

APPTD to procure 2,736 new buses

Minister Pinipe Viswaroop says 1,536 diesel buses and 1,200 electric buses will be procured

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Transport Pinipe Viswaroop has revealed that the Andhra Pradesh Public Transport Department (APPTD), erstwhile Andhra Pradesh Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC), is planning to procure 2,736 new buses for the year 2023-24. Of them, 1,536 are diesel BS-VI buses and the remaining 1,200 are electric buses. The APPTD will finalise tenders within two to three days to purchase 1,489 buses, he said.

He was replying to a question on the fifth day of the 43rd session of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, posed by the Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) members Illa Venkateswara Rao, KS Lakshmana Rao and Shaik Sabjee. Minister Viswaroop said that

The APPTD had bought 402 new buses after January 2020. Recently, the PTD called tenders to purchase 1,489 new buses and these tenders would be opened soon, he said. Keeping the occupancy ratio in the RTC buses, the State government has decided to procure another 2,736 new buses in 2023-24.



the APPTD had bought 402 new buses after January 2020. Recently, the PTD called tenders to purchase 1,489 new buses and these tenders would be opened soon, he said. Keeping the occupancy ratio in the RTC buses, the State government has decided to procure another 2,736 new buses in 2023-24, he added.

Further, he said that as of now, the APPTD had 8,247 buses and another 2,661 which were hired from private persons. At present, 10,908 buses are operating to serve the people across the State, he said.

To another question, the minister answered that the APSRTC had leased out 22.68 acres of land at 25 places in the

State to private persons and institutions for 33 years. These lands were leased out under the Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) scheme with a licence fee of Rs.9.205 crore per annum, he explained.

He added that during the financial year 2023-24, APPTD issued a letter of intent for one site (0.32 acres) at Narasaraopet in Palnadu district. For the remaining sites, a letter of intent would be given soon, he said.

Earlier, PDF MLC I Venkateswara Rao urged the government to hire bus drivers who are working privately on a contract basis.

Also, he demanded that the government provide Employees State Insurance (ESI) and Provident Fund (PF) facilities for them.

He expressed unhappiness over the reduction in the num-

ber of Palle Velugu buses in the State. As a result, people are facing hardships to travel to interior places. Compared to the previous years, the number of RTC bus services has gradually diminished, he added. Another PDF member Shaik Sabjee raised doubts about the share of the government in the hiked pension for the employees.

Meanwhile, PDF MLC KS Lakshmana Rao raised his objection to giving the RTC sites on lease. Most of the RTC sites are in the heart of the cities and towns, however, there would be a chance for the State government to develop them and earn more income, he opined.

The minister said that the leasing system had not been started by his government, and it was implemented in the State earlier also.

Andhra varsity to get Rs 4.5 cr for Industry 4.0 Tech Proto lab

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Ministry of Heavy Industries is in the process of establishing an Industry 4.0 Technology Prototype Laboratory at Andhra University, with an estimated budget of Rs 4.5 crore. This development was officially disclosed by the university's Vice-Chancellor, PVGD Prasada Reddy, during a media interaction. He emphasised that, up until this point, a laboratory of this kind had only existed in Pune, and the fully equipped laboratory at Andhra University was set to be inaugurated in October. In alignment with the initiative, two senior officials from the Samarth Udyog Technology Forum, an organisation under the Union Ministry of Heavy Industry, conducted a visit to Andhra University to evaluate its suitability for hosting an Industry 4.0 Centre, backed by the Ministry.

These officials, namely Dr. Sadashiv Padhee, Executive Director, and Rajesh Pahadi, Head of Operations, had the opportunity to inspect various innovation startup and skill development facilities and engage with key project personnel during their visit.

Following their assessment, Dr Padhee and Pahadi met with VC Prof. PVGD Prasad Reddy and Registrar Prof V Krishna Mohan. They conveyed their contentment with the existing infrastructure at Andhra University for the implementation of the Industry 4.0 Centre. They also requested that specific civil works be finalised within the next two months, allowing the initiation of the Industry 4.0 systems upon approval from the ministry.

Dr Padhee and Pahadi found that the campus's infrastructure and academic activities were on par with the finest institutes in the country. They expressed

eagerness to collaborate with Andhra University in this endeavor. Prof Hanumanthu Purushotham played a pivotal role in preparing the project report and securing funding of Rs 3 crore for Andhra University.

Additionally, it was announced that Andhra University had been honored with the 'Making India Employable Award' by Teamless Edutech and Digiversity. This accolade recognised the university's dedication to nurturing innovation, incubation, and entrepreneurial opportunities. The Registrar received the award at a ceremony held in Mumbai.

Regarding postgraduate admissions at Andhra University, the Vice-Chancellor highlighted that notifications for filling vacant teaching positions would be released soon. The development marks a significant milestone after nearly three decades.

Nod for establishment of 17 new medical colleges in State

Paderu, Narsipatnam, Markapur, Pulivendula, Madanapalle Medical Colleges to start functioning next year

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Health and Family Welfare Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Vidala Rajini, has announced that the National Medical Council (NMC) has approved the establishment of 17 new medical colleges in the State. Out of these, five colleges are located at Vizianagaram, Rajamendravaram, Machilipatnam, Eluru, and Nandyal, and they were started in the academic year 2023-24.

The other five colleges -- Paderu, Narsipatnam, Markapur, Pulivendula, and Madanapalle -- are currently under construction and will commence operations from the academic year 2024-25.

In addition, the minister mentioned that seven more medical colleges would be set

up in Parvathipuram Manyam, Bapatla, Piduguralla, Anakapalli, Penukonda, Adoni, and Amalapuram, starting from the academic year 2025-26.

During the Question Hour, YSRCP members Thota Trimurthulu, Duvvada Srinivas and Dr Monditoka Arun Kumar asked about the newly sanctioned medical colleges.

Minister Vidadala Rajini replied that from this year onwards, an additional 750 MBBS seats were made available. The State government gives utmost priority to the health and medical sector, she said.

She claimed that no other governments had previously taken the initiative to start medical colleges in the State. For these 17 new medical colleges, the State government is

spending Rs. 8,500 crore, she added.

Also, her department is regularly monitoring the colleges' construction and reports the same to CM YS Jagan, she said. The decision taken by the government resulted in many students opting for MBBS course in government colleges, she said. Meanwhile, to a sub-question raised by PDF MLCs KS Lakshmana Rao, I Venkateswara Rao, and Shaik Sabjee, the minister replied that the State government was conducting counselling following the previous years by Dr YSR University of Health Sciences.

However, the members were concerned over the system followed by the Dr YSR University of Health Sciences -- conducting counselling for reserved seats first instead of open category seats. As a

result, reserved category students lost their seats.

To another question regarding Village Health Clinics, Minister Rajini said that under the Family Doctor concept, so far, 1.11 crore people availed of medical services. Also, 2,32 OP services were provided by the Village Health Clinics, she said. Under this scheme, two doctors are available at every Primary Health Centre (PHC). Of them, one is available for the patients in the PHC, she added.

Meanwhile, Minister Rajini made it clear that there was no shortage of doctors in the State. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy recruited 53,192 doctors and medical staff in the past four-and-a-half years, she said. Significantly, this type of medical service was provided in no other States, she explained.

Rs 50-Cr special fund for road safety: CS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy has stated that steps are being taken to establish a special road safety fund with revolving funds of Rs 50 crore across the State. On Wednesday, the CS reviewed the road safety draft audit report with the officials at the state secretariat in Velagapudi.

On the occasion, the CS said that due to the increasing number of road accidents in the State, many families are affected.

He clarified that the government would take strict measures in this regard and reiterated that a special road safety fund would be set up with a revolving fund of Rs 50 crore. He clarified that appropriate measures were being taken so that two percent of the estimated funds of various road projects could be



Special signage boards and danger warning boards should be installed on the roads in the vicinity of various schools, colleges and places of worship.

deposited in the road safety fund.

CS Jawahar Reddy made it clear to the officials that measures should be taken to completely prevent accidents due to human error or negligence. He ordered the officials of R&B and the National Highways Authority to improve the junctions on var-

ious national, State and other important highways and take immediate steps to rectify the black spots.

The CS has ordered the officials of Police, Transport and other departments to create awareness among the public about the necessity of wearing helmets and using seat belts.

Similarly, it has been clarified that strict action should be taken against those driving vehicles under the influence of alcohol or talking on cell phones under the new Motor Vehicle Act.

The Chief Secretary Reddy ordered the officials to take appropriate measures to prevent accidents in various cities, towns and other congested areas in order to ensure proper functioning of the signal system and CC cameras. Special signage boards and danger warning boards should be installed on the roads in the vicinity of various schools, colleges and places of worship. He ordered the District Collectors and Municipal Commissioners to immediately take appropriate measures to remove dangerous hoardings and plexiglasses on the roads in various cities and towns.

POLAVARAM BACKWATER ISSUE

Telangana's objections ignored

ENC writes letter to Chairman Central Water Commission (CWC)

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD



Telangana's objections were not considered in the issue concerning Polavaram backwaters and the ground reality was ignored. Citing this, Engineer-in-Chief C Muralidhar wrote letter to the Polavaram Project Authority on the remedial measures to be taken due to the effects of backwaters of the Polavaram project.

He wrote, "there is no action from the State of Andhra Pradesh and total lack of co-ordination on the part of PPA".

Telangana has taken strong objection to the compliance affidavit filed by the Union government as Concerns on Backwater (BW) & -

Submergence effect due to the Polavaram project protection measures were sought in consonance with GWDFA concerns which are unaddressed till date in contrast to averments in Compliance Affidavit of the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

To focus the concerns of the State, Union of India (UoI) filed Compliance Affidavit on 01.09.2023 inter alia stating under para 12(i) that "The official(s) of the Governments of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana gave their consent for joint sur-

vey for issues pertaining to Telangana and based on survey results necessary measure is to be taken by PPA and the Government of Andhra Pradesh as may be required and thus matter was resolved for taking further actions."

Telangana said, "The stand of Union of India is totally contrary to the ground reality as none of the activities have been undertaken and hence appears to be mere eyewash of the assurances made in various meetings undertaken by CWC/PPA".

Telangana raised concerns related to the submergence in Telangana territory when water is impounded at FRL+150 feet in Polavaram, backwater effect of the project in Telangana, drainage congestion and stagnation of local streams due to backwater, and effect of the Manuguru Heavy Water Plant due to backwaters.

Sediment and silt, deviation in observed past flood events, mathematical study outcomes, need to ascertain backwater effect due to PMF and necessity for public hearing were highlighted.

"Under these circumstances, it is once again requested to take immediate steps to resolve all the concerns raised by the State of Telangana in line with the submission made by the Union of India in the Compliance Affidavit before the Hon'ble Supreme Court", he said.

IRR was planned to benefit

Continued from Page 1

The families of Nara and Lingamane will not say anything about the transaction of Rs 27 lakh," said Perni Nani.

Speaking on the scam in the Assembly, Minister for Revenue Dharmana Prasada Rao said, "Records of assigned lands in Amaravati were destroyed and lands were taken by threatening the poor. The then government used the government machinery for their own benefit."

Record 91 Indian...

Continued from Page 1

India has also become the fourth best represented nation in the 2024 rankings, up from the sixth last year.

According to the rankings announced by the London-based THE magazine on Wednesday, the second best performing universities in India are: Anna University, Jamia Millia Islamia, Mahatma Gandhi University, Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences. The are all in the 501-600 band.

Two IITs -- the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati and Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines) Dhanbad -- moved up two bands to join the world's top 800 universities, from 1001-1200 to 601-800.

While Anna University in Chennai moved up from 801-1000 band last year to the 501-600 band, Aligarh Muslim University moved up from the 801-1000 band last year to the 601-800.

TODAY	
ALMANAC	
Month & Paksham:	Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Chaturdashi:	Sep 27 10:19 PM to Sep 28 06:49 PM
Purnima:	Sep 28 06:49 PM to Sep 29 03:27 PM
Nakshatram:	
Purva Bhadrapada:	Sep 28 04:29 AM to Sep 29 01:48 AM
Uttara Bhadrapada:	Sep 29 01:48 AM to Sep 29 11:18 PM
Rahukalam:	1:36 PM to 3:05 PM
Yamagandam:	6:09 AM to 7:38 AM
Varjyam:	10:24 AM to 11:50 AM
Gulika:	9:08 AM to 10:37 AM
Amritakalam:	06:42 PM to 08:07 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:43 AM to 12:30 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER	
Forecast:	Partly Cloudy
Temp:	34°
Humidity:	76%
Sunrise:	5:57 AM
Sunset:	5:59 PM
Updated:	September 27, 2023 5:00 PM

I don't own a house

Continued from Page 1

issues faced by the poor and I have always tried to solve those issues. Today I am satisfied because my government has built four crore houses for people across the country. Unlike the past governments, a house for the poor is not just a number for us."

"We work towards providing dignity to the poor by building a house for him. We are building houses as per the needs of the tribals, that too without the presence of any middlemen. Lakhs of houses were built and registered in the names of women. Though I don't have a house in my name yet, my government made lakhs of daughters house-owners," he said.

"Crores of women from tribal, Scheduled Caste and backward communities have now become 'lakhpati didi' because these houses registered in their names are now worth nearly Rs 1.5 lakh to Rs 2 lakh," he said.

The PM said World Bank president Ajay Banga was so impressed with the Gujarat education department's command and control centre in Gandhinagar, called as Vidya Samiksha Kendra, that he urged him to start such centres across the country and said that the World Bank is ready to be a part of the project. "The World Bank president recently visited the Vidya Samiksha Kendra. During our meeting, he urged me to start such centres in all districts of India and told me that the World Bank is ready to be a part of this amazing project," Modi said.

The projects launched by PM Modi at Bodeli include those worth Rs 4,500 crore related to the education sector under the 'Mission of Schools of Excellence' project of the Gujarat government aimed at improving the quality of education in the state. These projects include new classrooms, smart classrooms and computer labs coming up across the state. The PM said the new National Education Policy (NEP), which was left in limbo for three decades, was finally introduced by his government.

In a veiled attack on the opposition, he said, "They indulged in the politics of reservation instead of working to improve the education scenario in the state."

"You all know what the status of schools, colleges and availability of classrooms and teachers in Gujarat was two decades back. Many boys and girls were forced to drop out

India will soon emerge...

Continued from Page 1

In 2014, when I was given the opportunity to serve the country, my aim was to make India a global growth engine," Modi said addressing a gathering of industrialists and businessmen.

Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and state BJP president C R Paatil were also present on the occasion.

"We are standing at such a phase that India will soon emerge as a global economic powerhouse," Modi said, adding that global agencies and experts are today talking on similar lines.

"In a few years, India will be among the world's top three economies. This is Modi's guarantee," the PM said. He appealed to the country's industry to think of sectors where India can explore new possibilities or strengthen itself, and how Vibrant Gujarat can give momentum to this mission.

Modi highlighted how from a humble beginning, the Vibrant Gujarat events have turned into an institution and many states later followed it by organising their own investment summits. Swami Vivekananda said that every work passes through three stages- first it is mocked, later it faces opposition and finally it is accepted, especially when the idea is ahead of time, Modi noted, comparing the success of Vibrant Gujarat and how it passed through different stages.

Today the world can see the success of Vibrant Gujarat, he said.

of schools due to the pathetic situation of the education sector. When I became the chief minister (in 2001), there was not a single science-stream school in the entire tribal belt of Gujarat," the PM said.

"What is the use of providing reservation in medical and engineering colleges when there were no science-stream schools. You keep doing politics (on reservation), but don't spoil the future of our children, the PM said, targeting past non-BJP governments in the state.

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YSRCP govt spent Rs.4,969.05 cr under YSR Zero Interest scheme

Deputy CM says TDP govt allocated only Rs.2,492.88 crore in five years

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As a result of the efforts made by the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led YSRCP government, 1.05 crore Self-Help Group (SHG) members have received benefits from Rs.4,969.05 crore under the YSR Zero Interest Scheme since June 2019, said Deputy Chief Minister and Minister Panchayat Raj & Rural Development Budi Mutyala Naidu. They also received Rs.2,492.88 crore during the

period 2014-2019, he added. Replying to a question in the AP Legislative Council posed by YSRCP members Varudu Kalyani, Pothula Suneetha and T Kalpalatha, he said it seemed that the amount spent under the Zero Interest Scheme for the SHG members was double when compared to the previous government.

Minister Mutyala Naidu said that the State government was giving priority to SHG members and striving for their empower-



ment. Since 2019, after the YSRCP came into the ruling, the State government has spent Rs.4,969.05 crore and 1,05,13,365 beneficiaries have received benefits under the YSR Zero Vaddi Scheme, he added.

The amount was released under the Zero Vaddi scheme from 2014-15 to 2016-17, he said. However, in the period from 2017-18 to 2018-19, the previous government did not release a single paisa for the SHG members, he added.

He stated that the amount spent in the past four years was double the amount spent during the previous TDP rule. He expressed happiness over the implementation of the YSR Zero Vaddi scheme for the SHG members and said that no other State government was implementing this scheme. "Women are thanking Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for continuing the scheme for their empowerment," he added.

GVMC mulls setting up new office at Mudasarlova

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) authorities have devised a plan to construct a spacious new main office building in the Mudasarlova area within the city. The proposed office building will occupy approximately two lakh square feet of space on a six-acre site valued at Rs 50 crore. According to sources, the initial concept envisions a building with a ground floor and either four or five additional stories, but the basement could support a complex of eight to nine floors.

GVMC officials have pointed out that the current main office located at Asilmetta Junction opposite Jail Road, spans 2.25 acres and lacks provisions for vertical expansion. Originally designed for a ground-plus three-story structure, the basement cannot accommodate further vertical growth. Additionally,



there is no available space for horizontal expansion. The existing building is already crowded, housing various departments such as town planning, revenue, health, engineering, Urban Community Development (UCD), as well as offices for elected officials and senior staff.

Constructed in 1979, the GVMC office underwent renovations when Nagulapalli Srikanth served as commissioner, coinciding with its upgrade to the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) in 2005. Initially, the office

accommodated 50 corporators of the civic body under the leadership of NSN Reddy, who served as the first mayor during the early 80s.

Subsequently, with the city's status growing to a "Greater City", the number of corporators increased to 72, including areas like Gajuwaka Municipality and 32 peripheral areas that merged in 2007. Furthermore, the city expanded its limits through the merger of Bheemili and Anakapalli municipalities and the inclusion of five panchayats five years ago, resulting in an increased number of divisions, totaling 98.



Book on Dhirubhai Ambani released

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor of Gujarat Acharya Devvrat has launched a book titled 'The One and Only Dhirubhai Ambani' by Parimal Nathwani, Rajya Sabha member and Director of Corporate Affairs at Reliance Industries Limited, at the Raj Bhavan in Gandhinagar. Chief Minister of Gujarat Bhupendrabhai Patel was the guest of honor at the book release ceremony. The book 'The One and Only Dhirubhai Ambani' written by Parimal Nathwani has been published by Navbharat Publication in three languages -- English, Gujarati and Hindi. The book is titled 'Ekamev Dhirubhai Ambani' in Hindi and Gujarati.

Mukesh D. Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries Limited, has written the foreword of the book. This book contains the compilation of articles written by Parimal Nathwani about Dhirubhai in various newspapers and magazines from time to time after Dhirubhai's death.

Parimal Nathwani worked very closely with Dhirubhai Ambani, the founder chairman of Reliance Group, for a long time. During his tenure with Dhirubhai Ambani, he was deeply impressed by Dhirubhai's thinking, working style, relationship tact, vision, commitment, eagerness to learn and think new, faith in new technology and youth,

etc. In this book Shri Nathwani has penned his experience with Dhirubhai. Various aspects of Dhirubhai Ambani's personality as a thinker, an entrepreneur, a visionary, a family man, a role model, etc. are covered in this book.

On the occasion, Parimal Nathwani, the author of the book, Director of Corporate Affairs at Reliance Industries Limited and Rajya Sabha MP said, "My association with Dhirubhai Ambani is well known. The content of the book, therefore, is bound to reflect my personal impressions, observations, perceptions about Dhirubhai whom I have openly accepted as my role model. In fact, I owe it to Dhirubhai for what I am today."



Tamil Nadu former CM Palani Swamy had the Durga Darshan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Former Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, K Palani Swamy, visited the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Wednesday and took the darshan goddess Durga Devi.

The Durga Temple Trust Board Chairman Karnati Rambabu and Executive Officer (EO) D Bhramaramba welcomed the former CM as

per courtesy of the temple and provided the darshan.

Later, Palani Swamy took the Durga Devi Darshan and performed special Pujas. After that, the temple scholars gave the blessing to him at the Veda Ashirvachanam Mandapam.

Later, Chairman Rambabu and EO Bhramaramba presented Sessa Vastralu, Laddu Prasadam, and Durga Devi's portrait to the former Chief Minister.

Free check-up on World Heart Day

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of World Heart Day, celebrated globally on September 29, Kamineni Hospitals, Vijayawada, is taking a significant step towards promoting heart health in the community. Under the theme 'Livefromtheheart', the hospital has announced a special initiative aimed at providing free heart check-ups to those in need. Kamineni Hospitals, as part of its commitment to the well-being of the community, will offer an exclusive free heart health check-up package on September 29.

This package includes essential diagnostic tests such as ECG, 2D Echo, and a consultation with a cardiologist, all completely free of cost. Speaking on the initiative Dr Naveen Kumar, COO, said, "At Kamineni Hospitals, we are deeply committed to the health and well-being of our community. World Heart Day serves as a reminder of the importance of maintaining a healthy heart. With our Free Heart Health Check-up and Angiogram program, we aim to encourage individuals to take proactive steps towards their cardiovascular health. By offering these essential services at no cost,"

Chandrababu's arrest not limited to one state: Revanth Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committeechief Revanth Reddy has reacted sharply to IT Minister KTRama Rao's comments on the arrest of Telugu Desam Party national president and former Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. Interacting with media persons at Gandhi Bhavan on Wednesday, he said: "Minister KTR needs the votes of those who are protesting for Chandrababu but will they be deprived of their rights? People will slap them if they stop the protestors. Take a petition and give permission if necessary but it is wrong to refuse outrightly. Settlers will go against the BRS government in the elections. Their taxes are collected, their votes are asked, but their state problem is not our state. Is Hyderabad jagir of KTR to not accept when IT employees want to protest? CM KCR can go to Delhi and protest on Telangana issue. If the IT people here protest the decision taken by the AP government, what is stopping them? Chandrababu is a national level person. People who have as much experience as Chandrababu can be counted on fingers."



Revanth continued: "KTR is talking like an unknowledgeable person. We staged a dharna in front of the White House during the Telangana agitation. We will do different things during the protests. Everyone has the right to protest."

The TPCC chief said that as per the party's surveys, BRS would not cross 25 seats, while the tallies of BJP and MIM will be limited to single digits.

Revanth said KCR got fever after seeing the success of VijayaBheri meeting. CM is fearing that he should vacate Pragati Bhavan. "Our leader, unlike KCR and KTR, is not a bluff master. Rahul Gandhi speaks

facts and figures", he said. Revanth said that Asaduddin Owaisi had been saying that where there was no MIM and BRS, vote for BJP. He said, Kavita came to the court as she doesnot trust KCR. Her arrest was stopped due to the court's intervention. "The Congress is trying 100 percent to give 34 seats to BCs. We will give more seats to BCs than BRS. Many BCs in Congress have made the PCC chief of the party. Has anyone become the BC president of BRS?", he asked.

Revanth said that if the 30% commission taken by the BRS leaders was controlled, the promises given by the Congress could be effectively implemented.

"Mynampally will join the Congress on Thursday evening. The Congress has decided to give two tickets to the Mynampally family. Vemula Veeresham join soon", he said.

On Governor rejecting MLC candidature, Revanth observed: "Is KTR aware of the law, the selection of MLCs is done in many categories. The selection process depends on the category.

There is no relation between the selection of the Governor and the selection of the MLCs".

Lepakshi Best Rural Tourism Village of India

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Tourism Minister RK Roja has said that Lepakshi is picked as the Best Rural Tourism Village of India for 2023 out of 795 applications received from 31 States and Union Territories. She said it was a great honour to receive this award from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, on the occasion of World Tourism Day. The minister attended the WTD-2023 celebrations held at Tummalapalli Kalakshetram in Vijayawada on Wednesday

and presented awards.

Minister Roja said that this year the global tourism sector was celebrating World Tourism Day on the theme -- Tourism & Green Investment -- for people, for the planet and for prosperity. She said that this is its very special and honoured to announce in this juncture that Lepakshi Village is awarded as the Best Rural Tourism Village of India for 2023 out of 795 applications received from 31 States and Union Territories. She stated that this significant award is the achievement shown for the

commitment of the future endeavours and planning for development of the tourism sector of the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy. She further stated that the Oberoi Group has laid the foundation stones to develop 7 star hotels in 3 locations Gandikota, Tirupati, and Visakhapatnam which will boost tourism in the State and Mayfair Group of Hotels will develop 5star Hotel at Annavaram in Visakhapatnam and Hotel Hyatt by MRKR Group at Tirupati.

SFI urges students to take part in 'Chalo Vijayawada' on Sept 30

Protest planned demanding that government resolve problems in education sector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Student Federation of India (SFI) State president K Prasanna Kumar has urged the students to participate in the 'Chalo Vijayawada' programme that will take place on September 30, and make it a success. SFI has planned the protest demanding that the government resolve various problems in the education sector, he said.

While addressing a press conference at the Balotsav Bhavan in Vijayawada, SFI State president Prasanna Kumar released the poster of 'Chalo Vijayawada'. He alleged that the State government was neglecting many long-pending issues. During the five days of Assembly sessions, there was



no discussion regarding students, he pointed out.

Further, he said that the State government never fulfilled the promises given before the elections. He asked Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy why the State government cut the number of beneficiaries under the prestigious Vidya Deevena, Vidya Vasathi, Amma Vodi and other schemes. He criticised the gov-

ernment for failing to distribute textbooks to Intermediate students. "As a result of the State government policies, degree admissions in the 2023-24 academic year are limited to 1.20 lakh. The admissions in 2018 were three lakh," he said.

Meanwhile, he pointed out that GO No.77 kept students away from post-graduation courses. However, the State government had promised free education from KG to PG.

He said that the social, tribal, and backward caste welfare hostels were in a pathetic condition, but the government is not doing anything.

SFI State committee members M Someswara Rao, Shaik Jahida, NTR district president Gopi Naik, and other leaders were present.

Facelift for tourist retreat at Rushikonda

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

With a strong emphasis on enhancing aesthetics and developing green spaces, the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) has accelerated the construction of new structures as a component of the tourist destination atop Rushikonda. The APTDC initially proposed the construction of these buildings at an estimated cost of Rs 240 crore after the demolition of the Haritha resort in August 2021, following approval from the Union Environment Ministry. Despite encountering protests and legal obstacles, the

authorities are steadily progressing toward the completion of these structures.

In the meantime, with the construction of two out of the four planned buildings completed, separate tenders have been issued for interior design work, including furnishings and wall paneling, as well as the construction of a perimeter wall and the development of green spaces. Tenders for the interior design work, along with furnishings, have been released and are valued at Rs 19.08 crore.

The opening of bids for interior design is scheduled for the end of this month. Additionally,



another tender has been issued for the construction of the perimeter wall, landscaping,

and electrification, with an estimated cost of ₹8.58 crore. These activities will be initiated once

the tendering process is finalized. The tourism department corporation has also outlined plans for enhancing the area's aesthetics and expanding its greenery.

Through the AP Urban Greening and Beautification Corporation, the APTDC has invited bids for the beautification of 10 acres of land. Proposed activities include soft landscaping, which is budgeted at Rs 3.6 crore, and the cultivation of over 2 lakh plants within a 10,004 sq m area. A total of 58 plant species will be cultivated, along with the introduction of 1,498 rare plants as part of this beautification initiative.

Collector inspects area hospital

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh inspected the area hospital in Jangareddygudem on Wednesday.

The Collector visited all the wards and interacted with the patients. He also inquired with the doctors about the medical treatments being provided to the patients.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the name of Jangareddygudem area hospital was recommended for the 'Kayakalpa' award given to the government hospitals at the national level.

The Collector said that Jangareddygudem Area Hospital has complete infrastructure as compared to private hospitals and best medical services are being provided to urban, rural and tribal people in this hospital.

He said that births are also taking place in the government hospital in this area, adding that the name of Jangareddygudem area has been recommended from the state of Andhra Pradesh for the 'Kayakalpa' award given at the national level to the government hospitals that are providing the best medical services.

The Collector said that special measures are being taken to prevent maternal and child deaths in the ITDA. He said that several problems are arising during shifting of high risk pregnant women to hospital during labour pains at the



The Collector said that Jangareddygudem Area Hospital has complete infrastructure as compared to private hospitals and best medical services are being provided to urban, rural and tribal people in this hospital

ITDA areas, adding that the high-risk pregnant women within the range will be moved to a special place in Jangareddygudem two to three weeks before delivery. The needed health check-ups would be conducted and medical problems such as anemia and malnutrition would be

detected early and treated, he stated

The pregnant women would be transferred to the hospital for delivery without any health problems, and this is likely to significantly reduce maternal and child mortality, especially in tribal areas, he observed.

Collector Prasanna

Venkatesh ordered the officials to complete the construction of MCH and post-mortem departments in the hospital by December.

The Collector also directed the officials to set up a special department in the Jangareddygudem area hospital to provide medical services to the tribal people. It was brought to the attention of the Collector that the tests were being done in outside labs in the pediatric department, due to which the poor were being financially burdened. The Collector assured of ordering an inquiry on the same.

Two siblings killed as minivan hits bike

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Guntur Spt 27: Two siblings were killed and another person critically injured when the motorcycle on which they were travelling was hit by a minivan at Andugula Kothapalem village in Vinukonda mandal on the Guntur-Kurnool highway on the night of Tuesday.

Police said that the deceased Marri Chinna Kondalu (26) and Marri Musalaiah (22) were brothers. When they were going on a motorcycle, a minivan hit their bike killing them on the spot.

The mishap took place when their deceased siblings were going home after attending a family function at Neela Gangavaram. Another person Pedda Yedukondalu was critically injured in the accident and he was shifted to the GGH in Guntur.

The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH for post-mortem. Meanwhile, a pall of gloom descended on Koppu Konda village with the death of two siblings.



Steps will be taken to resolve temple land disputes: DC

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Collector AS Dinesh Kumar assured of taking steps to resolve the Singarayakonda temple land disputes.

The Collector took part in the 'Jaganannaku Chebudam' programme in Singarayakonda on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that he would take the land disputes to the notice of the state government and ensure that would be resolved.

The Collector said that 263 applications were received in this program, adding that the people mainly brought to his notice that those who have built houses in about 1300 acres of endowment lands in

Singarayakonda and those who have been cultivating fields for many years should be given rights over them.

Collector Dinesh Kumar said that a special committee would be appointed under the chairmanship of Joint Collector endowment, Survey and Panchayat Raj officials to look into the matter.

The Collector assured of taking the committee report to the attention of the state government. Steps would also be taken to resolve the problem and other land related problems. The Collector responded favorably to the request of carpenter workers for allocation of plots in the APIIC layouts and the officials were

ordered to take action in this regard.

The Collector also assured of allocating funds from the ZP to resolve the drinking water shortage and sanitation in Singarayakonda town. The Collector said that the Spandana programmes are being conducted in every mandals to receive grievances from the people. He instructed the officials to take steps to resolve the Spandana grievances on priority basis.

The Collector, Kondapi YSRCP in-charge Varikudi Ashok Babu, Special deputy Collector V Kumar and CPO Venkateswarlu receive representations from the people during the programme.



Pawan Kalyan questions APWC's silence on murder of girl

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena party chief K Pawan Kalyan questioned the silence of Andhra Pradesh Women's Commission chairperson Vasireddy Padma on the brutal murder of an intermediate girl student in Chittoor district.

In a statement here on Wednesday, Pawan Kalyan said

"The incident of gang rape of a Dalit girl in Lothgedda of Vizianagaram district also shocked. Minors have committed this crime, which means that the level of protection and law and order for girl children in the state is understood," he lamented.

that the Women's Commission raises its voice when he speaks about the disappearance of girls in the state, but the APWC remains silent on the molestations and murders of girls, he criticized, and questioned if the APWC is not responsible.

"When a girl student, studying intermediate in Chittoor district was brutally murdered, why

is the Chief Minister, the Home Minister and the chairperson of Women's Commission not responding? Doubts are being expressed that the police officers are trying to dilute the severity of the case by registering it a suspicious death," Pawan Kalyan slammed, adding there is a need to consider the pain of the girl's parents.

"The incident of gang rape of a Dalit girl in Lothgedda of Vizianagaram district also shocked. Minors have committed this crime, which means that the level of protection and law and order for girl children in the state is understood," he lamented.

"It is a fact that women and girls have no protection in the state. The ruling party is also

tying the hands of the police from taking strict action against those who harass women. The Disha Act has failed to provide needed protection to the girls and women in the state. The ruling YSRCP leaders have no sincerity to take steps to provide protection to the women and all should understand this," Pawan Kalya lambasted.

20 red sanders seized; 5 arrested

PNS ■ KADAPA

The police seized 20 red sander logs while being transported in a car and arrested five smugglers at Pincha dam in Sundupalli mandal in Annamayya district.

DSP Chenchubabu told media on Wednesday that on a tip a police team led by Reserve Inspector K Suresh Kumar Reddy and RSI Viswanath conducted combing at the Pincha dam area.

The police team spotted red sander smugglers when they were loading the red sander



logs into a car. The police arrested five red sander smugglers including Balu, C Krishnan, Prabhu Shankaran, Prabhu Jayaraman and S Arul, seized 20 red sander logs, the

car and three motorcycles.

The seized red sander logs worth Rs 1 crore, the DSP said. Kurnool range DIG Senthel Kumar appreciated the police team and announced a reward.

Constables save life of woman

PNS ■ ELURU

In a cine style incident, three police constables saved the life of a woman from her husband on the railway track at Vaturlu near here.

The police received information that a person was torturing his wife on the railway track with a weapon. After the receipt of the information, constables K Yedukondalu, I Srinivasa

Rao and K Ramesh rushed to the place.

They saw the accused holding a sharp blade in his hands and inflicting injuries to his wife.

The constables pounced up on him, apprehended him and saved the woman. The entire incident went viral on social media. Superintendent of police Mary Prashanthi appreciated the constables.



Bapatla police bag two SKOCH awards

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The Bapatla district police has bagged two SKOCH awards for efficiently conducting two programmes 'Operation Parivarthana-Alternate Livelihood' and 'Sankalpam-Fight against Drugs'.

The Bapatla district police qualified the semi-finals of SKOCH award 2023 for efficiently conducting "Operation Parivarthana-Alternate Livelihood" and "Sankalpam-Fight Against Drugs", SP Vakul Jindal said here on Wednesday.

As part of Operation Parivartana, the district police suppressed the brewing of country-made liquor with iron hand in the district, and at the same time, the police also showed alternative livelihoods to 83 families who depended on country-made liquor distilling. By conducting the Operation Parivartana, the district police have won the SKOCH award 2023.

The district police also took up 'Fight Against Drugs', a programme in a big way in the district to ensure that the youth should not become addicted to drugs. They organized the fight against drugs programme efficiently and won the SKOCH award 2023.

Consumption of country-made liquor causes not only various health problems but also causes many deaths.



Keeping this in mind, District SP Vakul Jindal has taken various measures with the aim of completely curbing illicit liquor menace in Bapatla district.

The district police have arrested 356 people in 307 cases in illicit liquor brewing and selling. The police have also seized 1500 litres of illicit liquor and destroyed 47,204 litres of jaggery wash meant for distilling country-made liquor. The police have invoked the PD Act against 14 people who resorted to illicit liquor brewing unheeding repeated warnings.

As part of Operation Parivartan 2.0, as many as 64 families were extended Rs

The district police also took up 'Fight Against Drugs', a programme in a big way in the district to ensure that the youth should not become addicted to drugs. They organized the fight against drugs programme efficiently and won the SKOCH award 2023

68.70 lakh worth loans to start various businesses in the first phase and 19 families were extended Rs 20.30 lakh worth loans in the second phase. By taking the steps, the brewing of country-made liquor was completely eradicated in the district.

Since there is a possibility of sale of ganja and other



intoxicating substances targeting the youth, Bapatla District SP Vakul Jindal started the programme "Sankalpam" on March 6, 2023 to save their future from becoming addicted to drugs. With the slogan "Fight Against Drugs", drug awareness seminars were organized in the college of the district.

"Sankalpam" program was organized by the police officers in 51 colleges in the district to explain the harm caused by ganja and drugs to the students and create awareness among them. In each college, 315 flexi banners have been erected in a way that the students can understand about the harms caused by cannabis.

As part of the "Sankalpam" programme, the students of the college were given a "DRUGS AWARE INSTITUTION" certificate for conducting drug-free programmes about the ill effects of cannabis, taking pledges, and making a drug-free, drug-free college.

Thunderstorm with lightning likely in AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

A thunderstorm accompanied by lightning is likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema during the next seven days.



Rainfall occurred at a few places over Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema, and dry weather prevailed over the last 24 hours. The southwest monsoon

In a daily weather report here, it said that light has been normal over coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema, the report added.

Ex-minister visits Skill Development Centre

PNS ■ NELLORE

In the wake of the allegations of scam on the Skill Development Centres, Telugu Desam party senior leader and former minister Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy visited the Skill Development Centre located on the Vikrama Simhapuri University campus here on Wednesday.

He saw the computers, other

equipment and gadgets in the Skill Development Centre. He inquired with coordinator Vijeta organizers on how many have been imparted training in the centre so far and how many of them got jobs.

Speaking on the occasion, Chandramohan Reddy lauded that the Skill Development centre is working efficiently but at the same time the ruling YSRCP leaders are making false allegations.

Venkatagiri MLA Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, Nellore rural MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy, Tirupati Parliamentary constituency president Narasimha Yadav, former MLAs Kambham Vijayarami Reddy, Pasha Sunil Kumar Reddy, former Union Minister Panabaka Lakshmi and Kotamreddy Srinivasula Reddy were among those accompanied Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy.



INDIA CORNER

Madras High Court frowns over Railways' use of plastic water bottles

The Madras High Court has expressed dissatisfaction over Railways' usage of plastic water bottles and said it was perpetuating plastic development and its manufacture. A bench of the HC has directed the Railways to file a report on the steps taken to exterminate the use of plastic in trains, even as it wanted the transporter to be a 'model employer' in this regard. A division bench comprising Justices S Vaidyanathan and P T Asha gave the directive recently while passing further interim orders on a review petition filed by Tamil Nadu Pongdy Plastic Association against the ban on use of plastics. "We express our deep dissatisfaction over the usage of plastic water bottles by Railways, and Railways are perpetuating plastic development and manufacture of more plastics. We are informed that even in the newly introduced Vande Bharat Express trains, the use of plastics is on the higher side."



Bengal Guv launches Durga Puja awards; nominations invited

West Bengal Governor Dr C V Ananda Bose on Wednesday announced the launch of the annual 'Governor's Durga Bharat Samman' to recognise the contribution of people in different fields from across the country, an official said. The awards will be presented in three categories, 'Durga Bharat Param Samman', 'Durga Bharat Samman' and 'Durga Bharat Puraskar', the official said, adding Raj Bhavan has started inviting nominations for the awards. "This will be an annual programme. The governor will give these awards this year during Durga Pujas. We have already started inviting nominations from people excelling in different fields," the official said. The awards will be conferred to people for their contribution in art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, information technology, research and development, trade and industry, and medicine, he said.



Villagers help free cyber fraudster from CID's custody in Rajasthan

A group of villagers got an alleged cyber fraudster freed from the custody of a CID team in a village in Alwar, police said on Wednesday. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) team had caught the man, Mubeen, on Monday in Loharwadi village, they said. According to police, when the police reached the village, Mubeen and his two accomplices Shahrukh and Akhtar tried to run away. The team chased and caught Mubeen while Shahrukh and Akhtar fled away. Sadar SHO Dinesh Chandra said on Wednesday. After catching Mubeen, a group of villagers surrounded the CID team, freed Mubeen and later fled away, the SHO said. The team has recovered a bag with Rs 6.93 lakh, he added. The SHO said that the CID team had received information that Mubeen was involved in cyber fraud, had formed his own gang, and would blackmail people to cheat them.



Assam party seeks separate Barak Valley state

PNS ■ KOLKATA/GUWAHATI

A political party of Assam on Wednesday demanded separation of Bengali-speaking people majority Barak Valley region, alleging that they are deprived of linguistic and cultural security and development.

The outfit, Barak Democratic Front (BDF), sought a new Purbachal state, home to around 42 lakh people who live in Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj districts. "Our demand for separation of Barak Valley is not a demand for establishing a Bengali state. Although Bengalis are the majority in the valley, there are many other communities such as tea tribes, Dimas, Manipuri, Bishnupriya, Khasi and Kuki and all of them are victims of socio-economic deprivation," BDF chief convener Pradip Dutta Roy told a press conference in Kolkata.

The BDF claimed all 15 MLAs of the region, including those of the ruling BJP, are in favour of a separate state.

India-China ties abnormal since Galwan clash: EAM

PNS ■ NEW YORK

India-China relations have been in an "abnormal state" since the 2020 Galwan Valley clash and it is a "possibly longer than medium-term issue", External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said, emphasising that none of the explanations given by Beijing for amassing its troops along the LAC are really tenable.

India has been consistently maintaining that the situation at the border in eastern Ladakh is not normal and that peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) were key for the normalisation of overall bilateral ties.

If the two biggest countries of the world have that degree of tension between them, "it has consequences for everybody else", Jaishankar asserted during a conversation at the Council on Foreign Relations to a question about India-China relations.



"You know, one of the pleasures of dealing with China is that they never quite tell you why they do things. So you often end up trying to figure it out. And it's always, there's a certain ambiguity out there," Jaishankar, who was India's Ambassador to China from 2009 to 2013, said.

"At various points in time, the Chinese have given us different explanations, and none of them are really tenable," Jaishankar said.

Indian and Chinese troops are locked in an over three-year

confrontation in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks.

"It is very hard to try to be normal with a country which has broken agreements and which has done what it has done. So if you look at the last three years, it's a very abnormal state," the minister said.

"Contacts have been disrupted, visits are not taking place. We have of course this high level of military tension.

US 'is adjusting to a multipolar world

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said that the United States "is adjusting to a multipolar world" although it may not use that term.

The United States is actively seeking to shape what would be the poles and what would be the weight of the poles and the manner in which it would benefit the US, Jaishankar said during a conversation at the Council on Foreign Relations here on Tuesday.

His remarks came ahead of his visit to Washington from September 27 to 30 for bilateral meetings with US interlocutors. Jaishankar's programme includes discussions with his counterpart Antony Blinken, senior members of the Biden administration, US business leaders and think tanks.

Corruption is killer of democracy, development: V-P Dhankhar

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Wednesday termed corruption the "killer of democracy and development" and said significant progress has been made over the last few years in clearing the corridors of influence of power brokers.

He also underlined the importance of education to accelerate India's development and improve people's lives.

Dhankhar was speaking at Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani.

Corruption is the "killer of democracy and development". But in recent years, significant progress has been made in making the corridors of influence free from power brokers, he said.

The vice president called on citizens to actively counter any "anti-India rhetoric that tarnishes, defames and weakens our institutions".

Dhankhar described education as the most "effective



and efficient" mechanism to improve people's lives and accelerate India's development.

He said society cannot progress unless justice is ensured for the half of humanity and hailed the passing of the women's reservation bill in Parliament as a "historic development".

The legislation is a recognition of women's rights and an affirmation of their empowerment, he said.

On India successfully hosting the G20 Summit, Dhankhar said the role played by the country under the lead-

ership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has put the Global South on the world stage.

He said the inclusion of the African Union as a member of the grouping deeply resonates with India's civilisational ethos and that the proposed India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) would prove to be a global "game changer".

Later, Dhankhar inaugurated the Regional Groundnut Research Centre of the Central Institute of Arid Horticulture in Bikaner. He also inaugurated a trainee house at the institute.

Citing the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme, Dhankhar said the government has taken many steps to empower farmers.

Through this scheme, money is sent directly to farmers' accounts, he said.

"Today our farmers are connected with technology. There is no middleman," the vice president said.

AFSPA extended in Manipur hills for 6 months; Valley areas kept out

PNS ■ IMPHAL

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act or AFSPA was extended by another six months in Manipur on Wednesday barring 19 police stations falling under the Imphal valley and an area that shares its boundary with neighbouring Assam.

An official notification said the state government is of the opinion after analysing the prevailing law-and-order situation that it is not expedient to have detailed assessment on the ground as security agencies are preoccupied in maintenance of law and order.

"Now, therefore in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 3 of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act..., the Governor of Manipur hereby declare the entire state of Manipur excluding the areas falling under the jurisdiction of 19 police stations...as disturbed Area for a period of six months with effect from October 1, 2023," the notification said.

The police station areas where the Disturbed Areas Act has not been imposed are Imphal, Lamphel, City,

Singjamei, Sekmai, Lamsang, Pastol, Wangoi, Porompat, Heingagng, Lamai, Iribung, Leimakhong, Thoubal, Bishnupur, Nambol, Moirang, Kakchin and Jirbam.

Significantly, the areas that have been kept out of the purview of AFSPA are dominated by the majority Meitei community which includes Jiribam, adjacent to Silchar valley of Assam.

With the extension of AFSPA, the Army and Assam Rifles cannot operate inside the areas under the 19 police stations without the consent of the state police.

Security officials have been advocating bringing the entire state under AFSPA so that they could easily ensure that the presence of terror groups within the valley is reduced or eliminated, sources said.

The security agencies have been warning that banned terror groups United National Liberation Front (UNLFF) and People's Liberation Army (PLA), Kanglei Yawol Kanba Lup (KYKL), People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) and KCP have been forming their base in the Imphal valley of the state.

Kejriwal bungalow controversy: CBI registers probe; AAP dubs it vendetta

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered a preliminary enquiry into alleged "irregularities and misconduct" with respect to the construction of a new official residence for Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, officials said on Wednesday.

The ruling Aam Admi Party in Delhi rejected the allegation of any wrongdoing and accused the BJP of "using all its power to finish AAP".

The CBI has registered the PE against unidentified public servants of the Delhi government, the officials said.

The preliminary enquiry is the first step to ascertain if the allegations have prima facie material to proceed with a regular FIR.

The anti-corruption branch of the CBI has demanded from the PWD records related to the approval and recommendation of its officials related to alteration, tender documents, bids submitted by contractors, approval of building plans and requests from the client for superior specifications like modular kitchen, marble flooring and other ornamental work, they said.

Officials on alert as dengue cases rise: Health Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In view of the recent rise in dengue cases across the country, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Wednesday directed the officials to be fully geared up and strengthen prevention, containment and management measures for the vector-borne disease.

Mandaviya, who chaired a high-level review meeting, was briefed on the nationwide dengue situation, the Health Ministry said in a statement.

He reviewed the preparedness of public health system for prevention, containment and management of dengue in view of the recent spike in its cases across the country.

Underlining the challenge posed by the increasing number of dengue cases, Mandaviya stressed the need for being prepared against the viral infection, the statement said.

He directed the officials to be fully geared up and strengthen prevention, containment and management measures for dengue, it added.

Mandaviya highlighted that the Union government has provided all necessary sup-



Mandaviya highlighted that the Union government has provided all necessary support to the states for screening kits and has provided financial support for fogging and Information, Education and communication (IEC) activities as well

port to the states for screening kits and has provided financial support for fogging and Information, Education and communication (IEC) activities as well.

Healthcare workers have also been trained. He urged states to adhere to the guidelines issued by the Centre for prevention and containment of dengue.

The Union Health Minister also stated that adequate fund is provided by the central government to the states under Programme Implementation Plan (PIP) for several activities such as surveillance, laboratory diagnosis, cases management and capacity building among others to prevent and control dengue.

ISRO excels as no individual penalised for failures: Somanath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Failures are a very natural part of the space sector but no individual is penalised for it at ISRO which encourages scientists to take novel approaches in decision-making, the space agency's chairman S Somanath said on Wednesday.

Speaking at the 50th anniversary of the All India Management Association (AIMA), Somanath, who played a key role in the soft-landing of a spacecraft on the moon, noted that even he had faced failures several times, but never got criticised for it by his seniors.

"We make sure that no single individual is penalised for failures because no decision is made by a single individual. All these decisions are taken by collective wisdom," he said in an interactive session here.

Somanath said in the space sector, there is a clear understanding that one person cannot understand everything which leads to collective decision-making.

"So, collective decision means that you own the responsibility of failures as well. Management owns the responsibility, it is not fixed on

an individual. This is the first," he said.

"So, people are courageous enough to take a novel approach or decisions. Otherwise, everybody will move away from taking any risks," the space agency chief said.

He said at ISRO, the management was very clear that failures are a natural part of a process when work is being done and the approach has always been to identify the reasons for the setback and make the necessary corrections.

"You have to give confidence to the people who have the courage to propose new things and support them. Once you do that, you can do wonders in any organisation," he said.

On identifying talent for the space programme, Somanath said he found that the commitment levels to excel in life of persons coming from a humble background were very high when compared with city dwellers.

"If you get a person from a tier-3 institution and put him in the task, the growth rate of the person in terms of his ability, knowledge is substantially higher than I could see from a city dweller," he said.



K'taka to challenge rider to release Cauvery water to TN before SC: CM Siddaramaiah

PNS ■ CHAMARAJANAGAR

The direction of the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee to Karnataka to release water at the rate of 3,000 cubic feet per second (cusecs) to Tamil Nadu from Thursday to October 15 will be challenged before the Supreme Court, the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Wednesday.

Siddaramaiah said he has spoken to the State's legal team which opined that it should be challenged in the apex court.

"We are challenging the order of the Regulation Committee before the Supreme Court. We don't have water to give," the CM told reporters at Male Mahadeshwara Hills in this



district.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar had on Tuesday expressed satisfaction over the CWRC rejecting the request of Tamil Nadu, which wanted Karnataka to release 12,000 cusecs.

Karnataka submitted before

CWRC at its meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday that the shortfall in cumulative inflows to its four reservoirs in the Cauvery basin up to September 25 is 53.04 per cent.

According to Karnataka officials, due to the failure of the south-west monsoon (from June to September) this year, there is no sufficient storage in the four reservoirs and the State is facing such a grave situation that it is finding it extremely difficult even to cater to the drinking water requirements let alone supplying for irrigation.

The rainfall received in Karnataka this year in the months of August and September is the lowest in the last 123 years, they said.

70% of early cancer deaths in 2020 preventable

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

About 70 per cent of the 5.3 million premature deaths from cancer globally in 2020 were preventable, while the remaining 30 per cent were treatable, according to a new The Lancet Global Health research.

Of the total deaths, 2.9 million were in men, while 2.3 million were in women, the study said, which had used the GLOBOCAN 2020 database on cancer mortality from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) for analysis.

The IARC conducts and coordinates research into the causes of cancer and is an inter-governmental agency under the World Health Organization of the United Nations.

Tobacco, alcohol, obesity, and infections accounted for

roughly 1.3 million deaths in women across all age groups in 2020, the study reported, acknowledging that the burden of cancer in women due to these risk factors was widely under-recognised.

Further, the study suggested that 1.5 million premature cancer deaths in women could be prevented each year through the elimination of exposures to key risk factors or via early detection and diagnosis, while a further 0.8 million lives could be saved each year if all women had access to optimal cancer care.

This study is a global estimation of the burden of premature, preventable, and treatable deaths from 36 cancer types in 2020 in 185 countries, by world region and Human Development Index (HDI).

"Discussion about cancer in



women often focus on 'women's cancers', such as breast and cervical cancer, but about 3,00,000 women under 70 die each year from lung cancer, and 1,60,000 from colorectal cancer: two of the top three causes of cancer death among women, globally.

"Furthermore, for the last few decades in many high income countries, deaths from lung cancer in women have

been higher than deaths from breast cancer," said study author Isabelle Soerjomataram, Deputy Branch Head of Cancer Surveillance at IARC.

Greater scrutiny of the causes and risk factors for cancer in women is also needed as they are less well understood compared with cancer risk factors for men, the study said.

Further, it said, growing evidence suggests links between commercial products predominantly used by women, including breast implants, skin lighteners and hair relaxers, and an enhanced cancer risk.

According to a new Lancet Commission report, gender inequality and discrimination influence women's rights and opportunities to avoid cancer risk factors and impede their ability to seek and obtain timely diagnosis and quality cancer

care. Further, gender inequalities have resulted in an unpaid caregiver workforce that is predominantly female, and hinder women's professional advancement as leaders in cancer research, practice, and policy-making, which in turn perpetuate the lack of women-centred cancer prevention and care, the report said.

"The impact of a patriarchal society on women's experiences of cancer has gone largely unrecognised. Globally, women's health is often focused on reproductive and maternal health, aligned with narrow anti-feminist definitions of women's value and roles in society, while cancer remains wholly under-represented," said study author Ophira Ginsburg, co-Chair of the Commission.

FIRST COLUMN

HOW TO GET HELP FROM GOD?

To begin with, accept the ‘Karmaphala’ principal’ — “what we sow we reap”




AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We have to make suitable efforts to do that. God is unlike our parents, who are obliged to help, especially when we are quite young. In the case of God, we have to deserve His help. If it wasn't so, God would be obliged to help everyone. Even parents stop helping as children become self-supporting, except to guide, as required. Therefore, we have to get rid of this false impression that God will help no matter what. Yes, He will if we become deserving. In this article, I will detail some thirty ways we can successfully do that, and which are mostly simple.

The first one has to be following dharma because it is most dear to God. God even incarnates to re-establish dharma. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 4.7) Dharma is the bedrock upon which the creation is based. Don't we know what social and other norms are? Then, we must not cross their 'Maryada' (limits). The second one is to be dutiful because this is the only right given to us. (2.47) Goodness must follow in our behaviour. We must be headed towards purity, as practised by yogis. (5.11) We should try to remember God because He is everything. (7.19) This will lead to 'dhyana' – the process of meditation.

Now I take up processes involving others. The first one has to be charity. All of us have something to spare, whether material objects or personal time. Human birth demands that we become useful to others. How else can the creation go on? We must help/serve others and others will do likewise.

The next group of acts are when we directly address God. The first one has to be praying, which comes to us naturally, whenever we are in trouble; even children pray when fearful. We should express our thanks if God responds. Shouldn't we be highly obliged? If God still does not respond, it is time to seek forgiveness and begin repenting for sins done in the past. Shouldn't we wonder about God's non-response and what we must do to deserve His help? Gradually, we must begin giving our minds and intelligence to God. What does this mean? Simply stated, God must be brought into our psyche; we must begin to think about God.



By now we would have become humble enough to do 'namaskar' to God giving up our highly bloated ego; visit a nearby temple to have 'darshan' of God. These places are generally highly charged with spiritual energy, which will help us to become God-conscious. We can begin worshipping God in our homes. We can begin by choosing a photo of God in whatever form attracts us the most; God has multiple forms. Similarly, we can start chanting God's name or mantra, whatever appeals to us. All these will lead to our becoming inquisitive about God's instructions, as detailed in bona fide scriptures like the Geeta. We can try to do whatever God wishes us to do (16.24), which will ensure God's pleasure. By now, we would have become highly deserving of God's help, because we in effect would have taken God's shelter.

This takes us to another level. God takes charge of our lives; He begins to use us as His 'nimitta' (instrument). Our lives will begin to become greatly fulfilling. God will get everything done and we will get credit. We will become very useful and highly satisfied. 'Tapasya' will begin to come naturally, which will qualify us for more gains, because in the spiritual domain also, the 'karmaphala principle' works, the only difference being: in this case our acts are spiritual. The word 'yogi' will no longer be a distant concept, we will become one. Sky is the limit then, as Sanjaya of the Mahabharata fame has described, "Where there is the yogeshwar Shri Krishna and where there is the archer Arjuna (in our case us), there will be 'saubhagya' (opulence), victory, wealth and definite principles (morality)".

(The writer is an educator, views are personal)

Punjab is reeling under socio-economic distress



AS MITTAL

Without sustainable economic growth, local employment generation, and self-reliance, Punjab's well-being will continue to be a challenge



It's worrisome that Punjab only receives 45 paise for every rupee it contributes to the Centre's tax kitty. This is especially concerning when comparing it to states like UP and Bihar, which receive Rs 1.80 and Rs 1.20, respectively. This revenue-sharing disparity is a significant contributor to the socio-economic distress experienced by Punjab. As a landlocked border state, it's even more crucial for Punjab to overcome this fiscal distress since India's and Pakistan's bilateral trade also halted through the Wagah-Attari route majorly affected Punjab's economy only. The said cost-effective cross-border route can directly short-connect to Europe, a big potential to catalyse the Punjab economy as strong as the economy of Southern-Western States, because of near to seaports.

Being far away from the seaports is one of the major disadvantages that Punjab is struggling with, and has a crippling impact on industrial growth. Secondly, adjoining the sensitive Pakistan border not only halted the trade but Pakistan led to illegal arms supply and drug terror scuffed the social fabric and law and order of Punjab. Keeping these two major geographical disadvantages centre stage till any central government has not compensated Punjab as it faces odd challenges in comparison to other states. Not even a fair share of tax kitty given, the Rural Development Fund(RDF) and Mandi Fee of Rs 5337 crore have not been released for long. Thus, how long does a fiscally distressed state government alone take forward the most development and welfare-oriented expenditure?

When a state's economy weakens, its people and progress suffer together. This is evident in the current crisis in India-Canada relations, as Punjab's economic distress has led to a migration of its human resources to Canada. Unfortunately, this migration has created a breeding ground for radicals and anti-Indian khalistan extremist activities on Canadian soil, a globalised challenge that has gone unaddressed. The Canadian connection to khalistani is longstanding. Since the mid-80s, there has been a significant exodus of Punjabi youth to Canada, where they often

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WHEN A STATE'S ECONOMY WEAKENS, ITS PEOPLE SUFFER. PUNJAB'S ECONOMIC DISTRESS HAS LED TO A MIGRATION OF ITS HUMAN RESOURCES TO CANADA

(The author is vice-chairman of Sonalika group, vice-chairman of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board, and chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council. Views expressed are personal)

do odd jobs to sustain themselves. Unfortunately, some of these young people become prey to anti-India extremists.

It is not good to allow a lop-sided economic development of a sensitive state like Punjab. It has its serious repercussions. If we fail to ensure holistic development, then we will be accused of inefficiencies in handling human resources. Unemployment is a multi-faceted problem exacerbating the distressed places associated with poorer mental health, crime and drug abuse. There is enough evidence of drug abuse and distress in the law-and-order situation, that an issue of brimming, can be ascribed directly to unemployment.

Punjab, which used to be a prosperous and progressive state even during its toughest time, is currently facing a significant problem of uncontrolled unemployment due to distressed farming and an imbalanced industrial base. This has resulted in Punjab's GDP growth rate dropping to 6%, which is lower than the national growth rate of 7.24% in 2022-23. Punjab is currently ranked at the 19th position, whereas it ranked first in GDP among the states in 1981 and fourth in 2001. Interestingly, UP and Bihar, which were once part of the economically sick states known as 'BIMARU' (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh), are now fast-growing economies. UP achieved an impressive growth rate of 16.8%, with a GDP of Rs 20.48 lakh crore in 2022-23, while Bihar's growth rate was 10.98% with a GDP of Rs 7,45,310 crore.

It is crucial to acknowledge that Punjab has immense potential that should not be overlooked when compared to the Southern and Western states. Presently, Punjab's contribution to the country's tax kitty stands at approximately 3%, and it only receives 1.8% of

the divisible pool of taxes allocated by the Fifteenth Finance Commission. In contrast, the Western and Southern states contribute 67% to the central exchequer but only receive a meagre 3-4%. While their argument may appear valid, it is essential to consider that the Southern and Western states account for 53% of India's total factories and have the advantage of being closer to seaports, which can drive economic growth and result in more contributions to the central exchequer. Punjab's sluggish growth may dampen overall economic sentiments, but it still holds enormous potential for growth and contribution to the country's economy.

Undoubtedly, Punjab has the potential to contribute 10-15% as it possesses a strong capable and committed entrepreneurial spirit to overcome this economic distress. This spirit has been evident in the past when it overcame the challenges of the partition of India in 1947 and 13 years of militancy in the mid-80s to mid-90s. Within a few years of these events, Punjab was able to rehabilitate its economy and become the richest state in India in the 80s. Today, Punjab seeks a fair interface without any political interference to compete on a level playing field and strengthen its economy, ultimately reducing unemployment.

It is important to consider Punjab's significant contribution to national food security. However, the large areas and population figures of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar provide them with additional leverage from the central tax pool. It is concerning that Punjab only received 1.8% of the Rs 8,16,649 crore distributed by the centre to the states during 2022-23. In contrast, Uttar Pradesh received the highest share at 18% (Rs 1,46,525 crore) and Bihar received the second-highest share at 10%. This highlights why Punjab and other states argue that they are not receiving a fair share of funds, despite contributing more to the exchequer.

During the fiscal year 2022-23, Punjab contributed a sum of Rs 32,800 crore to the central taxes fund, which included CGST, income tax, corporation tax, wealth tax, union excise duty, customs, and service tax. However, in return, the state only received Rs 14,756 crore. This has led to Punjab raising the issue with the Fifteenth Finance Commission, as it believes it deserves a fair share of central tax. Despite its efforts, Punjab has been unable to secure an amendment to the Finance Act.

Constitutionally, the purpose of the finance commission is to create some kind of 'equalization' among advantaged and disadvantaged states. From the point of view of equalization, the adoption of population figures as one of the criteria of devolution needs to be justified. Therefore, the constitution provides for a fair share of union revenue to be devolved to the states to address this issue.

The Way Forward:


In a federal structure, the central government needs to prioritise the improvement of economic conditions and livelihood prospects for the people of Punjab, which are facing unique challenges in comparison to other states.

It is crucial to take a comprehensive approach that ensures employment opportunities and social respect regardless of demographic and political differences. Without sustainable economic growth, local employment generation, and self-reliance, Punjab's well-being will continue to be a challenge, which is indispensable for the overall well-being of our nation.

Goat-rearing can be an excellent source of livelihood in rural Bihar

To provide livelihood, the government should provide adequate training and information to landless, marginal farmers about the goat farming schemes

Anita Devi, a 40-year-old resident of Hussainpur village, located about 65 kilometres from the Muzaffarpur district in Bihar, lost her husband two years ago. Left with no means to support her family of seven, including four daughters and two sons, she started goat farming to earn a livelihood. She faced criticism when she began rearing goats as a woman farmer. However, Anita resisted because her motivation to provide for her family kept her going. She had started with just two goats. Today, she has eight adult goats and 20 young ones. Goat rearing enabled her to protect her family and improve her financial status.




SIMRAN KUMARI

(The writers is a student from rural Bihar; views expressed are personal)

Alongside manual labour, agriculture-based employment like cattle, poultry, ducks, and goat farming is a crucial source of income, especially for economically disadvantaged individuals like landless, small-scale farmers, agricultural labourers, and socially oppressed individuals. According to the latest 2019 Livestock census, India has a population of 150 million goats, the second largest in the world. In around half a million remote villages, 70 million farmers are involved in the goat farming business. The primary income from Goat farming comes from milk, which has a production of about 42000 Kgs and meat production, which stands at 8500 Kgs.

Like Anita Devi, Goat farming is an excellent means of self-employment for many rural women. Around rural areas in Muzaffarpur, many women earn their livelihoods through goat farming, becoming breadwinners for their families. 35-year-old Champa Devi, resident of the same village as Anita, also supports her three daughters and two sons by raising goats.

In other instances, older women in the village claim that their sons and daughters-in-law have stopped providing for them in their old age. These women have, therefore, started rearing 2-4 goats to earn a living. These women leave for the fields in the morning to



graze their goats and only return in the evening.

Goat farming is a hard job, especially during the monsoons. It can be a challenge to find adequate fodder for the goats. The farmers rely on bananas, bamboo, and Banyan leaves to keep the cattle alive. People invest their capital into it. Even after that, we see an increasing number of women who raise goats in the village. It has become a source of livelihood for many families.

Various non-governmental and government organisations run programs to strengthen the village economy through agriculture-based employment like cattle, poultry, ducks, and goat farming. The Bihar government provides subsidies up to 60% for promoting goat farming. Under the Integrated Goat and Sheep Scheme, there is a provision for subsidising ten goats plus one buck, and 40 goats and two bucks. The government also provides financial aid to disadvantaged communities like Scheduled Caste/Schedule Tribe and

Other Backward Classes. These continuously disadvantaged groups get up to 60% subsidy, while the rest get 50%.

In addition, the capital investment required for raising 20 goats with one buck is about two lakhs, and farmers can take a loan from the bank for this purpose. This process of approving loans goes through the Department of Animal Husbandry in consultation with the bank. After that, subsidies get deposited into the beneficiaries' bank accounts in two instalments. However, because of a lack of awareness, many rural families do not know these schemes, leading women farmers like Anita and Champa to take loans with

high interest rates to start goat farming. On top of that, due to their lack of training, It is difficult for farmers to acquire high-quality breeds.

To promote livelihoods, the government should provide adequate training and information to landless, marginal farmers, and labourers about the goat farming schemes. Details about these schemes should be available in the Panchayat office or Gram Sabha. Ward members should be responsible for disseminating information about these programs to goat farmers. Only then women in vulnerable situations will be able to continue goat farming as a career and give themselves and their families a better future.

WHEN MIRZAPUR MET NEVER HAVE I EVER

With Indian cinema making its way around the world and winning western audiences, it's indeed a great time for Indian artists to go global and leave an impact with their craft. Currently at The Chicago South Asian Film Festival 2023 for the North American Premiere of her film *Lord Curzon Ki Haveli*, Rasika Dugal was present for a captivating panel discussion titled 'East Meets West'.

A thought-provoking event, featuring prominent groundbreaking actors from various continents, it made a never seen before union happen between *Mirzapur's* 'Beena' - Rasika Dugal and *Never Have I Ever's* 'Kamala' aka Richa Moorjani. The two were present on the panel along with other actors Aparshakti

Khurana, and Samrat Chakrabarti. Sharing their insights, experiences, challenges and more, Rasika Dugal and Richa Moorjani's coming together came as big news for all *Never Have I Ever* and *Mirzapur* fans.

A picture of the two ladies soon circulated on the internet and fans of the shows shared their peak excitement for this special moment, with some even urging for a collab.

Interestingly, the actress was in Chicago for her first film *Kshay* as well back in 2012 at the Chicago International Film Festival.

On the work front, Rasika Dugal has an interesting lineup of projects including sports drama *Spike*, *Fairy Folk* - an improv comedy, *Mirzapur* season 3 and *Little Thomas*.



Younger daughter's name of Joe and estranged wife Sophie revealed

Amid Joe Jonas and Sophie Turner's divorce battle, their children have been ordered to stay in New York for some time. Sophie and Joe have agreed to this! The name of the younger daughter of singer Joe Jonas and estranged wife-actor Sophie Turner has been revealed, amid the ongoing divorce battle. The name was included in recent court documents. Sophie Turner asked the judge to put her divorce from Joe on hold until they sorted out the custody of their children.

According to the report, the custody filings showed that Joe and Sophie have named their second daughter Delphine. Apart from 14-month-old Delphine, Joe and Sophie are parents to 3-year-old Willa.



Ali Fazal's 'khufiya' guest appearance in Fukrey 3 revealed

Speculation has been rife in recent weeks as fans eagerly await the release of *Fukrey 3*, the latest installment in the wildly popular *Fukrey* franchise. While it left fans disappointed when the news of Zafar aka Ali missing from the new instalment of the franchise, it might not be able bad news after all. As per a source close to production, Ali Fazal, who has previously graced *Fukrey 1* and *2* with his presence, will once again be part of the ensemble cast, this time as a guest special appearance at a crucial point in the film.

Fukrey 3, which is scheduled to hit screens this week, has already generated substantial buzz thanks to its riveting trailer and the enthusiastic advance booking response with the trials garnering over 38 million views. The decision to keep Ali Fazal's character and role in *Fukrey 3* "Khufiya" (mysterious) has piqued



Hollywood writers' strike officially ends after 148 days

The Writers Guild of America strike is officially ending after 148 days. Following a tentative agreement on a new contract with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP), the board of WGA West and council of WGA East have voted unanimously to lift the strike order at 12:01am PT on Wednesday. The decision means writers can return to work today before the ratification vote from October 2-9.

The WGA has unveiled the full 94-page contract including a summary of new terms, which includes improvements in compensation, as

well as a requirement for minimum staff levels in TV writers' rooms. Also included are better payment terms for screenwriters, plus restrictions when it comes to the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in writing. Per the agreement, AI isn't allowed to write or write literary material, while AI-generation material won't be considered source material. While the WGA strike ending could mean a speedy return to the air for programmes like late-night TV shows, other productions will still be on hold due to continued strike action by the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA).



FUN

ARCHIE



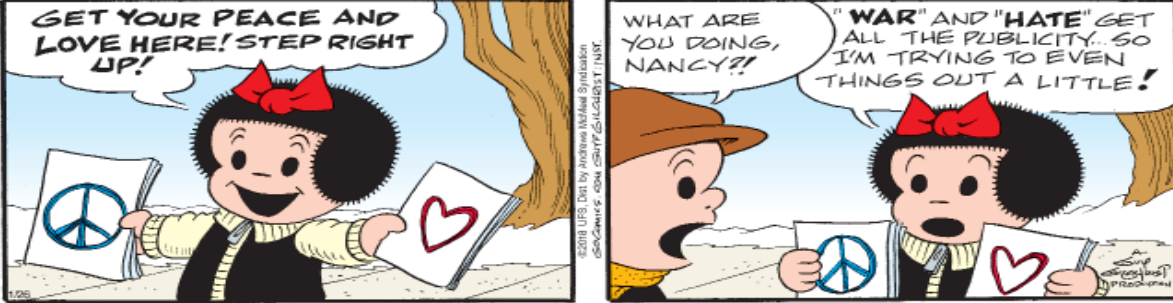
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



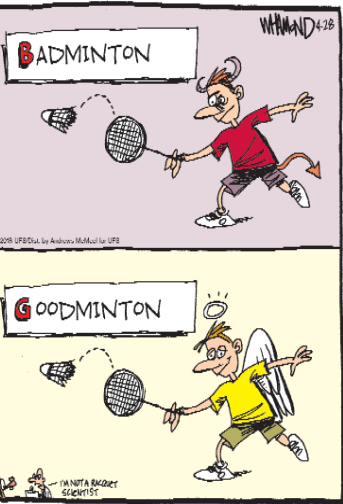
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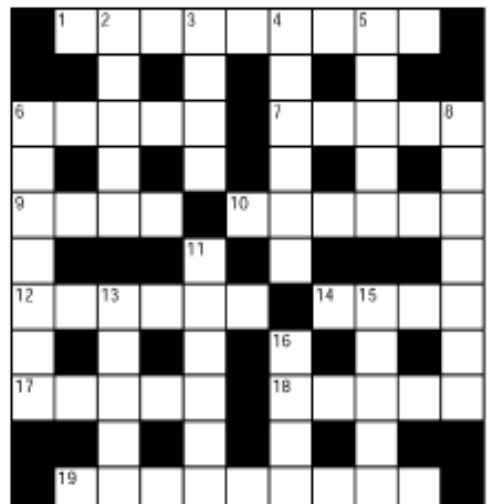
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- People who carve statues
- Use your brain
- Straps held by a jockey
- Not difficult
- Say again
- Put this sachet in a teapot
- This insect flies at night
- The number of sides on an octagon
- A round thing with spokes
- Know by sight

DOWN

- Strips of fried potato
- Find pleasant
- Changed direction
- Lift up

SOLUTION

A	O	N	O	R	S
S	C	A	R	I	E
S	A	S	A	S	A
E	A	T	I	N	G
B	U	R	N	S	T
L	E	S	A	A	A
E	X	A	C	T	R
S	C	O	V	E	D
S	H	E	P	H	E



Empowering community on cyber safety



PNS| HYDERABAD

THIS WEEK FOR OUR WEEKLY EDITION OF COMMUNITY WISE, WE BRING TO YOU ABOUT THE QUICK HEAL FOUNDATION, WHICH AIMS TO PRIORITISE AWARENESS AS THE PRIMARY TOOL TO TACKLE CYBERCRIME.

The Quick Heal Foundation is driven by its purpose of securing futures by enabling communities and society at large. Hence their programs are designed to be in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to create a better India with better opportunities for all. Their key focus areas are cybersecurity awareness and better healthcare for all. In this process, they also work to enhance employability through soft skills training.

Our Cyber Shiksha for Cyber Suraksha program aims to create awareness in society through street plays, workshops, and webinars for students across India. Furthermore, under our program Earn and Learn we train and motivate the volunteers to spread cyber security awareness amongst schools and colleges. We have organized workshops for underprivileged sections of society, like street vendors educating them on how to minimize risks on the internet. We have included all our employees, partners, schools & universities, local police, authorities, state administrations, and corporates across the country. We proactively spread awareness of cyber threats through e-learning on our website, social media, and PR campaigns. Since creating better access to



healthcare is also one of our primary objectives, we have been working in the public health space ever since inception. Under our Arogya Yan initiative, we donate state-of-the-art, fully equipped medical vans to NGOs operating in the rural areas of the country,' informs Anupama Katkar, the chairperson of the foundation.

Post-pandemic they observed that there was a marked increase in mental trauma of underprivileged students coming from slum areas. They then under their program, 'Arogyam Mansampada', proactively designed and conducted a 3-hour long session to address anxiety, stress, trauma phobia, and other problems including lack of attention and concentration. "The true impact of our initiatives comes in a non-tangible form, comprising a multitude of emotions like security, empowerment, self-awareness, gratitude, and above all, joy. We couldn't ask for anything beyond making cybersecurity a fundamental right for all while being carried forward to even the remotest corners of the country, and the smiles that we get to see on the faces of people who benefit from our health and educational programs."

In tangible terms, they take pride in having touched the lives of more than 4 lakh rural residents and 448 members of President Protected Tribes. They have donated 15 vans so far in 10 different states of India covering 600+ remotely located villages.

Besides, "The easiest way to safeguard yourself from malicious attacks is to install a good anti-virus solution and to activate your firewall. It keeps you protected from viruses, malware, and rootkits. It is advised to always keep the security software updated by applying the latest patches that are sent to your system to block and prevent new emerging threats. In a bid to educate the community at large on how to identify, report, and mitigate threats online, we have designed an e-booklet that is available on our website in multiple languages. Under one amongst many of our CSR programs, we conduct street plays and work closely with local administrations, NGOs, Universities, and Police to educate the marginalized sections of society on cyber safety. We have also organized workshops for underprivileged sections of society, like street vendors educating them on how to minimize risks on the internet."

The government's vision of 'New India' is more digital, self-sufficient, connected, and ambitious. With the country's internet user base growing and internet penetration increasing by the day, it is extremely important for robust steps to be taken at the policymaking level in order to increase cyber literacy in the country. It is important to foster cyber safety as a culture, empowering everybody in the organization and value chain with cyber safety education. It is also imperative for responsible industry stakeholders to join forces to spread awareness of safe digital practices to vulnerable communities at large.

Compelling acting craft and emotional depth

TEJAL SINHA

Popularly known for his role in *Bazaar* along with Saif Ali Khan, actor Rohan Vinod Mehra is currently getting all the much-deserved love for his recent stint in *Kaala*. And yes, now he's the talk of the town!

Rohan, who plays the character of Subhendu Mukherjee, is the son of the well-known actor Vinod Mehra. Enjoying the love and admiration for his role that he has gotten, he described his character's journey as 'nothing short of an immense roller coaster of emotions,' which according to him was also one of the factors that made him very thrilled to portray the role.

Rohan plays three different characters, of different age groups. However, according to him, "Playing the old man was difficult but I think the prep that Bejoy and I had done, we had done a lot of prep for the character to understand who he was, who were the people was around him. Once we got into the sets, we were all prepared to take on and shoot this character. It definitely was challenging and required a lot of efforts from my part and a lot of preparations were shown."

Something that he looked for in the script he says was how emotional the role would be! "When I first started reading the character and script, I thought that the role is definitely emotional but there's different elements to it. During the journey, when I was finding Subhendu and the truth in the scenes, I kept coming back to such a strong emotion of love, and the emotion for why this man is doing what he does. So that surprised me a lot about the character and the journey he took," he shares adding, "One thing that he really got to learn was doing a character that you can connect on an emotional and an instinctive level. It is the best way, and quite assuring as an actor because now that I see how the show is being loved so much, it's just so fulfilling. The character with whom you relate the most in the future will be the most fun to play since they will motivate you to move on."

The series also takes you on a rollercoaster ride of emotions and will give you shivers down your spine as you watch it. In a world where power, revenge, and wealth rule, the way to succeed in life often involves a complex maze of lies and clever tricks. Recalling at the most challenging scene to shoot, he shares, "It was definitely the army scene, the action part of the show because we had the location for a certain amount of

time and we were shooting on a real location. We had to get all of the aspects perfect. Everything had to be in sync to make it look realistic. We had to take multiple takes just for the choreography of the scene. My character in that particular scene, there was a lot of running. It was definitely demanding and you also had to make sure you don't lose the emotional connect of the scene."

To him, the most rewarding part of working on the series, he says, "Having to work with Bijoy. The trust and the freedom he gives you as an actor bring the life and soul of a lot of you into the character. He does not make any judgment on his part of the director. He always tried to figure out how are we doing the scenes, how the character was, and what decisions the character would take."

"The character affected me a lot off the camera as

well because we shot the whole thing in West Bengal, Kolkata, and Siliguri. My scenes were completely different as compared to the rest of the cast in terms of story and timeline. It was not like coming home to family and friends after the shoot. We were in a lot of isolated locations and there were not really network signals. It was lonely in that way. It was all about your character and what you're doing the next day. I'm not as lonely as my character in real life but I love to have my alone time and do things on my own," signs off the budding actor, who will next be seen playing another different character in *Aabhut*, starring alongside Nawazuddin Siddiqui.

Enrapturing hearts and winning all the right accolades with his recent stint in *Kaala*, actor Rohan Vinod Mehra, who is creating waves for himself in the industry, gets candid with *The Pioneer* about his character in *Kaala*, how the role affected him off camera, and more.



SECOND-HAND SMOKE CAN RESULT HEARING LOSS IN YOUR KID

When you breathe in other people's tobacco smoke (unintentionally or otherwise), it is called second-hand smoke or passive smoking. Second-hand smoke exposure results from mainstream or side-stream smoking. Side-stream smoke is produced while burning tobacco items, such as cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. Mainstream smoke is exhaled by a nearby smoker. Both sources emit airborne hazardous substances that have an impact on nonsmokers.

We have heard a lot about passive smoking being more harmful than direct smoking. However, we are only limited to knowing that be it direct smoking or second-hand smoking, it

affects the lungs and heart and can cause cancer but the negative doesn't stop here. Second-hand or passive smoking can also cause hearing loss which especially applies to children because their lungs are still undergoing vital stages of development, making them more susceptible to the harmful effects of second-hand smoke exposure. Even parents who deliberately limit their smoking to the outdoors unintentionally subject their children to the harmful chemicals that pervade the air.

Smoking is associated with decreased oxygen levels and increased blood viscosity, which can harm the fragile cochlear hair cells and result in probable hearing loss in

children. More than 4,000 different compounds are found in second-hand smoke, also known as environmental tobacco smoke in science.

Living with a smoker doubles the risk of hearing loss in nonsmokers. Your chance of having hearing loss increases with the number of cigarettes you smoke on average each day. Smoking during pregnancy increases a child's chance of having speech-language issues. It increases the likelihood of developing noise-induced hearing loss if you spend a lot of time near loud noise at work. Teenagers who are exposed to secondhand smoke have a two to three times higher risk of developing hearing loss, and they sometimes aren't even aware of

it. Infants and children with hearing loss who are not treated may experience substantial delays in speech and language development. The consequences include academic setbacks and socialization issues, highlighting the critical need to protect kids from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke. Quitting smoking will eliminate the source of exposure and foster a healthy atmosphere for the future of our children, which is the most efficient remedy for this urgent situation.

(The author Dr. Rohit Bhatia, MBBS, MS, (ENT Specialist) is the Director, Cochlea Advanced Surgical Center at Lucknow.)



Australia beat India by 66 runs to score a consolation win in 3rd ODI

PTI ■ RAJKOT

Australia avoided an unprecedented series whitewash after registering a 66-run victory over India in the third ODI here on Wednesday. Chasing a massive 353 to win, India were restricted by Australia to 286 in 49.4 overs. India however won the three-match series 2-1.

The Aussies motored to 352 for 7 after Mitchell Marsh (96), Steve Smith (74), Marnus Labuschagne (72) and David Warner (56) made impact knocks.

Jasprit Bumrah took three for 81 and emerged the most successful among Indian bowlers. India made a fist of chase through captain Rohit Sharma (81) and Virat Kohli (56), but soon fizzled against the off-spin of Glenn Maxwell.

Earlier, Mitchell Marsh's stroke-filled 96 and Marnus Labuschagne's polished 72 took Australia to a commendable 352 for 7 against India in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday.

While Marsh missed reaching triple figures by a whisker, Australia's batters came good collectively in what will be their last official ODI before the start of the World Cup.

David Warner had himself to blame for his dismissal after a fiery 56 off 34 balls (6x4s, 4x6s), but he set the tone for Australia early on.

Steve Smith also put brakes on his poor run of scores to make a rapid 74 and towards the end, Labuschagne upped the ante with his 58-ball knock to help Australia post their challenging score. Labuschagne also became Australia's top run-getter in the ongoing calendar



year. On a hot and humid day, drinks were brought out more often than not between change of over while batters dropped down to their haunches, turning out to be quite a laborious effort for the Australian batters after their captain chose to bat.

Marsh took the attack to Jasprit Bumrah (3/81 in 10 overs), hitting two fours and a six and forcing India to take off the solitary slip since there was no early movement on offer.

Warner too shrugged off a slow start to hit Mohammed Siraj for two imperious sixes as Australia seized early

momentum.

The assault continued as Prasidh Krishna was hit for three fours and a six in his opening over with Warner taking the lead. The Australian opener completed his ninth fifty against India and 31st overall with a six over fine leg off Siraj. However, Warner's charge ended while trying to scoop Prasidh, walking across the wickets but only to edge it behind.

In search of a big score, Smith opted for consolidation with Marsh, who had long shifted gears to drop the anchor.

Bumrah was brought back for the 23rd over but Marsh clobbered him for

three fours and two sixes to collect 19 runs — he gave that many in two separate overs — which finally forced India to bring Kuldeep Yadav (2/48) into the attack.

While India found it difficult to penetrate owing to a placid surface, the Australian pair of Marsh and Smith amassed 137 from 119 for the second wicket.

However, the Australian pair did struggle with the heat and humidity late in the afternoon and increasingly looked for boundaries while sacrificing the doubles.

For the second time this year and against the same opponent, Marsh came close to bringing up only his second ODI century but missed it by four runs.

All the hard work of getting close to the mark while braving the conditions went in vain when Marsh hit straight to Krishna at cover off Kuldeep.

Smith perished soon after as Siraj pinned him in front of the wickets for 74 off 61 balls, including eight fours and a six.

Alex Carey (11) had a short stay as he misjudged a slower ball from Bumrah to chip it straight to Virat Kohli at cover in the 37th over.

Bumrah, mixing his deliveries well in this spell, cleaned up Glenn Maxwell (5) for his second wicket of the game but one that also dented Australia's hopes of acceleration in the remaining overs.

Australia's slide continued as Kuldeep had Cameron Green (9) caught at long on, but Labuschagne and Pat Cummins put on 46 to take them to their overall fourth highest ODI total against India.

Tough to look beyond Shreyas in WC playing XI: Azharuddin



PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Former captain Mohammad Azharuddin can't look beyond Shreyas Iyer in India's playing eleven in the ODI World Cup and also backed a possible last-minute inclusion of R Ashwin in the 15-man squad.

India find themselves in a problem of plenty in the middle with Iyer, Ishan Kishan and Suryakumar Yadav staking a claim for one spot.

Iyer, who was India's designated number four before a back injury ruled him out of the game for six months, struck an attacking hundred in Indore to put himself ahead of Kishan and Suryakumar in the middle-order race.

"Good competition always brings the best out of the players. Shreyas is an exciting player and he really batted well the other day after losing out on games due to his back issues. He is very positive with his intent and looks to score all the time."

"He can make a big impact in the game. It is very hard to look past him unless you are looking for a left-hander in the middle, then Ishan comes into picture. However, I feel Shreyas has done enough," Azhar told PTI on Wednesday.

Ashwin should find a spot in final-15

Ashwin, who had played only two ODIs since 2017 before being picked for the ODI series against Australia, is expected to replace Axar Patel in the squad if the latter doesn't regain full fitness. He gave a good account of his skills in the first two ODIs before being rested for the final game in Rajkot.

The wily off-spinner also has Azhar's vote.

"Ashwin is someone who should be in the team. It is not very easy to line up against him as he has got a lot of variations. The team has already been announced. It remains to be seen whether Axar is in there or not."

"Instead of two left-arm spinners, Ashwin can also bat well, he should find a place," said Azhar, who captained India in three World Cups.

While Shardul Thakur has done alright in the chances he has got, he doesn't match the skills of Mohammad Shami who should be preferred over the former in the playing eleven, said the 60-year-old.

The recent selection showed that the management has not fully made up its mind on the fast bowling combination. Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammad Siraj walk into the playing eleven.

"Shami has been doing well for a long time. Shardul too has done alright in the limited chances he has got. But you don't require everyone to bat in the 11. Shami has also batted well at times."

"Shardul is a bowling all-rounder not a batting all-rounder. When you already have Haridk Pandya you don't need Shardul in the playing eleven," he said.

For him, the Indian player to watch out for will not be Rohit Sharma or Virat Kohli, as he has put his money on Shubman Gill.

Gill has been in sensational form over the past 12 months and has racked up five ODI hundreds this year.

"This time, Gill will be the main player for India. Obviously, the others around him are also batting well. If he can give India a good start it will set the ball rolling," said Azhar.

'Pressure will be on India'

Considering India have not won an ICC event since 2013, Azhar feels the team is bound to feel the pressure of not being able to win knock-out games over the past decade.

"It is going to be a very competitive world cup. India have a very good team. Grounds will be full as India are hosting after a long time." Asked if India are peaking at the right time following the Asia Cup title and series win over Australia, Azhar said: "I really don't understand this peaking business. When you are playing you are playing well, doesn't matter whether you are peaking or not peaking."

"Sometimes you lose two three matches even after peaking and that has happened with this team. Rather than thinking about all of this, one should focus on the game, rather than thinking about semis and finals straightaway."

"Yes, there will be a lot of pressure to win an ICC tournament which we have not won for a long time. I am sure the boys are fully aware of that," he said.

His home city of Hyderabad will be one of the 10 venues staging the World Cup games. But Azhar is disappointed that Hyderabad is not hosting an India match.



Williamson likely to play World Cup warm-up matches

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson is set to return from a long injury layoff in his side's World Cup warm-up matches, starting in India this week.

The star batter hasn't played any cricket since March when he ruptured the ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) in his right knee while fielding for Gujarat Titans in the IPL. He underwent surgery in April.

"The plan is to be involved in the warm-up games. There is a strong desire to be involved as much as I can," Williamson said ahead of the team's departure to India.

"Basically, it's just wanting to progress what I am doing now - the running, the fielding, time in the middle with the bat."

New Zealand will take on Pakistan and South Africa in World Cup warm-up matches on September 29 in Hyderabad and October 2 in Thiruvananthapuram respectively.

"They play England in the

tournament opener in Ahmedabad on October 5.

Asked if he was still experiencing discomfort, Williamson said: "Not a huge amount."

"Although the load is going to keep increasing, so there is a little bit of an unknown. But it has felt pretty good really in the last few weeks."

"Although it's going well, you still have days that vary a little bit. So it's working through those warm-up games to get as much out of it as I can, and as a team, without bothering it too much," he added.

Williamson had played a crucial role in New Zealand's campaign in 2015 and 2019 editions when they reached successive finals.

Talking about the most difficult aspect of his recovery Williamson said: "Not so much the sprinting, more the slowing actually. From sprinting, the braking, a little bit of a change of direction. It's all been part of the plan, and introducing it towards the end of recovery."

Nepal batters break three world records in T20Is

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Nepal batters smashed three world records en route to becoming the first team to amass a 300-plus total in T20Is, in the Asian Games here on Wednesday. Kushal Malla, a 19-year-old left-handed batter, struck the fastest-ever T20I hundred in 34 balls, eclipsing David Miller and Rohit Sharma's joint previous record (35 balls).

Batting at No 3, Malla smashed 12 sixes and eight



fours to remain unbeaten on 137 and power Nepal to the highest-ever T20I score of 314 for 3

against Mongolia, who opted to field. Their No 5 batter Dipendra Singh Airee also rewrote the record books, blasting a nine-ball fifty that bettered Yuvraj Singh's 16-year-old record.

Yuvraj took 12 balls for his fifty en route to scoring 58 in the World T20 match against England on September 19, 2007.

The previous record for the highest innings total in a T20I was held by Afghanistan, who had amassed 278 for 3 against Ireland on February 23, 2019.

Our ambition is to become biggest T20 league outside IPL: SA20 Commissioner Graeme Smith

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The kind of generational Indian T20 stars that IPL has produced in the last one and half decades has set the template to follow for a new franchise competition like SA20, former South Africa captain and commissioner of league Graeme Smith said on Wednesday.

"Our ambition is to be the biggest league outside India," Smith told PTI ahead of the second season's auction.

The SA20 comprises six franchises — MI Cape Town, Joburg Super Kings, Durban Super Giants, Paarl Royals, Pretoria Capitals, Sunrisers Eastern Cape, all of which are owned by the owners of IPL teams.

"I think IPL was there in the beginning. It took a couple of years to develop a number of generational stars and work within BCCI managed to create

outstanding depth of cricketers in India. It will be our goal too going forward," said Smith, who has always shared a cordial relationship with the Indian board, both as player and administrator.

"The highlight of the first season of SA20 was to see some youngsters and more established stars perform together. I think they played in the competition and were exposed to best practices by franchises — exposed to way of global thinking, getting the best coaches, best medical advice," said Smith, who is very satisfied with how the league has shaped up in just one season.

In fact, Smith is happy that SA20 has kept a salary cap of USD 2.3 million, offering the best pay scale outside IPL.

So, do you plan to increase the salary cap this time?

"Our salary cap is USD 2.3 million and teams can work with significant



numbers for a league outside the IPL. It gives us the ability to attract quality players," he said.

Smith believes that SA20 brought a lot of positivity in South African crick-

et. "The Season 1 exceeded all the expectations. We had such a limited amount of time to get up and running and we were able to attract six partners like six global franchises," said Smith.

As the league's commissioner, Smith has worked tirelessly with his team to deliver a product that is acceptable in the market. "Apart from the commercial side, it was important to bring some positivity back to South African cricket and see the fans flock to the stadium."

"Most importantly, the cricket in season 1 was outstanding. Some local young talent really stood up, global stars shone through and it was a very successful season," he said.

In Season 2, each franchise can buy up to 15 players with six uncapped ones, which will also help South Africa promote its own local talent, beneficial to the national team in future.

App revolutionises fantasy sports

Mumbai: The newly launched free-to-play app, by Sports engagement platform BeBeta,

prioritises community, unity, and sportsmanship over traditional betting. With personalised content and real-time updates, it offers

fans an engaging platform for Cricket, Football, and Kabaddi ahead of the Cricket World Cup.

"We believe that sports are best enjoyed with friends, and at BeBeta, we're committed to delivering an extraordinary experience that fosters a sense of belonging within a winning team, said Meet Shah, CEO & Founder of BeBeta."



Spain routs Switzerland in first home match since Women's WC title

AP ■ CORDOBA (SPAIN)

Spain's women's team received the support of a record crowd in its first home match since winning the World Cup title.

A crowd of 14,194 saw Spain rout Switzerland 5-0 in the Nations League on Tuesday, surpassing the previous record of 11,209 fans for a women's national team match in Spain, which was achieved in a friendly against the United States last year.

The local crowd, which did not fully fill the 21,000-capacity Nuevo Arcangel Stadium in Cordoba, showed their support for the players who have been fighting against sexism since their world title was tarnished by a scandal sparked by the former Spanish soccer federation president, Luis Rubiales, kissing player Jenni Hermoso on the lips during the World Cup awards ceremony. Players boycotted the national team but eventually a deal was reached with the federation and government mediators for significant reform in the beleaguered federation.

A banner shown by fans in Cordoba read "Your fight is our



pride. You are not alone."

Before the match, players from both teams got together and held a banner with the words "Se Acabo" — Spanish for "this is over" — followed by "Our fight is the global fight."

The "Se Acabo" slogan was started by Hermoso's teammate Alexia Putellas, Spain's star player, and has been a rallying call amid the scandal. New coach Montse Tomé left Hermoso out of the squad "as a way to protect her." Players also wore wristbands with the "Se Acabo" slogan, and raised their wrists while posing behind the banner.

The national team showed off the World Cup trophy to the fans, with Putellas and Irene Paredes raising it in front of the home crowd.

"We were excited about being able to celebrate with the fans," said Aitana Bonmati, who scored twice on Tuesday.

"It was an atypical week but we were able to overcome everything. The players showed that they are professionals."

Spain's first match after the World Cup was a 3-2 come-from-behind win at Sweden in the Nations League last week.



India continues winning streak at Badminton World Junior

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian team continued its winning streak at the badminton World Junior Championships with an impressive 5-0 win over Brazil in Spokane, USA on Wednesday.

In the opening match, the mixed doubles pair of Samarveer and Radhika Sharma triumphed over Joaquim Mendonça and Maria Clara Lopes Lima 21-14, 21-17 to give India a 1-0 lead.

In the boys' singles match, Lokesh Reddy Kalagolla faced a formidable opponent in Renan

Melo, who lost the first game 17-21 but fought back resiliently in the second game.

Lokesh managed to get the upper hand and ultimately won the second game by 24-22 to wrap up the match.

In the girls' singles section, Devika Sihag cruised to victory by defeating Maria Eduarda Oliveira 21-9, 21-6 in just 18 minutes.

In the boys' doubles category, Divyam Arora and Mayank Rana emerged victorious against Joaquim Mendonça and João Mendonça Taveira 21-19, 21-10.

Girls' doubles pair of Venala Kalagolla and Shriyanshi Valishetty then displayed their coordination on way to an impressive 21-13, 21-11 win over Maria Clara Lopes Lima and Maria Eduarda Oliveira.

Later in the day, group D leaders India will next face Germany, who is second in the group. The outcome of this match will decide who tops the group.

The team that finishes on top will face the winner of group C in the quarter-finals on September 28.

SAIEE MANJREKAR

DANCING ON THE ROCKY TERRAINS FOR SKANDA WAS A TEST FOR ME

SHIKHA DUGGAL

The month of September is drawing to a close, and it is the time when the entertainment industry gears up for a grand finale, releasing some highly anticipated films. *Skanda* among the lined-up releases, promises an entertaining cinematic experience.

Let's delve into the exclusive interview with one of the leading ladies Saiee Manjrekar, as she's set to hit the screens and captivate audiences in this final week of the month!

"*Skanda*'s whole set-up is actually really good. To cast Ram Pothineni was nothing short of eminence. We did trial after trial to get my look right, it's very important for an actress. But yes, somewhere down the line I would love to move away from doing the roles of just romantic interests," shared the *Major* fame.

Our cinema is a mirror that reflects time. So she's okay with not playing a decorative subject always, and rather become a strong force in the cinema. Thus far, "This doesn't mean the romantic interests I have played weren't solid, they were. In the movie *Major*—I had so much to do even as a wife. My style of acting has changed for *Skanda*. I have gone a step further."

Skanda is an action-packed entertainer directed by the illustrious Boyapati Srinu. The film, produced by Srinivasa Chitturi, is all set to premiere on September 28. But the protagonist spilled her guts out a little bit more. "We shot the popular song of the movie in the fields. Bits and pieces of it at the waterfall too! So dancing on such rocky terrains was a test for me. We were shooting in Mysore,

and then on and off Hyderabad.

As soon as our dance sequences used to finish, and cut to all of us gobbling down the local food of Mysore. The restaurants at Mysore were really cool."

A unique aspect of *Skanda* all of them will be seen in distinctive roles, promising a thrilling cinematic experience for their fans and the actress continues, "As a director and actor himself, my father is really happy with my filmography in South. The feedback is also getting better! Then Ram and I bonded over food and travelling a lot when in Hyderabad together. I always saw him taking care of the crew members as much as he could. Now when comparisons are being drawn between Sreeleela and myself, we can't be the same. Even after bagging so many projects, she continues with her hard work and has a very pleasant personality off-screen. I would love to have the mass popularity though. In fact, I even admire Keerthy Suresh's line-up. And I am not worried about the critics."

All set with her upcoming release, actress Saiee Manjrekar sits down with **The Pioneer** over an exclusive chat about *Skanda*, going a step ahead in acting with the project, and more.

tollywood



Tovino Thomas: Being chosen as India's official entry for the Oscars is an incredible recognition

The Malayalam film *2018: Everyone Is A Hero*, which stars Tovino Thomas and Kunchacko Boban, has been selected to represent India as the country's official entry at the 96th Academy Awards, by the Film Federation of India on Wednesday.

Hereafter, the film will compete in the Oscars if it is selected by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for the final nomination list.

The film narrates the stories of humanity overcoming the adversity set against the backdrop of the 2018 floods that devastated parts of Kerala. Tovino Thomas essays the role of a young man in the film who leaves the Indian Army with a fake medical certificate and redeems himself during the floods.

The film also stars Asif Ali, Lal, Narain, Kunchacko Boban and Aparna Balamurali in prominent roles.

Reacting to the news, actor Tovino Thomas said, "Being chosen as India's official entry for the Oscars is truly an incredible recognition for our film. It's not just a moment of pride for me as an actor, but for the entire team that poured their heart and soul into this project. *2018* is a reflection of the resilience and indomitable spirit of the people of Kerala in the face of one of the most devastating natural disasters of our time."

He further mentioned, "Through the film, we aim to remind everyone that amidst the chaos and destruction, there is always a glimmer of hope, and it's the human spirit that shines the brightest. This nomination serves as a shining example of our collective efforts, and I am hopeful that it will resonate with the international audience, just

as it did with our own."

2018: Everyone Is A Hero is one of the highest grossers of Malayalam cinema and clashed at the ticket windows with *The Kerala Story* - the Hindi film incidentally set on its soil. The makers of *2018: Everyone Is A Hero* even went on to market the Malayalam film as the 'Real' Kerala story and not the Hindi film which received the flak from a section of audience for staging a propaganda.

2018: Everyone Is A Hero in fact finds a mention in the top three highest-grossing Malayalam films of all time.

Produced by Venu Kunnappilly, C. K. Padmakumar, and Anto Joseph, *2018: Everyone Is A Hero* is directed by Jude Anthony Joseph. The film is also available to stream on Sony LIV.

The 96th Oscars for films released in 2023 will be held on March 10, 2024, in Los Angeles.



VD-Mrunal starrer VD13 completes half of its shoot

Vijay Deverakonda's movie with director Parasuram Petla went on the floors in July. Producers Dil Raju and Shirish on Wednesday revealed that the shoot of the untitled film has been completed to the tune of 50%.

Starring Sita Ramam actress Mrunal Thakur as the female lead, the film is firmly on its way to being released in theatres for Sankranti 2024. The reiteration by Sri Venkateswara Creations comes in the wake of rumours that Nani's *Hi Nanna* and Venkatesh's *Saindhav* might choose

the Sankranti slot due to the release of *Salaar* on December 22 this year.

Cinematographer KU Mohanan of *Maharshi* fame and *Geetha Govindam* composer Gopi Sunder are working on the movie. AS Prakash (art director), Marthand K Venkatesh (editor) and others are working on the project.

Besides this project, the *Kushi* actor is also doing a film with *Jersey* director Gowtam Tinnanuri. He will also be teaming up with Dil Raju on a film to be directed by Ravi Kiran Kola of 'Raja Vaaru Rani Vaaru' fame.

'If anyone finds MAD a lesser comedy than Jathi Ratnalu, we'll refund their ticket'

MAD, produced by Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas, will be released in theatres on October 6. Narne Nithin, Sangeeth Shoban, and Ram Nithin are joined by Sri Gouri Priya Reddy, Ananthika Sanilkumar and Gopikaa Udayan to headline this college campus comedy.

At an event on Tuesday, producer S Naga Vamsi promised that *MAD* will leave the audience in splits. "If anyone from the audience found *MAD* a lesser comedy compared with *Jathi Ratnalu*, we will refund their ticket amount," said the producer, known for films like *Bheemla Nayak*. The producer assured everyone that there is nothing vulgar about the comedy. "If,

on the release day, anybody finds even a single line crass, they can question me," Naga Vamsi said.

Meanwhile, Narne Nithin, who is Jr NTR's brother-in-law shared, "It was my sister Haarika who asked me to check out Nithin's profile. I liked him. Tarak garu didn't say anything in particular before the start of this film. He just asked me to do a good film with Nithin," Naga Vamsi revealed. Nithin later added that there is so much to learn from his 'bava'. "I have always wanted to become an actor. Even as a child, I had that strong desire. After my sister's marriage, that desire only became intense. I am glad that

I am debuting with a movie like *MAD*," he said.

"This is a mad fun film that is definitely not about the dreams and aspirations of Engineering undergrads. This is a pure entertainer, a no-holds-barred one at that," said director Kalyan Shankar. "I am hoping that *MAD* will bring me commercial success and also respect. The three male besties will make you laugh and also move you. You will be reminded of your best friend after you watch *MAD*. You will want to call him or her as you walk out of the theatre."

The makers will hold early paid premiers from October 3 in cities like Hyderabad if the content is ready by then.



Filmmakers shower praises for Kumari Srimathi

Creators of the upcoming Telugu comedy drama *Kumari Srimathi*, which exclusively premieres on Prime video from today, recently held a special screening of one episode of the series for media and friends from the industry. Filmmakers like Nandini Reddy and Hanu Raghavapudi, along with the cast including Talluri Rameswari, Prem Sagar, Nirupam, Mahesh Achanta and Praneeta Patnaik, director Gomtesh Upadhye, producer Swapna Dutta and Manish Meghna, Director and Head Content Licensing, Prime Video, graced the blue carpet.

At the end of the screening, all attendees gave a thunderous applause, appreciating the engaging narrative, humorous

storyline, and sincere performances delivered by the ensemble cast of the series.

Set in a village in East Godavari, the series hilariously encapsulates the tribulations in the life of a 30-year-old woman (played by Menen), who challenges stereotypes in a small town riddled with antiquity. The seven-episode series is produced by Early Monsoon Tales, a web division of Vyjanyanthi Entertainments with a legacy of 50 years, and directed by Gomtesh Upadhye.

Kumari Srimathi will exclusively premiere in India and 240 countries and territories worldwide on Prime Video on September 28 in Telugu, with dubs in Hindi, Tamil, and Malayalam.

Dochevarevarura to stream on Aha from September 29



Dochevarevarura, directed by Siva Nageswara Rao, is a comedy thriller starring Ajay Ghosh (in a dual role), Master Chakri, Bittiri Sathi (as a supari killer) and others. Now the latest update is that Aha Video is going to stream the movie starting September 29.

Starring Pranav Chandra (as the protagonist), Malavika Sateeshan (as the hero's love interest), Banerjee, Tanikella Bharani, Kota Srinivasa Rao and others, the film comes with a cynical understanding of the world: everyone in this society is seeking to exploit others. In *Dochevarevarura*, the male protagonist turns into a swindler to fund the treatment of an orphan child. With music by Rohit Vardhan and Karthik, its cinematography is by Ganesh Atri. Aha Video is also going to stream *Papam Pasivaadu*, starring Sreerama Chandra as the protagonist, on September 29. From October 6, *The Great Indian Suicide*, starring Ram Karthik and Hebah Patel, will be streamed on the platform. This Friday (September 29), a new episode of the Vishwak Sen-hosted *Family Dhamaka* will be out on the OTT platform.

Rohit Nanda: Even the visually impaired can watch the film and enjoy it

Starring Rohit Nanda and Anandi in lead roles, Ranjith S has produced the film *Vidhi* under No Idea Entertainment. This movie written and directed by Srikanth Ranganathan and Srinath Ranganathan and Sri Charan Pakala is providing music for this movie. Srinath

Ranganathan worked as a cinematographer. On Wednesday, the makers unveiled the first look of the film during an event, where the entire cast and crew had graced the event. On this occasion, Producer Ranjith said that *Vidhi* is a different concept, which will impress the audience.

Actor Rohit Nanda speaking at the event said, "The journey behind the making of *Vidhi* has been special for us. We are bringing this movie to the audience with audio descriptive technology. Even blind people can experience this movie. Sri Charan Pakala gave excellent music and background score. We are also going to show this movie to the visually challenged people. There are about ten lakh blind people in two Telugu states. 90 percent of them may not have been to the theatres. They all can go to the theater and enjoy this movie. Evidence Foundation, Delhi has helped develop this app.

Srikanth and Srinath were introduced through YouTube. I worked comfortably with Anandi. Sri Charan has given the classic music. Thanks to everyone who worked for our film."

Director and cameraman Srinath, who had initially worked in the media industry said, "I want the media to consider this movie as their own and take it forward. Thanks to the producer Ranjith for giving us a chance. Director Srikanth said, "*Vidhi* is our first film. It means it's our first lover. There are many memories. I will tell you all that in future events. Thanks to God and our team for giving us this opportunity. Small filmmakers like us need media support and we expect lot of love from you. During the writing time, both my brothers had fights. Fights are natural between brothers and sisters. But when he came to the sets, he was just professional and acted like nothing happened."