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It's a grand final for us:



MILLION JOBS

Doing Sarvam Shakthi Mayam was Priyamani's divine **CALLING**

politics. I am thinking of retiring from politics on an auspicious day. After 2018, politics have become very commercial. It is better to avoid commercial politics. As I have been in politics for 30 years I think it is better to retire in October or November

QUOTE OF THE DAY

the pioneer

I am not cut out for commercial

Uttam Kumar Reddy, Congress MP

Pawan's 'Varahi Yatra' from ...

Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalya will undertake 'Varahi Yatra' from June 14 and he will address the first public meeting at Kattipudi. Informing this to the media while addressing a press meet at JSP State headquarters in Mangalagiri on Friday, Jana Sena political affairs committee chairman Nadendla Manohar said Pawan Kalyan would address a public meeting in every Assembly constituency

Perni flays Naidu's stance ...

Former Minister Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) has voiced his criticism of TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu for his stance on the bifurcation of united Andhra Pradesh state nine years ago. Perni Venkataramaiah stated that Chandrababu's recent expressions of support for the separation are mindless and shameful. He also accused Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy of not ...

Govt to get more than Rs 4,000 cr...

The Coal India share sale was over-subscribed by both retail and institutional investors and the government is expected to get more than Rs 4,000 crore. In the two-day offer for sale (OFS), the government sold its 18.48 crore shares or 3 per cent stake in Coal India at a floor price of Rs 225 apiece. At the floor price, the stake sale would fetch over Rs 4,000 crore to the exchequer. Institutional investors had on Thursday put in bids for over ...

-PAGE: 8

India shouldn't pick WTC XI ...

India should not pick the playing XI for the World Test Championship final with a predetermined mindset like they did two years ago, says former chief selector MSK Prasad, who feels it would be very tough to fill the injured Rishabh Pant's shoes as his overseas feats are unparalleled. India's move to pick two spinners — Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja in the 2021 WTC final against New Zealand backfired as pacers dominated the game in .

CM flags off subsidised tractors, harvesters for farmers' groups



PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy formally flagged off tractors, com-

ond phase of the 'YSR Yantra Seva Scheme' here on Friday. The Chief Minister also formally launched 4019 YSR Yantra Seva Kendras. Handing over 2,562 tractors, 100 combine harvesters and 3,573 bine harvesters and other farm machines to the RBKs-attached farm machinery worth Rs farmers' groups, the Chief Minister said 361.29 crore under secthat 40 % subsidy would be given on pur-

chase of these machines while 50 % of the cost is arranged through loans and the groups are asked to pay 10 per cent of the cost. The Chief Minister directly released Rs.125.48 crore of subsidy into the bank accounts of farmers' groups with the click of a button. The tractors and harvesters would be at the disposal of 10,444 RBKs, he said, adding that cluster level community hiring centers (CHCs) would super-



50 dead, over 350 hurt in Odisha triple train crash

PNS BALASORE/HOWRAH

At least 50 people were killed and more than 350 injured in a horrific triple train crash on Friday in Odisha involving the Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express, the Shalimar-Chennai Central Coromandel Express and a goods train, officials said.

They said several coaches of the 12864 Bengaluru-Howrah train travelling to Howrah derailed at Bahanaga Baazar in Balasore district and fell on adjacent tracks.

These derailed coaches collided with 12841 Shalimar-Chennai Central Coromandel Express and its coach-

es capsized too," a senior official said. A goods train was also involved in the accident as the coaches of the Coromandel Express hit its wagons after getting derailed, the official

The accident happened around 7

Over 350 people have been admit-

district, officials said, adding that all private and government hospitals have been put on alert in the nearby districts, including state capital Bhubaneswar.

So far, 50 bodies could be brought out from under the overturned coaches, they said.

Several people were trapped under the derailed coaches, and locals were assisting emergency services personnel to rescue them, but darkness was hindering the operation. Railway Minister Ashwini

Vaishnaw said he was rushing to the accident site.

"Rushing to the site in Odisha. My orayers for the speedy recovery of the njured and condolences to the reaved families.

Rescue teams mobilised from Bhubaneswar and Kolkata. NDRF, State govt. teams and Airforce also mobilised. Will take all hands required for the rescue ops," he tweeted.



Margadarsi MD ready

to be quizzed on June 6

The Crime Investigation

Department (CID) of Andhra

Telangana poised to conquer more peaks

KCR reels out State's achievements

NAVEENA GHANATE

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao said that Telangana needs to cross many more milestones.

Speaking at the Telangana Formation Day function held at the Secretariat he said, "Telangana needs to cross many more milestones and conquer many peaks. With your blessings, I promise that I will continue to work for the all-round development of Telangana. The Telangana government is trying to spread the spirit of Telangana throughout the country. Telangana will progress into a prosperous state where everyone will prosper and have equal opportunities." KCR said that another $\hat{50}$ lakh acres will be irrigated in the next two to three years and the dream to provide irrigation to 1 crore 25 lakh acres in the state will be achieved soon. In his one hour and

- TS per capita income soars to 3.17 lakh
- GSDP has increased to Rs 12,93,469 crore.
- Within nine years, Telangana has become an inspiring state in many fields

26-minute speech, KCR said that Telangana has ushered in the golden age of welfare with the slogan 'Let's increase wealth and share it with others." In 2014, the per capita income of Telangana was only Rs 1,24,104. Due to the progress achieved by the Telangana government, today the per capita income of our state has increased to Rs 3,17,115.



98 killed, 310 injured in Manipur violence

A total of 37,450 people are in 272 relief camps at present, said the statement,

issued by the Chief Minister's

Office (CMO). In all, 4,014

cases of arson have been

on May 3.

reported since the violence

At least 98 people lost their lives and 310 others were injured in the ethnic violence in Manipur that broke out a month ago, the government said in a statement on Friday.

A total of 37,450 people are in 272 relief camps at present, said the state-Office (CMO).

In all, 4,014 cases of arson have been reported since the violence broke out in the state on May 3, it said.

"The number of deaths is 98 and the number of injured reported is 310," it

Over the last one month, the state

police has registered 3,734 cases and arrested 65 people for their involvement in the violence, the statement

"Sporadic incidents of firing or

becoming rare now as coordinated effort is made by different security agencies," it said. The Army, Assam Rifles, CAPFs and local police have been deployed

torching of houses by miscreants are

in vulnerable places, it added. Till now, 84 companies of central armed forces have been deployed, the

"More companies are being

deployed. Flag march and area domination exercises are being carried out widely. Search operations will be conducted from today to recover snatched arms and ammunition," it said.



Pradesh police is reportedly making preparations to arrest Ch Sailaja Kiran, the managing director of Margadarsi Chit Funds Private Ltd and daughter-in-law of media baron and Eenadu group chairman Ch Ramoji Rao.

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Recently, the CID authorities had attached movable assets worth Rs 793 crore belonging to Margadarsi. In addition to this, lookout notices were issued for Sailaja Kiran, who is accused of absconding and evading questioning in relation to the alleged irregularities associated with Margadarsi.

Currently, Sailaja is in the United States to attend her children's graduation ceremony. She filed a petition in the High Court clarifying that she was not absconding, but had travelled to the US for legitimate reasons.

According to the CID, Sailaja was initially served notices for questioning on June 3. However, she requested an extension until June 6 and left for the US without informing the

Viveka case adjourned to June 5

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The CBI court in its ruling on Friday made a recommendation to the Hyderabad District Magistrate regarding the special categorisation of YS Bhaskar Reddy as a trial prisoner. Accordingly, the request was obliged. In another development, the CBI court conducted a hearing on Friday to address the petition seeking permission for the ninhydrin test, which is based on Viveka's letter. Gangi Reddy and Sunil Yadav submitted their counters in response to the CBI petition. Dastagiri, on the other hand, informed the CBI court that no counter had been filed from his side. The court adjourned the hearing until June 5.

APPSC Group - I Main exams from today



APPSC Chairman D Goutham Sawang inspecting a Group- I exam centre in Vijayawada on Friday.

Arrest WFI chief Brij Bhushan by June 9

Gautam Sawang, Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC), has directed officials to strictly adhere to guidelines during the upcoming Group-I Main Examinations scheduled from June 3 to 10. During his visit to two exam centres in Vijayawada on Friday, Sawang provided suggestions and instructions to the officials, emphasising the importance of maintaining protocol.



People should not take calls from 'unknown' numbers

PNS NEW DELHI

Telecom Minister Ashwini to not pick mobilephone calls from "unknown numbers" and asserted that measures taken by the ministry have resulted in a significant reduction in spam calls and cases

of cyber frauds. "People should never pick calls made from unknown numbers. I request every citizen that they should respond to calls from only they recognise," he told reporters. such callers, the minister said.

He was responding to a question about spam calls and cyber frauds. Vaishnaw said his ministry had Vaishnaw urged people on Friday recently launched the 'Sanchar Saathi' portal to prevent spam calls and cyber frauds. Over 40 lakh wrong

> wrong "points of sale" agents were blacklisted, he added. The use of artificial intelligence has helped significantly to reduce

SIMs and 41,000

these cases, he said People should respond to unknown numbers only if an (telephone/mobile) those numbers identification message is sent from

Demands 'Khap mahapanchayat'in Kurukshetra

PNS KURUKSHETRA (HARYANA)

A "khap mahapanchayat" here on Friday demanded the arrest of outgoing Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief and BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, accused of sexually harassing some women wrestlers, and gave the government time till June 9 to act on its demand.

The meet deliberated on the next steps to be taken in the agitation pertaining to the wrestlers issue.

Talking to reporters after the "mahapanchayat", Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait said WFI chief Singh should be

He said they are giving the gov-



Delhi for protest.

BKU chief Tikait said that they are giving the government time till June 9 to act on the demand, else the agitation will be intensified by holding panchayats across the country and the wrestlers will return

ernment time till June 9 to act on the including Haryana, Punjab, demand, else the agitation will be Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. intensified by holding panchayats across the country and the wrestlers will return to Jantar Mantar in

Farmer outfits had held a "khap mahapanchayat" in Uttar Pradesh and a series of protests in Punjab and Haryana on Thursday, showing sol-Representatives of various khaps idarity with the wrestlers who have and farmers' outfits reached the Jat accused Singh of sexually harassing Dharamshala from different places, female grapplers, including a minor.



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

winning cricket team on Friday came out in support of the protesting wrestlers and urged

them not to take any hasty decision while hoping that players' Members of the 1983 World Cup issues will be "heard and



June 2: Bouquets & brickbats get swapped

une 2, 2014, was a momentous day for everyone in Telangana. It was the day for which the people of Telangana fought for decades, and finally, after many sacrifices, including the ultimate sacrifice by hundreds, in the two-stage historic movement spanning decades, Telangana became a separate state inside India.

Behind the passionate struggle for a separate state were the hopes of the people of Telangana. These hopes, in a nutshell, revolved around two primary things: firstly, ownership and control of resources like water (Neellu), finances (Nidhulu) and jobs (Niyamakaalu), and secondly, social justice for all sections (Saamajika Telangana).

Although the Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR)led BRS government in Telangana has poured cold water over these dreams and has taken the state backwards in many things in the last nine years, today will be a day to remember and thank all those who contributed to realising the Telangana state.

To begin with, I want to congratulate and share my best wishes with the people of Telangana on the ninth anniversary of Telangana Formation Day. Starting today, Telangana enters the tenth year of statehood, and I wish Telangana and all Telanganaites success.

I pay homage to the

Telangana Martyrs who sacrificed their lives for a Telangana state. Without their sacrifices, Telangana would not have become a reality today. Not just this generation but all future generations of Telanganaites will be heavily indebted to them. It becomes the duty of every **Behind the passionate struggle for a** separate state were the hopes of the people of Telangana. These hopes, in a nutshell, revolved around two primary things: firstly, ownership and control of resources like water (Neellu), finances (Nidhulu) and iobs (Nivamakaalu), and secondly, social justice for all sections (Saamajika Telangana).

Telanganaite to strive sincerely towards the kind of Telangana they dreamt of to repay at least in part the debt we owe them.

I pay tributes to the late Atal Behari Vajpayee, whose steadfast belief that smaller states would benefit the country by improving administration and speeding up development provided the ideological support for the creation of smaller states

in general and Telangana in particular.

Another national leader

to whom Telangana is indebted is the late Sushma Swaraj. The affable leader, fondly called Telangana Chinnamma (mother's sister), made a case for Telangana's statehood in Parliament like no other leader. No Telanganaite can forget the passionate pleas

she made to the ruling party

KISHORE POREDDY

and its leaders to bring a Bill granting statehood to Telangana, assuring them they would get hundred per cent support from the BJP for passing the Bill. Moreover, her motherly appeal to the youth of Telangana not to commit suicide but to live for Telangana showed her affection for the people, especially the youth of Telangana. On this occasion, I take the opportunity to remember

her and pay my respects.

I also thank the BJP, the first national party to support Telangana statehood by passing an official resolution in 1997, long before the second stage of the struggle for Telangana gained traction.
This support by a national party laid the foundation for the second stage of the TS movement that would soon start in earnest.

At the same time, I would like to thank all intellectuals, poets, artists, activists and leaders of the BJP, the then Telangana Rashtra Samithi, the Congress and the Communist Party of India, who put aside politics to project the singular will of the Telangana people for a separate state.

Although the present gov-

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief Nara Chandrababu

Naidu has emphasised the party's commitment to ensur-

ing equal justice for both Andhra Pradesh and

Telangana since the states were divided nine years ago.

Highlighting the historical

significance of the TDP and its

founders, Naidu praised the

efforts of Potti Sriramulu and late NT Rama Rao in advocat-

ing for the progress of the

Telugu community. He further

stated that the TDP has

achieved notable results glob-

ally through its Vision-2020

initiative within a relatively

Naidu said that the TDP has

always strived to create and

been callous and even became antagonistic towards them after the state's formation, the students, especially those of the Osmania and Kakatiya Universities, and government employees who spearheaded the Sakala Janula Samme (All People's Strike), deserve our thanks and respect for their steadfast

and untiring participation

in the movement for state-

hood.

ernment, led by KCR, has

I also thank all those TS leaders who were ignored and on some of whom even the police were unleashed by our very own Telangana government after the state's formation. Although the KCR government had mistreated you, Telangana is grateful for your contributions.

also wish a happy Telangana Formation Day to not only all those who led,

TDP fought for equal justice

for both Telugu states: Naidu

participated, supported and helped, but also to those who opposed a Telangana state and became dearest to our Chief Minister KCR like Asaduddin Owaisi of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul-Muslimeen (AIMIM), and the leaders of the CPM.

And finally, I wish our Education Minister, who as the then Home Minister unleashed the police and filed numberless criminal cases, and the leaders of all political parties who disparaged, ridiculed and even personally attacked those fighting for a Telangana state, but are today ministers and MLAs in the BRS, a delightful Telangana Formation

Jai Telangana.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson)

the current lack of development in the state, Naidu compared it to the TDP's previous

tenure, during which substantial efforts were made to

improve basic amenities.

Naidu cited the transformation of Visakhapatnam into an IT hub during the TDP regime,

contrasting it with the report-

ed increase in illicit activities

such as ganja cultivation and

at the alleged filing of false

cases against employees who

demanded their salaries.

Observing the prevailing situ-

ation, he expressed deep con-

cern and asserted that the

TDP would shoulder the

responsibility of advancing the

state and addressing these

Naidu also expressed dismay

drug sales in the city.



Telangana, the best example of India's pluralism: Abdul Nazeer

10th Telangana Formation Day celebrations held at AP Raj Bhavan

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Telangana State has been, for a long time, a meeting place of diverse languages and cultures and the best example of India's composite culture, pluralism region was well-known for its Pradesh Governor S Abdul Nazeer. He was the chief guest

at the 10th Telangana Formation Day celebrations held at Darbar Hall in Raj Bhavan here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, the Governor added that Telangana

the Telangana Formation Day mutual understanding between

brings people of different States together and gives us an opportunity to know each other in a better perspective," said the Governor, 'Ek Bharat, Shresth Bharat' programme aims to forge a strong relationship and ding among all the people "Celebrating occasions like of the country, and promote

different States and Union Territories, through the concept of oneness and enrich the spirit of national integration.

N Chandana, S Bhanu Santoshi, K Bhagya Suseela and Ch Sravya enthralled the Bathukamma dance performance. Nitya rendered ed the programme.

Annamacharya Keertana, while P Aparna, Anantha Sriya, Preran, P Bhavya and Megha Lara, students from Telangana Vijayawada, shared their expebers of Raj Bhavan also attend-

studying in various educational institutions in and around

triumphant team said it was distressed and disturbed after seeing the visuals of wrestlers being manhandled but also hoped Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik

Continued from Page 1

In a joint statement, the 1983

and Bajrang Punia, who have been demanding the arrest of Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Birj Bhushan Sharan Singh for alleged sexual exploitation of women wrestlers, took their protest to Haridwar on May 30 but did not carry out

the threat of immersing their medals into holy river Ganga.

Cricket legends support...

distribute assets equitably

among the people. Despite

facing a deficit budget, the

party took various measures to

propel Andhra Pradesh

towards progress through its

'Nava Nirmana Deeksha' cam-

paign, aimed at developing

Expressing his concern over

the state after its bifurcation.

On May 28, the Delhi Police had detained the wrestlers for violation of law and order when they marched towards the new

The Police also cleared the protest site and made it clear that the wrestlers will not be allowed back at Jantar Mantar.

The police action against the wrestlers had invited criticism from different quarters.

"We are distressed and disturbed at the unseemly visuals

of our champion wrestlers being manhandled. We are also most concerned that they are thinking of dumping their hard earned medals into river Ganga," a statement released to PTI by Parliament building without the 1983 World Cup wining

> "Those medals have involved years of effort, sacrifice, determination, and grit and are not only their own but the nation's pride and joy. We urge them not to take any hasty decision in this matter and also fervently hope that their grievances are heard

and resolved quickly.

Telangana poised to conquer...

Continued from Page 1

Telangana, which is only 10 years old, has a higher per capita income than many big states. In 2014, the GSDP of the state was only Rs 5,05,849 crore, but today, the state GSDP has increased to Rs 12,93,469 crore. That is, despite problems like corona and demonetization Telangana has recorded a growth rate of 155 per cent," KCR said.

Listing Telangana's achievements after its formation on June 2, 2014, after hoisting the national flag at the Secretariat, KCR said

Sukla Paksha

8:59 AM to 10:36 AM

1:51 PM to 3:29 PM

5:44 AM to 7:22 AM

10:16 AM to 11:45 AM

Amritakalam: 07:11 PM to 08:42 PM Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:48 AM to 12:40 PM

Updated: June 2, 2023 5:00 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Tithi:Dwadashi:

Trayodashi:

Nakshatram:

Rahukalam

Varjyam:

Temp: 41°

Humidity: 54%

Sunrise: 5:34 AM

Sunset: 6.37 PM

Gulika:

Yamagandam:

that the state's installed power generation capacity increased to 18,453 MW from 7,778 MW nine years ago. Before hoisting the tricolour, KCR offered floral tributes to those who died during the TS movement at the Telangana Martyrs Memorial in the city.

"I made a promise as Chief Minister at the state formation meeting held at Parade Grounds on June 2, 2014. On that day, I assured people that I would shape Telangana in such a way that the nation would learn from Telangana and that it would be a benchmark for India. Within

CM flags off

Continued from Page 1

subsidised tractors,...

He said the government handed over

3,800 tractors, 391 combine harvesters and

22, 580 farm machines worth

Rs.690.87 crore to farmers' groups working

under 6525 RBKs in the first phase with

a subsidy of Rs 240.67 crore, besides setting

The scheme aims at reducing cost of cul-

tivation and enhancing farmers' income

through mechanisation, he said, adding

that tractors, harvesters and other

machines can be hired by farmers for less-

The government will also launch the

YSR Yantra Seva App and farmers can seek

the services with the help of the app which can be accessed at RBKs, he said.

tarpaulins and breeders would be distrib-

uted in October next and 7 lakh farmers

would be benefited.

The Chief Minister said that sprayers,

nine years, Telangana has become an inspiring state in many fields, KCR said. We took a step forward with the slogan "Telangana should be rediscovered, Telangana should be rebuilt," he said. Assuring all-round development, he said his government will distribute titles for 4 lakh acres of 'Podu' lands to 1.5 lakh tribals from June 24. The Chief Minister said that 1.50 lakh families will be given 'Dalit Bandhu' benefits in the scheme's second phase. Under the scheme, Rs 10 lakh will be given to a Dalit family for setting

up a business of choice.

APPSC Group - I Main exams...

Continued from Page 1

Accompanied by Shaik Salam Babu, a Member of APPSC, and ACP Vishal Gunni, Sawang inspected the arrangements at Potti Sreeramulu Chalavadi Mallikharjuna Rao College of Engineering and Technology, as well as KBN College exam centres. Security arrangements were also discussed with ACP Vishal Gunni

During the visit, the Chairman stated that the Group-I Main Examinations

Continued from Page 1

arms and ammunition.

The government appealed to the

"Stringent legal action will be

So far, 144 arms with 11 magazines

Meetings were being held with vil-

people to surrender the snatched

taken against any person if caught

with snatched arms and ammuni-

have been recovered by the security

lage heads and civil society organi-

sations to resolve conflict and bring

peace, it said, claiming that the sit-

uation is normal in most of the dis-

Curfew has been relaxed for 12

hours in Imphal West, Imphal East,

Bishnupur and Pherzawl, for 11

hours in Kangpokpi, for 10 hours in

Churachandpur and Chandel, for

eight hours in Jiribam and

Tenugopal, and for seven hours in

Thoubal and Kakching districts, it

agencies, said the statement.

98 killed, 310 injured in Manipur ...

would commence on June 3, with 6,455 candidates scheduled to appear in 11 centres across 10 districts. Candidates will be permitted entry from 8:30 am, and the examination will be conducted from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Sawang emphasized that the entire examination process would be under surveillance, with all centres equipped with live recording systems.

Please review the edited news report and let me know if there are any further changes or additions you would like to make.

said. There is no curfew in

Tamenglong, Noney, Senapati, Ukhrul and Kamjong, it added.

the NH-37 has been ensured," the

statement said, noting that around

450 trucks were on the move with

Manipur a day after Home Minister

Amit Shah left the state, concluding

his four-day visit and announcing a

slew of measures to bring back nor-

Clashes broke out on May 3 after

a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was

organised in the hill districts to

protest against the Meitei communi-

ty's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST)

Meiteis account for about 53 per

cent of Manipur's population and

live mostly in the Imphal Valley.

Tribals Nagas and Kukis constitute

another 40 per cent of the population

and reside in the hill districts.

essential items.

"Movement of essential items along

An uneasy calm prevailed in

Margadarsi MD ready to be quizzed on June 6

Continued from Page 1

It is believed that this disregard for the CID's request led them to decide on her

Sailaja informed the court that she would soon be returning to India and even booked her return tickets.

"I am prepared to be questioned by the CID at my residence on June 6, as specified in their notices," she stated.

Sailaja argued in court that the issuance of lookout notices was unnecessary since she was already scheduled to return to India on June 3. She requested the court to direct the CID to withdraw the notices and ensure they do not create any complications for her upon landing at Hyderabad air-

It appears that Sailaja is concerned about the possibility of being arrested by the CID authorities immediately upon her arrival. Although the granting of bail may follow later, the arrest of Ramoji Rao's daughter-in-law alone has already generated considerable attention and contro-

50 dead, over 350 hurt...

Continued from Page 1

He also announced ex-gratia of Rs 10 lakh for the deceased, Rs 2 lakh for those grievously injured and Rs 50,000 for those who got minor injuries.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said he has reviewed the situation, and will be travelling to the accident site early Saturday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was distressed by the accident, and spoke with Vaishnaw to take stock of the situation. "Distressed by the train accident in Odisha. In this hour of grief, my thoughts are with the bereaved families. May the injured recover soon. Spoke to Railway @AshwiniVaishnaw and took

Minister stock of the situation. Rescue ops are underway at the site of the mishap and all possible assistance is being given to those affected,"

Four units of the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF), three units of NDRF and 60 ambulances were work-

ing to rescue the injured, officials

The Odisha government has issued helpline 06782-262286. The railway helplines are 033-26382217 (Howrah), 8972073925 (Kharagpur), 8249591559 (Balasore) and 044-

25330952 (Chennai). Expressing concern over the accident, in which a large number of people from West Bengal were involved, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said she was monitoring the situation along with the chief secretary and other officials.

"We are coordinating with Odisha government and South Eastern Railways for our people's sake. Our emergency control room has been activated at once with numbers 033- 22143526/ 22535185. All out efforts for rescue, retrieval, aid and assistance initiated," she tweeted.

West Bengal Chief Secretary HK Dwivedi said the state was sending a team led by minister Manas Bhunia and MP Dola Sen

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH ROADS AND BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

e- PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Nit No. CE(R&B)NH&CRF/801/CRF/ROBs/2023-24, Dt: 01-06-2023
1. Online tenders were invited for 2 works under Setu Bandhan CRIF scheme amounting to Rs. 210.74 Crores in West Godaxan & Visakhapatham Districts vide Nit No. CE [R&B] NH & CRF/ 01/ CRF/ ROBs 2023- 24. Dt: 01-08-3923. 2. Tenderen can download the tender schedules from e-market place i.e., www.tender.apeprocurement.gov.in from 14-06-2923 @ 04:90 PM onwards. The last date and time of recept of tenders is on or before 29-06-2023 upto 04:00 PM. 3. Further details can be seen @ 'e procurement marketplace at "www.apeprocurement.gov.in". S4i. Chief Engineer (R&B R.O.No: 9687ICLIADVTHHI2021-22, Dt. 02.06.2023

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MISSION CLEAN KRISHNA GODAVARI CANALS

VMC begins cleanup of three major canals criss-crossing city

In a major endeavour towards enhancing the cleanliness and environmental sustainability of the city, the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) has commenced the cleaning process for three prominent canals under the Mission Clean Krishna Godavari Canals (MCKGC) initiative.

The Bandar, Eluru, and Ryves canals, which traverse through Vijayawada, will undergo extensive cleaning as part of the MCKGC campaign. The primary objective of this initiative is to raise awareness among the public about the importance of maintaining a garbage-free and waste-free environment in and around these canals, emphasized VMC Commissioner Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar.

On Friday, the Commissioner conducted a thorough inspection of the Bandar Canal, Eluru Canal, and Ryves Canal, accompanied by city officials. During the inspection, he provided valuable suggestions to the officials, directing the Public Health Department to promptly



address the issue of accumulated garbage near the Eluru locks and ensure the immediate cleaning of sewage. Nodal officers have been tasked with regular monitoring of the performance of 600 sanitation workers dedicated to the canal cleaning operations across the city.

Commissioner Swapnil Dinkar said that the Vijayawada city administration is committed to adopting a sustainable and inclusive approach to combat plastic pollution in the city. As part of this commitment, the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation has already taken steps to prevent and control the



usage of single-use plastic, including educational campaigns and motivational efforts

public. Commissioner Swapnil Dinkar actively participated in the "International Forum to End Plastic Pollution in Cities," organized by the United Nations

Environment Programme

(UNEP) in Paris, France, from

May 25 to May 28, 2023. India was represented by three delegates at the UNEP including meeting, Commissioner Swapnil Dinkar, Commissioner of Ambikapur Municipal Corporation Pratishtha Mamgain, and Secretary of Port Blair Smitha R. During the event, the delegation closely examined urban development practices and studied exemplary approaches for preventing and managing plastic

Furthermore, Commissioner emphasized the significance of aesthetically enhancing the canal bunds while minimizing water pollution and safeguarding the wellbeing of local residents. He urged the people of Vijayawada to refrain from discarding garbage and construction waste into the canals, emphasising the collective responsibility to maintain cleanliness and preserve the three canals that grace

Long-term plans to be evolved to check mishaps on Tirumala ghat

In a positive initiative, AV Dharma Reddy, Executive Officer (EO) of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), has instructed officials to devise long-term action plans to prevent accidents on the ghat road to Tirumala. The directive came during a review meeting held on Friday in Tirupati, where EO Reddy met with District Collector Venkatramana Reddy, SP Parameshwar Reddy, and senior TTD officers at the TTD Administrative Building.

Several decisions were taken during the meeting to enhance safety measures on the Ghat road. Checkpoints will be established at crucial locations such as the First turning of Down Ghat Road, Seventh Mile, Alipiri Down Gate, Upghat Link Road, Natural Garuda Rock, and Divyaramam. Additionally, concrete retaining walls will be constructed on the Down Ghat road, similar to the ones on the Up Ghat road. Furthermore, a comprehensive list of vehicles that will be restricted from plying along the Ghat roads will be compiled.

To improve awareness and communication, Accident Prevention Instruction boards will be prominently displayed at



various points along the Ghat roads. Pamphlets detailing speed limits and other essential driving guidelines will be printed and distributed. In a bid to identify speeding vehicles, speed guns will be installed along the Ghat roads.

Emergency preparedness is a top priority, and measures will taken accordingly. Ambulances and rescue teams will be kept on standby to address any accident-related emergencies. Additionally, audio recordings highlighting essential driving tips and guide-lines will be played in RTC buses operating on the Ghat roads, aiming to raise awareness among the public. The number of free buses available in Tirumala will also be increased.

To ensure safer commuting, steps will be taken to discourage overtaking by RTC buses on the Ghat roads. Furthermore, the medical teams at BIRRD

and SVIMS, led by Ruia and their dedicated doctors, will be actively engaged and prepared to attend to any emergency accident cases that may occur on the

The meeting was attended by several officials, including JEOs Sada Bhargavi, Veerabrahmam, CVSO Narasimha Kishore, FACAO Balaji, CE Nageswara Rao, Engineering Advisor Ramachandra Reddy, SVIMS Director Dr. Vengamma, BIRRD Special Officer Dr. Reddeppa Reddy, Ruia Superintendent Dr. Ravi Prabhu, Additional SP Tirumala Muniramaiah, RTC RM Chengal Reddy, Incharge RTO Ravindranath, and others.

These proactive measures are expected to significantly enhance safety and minimize accidents on the Ghat road, ensuring a smoother and more secure commuting experience

Pawan's 'Varahi Yatra' from June 14

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalya will undertake 'Varahi Yatra' from June 14 and he will address the first public meeting at Kattipudi.

Informing this to media while addressing a press meet at JSP State headquarters in Mangalagiri on Friday, Jana Sena political affairs committee

Nadendla Manohar said Pawan Kalyan would address a public meeting in every Assembly constituency during his yatra.

chairman

He said that Pawan Kalyan would embark on his Varahi Yatra on June 14 after worshipping lord Satyanarana Swamy of Annavaram at the hill shrine. The Varahi Yatra would continue from Annavaram to

"Pawan Kalyan is taking out Manohar added.

Varahi Yatra not only for the election purpose but also to know the problems of people personally. He will interact with the people during the yatra. It is planned that Pawan Kalyan will spend at least two days in each constituency. The first phase of Varahi Yatra will be held in 11 constituencies,"

Manohar said. Pawan Kalyan would go through Pithapuram, Kakinada, Kakinada r u r a l , Mummidivaram,

Amalapura, P Gannavaram, Rajolu, Narasapuram, Palakollu and

Bhimavaram during his yatra. The routemap for the yatra in West Godavari would be prepared after consulting the district leaders, Manohar said."Pawan Kalyan will address the crowds at various places

Botsa opens multi-specialty hospital in Srikakulam

PNS SRIKAKULAM

A state-of-the-art 100-bed multi-specialty hospital was inaugurated in the district by Education Minister Botsa Satyanarayana on Friday.

The minister dedicated the 'Pulsus Vijaya Multi-Speciality Hospital and Research Center', a public-private partnership project, to the nation. 'With an affordable rural

healthcare focus, the hospital will provide a comprehensive range of medical specialties, cardiology, including orthopaedics, neurology, oncology, pediatrics, and emergency services," a statement by the Pulsus Group said. It will also house the latest research laboratories, thus facilitating ground-breaking studies and collaborations with academic

institutions. The Pulsus Vijaya Multihas been built at a cost of Rs 50 their well-being," Satyanarayana people's lives.



metres, it said. The remarkable

initiative by the Pulsus Group, a leading advocate for advancing medical knowledge, and partially funded by the Government of Andhra Pradesh under the Aarogyasri Welfare scheme which aims to provide quality healthcare to both developing and developed nations, the statement said.

"The inauguration of Pulsus Vijay Multi-Speciality Hospital and Research Centre marks a significant step towards enhancing the healthcare infrastructure in Srikakulam. I am delighted to be a part of this momentous occasion and believe that this hospital will bring world-class medical services to our citizens,

Thanking the State government for the initiative, Dr Srinubabu Gedela, CEO, Pulsus Group and promoter of the hospital said the support received from the Aarogyasri scheme has been instrumental in making

this vision a reality.

"Their contribution demonstrates the government's commitment to improving healthcare services and empowering communities in need," he said. Furthermore, Gedela high-

lighted the hospital's mission, stating, "At Pulsus Vijay Hospital, we are dedicated to offering comprehensive, compassionate, and patient-centred care. Our aim is to raise the standard of healthcare in our region and provide advanced treatment options to our patients besides promoting pioneering research in the healthcare sector. This new facility will

Rs 55K cr given to AP in nine years of BJP rule: MP GVL

PNS VIJAYAWADA

BJP MP GVL Narsimha Rao has said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sanctioned funds for Andhra Pradesh to compensate for the revenue shortfall without any expectation of political gain. Speaking to the media persons here on Friday, GVL said that funds were coming to AP with a special initiative of Narendra Modi. An amount of Rs 10,461 crore has been allotted to AP as revenue grant. During the nine years of the BJP government at the Centre, funds to the tune of Rs 55,000 crore were allotted to Andhra Pradesh.

MP GVL said that a section of people were asking why the Centre was giving funds to Andhra Pradesh, and such a situation was not seen in any other State in the country. political gain, but for people.



Pic by CH VIJAYA BHASKAR

The funds given by the Centre are being spent in a haphazard manner, but the State govern-ment is not revealing that the Centre is providing the funds. While the State is in a deep debt crisis, the Centre is giving financial assistance," he added.

GVL stated that Prime Minister Modi was very positive about the Polavaram proed. The Central government will provide funds for the construction of the first phase of Polavaram up to 41.15 m, said the MP.

He said that the BJP would expose the failures of the YSRCP government in the State to the people through a charge-sheet and added that CM Jagan Mohan Reddy was 12, 911 crore had been allocat- with YSRCP stickers.

15 passengers injured as bus rams van

PNS NELLORE

As many as 15 passengers were injured when the private bus in which they were travelling rammed a van at Naidupetpalem village in Kodavaluru mandal in the wee hours on Friday.

Police said that a private travel bus was going to Nellore with passengers. A prawnladen van was also going to Nellore on the NH 16. The van driver applied a sudden brake to avoid running over a herd of sheep. The private bus driver could not apply brakes, resulting in the bus ramming the van from the rear end. 15 bus passengers were injured in the mishap and they were taken to the GGH in Nellore. Meanwhile, the van ploughed through the herd of sheep killing some of them.

Telugu Keerthi' award for Addanki

PNS VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of the Telangana State's 10th anniversary celebrations, Pudami Sahitya Vedika honoured Telugu people who have excelled in various fields with Telugu Keerthi Puraskaram Hyderabad Telugu University on Friday.

The award was presented by Ch Bal Reddy, president, Pudami Sahitya Vedika, to Dr Addanki Raja, founder the Philanthropic Society of India, for his yeoman service during the past 10 years across the country and abroad.

The guests who were present included Legislative Council member Kura Raghotama Reddy, Telangana Sahitya Academy Chairman Juluri Gauri Shankar, former president of Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation Uppala Srinivas Gupta, former Legislative Council member Pula Ravinder and chairperson of the Global Creative Arts Academy from America Sita Madabhushi.



Online admission to RGUKT from tomorrow

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT) (IIIT) in Andhra Pradesh has announced that the admission process for the Academic Year 2023-24 will commence on June 4. The notification regarding admissions will be released on June 3, as confirmed by Prof KC Reddy, the Chancellor of RGUKT.

According to the Chancellor, candidates seeking admission can apply through the online process starting from June 4 until June 26. The certificate verification for Special Category candidates (PH/CAP/NCC/Sports/Barat Scouts) will take place from July 5 to 9 at the Nuzvid campus. The tentative declaration of results is scheduled for July 13, and the certificate verification process will be conducted in the third week of July. The classes for the selected candidates will commence during the first week of August. The detailed notifica-



tion, including the release date of the selection list and counseling dates, will be available on the University website

www.rgukt.in.
In 2021, the AP Higher
Education (EC) department issued a Government Order (GO) stating that a deprivation score would be added to students who studied in government schools. This score will be determined by the governing council of RGUKT each year before the admission noti-

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, RGUKT conducted a Common Entrance Test for admissions during the 2020-21

since the 10th examinations could not be held. For the 2022-23 academic year, admissions were based on the 10th class merit, with an additional 4% deprivation score added to students who studied in government schools, as recommended by the Governing

Council.

During the 63rd Governing Council meeting held on May 25, it was resolved that a 4 percent deprivation score would be added to candidates who studied in government schools in the class 10 examination. RGUKT offers a total of 4,000 seats across its four campuses (1,000 seats per campus), with an additional 400 supernumer-ary seats (10%) reserved for candidates from the economically weaker sections (EWS) (100 seats per campus). Out of the total seats, 85% are reserved for candidates from Andhra Pradesh, while the remaining 15% are open for merit-based admissions from both Andhra Pradesh and

Efforts on to pacity Kodela Sivaram

TDP team speaks to rebel leader

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Opposition TDP has started efforts to pacify rebel leader Kodela Sivaram from Sattenapalli by promising opportunities in the future.

On Friday, a three-member team of the TDP comprising Nakka Ananda Babu, GV Anjaneyulu and Dola Bala Veeranjaneya Swamy visited Sattenapalli and spoke to the rebel leader. Meanwhile, angry supporters and follow-ers of Sivaram staged a protest and stopped the vehicles of the TDP team for sometime demanding appointment of Sivaram as Sattenapalli TDP

in-charge. Senior leader Nakka Anand Babu said that Naidu appoint-ed Kanna Lakshmi Narayana the in-charge of Sattenapalli constituency after weighing the situation here and comparing the equations and in the background of the special situation in

Sattenapalli. "We are here to talk to people who are struggling. Sivaram will be the future leader and Chandrababu Naidu has given us a clear assurance that Sivaprasad will have good

opportunities," he added. Guntur TDP president GV Anjaneyulu said that the three-member team talked with Kodela Sivaram and he expressed displeasure over the party giving charge of the constituency to Kanna Lakshminarayana. The TDP chief had promised to do justice to the Kodela family. Kanna Lakshminarayana was appointed as party in-charge of Sattenapalli constituency in

view of social mobilisation. He said that the decision may upset supporters of Sivaram and Kodela, and that the party would take steps to resolve the issue. Anjaneyulu said that Chandrababu would soon contact Kodela Sivaram and talk to him.

16th century temple pillars found in neglected state

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Temple pillars carved with beautiful sculptures, dating back to the 16th century, were found in a state of utter neglect at Veyinutulakona, a pilgrim centre near Pendlimarri in Kadapa district, says Dr E Sivanagi Reddy, archaeologist and CEO, Pleach India Foundation.

Based on the information given by local historians,

Tavva Obul Reddy, Chintalkunta Siva Reddy and Dr Sivanagi Reddy visited the spot and noticed a few priceless pillars of the Vijayanagara period lying uncared on the premises. He said that the old temple of Narasimha and Ammavaru built during Achyuta Devaraya regnal period (1530-42 CE) were dismantled and rebuilt with new stone. The archaeologist lamented the neglect of an

inscription of Achyuta Devaraya that recorded the construction of the temple and some grants given for the maintenance of the temples.

Dr Sivanagi Reddy sensitised the temple priests on the archaeological significance of the pillars and the need to safeguard them for posterity. There are beautiful sculptures of Narasimha, Chenchu Laxmi, Anjaneya, Seshasayana, creepers and swans representing the art of the mature Vijayanagara phase. Dr Sivanagi Reddy, along

with Chandramohan Reddy,

former MD, AP Urban Green Beautification Corporation, and Syamsunder Reddy, Special Officer, AP Shilparamam, appealed to the temple authorities and the district administration to look into the matter and erect them on pedestals under proper labelling with historical data.



Staff demand roster-cum-merit system in promotions

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Samata Sanika Dal Andhra Pradesh state president and Dalit JAC leader Bethala Sudarshanam has demanded that promotions be given in the Transport department based on roster and merit.

He deplored that in Andhra Pradesh State Transport Department, employees are given promotions only on the basis of merit and not on the basis of roster-cum-merit.

He said that Rule 22 and 22A of the Andhra Pradesh State and Subordinate Service Rules, 1996 are in favour of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Castes, Women and Physically Handicapped candidates but their constitutional rights are suppressed by with the merit based promotion without roster system.

Sudarshanam said that they complained to the Secretary of the department about the vio-

lation of the rule, but he did not pay attention to it and harassed the employees. He demanded action to be taken against those responsible for the life tax crores scam in a car showroom in Nidamanuru on the outskirts of Vijayawada.

He warned that SSD and DJAC will start protests if the government fails to do justice in the promotions. Leaders of various Dalit organisations and unions participated in the

the pioneer



Officials directed to take steps to check child labour

PNS BHIMAVARAM

District Collector P Prashanti has directed the officials to take steps to eradicate child labour, identify the dropout children from school and send them back to school.

The Collector held a review meeting with the district task force committee here on Friday and reviewed the implementation of programmes to eradicate child labour and identify dropouts of schools. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that according to the law, anyone who makes children. under the age of 14, work at a workplace anywhere is punish-

The children who are out of school should be identified and it should be found out whether they are at work or at home and encourage them to return to school, the district Collector said, and directed the officials to conduct a special drive for the identification of child labourers from today to the end of June with six teams



in 20 mandals of the district. Collector Prashanthi warned that action would be taken against the employers who have engaged minors into work, stating that it is the responsibility of everyone to bring them out of the workplace and provide them with a better future. Everyone should contribute to creating a child

labour-free system in the dis-

trict, she told the officials.

She said that the officials of the Education Department, Police, Labour Department, Children's Rights Protection Organizations, Social Welfare Department, Medical Department and other departments should identify the child labourers and bring them from

work to school. The Collector directed the officials to identify the places where child labourers and con-

duct regular inspections to identify the most troublesome children in railway station, RTC complex as well as those who work in hotels, grocery shops, brick kilns, packing industries, aqua field, bakery industries and other places.

She ordered the education department officials to bring the list of children who have dropped out of school and counsel the parents so that the children can join the schools again. Special attention should be given to children who have dropped out of classes 9 and 10. Collector Prashanthi told 10, Collector Prashanthi told the officials. District labour office A

Lakshmi also spoke. Later the Collector released wall posters creating awareness on the eradication of child labour. Sub-collector M Surya Teja, Additional SP ATV Ravi Kumar, RDO Desiraju, women and child welfare officer B Sujata Rani, CWC chairperson Rábika Rani and DMHO D Maheshwara Rao were among those who were present.



Illegal transport of 139 cows stopped

PNS ELURU

The police freed 139 cows while they were being shifted in a DCM van illegally at Tukkuluru bypass road in Nuzvid Rural PS limits. Nuzvid Rural SI T

Ramakrishna said that on a tip-off the police conducted checking of vehicles. They found 139 cows stuffed in the van and being transported illegally. The police shifted the cows to the cow care centre located at Palvancha. The police arrested three persons n this regard.

Three engg students among 7 held with 21.6 kg of ganja

The police conducted a raid and arrested seven cannabis smugglers, including three engineering students, under CK Dinne police station limits and seized 21.6 kg of ganja and four mobile phones from them.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, SP KKN Anburajan said that the arrested smugglers include three engineering college students studying at Chennai.

The accused engineering students were identified as Tirupathi Venkata Siva Reddy of Hyderabad, Vagolu Rahul of Guntur, Gangireddy Hariprasad of kadapa city and other three smugglers Mallapagari Mallikarjuna Reddy, Palagiri Pawan Kumar, Kottam Prathap, Narasimhulu belonging to Kadapa. The gang has been procuring ganja from Bhadradri Kothagudem district in Telangana and transporting Chennai via Kadapa.

The SP said that the storage and consumption or sale of cannabis is a serious crime and stringent action would be taken against those involved, the SP warned. Surveillance has been intensified across the district and the police are monitoring the suspects and their movements, the SP added.

District Police identified the persons who were addicted to ganja and were shifted to rehabilitation centres for treatment, Anburajan said, and he advised the youth not to spoil their precious life by consuming ganja, drugs and other intoxicating substances.

The SP appreciated the team of police per-



sonnel who arrested smugglers and seized ganja under the supervision of Addl.SP (Admin) Tushar Dudi, Kadapa DSP M.D Shareef and Special Branch Inspector B.Raja Prabhakar.

Meanwhile, another police team conducted raid and seized 7 red sander logs weighing 300 KGs. The SP said that on a tip off, the police team conducted a raid at Yakarlapalem village in Lankamalla forest area in Mydukur mandal.

The police noticed some red sander smugglers were loading the logs into a van. When ne smugglers saw the police, they hurled stones at them, However the police escaped and arrested seven smugglers and seized 7 red sander logs, one ford vehicles, one motorcycle and four

Take steps to improve tech skills of youth, officials told

PNS BAPATLA

District Collector P Ranjit Basha directed the officials to take steps to improve the technological proficiency and skills of youth.

Addressing a meeting here on Friday, Ranjit Basha, directed officials to take required steps to improve the proficiency of youths in technology which helps them to get jobs.

The Collector said that a special portal should be created for the youth of the district with the name "Bapatla Animuthyalu". There should be a portal to bring unskilled youth, unemployed people waiting for jobs and industry owners on a single platform.

Sectors in demand in the society and job opportunities in demand should be identified and uploaded in the portals, he said and asked the authorities to focus on those who are willing and interested in training the unemployed. Training should be imparted to devel-



op the skills of the unemployed as that helps them to get jobs.

Collector Rajit Basha said that if all the officials worked in coordination, the unemployed people of Bapatla district could get good employment opportunities, adding that there are six skill development hubs in the district, one for each constituency, out of which only two are function-

The authorities should take measures to ensure the functioning of the remaining four hubs. There are 16 employment skills colleges in the district. The unemployment training programmes should be employment oriented.

Ranjit Basha said that the authorities should take measures aimed at providing employment opportunities and

resources to the unemployed. The authorities should also take steps to ensure that the youth gets access to the latest technology and the officials should guide the youth to create employment sectors them-

> The number of students who have completed B.Tech Engineering in the district should be kept in the portal. The officials were advised to prepare the details of the unemployed who have completed their educational qualifications. He explained that the portal should be useful for the unemployed in all ways.

District skill development officer G Sudhakar, district employment generation officer Ramadevi and DRDA PD B Arjun Rao were among those who were present.



Milk van rams tree, driver burnt alive

In a ghastly road accident, a van driver was burnt alive in the driving seat as the van rammed a tree at Oguru village in Kandukur mandal.

Police said that the milk van belonging to Sangam dairy towards going

Singarayakonda. The milk van rammed a road side tree and flames erupted in the cabin. The driver struck in the cabin and he could not escape, resulting in him being burnt alive in the driving seat itself. His body burnt beyond recognition. The police registered a

Egg hurled at Nara Lokesh

A person, said to be the YSRCP activist, hurled an egg towards Nara Lokesh during his Yuva Galam padayatra in Proddatur in YSR district on the night of

Thursday.
The TDP activists apprehended him and thrashed him. Later he was handed over to the police. The throwing of an egg on Nara Lokesh led to tension for some time. However, the alerted police pacified the angry TDP activists.

TDP sources said that when Lokesh was passing the Reliance petrol bunk area a youth hurled an egg and a stone towards Lokesh. The egg hit a security man.

The TDP activists chased the youth, caught hold of him and thrashed him. The police whisked the youth away to the police station in a police vehicle.

As a precautionary measure, a posse of police was deployed to Proddatur.



'Secretariat system providing all kinds of services'

PNS ONGOLE

Minister for Municipal Administration Audimulapu Suresh lauded the village and ward secretariats for providing all kinds of services transparently to the people.

The Minister, along with Collector AS Dinesh Kumar and sub-collector Sethu Madhavan, participated in the Gadapa Gadapaku programme in Tripurantakam on Friday. The minister directed the officials to take steps to resolve the problems and grievances brought to his notice by the people during the Gadapa Gadapaku programme.

The Minister said that the eople complained to him that they had not been granted house plots even though they applied for house plots under the "90 Days House Plots" scheme. The Collector ordered the officials to grant house sites to all the eligible people as soon as possible. If there are vacant sites in the layouts, they should be allotted to them, the Minister asked the Collector.

When some residents urged for 20 cents of land for the construction of a marriage hall, the minister assured them of considering their appeal positively. The minister suggested that



the existing guest house in Tripurantakam has reached a dilapidated state and steps should be taken to construct a new guest house. Meanwhile, the Collector told the minister

that steps would be taken to build the guesthouse by collecting funds through various

Later, the Collector inspected the on-going development works of MPUP school. He made it clear that the quality standards should be followed in the work. The Collector also visited ZP High School in Tripurantakam village and inspected the textbooks and Jagananna Vidya Kanuka kits ready for distribution.

Dinesh Kumar instructed the secretariat staff to ensure that child marriages are not held in their jurisdiction and give priority for sanitation. The Collector visited the famous Balatripura Sundari Devi temple. The temple officials and priests welcomed the collector and the priests blessed

NTTPS to produce 15-20 MU of power from August

The trial run of a new unit at the Dr Narla Tatarao Thermal Power Station (Dr NTTPS) in Ibrahimpatnam commenced on Friday, with Special Chief Secretary of the Energy Department and AP Genco Chairman K Vijayanand and MD KVN Chakradhar Babu leading the ceremony. A symbolic button press marked the "lighting up" of the unit, which is expected to be operational from August. This development will result in an additional supply of 15 to 20 million units of electricity on a daily

basis. During their visit, Chairman Vijayanand and MD Chakradhar Babu, along with directors, chief engineers, and senior officials, inspected various departments of the power station. Chairman Vijayanand stressed the need for prompt completion of all pending tasks to ensure the project's timely completion by August. He assured that APGenco is fully committed to providing support throughout the process. Representatives from collaborating companies also affirmed their dedication to expediting



the remaining work. Vijayanand highlighted the

current electricity supply figures, stating that APGenco currently provides an average of 105 million units of electricity daily to meet the state's needs. Despite the unprecedented rise in demand this summer, AP Genco has been supplying 40 to 45 percent of the state's total electricity consumption. Once the newly operational unit comes online in August, an additional 15 to 20 million units will be sup-

The Chairman expressed his pride in APGenco's achievement of adding two

units with a combined capacity of 1600 MW within a year, considering it a momentous milestone in the company's history. He mentioned that the Sri Potti Sriramulu 800 MW stage-2 unit at the Sri Damodaram Sanjeevaiah Thermal Power Station in Nellore district was inaugurated on 27-10-2022 by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Furthermore, efforts are underway to fast-track the completion of two additional units with a generation capacity of 230 MW at Lower Sileru, aiming to make them available by April 2024.

PERNI FLAYS NAIDU'S STANCE ON BIFURCATION

PNS VIJAYAWADA



Uttam may quit,

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

politics

blames 'commercial'

for commercial politics and that he is thinking of retiring from politics after seeing a good day.

In a chit-chat with journos on Friday at the Gandhi Bhavan, Úttam said that he thinks that Lok Sabha and Assembly elections will be held simultaneously. He said that the BJP wants to go for elections with Modi's charisma. The Congress stands to gain if both elections are held at the same time, he said.

Uttam said that if Sarath Chandra Reddy becomes an approver, the liquor case will turn serious and it will be a death blow to AAP.

He said that he does not know whether YSRTP chief YS Sharmila will join the Congress or not.



Venkataramaiah stated that Chandrababu's recent expressions of support for the separation are mindless and shameful. He also accused Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy of not extending greetings on the occasion. Perni Venkataramaiah recalled Chandrababu's actions during his time in power when he dramatised the state bifurcation by wearing black badges and vehemently criticising Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi for the division. Furthermore, Perni Venkataramaiah pointed out the silence of the BJP, which

strongly supported the state's low suit. Perni Nani further accused division, on this matter. Speaking at the party central



office on Friday, Perni Nani alleged that Chandrababu's celebration of Telangana Foundation Day raised questions about his loyalty to a particular State. He reminded everyone that the official formation day of Andhra Pradesh is November 1 and emphasised that the people of AP will celebrate on that day. He dismissed the notion that June 2 is a day of celebration solely because of Chandrababu's statement, stating that no one in AP will fol-

the TDP and its affiliated media

outlets of spreading false propaganda and making baseless allegations about Andhra Pradesh's debt. He pointed out that the debt incurred during the TDP regime was higher than that under the ruling YSRCP gov-

He highlighted a single-day debt of Rs. 5,000 crore during Chandrababu's tenure, whereas the YSRCP government's debt over four years amounted to Rs. 1.82 lakh crore. He also commended the government for providing Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) worth Rs. 2.11 crore to assist the poor.

Regarding Pawan Kalyan's political party, Perni Venkataramaiah claimed that its purpose was to criticize Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy while in power and demand packages while in opposition. He mentioned that the party's campaign vehicle would not hit the roads before the Dasara festival, as many people are eagerly awaiting it.

Origin Dairy director Shejal attempts suicide

PNS NIRMAL



Shejal attempted to commit suicide by consuming pesticide at Telangana

Bhavan in Delhi on Friday, according to reports reaching

She has been agitating in Delhi for the last four days. She has been demanding action against Bellampally MLA Durgam Chinnaiah, alleging that he had subjected her to sexual harassment. The police had foisted false cases on her at the instance of the MLA.

Shejal staged a sit-in at Jantar Mantar in Delhi. She also complained with the National Commission for

Al sends out questionnaires to assess customer satisfaction levels

s it works on improving services, Air India on Friday said it is sending out Aquestionnaires to customers to every day and has received good response through its digitalised customer feedback mechanism. Air India, which was taken over by Tata Group in January last year, started sending questionnaires to travellers to identify areas for improvement to meet customer expectations in March. The Net Promoter Score (NPS)based customer feedback mechanism has received more than 1,40,000 responses in three

months, the airline said in a release. In his message to staff on Friday, Air India CEO and Managing Director Campbell Wilson said that over the last three months, the airline has expanded NPS to cover the entire physical customer journey, from check-in, through to lounges, in-flight experience and the arrival process, and will be extended to the online and call centre experiences. "Questionnaires are sent every single day, and so far we've had more than 1,40,000 responses.



Gokulraj murder case: Madras HC upholds conviction by trial court

he Madras High Court on Friday upheld the conviction and life sentence awarded to eight people in connection with the murder of a Scheduled Caste engineering student Gokulraj in 2015 in Tamil Nadu's Tiruchengode (Namakkal district), on suspicion that he was in a relationship with an upper caste woman. The court altered the charges against two others accused in the crime to imprisonment for five years. Ten people, against whom the Madurai special sessions court handed out the life

imprisonment till death without remission sentence in March 2022, appealed against the judgment. A division bench comprising justices M S Ramesh and N Anand Venkatesh dismissed their appeals today and confirmed the earlier verdict in the case. The bench said it found no perversity in the trial court's judgment convicting the accused. "We remained conscious of the fact that moral conviction has no place in criminal jurisprudence," the bench said.



India presses Germany to send back Baby Ariha as soon as possible

ndia on Friday urged Germany to send back at the earliest an Indian baby girl who has been living in foster care in Berlin for over 20 months, asserting it is important for the child to be in her linguistic, religious, cultural and social environment. The German authorities had taken custody of Ariha Shah on September 23, 2021, when she was seven months old, alleging that the parents harassed her. External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said Ariha's continued stay in the German foster care and "infringement" of

her social, cultural and linguistic rights is of deep concern to the government of India and the parents. On Thursday, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde wrote a letter to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar seeking his assistance in bringing Ariha back home.

"We would like to reiterate that Ariha Shah is an Indian national and her nationality and socio-cultural background is the most important determinant of where her foster care is to be provided," Bagchi said.

UPA-era lost decade, shortcut



LAW COMMISSION ON SEDITION CASES

Increase jail term to 7 years

PNS NEW DELHI

The Law Commission of India has recommended enhancing the jail term in sedition cases from a minimum of three years to seven years, contending that it would allow courts greater room to award punishment in accordance with the scale and gravity of the act committed.

In a report on the 'Usage of the Law of Sedition', the Commission said its earlier report had termed the punishment for Section 124A (law of sedition) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) "very odd" as it has provisions for either life imprisonment or a three-year jail term, but nothing in between.

The minimum punishment under the sedition law is pay-

A comparison of the sentences as provided for offences in Chapter VI of the IPC suggests that there is a glaring disparity in the punishment prescribed for 124A," Commission said.



with offences against the state. "It is, therefore, suggested that the provision be revised to bring it in consonance with the scheme of punishment provided for other offences under Chapter VI. This would allow the courts greater room to award punishment for a case of sedition in accordance with the scale and gravity of the act committed," the report said.

The Commission also suggested changes to the phrasing of Section 124A and added words "a tendency to incite violence or cause public disorder'

The current Section 124A of IPC reads as follows: "Sedition-Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible repre-Chapter VI of the IPC deals sentation, or otherwise,

Will take 'informed and reasoned' decision

The government will take an "informed and reasoned" decision on the Law Commission report on sedition after holding consultations with all stakeholders, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said on Friday and noted that recommendations in the document were "persuasive" but not "binding". Meghwal's remarks came in the wake of the recommendation by the law commission to increase the minimum iail term in sedition cases from the present three years to seven years. "The law commission report on Sedition is one of the steps in the extensive consultative process. The recommendations made in the report are persuasive and not binding," Meghwal said on Twitter. He said the final decision on the matter will be taken only after

brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the Government established by law in India, shall be pun-

"Now that we have received the report, we will also hold consultations with all the other stakeholders so that we take an informed and reasoned decision in the public interest," Meghwal said. In its report, the Law Commission has recommended enhancing the jail term in sedition cases from a minimum of three vears to seven years, contending that it would allow courts greater room to award punishment in accordance with the scale and gravity of the act committed. The view evoked a strong reaction from the Congress, which accused the BJP government of planning to make it more "draconian" and giving a message ahead of the general elections that it will be used against opposition

consulting all the stakeholders.

ished with imprisonment for life, to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or with fine.

Sisodia allowed to meet ailing wife in custody

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Friday permitted AAP leader Manish Sisodia, under arrest in cases related to alleged irregularities in the city government's excise policy, to meet his ailing wife at his residence on Saturday.

Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma directed the Tihar Jail Superintendent to take Sisodia, the former deputy chief minister, to his residence where he has been allowed to meet his wife from 10 AM to 5 PM.

Sisodia was first arrested by the CBI on February 26 for his alleged role in the scam and has been in custody since then. The high court has already denied him bail in the CBI case on May 30.

He was arrested on March 9 in the case lodged by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and is currently in judicial custody.

The high court made it clear that Sisodia shall not interact with media or any other person except his family members, and also not access phone or internet.

politics will harm nation: Ashwini

PNS NEW DELHI

Senior BJP leader Ashwini Vaishnaw described the Congress-led UPA rule between 2004-14 as a "lost decade" for India and also targeted Opposition parties for their politics of "shortcuts" which, he said, harms the country

Speaking to reporters, the minister in-charge of key portfolios such as railways, communications, electronics and information technology gave a snapshot of various developments in these sectors under the Narendra Modi-led government.

"Unprecedented change has happened in the country in the last nine years," he said in his remarks as the BJP marks the government's ninth anniversary by fielding its senior leaders across the country to underscore its various achieve-

Noting that the Indian economy has risen from 10th in global size in 2014 to fifth now, he added it was the 10th largest economy in 2004 as well when the UPA government came to



"It was a lost decade," the Union minister said.

In an apparent reference to freebies being offered by different parties, he said their shortcuts will harm the nation and asked people to give a clear mandate to the BJP under Modi's leadership in 2024 as they had in 2014 and 2019.

It is people's decisive and clear verdict which led to good results from the government, Vaishnaw said.

The BJP has often spoken against what it slams as 'revdis' (doles) offered by Opposition parties such as the Congress and the AAP. The Opposition has claimed that the ruling party is no different, a charge

The minister said, "Recently, the Morgan Stanley Report also stated the transformation India has embraced in less than a decade. We are projected to be the fourth largest economy by 2026 and among the top three economies by 2027-28.

Trains have begun running on time, cleanliness inside them and on platforms has vastly improved, he said, adding that 37,000-km of tracks were electrified in nine years against 21,000 km in over six decades till 2014.

The average length of new track being laid daily has risen to 14 km from 3.5 to 4 km earlier, Vaishnaw said, adding that a bigger role for the railways in cargo movement will help control price rise as well because freight charges are much less in the sector than road transport.

Calling made-in-India Vande Bharat trains world class, he said only eight countries have the design and manufacturing know-how for building trains which can run at 180 kmph. These trains will connect 200 cities by the middle of next year.

World-class roads necessary

to achieve US\$ 5 trillion

economy target: Gadkari

MP with heinous allegations safe under PM's protective shield: Rahul Gandhi

PNS NEW DELHI

Centre on Friday over "inac- medals -- pleading for justice Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, with Rahul Gandhi saying while daughters who won international medals are pleading for justice on the streets, a member of Parliament who has "heinous

allegations" against him is safe under the prime minister's "protective shield". Congress general

secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the issue

and asked why no action has been taken against Singh, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP, so far.

The two FIRs registered by the Delhi Police against the outgoing WFI chief on the basis of complaints from six women wrestlers and the father of a minor narrate several alleged instances of sexual harassment, inappropriate touching, groping, stalking and intimidation by Singh at different times and places, including in foreign coun-

tries, over a decade. In a tweet in Hindi, Rahul

Gandhi said, "Daughters who The Congress slammed the brought 25 international on the s heinous allegations of sexual abuse in two FIRs -- safe in prime minister's 'suraksha avach'!

The Modi government is responsible for the plight of the wrestlers, he said. Tagging the details of the

FIRs against Singh, Priyanka Gandhi said, "Read these serious allegations and tell the country why no action has been taken against the accused till now?'

Congress MP Deepender Hooda also tagged a media report detailing the FIRs, saying, "Speechless! What else is left after this? How will someone's blood not boil after reading this?"

"BIP trolls today, before writing against me, must think that if your sister and daughter were in place of these girls, would you have been able to tolerate this? If the accused is a BJP MP/minister, will the FIR also be registered when the Supreme Court orders?" Hooda, who has been vocal on the issue and attacking the government over it, said.

K'taka decides to implement all five poll promises

PNS BENGALURU

The ruling Congress's Cabinet on Friday decided to implement within this financial vear the five guarantees that the party had promised ahead of tion, without any discrimination based on caste or religion, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah

The Cabinet held a detailed discussion regarding the five guarantees and its implementation, and has arrived at decisions, Siddaramaiah who headed the meeting told reporters.

The Congress had promised to implement the guarantees' -200 units of free power to all

households (Gruha Jyoti), Rs 2,000 monthly assistance to the woman head of every family (Gruha Lakshmi), 10 kg of rice free to every member of a BPL household (Anna Bhagya), Rs 3,000 every month for unemployed graduate youth and Rs 1,500 for unemployed diploma holders (both in the age group of 18-25) (YuvaNidhi), and free travel for women in public transport buses (Shakti) on coming to power.

The Gruĥa Jyothi scheme to provide 200 units free electricity per month to every household will be implemented from July 1, Siddaramaiah said. However, the arrears have to be paid by the customers.



Speaking about the Gruha Lakshmi scheme that provides Rs 2,000 per month to women heads of the family, also known as 'kartha', the CM said it will be implemented from August

He said the application can

be submitted for this, even online, from June 15 to July 15, and the applicants who want to be beneficiaries under the scheme will have to submit their Aadhaar and bank account details along with

The scheme will be applicable to both BPL and APL card holders, he said, adding that the beneficiaries of social security schemes will also get the

Siddaramaiah announced that under 'Anna Bhagya', 10 kg of food grains will be given to every member of a BPL household and Antyodaya card holders from

economy as envisaged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Addressing a gathering in

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari

standards are needed for India

to become a USD 5 trillion

Dumad near Vadodara city, the Union Minister for Road Transport Highways assured that all highways in India will be of "world standards"

PNS VADODARA

You will find good quality national highways anywhere you go in the country. Our country is chang-

ing. It is our PM's dream to make India a developed and self-reliant nation which takes care of its poor and needy cit-"To make India a USD 5 tril-

lion economy as envisaged by PM Narendra Modi, it is necessary to have world class road infrastructure in the country. And that is what we are trying to achieve," said Gadkari. Stressing on the need to

have better roads, the minister informed the audience that former US president John F Kennedy had once said

American roads are not good because America is rich but America is rich because American roads are

"In Gujarat, highway projects of Rs 2 lakh crore are currently underway. I want to assure you that before the end of 2024, all the highways across the country will be of world standards, as good as

American roads," the Union minister asserted.

Gadkari also said the 'Signature Bridge' connecting Okha with Beyt Dwarka island in Devbhumi

Dwarka district of Gujarat was nearing completion and it would be inaugurated by the PM ahead of Janmashtami, which will be observed in September.

The Union minister was here to inaugurate a flyover, an underpass and a service road built at Dumad junction on Surat-Ahmedabad National Highway 48 at a cost

of Rs 48 crore. According to Gadkari, the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, being built at a cost of Rs 1 lakh crore, has been completed till the Rajasthan border, while the remaining stretch till Mumbai will be finished in the next six months.

Shivaji's life a source of inspiration: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is a source of inspiration, and the work done by him continues to be relevant even today as welfare of people was the basic principle of his administration.

In his video message that was played at the state-level function being held atop the Raigad fort in Maharashtra to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the coronation of the Maratha warrior king, the PM also said that Shivaji Maharaj epitomised courage and he possessed sharp administrative

"Welfare of the state and its people was

the basic principle of Chhatr apati Shivaji Maharaj's rule. 350th The anniversary of the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

is a source of energy and inspiration. His coronation is



an important chapter of India's history," PM Modi said. "A leader should keep his people motivated and confident. Shivaji Maharaj removed the mindset of slavery from people. He not only fought against the invaders, but also instilled confidence among people that establishing 'swarajya' (self-rule) was possible, 'he said. And he not only established 'swarajya',

but also implemented 'sushasan' (good governance), the prime minister added.
"Shivaji Maharaj's administrative and defence acumen was sharp. He was known for his bravery and administrative

skills...His life and work are relevant even today and continue to inspire us. The vision of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' encompasses the ideals of Shivaji Maharaj, he said. The manner in which he expanded his navy and built sea forts is inspiring, the PM said, adding, "We changed the navy ensign and freed the navy from the

'SCO summit in virtual mode based on various factors'

PNS NEW DELHI

India on Friday said its decision to hold the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in the virtual format was taken considering

a number of factors. Replying to a question on the issue during his weekly media briefing, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi noted that India did not make any announcement in the past it would be an in-person summit.

The MEA on Tuesday announced that India will host the annual summit of the SCO in the virtual format on July 4. While making the announcement, it did not cite any reason

behind the decision.

India is hosting the summit in its capacity as the current chair of the SCO.

Bagchi said many international summits in recent years have taken place in the virtual format and it was decided to hold the SCO summit in that mode taking into consideration various factors.

He, however, did not mention

the factors. He said the decision was not

driven by a single factor. 'We have now communicated to the SCO partners about this event being held in virtual format on July 4 and our expectation is that everybody would be able to

join," Bagchi said. India hosted the foreign min-



isters of the SCO at a two-day conclave in Goa earlier this month. The SCO is an influential economic and security bloc and has emerged as one of the

largest transregional international organisations. The SCO was founded at a the summit. The organisations are the UN. summit in Shanghai in 2001 by the presidents of Russia, China,

the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. India and Pakistan became its

permanent members in 2017. The MEA said heads of six international and regional organisations have also been invited to

the ASEAN (Association of

Southeast Asian Nations), CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization), EAEU (Eurasian Economic Union) and CICA (Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia).

India was made an observer at the SCO in 2005 and has generally participated in the ministerial-level meetings of the grouping, which focus mainly on security and economic cooperation in the Eurasian region.

India has shown a keen inter-

anti-Sikh riots.
Chief Metropolitan est in deepening its security-related cooperation with the SCO and its Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), which specifically deals with issues relating to security and defence. Additional

1984 ANTI-SIKH RIOTS CASE

Court takes notice of CBI charge-sheet against Tytler

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A court here on Friday took notice of the CBI's charge sheet against Congress leader Jagdish Tytler in the Pul Bangash case of killing of three people and torching of a gurudwara during the 1984

Magistrate Mahima Rai Singh took notice of the charge sheet and referred the matter Chief



Metropolitan Magistrate Vidhi Gupta, as the case pertained to a former MP.

ACMM Gupta is likely to take cognisance of the charge sheet on June 8 and issue summons to Tytler. Tytler "incited, instigated and provoked" the mob that

had assembled at Pul Bangash Gurudwara in Azad Market on November 1, 1984 that resulted in burning down of the gurudwara and killing of three Sikhs -- Thakur Singh, Badal Singh and Gurcharan Singh -- the CBI alleged in its charge sheet filed on May 20.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Green Day

We must realise that we can afford to ignore environmental issues only at our own peril

he World Environment Day, celebrated annually on June 5, is unlike any other for, if nothing else, the sheer importance it holds for our survival and that of our future generations. It's quite understandable to scoff at yet another 'World This Day' or 'World That Day', especially since it doesn't hold any personal or intimate meaning in our lives such as our birthday or Mother's Day or Father's Day but what lends it gravitas is that it's much more than an individual's celebration: It calls for joint efforts by the global communities - in fact all of humanity - to protect, safeguard and conserve nature, lest we all shall perish before too long. With the increasing urgency of environmental issues, this day serves as a powerful reminder that we cannot afford to overlook the state of our environment. Unfortunately, and as a result of mankind's own doing, the world today faces unprecedented environmental challenges, including climate change, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, pollution and water scarcity, among others. These



issues not only impact ecosystems and wildlife but also pose severe threats to human health, livelihood and future generations. The day aims to unite diverse stakeholders, including individuals, organisations, Governments and communities around the world, in fostering global collaboration and solidarity. It also serves as a platform for sharing ideas, best practices and innovative approaches to tackle environmental challenges effectively.

In this light, we must train ourselves to make sincere efforts in becoming more aware of the causes that have led to, and are still leading to, issues like global warming, water scarcity and deforestation. On a very basic scale, it's also high time to plant and nur-

ture trees as well as to reduce mankind's carbon footprint by cutting down on the greenhouse gas emissions by adapting to greener and healthier technologies rather than shamelessly using air-conditioners and fossil fuel-guzzling vehicles. In this time and age, when we have technologies such as electric vehicles available to us for use, what stops us from holding out that little bit of extra down payment initially and go for an electric vehicle which would stand us and the environment in good stead in the years to come? From minimising waste, recycling material and conserving energy to promoting ecofriendly transportation and embracing renewable resources, the global citizen must vow individual action in mitigating environmental degradation. Though the Governments have already woken up to this existential threat, what with a host of groupings like COP 27 working overtime to tackle the menace, it also helps promote policy changes and advocacy efforts. The day reminds Governments to enact and enforce environmental regulations, supports the development of sustainable policies and encourages lawmakers to prioritise environmental protection. So let's not stand in the way of a green Earth; in fact, let's help lay a new path that rejuvenates our tiring planet.



A view of the Raigad Fort on the 350th anniversary of the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

US baton of values passes seamlessly



BHOPINDER SINGH

Its military leadership is today poised for an unprecedented normalcy of top two positions to be held by the citizens of African-American ethnicity

olin Powell was the most decorated and highest-ranking black man in United States military history, ascending to National Security Adviser, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), and later Secretary of State (first black on all three accounts). The soldier and diplomat were even speculated to run for Presidentship as a Republican, which he ultimately declined (though in later years, he did call fellow Republican, Donald Trump, a 'national disgrace'). The dignified Soldier-Statesman would have been conscious of his black or African-American identity in 1958 as a newly commissioned officer, but as the wise soldier late reflected, "Let it (racism) be a problem to someone else...Let it drag them down. Don't use it as an excuse for your shortcomings". America was to evolve for the better on the inclusivity front, and soon had the likes of Barack Obama and Kamala Harris, at even more enior leadership positions.

Today, American Military leadership is poised for an unprecedented normalcy of two top positions to be held by Americans of African-American ethnicity i.e., Secretary of Defence, Lloyd Austin (retired Four-Star General) and the newly nominated Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), General Charles Brown Jr. As nominated CJCS, Charles Brown would replace General Mark Milley and would serve at the pleasure of the President of USA for a four-year term. Amongst his many professional accomplishments, Milley of course would be remembered for standing up to retain and burnish the apolitical credentials of the 'Uniform' - he had rebuffed attempts to use his image in the election campaign by then President Donald Trump and had also famously apologised for his presence at an event that created a perception of military nvolvement in domestic politics. He bluntly reiterated that the Armed Forces did not serve a King or Dictator, "We take an oath to the Constitution, not an individual". The unflinchingly apolitical stance of the American Military leadership was pivotal in

denying the recklessly divisive attempt of Donald Trump to overcome the shock of the 6th January 2021, insurrection moment. Amongst the few US Presidents with virtually no Military connection, yet with an unearned urge to appropriate the institution of the Armed Forces to build his political muscularity, Trump was denied the same by the ramrod straight and constitutional posture of the US Armed Forces leadership, who

simply refused to bend.

Not only did the likes of Mark Milley stand up for constitutional propriety but also for widening opportunity and intake for societal 'minorities' e.g., blacks, who remained vastly underrepresented at top leadership levels. A couple of years back, Milley pointed out that while Gen Charles Brown was amongst the 2% Air Force pilots of African-American ethnicity when he joined the Air Force in 1984, the ratio of Blacks as Air Force pilots was still an abysmal 2%, over 35 years later! Incidentally, Mark Milley himself is a 'White' and was serving under arguably the 'Whitest of White' President i.e., Donald Trump, who may not have perceived Milley's concern as a pressing issue, given his penchant and politics of majoritarianism. But then, such is the cloth from which the 'Uniform' ought to be sewn.



THE LIKES OF MARK MILLEY STAND UP FOR CONSTITUTIONAL **PROPRIETY BUT ALSO FOR** WIDENING **OPPORTUNITY** AND INTAKE FOR SOCIETAL 'MINORITIES', EG BLACKS, WHO REMAINED VASTLY UNDER-REPRESENTED AT TOP LEADERSHIP

when questioned on the aftermath of George Floyd's murder had released a video of his own experiences (in a nonpartisan way) where he accepted that as a black man in America his own experiences, "didn't always sing of liberty and equality" – such a powerful comment from him, was not held against him in his subsequent career trajectory. His commentary was fully compliant with the Constitution and apolitical, even if it riled the dispensa-

Now, the Pentagon will see yet another product of a fine American culture i.e., 'Military Families, in the form of Gen Charles Brown Jr. As Biden alluded, "General Brown is a warrior, descended from a proud line of warriors" – his father had served for 30 years and retired as Colonel, while his grandfather was drafted in World War 2. Soldering is a proud and immensely respected tradition in the American consciousness, and President Joe Biden remains justifiably proud of his late son, Major eau Biden (Judge Advocate General's Corps), who served lessly from one to the other. in Iraq (including a 7-month deployment in a combat zone).

From an Indian perspective, General Brown is supposed to be an authority on the challenges posed by

Even General Brown Chinese expansionism, especially given his experience as Air Component Commander for the United States Indo-Pacific Command. He has also visited India during the successful completion of a joint Indo-US Air Force exercise, Cope India, focused on enhancing capabilities, aircrew tactics and force employment. He had noted then, "Cope India is just one part of an ongoing effort to strengthen the relationship between the US Air Force and the Indian Air Force". General Brown's familiarity along with that of Secretary of Defense as a former Commander of US Central Command (responsible for military operations in the Middle East & Afghanistan theatre), ensures that the top two in the US Security apparatus are well-versed with India's dual challenges of China and Pakistan.

Finally, as Lloyd Austin iled Gen Brown, hailed "Throughout his career, he has insisted on doing right by his teammates and their families", this rings true for the 'Uniformed' fraternity universally, as the baton moves seam

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

The multiple benefits of community-driven learning



Learners band together in a supportive environment, pooling knowledge and focusing on growing personally as well as professionally

Remember the days when getting a job meant you were pretty much set for life, and learning one skill meant you could get through your entire career until retirement? Well, those days are long gone! We're living in an age where tech is the real boss, and it's changing faster than you can say 'artificial intelligence'.

So, what's the secret to staying employable in this rapidly changing world? It's simple: never stop learning, folks. That's where upskilling comes in. And as more of us realise the importance of keeping up with the times, community-driven learning is starting to make waves.

Community-driven learning is a whole new approach where learners band together in a supportive environment, pooling their knowledge and focusing on growing personally, as well as professionally. It's all about learning together and getting better together.

Collective knowledge and experience – The thing about community learning is that you've got people from all walks of life coming togethinsights and perspectives to tap into! Active discussions, project collaborations, and sharing of experiences can enable learners to tap into this extensive pool and gain a much broader understanding of the subject. Further, the peer-to-peer learning opportunities enrich the experience and provide real-world opinions that classic educational

settings don't usually offer. Enhanced motivation and engagement – Let's face it, learning on your own can get lonely. But when you part of a community, there's a sense of belonging and accountability. You're not just learning buddies; you're each other's cheerleaders. It's that sense of camaraderie that makes the learning experience a whole lot more enrich-

ing and fun. Networking opportunier. That's a treasure trove of ties - Since the premise of viduals who all have the same

is based on collaborative learning and engagement, it fosters networking among learners. Also, learners might find their future business partner, their next job, or just offered by digital platforms some cool people to help them stay updated on the latest industry trends. It's precisely connections like these that we turn to in times of professional hardships, and what's a better way to forge these meaningful connections than by learning and struggling on projects togeth-

Continuous learning and lifelong engagement -Community-driven learning is not only helpful in better understanding different industries and functions but also fosters a lifelong learning and development mindset. As the skills, tools, and technologies keep changing every few years, it has become crucial for the modern workforce to regularly upskill, relearn, compensation. And this isn't and engage with others to remain up to date on trends technologies. Community-driven upskilling initiatives bring

together like-minded indi-

community-driven upskilling drive for continuous learning

and growth. Flexibility - Communitybased learning offers great flexibility in terms of upskilling. The courses are of short durations such as one to four weeks, and sessions are held on weekends or in the evenings to accommodate learners with full-time jobs. The courses are affordable and what's not to love about learning real-world skills from industry experts, all from the comfort of your wn home?

IN CONCLUSION So, here's the bottom line: community-driven upskilling is revolutionizing professional development. It's not just about climbing the ladder; it's about fostering rapid growth. For those new to the corporate world, it's your pathway to better job satisfaction and stronger fleeting trend. It's about long-term resilience in your career. So get ready, because this journey into upskilling is just getting started.

(The author is Founder & CEO, of Growth School)

HOODWINKING VOTERS WITH FREEBIES

Sir — Buoyed by landslide victory in the Karnataka Assembly election, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has announced 100 units free electricity. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has laid strong foundation of freebies culture and it has not gone unrewarded. In the case of Karnataka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar have acted in haste and are now repenting at leisure without showing that they are repenting. They are putting up a brave face saying that they would never go back on their promise. It is the wont for all the political parties to make announcements of welfare schemes or freebies without any condition before election. Conditions start trickling out soon after the election is over and the party is voted to power with people believing that the announcements made are implemented in extending the benefits. Politicians are hoodwinking the voters without giving any inkling of the possible conditions to be stipulated after the election. It is obligatory on the part of the government to give benefits without conditions whenever no condi-

tions are stipulated before the election. If the conditions are attached after the election, the courts have to direct the government to extend the benefits to all irrespective of the economic status of the people. If it is done so, the political parties clearly outline the conditions before election for availing benefits. It will enable the voters to or to not vote for a particular party. The political parties will eschew the practice of announcement of freebies without conditions before election and with conditions after election. Chaotic condition has prevailed in Karnataka after the freebies of high magnitude have been announced. The 200 units free electricity will exclude a large number of consumers if the contemplated idea of extending the benefit only to those consuming 200 units or less is implement-

IPL earnings show the way

E EDITO

LEVELS

rhis IPL- 2023 has earned about ₹49,000 crore for the BCCI via split media rights over five years (to the two companies Disney Star and Mukesh Ambani's JioCinema). As a bonus, almost every IPL T20 match is selling Housefull at almost every stadium. The Indian government must take inspiration from IPL's pooling type method to earn big revenue via rather than periodically increasing taxes on essential goods.

Taking a leaf out of this, the Government should ask every citizen to contribute ₹1 or ₹10 or ₹100 ... depending on its funds needed. This way the government can coolly earn ₹140 crore / ₹1400 crore / ₹14,000 crore without burdening the citizens. Since the financial burden is equally shared, big pain will not be felt. Even one day's salary of all employees can be cut periodically. Better limit contribution from the poor to at the most ₹10. Another way is, the Government should nationalise the IPL T-20 tournaments to earn big money (instead of a periodical tax increase).

Ganapathi Bhat I Akola

200 units of electricity are free, it unambiguously means that the first 200 units are free and the consumption in excess of 200 units is chargeable. Freebies are nothing but bribery. KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

OVERCOMING WATER SCARCITY Sir — Water scarcity is a pressing issue today that demands immediate attention. By adopting efficient water conservation practices, we can make a significant difference. Emphasising the importance of responsible water usage, promoting rainwater harvesting and implementing modern irrigation techniques can conserve this vital resource.

Public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives should highlight the significance of water conservation, encouraging citizens to adopt simple yet impactful habits like fixing leakages and reducing excessive water usage.

Jubel D'Cruz |Mumbai

POLITICS IS HURTING MANIPUR

Sir — So far more than 75 people have died in Manipur violence. Countless properties and houses have been burnt. Both Imphal

ed. When it has been announced that and New Delhi have governments of the same ideology. Which is nowadays called double engine government. Despite this, instead of decreasing, the violence is increasing day by day. The central government kept spending lip-service for the first 20 days as all of Karnataka was busy campaigning. At last Home Minister Shri Amit Shah visits Manipur but he does not do what he should have done. His silence on the order of the Imphal High Court which was later refused to be overturned by the Supreme Court i.e. the order granting Scheduled Tribe status to the majority Meitai community is surprising.

Imphal valley is dominated by Meitei. People of Meitai caste belong to the Hindu community. The hill districts are dominated by the Naga and Kuki tribes. The recent violence was seen more in Churachandpur hill districts. The game of keeping silence on the real issue of both the governments is actually a game of religious polarization, thus the political line of division between the minorities and the majority is drawn behind the violence.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

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FIRST COLUMN

KARNATAKA GOVT TO CREATE A MILLION JOBS

Its mass entrepreneurship programme will create 10 lakh jobs in the first 100 days



LAKSHMI VENKATARAMAN VENKATESAN

ith expectations running high, the newly minted Karnataka Government of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has both an obligation and an opportunity to redress the unemployment concerns raised by 28% of Karnataka's youth and fulfil their aspirations. Rahul Gandhi, taking full cognisance of this issue, has promised 10 lakh jobs in the next five years. The Congress Government led by Siddaramaiah can get a head start on fulfilling these promises, in its first 100 days, by laying the foundation for sustainable job creation and by instituting programs and policies for mass skilling and entrepreneurship.

The challenges for Karnataka are manifold. As per an analysis of Karnataka PLFS data, overall youth unemployment is at nearly 16% but of that subset, educated young people are the most vulnerable. Nearly 35% of educated young people are unemployed and only 14% of women are gainfully employed.

To give immediate relief to the unemployed, Rahul Gandhi has proposed the Yuva Nidhi scheme of providing Rs. 3000 per month to unemployed graduates and Rs. 1500 every month to unemployed diploma holders. This, however, needs to be augmented by bold, new long-term solutions that address the root cause of unemployment rather than symptom management. While doing so the new government needs to avoid the pitfalls of past misguided interventions - mismatches between types of skilling and industry needs and mandating the private sector to hire a fixed number of workers - to name a few. Mass entrepreneurship in Karnataka has the potential to empower a significant number of young people to set up their own enterprises spread across a wide range of geographies – especially in Northern Karnataka and in rural areas.

An imaginative collaboration between government, private sector, civil society, and youth could be a game changer in democratising enterprise creation, setting up innovation funds, and building industry-specific programmes and partnerships with incubators, accelerators and youth-centric NGOs. To make entrepreneurial opportunities widely accessible, awareness generation campaigns can be launched through Rural Business Idea Contests, and Entrepreneurial Hackathons in educational institutions. Entrepreneurship needs to be made an integral part of education in schools and colleges in Karnataka similar to what the Delhi Government has done.



Banks must lend more to micro-enterprises rather than dole out small loans (the average Mudra loan is Rs. 27,000) to create viable businesses that build assets and generate jobs. Additional efforts should be made to support women as 85% of them face challenges in availing bank loans.

Karnataka can also launch state-wide mentor programmes, particularly for the educated unemployed as mentoring greatly improves chances of entrepreneurs' success, according to a study conducted across 17 countries by Sage. Rural and sector-specific entrepreneurship can be encouraged by providing rural-specific infrastructure, connectivity, grants, subsidies, low-interest loans, and tax breaks. Special schemes, grants, and mentorship programs should be instated to address gender disparities and promote gender equity. Digital entrepreneurship can be encouraged through digital literacy training, support for digital platforms and marketplaces, and digital innovation.

Key gaps in the policy landscape need to be filled by providing an enabling ecosystem with infrastructure and connectivity, simplifying regulations and expanding incentives to non-technology and non-Bengaluru-based startups. These steps, planned and executed synergistically, can help Karnataka realise the vision of creating 10 lakh jobs in five years for its youth and women, through a grassroots mass entrepreneurship movement spanning every town, taluka and village. (The writer is the Founding and Managing Trustee

India's stake in Awami League's Victory



Bangladesh will again become a centre of anti-India activities, should a BNP-Jama'at-led coalition return to power in Dhaka in coming elections



ndia must do everything possible, within four corners of international law and with absolute respect for Bangladesh's sovereignty, to help Sheikh Hasina-led Bangladesh Awami League win the parliamentary elections scheduled in that country in January 2024. Begum Khaleda Zia-led Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the main opposition party, which is allied to the Bangladesh Jama'at-e-Islami (Jama'at) and other fundamentalist Islamist organisations, is pathologically anti-India. Bangladesh will again become a centre of anti-India activity and promoter of north-eastern India's secessionist insurgent groups, should a BNP-Jama'at-led coalition return to power in Dhaka.

A look at the record of the BNP-Jama'at-led coalition government when it was in power from 2001 to 2006, makes this clear. The issuance of threats to India, the active promotion of secessionist insurgent violence in northeastern India, and attempts to create a climate of hostility toward India in Bangladesh were the three main features of Dhaka's policy towards Delhi. An important example of the threats was one by its foreign minister, M. Morshed Khan, at a seminar in Dhaka on September 7, 2004. Referring to what he said were restrictions imposed by India on the import of goods from his country, he said, "Dhaka could end India's three billion-dollar trade here by issuing an SRO (Statutory Rogatory Order) on all Indian goods entering Bangladesh.'

Striking an even more minatory note, he said, "Bangladesh is Indialocked. Delhi should also remember that the seven north-eastern Indian states are Bangladesh-locked." While an attempt to expressed are personal)



INDIA, THE ACTIVE PROMOTION OF INSURGENTS, **VIOLENCE IN** NORTH-EASTERN INDIA, AND ATTEMPTS TO CREATE A **CLIMATE OF HOSTILITY** TOWARD INDIA WERE MAIN FEATURES OF DHAKA'S POLICY TOWARDS DELHI

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views

intimidate India was implicit in his reference to the vulnerability of India's north-eastern states vis-à-vis Bangladesh, an attempt to sow discord between these states and the rest of India was scripted into his blasting of the "Central Bank of India" (Reserve Bank of India?) for acting unilaterally against the interests of the common people of India (by imposing non-tariff barriers) such as not allowing individual states to open letters of credit without permission from Delhi.

The policy of providing sanctuary and support to north-east-ern India's rebel groups, began when Bangladesh was East Pakistan, but halted after liberation in 1971 when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was in power and resumed after his assassination. Begum Khaleda Zia's government pursued it with vigour. In fact, when she was the leader of the opposition in Bangladesh's national parliament, she had referred to rebels of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and other insurgent groups of north-eastern India as "freedom fighters." Not surprisingly, her government ridiculed India's protests supported by information. Referring to the list of insurgent camps in Bangladesh provided by India's Border Security Force (BSF), Major-General Mohammad Jahangir Alam Khan of the Bangladesh Rifles, visiting India for talks with BSF's director-general, Ajay Raj Sharma, said in Delhi on September 28, 2004, "There is not a single camp in Bangladesh. We looked for the prits had launched the attack in camps' locations given in the BSF list. Some of the addresses were of our cantonment area and of our headquarters....some of the addresses even pertained to the Bay of Bengal." In sharp contrast, the present government under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has not only shut these camps down but handed over to India some of the key insurgent leaders it could

As a part of its attempt to cree an anti-India temper in Bangladesh, Begum Khaleda Zia's government even insinuated that India was behind the dastardly grenade attack on the Awami League's rally in Dhaka on August 21, 2004. Sheikh Hasina survived—albeit with injuries—the attack, which was aimed at killing her and eliminating the Awami League's top leadership. Twentyfour (including 22 on the spot) died and 300 were injured. Among those who succumbed to their injuries was Ivy Rahman, secretary of the Awami League's women's affairs wing and wife of Zillur Rahman, then the party's general secretary and subsequently the country's president.

Justice Joynul Abedin, a senior judge of the High Court Division of Bangladesh's Supreme Court, appointed on August 22 as a single-person commission to inquire into the attack, submitted his report on October 2, 2004. He said at a press briefing before submitting his report that local and important BNP leaders.

prits had launched the attack in pre-planned way to destroy Bangladesh's democracy, independence and sovereignty. A report in the Independent of Bangladesh on October 3, 2004, which cited dispatch by the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha, the country's government-con-trolled national news agency as stating this, further said that, according to the commission, the attackers were foreign agents. Justice Abedin, who had once been a BNP functionary, did not identify the foreigners. Asked to elaborate on what he meant by saying that the grenade attack was the work of foreign agents, he said during a telephone conversation with Golam Mohiuddin of Bangladesh's daily, Prothom Alo on October 3, that he had taken into special consideration Bangladesh's geographical location and the politics of the subcontinent. He further said, "it becomes foreign the moment one crosses the geographical boundary of the country." Asked whether the commission's report mentioned the foreign country which was the closest (obviously India) he did not deny it but said, "I cannot answer this question of yours."

This clearly implied that India could have been the country, Significantly, among those sentenced by a special tribunal on October 10, 2018, for complicity in the grenade attack, were

Flawed ICMR paper on vaping continues to cause harm

Another year records over 13 lakh tobacco deaths in India alone because regular combustible cigarettes and tobacco remain widely available to all ages

While other countries reconsider their tobacco control options and embrace tobacco harm reduction, with some even reversing previous bans on nicotine vaping, we in India seem obsessed with the "implementation" of an illconceived ban on ENDS/Ecigarettes. People have even filed PILs against e-cigarettes

and become instant celebrities. In all this noise, no one appears to care that regular combustible cigarettes and tobacco remain widely available to all ages - with the last GYTS (Global Youth Tobacco Survey - 4) even showing 8.5% of current underage tobacco users with an average age of initiation at 9-11 years (Total population of 0-16-year-olds: ~ 38-40 crores or



(The author is the director

of the Association of Harm

Reduction Education and

Research)

of Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)

25% of our population) there are multiple tobacco sellers in plain sight of schools yet we hardly bat an eyelid. Why is this not worrying anyone enough to file PILs against this? Why no one is calling for the "implementation" of the cigarette and tobacco laws

banning sales to minors? Yet, if we are fixated on ecigarettes or rather nicotine vapes (or I'll start calling nicotine gum cigarette gum), it's time we take a long hard look at the infamous ICMR white paper on ENDS released 4 years ago that led to the ban on the manufacture, transport, sale etc. of nicotine vapes. The paper called for a complete ban on vaping but the law does allow personal use.

well as by senior doctors at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi. The claim of harm reduction was incorrectly assessed by the ICMR paper. The contrast should have been between risks posed by nico-

renowned global experts as

tine vapes versus risks posed by cigarettes and bidis. Instead, the contrast was between uncertain long-term health effects versus widespread nicotine addiction in youth. So what harm exactly does "nicotine addiction" cause? Especially if the nicotine is separate from tobacco.

Looking at the various proven carcinogens and toxic chemicals in tobacco and the clear absence of these in This paper was roundly criticized at the time by magical process by which found to be the culprit. programme where 1 million

vaping becomes nearly as dangerous as smoking. The relative risks have been estimated as 95% to 99% safer than cigarettes and even if these figures are overstated, the fact remains that nicotine vapes are far, far safer than cigarettes or bidis. There is no combustion in nicotine vapes (apart from poorly designed lab studies where vaping coils are overheated and burned to failure and the smoke is inhaled by poor trapped rats). In the real world, a vaper getting a "burnt taste" from a dried coil would immediately stop and get a new coil or

cartridge. Every single time. Nicotine vapes were also implicated in the EVALI outbreak where illegal THC cut

Despite the wide availability of nicotine vapes, there has not been a corresponding rise in EVALI. Papers with an unsound methodology that claimed vaping caused heart disease have also been retracted.

The ICMR paper also called into question "tobacco cessation claims" of nicotine vapes saying they were unproven. On the contrary, nicotine vapes are now the most popular means to quit smoking worldwide. A recent Cochrane review in Nov 2022 (78 studies, 40 RCTs, total of 22052 subjects) showed "high-certainty evidence that ECs with nicotine increase quit rates compared to NRT". The UK government has even

nicotine vapes to reach a smoke-free society by 2030. A statement by 15 past presidents of SRNT (Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco) calls for considering the use of nicotine vaping as a means to double the quit rate. The preponderance of evidence globally is in favour of nicotine vaping as prefer-

able to smoking. A prominent concern also raised by the ICMR paper was about vaping being a "gateway" into tobacco use and ending up in a "nicotine addiction" even after cessation of smoking or as some folks have put it: exchanging one addiction for another. We need to consider two things here. First, nicotine is not carcinogenic and is not associat-

smokers will receive free ed with the detrimental effects of tobacco. There are no studies that have established any detrimental effects of longterm nicotine replacements.

Second, the "gateway" theory has been comprehensively debunked in the real world. The same youth who smoke tend to also vape. It's not vaping that has suddenly led to young people picking up a smoking habit.

The ban on nicotine vaping has not served the cause of tobacco control. It has instead boosted cigarette sales and led to the current situation where youth awareness of vaping has increased to nearly 25%. A situation where tobacco control people think nicotine vapes are more dangerous than cigarettes or bidis and have largely ignored the latter.

ne pioneer

Rupee rises 9 paise to close at 82.31 against US dollar

he rupee appreciated by 9 paise to 82.31 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, supported by broad dollar weakness and a positive trend in domestic equities. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened on a positive note against the US dollar and settled at 82.31 (provisional), up 9 paise over its previous close. During the day, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 82.27 and a low of 82.38 in the day

trade. On Thursday, the rupee closed at 82.40 against the US currency. "The Indian rupee strengthened for the second consecutive day on positive domestic markets and a weak US dollar. However, a rebound in crude oil prices capped sharp gains," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.12 per cent to 103.43.Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures advanced 1.28 per cent to USD 75.23 per barrel.



E-commerce platform Meesho crosses 500 mn downloads

500 million cumulative downloads across Google Play and iOS App Store, mobile data analytics provider has said. The company has achieved the 500 million download milestone in six years, data.ai, formerly known as App Annie, said in a statement. According to data.ai, over half of Meesho app downloads (274 million) came in 2022.Indian e-commerce

platform Meesho has emerged as the world's fastest shopping app to cross 500 million cumulative downloads across Google Play and iOS App Store combined, reaching this milestone in six years," data.ai said. According to data.ai, with just 13.6 MB size, Meesho's android app is the lightest e-commerce app in India on Play Store, which makes it compatible with low-end



GAIL infuses Rs 2,100 cr in JBF **Petrochemicals**

ndia's largest gas firm GAIL has infused Rs 2,100 crore in insolvent private-sector chemical company JBF Petrochemicals Ltd that it had acquired in bankruptcy proceedings. The firm had in March won bankruptcy court approval for taking over JBF. In a stock exchange filing, GAIL (India) Ltd said it has "infused Rs 2,101 crore (equity - Rs 625 crore and debt - Rs 1,476 crore)" in the committed bankruptcy resolution plan.

"Accordingly, JBF has become a wholly owned subsidiary of GAIL with effect from June 1, 2023," it said, GAIL had outbid a consortium of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) in the insolvency process run by IDBI Bank to recover Rs 5,628 crore of dues to financial and operational creditors. JBF Petrochemicals was incorporated in 2008 to set up a 1.25 million tonne per annum capacity purified terephthalic acid plant at Mangalore Special Economic Zone



COAL INDIA SHARE SALE OVER-SUBSCRIBED

Govt to get more than Rs 4,000 cr

PNS NEW DELHI

The Coal India share sale was over-subscribed by both retail and institutional investors and the government is expected to get more than Rs 4,000 crore. In the two-day offer for sale (OFS), the government sold its 18.48 crore shares or 3 per cent stake in Coal India at a floor price of Rs 225 apiece. At the floor price, the stake sale would fetch over Rs 4,000 crore to the exchequer. Institutional investors had on Thursday put in bids for over 28.76 crore share, while retail buyers on Friday bid for over 2.58 crore shares of Coal India. Institutional bidders on Friday put in bids for 5.12 crore shares. Coal India OFS is the maiden government stake sale of a public sector undertaking in the current fiscal. The government currently holds 66.13 per cent in CIL. The stake sale in Coal India will help the government inch towards the Rs 51,000-crore disinvestment target set for the current fiscal.

Shares of Coal India settled for the day at Rs 230.90 apiece on the BSE, up 0.15 per cent over its previous



Coal production grows 7.10 % to 76.26 MT

Domestic coal production was 7.10 per cent higher year-on-year at 76.26 million tonne (MT) in May. India had produced 71.21 MT coal during the same month in 2022, the coal ministry said in a statement. "Ministry of Coal has achieved a remarkable feat with a substantial surge in overall coal production during May 23, reaching 76.26 MT surpassing May 22 of 71.21 MT, representing an increase of 7.10 per cent," it said. The cumulative coal production in April-May FY24 jumped to 149.41 MT from 138.41 MT in the yearago period. Last month, Coal India Ltd (CIL) alone produced 59.94 MT coal, up 9.54 per cent over 54.72 MT in May 2022. With an increased firstmile connectivity infrastructure, coal dispatch last month grew 5.70 per cent to 82.22 MT from 77.79 MT in May 2022. First-mile connectivity refers to the transportation of coal from pitheads to

dispatch points. The cumulative coal dispatch in April-May FY24 stood at 162.44 MT as against 149.76 MT in the year-ago period. This upturn in offtake has resulted in a comfortable coal stock position, guaranteeing reliable and abundant supply of coal lying at pithead coal stock at CIL, SCCL, stock at TPP(DCB) etc, the ministry said. The total coal stock as of May 31, 2023 is 112.41 MT as compared to 82.97 MT on May 31, 2022, a growth of 35.48 per cent. The coal stock position has strengthened the capability to tackle unforeseen fluctuations in energy demand and ensures meeting the energy demands of the nation. The availability of coal rakes for coal transportation has remained consistently good throughout this period due to the initiative taken by the ministry to augment rail connectivity infrastructure under PM Gati Shakti

Goldman sees RBI pausing again on June 8 review

PNS MUMBAI

Forecasting a steeper fall in inflation to the tune of 50 bps lower than previously projected, a Wall Street brokerage sees the central bank leaving the policy rates unchanged at 6.5 per cent in the forthcoming review on June 8.

Analysts at Goldman Sachs India in a report on Friday said the headline inflation will average 5.3 per cent this year, which is within the RBI target of 2 per cent plus or minus 4 per cent, even though they expect some risk to food inflation stemming from crop damages due to unseasonal rains.

It can be noted that retail inflation has declined to an 18-month low of 4.7 per cent in April from 5.7 per cent in March. Moreover, core inflation has also fallen to 5.2 per cent in April.

Going forward, we see average headline inflation at 5.3 per cent in 2023, which is within the RBI target of 2-6 per cent. This means that in Q2 of 2023 (Q1 of FY24) headline inflation is likely to be around 50 bps below the most recent

BRICS pitches for using local currencies in intl trade

The BRICS nations on Friday underlined the need for using local currencies in international trade and financial transactions besides committing themselves to supporting rulebased open and transparent global trade.

A joint statement issued at the end of the meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, also pressed for a robust Global Financial Safety Net with a quota-based and adequately resourced adequately resourced International Monetary Fund (IMF) at its centre.

It further said the process of IMF governance reform under the 16th General Review of Quotas, including a new quota formula as a guide, should be completed by December 15,

The joint statement titled 'The Cape of Good Hope', said ministers expressed their support for a free, open, transparent, inclusive, equitable, non-discriminatory and rulesbased multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, with special and differential treatment (S&DT) for



developing countries, includ-Developed Least Countries.

"They stressed their support to work towards positive and meaningful outcomes on the issues at the 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13). They committed to engage constructively to pursue the necessary WTO reform with a view to presenting concrete deliverables to MC13. They called for the restoration of a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all members by 2024, and the selection of new

Appellate Body Members without further delay," it said. They condemned unilaterprotectionist measures under the pretext of environmental concerns such as unilateral and discriminatory carbon border adjustment mechanisms, taxes and other measures, it said.

The BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing 41 per cent of the global population, 24 per cent of the global GDP and 16 per cent of the global trade.

The ministers recognised the impact on the world economy from unilateral approaches in breach of international law and they also noted that the situation is complicated further by unilateral economic coercive measures, such as sanctions, boycotts, embargoes and blockades.

ONGC to maintain financial flexibility as earnings steady: S&P



PNS NEW DELHI

State-owned ONGC's operating cash flows will rise over the next 12-24 months due to higher production volumes, stable earnings from domestic gas production, and the removal of a windfall tax on crude oil, S&P Global Ratings said on Friday

"This should help the company maintain its good credit quality, despite its investment plans and healthy shareholder distributions," the rating agency said in a statement. ONGC is India's largest oil

and gas producer. "We estimate that ONGC's domestic production volumes

will rise by 8-10 per cent for

fiscal 2024 (year ending March

31). The increase is attribut-

able to the start of oil produc-

tion from its block in the

Krishna Godavari basin later

this year," S&P said. At the same time, produc-

tion at the Sakhalin-1 project of ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) should also recover to fiscal 2022 levels, after a period of disruptions because of geopolitical issues.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation produced a total of 42.8 million tonne of oil equivalent (mmtoe) in fiscal 2023 compared with 43.4 mmtoe in fiscal 2022. OVL produced a total of 10.2 mmtoe in fiscal 2023, down from 12.3 mmtoe in fiscal

"Growth in production volumes will outstrip the impact of moderating oil prices on ONGC's earnings, in our view. We estimate the company's EBITDA at Rs 1-1.1 lakh crore over fiscals 2024 and 2025, compared with about Rs 98,700 crore in fiscal 2023," it said.

Average time for issuing I-T refunds reduced to 16 days

refunds by the income tax department has been brought down "significantly" and 80 per cent of refunds were issued in the first 30 days of filing of returns during the 2022-23 fiscal, CBDT Čhairman Nitin Gupta has said.

The chief of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said the work of processing Income Tax Returns (ITRs) has been "expedited" as the tax department is leveraging technology in a big way and was working to ensure 'ease of doing business' for the taxpayers by promoting voluntary compliance.

"We have expedited the pro-



cessing of returns and quicker issue of refunds. The average time taken for processing of returns has been reduced to only 16 days in the financial year 2022-23 as against 26 days in the previous 2021-22 fiscal," Gupta said. "We have seen a hundred

percentage of ITRs processed within one day of their filing. This percentage has increased from 21 per cent for assessment year (AY) 2021-22 to 42 per cent for AY 2022-23," Gupta said on Thursday while speaking at the online 'Samvaad' session hosted by the I-T department.

The CBDT, headed by a chairman, is the administrative body for the tax department.

Talking about technology advancement undertaken by the department, Gupta said it achieved a "peak processing capacity of nearly 22.94 lakh returns in a single day on July

Sebi takes steps to boost liquidity in RFQ platform

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Friday came out with corporate bonds through Request for Quote (RFQ) platform by stock brokers in order to increase liquidity on the platform.

For all the trades in proprietary capacity, stock brokers will have to undertake at least 10 per cent of their total secondary market trades by value in corporate bonds in that month by placing quotes through one-to-one or one-tomany mode on the RFQ platform of stock exchanges from July 1, and further, the percentage will increase to 25 per cent from April next year,

Sebi said in a circular. Stock brokers will have to



consider the trades executed by value through one-to-one (OTO) or one-to-many (OTM) mode of RFQ with respect to the total secondary market trades in corporate bonds, during the current month and immediately preceding two months on a rolling basis.

Further, only trades pertaining to proprietary capacity of stock brokers will be considered for the purpose of such calculations.

Royal Enfield starts operations in Nepal

PNS NEW DELHI

Motorcycle maker Royal Enfield on Friday announced the commencement of operations of its assembly unit in

The unit has been set up in collaboration with the Triveni Group of Nepal.

The complete knocked down (CKD) assembly unit has an annual capacity of 20,000 units.

It will begin operations with local assembly of the new Classic 350 and the SCRAM 411 for Nepal, Royal Enfield said in a state-

"Located in Birgunj, the new facility is the Royal Enfield's fifth CKD assembly unit in the world - after Brazil, Thailand, Colombia and Argentina," the company said.

Rooftop solar capacity grows 6.35% to 485 MW

PNS NEW DELHI

The rooftop solar capacity in India increased by 6.35 per cent to 485 megawatt (MW) in the January-March quarter of this year, according to Mercom

In the January-March period of calendar year 2022, the rooftop solar installation capacity in the country was at 456 MW, the research firm said

India's cumulative rooftop



solar capacity was approximately 9.3 gigawatts (GW) at the end of Q1 2023.

On a quarter-on-quarter basis, at 485 MW, rooftop solar

capacity addition was marginally up by 0.4 per cent compared to 483 MW in Q4 2022, Mercom India said. According to its 'Q1 2023 Mercom India Rooftop Solar Market Report', nearly 58 per cent of capacity was added by residential consumers in Q1 2023, while industrial and commercial consumers accounted for 28 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively.

In Q1 2023, rooftop solar accounted for 26 per cent of total solar installations.

"After ups and downs in 2022, we are beginning to see steady growth in rooftop solar driven by solid fundamentals.

Sensex, Nifty rise on gains in metal, auto stocks

PNS MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty closed higher on Friday after two days of fall, helped by buying in metal, telecom and auto stocks amid

a firm trend in global markets. Automakers led by Maruti Suzuki India, Hyundai, Mahindra & Mahindra reporting robust wholesales of passenger vehicles and GST collections crossing Rs 1.50 lakh crore for the third straight month in May also added to

the optimism. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 118.57 points or 0.19 per cent to settle at 62,547.11. During the day, it jumped 291.3 points or 0.46 per cent to 62,719.84.

The NSE Nifty advanced 46.35 points or 0.25 per cent to finish at 18,534.10.

On a weekly basis, the BSE benchmark gained 45.42 points or 0.07 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 34.75 points or 0.18 per cent.



"This week, the Indian mar ket was volatile. However, it was able to regain momentum led by a positive domestic outlook accompanied by global cues. Auto stocks garnered attention as sales numbers for May came in strong, with a sequential recovery boosting sentiment across the sector.

"The hope that the Fed will refrain from a rate hike has provided comfort to the global equity market," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Tata Steel was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, rising nearly 2 per cent, followed by Maruti, Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Larsen & Toubro, Titan, Bharti Airtel, Power Grid, ITC, State

Bank of India and Nestle.

Small tea growers for clusters to achieve scale

Small tea growers (STGs) have submitted a status report to the Union Commerce Ministry highlighting the issues faced by them and also sought assistance from the government to achieve scale in their operations by setting up clusters.

In the status report prepared by engaging consultancy firm BDO India LLP, the apex body of STGs the Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Associations (CISTA) said that although their contribution to

the overall tea production volume of the country is close to 52 per cent, they are not getting the remunerative price for green leaf produced by them while the costs of production is rising.

President of CISTA Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty said a delegation met the Union Commerce secretary Sunil Barthwal two days ago and submitted the status report to him seeking government's interventions for the growth of the

STGs in the country. "In the report, we have said that cluster development will



play a pivotal role in moving STGs up the value chain which will help them in getting remunerative prices. In this context, the government may consider

development of clusters in the major tea producing regions of the country for quality production and brand building in domestic and export markets",

India in 2022, 52 per cent was contributed by the STGs, according to CISTA. The report also highlighted the cause for providing incentives to STGs who are trying to move into packeting for promotional activities, besides supporting startups in the tea trade which are expected to be formed in huge

Out of the 1350 million kilo-

gramme of tea produced in

Regarding bought leaf factories (BLFs) which process tea leaves without having any cap-

numbers.

tive gardens, the CISTA status report stated that their modernisation of operations are integral for the development of STGs. "The report said that BLFs are

key to processing of green leaves which is key to ensuring good quality tea meeting accepted quality standards. We also highlighted that the government should also introduce production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for the tea sector, especially the STGs which will incentivise them and go for value addition in their branding

what's brewing?

Papon joins forces with Grammy-Nominated Darren Heelis



Renowned singer and composer Papon, known for his soulful music and soothing voice, has embarked on a new musical journey and is currently preparing for his upcoming songs in London. After a recent health setback, Papon has made a remarkable recovery and is now back in full swing, ready to captivate his audience once again.

Papon's passion for music has brought him to the vibrant city of London, where he is currently mixing and mastering his latest album. In a recent social media post, the artist provided a glimpse into his current project by sharing a candid picture alongside Grammy-Nominated audio engineer Darren Heelis. The photo captured the two talented artists sitting in the Pierce Room Studio, igniting excitement among fans and industry insiders alike.

Adding to the intrigue, Papon's caption accompanying the image read, "Back in London to mix with my friend Darren Heelis after a very long time! Lots of surprises coming your way! Stay tuned!!" His words have left fans eagerly anticipating the upcoming collaboration and speculating about

the surprises that await them.

Papon shared his excitement about the upcoming collaboration, stating, "I'm really excited to be working with the talented Darren Heelis on the two new albums. It has been an amazing experience collaborating with him, and we have created something truly special. These songs hold a special meaning for me, and I can't wait to share them with all my fans. Each track is a blend of emotions and beautiful melodies that will take listeners on a wonderful musical journey. Stay

Munawar embraces odd jobs as a way of life, not struggle

Singer and entertainer Munawar has stood the test of time and very early in his life, he realised that success and recognition never come easy. Despite going

through an arduous journey, he has reached the heights of stardom with his talent and hard work. Munawar believes in being extremely proud and open about his background and life

Recalling his early days, Munawar shared how taking up "odd jobs" helped him value hard work and his achievements even more. The celebrated singer, known as one of the most talented young artists today, previously worked at places such as a footwear store, utensil store, a restaurant, and even a snacks company,

where he would earn just Rs 3 for filling

up over a hundred packets of chips.

Munawar said, "Life changed for me
when my father was paralyzed, and I stepped in to take responsibility for my family. It was a difficult time for us as a family. Working was the only way of life for me, I was just able to make enough money to put food on our table. During that phase of my life, I realised the value of money and my responsibility towards my loved ones. I used to do different chores, and looking back, I feel they really shaped me. I will not call that a struggle, it was just life."

Remembering the feeling of holding the mic for the first time in his life, an emotional Munawar said, "I still remember that special feeling I experienced when I held the mic for the first time for comedy. Soon, I realised my passion for music and decided to continue pursuing it for the rest of my life. What I learned from my experiences is that we should never lose hope and that the sun eventually shines through?

Munawar's rise to fame has been worthwhile, and his song *Noor* from his latest album *Madari* has been topping the charts. The song, written by Munawar, produced by Riz Shain, and composed by Munawar and Charan, is available on Munawar's official YouTube page. The song is mixed by Abhijay Sharma and mastered by Pixl.



Tupac Shakur set to be honoured with Hollywood Walk Of Fame star

The rap icon, who was killed in September 1996 aged 25, will get the Hollywood Boulevard tribute on June 7, reports aceshowbiz.com. Ana Martinez, Hollywood

Walk of Fame producer, said in a statement, "Tupac Shakur was a rapper, actor, activist, poet, and revolutionarv. This iconic artist has continued to be part of the zeitgeist for decades after his passing and will continue to be an important cultural figure for many years to

Martinez suggested Tupac's star will become a huge attraction for rap fans, adding, "Surely, as one of LA's own, Tupac's star will be added to the list of most visited stars."

Tupac is still widely recognised as one of the most influ-

R apper Tupac Shakur is to be honoured with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

ential and successful rappers of all time. He died on September 7, 1996 after he was involved in a drive-by shooting in Las

Vegas.

Kendrick Lamar, 35, previously paid a glowing tribute to the late rap star, describing Tupac as one of his biggest inspirations.

On the 19th anniversary of Tupac's death, in a note posted on the official Tupac website, the rapper said, "I was 8 yrs old when I first saw you. I couldn't describe how I felt at that moment. So many different emotions. Full of excitement. Full of joy and eagerness."

"20 yrs later I understand exactly what that feeling was. Inspired. The people that you touched on that small intersection changed lives forever. I told myself I wanted to be a voice for man one day. Whoever knew I was speaking out loud for u to listen. Thank you.



Holland has given an update on the development of his fourth Spider-Man movie.

At the premiere of his new Apple TV+ show *The* Crowded Room in New York City, Holland said that though he can't share too much, he has"been having meetings" about the next chapter in the Marvel franchise, reports 'Variety'.

However, those conversations have been put on hold for now due to the ongoing writers strike.

"I can't talk about that, but I can say that we have been having meetings. We've put the meet-

ollywood star Tom Holland has given an update on the Holland told 'Variety'. "There's been multiple conversations, but at this point it's very, very early stages."

Holland echoed what *Spider-Man* producer Amy Pascal told 'Variety' on Wednesday night at the premiere of another movie in the Spidey universe, Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse. "Are we going to make another movie? Of course we are," Pascal said. "We're in the process, but the

writers strike, nobody is working during the strike. We're all being supporters and whenever they get themselves together, we'll get started."

Holland stars in the psychological thriller *The*

Crowded Room as Danny Sullivan, who gets arrested for his involvement in a New York City shooting in 1979. Through a series of interviews with an interroga-

tor named Rya (Amanda Seyfried), Sullivan slowly reveals his darkest secrets.

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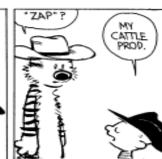












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> Saturday June 3, 2023

Conquering her grief and abuse to aid more like her

Neehaari Mandali, who has helped many burn survivors to lead a proud life, is on a mission to spread awareness about burns. This week, *The* Pioneer rang a call to this good samaritan for our weekly edition of Hyderabond, as she discusses her association with Hyderabad, but also her cause.

TEJAL SINHA

The pain that a burn injury causes in a victim's life not only has a psychological impact but also leaves physical scars that lasts for a lifetime. Well, that's how it's been for Neehaari Mandali too. When her fairytale marriage turned out to be too. When her fairytale marriage turned out to be mental and physical torture, she doused herself with kerosene, which left her with 90 percent burns on her body. She was also two months pregnant. Doesn't that sound horrifying? She had to survive and go through it all by herself—several surgeries, months of hospitalization, and a lot of courage.

A native of Pulliguda village in Andhra Pradesh, Neehaari shifted to Hyderabad in 2012, after the terrifying incident that took place. While she was still recovering, it was then that she started the Burn Survivor Mission Trust (BSMS). Today, she's become a 'messiah' for many such burn survivors through this organisation. During the initial days when she'd

this organisation. During the initial days when she'd shifted here, she did feel a little uncomfortable: "It

shifted here, she did feel a little uncomfortable: "It was difficult for me to interact or meet people. At times, I used to get positive responses, while sometimes I got negative responses in a couple of areas. It's been 10 years—a decade—since I came here.

According to Neehaari, Hyderabad teaches people what life is and makes them live a pleasant life. She goes on further, "Here you just don't have one particular sector to work. Even people who've not got a proper education get good job opportunities. The city makes you learn life values."

Though her trust's registration was officially start-

Hyderabad. She believes that the culture that's here, and that people from different corners of the country have settled here—different international countries, this in a way has led to spreading more awareness about burns. "I've got about burns. "I've got enough opportunities to expand my wings here. Even if any incident had happened in any nearby areas or states, they would come here to Hyderabad. And so this has been a big platform," shares Neehaari, who to date has handled 156 hurn recon

date has handled 156 burn recon-

date has handled 156 burn reconstructive surgeries, 900+ counselling sessions, and 10+ suicide cases. She feels that with the ease of reachability here in Hyderabad, it's easy to grab the attention of people, especially through word of mouth.

According to several reports, the estimated annual burn incidence in India is approximately 6-7 million per year. And it's been a challenge for the philanthropists too, in order to raise awareness. Why? Because unfortunately it's still a taboo in the society. Every time one looks at these burn survivors, they just act uncanny. "While we have awareness on cancer, saving soil, or menstrual hygiene, why don't we have awareness on burns?" questions Neehaari. "According to WHO, over 6 to 7 million people have been a victim of burns. And out of this, 1.4 Though her trust's registration was officially started in Andhra Pradesh, they work from Hyderabad (Gachibowli) as their base. The lady bountiful felt that there was much more opportunity for her in have been a victim of burns. And out of this, 1.4 lakh people are disabled in our country. It's a very

very big challenge for us. Being a victim myself it's been a very big challenge. Out of a hundred people around 10 people will react, and out of those 10 people how many people would come forward and help is again a big question. People do know about burns but not post-burn deformities. There is no awareness regarding that. We cannot stop what has happened or is happening but whatever incidents had taken place to date, all we can do is to find out the victims, which is again not an easy task."

Mercifully, she says that now people have been approaching her ever since they started the organisation. While in a conversation, she also revealed that she to date faces challenges.

As we talk about post-burn surgeries, it also affects the victim mentally. And according to her, counselling has been a

her, counselling has been a big challenge. Like any of us, even they give importance to their appearance. "After the surgery is done, we counsel them, and maybe for the next week or even a year, they might feel better. However, later when However, later when they go for jobs, they might encounter people commenting on them and then they would again go back to the shell. It's very important to create awareness of that in society," shares Neehaari, who

that in society," shares Neehaari, who was recently awarded the NTR Legendary National Awards 2023. Apart from all the awards that she's bagged, she also has her autobiography which was published in Malayalam in 2017, titled 'Maattathinte Kuthipp'. And so for her, every time that she receives recognition, she feels that a new and much more responsibility has come on her, and she tries to become more responsible and do proper justice to not just the recognition, and people but also the organisation and

iust the awards and interviews that have brought people to know about her cause. Now, she's going to star in writer-director Ram Alladi's Panne, which explores how the individual's freedom is bound by social restrictions. She plays the character named Bharati Padiyachi, who has a complete grip on the rules and regulations of the constituency. Taking us into detail about it, she says, "She has a lot of capacity to fight against people. The film will show how she works with the PM, how supportive she is to the PM how she works whatever the PM says. And so what happens is a party tries to molest her, throws petrol on her, and attempts to murder her. However, later as she gets back to normal keeping her appearance aside with all the difficulties, she still manages to work hard. Panne, which explores how the indities, she still manages to work hard. So now the post-production work is going on, and it is going to be released soon."

Neehaari says she feels very much connected to her character. much connected to her character. Just like how her character doesn't tolerate any sort of negativity or anything that troubles her, she's the same in her real life too. So, does she feel the film that this film is going to help her bring more awareness to the cause? film is going to help her bring more awareness to the cause? "100 percent," she says. "Not just the film. Even the interview that I'm giving today and that you're taking. Even if it reaches one person and if it creates awareness, that's what I wish for. It's kind of a selfish thing. If I have done some work it has to reach at least one person and that's what I keep thinking about the burn survivors. And now as we talk about the film, it's on-screen it will it's on-screen it will raise awareness to



Deepti Sadhwani: Asit Kumar Modi never troubled me on the sets of TMKOC

SHIKHA DUGGAL

eepti Sadhwani has undertaken different jobs to stay afloat before becoming a celebrity —she worked in finance as an investment banker. Now she's rich and famous! We assume investment bankers have a thing for show business. Many of the film industry's favourites belong to the finance background; likewise, Deepti.

Let's get to know her a little bit more. "My journey has

had a lot of variety and diversity, with some ups and downs. My career started as Miss Lucknow! From there, I participated in the Miss India pageant as well. So, I started doing ramp walks, some cameos in films, and continuing my education background—all simultaneously. With the help of an MBA in finance, I turned into an investment banker too! I started to specialise in marketing abroad, but then one fine day I quit my job and returned to India. Because I had this knack for doing things on my own, I started making my own music albums! From there on, my career took off. I

started to be a part of live events, and I started my own marketing agency and music record label too."

Recalling a few more interesting urban myths with us, she goes on, "When I quit my job, I had no savings of my own I wasn't so keep on taking any bale from your your I wasn't so keep on taking any bale from your your your your your your yo own. I wasn't so keen on taking any help from my parents because they knew I was an independent girl. Without any financial backing, I went on to do other ventures. At least I was trying to imagine them! There was a time when I felt like leaving everything and, just going back to my parents in my hometown."

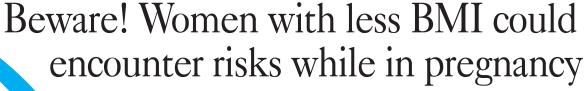
But she didn't give up, and instead, "I ran my finance back-ground into the subconscious and started investing in multiple businesses. I was getting offers for films, but I didn't want to totally rely on them either. I wanted to make use of my educational background anyway! The trend of being an entrepreneur was on the rise, so I hopped on board too. When I opened this music label, I had already decided not to do anything with A-listers. They have enough opportunities! My role was to turn the coin for the betterment of independent singers. There are a lot of sob stories we hear on reality television shows —it was time for me to take action on it, and I am."

The fact that her parents were extremely supportive and trusted her decision made the transition easier for her. Her father was a banker himself, but to be a heroine apart from an investment banker was seriously like breaking a stereotype for Deepti.

And now comes the controversial turn—a little-known fact that our interviewee was also a part of *Taarak Mehta ka Ooltah Chashmah* run by the alleged perpetrator Asit Modi—all the dispute that's going on around sexual harassment allegations against him, to which his former talent quipped, "I had shot with him. The set atmosphere was very similar to your own family. Back then, all of us were

well treated. At least that's what I observed! There wasn't even a sense of competing with each other for screen space in such a big show. My interaction with Asit Kumar Modi was very cordial. I have no comments on the allegations against him; the law will decide that now, but he never troubled me on the sets of Taarak Mehta ka Ooltah Chashmah. He was instead taking care of me as his artist!'

An investment banker turned actress has had her own share of hassle to become who she is today. In an exclusive chat with The Pioneer, the actress not only takes us through her journey but also speaks of being a part of *Taarak Mehta ka Ooltah* Chashmah, which has now been the talk of the town, for a while now.



Pregnancy is a transformative period in a woman's life that brings joy and excitement. However, it also comes with its share of risks and challenges, especially for women with a lower body mass index (BMI). BMI is a measure of body fat based on an individual's height and weight and is an impor-tant indicator of overall health. Women with a lower BMI, typically classified as underweight and may face unique risk factors during pregnancy that require special attention and care.

One of the primary concerns for pregnant women with a lower BMI is inadequate weight gain. Weight gain is crucial during pregnancy to support the growth and development of the fetus. However, women with a lower BMI may have difficulty gaining the recommended amount of weight, which can lead to complications such as low birth weight and preterm birth. It is essential for healthcare experts to closely monitor the weight

gain of these women and provide appropriate guidance and support to ensure a healthy pregnancy outcome. Another risk factor associated with a lower BMI in

pregnancy is nutritional deficiencies. Women with a lower BMI may have a limited reserve of essential nutrients, which can affect both their own health and the development of the fetus. Adequate intake of vital nutrients like folic acid, iron, and calcium is crucial during pregnancy to prevent birth defects, anemia, and ensure proper bone development. Women with a lower BMI may also be at a higher risk of developing gestational diabetes during pregnancy. Gestational diabetes is a condition characterized by high blood sugar levels that occur for the first time during pregnancy. It can lead to complications for both the mother and the baby, such as preeclampsia, preterm birth, and increased birth weight.

In addition to these physical risks, women

with a lower BMI may also experience psy-chological and emotional challenges during pregnancy. Society often emphasizes the idea that pregnancy is synonymous with weight gain, and women with a lower BMI may face criticism or judgment for not conforming to these expectations. This can lead to feelings of selfdoubt, body image issues, and increased stress levels. It is essential for doctors to provide emotional support and create a non-judgmental environment for these women to address their concerns and promote a positive pregnancy experience.

Dr. Tejashri Shrotri, senior consultant (obesterics and gynecology), Apollo Cradle and Children's Hospital-Chirag Enclave in New Delhi shares some tips that can help women with a lower BMI have a healthy and successful pregnancy.

Consult a Doctor: It is crucial for women with a lower BMI to seek regular prenatal care and consult with an experienced doctor in managing pregnancies with lower BMI. Doctor can closely monitor the progress of the pregnancy, provide guidance on appropriate weight gain, and address any specific concerns or risks associated with

Focus on nutrition: A well-balanced diet is particularly important for women with a lower BMI during pregnancy. Ensure that your diet includes a variety of nutrientrich foods such as fruits, vegeta-bles, whole grains, lean proteins, and dairy products. Consider working with a registered dietitian or nutritionist who can help create a customized meal plan to meet your

specific nutritional needs.

Prenatal supplements: Prenatal vitamins and supplements are essential for all pregnant women, but they are particularly important for those with a lower BMI. These supplements help ensure that you and your baby receive adequate amounts of essential nutrients such as folic acid, iron, calcium, and omega-3 fatty acids. Discuss with your doctor about the appropriate prenatal supple-

ments to support your pregnancy.

Stay active and exercise: Regular physical activity during pregnancy can help improve overall health and wellbeing. Consult with your health coach about suitable exercises for your individual needs. Low-impact activities such as walking, swimming, or prenatal yoga can be beneficial and help maintain muscle tone and flexibility. However, always prioritize safety and listen to your body, avoiding any exercises that cause discomfort or

Monitor blood sugar levels: Pregnant women with a lower BMI may have a higher risk of developing gestational diabetes. Regular monitoring of blood sugar levels can help detect and manage this condition early on. Follow the recommended testing schedule and dietary guidelines provided by your doctor. In some cases, medication or insulin therapy may be necessary to maintain blood sugar levels within a healthy range.

India shouldn't pick WTC XI with pre-determined mindset: Prasad

India should not pick the playing XI for the World Test Championship final with a pre-determined mindset like they did two years ago, says former chief selector MSK Prasad, who feels it would be very tough to fill the injured Rishabh Pant's shoes as his overseas feats are unparal-

India's move to pick two spinners — Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja — in the 2021 WTC final against New Zealand backfired as pacers dominated the game in overcast conditions at

Spin could play a role in the final against Australia at The Oval in London from June 7 but Prasad advised the team to take the final call depending on the conditions at that time.

"We went with two spinners and three fast bowlers in the mind but subsequently there was rain, we should have changed our plans, somehow we stuck to the same playing eleven. But that is in

the past.
"It all depends on conditions at The Oval. The is the actual story of the movie, the pitch and conditions. We don't know how they will be over five days, so we should not pre fix our mind and understand the conditions and back your instincts," the former India wicketkeeper told PTI.

Pant, who has scored cen-



turies in England, Australia and South Africa, won't be available to counter attack if the top-order fails. Prasad feels KS Bharat is the automatic choice in Pant's absence but the latter's ability as a batter is rare.

"It is a pretty straightforward call to pick Bharat (over Ishan Kishan). It is really tough to fill the shoes of Rishabh especially in an away series. In the history of entire India cricket, no other wicketkeeper batter has hundreds in England, South Africa and Australia, so it's

very difficult to replace him. "You need to have a wick-

etkepeer who is fit and fine for 100 overs. This is a Test match and we need to think from that aspect. "But if you are thinking you can have Ishan Kishan, Bharat has been tried and tested and has played India A in England, so they might end up going with him," said Prasad, who was the chief

selector between 2016 and 2020. India's star studded top four comprising Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara and Virat Kohli are expected to deliver against the likes of Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Pat

Cummins. Ajinkya Rahane at five also adds to the experience of the batting unit.

"That is going to decide the fate of the game. How our top order is going to face their fast bowling. "With Gill in the form of his life, Rohit already has a hundred in England, Kohli has been in great form and Pujara has got lot of runs in county cricket and Ajinkya with his experience, it is the best we can have, they have to fight and win the game," Prasad

Gill has recorded centuries

across formats in the last six months and was the standout bat-

"It is all about the mindset and Gill has adapted to different formats now. In IPL he did say about technical changes he made in his batting to improve strike rate. So, if a player can change his mindset as per format he is going to do well in any format.

"That is what he has done across formats. I hope he will replicate that form in England," said the 48-year-old who played six Tests and 17 ODIs between 1998-99.

If India does go with four pacers, then choosing between Ashwin and Jadeja becomes very difficult considering what they bring to the table, said Prasad.

Jadeja has been so good of late that he can play as a specialist batter. It is a tricky call considering what both can bring to the table, it is hard to ignore. Ashwin with his 400 plus wickets and he is someone who is who can bowl on any surface. If it comes to that, it will be a very tough call," he said.

Another tough call will be to choose between Umesh Yadav and all-rounder Shardul Thakur.

That is the trickiest part. If you see the statistics, Umesh is more successful in home conditions compared to away conditions, so picking Shardul gives you that batting advantage. You need to have long batting depth also against a quality attack like Australia," Prasad added.



Australia unsure about India's bowling line-up

PTI LONDON

Australia are expecting Ravindra Jadeja to feature in India's playing XI in the World Test Championship final but are unsure about Ravichandran Ashwin's participation in the marque contest to be played at The Oval starting June 7.

India utilised three spinners during the recent Border-Gavaskar Trophy series with both Ashwin (25 wickets) and Jadeja (22) shinning bright to help their side claim a 2-1 series win. Talking to local media prior to Australia's training session at the Kent County Cricket Ground in Beckenham on Thursday, assistant coach Daniel Vettori said the team management had a lot of discussion about India's probable

bowling attack. "We have been debating that," Vettori said.

because of the batting he brings to the table and how successful he has been at that No.6

"Then the question will be around that fourth seamer and the all-rounder in (Shardul) Thakur and Ashwin, but they are (both) pretty good choices.

Vettori, however, feels Ashwin might just lose out on a spot in the playing XI because of team combination despite enjoying a decent record in England.

The experienced off-spinner has a total of 18 wickets at an average of 28.11 from seven matches in England but has played just one Test at The

"Ashwin is an incredible bowler and he will be first choice in most teams, and just with their combinations it may lead to that (him missing selec-Vettori said.

behave how it always behaves. "It is a good wicket, but it

can offer a lot to the spinners as the game goes on." Vettori also expects Cameron Green to play a big part in the WTC final, especially after

his superb showing in the justconcluded IPL. "Any cricket is preparation now. He is doing work in the background to make sure his

bowling loads are up and he is actually ready for Test cricket," Vettori said of Green. "We look at it like if you are involved in high-intensity,

high-class cricket, we are happy with that as it means you are playing cricket.

The hardest thing for guys is coming out of nothing and that might be a challenge for a couple of guys who have had an extended break and how they get up to speed as quickly as

It's a grand final for us: Lyon

PTI MELBOURNE

Off-spinner Nathan Lyon doesn't believe Australia's preparations for the World Test Championship final will be affected by the talk around the Ashes, terming the upcoming contest against India as "grand final".

India and Australia will square off in the WTC final at The Oval from June 7.

The five-Test Ashes against England beginning June 16 has dominated the headlines over the past few months as Australia seek to win the marque series away from home for the first time in 22

"Yes, we are playing the Ashes but we've got a big game that we're up for. This (WTC final) is our grand final, and then our season basically starts again," Lyon was quoted as saying by Australian Associated Press.

"That's probably where we're quite happy with where we're at with our planning. We are able to understand what we've got around the corner, and be OK. It's exciting to be part of the final and the fanfare and stuff around it, it's bloody special.

"I know every Australian fan is looking forward to the Ashes, and so they should be. But they should also be excited about



this match," he added.

Australia will head into the Ashes without any warm-up game with the WTC final being the lone match before the contest against England.

series in India earlier this year won't have any bearing on the upcoming contest.

"You can wipe off anything that happened in India," Lyon

"Both teams are really well rounded in their squads. It is going to be a really good chal-

"India obviously have some class batters but they have some class fast bowlers as well. It's going to be a good challenge. Both squads going at it and competing for one game, it's going to be a really good challenge," he said. "It's a fresh start. I'm looking

forward to it.

ECB CEO supports India getting 38% earnings share

PTI DUBAI

India make immense contribution in driving revenues and fuelling the growth of cricket globally and deserve to earn USD 230 million per year from 2024 to 2027 under ICC's proposed financial model, feels ECB chief executive officer Richard Gould.

According to the new proposed distribution model, the Indian cricket board (BCCI) could earn 38.5 per cent of the USD 600 million earnings over the next fourvear commercial cycle with the

The PCB is likely to take home USD 34.51 million (5.75 per cent), while the rest will be shared by the remaining eight full members.

In total, the 12 full members will get USD 532.84 million (88.81 per cent) with the remaining USD 67.16 million (11.19 per cent) going to the associate members out of the USD 600 million projected

The proposals, which are due to be ratified by

the ICC, were criticised as it will only further increase the financial disparity in the game. However, Gould defended ICC's new allocation

"When you see where that value is created, I think it's understandable," Gould said on the latest episode of The Final Word podcast.

"There may be tweaks in the margins here or there, but the dominant position India is in is based



on India's ability to drive revenues and drive the sport forward. One point four billion people, one sport, ten (IPL) teams, one international team."

"What I'm also fascinated by is India's determination also to assist the world game. You look at the percentages and go 'Well, that's not fair it should be split equally. But we've got to look at the size of the market. "India play as many inter-

national fixtures as any other team in the world. And they do that because they know when they tour as an interna-ECB (USD 41.33 million) and Cricket Australia tional team, they bring interest and revenue to that

> round, in that regard," he added. Gould acknowleded the disparity, but he took

> a holistic view of the situation. "I get it (the financial inequality). But I also

> understand how important India is, because without them we wouldn't have the kind of revenues that are coming into the game," he said. "And I do think India make huge efforts to be responsible partners in this when I see the amount

> they travel around the world, taking India everywhere. I do think it is a balance. "I think there is collective decision-making, both in India and within the ICC, and I think there is a real determination and understanding we need (for)

> Gould feels instead of the host nation retaining all revenue, boards need to pay touring sides dur-

> cricket to be expanding and we need it to be healthy around the world."

ing bilateral series.

gobind Singh told PTI.

he added.

"Usually they have better

The national camps for sen-

stamina but not having good

practice has affected their fitness,"

ior wrestlers were put on hold

due to the ongoing agitation of top grapplers and the Indian

Olympic Association's ad-hoc committee taking charge of the functioning of the Wrestling

Sehrawat to lead India 'A' in **Emerging Women's** Asia Cup



PTI NEW DELHI

Batting all-rounder Shweta Sehrawat will lead a 14-member Indian 'A' squad in the upcoming ACC Emerging Women's Asia Cup beginning in Hong Kong on June 12. India 'A' will begin their hosts Hong Kong at the Tin Kwong Road Recreation Ground.

The All India Women's Selection Committee on Friday announced the India 'A' (Emerging) squad for the upcoming ACC Emerging Women's Asia Cup 2023," BCCI said in a release. The tournament will feature eight teams which are divided into two

Índia 'A' (Emerging) is a part of Group A which also features hosts Hong Kong, Thailand 'A' and Pakistan 'A', while Bangladesh 'A', Sri Lanka 'A', Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates are in Group B.

The final will be played on June 21.

SOUAD: Shweta Sehrawat (Captain), Soumya Tiwari (vicecaptain), Trisha Gongadi, Muskan Malik, Shreyanka Patil, Kanika Ahuja, Uma Chetry (wicketkeeper), Mamatha Madiwala (wicketkeeper), Titas Sadhu, Yashasri S, Kashvee Gautam, Parshavi Chopra, Mannat Kashyap, B Anusha.

Head Coach: Nooshin A Khadeer

SCHEDULE: June 13 - India 'A' vs Hong Kong; June 15 - India 'A' vs Thailand 'A'; June 17 - India 'A' **Afghanistan beat** SL in 1st ODI

AP HAMBANTOTA

• ahead of its World Cup qualifiers in two weeks' time after suffering a heavy six-wickets defeat against Afghanistan on Friday.

Set a target of 269, Afghanistan got there with 19 deliveries to spare to take the opener of the three-match one-day international series.

Ibrahim Zadran was the hero for the visitors, top scoring with 98 runs. The opening batter took the Sri Lankan quicks to task during the Power Play as he raced to his half-century in just 35 balls.

Zadran, a 21-vear-old righthanded batter, settled down after the field restrictions as he added 146 runs with Rahmat Shah for the second wicket as the Afghans proved Sri Lanka's total of 268 was way below par

Kasun Rajitha broke the stand when he had Zadran caught at deep mid-wicket, just two runs short of his fourth ODI hundred. Zadran's 98 runs came off 98 balls with 11 hits to the ropes and two over it.

Sri Lanka also dismissed Rahmat Shah for 55 when Matheesha Pathirana claimed his first ODI wicket. But Hashmathullah Shahidi's 38 sealed the game for his side.

The Afghan captain shared 42 runs for the fourth wicket with remained 27 not out.

Sri Lanka brought in the experienced Dimuth Karunaratne and Angelo Mathews to the ODI squad to address the team's

But it was back to square one as they slumped to 84-4 with Mathews (12) and Karunaratne (4) not able to make big contri-

Charith Asalanka held the Sri Lankan innings together with his seventh half-century and went on to score 91 off 95 balls with 12 fours. He was well backed up by Dhananjava de Silva (51) as they shared a 99-run partnership for the fifth wicket. But Sri Lanka needed much more than

Asalanka's knock was some consolation for the Sri Lankans. but the former world champions needed the senior players to put their hands up as there were too

many soft dismissals. Afghanistan, which has already qualified for the World Cup in India later this year, was without star bowler Rashid Khan, who sat out with a lower back strain. But their bowlers responded well keeping Sri Lanka to a below-par total cutting down the

Tongue's debut makes family friend richer

PTI ■ LONDON

▲ family friend of Josh Tongue, **A**who made his England Test debut against Ireland, has hit the jackpot for a wager he had placed 14 years back on the pace bowler that he would one day go on to represent the country.

Josh, a 25-year-old right-arm quick, received his England cap from pace bowling stalwart James Anderson on Thursday in the one-off Test against Ireland on Thursday, and though he did not take a wicket, the Worcester Academy product bowled 13 overs, conceding just 40 runs.

A pub landlord, Tim Piper

— a family friend — had taken a 500-1 odds that Josh would eventually play for his country when the boy was just 11 years When Josh, who was includ-

ed in the squad as injury cover ahead of the Ashes, was announced in the playing XI against Ireland, Piper became richer by 50,000 pounds. "It's been amazing, absolute-

wonderful," Piper told Sen Radio on Friday. "I never dreamt it would be this popular and people in the



they've got friends messaging them saying, 'what the hell hap-pened in Redditch (a town south of Birmingham where Piper

Piper, who watched Josh from a young age and played backyard cricket with him, added he was happy to see the youngster get his Test cap from one of the all-time great bowlers

"This (father Phil Tongue) is a friend of mine for 35 years, this (Josh) is his son and I see the work him and his wife have put in to chase this boy around England for the last 25 years. It's wonderful for the family and they were on the pitch today (Thursday) when he got his cap presented by Jimmy Anderson. "It's just a fairytale," added

Josh, originally started off as a leg spinner and played Under-11s when he was six, and Piper had the belief that the youngster would one day play for the

"On Tuesday night someone phoned me up and said he's (Josh) playing. I was like, 'you what'?" Piper said.

"I look at Sky Sport, BBC Sport, I saw that he was starting (against Ireland) so obviously ran upstairs, got the betting slip out of the cupboard, it's been next to my passport for the last 14 years. I thought I bet to check this slip but I wrote it and read

"It's there and I thought oh my god. He knew I bet on him from a young age... it was known in Worcestershire cricket club a bet had been put on him." Piper is the landlord of the Cricketers Arms pub in

Redditch and played with Phil

Tongue in local tournaments in

it correctly.

the 1990s. "Even though it's 50,000 pounds to me, a lovely amount, but I'm so happy for the fami-

Medal-less second day for India in Bishkek prepared," national coach Har-

PTI BISHKEK

Sajan Bhanwal made a spirit-ed comeback after trailing 0-7 but lost steam in the second period of his bronze medal playoff after three Indian women wresters made early exit as India endured a medal-less day at the UWW Ranking Series event here on Friday.

Bhanwal, who was passive initially, lost points in a jiffy from par terre' position against China's Rui Liu but logged five straight points to reduce the deficit. The Chinese wrester was tired but Bhanwal too did not have much left in the tank and shook hands for a 5-7 defeat in the 77kg bout.

Vikas lost the 72kg bronze play-off to Georgia's Otar Abuladze. The Indian Greco-Roman team thus will return with just one medal — a bronze that came through Manjeet in the 55kg category.

"We could have won at least

4-5 medals in this tournament.

The competition was not much

high, mostly the Asian wrestlers

Federation of India. In the women's competition, young Sonam Malik, who is returning from an elbow injury, and Nisha Dahiya suffered firstround defeats while Priya lost her

at the 2022 junior world cham-

Sonam, the silver medallist

quarterfinal bout.

pionships, lost 3-5 to China's Jia ong in the qualification round. The Asian championship silver medallist Nisha had a disappointing result in the 68kg competition as she lost by technical superiority to Uzbekistan's Firuza Esenbaeva. The Uzbeki later lost her quarterfinal to Turkey's Nesir Bas, thus closing

were competing. It was much the repechage door on Nisha. tougher in the Croatian Ranking In the 76kg, Priya began Series event. Sajan could have with a 6-0 win over Ukraine's won today but since there was no Anastasiia Osniach but lost the quarterfinal 1-10 to China's national camp, our Greco-Roman wrestlers were not well-Qiandegenchagan.

Banarse reaches surfing final

Sugar Banarse, the 17-year-old from Goa, came up with an impressive performance in the Women's Open category to reach the final of the 4th Indian

Open of Surfing here on Friday. Banarse, who collected the highest number of points (10.17), will look to defend her title on Saturday against tough competitors like Tamil Nadu's Kamali Moorthy (8.50) and Shrishti Selvam (4.74) and Karnataka's Sinchana Gowda

In the Men's Open category, Sanjaikumar S, Srikanth D, Raghul Paneerselvam, Sathhish Sarvanan, Manikandan M, Kishore Kumar, Santhosh M and Surya P advanced to the semifinals, scheduled to be



held on Saturday.

Srikanth D, who scored the highest number of points, said, The waves were comparatively smaller than the previous day and but I am happy to do well today. I want to continue with the tempo and win the title."

The Groms Boys (U16) category semifinals saw Tamil boys dominate as three out of four surfers from the state made it to the final. Teenage

surfer Kishore Kumar emerged as the highest scorer in the category for the second consecutive day (11.67) as he stunned everyone with his stellar performance.

Tayin Arun, with 9.17 points, and Harish P, with 6.33 were other boys from Tamil Nadu to book final berths. Karnataka's only hope Pradeep Pujar earned 4.30 points to

Vijayawada | Saturday June 3, 2023

tollywood



Doing Sarvam Shakthi Mayam was Priyamani's divine calling

Priyamani Raj is one of the most prominent and talented actresses down south. She has significantly boosted the box office with her acting. The actress is now all set to star with Sameer Soni and others in Sarvam Shakthi Mayam. Spanning across ten episodes on Zee 5, the series follows the personal journey of an athe-ist writer and a dysfunctional family as they embark on a pilgrimage to visit all the Maha Shakthi Peeths. But

> Because she re-educates us, "Firstly, I would like to begin with that I am really happy with the choices of projects that I have embarked upon regardless of whether they have been a blockbuster hits or not. Because there was a certain kind of a personal investment that I let into every film or series that I choose! More

than a documentary, this is some sort of a travelogue that we are taking you on. Puri Jagannadh. Today, he is counted as one of the most popular screenwriters in a travelogue that we are taking you on. All of us realised our self-worth by shooting. Now where the spirituality part comes in, the interpretations are open to the audiences. But we would still like the

audiences to believe in divine power!"

So is it mythological, is it devotional or what is it in every way? We were strangely analytical about it, "The title of the series was decided after everything was shot. The series is not preachy at all! The little it is going to do is provoke a sense of spirituality and divinity inside you. I can see today's generation is not very devotional, they are like whatever sorts about it. The world has changed so much with the advent of technology that we hardly have any time to explore divinity. So from a show like this we would like

ity. So from a show like this we would like to persuade the new generation, especially to not forget about the divine nature."

As an experienced actress, even she knows that none of her roles are going to be a hundred percent justified character! But telling us a little bit about the way BVS Ravi writes and envisions, she said, "My character is written in a way that it is not forceful in somebody else's face. But Lam sure whoever will wotch face. But I am sure whoever will watch the show would want to take a trip down the lane just to explore what are these Maha Shakti Peeths in India. So I have known Ravi all my life. He is always been a well wisher of mine. I met him during the filming of Golimaar in Telugu, and

the Tollywood industry. In fact, to spill the beans, he has become so busy that we actors have to wait for him to come on the sets first. From the time we have known each other, we always have this fun banter between us that we will never let go off. He's always been appreciative of my craft but due to various reacative of my craft but due to various reasons we could never work together and this is going to be the first time we are working together, and after so many years it is happening! He is one of those writers for me who funnily perturbs me about why didn't he write a role for me until now. The vibe of the show was so positive that I honded with the creative con tive that I bonded with the creative consultant of the series also so well. It was only the producer's brain to make it happen that the whole cast and crew could travel to all the eighteen places without

disturbing my dates. Priyamani Raj calls BVS Ravi a very knowledgeable man, and writer. That's why because she never knew about the Maha Shakti Peeth, but as a writer, she could see how well informed has he come and equipped Priyamani also with all the adequate knowledge. She never knew about this existence before! Page by page, he took her to the very relevant turning points of history in anticipation of the show they were making about. So as a fan of history and the way BVS Ravi explained the narration to her, it some-I got to know that he is an avid writer for how piqued Priyamani's interest in the including me."

show. Further ahead, she said, "The discussions on the set used to be very heavy. But he ensured that all the characters were given equal importance, even if it is for one scene. Now anything in everything can stir up a debate! I would like to repeat myself, that we are not forcing anybody to believe in God. I am not much of a believer myself. But you can always be open to interpretation. We can always go back to history and know the importance at least."

Sharing some personal anecdotes while travelling for the show, she discussed, "To whichever temple we were going to, there was always a priest over there telling us the whole importance of how the temple was built and what is the how the temple was built and what is the importance of the body part that had fallen there was. Through this show, I was fully energised and felt like I was destined to be a part of it. Maybe I wouldn't have travelled to all the eighteen places, but this show made us do it. In fact, my aunt told me that this was your divine calling, any actress could have been a part of *Sarvam Shakthi Mayam*, but I was supposed to do it. What does this mean? We started our travel from Orissa, because of this show, we literal-Orissa, because of this show, we literally covered half of India. But travelling wise this was the most difficult shoot of my life. Like when we were travelling from Patna to Bodhgaya, it became hectic. And we were travelling in a convoy because there were only five women,

Virat Karna to play a mass character in *Peda Kapu-1*



Sensible director Srikanth Addala joined forces with Miryala Ravinder Reddy of Dwaraka Creations who delivered the blockbuster Akhanda for a new age film to introduce Virat Karrna as a hero. The makers announced the title and also the first look of the

Director Srikanth Addala locked a powerful and mass-appealing title Peda Kapu-1 for the movie and presented Virat Karrna in an intense and rugged in the first look poster. The young hero is seen alongside a huge crowd, and someone raises his hand as a mark of victory. Virat Karrna who has good looks is a perfect material. He sports messy hair and a thick beard to play a mass character. A Common Man's Signature is the tagline of the movie and the first look is highly impres-

Miryala Sathyanarayana Reddy the movie that has some to technicians handling different crafts. Chota K Naidu cranks the camera, Mickey J Meyer composes music and Marthand K Venkatesh is the editor. India's leading action director Peter Heins supervises fights and Raju Sundaram is the choreograph-

The shooting of *Peda Kapu-1* is presently underway.

Kamal Haasan calls Mani Ratnam 'doyen of Indian cinema'

ndian film director Mani Ratnam, who is currently enjoying the success and love for his magnum opus *Ponniyn Selvan* franchise, celebrat-

Actor-politician Kamal Haasan penned a note for the filmmaker, whom he called "doyen of Indian cinema who has touched the hearts of millions."

Kamal, who lent his vocal prowess to Ratnam's *Ponniyin Selvan 2*, took to Twitter to pen the note: "If one were to count life by the happiness that they create around them and if age is calculated by the friends around you, my dear #ManiRatnam you are going to be a much older man today! A doyen of Indian Cinema who has touched the hearts of millions through his art and one who transformed dialogues into a lovely visual experience."
Haasan added: "You have constantly push

boundaries of cinema unmindful of the scale of challenge by constantly learning. Today you are a master inspiring the next generation of filmmakers through whom your legacy shall reverberate perpetually."
"From Nayakan to #KH234, our journey togeth-

er has been personally rewarding and enriching for me. Many more happy returns of the day and more to come my friend! #HappyBirthdayManiRatnam."



Nikhil Siddhartha turns into a ferocious warrior in Swayambhu

fter teasing with a pre-look poster, the makers of Telugu star Nikhil sa a ferocious warrior on the battlefield. Sporting long hair and a grimace, he is seen released its first look on the actor's birthday

on Thursday, and its motion poster was unveiled on Friday.

Directed by Bharat Krishnamachari and produced by Bhuvan and Sreekar under the Pixel Studios banner, with Tagore Madhu presenting it, shooting for the lavishly mount-ed pan-India historical drama will start in

August this year. Swayambhu means self-born or 'the one

riding a horse with a spear in one hand and a shield in the other.

It is said to be the most expensive movie in Nikhil's career, with cinematography by Manoj Paramahamsa, music from Ravi Basrur and dialogues by Vasudev

Muneppagari. Nikhil's upcoming new release will be *Spy*, centred around the disappearance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.





Rajnikanth-starrer Jailer wraps up its shoot

Superstar Rajinikanth and Tamannaah Bhatia have wrapped up shooting for their next film titled Jailer.

The film's maker Sun Pictures took to Twitter, where they shared a bunch of pictures from the celebrations of the wrap up. In the images, Rajinikanth along with Tamannah and director Nelson Dillipkumar are seen cutting a cake. Sun Pictures took to their official Twitter page and wrote: "It's a wrap for #Jailer! Theatre la sandhippom"

#JailerFromAug10."

The film, which will be releasing on August 10, will have Rajinikanth play a prison jailer. The film has been shot inside a prison. Apart from Rajinikanth and Tamannaah, it also stars Shivrajkumar, Mohanlal, Jackie Shroff and Ramya Krishnan. This will be seen working with Jackie. The two have previously worked in Uttar Dakshin in 1987.

Rainbow Chivarey, an energetic dance number from Takkar out now

Siddharth, known for films like Bommarillu and Nuvvostanante Nenoddantana, is set to woo crowds in a refreshing avatar for his upcoming Tamil-Telugu action romance Takkar. Written and directed by Karthik G Krish, the film features Divyansha Kaushik

as the female lead. Produced by TG Vishwa Prasad and Abhishek Agarwal, in collaboration with People Media Factory, Abhishek Agarwal Arts, and Passion Studios, Takkar releases in theatres on June 9. After wooing film buffs with the superb trailer, teaser and three songs Kayyale, Pedhavulu Veedi Maunam,

Oopirey, the fourth song from the film titled Rainbow Chivarey was unveiled on Friday.

Nivas K Prasanna composes the music for the film while Krishna Kanth is the lyricist. Benny Dayal, Vrusha Babu have crooned for the spirited, energetic number Rainbow Chivarey. True to the lyrics and the film's theme, the highly-addictive song is full of lively visuals and has a flashy, vibrant tone. One of the major highlights of Rainbow Chivarey is Siddharth's superb dance moves, while on the technical front, the costumes, cinematography make an impression too.

