



Reddy, P2

-SPORTS

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A car without fuel, a hand that can't give

Terms and conditions apply. This proviso pretty much sums up the attitude and approach of the Bharat Rashtra Samiti and the Congress parties and their respective promises to the people of Telangana.

The last nine years of the BRS government in the state reflected how Telangana went from being a revenue-surplus state with a low loan burden into one that creaks and groans and barely manages to squeak through each month to meet the bare minimum of expenditure, including staff salaries.

There was a time, before bifurcation, when fears arose over what could happen to the revenues generated from the growth engine that is Hyderabad, and whether these would have to be shared by Telangana and residuary

Andhra Pradesh for the next 10 years but this remained just an unfounded fear leaving Telangana to boost its kitty from Hyderabad.

But then a sense of well-being and hope dissipated when the BRS government let promise after promise it had made to people fall by the wayside. There are many to list but suffice to recount some of these unkept promises which serve as more than adequate examples of the failures of the BRS government. These include double bedroom houses for the poor, 3 acres of farmland for landless Dalits, a job to every household, the Rs 3,016 unemployment dole, free fertilisers, and loan waiver for farmers. And these were just the unfulfilled promises.

Coupled with other acts of sleight of hand including

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denying benefits such as medical insurance, fee reimbursement, diverting panchayat funds, and payments to cooks in schools, the path the BRS government put Telangana on has become increasingly evident.

This situation came to be despite the Centre increasing its tax devolution to the states from 32% to 42%, the state enforcing highest taxation on fuel prices, pushing liquor sales to new heights, selling

government land to raise funds to pay salaries, leasing out assets such as the ORR, and holding back on payments to public utilities such as the DISCOMS and GENCO throwing them into financial ruin.

It is at this stage that the Congress decided to exploit the unfulfilled aspirations and dreams of the people with it, without any thought of Telangana's financial distress and unprecedented loan bur-



KISHORE POREDDY

den. Despite full knowledge of the state's inability to service loans and its being on the verge of bankruptcy – Union Power Minister RK Singh only recently said loans had been held back for the state's power sector as the Centre now believed that Telangana

had gone beyond the tipping point and could not service any fresh loans -- the Congress, believing it has nothing to lose but everything to gain, has begun making promises that will be impossible to fulfil. Although estimates vary, the cost of its promises and declarations are expected to require another Rs one lakh crore a year that will need to be found.

It is not that the Congress is unaware of the duplicity of its promises. It cannot claim that it does not know where things stand as far as Telangana's financial dol-drams are concerned. The Congress also knows that it cannot divert any funds from an already non-existent development budget but it still has made promises in a brazen manner, possibly in the hope that if proclaimed with such

confidence, the people could just buy into a fresh round of hope, after having been ditched by the BRS which too acted in the same manner. In fact, almost every promise Congress has made as part of its so-called guarantees and declarations involve a hidden sleight of hand -- incidentally that party's symbol that suddenly has acquired a different meaning with this move -- and its true costs will become evident if it ever comes forward with data based on which it made its promises.

Meanwhile, be it the BRS or the Congress, their promises mean just one thing: the casualty will be development in Telangana with every possible penny getting diverted to vote catching doles desperately camouflaged as welfare schemes and programmes.

The silence of both parties

on the attacks on Sanatan Dharma raises apprehensions, whether it is Congress leading the INDI Alliance or the BRS, would not hesitate to even exploit the very way of our life for which they clearly have no regard for. For the BRS, temples are nothing more than good business opportunities, a stand taken by none other than the CM's son Taraka Rama Rao -- the party's working president and Minister. For the Congress, which has proved it has no regard for Sanatan Dharma, it should come as no surprise if it devises ways and means to dip into even God's funds. But it is unlikely that even God, with his funds would be able to rescue Telangana from these two parties ruining the state.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson)

Assembly passes 3 bills on Day 2

3 Telugu Desam MLCs suspended from Council

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The AP Assembly passed three bills unanimously on the second day of the monsoon session on Friday, namely, a bill to repeal the Andhra Pradesh Vaidya Vidhana Parishad Act, 1988, the Andhra Pradesh Special Security Group Bill-2023 and the Andhra Pradesh Aadhaar (targeted delivery of financial and other subsidies, benefits and services) Bill-2023.

Health Minister Vidadala Rajini said there was no financial autonomy for the Commissionerate of the Andhra Pradesh Vaidya Vidhana Parishad (APVVP) and it is entirely reliant on Grants-in-Aid from the Government of Andhra Pradesh, instead of generating its own funds as provided for in the Act. The expenditure of pay and allowances to the staff working in APVVP is met



from the Grants-in-Aid only.

Minister Rajini said that it is proposed for conversion of APVVP from Autonomous body to Government Department (HOD) as Directorate of Secondary Health duly repealing the "The Andhra Pradesh Vaidya Vidhana Parishad Act, 1986 (Act No.29 of 1986 with

Amendments up to 31.03.1989)" as there is no additional financial implication as the salary structure is same for State Government employees and APVVP employees both regular and contract and Outsourcing employees.

Home Minister Taneti Vanita, said that the SSG (Special Security Group) of

Intelligence Department, AP is entrusted with the crucial responsibility of providing proximate security to the Chief Minister and members of his immediate family. She explained that to further enhance the credibility and legitimacy of the SSG organisation and to ensure accountability, it is proposed for the

enactment of legislation that would provide the necessary legal framework for its operations.

Industries Minister Gudivada Amarnath said that the Government of Andhra Pradesh is at the forefront of implementing various targeted schemes for the socio-economic development of various sections of the society in the State. The Government of Andhra Pradesh proposes to use the Aadhaar number for the identification of the beneficiaries for various Government schemes in alignment with the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 and its subsequent amendments. Accordingly, the Government has decided to enact a new Legislation for "Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) in the State".

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a dramatic turn of events during the second day of the 43rd session of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, Chairman Koyye Moshenu Raju took action against three Telugu Desam Party (TDP) members. Kancharla Srikanth received a suspension for the entire session, while Panchumarthi Anuradha and BT Naidu were suspended for one day.

Tensions escalated as TDP members continued to disrupt proceedings, leading to the chairman adjourning the house twice before the lunch break. The root of their agitation was their demand for a discussion on the arrest of former Chief Minister and TDP Supremo Nara Chandrababu Naidu.

During the second-day session, TDP members, including BT Naidu, Rajagopal Reddy, Rama Rao, and Paruchuri Ashok Babu, submitted an adjournment motion, but Chairman Moshenu Raju rejected it.

disrupting the council proceedings. Marshals attempted to restore order, but tensions remained high.

Following the lunch break, the situation showed no improvement, leading Chairman Moshenu Raju to express his anger over the opposition party members' behavior. He then announced the suspension of three members from the council based on a proposal received from Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development Dr. Adimulapu Suresh.

Panchumarthi Anuradha and BT Naidu received one-day suspensions, while Kancharla Srikanth was suspended from the house for the remainder of the session.

Before this decision, TDP members had boycotted the council session in protest, alleging that the government was preventing them from conducting a debate on Chandrababu Naidu's arrest. Chairman Moshenu Raju subsequently proceeded with the question hour.

Prior to these developments, Ministers Ambati Rambabu and Meruga Nagarjuna condemned the behavior of the TDP members in the council.

AP CID gets 2-day ...

Continued from Page 1

The Special Public Prosecutor noted that the CID would travel to the Rajamahendravaram Central Prison, where Naidu is currently detained, to interrogate him. On both days, the CID will take over the former CM's custody from 9 am to 5 pm and later hand him back to the jail authorities.

Naidu was arrested on September 9, for allegedly misappropriating funds from the Skill Development Corporation when he was chief minister in 2015, which resulted in a purported loss of over Rs 300 crore to the state exchequer. After his arrest, he was remanded in judicial custody for a period of 14 days. Prior to granting police custody, the ACB court today had extended his judicial remand by two days till September 24.

Earlier in the day, when the high court dismissed Naidu's petition for quashing of the FIR, it noted that his plea was devoid of merit and said the court was

not inclined to interfere at this stage when the investigation is ongoing. Further, the order highlighted that the HC will not allow a mini trial to be conducted on a petition filed under Section 482 of the CrPC (prevent an abuse of the process of any court or to secure the ends of justice). The High Court observed that police have the statutory right and duty under the relevant provisions of the CrPC to investigate a cognisable offence. It also stressed that the power of quashing should be exercised sparingly with circumspection. Noting that criminal proceedings ought not to be scuttled at the initial stage, the HC said quashing an FIR should be an exception rather than the rule. Furthermore, the high court said that an FIR is not an encyclopaedia which must disclose all facts and details relating to the offence reported. Hence, when the investigation by the police is in progress, the court should not go into the merits of the allegations in the FIR.

Bhuvaneswari voices ...

Continued from Page 1

She further highlighted Chandrababu as a source of inspiration for many, including their son Nara Lokesh, who has followed in his father's footsteps by pursuing a career in public service. Bhuvaneswari brought attention to the numerous initiatives undertaken by the NTR Memorial Trust and the Nara Model School, both of which extend education and support to underprivileged children.

Bhuvaneswari concluded her poignant missive by beseeching the public and the global Telugu community for their unwavering support. She questioned whether the alleged injustices inflicted upon her husband were acceptable and implored everyone to stand in solidarity with her family as they seek justice.

Buggana sheds ...

Continued from Page 1

Similarly, at JNTU Anantapur (2016-17 to 2021-22), the figure stands at a staggering 16,072 students."

The Minister went on to emphasize the bizarre coincidence that all these students were enrolled and purportedly completed their training within a mere five-day span, spanning from March 12, 2018, to March 17, 2018. The question naturally arises: how can one genuinely impart a skill within such a brief timeframe? Upon closer scrutiny of the case, it was uncovered that the majority of courses normally required a minimum of four to six weeks for completion. For instance, a course like product design demands 120 teaching hours over five weeks, while a manufacturing CNC course necessitates four weeks and 144 teaching hours. Astonishingly, the training provided to these students didn't even last a week. It appears that

this was more of a token demonstration of the courses, rather than a genuine effort to empower students with skills. This deliberate deception underscores how students were manipulated and, in essence, robbed under the pretext of skill development.

Minister Buggana firmly asserted, "Through this Assembly, I aim to apprise the people across the state of the vast scale of this scandal. On one hand, corrupt politicians drained public coffers, and on the other, they callously toyed with the futures of aspiring students throughout the state by depriving them of proper training. In the guise of skill development, students were cruelly duped."

Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy went on to delve into the intricate details of how Chandrababu Naidu and his elusive aide, P. Srinivas, surreptitiously funneled public funds through a convoluted network of shell companies.

Enhanced infrastructure to boost shipping and logistics growth

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Lt Cdr BM Ravindranath Reddy, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the AP Maritime Board, expressed the commitment to boost exports from the state by supporting industries and traders through infrastructure development and a favorable ecosystem. He also highlighted the crucial role of dry ports in handling significant export and import volumes.

Participating as the Guest of Honour at the first International Conference on Shipping and logistics, organized by the Federation of Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FAPCCI) in association with Maritime Gateway here on Friday Reddy emphasized their goal to stimulate regional economic growth by leveraging Central Government's Gati Shakti initiatives and the state government's logistic policy. He underlined the significance of dry ports in the global supply chain.

Mercy Epao, the Joint Secretary for SMEs in the Government of India, underscored the pivotal role of the MSME industry in the Indian economy. She noted its contribution to GDP, exports, and employment, especially in less developed regions.

Pocharam condemns Chandrababu's arrest

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Assembly Speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy said that the arrest of former AP Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu was an undemocratic act.

He said that there should not be vengeful acts in politics and that it is painful that they did not reveal why Chandrababu Naidu was arrested.

Addressing the gathering after inaugurating double-bedroom houses in Sambapur and Bhairapur in the Birkur mandal of Kamareddy district on Friday, Pocharam said that this kind of politics cannot be justified in a democracy.

"Politics doesn't mean conspiracies and vengeance. I am condemning the arrest of Chandrababu Naidu," he said.



Meanwhile, Sambapur village passed a resolution unanimously extending full support to Pocharam during the forthcoming elections. He said that the people of Telangana are ready to ensure KCR's victory once again seeing the state's development.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha

Tithi: Ashtami: Sep 22 01:35 PM to Sep 23 12:18 PM

Navami: Sep 23 12:18 PM to Sep 24 10:23 AM

Nakshatram: Moola: Sep 22 03:34 PM to Sep 23 02:56 PM

Purva Ashadha: Sep 23 02:56 PM to Sep 24 01:41 PM

Rahukalam: 9:08 AM to 10:38 AM

Yamagandam: 1:38 PM to 3:03 PM

Varjyam: 12:02 AM to 01:33 AM

Gulika: 6:08 AM to 7:38 AM

Amritakalam: 08:47 AM to 10:20 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:44 AM to 12:32 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Isolated Thunderstorms

Temp: 33°

Humidity: 79%

Sunrise: 5:56 AM

Sunset: 6:04 PM

Updated: September 22, 2023 5:00 PM

TDP boycotts rest of ...

Continued from Page 1

Considering all these developments and the suspension of TDP MLAs Naidu and B Ashok, the opposition party leader said they have decided to boycott the rest of the sessions of both houses.

Besides these suspensions, TDP leaders Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary, Nimmala Ramanaidu, and V el a g a p u d i Ramakrishnababu were also suspended.

Meanwhile, during a discussion in the assembly on skill training in the erstwhile TDP government, Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath informed the house that training courses with a duration of three weeks were completed within five days.

JD(S) joins NDA; pact ...

Continued from Page 1

"I am happy that JD(S) has decided to be the part of National Democratic Alliance. We wholeheartedly welcome them in the NDA. This will further strengthen NDA and vision of Hon PM Narendra Modi Ji for 'New India, Strong India,' Nadda posted on X after the meeting.

Shah said the JD(S) has expressed its trust in Modi's vision of a developed India.

"I warmly welcome JD(S) to the NDA family. Their association will lead Karnataka on the path of development and pave the way for a stronger NDA and a stronger India," he posted on X.

Talking to reporters at Shah's residence, Kumaraswamy said: "Today we have officially joined the NDA. We have formed the

alliance against Congress. Congress is indulging in corruption in the state. It is working against the interest of farmers. We have joined the NDA alliance against the Congress." On seat sharing, he said, "There is a positive response from both sides. Seat sharing is not a big issue. We will sort out that issue as both sides are positive."

Sources said the BJP High Command will finalise the number of seats and constituencies after holding deliberations with Karnataka state party leaders. The seats are likely to be announced after Dussehra festival which falls on October 24.

Sources said the JD(S) may get 3 or 4 seats of the 28 seats at stake although the regional party has been demanding 6-8 seats.

Goa Chief Minister

Pramod Sawant, who is believed to have played a role in the negotiations with Kumaraswamy, was also present in the meeting along with the former chief minister's son Nikhil Kumaraswamy. The JD(S) headed by Gowda, who is father of Kumaraswamy, has long been a strong third player in Karnataka where the Congress and the BJP have traditionally been the two main parties.

Following the assembly poll debacle, BJP, wary of its prospects in 2024, seemed open to an alliance with the JD(S).

In the 2019 LS elections, the BJP had won 25 seats, while an independent (Sumalatha Ambareesh from Mandya) backed by it won one seat. The Congress and the JD(S) managed to get just one seat each.

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Heavy rain likely in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema during the next 48 hours, the Meteorological Centre said on Friday.

A daily weather report here said that thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next three days, and in Rayalaseema during the next 48 hours.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are likely to occur at a few places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema during the next seven days. Heavy rainfall occurred at one or two places over Vizianagaram district of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Nandyal district of Rayalaseema during the last 24 hours.

Rainfall occurred at many places over Coastal Andhra Pradesh, at a few places over Rayalaseema, and at one or two places over the same period. Southwest monsoon has been active over Coastal Andhra Pradesh and normal over Rayalaseema, the report added.



Strengthening of local police top priority: Vizag CP

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam district administration is diligently working to improve urban facilities and elevate the city's visual appeal. Concurrently, efforts are underway to strengthen the local police force, given the Chief Minister's plan to move to Visakhapatnam on Dasara day. This move will place greater demands on the city's police department to ensure urban peace and maintain rigorous security standards.

"I am assessing the necessary size of additional forces required to maintain top-tier security in this region. The Chief Minister is currently placed under Z-category protection. Additionally, I will require the services of two joint commissioners to lead these forces," stated Ravi Shankar, the new Police Commissioner.

Speaking with 'The Pioneer' on Friday, the Police Commissioner expressed his determination to make full use of all the legal resources at his disposal. When asked about the approximately 500 rowdy sheeters causing disturbances in the city, he provided assurance that they would be effectively managed well in advance of the



"The city currently has approximately 4,000 police personnel, and we will be augmenting our ranks with additional officers."

Chief Minister's arrival.

Regarding the issue of ganja smuggling and the growing problem of drug abuse, the commissioner mentioned that he is currently reviewing the files and information compiled by his officers. He added, "The city currently has approximately 4,000 police personnel, and we will be augmenting our ranks with additional officers."

When examining the skills and educational backgrounds of the fresh police recruits, the commissioner observed that 30 percent of them were well-suited for receiving training in cybercrime. Another high-

ranking police official mentioned that they plan to curb ganja smuggling operations in the ASR district's remote areas and enhance surveillance on Maoist activities.

Regarding civic amenities, Mayor Hari Kumari stated that the city underwent beautification efforts for events like the G20 Summit, the Global Investors Meet, and the international fleet review hosted by the Navy at RK Beach. She mentioned, "Our ongoing task is to ensure their continuous upkeep. Additionally, we plan to expand the underground drainage system to cover more areas."

ADALI'S VIEWPOINT: A HIDDEN PARADISE AWAITS TOURISTS

PNS ■ SEETHAMPETA (PARVATHIPURAM-MANYAM)

The Parvatipuram-Manyam district administration is gearing up to transform Seethampeta and other areas into thriving tourist destinations, defying the odds of limited infrastructure.

Nestled amidst the lush landscapes of the northern coastal region of Andhra Pradesh, the Adali viewpoint remains a well-kept secret. Located a challenging 16 km uphill from Kusumi Centre along the State highway in Seethampeta mandal, it offers a breathtaking panorama of endless clouds and the Eastern Ghats mountain range. This serene sanctuary exudes solitude and tranquility, making it a haven for seekers of natural beauty.

Perched at the district's highest point, this hidden gem neighbours sparsely populated tribal settlements. Visitors here are treated to a sweeping view of the Hiramandalam reservoir, which stretches across the Vamsadhara River, along with other picturesque landscapes. The Parvatipuram-Manyam authorities are determined to transform this gem into a coveted tourist destination, with plans to enhance visitor amenities.

Collector Nishant Kumar and ITDA-Seethampeta Project Officer Kalpana Kumari have set the wheels in motion to establish the Adali viewpoint as a premier tourist attraction within the district. Their directives to the engineering and tourism departments include improving



N Narayana Rao, the district tourism officer for Parvatipuram-Manyam, mentioned that the Tourism department has already introduced restroom facilities and drinking water amenities at the viewpoint. Furthermore, they are working diligently to set up tented accommodations for tourists, with an expected completion time frame of approximately two months.

essential facilities like camping accommodations, food courts, designated photo spots, and more. The government has allocated approximately Rs 1.6 crore for the development of restaurants and commercial facilities around the Adali viewpoint, aiming to provide tourists with a complete experience of the

natural beauty.

Nishant Kumar expressed his optimism, saying, "We are also in the process of establishing a tribal museum that will showcase the rich culture and traditions of the indigenous people of the region. This museum is poised to become an additional point of interest in the

Sithampet area." He anticipates that these projects will be completed within the next couple of months, just in time for the expected surge of tourists from Odisha and other regions exploring the Sitampet tribal areas in October and November 2023. He also urged officials to actively promote tourism at Thotapalli Reservoir and other sites along the Parvatipuram-Palakonda route.

N Narayana Rao, the district tourism officer for Parvatipuram-Manyam, mentioned that the Tourism department has already introduced restroom facilities and drinking water amenities at the viewpoint. Furthermore, they are working diligently to set up tented accommodations for tourists, with an expected completion time frame of approximately two months. This unique destination not only offers a captivating view of the 9th-century Srimukhalingam temple, constructed by the Eastern Ganga Dynasty kings but also the scenic Hiramandalam reservoir.

A visionary plan by the Tourism department includes a two-kilometer ropeway connecting the viewpoint to the Hiramandalam reservoir. This ambitious initiative promises to transport visitors to a world far removed from the hustle and bustle of urban life. Narayana Rao believes that this development could draw a substantial influx of tourists, akin to what has been witnessed at other similar viewpoints in neighboring districts.

Govt urged to withdraw condition on landowners' sign for loans

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of the Assembly sessions, on the second Friday, the Legislative Council Chairman has allowed to conduct a discussion on 'Agricultural Progress in Andhra Pradesh -Measurements taken by the State government'.

Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) MLC KS Lakshmana Rao urged the State government to withdraw the condition that signature of

the land owner is needed if tenant farmers want to take bank loans.

He said that 70 per cent of the farmers were tenants and they were denied loans by the banks. Without the signature of the land owner, banks are not giving loans to them, he added.

Further, he said that the government implemented the prestigious YSR Rythu Bharosa scheme for SC, ST, and BC category farmers.

He also sought government intervention to ban fake seeds and fertilizers. Also, the MLC demanded Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for the farmers.

YSRCP MLC C. Yesu Ratnam said that mirchi export from the Guntur Market Yard was about 43 per cent. With the support of the State government, mirchi is exported to Bangladesh, he said.

Later, MLC Pothula Sunitha and other members spoke.

State-of-the-art service facility in Renigunta

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Automotive Manufacturers Private Limited (AMPL) on Friday inaugurated their State-of-the-Art service facility at Renigunta, Andhra Pradesh.

Automotive is one of the largest dealers of Ashok Leyland with an extensive network of 104 service touch points spanning six states including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, and Uttar Pradesh, Automotive

Manufacturers continue their commitment of providing exceptional reach & service to customers across the region.

Speaking on the occasion, Rajiv Sanghvi, Executive Director, Automotive Manufacturer's said "We are delighted to inaugurate the new State of The Art Ashok Leyland service facility today in Renigunta which is the largest Commercial Vehicles Workshop in the region. With the Best-in-Class prod-

ucts of Ashok Leyland coupled with our understanding of the customer needs we endeavor to provide Best-in-Class ownership experience for our customers."

The facility which spans about 1.00 acre features 8 state-of-the-art service bays equipped with advanced tools and equipment handled and operated by a team of highly trained mechanics. This facility stands as the largest commercial vehicle workshop in Tirupati District.



4 women saved at Vodarevu beach

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The police saved four women pilgrims who were drowning in the Vodarevu beach of Bapatla district during Ganesh idol immersion. Bapatla district SP Vakul Jindal said that on 21 September, four women were drowning in the sea at Vodarevu beach in Bapatla district, the police personnel on duty immediately responded and saved their lives. He said that in view of Ganesh immersion pilgrims coming in large numbers to the Suryalanka, Vadarevu and Ramapuram beaches in the Bapatla district.

Under the supervision of Kothapatnam Marine CI K. Srinivasa Rao, and SI P. Subba Rao, the district police and marine officers have jointly set up a strong security presence along the sea coast. Police and marine personnel

are performing duties on the Vodarevu beach. During the evening of September 21, four women among the devotees who had come from Chilakaluripet to Chirala Vodarevu for the immersion of Lord Ganesha were taking a bath in the sea when suddenly the waves hit them and they were drowning in the sea. Then immediately on duty staff HC- S. Prasad, Constables S. Chiranjeevi, A. Naresh, and Home Guard V. Pothuraju jumped into the sea in the blink of an eye and saved the four women who were drowning and brought them to the shore and handed them over to their relatives.

SP Vakul Jindal advised the public that pilgrims and devotees must follow the instructions of the police. The pilgrims thanked the police for their quick response.

New polling stations to be set up if necessary

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar has asked the authorities concerned to take measures to ensure that only 1,400 voters are there in each polling station. If the number of voters exceeds 1,400, another polling station should be set up. He also advised the officials to take steps to prevent the problems arising in the existing polling stations as well as the new polling stations to be set up in the city. He visited the 27th and 29th divisions along with booth-level officers to find out the feasible place for establishing new polling stations on Friday. He inspected Tunuguntla Ramadevi Elementary School, Sri Venkateswara Sivaramakrishna Mudiraj Kalyana Mandapam,

Municipal Corporation Kalyana Mandapam, Satavahana College and Secretariats 199 and 200 located on Sambamurthy Road and Gulabi Thota areas.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner directed the Electoral Registration Officers to find out which polling station had more voters than the norms and asked them to provide the information within the stipulated time. Special arrangements should be made at each polling station for the safety of the election personnel, he added.

He also asked them to consider the buildings, which have facilities like electricity and drinking water for setting up the new polling stations. Assistant Electoral Registration Officers, Election Booth Level Officers, Secretariat staff and other officers accompanied him.



INS Sahyadri participates in trilateral exercise

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Indian Navy's indigenously built warship INS Sahyadri, mission deployed in Indo-Pacific, participated in the maiden trilateral Maritime Partnership Exercise with the ships and aircraft from the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and Indonesian Navy from 20 - 21 Sep 2023.

The trilateral exercise provided an opportunity for the three maritime nations to strengthen their partnership and improve their collective capability to support a stable, peaceful and secure Indo-

Pacific region. The exercise also provided the opportunity for the participating navies to benefit from each other's experience and expertise. Complex tactical and manoeuvring exercises, cross-deck visits and cross-deck landings of integral helicopters were conducted for training of crew and enhancement of interoperability.

INS Sahyadri, the third ship of the indigenously designed and built Project-17 class multirole stealth frigates was built at Mazagon Dock Ltd, Mumbai and is commanded by Capt Rajan Kapoor.



Elaborate steps for launch of Aspirational Block Programme

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector S Dilli Rao has instructed all the officials concerned to make elaborate arrangements for the Aspirational Block Programme-Chintan Shivir, which will be launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi across the country on September 30.

Ibrahimpatnam mandal of NTR district has been selected under the programme.

In view of the launch of the programme, the Collector on Friday conducted a meeting with Panchayati Raj, RWS, and Agriculture and Educational officers at the Ibrahimpatnam MPDO office.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that under the Aspirational Block Programme, various schemes regarding health, sanitation, nutrition, agricultural e-commerce etc. were being planned. He said that awareness ral-

lies would be conducted on preventing tuberculosis, apart from immunisation drives, on October 3.

Besides, the Poshan mela will be organised at Anganwadi Kendrams on October 4, sanitation activities will be conducted in all village panchayats on October 5, and workshops and seminars will be organised on October 6, he added.

Essay and painting competitions will be conducted in all

the government schools on October 7 on digital literacy. On October 9, an exhibition of agricultural products will be organised.

Awards will be presented to the winners of the competitions, the Collector added. He asked all the officials to make special arrangements for the success of the programme.

Sub-Collector Adithi Sing, MPDOs BV Rama Krishna Naik, P Jyostna and others were present.



Cong stages protest in front of Dr YSR UHS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Congress leaders and cadres staged a dharna in front of the Dr YSR University of Health Sciences in Vijayawada on Friday. They wanted to meet Vice-Chancellor Dr K Babji to request him to take necessary action on the irregularities in the second counselling for MBBS admissions. However, the police personnel deployed at the university's main gate did not allow them to enter the campus.

APCC chief Gidugu Rudra



Raju and other leaders requested the police to permit them to

meet the VC to give him representation. But, they rejected

the request and the Congress leaders staged a dharna in front of the gate demanding cancellation of the second MBBS counselling.

Meanwhile, the police took some of the party leaders into custody. A row followed between the police and the Congress leaders. Subsequently, the police arrested 22 leaders and shifted them to the Gunadala police station.

Later, the police let 10 people including Gidugu Rudra Raju meet Vice-Chancellor Babji.

APCC president Rudra Raju

and other leaders gave him a representation. The Vice-Chancellor reacted positively to the request and assured them of rectifying the faults.

Speaking on the occasion, Rudra Raju alleged that the YSRCP was continuing its autocratic rule in the State. The leaders staged a peaceful protest, however, the police created trouble, he alleged.

APCC working presidents Mastan Vali, Sunkara Padma Sri, Mahila Congress president L Tania Kumar, and others were present.

YSRC MEDICAL WING RAISES DOUBTS OVER BALAYYA's MENTAL HEALTH

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr. Mehboob Sheikh, a senior leader of the YSRC Medical Wing, has expressed apprehension about the recent behavior of N. Balakrishna, a TDP legislator from Hindupur, in the Assembly over the past two days. Dr. Sheikh has raised questions regarding Balakrishna's mental condition, citing peculiar actions such as mustache-twisting, whistle-blowing, and indecent gestures as clear indications of his deteriorating health.

Dr. Sheikh pointed out that Balakrishna's mental state seemed to have taken a turn for the worse after his visit to N. Chandrababu Naidu, who is his brother-in-law and was recently placed in

Rajahmundry Central Jail on judicial remand. Rumors about Balakrishna's mental health and past certification have added to the concerns.

Furthermore, Dr. Sheikh highlighted Balakrishna's demeanour, which appears to reflect an imperialistic attitude. Balakrishna has exhibited behaviour as though he expects unquestioned authority, both in the world of cinema and within the Legislative Assembly. It is essential to remind him that he holds the position of an MLA, not a hero.

Dr. Sheikh urged Balakrishna to use the Assembly as a platform to explain, in detail, his belief in Chandrababu's innocence if he genuinely holds such a conviction.

Assembly ain't TDP office, Ambati tells Balayya Babu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister Ambati Rambabu offered valuable counsel to Hindupur's opposition legislator, Nandamuri Balakrishna, urging him to seize the opportunity to assume control of the party and restore the illustrious reputation of the Nandamuri clan.

Expressing his exasperation with the opposition legislator's negative demeanour, the minister emphasised that the Assembly is not the TDP's private office. Balakrishna and his fellow legislators should bear this in mind and concentrate on addressing public issues while in the Assembly.

Speaking to the media at the Assembly's designated media area on Friday, Ambati conveyed

his party's readiness to engage in discussions regarding the arrest of Nara Chandrababu Naidu and allegations of corruption at any time and place. A discussion regarding Chandrababu's arrest and the APSSDC scam had been proposed in the Assembly, but TDP legislators declined to participate and left the session. The Minister remarked, "What the TDP seems to desire regarding Chandrababu's arrest in the House is not a constructive debate but rather chaos. If the TDP genuinely wishes to engage in a meaningful discussion, if they have faith in Chandrababu's innocence and believe Naidu is blameless, then they should join

the discussion. However, their evasion suggests Chandrababu's involvement in the scam."

Criticising Balakrishna's twirling of his mustache, Minister Rambabu suggested that this is an opportune moment for him to rekindle the legacy of his father, NTR's, party. There has been a rumor circulating that Balakrishna did not assist NTR in a time of need, and this presents a significant opportunity to dispel that rumor.

He pointed out that Balakrishna's brother-in-law (Naidu) is in custody, and his son-in-law (Lokesh) is in Delhi. Such an opportunity may not arise again, and Balakrishna is

encouraged to revive the party's lost fortunes and restore the Nandamuri clan's prestige.

Minister Rambabu asked Balakrishna, "You have been elected as an MLA twice and played a pivotal role in making Naidu the Chief Minister. In contrast, your son-in-law (Lokesh) became a minister without winning an election. Despite winning twice, you were not appointed as a minister. Your brother Harikrishna was initially given a ministerial post but was later sidelined. Take a moment to reflect on the injustices your family has faced. You possess leadership qualities, and I am offering this suggestion and advice, even though we are on opposite sides of the political spectrum."

Tragedy strikes schoolgirl on her birthday

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

A heartbreaking incident unfolded at Srividya English Medium School in Guntakal on Friday when a five-year-old girl lost her life after celebrating her birthday. Keertana, a bright student in the UKG class, met with a fatal accident when a large flooring tile collapsed onto her.

According to local authorities, little Keertana had joyfully shared sweets with her classmates as she marked her special day. Following a birthday lunch, the children were resting in the school corridor when tragedy struck. A massive section of flooring unexpectedly gave way, resulting in a devastating injury to Keertana. Despite swift efforts to save her, she was rushed to the government hospital, where doctors declared her brought dead.



The news of Keertana's untimely passing prompted student union leaders to take immediate action. They assembled at the school and staged a dharna, calling for a compensation of Rs 25 lakh to be extended to the grieving parents. Additionally, they demanded a thorough investigation into the incident and urged authorities to revoke the school's license.

In response to the student union's demonstration, the police took action and appre-

Two boys run over by SUV during Ganesh immersion



KURNOOL: Two boys were killed when an SUV ran over them during the Ganesh immersion procession at SMT Colony in Yemmiganur on Thursday night. Police said that the driver of a

Bolero SUV left the ignition key in the vehicle. Some boys boarded the stationary vehicle and turned the ignition key, resulting in the SUV rushing forward and crushing Raju (16) and Manoj (7). Both the deceased were shifted to the GGH in Kurnool but they died on the way. As many as three persons including Dhanush, Ramesh, and Lakshmi were injured in the incident. Meanwhile, the relatives of the deceased boys staged a dharna at the GGH in protest against the indifferent attitude of the hospital doctors and staff in providing medical treatment to the injured boys at the earliest.

hended the leaders, relocating them to two different police stations. Meanwhile, a deep sense of sorrow enveloped Keertana's

family as they mourned the loss of their beloved daughter on the very day she celebrated her birthday.

9 new polling centres proposed

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh said that 9 new polling centres would be set up in the district.

As part of Revision-2024, the Collector held a meeting with the representatives of the recognized political parties on voter registration, changes, additions, objections, and rationalization of polling centres here on Friday.

The Collector said that among the newly proposed polling centers, there are 4 centers in the Eluru constituency, 4 centers in Chintalapudi, and one (1) in Kaikaluru. The Collector said that there are currently 1736 centers in the district and if the newly proposed 9 are added, the number will reach 1745.

Similarly, it has been pro-



posed to move 117 polling centers to other areas and to change the names of 294 polling cen-

ters. The representatives of the respective political parties have been informed to express their objections on the process of rationalization of polling centers in accordance with the guidelines of the Election Commission.

"According to the new guidelines of the Election Commission, the offices of any political parties should not be within 200 meters of the polling station. To this extent, the concerned EROs should re-examine," the Collector said, adding that 98 percent of the examination regarding the registration, additions, changes, and deletions of voters has been completed as part of the special voter list amendment program in the district. Leaders of various political parties including TDP, Congress, and CPM were among those who attended.

250 people examined for eye ailments

PNS ■ KAKINADA

A mega eye camp was organised at Nagulapalli village near here in which over 250 patients were examined for various eye ailments by a team of ophthalmologists.

YSRCP leader Vadiseti Narayana Reddi organized the camp with the support of village Sarpanch Gouri Rajeswari in cooperation with the Kiran eye hospital.

After conducting various tests, 80 patients were identified for surgeries and they would be taken to the Kiran eye hospital in a bus tomorrow. After performing free surgeries, they would be taken back safely to their houses, organizers told the media.

New irrigation project coming up in Palnadu

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

A new project is being established in Palnadu district, which is dependent on agriculture, to benefit the farmers.

The Indo-Israel project is being established in the Palnadu district. The project is coming up at Gundlapalli village in Nekarikallu mandal in Sattenapalli constituency on 25.27 acres, MP Sri Krishnadevarayalu said.

The project provides the technology required to raise mirch and vegetable crops. MP Sri Krishnadevarayalu made vigorous efforts for the establishment of the Indo-Israel project here.

The representatives of Israel



inspected the land allocated for the project and expressed satisfaction. Under the project, a lab will be constructed at the

Center of Excellence with all the facilities to provide awareness and training on methods and techniques that provide high yields in cultivation.

Through this lab, farmers will be taught the skills of cultivation. This will enable them to implement those policies in their agriculture and get higher yields.

This Indo-Israeli project will greatly benefit the farmers of Palnadu, where there is a large extent of dryland. Due to the fact that the farmers are using excessive fertilizers, even though the yield is high, they are not getting the expected profits. The new project helps the farmers on how to reap rich dividends from their crops.

Vinay Kumar takes charge as Director of ICFRE

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Dr Vinay Kumar was appointed as Director (International Cooperation) of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), a Central government organisation located in Dehradun, Uttarakhand on Friday.

He is a senior officer in the Telangana Forest Department and is currently working as the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests. He is also in charge of IT. The new post will coordinate international relations on forest research and education. He will serve in this position for five years.

Vinay Kumar oversees conferences on forest study, research and environmental change by organisations from various countries.

Star Air now connects Nagpur and Hyd to Ajmer

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Star Air, India's leading regional airline, announced the expansion of its flight network with the introduction of a new route connecting Nagpur and Hyderabad to Ajmer (Kishangarh).

Starting from September 30, Star Air will operate non-stop flights on its modern Embraer E175 aircraft, providing travellers with convenient and comfortable access to the enchanting city of Ajmer (Kishangarh).

These new routes, part of 40 routes awarded to Star Air under the Govt. of India's RCS-UDAN scheme, will provide convenient and seamless travel options for passengers visiting the beautiful cities of Ajmer and Pushkar.

Upper hand for women voters in TS

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

Women voters are going to play a key role in the Telangana Assembly elections with more than half of the Assembly constituencies having more than 50 per cent female voters.

As per data on district and Assembly constituency-wise voters, as of September 18, 2023, 66 constituencies have more than 50% women voters. Twenty of the 33 districts have more than 50% women voters with Nizamabad district having the highest number of 52.1% women followed by Jagtial, Nirmal, Kamareddy, Khammam, Medak, Rajanna Sircilla and Bhadrachalam which have more than 51% women voters. Women voters comprise 49.84% of the electorate across Telangana.

Balkonda has the highest percentage of women voters at 53.7% followed by Nizamabad Rural with 53.2% and Armoor 53.1%. The lowest is Serilingampally with 46.8%, followed by Jubilee Hills at 46.9%.

In Telangana, in the 2018 elections, 1.02 crore women voted across the State and played a major role in the mandate with women exceeding men by around 4,700. In 2018, 2.5 lakh more men were enrolled than women.

It may be mentioned here that in 2018, during the Telangana Assembly elections, more women voters turned up in the constituencies of

Mancherial, Nirmal, Nizamabad, Kamareddy, Jagtial, Karimnagar, Rajanna Sircilla, Siddipet, Rangareddy, Medchal, Malkajgiri, Mahbubnagar, Wanarpathy, Jayashankar Bhupalpally and Khammam.

In the GHMC area, in Kukatpally, Nampally, Serilingampally, Uppal, Pattancheru, Medchal, Quthbullapur, Sanath Nagar and LB Nagar more women turned up to vote than men.

Keeping in view women across the state, the Congress has already announced the

Mahalakshmi scheme for women through which an assistance of Rs 2,500 per month will be given to women.

Apart from that LPG gas would be provided for Rs 500 a cylinder and free travel would be allowed for women in TSRTC buses across the state.

The BRS on the other hand has been giving schemes in the name of women, be it 2BHK houses of the Gruha Lakshmi scheme. The BRS government is pitching hard the KCR kit scheme, nutrition kit and the Amma Vodi Scheme among others.

The BRS has nominated only seven women in 115 constituencies. The BJP is going to use the Women's Reservation Bill to make inroads in the state. Women's reservation is a gender-justice step that the BJP government will focus on during the 2024 campaign like the triple talaq ordinance during the 2019 polls.



350 kg ganja seized, five arrested

PNS ■ PADERU

The police seized 350 kg of ganja while being transported in a car illegally at Sileru village.

Additional SP KPS Kishore told the media here on Friday that on a tip-off a team of police led by CI Ashok Kumar conducted checking of vehicles at Teejari camp.

When they checked a car, they found 350 kg of ganja which was neatly packed in 12 bags. They purchased the ganja



in Odisha and were taking it to Maharashtra to sell there. Interestingly, the Sileru panchayat ward volunteer was one among the five arrested. The Additional SP appreciated the police team for arresting the ganja smugglers.

Concerted efforts needed to keep city clean: Civic body chief

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Municipal Commissioner Keerthi Chekuri underlined the need for coordinated efforts to make Guntur city clean and green.

She inspected some of the localities including Navabharat Nagar, Vidya Nagar, and Inner Ring road in the city on Friday. She noticed accumulated garbage at dumping points. She expressed anger over the sanitary officials, inspectors, and supervisor. She directed the official concerned to submit a report for laxity in sanitation works.

Later she held a meeting with the officials and corporators in her chamber. Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner told the public health officials that Clean Guntur means providing a healthy and clean environment to the people of the city. Strict action must be taken against negligent workers, secretaries, and inspectors, she ordered the officials.

She directed the MHO to



rationalize sanitation workers division-wise and to collect garbage from house to house from 6 a.m. in divisions with e-autos and to assign supervisors to sanitation work in divisions with secretaries.

The Civic Chief ordered the SS to allocate the transfer workers from other divisions to the divisions where workers are required and to allocate workers specifically for e-autos and cleaning of main roads.

She also directed the EE to

call the required laborers for the silt work through tender. Henceforth, sanitation works should be checked in the morning and gang work in the afternoon, she instructed the officials concerned. Secretaries should be on duty as per the sanitation action plan but complaints received that some of the secretaries were not attending duties regularly. MHO DR. Bhanuprakash, EE Koteswara Rao, SS Rambabu, and other officials were present.

VMC endorses EVs as green transport option

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In alignment with the nationwide cleanliness and sustainability campaign, the Indian Swachtha League 2.0, the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation, under the leadership of Mayor Rayana Bhagya Lakshmi and Commissioner Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar, orchestrated an impactful event on Car-Free Day. This initiative strives to heighten awareness about sustainable transportation alternatives and curb pollution within the city.

On the occasion of Car-Free Day, Mayor Rayana Bhagya Lakshmi underscored the significance of sustainable transportation, endorsing the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) as a cleaner and eco-friendly option. Promoting the use of electric vehicles represents a significant stride toward reducing pollution levels in our city and enhancing the overall quality of life for its residents. The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation remains unwavering in its commitment to transforming the city into a cleaner and more sustainable urban environment, and this event stands as a testament to that pledge. Deputy Mayors Avuthu Sailaja and Bellam Durga joined Mayor Rayana Bhagya Lakshmi in an electric vehicle ride, symbolizing their dedication to eco-friendly mobility solutions. The event was designed to demonstrate the convenience and benefits of electric vehicles while simultaneously diminishing the city's carbon footprint.



In collaboration with the New and Renewable Energy Development Corporation of Andhra Pradesh (NREDCAP), the Corporation provided an opportunity for employees and citizens to test drive electric vehicles. A noteworthy highlight of the event was the announcement by NREDCAP regarding their provision of electric vehicles to all government employees, requiring zero down payment and featuring affordable EMIs. This initiative is anticipated to motivate more individuals to transition to electric vehicles, thereby contributing to cleaner air and a healthier environment.

Additional Commissioner (Projects), KV Satyavati, Additional Commissioner (General), Sakuntala, Chief Engineer, Prabhakar, and Manager, B Srinivas, underscored the civic administration's commitment to sustainable urban development and environmental preservation.

TDP MLAs submit memo to CEO

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MLAs Yeluri Sambasiva Rao, Gottipati Ravikumar, and Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy on Friday submitted a memorandum to the AP Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Kumar Meena urging to order an inquiry against the officials who resorted to irregularities in preparing voters list.

Later talking to the media the MLAs said that some of the officials in the Prakasam district were acting in favour of the ruling party leaders ignoring the guidelines for deleting and adding voters to the voters list. Though they had complained

against them to officials concerned, no action had been taken so far, they alleged.

"Some of the officials in a planned manner deleted the names of TDP sympathizers from the voters list," he claimed.

The TDP MLAs said that some people intentionally filed Forum 7 to delete the names of TDP sympathizers and they had explained the same to the AP CEO and sought action against delinquent officials.

The TDP MLAs also demanded that AP CEO Meena take action against the district election officer, election returning officer, and other staff for indulging in irregularities in preparing voter list.



TDP deliberately avoided debate on scam: Botsa

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Members of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) exhibited behaviour in the Assembly that can only be described as unruly. This behaviour included vulgar hand gestures, whistling, the use of unparliamentary language, and even intimidating the Speaker. Such actions not only defy the principles of democracy but also fall short of the decorum expected within the Legislative Assembly.

Speaking at the Assembly media point, Minister Botsa Satyanarayana expressed his deep concern over the conduct of TDP legislators within the Assembly. He stated that the public was eagerly awaiting a discussion on matters concerning the welfare of the State. However, it became evident that the TDP had premeditatedly disrupted both the Assembly and council sessions as part of a larger plan and conspiracy. The behaviour of TDP members was not only indecent but also reprehensi-



ble.

Minister Botsa questioned why the TDP members were not interested in discussing the arrest of their party leader, Chandrababu Naidu, within the Assembly.

He said that the government was prepared to provide a comprehensive explanation regarding the skill scam. He further wondered why the TDP had not condemned Chandrababu Naidu's actions if they believed he had committed wrongdoing. The public is keenly observing the dual stance of TDP members, as they created chaos when the

government initiated discussions on Chandrababu's arrest, primarily related to his alleged involvement in the youth employment training scam.

Minister Botsa underscored that Chandrababu Naidu's arrest and subsequent remand to Rajahmundry Central Jail have bolstered public confidence in the judicial system. He praised the judiciary and police for their commitment to upholding the law while emphasising those systems that succumb to political influences are detrimental to society. He urged TDP members to voice any concerns they may have through appropriate legal channels or during legislative sessions, wondering why they had not availed themselves of these platforms.

Minister Botsa challenged the TDP to explain why the government's share of Rs 371 crore was allegedly diverted while the share of Siemens company remained untouched, shedding light on the need for transparency in this matter.

INDIA CORNER

Gujarat court issues second summons to Tejashwi Yadav in defamation case

A metropolitan court in Ahmedabad on Friday issued summons to Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav for the second time in a criminal defamation case after learning that the first summons could not be served to him due to some confusion. As per the latest summons, Yadav is required to appear before the court on October 13. On August 28, the court of Additional Metropolitan Magistrate D J Parmar had issued summons to Yadav in a criminal defamation case filed against him over his reported remarks that "only Gujaratis can be thugs (fraudster)". The court issued summons to the senior Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader to appear before it on September 22 in the case registered under sections 499 and 500 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). When the court began the hearing of the case on Friday, it was revealed that the summons was still lying in the court and it was never delivered to Yadav.



HC grants relief to TMC's Abhishek, rules against coercive action by ED

The Calcutta High Court on Friday granted relief to TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee, directing the ED not to take coercive steps against him in connection with its probe into the school jobs scam in West Bengal. The court, however, did not quash the Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR), equivalent to an FIR, filed by the Enforcement Directorate against Banerjee. The single bench of Justice Tirthankar Ghosh directed the ED that no coercive steps can be taken against the Trinamool Congress MP based on the ECIR. The court maintained that evidence produced by the ED is not sufficient to warrant Banerjee's arrest. It also said that the investigation against Banerjee into the alleged irregularities in recruitment of teachers in government and government-sponsored schools will continue. Earlier this month, the TMC national general secretary was questioned by the ED for a marathon nine hours.



Jaishankar embarks on US visit to attend annual session of UN General Assembly

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday began a nine-day visit to the US, primarily to attend the annual session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York and to host a special event on Global South. Following the completion of the 78th UNGA related engagements, Jaishankar will visit Washington DC from September 27 to 30 for bilateral meetings with his American interlocutors. "During his visit to New York from September 22 to 26, the External Affairs Minister (EAM) will be leading the Indian delegation for the high level week at the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. "In keeping with India's support for Global South, the EAM will be hosting a special event 'India-UN for Global South: Delivering for Development'," it said in a statement. Jaishankar would also attend various plurilateral and bilateral meetings in New York.



WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL

Concern over uncertainty in implementation pronto

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The passage of the women's reservation bill has ignited hope among stakeholders about attaining gender equality in India's political landscape, especially at the policy-making level, even as some raised concerns over its effectiveness given the uncertainty in the deadline for its implementation.

The bill to reserve one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies for women received the parliamentary nod on Thursday as the Rajya Sabha unanimously voted in its favour. It will now require the approval of a majority of state assemblies.

The 128th Constitution amendment bill, referred to as the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, will be implemented after a delimitation exercise to redraw parliamentary and assembly constituencies based on the census which the government has said will be commissioned next year.

Prominent lawyer Shilpi Jain said it could have been imple-



mented immediately.

"Just give tickets to 33 per cent women! At least fix a time limit for its implementation. Otherwise, it's an eyewash. It's like being given a prize which can't be taken for the next few years!"

"A law that doesn't have a time limit about its actual implementation doesn't come into effect till it's implemented! It's half a trophy being given now. The other half, no one knows if/when it will be given!" she said.

Shabnam Hashmi, of the Left-leaning NGO Anhad, said that first there will be a census and after that, there will be delimitation. So, there is no guarantee

of this happening even by 2029, she said.

The stakeholders, however, cautioned that reservation for women in Parliament and assemblies can become a token exercise as is seen in many Panchayat elections where 33 per cent of reserved seats are filled by female family members of politically influential sections of the community.

There should be provisions to encourage those from non-political backgrounds to contest polls rather than those picked by male members of politically influential families, they said.

Dolly Verma, a second-time sitting sarpanch from Bihar's

Gaya who has been fighting against the system of "Sarpanch Patis" (husbands of elected village council heads) in India, expressed hope that the women's reservation bill will empower women "in the long run".

"Reservation in local governance has existed for a long time. But as a sarpanch elected twice to office, even today, I see that Sarpanch Patis are widely accepted."

"However, I have also seen a gradual change happening. Elected women are working as leaders and motivating other women too. I strongly feel that the women's reservation bill will empower women in the long run," she said.

Echoing her views, Hashmi said a large number of women are asserting themselves now. "At the MLA and MP levels, there would be a difference. A woman will need to establish herself at the constituency level, she will need to be more assertive and more self-dependent rather than depending on the family," she said.

Women's quota bill to empower half of India's population

PNS ■ NOIDA

When half of India's population will contribute in policy decisions and feel empowered, the speed of the country's progress will double, BJP leader Mahesh Sharma said on Friday, lauding the passage of the women's reservation bill in Parliament.

The Lok Sabha MP from Gautam Buddha Nagar in Uttar Pradesh also lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "completing" a "long-pending" work.

The bill to reserve one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies for women received the parliamentary nod on Thursday as the Rajya Sabha unanimously voted in its favour. It will now require the approval of a majority of the state assemblies.

The 128th Constitution amendment bill will be implemented after a delimitation exercise to redraw parliamentary and Assembly constituencies based on the census, which the government has said will be commissioned next year.

Manipur govt files report in SC on recovery of arms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Manipur government on Friday told the Supreme Court it has filed a status report on recovery of arms from "all sources" in the ethnic violence-hit state.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and Manipur government, told a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud the status report is for the "consumption" of judges only.

On the issue raised before it that the CBI should be asked to give updates of the probe being conducted by the agency in 11 FIRs transferred to it in cases involving sexual violence against women and children in the state, the bench said it has already appointed "seasoned" IPS officer Dattatray Padsalgikar to supervise the investigation of criminal cases.

"Allow a little bit of time to the officer to take charge, monitor the situation and then we may ask for a status report," said the bench, also comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra.

The CJI said Padsalgikar, a



former Director General of Police of Maharashtra, himself went to Manipur to oversee the process. He is one of the most highly respected officers from Maharashtra, Chandrachud said.

In its August 7 order passed on a batch of pleas, including those seeking court-monitored probe into the cases of violence, besides measures for relief and rehabilitation, the apex court had appointed Padsalgikar to supervise the CBI investigation into the FIRs transferred to it as also the cases being handled by the state police agencies.

During the hearing on Friday, Mehta said he has placed before the court a report on recovery of weapons.

"That is for your lordships' consumption," he said.

The solicitor general informed the bench about a short affidavit in the matter.

"I have a short affidavit also which says that whatever issues are being debated here are already being brought to the notice of the (apex court-appointed) committee," he said, adding the panel is seized of the matter.

The top court had earlier appointed a three-member committee of retired high court judges headed by Justice (ret'd) Gita Mittal, to oversee relief and rehabilitation of the victims of ethnic violence in the state.

The all-woman panel headed by Justice (ret'd) Mittal, a former chief justice of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, also comprises justices (ret'd) Shalini P Joshi and Asha Menon.

Mehta said the matter can be kept for September 25 so the court can go through the status report as well as the affidavit. "Last time we had said that the status report on recovery of arms shall be shared with the court," the bench said, adding the affidavit can be shared with the petitioners but not the status report.

BJP issues notice to Bidhuri for his remarks against Danish Ali

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday issued a show cause notice to its Lok Sabha member Ramesh Bidhuri for his use of objectionable words against Bahujan Samaj Party MP Danish Ali in Parliament during a discussion on Chandrayaan mission's success.

BJP sources said the party has sought a reply from the South Delhi MP for his use of unparliamentary words.

Bidhuri had used derogatory words against Ali while speaking in Lok Sabha on Thursday. Speaker Om Birla later expunged those words.

Union minister Rajnath Singh had expressed regret for Bidhuri's remarks.

The video of Bidhuri's con-

'My name dragged into this by people with vested interest'

BJP MP Harsh Vardhan on Friday alleged that some people with vested interest have "dragged" his name into a row over certain objectionable remarks made by his party colleague Ramesh Bidhuri in the Lok Sabha. "While I was no doubt witness to the jugglery of words being thrown at each other (which in fact the entire House was), the truth of the matter is that in the chaos that existed, I could not clearly hear what was being said," Harsh Vardhan, a former Union minister, wrote on X. He is currently the MP from Chandni Chowk in Delhi. The BJP leader's clarification came a day after Bidhuri made certain objectionable remarks targeted at BSP member Kunwar Danish Ali on Thursday night during a discussion in the Lok Sabha on the success of Chandrayaan-3 mission.

trovseral references to the Muslim MP have gone viral with opposition parties demanding strict action against him, including sus-

pension from the House.

Speaker Birla has cautioned him and warned of strict action if such an offence is repeated.



Rain continues in many parts of Kerala; IMD issues 'yellow alert'

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

As incessant rains continued to lash several parts of Kerala, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday issued "yellow alert" warning isolated heavy rains in seven districts.

Heavy rainfall was predicted in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Idukki and Ernakulam districts.

Northern districts including Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur and Kasaragod are likely to witness thunderstorms, moderate rains and heavy rains in the coming hours, IMD sources said.

"Yellow alert" indicates heavy rainfall between 6 and 11 cm.

Incessant rains caused waterlogging and uprooting of trees in high ranges of

Kottayam and Idukki districts. Meanwhile, shutters of Peppara Dam here were raised by 10 cm in the wake of increased water level, district authorities said.

The District Collector has asked local people to be vigilant as the shutters would be raised by another 10 cm later in the day, an official statement said here.

Heavy rains lashed hilly areas in Kottayam on Thursday causing landslides in two places and disrupting traffic on various roads, including the one leading to the popular hill station of Vagamon in Idukki.

The sudden heavy rains also led to rise in water levels of various streams and rivers, including the Meenachil river, raising concerns of a flood situation in the downstream areas, the district administration had said.

Cong slams Bidhuri's remarks against BSP MP

The Congress on Friday strongly condemned BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri's objectionable remarks in the Lok Sabha against BSP parliamentarian Danish Ali and demanded his immediate suspension from the House. Describing the remarks as an insult to all MPs, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the apology offered by Union Minister Rajnath Singh was a "mere eyewash" and not acceptable. "It is an absolute

shame what Bidhuri has said. Rajnath Singh's apology is simply not acceptable. It is a half-hearted apology, it was an afterthought. What Bidhuri has said is an insult to Parliament and makes a mockery of what the prime minister keeps repeating 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas, Sabka Sabka Vishvaas, Sabka Prayas' which becomes all 'bakwaas' (nonsense)," Ramesh told reporters here when asked about the issue.

LIGHT AFTER 25 YEARS!

7 remote villages in Naxal-hit Sukma get power supply

PNS ■ RAIPUR

Nearly 25 years after their homes plunged into darkness due to damage to infrastructure by Naxals, 342 families from seven remote villages of insurgency-hit Sukma district are back on the electricity supply grid, officials said.

In the late 1990s, these villages had to bear the brunt of Left Wing Extremism after Naxalites ran amok in the area, destroying electricity poles and other infrastructure and depriving the locals of basic facilities.

The seven villages Dabbakonta, Pidmel, Ekalguda, Duramangu, Tumbangu, Singanpad and Dokpad were electrified



through the conventional source of power supply early this week, said Sukma Collector Haris S.

The government and administration are committed to pro-

viding basic facilities like ration, electricity and water to the people, particularly the last man in the last mile and ensure that benefits of welfare schemes reach them, said col-

lector said.

Though some of the houses had access to solar power to light up bulbs and operate a fan, that too was plagued due to maintenance issues, said officials.

About 342 families have benefited from electrification in these seven villages, said the collector. The priority of the government is to ensure the development of basic facilities in hyper-sensitive areas. Electricity will soon be provided to other villages in the area, he said.

Sukma is among seven districts of the less prosperous Bastar division in South Chhattisgarh, more than 400 km from the capital Raipur. Inspector General of Police

(Bastar Range) Sundarraj P said setting up of six police camps in the area has helped in ensuring the development of such remote areas and reaching benefits of welfare schemes to the people.

There was electricity connectivity in these villages till the late 1990s. But Maoists damaged the electricity poles and infrastructure due to which the villagers were deprived of regular power supply for about 25 years, the IG said. After the establishment of Pidmel, Dabbakonta, Tondamarka, Dubbakonta, Elmagunda, Karrigundam and other such police camps in the area, villagers are now getting back their basic facilities and amenities, he said.

SANATAN DHARMA REMARK

SC issues notice on plea seeking FIR against TN Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday sought responses from the Tamil Nadu government and its minister Udhayanidhi Stalin on a plea seeking an FIR against him for his "eradicate Sanatan Dharma" remark.

A bench of Justices Aniruddha Bose and Bela M Trivedi issued notices on a plea filed by B Jagannath seeking an FIR against the Tamil Nadu minister on grounds that the remarks are akin to hate speech and that the top court had in similar matters passed several directions, including registration of FIR.



Senior advocate Dama Seshadri Naidu, appearing for the petitioner, submitted that the minister allegedly asked school students to say that this religion is not good and that the other religion is good.

"This court has taken note of similar matters where individuals make such a statement against another's faith but in this case it is a minister making the statement. Here it is a state, which is telling the school students that so and so religion is wrong," Naidu said.

The bench asked Naidu what was he seeking from the court, to which the senior lawyer said he is seeking a restraining order against the minister (Stalin) from making any such statement and secondly that an FIR be registered.

"We are also seeking that students should be kept out of this," he said.

Course correction

The IMF's call to tax the rich and shield the poor in Pak will not be easy to implement

Pakistan's dwindling economy has steadily dug its way into such a morass that even sane, helpful and logical directions from the experts outside, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in this case, do not seem to be able to pull it through. The recent call by IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva to Pakistan for increasing taxation on the wealthy and protecting the poor is a stark reminder of the country's economic woes. The cash-strapped nation, which secured a bailout from the IMF in July, is grappling with double-digit inflation and a range of structural issues that need immediate redressal. Kristalina's meeting with Interim Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly session has brought the pressing economic issues facing Pakistan to the forefront. Kristalina emphasised the need for Pakistan to collect more taxes from the wealthy and simultaneously protect the country's vulnerable populations. The IMF has long been advocating economic reforms in Pakistan.



Pakistan's economy is reeling under soaring inflation, which has been exacerbated by the conditions attached to the IMF's \$3 billion bailout package. Meanwhile things have only gone from bad to worse for general population. Massive hikes in electricity and petrol prices have driven inflation to a staggering 27.4 per cent last month, placing the citizens under a crushing burden.

The promise of economic stability and growth through the IMF bailout has not yet materialised for the majority of Pakistanis. The IMF's insistence on revenue collection and protecting the most vulnerable segments of society underscores the importance of a balanced approach. But the irony is that this bailout, and even the previous ones, have hardly changed anything. The ordinary Pakistani continues to suffer while the Pakistani elite (especially the army) enjoys the privileges. These measures are essential not only for fiscal sustainability but also for maintaining social cohesion in a country facing considerable economic hardships. The IMF's approval of the \$3 billion standby agreement, which is crucial to prevent a sovereign debt default, has saved the day but the crisis runs deeper in Pakistan's system. It must galvanise and upgrade industry and trade to compete in the international market. But it is resorting to piecemeal reforms such as earmarking 10 Government-owned companies for privatisation. Though this move is in line with the IMF's recommendations as State-owned entities' losses have been straining Government finances, it is not a permanent solution. Pakistan's economy needs structural changes that can create a conducive business environment. The IMF's prescription may not be easy to follow as Pakistan's elite is going to resist it tooth and nail, especially with the general elections slated for January end. In the short term, however, such moves can play a pivotal role in steering Pakistan away from the brink. The path ahead is challenging as it is directly linked with the survival of Pakistan as a State.

PICTALK



Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel perform during diamond jubilee celebrations of Air Force Station Jammu

Who killed Hardeep Singh Nijjar?

The Indo-Canada relations have deteriorated after the killing of Nijjar, a pro-Khalistani. Are sectional conflicts among Khalistanis in Canada the cause?

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegation that Indian agents had murdered the Khalistani leader, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, on June 18, 2023, in Canada, is reportedly based on inputs from intelligence sources. This raises the question as to how reliable these inputs are. No final judgement is possible until these inputs and the evidence behind them are made public. Nevertheless, one can have some idea of the efficiency of the Canadian intelligence and security establishment by looking at their performance in respect of the biggest ever terrorist outrage emanating from Canadian soil—the mid-air explosion that brought down Air India's Boeing 747 aircraft, Emperor Kanishka, carrying flight AI 182 from Toronto to Mumbai via Montreal, off the coast of Ireland. All 329 persons, passengers and staff, on board the flight which had taken off on June 23, 1985, were killed. Only 131 of the bodies could be recovered.

The Air India explosion was a result of negligence, intelligence failure, inaction and lax security arrangement on the part of the Canadian authorities. For quite some time before the explosion there was a fear that Khalistani terrorists in Canada were planning a strike. Alerted, India's Intelligence Bureau had sent a telex message on June 1, 1985, both to Air India's management and the Canadian authorities asking them to beef up security measures to forestall a possible attack on an aircraft by Sikh terrorists.

James Bartleman, then head of Canada's intelligence bureau, got a frosty response from an official of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), whose attention he drew to a highly classified Communications Security Establishment (CSE) document saying that Sikh extremists might be targeting AI 182. He was told that officials were probing the matter. Security measures remained lax. Sniffer dogs remained missing from all Canadian airports because they were under training at Vancouver. X-ray screens at Toronto's Pearson Airport



"broke down" on the day of the flight.

Days before the bombing, Canadian intelligence operatives who were tracking Talwinder Singh Parmar, founder and leader of terrorist group Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), and subsequently considered to be the mastermind behind the downing of AI-182—heard an explosive test that he conducted in a forest. They ignored it, thinking that it was a "gunshot!"

In its report submitted in 2010, a commission of inquiry, appointed by Stephen Harper, then Canada's Prime Minister, in 2006, and headed by a retired judge of the country's Supreme Court, John Major, condemned several security failures and blunders on part of Canadians that led to the bombing. According to the report, the RCMP and Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) had significant pieces of information that, taken together, "would have led a competent analyst to conclude that Flight 182 was at high risk of being bombed by known Sikh terrorists in June 1985." Lack of coordination among them prevented the risk from being neutralised. The report called the security lapses "inexcusable" and termed Canadian security arrangements at the time "wholly deficient".



THE REPORT CALLED THE SECURITY LAPSES "INEXCUSABLE" AND TERMED CANADIAN SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AT THE TIME "WHOLLY DEFICIENT"

Nor have the post-explosion developments shown any profound regret on the part of the Canadian authorities over what had happened. Nor have they reached out to the victims and their families the way they should have. The earnestness with which investigations into the outrage were conducted is reflected in the fact that only one person Inderjit Singh Reyat, was convicted and, that too, decades after the bombing. Talwinder Singh Parmar, who had returned to India, was killed in an encounter with the Punjab police in 1992. The other accused, including Ripudaman Singh Malik, who was subsequently murdered in Canada on July 14, 2023, were acquitted.

In a searing observation, judge John Major, had stated that Canada had relegated the biggest terrorist attack targeting their country to background. He noted, "I stress this is a Canadian atrocity. For too long the greatest loss of Canadian lives at the hands of terrorists has somehow been relegated outside the Canadian consciousness." Given this background, one can hardly be blamed for doubting, prima facie, Canadian intelligence agencies' conclusion that Indian agents had murdered Hardeep Singh Nijjar. This is particu-

larly so in the context of Ripudaman Singh Malik's subsequent murder. He had written a letter on January 17, 2022, to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, praising him for his initiative to redress some of the pending demands of the Sikhs. While thanking Modi for removing the names of some Sikhs from the blacklist which prevented them from visiting India, he accused certain "anti-India members" of the Sikh community of running an "orchestrated campaign" against Modi. Back in Surrey in British Columbia, his praise for Modi had prompted a section of Sikhs to accuse him of treachery towards the Sikh qaum. Was he murdered for the 180-degree turn in his attitude to India and Modi?

The world of Khalistani terrorists, it appears, is not one of great mutual camaraderie and friendship, but one of sectional acrimony. Was Hardeep Singh Nijjar a victim of this internecine conflict, and the RCMP, CSIS and the CSE have been clueless about this entire matter as they were about the preparations to blow up the Air India flights? The question needs to be looked at seriously.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PLAYING POLITICS

Sir — The proposal by Karnataka State Co-operation Minister Rajanna to appoint three additional Deputy Chief Ministers in the Karnataka government seems to be a well-calculated political manoeuvre aimed at weakening the current Deputy CM, D K Shivakumar, who is poised to replace Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the second half of the government's five-year term. Rajanna has openly aligned himself with CM Siddaramaiah, fueling speculation that he is the latter's spokesperson. Reports indicate that only one Deputy Chief Minister position was created in response to D K Shivakumar's demand to assert his position as the second most powerful figure in the government after the Chief Minister. In this context, Rajanna's statements hint at a power struggle behind the scenes. Moreover, the open rebellion staged by senior leaders B K Hariprasad and Bsavaraja Raya Reddy against the government undermines the expectation that the Congress, with its 135 seats, can provide a strong and stable government in the state. Failure to address these troubling developments with firm corrective measures early on may spell trouble for the Congress government, erode its credibility, and pave the way for political instability.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

WOMEN REPRESENTATION

Sir — It is disheartening that despite being proud to call ourselves the world's largest democracy, we have failed to achieve gender equity in our legislative bodies at both the national and state levels even after seventy-six years of independence. While women constitute nearly half of India's 95 crore registered voters, they make up only 15 percent of lawmakers in Parliament and 10 percent in state assemblies. Therefore, the move to reserve 33 percent of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislatures, initiated in 1996, is a significant and commendable step toward promoting gender equality in politics. However, due to political maneuvering, we have failed to enact it into law.

Neutralise the Khalistan movement



Late Indira Gandhi, who had a keen awareness of the dangers posed by the divisive Khalistan movement, confronted it head-on through Operation Blue Star. Without this intervention, the movement could have taken deeper root within our nation. Although its leaders were compelled to disperse abroad, in 1984, she paid the ultimate price with her life for the greater national cause. Canada, with its enthusiasm for immigration and a relative lack of experience in dealing with terrorism, tragically suffered the loss of 268 of its own citizens in the 1985 bombing of Air India's Kanishka Flight 182. It appears that, perhaps due to a delayed examination of history, Canada is now recklessly aligning with proponents of the Khalistan movement within its borders for short-term political gain. Sooner or later, the nation will realize that these renegades owe their allegiance to nothing but blind devotion to a misguided cause. The Indian government must step far beyond the scope of diplomacy and demonstrate unwavering resolve through every possible means to neutralise the Khalistan movement, not only within Canada but also in other emerging regions, to prevent the ignition of domestic unrest.

R Narayanan | Mumbai

Finally, after six attempts and twenty-seven years since its first introduction in 1996, the Women's 33 Percent Reservation (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam) Bill passed in the Lok Sabha on September 20, 2023. Despite all political parties' efforts to attract women voters with various schemes and financial incentives, they have remained silent on the 33 percent reservation. Now that the bill has cleared this hurdle, the question arises of how soon it can become law. According to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, "After the next year's elections, the census and delimitation exercise will take place. After this, there will be 1/3 women in this house." This implies that it is unlikely to happen before the 2029 elections, unless there is a significant shift in the government's stance and amendments to the Constitution. Nevertheless, involving women in policymaking is essential to address issues concerning them adequately.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

RAHUL GANDHI MEETS COOLIES

Sir — Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi once again surprised people by vis-

iting a railway station in New Delhi and engaging with porters to understand their concerns. The Congress leader arrived at Anand Vihar Railway Station to interact with the coolies. Gandhi engaged in extensive conversations with them and discussed the challenges they face. This visit comes several months after a group of porters requested him to meet them and comprehend their issues, and to work towards their betterment.

In recent months, Rahul Gandhi has consistently surprised people with his interactions with the public. He visited Bengali Market, the Jama Masjid area to have a meal, and Mukherjee Nagar to engage with UPSC aspirants.

Recently, he undertook a motorcycle journey in Ladakh, Leh, and Kargil regions to interact with the local population. Rahul Gandhi's fearless and courageous efforts to engage with ordinary people and understand their problems are commendable.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Multivitamins: A traveller's companion

The role of multivitamins cannot be overstated to reinforce your immunity while travelling

Travel has become an integral aspect of modern lifestyle. People nowadays are traversing the globe more than ever before for business as well as for leisure. Even though travelling is fun, people who travel a lot often face the challenge of maintaining their health during their trips. This is because of the change in their usual routines, consumption of different foods, and the new environment. These factors can drain travellers, both physically and mentally, besides dampening the excitement of their adventure. This is precisely where multivitamins come into play.

Why is Multivitamins?
The stress of travelling can cause discomfort like a stiff neck, sore muscles, back pain, and joint aches, which can be quite tiring. Multivitamins can soothe these symptoms besides providing the essential vitamins and minerals that could be deficient in your diet throughout your journey. Besides this, multivitamins can prove beneficial in several other ways:

Supporting Natural Wellness: Multivitamins are a



blend of vitamins and minerals usually found in our food. They are beneficial for bridging nutritional gaps and naturally improving health. One daily multivitamin during travel can serve as a reliable support system, countering the deficiency of essential nutrients induced by changing diets. Changing time zones and long flights can disrupt our sleep patterns and leave us fatigued and stressed. B vitamins, particularly B6, B12, and folic acid, play a substantial role in stimulating the nervous system for combating stress. Including these nutrients in a multivitamin can help travellers manage fatigue and adjust to new time zones more effectively. Thus, consuming health supplements or multivitamins during travel can play a crucial role in balancing irregular meal patterns. Multivitamins

come in various forms, from traditional tablets and capsules to gummies and powders, catering to different preferences and dietary restrictions. Their portability makes them an ideal travel companion. When choosing multivitamins for your journey, consider a blend that includes all the essential nutrients for travellers—Vitamin B complex, Vitamin C, magnesium, probiotics, and ginseng. For instance, vitamin B complex boosts cognitive performance while Vitamin C aids in fortifying the immune system.

Vital Nutrients to Vegan & Vegetarian Travellers

Vegan and vegetarian travellers often struggle to meet their nutritional needs while on the go. Dietary restrictions can impact their energy levels and overall health during their journey. Multivitamins play a crucial role in bridging these nutritional gaps for such individuals. Furthermore, multivitamin supplements for this group contain medicinal herbs and higher levels of zinc, vitamin B12, iron, and algae-derived omega-3 fatty acids to address deficiencies

commonly found in plant-based eating patterns. For instance, multivitamins composed of Ashwagandha, an age-old medicinal herb renowned for its rich reserve of Vitamin C, calcium, and iron, are known for enhancing stamina. Similarly, certain multivitamin products include Shilajit, a mineral-dense resin used in Ayurveda. This natural substance is rich in nutrients, including iron, magnesium, retinol, and vitamins B, C, and E. It also aids in stress and anxiety reduction, which makes it an ideal companion for vegan and vegetarian travellers.

Multivitamins, the tiny powerhouse companions that can empower you to conquer new horizons with strength, and vigour. So, whether you are chasing sunsets on remote beaches or sealing business deals in bustling cities, let multivitamins be your trusted companions. Your journey is extraordinary—let your health be equally exceptional.

(The writer is the CEO, Co-Founder, of Positive Gems; views are personal)



GAGAN MANCHANDA

FIRST COLUMN

A CALL FOR FAITH, PEACE, AND UNITY

The positive spirit of hope and faith in God is essential for our well-being



RADHANATH SWAMI MAHARAJ

The Bhagavat Gita verse (BG 8.15) states, that the world is a place of ordeal and unease for the living beings. Further, it outlines the genres of trouble caused by nature (adi-Devika), by society (adi-bhautika), and by body & mind (adhyatmitika). Does the cause of discomfort trigger resentment, bitterness, and anger? Does it invoke a victimhood mindset? Does the innate troubles of the world have a license for perpetrating violence, causing generational rivalry and spreading animosity?

Humans look forward to living in peace and harmony however still we see fights between individuals, family, friends and nations. The underlying reason behind such fights/war shows the obvious failure of any potential dialogue, but more than that it reveals the true characters of an individual or leaders involved directly in this fight/war. The Bhagavad Gita 16.4 states; that hypocrisy, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness, and ignorance are the traits of a person possessed by ignorance. And, these fights/war exposes the deep-seated dark traits seated within the hearts of individual/leaders, leading to the unfortunate dehumanization of humanity.

Every fight/war historically, globally and generationally has been fought due to conflicting ideologies between the well-intentioned and not-so-well-intentioned people or groups. But people bereft of spiritual wisdom; act whimsically, instinctually, and emotionally to further their self-serving ideologies without much thought. Additionally, when people start believing they are 'right' 20 times a day, it gets into their heads. They act as (pseudo) God displaying their ignorance brazenly, adversely impacting the lives of many. What they fail to recognize is that, at the core, every being is equal in spiritual identity (nastatmano). Steeped in arrogance and ignorance they fail to perceive the sanctity of life, and thus engage in unbeneficial, destructive work (Agra karma) bringing socio-cultural and economic ruins (ksayaya Jagat). True greatness lies in forgiveness, sacrifice, and compromise for a higher objective of life, peace, and harmony. If those are not the values that drive us; how could it be otherwise? In the absence of spirituality that fosters resilience and forgiveness, people would naturally tend to slip into the bloody cycle of endless retribution. As a social thinker's question, How many lives per mile would ultimately work, to bring the parties to the table in negotiation? If tooth for a tooth, and eye for an eye is the policy followed, then the whole society will end up blind and toothless.

The quintessential message of Krishna Consciousness, calls forth the positive spirit of hope, meaning and faith in God in critical times. Historically, Kamsa ran a godless kingdom and wreaked havoc in the society by using deceit, fear, and force to maintain his grip on power. To assuage the suffering, Lord Krsna appeared as lightning amid the darkness of the world and neutralized Kamsa who was possessed by the spirit of ignorance beyond redemption. Currently, this lightning potency of the Lord is still accessible, within our reach, as the wisdom of the Gita. Irrespective of social, cultural, or religious diversities, the spiritual wisdom of the Gita empowers us to orient our lives towards a higher purpose, beyond selfish and short-sighted objectives. This higher purpose needs to be placed at the heart of world leaders and citizens, guided by universal qualities of forgiveness, fortitude, simplicity, non-violence, truthfulness, and freedom from anger, among others. Guided by wisdom and integrating such favourable characteristics into our lives as individuals, we feel spiritually empowered to be a positive force, bringing order amid the chaos of godless civilization and bridging the divide among human hearts with faith, peace, and unity.

(The author is the Spiritual Guru of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness)



Celebrating International Day of Sign Languages

On this day, let us recognise the power of communication and the indispensable role sign languages play in bridging the gap for the deaf-mute community



ARMAN ALI



Every year, on September 23rd, the world unites to observe the International Day of Sign Languages, acknowledging the vital role sign languages play in our global society. This year, with the theme "A World Where Deaf People Everywhere Can Sign Anywhere!", we contemplate the significance of sign languages in reshaping the world, especially in a context where communication is an integral part of our daily lives.

Communication forms the lifeblood of our interconnected world, serving as the foundation for building relationships, sharing ideas, and engaging in the intricate processes that shape our societies. Yet, for the millions of individuals worldwide who are deaf or hard of hearing, accessing this fundamental human right can be challenging. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), currently, over 1.5 billion people, nearly 20% of the global population, live with hearing loss, and 430 million of them experience disabling hearing loss. Alarming, it is projected that by 2050, this number could exceed 700 million people with disabling hearing loss.

The deaf community in India constitutes a significant portion of the population, with a diverse and vibrant culture. India has the largest deaf population in the world. As per WHO estimates in India, there are approximately 63 million people, who are suffering from Significant Auditory Impairment; this places the estimated prevalence at 6.3% in the Indian population.

Despite the challenges they face, the deaf community in India has made considerable strides in recent years. The Indian Sign Language (ISL) is recognized as one of the officially recognized languages of India, which has helped promote communication and inclusion among the deaf population. Additionally, various NGOs, government initiatives, and educational institutions have been working tirelessly to improve access to education, healthcare, and employment



TO ENSURE THAT GOVERNMENT PROCEEDINGS AND POLICIES ARE ACCESSIBLE TO THE DEAF COMMUNITY, IT SHOULD BE MANDATORY TO HAVE A SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER AT EVERY GOVERNMENT EVENT

(The writer is Executive Director, National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People)

opportunities for the deaf.

In terms of education, there are specialised schools and institutions across the country that cater to the needs of deaf students, offering tailored curricula and sign language instruction. However, there is still a need for more inclusive education practices and increased awareness about the rights and potential of deaf individuals.

Efforts are also being made to empower the deaf community through vocational training and employment opportunities, ensuring they can lead fulfilling and independent lives. Indian sign language interpreters play a crucial role in facilitating communication between the deaf and hearing communities in various settings, including government offices, hospitals, and educational institutions.

Indeed, the deaf community in India is a significant and dynamic part of the country's diverse population. While there have been positive developments in terms of recognition and inclusion, ongoing efforts are needed to further improve the quality of life and opportunities for deaf individuals in India. Accurate and up-to-date statistics will be essential to track the progress and tailor interventions to better meet the needs of this vibrant community.

For this vast community, sign languages act as a conduit to participate in the broader narrative of global communication. Sign languages are not just tools of communication; they are intricate and vibrant linguistic systems in their own right, featuring distinctive grammar, vocabulary, and cultural nuances. They provide the means through which deaf individuals convey their thoughts,

share their stories, and connect with the world around them. On the International Day of Sign Languages, we celebrate the diversity of these languages and the sense of unity they foster among the global deaf community.

India, being the most populous nation globally, also has the largest deaf population and therefore it is our collective responsibility to address their needs and aspirations. We have made significant strides in assistive technology, and there must be a decisive push to enable larger access to these technologies for the deaf population. With its inbuilt rich dynamics, the addition of technology will make sign language more profound and relevant. It's also essential for the country to view disabilities as an investment to promote their integration into mainstream society.

In the same vein, it is important to emphasize that achieving inclusion cannot occur in isolation. An ecosystem must be created to facilitate two-way communication through sign language. The responsibility lies not only with the deaf community but with society as a whole. Sign language should be integrated into the standard school curriculum to ensure that everyone becomes proficient in this language and skill. Just as foreign languages are taught in schools, there's no reason why Indian Sign Language shouldn't be part of the curriculum.

The significance of sign language reaches beyond everyday conversations. In an increasingly interconnected and diverse world, sign languages are pivotal in areas such as education, employment, healthcare, and civic engagement. They empower

deaf individuals to access quality education, pursue meaningful careers, make informed healthcare decisions, and participate in the political and social life of their communities. Without sign languages, millions would find themselves excluded, unable to fully engage in society.

To ensure that government proceedings and policies are accessible to the deaf community, it should be mandatory to have a sign language interpreter at every government event. This way, a significant portion of the population would not miss out on essential government information and programs.


In a world that prides itself on progress and inclusivity, such oversights should be deemed unacceptable. The International Day of Sign Languages serves as a stark reminder of the imperative for governments, organizations, and individuals to prioritize accessibility and inclusivity in all facets of society. It is a day when we should reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that sign languages are accessible to all, everywhere.

As we commemorate the International Day of Sign Languages in 2023, let us recognize the power of communication and the indispensable role sign languages play in bridging the gap for the deaf community. Let us also advocate for increased awareness, investment, and action to guarantee that sign languages are accessible to everyone, everywhere. Only through such collective endeavours can we genuinely create "A World Where Deaf People Everywhere Can Sign Anywhere!" and transform the global order for the better, making it a more inclusive and equitable place for all.

Cooperatives can end Punjab's agriculture woes

Cooperative societies can make agricultrue viable by providing cheap loans, selling agricultural inputs at reasonable rates and buying farm produce at fair price

Punjab has been the leader in food grain production; despite the bad weather, this year too, the contribution of wheat to the national grain reserve from Punjab is more than 46 per cent. However, the economic condition of the farmers of Punjab is getting worse. They cannot repay the loans taken on crops and commit suicide. One-third of the farmers in Punjab are either marginal with up to 2.5 acres of land or small farmers with 2.5 to 5 acres of land. Their total land is only 9.7% of the cultivable land in the state. According to a survey, the number of marginal and small farmers with up to 5 acres of land is 3,61,938, while the number of semi-medium farmers with 5 to 10 acres of land is 3,67,938



SUKHDEV SINGH

The writer is Professor (Retd) Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar and a member, the Governing Council Amritsar

and medium farmers with 10 to 25 acres of land is 3, 05,220. There are only 57,707 farmer families with more than 25 acres of land. Despite their hard work and optimization of the yield, more than 80 per cent of the farmers in the state are in debt.

The majority of the farmers depend on six-month yield crops i.e. wheat and paddy, and earn what barely meets the repayment of the money borrowed during the previous six months for expenditure on growing the crop and supporting the families. Then the cash is needed for the next cycle. But they don't have savings to defray the expenses on agricultural implements, seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, on the one hand, and on personal needs, such as food,

clothing and health facilities for the family, children's education and other social responsibilities, on the other. Thus, the farmers have to take a loan for the next term. Small landowners face difficulty in loan sanctions from banks or moneylenders. Due to a lot of paperwork and lateral guarantees, the sanction of bank loans is delayed and sometimes completely refused or else the partial amount is sanctioned. Then the farmer has to approach some private moneylender for a loan at a high interest rate to save the crop. Due to the high interest rate, the real income from the crop decreases, while due to delayed loans, the use of fertiliser and pesticides is delayed causing low yield and losses. Some moneylenders sell fertilizers and pesticides instead of giving the loan amount in cash, so the farmers have to buy these products at the moneylender's price. What is worse is that sometimes the farmers double their losses when they happen to buy fake products.

In such circumstances, cooperative societies can be a solution to this thorny issue. They can purchase agricultural inputs like quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticides in bulk at competitive prices and sell to the farmers at a marginal profit, sanctioning the total cost as a crop loan at low interest. Societies can buy farm machinery and tools and rent to such farmers at a reasonable cost. This will benefit both farmers and cooperatives.

Cooperative societies can

encourage farm support activities and set up processing and procurement centres for agro-products to help farmers generate their daily, weekly or monthly income. If possible, they may employ marginal farmers on a part-time basis in the processing units.

Future of Cooperative Societies: There are 19164 cooperative societies in Punjab out of which 3953 are Primary Agriculture Cooperative Credit Societies (PACS). Of these, 56% are in profit, 38.6 in loss, while the rest are in 'no profit, no loss'. While effecting administrative reforms in cooperative societies and efficient utilisation of funds, the Punjab Government can take advantage of the recent Union Cabinet decision to expand the scope of cooperative societies, by setting up new PACS in unrepresented villages and by computerizing PACS for their efficient, transparent and accountable performance.

Future Action Plan: In Punjab, the State Agricultural Development Bank (SADB), Primary Agricultural Development Bank (PADB) and Primary Agricultural Cooperative/Credit Societies (PACS) should jointly support dairy, poultry, fisheries, piggy and agro-processing units in addition to loans for crops. Operative farming should be developed by pooling the holdings of 2.5 to 5 acres of land to form a unit of at least 25 acres to which 10 acres of Panchayat land on concessional contract may be added making it a unit of 35 acres. In addition to

other facilities, such cooperative farms may be provided electricity connections for tube wells on priority and the necessary machinery at concessional rates.

The other types of cooperative farms can be the cooperative farm for Dalits, the cooperative farm for women and the cooperative farm for landless farmers, each on 10 acres of Panchayat land attached to a subsidiary business of dairy, piggy, poultry, fish farming etc. Similarly, by combining 5-10 acres and 10-25 acres of land holdings, cooperative farms of 35-50 acres can be created without the addition of Panchayat land. These farms should also be given the same facilities as other cooperative farms.

MONEY MATTERS

Rupee rises 19 paise to close at 82.94 against US dollar

The rupee appreciated 19 paise to 82.94 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, as the inclusion of India in the JPMorgan bond index boosted investor sentiment. Forex traders said the decision of JPMorgan Chase & Co to include Indian government bonds in its benchmark emerging market index is expected to have far-reaching implications for India's debt market and global investors. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.75 against the US dollar and touched the lowest level of 82.97 in the day trade. The rupee finally settled 19 paise higher at 82.94 (provisional) against the previous close. On Thursday, the rupee settled at 83.13 against the US dollar. India's inclusion in a major global bond index will open doors to increased foreign investment in the nation's debt market, traders said. Analysts expect India's inclusion in a major global bond index will lead to a direct inflow of USD 20-25 billion in the debt over the 18-21 months.



Gold plunges Rs 170; silver jumps Rs 800

Gold plunged by Rs 170 to Rs 60,000 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday amid fall in precious metal prices in overseas markets, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the yellow metal had settled at Rs 60,170 per 10 grams. "Domestic markets gold price came under pressure, causing strength in the rupee," Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, said. However, silver jumped Rs 800 to Rs 75,300 per kilogram. In the global markets, gold was down at USD 1,925 per ounce, while silver was trading higher at USD 23.70 per ounce. Comex gold fell on the back of strong US macro data that stoked expectations that the Federal Reserve will pursue a higher-for-longer stance on interest rates, Gandhi said.



Suzlon secures 29.4 MW wind capacity order from BrightNight

Suzlon Group on Friday said it has secured a new order to install 29.4 MW wind capacity from BrightNight in Maharashtra. The capacity is a part of BrightNight's 100 MW wind-solar hybrid project in Osmanabad in Maharashtra. Suzlon Group said in a statement "Suzlon will install 14 units of S120 140m wind turbine generators with a hybrid lattice tubular tower and a rated capacity of 2.1 MW each," it said without disclosing the order value. The project is expected to be commissioned in phases, beginning April 2024, and curb 2.5 lakh tonne of CO2 emissions per year, it added. Suzlon will execute the project with a scope of supply, installation, and commissioning. Additionally, Suzlon will offer post-commissioning operation and maintenance services. JP Chalasani, Chief Executive Officer, Suzlon Group said, the power generated from this project will target the Commercial and Industrial (C&I) customer segment, creating deeper penetration of renewable energy in India.



Govt to make IT hardware import process fully online

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Friday informed IT hardware players that the process of import authorisation for laptops, tablet, servers etc. will be completely online and has sought data of the past three years for the inbound shipments of mobile, IT and telecom products, sources aware of the development said.

Industry players have been informed that the "import management system" portal, which will be managed by Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), will go live by the end of this month.

"MeiTY has informed companies that 'import management system' will go live by September end. It will be managed by DGFT. It has asked importers to feed their organisation data and import data subsequently for the past 3 years," a source, who did not wish to be identified, told PTI.

The government has proposed to implement new rules for import of IT hardware from November 1.

The new rule will allow



imports of IT hardware by authorised firms.

The import management system will handle imports related to mobile phones, IT and telecom products.

"The import authorisation will be processed completely online without any manual interventions for speedy approval," an industry source said.

The authorisation will be initially granted for about a year, after which there will be gradual reduction of 5 per cent on import quota of fin-

ished products.

"There may be conditional relief on import quota on a case to case basis," the industry source said.

Minister of State for electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar will hold a meeting with the industry on October 1 to assess the situation.

"The minister has told industry that he will also speak with commerce minister Piyush Goyal and request him to set up a similar consultation with the industry on this sub-

ject," the industry source said.

Earlier in the day, Chandrasekhar told reporters that the government aims to meet up to 70 per cent of the country's IT hardware requirement through local production in the next three years and reduce dependency on imports from non-trusted sources.

"At present, almost 80 per cent of our supplies to the digital ecosystem come from imports. We want to make sure whatever the sources are, they are trusted.

"As part of emphasising trust, it is obvious that the Indian component of that supply chain will have to grow. Today 8-10 per cent of our supply requirement comes from India, we want to make that 65-70 per cent in the next three years," the minister said.

As many as 40 companies, including Dell, HP, and Lenovo, have applied for the IT hardware production linked incentive (PLI) scheme with a commitment to make personal computers, laptops, tablets, servers and other equipment worth Rs 4.65 lakh crore during the scheme period.

NALCO reports lower sales, net profit for FY'23

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

National Aluminium Company Ltd (NALCO) clocked sales of Rs 14,171 crore and a net profit of Rs 1,544 crore in the 2022-23 fiscal, a company official said on Thursday.

The aluminium major registered an export turnover of Rs 4,217 crore during the period.

It, however, had registered the "highest-ever" sales of Rs 14,181 crore and a "record" net profit of Rs 2,952 crore in the 2021-22 financial year, the official said.

The company's 42nd annual general meeting held here on Thursday via virtual mode approved the annual accounts for 2022-23.

"Higher input costs, volatility in business environment as well as dynamics of global demand-supply has impacted NALCO's profit margins in spite of the fact that the company has registered growth in several fronts in FY 2022-23," CMD Sridhar Patra told shareholders at the AGM.

FinMin sees 6.5 % growth in FY24 despite risks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The finance ministry on Friday exuded confidence that the country will achieve 6.5 per cent growth in FY24 on the back of improved corporate profitability, private capital formation and bank credit growth, notwithstanding the risks of rising crude oil prices and monsoon deficit.

The ministry's August edition of Monthly Economic Review said the 7.8 per cent growth recorded in the first quarter (April-June) was on account of strong domestic demand, consumption and investment. The growth was also witnessed in various high-frequency indicators.

Flagging certain risks like steadily climbing crude oil prices in the global market, impact of monsoon deficit in August on Kharif and Rabi crops, the review said, "that needs to be assessed." At the same time, it observed, the rains in September have erased a portion of the rainfall deficit at the end of August.

Furthermore, the review said, a stock market correction, in the wake of an overdue global stock market correction, is an ever



"In sum, we remain comfortable with our 6.5 per cent real GDP growth estimate for FY24 with symmetric risks," it said.

present risk, and offsetting these risks are the bright spots of corporate profitability, private sector capital formation, bank credit growth and activity in the construction sector.

"In sum, we remain comfortable with our 6.5 per cent real GDP growth estimate for FY24 with symmetric risks," it said.

Observing that the strength of domestic investment is the result of the government's continued emphasis on capital expenditure, the report said, measures implemented by the central government have also incentivised states to increase their capex spending.

The external demand has further complemented the

domestic growth stimulus, it said, adding, the contribution of net exports to GDP growth has increased in Q1FY24, as services exports have performed well.

High Frequency Indicators (HFIs) for July/August 2023 reflect sustenance of growth momentum in Q2FY24, it said.

With regard to the banking sector, it said, a variety of indicators suggest increasing resilience of the sector through declining Non-Performing Assets (NPA), improving Capital to Risk-weighted Asset Ratio (CRAR), rising Return on Assets (RoA) and Return on Equity (RoE) as of March 2023.

ANZ bank selects HCLTech to drive digital services

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Banking major ANZ has selected IT services company HCL Technologies (HCLTech) for a new engagement that entails digital workplace transformations across 33 countries.

HCLTech will provide ANZ with digital workplace services and experience management across end user devices and applications, including laptops, mobile phones and tablets, according to a release.

The release, however, did not divulge the size of the contract bagged by HCLTech.

"HCLTech, a leading global technology company, and ANZ, one of Australia's four largest banks and the largest banking group in New Zealand and the Pacific, have expanded their relationship with a new engagement that will transform ANZ's digital employee experience across 33 countries," it said.

ADB appoints Bhargav Dasgupta as Vice-President for market solutions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Friday appointed Bhargav Dasgupta, MD and CEO of ICICI Lombard General Insurance, as Vice-President (market solutions) for a period of three years.

He will be responsible for management of the operations of ADB's Private Sector Operations Department and Office of Markets



Development and Public Private Partnerships, ADB said

in a statement.

An alumnus of Indian Institute of Management Bangalore, Dasgupta replaces Ashok Lavasa, former Finance Secretary and Election Commissioner of India.

Dasgupta, who tendered resignation from his position as managing director and CEO on Thursday, has over 35 years of experience across a range of economies, including in Asia and the Pacific.

Gen Z dating preferences: Honesty more important than physical appearance

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Gen Z is more upfront about their intention when it comes to dating and do not shy away from stating that they want 'situationship' if that is what they want, findings of a survey conducted by dating app Tinder indicates.

Tinder India Director of Communications Aahana

Dhar says questions were posed to 1,018 Indian young adults in the age group of 18 to 30 across several Indian cities, including Bengaluru, as part of the survey.

Situationship is the Gen Z term for a relationship without any pre-set agendas, with trust on transparency and freedom. According to the study, Future of Dating, 43%

of Bengaluru Tinder users pick situationship as their current dating preference.

The Bengaluru survey also identified six trends followed by the youth in the information technology hub.

"From what we could see, Gen Z, which we think is the most fluid generation, has completely rejected previous dating norms.



TVS ILP performs ground-breaking ceremony

● New state-of-the-art warehouse in Chennai

PNS ■ CHENNAI

TVS Industrial and Logistics Parks (TVS ILP), part of the TVS Mobility Group, has held the groundbreaking ceremony of its state-of-the-art warehouse in the city, the company said on Friday.

The city-based firm through the new warehouse has planned to offer support to the vertically integrated solar manufacturing facility of US-headquartered First Solar.

The warehouse to come up over an area measuring 5.70

lakh sq ft at Pillaipakkam in neighbouring Kancheepuram district, would supply the raw materials and inventory to First Solar, a company statement here said.

TVS ILP COO Manikandan Ramachandra said, "This strategic location is intended to reduce time, inventory, and space utilization costs within the First Solar factory..."

"We understand the importance of proximity for manufacturing companies in need of warehouses near their facilities, and our strategic land acquisition

adjacent to First Solar's facility emphasizes our dedication to meeting this need," he said.

The construction work of the facility is expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2024 and will generate 200 jobs in the region.

First Solar Vice President Sujoy Ghosh said, "We are pleased that TVS ILP has decided to set up this important piece of warehousing infrastructure close to our facility in Chennai."

"We anticipate that the ware-



house will play an important role in our effort to optimize inventory and capacity utilization," Ghosh, also the company's Country Managing Director, said.

According to the company, the foray into the renewable energy sector is a testament to its versatility and dedication to serving clients from diverse industries.

RIGHT TO TRAVEL GUARANTEED IN CONSTITUTION

No LOC on bank's mere request: Delhi HC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The right to travel abroad, which is guaranteed under the Constitution, cannot be taken away in an arbitrary and illegal manner and Look Out Circulars (LOCs) opened merely at a bank's request without application of mind, the Delhi High Court has said.

country's economy or interests.

The judge emphasised there has to be some application of mind by the authorities concerned while issuing an LOC as it results in restraining a person from travelling abroad, which is their right, and causes social stigma.

"The authority opening the Look Out Circular must satisfy itself that the departure of a person against whom Look Out Circular has been opened would be detrimental to the sovereignty or security or integrity of India or that the same is detrimental to the bilateral relationship with any country or to the economic interests of India or departure



of such a person ought not be permitted in the larger public interest at any given point in time," said the court in an order dated September 19.

"It is well settled that the

right to travel abroad is guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India which cannot be taken away in an arbitrary and illegal manner," the court asserted.

The court's order came on petitions by former directors of a company challenging the LOC issued against them at the instance of Bank of Baroda in connection with a loan default by the company.

The petitioners, who were the guarantors, contended that the opening of the LOC was mere blackmailing and arm-twisting tactics, and the bank only wanted to keep them as hostages in the country till the money has been paid.

The court concluded the opening of LOC against the petitioners was "not justified" and "wholly unsustainable", and quashed it.

It noted there was neither

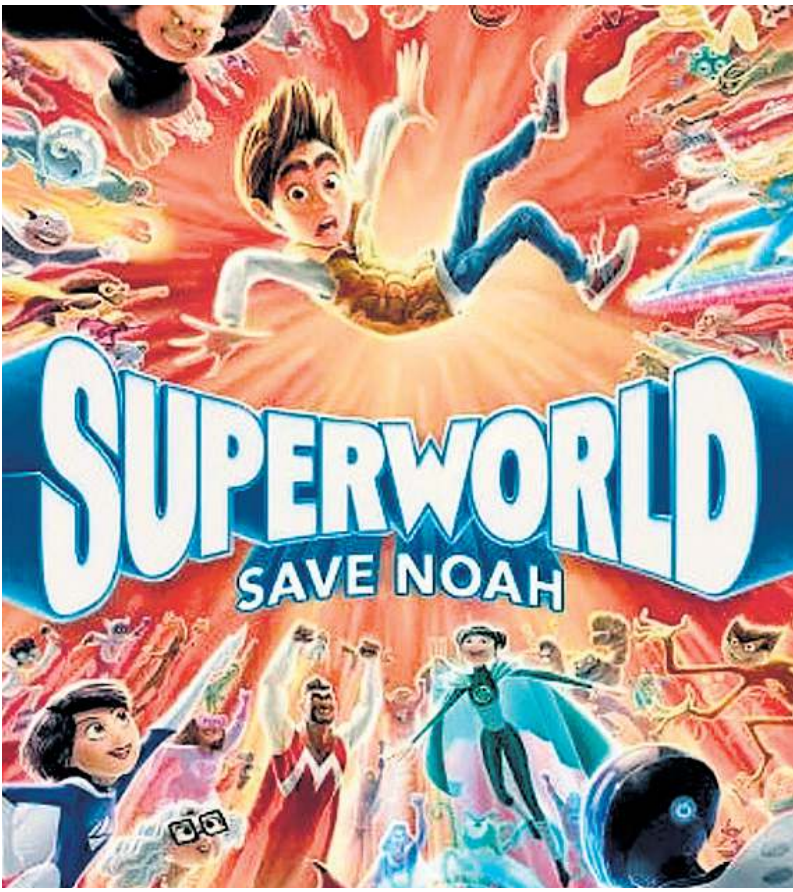
any criminal case against the petitioners, who were not involved in the day-to-day affairs of the company for the last several years, nor a suspicion that they siphoned off funds, and time to make payment had also been extended till the end of September as part of a one-time settlement.

"There has to be a proper application of mind by the authorities on the facts of each case before opening of a Look Out Circular which not only impedes the right to travel but also casts an aspersion/stigma on the person in the society against whom the Look Out Circular has been opened," the court said.



Superworld animation movie in the works at Paramount

Paramount Animation is developing a feature film based on the book series "Superworld", created and illustrated by Yarrow Cheney and Carrie Cheney. According to entertainment website Deadline, Brad Butler will oversee the project for Paramount Animation. The film, titled *Superworld*, is set in an alternate world where everybody has powers, however, a supervillain has taken over. "The one kid who lacks special abilities is the only person who's able to steal the Super Stone that keeps the villain in control – but to do that, he must pull off the dangerous heist while rallying his hero friends in a war against the villains," the plotline reads. Yarrow and Carrie Cheney are a husband-and-wife creative team who produced, wrote, and directed the acclaimed animated short, *The Very First Noel*. Yarrow also co-directed the 2016's hit animation movie *The Secret Life of Pets*.



Nicki Minaj's husband Kenneth Petty sentenced to 120 days house arrest after threatening Offset

Rapper Nicki Minaj, who is often referred to as the 'rap queen', is in a spot of trouble as her husband Kenneth Petty has been given a 120-day house arrest sentence after being convicted of threatening rapper Offset. In a court order filed on September 20 in the Central District of California, Petty was ordered to undertake home monitoring after he "was recorded on video making threatening remarks to a specific individual while in the company of someone with a criminal record." The specific individual mentioned in the order is Offset, and the clips relate to a series of messages Petty aimed at the rapper that appeared on social media September 16. However, according to the documents obtained by People magazine, the legal filing never mentioned Offset by name. The filing stated that Petty's recent conduct "raises concerns" over his "willingness to comply with the Court's orders," and that Petty's probation officer "believes placement in the Location Monitoring Program will effectively allow for closer monitoring of Mr. Petty's activities, limit his movements, provide a sanction for his non-compliance," and "encourage him to reflect upon and reevaluate his current status in the community."

Petty is also a convicted sex offender as he was book for first-degree attempted rape of a 16-year-old girl back in 1995, for which he was sentenced to 18 to 54 months and ultimately served four years in prison.

However, the case against Minaj was dropped the following year, according to documents

obtained by People.

Petty's alleged rape victim previously filed a lawsuit against Minaj, 40, and her husband, in which she accused the pair of attempting to intimidate her into dropping her rape accusation in 2021.



ANGUS CLOUD'S DEATH REVEALED TO BE CAUSED BY ACCIDENTAL DRUG OVERDOSE

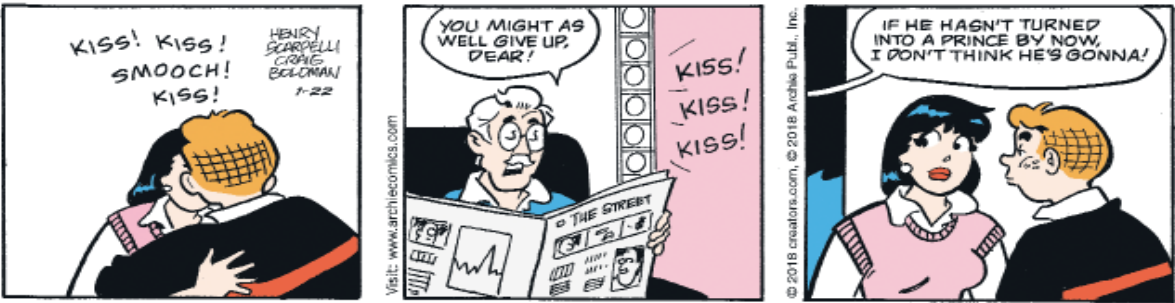
Actor Angus Cloud's cause of death has been revealed two months after his death, which according to the doctors was due to acute intoxication, accidentally overdosing on drugs and antidepressants. The 25-year-old actor had been suffering from depression and suicidal urges after his father passed away which led to the coroners discovering cocaine, methamphetamine, fentanyl, and benzodiazepines (depressant drugs often used to treat conditions such as anxiety disorders, insomnia, and seizures) in his system at the time of his death, People reports. The news of Cloud's death first broke back on July 31 where the actor's family confirmed that Cloud had died at their family home in Oakland, California. "It is with the heaviest heart that we had to say goodbye to an incredible human today,"

their statement read. "As an artist, a friend, a brother and a son, Angus was special to all of us in so many ways." The family noted that Cloud's father died the week prior and the actor "intensely struggled with this loss." "The only comfort we have is in knowing that Angus is now reunited with his dad, who was his best friend," the family continued. "Angus was open about his battle with mental health and we hope that his passing can be a reminder to others that they are not alone and should not fight this on their own in silence. We hope the world remembers him for his humor, laughter and love for everyone." In a later post on Facebook, his mother Lisa Cloud stated that her son's death wasn't "intentional." "Although my son was in deep grief about

his father's untimely death from mesothelioma, his last day was a joyful one. He was reorganising his room and placing items around the house with intent to stay a while in the home he loved," she wrote in the post. "He spoke of his intent to help provide for his sisters at college, and also help his mom emotionally and financially. He did not intend to end his life. When we hugged goodnight we said how much we loved each other and he said he would see me in the morning," she continued. "I don't know if or what he may have put in his body after that. I only know that he put his head on the desk where he was working on art project's, fell asleep and didn't wake up." Lisa also emphasised that while her son may have "overdosed accidentally and tragically," it is "abundantly clear that he did not intend to check out of this world."

FUN

ARCHIE



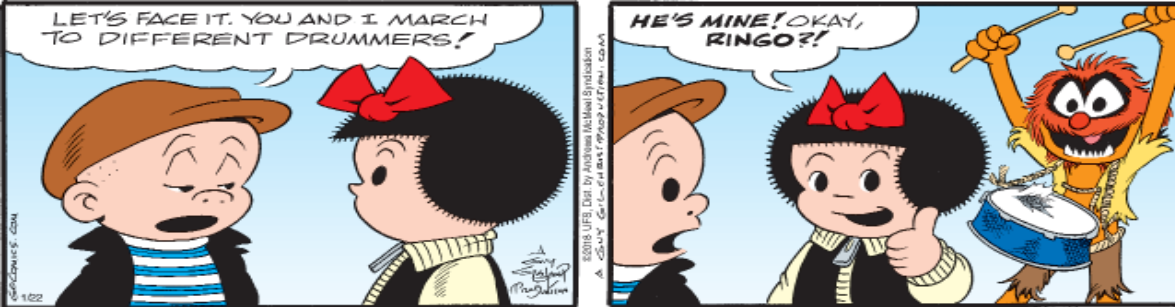
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



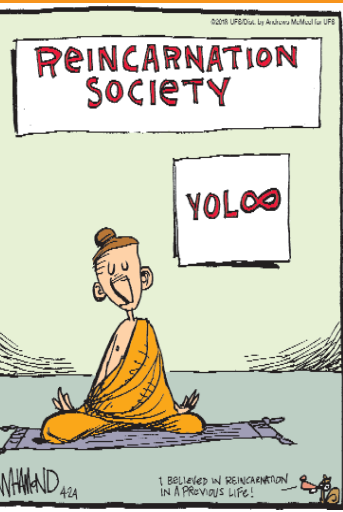
NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



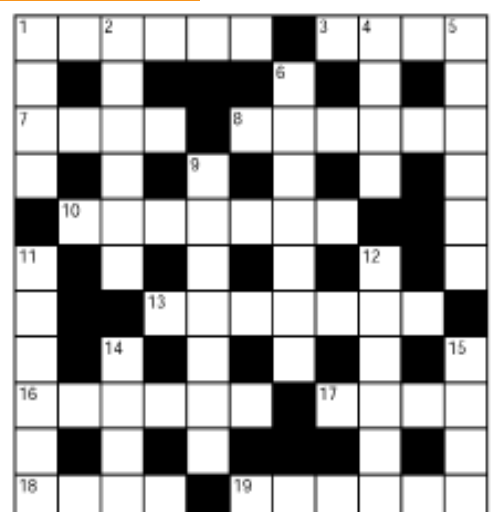
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Bleeding injuries
- 3 Counts up
- 7 This heavy metal is used for making fishing sinkers
- 8 Took part in a game
- 10 Write this on an envelope
- 13 A two-wheeled ride-on you push along with a foot
- 16 Of greater height
- 17 Young female
- 18 Gritty stuff on beaches
- 19 A small river
- 5 Australia's largest city
- 6 A flower on a fruit tree
- 9 A game with bats and wickets
- 11 A prickly desert plant
- 12 Make up your mind
- 14 A map of a building
- 15 This fruit has a stone

DOWN

- 1 Go on foot
- 2 Ugandans live here
- 4 Parts of a week



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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



'HYDERABAD TO ME IS MY SWARGDHAM; PEOPLE HERE HAVE ALWAYS RESPECTED ME'

TEJAL SINHA

Renowned yoga teacher B.K.S. Iyengar once very well said, "Yoga is the only key that unlocks the door to peace, tranquility, and joy." True that! Regardless of your level of yoga expertise, if you're practicing regularly, you can feel better from head to toe. With a similar aim to cure multiple health issues, including diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and PCOS, right from colds to cancer, headaches to heart diseases, and diabetes to depression, Yoga Acharya Narayanam Gopinath, through his Maharshi Patanjali Yoga-Health and Diabetes Care Centre, believes and aims at curing all of them with the right food as medicine and yogic practices.

A former aeronautical engineer who had worked with the Indian Air Force shifted to Hyderabad with his family due to his job. Later after that, he retired; he joined the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) in 1992 and went on to work until 2018. But throughout his work, he had always had a passion for teaching yoga, ever since his childhood, making him pursue his master's in yoga. Today, he is not only a healthcare expert but also a diabetologist and an advanced medical nutritionist. In fact, during the pandemic, he, along with Dr. Vishnu Chaudhary, formed a team called the NICE Network of Influenza Care Experts, curing more than one lakh people with zero medicine, zero money, and zero morality.

With all his experience, he shared, "I can say that any disease can be cured by changing the lifestyle. These are all lifestyle-oriented diseases. Lifestyle is all about your behaviour. We educate the people. There is a greater need to educate people in terms of medications. People come and cure their issues in 1 to 3 months, depending on the issue. Once we start giving the nutritional plan, they get rid of this. Some medicines have side effects, but we try to provide side benefits. I strongly believe that a man is more of an emotional entity than a logical entity."

"It's not about a lifestyle disease; it's about your commitment to your diet and lifestyle. Curing me is not a problem, but convincing them of this is a big problem. I have also helped people with Gangrene cases when they have to cut their legs. We only give the



This week for our weekly column of Hyderabad, *The Pioneer* interacts with a former aeronautical engineer at the Indian Air Force and now a healthcare expert, Yoga Acharya Narayanam Gopinath, to speak of his association with the city, what Hyderabad means to him, and more.

HYDERABOND

natural medicines; even during the pandemic, we had given natural kadhas," shared the 66-year-old expert, who recalled working in various places of the city, including Balanagar, Kukatpally, and Sangareddy, to name a few.

Speaking of his love for the city, he said, "Since day one, I have loved Hyderabad. I love the climate here. People here have received me very well. Here, you have multilingual people. Since I had worked in the forces, I know like 3-4 languages, and people here treated me very well. They used to take my services to cure their health problems. People are very friendly." Having lived in various parts of the country like Srinagar, Uttar Pradesh, and Chandigarh, one thing that he really enjoys about the 'City of Nizams' is its lovely climate. He explained, "The climate here is so good that their capital. Here, there are a lot of good job opportunities for anyone and everyone. The bond that I share with Hyderabad is amazing. I can settle here for the whole of my life."

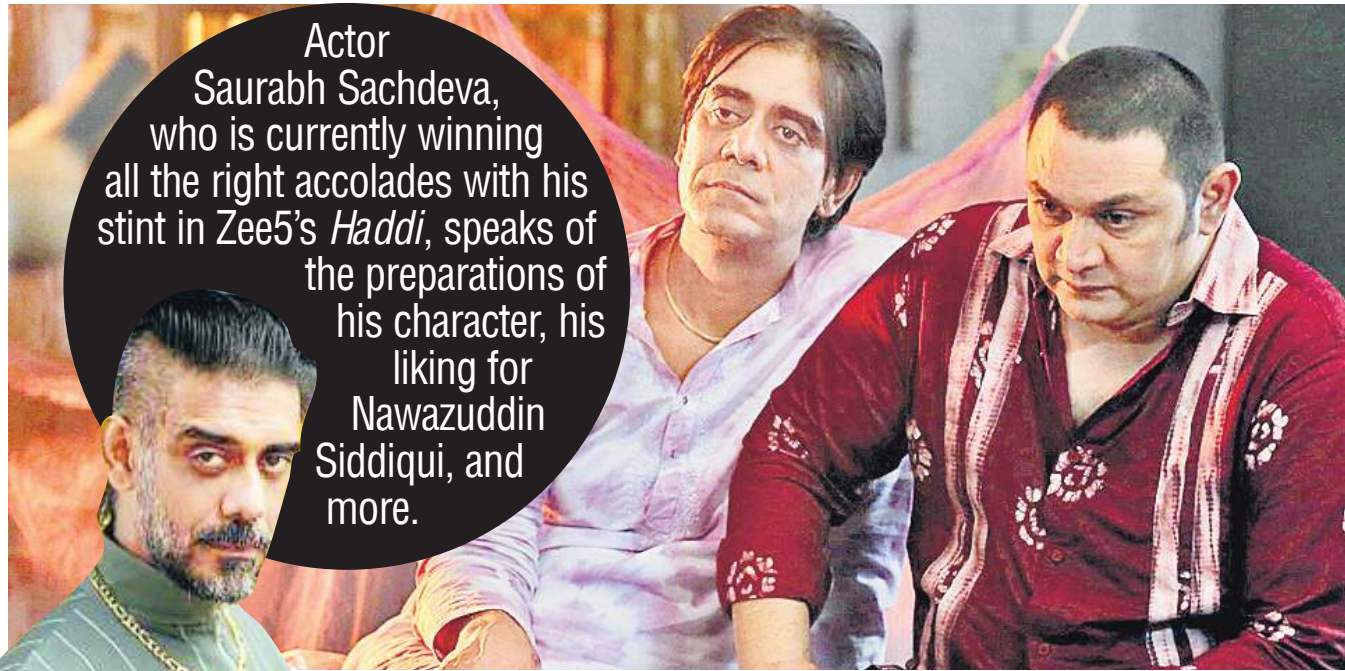
Ever since he was a kid, he'd

always adored the popular places that Hyderabad has always been known for, including the Salarjung Museum, Tankbund, and Khairatabad Ganesh. But talking of what he particularly likes, he said, "I really love the fruits here. For instance, Hyderabad's banana and Andhra's banana are different (he giggles). In my diet plan, fruits are very important. When I think of Hyderabad, and since I'm a vegetarian, I can think of fruits and not Paradise Biryani, hahaha!"

With people migrating from different cities for a better living, he feels that the population has been increasing day by day. However, looking at the other side of it, he feels the city has been a good place to live, with not only job opportunities but also a good education. He further goes on to appreciate the chief minister, K. Chandrababhan Naidu, and health minister, Harish Rao, for putting up efforts to improve the health infrastructure throughout the state. "Today, every district has a medical college. Being a yoga practitioner and healthcare expert, I feel prevention is always better than cure. Yoga is the only preventive and curing medicine for any of the diseases. Like the central government, the state government has also taken several measures to promote and raise awareness of yoga. However, schools and colleges also need to come forward and provide at least 30 minutes of yoga for students so they are aware of its benefits and will have a habit of performing it regularly," signed off the expert, who ended the conversation by saying, "Hyderabad to me is my Swargdham, and so is it for many other people who want to establish their work in the city. One can stay here and live a peaceful life."

I was never fearful of getting blocked out by Nawazuddin Siddiqui: Saurabh

Actor Saurabh Sachdeva, who is currently winning all the right accolades with his stint in Zee5's *Haddi*, speaks of the preparations of his character, his liking for Nawazuddin Siddiqui, and more.



SHIKHA DUGGAL

A hopeful year for the transgender community has come, and some really good representations of them have come on screen. One of which was actor Saurabh Sachdeva's role, executed with defiance and style. Yes, we are talking about *Haddi* streaming on Zee5, and we see the emotional blueprint he showcases in the vengeful track.

On an even more rebellious note, the actor who is grabbing all the eyeballs with his pairing opposite Kareena Kapoor Khan in *Jaane Jaan*—it seems like he's really imbuing all his character roles with his heart. Don't you think so?

In an exclusive conversation with us, also, an acting

coach also expressed, "It wasn't my responsibility to make the caricature of the character, nor did I want to be scornful about the community. I was free of values and morals when I was representing this role. Now I didn't enter their community just to understand their world; I was just empathizing. I watched quite a few documentaries and met a few of them personally. You have to be liberal to understand their psyche, or else you can't."

The sweet exchange of conversation continues with *Sacred Games* fame: "I saw this role as a literal challenge. I read the script a lot, many times. I have always been like this: without going out of the circumference of the character that's given to me, I try to find the spine of it. This time the body language was very violent, but externally I was happy."

In true blue hon-

esty, the actor who has even trained Rana Daggubati has an extreme liking for Nawazuddin Siddiqui, to which he explains, "We may have studied at different acting schools, but we are in the same tandem. Our mother tongues match. He was always joking around me on the sets, asking me to finally let go of my trans character when the cameras weren't rolling. I knew there was an Anurag Kashyap and a Nawaz in the movie, but I was never fearful of getting blocked out by the veterans."

Those outwardly feminine gestures and everything he did to make the character look real were greenlit. His comment was, "Transgenders shouldn't just play themselves. They should grab every role! But the scene where all of us go to the Kinnar Gharana to kill Ila Arun was disturbing to all of us. We were just following the director's instructions and didn't get into the why and how of it."

Almonds voted as the top snacking choice

Over the past few decades, there has been a significant increase in lifestyle-related health issues. A large part of this problem is due to changes in our lifestyles, such as decreased physical activity, unhealthy diets, increased stress, and inadequate sleep. These changes have resulted in an increase in chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension and certain types of cancer. While modern medical advancements have enabled us to better manage and treat these conditions, prevention through lifestyle changes remains an effective way to reduce the burden of lifestyle-related diseases. It is important to prioritize healthy habits and make positive lifestyle changes to improve our overall health and wellbeing.

In a recent YouGov survey conducted by the Almond Board of California between 24th January - 6th February 2023, it was found that most urban cities in India reported a rise in lifestyle-related health issues such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease. While the survey highlighted the growing health concerns in India, it also revealed some of the key strategies followed by them to fight these health problems like eating a well-balanced diet, exercising, and eating healthy snacks.

The quantitative survey was done amongst a sample size of over 4000 respondents in cities including Delhi, Lucknow, Ludhiana, Jaipur, Indore, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Pune, Bangalore, Coimbatore, Hyderabad, Kochi, and Chennai. Commenting on the results of the survey, Ritika Samadhar, Regional Head - Dietetics, Max Healthcare, Delhi, said, "Maintaining a healthy diet is crucial for overall health and wellbeing and this survey is a testament to that fact. A balanced diet provides essential nutrients and energy that our bodies need to function properly, including carbohydrates, proteins, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals. One food that has gained attention for its health benefits is almonds. Almonds are a nutrient-dense food that provides an abundance of essential vitamins and minerals, including vitamin E, magnesium, and potassium. They are also a healthy source of healthy fats, fiber, and protein. Regular consumption of almonds has been associated with various health benefits, such as reducing the risk of heart disease, improving blood sugar control, and promoting weight management."

MBBS and Nutritionist, Dr Rohini Patil, said, "Awareness around PCOS, type-2 diabetes and hypertension have increased in the recent past as people are taking precautionary measures to curb the onset of such health problems. It is good to see that almonds have emerged as the top nut choice in Indian diets as per the survey. Almonds are extremely nutritious and are a plant-based source of protein and calcium. They make for a perfect dietary choice for vegans and people with lactose intolerance. In addition to being rich in protein and calcium, almonds are a good source of dietary fiber that help in blood sugar control and weight management. They are also high in vitamin E which acts as an antioxidant to support pulmonary immune function. A convenient and effective strategy to boost overall health and wellbeing is by integrating almonds into a wholesome diet."



Common myths about workouts continue to plague the fitness industry. Misconceptions about fitness tend to spread far and wide through word of mouth.

BELOW ARE THE TOP 10 MYTHS ONE MAY REGULARLY ENCOUNTER:

Spot Reduction: People often approach me with requests to lose abdominal fat or eliminate cellulite in specific areas like their thighs. The reality is that targeting fat loss in specific areas through exercises for those regions alone is nearly impossible. Effective fat loss for the entire body relies on a smart combination of diet and exercise.

No Pain, No Gain: While some soreness or discomfort after exercise is normal, the belief that experiencing pain

signifies a successful workout is a myth. To see results, you must challenge yourself consistently.

Cardio is the sole weight-loss solution: This notion is entirely incorrect. While cardio is crucial for calorie burning, a combination of strength training, a balanced diet, and cardio is essential for weight loss and overall fitness.

More exercise is always better: Quantity is not the key to weight loss. The weight you lift or the number of deadlifts you perform is less important than proper form, correct technique, and injury prevention. Quality surpasses quantity, and rest and recovery are equally vital.

Eating less leads to weight loss: Reducing calorie intake can slow down your metabolism, prompting your body to store fat. Eating less can have adverse effects on your health. For sustainable weight loss, a balanced diet is imperative.

Crunches for six-pack

Busting fitness myths you need to stop believing

abs: Focusing solely on crunches won't yield a toned midsection. A combination of core exercises and a healthy diet is essential.

Women will bulk up from lifting weights: Contrary to popular belief, women can't bulk up in the same way men can due to their hormonal differences. Weightlifting, a form of strength training, is an effective way for women to burn calories over an extended period.

Supplements can replace a healthy diet: Supplements can complement but not replace the nutritional benefits of whole foods and a balanced diet. Food provides essential energy for daily activities.

Sweat equals fat loss: Sweating during exercise is a natural response to regulate body temperature and does not necessarily indicate calorie burn or fat loss.

More exercise means faster results: Quality matters more than quantity in the long run. Weight loss is a gradual process that requires patience and consistency. A sustainable fitness routine and patience are key components of a weight-loss regimen.

Keep in mind that your fitness journey is unique and multifaceted.

Rely on evidence-based research and consult a fitness expert if you have questions or concerns.



LIVERPOOL, WEST HAM WIN IN EUROPA

AP ■ PARIS

In a meeting of two former European champions in crisis, Ajax and Marseille drew 3-3 in "a crazy game" while Liverpool and West Ham were also winners on Thursday in the opening round of Europa League group games.

Liverpool fell behind for the fourth time in five matches this season but fought back to beat LASK 3-1 in Linz to make Jurgen Klopp the first coach to win 50 European games at the Merseyside club.

West Ham, who won the Conference League last season, also hit back to beat visiting Serbian club TSC Backa Topola 3-1.

Brighton, making their European debut in the Europa League, and Aston Villa returning to Europe, after 12 years, in the Conference League, both fell behind early and although they each equalised twice, lost 3-2.

In Amsterdam, Ajax, who have won just two games all season and sit 12th in the Dutch league met Marseille who are third in Ligue 1.

Ajax carved open the visiting defence in the first 20 minutes and took a two-goal lead with goals by Carlos Borges and Steven Berghuis.

Jonathan Clauss and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang hit back before half time.

In Brighton, Djibril Sidibe put AEK ahead with a bullet



header from 13 yards.

Brighton twice levelled with Joao Pedro penalties. AEK twice regained the lead when sudden deflections in the rain opened up chances. Mijat Gacinovic buried one and Ezequiel Ponce tucked home the winner.

"We can improve but it's difficult to accept this defeat," said Brighton coach Roberto De Zerbi. "I can't be happy when we win at Old Trafford and sad today with a good performance." "We didn't show as much experience as AEK Athens."

Liverpool, playing in the Europa League for the first time since finishing runners-up in 2016, changed their entire starting 11 away to LASK. They fell behind to a 14th-minute rocket from Florian Flecker.

Darwin Nunez levelled with a 55th-minute penalty kick after Luis Diaz was brought down. After 61 minutes, Klopp started to replace teenagers with regular starters. Within two minutes they were ahead when Ryan

Gravenberch, on his full debut, burst down the right and crossed low for Diaz to score from close range.

Two minutes from the end Mohamed Salah, a second-half replacement, poked home a third.

"I'm really, really happy, because I said before, I knew it would be difficult and it was difficult," said Klopp.

"A well-deserved win in the end, and that's it."

Elsewhere in the Europa League, Romelu Lukaku earned last year's beaten finalists Roma a 2-1 victory at Sheriff in Moldova.

Abdallah Sima scored the only goal as Rangers beat Real Betis 1-0 in Glasgow.

Bayer Leverkusen crushed Swedes Hacken 4-0, Rennes cruised past Maccabi Haifa 3-0 in France, Spaniards Villarreal lost 2-0 to Panathinakos in Greece.

In the Conference League, Aston Villa fell behind in the third minute to Legia Warsaw and despite equalising twice lost 3-2.

"We have to be demanding of ourselves to impose the game plan, but we didn't do it," said Villa boss Unai Emery, three time winner of the Europa League.

"I like demanding games that are a challenge and not easy. Now these will be the types of matches we will face in the group."



Odegaard signs new contract

AP ■ LONDON

Arsenal captain Martin Odegaard has signed a new five-year contract at the club, becoming the latest player to commit his long-term future to the Gunners.

The 24-year-old midfielder follows in the footsteps of Bukayo Saka, Gabriel Martinelli and William Saliba, who have all extended their deals.

The former Real Madrid player scored 15 Premier League goals and provided seven assists as the Gunners finished second behind Manchester City last season. He has three goals in all competitions this season.

"It was an easy decision for me," said the Norway international, who initially joined on loan from Real in January 2021.

"As I said many times, I felt connected and I felt at home here since the first day."

"Also, I was moving around a lot (during loan spells) and struggling to really settle down, so I felt like I needed a place to come and settle down and to kind of find a home."

Arteta said Friday that the new deal was "great news" for Arsenal. Arsenal are fourth in the Premier League table ahead of Sunday's home match against Tottenham.



Garcia, Kenin reach WTA Guadalajara semis

AP ■ GUADALAJARA

France's Caroline Garcia overpowered Victoria Azarenka in straight sets to reach the semi-finals of the WTA 1000 Guadalajara Open on Thursday.

Third-seed Garcia was always in control against her 10th-seeded opponent from Belarus, winning 6-3, 6-4 in 1hr 37min.

The 29-year-old French woman will face Maria Sakkari in the last four on Friday after the second seed from Greece eased past Colombia's Emiliana Arango 6-3, 6-4.

Garcia, who is chasing the 12th title of her career, used her powerful serve to gain the upper hand on Azarenka, slamming down 10 aces during the match.

Garcia was also able to save no fewer than 11 break points to deny Azarenka any chance of an opening.

"It's always tricky," said Garcia. "She had a lot of break point opportunities, but I served really well at those points, so I guess I have to thank my serve."

The win ensured that Garcia, the world number 11, will move into the top 10 at the end of this tournament.

In other quarter-final action

on Thursday, former Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin's recent resurgence continued as she overpowered 2021 US Open finalist Leylah Fernandez of Canada 6-4, 6-7 (6/8), 6-1 to reach the last four.

Kenin, 24, has gradually worked her way back up the rankings after tumbling to 426th in the world last year following a slew of injuries and upheaval in her coaching set-up.

She has won 14 of her last 17 matches on the WTA Tour since July, and is poised to climb back into the top 30 after this tournament.

On Thursday, she secured her latest semi-final berth the hard way, advancing despite coughing up 14 double faults, with Fernandez racking up 15 aces.

Kenin, who also reached the semi-finals in San Diego last week, will face unseeded American Caroline Dolehide in the last four.

Dolehide defeated Italy's Martina Trevisan 3-6, 7-6 (11/9) 6-3 in their quarter-final.

The American battled into her first WTA 1000 semi-final after saving four match points in the second set before winning the deciding set.

gold medals than the 16 won in 2018.

The other Olympic medalists are weightlifter Mirabai Chanu, shuttler PV Sindhu, wrestler Bajrang Punia and boxer Lovlina Borgohain.

Still, it is difficult to predict the gold medal count for India. Sindhu has been struggling for some time, Chanu has had fitness issues recently while Bajrang started training only a few months ago after taking part in the wrestlers' protest.

Borgohain and Chopra have, though, become world champions recently. Borgohain will also shoulder the responsibility of being the Indian contingent flag-bearer during the opening ceremony on Saturday along with the men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh.

The eight-gold show in athletics in 2018 will be hard to repeat but hockey (men and women), kabaddi (men and women), chess and archery can swell India's yellow metal tally. Going by current form,

Naglesmann is Germany's new boss

AP ■ MUNICH

Julian Nagelsmann has been given nine months to revive flailing Germany ahead of hosting Euro 2024 after being named as the sacked Hansi Flick's successor as national team coach on Friday.

Germany fired Flick with the national team struggling, the German football association (DFB) fearing another embarrassing performance in a major tournament, this time as hosts at next year's European championships.

Former Bayern Munich boss Nagelsmann has signed a deal until the end of next July, allowing the 36-year-old to leave after Euro 2024.

"We have a European

Championship in our own country -- that's something special," Nagelsmann said in a statement. "I have a great desire to take on this challenge."

Nagelsmann said he signed the short-term deal "to keep the Euros in focus" but insisted he "would not rule out" an extension.

Flick, who became the first coach in Germany history to be sacked, had won just four of 17 matches leading up to his dismissal and took the team to a disappointing group-stage exit at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

The four-time world champions were also knocked out in the group stage at the 2018 World Cup in Russia under previous boss Joachim Loew.



DFB president Bernd Neuendorf called Nagelsmann "an outstanding coach" and said: "We are convinced (he) will ensure that the national team inspires its fans and that the Euros are also a sporting success."

Flick was sacked after a humiliating 4-1 friendly loss to Japan in Wolfsburg in early September.

Nagelsmann, who also succeeded Flick as Bayern coach, has been jobless since he was sacked by the German champions in March.

DFB sporting director Rudi Voeller called Nagelsmann "an absolute football expert" and said he had "proven himself at a very young age for a head coach".

Verstappen gets back on track ahead of Japanese GP qualifying

AP ■ SUZUKA

Max Verstappen laid down a mark with the fastest times in both practice sessions for the Japanese Grand Prix on Friday, as he looks to put one hand on his third-straight Formula One title.

Red Bull's Verstappen put down a lap of 1min 30.688sec to finish 0.320sec quicker than second-placed Charles Leclerc of Ferrari in the second practice.

Verstappen, who leads teammate and nearest rival Sergio Perez by 151 points in the championship standings, cannot clinch the title on Sunday but a favourable result can set him up to seal the deal at the Qatar Grand Prix next month.

The Dutchman is looking to bounce back from a disappointing fifth-place finish at last weekend's Singapore Grand Prix that ended his record streak of 10-straight wins.

He said his car was "enjoyable to drive again".

"We had a strong day on short runs, long runs," said Verstappen.



"There's a lot of degradation on this track so it will be quite tough on tyres in the race, but so far it's a good start to the weekend."

Verstappen made his intentions clear from the start of the day, finishing the first practice quickest ahead of

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz and McLaren's Lando Norris. And there was no let-up in the second session. He briefly ceded top spot to Leclerc before switching to fresh tyres and reclaiming first place.

Norris had the third-fastest time with 1min 31.152sec.

Paris Olympics berths up for grabs at Asian Games boxing

AP ■ HANGZHOU

Flyweight world champion Hasan-bey Dusmatov will be one of the favourites for gold when boxing gets under way at the Asian Games on Sunday, with qualification for the Paris Olympics also up for grabs.

The 30-year-old Uzbek was Olympic champion in 2016 and in Hangzhou will be seeking the one gold medal absent from his collection in the 51kg division.

His first bout will be on Monday, with gold and silver medalists in the seven men's weight divisions all guaranteed a place at next summer's Paris Olympics. In the women's competition, 20 Paris berths can be won in Hangzhou.

Dusmatov was stunned in the 2018 Asian Games final by Amit Panghal in a massive upset, but the Indian is a notable absentee this time.

Another hoping to turn 2018 silver into gold is middleweight (71kg) world champion Aslanbek Shymbergenov from Kazakhstan.

Shiva Thapa, a winner at the 2013

Asian Championships, will lead the Indian squad in Panghal's absence.

In the women's competition, light flyweight (50kg) Thi Tam Nguyen has recovered from a torn knee ligament suffered at the SEA Games earlier this year and will lead a nine-strong Vietnam team.

The world championships silver medalist has already secured her place at Paris and will become the first Vietnamese boxer to take part in two consecutive Olympics.

She could again come up against India's multiple world champion Zareen Nikhat, who beat the Vietnamese by unanimous decision to lift the world title in New Delhi earlier this year. Nikhat also won gold in the 2022 world championships in Istanbul in the 52kg category.

Oh Yeon-ji from South Korea returns to defend her Asian Games lightweight (60kg) gold medal.

Organisers will be desperate to avoid the chaos of five years ago in Jakarta when the Asian Games boxing competition was marred by judging protests and controversy.

Asian Games: Chance for Chopra-led India to showcase its sporting prowess

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Led by Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra, India will seek to showcase its ascendancy as a sporting power at the Asian Games, which opens formally on Saturday after an unprecedented one-year delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

India will hope to surpass the 70 medals (16 gold, 23 silver and 31 bronze) won in 2018 in Indonesia with largest contingent of 655 athletes competing in 39 sports in Hangzhou to show the world the rapid strides the country has made in sports since the historic performance in Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

India have not finished in the top-5 in medal tally standings since the 1986 edition in Seoul. For the first time in the Asian Games history, India will be having five Olympic medalists in their ranks led by javelin superstar Chopra, who will be defending his title, raising hopes of the country grabbing more

gold medals than the 16 won in 2018.

The other Olympic medalists are weightlifter Mirabai Chanu, shuttler PV Sindhu, wrestler Bajrang Punia and boxer Lovlina Borgohain.

Still, it is difficult to predict the gold medal count for India. Sindhu has been struggling for some time, Chanu has had fitness issues recently while Bajrang started training only a few months ago after taking part in the wrestlers' protest.

Borgohain and Chopra have, though, become world champions recently. Borgohain will also shoulder the responsibility of being the Indian contingent flag-bearer during the opening ceremony on Saturday along with the men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh.

The eight-gold show in athletics in 2018 will be hard to repeat but hockey (men and women), kabaddi (men and women), chess and archery can swell India's yellow metal tally. Going by current form,



India can win gold in both men's and women's hockey competitions. India can also win a gold each in men's and women's kabaddi and make amends for missed chance in Jakarta. The men's team had won a bronze and the women's settled for a silver last time.

Shooters had given nine medals in 2018, including two gold, but they may not be able to surpass the tally this time.

In boxing, the likes of Nikhat Zareen and Borgohain are favourites to win a medal but it is difficult to predict the colour. The same is the case with the wrestlers who had won three medals, including two gold, in 2018.

By hosting the world's biggest multi-sporting event, China is heralding its opening from the pandemic, a giant competition which will be the biggest ever in its history.

No doubt the Olympics is the pinnacle of multi-sporting event in the world but more athletes compete in the Asian

Games, with over 12,000 taking part in Hangzhou.

The 19th edition of the continental showpiece, which will run till October 8 in Hangzhou and five co-host cities of Huzhou, Ningbo, Shaoxing, Jinhua and Wenzhou, was to be held in September 2022 but was postponed by a year after a surge of COVID-19 cases in China.

Forty-five nations and territories in Asia will compete for 481 gold medals from 40 sports and 61 disciplines, including Esports which is making its debut in the Asian Games. Competitions in football, volleyball, cricket, rowing, sailing and modern pentathlon began before the grand opening ceremony.

China are fielding their second-largest contingent in their Asian Games history with 886 athletes, including 437 women, taking part in Hangzhou. It is 91 less than the 977 athletes China fielded at the 2010 Guangzhou Games.

China are not only fielding

the most number of athletes in this edition of the Games but they are also set to continue their domination by bagging the top spot in the medal tally, which they have been doing at every edition since 1982 with several Olympic champions participating. South Korea are sending their largest ever athletes' contingent of 867 with an aim to finish second in the medal tally.

The Asian Games are expected to be declared opened by Chinese president Xi Jinping. Organisers have already spent about 10.2 billion yuan (USD 1.4 billion) on venues for competitions and training, according to reports.

Hangzhou is the third Chinese city to hold the Asian Games, after Guangzhou in 2010 and Beijing in 1990. The Chinese capital has also hosted the Summer and Winter Olympics.

All the venues will use green electricity as the goal is to host a carbon-neutral and green Asian Games.

PRAGATI SHRIVASTAV

I was happily roving in my half-saree on the sets of *Peddha Kapu-1*

ALL SET TO WOO THE AUDIENCE WITH HER UPCOMING FILM *PEDDHA KAPU-1*, THE LEADING LADY PRAGATI SHRIVASTAV GETS CANDID WITH *THE PIONEER* ABOUT HER ROLE, SOME BTS OF SHOOT, AND MORE.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

The intense and gripping trailer of director Srikanth Addala's rural new-age political actioner *Peddha Kapu-1* is all set to raise the bar on high. We have the heroine of this another sensible movie on board with us—that's right, Pragati Srivastava—and she's managing the switch quite well. Maintaining the same intensity with us in the interview as well, the leading lady advances, "This role came very instinctively to me. Most of the time, what happens is that the filmmakers already have an already received idea of how a heroine should be in Telugu. Srikanth is not your cliché filmmaker, and that's what made me sign this movie. It was really a very good chance for me to step into new shoes and even break off from that hack-

neyed idea of an actress." When the pre-look of the movie came out, it showed a hand with blood marks and dust on it. The outline of the story is not known yet, but it is a social drama for sure! And the actress, who will also be the new leading lady opposite Anand Deverakonda, continues, "We were shooting at a village background. I have never tapped into a role of a village belle! I was happily roving in a half-saree. Its okay to not do glamorous roles always, as an actress. I have watched all of my director's movies and I was keeping a track of it." She further elaborates, "I was so happy to give look tests for him. I am a crucial part of the film; what else would I need? What happens in a massy film when the role of an actress is overlooked? It's different when you are doing a film with Srikanth Addala. This is supposed to be my re introduction in the telugu

film industry and I am not ready to get obscured by any other actress." This rustic village drama had a lot of action sequences too. Pragati spills the beans, "Where the leading actor was doing his hostilities, I was finding it so difficult to show anger on screen. I was in the body language of a typical telugu ammai. I just can't express my anger! I struggle, literally. The trickiest moments on the sets. I was oblivious about my role—we did a lot of field work. I was trying to observe how Telugu girls carry their half sarees and the Andhra slang. The language was challenging enough! I in fact went to a vegetable mandi too just to see the variety of telugu women there. I got my body language for this movie from there, as hilarious as it may sound."

She's been looking for scripts that add value to her filmography; perhaps *Peddha Kapu-1* is one of them. On the contrary, "Comfort on-screen has improved a lot from my first film. I take marketing of my films very seriously now, I need my films to be backed by big banners. I am very practical, this way! Press meets to date feels dreamy to me. My co-actor taught me how to just not eat food but fall in love with it. Virat enjoys having food, he eats with dedication. I know it's funny but it's true. He used bring all the local cuisine at one palate. He made me discover my taste buds! On a final note, I would love to work with Prabhas next. Fingers crossed."



Sai Pallavi dismisses rumours on her wedding pic, says, 'It's disheartening to have to explain'

The Tollywood actress Sai Pallavi is one of the most coveted female stars in India. She denounced the "baseless" claims about her marriage to director Rajkumar Periyasamy that were making the rounds on social media and several news websites on Friday. In the widely shared image, the couple could be seen sporting traditional attire and wearing garlands. The cropped photo was originally taken at a puja ceremony for her most recent film. It was painstakingly modified and then spread online. The actress finally responded to the rumours. She tweeted on X (formerly Twitter), "Honestly, I don't care for rumors, but when it involves friends who are family, I have to speak up. An image from my film's pooja ceremony was intentionally cropped and circulated with paid bots & disgusting intentions." She added in her statement, "When I have pleasant announcements to share on my work front, it's disheartening to have to explain for all these jobless doings. To cause discomfort like this is purely vile!" Fans urged the actress to ignore the negativity on social media and wished her luck for her next film. On the work front, Sai Pallavi was last seen in the 2022 Tamil movie *Gargi*. She was also recently signed for Chandoo Mondeti's film opposite Naga Chaitanya.



Film based on *GTA* will release on October 6

The movie *GTA* is going to be released in theaters on October 6th, with Chaitanya Pasupuleti and Heena Rai as the hero and heroine. The movie is bankrolled by Ashwatthama Productions. Debutant director Deepak Sidhanth is helming the movie. Music by Mark K Robin and it is edited by Garry BH. KV Prasad provided the cinematography for this movie. It will be released in theaters on October 6 after the pre-production is completed. The release poster of this film was unveiled by the writer and director of (gangs of godavari) Krishna Chaitanya. On this occa-

sion, he said, "I wish the success for the upcoming *GTA* movie with a new concept, and said that this movie is coming with a catchy title to connect with 90 kids and it will bring back nostalgic memories. This movie is being made as a crime action drama. Director Deepak Sidhanth said that the film is based on the game *GTA*."

Maaya Chesave from *Devil* – A 'blend of vintage music and setting'

In the movie *Devil*, Maaya Chesave song beautifully portrays the journey of love between the hero (Kalyanram) and the heroine (Samyuktha Menon). The film is set in the 1940s during the Madras Presidency era. To capture the period-

romance feel, director-producer Abhishek Nama chose traditional South Indian houses and palatial mansions like Kanadukathan Palace (at Karaikudi), to create an authentic backdrop for the romance to unfold. Music too played an important role in elevating the cinematic experience. Abhishek Nama and composer Harshavardhan Rameshwar have imported unique vintage music instruments to capture the essence of orchestration in the period romance. Drums and percussions - African Djembe from South Africa, Bongo, Djembe, and Duff drums from Malaysia, Chinese Mouth Organ, Darbuka, and Ocean Percussion from Dubai, Fiber Congo drums from Singapore, Hourglass-shaped talking drum from West Africa, among many. These soundscapes helped to transport the audience back to the bygone era thereby complementing the narrative of the film.



Lakshmi Manchu celebrates historic Women's Reservation Bill at New Parliament building

Renowned actor and philanthropist Lakshmi Manchu, along with fellow actresses Tamannah Bhatia, Divya Dutta, and other prominent figures, visited the new Parliament building to witness the historic moment when the Women's Reservation Bill, titled the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam', was moved by Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal in the Rajya Sabha. The momentous occasion was a celebration of progress towards gender equality and representation in the Indian political landscape.

The Women's Reservation Bill, when implemented, is set to bring about a significant increase in female members of Parliament in the Lok Sabha, rising from the current 82 to 181, as announced by Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal during the bill's introduction. Lakshmi Manchu, who had the privilege of touring the new Parliament building, joined other women activists and actresses in attending the proceedings as the Women's Reservation Bill passed in the Rajya Sabha. She shared her thoughts, saying, "Honored to witness history at our new

Parliament as the historic Women's Bill passed in the Rajya Sabha. Heartfelt thanks to @narendramodi Ji and @ianuragthakur Ji for inviting me to this momentous occasion. A day etched in my heart forever. #EqualRights #IndiaRising #HistoricMoment #WomensReservationBill #NewParliamentBuilding." The passage of the Women's Reservation Bill is a significant step towards ensuring equal representation for women in Indian politics, fostering a more inclusive and diverse democracy.

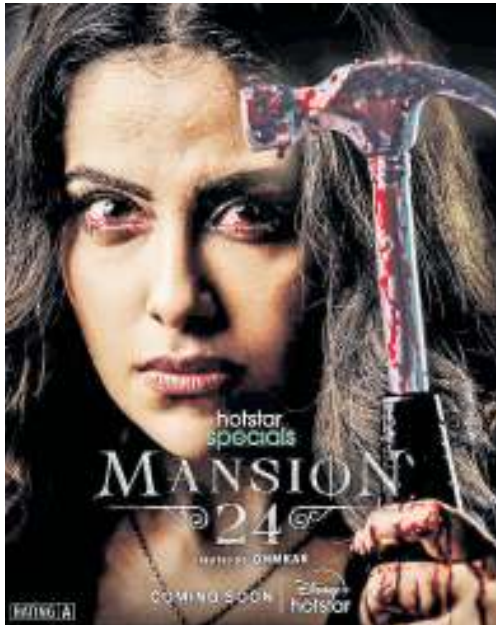


Euphoric Original Gangster Music from Shiva Rajkumar's *Ghost* is out now

Karunada Chakravarthy Shiva Rajkumar's Pan India Film *Ghost* is being made as High Voltage Action Thriller. Durector Srini is crafting the film as big daddy of action films. Popular politician and producer Sandesh Nagraj is bank-rolling this biggie on a prestigious manner under his Sandesh Productions. *Ghost* is gearing up to hit the screens globally on 19th October for Dussehra in Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, and Malayalam languages. Makers released the euphoric Original Gangster Music from *Ghost* in a grand event held

amidst fans are Loyola College in Chennai. The high voltage song is composed by Arjun Janya has lyrics in Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam languages. The lyrical video is highly impressive with Shivarajkumar's towering screen presence along with glimpses from making of the film. In addition to *Ghost* striking promotional material, Shivanna's role in recent blockbuster, *Jailer* received tremendous response which further raised the hype around the film. Popular Bollywood distributor Jayantilal Gada of Pen Movies has acquired theatrical, dubbing, digital rights of

Ghost for a fancy rate reflects the craze of the film. The crew of *Ghost* comprises top technicians. Dialogues by Masthi and Prasanna VM. Music is composed by popular music director Arjun Janya. Cinematographer Mahendra Simha's captivating visuals promise to take the film a notch higher. Production Design is by Mohan B Kere. PRO, BA Raju's Team will be doing Telugu version PR work *Ghost* will be released in Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Hindi and Malayalam languages produced by top production house Sandesh Productions.



AVIKA GOR'S NERVE-RACKING LOOK FROM *MANSION 24* UNVEILED

After intriguing fans with the first look poster of Varalakshmi Sarath Kumar in *Mansion 24*, the makers unveiled a spine-chilling first look of actress Avika Gor. Looking at the poster, the first thing that catches the attention of the viewer is Avika's eyes, which seems to be permeated with blood. She's also seen holding a hammer, which is cover with blood stains. The makers shared the poster with a caption that read, "The blood has a story to tell. Are you ready to listen?" Well the poster and the caption surely intrigues one to know what this horror project is going to be about. As of now, no specific release date has been announced by the platform, but we can expect some updates sooner than we realize.