



# sunday pioneer

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Next round of India-EU FTA talks at Brussels in Sept



Judiciary answerable to 'Constitution and Constitution alone': CJI



Why this particle could turn physics on its head

## In brief

### With hospitalisations up, France weighs return to masks

Tourism is booming again in France and so is COVID-19. French officials have invited or recommended people to go back to using face masks but stopped short of renewing restrictions that would scare visitors away or revive antigovernment protests. From Paris commuters to tourists on the French Riviera, many people seem to welcome the government's light touch, while some worry that required prevention measures may be needed. Virus-related hospitalisations rose quickly in France over the past two weeks, with nearly 1,000 patients with COVID-19 hospitalised per day, according to government data. Infections are also rising across Europe and the United States, but France has an exceptionally high proportion of people in the hospital, according to Our World in Data estimates.

### Male models drape themselves in sarees to break stereotypes

Breaking stereotypes, two male models in the city draped themselves in sarees to create a gender neutral status for the globally famed Indian wear during Pride Month. Models Pritam Ghoshal and Amit Jain created quite a flutter for their stunning photoshoot in which they sported a collection of exclusive sarees in mostly white and black hues with orange and blue streaks in a recent event during the Pride Month from June 1 to 30. "We represent the new generation of fashionable men who want to smash gender stereotypes and challenge the conventional ideas of masculinity by donning lustrous drapes," Ghoshal said at the special shoot organised on the occasion.

### NEP a game-changer that can overhaul country's education

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a "game-changer" that can overhaul the country's education system by reorienting, redesigning, and realigning its processes, Minister of State for Education Rajkumar Ranjan Singh said on Saturday. Singh was speaking at the 27th Prof. G Ram Reddy Memorial Lecture on "Indian Education System in the Journey of 75 years of India's Independence" at Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). The NEP 2020 is a game-changer that can overhaul the country's education system by reorienting, redesigning, and realigning its processes and outcomes.

# Bhimavaram turns fortress ahead of PM Modi's visit

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Foolproof security arrangements are being made for the Prime Minister's programme in Bhimavaram and the entire town is under heavy security. Police officials said that 5,000 police personnel, including para-military personnel, have reached Bhimavaram town. The bomb squad checked the premises while the SPG officials oversaw the proceedings.

Arrangements have almost been completed for the unveiling of a 30-foot statue of legendary freedom fighter Alluri Sitarama Raju on July 4 here.

The entire Bhimavaram town has turned into a fortress with foolproof security arrangements.

A large number of security personnel had been deployed. The Prime Minister would unveil the 30-foot bronze statue of Alluri Sitarama Raju on the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary in the ASR park here.

The Prime Minister will participate in the 125th birth anniversary celebrations of Alluri Sitarama Raju at Pedamiram near here. Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, Janasena president K Pawan Kalyan, film actor K Chiranjeevi, Union ministers, MLAs, and MP would participate in the programme on July 4.

Meanwhile, the police imposed several restrictions on vehicular traffic. Private vehicles coming



The police imposed several restrictions on vehicular traffic. Private vehicles coming from Kalla are not being allowed towards Bhimavaram. As part of precautionary measures, all shops in Bhimavaram town would remain closed on July 4 till programme is concluded.

from Kalla are not being allowed towards Bhimavaram. As part of precautionary measures, all shops in Bhimavaram town would remain closed on July 4 till programme is concluded. The police officials inspected the commercial complexes and shopping malls. YSRCP district president and

Achanta MLA Cherukuvada Sriranganatha Raju and Khatriyaseva Samiti are mobilizing 2000 buses and 3000 cars to bring people from various places to participate in the programme. Food and drinking water are being arranged for one lakh people. Parking places were arranged for

## PRESIDENTIAL POLL



# Only Murmu, Sinha left in fray after last date of withdrawal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

NDA nominee Droupadi Murmu and joint opposition candidate Yashwanth Sinha are the only two left in the race for the president's office after the last day for the withdrawal of nomination ended on Saturday.

Rajya Sabha Secretary General P C Mody who is also the Returning Officer for the July 18 polls said 115 nomination papers by 94 individuals were received till June 29, of which 107 were rejected for not meeting the required criteria.

The nomination papers of Murmu and Sinha, four sets each, were found to fulfill all the requirements of a valid nomination and were accepted, he said.

The Rajya Sabha Secretariat said in a statement that the voting will take place between 10 AM and 5 PM in Room Number 63 of the

Parliament House, and in notified rooms in state assemblies.

The Electoral College for election to the Office of President of India comprises the elected members of both Houses of Parliament and the elected members of Legislative Assemblies of all states, and the union territories of Delhi and Puducherry.

With several regional parties including the BJD, BSP and SAD extending their support to Murmu, the numbers are stacked in favour of the NDA nominee who is expected to win the polls comfortably.

MPs normally exercise their vote in the Parliament House, while members of state legislative assemblies, including the MLAs of the NCT of Delhi and the Union Territory of Puducherry, in their respective capitals at the places notified by the Election Commission of India.

# High Court rejects Raghurama's plea for additional protection

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Rebel YSRCP MP from Narasapuram K Raghurama Krishna Raju's petition for additional protection was rejected by the Andhra Pradesh High Court. The court rejected the MP's request for protection so that he can attend Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting at Bhimavaram on July 4.

The High Court bench, headed by Justice Cheekati Manavendranath Roy, on Friday expressed surprise over Raju's request for more protection, as he feared he might be arrested by the Andhra Pradesh police, if he comes to Bhimavaram to attend the PM programme. Justice Roy enquired with Raju's counsel what kind of protection he had. The counsel told him that the MP has been enjoying Y-category security provided by the Centre.

Moreover, based on a specific request from Raju, the Centre also beefed up his security by providing him with "Z" category protection during his visit to Bhimavaram on July 3 and 4. The Judge asked if there was any need for more protection for the MP.

The MP sought a direction



from the court to the police not to take any coercive action against him as he was facing criminal cases registered against him and the police might file fresh cases against him if he came to Bhimavaram. The judge, however, pointed out that the court had already given direction to the police not to resort to any coercive action against the MP.

The High Court judge said there is no need for any fresh directions. However, if any new cases are filed against the MP during his visit to Bhimavaram on July 3 and 4, the government and the police should follow due process of law, like giving prior notice for arrest and prosecution.

# All talk no work in Modi rule: KCR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

"We fought for Telangana for 60 years. Telangana is ready for another round of big fight," TRS president and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Reddy declared, while being stridently critical of the Narendra Modi government at the Centre during his speech at a meeting got up to support Presidential candidate Yashwanth Sinha here on Saturday.

Adverting to media reports suggesting attempts being made by the Bharatiya Janata Party at the national level to dislodge the TRS government in Telangana, KCR observed: "It was surprising that one Union Minister made a statement that the Telangana government will be toppled like BJP did in Maharashtra. We are waiting. Let Modi's dictatorial rule dethrone the Telangana government; we are ready to unseat the BJP govern-



- 'Topple us and we will bring you down'
- 'PM is acting like a salesman of his corporate friends'
- 'Modi thinks he is God. This is a psychological disorder'
- 'Not even 1 lakh Modis can kill democracy in India'
- 'We should fight for new and honest India'

ment at the Centre." KCR said that the TRS had fought for Telangana and today people were enjoying the fruits in the separate state. "Now, we should also fight for new and honest India. Today, the conduct of meeting in support of Presidential candidate Yashwanth Sinha proves the spirit of democracy is still alive in India. Not even one lakh Modis can throttle the voice of India." KCR then wished that a bright and prosperous India would happen soon.

Tearing into the functioning of the Union government headed by Modi, the Chief Minister said: "In

China, there is less talk and more action; therefore, the outcome is its pacing economy. Here all talk, no work, so no outcome". KCR said that everything in India was going wrong. "What is happening in the country is not good. India should not sit calmly. It is the time to raise voice and it required to bring a qualitative change in India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is coming to Hyderabad and will stay for two days. Modi will speak against the Telangana government with a loud voice.

## TODAY

### ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Jul 02 03:17 PM to Jul 03 05:07 PM
Tithi:	Chaturthi: Jul 03 05:07 PM to Jul 04 06:33 PM
Panchami:	
Nakshatram:	
Ashlesha:	Jul 02 03:56 AM to Jul 03 06:30 AM
Magha:	Jul 03 06:30 AM to Jul 04 08:44 AM
Rahukalam:	5:13 PM to 6:50 PM
Yamagandam:	12:20 PM to 1:58 PM
Varjyam:	07:37 PM to 09:22 PM
Gulika:	3:35 PM to 5:13 PM
Amritakalam:	None
Ahijit Muhurtham:	11:54 AM to 12:46 PM

### VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly cloudy  
Temp: 34°C  
Humidity: 67%  
Sunrise: 5:39 AM  
Sunset: 6:44 PM  
Updated: JULY 2, 2022 5:00 PM

## OBTUSE ANGLE



# Spurt in Covid cases pushes people into alert mode

C PRADEEP KUMAR ■ VIJAYAWADA

The gradual increase in the number of Covid cases, particularly in urban areas, in the past few weeks is ringing alarm bells across the State.

Hardly until two months ago, it was thought that the pandemic is on the wane but the spurt in cases in the past few weeks has taken people by surprise, spreading panic. Taking no chances, both common people and celebrities are now in alert mode and are again taking enough precautions to stay unaffected by the pandemic.

State Health officials say that positive cases are reported in urban places like Visakhapatnam, NTR, Krishna, East and West Godavari, Guntur, and Chittoor districts. The symptoms of the Coronavirus are the same old upper respiratory tract infection, cold, fever and

body ache. The positive cases began to rise in the first week of June with about 10 cases reported and gradually increasing to over 100 cases. It may be noted that Covid precautions were thrown to the wind and no one was following them until very recently. People not only discarded masks but also stopped following social distance or using hand sanitizers at public places, shopping malls, commercial places, hotels, restaurants, tea stalls, eat streets, rythu bazaars, movie theatres, bus stations, railway stations and others.

With the increase in positive cases, people are flocking to hospitals for Covid booster doses. A few corporates have arranged booster doses for their employees. The Bezvada Bar Association will organise a vaccination camp on the court premises in the city on June 30. As part of the programme, Covaxin and Covishield doses will be



given to all advocates and their families as a precautionary measure, said BBA president Ch Vishnu Vardhan. Another worrying factor is that the death toll of Corona victims is also increasing. The Centre has already issued corona warnings in all the states.

The Corona pandemic is not sparing anyone. Ministers, MLAs, MLCs,

leaders of various political parties, officials, and employees have already been infected by the virus. Recently, two YSRCP MLAs have been diagnosed as corona positive. Former minister and MLA Mekatoti Sucharita has tested positive for Covid and Mangalagiri MLA Alla Ramakrishna Reddy (RK) has also been infected with Covid. Currently,

these two leaders are undergoing treatment in home isolation.

MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi was also infected by corona and is currently undergoing treatment in Hyderabad.

Former director of public health G Hymavathi said that cases are reported in urban areas where people keep coming from different places. She said that one who is infected with covid should follow protocol and should be isolated. She said that Covid is subsiding in a few days. A fever survey is being carried out and people should wear masks and follow social distance as safety. Senior citizens should be extra cautious as post covid effects would be critical. Principal Secretary MT Krishna Babu instructed all the district collectors to see to it that all health workers are given booster doses and make vaccines available for all people above 18 years of age.

# Rally taken out in city against drug abuse

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada-Central MLA Malladi Vishnu has said that the future of the youth will be shattered by the addiction to drugs. A rally was organised in Division 1 (Urmila Nagar) in the city to create awareness among the people against the use of drugs under the auspices of the Special Enforcement Bureau officials on Saturday. The MLA participated in the programme along with Deputy Mayor Sree Sailaja Reddy, local corporator U Sunitha and others. On the occasion, Malladi Vishnu explained the ill effects and health problems caused by the use of drugs. He expressed concern that the present youth are addicted to drugs and are suffering from cancer, diabetes, and heart attacks. As a result, the financial conditions



are shattered and their families are on the road, therefore, the youth should stay away from drugs. He said that youth addicted to drugs are committing crimes and becoming criminals under the influence of intoxicants in society. The

parents should also focus on the behavior of their children. The college managements are also advised to keep a close eye on the movements of the students. The MLA stated that the state government is taking strict measures to prevent

drugs. If anyone was selling or consuming drugs in the areas where schools and colleges are located, they should immediately inform the police. Vijayawada East Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB)-CI Swaminathan, ASI

Sathyavani, YSRCP leaders Konda Maheshwar Reddy, Uddhanti Suresh, Alla Prasad Reddy, Yalamanda, Kolakaleti Ramani, Tungam Jhansi, Bandi Venu, Shiva, secretariat staff and party activists were present.

# Emulate Alluri, MLC exhorts youth

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) MLC KS Lakshmana Rao has said that the freedom fighter Alluri Seetha Rama Raju was the ideal to the present youth and they should take forward his motives in society. Student Federation of India (SFI), Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) Vijayawada city committees organised the Alluri Seetha Rama Raju 125th birth anniversary at SRR & CVR Government Degree College in the city on Saturday.



peaking on the occasion, MLC Lakshmana Rao said that Alluri's armed struggle made a history in the freedom movement. He tried and succeeded in educating the tribal people and the poor illiterate masses to create awareness of the freedom movement, MLC said. He further said that Alluri Seetha

Rama Raju sacrificed his life at the age of 27 years and the students should take the responsibility to take forward his ideas in society. SRR & CVR Government Degree College Principal K Bhagya Lakshmi, SFI NTR

district president M Someswara Rao, secretary Ch Venkateswara Rao, DYFI central city leaders Nizamuddin, Lakshma Reddy, Bhargav, Kartik, Radha Krishna and others participated.

# Modi ended dynastic rule: Nadda

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Taking a dig at the TRS BJP President JP Nadda said that "parivarvad is being defeated by vikasvad" under the Modi government.

Speaking at the BJP National Executive Committee meeting on Saturday here Nadda said, "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, the politics of casteism, dynastic rule and minority appeasement has ended and development has become the focus of politics. The Prime Minister has established the politics of performance and development in our democracy."

The BJP chief credited the Prime Minister for the BJP's repeated electoral victories in states like Uttar Pradesh and Manipur where polls were held earlier this year, the sources said. He said there was "pro-incumbency" in favour of the BJP in the states the BJP had won.

Nadda began by praising Modi's leadership whether it was in managing the Covid-19 challenge or the difficult mission of rescuing Indian students stuck in the Ukraine warzone. He also spoke about



the "violence that BJP workers have to face" in J&K, West Bengal and Kerala and said they deserve the utmost respect for the sacrifices they have been making.

He said that BJP's electoral victories were a reflection of the good governance of the Modi government, especially the work done for the poor and the marginalised. The PM Garib Kalyan Yojana has been extremely effective, he said.

Home Minister Amit Shah introduced a resolution on the party's strategy in the coming elections in Gujarat, Karnataka,

and Himachal Pradesh. The BJP National Executive on Saturday hailed Agnipath which has been criticised by the opposition, and the government's announcement to create 10 lakh jobs in the next 18 months.

In political resolutions on upcoming elections and strategy, Telangana's election in 2023 was also reportedly mentioned.

Briefing the media Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan dismissed the opposition's allegations about the job crisis and said the last Union Budget had made the highest-ever allocation for public spending and the government made the highest-ever capital spending during the Covid pandemic. All these are linked to job creation, he said.

If there was an acute crisis, then social harmony would have been hit, he said, asserting that the government has created jobs and taken care of the poor. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh proposed the resolution while his Cabinet colleague Piyush Goyal and Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar seconded it.

# Modi has no moral right to enter AP: JDF

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Leaders of the Jai Andhra Democratic Forum (JDF) strongly oppose Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the State on July 4. Speaking to the media persons on Saturday, the JDF leaders said that PM Modi has done injustice to the State by not according the Special Category Status (SCS) and not implementing bifurcation promises and has no moral right to visit AP. The leaders of JDF called for a state-wide protest against Modi's visit on July 4.

They said that Narendra Modi has given a pot of soil and water for the Amaravati capital and wondered how the PM was coming to Andhra Pradesh. They said that with the inspiration of Alluri Sitarama Raju, a movement will be initiated across the



State to get Special Category Status and bifurcation promises to Andhra Pradesh. On the occasion of Modi's visit, JDF leaders have called on all parties to protest by providing a pot of Soil and Water on July 4. Modi has no moral right to enter Andhra Pradesh. Film actor and JDF state president Ranki criticized the BJP for

betraying the state by not according to special category status and fulfilling bifurcation promises even after eight years after the undemocratic division of the state. He said that he quit the BJP which had done injustice to the state. He said that he was ready to sacrifice his life in order to achieve the SCS and bifurca-

tion promises to the State. Secretary of Andhra Intellectuals Association PS Murthy, National Navkranti Party President Kanakam Srinivasa Rao, M Srinivas, Ch Krishnanyanayulu, P Surendra Reddy, Nagendra Kumar, Madhu Babu, Rama Rao, Venkanna Babu, and others spoke on the occasion.

# GST biggest indirect tax reform in India's history: CII



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Termining GST as the biggest indirect tax reform in the history of independent India, CII on Friday said it helped in creating a unified market across states, simplified the indirect tax structure for the industry and also brought about logistics and warehousing efficiencies.

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) was rolled out on July 1, 2017. CII director general Chandrajit Banerjee said the government is to be particularly felicitated for taking on board industry suggestions continuously and coordinating during the entire period of transition. "It is truly a huge achievement. I also compliment CBIC and GSTN along with other bodies who led the transition with such impact. The tireless efforts of all officials at all levels enabled the smooth implementation of the reform in such a short time," he said.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹293
Without Skin	₹312
Broiler at Farm	₹160

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	411
VISAKHAPATNAM	420
HYDERABAD	346
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.11

# Netas lose money in global crypto crash

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana politicians who invested in Bitcoin have reportedly suffered huge losses due to the crypto crash. Many netas had bet big on Bitcoin in 2021 which was one of the best times for crypto investors.

Even though crypto is not legal tender, multiple sources confirmed that local politi-

cians have invested big in cryptocurrency. No crypto investor has fully escaped the downturn including our own politicians. While Bitcoin had hit an all-time high of Rs 54.5 lakh in November 2021 it slumped to nearly 70 per cent of that value in June 2022.

The politicians who have invested in Bitcoin include TRS netas. "Politicians are

also businessmen and they are not conventional. While they are aware that the impact of global inflation resulted in this loss the day-to-day dip is worrying them. But Bitcoin is like the lord of cryptocurrencies. So there is hope for it. It was literally a ticket to riches last year." Sources said that during the pandemic, netas had reportedly invested even more in the crypto market

when prices had started soaring. Sources said that while politicians had a lot of confidence last year, now they are realising that they put in a lot of money on the wrong side of the trade.

It may be mentioned here that the crypto crash started in May when an experimental coin called TerraUSD lost almost all its value practically overnight, taking down a sis-

ter digital currency, Luna, as well. The impact of the Luna-Terra crash spread hitting the prices of Bitcoin and Ether, the two most valuable digital currencies. Caggemini's 2022 report says that high net worth individuals (HNWIs) have embraced crypto and other digital assets with around 71 per cent of the almost 3,000 individuals investing in digital assets.



# All talk no work in Modi rule: KCR

Continued from page 1

Modi will make wild allegations against the Opposition in his speeches", he remarked.

KCR said that Modi had made tall promises after assuming office for the first time. But not a single promise was fulfilled. "We will not find a single promise fulfilled even in torchlight. The Prime Minister always thinks he is intelligent".

KCR pointed out that Modi had made the promise of doubling farmers' income. In reality, investment on farming had doubled. Diesel, petrol and power prices had increased. "The Modi government has brought into force three farm laws. The peasant community fought against the Draconian laws. More than 700 farmers sacrificed their lives. The Modi govt branded the agitating farmers as terrorists and Khalistani gang. Ministers and BJP leaders attacked farmers", he added.

KCR said that Modi did not have concern for or pity on farmers. It was the Telangana government that extended Rs 3 lakh financial assistance to each bereaved family of farmers who died during the agitation. "BJP ridiculed the TRS government's gesture in helping the victim families", he said.

is imminent in the county". KCR dared the Prime Minister to answer the questions he had posed in the meeting organised by BJP in Hyderabad.

"The Telangana Chief Minister said that India had weakened and that farmers, unemployed and employees were also facing problems.

"The entire Modi government is misusing all constitutional bodies. Opposition parties are harassed and targeted. It is the murder of Indian democracy. The BJP rulers are conspiring to destabilise the state governments. Modi toppled nine state governments in the country and the country is facing the consequences. The BJP rulers resorted to propaganda and no one is happy," KCR commented, and urged people to understand the situation in the country.

KCR said that Modi was the 15th Prime Minister of India and India had lost its respect during his term. He said that the present crisis in Sri Lanka was the handiwork of Modi who had influenced the Sri Lankan government to get contracts awarded to his industrialist friends. "Modi has to break his silence on his role in Sri Lanka crisis. Did ever we see an Indian PM receiving such a big criticism from other countries? We will not sit calm and definitely fight against it", KCR said.

KCR said that personally he had no enmity with Modi. He opposed the lopsided policies adopted by the Modi government. The Chief Minister said that Modi launched Make in India. "What happened is many eco-

nomical offenders fled the country. Make in India is false". KCR demanded that the Prime Minister must disclose the details of jobs created and industrial growth under Make in India. Modi should learn from China where the rulers speak less and work more. China's GDP had already crossed 16 trillion dollars and India's economy remained not more than 3 trillion dollars. When will India achieve the target of 5 trillion dollars?"

KCR pointed that after the launch of Make in India, many companies had shut operations in the country. Fiat, Ford, GM Motors, Datsun, United Motors and Harley Davidson stopped their business in India. He asserted that India was not growing, but collapsing under the Modi regime. KCR sought to know why India should import coal when the nation had abundant reserves. "The Prime Minister is playing the role of salesman of the big traders in the country. If Modi is clean, he should talk on the issues raised by me", KCR observed. "After Modi became PM, black money doubled. Is it not Modi and company's growth? The Prime Minister promised housing for all by 2022 and also to bring a corruption-free India. The Modi government helped traders and the PM promoted them as a salesman. Big scams took place in the present Union Government. NPAs were so high".

KCR said that rupee's value had been declining and it had slid to all-time low in the Modi government. The Modi government did not succeed in

any sector. The holy Ganga river saw floating corpses during the Corona crisis. Termining the lockdown as the biggest disaster in independent India, the Chief Minister said that lakhs of people had to walk long distances on the streets and people were traumatised. KCR said that every policy adopted by the Modi government did a big harm to the country.

KCR said that during Modi rule, India's ranking in many sectors had fallen down at international level. The Telangana CM said: "India was insulted on international platforms due to Modi's decisions and policies. Growing hatred and division brought a big disrepute to India on international platforms. India is a tolerant country and its basic principle is 'Live and let live. What Modi has dreamt for India and what he achieved?"

KCR said that India was messenger of peace and the entire world respected Mahatma Gandhi. "Today, the BJP leaders are maligning the Gandhi image by making controversial remarks. Why Modi is maintaining silence? India's international reputation is tattered. India's Father of the nation was insulted repeatedly by Modi's men. The PM should answer in his speech", KCR said.

KCR demanded that Modi should tender an apology for denigrating India's reputation at the international level. "Modi should also answer what is great in him. It is ridiculous that Modi is promoting himself as God. Modi is exhibiting a psychological disorder".

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# 3.84 L to appear for EAPCET-2022

122 centres arranged in AP and TS for exams to be held from July 4 to 12

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Higher Education Department Principal Secretary J Shyamala Rao has said that 3.84 lakh candidates will appear for the Engineering, Agriculture and Pharmacy Common Entrance Test (EAPCET) - 2022, which would be conducted from July 4 to 12. The department arranged 122 examination centers in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana of which 120 in AP and two centers in Telangana, he said.

Shyamala Rao addressed the press reporters at the Andhra Pradesh State Council for Higher Education (APSCHE) office in Mangalagiri, near here, on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, he said the department had made elaborate arrangements for the smooth conduct of the EAPCET. Engineering entrance

**Candidates coming late even by one minute will not be allowed and examination centres chief superintendents will strictly follow the rules and regulations of the Higher Education Department. SC, and ST students should bring the caste certificates along with hall tickets.**



exams would be held from July 4 to 8 and Agriculture and Pharmacy exams would be conducted from July 11 to 12, he added. He further said that 3.84 lakh students registered to write the EAPCET - 2022. Examination centres route maps printed on the back side of hall tickets, he said. Andhra Pradesh State Council for Higher Education

Chairman HemChandra Reddy made it clear that the candidates coming late even by one minute will not be allowed and examination centres chief superintendents strictly follow the rules and regulations of the higher education department. SC, and ST students should bring the caste certificates along with hall tickets, he suggested.

Moreover, he said that they would not allow electronic goods and criminal cases would be registered if anyone can write the exam instead of the original candidate. Students should wear masks and attend the examinations, he said. He appealed to the concerned officers to provide medical kits at the examination centres and arrange buses to the centres, he added.

## UHS students win medals in roller sports

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr NTR University of Health Sciences (NTRUHS) bagged medals in team and individual events at the All India Inter University Roller Sports, Roller Hockey and Inline Hockey men's and women's championship held at Visakhapatnam, from July 1 to 2.

According to Dr NTRUHS Sports Board secretary E Trimurthy, the university men's team won the gold medal in Roller Hockey (quad) event. The women's team secured second place in Inline Hockey and won a silver medal. The men's team bagged the bronze medal in Inline Hockey, he added.

Vice-chancellor P Shyam Prasad and Registrar K Sankar congratulated both men and women teams and individual winners.



## Supply quality commodities, TTD EO tells suppliers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Executive Officer AV Dharma Reddy has asked all the suppliers to provide only quality commodities to the institution.

Addressing a meeting of all suppliers at SVETA Bhavan in Tirupati on Saturday, the EO said 'Laddus' and 'Anna Prasadam' are being consumed by lakhs of devotees visiting Tirumala. Therefore, the materials sup-

plied by the traders should be of high quality. He said since the cost of materials is met through the contributions of devotees, the suppliers should ensure quality and conduct justified trade practices.

Among others, he asked the shop owners and eateries to use bio-degradable plates and cups. Interacting with suppliers of rice, ghee, sugar, dals, almonds, cashews, jaggery, edible oils, coconuts, camphor, sanitary products, sarees, dhotis, etc. he

enquired about production, and supply systems. He asked them that the Puja materials are believed to be highly sacred and sentimental by devotees and hence there should be no compromise on its quality while supplying to traders, he affirmed. TTD JEO Veerabrahmam, Marketing GM (Procurement) Subramaniam, DyEO Nateshbabu, SVETA Director Prashanti, suppliers to TTD from several regions were present.

## Vja Railway Division makes marked progress in revenue

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The revenue of the Vijayawada Railway Division hugely increased in the first quarter of 2022-23 with gross revenue of Rs.1166.69 crore from April to June 2022-23 as against Rs.648.26 crore for the corresponding period last year, which is 79.97% more.

Shivendra Mohan, DRM, Vijayawada, said that in the current financial year up to June, the Division registered 13.783 million originating passengers. When compared to last year's corresponding period, a growth of 381% is registered.

Shivendra Mohan said that the earnings on the passenger front, in the current financial year up to June is Rs.288.17 Crore which is 232.72% more than the corresponding period of the last year. The freight loading in Vijayawada Division was 7.848 MT up to June 2022, which is 49.21% higher than last year's loading of 5.26 MT. The loading in the month of



June was 3.00 MT which is the highest ever loading achieved for the month of June in the last 13 Years in the BZA division. Freight earnings have shown remarkable growth and were recorded as Rs.852.33 Cr up to June in this current financial year which is a 54% increase over the Corresponding period of Last year.

The DRM said the New double line covering a length of 34.353 km (new line) and 5.115 km (diversion track) between Aravalli-Nidadavolu stations opened for Coaching train operations. During the

first quarter, the rebuilding of 21 bridges was completed in Golden Quadrilateral-Golden Diagonal Routes of Vijayawada-Gudur, and Vijayawada-Duvvada as against the annual target of 39 Bridges. In the month of April, a Remote monitoring system for the CLS panel developed departmentally at Kondapalli which gives text messages and calls for 05 registered mobiles in case of any incoming power interruption to CLS panel 'AT UP/AT DN/LOCAL' so that the failure can be attended immediately.

## Left parties stage protest against hike in RTC bus fares

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Activists of CPI, CPM, CPI(ML) Liberation and other Left parties staged a protest in front of the Pandit Nehru Bus Station (PNBS) in Vijayawada on Saturday and demanded the withdrawal of the hiked APSRTC bus charges in the name of fuel cess.

Earlier, the agitators took out a rally and raised slogans against the State government. They stopped the buses from coming out of the bus stand.

Speaking on the occasion, CPM Central Committee member and former MP (Rajya Sabha) P Madhu alleged that the State government had enhanced the APSRTC bus charges for the seventh time and imposed additional bur-

dens on the bus commuters. Though the APSRTC has been purchasing diesel at the retail outlets at Rs 97 per liter, the corporation is claiming that it is spending Rs137 on every litre of diesel, he said.

He lashed out at the opposition parties TDP and Jana Sena for not organising any agitation in support of the genuine demands of the common man.

He further said that ruling YSRCP and opposition TDP and JSP are not bothered about the people's problems and they are fighting only for their political existence. The State government imposed an additional burden of Rs 2,000 crore after the YSRCP came to power, he said. All these three parties have supported BJP

and are not fighting on the public issues, he said.

CPI state secretary, former MLA K Ramakrishna said that if the State government did not withdraw the hiked RTC charges, Left parties would organise a State bandh with the other political parties and people's organisations. RTC bus charges are very high in the State compared to the Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka states, he said. The YSRCP government imposed Rs.1,250 crore additional burden on RTC bus travellers in a span of just two months, he alleged.

CPM State secretariat member Ch Babu Rao, NTR district leader Donepudi Kasinath, CPI Vijayawada city secretary Di Sankar and others participated.



## V&E conducts surprise checks in shops; nine cases registered

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The AP Vigilance and Enforcement officials conducted surprise checks in 60 seeds, fertilizers, and insecticide shops in the State on Saturday and registered cases against nine shops for violation of norms.

The V & E officials said that with a view to controlling the price and the quality of seeds, fertilisers, and insecticides for the benefit of farmers, surprise inspections were conducted at random by V&E officials on Saturday across the State on 60 wholesalers and retail units.

The V&E officials said that these 60 shops include 20 shops selling seeds, 32 shops selling fertilisers and 18 shops selling Insecticides. Out of 60 inspections, nine cases were filed U/s 6A of Essential Commodities Act, 1955 on excess Stock limits and Essential Commodities Act) were also filed. They said that the



Vigilance & Enforcement department is giving warning against the Wholesale and Retail traders etc., to prevent illegal hoarding and black marketing of seeds, fertilisers, and insecticides and to ensure the sale of good quality seeds, fertilisers, and insecticides in the State.

## Orientation programme for PETs, PDs concludes

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The two-day Physical Education Teachers (PET) and Physical Directors (PD) orientation programme concluded at the KBC ZPH School, Patamata in Vijayawada on Saturday. As per the School Education Department's directions, the Vijayawada Division's PETs and PDs orientation programme was held at the ZPH School.

On the second day of the orientation programme, the PETs and PDs performed several activities including rhythmic dance with colourful umbrellas. With this rhythmic dance drill, teachers enjoyed it a lot as such a drill was not

conducted earlier, said senior PD Raj Kumar. The teachers took part in mass drills and played Kho-Kho.

Resource person and programme coordinator, yoga trainer T Purnachandra Rao and Venkata Lakshmi explained the battery tests. They said that all PETs and PDs should teach rhythmic drills to the students regularly after the reopening of the schools.

NTR district PETs and PDs Association secretary L Durga Rao, headquarter secretary Vijaya Varma, resource persons Venkata Rao (Kho-Kho), Nagaraju (Athletics) and others participated in the orientation programme.

## Mayor lays stone for VMC canteen

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Mayor Rayana Bhagya Lakshmi laid a foundation stone for the construction of a canteen-cum- refreshments building on the corporation office premises here on Saturday. The VMC sanctioned Rs 55 lakh from the General Funds for the construction of the new building.

Speaking on the occasion, Bhagya Lakshmi said that the VMC had no canteen facility as of now and the corporation staff and corporators are facing severe problems. People coming to the VMC office

from across the city on personal work are also facing problems, she said. So, the VMC sanctioned Rs 55 lakh for the canteen.

Later, Bhagya Lakshmi, along with Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar, inspected the VMC's new building whose construction was stopped earlier.

VMC Chief Engineer M Prabhakara Rao, Additional Commissioner (Projects) KV Satyavathi, Additional Commissioner (General) M Syamala, SE (works) PVK Bhaskar, Executive Engineer Venkateswara Reddy and others participated.



'Stop sale of single-use plastic products'

## Ph.D awarded to engg college asst. professor

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Sunitha Pachala, working as Assistant Professor in CSE Department of Dhanekula Institute of Engineering and Technology, Ganguru, has been awarded the doctorate by the JNTU University, Kakinada, for the research work done on "Lightweight Proxy Re-Encryption-based Identity Management Protocol for Enhancing Privacy in Cloud Environment". On July 1, she was awarded the Ph. D degree in faculty of Computer Science and engineering.

She has completed her research work under the supervision of Ch Rupa, Professor, Department of CSE, VR Siddhartha Engineering College, and L Sumalatha, Professor and Registrar, Department of CSE, JNTU, Kakinada. Chairman of Dhanekula Engineering College Ravindranath Tagore, Director DKRR Ravi Prasad, and Principal Kadiyala Ravi congratulated Sunitha.

## Lift ban on plastic glasses: APTA

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Thermoformers Association (APTA) has urged the State and Central governments to remove the ban on the disposal of glasses used by the majority of people.

APTA president D Srinivas, general secretary Sarikonda Ramaraju, and other leaders said that the government imposed a ban on single-use plastic from July 1 under which plastic glasses came under ban. They said that disposable plastic glasses are very useful to people during pandemics, hence the government should give relaxation.

The APTA leaders said that it is sad to impose a ban on disposable glasses, which are necessary for everyone during the time of Covid. They expressed concern that there are 1,000 glass manufacturing industries and 2,000 auxiliary companies across the country and five lakh people are working in them will lose their jobs. They said that after Covid,

they took loans with the facilities provided by the government hoping for good business. They further stated that it will take four to five years to repay loans so the ban will force them onto the roads and they sought a ban be lifted for another two years. They wanted to provide an opportunity to establish alternative industries, otherwise, the bank loans or the owners of the industries would have to fall on the road.

They said that as part of the ban, the government had given permission to use those above 75 microns for some items, and since our glasses are already 100 microns thick, APTA is seeking permission to use glasses above 100 microns. They said that glasses are mostly used in function halls and they are not thrown away, adding that more than 100 can be recycled. They said APTA is requesting the State and Central governments to lift the ban on glasses for another two years or to give permission to manufacture and use glasses above 100 microns.

## AP has become badminton hub, says ace shuttler Kidambi

Two-day league tournament being organised by SAAP & NTR DSA inaugurated in Vijayawada

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Thomas Cup champion and international shuttler Kidambi Srikanth has said that Andhra Pradesh has become a badminton hub with several world-class courts being set up there. Now, badminton players from Chennai and Bangalore are coming to the State for practice. "But, during my childhood days, I went to Chennai and Bangalore for practising," he recalled.

He was speaking after inaugurating a two-day badminton league tournament being organised by the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh

(SAAP) and NTR District Sports Authority at the Chennai Ramakrishna Municipal Corporation Indoor Stadium in Vijayawada on Saturday. As many as 150 budding players attended the two-day league championship from across the State.

Srikanth said that the State government is creating sports infrastructure for conducting tournaments and practising. It is also providing incentives to those who perform well at the national and international tournaments. The SAAP is conducting the leagues to identify and pick talented players in the State, he said.

He further said that these types of tournaments and facilities were not available during his childhood. The budding shuttle badminton players have to use the government infrastructure and facilities to participate in national and international tournaments, he suggested. SAAP implemented several schemes to promote sports and games in the State, he said.

NTR District Collector S Dilli Rao said that budding badminton stars should be inspired by Kidambi Srikanth and PV Sindhu and work hard to win more championships in the future. "I am very proud to meet Kidambi Srikanth personally for the first time," he said.

He said that he saw Srikanth on the TV when he played Thomas Cup and World Badminton Championship tournaments.

He said that he had one desire and that is to see Kidambi Srikanth as All England Badminton champion, the Collector said.

He directed the district sports authority officials to conduct sports and games as well as training camps in rural areas to spot talented sportspersons. There are so many most talented and outstanding sports persons in the

villages, but due to the lack of sufficient sports arenas and facilities, they are not coming into the limelight.

The Collector exhorted the students not to play sports and games only for engineering or medical seats. They should play for physical and mental fitness.

NTR District Sports Authority (DSA) CEO U Srinivasa Rao, chief coach SA Azeez, YSRCP Vijayawada East constituency incharge Devineni Avinash, Kidambi Srikanth's father Krishna, mother Radha and badminton coach Bhaskar Babu were present.



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

VMC Additional Commissioner (Projects) KV Satyavathi organised a meeting with wholesale traders on Saturday and warned them to sell single-use plastic products in the city to protect the environment from air pollution.

Speaking on the occasion, Satyavathi said that the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change had directed the Corporation to ban single-use plastic products. She suggested that traders should use jute, cloth and paper bags. If any trader is found violating the rules, strict action would be taken against them, she warned.

She further said that VMC officers would create awareness of the ban on single-use plastic for fruit traders, vegetable traders and street vendors.



## Woman, daughter burnt alive in fire

PNS ■ AMALAPURAM

A woman and her daughter were charred to death when their house caught fire at Komaragiri village in Allavaram mandal of Konaseema district in the wee hours of Saturday.

Police said that Sadhanala Mangadevi (43) and her daughter Jyothi (23) were burnt alive when their hut caught fire. Jyothi got married six months ago and she was pregnant.

The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the government hospital for post-mortem.

# Ban on plastic products will be implemented firmly: Civic chief

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Guntur Municipal Corporation (GMC) Commissioner Keerthi Chekuri has said that the ban on the use of single-use plastic products will be implemented strictly in the city. She conducted a surprise inspection at the wholesale flower market and Rythu Bazar here on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion the Commissioner said that on Saturday, 42 shops selling or using prohibited plastic in the city were fined Rs.45,600. She said that a Rs.5000 fine would be imposed if the sale of single-use plastic products was found.

Speaking on the occasion, the commissioner said that the use of plastic products is harmful to public health and the environment, and strict action should be taken if such products are used or sold. The Commissioner said that the fruit and flower traders should



give cloth bags to the customers. If they are given in non-woven bags, there would be a fine of Rs.5 thousand, she warned. Keerthi Chekuri warned that commercial shops, retailers,

vendors, street vendors, vegetable and fruit markets, malls, and other establishments are found to be storing and using single-use plastic equipment and carry bags. The trade licenses of those shops and

shops would be cancelled, she warned them.

"Apart from this, heavy fines will also be imposed. Straws and covers for bouquets are being used in flower garlands and henceforth action will be taken against the sellers of these", she said.

The estate officer was directed to make the traders in Rythu Bazar take a pledge not to use or sell banned plastic bags. She said that task force teams have been formed in the city for the implementation of the plastic ban, as well as inspections would be done every day by the secretariats and action would be taken not only against the sellers of plastic bags but also against those who use them.

CMOH Dr. Vijayalakshmi, SS Ananda Kumar, Rythu Bazar Estate Officer

Phani Babu and other officials accompanied the Commissioner.



## Health Min Vidadala visits diarrhoea victims in hospital

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Minister for Health Vidadala Rajini on Saturday visited the diarrhoea patients who are undergoing treatment in the medical camp and PHCs at Kolakaluri village.

The Health Minister, along with MLA Annabattuni Shiva Kumar, Family Welfare Commissioner Nivas, Collector M Venugopal Reddy visited the patients who have been suffering from diarrhoea for the last two days in the medical camps set up in the ZP high school and PHC at the village.

Collector Venugopal Reddy apprised the minister about the treatment being given to the patients and their condition.

Talking to the media on the occasion, the Health Minister said that the government had responded to the prevalence of diarrhoea in the village and directed the officials concerned to provide them better treatment and take steps to ensure that the contagious diseases

should not spread to other areas. She asked the doctors to monitor the health condition of the patients constantly. The minister informed that 30 more medical staff were deployed to the village to provide medical services to the patients. She informed that those who are suffering from diarrhoea symptoms at a high level are being shifted to the hospital and those whose symptoms are low are being treated in the camp.

Minister Rajini said that the water samples had already been collected and sent for testing and the preliminary report revealed that the drinking water was not contaminated. However, the full report should be received to come to a conclusion on the exact reason for the outbreak of diarrhoea in the village, she opined. On the suspicion that the outbreak of diarrhoea at the village was due to water contamination, the drinking

water being supplied by the panchayat had been stopped and drinking water was being supplied through tankers, the minister said.

The water supplied by tankers should be used for routine needs and the water supplied in cans should be used for drinking purposes, she advised the villagers. The Minister said that the situation is completely under control, no need to worry and the government would provide full assistance. She expressed grief over the death of a girl Srimidh with diarrhoea symptoms in the village. Steps were taken to extend financial assistance to the family of the deceased girl, she said.

MLA Annabattuni Shiva Kumar said that all needed medical services were being provided to the diarrhoea patients. The situation is under control now. He said that he had spoken to the Collector regarding extending financial assistance.

## Shuttle tourney gets underway in Prakasam dist

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The two-day district-level 49th shuttle badminton championship began in the Lord Krishna Shuttle Badminton Academy here on Saturday.

Lord Krishna Badminton Academy chairman, an eminent industrialist, and YSRCP leader Sidda Sudheer Kumar inaugurated the championship. He encouraged the players by playing shuttle badminton on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion,

Sudheer Kumar said that participation in sports helps with mental and physical firmness. He asked the sportsmen to take win and defeat equally and continue to work hard for the next game.

Sudheer Kumar asked parents to encourage their children in sports from childhood itself. He said that there are many facilities in the Lord Krishna Shuttle Badminton Academy and appealed to the enthusiastic players to avail the opportunity.

On the first day, players in various categories participated in

matches and the competitions of different categories of boys and girls were exciting. The players were encouraged with thunderous applause by the spectators.

Later Prakasam district badminton association felicitated Sidda Sudheer Kumar. Electricity SE KVG Satyanarayana, LKB academy founder president Addanki Muralikrishna, Dr.Sridhar Reddy, Prakasam district ball badminton association president Lakshma Reddy and vice president Ashok Reddy were present.



## 12 injured as car rams auto

PNS ■ NELLORE

As many as 12 agricultural labourers were injured four of them critically when a car ramed the auto-rickshaw from the rear end at Bogolu village on Saturday.

Police said that 12 agriculture workers were returning from a field after work. A

speeding car ramed the auto-rickshaw from behind. Both the car and auto-rickshaw veered off the road and fell into a field.

Out of the 12 injured, the condition of four of the workers is said to be very critical. All the injured were admitted to the government hospital in Kavali and Nellore.



## Pinipe promises to solve in Eluru dist problems

PNS ■ ELURU

Minister for Transport and also district in-charge minister Pinipe Viswaroop assured to resolve the problems of Eluru district by taking them to the notice of Chief Minister.

The minister attended a review meeting here on Saturday. Speaking on the occasion he said that Minister Viswaroop said that today's meeting was very meaningful and many priority issues raised by the legislators of the district would be brought to the attention of the Chief Minister. He appreciated the legislators for not only making the meeting meaningful and clear but also for reviewing the issues in depth with comprehensive details.

The minister said that especially the construction works of the Chintalapudi Social Welfare Residential Hostel, completion of the Chintalapudi lift scheme, and other issues would be brought to the notice of the Chief Minister himself. Eluru MLA Alla Kalikrishna Srinivas



(Nani) said that development and welfare programs in the district were being carried forward more efficiently under the leadership of District In-charge Minister Pinipe Vishwarup.

Polavaram MLA T Balaraju said that sand points should be established in the constituency to make it suitable for the construction of houses. The tribal people, who were allotted houses, appeal for sand to carry out construction works of their houses. He said that proposals were sent to the government to construct OHRs at various places in the tribal areas at a cost

of Rs 24 crore. The MLA urged to sanction roads in Polavaram, Chintalapudi, and Gopalapuram constituencies.

Steps should be taken to complete the remaining 5 percent of the work related to Pogonda Reservoir, he told the minister, adding that there is a shortage of doctors in the agency area. The construction works of the 100-bed hospital being constructed at a cost of Rs 25 crore should be expedited. If the hospital is opened it would serve 2 lakh people.

District Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said that a meeting

was held to review the implementation of Navaratna schemes in the district, the measures taken by the government to resolve the problems raised by the legislators in the programme of Gadapa Gadapaku, and the implementation of development programs in the respective constituencies. The Collector said there would be a special meeting with the officials of the Chief Minister and CMO office to resolve the problems of the district. He said that would personally visit and take the necessary steps to complete the construction work of the Social Welfare Residential Hostel in Chintalapudi.

MLAs D Nageswara Rao, Unnamatla Eliza, Talari Venkata Rao, Kothari Abbaya Chaudhary, Meka Venkata Pratap Appa Rao, Puppala Vasubabu, District Collector V. Prasanna Venkatesh, District SP Rahul Dev Sharma, Joint Collector P Arun Babu and others were among who were present.

## 2 businessmen arrested for defrauding banks

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The director of Enforcement (ED) arrested Khagesh Kachhwal and Varanasi Dileef in a money laundering case on June 25 for acting as entry operators and facilitating largescale bogus LC discounting and providing large accommodation entries to assist money laundering activities of the bank fraud accused persons.

ED initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of FIR registered by the CBI, EOB, Chennai against M/s RE Cables and Conductors Private Limited (RECC) and others for alleged misappropriation of the funds of the State Bank of India (SBI) and caused wrongful loss to the tune of Rs 74.83 crore. Investigation by the ED revealed that Khagesh Kachhwal and Varanasi Dileef are one of the biggest entry providers in Hyderabad city under whose assistance and guidance, M/s RECC had fraudulently mis-utilised the

credit facilities availed from banks. Khagesh Kachhwal and Varanasi Dileef have a number of shell companies under their control. The modus operandi is that various LCs are opened by M/s RECC in the name of shell entities controlled by the both of them under the guise of short term advance with the help of bogus documents. No goods/materials are supplied against such LCs. Subsequently, the LCs were discounted with a known bank and the amount received by discounting is diverted back to M/s RECC so that it can tide over its cash flow crunch. Since RECC did not make the payments to the bank, the LCs dissolved causing loss to the bank. Both of the accused admitted that they are providing these services for pecuniary gain of 0.25% of the transaction amount.

Apart from M/s RECC, they have provided such services to many business houses from Hyderabad including those who are now accused of large loan frauds.

## DFO inspects tiger's turf

PNS ■ KAKINADA

DFO Ananta Shaker inspected the areas where the elusive Bengal Royal tiger is roaming in Anakapalle district on Saturday.

The Forest department officials located the pug marks of the tiger at Peddapalli village. The officials went to the place by walking 10 KMs. They interacted with the hut dwellers and warned them to be cautious as the tiger is roaming in the area. The officials visited various places to locate the hideouts of the tiger.

The forest officials came to the conclusion that the tiger had entered the Anakapalle district. The forest officials



examined the pug marks and decided that the tiger is four years old. The officials said that all precautionary measures were taken to ensure that no loss of life due to the tiger.

Anantha Shaker said that special teams were deployed to

the areas where the tiger is roaming. "The GPS system has been installed and drone cameras are being used to locate the tiger," he said, adding that the revenue and police officials were put on high alert.

## DC exhorts students to strive to achieve goals

PNS ■ ONGOLE

District Collector AS Dinesh Kumar exhorted the students to strive hard from the student stage itself to achieve goals and reach heights in life.

The Collector participated in the "Coffee with Collector" programme with the students of Jammulapalem and Talluru ZP high schools. Out of the 28 students who participated in the programme 22 were girls.

Speaking to the students, the Collector asked them to grow up to be the best citizens in society. "You must have high ambitions and start striving to achieve them from the student stage itself. Teachers will be with you to provide adequate awareness in this regard. I will also be



with you. I will come to your house and talk to your parents about your future. Go ahead with an optimistic outlook," Collector Dinesh Kumar told the students. Interacting with the students, the Collector knew the habits, passion, and ambition of the students. He asked them not to feel poverty

is an obstacle to their studies. He asked them to think innovatively and focus on his studies. He exhorted the students to use technology and take advice from the teachers. DEO Vijay Bhaskar, Samagra Siksha Abhiyan, CMO Konda Reddy, and ACOMO Rajani, and other officials were present.

## STATES INK JOINT PACT TO FIGHT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On the measures to be taken to prevent human trafficking, decisions were passed at a conference on women trafficking held in Hyderabad for two days on Friday and Saturday under the chairmanship of the State Women and Child

Welfare Department. Telangana Women's Commission chairperson V Sunitha Lakshma Reddy called upon everyone to work together to stop human trafficking. Along with Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, and Odisha have signed joint agreements to curb human trafficking. On this occasion, Sunitha Lakshma Reddy made it clear that all the states are moving forward collectively to prevent human trafficking. The chairperson expressed concern that this is the third largest organized crime in the world after drug and arms trafficking. The chairperson informed that the Telangana government is providing skill training in various aspects to identify and protect those illegally trafficked. She said that the police department is not only setting up AHTU in the districts but also conducting awareness seminars to prevent illegal trafficking.

## Fishing harbour in Kakinada to be modernised at a cost of Rs 10 cr

KAKINADA: District Collector Kritika Shukla on Saturday announced that the Kakinada fishing harbour would be modernized at a cost of Rs 10 crores. After visiting the fishing harbour along with officials of AP Maritime Board and Kakinada sea port, The Collector told the media that the required funds would be sanctioned under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana scheme. She said the details of the modernisation work to be taken up priority-wise were discussed with the fishermen along with the officials and the works would be grounded shortly. The Collector visited the Boat building yard constructed with the Kakinada smart city funds at Yetimoga and expressed satisfaction over the progress of various works. Port officer Dharmasastra, Assistant director fisheries Sravani Kumari, Port SE Raghava Rao, AP Maritime Board DE Pullara, smart city SE Satyanarayana Raju, FDOs Anil and Nookaraju accompanied the collector during the visit.

## HOUSING WORKS Show progress or you will be sacked, volunteers warned

PNS ■ BAPATLA

District Collector Vijaya Krishnan has warned of sacking the volunteers if there is no progress in the construction of houses in the Jagananna layouts. The Collector made a surprise inspection of Kodapadu and J Ponguluru secretariats and layouts.

On this occasion, the District Collector said that steps should be taken to complete the construc-

tion of houses at the earliest. She said that the government would give cement and iron to the beneficiaries. Necessary bank loans would also be provided to the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries should be made aware to take up construction of houses expeditiously. The secretariat staffers were advised to provide transparent services in village secretariats.

The secretariat staffers were directed to resolve the grievances within the time limit set by the

government. The Collector inquired about the services provided to the people in the village secretariats. On this occasion, the District Collector inspected the Bulk Milk Centre in Kotapadu village. The Collector interacted with the dairy farmers at the milk collection centre. She inspected the land for constructing a stock warehouse in connection with the RBK in Kotpadu village.

Collector Vijaya Krishnan inspected Jaganna layouts in

Kondamanjuru and Muppavarapu villages. She spoke to the students who were preparing for the 10th class supplementary examinations at Kondamanjuru Zilla Parishad High School. RDO Sarojini, Animal Husbandry Department JD Hanumantha Rao, Housing Construction Department PD Prasad, Panchayat Raj S E Srinivas, Tehsildar Padmavathi, and MPDO Veeranjanyulu were among those who were present.



# Judiciary answerable to 'Constitution and Constitution alone': CJI Ramana

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In India a party in power believes that every governmental action is entitled to judicial endorsement and the opposition parties expect the judiciary to advance their political positions and causes but the "judiciary is answerable to the Constitution and Constitution alone" Chief Justice of India N V Ramana said on Saturday.

He also expressed disappointment that even after 75 years of Independence people have not understood the roles and responsibilities assigned by the Constitution to each Institution.

"As we celebrate 75th year of Independence this year and as our Republic turned 72, with some sense of regret I must add here that we still haven't learnt to appreciate wholly the roles and responsibilities assigned by the Constitution to each of the Institutions. The party in power believes that every Governmental action is entitled to judicial endorsement. The



**"As we celebrate 75th year of Independence this year and as our Republic turned 72, with some sense of regret I must add here that we still haven't learnt to appreciate wholly the roles and responsibilities assigned by the Constitution to each of the Institutions"**

parties in opposition expect the judiciary to advance their political positions and causes", the CJI said at a felicitation function organised by the Association of Indian Americans in San Francisco, USA. He added that this flawed

thinking of all hues flourishes in the absence of proper understanding among people about the Constitution and the functioning of the democratic institutions. "It is the vigorously promoted ignorance among the general public which is

coming to the aid of such forces whose only aim is to run down the only independent organ i.e., the judiciary. Let me make it clear. We are answerable to the Constitution and Constitution alone", he said.

CJI Ramana said that to enforce checks and balances envisioned in the Constitution, "we need to promote Constitutional culture in India. We need to spread awareness about the roles and responsibilities of individuals and institutions. Democracy is all about participation".

He quoted Abraham Lincoln and said, under the Constitution of India, it is the people who are entrusted with the task of passing judgment on the rulers, once every five years. "...the people of India have done their job remarkably well so far. We should have no reason to doubt the collective wisdom of our people. Significantly, the voter in rural India is more proactive in discharging this task when compared to their urban, educated and well-to-do counterparts",

he added. CJI Ramana said both India and the United States are known for their diversity which needs to be honoured and cherished, everywhere in the world.

"It is only because the United States honours and respects diversity, that you were able to reach this country and make a mark through your hard work and extraordinary skills. Please remember. It is the tolerance and inclusive nature of American society that is able to attract the best talents from all over the world, which in turn is contributing to its growth", CJI Ramana said while addressing the Indian diaspora. He added that honouring qualified talents from diverse backgrounds is also essential to sustain the confidence of all sections of the society in the system.

"This principle of inclusivity is universal. It needs to be honoured everywhere in the world, including in India. Inclusivity strengthens the unity in society which is key to peace and progress.

# India slams USCIRF for 'misrepresenting' facts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Saturday slammed the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) for its "biased" and "inaccurate" comments on the country.

The strong reaction from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) came a day after the USCIRF alleged "repression" of critical voices, especially religious minorities and those reporting on and advocating for them in India.

"We have seen the biased and inaccurate comments on India by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said.

He said the comments reflect a "severe lack of understanding" of India and its constitutional framework, its plurality and its democratic ethos.



**The strong reaction from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) came a day after the USCIRF alleged "repression" of critical voices, especially religious minorities and those reporting on and advocating for them in India**

Regrettably, USCIRF continues to misrepresent facts time and again in its statements and reports in pursuance of its motivated agenda. Such actions only serve to strengthen concerns about the credibility and objectivity

of the organisation," Bagchi said. He was replying to media queries on USCIRF's comments on India.

## Mumbai: Mother-daughter duo killed, another daughter, driver commit suicide



PNS ■ MUMBAI

A woman and her daughter were killed allegedly by her other daughter, a teenager, and the family's driver, who later committed suicide at their house in suburban Kandivali here, police said on Thursday.

The woman and her daughter were found dead in a pool of blood, while her other daughter and the driver were found hanging in the premises in the early hours of the day, an official said, adding that a few "suicide notes" were recovered from the spot.

The deaths occurred in the ground-plus-two-storey structure, which served as the family's hospital and house, located near Kandivali railway station, late on Wednesday night, he said.

The victims, Kiran Dalvi (45), her daughter Muskan (26), were found lying in a pool of blood, and her other daughter Bhoomi (17) and

driver Shivdayal Sen (60) were found hanging, the official said. According to the police, Sen had been working as a driver for the family for the last 10 years. Bhoomi and Sen committed suicide after allegedly killing Kiran and Muskan Dalvi.

The police recovered a suicide note from Sen's possession, in which the duo claimed that they had killed Kiran and Muskan over some domestic issues and were ending their lives as well, the official said.

The incident came to light after the police were alerted about a man roaming around with a sickle in his hand at Dena bank junction in Kandivali (west), following which officials reached the spot and searched the area, he said.

Locals informed the police that the man was seen entering the Dalvi Hospital building with two women and they could hear their screams, the official said.

## MP local body polls: Will give free power, water, healthcare if we win, says Kejriwal

PNS ■ SINGRAULI

Aam Aadmi Party national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said the Congress and BJP have cheated the people of Madhya Pradesh and announced that his party would provide free water, electricity and health care if voted to power in the upcoming local body polls.

The elections to 413 urban bodies in MP will be held on July 6 and 13 and AAP, for the first time, has fielded mayoral candidates in 14 of 16 municipal corporations as well as candidates for corporator seats.

"The Congress and the BJP have cheated you. Give us a



chance. I assure you Singrauli will be developed like Delhi where people are availing free water, electricity and health care. Only one party can do it," Kejriwal said at a public gathering while leading an impressive roadshow for his party's mayoral candidate Rani Agrawal here.

"I request the people of Mhya Pradesh to vote for our candidates in the civic elections. Give us one opportunity. If we don't work, kick us out. You have seen the Congress and BJP and their games so far. They don't work. They indulge in setting to rule for five years alternatively," he claimed.

The BJP and the opposition Congress in MP will also have to contend with the Asaduddin Owaisi-led All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), which too is making its local body poll debut.

## Sri Lankan national held with 2 kg gold in Chennai airport

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Over two kilograms of gold worth Rs 98.55 lakh was seized at the domestic airport here and a Sri Lankan national was arrested in this connection, the Customs department said on Saturday. Acting on specific inputs, the officials intercepted the passenger who

arrived here from Mumbai on Friday and recovered 11 bundles of foreign-origin gold paste concealed in his baggage, an official release said here. The gold weighed 2.13 kilograms worth Rs 98.55 lakh and was seized under relevant sections of the Customs Act, 1962. The passenger was arrested, it said.

## Gold smuggling: UDF leaders head statewide protest marches



PNS ■ THRISSUR

The opposition Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) on Saturday took out protest marches to district collectorates across Kerala demanding a comprehensive probe into the allegations that have cropped up against Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his family members in the gold smuggling case.

Besides the district headquarters, a protest rally was taken out to the Secretariat, the administrative hub, in the state capital also.

Senior front leaders, MLAs and former ministers led the marches in various districts criticising the stand being taken by the Left government and the Chief Minister on the issue. Inaugurating the protest rally here, Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly V D Sathesnan alleged that the Chief Minister and his government were on

the defensive on the issue. "Several serious allegations have been levelled against the Chief Minister in the case. We have raised many questions in and outside the Assembly over the issue but neither Vijayan nor any of his party colleagues have given any clear answer," he said. The Congress leader said the Marxist veteran should answer the questions being raised by them.

He also alleged that those who want to shift the focus of the attention in the gold smuggling case were behind the recent attack against the AKG Centre, the CPI(M) headquarters in Thiruvananthapuram. Senior leader Ramesh Chennithala, who flagged off the rally in Kollam, asked why the Chief Minister was yet to file a defamation suit against Swapna Suresh, the prime accused in the gold smuggling case, if her recent revelations against him were wrong.

## Maha: MVA fields Sena's Rajan Salvi for Assembly Speaker post

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena MLA Rajan Salvi on Saturday filed his nomination as the Maha Vikas Aghadi's (MVA) candidate for the post of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Speaker, election for which will be held on July 3.

On Friday, first-time BJP legislator Rahul Narvekar had filed his nomination for the post. While Narvekar represents Colaba Assembly constituency in Mumbai, Salvi is the MLA from Rajapur segment in Ratnagiri district. A special two-day Assembly session has been convened on July 3 and 4. While election for the



speaker's post will be held on Sunday, the newly sworn-in Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, in whose cabinet BJP leader Devendra Fadnis is the deputy CM, will face the floor

test the next day. The MVA alliance consists of the Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress. The government of these three parties collapsed on Wednesday following a rebellion by Eknath

Shinde, who took oath as CM the next day. Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat said Salvi is the opposition's candidate for the election to the speaker's post. Jayant Patil, Dhananjay Munde (NCP), Ashok Chavan (Congress), Sunil Prabhu (Shiv Sena) were prominent among those who were present with Salvi when he filed his papers here. The deadline for filing of the nomination papers was 12 noon on Saturday.

The post of assembly speaker has been lying vacant since Nana Patole of Congress resigned in February last year to become the party's state unit president.

## Parked ambulance plunges into river Chenab in JK's Doda

PNS ■ JAMMU

An ambulance parked at a workshop for servicing, rolled down into river Chenab in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, officials said. No one was present inside the ambulance when it plunged into the river near Ganpath bridge, they said. The CCTV footage of the incident shows the vehicle getting into reverse mode and crossing the road to the other side before disappearing after rolling down several hundred feet into the river.

## MANAGING COVID-19 Niti Aayog releases compendium of Ayush practices

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Government policy think tank NITI Aayog has released a compendium of Ayush-based practices from states and union territories for containing and managing the COVID-19 outbreak, an official statement said.

Releasing the compendium, NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Suman Bery said it is critical to communicate the learnings from the testing times during the COVID-19 outbreak about how Ayush practices imple-



mented at national and state level benefited people. The compendium provides infor-

mation focused on practices adopted by various states and UTs of India for strengthening

the country's fight against COVID-19, using Ayush's resources and interventions, Bery added. Also, speaking at the occasion, NITI Aayog member V K Paul said he is hopeful that practices documented in this compendium will be useful to address any future surge of the pandemic and also serve as a model of an integrative approach to health action. According to the statement, in preparing the compendium of Ayush-based practices, NITI Aayog reached out

to all state governments and administrations of union territories, requesting them to share Ayush practices they have undertaken for Covid-19 mitigation and management.

The report indicates that traditional healthcare systems in the country to be strengthened further, the statement said, adding that the integration of evidence-based Ayush services with the modern system has the potential to significantly strengthen India's healthcare system.

## INDIA CORNER

### Tejashwi makes fresh bid to fish in NDA's troubled waters



RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Saturday made a fresh attempt at fishing in the NDA's troubled waters in Bihar by questioning the manner in which security for the BJP's leaders and offices were ramped up in the state in the wake of violent protests against 'Agnipathi' scheme.

The leader of the opposition came out with a series of tweets accusing BJP leaders, including Deputy Chief Minister Renu Devi, MPs and MLAs, who have been given Y category security, of having no faith in their own double engine government but staying in a coalition with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's (JD(U)) just for the sake of power. Yadav also alleged that deployment of central paramilitary forces at BJP offices was made without taking the state government into confidence and was tantamount to assault on the federal structure.

### SUP ban: Delhi govt gives 10-day grace period to comply



The Delhi government has decided to be lenient towards those violating the ban on single-use plastic (SUP) items for the initial 10 days and has launched a massive campaign to create awareness against the use of such commodities and promote their alternatives. It

will also provide incentives to SUP manufacturing units willing to switch over to green alternatives. Enforcing the ban without providing alternatives to people will be detrimental considering the effect of Covid on businesses and inflation, an official said. Environment Minister Gopal Rai had Friday said the ban comes into effect when the unemployment rate is high. "It is going to affect a large number of manufacturers, distributors and sellers of SUP items. Many people will find it difficult to make their ends meet. These people are our own," he had said.

### NIA to probe killing of chemist in Amravati in Maharashtra



The anti-terror probe agency NIA will investigate the killing of a chemist in Maharashtra's Amravati, the government said on Saturday, after it emerged it might be linked to his social media posts supporting suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma. The

chemist, Umesh Prahlarao Kolhe, was killed on June 21. A Home Ministry spokesperson tweeted that the probe of the case relating to the "barbaric killing" of Kolhe has been handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA). The federal probe agency would thoroughly investigate the conspiracy behind the killing and involvement of organisations and international linkages. Kolhe's killing had taken place a week before two men hacked to death a tailor in Rajasthan's Udaipur before posting videos online saying that they were avenging an insult to Islam.

### Kanhaiya Lal murder accused attacked at Jaipur court



A group of lawyers Saturday attacked the four accused in the Kanhaiya Lal murder case, kicking and slapping them as they were being taken to a prisoner vehicle after being produced in a court here. The clothes of one of

the four accused were also torn, and the agitated lawyers raised slogans against Pakistan and demanded the capital punishment for them. The four persons -- main accused Riaz Akhtari and Ghouse Mohammad, and two others namely Mohsin and Asif -- were produced in a special court here amid tight security arrangements. The court sent the four to police remand till July 12.



# Next round of India-EU FTA talks at Brussels in Sept

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Determined to make cooperative sector more powerful, modern: Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said the government is determined to make the cooperative sector more powerful, modern and transparent by taking many important steps.

Greeting the people on the 100th International Day of Cooperatives, Shah, who also holds the portfolio of home affairs, paid his respects to all the great men who worked tirelessly to strengthen the idea of cooperatives in India. "Along with this, I congratulate all those who have engaged in raising the standard of living of the poorest of the poor through the cooperative sector," the minister said in series of tweets. He further said that the idea of cooperatives is the best medium to realise the vision of all-inclusive development.

India and the European Union concluded the first round of talks for the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) on Friday and the next round of talks is scheduled at Brussels in September, the commerce ministry said on Saturday.

India and the 27-nation bloc resumed negotiations on June 17, after a gap of over eight years, on the proposed agreements on trade, investments and Geographical Indications (GI).

The first round of talks, which began on June 27, concluded on July 1.

India's FTA negotiations were led by Chief Negotiator Nidhi Mani Tripathi, Joint Secretary in the Department of Commerce and the EU was represented by its Chief Negotiator Christophe Kiener, the ministry said in a statement.

The week-long negotiations were held in a hybrid fashion with some of the teams meeting in Delhi and the majority of officials joining virtually.

During the first round, 52 technical sessions covering 18



**India's FTA negotiations were led by Chief Negotiator Nidhi Mani Tripathi, Joint Secretary in the Department of Commerce and the EU was represented by its Chief Negotiator Christophe Kiener, the ministry said in a statement.**

policy areas of FTA and seven sessions on investment protection and GIs were held, it

added. India's bilateral trade with the EU amounted to USD 116.36 billion in 2021-

22. Currently, the EU is India's 2nd largest trading partner after the US, and the second largest destination for Indian exports. "The trade agreement with the EU would help India further expand and diversify its exports of goods and services, including securing the value chains. Both sides are aiming for the trade negotiations to be broad-based, balanced, and comprehensive, based on the principles of fairness and reciprocity, it added.

## Financial services an exciting aspect of UK-India FTA, says Rishi Sunak

PNS ■ LONDON



The financial services sector holds out an exciting prospect of closer exchange between India and the UK with a free trade agreement (FTA) being negotiated between the two countries, according to British Chancellor Rishi Sunak.

In an interaction with reporters ahead of India Global Forum's UK-India Awards celebrating Indian diaspora success within the UK-India corridor on Friday, the senior British Indian Cabinet minister said he sees enormous opportunity for both countries in areas such as fintech and welcomed the opening up of the Indian insurance market.

The minister also expressed his confidence over the Diwali timeframe for an FTA draft to be ready.

There's good progress being made and I think one of the exciting things for me in my role is financial services, he told PTI.

Financial service is an area where there's an enormous opportunity for both of our countries. India's goal is to spread insurance across the entire economy because insurance is a great thing for enabling protection for indi-

viduals and growth. We can help with that in the UK because we have a fantastic insurance industry. And bit by bit we've been able to provide more of those products, services and expertise to Indian firms and citizens and companies, he said.

He also referred to India's plans for a Sovereign Green Bond and the UK having gone through that journey would want to help India raise that capital.

It builds on a tradition of us helping provide capital to India from across the world because one of the defining movements of capital of our time will be the flow of capital from the west into fast growing India. That's an incredibly exciting and significant event. And the UK can really help be the place which allows India the access to the biggest pool of capital on the best possible terms to drive its growth, he said.

In the interaction with the Indian Journalists Association (IJA), the senior Cabinet minister said he is very supportive of India playing an increasingly influential role in the region, and indeed, in the world as a massive economy and the world's largest democracy and an FTA would prove a greater champion of that cause.

The 42-year-old UK-born Indian-origin minister, who said he is looking forward to a visit to India with his family soon, also highlighted the important role to be played by the Indian diaspora in strengthening a partnership of equals between the two countries.

The UK doesn't have a monopoly on opportunity. There's an enormous amount of opportunity in India, we also want to make sure that if this living bridge is going to be a real thing, we have got to make it easier for people in the UK to go to India, to study at world-class institutions to go work in all these amazing start-ups, he said.

## Rajeev Chandrasekhar meets UK PM; discusses India-UK collaborations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Minister of State for IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar met UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Friday and discussed future collaborations and partnerships between India and the UK in innovation and technology sectors, according to an official release.

Briefing reporters later, Chandrasekhar said both India and the UK want to dramatically expand the innovation economy, the release said.

"Union Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar on Friday met UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson along with a delegation of Indian startups, unicorns and innovators," it said adding that they both discussed future collaborations and partnerships between the two sides on innovation and the technology sector.

Chandrasekhar also met



Paul Scully, British MP in this regard.

"We want to take the digital economy to be 25 per cent of the total economy. The UK government also wants to expand the slice of that pie too," Chandrasekhar told reporters.

He also held ministerial roundtable discussions with Priti Patel, Home Secretary-UK, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of

Trade- Government of UK and Chris Philip, Minister for Technology and Digital Economy UK at the India Global Forum.

Chandrasekhar outlined the rapid strides taken by India in the field of technology, and informed that the country is designing 5G gear and manufacturing devices that go into making of 5G products.

Chandrasekhar also attended a session on the Future of Digital at the IGF, UK where he spoke on the rapid digitalisation and the need for safeguarding 'Digital Nagriks' against user harm.

He called for collaboration among countries, especially like-minded democracies, to ensure safety and trust for the users in the boundaryless domain of cyberspace. Safety and trust would be paramount, he said adding that India is keen to work with partner countries in shaping the future of a secure internet.

## Taxpayers face issues accessing e-filing portal; Inty taking measures, says IT dept

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As taxpayers face issues in accessing the e-filing portal, the Income Tax department on Saturday said software provider Infosys is taking "proactive measures" to deal with the 'irregular traffic' on the portal.

"It has been noticed that taxpayers are facing issues in accessing ITD e-filing portal. As informed by @Infosys, they have observed some irregular traffic on the portal for which proactive measures are being taken, the I-T department tweeted.

The new e-filing portal www.incometax.gov.in, launched on June 7, 2021, had a bumpy start with taxpayers and professionals reporting glitches and difficulties in its functioning. Infosys was given the contract in 2019 to develop the portal.

## Hindustan Zinc mined metal production rises 14% in Apr-Jun

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vedanta group firm Hindustan Zinc on Saturday reported a 14 per cent increase in mined metal production to 2,52,000 tonnes for the first quarter of 2022-23.

The rise in mined metal production was due to higher ore production largely at Sindesar Khurd, Rampura Agucha and Kayad mines supported by better mill recovery.

The mined metal output was at 2,21,000 tonnes in the corresponding quarter of previous fiscal, Hindustan Zinc said in a statement.

The refined metal production in the first quarter of the

current fiscal was at 260,000 tonnes, registering a rise of 10 per cent as compared to Q1 FY22 in line with availability of mined metal and better plant availability and flat sequentially. The output of integrated zinc increased by 10 per cent to 2,06,000 tonnes.

"Refined lead production was 54,000 tonnes for Q1 FY23, up 11 per cent as compared to Q1 FY22 and up 9 per cent sequentially on account of better plant availability and Pyro plant operation on lead-mode for part of the quarter," it said. Hindustan Zinc, a Vedanta group company, is an integrated producer of zinc, lead and silver.



## Indian Bank signs MoU with Government of Haryana

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Public sector Indian Bank has inked a pact with the Government of Haryana towards distribution of mobile phones to consumers through e-unified payment interface system, the bank said on Saturday.

As per the agreement, the city-headquartered bank would provide e-upi coupons to beneficiaries. The coupons can be redeemed without any credit or debit card allowing the customers to avail a mobile phone from a designated vendor, a bank statement here said.

Mobile distribution melas would be organised by the bank in Haryana under this initiative, it added.

## Payout for Punjab farmers selling moong below MSP

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a relief for 'moong' growers, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday announced that his government would pay up to Rs 1,000 per quintal for compensating farmers who are selling their crop below the MSP in the market.

The announcement came after some reports suggested that the 'moong' (green gram) was being sold at a rate less than the minimum support price of Rs 7,275 per quintal.

Mann said he has given directions in this regard to the finance department. "In the last few days, questions have been raised on the quality of moong crop," said Mann in a video message. Mann said if a farmer sold crop at Rs 7,000 per quintal, then the state government will pay Rs 275 to him and the crop was sold at Rs



6,500 per quintal, the government will pay the difference of Rs 775. If a farmer sold the crop at Rs 6,000 per quintal, then he will be given Rs 1,000 a quintal, said Mann. The minister further said he has already approved relaxation in existing specifications for the purchase of damaged 'moong' crop. Announcing relaxation in specification for buying

Mann, later in a statement, said there was a total arrival of 2.98 lakh quintals of moong crop in 2021-22 and this year the crop's arrival is expected to be 4 lakh quintals.

The chief minister said 'moong' was sown over 1.25 lakh acres of land this year.

Meanwhile, Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal asked the AAP government to procure the entire 'moong' crop arriving in the state mandis at the MSP as well as compensate farmers for the loss suffered in selling short to private players by July 10. In a statement, Badal said, "We want a clear cut directive to the state agencies to purchase all 'moong' arriving in state mandis as per the MSP. We also want the government to compensate farmers for the losses suffered by them in selling their produce to private players."

## Harish Madhav given additional charge of OIL chairman

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Harish Madhav, Director (Finance), Oil India Ltd (OIL), has taken over the additional charge as Chairman and Managing Director of the nation's second largest national exploration and production (E&P) company.

Madhav was given the additional charge following superannuation of Sushil Chandra Mishra on June 30. Madhav took charge on July 1, an Oil India Ltd (OIL) statement said. He is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and has been Director (Finance) on the Board of OIL since August 2, 2019.

## 12 US lawmakers urge Biden to hold India accountable in WTO

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

A dozen American lawmakers have written a letter to President Joe Biden, urging him to file a formal request for consultations with India at the World Trade Organization (WTO) over its "dangerous trade-distorting practices" that they claim have impacted the US farmers and ranchers.

The Congressmen stated that the current WTO rules allowed the governments to subsidise up to 10 per cent of the value of commodity production.

However, the Indian government continues to subsidise more than half of the value of production for several commodities, including rice and wheat, they said.

India's "lack of rule-following" and the Biden administration's "lack of enforcement" have reshaped the global agricultural production and trade channels by driving down prices, depressing production of rice and wheat commodities, and putting American producers at a disproportionate disadvantage, the Congressmen alleged in the letter.

"India's practices are dangerously trade-distorting on a global scale and impact US farmers and ranchers," the letter read. The lead in the letter was taken by Congressmen Tracey Mann and Rick Crawford. "We urge the administration to file a formal request for consultations with India at the WTO and to continue monitoring other WTO mem-



bers' domestic support programmes that undermine fair trade practices," they said.

The US must not yield for the sake of reaching a consensus. Instead, America must

work to promote solutions that will alleviate the global supply chain and food shortages. It must take actions that will address those consumers most impacted by inflation and rising food prices, the lawmakers demanded. "It is up to the American agriculture to contribute to building resilient conditions for food security for the US and throughout the world, they said. India has defended its stand at the WTO. Several countries and organisations across the world have applauded India for taking a firm stand in protecting the interests of its farmers.

The Geneva-based WTO is an intergovernmental organisation that regulates and facilitates international trade. Governments use the organisation to establish, revise, and enforce the rules that govern international trade.

## MONEY MATTERS

### Bank fraud: ED attaches Rs 90-crore assets of road construction company



Assets worth more than Rs 90 crore of a Hyderabad-based road construction company have been attached under the anti-money laundering law in a case linked to an alleged bank loan fraud, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said on Saturday. A provisional order was issued on Thursday under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to attach 105 land properties located in Telangana (Hyderabad), West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh (Visakhapatnam, Prakasam and Krishna districts) and movable assets worth Rs 7.36 crore, including shareholding of the promoters in the company called Madhucon Projects Ltd, totalling Rs 96.21 crore. The money laundering case stems from a March, 2019 CBI FIR registered against Ranchi Expressways Limited (a Madhucon Group company) and its directors. The case started after the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) awarded a project for four-laning of NH-33 from 114 km to 277.50 km (approx 163.50 km) on Ranchi-Rargaon-Jameshpur section on annuity basis on design, build, finance, operate and transfer (DBFOT) pattern to Madhucon Project Limited on 18.03.2011. A special purpose vehicle called Ranchi Expressway Limited (REL) was incorporated by Madhucon Group to execute this project. Kamma Srinivasa Rao, S Nama Seethaiah and Nama Prithvi Teja were the founder directors of the said company and Madhucon Project Limited was the Engineering Procurement Construction (EPC) contractor of the project," the ED said in a statement.

### Timex to launch Adidas watches, Philipp Plein products in India



Timex Group India will soon launch Adidas Originals watches and products of German luxury fashion house Philipp Plein in the domestic market, as per the company's latest annual report. The company will soon be launching the Adidas Originals watch collection. The new range will blend Timex Group's watchmaking and design expertise and Adidas Originals' street culture inspiration, while keeping in mind the brand's commitment to sustainability," it said. Further, Timex Group India said it will launch products of Philipp Plein, a brand known for use of crystals, studs, multicolour plating, military patterns and innovative combination of precious and refined materials. Last year, Timex Group and Adidas, a global leader in the sporting goods industry, announced a global licensing agreement. The company will further strengthen its brand portfolio by launching popular international lifestyle and fashion brands in India to cater to the high demand in the Premium Fashion and Bridge to Luxury segments driven by upper-middle-class customers and the continued affinity for international brands," it said. Timex said it has been launching strong fashion brands in India. "Guess, Gc, Furla, Ted Baker, Missoni, Adidas Originals, Philipp Plein and UCB, will help in increasing our market share and give ample choice to the consumer. Versace and Salvatore Ferragamo will cater to the consumer in the luxury segment," it added.

### D-Mart Q1 revenue jumps almost 2-fold to Rs 9,806.89 cr



Avenue Supermarts Ltd, which owns and operates retail chain D-Mart, on Saturday reported a nearly twofold rise in its standalone revenue from operations to Rs 9,806.89 crore for the first quarter ended on June 30, 2022. The company had revenue from operations of Rs 5,031.75 crore in the April-June quarter a year ago. Avenue Supermarts informed BSE in a regulatory filing. "Standalone Revenue from operations for the quarter ended (QE) June 30, 2022 stood at Rs 9,806.89 crore," said Avenue Supermarts in a regulatory filing while sharing a company update at the end of quarter. This is also helped by a comparatively low base of the pandemic impacted the corresponding quarter. The total number of stores as of June 30, 2022, stood at 294. In the April-June quarter of FY 2020-21, Avenue Supermarts' standalone revenue was at Rs 3,833.23 crore. It was Rs 5,780.53 crore in the pre-pandemic April-June quarter of FY 2019-20. Promoted by Radhakishan Damani and his family, D-Mart retails basic home and personal products across markets which include - Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, NCR, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Rajasthan.

I'm a big believer in accepting yourself and not really worrying about it  
— Jennifer Lawrence



Not many would be 'charitable' to Thackeray who has now been left with a mere rump of Shiv Sena, which is restricted to only commercial Capital Mumbai, writes DEEPAK K UPRETI

# UDDHAV THE LAST OF THE THACKERAYS ?

**C**an Uddhav Thackeray who quit as Chief Minister of Maharashtra, be justified in saying "Et tu Brute?" to Shiv Sena breakaway group leader Eknath Shinde? Will the average Shiv Sainik buy his allegations that Shinde conspired with the BJP to kill his 'Maha Vikas Aghadi' government?

Not many would be that 'charitable' to Thackeray who has now been left with a mere rump of Sena that is restricted to only commercial Capital Mumbai.

Now that Shinde is in the saddles of the Chief Minister, Uddhav will face an enormous challenge in keeping his hold over the cadres of the Shiv Sena. It may seem a tall order for a man who failed miserably in keeping his legislature party united and faced the mortification of seeing two-thirds of his MLAs deserting him.

The Uddhav-led Shiv Sena, which a few months ago had a plan to go national and contest elections outside Maharashtra, is now fighting for its survival as a political party within the western state.

While the question which is the "real Shiv Sena" would be decided by the Election Commission and the court, the Sena of Uddhav Thackeray is gasping for Oxygen on its own political turf that has been successfully invaded by the new-age Shiv Sainik, steered cleverly by a buoyant BJP leadership.

The lightning strike by 'Shinde-Sena' in the last 10-days and cloak and dagger drama that spread and unfolded in Mumbai, Ahmedabad to Gauwhati have made the Shiv Sena 'panth pradhan' poorer with as many 39 MLAs, leaving him to lead a largely Mumbai-based organization.

But in Mumbai, too, newly-anointed chief minister and rebel leader Eknath Shinde himself has a strong base in Thane, his long-time constituency.

Thackeray may find his Mumbai base further squeezed with several Mumbai MLAs- Sada Sarvankar, Prakash Surve, Yamin Jadhav, Mangesh Kudalkar- going along with Shinde.

Several senior Shiv Sena MLAs who have rebelled and moved with Shinde have deep district and panchayat-level political roots of decades in north Maharashtra, Vidarbha, and the Konkan region and thus would make it very difficult for Thackeray to re-grow his party outside Maharashtra.

Is Thackeray culpable of complacency and living in his ivory towers and dreaming big without working on the ground?

As they say coming events cast their shadows before. The straws in the wind were there for all to see, but the Sena chief turned blind eye to the omen. In the hindsight, he looked to be deep in slumber after a two and a half-year run as Chief Minister in 'Varsha Bungalow', cut off him from "Matoshree", the house built by Bal Thackeray, where common Shiv Sainik, corporators, or MLAs would in the past go and get redressal of their grievances on a day-to-day basis.



AS THEY SAY, COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE. THE STRAWS IN THE WIND WERE THERE FOR ALL TO SEE, BUT THE SENA CHIEF TURNED BLIND EYE TO THE OMEN. IN THE HINDSIGHT, HE LOOKED TO BE DEEP IN SLUMBER AFTER A TWO AND A HALF-YEAR RUN AS CHIEF MINISTER IN 'VARSHA BUNGALOW', CUT OFF HIM FROM "MATOSHREE", THE HOUSE BUILT BY BAL THACKERAY, WHERE COMMON SHIV SAINIK, CORPORATORS, OR MLAS WOULD IN THE PAST GO AND GET REDRESSAL OF THEIR GRIEVANCES ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS.



Shiv Sena lost its second Rajya Sabha seat to the BJP in the recently concluded Rajya Sabha elections with its candidate Sanjay Pawar failing to get nine requisite votes.

Team Uddhav then publicly blamed six of its erstwhile supporters for "betraying" the Sena but failed to set its house in order, which was simmering with charges of "inaccessibility" of Thackeray.

The disconnect was too visible to be ignored by coalition partners. Nationalist Congress Party leader Sharad Pawar said he had "warned" Thackeray to watch out lest he is caught by sudden surprises.

Ignoring the deft moves made by BJP leader and former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis who cleverly 'tapped' the unrest within Sena, Thackeray allowed Raut, a loudmouth and part of his coterie, to make unproductive comments like "Give us control of the ED for two days and we'll get even Devendra Fadnavis to vote for us."

This is the lowest point that the Thackerays have seen since senior Bal Thackeray first entered an alliance in 1989 with the BJP for Lok Sabha and came into power for the first time in

1995 with Manohar Joshi, prominent Shiv Sena leader becoming the CM of the state. Narayan Rane was another Shiv Sainik (who is now with BJP) who occupied the CM post.

Uddhav is seen to have committed a cardinal sin and a tactical blunder in 2019 by himself stepping into Chief Minister's post and not nominating someone from Shiv Sena, a tradition set by his father who continued to be in the hallowed 'Matoshree', seen to be the final court of Justice for all Shiv Sainiks until he died in 2012.

Thus, Uddhav lost the 'moral authority' that the senior Thackeray held over Shiv Sainik by 'abstaining' from power.

But a much greater blunder that Uddhav has been accused of committing is tailoring the "Hindutva agenda" to suit his power goals and joining hands with "secularists" in the MVA coalition government.

It would be difficult for Uddhav to answer the charges of Shinde-led Shiv Sainik that it is he "who has betrayed" the 'ideals' espoused by his father and not them "who continue to fight for a Hindu cause".

With Shinde now occupying the

office of the Chief minister, his camp may, as of now, have an edge in convincing average Sainiks that they are battling to save the "real Shiv Sena" from the clutches of those someone whose strings were pulled by 'secular-left-liberal enemies'.

The success of mass mobilization by two Shiv Sena rival factions would depend on as which side can convince the Sena voters on the "betrayal theme". However, Shinde, a Maratha, may be counted on to make a dent in Sharad Pawar's Maratha vote bank. This could give his faction added fillip at the time of election and also serve the BJP in cutting down Pawar to size.

Amidst all these high voltage political theatrics, it will be interesting to see if the BJP astutely ropes in the mercenary Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) leader Raj Thackeray as the third party in the new ruling combination in Maharashtra.

If the breakaway Shiv Sena Group is to be merged into MNS it would gain the respectability of the Thackeray title or counter cousin Uddhav and further legitimize its existence in the eyes of Shiv Sena workers.

Raj Thackeray who has been inter-

acting with top BJP leadership has, for some time, been warning against loudspeakers in the mosques with 'Hanumanchalis' in Mumbai.

Though Raj Thackeray is doing BJP's bidding vis-vis his cousin, the saffron party yet does not have full confidence in him and is wary of his political intentions. But as of now, though not 'trusted and tested', the other Thackeray may have a place in the BJP game plan for Maharashtra.

The first trial with the fire of Thackeray, post his exit from power, to prove the substance of his side of Shiv Sena to the people of Maharashtra as against the 'Shinde Shiv Sena' would come soon in the BMC, Thane, and Kalyan-Dombivili civic polls.

Uddhav will need to reinvent his politics and prove its 'Hindutva credentials' after he has taken the "secular dip". It is not an easy task after his two and half years of company with MVA allies. His move to rename Aurangabad city as Sambhaji Nagar and Osamabad city as Dharashiv has come too late with the obvious intent already read!

(The writer is a special correspondent of The Pioneer)

# CHECK THOSE TRIGGER POINTS

The Migraine Awareness Month has just concluded. Owing to lack of awareness around migraine—a headache that can cause severe throbbing pain or a pulsating sensation, usually on one side of the head—people afflicted with the disorder often suffer in silence. Very few know that migraine ranks in the top 10 leading causes of years lived with disability, worldwide. THE HEALTH PIONEER brings a detailed report on this commonly prevalent illness and medications available to manage it.

I feel my head pounding when I try to move or when a door slams. It gets much worse when curtains are pulled aside. Bright, white lights make it worse, leaving me feeling dizzy.”

“It’s like I am being hit in the head with a hammer before I am totally incapacitated in bed. Sometimes, it is for days that I am unable to carry out even my daily routine.”

These are just a few testimonies shared by the patients suffering with migraine. Astonishingly, around 1 billion people worldwide have migraine. This makes it the third most common illness in the world, allergies and cold flu being the first two respectively.

In India, over 200 million people have migraine, which remains undiagnosed in many cases. Among the age group of 15-49, migraine is the number one cause of YLD (Years Lost due to Disability). Unfortunately, there is still a lack of awareness around this condition.

Untreated, a migraine attack may last for 4-72 hours, and tension headaches may potentially last for a week, impacting more women than men.

Migraines present as severe and debilitating headaches—usually on one side of the head—that cause a painful throbbing and pulsating feeling and is often accompanied by nausea, dizziness, vomiting and sensitivity to light and sounds.

Chronic migraine is defined as a headache occurring on 15 or more days per month for more than three months, which, on at least 8 days per month, has the features of migraine headache.

Episodic migraine is defined as having headaches on fewer than 15 days a month.

According to a recent study, in India, migraine patients have poor awareness of their headache triggers and do not recognise it unless asked specifically.

The doctors suggest Yoga and meditation that can help the body to recover from stressful events such as migraine episodes. In fact, a study published in 2018 found that Yoga paired with Ayurveda, a holistic form of medicine, reduces migraine symptoms and pain intensity and improves quality of life.

Owing to the lack of awareness around the condition, about 40 per cent of the patients in India end up consulting with a general physician or other doctors for issues related to eyes, digestion, or ENT related problems. According to a study conducted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) less than 50 per cent of people suffering from migraine consult a physician and it is very often confused with sinus, cervical headache, hunger headache and even a hangover.

Therefore, 50 per cent of patients self-medicate as they go to chemists for painkillers.

Reaching out to a specialist, that is a Neurologist, can be truly beneficial for patients suffering from migraine. A neurologist can help dive deeper into the intricacies of the condition and find solutions towards managing it.



**Underdiagnosis and insufficient treatment is due to gaps in knowledge. Understanding triggers help as they could be related to stress.**

hormonal changes, weather changes, sleep cycle, bright lights, etc. There is low awareness regarding the distinction between migraines and home remedies to alleviate symptoms temporarily. With chronic migraine, only 1 in 20 patients find the correct diagnosis and guided treatment. Some chronic and mild conditions have similar symptoms and so, patients are diagnosed with these instead of migraine, which can further delay their treatment therapies.

**DR DEBASHISH CHOWDHURY**  
Head of Neurology Department,  
GB Pant Hospital, Delhi

**A wide range of migraine treatment is available aimed at stopping symptoms, cutting down intensity and attacks and preventing future episodes. Many medications have been designed to treat migraine, its frequency and intensity. Medications used to combat migraines can be pain-relieving medications and injections such as nerve blocks. Then, there are certain devices that are based on neuro-modulation therapies that can be taken monthly or quarterly basis, preventive therapies, and Botox injections which are approved by the USFDA. These all are safe and result-oriented, but should be taken only after consulting a doctor. But best medicines are lifestyle modifications such as avoiding triggers that cause migraine. Then there are evidences that meditations and some stretching exercises too helps in subsiding the illness.**

Asst. Prof. **DR DIVYANI GARG**  
Neurology Department, Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi

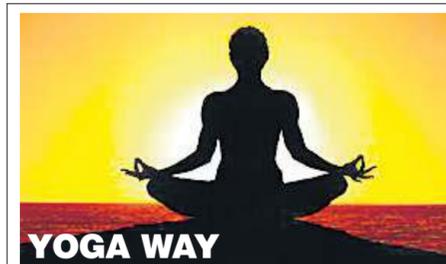
**O**wing to its chronic nature, migraine is one of the non-curable diseases like diabetes or epilepsy, but it is preventable and controllable. Migraines can have a negative impact on not just the patient, but also their families, co-workers and the society, which is why it is important to diagnose and treat patients in a timely manner. By identifying and avoiding the triggers, or

in some cases by using preventive therapy, patients can partially prevent and/or control the disease. Preventive therapy can be highly beneficial for the patients if followed with adherence. As for any other disease, treatment adherence and a healthy lifestyle are two key aspects in order to prevent the disease and live a healthier life.

**DR RK DHAMIJA,**  
Director, Institute of Human Behaviour  
and Allied Sciences (IHBAS) Delhi

**P**eople commonly use medication to treat their symptoms. However, other methods such as Yoga may be an effective way to reduce the frequency and severity of migraine. However, someone who experiences migraine should avoid Yoga classes that are vigorous or involve heat, as well as poses that stress the neck.

**ISHWAR V BASAVARADDI**  
Director, Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga,  
Union Ministry of Ayush, Delhi



● **Loosening Practices:** Neck Movements (Right and left bending/Forward and backward bending)

● **Chest Movements** (Vakshsthal Shakti Vikasaka)

● **Asana:** (Tadasana/Urdhahastattanasana/Kati Cakrasana/ Ardha Ustrasana/Shashakasana/Marjarisana/Vakrasana/ Makrasana/Bhujangasana/Setubandhasana/Saral matsyasyana/Saral Pavanmuktasana/Shavasana)

● **Kriya:** Jalneti (twice a week)/Kapalbhati(daily)

● **Breathing** (Abdominal Breathing/Thoracic Breathing)

● **Pranayama** (Suryabhedan Pranayama/Chandrabhedan Pranayama/ Ujjayi Pranayama/Bhramari Pranayama)

● **Bandha** (Jalandharabandha)

● **Relaxation/ Dhyana** (Yoga Nidra/Dhyana)

## TRIGGERS

Some foods (processed food, ice creams, aged cheeses, salty foods); drinks (alcohol, caffeinated beverages, wines); food additives (monosodium glutamate); stress, bright lights, sounds; missing sleep or too much sleep; intense physical exertion; changes in weather and some medicines like oral contraceptives and vasodilators may trigger migraine.

## REASONS WHY MIGRAINE IS LARGELY MISDIAGNOSED

**Myth:** Migraine is just a headache, and nothing needs to be done about it

**Fact:** If you do not recognize you have a migraine the frequency of the headache starts to increase with the passage of time and taking pain killers to avoid the pain can prompt the next headache to come faster. The frequency of attacks increases this phenomenon, known as a ‘Rebound Headache Phenomenon’, also known as ‘Medication Overuse Headache’ involving from 5 to 10 to 20 attacks a month.

**Myth:** I cannot have migraine because it is a one-sided headache

**Fact:** Migraine can be both-sided, front or back condition.

**Myth:** Only adults have migraine

**Fact:** Children around 6 years of age can also have migraines.

## PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- ◆ Avoid loud noises and bright lights
- ◆ Take breaks from the TV or computer screen to rest your eyes, and adjust the brightness levels on digital screens. Pay close attention to all visual and audio disturbances, and make sure you can easily avoid them if a migraine arises.
- ◆ Pay attention to food choices
- ◆ Keep a headache diary
- ◆ By keeping a diary, you can easily identify your specific migraine triggers.
- ◆ Beware of hormonal changes
- ◆ Take supplements
- ◆ Pay attention to the weather
- ◆ Eat and sleep on a regular schedule
- ◆ Avoid stress: Although we can’t always control stressful situations, we can control how we react to them.
- ◆ Choose relaxing exercises
- ◆ Plan ahead

## NEWS BRIEFS

● Newly-elected MLA from Rajinder Nagar constituency Durgesh Pathak visited Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in Delhi recently on the occasion of National Doctor’s Day and interacted with medics and other healthcare workers. The hospital in a statement said he met Dr D S Rana, Chairman (Board of Management) of the hospital, and other senior officials..

● Tata 1mg, a digital health company, has announced complimentary health check-ups for more than 1,000 doctors across various hospitals in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Dehradun. The participant doctors would be checked on more than 70 health parameters including liver function test, kidney function test, thyroid profile, glucose, lipid profile, vitamin D and vitamin B12.

● The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi has received a patent from the Indian Patent Office for its nanotechnology-based cancer detection system for early and effective identification of prostate cancer. The order was issued by the patent office after the institution amended its claims and submitted all the required documents in recent months.

Last week, Fortis Memorial Research Institute (FMRI) at Haryana’s Gurugram celebrated its completion of 1,000 plus Bone Marrow Transplants (BMTs) at its various sites across the country.

Survivors of blood cancers and blood disorders such as thalassemia or aplastic anemia at the event echoed sentiments and were thankful to their doctors that they got a second chance of life given that the disease is still considered as a death sentence.

In 2020, BLK Super Speciality Hospital in Delhi too crossed 1,000 BMTs. It celebrated the milestone with much fanfare with the BMT recipients who included young, middle-aged as well as elderly persons.

So what’s so special about the BMT procedure that is becoming a sort of achievement in the sector?

“BMT is a suitable treatment for both cancerous and non-cancerous conditions such as sickle-cell anaemia or thalassemia. Relapse in BMT is less compared to the relapse in chemotherapy and therefore, BMT is a well-preferred treatment for blood cancers. In recent years, haploidentical BMT has been observed to give as good a result as a full-matched BMT. With scientific progress and better drugs, India is achieving the current BMT success rates,” explained Dr Rahul Bhargava, one of the leading haematologists in the country and Principal Director, Hematology, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram.

However, a lot remains to be done. Though BMTs are on a steady rise in India, with about 3,000 transplants being performed yearly, there remains a gap as a significant number of patients with blood disorders are also adding up, Dr Bhargava said. He pointed out that while America conducts 930 BMTs in a centre itself, just 3000 BMTs are being conducted in 72 centres across India.

In fact, it is less than 10 per cent of the actual requirement in India. Even today, 90-95 per cent population cannot afford it. No cancer centre is complete without a BMT unit. Unfortunately, 90 per cent cancer centres in the so-called cancer grid

# BMT, A Ray of Hope For Blood Cancer Patients

Even today, 90-95 per cent of the population cannot afford Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT), a special therapy for patients with blood cancers or blood disorders. Unfortunately, 90 per cent cancer centres in the so-called cancer grid are neither planning or allowing BMT units to come up. The Government must make it mandatory to have a BMT centre in each State and all the big cancer hospitals, Dr Rahul Bhargava tells THE HEALTH PIONEER



Dr Rahul Bhargava

are neither planning or allowing BMT units to come up. The Government must make it mandatory to have a BMT unit in each State and all the big cancer hospitals, he suggested.

Moreover, the number of physicians dealing with only blood cancers is few and far between in the country – around 350 to 400 for a population of 1.38 billion. The challenge is that the diagnosis gets delayed.

Explaining the BMT procedure, Dr. Bhargava said: “BMT is like blood transfusion where we collect the stem cells from the peripheral blood after giving growth factors. The growth factors allow the stem cells to move out from the bone marrow to peripheral blood. It is collected from the same machine from which the platelets are collected.



“Once these stem cells are collected they are either stored or they are transfused through the veins in the body.”

Talking about the recent advancements in the sector, he said in blood cancer, apart from chemotherapy, BMT needs to be done so that the survival rate is

increased from the existing 40 per cent to 70 per cent. Moreover, recent advancements like CART-T are on the way which promises increased life to more patients.

Besides the costs involved in setting up a BMT, the sustainability, costs of improvement programmes, the required accreditation, HLA and

blood banking; quality assessments, well-trained doctors and nurses are essential. The BMT should be covered under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme, so that more patients can be covered.

Also, there is a need to increase the donor availability, points out the doctor who has helped set up a few BMT centres in Government hospi-

tals like in Bikaner and Indore.

“Only 30 per cent of patients have an HLA-matched sibling or family donor in India. Therefore, large donor registries should be created. Since BMT is not a surgery but involves only changing the blood through the recipient’s arms and transporting it to the bone marrow, creating a donor pool and spreading its awareness will make BMT accessible to people.

“With BMTs, we are successfully curing incurable diseases like leukaemia, myeloma, thalassemia and also improving the quality of life for the patients.

“Therefore, large donor registries should be created. Since BMT is not a surgery but involves only changing the blood through the recipient’s arms and transporting it to the bone marrow, creating a donor pool and spreading its awareness will make BMT accessible to people,” he stressed.

It’s not that there has been no success in the sector. In cancers like Multiple Myeloma, if survival was three years, now it is six to eight years. Similarly, in Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia (CML) where the survival was five, it is now 30 years. So many people are getting cured due to newer sophisticated drugs in the sector. So, one must understand that blood cancer is no longer a death sentence if detected early, it can be cured. It’s time we end the stigma; spread awareness about the disease to ensure early diagnosis and treatment, said the doctor.

# Hongkongers' forlorn bid to save democracy

Hong Kong completed 25 years of Chinese rule on July 1 this year. However, it has been an arduous journey for the islanders who have copped all the hassle under the tight reign of China. Initially, the Hongkongers didn't realise the hidden agenda of the Communists, but in the last decade, since the coming of Xi Jinping to power in 2012, they have started feeling suffocated under China's constricting grip.

As per the handover agreement between the Chinese Government and the UK, the basic liberties and freedom would be available to the islanders for the 50 years since 1997. At its halfway mark, even the outside world, international community, has realised that the Hongkongers have lost their basic liberties. Now a Chinese security structure is being imposed on the Hongkongers and the law-breakers are branded as anti-nationals. Many of the offenders are transported to the mainland for receiving a Chinese sense of "justice".

The new generation of Hongkongers is getting restless under the over-imposing and suffocating Chinese security state as many underline the fact that the promised rights under the Basic Law are being denied by China. But for Beijing, Hong Kong is an integral part of China and what applies to the mainlanders applies to the islanders. So, there is no point of compromise and discussion on this issue neither by the earlier colonial power, the UK nor by any global governance agency.

As per Beijing's reasoning, any disturbance or deteriorating law and order chaos in Hong Kong is an internal issue of China. Therefore, the rest of the world, particularly the West, should no longer be bothered about it.

The moot point is: Is it as simple as the way the Xi regime has projected it to be? Of course, not. Indeed, Hong Kong is an integral part of China; by no stretch of imagination, it is any longer a colony of the UK after the July 1, 1997 historic handover of the territory to China.

However, as per the historic deal, Beijing was supposed to respect and adhere to the basic rights and liberties available to the Hongkongers till 2047. Till this year, Beijing



A girl poses for a photo at a promotional booth commemorating the 25th anniversary of the handover of Hong Kong from British to Chinese rule at a shopping centre on July 2, 2022

AP

should have not touched the democratic ambience so far enjoyed by the island people. To that end, Xi and his cronies are directly violating the basic freedoms of the locals in Hong Kong. Under the Basic Law, a slew of progressive electoral reforms was also promised so as to bring forth a fully franchise system to elect the members of the Legislative Council of the city, popularly known as the Legco. But eventually, what has come to the forefront is a crude National Security Law and a limited franchise reform measures that now allows only the "patriots" to run for the Hong Kong leadership. And on this June 30, the National Security Law completed two years as it was promulgated on the same date in the year 2020. In fact, the National People's Congress (NPC), the rubber-stamp Parliament of China had revealed its plans of bringing such legislation months before its inauguration.

The root of the Umbrella Movement and various democratic protests lies in the blatant violation of the Basic Law or Mini Constitution under which

the NPC had agreed to respect the autonomy of the territory. In fact, since the formal transfer of the territory, it has been administered as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). Further, the mainland authorities committed to maintaining a unique administrative system "One Country, Two Systems", under which Beijing will follow the Communist pattern and Hong Kong will carry on with the capitalist system of economy and polity. And this autonomy, wherein basic rights and freedoms were to be enjoyed by the Hongkongers will be continued for another fifty years i.e. till 2047. Clearly, many locals were happy that they will be able to have a free life even under the Communist China and will not be affected by the opaque and the authoritarian regime of Beijing.

Today, the international community has voiced concerns against the illegal interference by Beijing in Hong Kong. The most important and far-reaching comment came directly from 10, Downing Street, the office of

the British Prime Minister two years back. In the wake of massive overhauling of the legal administration of Hong Kong, the UK, the former colonial master of the city, proposed a citizenship offer to the islanders in the middle of 2020. The decision has also demonstrated the legacy of British control for nearly a century over this part of China.

When Hong Kong was handed over to China by then UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to Deng Xiaoping, the then President of China, there was a call for issuing this kind of unique citizenship offer from Britain. However, such measures were not considered by the Government of the UK during that time in July 1997.

What has provoked the current Boris Johnson regime to make the citizenship offer to millions of Hongkongers? On November 11, 2020, the Chinese Parliament decided that any Hong Kong legislator who promote or support Hong Kong independence, refuse to recognise China's sovereignty over Hong Kong, seek foreign countries to interfere in the

affairs of Hong Kong, or endanger the national security of Hong Kong, will be in breach of the parliamentary oath and disqualified from the membership of the Hong Kong Legislative Council with immediate effect. This decision of the National People's Congress (NPC) eventually disqualified four members of the Legislative Council.

Back home in London, it was advocated that this sudden move of Beijing was a ploy to harass and stifle all voices critical of the policies adopted by the mainland authorities over the years. Truly speaking, this new rule set by the bosses in China has become another tool to suppress the concerns of the locals in Hong Kong.

Today, the British Government feels that this decision of the NPC directly breaches the legally binding historic Sino-British Declaration signed on 19 December, 1984 in Beijing. The Declaration which came into effect on 27 May, 1985 clearly outlines the administrative arrangement of Hong Kong after the withdrawal of

the UK on July 1, 1997.

What has been highlighted by Westminster today is that China has violated its earlier commitment of providing considerable autonomy to this former colonial territory. In fact, this high degree of autonomy and freedom of speech for Hong Kong was very much guaranteed under the Paragraph 3 and Annex I of the joint Declaration.

The British Government noted that this is for the third time the Chinese Government has breached the legally binding declaration since the handover of the territory in 1997. The first such instance took place in 2016, the second, when Beijing imposed the National Security Law in June 2020, and third, in November of 2020. This clearly indicates what Beijing is aiming to pursue in Hong Kong.

Clearly, China is scared of the democratic spirit of the Hongkongers. It is obvious that the rights and liberties the Hongkongers enjoyed before the Chinese crackdown were ever even imagined for the mainlanders. Hence depriving

islanders of the rights and liberties is a Communist mechanism to assimilate them with the deprived mainlanders.

Now, it is a forlorn hope that there would be a democratic system in the island. The historic "One Country, Two Systems", as mentioned in the Constitution of Hong Kong, has long disappeared. And clearly, Xi, the forever President of China, has directly contributed towards it. The current National Security Law stifles the vibrant civil society of Hong Kong.

The most visible changes are the disappearance of hundreds of pro-democracy groups, activists, newspapers (like Apple Daily and Stand News), websites, booksellers and finally the legislators from the Legco.

The most interesting part of this unwelcoming atmosphere in the city is that today the annual candlelight vigil commemorating the brutal Tiananmen Square of 1989 has been banned by the administration.

Sadly, Hong Kong was ranked at 148th in the world for press freedom index this year. It must be noted here that once the city was known as the beacon of press freedom in Asia. It's tumbling down about 70 ranks in comparison to last year.

To pro-Beijing lawmakers, stringent laws were required to prevent anti-national activities in this part of China. Indeed, to many of them, the island territory was reaching a critical point and its people demanded a peaceful atmosphere. And for many such legislators, the Hongkongers still enjoy enough rights and freedoms in the city state.

Finally, it is apparent that Beijing has prevailed over Hong Kong. It has truly demolished the democratic epitaph of the city. It is certain that the road ahead is arduous for freedom-loving Hongkongers.

(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)

**It seems China is scared of the democratic spirit of the Hongkongers. Therefore it has buried the historic 'One Country, Two Systems', as mentioned in the Constitution of Hong Kong. And clearly, Xi, the forever President of China, has directly contributed towards it**



MAKHAN SAIKIA

## PERSPECTIVE

# Collaborations key to eliminate malaria

**From the tangible progress India's efforts made towards malaria elimination, it is likely that malaria will be history by 2030. What will be required to carry India's progress to the finish line is sustained political will and action, innovative partnerships, strengthened healthcare systems and empowered workers**



KALIKESH SINGH DEO

While Covid-19 continues to dominate headlines and the public health agenda, a crucial health summit was held in Kigali, Rwanda, on June 23, 2022. The landmark Kigali Summit on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) took a step away from talking about the pandemic itself and focused instead on one of its most alarming by-products — the rise in malaria cases and deaths worldwide. Globally, 85 malaria endemic countries witnessed 241 million cases of malaria in 2020, a significant increase compared with 227 million cases in 2019. Malaria deaths also increased, going from 6,96,000 cases in 2019 to 6,27,000 cases the following year.

Recognising the need for immediate action, the global community came together at the Summit to reinforce their commitment to ending Malaria in time to achieve global Sustainable Development Goals. As one of the highest malaria-burden countries in the world, India must consider key takeaways from this Summit and strengthen its efforts to end malaria once and for all.

So far, our commitment to ending malaria has resulted in a steady decline of the disease in India — we were the only high-endemic nation in the world to achieve a 17 per cent

decrease in reported cases between 2018 and 2019 and an even more staggering 45 per cent decrease between 2019 and 2020. Odisha has played a critical role in India's success against malaria. The State reduced its malaria burden by 94 per cent, between 2016 and 2020.

Still, as of 2020, India contributed to 82 per cent of malaria cases and deaths in the South Asian region. This naturally makes us a key player in any global effort to eliminate malaria successfully. As we begin to bring focus back to priority health programmes in India, there are several steps that may be taken to help us achieve our malaria elimination goal. The need of the hour is integration and cooperation, at the programme level and among nations and states, a point that was underscored over and over again at the Kigali Summit.

Regional cooperation in India can address several existing barriers to malaria elimination in the country. Given that States have responsibility for implementing public health programmes, the sharing of best practices would ensure that our successes are replicated across the country.

In Odisha, the pioneering DaMAN programme has contributed to considerable learnings and insights on private

sector collaboration and integrated service delivery.

Odisha mobilised components under other health programmes to afford an inter-sectoral approach to ending malaria that could prove useful to other States as well. By involving, for example, the department of urban development and housing, we could ensure insecticidal spraying to disrupt mosquito breeding cycles. Another example could be the department of Panchayat Raj which ensured village-level community mobilisation by involving elected representatives.

At the national level too, policymakers can play a critical role in supporting elimination efforts by reviewing the implementation of programmes in their constituencies. At the Kigali Summit, the use of digital scorecards by parliamentarians to track core indicators for malaria elimination was highlighted as a measure that allowed countries to tailor services based on district-level needs.

This resulted in concerted action and motivation to accelerate malaria elimination. India already has in place an electronic monitoring database

that organises States in categories based on their levels of malaria. The real-time sharing of this data in the form of scorecards with policymakers, who could review progress against the disease in their constituencies, would provide much-needed impetus to eliminate malaria.

At the same time, while policymakers are key champions for malaria elimination, another key idea that pervaded across the summit in Kigali was the need to inspire every community member to act against malaria. Communities constitute the heart of public

health programming. It is with community engagement, empowerment and ownership that we can succeed against malaria. Thus, continued focus on community-based interventions that educate the community about the importance of using insecticide treated bed-nets, allowing indoor residual spraying and accessing care in a timely manner is crucial.

Odisha has also made innovative use of behaviour change communications to better health responses towards malaria, especially in the Bastar district which has one of the

highest burdens of malaria in the State.

This includes the production and dissemination of creative collaterals like posters, flipbooks, game cards, snake & ladder game, question answer booklets among others.

The State also runs mass awareness campaigns through engagement of district and block level "kalakar sangathans". By empowering community members to comprehend the benefits of anti-malarial interventions and serve as champions who foster greater and greater trust among larger numbers of people, we can soon bring safe and effective measures against malaria to every home in India.

From the tangible progress India's efforts have made toward malaria elimination and from the successes of different countries in successfully ending endemic malaria, it is clear that malaria elimination in India is not only possible but probable by 2030. What will be required to carry India's progress to the finish line is sustained political will and action, innovative partnerships, strengthened healthcare systems and empowered workers working closely with the community to meet humanity's shared goals.

(The writer is a former Member of Parliament)



TEN YEARS OF HIGGS BOSON

# Why this particle could turn physics on its head

Ten years ago, scientists announced the discovery of the Higgs boson, which helps explain why elementary particles (the smallest building blocks of nature) have mass. For particle physicists, this was the end of a decades-long and hugely difficult journey and arguably the most important result in the history of the field. But this end also marked the beginning of a new era of experimental physics.

In the past decade, measurements of the properties of the Higgs boson have confirmed the predictions of the standard model of particle physics (our best theory for particles). But it has also raised questions about the limitations of this model, such as whether there's a more fundamental theory of nature.

**Physicist Peter Higgs predicted the Higgs boson in a series of papers between 1964 and 1966, as an inevitable consequence of the mechanism responsible for giving elementary particles mass.**

Physicist Peter Higgs predicted the Higgs boson in a series of papers between 1964 and 1966, as an inevitable consequence of the mechanism responsible for giving elementary particles mass. This theory suggests particle masses are a consequence of elementary particles interacting with a field, dubbed the Higgs field. And according to the same model, such a field should also give rise to a Higgs particle meaning if the Higgs boson wasn't there, this would ultimately falsify the entire theory. But it soon became clear that discovering this particle would be challenging. When three theoretical physicists calculated the properties of a Higgs boson, they concluded with an apology. We apologise to experimentalists for having no idea what is the mass of the Higgs boson and for not being sure of its couplings to other particles. For these reasons, we do not want to encourage big

experimental searches for the Higgs boson. It took until 1989 for the first experiment with a serious chance of discovering the Higgs boson to begin its search. The idea was to smash particles together with such high energy that a Higgs particle could be created in a 27km long tunnel at Cern in Geneva, Switzerland the largest electron-positron (a positron is almost identical to an electron but has opposite charge) collider ever built. It ran for 11 years, but its maximum energy turned out to be just 5% too low to produce the Higgs boson. Meanwhile, the most ambitious American collider in history, the Tevatron, had started taking data at Fermilab, close to Chicago. The Tevatron collided protons (which, along with neutrons, make up the atomic nucleus) and antiprotons (nearly identical to protons but with opposite charge) with an energy five times higher than what was achieved in Geneva surely, enough to make the Higgs. But proton-antiproton collisions produce a lot of debris, making it much harder to extract the signal from the data. In 2011, the Tevatron ceased operations as the Higgs boson escaped detection again.

In 2010, the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) began colliding protons with seven times more energy than the Tevatron. Finally, on July 4 2012, two independent experiments at Cern had each collected enough data to declare the discovery of the Higgs boson. In the following year, Higgs and his collaborator Fran ois Englert won the Nobel prize for the theoretical discovery of a mechanism that contributes to our understanding of the origin of mass of subatomic particles.



## TROUBLE ON THE HORIZON

Yet the discovery has raised new, fundamental questions. Experiments at Cern have continued to probe the Higgs boson. Its properties not only determine the masses of elementary particles, but also how stable they are. As it stands, the results indicate that our universe isn't in a perfectly stable state. Instead, similar to ice at the melting point, the universe could suddenly undergo a rapid phase transition. But rather than going from a solid to a liquid, like ice transitioning to water, this would involve crucially changing the masses and the laws of nature in the universe. The fact that the universe nevertheless seems stable suggests something might be missing in the calculations something we have not discovered yet. After a three-year hiatus for maintenance and upgrades, collisions at the LHC are now about to resume at an unprecedented energy, nearly double that used to detect the Higgs boson. This could help find missing particles that move our universe away from the apparent knife-edge between being stable and rapidly undergoing a phase transition. The experiment could help answer other questions, too. Could the unique properties of the Higgs boson make it a portal to discovering dark matter, the invisible substance making up most of the matter in the universe? Dark matter is not charged. And the Higgs boson has a unique way of interacting with uncharged matter.

The same unique properties have made physicists question whether the Higgs boson might not be a fundamental particle after all. Could there be a new, unknown force beyond the other forces of nature gravity, electromagnetism and the weak and strong nuclear forces? Perhaps a force that binds so far unknown particles into a composite object we call the Higgs boson? Such theories may help to address the controversial results of recent measurements which suggest some particles do not behave exactly the way the standard model suggests they should. So studying the Higgs boson is vital to working out whether there is physics to be discovered beyond the standard model. Eventually, the LHC will run into the same problem as the Tevatron did. Proton collisions are messy and the energy of its collisions will only reach so far. Even though we have the full arsenal of modern particle physics including sophisticated detectors, advanced detection methods and machine learning at our disposal, there is a limit to what the LHC can achieve.

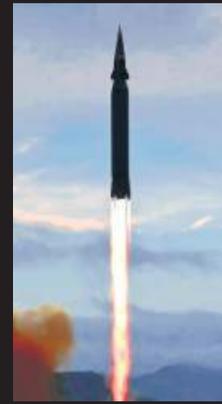
people. The timing of both attacks appeared to be juxtaposed with the European meetings of U.S. President Joe Biden, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron, all supporters of Ukraine. Defying the evidence, Putin and his officials deny that Russia hit residential areas. Putin has denied that Russian forces targeted the Kremenchuk mall, saying it was directed at a nearby weapons depot. But Ukrainian officials and witnesses said a missile directly hit the mall. It was hardly the first time that bursts of violence were widely seen as signals of Moscow's displeasure. In late April, Russian missiles struck Kyiv barely an hour after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy held a news conference with visiting U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. This says a lot about Russia's true attitude toward global institutions, Zelenskyy said at the time. Kyiv's mayor called the attack Putin's way of giving the middle finger.

The Russian president recently warned that Moscow would strike targets it had so far spared if the West supplied Ukraine with weapons that could reach Russia. If Kyiv gets long-range rockets, Russia will draw appropriate conclusions and use our means of destruction, which we have plenty of, Putin said. On Friday, a day after Russian forces made a high-profile retreat from Snake Island near the Black Sea port city of Odesa following what Ukraine called a barrage of artillery and missile strikes, Russia bombarded residential areas in a coastal town near Odesa and killed at least 21 people, including two children. While Russia's messaging

## Russia's messages with missiles tell West to back off

when missiles struck the capital on June 26, three days after EU leaders unanimously agreed to make Ukraine a candidate for membership.

It was maybe a symbolic attack as the Group of Seven leading economic powers and then NATO leaders prepared to meet and apply further pressure on Moscow, he said. At least six people were killed in the Kyiv strike, which pummeled an apartment building. The former commanding general of U.S. Army forces in Europe, retired Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, went further in connecting the attack and the meetings. The Russians are humiliating the leaders of the West, he said. A day after the Kyiv attack, as G-7 leaders met in Germany to discuss further support for Ukraine during their annual summit, Russia fired missiles at a crowded shopping mall in the central Ukrainian city of Kremenchuk, killing at least 19

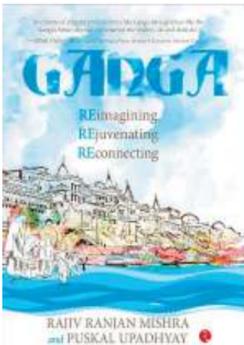


can be blunt and devastating, Ukraine's signals under Zelenskyy have focused daily on seeking to amplify Moscow's cruelty to a world that day by day risks becoming weary of the war. If interest fades, the concerted support seen at global summits could fade, too, and with it the urgency to deliver the heavier weapons that Ukraine craves. Zelenskyy tends to pair pleas for more help with reminders that all of Europe ultimately is at stake. He described the mall attack as one of the most daring terrorist attacks in European history.

For all of Ukraine's indisputable suffering, it was a bold statement of some hyperbole in the context of extremist attacks with mass deaths in Paris, Nice, Brussels, Madrid and London in this century alone. For Zelenskyy and Ukraine, the underlying demand cannot be reiterated enough: provide more heavy weapons, and faster, before Russia perhaps makes irreversible gains in the eastern industrial region of the Donbas, where street-by-street fighting grinds on. In his nightly public addresses, Zelenskyy also makes sure to capture the traumatic toll on everyday life in Ukraine, appealing well beyond global leaders to the wider world. This week, he accused Russia of sabotaging people's attempts to live a normal life.

## Reimagining, rejuvenating water bodies

Taking charge of cleaning and maintaining water bodies, lakes and stretches of rivers can go a long way in nurturing and sustaining them for the future and will also help reduce the carbon footprint of the country, says a new book on Ganga rejuvenation.



In "Ganga: Reimagining, Rejuvenating, Reconnecting", authors Rajiv Ranjan Mishra and Puskal Upadhyay describe among other issues how the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) team took up its task keeping in mind not just the enormity of it but also the scar of past failures of cleaning the river. Apart from being India's longest and most revered river, Ganga and its tributaries traverse 11 states and provide a livelihood to nearly 43 per cent of Indians. But Ganga has been getting polluted, with its ecology and flow endangered. Many initiatives to clean the river ended up either being hugely inadequate or dismal failures. And this haunting legacy stayed with the NMCG team every step of the way in its long, complex and daunting journey, say Mishra, a former DG of NMCG, and Upadhyay, financial advisor at NDMC. From the beginning, the team adopted a radically different and holistic approach to resolve the "wicked problem" while dealing with multiple stakeholders and their clash of ideas on the road ahead. The book, published by Rupa, chronicles this long and

complex journey so far transcending the challenges of over-abstraction of water, pollution abatement, bringing behavioural change, and making collaborative partnerships to achieve their goals. Since the establishment of NMCG in 2011 and the launch of Namami Gange in 2014, many facets of rejuvenation like clean villages, ghats and crematoriums, improving ecology and flow, biodiversity and wetland conservation, plantation, strengthening People-River connect, research, knowledge dissemination, and public participation have been initiated. These efforts aim to make the river not just clean but also rejuvenated, a concept still new to many countries, the book says. "This achievement is phenomenal for any river conservation project in modern India, especially by an entity that grew and continued with the programme. In the process, its human capital, i.e., its employees, kept growing and produced tangible outcomes and laid the foundation of a model for other rivers," it says. The authors say sustaining the river needs sustaining its ecology and creating conditions so that the river can continue to perform its ecosystem services. "This means that we need to focus with systems approach and look at water, sediments, aquatic life, catchment area, etc. all taken together." They rue that most industries only pay lip service to environmental concerns

and minimally comply with legal requirements. "Commitment towards nature is lacking even though issues of environmental, social, governance (ESG) and sustainability of businesses have increasingly become important for regulators and investors at home and abroad. "Thus, taking charge of cleaning and maintaining water bodies, lakes and stretches of the river can go a long way in nurturing and sustaining them for the future and will also help reduce the carbon footprint of the country," the book says. The authors feel that the management of water resources, including rivers, has to be looked at through a more holistic lens where water is not just a resource to be exploited, but one that sustains economies and ecosystems into the future. "The integrated management of both surface and groundwater and how they interact with society and the economy is a starting point towards water security and sustainability of the river," they write. There is also an urgent need for states to come together to discuss, analyse and strategise their water management plans, and is perhaps the first step in this direction, they say. Secondly, the job of sustaining the river should become the responsibility of both the urban local bodies and residents of the state, which calls for a bottom-up approach to the whole issue, they add. The book also says that the revival of the river has seen the return of certain aquatic life, long declared dead or extinct. For instance, the Ganga Dolphin, which had gone missing for some time now, has suddenly become visible near Varanasi and other stretches of the Ganga. The Ganga Praharis in Kolkata have reported sightings of the Bengal shark, not seen since 1965, it says.

A man has been booked for allegedly placing a fake robbery call to grab his wife's money in west Delhi's Paschim Vihar area, officials said on Friday. The accused has been identified as Raman Bholu, a resident of Paschim Vihar, they said, adding that he was under debt. On Wednesday, police got information regarding robbery of Rs 2 lakh by two unidentified suspects. Police reached the spot and the caller was contacted who said that he had gone to Balaji Action hospital. Police reached there and met Bholu who claimed that he had withdrawn Rs 2 lakh from a bank and was going home. He stopped to fetch his water bottle from his car parked near his house, a senior police officer said. One person came there and enquired about an address. Meanwhile, someone hit him from behind due to which he fell on the ground and became unconscious, the officer said, adding that when he got up, his bag containing cash was found missing. He was continuously changing his statements and alleged that two unidentified bike-borne suspects snatched his bag, police said. Police scanned the footage of CCTV cameras installed

### MAN COOKS UP ROBBERY STORY TO GAIN WIFE'S MONEY

long the entire route thoroughly and found that nothing such took place as was being claimed by the complainant. He was shown all the CCTV footage, following which he confessed that he had concocted this story. He was booked under section 182 (false information with intent to cause public servant to use his lawful power to the injury of another person) of the Indian Penal Code for making the fake call, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Sameer Sharma said. During interrogation, the accused disclosed that he worked as a delivery agent for e-commerce websites and used to take huge orders for the delivery of the items, the DCP said. He incurred huge loss during the COVID-19 pandemic and came under debt. He needed money to pay off his dues. His wife, a private school teacher who also gives home tuitions, had saved Rs 8 lakh to buy a plot.

## Struggling in the dark to cope with power cuts

South Africans are struggling in the dark to cope with increased power cuts that have hit households and businesses across the country. The rolling power cuts have been experienced for years but this week the country's state-owned power utility Eskom extended them so that some residents and businesses have gone without power for more than 9 hours a day. A strike by Eskom workers added to the utility's woes including breakdowns of its aging coal-fired power plants, insufficient generation capacity and corruption, according to experts. The prolonged power cuts are hitting South Africans in the winter months of the Southern Hemisphere when many

households rely on electricity for heat, light and cooking. Small and large businesses have had to close down for prolonged periods or spend large amounts for diesel fuel to operate generators. Anger and frustration is widespread among business owners and customers at the power cuts, which Eskom calls load shedding. The power blackouts are here to stay say experts who warn it will take years to substantially increase South Africa's capacity to generate power. South Africa mines coal and relies heavily on coal-fired plants, which causes noticeable air pollution. The country is looking to increase power production from solar and other renewable sources. The big picture is that we were at least expecting (heavy power cuts) this winter," said energy expert Hilton Trollip. "Eskom told us at the end of last year that

there was a chronic power shortage ... What that means is that until we have a substantial amount of extra generation on the grid, we will continue to be at the risk of load shedding at any stage. The question then is how bad will the load shedding be? He lamented the impact of the blackouts on the economy. The most direct economic consequence is when businesses have to stop production because they don't have electricity ... whether you have a factory, a travel agency or you have a shop," said Trollip. "Whenever economic activity is disrupted because there is no electricity, that is a direct cost to the economy. The power cuts are costing South Africa well over 40 million per day and deterring investment, say economists. South Africa's economy, Africa's most developed, is already in recession and is suffering a 35% unemployment rate. Small businesses in the country's townships, suburbs and rural areas are among the hardest hit by the effects of the rolling blackouts, said Trollip. Buhle Ndlovu, a teacher at a nursery school in Soweto, Johannesburg's largest township, said the power cuts increased her costs to run the school. We cater to about 40 children here. We need to feed healthy meals to them daily," said Ndlovu. "At the rate we charge we can't afford to take on additional costs to buy gas in order for us

to cook. Loadshedding has really made it difficult for us. She said it is a challenge to take care of children by candlelight until parents come to pick up their kids well after dark. Some shops, however, are getting new business from the power cuts, like Uri's Power Centre which is seeing brisk sales of power generators, batteries and other backup systems. I



think people should definitely look to become less reliant on Eskom. I don't believe that the power situation is going to resolve itself any time soon," said owner Adam Zimmerman at his shop in the Randburg area. We're all aware of Eskom problems and people have various options whether to invest in a generator to run their business or home.