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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

-Ponnam Prabhakar, Transport Minister P4**DON'T MISS...****Ganta planning to join YSRCP?**

Ganta Srinivasa Rao, TDP leader and MLA representing Visakhapatnam North, has faced a setback as the TDP high command opted not to field him in the upcoming elections. Despite their indication to field him in Srikakulam (Chipurupalli) district, a move Ganta wasn't keen on, his name was conspicuously absent from the first list announced by the TDP-JSP alliance. This development has prompted Ganta to explore other political options.

-PAGE: 3**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 trioka 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...

-PAGE: 5**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..."

-PAGE: 6**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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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 saffron 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.

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TDP national president N Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena Party president K Pawan Kalyan, flanked by TDP State president K Atchannaaidu, releasing the first list of Assembly candidates at Undavalli near Vijayawada on Saturday.

-Pic: Ch.Vijaya Bhaskar

“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

-N Chandrababu Naidu

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.

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.

Denied ticket by TDP, Vedavyas faints

MACHILIPATNAM: Telugu Desam senior leader and former deputy Speaker of Assembly, Buragadda Vedavyas fainted after knowing that his name was not figured in the TDP-JSP candidates list on Saturday. TDP leaders said that Buragadda Vedavyas was visiting Chinapandraka village. At the same time, Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan released the list of candidates.

The TDP leaders told Buragadda Vedavyas that his name was missing in the list. He was shocked and disappointed. He fainted and collapsed in a chair. His followers helped him to reach his car.

He was taken to the Primary Health Centre at the village where he was given treatment. Later Vedavyas left the village for his residence.



Naidu turns his back on BCs, Minorities

C PRADEEP KUMAR ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a surprising move, TDP leader Chandrababu Naidu appeared to overlook the interests of BCs and minority communities with the announcement of candidates for 94 seats on Saturday. The TDP is set to contest 151 seats in the upcoming elections, which accounts for the majority of the 175-member Andhra Pradesh Assembly. Notably absent from the occasion was the party's prominent figure and general secretary, Nara Lokesh.

Among the 94 declared seats, the opposition TDP has allocated 20 seats to the Kammas, a significant

caste in the coastal regions of AP. The distribution includes 18 seats for BCs, 20 for SCs, 7 for Kapus, and only one seat for Muslim minorities, constituting 10-15% of the population.

Earlier this year, the TDP launched a 'Jai Ho BC' campaign, reaffirming its dedication to the political empowerment of the community. However, during the TDP's tenure from 2014-19, not a single BC member was nominated to the Rajya Sabha, and the concerns of the marginalized were often overlooked.

In the past, the Nayee Brahmin community faced resistance from Naidu when they sought recognition as contract employees with minimum wage guarantees. Naidu's warning of "clipping their wings" in

response to their demand for fair wages drew criticism. Similarly, the TDP administration had confrontations with the fishing community. Moreover, Naidu had pledged to reserve 40% of tickets for youth in the upcoming elections. However, following the release of the first list of candidates, the party's youth leaders are now questioning the leadership's commitment to this promise.

Lokesh, who led the Yuva Galam initiative two years ago to encourage youth participation in politics and had assured a significant number of seats for them in the upcoming elections, expressed disappointment with the first list, which seemingly sidelined youth representation.

New criminal justice laws from July 1

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The newly enacted laws -- the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Act -- to completely overhaul the criminal justice system in the country will come into effect from July 1.

The three laws got the Parliament's approval on December 21 last year and President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent on December 25.

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.

Continued on Page 2

All set for APPSC Group-2 exam today

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Chief Secretary KS Jawahar Reddy has said that extensive arrangements have been made for the conduct of APPSC Group-2 Screening Written Exams to be held across the State on Sunday (February 25). The CS held a video conference with District Collectors, SPs, APPSC and other officials on Saturday. On this occasion, he ordered the District Collectors and SPs to ensure that the Group-2 preliminary screening tests to be held on Sunday are conducted peacefully without any untoward incident. Similarly, it was ordered to ensure that

minimum facilities like drinking water and electricity supply are available in the examination centres.

The CS stated that these exams will be held in 1,327 centres across the State. He said that the exams will be held from 10.30 am to 1 pm. He further said that 24 All India Service Officers, 450 Route Officers and 1330 Liaison Officers have been appointed for continuous supervision of the examinations.

He said that 24,142 invigilators and another 8,500 other staff have been appointed in the examination centres. Moreover, as part of the wide security measures, 3,971 police personnel have been appointed and 900 escort personnel have been appointed to ensure the safe transportation of exam papers, answer sheets etc.

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Narasapur MP Raghu Rama quits YSRCP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Narasapuram Lok Sabha member K Raghu Ramakrishna Raju on Saturday resigned from the Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy-led YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh.

In his resignation letter addressed to Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, Raju, who has been at odds with the former for nearly four years, said the time has come for both of them to free themselves from 'unsavoury association once and for all'.

"I hereby tender my resignation for the primary active membership of YSRCP Party and expect you (Reddy) to accept the same with a prompt reply or response at your earliest convenience," said Raju in his resignation letter posted on 'X'.

The MP noted that he resigned as a mark of his 'strong conviction towards serving for public good' and observed that the time has come for all to face public probity and mandate, hinting at the forthcoming polls.

OBTUSE ANGLE

Jaahnavi case: Indian mission raises issue with US

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

India's consulate in Seattle has raised with authorities the case of Indian student Jaahnavi Kandula after the prosecution attorney said an overspeeding 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.

Family shocked over decision of authorities

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

In bodycam footage released by the Seattle Police Department, Officer Daniel Auderer laughed about the deadly crash and dismissed any implication Dave might be at fault or that a criminal investigation was necessary.

On Wednesday, the King County Prosecutor's Office said they would not move forward

with criminal charges against Dave due to a lack of evidence to prove a criminal case beyond a reasonable doubt. India's consulate in Seattle also said it was monitoring the progress in the case and will extend all possible support in ensuring justice for Kandula and her family.

"On the recently released investigation report of the King County Prosecution Attorney on the unfortunate death of Jaahnavi

Kandula, the Consulate has been in regular touch with the designated family representatives and will continue to extend all possible support in ensuring justice for Jaahnavi and her family," the mission said in a post on X.

"We have also raised the matter strongly with local authorities, including Seattle Police for appropriate redress. The case has now been referred to the Seattle City Attorney's office for review," the post said on Friday.

Continued on Page 2

Asserting the electorate's awareness of which party delivers on its promises, Sajjala expressed confidence in Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's administration and predicted his re-election.

TDP fields 5 new faces in combined Krishna district

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Jana Sena Party (JSP) alliance have announced 11 out of 16 Assembly segment candidates who will be contesting in the upcoming general elections in the combined Krishna district. Among the announced candidates, five are newcomers to the TDP, while the remaining six are incumbents for their respective constituencies.

TDP chief and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu, along with JSP chief Pawan Kalyan, revealed 99 names in the initial list. Fortunately, 11 seats were confirmed in this first list, with the candidates for Vijayawada West, Mylavaram, Kaikaluru, Penamaluru, and Avanigadda constituencies likely to be announced in the subsequent list.

In the first list, Kolikapudi Srinivas for Tiruvuru, Kolu Parda Saradhi for Nuzvid, Yarlagadda Venkata Rao for Gannavaram, Venigandla Ramu for Gudivada, Kavitha



Krishna Prasad for Pedana, Kollu Ravindra for Machilipatnam, Varla Kumara Raja for Pamarru, Bonda Uma Maheswara Rao for Vijayawada Central, Gadde Rama Mohana Rao for Vijayawada East, Tangirala Sowmya for Nandigama, and Sreeram Raja Gopal (Tataiah) for Jaggaiahpet were confirmed. Among these, Kolikapudi Srinivas, Venigandla Ramu, and Varla Kumara Raja are first-time contenders in the elections.

However, there is ongoing discussion regarding the Vijayawada West constituency allocation between the TDP and JSP alliance. Additionally, former TDP MLC Buddha Venkateswara Rao, known as Venkanna, is vying for candidature in this seat. The JSP has

its eye on Mylavaram and Avanigadda constituencies. Meanwhile, there is stiff competition among TDP leaders for the Mylavaram and Penamaluru segments. Former Minister Devineni Uma Maheswara Rao and former MLA Bode Prasad are leading contenders for their segments, considered prestigious by the TDP leadership. Consequently, the party is scouting for strong candidates, party sources disclosed. Kaikaluru is likely to be allotted to the BJP if they join the TDP-JSP alliance.

Former Minister Kolu Parda Saradhi's candidature has been announced for the Nuzvid segment in the Eluru Parliamentary Constituency. Similarly, Yarlagadda Venkata Rao will represent the Gannavaram constituency of

the Machilipatnam Parliamentary Constituency. Both candidates have defected from the ruling YSRCP to join the TDP and previously contested elections under the YSRCP banner from the same constituencies.

KP Saradhi emerged victorious from Penamaluru, whereas Yarlagadda Venkata Rao faced defeat in Gannavaram. In the recent seven lists released by the YSRCP, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy did not confirm Saradhi's candidacy, leading to his shift to the TDP. Yarlagadda Venkata Rao also switched allegiance from the ruling YSRCP to the TDP, joining in the presence of Chandrababu Naidu, after Jagan Mohan Reddy appointed Dr. Vallabhaneni Vamsi Mohan as the Gannavaram convener.

Regarding KP Saradhi, the MLA representing Penamaluru, although not formally joining the party, the TDP has announced his name for the Nuzvid assembly constituency.

Only the rich are being favoured in polls: Mandali

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Former Deputy Speaker and senior TDP leader, Mandali Buddha Prasad, has

expressed his dissatisfaction in a subtle way with the initial list released by the TDP and JSP leadership on Saturday. He said he was happy at not finding his name included in the first round of announcements.

Following the release of the TDP-JSP joint list, Buddha Prasad took to social media platforms to share his reaction. "You are well aware of my principles and beliefs. I have never aspired for positions. If entrusted with responsibilities, I have always strived for the development of our region. However, I have never amassed wealth through any position," he conveyed to his followers and TDP supporters.

Addressing the evolving landscape of politics, Buddha Prasad highlighted the increasing influence of money in electoral processes. He lamented the trend of political parties favouring affluent candidates to secure votes, emphasising the need for change.



OFFICIALS TASKED WITH RANDOMISING EVMs

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In compliance with directives from the Election Commission of India (ECI), officials are tasked with conducting the randomisation of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) seamlessly, stated Nageswara Rao Naik, the EVM Nodal Officer for Krishna district and District Panchayat Officer (DPO).

Under the guidance of Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Mukhesh Kumar Meena and Krishna District Election Officer and Collector P Raja Babu, the Nodal Officer successfully conducted a trial run

for the randomisation of EVMs on Saturday.

Addressing the gathering, DPO Nageswara Rao Naik explained that during the initial randomization phase, EVMs, Ballot Units, Control Units, and VVPATs are allocated to the respective constituencies in the presence of political party representatives. Subsequently, during the second phase, these units are assigned to specific polling centres in the presence of Returning Officers.

He further elaborated that following verification by technical experts, all allocated units undergo scrutiny. Any

malfunctioning unit is promptly replaced. Upon completion of the randomization process, details of the allocated units are disclosed to political party representatives. Additionally, he mentioned that 20% of units are reserved for each constituency.

The event was attended by K Chandrasekhar, the ARO of Machilipatnam Parliament, and District Revenue Officer, along with Geetanjali, the joint collector, and assembly constituency Returning Officers M Vani, Padmavathi, D Raju, P Venkata Ramana, Bala Subrahmanyam, among others.

Constituency surveillance teams appointed in Vizianagaram district

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

District Election Officer Nagalakshmi has issued a comprehensive directive appointing Constituency-wise Surveillance Officers, also known as Static Surveillance Teams to ensure the integrity of the upcoming elections here today. These teams are tasked with vigilantly monitoring the implementation of the model code, detecting any violations thereof, addressing complaints, scrutinizing candidates, and overseeing the election expenditure of political parties.

Under the directive, 30 teams have been meticulously appointed for each constituency. Each team will operate under the guidance of Deputy Tahsildars and will comprise police constables, revenue staff, and a videographer. The operational schedule has been strategically organized, with one team on duty from 6 am to 2 pm, another from 2 pm to 10 pm, and the third from 10 pm to 6 am, ensuring round-the-clock surveillance.

Emphasizing the significance of their role, the mandal

revenue officer highlighted that these teams will conduct operations directly from their office premises. They are mandated to promptly report any findings to the respective Returning Officer and coordinate with associated officers for immediate action. The primary focus of these surveillance teams will be at designated check posts, where they will diligently monitor the transportation of illegal cash, illicit liquor, arms, and other prohibited items. Capturing evidence through videography is a pivotal aspect of their duties. All recorded footage will be compiled into DVDs and



handed over to the accounting team for documentation.

Furthermore, the teams are instructed to maintain daily records of seized cash, confiscated items, and complaints in a detailed annexure, ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the process. With these robust surveillance measures in place, Vizianagaram stands resolute in upholding the sanctity of the electoral process, fostering trust among citizens, and ensuring fair and free elections.

Jana Sainiks in disbelief over PK agreeing for just 24 seats: Roja

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The much-awaited TDP-Janasena alliance finally announced the list of candidates who will be contesting the forthcoming Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in Andhra Pradesh.

After several rounds of negotiations and much dilly-dallying, the announcement has caused heartburn to many leaders in the TDP camp while Jana Sena leader Pawan Kalyan is facing criticism for not living up to the expectations of the party cadre.

Reacting to the development, YSRCP leader and minister Ambati Rambabu said Pawan Kalyan has betrayed the trust of his cadre. He said JanaSainiks



were hoping to get 60-70 seats but the party has been reduced to a laughable number of 24.

Terming Jana Sena shameless, he said Pawan Kalyan is now misleading his cadre by asking them to assume that they are contesting on 40 seats, while in

reality, the party got only 24 seats. Describing it as the Jana Sena leader's failure, Rambabu advised Pawan Kalyan to go back to movie-making rather than holding Chandrababu Naidu's palanquin in the elections.

"It is better for Pawan Kalyan to merge his party with TDP, just like his brother Chiranjeevi merged his Praja Rajyam Party with the Congress. The TDP + JSP alliance is a big gimmick. Nobody has any clarity. They are not sure whether the BJP is in alliance with them or not," Ambati Rambabu said.

Another YSRCP leader Roja asked Pawan Kalyan if he could share the details of the package deal that he got for agreeing to

settle for only 24 seats. She asked how much money did he get for insulting his party cadre.

She said JanSainiks are in a state of utter disbelief that their leader has bowed down to Chandrababu for just 24 seats and compromised the interests of the Kapu community. She added that even Nara Lokesh, who lost as an MLA in the 2019 elections, got a ticket in the first list but not Pawan Kalyan.

"You don't dare to fight CM Jagan alone, hence you cobbled up an unholy alliance. Even though so many days have passed, still there is no clarity. The confusion over seat distribution is so evident.

The collapse of TDP-JSP is imminent," Roja asserted.

Minorities up in arms against TDP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



The minorities were up in arms against Telugu Desam chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu over showing an empty hand to Muslim minorities in the ticket allotment for 2024 elections as TD has given only one seat against Jagan Mohan Reddy offered four seats out of 67 MLA seats announced so far. Senior minority leader and YSR Congress Medical Wing State Vice President Dr. Mehboob Shaikh said that Naidu earlier

neglected minorities during his government in 2014-19 by denying tickets, ministry in the cabinet and further in nominated posts. He deplored that Naidu's disdain for Muslims is once again clear as he has given only one ticket to a minority and it is regrettable that only one Muslim minority has been given a chance for the 94 assembly seats announced by the TD today.

Dr Mehboob Shaikh pointed out that if we look at the list of TDPs today, the public can

understand that Chandrababu aims to undermine the minorities in the state in alliance with the BJP. He further pointed out that YSRCP president and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has allocated four of the 67 seats officially announced till now for 2024 elections to Muslim minorities including one minority woman. He deplored that Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan who is adopted son of Naidu has followed Chandrababu by not giving any ticket to minorities.

ZP CEO stresses election preparedness in training session

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

Zilla Parishad Chief Executive Officer D. Venkateswara Rao emphasized the need for preparedness and adherence to election protocols during a comprehensive training session for key personnel on Saturday morning. The session aimed to strengthen preparedness and ensure adherence to election protocols for a smooth and transparent electoral process. Rao highlighted the establishment of flying squads, static surveillance teams, video surveil-

lance units, accounting teams, and expenditure inspectors across districts. These teams will play instrumental roles in ensuring the smooth conduct of elections within their respective constituencies.

He underscored the importance of promptly resolving complaints regarding election code violations. Additionally, he stressed the necessity of providing written responses to complaints lodged by political entities and candidates. Rao also emphasized the scrutiny of election-related activities, such as



meetings and rallies, through the Suvidha app and offline channels.

K. Chenna Keshavrao, District Information and Civil Relations Officer, emphasized the pivotal role of the MCMC in verifying audio and video con-

tent used in election campaigns. He reiterated the necessity of obtaining prior approvals for electronic advertisements. The committee will also monitor political advertisements across various media platforms, including social media, e-papers, tele-

vision, radio channels, and internet-based platforms.

Prasanna Lakshmi, Chief Planning Officer, elucidated procedures regarding the seizure of cash and gold during election inspections. She stressed the importance of providing detailed receipts during seizures and promptly handing over seized assets to designated authorities. Lakshmi emphasized transparency in reporting seized assets to the media and submitting comprehensive reports in prescribed formats.

Trough runs over Marathwada to south TN

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The Meteorological Centre reported on Saturday that a trough extending from south Telangana to south Tamil Nadu now stretches from the aforementioned cyclonic circulation over Marathwada and its neighbouring regions to south Tamil Nadu, crossing Interior Karnataka at 0.9 km above mean sea level.

Additionally, another trough extends from the same cyclonic circulation over Marathwada and its vicinity to Coastal



above mean sea level.

The cyclonic circulation over south Chhattisgarh and its surroundings at 0.9 km above mean sea level has weakened, while the one over south Telangana and its vicinity, extending up to 1.5 km above mean sea level, has also become

less prominent. Light rain may occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next 48 hours.

Dry weather is expected to prevail in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema from February 26 to March 1. Rainfall was recorded at one or two places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh, while Rayalaseema experienced dry weather over the last 24 hours, the report further noted.

YSRCP's innovative social media campaign dominates political narrative

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

With elections in Andhra Pradesh heating up the YSR Congress Party is dominating the social media space. Following CM Jagan's directions, the party, which is successfully conducting back-to-back campaigns on the ground, is also focussing on building their strength on social media. The YSRCP is simultaneously prepared at the backend - whether it's the finalization of candidates or the formation of booth committees, they have checked all the crucial boxes on their checklist.

'Siddham' rally and advantage animation!

Taking cue from the fierce Bengal election of 2021, the YSRCP is also making use of an animated series - the episodes of which coincide with the Siddham Sabhas

that are happening on-ground. This series is based on the predominant narrative that Jagan is the protector of the poor and will teach all conspirators of Andhra Pradesh the lesson of a lifetime. The series also portrays how the sentiment currently is 'One Versus All'.

The first episode, which was launched on Feb 27, when CM Jagan conducted his first Siddham Rally in Bhemili, was an introductory episode, that depicted how every political party - be it Congress, JSP, TDP or BJP had all conspired against the state of Andhra Pradesh and its people. And all of them were on one side versus Jagan, a man who is the protector of the land, and the poor. The second episode launched on Feb 4, a day after CM Jagan's Siddham rally in Eluru. This episode highlighted the transformation brought by CM Jagan in government schools via the Nadu-Nedu scheme and how TDP



and JSP were opposing reforms. The party launched the third episode of the Siddham series, two days post-CM Jagan's humongous 'One Million Rally' in Anantapur.

The party is expected to release its fourth episode of the series post the last Siddham meeting being planned in Palnadu.

'Ooru Marindi' campaign

The party also launched a social media campaign called 'Ooru Marindi' near Sankranti, where they posted various kinds of content - graphics, videos, illustrations, and animated videos on how the villages of Andhra Pradesh have been transformed under CM Jagan's government.

'Tikamaka Pottulu' series

Harping on the ongoing TDP-BJP-JSP

alliance chatter, the party is also running a series of special episodes called 'Tikamaka Pottulu', where they are fiercely attacking the opposition surrounded by the alliance confusion and chaos. The party has released 5 episodes of the cartoon series to date.

Jagananna Agenda Song

The party has launched 4 songs to date, which have topped the charts and have kept people hooked. Siddham Song for Cadre, Jagananna Agenda, Anda Danda, and Aapu Babu Natakam are the other songs that have been launched by the party till now. Jagananna Agenda Song became a massive hit among the people as it clocked over 10 million organic views. The song was a big hit on Instagram as well and over 65,000 people made remix reels using the song posted by the party.

Medical officials instructed to prepare for pulse polio campaign

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Joint Collector S Ram Sundar Reddy has instructed medical and health authorities to ensure all necessary arrangements are in place for the upcoming pulse polio programme scheduled for March 3 across the district.

During a meeting held with officials from various departments, including health and medical, on Saturday, the Joint Collector outlined the plans for the campaign. He announced that the booth-level Pulse Polio programme would occur on March 3, followed by a house-to-house campaign on March 4 and 5.

Emphasising the importance of comprehensive coverage, Reddy underscored that the Pulse Polio procedures would run from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm for three consecutive days. He urged the establishment of Special Pulse Polio



West Godavari Joint Collector S Ram Sundar Reddy, along with other officials, unveiling a wall poster promoting the Pulse Polio programme in Bhimavaram on Saturday.

Centers, particularly in densely populated urban areas near transportation hubs, commercial centres, and industrial zones.

The Joint Collector urged coordination among the medical, health, education, and women and child welfare

departments to ensure that all children aged 0-5 years receive the polio drops. "There are approximately 185,953 children within the 0-5 age group in the district, and meticulous arrangements have been made to reach each of them. This includes setting up 1,315 pub-

lic booths, 45 mobile booths, and 34 transit booths, with 5,520 vaccinators on standby," stated Reddy. Additionally, he mentioned that 181 vehicles would be deployed across the district to manage Pulse Polio operations.

Reddy highlighted that while the prevalence of polio is low, it remains crucial to maintain preventive measures due to the potential risk of virus transmission. He urged proactive efforts from Anganwadi staff, ASHA workers, and ANMs to raise awareness about the campaign, particularly in urban and rural areas.

Addressing past challenges, Reddy urged officials to resolve any issues that may have hindered the polio vaccination program.

The meeting was attended by DCHS Dr. P Suryanarayana, DMHO Dr. D Maheswar Rao, and RDO K Chennayya among others.

10 kg ganja seized, 4 held

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

The police seized 10 kg of ganja and arrested four persons here on Saturday.

DSP Rajagopal Reddy told the media that on a tip-off, a police team led by K Ulasaiah conducted a raid at BANS hotel on the outskirts and seized 10 kg of ganja.

The police arrested Tulasiraman, Charant Kumar, Madhav and Kannu and seized 10 kg of ganja from the possession worth Rs 4.50 lakh.

The accused confessed to selling the ganja locally. The accused told the police that they had brought the cannabis from Visakhapatnam district at a cheaper price and sold the commodity here at a higher price.



'TDP belittled Pawan by leaving him with just 24 seats'

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

Minister for Water Resources Management Ambati Rambabu has observed that Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan has been belittled by the Telugu Desam Party by allocating only 24 MLA seats to contest in the forthcoming elections.

Addressing the media in Sattenapalli on Saturday, Ambati Rambabu said that the Jana Sena party expected to contest in 60 to 70 Assembly segments but it was given only 24 seats by Chandrababu Naidu.

"Instead of carrying a palanquin of TDP, it is better for Pawan Kalyan to merge the JSP in the TDP," Ambadi ridiculed. The Minister also advised Pawan Kalyan to take a cue from his brother Chiranjeevi who merged his Praja Rajyam party in the Congress.

"The JSP cadres raised slogans as Pawan Kalyan CM and hoped that the JSP would be given 70 Assembly seats. Pawan Kalyan backstabbed the Kapu



Irrigation Minister Ambati Rambabu addressing a press conference at Sattenapalli in Guntur district on Saturday.

community people by accepting 24 seats given by the 'TDP,' Ambati played. He also advised the Jana Sena leaders and cadres not to be betrayed by package politics.

"The TDP-JSP alliance is embarrassing. The Jana Sena could not announce the constituency where Pawan Kalyan would contest. The JSP cadre is deeply disappointed with the allocation of only 24 Assembly and 3 LS seats by the TDP,"

Ambati claimed.

The Minister pointed out that the BJP has so far not announced joining the TDP-JSP alliance. But the TDP is claiming the BJP will join their alliance. "As long as the people of the state bless Jagan Mohan Reddy, the alliance can not defeat Jagan Mohan Reddy," Ambadi predicted, adding that the YSRCP would contest in all the 175 Assembly constituencies and win.

Elaborate arrangements made for Group 2 exams

PNS ■ BAPATLA

Superintendent of Police Vakul Jindal has said that elaborate security arrangements have been made for the Group 2 examination to be conducted on March 25. SP Vakul Jindal said that arrangements have been made in the district for the Group 2 screening test examinations to be held by APPSC.

The SP said that a total of 7671 candidates would appear to write Group 2 examinations being held in 25 examination centres across the Bapatla district. "Three DSP level officers, 12 CIs, 25 SSILs and a total of 224 police officers and personnel will be on duty to ensure the peaceful conduct of the Group 2 examination in the district," the SP made it clear.

The candidates appearing



for the Group 2 screening test should follow the rules and regulations mentioned in the hall ticket. The candidates should reach the examination centres by 9 am with the hall ticket and any original ID card recognized by the government. Candidates will not be allowed to leave the examination centre till the completion of the examination, the SP clarified.

ified.

Electronic gadgets like mobile phones, calculators, Bluetooth and smart watches would not be allowed in the examination centres, the SP said. The candidates should keep the valuable belongings and items they bring with them on their own, he made it clear.

SP Vakul Jindal warned that strict action would be taken as per the AP Public Examinations (Prevention of Malpractices and Unfair Means) Act, 1997 if the candidates indulge in malpractices and misbehaviour.

As Section 144 is in force at the examination centres, the SP advised the public that it is illegal for people to gather at the examination centres and that Xerox and Internet shops should be closed.

44,614 candidates to appear for Group-2 exam in Krishna

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The collectors of NTR and Krishna districts, Dr. S. Dilli Rao and P. Raja Babu respectively, have apprised Chief Secretary of the State, Dr. K.S. Jawahar Reddy, of the arrangements made for the Group-2 Screening Examination scheduled for February 25, Sunday. In preparation for the smooth conduct of the examination, both district administrations have collaborated with the police department to ensure necessary measures are in place. A total of 41,614 candidates are expected to participate in the examination on Sunday.

Chief Secretary Dr. KS Jawahar Reddy conducted a video conference with all district collectors from his office in Vijayawada on Saturday.



He emphasized the importance of maintaining incident-free proceedings during the examination.

Additionally, Dr. Reddy inquired about various initiatives including Re-Survey, Jagananna Aarogya Suraksha, Aarogyasri, MGNREGA, and government-prioritized building constructions.

In a prior review of the Group-2 screening examination, it was reported that the NTR district has arranged 54 examination centres, with over

24,373 candidates expected to appear. NTR district collector Dr. S. Dilli Rao and Joint collector Dr. P. Sampath Kumar provided this information.

On the other hand, Krishna district collector Raja Babu stated that 17,241 candidates would participate in the examination across 51 arranged centres. The examination is scheduled from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm, and section 144 will be imposed at all examination centers for security purposes.

YSRC MLA donates 25 desi cows to TTD

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Ruling YSRC MLA M Venugopal on Saturday donated 25 Gir Sahiwal breed cows to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD).

The livestock donation is expected to supplement the temple body's requirement of 30 kg of ghee per day for Sri Venkateswara temple's daily kankaryams (rituals).

"M Venugopal, MLA from Darsi in Prakasam district has donated 25 Gir-Sahiwal breed desi cows to TTD in the presence of TTD Chairman B Karunakara Reddy and executive officer A V Dharma Reddy at SV Gosala in Tirupati," said TTD in a press release.



According to the executive officer, the temple body needs 500 desi cows in addition to the existing bovines.

Following the donation, special pujas (rituals) were held for the cows, including some ceremonial fodder feeding.

Later, the temple priests offered 'theertha prasadam' (consecrated food) to Venugopal (58) and his wife.

TTD is the official custodian of the famous Sri Venkateswara temple in Tirupati.

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 Ponnampababakar 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 chat with scribes at the Gandhi Bhavan on Saturday, Ponnampababakar 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. The Transport Department acted effectively in Medaram Jata, he said.

Ponnamp said that the government will certainly implement the scheme of giving Rs 12,000 per annum to auto drivers. He said that 450 autos purchased were by the GHMC and that there will be 3030 autos in rural areas.

He said that the Congress government is sincere on the caste census and is thinking of implementing reservations like in Bihar. The government is thinking of setting up a team with Rs 1 lakh capital to do a caste census in Telangana.

The government will conduct a meeting with all parties very soon and the government



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.

is thinking of setting up a commission regarding that, the Minister said.

He said that the Congress government will implement reservations in all sectors after the caste census in the state is over.

The Minister said the Transport Department will issue driving licenses only if persons pass in all future tests. He said that the TSRTC is running successfully due to the hard work of drivers and conductors.

He said that they had identified RTC assets in the state. RTC targeted Rs 2000 crore through RTC Cargo and that the RTC got only Rs 150 crore now. He said that the RTC has 90 depots and that the RTC will run buses to all parts of the state.

Responding to a question that the Congress will not spare if the criminals join Congress from cases, Ponnamp said that the Congress government will not leave criminals even if they changed their political affiliations.

Take steps for release of prisoners unable to provide sureties: DC

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh directed the officials to provide sureties to the poor prisoners who have been languishing in prison for a long time.

Addressing the Poor Prisoners Empowered Committee meeting here on Saturday, the Collector said that the prisoners belonging to underprivileged sections have been languishing in prisons unable to pay surety money. He directed the officials to take steps to ensure that the prisoners were released.

The Collector said that the Union Home Minister issued orders to the state governments to take steps for the release of prisoners belonging to the socially backward com-



Eluru District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh addressing the Poor Prisoners Empowered Committee meeting in Eluru on Saturday

munities and financially poor by extending financial aid help. The prisoners were unable to pay the money for surety as per the court order, the Collector said.

"An empowered committee was formed to assess the financial status of prisoners to free them from the prisons by

extending financial assistance to pay the surety amount. District 7th additional judge M Ramakrishnam Raju, district legal services authority secretary K Rarna Prasad, SP D Mary Prashanthi and prisoners department officer CH RV Swamy were among those who were present.

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 keeping highly confidential land data, Aadhaar and bank account details with the agency and



CM Revanth at Dharani Committee's review on Saturday

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

‘LIVING DOCUMENTS’ 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 constitu-

tions 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.'

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-shar-



ing 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.

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 (ANEMI) 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.

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

liable" platforms/algos/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.

ity 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.

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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.



It further noted that the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar are the most preferred destinations for Indian healthcare professionals seeking job opportunities.

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, including experience in regional sales, distributor management, and project management.

Additionally, there is also a high demand for healthcare professionals ranging from diplomas to higher degrees in nursing and medicine.

The healthcare workers migrating from India to the MENA region are predominantly within the early 30s age group, with a noticeable increase in the number of male nurses joining the workforce segment that is traditionally dominated by women, the report added.



RISKS LURK BEHIND THE GLAMOUR

A recent tragic death during smile enhancement surgery of a 28-year-old man in Hyderabad highlights the risk of cosmetic procedures. In a chat with ARCHANA JYOTI, experts emphasise the need for thorough consideration before surgery, advocating stricter regulations, and increased awareness

From smoothing wrinkles to reshaping body contours, the allure of cosmetic procedures often promises transformative results and a boost in self-confidence. Cosmetic surgery has emerged as a popular option for individuals seeking to enhance their physical appearance and address perceived imperfections. However, there lies a landscape fraught with risks and complexities that warrant careful consideration.

Consider a few cases of 2023: *Chethana Raj, a promising young TV actor, who tragically lost her life after undergoing plastic surgery in Bengaluru. Her father, K Varadaraj, revealed that hospital authorities attributed her death to a cardiac arrest.

*The untimely demise of Luana Andrade, a 29-year-old Brazilian influencer, following liposuction surgery in São Paulo, serves as a chilling reminder of the risks inherent in cosmetic procedures. Complications during the surgery led to four cardiac arrests, ultimately claiming her life. *Argentine model and actor Silvina Luna died due to complications related to a kidney illness associated with prior plastic surgery. These reported cases involve celebrities or in some others, complainants managed to reach out to media or vice versa. The recent one that has been reported this year is of LN Vinjam (28) who lost his life on February 18 while undergoing a 'smile designing' procedure, just weeks before his wedding. There are countless unreported instances of individuals suffering after cosmetic enhancements. Many endure silent pain as their pursuit of an ideal

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS	
Hematoma: Hematoma, a pocket of blood resembling a bruise, can occur in 1 percent of breast augmentation procedures and is the most common complication after facelifts.	Deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism: Though relatively uncommon, these conditions can be life-threatening, with rates slightly higher in procedures like abdominoplasty.
Seroma: Seroma, the pooling of sterile body fluid beneath the skin's surface, is a common complication following surgeries like tummy tucks.	Organ damage: Procedures like liposuction pose risks of visceral perforations, where surgical instruments inadvertently puncture internal organs, potentially leading to fatal consequences.
Blood loss: While some blood loss is expected during surgery, uncontrolled blood loss can result in severe outcomes such as a drop in blood pressure.	Scarring: Scarring is an inevitable outcome of surgery, with some individuals experiencing hypertrophic or keloid scars, which can be red, thick, and raised, causing aesthetic concerns.
Infection: Despite preventive measures, infections remain common after plastic surgery, affecting around 1.1 to 2.5 percent of individuals undergoing breast augmentation. Cellulitis, a skin infection, is one example, while severe cases may require intravenous antibiotics.	General appearance dissatisfaction: Despite overall satisfaction rates, some individuals may experience dissatisfaction with their postoperative results, particularly if there are contouring issues or asymmetry problems.
Nerve damage: Many surgeries carry the risk of nerve damage, leading to numbness or tingling sensations. While often temporary, nerve damage can sometimes be permanent, affecting sensitivity or function in the operated area.	Complications of anesthesia: Anesthesia carries its own set of risks, ranging from lung infections to tions, stroke, heart attacks, and death.



DR MANISH JANGRA
Consultant Dermatologist,
Park Hospital

appearance is botched by incompetent surgeons.

Dr. Manish Jangra, Consultant Dermatologist from Park Hospital points out that craze for cosmetic procedures is rising day by day. Minimally invasive procedures have seen an even larger increase than surgical ones. "When it

comes to cosmetic dermatology, individuals often seek treatments to address a variety of concerns related to their skin's appearance and texture, correcting skin tone, smoothing wrinkles, removing hair on the face or body and reducing surface fat.

"When we talk about Botox a lot of thing comes in our mind as it is widely used by various media platforms and many famous celebrities for various indications. Botox is a botulinum toxin obtained from bacteria. It is basically used in dermatology for various cosmetic issues like frown lines(Forehead) Crow footprints (Lateral to Eyes). These are basically used to smooth wrinkles over face. This is also used for

Hyperhidrosis of palms & for excessive sweating.

"Then there are Fillers. These are used to fill the area that has lost tissue or to fill that gap.

"Dermal fillers, sometimes called soft tissue fillers, are substances designed to be injected beneath the surface of the skin to add volume and fullness. The time they take to work, as well as how long they last, also vary. Some fillers last six months, while others last up to two years or longer. They can be used to enhance lips, enhance shallow area like under-eye trough & to soften the static wrinkles. But they must be injected by dermatologist with great experience in aesthetic practice," warns Dr Jangra. He reiterates, this must be

injected by qualified dermatologist only as various quacks too are flourishing in market claiming to be cosmetologists leading to various complications. People must check qualification and experience of the doctor first and should cautious about the quacks using term "Cosmetologists." There is no such degree by this name approved by National Medical Commission (NMC), cautions Dr Jangra. "Also you must ensure to go to dermatologist with MD/DNB/DVD (Degree in Dermatology). A lot of dentists/M B B S / non medicos/nurse have started practicing as cosmetologists, playing with health of the common people."

Dr Sachin Ambekar, Director, Minimal Access Surgery and Medical Director at Mash Hospital, stresses on the necessity for hospitals to be equipped to handle emergencies and emphasizes the importance of thorough patient history-taking before any surgical procedure minor or major which he's had in the previous history. If he's had a surgery, what kind of anaesthesia, did he have any kind of complications and if there is any detailed notes discharge summary available with the patient. Before any surgery the medical teams get multiple tests done that



DR SACHIN AMBEKAR
Director of Minimal Access Surgery and
Medical Director at Mash Hospital



DR MADHU GOEL
Director, Gynecologist and Obstetrics
at Fortis La Femme

includes local anaesthesia test dose, IV antibiotic test dose. The anaesthetist or the surgeon takes a detailed history of the medical and surgical history. While it is mandatory for every centre involving dentists, oral maxillofacial, aesthetic ad plastic surgery to have qualified doctors on its panel but it is most important to keep a backup in case there is any emergency. **Dr Madhu Goel**, Director, Gynecologist and Obstetrics at Fortis La Femme highlights several key points surrounding the motivations, types, and potential risks associated with these surgeries.

From addressing perceived flaws to enhancing confidence and conforming to societal beauty standards, rise of social media and celebrity culture have also contributed to the desire to emulate certain looks or features, she notes.

While many cosmetic procedures are generally safe and backed by research, it's crucial for patients to be aware of the potential risks and complications involved. As with any surgical procedure, there are inherent risks such as anaesthesia complications, infections, scarring, and changes in sensation. "Therefore, thorough consultation with a qualified healthcare provider and a realistic understanding of both the benefits and risks are essential steps, advises Dr Goel.

DOCTORS SPEAK

India's Over-the-Counter Topical Steroid Crisis



DR DIKSHA AGRAWAL
Consultant Dermatologist
Ghaziabad Dermatology Centre

Topical steroids, initially designed for short-term use under medical supervision, are increasingly being used without proper guidance, with various factors contributing to this issue. The ease of availability and lack of stringent regulations contribute to the rampant over-the-counter sales, leading to misuse with Topical Steroid-Damaged Facies (TSD) standing out as a visible consequence. While steroids are used for medical conditions like psoriasis and eczema, amongst others, their unsafe and unregulated use can lead to multiple problems. Let's delve deeper into the reasons behind this phenomenon:

MISDIAGNOSIS AND SELF-MEDICATION

Many individuals lack proper medical knowledge and may incorrectly diagnose their skin conditions. This leads them to self-medicate with topical steroids without seeking professional advice. This practice not only exacerbates existing skin issues but also puts them at risk of developing dependence on these potent medications.

PROFIT-DRIVEN PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY:

Some pharmaceutical companies prioritize profits over public health by making topical steroids readily available without stringent regulations. This accessibility encourages indiscriminate use among consumers who may not be aware of the potential risks and side effects associated with these medications.

LACK OF AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

There is a general lack of awareness among the public regarding the appropriate use of topical steroids and their potential adverse effects. Consumers may be influenced by advertisements or recommendations from non-medical sources, further perpetuating the misuse of these medications. For instance, skin thinning occurs due to the inhibition of collagen synthesis by steroids. This can result in skin atrophy, making it more fragile and prone to injuries. Additionally, continuous application of topical steroids can lead to the development of stretch marks (striae) on the skin, highlighting the detrimental effects of steroids.

This scenario urgently calls for collaboration between regulatory authorities, healthcare professionals, pharmaceutical companies, and the public to ensure the safe and appropriate use of topical steroids in India.

WHO: Nations must step up tobacco control measures



SAIMA WAZED
Regional Director of WHO
South-East Asia

Despite significant declines in tobacco consumption over the years, the South-East Asia region continues to be the home of the highest number of tobacco users, including smokeless tobacco. Moreover, the use of e-cigarettes is on the rise, particularly among young people, posing additional health risks.

Highlighting the gravity of the menace causing health issues like cancer, respiratory issues, and heart disease, newly elected Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia, Saima Wazed, has called for heightened efforts in controlling both tobacco and e-cigarette usage within the region.

Of particular concern is the increasing number of adolescent tobacco users, indicating a concerning trend among younger populations. Additionally, the rise in e-cigarette use among school-aged children, as evidenced by Thailand's experience, demands immediate attention, she said.

Furthermore, she stressed the lack of evidence supporting the effectiveness of e-cigarettes for smoking cessation, underscoring the need for regulatory measures. Key statistics underline the gravity of the situation, with an estimated 411 million tobacco users in the region, accounting for a significant

portion of global tobacco consumption. Smokeless tobacco usage is particularly prevalent, with the region hosting nearly 77% of global users. Furthermore, there are approximately 11 million adolescent tobacco users, indicating a concerning trend among younger populations.

Regarding e-cigarettes, she said, despite efforts by some countries to ban or regulate e-cigarettes, more comprehensive measures are required.

"Several countries in the region have set ambitious targets for tobacco control, with initiatives such as "Tobacco Free Bangladesh" and "Tobacco Endgame" in India.

"Moreover, countries are implementing demand reduction strategies advocated by WHO, such as the MPOWER package, to further curb tobacco consumption," Wazed said.

BOOK REVIEW

Rhythm of the Ruins unveils emotional brilliance

Enter the world of 'Rhythm of the Ruins' by Mukul Kumar, a captivating collection of poignant poems that capture the essence of life's complexities, offering a profound exploration of the beauty found amid chaos and change. From the slums of Bombay to mythic realms, the book promises to touch the hearts and minds of all who dare to delve into its pages

By SWARN KUMAR ANAND

*I miss you terribly, Papa
My sky stretches, serene
Within the fortress of his care,
Deluge or draught draws from
My shelter a joyous smug stare.*

Mukul Kumar's poetry collection "Rhythm of the Ruins" commences with an unwavering dedication to his late father, painting a vivid picture of the poet's profound connection to his Papa. The poem portrays the father as a

nurturing guardian, providing a sense of eternal peace and security. Evoking imagery of a serene sky sheltered within the fortress of paternal love, Kumar finds solace amid life's uncertainties. The phrase "joyous smug stare" hints at the comfort and pride derived from his father's strength and support.

"Rhythm of the Ruins" offers a profound exploration of the human experience through thought-provoking poems. Mukul Kumar's mastery of personification infuses each piece with a unique blend of

romance and realism, drawing inspiration from sources as diverse as Renaissance paintings to the chaos of modern life.

The title poem, "The Rhythm of the Ruins," sets a captivating tone for the entire collection, prompting readers to ponder the beauty inherent in disorder and flux. Through introspective exploration, the poem delves into the tumult of inner emotions, conveying a yearning for resolution amid tumult.



The vivid imagery of a cloud withholding its rain and the subsequent silence

following a storm portrays the poet's struggle for catharsis. Despite the pervasive sense of emptiness, there emerges a resilient endeavour to impose order upon chaos, driven by a desire for rejuvenation symbolised by the invocation of "Gaia" and "Eros".

"Will She Come Back?" is an exploration of longing and uncertainty, where time seems to blur into an unintelligible

haze. It delves into the universal question of whether someone departed will return, evoking themes of hope, longing, and the enigmatic nature of fate. With its emotive depth and evocative language, the poem invites readers to contemplate the intricacies of human relationships and the enduring quest for closure.

Throughout the book, Mukul Kumar delves into a wide range of themes, from love and loss to the complexities of human nature and the beauty of imperfection. Each poem is a journey in itself, offering

readers moments of reflection and insight. "Not Missing the Rainbow" invites us to ponder the significance of common sights and experiences.

What sets "Rhythm of the Ruins" apart is Mukul Kumar's ability to convey deep emotions with simplicity and clarity. His language is accessible yet rich, inviting readers to immerse themselves in the beauty of his verses. One of the most remarkable aspects of this collection is its ability to resonate with readers on a personal level. Kumar's attention to detail and keen

observation of life's nuances ensure that each poem feels like a deeply personal experience. These are poems to return to time and time again, each reading offering new insights and revelations.

From its evocative title to its stunning cover design, "Rhythm 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.

"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)

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.

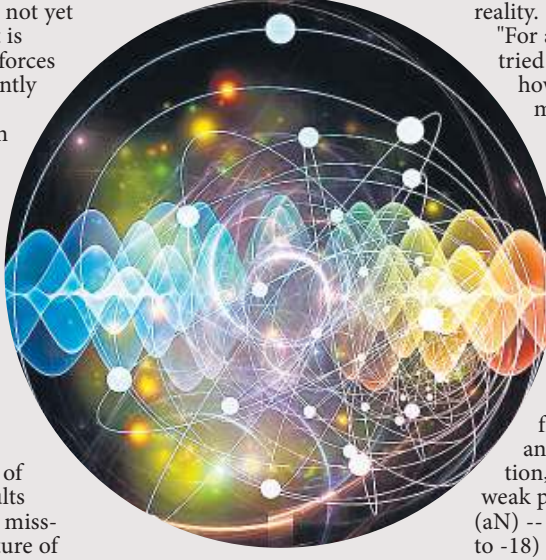
The gravitational force, originally discovered by physicist and mathematician Isaac Newton, is known to be fundamentally weak, gaining prominence and being detectable only at macroscopic scales.

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 attonewtons (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.