration's incentive promises, regardless of political changes. Later, Revanth Reddy highlighted the gap between education and jobs, noting a shortage of skilled workers. He mentioned that CREDAI and NAC reported job availability but a lack of skilled employees. He said discussions with TATA led to a plan to upgrade Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) with

Rs 2,400 crore investment, of which only Rs 300 crore has been sanctioned by the State government, while TATA has invested Rs 2,100 crore through CSR funds for training and employment in Telangana. Revanth also discussed plans for a Young India Skill University, run by industrialists with Mahindra Group's Anand Mahindra as chairperson. He announced a corpus fund will be collected from industrialists through a planned get-together. He emphasised that the skill university will help address the unemployment issue of young graduates and boost the state's GDP. He called agriculture "our culture" and encouraged people to study, start businesses, or

become entrepreneurs for financial stability and promised further skill development and technology upgrades. Meanwhile, Minister for Information Technology, Electronics, Communications and Industries, D Sridhar Babu, said Telangana will become technology-driven and will attract attention. He emphasised that growth should extend beyond Hyderabad to other districts as part of the policy. He announced a new skill training programme for the banking and finance sector and noted that industrial parks will be established in all districts, with 5% for women and 15% for SC/ST.



**Impractical, 'cheap stunt'**

**Opposition slams simultaneous polls proposal**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the Union Cabinet approved the recommendations of the Ram Nath Kovind panel on "one nation, one election" on Wednesday, opposition parties called the proposed move impractical and a "cheap stunt" by the ruling BJP. The Union Cabinet accepted the high-level panel's recommendations for holding simultaneous polls for the Lok Sabha, state assemblies and local bodies in a phased man-

ner, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced. Mallikarjun Kharge, president of the main opposition party Congress, said the proposal is not practical and alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) comes up with such things to divert attention from real issues when polls approach. "It is not practical, it will not work. When elections come and they (BJP) do not get any issue to raise, they divert attention from real issues," Kharge

**The Union Cabinet accepted the high-level panel's recommendations for holding simultaneous polls for the Lok Sabha, state assemblies and local bodies in a phased manner, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced**



told a press conference here. Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Derek O'Brien called it

a "cheap stunt" of the BJP and questioned why the Maharashtra polls were not announced with those in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir if the government wants simultaneous elections.

"One nation, one election is just another cheap stunt by the anti-democratic BJP. Why were the Maharashtra elections not announced along with the elections in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir?" he asked.

"You cannot do three states in one go and you talk about one nation, one election," O'Brien said.

**BJP, allies welcome Cabinet's approval**

The ruling NDA on Wednesday welcomed the government's nod to a high-level committee's recommendations for simultaneous elections, with several BJP leaders lauding the decision as another example of Prime Minister Narendra Modi doing what he promises.

Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told reporters that the Union Cabinet headed by Modi accepted the recommendations of the committee headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind, asserting that its implementation will boost development and save public money. With the government for-

mally moving on one of its more ambitious agenda items for this term, it will be keenly watched as to how much progress the proposal makes in the face of stiff protest from opposition parties, which have enough numbers in Parliament to stall any constitutional amendment bill.

**TPCC slams Modi ...**

Continued from page 1

these baseless remarks are being made by people who have contributed nothing to India's freedom struggle," Goud said, calling the BJP leaders' actions a disgrace. Mahesh Kumar Goud further stated that the BJP has failed to offer any response from top leaders, including the Prime Minister and the Home Minister, to the threats made against Rahul Gandhi by BJP leaders.

He mentioned that such comments stem from BJP's fear of Rahul Gandhi's growing popularity, as his Bharat Jodo Yatra and recent initiatives have struck a chord with the public. He warned, "If the BJP doesn't suspend these leaders, it will be clear to the people that this is the official stance of the party." Protests were also held in Narayanguda, where MLC Balmoor Venkat, along with Congress workers, burnt the effigies of BJP leaders, demanding an immediate apology. Venkat urged the police to register cases under attempt to murder charges against those who made violent threats towards Rahul Gandhi.

"BJP leaders are terrified because they know Rahul Gandhi is poised to become the next prime minister. Instead of addressing public issues, they resort to attacking him," he added.

Sunitha Rao, president of the Telangana Women Congress, led another protest at the BJP office, condemning the statements by former MLA Tanvinder Singh, who allegedly made inflammatory comments against Rahul Gandhi. She demanded that BJP leaders issue a public apology or face continued protests, adding that the Congress will not allow BJP leaders to roam freely until they retract their statements.

In Hanamankonda, a protest was held under the leadership of DCC president Nayini Rajender Reddy, joined by prominent leaders such as Warangal DCC president Erabelli Swarna, Mayor Gundu Sudharani and MPs and MLAs. Speaking at the event, Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar reminded the gathering of the Congress's long-standing commitment to the nation's welfare, highlighting the party's role from the independence movement to the present day.

**CBI moves ...**

Continued from page 1

Around a month back, former Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Kothakota Srinivas said that the main culprits in the phone tapping case were mis-using visas from other countries. "The blue corner notice has not been effective because it doesn't allow us to request other countries to produce the accused or to handover to us," he added.

The case was registered on March 10 for destroying the hard disks of the Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB). Those hard disks allegedly contain Maoists and other left-wing sensitive information. The police have arrested Praneeth Rao, Bhujanga Rao, Thirupathanna and Radhakishan Rao. Although they have applied for bail several times, the court has rejected all their pleas till date.

**Direct flyover to ...**

Continued from page 1

offering a direct entry flyover to the temple complex. Surekha stated that the bridge, set to be completed within three months, would be a major asset among Telangana's infrastructure. She directed the officials concerned to ensure that developmental works undertaken in and around prominent temples do not harm their sanctity or disrupt their historical significance.

The Minister held a review with the officials of the Endowments Department at the Secretariat on Wednesday, discussing various temple projects, including the progress of the Keesaragutta Ramalingeshwara Swamy Temple, Yadadri Temple under the YTDA, and the master plan for the development of Bhadrachalam Temple. During the meeting, Surekha

emphasized the importance of coordination among departments like Forest, Endowments, Tourism, Cultural, R&B, and Panchayat Raj for the smooth execution of temple development projects. She highlighted that works at the Yadagirigutta temple, including the gold-plating of the Vimana Gopuram, will begin after the Monitoring Committee, led by the Chief Secretary, submits its report. The Minister also announced the construction of a Vedic School in Rayagiri, on a 20-acre site, with an estimated outlay of Rs. 43 crore, under the supervision of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham. Additionally, the newly built Annadanam Satrams (dining halls) will soon be opened for devotees.

Surekha instructed officials to develop the Keesaragutta Ramalingeshwara Swamy Temple

in line with the Ramappa Temple model, as suggested by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. The development would include the Natya mandapam and surrounding areas without disturbing the nearby Lakshmi Narasimha, Anjaneya, and Nagadevata temples. She also suggested establishing a digital museum detailing the places visited by Lord Rama in south India. The master plan, once finalized, will be submitted immediately to the Chief Minister for approval.

Regarding the development of Bhadrachalam Sri Sitaramachandra Swamy Temple, Surekha was briefed on flood control measures by Conservation Architect Surya Narayana Murthy. She directed officials to ensure that development projects would take into account the regular influx of devotees during the Godavari

Pushkaralu and Mahapushkaralu. She emphasized creating green spaces on temple lands to cultivate sacred plants like tulsi and flowers for rituals, reducing reliance on external suppliers.

Surekha announced that the Endowments Department, in collaboration with the Tourism Department, would soon introduce VIP darshan facilities for devotees across three circuits. The first circuit will include Vemulawada, Kondagattu, Dharmapuri, and Komuravelli temples; the second, Manyamkonda, Sri Rangapur, Jogulamba, and Ammapalli temples; and the third circuit, Dichpalli, Basara, and Kamarreddy temples. VIP devotees will receive mementos and shawls as their visit, with guides, photographers, and videographers available to assist them.

**'TAKE HOME RATION' SCHEME**

**Govt committed to plug loopholes, asserts Min**

PNS ■ RANCHI

Union minister Annapurna Devi on Wednesday said the government is committed to plug loopholes to ensure that the 'Take Home Ration' (THR) scheme reaches the beneficiaries.

The Centre is also focused on upgrading 10,000 'saksham anganwadis', implementing a two-factor authentication system to track the delivery of the scheme and improving nutrition outcomes nationwide, she said.

"To address various complaints and to ensure that the THR reaches beneficiaries, we have launched pilot projects in six districts of six states. In Ranchi, we will start it this month. Under the project, the beneficiary's photo will be captured and an OTP will be sent on his/her mobile. On authentication, THR will be delivered. If the pilot project becomes successful, it shall be replicated throughout the

country," the Women and Child Development Minister said.

The THR scheme comes under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme and focuses on health, nutrition and development of infants, pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls.

She was briefing the media here on the achievements of 100 days of the Narendra Modi-led government's third term.

Lashing out at the Jharkhand government, the minister alleged that the present JMM-led dispensation has failed to check "Bangladeshi infiltration" and "atrocities on women" in the state.

"This government prefers silence on atrocities on women... On Bangladeshi infiltration, too, it remains silent. The law and order has collapsed in the state," Annapurna Devi said.



**KTR seeks ...**

Continued from page 1

"The Central government should bring its plan for 'One Nation, One election' before the people of India. It is essential that the public understands how the government will conduct these elections, whether they will cancel the current terms of state governments and bring both state and national elections together, or whether this will be implemented in phases. This clarity is crucial for the future of governance in the country," KTR stated.

KTR amplified that the BRS party would declare its official stance on "One nation, One election" only after the central government provided clarity on its plans. "Once the central government outlines its position and provides further details, the BRS will hold internal discussions and take a formal decision on our party's stance regarding One Nation, One election." The BRS working president stressed that there were nearly four years left before the next parliamentary elections, as the last national elections were recently concluded. He questioned whether the central government intended to dissolve the state governments prematurely to align the election cycles or if it planned to implement simultaneous elections gradually. "The government must clarify whether it will hold state and parliamentary elections simultaneously by dissolving state governments, or if it will phase in this process" KTR observed.

KTR highlighted the importance of addressing other critical issues before addressing 'One Nation, One election'. "Along with the discussion on One Nation, One election, the country must undertake a Census and delimitation of the constituencies for both Parliamentary and Assembly seats. Additionally, the already approved women's reservation in legislatures must be implemented without delay," KTR emphasized.

**Necessary for ...**

Continued from page 1

He also mentioned that while the idea may not sit well with some sections, it is vital for the overall development of India. Maheshwar Reddy said, "The Jamili bill will be introduced in Parliament soon, providing an opportunity for all political parties to discuss and voice their concerns during the debate." Touching on the Modi government's achievements, he highlighted the initiatives aimed at improving the living standards of various social groups, especially workers, farmers, and women. He added that the government had issued health cards to over six crore individuals above 75 years and was working towards developing a strong eco-system with focus on environmental conservation. He concluded by hailing India's rapid rise as 'a global manufacturing hub' and its expected position as the world's third-largest economy, while attributing these developments to the Modi government's policies.

**Cabinet nod for ...**

Continued from page 1

Responding to a question on the stand of opposition parties, the minister said, "The opposition might start feeling internal pressure (about 'one nation, one election') as more than 80 per cent of the respondents who responded during the consultation process have given their positive support, especially the youth. They are very much in favour of this."

Asked by reporters when the recommendations could be implemented and whether a bill would be brought in the upcoming winter session of Parliament, Vaishnaw evaded a direct reply but pointed out that Shah has said the government would implement it in its current tenure.

After the discussions are completed, implementation would follow in steps and it would be the government's endeavour to build a consensus over the next few months, he said.

Once the consultation process is over, the law ministry will draft a bill, place it before the cabinet and subsequently, take it to Parliament for simultaneous polls to come into effect, the minister added. Sources in the government later said a singular bill or a set of bills will be brought before Parliament.

In its report submitted to the government in March, just before the general election was announced, the Kovind panel recommended implementing "one nation, one election" in two phases -- simultaneous polls for the Lok Sabha and state assemblies in the first phase and elections for local bodies like panchayats and municipal bodies within 100 days of the general election in the second phase.

It also recommended a common electoral roll, which would need coordination between the Election Commission of India (ECI) and state election commissions.

At present, the ECI is responsible for the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls, while the local body elections for municipalities and panchayats are managed by the

state election commissions. The country had simultaneous elections between 1951 and 1967 but thereafter, polls started getting dispersed due to various reasons, including mid-term elections.

Holding all polls simultaneously will

**HIGHLIGHTS ...**

Continued from page 1

- Where fresh elections are held for the House of the People (Lok Sabha), the tenure of the House will be "only for the unexpired (remaining) term of the immediately preceding full term of the House.
- When fresh elections are held for state legislative assemblies, then such new assemblies -- unless sooner dissolved -- shall continue up to the end of the full term of Lok Sabha.
- A single electoral roll and Elector's Photo Identity Card (EPIC) shall be prepared by the Election Commission of India in consultation with the State Election Commission and the same will substitute any other electoral roll prepared by ECI.
- For making logistical arrangements for the conduct of simultaneous elections, the ECI may draw up a plan and estimate in advance for the procurement of equipment, such as EVMS and VVPATs, deployment of polling personnel and security forces and make other necessary arrangements.

require a lot of manoeuvring, including advancing some elections and delaying some others.

While the Lok Sabha polls were held in May-June this year, states like Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh also went to polls along with the parliamentary election.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## The next gen chief minister

By naming Atishi as Delhi's new CM, Kejriwal seeks to appeal to women voters and refresh the party's leadership

In a surprising but strategic political manoeuvre, Atishi, the dynamic and well-regarded education reformist, has taken over as the youngest Chief Minister of Delhi. This shift marks a significant moment not only in Delhi's political history but also in the larger context of Indian politics. Arvind Kejriwal's decision to pass the baton to Atishi is being viewed as a calculated move, one that signals both a generational shift and a fresh approach to governance. Kejriwal's choice of Atishi is rooted in multiple factors, each with its own political and administrative logic. Atishi has been one of the brightest stars in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) since its inception, known for her innovative ideas and hands-on approach to public administration, especially in the education sector. Her work as the education minister has drawn national attention, with Delhi's government schools undergoing a transformative makeover under her leadership. Kejriwal's decision to elevate her comes at a time when AAP is facing multiple challenges. From managing Delhi's



growing urban infrastructure needs to balancing the delicate relationship with the central government, the city requires fresh energy and innovative solutions. Atishi, with her administrative experience and public image as a reformer, presents a candidate who is capable of steering Delhi through these complex issues. Moreover, Kejriwal's move signals his willingness to let the younger generation of AAP leaders take charge. By elevating Atishi, he is not just preparing for Delhi's immediate future, but also laying the groundwork for the party's long-term vision, positioning AAP as a progressive and youth-centric force in Indian politics.

Atishi's rise to the position of Chief Minister brings with it a new wave of expectations. Her track record suggests that education and public welfare will remain key priorities. Delhi's residents can expect an expansion of the initiatives that have already borne fruit, such as the Mohalla Clinics, water and electricity schemes and the focus on improving healthcare and education. One of the most significant aspects of Atishi's leadership could be her ability to bring a new perspective to governance—one that is less confrontational and more collaborative. Atishi's rise to the highest political office in Delhi is a momentous event. But make no mistake, the real power still remains with Arvind Kejriwal. He is the one who would be making all the key decisions. But Atishi's rise in the party is for real. It does not matter that she would be the chief minister for only few months as Delhi elections are round the corner and her tenure would be a talking point with women voters. Besides, for Delhi, it signals a continuation of the reforms initiated over the past decade, with the added promise of new energy and ideas that could redefine the city's future. It would indeed be a test of Atishi's leadership quality as she will be under constant scrutiny, with both her supporters and detractors closely watching her every move. Her ability to navigate these pressures will be crucial in determining the success of this bold experiment by Kejriwal.

### PICTALK



People perform 'pind daan' rituals at the bank of Falgu river on the first day of the Pitra Paksha, in Gaya

## Ozone: The earth's protective shield but also a threat

Ozone is a paradoxical element — it shields life from harmful UV radiation in atmosphere but is also a big pollutant on the ground

People often think of two different things when they hear the word "ozone": on the one hand, an essential shield in the atmosphere that protects life on Earth from the Sun's dangerous ultraviolet radiation; on the other, a pollutant that causes health problems and damage to the environment. Ozone is indeed a double-edged sword because its effect on human life depends on where it is and how much of it there is. The "good" ozone in the upper atmosphere is significant, but the "bad" ozone at ground level is very bad for people and the world. This dual nature needs immediate care, new ideas, and cooperation worldwide so that people can continue to live. Ozone creates the well-known ozone layer high in the stratosphere, between 10 and 30 miles (16-48 km) above the surface of the Earth. This protective layer absorbs the bulk of the Sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation UV-C and UV-B. Ecosystems would almost certainly be unable to survive as they do now without this natural shield, which exposes life on Earth to haz-



ardous radiation levels. Although life depends on the ozone layer in the stratosphere, ground-level ozone, found in the troposphere, is a hazardous contaminant. This ozone, created by sunlight-induced chemical interactions between nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), is mainly caused by human activity, including certain chemicals, industrial processes, and automobile emissions. This ozone will affect crop productivity and ecosystem dynamics. In the mid-20th century, scientists discovered that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) were causing the systematic depletion of the ozone layer. In response to the pressing need, a global accord, the Montreal Protocol, was

adopted in 1987 to gradually eliminate the manufacturing of chemicals that cause the depletion of the ozone layer. The main objective of this accord was to eliminate progressively chemicals that cause erosion of the ozone layer, notably chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), which are extensively used in refrigeration, aerosols, and other industrial uses. India is also a signatory to this accord. Indian industries, especially those in the refrigeration, air-conditioning, and foam production sectors, were compelled to transition to ozone-friendly alternatives. The phasing out of CFCs initially led to the adoption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), but attention soon shifted toward more environmentally friendly solutions, such as natural refrigerants, hydrofluoroolefins (HFOs), with lower global warming potential. Since the implementation of the Montreal Protocol, global emissions of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) have dramatically decreased. The ozone layer has shown signs of recovery, particularly over Antarctica, where the famous

"ozone hole" is gradually closing. This recovery is essential for shielding the planet from harmful UV radiation. In addition, the phase-out of CFCs and other ODS has had a measurable impact on global temperature regulation. This is significant when considering the urgency of limiting temperature rise to avoid catastrophic climate impacts. The Protocol has become a symbol of what international cooperation can achieve if people unite and work together to protect the environment. The illegal production of CFCs and incomplete phase-outs in some regions could slow progress. While ozone protects life and poses risks, its dual nature demands vigilant global action. Striking the right balance between preserving the protective ozone layer and mitigating harmful ground-level ozone is essential for humanity's and the planet's health. We can ensure a safe future only through international cooperation and innovative solutions. (The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies; views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

## Showdown over Rahul's remarks in the US

Rahul Gandhi's recent trip to the US has reignited the debate over whether Indian leaders should criticise their government while abroad



KALYANI SHANKAR



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's recent he United States has provoked a war of words between the ruling BJP and the main opposition Congress in India. Should the Indian leaders refrain from bad-mouthing the ruling BJP while abroad? Is there a red line, and has Rahul crossed it while he was in the US? The BJP claims yes, and the Congress says no. Gandhi has taken potshots at the Indian government and PM Modi. Congress claims that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also bad-mouthed the Congress not once but continuously since he took over in 2014 and visited over 80 countries. The Congress cites many examples. Also, the BJP has misrepresented Rahul's statements. Rahul aims to engage the Diaspora through programs with the Diaspora, students, officials, and lawmakers in the US, demonstrating the strategic nature of his approach. Why does he want to woo the Diaspora? Modi also has never missed an opportunity to address the Diaspora in whichever country he visits. Rahul, too, wants to connect with the Indian American community. The influence of the Indian American community has increased. A decade ago, there was one Indian-American in the House of Representatives; now, there are five and one senator. The US has

an Indian-origin Presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris, and a vice-presidential candidate, JD Vance, who has an Indian wife. Education, affluence and awareness of the influence in the past two decades are behind the rise of Indian Americans, whose population is one per cent, and their representation in US Congress is now one per cent. Rahul commented on the RSS, India's democracy, Modi's China policy, and religious freedom in India, among other things. On the RSS, Gandhi said that the BJP's parent organisation believes India is "one idea", but the Congress considers it a "diversity of ideas." This criticism of the RSS, a critical ideological force behind the BJP, upset the BJP. In India, the BJP slammed Rahul's adverse comments and meeting with anti-India US Congresswoman Ilhan Omar. The BJP claims that it can be used for anti-India propaganda. Gandhi counters that she was part of the lawmaker's delegation, and how he could have declined to meet with the delegation. Rahul noted that Indian democracy has struggled for the past ten years but is improving. He also observed that 90% of India's population, including OBCs, Dalits, and Adivasis, are



IN INDIA, THE BJP SLAMMED RAHUL'S ADVERSE COMMENTS AND MEETING WITH ANTI-INDIA US CONGRESS WOMAN ILHAN OMAR. THE BJP CLAIMS THAT IT CAN BE USED FOR ANTI-INDIA PROPAGANDA

not able to take an active part in the democratic process. This has upset the BJP. While Rahul agreed with Modi's policies on Pakistan and Bangladesh, he felt Modi's China policy was flawed. Rahul pointed out, "We've got Chinese troops occupying land the size of Delhi in Ladakh. I think that's a disaster." The BJP fielded top leaders to refute Rahul's allegations, with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh leading the response. He rubbished Rahul's claim on China policy. He observed it was "extremely shameful" that the LOP is hurting the dignity of India by saying "misleading, baseless and factless things." Another controversial subject was the caste census. Rahul Gandhi supported the caste census and claimed that BJP was trying to end the reservation. Union Minister Amit Shah quickly responded that they would not allow anyone to abolish reservations or undermine the nation's security. Countering his remarks about the status of Sikhs in India, Senior Minister Hardeep Puri said, "I am a proud Sikh. I have been wearing a turban for over six decades and a kada for even longer..." The BJP takes Rahul's statements seriously, given that he is the LOP. His increased stature after leading the Bharat

Jodo' yatra and the Leader of the Opposition cannot be wished away. In the 2024 elections, much to the dismay of the BJP, Congress doubled its number. Second, after the 2024 polls, the opposition coalition INDIA was strengthened. The BJP had to form the government with the help of allies. Third, Rahul visited the US before Modi's scheduled visit on September 22. His trip was well received, which did not please the BJP. But Modi would have a grand welcome at the official and the community levels. At the end of his visit, Rahul clarified, "The fight for democracy in India is an Indian fight. It has nothing to do with anybody else. It's our problem. And we'll take care of it. We will make sure that democracy is secure." This clarification prevented the idea that he was inviting a foreign power to resolve Indian problems. There is some merit in the BJP saying dirty linen should not be wasted abroad. On an earlier occasion, foreign minister S. Jaishankar said, "I don't think taking national politics out of the country is in the national interest." But this is good for both sides, and both should follow it. (The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### MYANMAR: CHALLENGES FOR INDIA

Madam — Apropos of the well analysed article 'Myanmar Junta on the Blackfoot' (18th Sept), India faces multiple challenges in the existential crisis of the military junta in Myanmar for more than a decade. The worst crisis of refugee influx, the consequential fallout, unrest and instability in North Eastern states particularly Manipur and security threats from China along its North-eastern borders need top priority from security angle as diplomatic channels with the National League for Democracy or the Junta have not served our country's strategic interests. UNO does not appear and is no more an International Organisation capable of dealing with the crises in the countries having multiple stake holders. All its permanent members in Security Council have substantial stakes in all the wars and coups presently. The refugees crisis emanated from Myanmar is the most disturbing and destabilising factor for India. India is not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol. India has chosen not to sign the refugee conventions and protocol, and has historically cited national security interests and challenges to its sovereignty as key concerns. India, along with the governments of other South Asian countries, asserts that migration is a matter of bilateral and not multilateral relations, which should not be governed by international agreements. Sometimes it appears that refugee influx in India is a deliberate outcome of military coup in neighbouring countries. Peace and political stability in Myanmar appears a distant possibility and multiple stake holders namely China, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Myanmar itself know the vulnerability of Indian borders and some strategic areas sandwiched between some of these countries. Therefore, for the time being till political normalcy is restored in Myanmar, military options should be prioritised over diplomatic adventures. Vinod Johri | Delhi

#### Atishi is the new Delhi CM



The selection of Atishi Marlena Singh as Delhi's new chief minister does not come as a surprise. Infact, any name as chief minister would not have turned heads because it is amply evident that the man holding all the aces, is still Arvind Kejriwal. Make no mistake, Kejriwal may have just returned from prison, but the clever former bureaucrat intends to turn the politically tricky situation into a massive support of strength. Since the Delhi assembly elections

are only a few months away, Kejriwal aims to divert the excise policy corruption issue by pitch-forking a party leader, with no real mass base, as the executive head of the state. However, Atishi's comparatively clean image, administrative experience and fighting spirit should come in handy for the AAP supremo who is sure to go the whole hog to retain power for the party in Delhi. That way, Kejriwal can intensely focus on the election campaign with little to answer on a "corrupt chief minister" holding on to his chair. Of course, the opposition will vociferously target the former chief minister who is perhaps the principal vote-getter for his party besides a handful of leaders like Manish Sisodia. The chief minister's seat will beckon Kejriwal if the party wins, and Atishi shall be relegated to the list of those chief ministers who held the post of chief minister for a few months. Ganpathi Bhat | Akola

#### ONE HUNDRED DAYS OF MODI GOVT

Madam — For a government in power for the past 100 days now talking about its feats in 100 days is incorrect. It gives room for posing questions like why such actions were not done in the last 10 years and how just allocation of funds can be claimed as a feat and so on. If any assessment be made on the performance of the present government it should be for the period in power since 2014. Because nothing could be achieved in a short period of time like 100 days. In the case of the present government the claim on employment is not correct. Because it is only a matter of allocation of funds and announcement of a project. The working and success of the project needs to be assessed only after its completion. It is also to be noted that it is only a project to improve the skill and not a project to provide employment. Farmers' basic woes are not addressed and they continue to feel let down and the consumers also feel the same with the growing food inflation. Healthcare continues to be a commodity. A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

#### TRAGEDIES AT GANESH VISARJAN

Madam — Ganesh immersion in the country turns tragic in several parts of India. Similar incidents have occurred throughout the country. While immersing an idol of Lord Ganesha, devotees got swept away by the river's powerful currents. Divers recovered his body afterwards but it was a sad end to a religious celebration. In another incident in Gujarat's Gandhinagar, eight people drowned while taking a dip in the Meshwo River. It is time for the people to exercise caution during religious events like Ganesh Visarjan. This tragic series of events serves as a reminder of the importance of safety precautions during religious ceremonies. It is crucial to take necessary measures to avoid such incidents in the future. Let us not take undue risks in the name of God and pay heavy price for that. Besides, there must be adequate security arrangements by the government to avoid such accidents. Nikhil CK Maniam | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

### EMBRACING DIVINE SHELTER

God can help us succeed in life but we must seek his shelter by adhering to dharma



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

What a wonderful prospect! Yes, it is possible, if we take shelter of God and remain in it. Because God is everything. (Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-Geeta 7.19) For that, we have to be engaged in activities according to the instructions of God. And we will benefit in many ways. How else can one remain motivated to pursue the spiritual path? In this process, God is pleased but does not benefit personally in any way, because God is 'purna' (complete in all respects).

I will cite three examples and a few reasons to substantiate this. But I will begin with some of the benefits of taking shelter from God and remaining there. God's instructions promote 'dharma' (highest moral and religious principles). Because dharma is the bedrock upon which the Creation is based. God even incarnates when there is a decline in dharma. (4.7) Those, who follow dharma in their behavior are rewarded by God's Divine Authority.

This is done according to the 'Karmaphala Principle', which is: "What we sow we reap." If one pleases God by spiritual practices additionally, God gets personally involved in the life of His devotee. His very first act is to begin guiding. I am experiencing it. It is simple. I face a challenge /problem. I pray for guidance and help. God gives me intuitions. As the connection with God becomes stronger, God begins helping too. This is a quantum jump because God is omnipotent. Problems get solved and life can go on smoothly. (18.58) Sometimes, we face non-cooperation from others; God even changes the hearts of people. Further progress on the spiri-



tual path helps us to qualify for becoming 'nimitta' (instruments) of God, as Arjuna did in the Mahabharata. (11.33) God, as Karta, begins to micromanage the lives of His dear devotees. Reformations begin; because we must help ourselves. And credit for success must also come to us; God does not need it.

Only rarely did God intervene directly, as Lord Krishna did to protect Draupadi from getting humiliated; no one had come forward. Similarly, Lord Krishna had to protect His devotee and friend (4.3) Arjuna after he was about to enter the fire for not being able to kill Jayadratha before sunset, as vowed him.

Lord Krishna brought the sun back and Arjuna was able to kill Jayadratha before the sunset. In these two instances, though the Lord got credit, He did not gain anything, Draupadi and Arjuna gained. God has a plan for whoever takes His shelter. How did the Lord help Goswami Tulsidas? His wife opened his eyes when she told him, "You will attain success in life if you become devoted to Shri Rama instead of to me." Because Tulsidasji was at the threshold of becoming great by writing epics like Ramacharitanmasa. The conclusion is: get linked with God urgently.

There is so much to gain from God, who has plenty to give. Isn't God the owner of everything? God is self-sufficient. He creates without any help from anyone. God never gets attached to anyone. If He did, God would become dependent on others to do what He must to keep the Creation going.

I am gaining everything desirable. I could not have imagined what God can and does for me. The quality of my life is steadily improving. Please get started on the spiritual journey; you will never look back.

(The writer is a spiritual guide; views expressed are personal)

# Reclaim water bodies to ward off water crisis



SRIRAJ KOTA

India's lakes and wetlands, once lifeline for its cities, are vanishing at an alarming rate, driven by rampant corruption and unchecked construction



Urban lakes and wetlands are an integral part of our ecosystem. They perform critical environmental, social, and economic functions as they are a source of drinking water, recharge groundwater and support biodiversity besides providing livelihoods. But the life of these indispensable water bodies is ebbing under the relentless onslaught of population, corrupt administrations, and construction mafia. A study by Wetlands International has shown that two out of every five wetlands in India have been lost in the last 30 years, and of the remaining water bodies 40% are unable to support aquatic life due to loss of water quality. But this plunder of water bodies of India did not happen overnight but over some time.

Take the case of Bengaluru for instance. In the late 18th century, a British expedition tasked by Governor General Cornwallis to find an alternative route between Madras and Srirangapatna stumbled upon Bengaluru which was full of lakes and water bodies.

The captain heading the expedition thereafter referred to it as the Land of Thousand Lakes in his reports. However, today Bengaluru is a pale version of its once illustrious past. In 1960 Bengaluru had 262 lakes but today only 10 of them hold water.

The city saw a shocking decline in its water bodies as exploitation and population grew in equal measure. Lakes and water bodies are disappearing at an alarming pace at the city level and state level as well. According to the Union Jal Shakti Ministry report, Karnataka lost an astounding 13,000 water bodies in just one year between 2021 and 2022.

This is the case with every city in India. Ahmedabad for instance had 137 lakes in 2001 but as per recent reports, construction has been seen on 65 of them now. The national capital Delhi too is being robbed of its water bodies. According to a Delhi government report, nearly half



TODAY BENGALURU IS A PALE VERSION OF ITS ONCE ILLUSTRIOUS PAST. IN 1960 BENGALURU HAD 262 LAKES BUT TODAY ONLY 10 OF THEM HOLD WATER

(49.1%) of Delhi's official water bodies do not exist anymore - they have either gone "missing" or have been encroached upon.

The entire nation more or less presents the same depressing scenario. But recently a state government sat up, took notice, and acted. The Telangana state government's Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA) initiative to reclaim encroached land of water bodies in Hyderabad and surrounding areas has made national headlines. The HYDRAA team created in July this year and headed by an IPS officer was given a clear-cut mandate by the state chief minister Revanth Reddy to free the city water bodies of illegal encroachments and construction.

The Full Tank Level (FTL) was kept as the parameter by HYDRAA and any construction or encroachment within 30 meters of FTL was made subject to demolition. The agency has been given a free hand and made immune to political pressures with zero tolerance being practiced even if the encroachment belongs to prominent politicians or businesspeople of the city. Notably, even the chief minister's brother was served notice for demolition.

This drive conducted diligently and without bowing to any pressure was able to remove 262 unauthorised encroachments built in water bodies, government lands, urban canals and parks in 23 locations in the city have been removed and 111.72 acres of land have been reclaimed to date. The state government has issued further instructions making it compulsory to take

HYDRAA NOC before commencing any construction near lakes.

The actions of HYDRAA have instilled a sense of confidence among the environmentalists not only in Telangana but also across India and are being seen as a case study in governance especially about safeguarding environmental assets such as water bodies. But as is expected with any groundbreaking initiative, the step taken by the Telangana government too has off late been soundly criticised for being inhuman due to the demolishing of houses of the poor and those who were paying loans for the same. Given this adverse feedback, the state government has issued clarifications to the effect that occupied houses will not be demolished.

The HYDRAA initiative is an example and a clarion call for the rest of the nation to wake up rescue and reclaim its water bodies. This is crucial in light of reports released by the United Nations and Niti Ayog which state that water demand will reach twice the available supply, and 40 per cent of India's population will not have access to clean drinking water by 2030. To prevent a grim and parched future, the central government in collaboration with state government and local environmental groups must establish a Wetland Task Force for every state.

The state-specific task force must have a clear mandate to reclaim every water body in its jurisdiction by clearing out encroachments, demolishing illegal construction and preventing changes in land use. Apart from enforcement duty, the task force must also have an enabling role that is

focused on replenishing and rejuvenating the wetlands and water bodies in its jurisdiction. For instance, the task force can encourage urban households and businesses to implement rainwater harvesting practices on their premises. The water harvested can be channelled towards improving the groundwater table and recharging the aquifers. Additionally, the government can, through the task force regulate the borewells in the urban areas.

Indiscriminate and unregulated drilling for water in metropolitan areas has caused the drying up of the groundwater table. The task force team can save the city's water resources by ensuring that prior permissions are taken to drill borewells. Furthermore, the task force team can install water meters to ensure that water extraction is done in a measured and quantified manner. Currently, there have been many instances where local leaders, with political affiliations "adopt" lakes and water bodies in the name of preserving them and slowly encroach the property.

After that, in connivance with builder mafia construction is done on the property which is then sold to unsuspecting citizens. The wetland task force can prevent this and play a pivotal role in ensuring that no individual or commercial company is entrusted with safeguarding the lakes and water bodies as this can result in manipulation.

Water bodies are India's lifelines. Reclaiming the lost ones and preserving the remaining can alone ensure a water secure future for our nation.

(The writer is a policy analyst, views expressed are personal)

## India's untapped ocean energy: A blueprint for powering the future

India's 8,000 km coastline holds the potential to generate a staggering 9.2 lakh TWh of clean energy annually

The 8000 km long Indian coastline has the potential to generate 9.2 lakh Trillion Watts hour per annum (TWh/annum) electricity, which is a manifold of what is generated as of date. This is at a time when India is struggling to meet its requirement of 4.5 Lakh MW power utilizing all sources of energy production.

According to Ocean Energy Atlas prepared by Hyderabad-based Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), a premier research and development organization under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea are the nation's



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Akshayapatra of energy. "The Exclusive Economic Zone lying within the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal has oceanic energy potential of 9.2 lakh TWh/annum. This is the first time in the history of India the oceanic energy potential has been assessed and an atlas of this kind has been prepared," Dr T M Balakrishnan Nair, Group Director and lead sci-

entist, INCOIS, told The Pioneer. A bouquet of offshore renewable, offshore solar, offshore wind, wave, tidal, ocean thermal energy conversion, and salinity gradient represent the hitherto untapped potential of renewables. India's Ocean Energy Atlas has been released following the International Renewable Energy Agency's finding that the G-20 countries collectively account for 81 per cent of total renewable energy and about 100 per cent of ocean energy.

India's offshore wind energy remains untapped even as countries like Denmark, Britain and China have made giant strides in this sector. Dr Nair says there is wide scope to set up renewable energy power stations to tap salini-

ty gradients. Dr. T. Srinivasa Kumar, director, of INCOIS, said that the atlas would serve as a key resource for guiding policy and investment decisions in the energy sector.

An important element in this form of energy generation is that there would not be any kind of apprehension in the minds of the people about land acquisition, pollution and discharge of effluents. "This is the cleanest form of energy and many public and private sector enterprises have shown their interest in setting up renewable energy units," said M Ravichandran, secretary, ministry of earth sciences, Govt of India.

INCOIS is playing a major role in the country's blue



economy sector by providing information to fishers about potential fishing zones and sharp weather forecasts. Dr Srinivasa Kumar and his team have developed a state-of-the-art tsunami warning system with which they alert countries along the rim of the Indian Ocean. Since its inception in 1999, INCOIS has been contributing to India's blue economy through its flagship pro-

grams like Potential Fishing Zones (PFZ), Ocean State Forecasts (OSF) and Tsunami Early Warning Services (TEWS). INCOIS has also been the national and regional warehouse for oceanographic data spanning in-situ platforms, satellite sensors, and model-simulated products.

Taking advantage of the availability of such long-term scientific datasets, INCOIS has taken up the challenge of estimating the ocean energy potential from the Indian EEZ and prepared an Atlas for the first time in the country. The satellite data collected through hi-tech sensors about the regions where there are good catches are disseminated to fishers and this has made the job of fishermen

quite easy. All they have to do is rush to the areas identified as fishing zones by the INCOIS scientists. The Integrated Ocean Energy Atlas prepared by Team INCOIS is the first of its kind in the world.

Ocean energy assumes significance as scientific reports are galore about the fluctuations in solar power generation capabilities because of climate change. G M Pillai, director general, of the World Institute of Sustainable Energy (WISE), Pune, says that as of this date, solar power output is not encouraging because of changes in rain patterns. "The Rajasthan deserts could have been the powerhouse of states like Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat but the solar power

potential has come down and the deserts are becoming evergreen garden," said Pillai. The thorium-based nuclear reactor is yet to take off and the picture from nuclear power reactors is dismal. There was a time when former directors of the Indira Gandhi Center for Atomic Research (IGCAR) at Kalpakkam had claimed that India was the world leader in Fast Breeder Reactor technology, it all ended up as chest beating. The only hope is integrated ocean energy. India has a vast coastline of nearly 8000 km and this could offer a permanent solution to our energy needs.

(The writer is a special correspondent with the Pioneer; views expressed are personal)

IN BRIEF

# India stands out globally, will continue to grow at fast pace: FM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said India is standing out globally in terms of economic growth and will continue to do so in the next few years.

Sitharaman said the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for government employees approved by the Cabinet last month, balances the interests of government employees as well as taxpayers by not overburdening future generations with heavy pension bills.

"We are much better off than many other countries, even if they are advanced countries, today they are struggling to grow. We are standing out as an economy which is growing at the fastest rate in the last few years, this year and the next few years also for which we can do prediction," Sitharaman said.

The Indian economy grew at 8.2 per cent in 2023-24. The Economic Survey 2023-24 tabled in Parliament in July projected the economy to clock



6.5-7 per cent growth this fiscal year.

Sitharaman was speaking at the launch of NPS Vatsalya-- a pension scheme for children below the age of 18 years. The minimum contribution for the scheme is Rs 1,000 annually and pension would accrue after 60 years of age.

Sitharaman further said that the NPS scheme has generated competitive returns since its

inception.

For the Government sector, NPS, on average, has given returns of 9.5 per cent Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) since its inception.

In the Non-Government sector, since inception, the permitted asset classes have delivered CAGR returns of 14 per cent for equity, 9.1 per cent for corporate debt and 8.8 per

cent for Government Securities.

With regard to the UPS for central government employees which will be effective from April 1, 2025, Sitharaman said it has the best elements of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) as well as the New Pension Scheme (NPS), and it provides an assured pension after retirement.

Under UPS, government employees will receive a guaranteed pension amounting to 50 per cent of their average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months before retirement.

Additionally, the UPS scheme includes inflation indexation based on the All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (AICPI-IW).

State governments also have the option to adopt the Unified Pension Scheme.

"UPS balances the interests of government employees as well as taxpayers by not overburdening future generations with heavy pension bills," Sitharaman said.

# Govt to launch Credit Guarantee Fund for farmers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday said it will soon launch a Rs 1,000 crore credit guarantee fund to enhance lender confidence in pledge financing against electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipts for farmers and traders using WDRA-registered warehouses.

Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra told reporters here that the fund with a corpus of Rs 1,000 crore will address the anticipated credit risk of lenders.

"A credit guarantee scheme has been approved recently and will be launched shortly," Chopra announced, highlighting the achievements in 100 days of the Modi 3.0 government.

The pledge financing against electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipts (e-NWRs) was not gaining traction to a satisfactory level despite the government efforts to make it seamless with the recent introduction of the Kisan Upaj Nidhi portal, he said.

The Kisan Upaj Nidhi is a government initiative aimed at supporting farmers by provid-

ing financial assistance and facilitating easier access to credit.

The secretary said the pledge post-harvest financing was only Rs 3,962 crore in the total Rs 13 lakh crore credit in 2023-24. The lower pledge financing was due to 'reluctance on the part of bankers anticipating a credit risk.'

The new credit guarantee fund aims to address the credit risk and ensure a pick up in loans against pledge of eNWRs to Rs 1,05,000 crore in the next 10 years from the current level.

The Secretary further said his department has used the PM Gati Shakti to optimise

routes taken by vehicles for carrying PDS foodgrains from FCI godowns to state godowns to fair price shops, thereby saving Rs 112 crore. "We have received reports from 13 states and there are savings to the tune of Rs 112 crore. With a small intervention we are able to make this kind of savings," he said, adding that the department is exploring the possibility to quantify the carbon emissions that were reduced and avail carbon credits.



## Number of Atal Pension Yojana subscribers touches 6.9 cr

About 7 crore people have subscribed to the Atal Pension Yojana (APY) whose corpus has swelled to Rs 35,149 crore, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Wednesday. APY is a low-cost pension scheme that offers a guaranteed minimum pension of Rs 1,000-5,000 per month from the age of 60 years onwards (depending on the contributions by the subscribers). In case of death of the subscriber, the same pension will be provided to the spouse till he/she is alive. In the event of death of both the subscriber and the spouse, the entire corpus is given to the nominee. "Since its inception in 2015, 6.90 crore people have subscribed to the Atal Pension Yojana and a corpus worth Rs 35,149 crore has been accumulated," Sitharaman said at an event to launch the NPS Vatsalya scheme.



## Govt raises refund cap for Sahara depositors to Rs 50,000

The government has raised the cap on refund amounts for small depositors of the Sahara Group Cooperative Societies to Rs 50,000, up from the previous limit of Rs 10,000, a senior cooperation ministry official said on Wednesday. The government has so far released Rs 370 crore to more than 4.29 lakh depositors of Sahara Group of Cooperative Societies through the CRCS-Sahara refund portal. "With an increase in the limit of refund amount to Rs 50,000, about Rs 1,000 crore payment will be made in the next 10 days," the official said. Last week, the cap on refund amount for small depositors was raised to Rs 50,000 each from Rs 10,000, the official said. The government is vetting the claims of depositors carefully before releasing the refund.

Following a Supreme Court order, the CRCS-Sahara refund portal was launched on July 18, 2023, for submission of claims by genuine depositors of Sahara Group's four multi-state cooperative societies for refund of their legitimate deposits.



## Western Carriers IPO subscribed 13.88 times

The Rs 493-crore initial share sale of logistics company Western Carriers (India) Ltd got subscribed 13.88 times on Wednesday. The initial public offering received bids for 28,96,23,957 shares against 2,08,68,467 shares on offer, as per NSE data. The category for non-institutional investors garnered 20.92 times subscription while Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) subscribed to the offer 18.60 times. Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) fetched 14 per cent subscription. Last Thursday, Western Carriers (India) said it has mobilised Rs 148 crore from anchor investors. The Kolkata-based company's initial public offering (IPO) is available for subscription in the price range of Rs 163-172 per share. The IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares, aggregating up to Rs 400 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of up to 54 lakh equity shares worth Rs 93 crore, at the upper end of the price band by promoter Rajendra Sethia. Proceeds from the fresh issue to the tune of Rs 163.5 crore will be used for debt payment and Rs 152 crore for funding capital expenditure.

# India, EU agree to enhance cooperation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and the European Union (EU) have agreed to enhance cooperation in sustainable water management with focus on river basin management,

fostering innovation and technology transfer, while promoting sustainable investments. EU Ambassador to India Ugo Astuto highlighted the success of the ongoing water projects in India, empha-

sizing that the European Union and India have developed a strong and innovative water management partnership.

At the inauguration of the India-EU Water Forum on Wednesday during the India

Water Week, he praised its growing collaboration with India in water management and expressed interest in expanding this partnership to Africa. "We have developed a successful partnership in India.

# Markets settle lower dragged by IT stocks

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Wednesday, after hitting fresh record high levels during the morning trade, dragged by IT stocks as investors preferred to book profits ahead of the keenly-awaited US Fed's decision on interest rates.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 131.43 points or 0.16 per cent to settle at 82,948.23. During the day, it climbed 246.72 points or 0.29 per cent to scale a new all-time intraday peak of 83,326.38.

The NSE Nifty also declined 41 points or 0.16 per cent to close at 25,377.55. During the day, it advanced 63.65 points or 0.25 per cent to hit a fresh intra-day lifetime high of 25,482.20.

From the 30 Sensex firms, Tata Consultancy Services and HCL Technologies dropped



over 3 per cent each. Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Sun Pharma and Tata Motors were the other major laggards.

Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Nestle, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and State Bank of India were among the biggest gainers.

In Asian markets, Tokyo and Shanghai settled higher. Trading was closed in Hong Kong for a national holiday.

European markets were trading lower.

# EYES 60 PC REVENUE INCREASE IN 3-4 YEARS Govt plans to transform India Post into logistics firm

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is looking to transform India Post into a logistics company and increase the revenue of the department by 50-60 per cent in the next 3-4 years, Union Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Wednesday.

Speaking at a Public Affairs Forum of India event in the national capital, the minister said about 25,000 villages in the country that do not have mobile networks will be connected by next year.

"Postal department is moving leaps and bounds. Today, our turnover is close to about Rs 12,000 crore per annum.

I'm looking at possibly trying to increase that by 50-60 per cent over the next 3-4 years," Scindia said.

The postal department has



the potential to take services to the doorsteps of people in rural and remote areas, he said, adding that he will be looking at all potential services to increase the revenue of India Post.

"We need to transform ourselves from just a mail busi-

ness and a letter business. We need to transform ourselves into a logistics company. We have got to look at route optimisation, multiple sources to be able to transport our services," Scindia said.

On development in the Northeast, the minister said the government is spending a large amount in building huge infrastructure in the region, including investment of Rs 48,000 on road network.

He said 6,000 villages in the Northeast and 25,000 of them across the country still do not have mobile towers.

"Through USO Fund we are trying to set up mobile networks in all the 25,000 villages by the middle of next year... after that there be not a single village left in the country without mobile connectivity," Scindia added.

# 'Don't miss out on tapping design, export opportunity'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IT Secretary S Krishnan on Wednesday exhorted the industry not to ignore the design elements of value chain, and said that India should build on its existing strengths and aim for 'India designed-India developed' mobile phones.

Speaking at a Broadband India Forum (BIF) event, Krishnan also noted that India should position itself as a competitive destination where players can manufacture for the domestic market, as well as exports.

The mobile phones manufactured in India in volume terms has reached a 'steady state', when seen against the backdrop of the overall size of the domestic market and average expected lifespan of handsets (with replacement cycle seen at three years), he said.

Optimising production capacities from here on would require players to also tap the export markets, he added. Encouraging players to think about 'India designed-India developed' mobile phone, Krishnan said that playing on the strengths of both design and manufacturing capabilities would lead to greater value creation in the country.

The big question around 'what is the design of future' is something that can be answered by India along with other countries, he asserted.

"Given the kind of design strengths we have, and given the kind of capacities we have...the element of design is something that can't be ignored and needs to be an important goal for the mobile industry," he said.

He noted that electronics manufacturing pie has increased to about USD 115 billion, of which mobile phones constitute the fastest-growing segment.

# India's home & household market to reach \$237 bn: Deloitte

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India's home and household market is expected to reach USD 237 billion by 2030 at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of over 10 per cent, fuelled by increasing disposable income, shifting consumer preferences and a growing focus on comfort and convenience across product categories, according to a report by Deloitte.

The report, Powering Consumption Growth-India's Home and House Market, launched at the two-day event MAPIC India 2024, which began here on Wednesday, also said that the home and household market are witnessing strong demand, particularly in tier 2 and tier 3 cities that are emerging as growth hubs.



It also said that omnichannel retail and e-commerce are helping businesses connect with consumers, expanding their reach beyond urban centres.

Stating that factors such as high disposable incomes, the rise of digital platforms, easy access to credit, and young consumers seeking modern designs, home renovations and

personalisation, which provide tailored offerings to consumers, are driving the demand, it said, while the home and household industry are expanding rapidly, there are still limitations to overcome.

After-sales support, warranty worries and the need for a comprehensive omnichannel strategy are all significant issues for businesses to handle.

# Min: Skilling activities should be aligned with job market needs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Skilling activities should be aligned with the requirements of the industry and the job market, Union Minister Jayant Chaudhary said on Wednesday.

Inaugurating the Airbus-Tata STRIVE skill development centre here, the Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister also asked the two companies to further deepen their collaborations with higher education institutions.

"It (skilling) needs to be completely aligned with industry, with the requirements of the job market, with the labour market. It needs to be to accentuate what is already present in India," the minister said. Later talking to reporters, he mentioned increasing migration from rural to urban areas and said everyone might not be get-



ting jobs.

Against this backdrop, the minister pitched for encouraging development of entrepreneurship skills among youth.

The centres at Delhi and Bengaluru will offer courses in the field of Information Technology (IT) such as cybersecurity, ethical hacking, web designing, cloud computing along with youth development modules (soft skills curriculum) that will empower the youth and enrich their skills and scope of employability in the IT and allied services.

# Nearly 50pc of public infrastructure unprepared: CBRE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nearly 50 per cent of public infrastructure in India is unprepared for disaster management, according to a survey by CBRE.

The survey findings were released at a joint 'Infrastructure Management Conference 2024' organised

by CBRE and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) here. On Wednesday, real estate consultant CBRE said as per its survey on select large infrastructure assets on risk management parameters, 'nearly 50 per cent of the public infrastructure in India is unprepared for disaster planning and management and needs greater



attention". "India is grappling with a significant increase in both natural and man-made

disasters, posing a threat to the economy, population and long-term sustainable development," the consultant said. The vulnerability to disasters is further exacerbated by a confluence of factors, including changing demographic and socio-economic conditions, unplanned urbanisation, development within high-risk zones, envi-

ronmental degradation, climate change, and geological hazards, it added. Anshuman Magazine, Chairman & CEO - India, Southeast Asia, Middle East & Africa, CBRE, said, "Inadequate risk management is a primary cause of the issues we see in infrastructure projects. This leads to direct financial losses, hindered GDP

growth, and negative impacts on reputation and society."

While India is progressing towards its next growth mile, backed by a resilient economy and tremendous infrastructural development, he said, adding that it is extremely crucial to take a proactive stance to unlock a future that is sustainable.

# India takes part in key trade fair

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is participating in a key tourism trade fair in French

capital Paris with the goal of significantly increasing inbound tourism, officials said on Wednesday.

**GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
**E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE**  
 MIT No. 15/2024/CRZ, GHMC/2024-25 Dt. 18.09.2024  
 Nature of the Work: Procurement of Twin Litter bins and Three Litter Bins of 100 capacity each in circles of Charminar Zone, GHMC. Estt. Cost: Rs. 28.92 Lakhs. Download Start Date & Time: 19.09.2024 at 11.00 A.M. Last Date & Time Receipt of Bids: 21.09.2024 at 11.00 A.M. Name & Address Officer, Cell No.: Smt. G Hari Kishore, ZCTO, CPZ, GHMC, Hyderabad. Ph.No. 9649906768. For further details can be seen at e-procurement @ www.tenderaprogram.gov.in. Note: 1% EMD should be obtained after the date of tender notice. R.O.No: 4255-PNCLADVT/12024-25, Dt. 18-09-2024 Sd/- ZCTO, CRZ, GHMC.



## Bringing Hyderabad its own 'Radhey Kutumb' with Radha Raanis

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**S**abki apni duniya hai, par meri duniya toh aap ho—Kanha. Isn't this the feeling every devotee of Muralidhar Krishna Gopala has for him? Krishna, revered as the god of love, compassion and protection, is worshipped by devotees throughout the country, not just on certain days but through their continuous devotion to him. It is thought that Lord Krishna lived his childhood years in Vrindavan. Vrindavan is situated in the Braj Bhoomi area, known as a focal point of the Krishna circuit for Hindu pilgrims. However, not all followers can visit the city frequently. Picture having a piece of Vrindavan right in your own city. Hey, people from Hyderabad, we do possess one; Radhey Kutumb Club. As it goes by the name, it defines a whole family devoted in the love of Radhey Krishna. Hyderabad's only all-women's spiritual club devoted to Radha Krishna aims to not just bring the aura of Vrindavan but also make the devotion with fun and touches of laughter.

"Where people are so busy with their own lives, getting exhausted over many things, we do wish to do a lot of things. Unfortunately, we don't," expresses Reenu Sharma, founder of the Radhey Kutumb Club, in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*. Hailing from Jaipur, the

ardent Krishna devotee travelled very often to Vrindavan and Mathura during her teen years as her grandpa resided there. Making her inclination towards the devotion of Kanha but obvious.

"As I travelled here to Hyderabad after I got married, I was busy with my family and kids," she enthuses. Being a socialite, not only did she travel pretty often, she used to also attend various parties, club events and many more. But there was something lacking, she felt. "Being in Hyderabad, it's not possible for me to travel every now and then to Vrindavan. It was then that I realised, Why not bring a piece of Vrindavan and Mathura's aura here in Hyderabad? It's been 7 years now that I started this club."

What started off with an expectation of having about 15 ladies join the club eventually began with 50 of them. Overwhelmed by this unexpected response, with great regards, she shares, "Isn't that something mindblowing? I mean, I had no idea that so many Hyderabad women would be keen on joining the club. The enthusiasm since the beginning has been enormous. These ladies, who are all below 50, had connected very well."

If you feel Radhey Kutumb is all about bhakti and archana, well, it's about doing it all with some fun and entertainment. "We are a fusion club. Along with Bhakti, we bring together some entertaining tasks like Q&A, storytelling, skits and many more around Radha and Krishna. My club members are called 'Radha Raanis' and they have all now become family. Through



this, we are connected to the *sanskriti* of the Lord. As a part of these activities, we had also organised a Nandutsav during Janmashtami. We have all been followers of Lord Krishna and I wanted to create a small Mathura Vrindavan in Hyderabad, where people can feel its aura here," she shares with great enthusiasm. Apart from these activities, they also have an annual event, where all the 'Radha Raanis' bring in their husbands and make it a familial extravaganza. Then there's also a spiritual trip for two days, once a year for them.

These days, youngsters have been surprisingly finding their peace in devotion and spirituality, notices Reenu as she shares, "I see many of them adoring Radhey Shyam

so much and turning spiritual than ever before. Even when you go to the temples, you find so many of the youngsters taking the blessings. These days, life has been so stressful. I would like to say that if more of such clubs are being made, it helps us to connect with ourselves even more."

But again, starting a one-of-a-kind club came in with its own set of challenges. Reenu, who credits her parents, RS Gemini and Shakuntala Gemini, for all of the devotion and love filled in within her. She goes on to express, "My concept was that wherever we go, be it parties and other events, we dress up so well. Then why not to temples? I used to tell my Radha Raanis that whenever you come to the club, dress up just as you would while going to an event, dressed colorfully. *Bhagwan ke wajah se humane itna sab mila, hum unke liye itna kamm dress hote hai*. Then, every time that I used to call the media to cover our events, many of the ladies were like, "Why media?" I believe that when we can call media to cover so many other events, why not a spiritual event? And then, making them dance in front of Radha Krishna as a celebration was again a challenge. We organise these events at the houses of the members. Initially, many were apprehensive because all of them come from different social strata. But I made them believe that *Mann bada ho toh sab aaram se hojata hai*. With this, we bring Radhey Krishna's devotion in all of their houses."



With a community of Radha Raanis, the Radhey Kutumb Club has created an aura of their own for the devotion of Radhe Krishna, here in Hyderabad. The Pioneer connects with the club's founder, sharing the back story of the club being an all-women's spiritual club and bringing together fun and laughter with devotion



## Sip of art and a bite of bliss!

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**I**n celebration of its expansion, Maize and Beans, the cafe promoted by renowned designer Gaurang Shah, opened its doors for a one-of-a-kind pop-up event on Road No. 59, Jubilee Hills. The much-anticipated affair marked a delightful collaboration between the cafe's Creative Director, Meet Shah and acclaimed barista Shraavan, affectionately known as the "Mokapotguy" in coffee circles.

In an exclusive interview, when asked about the inspiration behind the pop-up at Gaurang's Kitchen and how it differs from the usual menu, Meet Shah shared, "We had some unused space where we were selling continental specialty coffee. But when you have an Indian-ambiance restaurant, people don't often come in just for coffee. We were looking for a different space, but then someone suggested, 'Why not utilise this space and make it into a coffee shop?' That's when the idea clicked. We decided to open the space with a pop-up, featuring drinks that Shraavan and I created and four food items that I've been trialing for the past four months. Rather than launching them on a regular day, we thought this pop-up would be the perfect occasion, especially since we knew it would attract a younger crowd who wants something unique. So, we opened the cafe and launched the pop-up on the same day."

He further delved into the concept behind Maize and Beans, explaining the thought process of combining these two central ingredients. "We originally focused on Italian and Mexican cuisine and maize is a staple food in Mexican culture. So, we came up with the idea of putting 'maize' in the name. As for 'beans', they signify our specialty coffee offering, which tied everything together as Maize and Beans."

When asked about maintaining the balance between traditional flavours and contemporary dining trends, he said, "My dad is deeply rooted in Indian culture, whether it's clothes or food and being around him for the past 20 years, I've developed a strong connection to Indian cuisine. So, I thought, why not blend continental flavours with Indian? For example, we've created Aglio e Olio Thecha Balls. Aglio e Olio is a classic continental dish with garlic as its main ingredient, while Thecha is a traditional Indian chutney made with chili and garlic. Combining these two elements brings something unique to the table, which was the thought process behind it."

The pop-up event itself was set in a beautifully designed open-air venue, offering a serene and spacious environment. Its vibrant yet minimalistic aesthetics made the perfect backdrop for an afternoon of indulgence and creativity. Not just about coffee and food, the event also doubled as a creative platform for young local artists,

who showcased their work, turning the cafe into a space that fed the mind and soul as much as the palate. The menu was the centerpiece, showcasing an array of meticulously crafted beverages and gourmet bites. Guests enjoyed classic coffee favorites like Espresso, Cortado and Cappuccino, alongside creative twists such as Lotus Biscoff Latte and Rose Latte. For cold brew lovers, options like Yuzu Passionfruit and Buttered Fig & Rose were on offer, with signature drinks like Orange Star Anise Cold Brew and Kulfi Affogato stealing the show.

The food, too, was an absolute delight. The Cheesy Spinach Croissant Sandwich was a hit, crispy, buttery and oozing with perfectly melted cheese. The Herbed Zucchini Feta Fritters offered a light, flavourful crunch, while desserts like the Mawa Croissants and classic Tiramisu provided the perfect indulgence for the sweet-toothed.

As someone fortunate enough to sample the menu, the Cold Brew Ginger Ale was a refreshing stand-out, blending the warmth of ginger with the cool smoothness of cold brew. The Cheesy Spinach Croissant was nothing short of sublime, leaving a lasting aftertaste of buttery perfection.

As the event drew to a close, it was clear that Maize and Beans is set to become a hub for coffee and gourmet food lovers alike. The cafe's new offerings and the collaborative pop-up with Shraavan have created a lasting impression, establishing it as the perfect spot to unwind with a perfect cup of coffee, a delicious bite, and perhaps some inspiring art.

Whether you're a coffee aficionado, a foodie, or an admirer of the arts, Maize and Beans at Gaurang's Kitchen is poised to become your new favourite spot, promising an experience that nourishes not just the body but the mind and soul as well.



## UNDERSTANDING COLLOID CYSTS IN BRAIN

**C**olloid cysts, though rare, can have serious consequences due to their impact on CSF flow. Early diagnosis and prompt treatment are essential to prevent life-threatening complications. Colloid cysts are rare, benign lesions found in the third ventricle of the brain. Although these fluid-filled sacs are not true brain tumors, they are classified under intraventricular brain tumors due to their location. These cysts can have significant implications if they obstruct the normal flow of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), leading to severe symptoms and potential complications. The third ventricle is a crucial part of the brain's CSF circulation system. The brain and spinal cord are suspended in CSF, which not only provides nourishment but also acts as a protective cushion. When a colloid cyst obstructs the flow of CSF, it can lead to hydrocephalus, a condition characterised by increased intracranial pressure.

Common symptoms of colloid cysts may include severe headaches, often sudden and intense, these headaches are typ-

ically due to the build-up of pressure inside the skull. Patients may experience fainting or drowsiness as a result of intermittent CSF blockage. Nausea and Vomiting, these symptoms are associated with the elevated intracranial pressure. Blurred or double vision can occur when the optic nerves are affected by the increased pressure. In some cases, colloid cysts are asymptomatic and are discovered incidentally during imaging for unrelated conditions. Regular monitoring through surveillance scans is crucial for these patients to track any changes in the cyst's size or effects on brain function. The varied presentations of colloid cysts require tailored treatment approaches, as demonstrated by the following cases.

A woman in her late 40s was brought to the hospital in a comatose state after experiencing severe headaches earlier in the day. Her condition rapidly worsened, leading to unconsciousness. A CT scan revealed acute obstructive hydrocephalus caused by a colloid cyst. Immediate intervention was necessary to prevent fatal out-

comes. Bilateral frontal external ventricular drains were inserted to relieve the intracranial pressure by draining the excess CSF. The patient's condition improved dramatically and she regained consciousness by the next morning. An MRI confirmed the presence of the colloid cyst and the patient consented to surgical removal.

Given the enlarged ventricles, the surgical team performed a craniotomy on the right frontal area of the skull. Using a microscope, they accessed the cyst through the brain cortex and right lateral ventricle, successfully resecting it. The patient made a full recovery and was discharged a few days later.

Another woman in her late 20s had been diagnosed with a colloid cyst during a routine scan, though she initially had no symptoms. Over time, the cyst grew, leading to frequent fainting episodes due to intermittent CSF blockage.

However, her ventricles were not enlarged, suggesting less severe obstruction. Due to the absence of ventricular enlargement, a different surgical approach was cho-

sen. Image guidance was used to navigate precisely to the cyst through a narrow corridor between the brain's hemispheres and the corpus callosum.

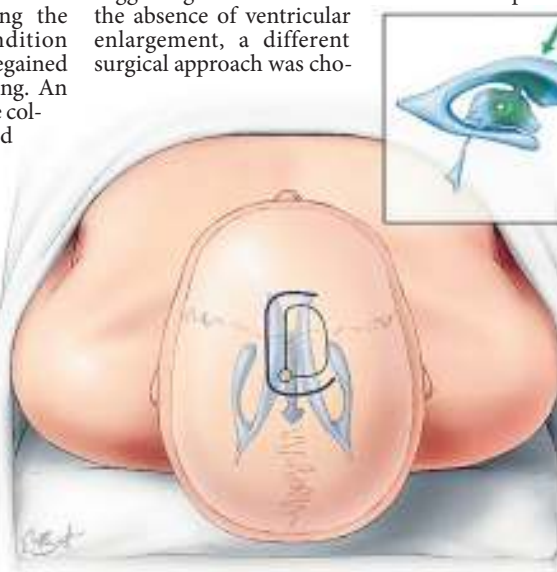
The operation was performed using a microscope, allowing for the cyst's complete removal without significant damage to the brain. The patient's fainting episodes ceased immediately and she was discharged a few days after surgery.

Treatment for colloid cysts depends on various factors, including cyst size, symptom severity and overall patient health. Common treatments include: **Ventriculoperitoneal shunt:** A drainage system is implanted to divert excess CSF, reducing intracranial pressure. **Endoscopic Removal:** a minimally invasive procedure that uses an endoscope to remove the cyst through a small incision can be undertaken as well.

**Craniotomy:** An open surgical approach to remove the cyst, typically reserved for larger cysts or those causing significant symptoms.

The rising number of colloid cyst cases in India is likely due to a combination of improved diagnostic capabilities, greater awareness among healthcare professionals, and increased access to advanced medical imaging like MRI and CT scans. These benign, fluid-filled sacs in the brain's third ventricle can cause serious symptoms if they obstruct cerebrospinal fluid flow, leading to conditions like hydrocephalus. While colloid cysts were once considered rare, the enhanced ability to detect them earlier and more accurately has led to a noticeable increase in diagnosed cases, underscoring the importance of continued vigilance and improved neurological care across the country.

(The author, Dr. Rathijit Mitra, is an expert on colloid cysts at CK Birla Hospital.)



# what's brewing?



Shailaja



A 9-day Live Handloom Silk Expo was inaugurated at the Sri Satya Sai Nigamagaram in Srinagar Colony. The expo was inaugurated by Dr. Ch Preethi Reddy, Vice Chairman of Malla Reddy Vishwa Vidyapeeth, along with Sudha Jain, Ms India Asia Pacific and Show Coach & Socialist, along with Shailaja Yamusami, the founder of the Live Handloom Silk Expo.

Preethi Reddy



Shailaja and Padma



Sudha Jain



Apoorva



Ishika Roy



Desire Designer Exhibition has kickstarted its latest exhibition, which is being held at Hotel Taj Krishna in Banjara Hills. The expo will end on September 20.



Hyma



Anita Agarwal



Vaanya

PARTY  
Photos by- SV Chary

100-year-old legacy and heritage fashion brand from Bengaluru, P N RAO, the finest men's suit maker in the country, threw open its flagship store in the bustling and fashionable city of Hyderabad. Located in Jubilee Hills, this store marks their 8th store in the south of India. The store was inaugurated by its partners; Machender Pishe, Ketan Pishe and Naveen Pishe.



Design Democracy 2024 is set to captivate the city from October 4 to 6 at HITEC, Halls 1 and 3. Bringing together creators, professionals and enthusiasts, the event promises a transformative celebration of design, art and innovation.



Tally Solutions announced the global launch of the all-new TallyPrime 5.0, elevating its suite of Connected Services. The launch is in line with the company's vision to enhance business operations for the mid-mass segment both in India and globally. The company aims to support the fast-growing MSME sector in the city through its cutting-edge solutions, empowering businesses to streamline operations and scale sustainably.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



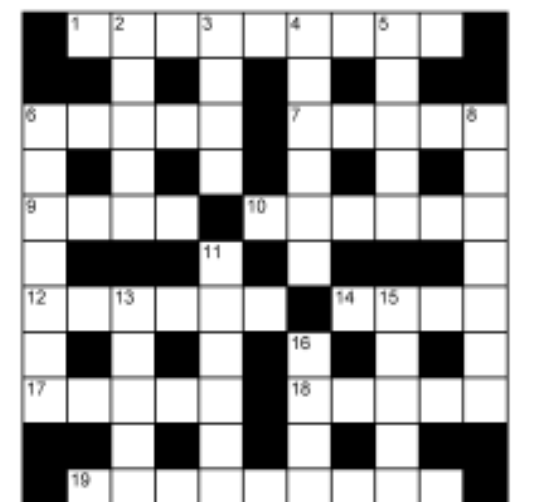
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU

6	4	5			
	3		1	6	
7				5	3
	8	1	6		3
5					9
	6		9	3	8
9	7				8
		3	7	4	
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Yesterday's solution

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

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

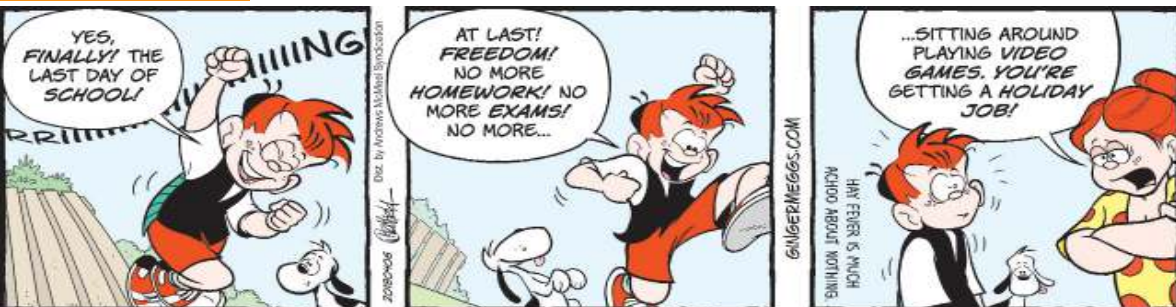
- A ship's right side
- Perspire
- Young person
- Take a break
- Very rarely
- A passenger needs this
- Sky colour
- Divide into two equal parts
- Acted dramas
- Lucky
- Make longer by pulling
- Carpenters and engineers use these
- Say again
- A stringed musical instrument
- Fewest
- Twirl

### DOWN

- These are cut down for paper manufacture
- Decays
- The gas we need to live
- Circular in shape



### GINGER MEGGS



# Ritesh Rana on cloud nine!

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Director Ritesh Rana is on cloud nine after his film *Mathu Vadalara 2* was declared a hit. The film, which released last week, has been performing well at the box office and continues to gain momentum. Industry stars like Megastar Chiranjeevi and Superstar Mahesh Babu have spoken highly of the film, which has been a huge morale boost for the director. "I expected the film to be a success, but I never imagined it would be this huge, especially after seeing the collections," said Ritesh Rana.

The team was ecstatic when Chiranjeevi shared his thoughts on social media. "We were all thrilled to see Chiranjeevi garu's comment. We didn't expect it, and when it happened, it gave us all a massive thrill," Ritesh added. In the film, Ajay's character is a nod to the role he played in Pawan Kalyan's *Khushi*. "We wanted to show the character's growth, so I decided to reference Ajay's earlier role from *Khushi*. It's a connection the audience really appreciated," he explained.

When the first part of *Mathu Vadalara* was released, there weren't many expectations, as it was a small film featuring relatively new actors and a debut director. But with the sequel, the stakes were much higher. "That's why we went ahead with the sequel. We didn't rush into it; we waited for the right story. We were con-



Director Ritesh Rana has solidified his reputation as a filmmaker to watch with the success of *Mathu Vadalara 2*, the highly anticipated sequel to his breakout hit. As the film continues to perform strongly at the box office, Rana reflects on the journey of creating this sequel, his creative choices and the unexpected response from fans and stars alike

fidant it would succeed, but the response has exceeded our expectations," said Ritesh.

Known for his unique blend of humour and sarcasm, Ritesh has maintained this style across all three of his films. "I'd love to explore other genres, but humour and sarcasm are my favourites. My next film will be in a different genre," he hinted. On the chemistry between actors Satya and Simha, Ritesh clarified that both characters were written equally. "Satya's character shines because of Simha. I wrote them both with equal importance," he said.

Regarding Vennela Kishore's character as a "Youth Star," Ritesh emphasised that the role wasn't a parody of anyone specific. "I didn't model the character after anyone in particular. It just fit the story," he clarified.

Talking about the "HE" team in the film, Ritesh shared that the dress code and style were inspired by the movies *Bad Boys* and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*. "There aren't many buddy cop films in Telugu, so I wanted to bring that element in, and the look really worked," he explained.

While Sunil wasn't part of the first film, he joined the cast for the sequel. "Sunil wasn't originally supposed to be in the film, but when we met, he expressed interest in working with me. So, we created a new character for him. It was a last-minute decision, but it turned out well," said Ritesh.

As for another sequel, Ritesh revealed that it's possible, but not immediately. "We can definitely make another sequel, but I want to do a different film before coming back to *Mathu Vadalara*," he said. He also expressed deep appreciation for producer Cherry, whom he considers a father figure. When asked if director Rajamouli had seen the film, Ritesh confirmed, "Yes, he watched it and enjoyed it a lot."

Ritesh had originally planned to remake the first part of *Mathu Vadalara* in Hindi but ultimately dropped the idea. "Everything was set, but then Covid happened. Moreover, the first part was being watched in all languages, so we felt there was no need for a Hindi remake," he explained.

He also praised Faria Abdullah's performance in the film. "I wrote the character with Faria in mind, and she delivered it with ease," Ritesh said. During the shoot, Faria shared her rap song, which the team liked so much that they decided to use it for promotional purposes.



## When Superstar Krishna got angry at Thammareddy Bharadwaj...

Thammareddy Bharadwaj directed several films with Superstar Krishna, one of which was *Rowdy Annayya*, released on September 17, 1993, marking 31 years on Tuesday. Krishna played a lawyer in the film, with Rambha as the female lead. Having made her debut in 1992 with *Aa Okkati Adakku*, Rambha was an instant hit, which led Thammareddy to cast her opposite Krishna.

Krishna's character in the film bore his real name, Ghattamaneni Sivaramakrishna. The movie, set in a rural backdrop, was an action film filled with commercial elements. However, a particular song led to tensions between Krishna and Thammareddy. The dispute arose over a special song featuring Silk Smitha. Thammareddy wanted to film the song with comedian Babu Mohan, but Krishna disagreed and wanted to be the one in the song with Silk Smitha.

Unable to refuse Krishna, Thammareddy filmed the song during the day with Krishna and Silk Smitha. However, later that night, he secretly filmed the same song with Babu Mohan and Silk Smitha. When the film went for censor certification, the board raised objections to certain scenes in the song, causing a delay. It was during this delay that Krishna learned of Thammareddy's actions and grew furious, refusing to speak with him for several months.

"Yes, it is true that I shot the song with Krishna and Silk Smitha during the day and with Babu Mohan at night. After the film's release, fans attacked my office, damaging furniture and other property. I had to file a police complaint, and a few arrests were made," Thammareddy recalled. After Krishna's anger subsided, Thammareddy reshot the song. "One week after the film's release, I reshot the song with Krishna and Silk Smitha and added it to the film," he added. This meant that Silk Smitha had to film the song three times.

The incident strained their relationship, and they didn't speak for nearly six months. "One day, Krishna called me to his office and asked me to withdraw the police case filed against his fans. I withdrew it immediately, and



we reconciled," Thammareddy shared. From then on, they maintained a good relationship, with Thammareddy being by Krishna's side when he was hospitalised in November 2022. "I was with him till his last breath," Thammareddy said. As for *Rowdy Annayya*, it went on to be an above-average film.

## Oo Pilla is blend of melody and peppy beats

Actor Vishwak is preparing for the release of his next film, *Mechanic Rocky* on October 31. Ravi Teja Mullapudi, making his directorial debut, directs the film, which is produced by Ram Talluri.

The makers have been actively promoting the project and recently launched its debut song as part of the campaign. The song had been met with a fairly positive reaction.

Later, the makers launched the film's second track, *Oo Pilla*. Jakes Bejoy, well-known for his recent movie *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram*, has been appointed as the music composer for *Mechanic Rocky*. In *Oo Pilla*, he creates a catchy tune with lively rhythms. This song tells the tale of love between Rocky (portrayed by Vishwak) and Priya (portrayed by Meenakshi Chaudhary).

In the meantime, the film's plot focuses on the main character, who failed to tell the girl he loved how he felt back in his B-Tech days. Afterward, he has another chance to meet her and travel together once more. The lyrics were written by Krishna Chaitanya and the song was performed by Nakash Aziz.

Shraddha Srinath is also featured in a significant role in the movie.

## WHY IS POONAM KAUR NOT APPROACHING REDRESSAL PANEL?

Actress Poonam Kaur is making headlines once more. The actress is always discussing things on social media and creating headlines, but she has never utilised the appropriate channels to address her concerns. On social media, the actress reiterated her comments about director Trivikram Srinivas and urged industry leaders to hold the top director accountable.

Surprisingly, the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce Sexual Harassment Redressal Panel asked them to come forward if they encounter any issues in their workplace. However, Poonam Kaur used social media to urge industry professionals to interrogate Trivikram Srinivas. The actress has accused Trivikram Srinivas multiple times in the past, indirectly. However, it's been for the first time that she has brought up Trivikram Srinivas' name and requested for an interrogation against him. This topic is widely debated within the film industry as well as on social media.

However, there is only one question being asked by everyone. What is stopping Poonam Kaur from seeking help from the Redressal panel after publicly accusing a top director on her social media platform? She has the option to present the evidence and proofs to the panel instead of posting on social media. The panel is unable to address her complaint spontaneously since it does not have the legal authority of a court.

On Tuesday, the chairman of the panel, Jhansi, clearly instructed everyone to accept complaints from anyone who comes forward and submit them either in writing or in person. Some of them are talking in interviews and also talking on other platforms, but if they approach us directly, then we can take their complaints and enquire about it," said Jhansi on Tuesday.

She mentioned that she gave a complaint to the Movie Artistes Association (MAA), but they ignored it. "Had the association taken complaint on Trivikram Srinivas, I and many wouldn't have had the political suffering, I was rather silently ignored, I had given a call and then complaint to the heads, I want industry bigwigs to question Director Trivikram (sic)," said Poonam Kaur on her social media page.



## Hat-trick of flops for Raj Tarun

Actor Raj Tarun's career is on a downward spiral following his third consecutive box office failure with *Bhale Unnade*. The actor has been making headlines for his personal life lately after his rumoured girlfriend Lavanya accused him. The actor's film career is overshadowed by controversies. In spite of his personal issues, the actor's movies are consistently being

released back to back. Initially receiving positive reviews, *Purushottamudu* ended up being a box-office failure. The next film was *Tiragabadda Saami* directed by AS Ravi Kumar Chowdhary. The movie flopped and it also bombed at the box office. A few performances were called off on the very first day the movie premiered.

The most recent one is *Bhale Unnade* directed by Sivasai Vardhan. Well-known filmmaker Maruthi is also engaged in the production as he

acts as the film's presenter. In spite of everything, the movie failed to attract an audience and performed poorly financially. Despite some favourable buzz surrounding the movie, its promotion is lacking, resulting in its removal from theaters starting on the second day.

A source said that the actor's career is currently in trouble, causing a lot of talk in the film industry. The actor currently holds a few movies, but he requires a well-deserved break in his career.

## More fun in MAD Square



Last year, the college-themed film *MAD* became a massive hit, introducing several new faces to the industry. Directed and written by Kalyan Shankar, the film launched actors Narni Nithin, Ram Nithin and Sangeeth Sobhan, along with a few female lead actresses. The project was backed by the prominent production house Sithara Entertainment. With the success of *MAD*, the team announced its sequel, *Mad Square*, some time ago.

Now, the makers have unveiled the first look poster from the sequel *MAD Square*. They are also set to release the first single from the film on September 20. To make the announcement, the team released a poster featuring the *MAD* gang in traditional attire, showcasing their attitude and style in a fresh, yet equally charming, way compared to the first film.

The songs composed by Bheems Ceciroleo became huge chartbusters in the first film and the makers have promised another hit album for the sequel.

According to the team, Kalyan Shankar has treated this sequel with the same raw energy as the first, delivering even more fun and entertainment. They assure fans of the original that *MAD Square* will exceed expectations. The film is produced by Haarika Suryadevara and Sai Soujanya.



# India look to spin a new story but tricky Bangladesh no pushovers

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Littered largely with lopsided contests, India's hopes of walking down that familiar path will hinge on sorting an uncharacteristic batting infirmity against spin when they face Bangladesh in a two-Test series starting here from Thursday. Bangladesh, who are fresh from a recent 2-0 drubbing of Pakistan, are no pushovers this time and this will add to India's list of concerns as they look to take that bold first step into a long season that features 10 Tests, including a possible berth in the World Test Championship Final. India's 40-4 (win-loss) home record in the last decade is awe-inspiring but there is an ever-little crack, which is getting more pronounced in the past three years, particularly in the case of star batter Virat Kohli. Kohli was a constant in India's bull run at home since 2015, crunching runs for fun against all comers. But since 2021, his numbers against spin have dipped - an average of 30 in 15 Tests in this period. This is not to hold against

Kohli's extraordinary qualities as a batter, but it's an area that the champion cricketer himself will certainly want to improve upon. Skipper Rohit Sharma has also been prolific in dismantling spin, especially since his promotion as an opener in 2017 against South Africa. He averaged over 90 against twerkers. But since 2021, it has come down to a less flashy 44 in 15 matches. KL Rahul, a batter who is backed by Rohit as equally proficient against spin and pace, offers a slightly bleaker picture. In the last three years, he has played five Tests at home but against the slower kind, the elegant right-hander's average has taken a beating and stands at 23.40. Collectively, these stats need to be taken as an indication of waning skills but, perhaps, also as a reminder to refocus on perfecting the art of playing spin, often the core strength of batters from this part of the world. Assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate had stressed on this point recently after India's debacle against Sri Lanka



spinners in a three-match ODI series which they lost 0-2. There are bright points too in Rishabh Pant (five matches, average 70), Shubman Gill (10

matches, average 56) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (five matches, average 115). However, the numbers of Jaiswal and Gill are constituted

by their breakaway series against England earlier this year, but the Three Lions did not have an experienced spin attack to lean upon.

In contrast, Bangladesh have much more potent spinners in left-armers Shakib Al Hasan, Taijul Islam and off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz, who can

hurt any opposition on their day. Here, India will bank on the firepower and innovative approach of Pant to unsettle and eventually take down the visiting spinners as the Delhiite is expected to return to Test cricket for the first time since his horrific car accident in 2022. In the bowling department, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja are certain to figure in the first eleven, and it's as formidable a unit as one would get irrespective of conditions. India will ponder over whether to go with a third seamer in either Akash Deep or Yash Dayal, considering that the MA Chidambaram Stadium may offer a red-soil pitch, or field a third spinner in Kuldeep Yadav as is the prevailing trend in a home Test. India can also consider the option of giving another run to Axar Patel as it can give a flip to late order batting against a Bangladesh attack that also has two express quicks in Nahid Rana and Hasan Mahmud. New head coach Gautam Gambhir too might have a small but significant personal goal in front of him, that is to

start the first Test series under his tutelage on a winning note, after returning from Sri Lanka with a tad underwhelming 1-1 record from a white ball tour. An obsessed pursuivant of victory, he will want to set it right. Rohit might carry a contrarian view on such individual targets and dress rehearsals, but India's effort in this series, first in six months for them in the traditional format, will certainly be a strong pointer to the course for the season ahead. **TEAMS (FROM):** **India:** Rohit Sharma (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (WK), Dhruv Jurel (WK), R Ashwin, R Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohd. Siraj, Akash Deep, Jasprit Bumrah, Yash Dayal. **Bangladesh:** Najmul Hossain Shanto (C), Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Zakir Hasan, Shadman Islam, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim (wk), Shakib Al Hasan, Litton Kumer Das, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Nayeem Hasan, Nahid Rana, Hasan Mahmud, Taskin Ahmed, Syed Khaled Ahmed, Jaker Ali Anik.



## Rishabh Pant braces for Test return after 632 days

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Harsh sun beating down on him, Rishabh Pant was engrossed preparing for his first Test in two years, taking down net bowlers in that unmistakably Pant-ish way. From getting tossed up some 40m into air off a toppled car to getting back to cricket field at the highest level is nothing less than extraordinary. It was hard to believe that 632 days have passed since Pant has played a Test match, and, coincidentally, his last five-day game was also against Bangladesh in 2022. Now, the same opposition awaits him on his return to Test cricket come Thursday at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, and while the cricketing landscape around him remains largely unchanged, though some worthy contenders have come up in the interim. Dhruv Jurel has impressed all with a gritty outing in front and behind the stumps during the home series against England earlier this year. None could have faulted the team management if they continued with Jurel for this match, but head coach Gautam Gambhir underlined the value Pant brings to the table. "We all know how destructive he can be (as a batter) and what he can do in Test cricket. Obviously,

it gives him the freedom to go out there and express himself. He has got runs everywhere around the world. "It is always good to have someone like him who can open the game for us and more importantly can bring a lot of impact as well," Gambhir said in the pre-match press meet here. Of course, Pant has made his return to international cricket through the white ball formats, and was a part of India's T20 World Cup winning squad too but the long-format matches offer a vastly different challenge in terms of skills and the duration of concentration. Pant showed his readiness for the grind of red-ball cricket while playing for India B in the recent Duleep Trophy match at Bengaluru. After a rather nervy 10-ball seven in the first innings against India A, Pant showcased his full range with a 47-ball 61 that contained nine fours and two sixes. He tumbled, shuffled across and went deep into crease during that knock, but the management could have been more eager to see how he responded to the task of wicket-keeping. Pant aced that test with flying colours, taking seven catches, five alone in the second innings, in that match. The 26-year-old flew around behind the stumps to latch on to catches way down the leg side,

a telltale sign of a wicket-keeper's anticipation and agility, and was in the right position when the spinners operated. Jurel played for India A, but it was clear that the match was more of an audition for Pant ahead of his reintegration into Test cricket, which was supported by a quick assessment by the NCA physios. Gambhir delved on Pant's role as a wicketkeeper. "Not only with his batting, he has been excellent behind the stumps as well. Probably his batting overshadowed his keeping many times. "But actually, see what he has done in Indian conditions... it is never easy to keep against people like Ashwin, Jadeja and Kuldeep. So, what he has done behind the stumps has been remarkable. "Obviously, he brings a lot of good things to the Test side. Not only from the batting point of view, but from the keeping point of view as well," Gambhir detailed. Above all this, Pant gives a different angle to the whole game of cricket with his attitude. Ricky Ponting, who worked with Pant at Delhi Capitals, gave an insight. "He's an infectious character to have around the group. He loves his cricket. He's a winner. He doesn't just play to make a few runs and be out there for the fun of it," Ponting recently told Sky Sports.

## Important to build relationship with seniors to take Indian cricket forward: Gambhir

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Head coach Gautam Gambhir on Wednesday underlined the significance for him to build on the existing cordial relationship with the senior players like skipper Rohit Sharma and batting talisman Virat Kohli to take Indian cricket forward. Gambhir, who took over from Rahul Dravid after the T20 World Cup, has shared the Indian dressing room with the likes of Kohli, Rohit and Ashwin in the not-so-distant past. "It's still early days (for him as coach). But the good part is that I have played with those guys (seniors). At one stage we were sharing the dressing room as players, when they were younger, who

have now become experienced guys," Gambhir said in the pre-match press meet here. "When you have that kind of a relationship, sometimes it gets much easier than building a relationship. Obviously, now the roles are different. "The relationship we can build over a period of next couple of years. It's going to be very important, and now we should keep taking it a little bit forward because we've got massive challenges coming our way," he added. The spat between Gambhir and Kohli after an IPL match at Lucknow has often been portrayed in social media as an example of strained relation between them. But Gambhir did not buy those



assumptions. "Sometimes people have made a lot of hue and cry about these things. But that's not true. My relationship with everyone in the dressing room team has

been really, really good. "More importantly I think the heart needs to be in the right place. When the passion is there, I think a lot of things can ease. I think the desire to win each and every time when we walk onto the cricket field, it's there. So, I think we've started off really well," said Gambhir. To buttress his argument, the 42-year-old explained his rationale behind selecting the eleven for a particular match. Communication, for him, is the watch word here. "I think the most important thing is clear communication. See, we don't drop anyone. We only select the best playing 11. We think and do the job for that particular Test match."

## Ponting joins Punjab Kings as head coach on four year contract

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Australian great Ricky Ponting was on Wednesday appointed head coach of Punjab Kings, replacing compatriot Trevor Bayliss in the underperforming IPL franchise. The former Australian captain has made the switch to Punjab Kings from Delhi Capitals, a team he was part of for seven years. "We are delighted to have Ricky on to guide and build our team for the next four seasons. His experience is crucial to help us develop a squad to deliver on-field success," franchise CEO Satish Menon said. An IPL source added that Ponting will take a call on the rest of the support staff. Under Ponting, Delhi Capitals became a force to reckon with though the elusive title never came. The team reached the final in 2020. He has also coached Mumbai Indians. Punjab too have never won the IPL since the league's inception in 2008 and the four co-owners will be hoping the World Cup-winning captain takes them all the way. Punjab's sole final appearance came way back in 2014 and they are one team which is often criticised for frequent chopping and changing. They have failed to finish even in the top five in

the last seven editions and ended ninth out of 10 teams earlier this year. In a team statement, Ponting promised a different style of play going forward. "I am excited to take up the new challenge. I had great conversations with the owners and the management about the way forward and was truly elated to see the alignment of our visions for the team. "We all want to repay the fans who have stayed with the franchise over the years and we promise that they will see a much different Punjab Kings going forward," he said. Bayliss was in charge of the side for the past two seasons with now-retired Shikhar Dhawan as its captain. Sanjay Bangar was head of cricket development, Charles Langveldt, the fast bowling coach, and Sunil Joshi took care of the spinners. Prior to Bayliss, Anil Kumble coached Punjab Kings but success eluded them. Punjab have had a strong core including Arshdeep Singh, Jitesh Sharma, Kagiso Rabada, Liam Livingstone, Sam Curran and Jonny Bairstow but the results have not come. Uncapped Shashank Singh and Ashutosh Sharma were the standout players for Punjab Kings in an otherwise forgettable season this year.



## Duleep Trophy: Iyer, Samson, Parag enter final round with point to prove

PTI ■ ANANTAPUR

The likes of Shreyas Iyer, Sanju Samson, Riyan Parag and Rinku Singh will get another opportunity to enhance their red-ball credentials when the final round of Duleep Trophy matches begin here on Thursday. No knockout games are scheduled for the season opening event and the team with maximum points will lift the trophy. With nine points from two games, India C sit at the top of the points table, followed by India B (7), India A (6) and India D (0). Table leaders India C, captained by Rituraj Gaikwad, will take on Mayank Agarwal led India A, while Abhimanyu Easwaran led India B will face India D, whose captain is under-pressure Iyer. After being ignored for the Bangladesh series, Iyer had a point to prove but he has not been able to lead from the front thus far in the competition. With his team yet to earn a point in the tournament, he will be fired up to put an inspiring performance. The performance of India D batter Samson and pacer Arshdeep Singh will also be tracked by the selectors. In the India B camp, Rinku will be aiming to get big runs after low returns in the previous game. In the India A versus India C contest, the selectors will be expecting more runs from Agarwal, Parag and Sai Sudharsan. Parag has batted confidently thus far but needs to stay longer in the middle. Pacer Prasadh Krishna, making a comeback from injury in the

previous round, would be looking to log in a significant number of overs while Shams Mulani will be fancying another match-winning effort in the prevailing conditions. Ishan Kishan, who made a memorable return to red ball cricket by scoring a hundred for India C, will need another epic knock to garner more attention from the selectors. **SQUADS:** **India A squad:** Mayank Agarwal (C), Riyan Parag, Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Tanush Kotian, Prasadh Krishna, Khaleel Ahmed, Avesh Khan, Kumar Kushagra, Shaswat Rawat, Pratham Singh, Akshay Wadkar, SK Rasheed, Shams Mulani, Aaqib Khan. **India B squad:** Abhimanyu Easwaran (C), Musheer Khan, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Washington Sundar, Navdeep Saini, Mukesh Kumar, Rahul Chahar, R Sai Kishore, Mohit Awasthi, N Jagadeesan (WK), Suyash Prabhudessai, Rinku Singh, Himanshu Mantri (WK). **India C squad:** Rituraj Gaikwad (C), Sai Sudharsan, Rajat Patidar, Abhishek Porel (WK), Ishan Kishan, B Indrajith, Hrithik Shokeen, Manav Suthar, Gaurav Yadav, Vyshak Vijaykumar, Anshul Khamboj, Himanshu Chauhan, Mayank Markande, Aryan Juyal (WK), Sandeep Warrier. **India D squad:** Shreyas Iyer (C), Atharva Taide, Yash Dube, Devdutt Padikkal, Ricky Bhui, Saransh Jain, Arshdeep Singh, Aditya Thakare, Harshit Rana, Akash Sengupta, KS Bharat (WK), Saurabh Kumar, Sanju Samson (WK), Nishant Sindhu, Vidwath Kaverappa.

## Malvika stuns Paris Olympics medallist Tunjung in China Open badminton tournament

PTI ■ CHANGZHOU (CHINA)

India's Malvika Bansod pulled off a sensational straight-game victory over Paris Olympics bronze medallist Gregoria Mariska Tunjung of Indonesia in the women's singles opening round of the China Open Super 100 badminton tournament here on Wednesday. The 22-year-old Indian, ranked 43rd in the world, displayed immense grit as she saved three game points in the opening game to defeat the world No. 7 Indonesian 26-24 21-19 in a 46-minute match, marking the biggest win of her career. Malvika, a B. Tech graduate in computer science from SRM University in Chennai, will next take on Scotland's Kristy Gilmour, a two-time Commonwealth Games medallist. She was the sole Indian bright spot in the women's singles as

compatriots Aakarshi Kashyap and Samiya Imad Farooqui exited in the first round. Aakarshi lost to Chinese Taipei's Chiu Pin-Chian 15-21 19-21, while Samiya was outplayed by Gilmour 9-21 7-21 in a one-sided contest. In other Indian results, the women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand went down 21-16 15-21 17-21 to Chinese Taipei's Hsieh Pei Shan and Hung En-Tzu. The mixed doubles duo of B Sumeeth Reddy and N Sikki Reddy lost 10-21 16-21 to Malaysia's Tan Kian Meng and Lai Pei Jing. A left-handed shuttler, Malvika, from Nagpur, transitioned to the senior international circuit in 2019, winning the Maldives International title and finishing runner-up at the 2022 Syed Modi International. She has been in good form this year, claiming the Azerbaijan International title.



Malvika, once coached by former India junior chief coach Sanjay Mishra, made headlines in 2022 when she defeated

2012 Olympic bronze medallist Saina Nehwal at the India Open, breaking into the world's top 30.

However, her progress was hampered by health issues as she contracted dengue and typhoid following her

participation in the Hangzhou Asian Games last year. After her recovery, Malvika consistently faced top-ranked players in early rounds of world tour events. Despite early exits, she managed to maintain her position in the world's top 50. She has played close matches against the likes of world No. 1 Akane Yamaguchi and former world champion Nozomi Okuhara. Currently training under coach Shrikant Vad at the Thane Badminton Academy, Malvika continues to push her game forward. "This is her biggest win, and she is extremely happy. She has been performing well, but lacks experience, and sometimes luck hasn't favoured her," her mother Trupti told PTI. "Sanjay sir was like a father figure to her, but once he took up his role as BAI secretary, we struggled to find a replacement."