



**Goyal seeks investment from Down...** P 6



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**ADR can transform legal landscape** P 5



**French textile artist Moulin moots globalisation of silk** P 10

## In brief

### Akshata Murty says will pay all taxes in UK to avoid 'distraction'

Akshata Murty, the daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, has announced that she will pay UK taxes on all her income, including from India, to avoid the issue being a distraction for her husband Chancellor Rishi Sunak. The 42-year-old entrepreneur has been at the centre of days of headlines after it emerged that her non-domiciled status meant she was not legally bound to pay taxes on her overseas income in the UK. Murty owns around 0.9 per cent of Infosys stake and therefore receives millions in dividends from the Indian software services major. "In recent days, people have asked questions about my tax arrangements: to be clear, I have paid tax in this country on my UK income and international tax on my international income, Murty said in a statement released on Friday.

### YouTube bans Russian parliament channel

YouTube has banned the channel of Russia's lower house of Parliament, the State Duma, prompting government officials to renew longtime threats against the platform. The Duma TV channel reported the ban on the messaging app Telegram, noting that it had 145,000 subscribers and over 100,000 million total views. In comments to the Russian news agency Interfax, Google didn't give an exact reason for the move, but said the company follows all applicable sanction and trade compliance laws. Russia's state communications watchdog Roskomnadzor demanded that YouTube unblock the channel.

### Go to India if you like it so much: Maryam to Pak PM

Pakistan's Opposition leader Maryam Nawaz on Saturday lashed out at Prime Minister Imran Khan for lavishing praise on India, saying he should go to the neighbouring country if he likes it so much. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam, who is the daughter of deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif, also suggested that Khan should emulate the example of India where no prime minister has abrogated the Constitution while facing a no-confidence motion. Her remarks came after Khan called India a "nation with a great sense of honour".

## TODAY

### ALMANAC

**Month & Paksham:**  
**Titthi:** Navami: Apr 10 01:24 AM to Apr 11 03:16 AM  
**Dashami:** Apr 11 03:16 AM to Apr 12 04:30 AM  
**Nakshatram:**  
**Pushya:** Apr 10 04:31 AM to Apr 11 06:51 AM  
**Rahukalam:** 4:54 PM to 6:24 PM  
**Yamagandam:** 12:21 PM to 1:52 PM  
**Variyam:** 05:21 PM to 06:52 PM  
**Gulika:** 3:23 PM to 4:54 PM  
**Amritakalam:** 07:28 AM to 08:59 AM  
**Abhijit Muhurtham:** 11:57 AM to 12:45 PM

### HYDERABAD WEATHER

**Forecast:** Mostly sunny  
**Temp:** 35°C  
**Humidity:** 49%  
**Sunrise:** 6:24 AM  
**Sunset:** 6:23 PM  
**Updated:** APRIL 09, 2022 5:00 PM

## OBTUSE ANGLE



# Guv changes her tone after meeting PM, Shah

SNCN ACHARYULU  
■ HYDERABAD

After the meeting with Prime Minister Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah the change in the attitude of Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan is evident. The Governor has changed her tone towards Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and is directly attacking him and his government.

The comments of Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan on KCR and his government are like those of a politician and not a Governor.

There is a lot of change in the attitude and the tone of Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan before meeting PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah and after that. Earlier, the Governor used to make only indirect comments about the CM and his government. But after meeting Modi and Amit Shah the Governor made a direct attack on the CM and his government.

The Governor said, "There is strong opposition at the field level against the TRS Government. KCR may not go for early elections."

These comments show the change in the attitude of Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan. The comments look like that of a politician and not that of a Governor.

The comments of Dr Tamilisai on the dissolution of the Assembly also belong to the same category.

While the fight between the TRS and the BJP reaches its peak ahead



**The Governor said, "There is strong opposition at the field level against the TRS Government. KCR may not go for early elections."**

of the Assembly elections the BJP leadership wants to play politics through the Governor.

During former Chief Minister NT Rama Rao's government the then Central Government headed by the Congress also did the same.

In West Bengal too, the Central Government led by the BJP is playing politics through the Governor. The bitter battle between West

## Veteran Tolly wood actor Balaiah passes away P:2



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The rancour between Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan and the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) has embittered feelings so much that now the latter have taken to trolling and body-shaming the Governor ala their DMK counterparts in Tamil Nadu.

TRS fans are targeting Governor Dr Tamilisai's looks and body shape. One of the posts suggested that the Governor's photo can be used to ward off evil outside buildings and houses. Some of these posts have

## TRS fans taking leaf out of DMK book in body-shaming Tamilisai

gone viral on social media and people are demanding action against those who made them.

Dr Tamilisai has been one of the most-trolled persons among lady Tamil Nadu politicians, and, with the latest cache of trolling, she is possibly the most-trolled lady Governor of Telangana. Dr Tamilisai, on her part, has decided to ignore the trolling. Sources indicated that the Governor has decided to ignore the trolling for the time being.

But a complaint was filed at the Nampally Cyber Crime Police Station by the BJP against TRS social media party karyakarthas who had made vulgar remarks about Dr Tamilisai.

2

## Have no powers, up to voters to decide

**Election Commission's take on freebies offered by political parties**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission has told the Supreme Court that offering or distribution of any freebies either before or after an election is a policy decision of the party concerned and whether such policies are financially viable or have adverse effect, has to be decided by the voters of that state.

In its affidavit, the EC said, "The Election Commission of India cannot regulate state policies and



decisions which may be taken by the winning party when they form the government. Such an action, without enabling provisions in the

law, would be an overreach of powers."

The poll panel said, "... It is also stated that offering/distribution of any freebies either before or after the election is a policy decision of the party concerned and whether such policies are financially viable or its adverse effect on the economic health of the State is a question that has to be considered and decided by the voters of the state."

2

## T-Hub model to be replicated outside India

NAVEENA GHANATE  
■ HYDERABAD

Acknowledging the success of Telangana's start-up initiative T-Hub, the incubator model will now be replicated outside India too.

Speaking to 'The Pioneer' T-Hub CEO MSR said, "We are working with a neighbouring country on the east. We are trying to set up the equivalent of what we have done here at T-Hub."

Without naming the country,



MSR said that the engagement with T-Hub has become strategic

**"We signed an agreement with the Odisha Government for an engagement. The Odisha Government is starting O-Hub. The formal launch will be towards April-end. We are working with three other states too apart from Odisha."**

for four states and one foreign country now.

2

## Fight for self-respect



**KTR on paddy procurement**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Industries Minister KTR made it clear that the paddy row is not just a fight against the Centre, but was a struggle to protect the dignity of Telangana. He said that they would not let go of the Centre until the entire paddy is procured from Telangana. KTR called for ousting BJP leaders who had taken farmers for granted. "The BJP leaders of Telangana have provoked farmers and now the Centre is playing tricks on them to buy the Yasangi crop," he said in a Tweet.

2

### 'Stop imposing Hindi'

Reacting to Union Home Minister Amit Shah's statement that Hindi should be accepted as an alternative to English instead of regional languages, Industries Minister KT Rama Rao has asked the Centre to stop imposing Hindi. In a tweet on Saturday, KTR said, "To impose Hindi and dump English will be a great disservice to the youth of this nation who have global aspirations #Stop Hindi Imposition (sic)." He warned that any attempt at language chauvinism and hegemony will boomerang in the country. Stressing that unity in diversity is India's strength, KTR tweeted, "India is a union of states and a true 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbam.' Why don't we let our people decide what to eat, what to wear, whom to pray to and what language to speak! Language chauvinism/hegemony will boomerang."

2

## AP BIFURCATION ISSUE

## Hearing on Undavalli's plea in SC next week

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a significant development, the Supreme Court has directed the registry to list the petition filed by former MP Undavalli Arun Kumar on the bifurcation of united Andhra Pradesh. After eight years the petition is likely to come for hearing next week.

The amended petition filed by former Congress MP Undavalli Arun Kumar will not affect the bifurcation and there is no chance of merging Andhra Pradesh and Telangana again. Undavalli who had opposed

the bifurcation had said in his petition that he had initially challenged the legality of the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh under the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014, and had requested the SC to repeal the AP Reorganisation Act.

Subsequently, Undavalli changed his plea and filed an amended petition in January. According to this,

the former MP requested the Supreme Court to reveal its stance on three issues.

One is whether United Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated scientifically or not.

The second one is that the Supreme Court should issue an order directing the Centre to fulfil the assurances given to Andhra Pradesh at the time of bifurcation.

2

## SII, Bharat Bio cut vax prices



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vaccine majors Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bharat Biotech on Saturday said they have decided to cut prices of the precaution dose of their respective COVID-19 vaccines to Rs 225 per shot for private hospitals after discussion with the government.

2

## First case of Omicron sub-variant XE detected in Gujarat

**AHMEDABAD:** A 67-year-old man from Mumbai, who had travelled to Vadodara in Gujarat last month, was found infected with XE, Omicron's sub-variant that is considered more transmissible than other variants of coronavirus, making it the first such case in the state, officials said on Saturday. The patient had tested positive for COVID-19 on March 12 during his visit to Vadodara, but had returned to Mumbai the next day without informing the local authorities, the officials said.

2

## Majority of employers favour 4-day workweek

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With a number of companies across the world proposing 4-day workweek for employees, a report has revealed that a majority of employers in India strongly agree that this model will help in reducing stress level. Over 60 per cent of the employers strongly agree that the new 4-day workweek model will be successful in uplifting the

overall morale of the organisation with job satisfaction and work-life balance, helping to reduce stress and anxiety levels, a report by HR Solutions Genius Consultants said.

However, 27 per cent of the employers who participated in the survey said they were not sure of its implications on organisations' productivity.

2



## Link cameras to excise dept servers

**Excise Minister orders all pub owners**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With drug cases increasing in the city, Telangana Prohibition and Excise Minister V. Srinivas Goud has directed the owners of all the 61 pubs in the city to connect their CCTVT cameras to Excise Department servers.

Srinivas Goud chaired a high-level meeting with Excise officials and pub owners at the Tourism Plaza Hotel in Begumpet here to discuss regulations on drugs in the city.

2



Addanki Dayakar complains to Sonia against Uttam, Komatireddy,

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Congress leader Addanki Dayakar who contested from the Thungathurthy constituency twice has filed a complaint against Nalgonda MP N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, Bhongir MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and TPCC Senior Vice-President Ramreddy Damodar Reddy creating an uproar in the TS Congress once again as its leaders had declared after their recent meeting with former AICC chief Rahul Gandhi that they would work hand in hand after burying their differences. Even TPCC Working President Sangareddy MLA T. Jagga Reddy, who had expressed his unhappiness about TPCC chief Revanth Reddy, had said after meeting Rahul that he would work hard for the Congress forgetting differences.

### New Delhi is now a picnic spot for TRS leaders: Sanjay

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

New Delhi has become a picnic spot for TRS leaders, Telangana BJP President Bandi Sanjay said here on Saturday. Speaking to the media in Siricilla, Sanjay said that KCR also goes to New Delhi if he fails to burn time in Hyderabad. "KCR has been procuring paddy for seven years. Why not buy it now?" Sanjay asked. "Your Ministers also told you to plant rice in Huzurabad. Where do you sell the paddy cultivated in your farm-house?" Sanjay asked KCR.

### At 42.4 degrees Celsius, Delhi hottest day in 5 yrs

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The blistering heatwave sweeping across Delhi-NCR intensified further on Saturday with the maximum temperature in the national capital rising to 42.4 degrees Celsius, the highest in April in five years, and nearing the 45-degree mark in neighbouring Gurugram. The capital had recorded a maximum temperature of 43.2 degrees Celsius on April 21, 2017. The all-time highest maximum temperature for the month was 45.6 degrees Celsius on April 29, 1941.

### Manickam Tagore...

**Continued from page 1**

The high command held a meeting with Telangana Congress leaders on April 4 to settle their differences. It was felt that such a meeting need not have been held had Manickam done his job effectively. Telangana Congress leaders, who are not happy with Manickam, shared their view with the high command. Many Telangana Congress leaders, including T. Jagga Reddy, Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy and others, criticised Manickam as well as TPCC chief Revanth Reddy. The high command finally conceded the need for a strong leader to replace Manickam.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹260
Without Skin	₹280
Broiler at Farm	₹142

EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	367
VIJAYAWADA	385
VISAKHAPATNAM	400
RETAIL PRICE (in Hyderabad)	₹3.67

# Sanjay alleges big conspiracy behind TRS' paddy politics

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

The TRS government's politicking on the paddy procurement issue smacks of a large-scale conspiracy to help middlemen make billions and is an attempt to deflect the anger of farmers towards the Centre, the BJP's Telangana unit President, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said on Saturday. In an open letter to the state's farming community, Sanjay said that by closing down paddy procurement centres during Yasangi (Rabi), the Telangana Government was forcing farmers to sell their paddy to middlemen at very low prices compared to the Minimum Support Price (MSP). "It is a conspiracy hatched by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao in collusion with the rice miller mafia to deny MSP to farmers so that TRS bigwigs can collect millions as commission from the millers," he said. Stating that the closure of paddy procurement centres during Rabi season was part of a large scale conspiracy by the KCR government, the BJP leader said as farmers would question the government for not purchas-



ing their paddy, the TRS leaders were hitting the roads to divert farmers' anger towards the Centre. He said the Centre would pay an MSP of Rs 1,960 for a quintal of paddy during Rabi. Farmers have already started harvesting in districts like Nalgonda, Khammam and Warangal, and have started to bring their produce to the market. As the state government has not opened IKP centres (meant for the procurement of agricul-

## Bomma to launch Sanjay's padayatra if Himantha doesn't come

Karnataka Chief Minister Basvaraj Somappa Bommai may launch the second phase of Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar's Praja Sangrama Yatra from the Jogulamba Shakthi Peetham on April 14 in case Assam Chief Minister Himantha Biswa Sharma fails to come to Telangana. Sources said that the BJP had invited Himantha Biswa Sharma for launching the second phase of Sanjay's Praja Sangrama Yatra. But Himantha Biswa Sharma's visit has not been finalised so far. The BJP is also getting ready BJYM activists to take on Congress activists, who are planning to block Himantha Biswa Sharma due to his remarks against former AICC Chief Rahul Gandhi and AICC chief Sonia Gandhi a few months ago. Congress leaders have demanded that the TRS Government should arrest Himantha Biswa Sharma on April 14 as an FIR has been filed against him. The BJP has been planning to conduct Union Home Minister Amit Shah's meeting at Maheshwaram on May 14, that is, on the last day of Sanjay's Praja Sangrama Yatra's second phase on a grand note. The BJP is planning to bring two to three lakh people for Amit Shah's meeting. The BJP has already held meetings with the committees set up to make Sanjay's Praja Sangrama Yatra a big success. The Yatra will be held for 31 days and it will cover 387 km and will end at Maheshwaram.

tural produce), the farmers are forced to approach millers. Exploiting the farmers' helplessness, the millers are paying only around Rs 1,300 to Rs 1,660 per quintal of paddy, which is much less than the MSP.

"As farmers have to clear debts and maintain their families, they are forced to sell their produce at the low prices offered by brokers, suffering a loss of Rs 300 to Rs 600 per quintal," Sanjay said.

## Majority of employers...

**Continued from page 1**

The remaining 11 per cent disagreed with the notion, arguing that the 4-day work model would neither improve nor yield any drastic positive results, it said. The report is based on a survey conducted online among 1,113 employers and employees between February 1 and March 7 across sectors, including banking and finance, construction and engineering, education, FMCG, hospitality, HR solutions, IT, ITES and BPO, logistics, manufacturing, media, oil and gas.

## Hearing on Undavalli's plea in SC next...

**Continued from page 1**

The third is that the Supreme Court should issue guidelines on bifurcating states in case any state is bifurcated in future. Speaking to 'The Pioneer' Undavalli said after Andhra Pradesh bifurcation Assembly elections were held twice in both the residuary state of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. He said that at this point it is not possible to merge both the states. "From the beginning, my argument is that Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated unscientifically. So I filed the amended petition in January requesting the Supreme Court to declare whether Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated scientif-

ically or unscientifically," he added. Undavalli said that leading advocate Prashant Bhushan had informed the Supreme Court bench led by the Chief Justice on Friday about the status of the petition filed by him and Chief Justice NV Ramana immediately directed the registry to list the petition next week. Undavalli said that he had filed the petition challenging the AP Reorganisation Act in 2014, had appeared before the Supreme Court on May 5, 2014, and had argued by himself. Undavalli said recently that he had filed a plea for an urgent hearing on the same issue with additional documents. Meanwhile, Undavalli Arun

Kumar said that the Centre has to file an affidavit in the Supreme Court on the petition filed by him. The Congress-led UPA brought in the AP Reorganisation Act to divide Andhra Pradesh in 2014. After the BJP-led NDA came to power Prime Minister Modi criticised the way the Congress adopted to bifurcate Andhra Pradesh. Prime Minister Modi said in Parliament that Andhra Pradesh was hastily divided for political objectives and that the method adopted for the bifurcation was wrong. The opinion of Undavalli Arun Kumar is also the same. In these circumstances, it is interesting to know what the Centre is going to say in its affidavit.

## TRS fans taking leaf out of DMK book in body-shaming...

**Continued from page 1**

In January, Tamilisai had said: "No woman should be discriminated on the basis of her looks, colour, and physical characteristics. Women should maintain self-confidence always, as body-shamers' aim is to demoralise, demotivate, and destroy women. Don't give room to such people. Always maintain mental strength by ignoring them." Earlier, in an interview with this newspaper, Dr Tamilisai had

acknowledged that she was the most-trolled person on social media and that it had impacted her family. "They cannot tolerate when a woman leader is growing in stature and wanted to demoralise me. The DMK used to troll my hair, colour, and height. They did not want a strong woman. My husband and children used to feel bad. My children and my friends wanted me to be continue my medical sonography practice due to the trolling I faced."

## We don't need a Governor: Talasani

He said it was not appropriate to make criticisms when there were no shortcomings. Srinivas Yadav: "What is the need for the Governor to critique the state government after meeting the Prime Minister and the Union Minister? How can the Governor abolish a government elected by the people with a majority?" He lamented that everyone knew how appointments were made in the Rajya Sabha. Talasani said, "Didn't the BJP government send industrialists to the Rajya Sabha?" Speaking about the issue of drugs raised by Governor, Talasani said that CM was angry over it and asked officials to ensure that no one involved in the case was spared.

## Veteran T'wood actor Balaiah passes away

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Veteran Tollywood actor Mannava Balaiah (92) passed away at his house here in Yousufguda on Saturday morning. Incidentally, he died on a day that happened to be his birthday too, according to his family members. A pall of gloom has descended on the Tollywood industry following the death of the veteran actor. The film industry expressed its shock over the death of the actor and wished that his soul may rest in peace. Balaiah who entered the cinema industry as a young man went on to act in over 300 films essaying various roles. He made his debut with the film Yettuku pai Yettu. His memorable films include Parvati Kalyanam, Irugu Porugu, Bobbili Yudhdham, Pandava Vanavasam, Monagallaku Monagadu, Sri Krishna Pandaveeyam, Vikramarka Vijayam, Alluri Sitaramaraju, Prana Snehitulu, Maharajasri Mayagadu, Peddarikam, Gayam, Yamaleela, Pelli Sandadi, Annamaiah, Manmadhudu, Malleeswari and Sriramarajyam. The multi-faceted genius also directed some films, produced a few films, and provided stories to many more. On



**A pall of gloom has descended on the Tollywood industry following the death of the veteran actor. The film industry expressed its shock over the death of the actor and wished that his soul may rest in peace.**

his banner called Amrita Films, he produced Chelleli Kapuram with Sobhanbabu in the lead, Neramu-Siksha with Krishna in the lead, Chuttalunnaru Jagrarta, and Urikichchina Maata (with Chiranjivi in the lead). He wielded the megaphone for the flicks titled Pasuputaadu, Nijam Chebite Neramaa? and Police Alludu. He won Nandi Award in the category of best writer for the film Urikichchina Maata. He went on to win another Nandi Award as a producer for the film Chellili Kaapuram.

# Odisha: 15 kg plastic waste removed from cow's stomach

**PNS ■ BERHAMPUR**

Plastic waste weighing around 15 kg was removed from the stomach of a stray cow by veterinary doctors at a state-run facility in Odisha's Ganjam district, officials said on Saturday. A team of veterinary doctors, led by district veterinary surgeon Dr Kiran Kumar Bisoyi operated on the six-year-old cow for around three hours after it was rescued, they said. Polythene bags, wrappers and other plastic wastes were removed from the stomach of the cow, Dr Bisoyi said. The ailing cow was rescued from Vidya Nagar near Courtpeta area four days ago after an animal rights activist



reported its condition to the authorities, he said. The cow was in a critical condition when it was brought to the hospital, he said, adding that clinical examination revealed an accumulation of plastic waste in its stomach.

Stray cattle, which survive on leftovers dumped in polythene bags, end up with plastic in their stomachs, the doctor said. After the removal of the plastics from its stomach, the cow's condition is stable now, he said.

## T-Hub model to be replicated outside India

**Continued from page 1**

"Our engagements have become strategic and have been scaled up. Earlier it was just tactical. There are two parts, one is that you can run short-duration projects for a few months. The other is engaging with them in the Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) model which could be of longer duration and the engagement is also deeper," MSR said. Meanwhile, T-Hub is working on the initiative T-Bridge to help connect start-ups with tech ecosystems outside India.

As part of the T-Bridge initiative, start-ups from Australia, Hiroshima (Japan), and South Korea are in Hyderabad and T-Hub is helping them with market access. "We are also working on how to get our start-ups go out and are keenly looking at the US. We have done 10 to 11 bridge programmes so far. For many of our start-ups, whether it is saas, medical device companies or those creating enterprise applications the US is the largest market. We will look at other markets too but the US will be the core market," MSR said.

## Have no powers, up to voters to...

**Continued from page 1**

It said that in December 2016, a set of 47 proposals on electoral reforms has been sent to the Centre in respect of reforms relating to political parties of which one chapter deals with "de-registration of political parties". "It is also submitted that the

Election Commission of India has also made recommendations to the law ministry to enable it to exercise the powers to de-register a political party and to issue necessary orders regulating registration and de-registration of political parties," the poll panel said. The commission said that in so far as the prayer for of the petitioner

Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay that the EC may be directed to seize the election symbol/deregister the political party which promises/distributes freebies from public fund, the Supreme Court in its verdict of 2002 had directed that the EC had no power to cancel the registration of a political party except for three grounds.

# Fight for self-respect

**Continued from page 1**

"KCR had earlier told farmers that the Centre is not ready to buy Yasangi paddy. But BJP leaders persuaded farmers to cultivate paddy saying that they will ensure that the Centre buys the crop. Now the BJP doesn't want to buy the grain," KTR said.

## 'Stop imposing Hindi'

**Continued from page 1**

"I am an Indian first, a proud Telugu and Telanganaithe next. I can speak in my mother tongue Telugu, English, Hindi and a little bit of Urdu," he added. This is the first reaction by a leader from the two Telugu states to Amit's statement on Hindi. Leaders from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and other non-Hindi states have reacted strongly to the Home Minister's statement saying that they will not accept Hindi under any circumstance.

## SII, Bharat Bio cut vax...

**Continued from page 1**

"We are pleased to announce that after discussion with the central government, SII has decided to revise the price of COVISHIELD vaccine for private hospitals from Rs 600 to Rs 225 per dose," SII CEO Adar Poonawalla said in a tweet. On Friday, the company had said that the precaution dose of its Covishield vaccine against COVID-19 will be priced at Rs 600 per shot for eligible individuals. Bharat Biotech Co-Founder Joint Managing Director Suchitra Ella in a tweet said: "We welcome the decision to make available precautionary dose for all adults. In consultation with the Central

### First case of Omicron...

He was later found infected with the XE variant as per a report given by a Gandhinagar-based lab, which was cross-checked and confirmed by a facility in Kolkata on Friday. The man is currently in Mumbai and his health condition is stable, they added. The state health department said that the patient was first tested for COVID-19 at a private laboratory after he developed fever following his arrival in Vadodara in a flight.

Government, we have decided to revise the price of #COVAX-IN from Rs 1,200 to Rs 225 per dose, for #privatehospitals."

### PREVENTIVE DETENTION

# Personal liberty of accused cannot be sacrificed: SC

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Personal liberty of an accused cannot be sacrificed on the altar of preventive detention merely because a person is implicated in a criminal proceeding, the Supreme Court has said as it quashed a Telangana government detention order against a man for allegedly duping hundreds of job aspirants. The top court said that a mere apprehension of a breach of law and order is not sufficient to meet the standard of adversely

ly affecting the "maintenance of public order". A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Surya Kant accepted that the nature of the allegations against the detenu is grave, but observed that the detention order was passed under the Telangana Act of 1986 "without any application of mind". "We accordingly allow the appeal and set aside the impugned judgment of the High Court dated January 25, 2022. The order of detention which has been passed against

the detenu on May 19, 2021 shall accordingly stand quashed and set aside," the bench said. The order of detention was challenged before the High Court which dismissed the petition on January 25, 2022. In its recent order, the bench said, "The nature of the allegations against the detenu is grave. However, the personal liberty of an accused cannot be sacrificed on the altar of preventive detention merely because a person is implicated in a criminal proceeding. The powers of preventive detention are exceptional

and even draconian." It said that in this case, the apprehension of a disturbance to public order owing to a crime that was reported over seven months prior to the detention order has no basis in fact. "The apprehension of an adverse impact to public order is a mere surmise of the detaining authority, especially when there have been no reports of unrest since the detenu was released on bail on January 8, 2021 and detained with effect from June 26, 2021," the bench

said. The top court said the powers of preventive detention are exceptional and even draconian, tracing their origin to the colonial era. They have been continued with strict constitutional safeguards against abuse, it said. "Article 22 of the Constitution was specifically inserted and extensively debated in the Constituent Assembly to ensure that the exceptional powers of preventive detention do not devolve into a draconian and arbitrary exercise of state authority," it said.

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RAMANAVAMI SHOBHA YATRA TODAY

# Keep vigil on the main procession route: CP to cops

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad City Police Commissioner CV Anand on Saturday chaired a meeting with all senior police officers and SHOs to review the final preparedness and to maintain Law & Order in view of the Sri Rama Navami Shobha Yatra procession to be held on Sunday. CV Anand directed his deputy officers to keep special vigil on the main procession route and the roads adjacent to it.

Addressing the meeting, CV Anand said, "CCTVs and drones have to be used. Day and night area domination activities have to be conducted. Additional platoons of police



Hyderabad CP CV Anand addressing an official meeting in city on Saturday

forces will be deployed to manage the crowds at religious places, procession routes and highly congested shopping areas." It may be noted that in last week, multiple zonal level meetings were conducted by senior officers from the depart-

ment to make adequate arrangements for Shobha Yatra. The Commissioner stressed that all the organisers must carry out the procession only on the route prescribed by the police and permitted by the high court. Public were requested to keep the car-

riage way clear and avoid crowds on the procession route.

The meeting was attended by DS Chauhan, Addl CP (L&O), P Vishwaprasad, Jt CP SB, Karthikeya, Jt CP CAR and other senior officials from the department.

## Visaka seer to visit Yadadri on April 12

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Vishaka Sharada Peetam Seer Swaroopanandendra Swami will be visiting the Yadagirigutta temple on April 12. He is visiting Narasimha Kshetra for the first time after the renovation. He will perform special pujas. Swaroopanandendra Swamy is first seer to visit the shrine after the MahaKumba Samprokshanam. During his visit Swaroopanandendra Swamy will examine the architectural style of the temple. On the 12th at 8 am Swamiji will leave Visakha patnam with his successor Swatmanandendra. After Arriving at Shamshabad Airport at 9 am, he will go to Yadgirigutta by road. Authorities have made necessary arrangements for Swarupanandendra's visit.

## GHMC collecting property tax even during construction flayed

SAITEJA BURRA  
■ HYDERABAD

Most citizens living within the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation are only aware that GHMC collects property tax from the public after their construction is completed. However, most people are not aware that GHMC collects property tax even during the construction.

Generally all municipal corporations in various states collect property tax from the public only when they register their homes within their respective municipalities. But this is not happening in GHMC in Telangana.

Citizens were surprised to learn that property tax was levied by GHMC even before the building was registered and during construction. "My new property got registered in Jan'2022 and

Door No was assigned as 1-4/99/MHM/5/710. Why am I charged Property Tax before Registration Dates? I see arrears added in the new assessment itself for the construction phase," said Venkat Rao on Twitter.

The Pioneer found that the GHMC's valuation authorities were not solving these major issues even though property taxes were being levied on citizens during constructions.

Another resident A Manoj Kumar said that his flat was also registered in the month of January 2022, but GHMC officials charged arrears for the period before the registration date. He was shocked to learn of the matter and asked the authorities to resolve the issue as soon as possible. Similarly, many owners of "My Home Mangala" were also charged the property tax even before the registration date.

Sudhir from Hyderabad has been facing this problem for the last three years. "My property was registered in January 2022, but the property tax arrears are showing arrears from the year 2019. The unit has not yet received an Occupation Certificate. Please check and rectify the arrears," he urged. Meanwhile, when people took to Twitter to complain, GHMC officials said that they had forwarded their details to the Chief Valuation Officer and the Valuation Officer would check and take further action.

Vinaya Vangala, a civic activist from the Hyderabad said that in most cases, GHMC officials should collect property tax from the public only when registering their property and have a property tax identification number (PTIN). But nowadays the public were charged even before registrations.

## Longterm use of statins leads to side effects: CCMB study



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A study conducted by the Center for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) reveals the side effects of cholesterol lowering drug statins.

According to a release by the CCMB, statins are one of the top selling drugs worldwide and are used for lowering cholesterol in patients with high blood cholesterol. These drugs act by inhibiting a key enzyme (HMG-CoA Reductase) needed for making cholesterol in our body. In spite of their popularity, it is revealed that regular use of statins will lead to severe side effects to long term users. The

molecular basis of these side effects is not clear.

Dr Parijat Sarkar, who is the first author of the paper, said, "Our results constitute one of the first comprehensive reports dissecting the mechanistic basis underlying the interplay between cellular level and cholesterol biosynthesis, and provide a molecular basis for the reported side effects of statin treatment."

Prof Chattopadhyay concluded, "These findings could provide vital clues in dissecting the biochemical process that give rise to adverse effects of statins, thereby helping to develop better drugs in the future."

## Adventurous sky cycling available on Necklace Road in Hyderabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Riding a cycle on a tightrope at a height above the ground that too without any solid support will bring shivers to the spine due to fear of falling. Hyderabad's first-ever sky cycling gaming is available to the youngsters who show some interest in adventures. Fixed at the gaming zone called 'Pitstop' in Necklace Road, the venue has turned out to be the spot for several youngsters. The venue also has adventures like zip-lining, rope course, tyre climbing, and so on.

For zip line and sky cycling, one will have to climb onto a platform which could be at a height of the third storey of a building from where two ropes are extended towards the other end of the venue. One will be hanging from the rope with the help of safety equipment. The



participants can experience thrill of sky cycling. But remember to pedal at a fast pace to maintain momentum without stopping in between. A software professional is behind in bringing the sky cycling to the city.

The organizer says that the rope is designed to take around 85 kg of weight currently and

plans are to increase the weight limit to 100 kg to accommodate more people. In addition, the persons who guide the visitors are trained by professionals on the use of different kinds of ropes. Pitstop is also known for its go-karting, bowling, bungee jumping, bumping cars, and a variety of food stalls. One can



also try the 360-degree cycle where one can experience the thrill of cycling in a complete circle with safety belts attached to the seats.

While zipline is for Rs 250, sky cycling costs Rs 300. However, one has to sign a form claiming self-responsibility at the beginning of the adventure.

## Brahmotsavams at Chilkur Balaji temple commence from April 12



Chilkur Balaji temple chief priest and others

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The annual Brahmotsavams in Chilkur Balaji temple starts on April 12 and lasts for seven days till April 18. Garuda Prasadam will be distributed to childless women on April 12 at the Chilkur Balaji Temple on account of Brahmotsavams.

In the month of Chaitra, Brahmotsavam is celebrated for seven days starting on Ekadashi immediately after Sri Rama Navami. The evening before the first day, Ankurarpanam (the sowing of

seeds to signify fertility and abundance) is performed.

The activities include the Dwajaroahanam on the first day, the raising of the Garuda flag to signify the beginning of the festival.

Religious activities during the festival include daily homas and processions in the streets around the temple. On the last day, Sudarshana Chakra Snanam is performed in the nearby water body. The festival ends with Dhvajavaroahanam, the lowering of the Garuda flag.

## SCR promotes local products at 6 stations

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The novel initiative of "One station one product" aimed at making the railway stations a sales and promotional hub for local products has been launched across six major stations over SCR. Encouraged by the terrific response to the pilot project at Tirupati Station, it has now been launched for the first time at Secunderabad, Kacheguda, Vijayawada, Guntur and Aurangabad stations.

It is being implemented for a duration of 30 days (in two spells of 15 days each) starting i.e., from April 9 to May 7, 2022 at the 5 new stations, while the project which is already under implementation at Tirupati. It



has now extended for another 30 days as well. The Six stations along with a brief explanation of the products identified for promotion / sale at these stations includes Hyderabad Freshwater Pearl

Jewellery and Hyderabad Bangles, Pochampalli Handlooms and Textiles in Kacheguda, Kondapalli Toys and Handicrafts in Vijayawada, Tenali Handloom Textiles and Mangalagiri Sarees, Jute and

Banana Fiber products in Guntur, Kalamkari, Handicrafts and Wood Carvings in Tirupati and Paithani Sarees & Himroo shawls in Aurangabad. Local Products will have an opportunity to have national reach by promoting their products at these Major stations. Nominal registration fee of Rs. 500 is to be paid for 15 days. On this occasion, Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager (In-Charge) complimented the Officers and staff of Commercial Wing for implementing this novel initiative over SCR. He stated that the Local artisans will have a good opportunity to showcase their products and thereby expand their reach of their products.

## 2-year-old boy falls into water bucket, dies

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a tragic incident, a two-year-old boy died, allegedly after he fell into a bucket full of water at Kothapet under LB Nagar Police Station limits in the city on Friday. The boy, Arun, was staying with his grandparents for the past some months, after his mother Lavanya left her in-laws' house over a dispute with her husband Sai Kumar. The incident occurred when Lavanya was sleeping. The toddler, while playing is believed to have accidentally fell into the bucket. The incident came to light only after his grandparents returned home. He was rushed to hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead.

## Cops intensify raids on betting rackets

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Cops in all the three police commissionerates busted at least 3 betting rackets in the last three days and seized huge amounts of money.

The Rachakonda Police on Saturday busted an online cricket betting racket in Vanasthalipuram and seized about Rs 12 lakhs and freeze bank accounts. In another operation, the SOT of Cyberabad commissionerate on April 7 busted a racket and apprehended 18 bookies. The police seized Rs 1.62 crore from the accused. Yet in another incident, under the Rachakonda on April 6, the police busted a betting racket arrested 7 persons and seized Rs 56 lakh. The organiser says



that betting starts from the first ball of the match and goes on till the last ball. The placing of the bets is done through phone calls which are recorded. After the match, the organiser informs the collection agents the details of money which needs to be collected. The money is then distributed and transferred to various bank accounts owned

by the bookies. Speaking to the Pioneer, Chandana Deepthi, DCP North Zone said, "Those who are indulging in this sort of betting, which comes under gambling, be it online or offline, we have put a surveillance on them. If one does illegal activities in the name of cricket, they will be arrested and strict action will be taken against them."

## Gandhi doctors perform 3 knee replacement surgeries in one day



Team of doctors at Gandhi Hospital who performed the knee surgeries

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Doctors at Gandhi Hospital in Hyderabad on Saturday performed 3 successful knee replacement surgeries within 4 hours successfully. The surgeries were performed between 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM along with other regular orthopedic cases. The

Operation Theatre (OT) functioned from 8 AM to 5 PM. Dr Vijaya, Dr Baby Rani from the Anesthesia team, other team of doctors and OT sisters, performed these surgeries. Dr Raja Rao, Superintendent of Gandhi Hospital congratulated the whole team for their hard work and cooperation.

## Cricket betting: 5 held, Rs 12.5 lakh seized

PNS ■ MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

The sleuths of special operations, LB Nagar Zone team of Rachakonda busted online IPL cricket betting racket. They apprehended five accused persons and seized Rs.12,50,000. The police identified that the organisers were having Rs.96,78,766/- in eight bank accounts. The police officials asked the bankers to freeze the bank accounts of the accused.

According to a press release issued by police, the main accused Devineni Chakravarthy (50), Vanasthalipuram, Hyderabad, was organising cricket betting with the main



bookie Appala Raju, native of Bheemavaram in AP. He was organising cricket betting at his brother-in-law Nidadavolu Srinivasa Uday Kumar's house at Muggualla (V), Seetha Nagaram (M), East Godavari district of AP. He was collecting betting amount from punters during ongoing cricket matches i.e., Indian Premier League-2022. The accused Srinivasa Uday

Kumar receives cricket betting rates from Appala Raju to his line number and informs the same to his punters as well to Devineni Chakravarthy. And he used to deposit the amounts in the account of Vemula parthy Harish (sub bookie). After completion of match he distributes the amounts to the customers through mobile banking and apps. On a tip off, the sleuths of SOT, LB Nagar Zone, along with Vanasthalipuram police, raided the cricket betting premises and apprehended punters Chenreddy Suresh Reddy, Saama Jaipal Reddy, Shaik Asif pasha along with Chakravarthy and Harish.

## Cyber stalker arrested

PNS ■ MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

Rachakonda cyber crime police arrested cyber stalker for harassing a woman and her family by posting and sharing victim's morphed pictures on various social media platforms. Mahesh M Bhagwat, Commissioner of Police, Rachakonda, said that the complainant stated that he has been receiving morphed photos of his wife (victim) and also receiving abusive words about his wife from different apps and whatsapp number. Investigation revealed that the accused is Mohanned Israeel (28), resident of Abdullapur met, native of Bihar and working as labourer in a shop. He purchases vegetables

from victim's vegetable shop and developed sexual desires towards her. He collected her phone number and did a video call to her and collected the screen shots of her without her knowledge.

Later, the accused asked her to make a video call to him. But she refused to do so and stopped responding to his calls. He morphed her pictures in nude and posted on social media applications mentioning her as a call girl. He also sent those morphed pictures to the victim's husband and thereby outraged the modesty of the women. On credible information and collecting evidences, the police arrested the accused on April 7 and produced him before the court.

## Liquor shops to remain closed today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As part of the "Sri Rama Navami" festival, Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Rachakonda police on Saturday have issued orders to shut down liquor shops until 6:00 am on April 11, 2022. "Police have warned that strict action will be taken if liquor is sold anywhere. Persons violating the rules are liable under Section 20. T.S, Excise Act, 1968. he police suggested everyone to abide by the rules.

## Traffic likely to be diverted in multiple parts of city today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On the occasion of Sri Rama Navami Shobha Yatra, Hyderabad city police on Saturday imposed traffic diversions in the limits of Goshamahall Traffic Police station and Sultan bazar Traffic Police Station to keep traffic running smoothly, to prevent accidents and to avoid inconvenience to the public.

A tributary procession starts from Akashpuri Hanuman Temple at 11 am today and joins the main procession at Gangabowli Junction in the mid-



dle of the main procession. Meanwhile, the procession "Sri Rama Navami Shobha Yatra" will cover a distance of 6.5 km and ends at the Hanuman Vyayamshala around 10 pm. The Hyderabad police requested the citizens to avoid the procession routes and cooperate with the Hyderabad traffic police.

## Only 0.8% of women use condoms for FP

SIDDHARTH KUMAR SINGH  
■ HYDERABAD

A recent study conducted by the Council for Social Development (CSD) revealed that only 0.8% of the married women population in Telangana is using condoms as a method for family planning. The data shows that in Hyderabad it is about 1.1%.

Speaking to the Pioneer, Dr Barkha, a Gynaecologist based in Hyderabad, said "Firstly in a country like India, it is a stigma that women are not supposed to go out to buy contracep-

tives. Also, the availability is not that frequent as compared to male condoms. The other reasons also include that female condoms are a little expensive, that is why only the privileged class of the society uses them. The next reason is that wearing a female condom is a little complicated process unlike that of men. The administration needs to create awareness in the society so that the stigma can be dealt with."

The study also reveals that married women between the age group 15-49 years have chosen more complex mea-

sures such as female sterilization, 61.9% of the women in Telangana have opted for this procedure. Suryapet district tops the list with 75.9% followed by Nalgonda at 75.1% and Wanaparthy at 74.4%. The city of Hyderabad has seen 64.6% of married women opting for sterilisation. On the other hand, male sterilisation is very low with only 2% males from the entire state have opted for this measure.

Dr Kiran Madala, HOD at Government Medical College Nizamabad said, "Condoms are safer and do not have any

side effects or complications. This will also prevent the spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). It's unfortunate to see that women today are opting for more contraceptive methods. These pills and other measures create a lot of hormonal imbalance in the body which takes a toll on their health also. Another reason is that contraceptives generally are used for a longer duration which increases the side effects. It is also a misnomer in the society that condoms are to be used only by males."

## Somany Ceramics opens experience centre in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Somany Ceramics Ltd. announced New Somany Experience Centre in Hyderabad, Telangana. The experience centre is spread over 10,000 sq ft giving their consumers a unique experience displaying the extensive portfolio of products in wall & floor tiles across various categories, including floor tiles, polished vitrified tiles, glazed vitrified tiles and digital tiles.

The experience centre has separate designated floors for

Bathware, Duragres (GVT) and ceramic tiles. With immersive and exclusive experience customers will be engaged with company ethos and state of the art extensive & wide portfolio.

The new experience centre was inaugurated by Shreekanth Somany - Chairman & Managing Director - Somany Ceramics Ltd. Speaking on the launch of the new experience centre, he said that, "We are extremely delighted and excited with the launch of one of the Biggest Somany Experience Centre in India at Hyderabad.



# All set for grand celebrations of Seetharama Kalyanam

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

All set for celebration of Seetharama Kalyanam at Sri Seetha Ramachandraswamy Devasthanam here on Sunday. Elaborate arrangements were made for the festival. The district administration and the Endowments Departments strived to ensure that celebrations take place on a grand scale. Devotees from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and other parts in the country would congregate at the temple town to witness the Seetharama Kalyanam. Devotees are witnessing the celebrations of Sri Rama Navami after a gap of two years. The celebrations remained a low-key affair for two years. Sri Rama Navami Festivities, including celestial wedding, were organised without much fanfare due to coronavirus pandemic for two



years. The TSRTC is operating 400 special buses to Bhadrachalam from different parts of the State to ferry the devotees to the temple town. District Collector Anudeep

Durishetty inspected the arrangements. He said six parking lots had been arranged. A good number of doctors and paramedical staff have been deployed. Minister

for Endowments A Indrakaran Reddy is expected to attend Kalaynaotsavam present 'Pattu Vastrams' and 'Mutu'ala 'Talambralu' to the deities.

## 8 passengers injured as Private bus overturns

PNS ■ NALGONDA

At least eight passengers suffered injuries when a private bus overturned in the early hours of Saturday at Nandipadu bypass road in Myrjalaguda district. The accident happened when the private bus was on its way to Bapatla from Hyderabad. There were 28 passengers in the bus. The police rushed to the spot and shifted the injured to Area Hospital. Investigation is on.



BJP national vice-president D K Aruna speaking at Kisan Morcha convention in Mahabubnagar on Saturday

# TRS gives short shrift to farmers' problems: Aruna

## BJP leader claims that the Chief Minister has not had a wink after the defeat in Huzurabad by-election

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

BJP national vice-president D K Aruna on Monday alleged that the TRS has been deceiving the farmers by trying to shift the blame on to the BJP government at the Centre. Speaking at Kisan Morcha convention here, Aruna said that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao had given a short shrift to the problems being faced by the farmers. The Chief Minister had now started shifting the blame on to

the Centre for the plight of the farmers, she felt. The TRS leaders were trying to rake Telangana sentiment to divert the people's attention. The TRS government had promised to procure every grain and now reneged on its promise, he said. KCR, she alleged, had started enacting drama after the BJP candidate Etela Rajender won the by-election from Huzurabad. The Chief Minister was not able to get a wink of sleep after the defeat of the TRS candidates in

Huzurabad by-election, she claimed. She charged the TRS with spending Rs 6,000 crore in Huzurabad by-elections, she alleged. She claimed that the State government had written to the Centre that the former would not supply parboiled rice. But now, the State government was insisting on the Centre procuring parboiled rice, she said. The government had not completed road laying works though administrative sanction was given for them long back.

# KCR apprehensive of BJP storming TRS citadel: Vijayashanti

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao has been apprehensive of BJP storming the TRS citadel in Telangana. That is why the KCR has been accusing the BJP leveraging the farmers' issue, alleges BJP national executive member Vijayashanti. Taking part in Kisan Morcha held at Yedapalli in Nizamabad district on Saturday, she recalled how KCR had written to the Centre refusing to give parboiled rice to the Centre for procurement. She sought to know why controversy over procurement of Yasangi paddy has been kicked up now when there was no problem on the issue since 2014. KCR raked up the issue since he felt that he is on a shaky wicket, she alleged. That is why he is politicising on farmers' laws and is hatching a conspiracy in this regard in



Vijay Shanti speaking at Kisan Morcha convention at Yedapalli in Nizamabad district on Saturday

association with the Congress and middlemen to resist the implementation of the farm laws, she contended. Accusing him of looting Rs 2 lakh crore, she alleged that KCR wants more. She sought to know why the State government has been collecting service charge from farmers on the pretext of providing free power to agriculture sector. There was no precedent of any government so far surviving long in power having clashed with the farmers, she said. MP of Nizamabad

Dharmapuri Arvind assured the farmers that the BJP in the event of coming to power in Telangana would procure parboiled rice. KCR, whom he accused of having insulted the jawans earlier, is now out to dupe the farmers, he alleged. He charged KCR with converting Telangana as the state having the dubious distinction of the most suicides by the farmers. KCR assured the farmers five years ago to provide fertilisers free of cost to the farmers, he said questioning him what happened to the promise.

## 'Public health continues to be fragile'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Over four lakh people have been screened through Active Care Finding (ACF) campaigns during Covid period by World Vision India (WVI) for Approach towards Childhood

Tuberculosis (FACT) in Guntur and Krishna districts. WVI works in a multi-pronged manner to enhance ACF, ensure contact treatment and treatment adherence and create awareness about Tuberculosis (TB).

## Bid to attack TDP MLA condemned

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh on Saturday strongly condemned the ruling YSRCP leaders' bid to attack TDP Kondepi MLA Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy in the Prakasam district. Lokesh said the YCP goondas targeted the TDP MLA out of frustration after he exposed the massive corruption of CM Jagan Reddy's relative and former Minister for Energy Balineni Srinivasa Reddy. In a statement here, the TDP MLC asserted that Veeranjanya Swamy was known for his honesty and commitment. Balineni sent his party miscreants to attack a Dalit intellectual and highly educated person like Swamy. Lokesh warned of serious consequences if the ruling YCP goons continued their mindless attacks. The TDP leaders would not be afraid of the intimidatory tactics.

# Guduru lambasts govt for not taking steps to protect govt land

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharatiya Janata Party State unit senior leader Guduru Narayana Reddy on Saturday flayed the government for its irresponsible behaviour in the matter of attempts of few persons to grab government land in Hyderabad. The land is worth Rs 1,500 crore. In a press statement, he alleged that attempts are being made by few officials to hand over the rights on a land parcel to a private society though the courts have not given any decision on the title dispute. He said that due to the irresponsibility and corrupt activities of a few officials, the private society may secure the government land located in Shaikpet village of Hyderabad. He said that according to reports, a senior official of the State government has been involved in the issue and he has recommended the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation to grant layout permission to that disputed land. He said that in Shaikpet vil-

**The courts have also suggested the government initiate steps to secure the title. However, the GHMC has given permission to develop the layout in that land.**



lage a fictitious survey number has been created by a few private persons and they have been claiming ownership on 32 acres with the help of this survey number on which the government claims the ownership. He said that cases are pending in the courts about the title of the land and the courts have ordered the status quo on the issue. The courts have also suggested the government initiate steps to secure the title. However, the GHMC has given permission to develop the layout in that land.

He said that though the Revenue Department officials have asked the government to pursue the case in the courts and to secure rights on the land, no attempts have been made so far. He said that such irresponsible behavior indicates conspiracy by few officials to give away the land to private persons with ulterior motives. Narayana Reddy said that while the government said that it would protect each inch of government land and would not allow grabbing of government land at any cost, no attempts have been made to

protect the land of Shaikpet village from falling into the hands of private persons. Ridiculously, the GHMC has informed a person through an answer under the Right to Information Act that there were no records of the land for the past 20 years in the GHMC. This showed that few officials of GHMC were in connivance with land grabbers in Shaikpet village. He said that while the government has been usurping the assigned lands from poor people to develop layouts to make money, it has been allowing private persons to grab the government land in the middle of Hyderabad city. He demanded that layout permission to the private society should be scrapped immediately and the government should take steps to secure rights of ownership on the said land through the courts. He also demanded the government to order for an inquiry on the higher official who has recommended the GHMC to give permission to layout in the disputed land and to take action on that officer.

# 19 TS Gram Panchyats bag natl awards

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana bagged 19 awards in various categories ahead of the National Panchayati Raj Day on April 24. Chandapur gram panchayat in Wanaparthy bagged Child Friendly Gram Panchayat Award. Yerravalle in Siddipet won Gram Panchayat Development Plan Award. Manthangod in Narayanpet won Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar. Under Deen Dayal

Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar category, a total of 16 panchayats were given award. They are Rajanna Siricilla in district category, Peddapalli, Thirumalagiri, Parvathagiri, Kodimial, in intermediate block category. At Gram panchayat category Mukra (K), Velchala, Venkatapuram, Jakkapur, Gundlapotlupally, Maddikunta, Nagaram, Mariapuram, Haripuram, Mandepally, Burugupalle were recognised.

National Panchayati Raj Day will be celebrated on April 24 every year across the country and view of the celebration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav as commemoration of 75th year of the Independence. This year's NPRD-2022 is very special. This year, the National function of NPRD-2022 is proposed to be organised in Palli Gram Panchayat of Samba district of Jammu & Kashmir, which will be attended by the Prime Minister as the chief guest.

# IT-aided healthcare system at TTD hospitals soon

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As a part of its IT initiative for a better administration, the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) is all set to launch a 'Health Cloud System' for all its Hospitals soon. A review meeting in this regard with IT experts of TTD and Kare Experts Technologies (Jio) was held at Padmavathi Rest House in Tirupati on Saturday by TTD EO Dr. KS Jawahar Reddy. Through a detailed PowerPoint Presentation, the Kare team explained to the EO the benefits of the Health Cloud System which is an advanced digitalisation platform in the Health Care System with faster

patient data processing and queue management, enabling quicker service to more patients besides ensuring quality treatment. Later, the EO said this next-gen technology will take the quality Medicare to the doorsteps of the patients. The TTD Health Cloud System will be launched in the month of July initially with SVIMS and Padmavathi Children's Hospitals and will be extended to all the TTD-run hospitals in a phased manner. SVIMS Director Dr. Vengamala and her team of doctors, FACAO Balaji, IT Advisor to TTD Amar Nagaram, Chief Information Officer Sandeep and TTD IT team, experts from Kare Xperts Technologies (virtually) participated.

## Padma Rao's book released

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dalit activist and co-founder of Andhra Pradesh Dalit Maha Sabha, Dr. Kathi Padma Rao's book on his life was released here on Saturday. The book contains the struggles that he had led against the atrocities committed on Dalits for two decades from the 1980s. The book, *Oka Asprushyuni Yuddha Gadh*a (An untouchable's war story) is the second in the series and was released by the victims of the Karamchedu massacre of 1985. Dr. Padma Rao recalled several incidents of Dalit atrocities and attempts on his life by police and politicians in those days.

# 'BJP will purchase parboiled rice if it comes to power in TS'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a significant departure from the policy of the government at the Centre, BJP Lok Sabha member from Nizamabad Dharmapuri Arvind has assured the farmers that the saffron party, if it is elected to power in the State, will purchase parboiled rice. Addressing the farmers' conference organised by the BJP Kisan Morcha on Friday at Yedapalli in Nizamabad district, Arvind alleged that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, who spoke in an 'insulting' manner towards the soldiers time and again, has now been deceiving the farmers. He alleged that the State had witnessed a highest number of farmers' suicides. The saffron party MP sought an answer from the Chief Minister as to what happened to the latter's assurance that the government



would provide fertiliser to farmers free of cost. He also asked KCR to tell what happened to the assurance of procuring turmeric in villages at the minimum support price. He wondered whether the farmers could lead a comfortable life with Rs 10,000 Rythu Bandhu grant and RS 2,000 pension. He stressed the need to defeat the TRS government. He claimed that the Centre had stopped importing turmeric and increased import of the produce. It led to increase in turmeric prices, he said.

## Parliament privilege panel summons Karminagar CP, others

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Parliament Privilege Committee has served notices to Karminagar Police Commissioner and other police officers, asking them to attend before it on April 26. The Parliament Privilege Committee served these notices in regard to the alleged attack and illegal arrest of Karminagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar. The Committee served notices to Karminagar Police Commissioner, Karminagar ACP, Huzurabad ACP, CI, Jammikunta CI, Karminagar One Town inspector. The Committee also sent a copy to Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar also.

# MAUD Director asks engineers to speed up developmental works

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Municipal and Urban Development Director Satyanarayana on Saturday directed the officials to speed up developmental and beautification works in Nalgonda town. District Collector Prashant Jeevan Patil, Additional Collector of Local Bodies Rahul Sharma and Municipal Commissioner K V Ramanachary were holding a review meeting with the Municipal engineers. During the meeting, the Director sought details on the development of roads, widening works, development of junctions, central lighting, footpaths, development of parks, and setting up of other junctions. The District Collector and the Municipal Commissioner were asked about the progress of works on the IT hub, helipad, and other development works.

The Municipal Commissioner was directed to organise meetings on property tax collection. The District Collector was asked to send proposals for the grant of funds for development works. District Collector Prashant Jeevan Patil said property tax would be levied and owners would come forward voluntarily and pay property tax if exemptions were given in property tax. He said works on the Hyderabad road was progressing at fast pace. The engineers have already started work on central lighting system, dividers, and power towers in the middle of the road. The meeting was attended by Additional Collector of Local Bodies Rahul Sharma, Municipal Commissioner K V Ramanachari, DE Venkanna, Town Planning Assistant Nagireddy, and others participated.



Municipal and Urban Development Director Satyanarayana and District Collector Prashant Jeevan Patil inspecting developmental works in Nalgonda on Saturday

# Traditional knowledge is integral to cultural identity: Experts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Participants of a national webinar have exhorted the need to safeguard Traditional Knowledge. The Centre for IPRs and Technology of Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University (DSNLU) of Vizag organised a 2-day national webinar on 'Safeguarding the Traditional Knowledge (TK) in India - Need of the Hour'. The webinar is aimed at dis-

cussing and deliberating important issues connected with TK, which is essentially culturally-oriented or culturally-based, and is integral to the cultural identity of the social group in which it operates and is preserved. "Traditional knowledge" is an open-ended way to refer to tradition-based literary, artistic, or scientific works; performances; inventions; scientific discoveries; designs; marks, names, and symbols; undis-

closed information; and all other tradition-based innovations and creations resulting from intellectual activity. India is a hub of traditional knowledge, indigenous culture, and ethnicity. Centre for IPR at DSNLU, Chair-Person, Prof. (Dr.) P. Sree Sudha, while inaugurating the webinar remarked that the present legal regime in the field of traditional knowledge is inadequate and incomplete. The interconnectedness of

national and global legal regimes on TK protection and the constant evolution of the debate, call for policy efforts towards adapting to changing requirements, Sree Sudha said. She opined that for three reasons the current IPR system cannot protect traditional knowledge. First, the current system seeks to privatize ownership and is designed to be held by individuals or corporations, whereas traditional knowledge has collective

ownership. Second, the protection under IPR Laws is time-bound, whereas traditional knowledge is held in perpetuity from generation to generation. Third, it adopts a restricted interpretation of invention which should satisfy the criteria of novelty and be capable of industrial application, whereas traditional innovation is incremental, informal, and occurs over time. She underlined the need

for a sui generis, or alternative law, for the protection of traditional knowledge and to safeguard the rights of the communities practicing traditional knowledge. DSNLU Vice Chancellor, Prof (Dr.) S. Surya Prakas, mentioned that scientific knowledge is based on experiment, whereas TK is based on experience. He explained that traditional knowledge represents the cultural and spiritual identity of a community.



# Alternative dispute resolution can transform legal landscape

PNS ■ KEVADIA (GUJARAT)

The concept of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) has the potential to transform the Indian legal landscape by providing a platform for millions of people to settle their grievances, Chief Justice of India NV Ramana said here on Saturday.

With adequate cooperation from all stakeholders, ADR can emerge as a tool of social justice in India, he said.

Speaking at the inaugural event of a two-day national conference on mediation and information technology organised near the Statue of Unity here, the CJI asked courts to take an active effort to make negotiation and mediation mandatory as part of case management.

He also said those engaged in the justice delivery mechanism need to have a thorough understanding of new technologies, which have the potential to simplify the process.



"The concept of ADR, through Lok Adalats, Gram Nyayalayas, mediation and arbitration centres, has the potential to transform the legal landscape of India by providing millions of people a platform to settle their grievances," the CJI said.

It can reduce pendency, save judicial resources and time, and allow litigants "a degree of control over the dispute resolution process and its outcome", he said, adding that it is "one of the most empower-

ing methods of resolving disputes as they maximise the participation of stakeholders".

Justice Ramana also said that while conflicts are inevitable aspects of our lives, they can be resolved through understanding.

"Conflicts have a human face. One must have the foresight to look beyond the conflict. A dispute should not spoil your relationship. Prolonged litigation can drain resources and cause animosity, and conflicts can be resolved

in a neutral environment, where both parties are in a win-win situation. After all, life is a balancing act," the CJI said.

Justice Ramana asked the courts to take an active effort to make negotiation and mediation mandatory as a part of case management and said lawyers must try their best for pre-litigation settlement and advise clients to approach Lok Adalats for the greater benefit of parties.

He asked the parties to not use dispute resolution forums as a mere delaying tactic.

Further, judicial officers must understand the parties and their economic conditions without bringing any adjudicatory flavour to the proceedings, he said.

The Chief Justice of India also underlined the need for skilled mediators to decide on issues like whether the settlement being reached is patently unjust to the weaker party, and whether he should be a silent spectator during such negotiations.

## President Kovind greets citizens on Ram Navami

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



President Ram Nath Kovind greeted citizens on the eve of Ram Navami on Saturday and said Lord Ram inspires us to follow the sublime values of virtue, tolerance, kindness and fraternity.

He said Ram Navami is an auspicious occasion to recall the ideals of Lord Ram and apply them in our lives.

Lord Ram's life inspires us to follow the sublime values of virtue, tolerance, kindness and fraternity, Kovind said.

Our lives be guided by these eternal values while following our duties. Let us dedicate ourselves to follow the path shown by Lord Ram and resolve to build a glorious nation. On the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami, I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to all the fellow citizens, the president said.

## 'Modi has changed 'culture of politics' with his work'

PNS ■ SHIMLA

BJP national president Jagat Prakash Nadda on Saturday credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi with changing the 'culture of politics' by being proactive at implementing various social service initiatives.

Nadda was here to address a public meeting as part of his three-day visit to his home state Himachal Pradesh. He also participated in a road show from the state assembly to Peterhoff on the first day of his visit on Saturday.

He said be it 185 crore double dose vaccination, surgical or air strikes in Pakistan, or safe evacuation of 23,000 Indians from war-torn Ukraine, the Modi government worked with determination in every field.

Nadda, who is also a Rajya Sabha member, claimed the BJP governments had tried to 'give' to the hill state, while the previous Congress governments always looked at 'snatching' from the state.

Elaborating further, he said the then Manmohan Singh government had withdrawn



the special category of Himachal Pradesh, forcing the state to pay 40 per cent share and the Centre 60 per cent for carrying out development work in the state.

When Modi became the prime minister in 2014, he restored the state's status, paying way for only 10 per cent contribution from the state and 90 per cent from the Centre for various development work, Nadda added.

"Whatever we said, we did. Whatever we will say, we will do (Jo kaha tha kiya hai, Jo kahenge vo karenge)," he

asserted.

The BJP chief said the party had gone to the electors in the states, where assembly polls were held recently, with its report card, and the people re-elected the party in four states, adding that the trend will continue in the hill state as well where elections are scheduled later this year.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur and Union minister Anurag Thakur also underlined the good work done by the BJP dispensation at the Centre and the state.

## ILLEGAL PHONE-TAPPING CASE

### Mumbai cops record Sanjay Raut's statement

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Mumbai Police probing the illegal phone tapping case against senior IPS officer Rashmi Shukla on Saturday recorded the statement of Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut, an official said.

Raut's statement was recorded as a witness by officials of Colaba police station at the office of Shiv Sena mouthpiece 'Saamana' in Central Mumbai, a day after a notice was served to him in this regard, the official said.

The official said Raut's phone was allegedly tapped two times in 2019 by the state Intelligence Department, which was then headed by

Shula, when talks about the formation of the MVA government comprising Sena, NCP and Congress were on after the results of the state Assembly polls.

Earlier, Mumbai Police had recorded the statement of Nationalist Congress Party leader Eknath Khadse in the case as his phone was also allegedly tapped during the same period, the official said.

Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil had last month claimed that the phones of four elected representatives were tapped between 2015 and 2019 in the garb that they were drug peddlers.

## J-K L-G says security forces alert against militant attacks

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

In the wake of the recent spike in militancy-related incidents in the valley, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said there was no need to be afraid as the security forces were alert and a strategy was in place to tackle the situation.

There is a strategy, but that cannot be discussed in the media, Sinha told reporters in Baramulla district in north Kashmir.

Whenever there is some major programme, some people try to send a message. But, security forces and police, including our paramilitary forces, are alert and no one needs to be afraid, we will take



their good care, he said.

Asked about the renovation of temples in the valley, the LG said the people should also come forward rather than waiting for the government.

It is necessary that the religious place of any religion is kept well - be it temple, mosque, gurdwara or church. "Recently, a church, which was shut for a long time, was renovated in Srinagar. Temples are also being renovated and

mosques also, Sinha said.

The people have to think themselves that if we have faith in temples, then they should come forward. Mosques are theirs, and they should come forward to keep it safe. It is not practical to expect the government to do everything, he said.

Asked about the alleged vandalising of temples, Sinha said the administration was prompt in its response against such things and an action has been taken.

This is a thing of past. Some mischievous elements are trying to send a wrong message, but the administration responds with promptness to such things and an action is taken, he said.

## Punjab govt committed to stop 'brain drain', says CM Mann

PNS ■ BATHINDA

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday said his government is committed to stop 'brain drain' by creating new opportunities in the state so that youngsters don't have to go to foreign countries in pursuit of their dreams. He was addressing the students of Maharaja Ranjit Singh Punjab Technical University (MRSP-TU) during the first convocation ceremony here.

Punjab Governor Banwari Lal Purohit and Mann also conferred degrees on the students, according to an official release. Mann said the education needs to be in sync with employment opportunities available.

## Need adequate charging points to avoid traffic jams

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the increasing adoption of electric vehicles, the Delhi Traffic Police has written to the Environment Department, suggesting that adequate number of charging stations be installed in the capital to avoid traffic snarls due to breakdown of 'uncharged' EVs.

The suggestion came in response to the government's draft policy mandating all aggregators and delivery service providers to induct electric vehicles while procuring a new fleet.

It said the absence of charging points could lead to traffic jams in case 'electric vehicles breakdown due to low charge'.

"It is, therefore, suggested that an adequate number of charging points may be installed at various locations to ensure smooth movement of traffic in the interest of electric vehicle users," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) SK Singh wrote to the Environment Department.

A senior official in the Environment Department said a committee will be constituted soon to examine the suggestions and comments received from various departments and the general public on the draft policy.



The government had issued the draft policy in the Delhi Gazette on February 8, 2022, inviting suggestions and comments from the public within 60 days.

After the policy comes into effect, aggregators and delivery service providers will have to ensure that 10 per cent of their new two-wheelers and five per cent of the new four-wheelers are electric in the first three months.

They will also have to ensure that 50 per cent of their new two-wheelers and 25 per cent of the new four-wheelers are

electric by March 2023.

The committee to review suggestions and comments is likely to be chaired by the principal secretary, Environment, an official said.

It will have a member each from the Delhi Pollution Control Committee, Transport Department, and Power Department.

The panel will also have an expert from the Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi and a representative of the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), he said.

## Central agencies looking into bomb hoax

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister Araga Jnanendra on Saturday said central agencies are looking into the bomb hoax threat received by multiple private schools in Bengaluru via e-mail, with regards to a terror angle, if any.

At least 15 schools in the city and its outskirts received bomb threats through e-mail on Friday morning triggering panic among students, parents and school managements, which the police later declared as a hoax after conducting searches.

"Searches went on till last night. There was no bomb, it was a hoax. Our police are trying to find out as to who was behind the hoax threat, and central agencies are also specially looking into it seriously," Jnanendra told reporters here.

The home minister, however, did not specify which central agency is involved in the investigation. Asked whether the state has referred the matter to central agencies, he said, "They have come themselves, to look into terror angle, whether the mail has come from outside... they will also inquire, collect details from our (police) investigation," he added.

## Doors of NC open for those who want united, progressive J&K

PNS ■ JAMMU

National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Saturday said the doors of his party are open for those who want to strengthen the idea of a pluralistic, democratic, progressive and united Jammu and Kashmir.

Abdullah was speaking at a

function here to welcome new entrants into the party-fold from the twin districts of Rajouri and Poonch.

A m o n g those who joined the party were former government officials Raghuraj Singh Manhas, D B Singh and Chander Mohan Sharma, former sarpanch Charan Singh and former soldier Sanjeev Singh from the Nowshera area of Rajouri and prominent social activist Mumtaz Shah from Surankote in Poonch, an NC spokesperson said.

"The National Conference takes pride in giving a plat-

form to all those individuals who want to do their bit to build bridges between different communities, regions and sections of the society," Abdullah said.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said the NC's strategy and vision in politics are about the welfare of people and protecting the political, social and cultural interests of people from all regions and religions.

He exhorted the new entrants to the party to raise the concerns of people at the appropriate levels.

"The perception of the public's voice in the administration and the government has decreased due to the backsliding of the democratic set-up, governance deficit and administrative inertia," Abdullah said.

Meanwhile, the NC president and vice president Omar Abdullah extended warm greetings to people on the occasion of Ram Navami.



## IMAGE POSTED BY AR RAHMAN TRIGGERS DEBATE

### AIADMK says Hindi imposition unacceptable

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The main opposition in Tamil Nadu, AIADMK on Saturday said people may learn Hindi on their own volition but imposition of the language is unacceptable.

An image posted by Oscar winning music composer A R Rahman on Tamil language has meanwhile led to an animated debate in the social media on languages.

Quoting Dravidian icon, the

late CN Annadurai, AIADMK top leader O Panneerselvam said if needed, people willing to learn Hindi may do so voluntarily. However, foisting Hindi on people is never acceptable, the AIADMK coordinator tweeted.

The former Chief Minister said his party stood firm in the two language policy of Tamil and English in keeping with the ideology of Annadurai. "#StopHindiImposition," Panneerselvam said.

Meanwhile, several twitter users linked Rahman's post apparently to Union Home Minister Amit Shah's remark on Hindi and subsequent reactions from several quarters.

Reacting to Amit Shah's statement on April 7 that Hindi should be accepted as an alternative to English and not to local languages, Chief Minister M K Stalin had said that it would wreck the nation's integrity.

The Rahman posted image's



caption 'Tamizhanangu' is obviously a pointer to invocation song to mother Tamil.

A line, appearing as a footnote to the image, is from a popular poem of celebrated Tamil nationalist poet Barathidasan and it denotes that Tamil language serves as the root to the rights of the Tamil people.

An artistic depiction of a white saree clad woman in the centre, against a background of red is seen as a subtle reference to mother Tamil and opposition to imposition of Hindi.

While a section of social

media users lauded Rahman saying he has posted this image with a red background to denote opposition to Hindi and full support to Tamil, there were others who questioned him on the intent behind posting the image.

A user, replying to the top notch musician alleged that Rahman built his career, earned money and fame and everything by doing Hindi movies and now started targeting Hindi.

## Need to recognise unsung heroes, their sacrifices



Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday pitched for recognising the unsung heroes of the country, saying art forms such as cinema and music should be used to highlight their sacrifices. He lamented that

people know about Robert Clive, but little was known about freedom fighters and historical figures such as Maharana Pratap, Chhatrapati Shivaji, Komaram Bheem and Alluri Sitaram Raju. Speaking at the Sangeet Natak Akademi and Lalit Kala Akademi awards ceremony here, the Vice President also emphasised that due importance should be given to mother tongues at all levels, be it at government functions, in teaching or in courts. Many unsung heroes made sacrifices but their stories remain largely unknown to the masses as they did not get enough attention in history books, Naidu said. Recognising the unrecognised is our duty. Our cinema, other art forms, music and literature should pay enough attention to this aspect.

## Irani derides Priyanka for Amethi loss



Union Minister Smriti Irani on Saturday took a jibe at Congress' Priyanka Gandhi Vadra saying that she created a history of sorts when three party nominees in the recent assembly polls forfeited their deposits in Amethi - a stronghold of her party.

In the 2022 assembly elections, she created a history by getting three Congress candidates forfeit their deposits in Amethi parliamentary constituency. My congratulations for this, she ridiculed the party general secretary, without taking her name. Irani had won the Amethi Lok Sabha seat defeating Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in the 2019 general elections. She was visiting her parliamentary constituency on Saturday to cast her vote in the ongoing legislative council polls. You see, in the 2019 elections, the Congress got about four lakh votes, but in 2022 it has come down to close to one lakh, she told reporters.



# Goyal seeks investments from Australia; assures better returns

PNS ■ PERTH

Seeking investments, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said India and Australia can enhance cooperation in areas such as skill development, education, services sectors, information technology, manufacturing and internet of things.

He said Australian firms that would invest in India can own 100 per cent of their companies and keep their technology and trade secrets.

You get a huge market (in India) with huge defence budgets, particularly considering the situation and the neighbourhood in which we are located. We would love to see investments growing into India from Australia and I will assure you that you will get far better returns than the return you get in your own country today, Goyal said in a luncheon meeting with businesses of both the countries here.

India and Australia have recently inked economic cooperation and trade agreements to boost economic ties.

In this agreement, the minister said, India is looking at



several ways to expand relationships, particularly in the fields of skill development, education, and services sectors, which hold huge potential.

Probably (we can look at) even developing 5G telecom systems together, he added.

Australia is the 17th largest trading partner of India, while New Delhi is Canberra's 9th largest partner. India's goods exports were worth USD 6.9 billion and imports aggregated to USD 15.1 billion in 2021.

Goyal also called upon the Indian community in Australia

to celebrate the International Day of Yoga on 21st June at 75 iconic locations in Australia to mark the 75th Anniversary of India's Independence, an official release said.

"I'm sure the world will notice the symbolism of this Unity reflected in our celebration of Yoga across the world, beginning from Australia," said Goyal, addressing the Community Centre Indian Society of Western Australia (ISWA) in Perth.

Goyal said India was very keen to have Yoga Instructors

**Australia is the 17th largest trading partner of India, while New Delhi is Canberra's 9th largest partner. India's goods exports were worth USD 6.9 billion and imports aggregated to USD 15.1 billion in 2021.**

and Indian chefs come to Australia as part of the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (Ind-Aus ECTA).

For the first time Australia has committed to provide work opportunity to the students with extended periods of Work Visas, he said.

"Our students who come here can add to the pool of talent and skill that Australia seriously needs, our IT professionals can help bring greater degree of technological skills, our STEM graduates can contribute to the economy in Australia in a big way," he said.

## Singapore investigates Indian business-linked education company

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

A Singapore High Court-appointed liquidator is investigating the affairs and divestment of assets of an education company linked to a Gurugram-based firm whose assets have been attached by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in India. Last month, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) attached assets worth Rs 90.31 crore of Gurugram-based company Educomp Professional Education Ltd under the anti-money laundering law in connection with an alleged bank loan fraud case.

A provisional order for attachment of the properties has been issued under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) against Educomp Professional Education Ltd, a group company of the Educomp Group, it said in a statement. Singapore liquidator Wong Joo Wan said on Saturday that he was investigating the alleged divestment of certain assets of Educomp Asia Pacific (In compulsory liquidation) since June 30, 2017, as well as fund movements of the company's bank accounts with the State Bank of India and OCB Bank of Singapore prior to the commencement of the liquidation.



# CAI lowers cotton crop estimate to 335.13 lakh bales for 2021-22 season

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Cotton Association of India (CAI) on Saturday reduced the cotton crop estimate by 8 lakh bales to 335.13 lakh bales for the 2021-22 season as the production in Gujarat, Telangana, Maharashtra and Karnataka is expected to decline.

The total production during crop year 2020-21, stood at 353 lakh bales, the CAI said in a statement.

For Gujarat, the CAI lowered the production estimate to 88.99 lakh bales for the 2021-22 season, Telangana to 39.91 lakh bales, Maharashtra to 83.50 lakh bales and in Karnataka to 21 lakh bales.

Meanwhile, the total cotton supply from October 2021 to

March 2022 is estimated at 343.68 lakh bales, which consists of the arrivals of 262.68 lakh bales, imports of 6 lakh bales and the opening stock estimated at 75 lakh bales at the beginning of the season.

Further, the CAI has estimated cotton consumption from October 2021 to March 2022 at 175 lakh bales while the export shipments up to March 31, 2022 are estimated at 35 lakh bales. Stock at the end of March 2022 is estimated at 133.68 lakh bales, including 75 lakh bales with textile mills and the remaining 58.68 lakh bales with the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI), Maharashtra Federation and others (MNCs), traders, ginners, MCX among others including the cotton sold but

not delivered).

The CAI Crop Committee has estimated the total cotton supply till end of the season 2021-22, that is up to September 30, 2022, at 425.13 lakh bales which is less by 8 lakh bales compared to 433.13 lakh bales estimated previously. The total cotton supply consists of the opening stock of 75 lakh bales at the beginning of the cotton season as on October 1, 2021, crop for the season estimated at 335.13 lakh bales and the imports for the season estimated at 15 lakh bales. The domestic consumption is estimated by the CAI at 340 lakh bales, the same level estimated previously, while the exports for the season have been estimated at 45 lakh bales.

# Assam exports jackfruit & green chilli to Dubai

PNS ■ DHUBRI

Assam has started export of jackfruit and green chilli to Dubai from here, officials said on Saturday.

The consignment was flagged off by Dhubri Deputy Commissioner Anbamuthan MP on Friday evening from Bilasipara town for the Lokapriyo Gopinath Bordoloi Airport from where it will leave for Mumbai for its onward journey to Dubai on Saturday.

The consignment comprised 1.5 tonne of tender jackfruit and 0.5 tonne of green chilli and this will be distributed by the Lulu Group International through its chain of more than 200 supermarkets and hypermarkets across the Gulf countries.

The whole process was coordinated by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and they



gave all the required technical support for the purpose, Anbamuthan said.

"This is a special day for the agro-economics sector of Dhubri district as well as for entire Assam. With... and relentless efforts of the district administration and farmers we are able to export jackfruit and green chilli from Dhubri to Dubai," the

DC said. Dhubri produces several agri products which have export potential and this particular opportunity came at an exhibition organised by APEDA in Guwahati where the Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) members first met the Lulu Group International representative, he added.

# India gets market access for exporting banana, baby corn

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Saturday said that the country has got the market access for exporting fresh banana and baby corn to Canada.

The move is expected to benefit Indian farmers growing these crops and enhance the country's export earnings.

Canada has given approval for export of fresh bananas with immediate effect, while outbound shipment of baby corn will begin from this month after technical update, the government said in a statement.

The decision was taken after negotiations between

Agriculture Secretary Manoj Ahuja and Canadian High Commissioner H E Cameron MacKay on April 7.

"Canada informed that export of fresh baby corn from India to Canada may begin from April 2022 after update of directive D-95-28; plant protection import and domestic movement requirements for corn and the automated import reference system," the statement said.

Based on the technical information provided for fresh bananas by India, Canada has approved entry of bananas into Canada with immediate effect, it added.



# 21 bids for 5 city gas licences

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Seven companies have put in 21 bids for licence to retail CNG to automobiles and piped cooking gas to households in five areas in states like Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, oil regulator PNGRB said.

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) had offered five Geographical Areas (GAs), spread over 27 districts in

five states, in the 11A city gas distribution (CGD) bid round.

Bids for the five GAs were received on April 6, PNGRB said in a statement. "21 bids have been received from 7 bidders with no single bid in any GA."

It, however, did not identify the bidders.

A sixth GA of Yanam in Puducherry has been added to the bid round and bids for this area are due on May 10, it added.



# SJVN opens bridge near its hydro-power project

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-run power producer SJVN Ltd on Saturday said that a bridge on the river Tons in Uttarakhand has become operational to ensure better connectivity in the region and support the activities of its Naitwar Mori Hydro Electric Project.

The 60-MW Naitwar Mori Hydro Electric Project is expected to be completed in the current financial year.

The double-lane steel truss bridge was inaugurated by SJVN chairman and managing director Nand Lal Sharma.

The 70-metre long and 6-metre wide bridge, constructed at an approximate cost of Rs 3 crore, "will facilitate better connectivity between villages Bainol, Naitwar and Mori and support the activities of



Naitwar Mori Hydro Electric Project", the company said in a statement.

"We are committed to commission the project in the current financial year. This will be an important milestone in our capacity addition journey and

help in achieving our vision of 5,000 MW installed capacity by 2023, 25,000 MW by 2030 and 50,000 MW by 2040," Sharma said.

To ensure smooth electricity supply from the Naitwar-Mori project site, SJVN is con-

structing a transmission line from Bainol to Naitwar.

During his visit to the site, Sharma also inaugurated the commencement of erection works of 37-km long 220 KV transmission line having 111 towers.

# New book tells rags to riches story of diamond tycoon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A new book tells the rags to riches story of renowned diamond baron Govind Dholakia, who created a billion dollar company and shifted the epicentre of the trade out of Belgium to India.

"Diamonds are Forever, so are Morals", as told to engineer-scientist Arun Tiwari and educationalist Kamlesh Yagnik, claims to be a modern roll-in-one of "Law of Success" by Napoleon Hill, "How to Win Friends and Influence People" by Dale Carnegie and "Wings of Fire" by APJ Abdul Kalam.

It is published by Penguin Enterprise, an imprint of Penguin Random House.

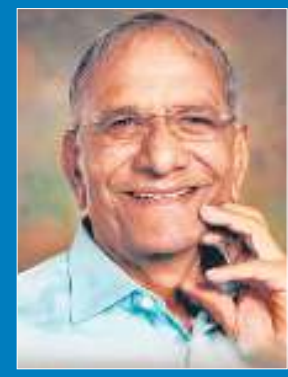
"It was a joy revisiting a substantial part of my life, struggles and professional journey through this book. Each one of

us has different life experiences that shape our present and future and through this book I wanted to share my life experiences with all to be reassured that a life of honesty and ethics helps achieve great success and gives immense satisfaction," said Dholakia, the founder and executive chairman of Shree Ramkrishna Exports Pvt Ltd (SRK), a leading diamond crafting company.

Born into a poor agricultural family of seven brothers and sisters in a remote village in Gujarat, Dholakia grew up just like any other child with no special treatments or privileges or better education.

His journey commenced in 1964 as he set out towards Surat, Gujarat, not only to support his family, but also with a dream in his eyes to outperform, and since then his lega-

**The autobiography is endorsed by no less than the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who called the work a "source of inspiration" for the coming generations and wished it all success.**



cy has conveyed it all.

In 1970, he founded Shree Ram Krishna Exports (SRK), world's largest diamond crafting and exports company and SRK Knowledge Foundation (SRKKF), a philanthropic arm of SRK.

Govindkaka, as he is fondly

addressed by all, started out as a Diamond polisher with a diamond factory to build an empire.

The autobiography is endorsed by no less than the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who called the work a "source of inspiration" for the

coming generations and wished it all success.

"From the reminiscences and incidents of childhood, early education, to picking up life skills on the personal and professional front, nuggets of inspiring information are compiled in the book. The simile between morals and diamonds in the title of the book itself sets the tone.

"The emphasis on morals is particularly relevant to the modern times, especially for our youth. The reader gets swayed with the autobiography's flow of thoughts. May the publication receive the love and affection of the readers and motivate them to contribute for the larger good. I wish the publication all success," he said.

The book, priced at Rs 510, is currently available for sale on online and offline stores.

## New-age entrepreneurs should not chase valuations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New-age entrepreneurs should not to chase valuations but follow their dreams passionately, Raymond Chairman and Managing Director Gautam Hari Singhania has said. Chasing valuation could be "fickle", Singhania said while facilitating the winners of the Raymond CEO Forum on Friday. Today's businesses believe in cash-burn but as a traditional company always believe on cash-flows, he said, adding both types of businesses will co-exist. "We have seen new-age entrepreneurs chasing valuations, which can be fickle. So the age-old way of doing business for profit, looking after cash-flows is important," said a company statement quoting Singhania.

## Ruchi Soya repays entire loans of Rs 2,925 crore



Edible oil major Ruchi Soya on Friday said it has repaid Rs 2,925 crore loans to banks and has become a debt-free company. Baba Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurved-led Ruchi Soya has recently raised Rs 4,300 crore through its follow-on public offer, and the part of the proceeds has been utilised to repay the debt. Acharya Balkrishna, MD of Patanjali Ayurved Ltd, tweeted that Ruchi Soya has become debt-free. In its draft red herring prospectus, the company had mentioned that it would repay loan of around Rs 1,950 crore to the lenders, a company spokesperson said. However, the company has decided to repay the entire debt amount of Rs 2,925 crore to its lenders. The money was paid to a consortium of bank led by State Bank of India. The other banks in the consortium are Punjab National Bank, Union Bank of India, Syndicate Bank and Allahabad Bank. In 2019, Patanjali had acquired Ruchi Soya for Rs 4,350 crore through an insolvency process.



# the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

## Jallianwala Bagh revisited

A gathering of 20,000 people, coming mostly from rural areas gas gathered to celebrate Baisakhi, the harvest festival of Punjab and had no clue of what was coming

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## Lankan solution: Protesters' patience & resilience

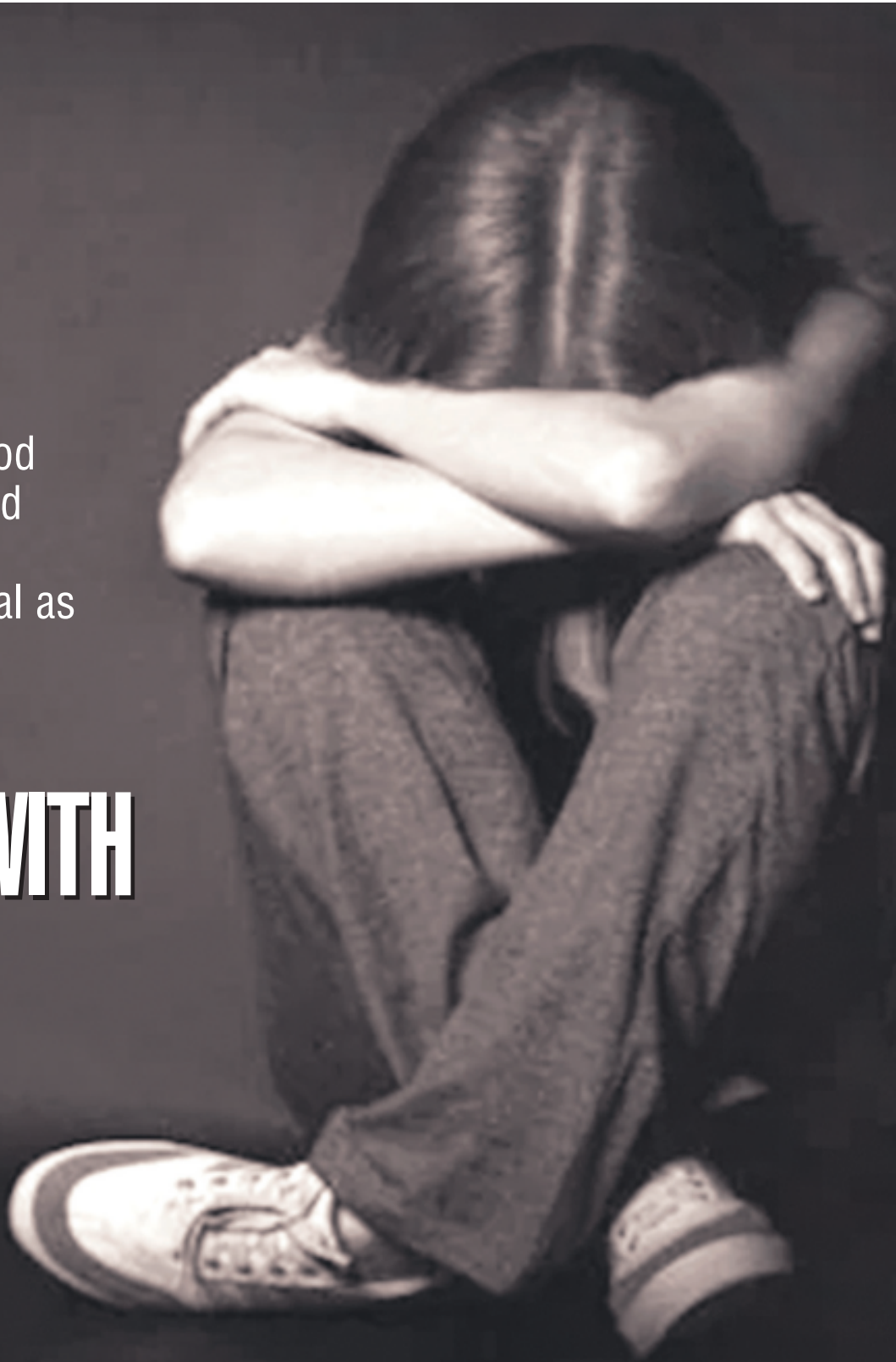
Sri Lanka, a nation of more than 22 million people, is in deep crisis as it is in dire need of basic materials for day-to-day survival. And the ruling Government of Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP)

It's hard for people to take anyone seriously who's never done this before. But that just gave me fire to move forward  
— Jessica Alba



Heatwaves have been associated with mood disorders, anxiety disorders, dementia, and anxiety-related disorders among others. Extreme heat exposure can lead to physical as well as psychological exhaustion writes  
**BISWAJEET BANERJEE**

## SEVERE HEAT COMES WITH MENTAL DISORDER



The Psychiatry Department of King George's Medical University in Lucknow has witnessed a sudden spurt in cases of suicidal tendency, irritability, anxiety, and bipolar disorder in the last fortnight. Experts attribute 1 these cases of mental disorders to heatwave condition that is sweeping a large swathe of the country.

On March 28, Mahendra Verma, a medical representative, had a fight with his wife Anita. He even threatened to commit suicide. When he met a psychiatrist and complained about sudden mood swings ranging from aggression to depression, doctor diagnosed it as a seasonal affected disorder –caused by harsh summer which came early this year.

Incidentally, in India mental disorders caused by climate variations are not taken seriously. Studies have found that people with mental illness were three times more likely to run the risk of death from a heatwave than those without mental illness. Some evidence seems to hint at a different vulnerability between genders. It claims that the percentage of deaths among women was higher than in men. Despite such a grave situation, people in India do not go to doctors for medical consultations.

### HARSH MARCH HEAT

India is passing through a rough weather situation as it recorded the hottest March days in the last 121 years with the scorching summer arriving early this year. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) says Maximum temperatures recorded this March were 4.5 degrees above average in most regions of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

“Heatwaves are spikes of high temperatures lasting some days that range outside the normal temperature for a specific season. This phenomenon is connected with climate change as they have increased in frequency and intensity,” said J P Gupta, the Met official.

In India, the maximum temperature peaks in April, and the month of May is considered the hottest. “This year is an exception when a heatwave was experienced in March. The southerly winds from Gujarat, south Pakistan took the heat to southern and southwest Rajasthan while due to lack of western disturbances, which brings colder winds, the temper-

ature in Jammu, and its neighboring areas remained higher than normal,” said Gupta.

What further aggravated the situation was the lack of pre-monsoon showers. In March generally, there is significant thunderstorm activity and associated rainfall across India. This year there were 83 percent deficit rains across India.

### SEVERE HEAT IS A MENTAL ISSUE TOO

American Psychiatric Association in its report titled ‘Extreme Heat Contributes to Worsening Mental Health, Especially Among Vulnerable Populations’ says that extreme heat has been associated with a range of mental health, including an increase in irritability and symptoms of depression and an increase in suicide. It can also affect behaviour, contributing to increased aggression, the incidence of domestic violence, and increased use of alcohol or other substances to cope with stress.

Dr. Adarsh Tripathi, Additional Professor, Department of Psychiatry, King George's Medical University in Lucknow said that the seasonal affected disorder has a scientific pattern. but in India no one takes it seriously. There are scientific studies to show that everybody is not sensitive to weather variation. Only specific people get affected by it. And those who get affected should take care, he said.

“Physical health, mental health, human well-being, and heat waves appear to be specifically interconnected. Heat stress directly caused by heatwaves has been associated with mood disorders, anxiety, and related consequences,” Dr Tripathi said.

The experts vouch that heatwave is not only rise in temperature but it can trigger serious mental health issue such as frayed tempers, an increase in anxiety, and bipolar disorders.

“There is no structured study in India about the impact of heatwave, but some Western countries have carried out studies to show that mental health outcomes of climate change range from minimal stress and distress symptoms to clinical disorders, ranging from anxiety and sleep disturbances to depression, post-traumatic stress, and suicidal thoughts,” Dr S K Pandey, Medical Officer, Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences in Lucknow said.

He said that Climate and Health Profile Report has identified the direct and indirect impact of extreme heat on health. It has been claimed that health risks caused by these fac-

HEATWAVES ARE SPIKES OF HIGH TEMPERATURES LASTING SOME DAYS THAT RANGE OUTSIDE THE NORMAL TEMPERATURE FOR A SPECIFIC SEASON. THIS PHENOMENON IS CONNECTED WITH CLIMATE CHANGE AS THEY HAVE INCREASED IN FREQUENCY AND INTENSITY



tors have significantly risen in recent years.

Dr Pandey said that in India as people stay outside more during summer their exposure to the heat is very high. This could increase feelings of hostility and aggressive thoughts and possible actions. The increase in heat-related violence is greater in summers and, therefore, people could be seen saying ‘garmi dimaag mein chadh gayi’ – an indication of aggressive behavior. Hot summer temperatures lead to an increase in mental health emergencies, but unfortunately, these are not recorded in India, he said.

Dr. Samarjeet Srivastava, a private practitioner said there is a definite relation between temperature rise and aggressive behavior as an increase in crime rate and aggression has been observed during the hot summer months, suggesting a link between aggressive behavior and temperature. “It has been seen that suicides, especially violent ones are more common with the recent increase in temperatures,” Dr Srivastava said.

In a study titled ‘Mental health effects of climate change’ by Susanta Kumar Padhy, Sidharth Sarkar, Mahima Panigrahi, and Surender Paul say heat waves have been associated with mental and behavioral disorders. It further cites a study from Australia that heat waves are associated with increased rates of

admissions for mental disorders also, in conjunction with other disorders such as cardiovascular and renal illness.

“Such heat waves have been associated with mood disorders, anxiety disorders, dementia, and anxiety-related disorders among others. Extreme heat exposure can lead to physical as well as psychological exhaustion,” the study said.

It also quoted another study from Thailand suggesting that occupational heat stress is associated with greater psychological distress among workers. “Similar other studies have found an association between increased temperatures in the workplace and greater psychological distress,” the writers said.

“Unfortunate part is India being a hot tropical nation where the temperature hovers over 45 Degree Celsius at many places no one takes mental health issues caused by severe heat as a serious health issue. For us, this is just another illness that will pass with the passage of time. This does not happen. There are thousands of people who do not come to hospitals or consult doctors to treat their disease because they do not know that they are ill caused by severe weather,” Dr. Pandey said.

### INCREASE IN STREET BRAWLS

The police claim that street brawls increase by over 18 percent during summer as compared to winter. But the number of street brawls in Lucknow increased by 46 percent in March 2022 as compared to 2021. The police dossiers show that in March 2021, 128 cases of street brawls were reported while it rose to 187 in March 2022.

The police do not have a justification for this increase in cases. These brawls are generally between the hawkers. They start as a non-issue and result in fisticuffs. “These hawkers stand under the sun for very long in summer and probably because of scorching heat they become irritated and at a drop of a hat they pick up a fight,” Narendra Nath Srivastava, a police officer said.

But police do not treat these brawls as a case of mental disorders. “I do not think these people need any medical consultation. These people once give vent to their anger, they cool down. People are generally irritated in summer and it is natural,” Srivastava said.

The writer is the Political editor of The Pioneer (Lucknow)







Sri Lanka, a nation of more than 22 million people, is in deep crisis as it is in dire need of basic materials for day-to-day survival. And the ruling Government of Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) headed by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa is being held responsible for the crisis as it has miserably failed to manage the current situation in the country. Sri Lankans have completely lost the trust in the administration in Colombo.

The present chaos in Sri Lanka initially started as an economic downturn. Gradually, it has turned into a major political crisis. The Rajapaksas are encountering a vehement public protest. Their long and powerful grip on power in the country is being openly challenged by street protests everyday.

The roots of Rajapaksa lie in the politics of pre-independent Sri Lanka, when it was a British colony. The current Rajapaksa are third generation of the family in the politics of the island. Even before its independence in 1948, the Rajapaksa clan had started its foray into politics and administration of the country. Today, even the fourth-generation family politicians such as Namal and Shashindra have consolidated their position in the ruling clan. People are voting them to power successively despite having setbacks in the past. Frankly speaking, the Rajapaksa clan, mainly hailing



Sri Lankans protest demanding President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his Government to resign, near presidential secretariat in Colombo on April 9

During that time, his brother Gotabaya, the current President, was the Defence Secretary of the country. Both the brothers, along with the support of the Armed Forces, completely vanquished the three decades old terror group called Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from the country's north and east region. Thus the majority Sinhalese community and the country as a whole heaved a sigh of relief in 2009 from a bloody terror outfit once led by dreaded militant Velupillai Prabhakaran.

Afterwards, Mahinda lost power to the Opposition UNP backed candidate named Maithripala Sirisena, who ruled the country from 2015-

This has made the cycle complete. Now the two most important political offices are with the Rajapaksas. Besides, the junior Rajapaksas have joined the Government both as ministers and other powerful office-bearers in the administration of the country. It has probably been the golden moment for the Rajapaksas in the recent political history of the island since independence. But now they are facing the bitterest and intense fight for survival.

Today, solution to the crisis is not in the resignation of the Rajapaksa Government. At the moment, the Opposition parties in the

However, the Opposition parties completely rejected the offer. Clearly, it was a good opportunity, for all public representatives to sit together and chalk out an emergency plan to rescue the nation from this mess. The opportunity is lost.

This week the Sri Lankan rupee fell to the record low level. It's now 310 against a US dollar. Shockingly, the buying and selling in the black market is reported to be about 400 Sri Lankan rupee against a US dollar. It's an unimaginable situation for the ordinary people.

But from the first week of March this year, the Sri Lankan rupee started plummeting to a historic low. On March 7, the Sri Lankan Central Bank devalued it from 200 to 230 against the US dollar with a view to allow greater flexibility in foreign exchange. Many analysts opine that Colombo has done it simply to obtain urgent help from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the crisis was deepening and going beyond the control of the government. But all that the government was planning and doing could not prevent the current economic catastrophe.

The irony is that despite appeals from the Opposition and the experts, the Rajapaksa Government declined assistance from the IMF for months. And this has worsened the economic condition of the country and contributed to the fall of the foreign exchange reserves. By this February, the foreign

In a nutshell, in Sri Lanka today, the expenditure has far exceeded the country's income. So the crisis will continue until there is an immediate foreign aid simply to make the basic necessities, both food items and medicines, available to people. Further, Colombo has to sit back with international financial agencies such as the Asian Development Bank and the IMF to plan for a step-by-step bailout plan to save the nation. Alongside India, Japan and China which are already offering financial packages to Sri Lanka, foreign countries must be consulted so as to ease the burden on the ordinary people. But the road ahead for Lankans would be tough.

Political polarisation to address the economic crisis will not help the commoners. Of course, if the current Government falls, the Opposition would get a chance to come back to power. But then, the economic situation for now will be same. Even they will have to struggle to set the country to normalcy. It may so happen

that people would again resort to street protests and violence to secure their future. Hence for now, it is wiser for all in Sri Lanka, including the Opposition leaders, to sit together and find out an urgent solution. Opposition leader Sajith Premadasa can certainly unite the rest of the Opposition parties, but only for finding a pragmatic solution to the present crisis, not to fight the Rajapaksa family rule at the moment. And, the people in general should maintain law and order so as to offer a helping hand to the Gotabaya regime to prevent the nation falling into an abyss. The people have all the right to show their anger in the next election against the Rajapaksa and the current ruling establishment. Time now is to display patience and resilience.

(Dr Makhan Saikia has taught political science and international relations for over a decade in institutions of national and international repute after specialisation in globalisation and governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He is the chief editor of the Journal of Global Studies, an international research journal)



MAKHAN SAIKIA

# Need for behavioural insights for healthy India



PRATAP C MOHANTY



The theme of World Health Day this year "Health Promotion for Well Being, Equity and Sustainable Development" narrates the trending need for the promotion of preventive and precautionary attitudes followed by a curative attitude among the population of India. However, the celebration of the day in India - where only 40 per cent of households with any usual members are covered under a health insurance/financing scheme and only 58 per cent use clean fuel for cooking (NFHS-5: 2019-21) - is confronted with serious concerns. The expenditure incurred by the Government of India on health (3 per cent of GDP) is lower than the average health expenditure of low-mid-income countries (3.71 per

According to National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), alcohol and tobacco addiction among men is 18 per cent and 38 per cent respectively. More than 50 per cent of the female belonging to the reproductive age group are anaemic. The gloomiest of all the pictures is of children, as 67 per cent of them are juvenile anaemic in the age category of 0.5-10 years. NIMHANS-conducted National Mental Health Survey 2015-16 shows that an estimated 150 million of the population, both children and elderly of all genders in rural and urban areas, need both short and long-term mental health-care.

After absorbing three shocking waves of Covid-19 pandemic, the health section of

the economic survey of India has focused on the Covid vaccination drive, while neglecting the fact of whooping rise in the count of individuals suffering from chronic non-communicable diseases, giving birth to the incidences of polymorbidity in the country. Furthermore, the public spending on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is less than 0.5 per cent of GDP in India. The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published its findings on post Covid conditions stating that the long-term impacts occur as multi-organ effects which in turn causes changes in many body systems, including heart, kidney, skin, lung, and cognitive functions, and complicated autoimmune conditions.

Since equity and well-being

lie at the heart of the World Health Day theme, the discussion is confined to the figures that provide the testimony on equity in health-care in India. The significant inequities have been observed in the NFHS-5 fact-sheet in context to the nutritional status of adults in 15-49 years age group where the women count in both underweight and overweight category, i.e., 18 per cent and 24 per cent, are more than men, i.e., 16 per cent and 22 per cent respectively. This is foolproof evidence of an alarming situation of the future carriers (women) as they have become more vulnerable to being trapped by NCDs.

Despite the implication of various health-care schemes such as Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), Janani Shishu Suraksha

Karyakaram (JSSK), Mission Indradhanush, National Ayushman Mission, Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana, and Ayushman Bharat, the percentage of male and female population suffering from diabetes is around 14 per cent, while hypertension ranges from 21 per cent to 24 per cent (NFHS-5: 2019-21).

The daunting task of promoting health for well-being, equity, and sustainability cannot be fulfilled without empowering women. The result from NFHS-5 data on currently married women who participate in basically three household decisions consisting of decisions about health-care for herself, visiting her relatives, and making purchases of major household stuffs, shows the lack of female autonomy in

decision making; and narrates a lag of 12 per cent to achieve the target of 100 per cent. It is impossible to paint a healthy India where only 77 per cent of women aged 15-24 years apply hygienic method in their menstrual period.

Evidence from other countries proved that behavioural interventions and insights play a crucial role in promoting the holistic well-being of an individual. Behavioural health interventions designed with insights from behavioural economics affect the decisions and actions taken by an individual in consideration of her health.

The Government should try to influence the behaviour of citizens by introducing nudges in the form of leveraging loss aversion, disclosing

outcomes, ease of choice, repetitive reminders, proposing indirect suggestions accompanied by positive reinforcement in the policy instruments. This rising burden of substance use disorder and degrading well-being demands urgent attention and immediate action from policymakers and health professionals, and individuals through triggering health-seeking behaviour. A practical policy framework must be designed in a manner that transforms not only health-seeking behaviour but also help-seeking behaviour at idiosyncratic level.

(Pratap C Mohanty, a specialist in Health Economics, teaches Economics at IIT Roorkee. Pragma Taneja is a PhD fellow, IIT Roorkee)



# Stolen artefacts to be returned to India from Scotland museums

**PTI ■ London**

A city council in the Scottish city of Glasgow has voted to repatriate seven historic artefacts stolen from India, in what has been dubbed the largest single repatriation of items ever from Scotland and the first repatriation of antiquities to India from any UK museum service.

Glasgow City Council had received a formal request from the Indian High Commission in London earlier this year for the return of six architectural antiquities from Kanpur, Gwalior and Bihar.

A further request made by Jaspreet Singh Sukhija, First

Secretary of Trade at the High Commission, last month was for a 14th century ceremonial sword or talwar and scabbard from the Deccan region.

The antiquities have been requested by the High Commission of India, on behalf of the Government of India and Archaeological Services India as they are part of India's historic heritage, notes a council report from earlier this week.

Archaeological Services India has advised that these items fall under the category of Antiquities, under India's domestic legislation and are therefore part of India's historic heritage. These items are

of cultural, historical and religious importance to the people of India as a whole and were illicitly removed from India, it reads.

According to the information available, six of the artefacts were stolen from Hindu temples and shrines in different states in India during the 19th century, while the sword was illegally purchased as a result of theft from the owner, sold and smuggled out of India.

All seven items were subsequently gifted to the city's museum collection, the report notes. Glasgow Life Museums has since held consultations with Sukhija and the Indian

government has agreed to meet the full cost of the return of the artefacts to India.

Delighted that all councillors supported the recommendations at committee today, said Councillor David McDonald, a trustee of Glasgow Life which manages the city's museums, in a Twitter statement

on Thursday.

Today's agreement represents the largest single repatriation of



the council's decision, which also involves the return of artefacts to Nigeria and the Cheyenne River and Oglala Lakota Sioux Tribes.

The return of these items is a significant, positive step which reflects the ongoing work that Glasgow is undertaking to redress the wrongful removal of cultural artefacts from their originating communities, the organisation said in a statement.

from any UK museum service, he said. Museums Galleries Scotland, the development body for Scotland's museums and galleries, welcomed

from Scotland and the first repatriation of antiquities to India

items ever

## Researchers identified over 5,500 new viruses in the ocean, including a missing link in viral evolution

The Conversation The Research Brief is a short take about interesting academic work. An analysis of the genetic material in the ocean has identified thousands of previously unknown RNA viruses and doubled the number of phyla, or biological groups, of viruses thought to exist, according to a new study our team of researchers has published in the journal Science.

RNA viruses are best known for the diseases they cause in people, ranging from the common cold to COVID-19. They also infect plants and animals important to people.

These viruses carry

their genetic information in RNA, rather than DNA. RNA viruses evolve at much quicker rates than DNA viruses do. While scientists have cataloged hundreds of thousands of DNA viruses in their natural ecosystems, RNA viruses have been relatively unstudied.

Unlike humans and other organisms composed of cells, however, viruses lack unique short stretches of DNA that could act as what researchers call a genetic bar code. Without this bar code, trying to distinguish different species of virus in the wild can be challenging.

To get around this limitation, we decided to identify the gene that codes for a particular protein that allows a virus to replicate its genetic material. It is the only protein that all RNA viruses share, because it plays an essential role in how they propagate themselves. Each RNA virus, however, has small differences in the gene that codes for the protein that can help distinguish one type of virus from another.

So we screened a global

database of RNA sequences from plankton collected during the four-year Tara Oceans expeditions global research project. Plankton are any aquatic organisms that are too small to swim against the current. They're a vital part of ocean food webs and are common hosts for RNA viruses. Our screening ultimately identified over 44,000 genes that code for the virus protein.

Our next challenge, then, was to determine the evolutionary connections between these genes. The more similar two genes were, the more likely viruses with those genes were closely related. Because these sequences had evolved so long ago (possibly predating the first cell), the genetic signposts indicating where new viruses may have split off from a common ancestor had been lost to time. A form of artificial intelligence called machine learning, however, allowed us to systematically organize these sequences and detect differences more objectively than if the task were done manually.

## French textile artist Moulin moots globalisation of silk

Celebrated French textile artist Isabelle Moulin said till now Indian silk was only catering as a fabric for the people and not much export was done.

Moulin on a 'Silk trip' to India to explore the potential of weavers in places like Murshidabad for possible collaboration with major silk hubs across the globe, said Murshidabad can play a huge role as a changemaker. "Till now Indian silk was only catering as a fabric for the Indian people and not much export was done. Now with the open market, I am sure India will catch up as far as the use of silk is concerned in various sectors. With the evolution of products and climate change, we aim to find new ways to produce silk, and protect the mulberry falling prey to climate change," she told PTI after a visit to Murshidabad recently. Since India is a continent of silk, the silk-producing cities here including Murshidabad can play a huge role as a changemaker. "The global silk market is changing and India can play a leading role in it," Moulin said. "Silk is the future. With ecological change, the climate and water required for the mulberry is in danger. We need to preserve this. My study also looks at making people aware of this aspect," she added. Elaborating on how silk can be more than just a fabric for garments, she said it is used in Artificial Intelligence-driven technologies as well. "It is used in surgeries, dental implants, and face creams, and for its tensile strength, it is used in military eye gear. Silk can be used in Artificial Intelligence driven surgeries. In fact, in China Silkworms are eaten because of its nutrition content, so silk can be an answer during the food crisis as well," she said. Moulin had created the Silk Me Back in 2011, an approach that combines heritage and contemporary expressions, combining scientific, technical and artistic perspective on the theme of silk and textiles. Moulin, who met representatives of the Crafts Council of West Bengal, said "our association will be of real help. To begin with, I have to understand the specificity (the position) of silk in this place. In what way they can fit in our network of Silk Cities across the globe. Today I had an initial conversation with Crafts Council of West Bengal. They have promised all support. We would take this forward. The silk expert, who is visiting India to promote bilateral cooperation between India and France around design and textile with an emphasis on silk in India, discussed Murshidabad's silk heritage and examine its potential to partner other major silk producing cities across the globe."



## 60-foot-long steel bridge stolen in Bihar's Sasaram

A 60-foot-long steel bridge was dismantled and stolen by a group of men posing as government officers in Bihar's Sasaram district, police said on Saturday. The bridge, weighing 500 tons, was built over the Arrah canal in Amiyawar village in Nasriganj police station area in 1972, they said. A group of men, posing as officers of the Irrigation Department, dismantled the defunct bridge with the help of gas-cutters and earthmovers over three days, police said. By the time the locals realised what was happening and informed the police, they had fled with the scrap, said Subhash Kumar, the Station House

Officer (SHO) of Nasriganj police station. "It appears that the whole operation was executed with the help of unwitting local officials of the Irrigation Department," he said. A case was registered and a hunt was on to nab those behind the incident, Kumar said. Scrap dealers in the district have been alerted about the incident, he said. "The bridge was too old and declared dangerous some time back. A new concrete bridge was constructed adjacent to the old one, and that is currently used by the locals," said Mantu Singh, a resident of the Amiyawar village. Taking a dig at the

government over the incident, Leader of Opposition Tejashwi Yadav said the thieves were inspired by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and BJP leaders. "If BJP and Nitish Kumar can steal the government of Bihar, then what is a bridge?" he said, apparently referring to Kumar's JD(U) severing ties with the RJD to form a government with BJP in the state in 2017.



## Rajouri Day: Army's bike rally to cover 1,000 km along LoC flagged off in Jammu

A bike rally to cover 1,000 kilometres along the Line of Control (LoC) was flagged off by the Army here on Saturday in connection with the Rajouri Day' celebrations, a defence spokesman said. 'Rajouri Day' is being celebrated on April 13 every year to commemorate the bravery and valour of the soldiers who laid down their lives for the liberation of Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district from rebels and the Pakistan Army personnel who had infiltrated from across the border in 1948. Organised under the Ace of Spades Division of the Army, the bike rally is part of the Rajouri Day celebrations with 22 brave riders leaving Jammu to cover challenging mountainous ridges and traversing a total distance of 1,000 kms, the spokesman said. He said the rally will culminate at Advance Landing Ground, Rajouri, on April 13, marking the commencement of the celebrations, which are likely to be attended by General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, north Command, Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi. The 22 brave riders will ride along the LoC to express solidarity with our armed forces guarding the frontiers besides paying homage at Khori Baba Temple, Brig Usman Memorial and Veer Badeshwar Temple en route, the spokesman said. He said the bikers will also spread the Message of Peace and Harmony' to further promote friendship, cultural bonding and brotherhood among the people of Rajouri. The week-long celebrations in connection with Rajouri Day' started on Friday with an ex-serviceman and 'Veer Nari' Sammelan and a conclave which was attended by maximum sarpanches from different villages of Rajouri and Poonch district, the spokesman said. Members of Team Gramonnati', a trust that aims to support rural transformation through technology and entrepreneurship along with other selected partners, had first-hand interaction with the sarpanches and educated them about various innovations and techniques that can be utilised for overall development of the region, he said. As part of the celebrations, he said, a painting competition, attended by over 140 students and teachers of 14 different schools, was held at Valley View Army Public School Rajouri on Saturday with an aim to nurture and foster creativity and promote extra-curricular activities in the region. A mini marathon is scheduled for Sunday followed by display of a plethora of Army equipment, the spokesman said, adding the youth of the Rajouri will be given an exposure of functioning and specifications of the various equipment of various arms, including artillery guns, Small arms, surveillance equipment, helicopters. The spokesman said a kite festival is also planned for the day as a run up to the Rajouri Day celebration on Sunday. The event will be based on the themes of Mera Bharat Mahan , Jawan Aur Awam , Beti Padhao Beti Bachao and Mera Desh Meri Shan . An artificial limb medical camp is being organised on April 11 to help the disabled with the treatment and distribution of wheelchairs, he said, adding a total of 40 disabled individuals will be assisted in amelioration of their problems. On Monday, a women empowerment conclave is scheduled at the headquarters of Ace of Spades Division for the aspiring women of Rajouri in order to motivate them and to make them aware about various schemes by which they can be benefitted to shape their future. The gathering will be addressed by the local women achievers from the region, the spokesman said. He said a light and sound show is being organised for the public at Dhanidhar fort on April 12, 14 and 15. This event is aimed to make local people especially the youth aware about the glorious history of the Army and to inculcate a sense of patriotism among them.

