

# sunday pioneer

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Three services used to work in 'silos' earlier

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PM launches world's LARGEST grain storage programme

Sole CUSTODIAN of Burra Veena

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## QUOTE OF THE DAY

VIPs are getting killed in road accidents in recent times due to inexperienced drivers. The Transport Department will conduct fitness tests for drivers driving the vehicles of Ministers, MLAs, MLCs, IAS and IPS officials soon. VIPs should choose only the selected drivers when they travel long distances

- Ponnamp Prabhakar, Transport Minister

## DON'T MISS...

### Modi to inaugurate 554 Amrit...

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate 554 Amrit Stations and 1,500 Road over Bridges (RoBs) worth Rs 1,800 crore of the South Central Railway next August, the SCR announced on Saturday. Modi will also inaugurate 15 railway stations in Telangana, 34 railway stations in Andhra Pradesh, six railway stations in Maharashtra and two railway stations in Karnataka worth Rs 925 crore. The PM will also inaugurate RoBs worth Rs 927.31 crore. The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme...

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### India, Maldives & Sri Lanka's...

Highlighting the importance of "collaboration and interoperability" among the coast guards personnel of the Maldives, India and Sri Lanka, Maldivian Defence Minister Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon said the trilateral exercise Dosti' will unite the troika to address "shared maritime security concerns through collaboration." Maumoon was speaking at an event to formally inaugurate the 16th iteration of Dosti," the biennial exercise, which began on Thursday and would continue until Sunday. Indian Coast Guard ship Samarth and ICGS...

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### IRF calls for making seat belts...

International Road Federation (IRF) -- a global road safety body -- has urged the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) to make the use of seat belts mandatory in all heavy vehicles, including passenger buses and school buses, to minimise casualties and injuries in road accidents. IRF President Emeritus K K Kapila in a letter to MoRTH said there is an urgent need to provide seats belts in buses, which need to be made mandatory. "There have been heart-wrenching passenger bus accidents resulting in loss of innocent..."

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### Scientists measure gravity at...

Scientists have measured gravity at the microscopic scale in a new study, which they say paves the way for finding the elusive quantum gravity theory. The gravitational force, originally discovered by physicist and mathematician Isaac Newton, is known to be fundamentally weak, gaining prominence and being detectable only at macroscopic scales. Einstein's theory of general relativity - the widely accepted theory of gravity - has been confirmed through experiments multiple times, more recently by directly observing gravitational waves from the merging of two black holes in 2016 and other black hole imaging studies. However, in the quantum realm, or at the atomic scale, how the gravitational force...

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## DELHI LIQUOR CASE

### Will CBI arrest Kavitha?

SNCN ACHARYULU  
■ HYDERABAD

The Centre has again become active in the Delhi liquor scam ahead of the Lok Sabha elections and is getting ready to take action against BRS MLC K. Kavitha, the daughter of BRS supremo K. Chandrasekhar Rao.

The CBI has summoned Kavitha to appear before them on February 26 in connection with the Delhi liquor scam. Perhaps, Kavitha may ignore the CBI summons like she did in the past when she was summoned by the ED.

February 26 and 28 are crucial days for Kavitha. The Supreme Court protection for Kavitha from arrest and summoning by probe agencies ended on February 16. Now, only the CBI has summoned Kavitha to appear on February 26.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court is taking up the petition filed by Kavitha objecting to the CBI summons in which she said that women should be interrogated only at their residences.

Will Kavitha appear before the CBI on February 26 or not? As the Supreme Court's protection for Kavitha from arrest has ended political observers are interested in knowing whether the CBI will arrest her.

At the same time, the Supreme Court's decision on Kavitha's petition scheduled on February 28 is



also creating interest. During the recent Telangana Assembly elections, the Centre gave the impression that Kavitha may be arrested at any time. But finally, the Centre remained silent on the issue.

With Lok Sabha elections round the corner, the Centre has again become active in the Delhi liquor case. The difference now is that the CBI has named Kavitha as an accused in the Delhi liquor scam.

In March 2023, Kavitha appeared before the ED in New Delhi and was questioned regarding her role in the Delhi liquor scam.

Meanwhile, Kavitha filed a petition in the Supreme Court saying that women should be questioned only at their homes and objected to the ED action summoning her to appear in their office. In this case, the Supreme Court recently extended Kavitha's protection from arrest and summoning by probe agencies till February 16.

# Safety of land records worrying

## CM orders probe into agency running Dharani Portal

K VENKATESHWARLU  
■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy ordered a comprehensive inquiry into the agency running the Dharani Portal.

The CM questioned the handing over of the Dharani Portal's maintenance to a private agency instead of the CCLA (Chief Commissioner of Land Administration) which is expected to handle the portal on behalf of the government.

The CM expressed serious concern about the safety of the land records of lakhs of farmers which is now in the hands of foreign companies. Attending a review meeting of the Dharani Committee on Saturday at the Secretariat, the Chief Minister blamed the BRS government for



CM Revanth at Dharani Committee's review on Saturday

keeping highly confidential land data, Aadhaar and bank account details with the agency and also raised doubts on whether the land records are safe.

The officials informed the CM that the BRS government had

entrusted the design, development and management of the Dharani Portal to a company named IL&FS based on technical and financial bidding and qualifications in 2018.

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## Geetha Reddy's absence from Cabinet a shortcoming: CM

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that the absence of TPCC Working President Geetha Reddy (Gitakka) in the Cabinet is a shortcoming. The 33rd death anniversary of J. Ishwaribai was held at the Ravindra Bharati under the auspices of the Telangana Language and Culture Department and the Eshwari Bai Memorial Trust. Chief Minister Revanth attended the function as the

chief guest along with Ministers Jupalli Krishna Rao, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Ponnamp Prabhakar. The CM paid tributes to Eshwari Bai's portrait and visited the photo exhibition at Ravindra Bharati. Speaking on the occasion, Revanth said that Ishwaribai had made her mark in politics inspired by Ambedkar.

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CM along with Ministers paying tributes to Eshwari Bai at a function held at Ravindra Bharati on Saturday

## Resolve all Dharani applications

### CM directs officials

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy asked officials to resolve all pending Dharani applications immediately. The Chief Minister told officials to make arrangements in all Mandal Tahsildar offices to dispose of applications in the first week of March. The CM also directed the Revenue Department to formulate terms and conditions for the disposal of pending applications by taking into consideration the suggestions of the Dharani Committee. Around 2.45 lakh applications are pending regarding the Dharani Portal across the state. The Chief Minister discussed with officials the possibility of addressing all pending applications in the first phase. The CM asked the authorities to resolve these issues immediately without troubling farmers and to make arrangements for the same in the first week of March. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy held a review meeting with the Dharani Committee at the Secretariat on Saturday.

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## Screening tests for VIP's drivers soon

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Transport Department will conduct tests for drivers driving the vehicles of Ministers, MLAs, MLCs and IAS and IPS officials soon, Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar said.

Ponnamp said that some VIPs were killed in recent road accidents due to inexperienced drivers. The Minister said that the Transport Department will send letters to all VIPs in this regard. The Minister advised VIPs to appoint only select drivers if they want to travel long distances.



In a chit-chat with scribes at the Gandhi Bhavan on Saturday, Ponnamp Prabhakar said that the RTC is suffering from the debts of

Rs 6,000 crore contracted during the BRS government.

The Minister said that women are travelling in TSRTC buses in a big way due to the Mahalaxmi scheme free bus travel. He said that women are visiting all temples in the state and subsequently the revenue increased.

The Minister said that 50 lakh people are travelling every day in TSRTC buses after introduction of the Mahalaxmi scheme. The RTC is running in benefit path now and that he had purchased new buses.

2

## Revanth trying to create differences, says Subhash

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Chief Minister Revanth Reddy wants to follow in the footsteps of former Chief Minister KCR by creating differences between Indians on the eve of the 2024 Parliament elections, the BJP's TS spokesperson Subhash said. He said that Revanth wanted to win at least a few LS seats in Telangana by creating differences among the people of Telangana.

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## JAAHNAVI CASE

### Indian mission raises issue with Seattle officials

#### Family shocked over decision of authorities

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

India's consulate in Seattle has raised with authorities the case of Indian student Jaahnavi Kandula after the prosecution attorney said an over-speeding Seattle police officer who struck and killed her while responding to a drug overdose call will not face any criminal charges citing lack of "sufficient" evidence.

Kandula, 23, from Andhra



Pradesh, was struck by a police vehicle driven by Officer Kevin Dave when she was crossing a street in Seattle on January 23 last year. He was driving 74 mph (more than 119 km/h) on the way to a report of a drug overdose call.

Kandula was thrown 100 feet when she was struck by the speeding police patrol vehicle.

2

## YADADRI THERMAL POWER PLANT

### Bhatti orders officials to speed up

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarkamallu ordered officials to complete the Yadadri Thermal Power Project quickly.

On Saturday, along with Ministers Uttam Kumar Reddy and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, he visited the thermal project under construction in the Damaracharla mandal of Nalgonda district in a helicopter and held a review meeting with officials.

When asked about the project's progress, he said that 1,600 MW will be generated by two units in September 2024, and 4,000 MW will be generated by five units by March 2025.

Earlier, petitions were received



Deputy CM Bhatti addressing officials on Yadadri Thermal Power Project on Saturday. Ministers Uttam Kumar Reddy and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy are also seen in the picture

from locals near the thermal power station. The Deputy CM congratulated officials for giving a good presentation on the project's progress.

He said that Ministers Uttam Kumar Reddy and Venkat are aware of the project and said that both of them worked for the project's progress during their MP tenures. Officials were directed to seek the

full cooperation of the two ministers for the project's completion.

The thermal plant's outlay increased hugely as the estimated cost of the project was hiked twice and as a result, it has become a burden on the exchequer.

2

## OBTUSE ANGLE



2

## Medaram Jatara ends, drawing 1.35 cr pilgrims

PNS ■ MULUGU

The four-day tribal Sammakka-Saralamma Jatara held in the Medaram village of Tadwai mandal ended on Saturday and lakhs of tribal devotees left for their hamlets and villages after paying obeisance to the tribal goddesses.

The Minister for Panchayat Raj, Seetakka, thanked the officials who worked for the success of the Medaram festival. She said that 1.35 crore pilgrims visited Sammakka and Saralamma.

Addressing the media on the last



Lakhs of devotees attending the last day of tibal festival on Saturday in Medaram village

day of the three-day festival on Saturday, she pointed out that the government had earmarked Rs 100

crore for the Medaram Jatara.

In all, officials of 20 government departments spared no efforts to

make the Jatara a grand success.

The TSRTC operated 6,000 buses and 12,000 trips to transport devotees to Medaram. In all, 5,090 people went missing during the festival. Of them, 562 were traced and reunited with their families. 32 children too are in the safe custody of officials, she noted.

She asked the parents of the missing children to contact Media Point and a missing persons point was set up near Jampanna Vaagu.

In all, 4,000 sanitation workers were engaged to conduct sanitation works at Medaram for 10 days from Monday, she said.

## 9 IPS promoted; Stephen Raveendra ADGP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Stephen Raveendra, an IPS officer of the 1999 batch has been empanelled for promotion to the rank of the Additional Director General of Police in the Above Super Time Scale (i) Level 15 in Pay Matrix of IPS (Pay) Rules, 2016.

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# With YouTuber, KTR and Cong on the same page

Bharat Rashtra Samithi leaders may send out feelers about an alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party even while being on the page with the Congress on political matters. BRS MLA KT Rama Rao has been promoting Dhruv Rathee, a YouTuber based out of Germany, who has made a video against Modi. Dhruv Rathee's latest video depicting Modi as a dictator is being amplified extensively by the Congress at the national level. The Congress has posted Dhruv Rathee's video on their official YouTube channel. Interestingly, at the local level, BRS has been amplifying it. BRS MLA KTR did the honours on X. Mind you, this is happening at a time when TPCC chief and CM Revanth Reddy has been taunting the BRS and BJP of having a secret alliance.

## 'Congress' contractors' bills cleared

People from various walks of life cannot help dealing with politicians directly or indirectly. However, it pays them always only if they are apolitical. In Telangana, following regime change, only contractors blessed by the governing 'hand' are having a field day. Ironically, most of the bills kept pending by the previous Bharat Rashtra Samithi government, apparently due to political considerations, are being cleared without any visible consideration. That is, bills relating to pro-Congress and Congress leaders, who happen to be also contractors, are being cleared expeditiously. In the erstwhile BRS regime, few bills were cleared and they were not those related to Congress leaders. While Komatireddy brothers, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and others belonging to the ilk are reaping the benefits of the Congress government coming to power, those in the other camp may have to wait indefinitely.

## 'Break' for CBN-a joke gone awry

The other day, TDP supremo and ex-CM N Chandrababu Naidu's wife N Bhuvaneshwari, who has been campaigning across Andhra Pradesh for her husband as part of her 'Nijam gelavali'

(Truth must win) yatra, started thinking loudly during a programme at the Kuppam Assembly constituency resulting in a bit of breaking news spreading like wild fire briefly. Addressing people, she said: "Let me share something and please feel free to react. I felt a certain urge within me. Chandrababu Naidu has been enjoying enduring trust of the people. Kuppam residents have consistently backed him for 35 years. May I suggest that he should take a break, and I should step into the electoral arena?" Let

Minister recalled that, in the previous BRS government, not only scribes but also (present Panchayatraj Minister) Seethakka was not allowed to enter the new Secretariat after its inauguration. Now, the Chief Minister claimed, scribes are visiting every Minister's chamber inside the Secretariat freely.

Scribes write about 'sentimental' CMs and PMs in a sarcastic manner. But their own fraternal colleagues are not beyond sentiments. One of the scribes commented that the Chief Minister will certainly fulfil the promise relating to house sites for journalists. For, the one with nose for news for newsmen averred: "The Chief Minister made his promise during Jatarata time". In contrast, he recalled the CM's reported comment for effect: "ex-CM K Chandrasekhar Rao paid a heavy price for neglecting the Sammakka-Sarakka Medaram Jatarata".

## Is media landing Dharani-Bhumatha in trouble?

Media persons worth their salt do their job, nothing more and nothing less. As for the Dharani portal, much has been written about its ills during the previous Bharat Rashtra Samithi regime. The Congress government, which had promised to clean up the mess with its own portal called Bhumatha, is perhaps scared of media monitoring of the transition. Otherwise, why would the state government ask the Dharani Committee to take a call on organizing press conferences after every sitting?

It is learnt that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has directed the Dharani Committee members not to conduct press meets after its meeting every time. Scribes on the Secretariat beat, who read between the lines, gathered that the CM was concerned that the right message was not going out through such pressers. So, the CM directed the Committee members, particularly Kisan Congress national vice-chairman, not to conduct press meet after every meeting of the Dharani Committee.

(With inputs from Naveena Ghanate, SNCN Acharyulu and K Venkateshwari)

alone the gathering, TDP leaders and cadre were also taken aback at her astounding statement. Although the sound bite had spread from Kuppam to Kanyakumari within minutes, Bhuvaneshwari finally said: "I was just teasing. I have no aspirations for any positions. My husband takes care of me well". People are of the view that this 'joke', call it conjugal teasing or whatever, could prove costly for Chandrababu, coming as it does from his own wife.

## Why scribes feel at home with Revanth

Scribes hopeful of getting house sites are happy these days, thanks to Chief Minister Anumula Revanth Reddy's resolve to give them their due, which was revealed after his darshan of the deities on Friday at the Sammakka-Sarakka Jatarata. The matter would be handled upon the appointment of the Media Committee chairman, he added.

Like at every available opportunity, when newshounds asked him about house sites for scribes, the Chief Minister made it clear: "the Congress government will solve the issue within 100 days". This implies that the present government, which has completed 75 days, needs only 20 plus days maximum for the issue in question. Mentioning that the government "belongs to journalists", the Chief Minister urged scribes to concentrate on writing about the conspiracies of the BRS and the BJP. Drawing a parallel, the Chief

IF THERE WAS NO UNEMPLOYMENT

# Youth would not use mobiles 12 hours a day, says Rahul

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said youngsters would not be using their mobile phones for 12 hours a day had there been no unemployment in the country.

Rahul Gandhi said this while addressing a gathering in Sambhal as part of his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra.

The Congress leader's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra reached Sambhal via Moradabad and Amroha, where Congress and Samajwadi Party leaders welcomed Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

Speaking at the Chandausi intersection, Rahul Gandhi asked a man, "How many hours do you use your mobile?" to which he replied, "Twelve hours."

Responding to this, Rahul Gandhi said, "There is no employment in India, that is why you use your mobile phone for 12 hours. Did you know that the sons of big businessmen don't watch Reels, they count money 24 hours (a day)?"

"If you get employment, you will watch Reels for half an hour and work for 12 hours," the Congress leader said. Rahul Gandhi - who has claimed several times during the yatra that people from backward



classes, Dalits and SC/ST communities don't hold senior positions -- sharpened his attack on their lack of representation.

He said, "If we take out the list of employees of any company take out the list of owners. Not one backward class, Dalit owner will be found. Take out the list of owners of media houses, private colleges or judges of high courts."

The same three to four per cent people (from upper castes) keep working in these positions."

Rahul Gandhi also claimed that work is being done to eliminate small farmers and

traders. "You are being starved to death, you are being destroyed. Exam paper gets leaked because these people do not want to provide employment to the youth of India. They cannot provide employment to them," the Congress leader claimed.

Gandhi said he undertook the 4,000-kilometre Bharat Jodo Yatra from Kanyakumari to Kashmir last year because the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh are spreading hatred in all corners of the country.

Cornering the media, the Congress leader said,

"Whenever we present our views in the media, the media does not show it. Be it the hard work of workers, unemployment, inflation -- these things are not going to be visible in the media."

"A shop of love has to open in the market of hatred," Rahul Gandhi said and added, "My work is to fight and eradicate hatred from the country."

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also lashed out at the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh, alleging that bulldozers are used to demolish homes of "innocent people" while the "guilty" escape unscathed.

GO 317

## Govt forms Cabinet sub-committee

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government issued orders setting up a Cabinet Sub-committee to review GO: 317 with Minister Damodara Rajanarsimha as its Chairman. The government allotted employees to new districts as per GO: 317.

Many employees objected that they have been treated unfairly. The Congress promised in its manifesto that it will review GO: 317 and solve the problem of affected employees.

MLC Balmoor Venkat said, "As promised earlier, the Prajala government took the first step in addressing

the issues of GO 317 and GO 46 by constituting a 3-member cabinet sub-committee with Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha as its Chairman and Ministers Sridhar Babu and Ponnamp Prabhakar as household members. The sub-committee will thoroughly examine these GOs and make recommendations.

## 9 IPS promoted; Stephen...

Continued from page 1

Consequent to empanelment, Stephen Raveendra has been promoted to the rank of Additional Director General of Police and retained in the same post, that is, Addl DGP, Home Guards. The MoS is also placed in Full Additional Charge of Addl., DGP, Welfare & Sports in Telangana.

Six IPS officers of the Telangana cadre have been empanelled for promotion to the Super Time Scale (ii) in the rank of Inspector General of Police, Level 14 in the Pay Matrix of IPS (Pay) Rules, 2016. This includes Kartikeya, IPS (RR: 2006), who has been retained in the same post as Inspector General of Police, Intelligence. Ramesh Naidu, IPS (SPS: 2006) has been retained in the same post as Managing Director, Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation (TSTDC), Hyderabad, in the rank of Inspector General of Police.

# 24 die as tractor-trolley falls into stream in UP

PNS ■ KASGANJ

Twenty-four people, including eight children, died when their tractor-trolley overturned and fell into a stream in Uttar Pradesh's Kasganj district on Saturday morning, police said.

They said 15 to 20 people were injured in the accident

that occurred on the Patiayali-Dariyavganj road under the Patiayali police station area when the occupants of the tractor-trolley were going to take a bath in the Ganga river.

Inspector General of Aligarh Range Shalabh Mathur said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has condoled the loss of lives



in the accident and announced financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh to the kin of each of the deceased and Rs 50,000 to the injured.

## Safety of land...

Continued from page 1

The CM and Dharani Committee members held a detailed discussion on the agency's operations which went bankrupt later and changed its name to Terrasys Technologies Limited, changed all directors and then sold its shares to Falcon Investment Company.

The Chief Minister inquired how the BRS government permitted the agency which won

the bid to change its name as it liked and also change companies.

The Chief Minister also inquired with officials on whether there are any rules for handing over land records to foreign companies or anyone else.

Revanth said it was astonishing that the company, which had won the Dharani tender for Rs 116 crore in 2018, sold its shares for around Rs 1,200 crore later.

## Resolve all Dharani...

Continued from page 1

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, the Chief Adviser to the Chief Minister, Vemmareddy Reddy, Dharani Committee Members M. Kodanda Reddy, retired IAS officer Raymond Peter, Advocate Sunil, Retired Special Grade Collector B. Madhusudan, Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari, Revenue Department Principal Secretary Naveen Mithal, the CM's Principal Secretary Seshadri, CCLA officer Lacchi Reddy and other high officials attended the meeting. The Dharani Committee submitted a report to the Chief Minister at the meeting. The report pointed out flaws in the ROR Act (The Telangana Rights in Land and

Pattadar Pass Books Act) which came into force in 2020.

The committee explained to the Chief Minister that a comprehensive cleansing of land records was conducted in haste in just three months and that it created a lot of problems. The same land records have been taken as the parameter and so land disputes increased in the state. As a result, lakhs of land ownership problems came to light. Due to this, even small typographical errors in names have to be corrected by the district collector. The committee brought to the CM's notice that the Revenue Department allowed correcting mistakes in Dharani data through 35 modules, but farmers are facing difficulties as they do not know which modules to apply for.

## New criminal...

Continued from page 1

According to three identical notifications issued by the Union Home Ministry, provisions of the new laws will come into force from July 1.

The laws will replace the colonial-era Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872 respectively.

The three legislations aim at completely overhauling the criminal justice system in the country by giving definitions of various offences and their punishments.

# All 3 RS candidates...

Continued from page 1

The affidavit of candidate GC Chandrashekar (INC) contesting from Karnataka was not analysed as it was badly scanned.

Eight (27%) out of 30 candidates from the BJP, six (67%) out of nine candidates from the INC, 1 (25%) out of 4 candidates from the AITC, 2 (67%) of three candidates from the SP, 1 (33%) of the three YSRCP candidates, 1 (50%) of the 2 candidates from the RJD, 1 (50%) of the

two candidates from the BJD and one (100%) candidate from the BRS have declared criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits.

Among major parties, 4 (13%) out of 30 candidates of the BJP, 2 (22%) out of 9 candidates of the INC, 2 (67%) of the 3 candidates from the YSRCP, 1 (33%) of the 3 candidates from the SP, 1 (100%) candidate from the SHS, 1 (100%) candidate from the NCP and 1 (100%) JD(S) candidate have declared assets valued at more than Rs 100

crore.

Three (27%) of 11 candidates from Uttar Pradesh, two (33%) of 6 candidates from Maharashtra, 2 (67%) out of 3 candidates from Andhra Pradesh, 1 (25%) out of 4 candidates from Karnataka, 1 (33%) out of 3 candidates from Telangana, 1 (33%) out of 3 candidates from Odisha, 1 (50%) of 2 candidates from Himachal Pradesh and 1 (25%) of 4 candidates from Gujarat have declared assets of more than Rs 100 crore.

## Chinna Reddy..

Continued from page 1

However, he fell silent after YSR became the CM of United Andhra Pradesh.

It may be recalled that the Congress first gave Wanganparthy ticket to Chinna Reddy. However, the party later gave the ticket to Thoodi Megha Reddy, who won defeating BRS candidate Singireddy Niranjan Reddy.

The party had assured Chinna Reddy then that it would give him a suitable post. Sticking to its word, the Congress has now given him a post with Cabinet rank.

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# Modi to inaugurate 554 Amrit Stations, 1,500 RoBs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate 554 Amrit Stations and 1,500 Road over Bridges (RoBs) worth Rs 1,800 crore of the South Central Railway next August, the SCR announced on Saturday.

Modi will also inaugurate 15 railway stations in Telangana, 34 railway stations in Andhra Pradesh, six railway stations in Maharashtra and two railway stations in Karnataka worth Rs 925 crore. The PM will also 156 inaugurate RoBs worth Rs 927.31 crore.

The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) launched by the Railway Ministry is aimed at modernizing railway stations. The idea is based on the implementation of various critical elements that cater to the increasing needs of railway



*The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) launched by the Railway Ministry is aimed at modernizing railway stations.*

stations.

The facilities planned under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme are the improvement of facades, providing aesthetically pleasing entrance porches, betterment of rail station approaches to ensure smooth access by widening roads, proper signage, dedicated pedestrian pathways, well-planned parking areas, improved lighting etc.

The plan also includes landscaping, providing green patches, local art to create a pleasant experience for rail users, earmarking stalls for the 'One Station One Product' scheme, enabling second entry for the station building and circulating area as per feasibility, construction of high-level platforms and adequate platform shelters, provision of passenger facilities like high-quality pub-

lic announcement systems, LED station name boards, and improvements to waiting halls.

Of the 156 RoBs Telangana will have 49, 59 will be in Andhra Pradesh, 19 in Maharashtra and 29 in Madhya Pradesh. This will help strengthen the safety of both road and rail users, facilitate seamless movement of road traffic without stoppings at level crossing gates, and will act as a bridge connecting localities, villages and towns.

SCR General Manager Arun Kumar Jain said, "These initiatives will strengthen rail infrastructure in the zone and also enhance safety standards. The redevelopment of these railway stations is being accorded top priority so that work gets completed within the planned time. Once completed, these stations will provide a unique experience to passengers."

## City man registers car in 2024, get 2020 challan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A man on February 23 claimed that his friend, who registered his newly bought car in 2024, has got traffic challan for his vehicle. He posted a photo showing details of the challan on the Telangana State Police's official website.

The X user named 'Night Owl' termed it a "Time Traveling Traffic Ticket", and urged the city traffic police to provide a solution to the issue. "Time-Traveling Traffic Ticket? Challan for a new Car Bought in 2024. Mystifies Owner with 2020.

## Kharge attends marriage reception of Sharmila's son

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy received the AICC president Mallikarjuna Kharge at Shamshabad Airport on Saturday night.

Mallikarjuna Kharge came to Hyderabad and attended the reception of the APCC president YS Sharmila's son YS Raja Reddy.

AICC general secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal, AICC in-charge general secretary to Andhra Pradesh State Manickam Tagore also attended the reception. The Telangana Ministers, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Ministers



All Indian Congress Committee president Mallikharjun Kharge, AICC general secretary KC Venugopal, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, former MP KVP Ramachandra Rao and others at the marriage reception of APCC president YS Sharmila's son in Hyderabad on Saturday

Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Jupally Krishna Rao, Ponnamp

Prabhakar and others attended the reception.

## Peak power demand recorded at 15031 mw in February

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Compared to last year, the consumption of electricity in the Telangana is 6.9 per cent higher in January and 4.6 per cent higher in February. Also, the maximum power demand in February 2023 was 14,649 MW while in February 2024 it was recorded as 15031 MW (up to 23rd February 2024). Peak demand 15031 MW on 23.02.2024 while 14526 MW on 23.02.2023. It is likely to increase further till the end of

this month.

The average power consumption in January and February 2023 was 242.95 million units while in January and February 2024 it reached 256.74 million units. Similarly, in the southern DISCOM, compared to last year, this year in the month of January, 6.67 percent and 6.24 percent in the month of February, higher consumption has been recorded in the state. In February 2023, the maximum power demand was 9043 MW

and till February 23, 2024 it was recorded as 9253 MW. It is likely to increase further till the end of this month. The average power consumption in January & February 2023 was 158.71 million units while in January & February 2024 it reached 169.36 million units.

In the area of Greater Hyderabad, 9.47% higher consumption has been recorded in the month of January and 12.27% in the month of February compared to last year. In February 2023, the

maximum power demand was 2930 MW and till February 23, 2024 it was recorded as 3174 MW.

The average electricity consumption in January & February 2023 was 51.69 million units while in January & February 2024 it reached 57.34 million units. 65 million units of electricity consumption in this February. Agricultural electricity consumption in the months of January and February last year and compared to the current year.

## Kamareddy Passport Seva Kendra operation suspended

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Operations at the Post Office Passport Seva Kendra in Kamareddy have been temporarily suspended due to operational reasons.

Applicants with appointments booked from February 26, 2024, will receive an SMS providing them with the option to reschedule their appointments.

Additional appointments are being made available at the Passport Seva Kendra in Nizamabad to accommodate these changes. However, applicants have the option to reschedule their appointments to any of the PSK's/POPSK's in Telangana according to their convenience and availability.

Hyderabad Regional passport office regretted any inconvenience caused and request public cooperation in this matter. Efforts are being made to resume operations at the earliest. For any other concerns, applicants may reach out to us at rpo.hyderabad@mea.gov.in

## No irregularities in promotions of professors: OU

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Osmania University has clarified that the allegation of irregularities in the

promotions of senior professors are baseless. It concluded that the promotion process was done in accordance with the UGC norms.

Registrar, Osmania University, Prof P Laxminarayana, said that following the G.O. No 15, the UGC rules and regulations have been strictly followed. The Registrar explained that it was wrong for a few people to allege that there were irregularities in the promotions of senior professors. If there are any doubts, it is suggested that the UGC rules can be examined once. He expressed concern that the reputation of Osmania University would be damaged by the spread of false information.

Although UGC Care List, Scopus, Peer Reviewed are options. They exhorted that it is not appropriate to spread false propaganda in their name. According to the public notice issued by UGC on September 16, 2019, the earlier UGC care list rules have been amended. He said the UGC selection committee should consider the quality of research of the faculty rather than just the number of articles. He said that for senior



professor promotions, 10 years of experience as a professor along with 10 research papers and 2 PhDs under their supervision should be awarded in the review period. According to the notification, the list of subject experts from other universities nominated by the Board of Studies (BoS) of the respective departments will be provided to the University.

It was explained that after the approval of the same list by the Executive Council, the respective experts will participate in the promotion process. To send the files of those who have applied for promotions to professionals. Based on their report only eligible candidates will be called for interview/interaction.

The Vice-Chancellor as Chairman, Governor Nominee as member, qualified Deans, Heads of Departments, Social Welfare Representatives and

subject experts nominated by BoS will participate in this process. It was explained that the list will be released based on the final decision given by the committee during the selection process.

According to the public notice given by UGC in 2019, it has been clarified that the opinion of the subject experts is the final decision.

The registrar has made it clear that every provision of the UGC, High Court and Supreme Court judgments has been followed in the promotions of senior professors in OU. Press and media friends have been requested to be vigilant against the spread of false information.

Everyone is asked to contribute to preserve the reputation of Osmania University, which has provided world-class leadership in various fields.

## GHMC Dy Mayor resigns from BRS, to join Congress today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GHMC Deputy Mayor Srilata Shobhan Reddy has resigned from the BRS Party on Saturday. Along with them, six BRS corporators have decided to resign from the party and join the Congress. Deputy mayor's couple has been unhappy with the leadership of the BRS party for some time now.

It seems that the leaders have resigned from the Congress party as they thought that they would get the right priority only if they joined the Congress party.

It is reported that they have mentioned to their followers that they are changing the party because the high command is not paying attention to them. It seems that some top leaders of the Congress have also invited the couple of Deputy Mayor Srilata to the



Mothe Srilatha Shobhan Reddy and her husband Mothe Shobhan Reddy

party. As part of the plan, Sobhan Reddy resigned from the basic membership of the party and from the post of president of BRS state labor department. They will join the Congress on Sunday at 11 am at Gandhi Bhavan in the presence of Telangana Congress in-charge Deepa Dasmunshi. In the letter of resignation, they

expressed their grief that the activists in BRS Party were not supported. GHMC Deputy Mayor Mothe Srilata Shobhan Reddy spoke to the media after resigning from the BRS party.

She said, "We are joining the Congress on Sunday. We have been in BRS for years and we fought in the movement. We did not get the pri-

ority we expected from the party high command. We were offended because we did not have a proper place in the party. We asked for MLA ticket but couldn't get, we asked for MP ticket but there is no possibility. My husband went to meet BRS working president KTR but was made to wait for an hour. We did not get justice in KCR's party and that's why we are leaving the party. We were hoping for the post of mayor of GHMC but we were given the post of deputy."

"The leaders of that party assured him that they will give him a good position from the Congress. He promised to give the post of mayor in the upcoming GHMC elections. That position is mine and I will stay here. You will see who will resign from the BRS party along with us and join the Congress," said Srilata Shobhan Reddy.

## 2 cyber criminals arrested in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The cybercrime unit of the Cyberabad police on Saturday arrested two persons for cheating people by promising jobs and defrauding them of Rs 1,70,000 and Rs 25,000 cash was seized from them.

The accused were identified as Mutchu Siva Prasad (32) and Battagiri Ranga Pardhu (26) both natives of Andhra Pradesh another person identified as Dhan Raju is absconding. The accused promised a job at the WNS global services. Based on an interview, a fake offer letter was handed to the victim; he was also asked to transfer the amount to a given bank account.

The incident happened on January 26, the victim received a call from Ranga Pardhu regarding placements in "WNS Global Services Private Ltd company" for Devops Associate software Engineer job role where will be Charges applicable. If interested, share your name and Study certificates copy along with Aadhar. He had shared his certificates through Whatsapp to their mobile number +91 8317567581. Later one person named Shiva called him and told that some jobs are available in "WNS Global Services Private Ltd company" Initially, he asked the charges of rupees 1,70,000/-



On 26-01-2024, So he agreed to pay the charges after receiving the offer letter. Then they agreed and requested him to pay for Rs. 20,000 as Initial fee, so that they schedule the Interview on January 27.

Following a virtual interview, the accused asked the victim to pay the remaining amount which agreed to. However, When he visited the office at Mindspace the personnel at the office informed him that it was a fake appointment letter. The complainant tried to contact the fraudsters but there was no response.

Prasad previously worked as an employee in Accenture, Infosys Hyderabad and innominds at Bangalore. He lost his job due to recession, later he contacted his previous acquaintance Raju, who secured him a job in Infosys in 2017. They planned to lure unemployed youth on the pretext of providing jobs and joined A3 in their team, who was also searching for a job. Later, they post the job vacancies in social media and whoever contacts them they'll promise victims to provide jobs in WNS Global service.

## Cong cut eligible recipients of free LPG & power schemes by 40%: BRS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS said that the Congress had slashed by 40% the number of eligible recipients for the Rs 500 LPG cylinder scheme and the 200 units free power supply schemes.

BRS leader Dasoju Sravan accused the Congress Government of cheating the people of Telangana regarding the six guarantees they gave during elections.

Addressing a press conference at the Telangana Bhavan on Saturday, Dasoju said that the Congress Government was not serious about implementing the guarantees and had been resorting to delaying tactics.

He said despite the availability of data on eligible beneficiaries, the Congress



Government enacted a drama named 'Praja Palana' and forced commoners to stand in long queues and spend to apply for those schemes.

He said that 'Praja Palana' was intended to delay the implementation of guarantees and to cut down most beneficiaries.

Referring to the announcement made by Chief Minister

Revanth Reddy during the Medaram Jatra on Friday, Sravan said that the Congress Government is planning to launch the two guarantees -LPG cylinders for Rs 500 and free electricity up to 200 units - on February 27 by inviting AICC General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi.

The Chief Minister also claimed that two guarantees of

free travel in TSRTC buses for women and an increase in the Rajiv Aarogyasri benefit to Rs 10 lakh had already been implemented by his government.

Dasoju clarified that 13 major promises were packed as six guarantees by the Congress government to deceive people.

He said that there are 1.24 crore LPG connections in the state. Of them, about 90 lakh consumers are white ration card holders. However, the Congress government proposed providing gas cylinders for Rs 500 to only 40 lakh people.

The BRS leader also condemned the Congress Government for putting a ceiling on the number of cylinders to three to five per year.

## Training programme held police personnel

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Cyberabad police personnel attending the training session in Hyderabad on Saturday

Cyberbad Commissioner of Police Avinash Mohanty on Saturday conducted a training programme for the police officials to identify critical polling stations.

The officers were briefed about the following during the session Identification of Critical Polling Stations by the Sector Police officers in coordination with Sector Officers of Revenue Department. Reasons for Critical Polling Stations and details of

points to be noted for sending reports to the DEO; Confidence Building measures to be taken to build confidence among the general public to cast their vote; Measures to be taken to conduct free, fair, participative, accessible, inclusive and safe election in Cyberabad limits and Force deployment in Critical Polling Stations.

As many as 18 Inspector of Police and 85 Sector Police Officers (SPOs) attended the training session from various Police Stations.

## Jayanthi of former AP speaker to be celebrated as State function

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Jayanthi of Duddilla Sripada Rao - former speaker of AP assembly & father of IT minister Sridhar Babu to be celebrated as "State function" on 2March2024. Telangana Government have decided to celebrate Birth Anniversary (Jayanthi) of (Late) Sri Duddilla Sripada Rao, Former Speaker, State Legislative Assembly, Erstwhile Andhra Pradesh falling on 02.03.2024 as a "State Function".

As per the orders of CS Santhi Kumari, Accordingly, all

the District Collectors are requested to celebrate Birthday (Jayanthi) of Duddilla Sripada Rao, Former Speaker, State Legislative Assembly, Erstwhile Andhra Pradesh as a "State Function".

The YAT&C Department shall take necessary further action in the matter duly meeting the expenditure from the budgetary provision of YAT&C Department. Duddilla Sripada Rao was Zamindar, he was a gold medalist lawyer and speaker in 1999. He was shot dead by Naxalites



GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA

O/o Superintending Engineer, PR, Region Karimnagar

E procurement Tender Notice

**NTT No.739 to 739/SE/Tenders/2023-24**

**De:24.02.2024**

Total No. of works (10) C/o Sub Centre Building at Sirpur (N) of Malkajgiri (M) in Jagtial District (4th Cell) & Health Sub centre buildings in Jagtial District & Rajanna Sircilla undersigned. Total Est Cost Rs.200.00 Lakhs Bid uplodging Starting Date: 23-02-2024 to Closing Date:07-03-2024.

Further details can be availed from e-procurement market place [www.tenders.telangana.gov.in](http://www.tenders.telangana.gov.in). Bid uplodging Starting Date: 28-02-2024 to Closing Date:07-03-2024.

**Sd/- Superintending Engineer,**  
**P.R. Region, Karimnagar**



GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA

ANDOLE - JOGIPET MUNICIPALITY, SANGAREDDY DISTRICT

NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

**R.No 78/ Andole - Jogipet/JM Works/2023-24**

**De: 25-02-2024**

Expression of interest is invited in sealed covers from experienced (in similar type of works) consultants for preparation of DPRs for Buildings and other Infrastructural Development works, in Andole - Jogipet Municipality under any grants for one year. A Demand Draft of Rs. 1000/- have to be drawn in favor of Commissioner, Andole - Jogipet Municipality. Last date for the issuing of schedule: De: 29-02-2024. Time: 3:00 PM. Last date for submission of sealed expression of interest: De: 29-02-2024. Time: 3:00 PM. Conditions: - 1. Conditions of EOI should be accepted. 2. Experience consultants in similar nature of works and eligibility criteria also be considered. 3. Consultant should be empanelled in any dept in any state. 4. Should have worked not less than Rs.30.00 crores project in single ULB in Telangana State. 5. The firm should have Rs.5.00 Crores of average financial turnover in last Three years. 6. The DPR should prepare in stipulated period and should get approved by the department. 7. The DPR shall be prepared as per the guidelines and norms and all the information as per the check list issued by the department. 8. Commissioner, Andole - Jogipet Municipality at his/its powers to accept or reject the sealed tenders. 9. E.O.I shall be submitted along with (Individual) DD for RS:- 9999/- have drawn in favor of Commissioner, Andole - Jogipet Municipality. 10 The rate quoted by the consultants shall be in percentage (%) of total estimated cost. Any other details contact on engineering section Andole - Jogipet Municipality in Working hours. Contact Mobile No:- Commissioner:- (9678758202) Municipal Engineer:- ( ) Commissioner, Andole-Jogipet Municipality. R.O. No.: 10872-PPICL/ADVT/1/2023-24





# Bhatti promises pattas to Podu farmers soon

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka has announced good news for Podu farmers and declared distribution of pattas to the lands being cultivated by them under Podu. Podu is a part of shifting cultivation.

It may be recalled that the Congress leaders during the poll campaign mentioned giving free pattas to Podu lands.

He visited Suryapeta of erstwhile Nalgonda district and stated that the Congress government would implement



Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, along with Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy, laying foundation stone for R. 400 crore Innovera life sciences plant in Huzurnagar on Saturday

six guarantees and ensure that the benefits reach every eligible person irrespective of his or her political affiliation..

Claiming that their government is the government that works for the people, the minister said that out of six guarantees two are under implementation and two more are ready for implementation on February 27.

He said that Priyanka Gandhi would launch the scheme of giving an LPG cylinder for Rs 500 only and also the scheme to provide 200 units of power per month free of cost to the poor.

## Three held for robbery of gold, mobile phones

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Uppal police on February 23 arrested three persons involved on charges of robbery of gold, mobile phones and weapons worth Rs 14 lakh were seized from them.

The incident occurred on the evening of February 19. The accused were identified as Dasari Sathwik (29), Meneni Anil Kumar (36), Gadde Sai Kumar (21). Complainant Nuthalapati Ramadevi stated that a person approached her and informed that a 2 BHK flat was sanctioned.

# Konda Surekha thanks officials for successful medaram Jatara

PNS ■ MEDARAM

Endowments Minister Konda Surekha on Saturday thanked the officials and all the stakeholders, including people, for their cooperation to the successful conduct of the Medaram festival.

She said that the event was successfully conducted with the cooperation of all government departments.

She observed, "The Congress government will safeguard Telangana state and people.

On directions from Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Ministers, elected people's representatives, higher authorities made all arrangements for the festival in a planned way from the beginning. The devotees had darshan of the deities, fulfilled their vows to the forest deities and returned home with a lot of satisfaction.



*She said that the event was successfully conducted with the cooperation of all government departments.*

The State government spared no effort to provide all amenities to devotees at every step, she said, and appealed to the devotees for forgiveness if any mistakes crept into the arrangements rather inadvertently.

As an Endowments Minister

for the first time, she supervised the arrangements for the festival with full commitment. With the blessings of the forest deities, she recovered from her ill-health quickly and was fortunate enough to have darshan of the deities on the elevated platforms.

She prayed to the deities for their blessings on people of Telangana.

# Kavitha offers jaggery in the name of KCR

PNS ■ NALGONDA

BRS MLC Kalwakuntla Kavita on Saturday offered jaggery to Sammakka-Saralamma equivalent to the weight of former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao through T App Folio.

She described the event as the biggest tribal fair in India.

KCR said that the protagonists of Telangana derived inspiration from the festival to uphold their self-respect. The Godavari valley region, which was once regarded as disturbed area under the rule of



the combined Anahra Pradesh rulers, is now a fertile valley with availability of water for irrigation. He appealed to the State government to provide all

amenities to devotees visiting Medaram from all parts of the country. He prayed to the deities for the prosperity and happiness of the people of Telangana.

Meanwhile, the forest deities who left the forest on February 21 and 22 to reach the elevated platforms gave darshan to the people till February 23.

All roads led to Medaram. Former minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao had faced the ire of the people waiting in serpentine queues as he tried to have quick darshan of the deity as a VIP.

# Chief Justice inaugurates Civil Judge Court



Telangana High Court Chief Justice Alok Aradhe inaugurating Second Additional Civil Judge court in Suryapet on Saturday

PNS ■ SURYAPET

Telangana High Court Chief Justice Alok Aradhe inaugurated the second Additional Junior Civil Judge Court on the premises of the district court complex here on Saturday. He also inaugurated an e-Seva centre there.

Earlier, he inspected a guard of honour presented by the police.

Suryapeta district judge G Rajagopal, sub-judge G

Srivani, principal junior civil judge K Suresh, and additional junior civil judge J Prasanti welcomed the Chief Justice.

Telangana State High Court judges T Vinod Kumar, K Lakshman, B Vijayasen Reddy, Pulla Karthik, Suryapeta Bar association president Gandrala Ashok, general secretary Palaboyina Narsaiah Yadav, DSP G Ravi, advocates and others were present on the occasion.

# Woman, who gets TV anchor kidnapped to marry, arrested

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

A young businesswoman, who got a television channel anchor kidnapped, to force him to marry her, has been arrested in Hyderabad, police said on Thursday.

Pranav, a techie who also works as part-time as anchor on a Telugu TV channel, was kidnapped in Uppal area on the night of February 10. He managed to escape from their clutches the next day and lodged a complaint with the police.

A case was registered at Uppal police station under Rachakonda police Commissionerate.

The police took up the investigation which led to Trisha's arrest. She confessed that she got him kidnapped as she wanted to marry him.

The woman, who is into digital marketing business, had seen Pranav's photograph and details on a matrimonial website two years ago. As someone had created a fake ID with Pravan's photograph, she called him to alert him. Police said Pranav had subsequently lodged a complaint with the police about his profile and photograph being misused.

The woman then developed interest in Pranav and wanted to marry him. Though he was not interested, she continued pestering him for the marriage.

She had also got a GPS device installed secretly in Pranav's car to track his movements.

She hired four goons, who kidnapped him on February 10 when he was returning home from duty. He was taken to her office where he was kept in a room.

Assistant Commissioner of Police Purshottam Reddy said they arrested Trisha. The four persons who kidnapped Pranav were absconding.

# One held, DJ systems, music equipment worth Rs 25 L seized

PNS ■ SURYAPET

The Suryapeta police on Saturday arrested an inter-state thief during inspection of vehicles and recovered from him Rs 25 lakh worth of stolen DJ systems and other music equipment.

Disclosing this to media at the District Police headquarters here, Suryapeta DSP Ravi said that the police nabbed the culprit while checking the vehicles on directions from SP Rahul Hegde.

While checking vehicles at Janagan X roads on Saturday, a suspicious good carrier was spotted. Upon checking it, several electronic equipment related to sound system worth Rs 25 lakh were detected.

The arrested was identified as Kurra Tulcha, resident of Adividevulapallimandal of Nalgonda district. Upon questioning him, he admitted to have stolen them. He admitted that he did steal the equipment along with Dharawat Balakrishna of and Barmawat Gurucharan of Kodada and Ramawat Vamsi of Nalgonda district.

The police recovered 27 amplifiers and 13

other equipment from them.

Tulcha figured as an accused in bike lifting case in Saroor Nagar police station. Balakrishna and Gurucharan figured as accused in Ganja smuggling case in Kodada town PS.

Tulcha who used to drive autorickshaw for a living in Hyderabad hatched a plan along with other accomplices to steal music systems and other equipment and sell them to earn money easily.

He took cars from Long Drive cars in Dilskh Nagar and visited various function halls and DJ shops in Macharla, Suryapeta, Kodada, Chilukuru and Chivvemla areas since November and stole amplifiers, mixers, crossover equipment from vehicles parked near function halls after the entertainment programme was over. He kept them at one place and now transporting them to elsewhere to dispose them of.

SP congratulated Suryapeta SI G Rajasekhar, SIs Yakub, P Lokesh and Balakrishna, crime inspector Karunakar, Krishna Saidulu, Anand and IT cell personnel for their success.

# Son, daughter-in-law punished for neglecting sr citizen

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Son and daughter-in-law of an old woman were arrested by Bhadrachalam police and produced them in a court which sentenced them to undergo jail term for defying the court order to treat the senior citizen with respect.

Parents sacrifice everything for the welfare of their children. But some children neglect their parents/

In Khammam district, such a pathetic incident took place. A court sentenced the old woman's son and his wife for

not taking good care of woman. It sent them to remand.

According to the police, the incident took place on Friday in Chunchupallimandal of the district.

An old woman belonging to Ram Nagar of the mandal, identified as Utlva Venkata Ramanamma, has a son, Ravi Shankar.

In 2022, the old woman approached the Kothagudem court complaining against her son and daughter-in-law accusing them of not taking proper care of her.

The Kothagudem court judge directed Ravi Sankar to take his mother home and give proper care to her. But, he turned a deaf ear to the directions given by the judge.

As usual, her son and daughter-in-law harassed her denying her entry to their house.

She lodged a complaint with the Bhadrachalam police who took her son and daughter-in-law under their custody and produced them before the magistrate who remanded them in judicial custody.

# Hyderabad NGO worker detained for distributing cash in riot-hit Haldwani

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad-based social worker Salman Ayub was detained by the police on Thursday after he was allegedly found distributing cash to families in riot-hit Haldwani.

The Nanital police detained Salman after he shared a video giving away cash to families, in Bhanpoolpura, affected due to the riot. He was let go after questioning on the condition that he would join the questioning when summoned.

The Hyderabad NGO's accounts, PAN card details, registration number and details of

donors were sought by the police. The police have also initiated action to cancel its registration.

In a video statement, the NGO worker and a familiar face in Hyderabad, Salman stated that it was the protocol of the police that he was detained for questioning for a short period. He also appreciated their efforts in bringing back peace into the riot-hit area.

"Police officials have been carrying out their duties diligently in Haldwani. The atmosphere is peaceful now and there is no fear among people," said Salman.

# TDP-JSP ANNOUNCES FIRST LIST OF SEAT ALLOCATION TO CANDIDATES

## TDP to fight 151, JSP 24 seats

**Jana Sena gets 3 LS seats**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan on Saturday announced their first joint list of 118 seats for the forthcoming Assembly polls in Andhra Pradesh.

The two leaders, however, said the seat allocation has been done keeping in mind the "need to accommodate" BJP in case the safe-party party decides to join the alliance.

TDP candidates will be contesting from 94 constituencies while Jana Sena will contest from 24

seats, as per the first list.

"On this auspicious occasion, both TDP and Jana Sena are ready to go for the polls. I wish this news to be good tidings for everyone in the state. This union is for the future of the state. This is the first step for a great effort," said Naidu, addressing a press conference at his Andhra Pradesh residence in Undavalli on the TDP-Janasena alliance.

Observing that the TDP-Jana Sena alliance "has the blessings of the BJP", Kalyan read out the names of five Jana Sena candidates and promised to reveal the remaining 19 names in a couple of days.

Explaining the rationale behind

the Jana Sena taking only 24 seats, Kalyan noted that it is important to take a lower number of seats than experimenting with a higher number of seats. "We have to first put the state on the right track, keeping the future of the state ahead of individual and party prospects," said the actor-politician.

Including the three Lok Sabha seats allocated for Janasena in the alliance, he noted that it is as good as the party contesting some 40 Assembly seats.

Meanwhile, Naidu highlighted that if the BJP also comes along with their alliance then those issues will also be discussed at the right time to take the right decisions.

"This alliance is for the future of the state, not for any two individuals or two parties. Both parties decided to work together for the welfare of five crore people. This is a historic day for the state," said Naidu.

For his ninth election, Naidu highlighted that he had done the most intense exercise of zeroing in on the candidates, unlike previously, even during the times of united Andhra Pradesh.

Taking the opinion of 1.1 crore people from various sources, Naidu said the 94 TDP candidates have been selected after a multi-pronged analysis and filtering.

He asserted that the selected candidates are people who are in

touch with the masses, desired by people, approved by the people and who can 'resiliently' face the polls and opponents.

Further, the opposition leader observed that the TDP gave prominence to youth, women, those from BC communities and educated people in selecting candidates.

Out of the 94 candidates, Naidu said 23 are first-timers, three doctors, one retired IAS officer, 25 post-graduates, 51 graduates and three doctorates.

Naidu called on the Janasena and TDP leaders to cooperate for mutual benefit wherever both the parties are contesting. "Wherever Jana Sena is contest-



ing the TDP should cooperate and wherever TDP is contesting the Jana Sena should cooperate. Both should work with an understanding for creating belief in people and victory will be easy, nobody can stop us..." Naidu added.

Seat-sharing arrangements for the remaining 57 of the 175 Assembly constituencies are expected to be announced soon.

As part of the alliance, Jana Sena will contest three Lok Sabha

seats of the total 25 from the state. TDP sources said currently discussions were underway with the BJP for a possible pre-poll alliance.

Meanwhile, talking to reporters, Andhra Pradesh BJP chief D Purandeswari said alliances in the southern State would be decided by the party high command and as of now the state unit is gearing up its activities in all the constituencies.



# Three services used to work in ‘silos’ earlier

Now they have better coordination to jointly confront challenges: Rajnath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's annual defence production is expected to touch a whopping Rs 3 lakh crore and exports of military hardware is poised to reach Rs 50,000 crore, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Saturday. In an address at a defence conclave, Singh, delving into structural defence reforms, said the three services used to work in "silos" earlier but now they are ready with better coordination to deal with every challenge jointly.

He said capital acquisition projects worth more than Rs 4,35,000 crore have been given in-principle approval in the financial year 2023-24, and the government is aiming for production of high-end systems like aero-engines and gas turbines in India in the next five years.

Singh noted that the government has been focusing on jointness among the Indian Army, the Navy and the Indian Air Force that would ensure enhanced coordination in times of "crisis".

"Earlier, the three Services used to work in silos. We focused on their integration



which was an out-of-the-box step and the need of the hour. It was a little difficult in the beginning; but today our military is ready with better coordination to deal with every challenge together," he said at the Firstpost Defence Summit.

Singh said restricts on import of arms was difficult in the short-term but the challenge is slowly turning into opportunity, and India is rising on the defence industrial landscape of the world. "Today, our military is using weapons and platforms, which are manufactured on our own soil," he said.

He asserted that no military can protect its nation from equipment imported from outside and self-reliance in defence

**He said capital acquisition projects worth more than Rs 4,35,000 crore have been given in-principle approval in the financial year 2023-24, and the government is aiming for production of high-end systems like aero-engines and gas turbines in India in the next five years.**

production is must for India in today's time, adding the government's persistent efforts have started to bear fruit as the defence production has crossed Rs 1 lakh crore. "Earlier, India was known to be an arms importer. But today, under the leadership of the prime minister, we have come out of our comfort zone and found a place in the list of top-25 arms exporter nations," Singh said.

"Seven-eight years ago, defence exports did not even touch Rs 1,000 crore. Today, it has touched Rs 16,000 crore. By 2028-29, annual defence production is expected to touch Rs 3 lakh crore and defence exports Rs 50,000 crore," he added.

The defence minister added

that Rs 6.21 lakh crore was allocated to the defence budget for 2024-25. He also spoke of the Agnipath scheme, saying it aims to make the country's military as one of the strongest in the world. "These decisions reflect the government's long-term approach towards national security," he said. Singh said the government has firmly set its sight to make India a major defence manufacturer.

"When the ability and dedication of our youth is extraordinary and the intentions of the government are clear, the question of setting simple targets does not arise. We will soon embark on an exciting journey towards achieving extraordinary goals," he said.

# Voters have right to know about fulfillment of vows

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The voters have a right to know about the feasibility of fulfilling poll assurances made by political parties, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said on Saturday and made it clear that the matter is, however, sub judice.

Political parties have a right to make promises in their election manifestos and the electorate has a right to know if these are genuine and how these programmes could be funded, he said, adding the entire matter forms part of an ongoing case and the matter was sub judice.

At a press conference here, Rajiv Kumar, answering questions, said the Election Commission has prepared a 'proforma' to make parties to make a disclosure on their election promises. However, this aspect also relates to the pending court matter.

He said enforcement agencies have been directed to stay vigilant and prevent distribution of cash and freebies. National Payments Corporation of India too has been tasked to monitor online transactions.

To a question on 'fake news,' he said, 'today fake news is running as you mentioned that election dates have been announced,' This fake news has, however, been countered within half an hour and it was made amply clear that it was fake.

A majority of political parties have sought single phase polls. After holding meetings with political parties during the last two days, Rajiv Kumar said "a majority of parties informed him that many parties have commenced parking of funds for distribution to voters."

"We met various political parties both national like the BJP, INC and state parties like the AIADMK, DMK. A majority of their demands were single phase elections, curb on distribution of money and freebies," he said.

The parties also sought action to prevent 'voter impersonation,' distribution of liquor and transfer of money through online mode.

During past elections in Tamil Nadu, parties have often accused each other of 'inducing' voters by distributing cash and gifts.

## INDIA CORNER

### Toddler abducted from govt hospital in Udaipur



An unidentified woman allegedly abducted a 13-month-old girl from Maharana Bhupal Government Hospital in Udaipur in the early hours of Saturday, police said. The toddler, Avyansh, was sleeping with her mother in the corridor of the

hospital when the incident occurred, they said. When the mother woke up around 4 am, she found that her daughter was missing and alerted the hospital administration, police said. An official from the hospital said the woman, whose daughter was abducted, had come to the hospital as an attendant and was not a patient. "They were sleeping in the corridor when another woman, who was also sleeping there, picked up the girl and left the hospital," the official said upon examining the CCTV footage. A case has been registered under the Indian Penal Code section 363 (kidnapping) at Hathipole police station, police said, adding that efforts are on to nab the accused.

### Class 6 student detained for schoolmate's murder in Delhi



A Class 6 student of a private school in northeast Delhi's New Usmanpur area was detained for allegedly killing a 14-year-old boy from his school, police said on Saturday. The students had a fight over some

petty issue outside the school and the accused punched the victim -- a student of Class 8 -- on the face, they said. The alleged incident occurred on Friday. The police received a call from JPC Hospital around 4 pm about the victim, a resident of Brahmpuri. The boy had injuries on his head, face and left hand. The place where the alleged altercation occurred was also littered with blood spots, the police said. The victim died due to excessive bleeding from the nose, they added. CCTV cameras installed in the locality were scanned and the 12-year-old accused was identified. He was apprehended late on Friday, the police said.

### Two undertrials escape from UP court lock-up



Two undertrials, one of whom has 47 cases registered against him, escaped from the lock-up on a court premises here by cutting through the window bars, police said on Saturday. A case was registered against both the accused late Friday night and three policemen have been suspended after the incident. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ghule Sushil Chandrabhan said four teams have been deployed to nab them. Sub-Inspector (SI) Viendra Kumar said Ankit Yadav and Sachin Saini had appeared before the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) and Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate III on Friday morning after they were summoned. A total of 55 prisoners had come with them to appear before the court. After everyone's appearance, the count started at 5.30 pm before sending the prisoners back to the jail.

### India's traditional system of medicines going global



Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Saturday said traditional medicines like Ayush have gained a new lease of life, and are being recognised worldwide for their efficacy. He also said that the traditional medicine sector of India has grown beyond geographical boundaries and reached a global market, under the BJP-led central government. The Union Minister of Ayush was speaking after inaugurating a centre of excellence at the State Ayurvedic College and Hospital here. "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has taken leadership position in the revamp of traditional medicines worldwide... This has helped our traditional medicine sector to grow out of its regular geography and communities to reach a wider population across communities from different parts of the world," Sonowal said.

## India, Bangladesh recognise their constitutions

PNS ■ DHAKA

Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Saturday said both India and Bangladesh share the tradition of constitutional and judicial systems largely aiming to ensure stability and both nations recognised their constitutions as "living documents."



"Our shared tradition aims to ensure stability, but when stability is desired, the stability must never be confused with stagnation," Chandrachud said as he spoke at the valedictory function of a two-day conference here in the presence of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was the chief guest.

"We recognise our constitutions are living documents. The constitutions of Bangladesh and India proclaim that they are 'given to the people by the people themselves' as citizens of sovereign nations," Chandrachud said. Bangladesh's Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan chaired the event. Bangladesh's apex court judges took part in the conference, which drew many jurists, senior lawyers, and government leaders including Law Minister Anisul Huq.

Earlier on Friday, Bangladesh President Mohammad Shahabuddin opened the two-day conference on South Asian Constitutional Courts in the Twenty-First Century: Lessons from Bangladesh and India.

Chandrachud said as he spoke at the valedictory function of a two-day conference here in the presence of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was the chief guest.

## Bulldozers demolish homes of 'innocent' while 'guilty' escape

■ Priyanka Gandhi attacks UP's BJP govt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday lashed out at the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh, alleging that bulldozers are used to demolish homes of "innocent people" while the "guilty" escape unscathed.

Priyanka Gandhi on Saturday joined the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, which resumed its journey from Moradabad after a two-day halt for the march's final leg in Uttar Pradesh.

She will accompany her brother as the yatra passes through Amroha, Sambhal, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Hathras, Agra, concluding at Fatehpur Sikri on Sunday, the Congress said.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav is set to join the yatra in Agra on Sunday, a development that comes after the parties reached a seat-sharing



arrangement in Uttar Pradesh for the Lok Sabha polls. "The Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra resumed from Moradabad. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was also present. As the yatra moved through Moradabad, people from different walks of life greeted them," Manish Hindvi, a spokesperson for the Congress' Uttar Pradesh unit, told PTI.

Priyanka Gandhi was to participate in the yatra when it entered Uttar Pradesh in

Chandauli but could not because of ill health and subsequent hospitalisation.

Addressing the public in Moradabad, she said, "When I came here in 2022, we had made a plan in the manifesto on how to stop repeated question paper leaks. It consisted of a job calendar, which would have the examination date and the date of appointment. We also spoke about making a commission to address all the injustices that had taken place."

## Cong will not be able to open its account in UP this time: Anurag

PNS ■ HAMIRPUR

Union Minister Anurag Thakur on Saturday said the Congress will not be able to open its account in Uttar Pradesh this time as party leader leader Rahul Gandhi has raised a question mark on the intelligence of the people of the state.

Thakur said the people of Uttar Pradesh have elected four generations of the Nehru-Gandhi family and sent them to the Lok Sabha.

Referring to Gandhi's recent drunk and addict comment on the youth of Uttar Pradesh at a rally in Varanasi, Thakur said



the Congress leader has lost his senses and is not aware of what he is saying.

Thakur, while talking to the media persons here, said Gandhi has hurt the honour and respect of the people of Uttar Pradesh.

The minister said the Congress has cheated the pub-

lic by making false promises. Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi's videos are going viral among the public in which she had said that five lakh government jobs would be given to the youth in Himachal Pradesh and now Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has retracted from the statement, he added.

Addressing the Tridev conference of Hamirpur BJP Mandal here earlier, the minister said the people will vote for the BJP in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections as they are fed up with the Congress' false promises.

### Jharkhand HC dismisses Rahul's petition to quash proceedings

PNS ■ RANCHI

The Jharkhand High Court has rejected Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's petition seeking to quash proceedings against him in a trial court in connection with a criminal complaint. Naveen Jha, a BJP worker, had filed the case against Gandhi in 2019 for his alleged defamatory remarks against Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Justice Ambuj Nath of the high court dismissed Gandhi's plea on Wednesday but the order was uploaded on the high court website on Friday.

## LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

# AAP, Cong announce seat-sharing pact for Delhi, Gujarat, Goa, Haryana

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party will contest four Lok Sabha seats in Delhi and the Congress three, the two constituents of the INDIA bloc said on Saturday as they announced their seat-sharing arrangements for the national capital, Gujarat, Goa and Haryana.

AAP General Secretary (organisation) Sandeep Pathak said his party entered into an alliance with the Congress by sidelining its own political interests as it believes that the "country is important and the party secondary".

The BJP termed the Congress-AAP tie-up as an alliance of the "corrupt", assert-



ing that neither chemistry nor arithmetic favours the two parties against the NDA, the ruling combine led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Congress and the AAP are constituents of the INDIA bloc formed by opposition parties to take on the BJP in

the upcoming general elections. In a joint press conference here on Saturday, Congress leader Mukul Wasnik announced the AAP will contest the Lok Sabha seats of New Delhi, West Delhi, South Delhi and East Delhi while his party will fight in Chandni Chowk, northeast Delhi and the northwest Delhi seats.

He said the Congress workers in Delhi will ensure that INDIA bloc candidates win all seven seats in the national capital. The BJP won all seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi in the 2014 and 2019 general elections. In the last Lok Sabha polls, BJP candidates in each of the seats polled more votes than Congress and AAP candidates combined.

### Under-employment is a problem for India: Arvind Panagariya

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Pitching for labour reforms, the chairman of the 16th Finance Commission and former NITI Aayog Chairman Arvind Panagariya on Saturday said that "unemployment" is not a problem for India but "under-employment" is.



Speaking at a session "The Economic Whisper: how to fuel growth with jobs" at the concluding day of the two-day ABP Network's 'Ideas of India Summit 3.0' here, he also sounded optimistic that the jobs problem in the country will be solved over the next 10 years.

"Unemployment is really not India's problem in my view. Our problem is underemployment, so productivity is low. So the job that can be done by one person often gets done by two people or maybe three people. And that is where I think, the real challenge of jobs is creating well-paid high-productivity jobs," he said.

Stating that in the economy's jargon, India is a labour-abundant and capital-scarce country, he said, "What we have done is to put much of the capital in very selective sectors which are in any case very capital intensive".

# India, Maldives & Sri Lanka's Dosti-16' kicks off in Maldives

PNS ■ MALE

Highlighting the importance of "collaboration and interoperability" among the coast guards personnel of the Maldives, India and Sri Lanka, Maldivian Defence Minister Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon said the trilateral exercise Dosti' will unite the troika to address "shared maritime security concerns through collaboration."

Maumoon was speaking at an event to formally inaugurate the 16th iteration of Dosti', the biennial exercise, which began on Thursday and would continue until Sunday.

Indian Coast Guard ship Samarth and ICGS Abhinav along with Sri Lanka Naval Ship Samudura are participating in the

exercise DOSTI-16' while Bangladesh is participating as an observer.

Sri Lanka has described Dosti' as a trilateral exercise that aims to enhance cooperation, strengthen friendship, improve mutual operational capability, and develop interoperability among the Coast Guard personnel of India, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka.

"Scheduled from February 22nd to 25, the exercise provides participating forces with opportunities to engage in various maritime activities, including interdiction operations, search and rescue missions, surveillance, and communication drills," the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) said in a statement.



These activities aim to enhance their collective capability to respond to maritime security and safety challenges," it said. Ministers of the Maldivian government, as well as the Chief of Defence Force, Lieutenant General Abdul Raheem Abdul Latheef, Vice Chief of Defence

Force, Brigadier General Ibrahim Hilmy, Additional Director General of Indian Coast Guard, ADGS Paramesh, and some foreign ambassadors, took part in the inauguration ceremony that was held on February 22, the MNDF statement said late on Friday night.

Speaking at the event, Maumoon emphasised the importance of greater collaboration between the coast guards of Maldives, India and Sri Lanka to address "shared maritime security concerns."

Exercise Dosti' focuses on regional cooperation in areas such as search and rescue, medical evacuations, countering piracy, pollution response, as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts.

According to Edition.mv, a news portal, Maumoon said, "President Dr Mohamed Muizzu's administration places the highest priority on ensuring that close relations, peace and stability is maintained between Maldives and neighbouring nations."

He said that the President has assured that he will focus on maintaining regional stability and noted that Sri Lanka's participation in the training since 2012 has brought further advancement to the programme, the portal said.

"Trilateral Joint Exercise 'EX-DOSTI-16' begins. Minister of Defence @mgmaumoon graced the inauguration ceremony, emphasising the importance of this historic event in uniting the Coast Guards of Maldives, India and Sri Lanka to address shared maritime security concerns through collaboration," the MNDF posted on its official X handle along with photos from the event late on Friday night local time.



COOPERATIVE SECTOR

# PM launches world's largest grain storage programme

Entailing investment of Rs 1.25 L cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday launched the world's largest grain storage plan in the cooperative sector, entailing an investment of over Rs 1.25 lakh crore, with the inauguration of 11 godowns in primary agricultural credit societies (PACS) in as many states.

Under the programme, 700 lakh tonne of storage capacity will be created over the next five years in the cooperative sector by constructing thousands of godowns and warehouses, Modi said at an event here.

He also laid the foundation for creating godowns and other agri infrastructure in 500 more PACS.



He also laid the foundation for creating godowns and other agri infrastructure in 500 more PACS.

"Today we have launched the world's largest storage scheme for our farmers. Under this, thousands of warehouses and godowns will be constructed across the country," he said after inaugurating 11 godowns set up by 11 PACS across 11 states. He rued that farmers were forced to bear huge losses

due to lack of storage infrastructure in the country. "Previous governments never paid due attention to this problem. But today through PACS, this problem is being addressed. Under the world's largest food grain storage programme, 700 lakh tonne storage capacity will be created in

the next five years. On this initiative more than Rs 1.25 lakh crore will be spent," the prime minister said.

With the creation of the huge storage facilities, Modi said farmers would be able to store their produce in the godowns/warehouses, get institutional credit against it, and sell their items when market prices are remunerative.

He also asked cooperative organisations to work towards reducing imports of food items, including edible oils and pulses, and also fertilizers.

Modi also emphasised on the importance of bringing transparency in the election system in cooperatives, saying this would encourage more participation of people in the cooperative movement.

## Sitharaman inaugurates new campus of BITS Pilani

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman Saturday inaugurated the fifth campus of the Birla group-run engineering institute BITS Pilani, with which the national institute of eminence also diversifies into law, management and design.

Located in the nearby Kalayan area of the megapolis, the Rs 1,600-crore campus spread across 60 acres will accommodate 5,000 students at full capacity, said Kumar Mangalam Birla, the group chairman and the chancellor of the institute.

Began in 1964 in Pilani, the

native village of the Birlas in the Marwar region of Rajasthan, the institute, which was one of the six private institutes elevated as an institute of eminence and houses 80,000 students across its five campuses in Pilani, Goa, Hyderabad, Dubai and Kalyan.

The new campus moves away from its core focus of engineering to law, management and design. The design school was started just last week while law and management schools were functional from last year from the temporary campus in Powai.

Declaring the new campus open, Sitharaman said.



## MONEY MATTERS

### Sebi using AI for investigations



Sebi is using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for investigations, its Whole Time Member Kamlesh Chandra Varshney said on Saturday and emphasised that entities should keep track of technological developments. Against the backdrop of instances of manipulations in the stock market, he said the message is that abiding with the law

will be more beneficial and violations will cause problems. In response to a question by PTI on whether Sebi is using AI, Varshney said, "we are using AI for investigations... and also using for a lot of things". He was speaking on the sidelines of the 13th international convention of the Association of National Exchanges Members of India (ANMI) in the national capital. As long as the market is transparent and no manipulation is happening, that is fine with the regulator, he noted. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has been taking action against violators as well as measures to enhance transparency.

### Odisha approves new industrial projects



The Odisha government has approved 27 new industrial projects to the tune of Rs 6,134 crore across sectors, a senior official said on Saturday. The proposals got the state government's nod at a meeting chaired by Chief Secretary P K Jena on Friday. The potential sectors include aluminium, renewable power, manufacturing,

aerospace and defence, food processing, apparel and textiles and IT infrastructure, the official said. The proposed projects are likely to create employment for 42,275 people, Jena said. In the aerospace and defence sector, Premier Explosives will set up a plant in Rayagada for an investment of Rs 864 crore, while in renewable power, Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Ltd will come up with a Rs 787.48-crore project in Kandhamal, officials said. In the manufacturing space, Texmaco Rail & Engineering Ltd will initiate a 35,000-MT unit for Rs 438.92 crore, and a combined investment of Rs 709.13 crore is expected in IT infrastructure, they added.

### 'Rumours of me being fired firing exaggerated'



A day after investors of the troubled edtech firm Byju's voted for a leadership change, Byju Raveendran has penned a note to employees saying he continues to remain CEO and the management remains unchanged, as he dubbed Friday's EGM as a "farce". The note to employees assumes significance as it comes after Byju's

shareholders (prominent investors) on Friday voted for removing Founder-CEO Raveendran and his family from the board over alleged "mismanagement and failures" at what was once India's hottest tech startup, but the company dug in its heels, calling the voting done in absence of founders as invalid and ineffective. In a note to employees on Saturday, Raveendran alleged that a lot of essential rules were "violated" at Friday's Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM). "This means that whatever was decided in that meeting does not count, because it didn't stick to the established rules... It is crucial for everyone to understand the specific issues that make this EGM a farce," he wrote. PTI has seen a copy of the letter.

## Adani hints at future collaborations with Uber

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

transition in India.

Billionaire Gautam Adani on Saturday met Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi, who is currently on a visit to India, and hinted at possible future collaborations between his conglomerate and the ride-hailing app.

Taking to X, both business leaders appreciated their conversation on the Indian growth story and their vision for the subcontinent.

"Absolutely captivating chat with @dkhos, CEO of @Uber. His vision for Uber's expansion in India is truly inspiring, especially his commitment to uplifting Indian drivers and their dignity. Excited for future collaborations with Dara and his team! #UberIndia," Adani said in a post on X.

The Uber CEO said he met the head of ports-to-energy conglomerate over breakfast for an "absolutely terrific conversation". He also highlighted the mobility service provider's commitment to accelerate EV

headquarters in Ahmedabad. "An absolutely terrific conversation with @gautam\_adani over a delicious breakfast about India's phenomenal growth and rising entrepreneurship. @Uber is committed to scaling up shared mobility and accelerating transition to EVs -- looking forward to take our partnership to the next level," Dara replied to Adani's post.

The Uber CEO arrived in India earlier this week. During this time, the ride-sharing platform Uber on February 22 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) to explore an integration with the network to expand the range of mobility offerings on the Uber app.

## Don't experiment on digital nagriks with 'unreliable' models and AI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar on Saturday made it clear to Google that explanations about unreliability of AI models do not absolve or exempt platforms from laws, and warned that India's digital 'nagriks' "are not to be experimented on" with unreliable platforms and algorithms.

The minister's comments came after Google, which is under fire over AI tool Gemini's objectionable response and bias to a question on PM Narendra Modi, said it has worked quickly to address the issue and conceded that the chatbot "may not always be reliable" in responding to certain prompts related to current events and political topics.

Chandrasekhar, the Minister of State for IT, in a post on X (formerly Twitter) said ensuring safety and trust are legal obligation of platforms.

"Government has said this before - I repeat for attention of @GoogleIndia... Our DigitalNagriks are NOT to be experimented on with 'unre-

### MoS IT warns Google



"Government has said this before - I repeat for attention of @GoogleIndia... Our DigitalNagriks are NOT to be experimented on with 'unreliable' platforms/algorithms/model... 'Sorry Unreliable' does not exempt from law," the minister said.

liable" platforms/algorithms/model... 'Sorry Unreliable' does not exempt from law," the minister said.

On Friday, Chandrasekhar had warned that Google AI tool Gemini's response to a question around the prime minister was in direct violation of IT rules as well as several provisions of the criminal code.

Chandrasekhar has taken immediate cognizance of the issue raised by verified accounts of a journalist alleging bias in Gemini in response to a question on Modi while it

gave no clear answer when a similar question was asked for Trump and Zelenskyy.

In an e-mail statement earlier on Saturday, a Google spokesperson said, "We've worked quickly to address this issue."

Google further said Gemini is built as a creativity and productivity tool and "may not always be reliable, especially when it comes to responding to some prompts about current events, political topics, or evolving news". "This is something that we're constantly working on improving."

## 65,000 functional PACS to be computerised by Aug: Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said around 65,000 functional Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) will be computerised by August this year to improve their efficiency.

The computerisation work has already been completed so far in 18,000 PACS.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the project for computerisation in 18,000 PACS across the country.

"I am happy that out of 65,000 PACS, computerisation of 18,000 PACS has been completed. Before elections, 30,000 PACS will be done," Shah said, while addressing a conference.

By August 2024, all PACS will be computerised, the Union minister said.

In June last year, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the computerisation of these PACS with an outlay of Rs 2,516 crore. He objective is to increase the efficiency of PACS, bringing transparency and accountability



Shah also highlighted that the model bylaws have been implemented by all states and Union Territories, irrespective of political parties.

in their operations. This will also help in facilitating PACS to diversify their business and undertake multiple activities/services.

Shah also highlighted that the model bylaws have been implemented by all states and Union Territories, irrespective of political parties.

With the adoption of these model bylaws, he said PACs can now diversify into new areas.

The Prime Minister formally launched 'World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector' with the inauguration of 11 godowns set up by PACS across 11 states.

Modi also laid the foundation stone for the construction of

godowns in an additional 500 PACS across the country.

On this initiative, Shah said farmers would be able to store 100 per cent of their production with the creation of new capacities.

Storage capacity in other countries is higher than production except for India, he added.

Food Corporation of India (FCI) has been bearing the responsibility of storage to date. Godowns set up in PACS will provide all modernised tools for farmers, Shah said.

The cooperation minister said more than 50 initiatives have been taken in just 35 months following the creation of the cooperation ministry.

## Brazil eyes deeper economic ties with India

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Ambassador of Brazil to India, Kenneth Flix Haczynski da N brega on Saturday said energy, defence and agro-processing are the three key pillars for strengthening economic cooperation between the two countries.

Speaking at a session on 'India-Brazil Fostering Trade Partnership - Focus West Bengal' organised by the Bharat Chamber of Commerce here, the diplomat emphasised on business-to-business collaborations in iron and steel, milk production, leather, biofuels, and aquacul-

ture. He also expressed optimism about the evolving defence sector alliance between the two countries.

Ambassador N brega said the first Brazil-India Defence Dialogue is expected to begin next week, focusing on strategic partnerships and technological cooperation.

The interactive session explored avenues to deepen economic ties and leverage West Bengal's potential in various sectors.

The diplomat expressed interest in exploring partnerships and technological exchange in food processing and aquaculture sectors.



### PASSENGER BUSES AND HEAVY VEHICLES TOO

## IRF calls for making seat belts mandatory

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

International Road Federation (IRF) -- a global road safety body -- has urged the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) to make the use of seat belts mandatory in all heavy vehicles, including passenger buses and school buses, to minimise casualties and injuries in road accidents.

IRF President Emeritus K K Kapila in a letter to MoRTH



said there is an urgent need to provide seats belts in buses,

which need to be made mandatory. "There have been heart-

wrenching passenger bus accidents resulting in loss of innocent lives. Many of them would have been saved, had they been wearing seat belts," he said.

Kapila pointed out that according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's 2021 data, only 14 individuals lost their lives in bus accidents in the USA.

Similarly, based on the

analysis of the accident propensity of Chinese bus drivers in 2022, China reported 215 fatalities.

He pointed out that both developing and developed countries have achieved remarkable outcomes due to stringent safety standards for public transport like buses.

"The contrasting and alarming data in India suggests a lacuna in mandating safety standards in buses.

Kerala leads India's healthcare talent migration to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, especially to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) which witnessed a 3.3-fold increase in demand in 2023, said a report.

Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh emerged as the leading states contributing to the migration of healthcare workers, including nurses, doctors, and laboratory technicians, to MENA countries, according to data by blue-collar worker platform Huntr.

Migration of healthcare workers from Kerala, in particular, witnessed a notable increase in migration to the UAE, with a 3.3-fold rise in 2023, the report stated.

The report is based on data on Huntr platform and employer organisations in the Middle East from 2022 and 2023.

It further noted that the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar are the most preferred destinations for Indian healthcare professionals seeking job opportunities. These countries offer attractive incentives, including extended residency visas, financial benefits, and state-of-the-art healthcare infrastructure,

the report added.

"The rapid globalisation has opened doors for extensive global mobility, and this report is a testament to the crucial role that India plays in meeting MENA countries' rising healthcare talent demands.

"The surge in migration from states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh reflects a significant shift in the region's

healthcare landscape. With Huntr's innovative solutions and stakeholder collaboration, we're poised to drive further growth and development in the MENA healthcare sector," Huntr CEO Samuel Joy said.

The report further revealed that employers in MENA countries seek candidates with specific skills and qualifications.

**GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
SHORT TENDER NOTICE  
NIT No: 25/EEC-4LBNR/HMC/2023-24 Date: 24.02.2024  
Name of work: Maintenance Works-1 Nos. Estimate Amount: Rs. 2.90 Lakhs, Start Date & Time: 25.02.2024 @ 03.00 PM, Last Date for receipt of Bids: 26.02.2024/11.00AM, Name & Address Officer: Cell No : Sri. D.Kolshwar Rao, Executive Engineer, L.B Nagar Circle-4, GHMC, (M) : 9989994465. For further details can be seen at e-procurement @ www.tenderaprocurment.gov.in. Sd/- Executive Engineer L.B.Nagar Circle-4, GHMC  
R.O.No:10668-PPICL/ADVT/1/2023-24

**GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
TENDER NOTICE  
NIT No: 33/GHMC/MP/TTE/2023-24 Date: 24.02.2024  
Name of work: Other Work, Estimate Amount/ECV: Rs.19.00 Lakhs, Start Date & Time: 27.02.2024 / 01.00 PM, Last Date receipt of Bids: 02.03.2024/11.00AM, Name & Address Officer : Sri. P.Saty Narayana, Executive Engineer, GHMC, Moosapet -23, Cell : 9989990362. For further details can be seen at e-procurement @ www.tenderaprocurment.gov.in. Sd/- Executive Engineer GHMC, Moosapet Division-23  
R.O.No:10668-PPICL/ADVT/1/2023-24

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA**  
ROADS AND BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT  
e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE  
CTN No: 2/SE/006/Tenders/2023-24 Date: 22/02/2024  
On line tenders are invited Yadadri Bhongir Districts wide Superintending Engineer (R&B) Yadadri Bhuvnagiri, "Construction of Municipal Office Building at Yadadri Bhongir Municipality in Yadadri Bhongir District (2nd call) ECV Rs.236.67 lakhs. Further details at http://tender.telanganagov.in. Last date of tenders is 06.03.2024 up to 3.30 PM Sd/- Superintending Engineer (R&B) Circle Office : Yadadri Bhuvnagiri  
BPN R.O. No : 864-CPCL-RDCH/ADVT/1/2023-24, Date: 24-02-2024



"I didn't finish university, I barely finished high school. All I know is from the books I've read, and the plays that I've read"  
— Jacob Elordi



BOOKS

The New Delhi World Book Fair is a celebration of the written word that transcends boundaries and bridges cultures. Here - as in others counties of the world - the significance of books reverberates with resounding clarity

EXPLORING  
PAGES OF POSSIBILITY

By  
Rajdeep Pathak

As the vibrant panorama of the New Delhi World Book Fair unfolded its final chapter on February 18, 2024, it bid a fond farewell to nine days filled with the symphony of literary marvels and cultural splendour. Nestled within the expansive embrace of Bharat Mandapam at Pragati Maidan, this majestic event, inaugurated on February 10th, played host to a multitude of nearly 15 lakh book lovers, who traversed its labyrinthine corridors in search of enlightenment and inspiration. Here, amidst the grandeur of more than 1,000 publishers hailing from 40 illustrious nations such as India, the United Kingdom, Argentina, Spain, and beyond, over 2,000 enchanting stalls stood as beacons of literary excellence. Organised by the National Book Trust (NBT) under the nurturing wing of the Ministry of Education, this year's fair unfurled its vibrant banner under the resplendent theme of "Bahubhashi Bharat - Ek Jeevant Parampara" (Multilingual India - A Living Tradition). With the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia taking part as the guest country, the air was suffused with the heady aroma of cultural exchange, literary discourse, and harmonious dialogues, weaving a rich flavour of mutual appreciation and understanding between the two nations. While traversing through the stalls with long overhanging signages guiding paths for visitors, one could also wonder at the very craftsmanship of the engineers who put up the display in a manner that attracted students, school children, writers, authors, guest speakers, men and women with their families alike from far end - thanks to the event management groups of companies who designed this panoramic extravaganza, the effect was spell-binding. However, what really attracted once again is the versatility and the imaginative and creative manner of enticing the readers/visitors and capturing (read holding on) to their interest. There were many window shoppers who just passed by. While some stalls engaged children in solving different crossword puzzles through creative games, there were others like ours (Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti), where spinning on the traditional charkha became a centre of attraction for the young and the old who wanted to try their hands on spinning. What came as a surprise in this digital age where Kindle and other such forums have become the latest fad, is that the Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi, "My Experiments with Truth" was still a popular choice amongst the buyers. The Children's Pavilion became a delightful sanctuary for young book enthusiasts, offering a diverse array of activities including storytelling, illustration workshops, calligraphy sessions, art demonstrations,

ORGANISED BY THE NATIONAL BOOK TRUST (NBT) UNDER THE NURTURING WING OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, THIS YEAR'S FAIR UNFURLED ITS VIBRANT BANNER UNDER THE RESPLENDENT THEME OF "BAHUBHASHI BHARAT - EK JEEVANT PARAMPARA" (MULTILINGUAL INDIA - A LIVING TRADITION). WITH THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA TAKING PART AS THE GUEST COUNTRY, THE AIR WAS SUFFUSED WITH THE HEADY AROMA OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE, LITERARY DISCOURSE, AND HARMONIOUS DIALOGUES, WEAVING A RICH FLAVOUR OF MUTUAL APPRECIATION AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS



drama classes, and explorations into the wonders of space. Notably, the fair has demonstrated its dedication to inclusivity and accessibility in literature through specialized events tailored for children with special needs, in line with its overarching 'Books-for-All' initiative. Further, amidst this vibrant mosaic of India's cultural panorama, as showcased at the World Book Fair, the symphony of myriad languages, dialects, and traditions harmoniously intertwined into a seamless expression of unity. Here, as one flapped through the pages of literature and glanced at the strokes of artistry, the feeling resonated with a profound testament to the nation's rich heritage. The unveiling of "Jaadui Pitara", an enchanting e-learning oasis, emerged as a beacon of enlightenment in consonance with the vision of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Overflowing with the treasures of puzzles, riddles, and tales, this marvelously inclusive repository, deftly translated into 22 languages through the marvels of (artificial intelligence) AI, stood poised to revolutionize the landscape of childhood education. Alongside, a constellation of specialized modules, meticulously crafted in alignment with NEP 2020, adorned this educational tableau, offering a cornucopia of resources and insights tailored to the modern learner. Embracing the noble vision of fostering a nation of avid readers, an ethereal e-library welcomed all with its boundless offerings, inviting one and all to immerse themselves in the splendour of knowledge.

In this timeless mosaic of human civilization, books stand as luminous threads weaving together the very fabric of knowledge, imagination, and cultural heritage. Like radiant beacons illuminating the path of enlightenment, books beckon us into realms of limitless discovery and profound insight. Amidst this vast literary landscape, book fairs emerge as vibrant marketplaces of intellect, where bibliophiles and seekers of wisdom converge in a harmonious symphony of literary delight. The English author Neil Gaiman once remarked, "Literacy is more important than ever it was, in this world of text and email, a world of written information. We need to read and write, we need global citizens who can read comfortably, comprehend what they are reading, understand nuance, and make themselves understood." His words underscore the contemporary relevance of literacy in an age dominated by digital communication. Maya Angelou, the celebrated poet and civil rights activist, aptly encapsulated the transformative power of literacy when she asserted, "Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him." She underscored the profound impact that exposure to literature can have on shaping young minds and nurturing a lifelong love for reading. Book fairs, with their wide array of offerings spanning genres and age groups, play a crucial role in instilling this habit of reading and nurturing a generation of literate and intellectually curious individuals.

Book fairs also serve as vital platforms for promoting diversity and inclusion within the literary world. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the acclaimed Nigerian author, emphasized the importance of diverse representation in literature when she said that "Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity". Therefore, by showcasing literature from diverse cultures, perspectives, and voices, book fairs contribute to a more inclusive literary landscape, fostering empathy, understanding, and interconnectedness among readers. Book fairs, by bringing together a diverse array of literature, empower individuals to engage with various forms of written expression, thereby fostering critical thinking and communication skills essential for navigating the complexities of the modern world. The New Delhi World Book Fair is a celebration of the written word that transcends boundaries and bridges cultures. Here - as in others counties of the world - the significance of books reverberates with resounding clarity, underscoring the enduring relevance of organizing such transformative events with new creative engagements. It is time when we move beyond just literacy... (The writer is programme executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Sansthan, views are personal)



From its evocative title to its stunning cover design, *Rhythms of the Ruins* (The Browser) is a book that demands attention. Whether you are a lover of poetry or simply someone who appreciates the beauty of well-crafted words, this collection is sure to leave a lasting impression.







# Idli, chicken jalfrezi featured among foods with highest biodiversity footprint

India's idli, chana masala and rajma featured in the top 20 dishes with the highest biodiversity footprint, along with chicken jalfrezi and chicken chaat, according to a new study analysing 151 popular local dishes from around the world.

However, researchers found that dishes with beef as the main ingredient such as fraldinha - beef cut dish originating from Brazil - formed the bulk of the top 20. Chili con carne (spicy stew with chili peppers, beef and beans) and beef tartare were other such dishes.

The scientists from National University of Singapore analysed lists of popular dishes taken from CNN.com and TasteAtlas.com to estimate their biodiversity footprints when globally and locally produced.

The researchers found that dishes made from ingredients like beef, legumes and rice encroaching on biodi-



versity hotspots with already very high agricultural pressure such as India end up having a high biodiversity footprint.

"India was observed to be involved with the production of mostly high biodiversity footprint dishes with biodiversity impacts driven by ingredients (e.g. rice, legumes, chicken) that are not

commonly flagged as having a high environmental footprint," the researchers wrote.

Brazilian beef dishes also had high biodiversity impacts due to the conversion of Amazon rainforest and other diverse ecosystems to pasture, they said.

Vegan and vegetarian dishes were

found to have a consistent significantly lower biodiversity footprint compared to dishes containing meat, the researchers said.

On the other hand, dishes made from starchy foods comprising potato and wheat such as mantou and Chinese steamed bun were among those with the lowest biodiversity footprint, the researchers said in their study published in the journal PLoS ONE.

They said this was partly explained by the lower weights of these dishes with below-average biodiversity footprint per kcal per gram in both locally and globally produced scenarios.

The researchers calculated the biodiversity footprint of each dish's ingredient by looking at the richness, conservation status, and range of wild mammals, birds, and amphibians within the agricultural land used for the specific product. They then added each ingredi-



ent's footprint together to generate the dish's overall biodiversity footprint score, which shifted depending on whether the ingredient was locally or globally sourced, and industrially or small-scale farmed.

Estimating dishes' biodiversity footprints across countries can empower

consumers and facilitate transitioning towards sustainable diets to mitigate the impacts of producing food on biodiversity, the researchers said.

Small changes in the dish we choose to eat and where we get the ingredients from can go a long way in preventing species extinctions, they said.

## FIGHT AGAINST RUSSIA

# Questions abound on whether Kyiv can sustain



The future looks bleak for war-weary Ukraine: It is beset by shortages in soldiers and ammunition, as well as doubts about the supply of Western aid. Ukrainian forces also face a Russian enemy that has recently seized the initiative on the battlefield.

Two years after Russia's full-scale invasion captured nearly a quarter of the country, the stakes could not be higher for Kyiv. After a string of victories in the first year of the war, fortunes have turned for the Ukrainian military, which is dug in, outgunned and outnumbered against a more powerful opponent.

As the war enters its third year, here is a look at the situation on the ground, the challenges ahead and some of the potential consequences if Ukraine does not acquire the people, ammunition and assistance it needs to sustain the fight.

**WHAT IS THE STATE OF PLAY?**  
Triumphs have turned to attrition for

Ukraine along the snaking front line in the country's east. With Russia gaining advantages, shortages mounting and a major military shake-up still fresh, questions abound about whether Kyiv can keep going.

"As things stand, neither side has won. Neither side has lost. Neither side is anywhere near giving up. And both sides have pretty much exhausted the manpower and equipment that they started the war with," said Gen. Richard Barrons, a British military officer who is co-chair of a defense consultancy.

Ukraine suffered setbacks after the much-anticipated summer counteroffensive failed to produce any breakthroughs. The armed forces switched to a defensive posture in the fall to repel new advances from Moscow.

On Feb. 17, Russian forces took control of the embattled city of Avdiivka, where Kyiv's troops were under constant fire with Russians approaching from three directions. Ukrainian commanders had complained for weeks of

personnel and ammunition shortages. It was the biggest battlefield victory for Russia since the fight for Bakhmut, and it confirmed that Moscow's offensive was gaining steam.

Away from the battlefield, Ukraine has proven successful in the Black Sea, where it has used long-range weapons to strike military installations in Crimea and maritime drones to sink Russian warships. Ukraine has disabled a third of the Black Sea Fleet, according to the Atlantic Council. Ukraine is looking to acquire more long-range missiles to strike deep into Russian-occupied territory, a move that some European countries fear may spark escalation from Moscow.

**HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED?**  
Both Russia and Ukraine have sought to keep casualty figures under wraps. Few details about Ukrainian military deaths have emerged since the full-scale invasion began in 2022. But it's clear that tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians have been killed.

In 2023, the first independent statistical analysis of Russia's war dead concluded that nearly 50,000 Russian men had died in the war. Two independent Russian media outlets, Mediazona and Meduza, worked with a data scientist from Germany's T bingen University to analyze Russian government data.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF UKRAINE CAN'T FIND MORE TROOPS?**  
Without more soldiers, Ukraine's defensive lines will be overstretched and more vulnerable to Russian attack, especially if Moscow launches intense multi-pronged assaults along the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line.

The Ukrainian military has an average personnel shortage of 25% across brigades, according to lawmakers. Military commanders are unable to give their soldiers enough rest, and Russia has recently increased the tempo of attacks. As a result, soldiers are tired and more easily injured exacerbating the

effects of the shortage.

Ukraine's military command has said 450,000 to 500,000 additional recruits are needed for the next phase of the war. Even if Ukraine succeeds in mobilizing that number, which is unlikely, it still would not be able to match the manpower of Russia, which has more than three times Ukraine's population.

Lawmakers have spent months mulling over a controversial proposal to increase the conscription pool, as many Ukrainian men continue to evade the war in Ukrainian cities.

Commanders say they don't have enough men to dig trenches or carry out offensive operations. Shortages have also required them to switch tactics and focus on preserving the lives of the soldiers they do have, sometimes at the expense of holding territory.

**WHAT ABOUT WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION?**  
If they continue, ammunition shortages will jeopardize Ukraine's ability to hold territory and keep soldiers alive.

Military leaders appear to be rationing shells, sending trickles of ammunition to firing positions to preserve stockpiles, while promises for more ammunition from Western allies have gone unfulfilled. The European Union failed on its promise to deliver 1 million rounds by the start of the year, delivering only a few hundred thousand.

At the same time, Russia is mobilizing its defense industry and may soon be able to fire 5,000 artillery rounds a day, Barrons said. Ukraine is building up its domestic arms production but will not be able to match Moscow in scale in the short-term.

Military commanders have complained for months of ammunition shortages for infantry fighting vehicles, machine guns, artillery and multiple rocket launch systems. Those shortages grew particularly acute by the end of 2023, with some artillery commanders saying they can meet only 10% of ammunition needs.



## Zelenskyy hosts Western leaders in Kyiv

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy welcomed Western leaders to Kyiv Saturday to mark the second anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion, as Ukrainian forces run low on ammunition and weaponry and foreign aid hangs in the balance.

Zelenskyy posted a video from the Hostomel airfield together with Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, as well as the the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

"Two years ago, here, we met enemy landing forces with fire; two years later, we meet our friends and our partners here," Zelenskyy said at the airport just outside of Kyiv, which Russian paratroopers unsuccessfully tried to seize in the first days of the war.

The Western leaders arrived shortly after a Russian drone attack struck a residential building in the southern city of Odesa, killing at least one. Three women also sustained severe burns in the attack on a residential building Friday evening, regional Gov. Oleh Kiper wrote on his social media account. Rescue services combed through the rubble looking for survivors.

Italy, which holds the rotating presidency of the Group of Seven leading economies, announced that the G7 will meet virtually on Saturday with Zelenskyy and would adopt a joint statement on Ukraine.

"More than ever we stand firmly by Ukraine. Financially, economically, militarily, morally. Until the country is finally free," von der Leyen said in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

On the front line in the eastern Donetsk region, Ukrainian soldiers pleaded for ammunition.

"When the enemy comes in, a lot of our guys die. ... We are sitting here with nothing," said Volodymyr, 27, a senior officer in an artillery battery.

"In order to protect our infantry ... we need a high number of shells, which we do not have now," said Oleksandr, 45, a commander of an artillery unit. The two officers only gave their first names, citing security concerns.

In a message on the war's second anniversary, Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi, the commander-in-chief of Ukraine's armed forces, thanked Ukrainian soldiers for their sacrifices and Western allies for their support, saying, "Every projectile, every tank, every armoured vehicle is, first of all, saving the life of a Ukrainian soldier."

Earlier this month, Zelenskyy fired top military commander Valerii Zaluzhnyi and replaced him with Syrskyi, marking the most significant shake-up of top brass since the full-scale invasion.

## Astronomers spot new tiny moons around Neptune and Uranus

Astronomers have found three previously unknown moons in our solar system two additional moons circling Neptune and one around Uranus.

The distant tiny moons were spotted using powerful land-based telescopes in Hawaii and Chile, and announced Friday by the International Astronomical Union's Minor Planet Center.

The latest tally puts Neptune at 16 known moons and Uranus at 28.

One of Neptune's new moons has the longest known orbital journey yet. It takes around 27 years for the small outer moon to complete one lap around Neptune, the vast icy planet farthest from the sun, said Scott Sheppard, an astronomer at the Carnegie Institution for Science in Washington who helped make the discovery. The new moon orbiting Uranus, with an estimated diameter of just 5 miles (8 kilometers), is likely the smallest of the planet's moons. "We suspect that there may be many more smaller moons" yet to be discovered, he said.



## WWII-ERA BOMB SAFELY DETONATED AT SEA

A World War II-era bomb whose discovery prompted one of the largest peacetime evacuations in British history has been detonated at sea, the Ministry of Defense said on Saturday.

The 500-kilogram (1,100-pound) explosive was discovered Tuesday in the backyard of a home in Plymouth, a port city on the southwestern coast of Britain. More than 10,000 residents were evacuated to ensure their safety as a military convoy transported the unexploded bomb through a densely populated residential area to a ferry slipway, from which it was taken out to sea.

"I think it is fair to say that the last few days will go down in history for Plymouth," said Tudor Evans, the leader of Plymouth City Council.

Plymouth, home to major naval bases for centuries, was one of the



most heavily bombed cities in Britain during the World War II. Fifty-nine separate air raids killed 1,174 civilians, according to local officials. The raids destroyed almost 3,800 homes, and heavily damaged another 18,000.

# Scientists measure gravity at microscopic scale

## Say it paves way for understanding quantum gravity

Scientists have measured gravity at the microscopic scale in a new study, which they say paves the way for finding the elusive quantum gravity theory.

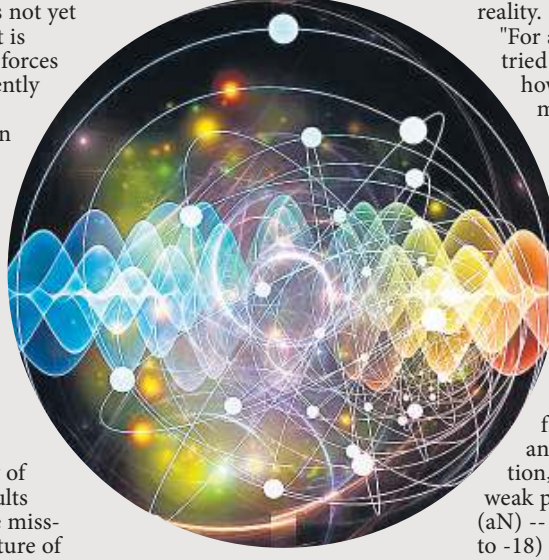
The gravitational force, originally discovered by physicist and mathematician Isaac Newton, is known to be fundamentally weak, gaining prominence and being detectable only at macroscopic scales.

Einstein's theory of general relativity - the widely accepted theory of gravity - has been confirmed through experiments multiple times, more recently by directly observing gravitational waves from the merging of two black holes in 2016 and other black hole imaging studies.

However, in the quantum realm, or at the atomic scale, how the

gravitational force works is not yet fully understood, even as it is believed that particles and forces at this scale interact differently than regular-sized objects.

In this study published in the journal 'Science Advances', physicists at the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom along with those in the Netherlands and Italy, report that they have successfully detected a weak gravitational pull on a tiny particle using a new technique involving levitating magnets. Lead author Tim Fuchs, from the University of Southampton, said the results could help experts find the missing puzzle piece in our picture of



reality.

"For a century, scientists have tried and failed to understand how gravity and quantum mechanics work together. Now we have successfully measured gravitational signals at the smallest mass ever recorded, it means we are one step closer to finally realising how it works in tandem," he said.

Using a sophisticated setup involving superconducting devices, or "traps", with magnetic fields, sensitive detectors and advanced vibration isolation, the scientists measured a weak pull of just 30 attoneutons (aN) -- 30 quintillionths (10 raised to -18) of a newton -- on a tiny

particle of weight 0.43 milligrams by levitating it in freezing temperatures a hundredth of a degree above absolute zero -- about -273 degrees Celsius.

The results open the door for future experiments between even smaller objects and forces with their novel technique employing extremely cold temperatures and devices to isolate vibrations of tiny particles likely proving to be the way forward for measuring quantum gravity, said professor of physics Hendrik Ulbricht.

"From here, we will start scaling the source down using this technique until we reach the quantum world on both sides. By understanding quantum gravity, we could solve some of the mysteries of our universe - like how it began, what happens inside the black holes, or uniting all forces into one big theory," said Fuchs.