

'You can expect plenty of action scenes from me in ***SIMMBA***'

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Naveen's idea of shadow cabinet worthy of emulation

After losing power that he had enjoyed for nearly a quarter century, Odisha's former chief minister Naveen Patnaik has drawn up a shadow cabinet, thus adopting a novel approach that is worthy of emulation by any opposition party for that matter.

Any government may at times adopt certain policies that are against the interests of the public. Such anti-people policies are adopted often to get political mileage or satiate patrons of the ruling parties at the cost of community assets and government land.

Government lands are to be protected forever by rulers in the interests of generations to come. Statesmanship is needed for present-day rulers, most of whom lack foresight. Instead of merely sitting in the



Opposition ranks following their defeat, political parties can form a shadow cabinet by appointing as its 'minister' a legislator for every department. This 'minister' works only to check the functioning of that particular department with view to ensure flawlessness in overall governance of the nitty-gritty of the administration.

The concept of a shadow cabinet, which involves members having no executive power but who share responsibility to scrutinise the policies and actions of the government, may be new to India. Still, it can be tried and implemented effectively. It requires understanding among various sections of people, whose progress is linked to a responsive government. The shadow cabinet is formed only to

Any government may at times adopt certain policies that are against the interests of the public. Such anti-people policies are adopted often to get political mileage or satiate patrons of the ruling parties at the cost of community assets and government land.

ensure good governance and smooth administration with ample checks and balances.

With a shadow cabinet in place, governments will on tenterhooks as they would not know what issue could be raised by any of the opposition parties and that too in the presence of the shadow cabinet.

Former chief minister of Odisha and Biju Janata Dal

(BJD) chief Naveen Patnaik was accused of not being able to function independently. Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi had declared at a public meeting that the BJP, if voted to power, would go for a thorough enquiry into the real health condition of Naveen Patnaik. Apart from the anti-incumbency factor, the BJP's campaign against the capabilities of Naveen contributed to



his defeat after a long stint of 25 years in power.

The shadow cabinet will keep tabs on the functioning of every department. This will make ruling party attentive to public needs. Due to such close watch, there may even be an opportunity for the ruling

party to take cues from the shadow cabinet for effective administration.

Given a shadow cabinet, there may no lethargic attitude on the part of ministers in the government with regard to the handling of any of the portfolios allotted to them. There would be scope for plugging loopholes in the functioning of various departments.

For example, many ministers in the erstwhile cabinets of both Telugu states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana had made verbal attacks on political opponents despite neglecting their duties. Some of the ministers did not maintain decorum in public life so much so that some of the legislators of the ruling parties declined to follow them while criticizing their opponents. Those ministers did not hold

a single review relating to their departments. People rejected such ministers in the recent elections, with regime change in both the Telugu states. They were fed up with the attitude of those erring ministers.

Such objectionable behaviour of ministers would not have been possible had there been a shadow cabinet to find faults in the right manner. Every department in the government would have constantly monitored its functioning. The shadow cabinet is intended to work like a watchdog over the functioning of the government in all its affairs. It can unearth aspects relating to improper governance by virtue of its close watch. This means that the government will have chance to correct itself, should there be deviations.

Coming back to Naveen, he

has enough legislators to form a shadow cabinet as BJD secured one-third seats in the House. Likewise, in Telangana, the Bharat Rastra Samiti (BRS) can afford to form a shadow cabinet to play the role of a watchdog, given its strength in the legislative Assembly. But the situation is different in Andhra Pradesh, where the opposition party does not even have the status of principal opposition. YSRCP has only 11 seats in the House, most of them are novices to the legislature. This precludes their ability to perform as members of the shadow cabinet even otherwise.

Members of the opposition parties should expose the misdeeds and misgovernance of the ruling party through a shadow cabinet. It would help strengthen democracy in the country.

CM: Ready for fast unto death if KCR joins

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy declared his readiness to stage a fast unto death in New Delhi to protest against the Centre's 'discriminatory' treatment of Telangana in the Union Budget 2024, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday.

He invited BRS President K. Chandrasekhar Rao to join him in the protest asserting, "Let us see if Telangana gets Central funds through this protest."

The Chief Minister made



these statements on Tuesday during the Assembly's discussion on the injustice to Telangana in Central budgetary allocations.

Revanth invited KCR to decide the date for a dharna at the Jantar Mantar in New

Delhi.

He was reacting to KTR's statements who suggested a fast unto death at Jantar Mantar.

"Under the leadership of the Chief Minister, they should stage a fast unto death with the cabinet at the Jantar Mantar in New Delhi. We will stand by them. Let's fight the Centre. Let's all go and see. Let's get funds," KTR said.

"The CM says Harish should go on a fast about the loan waiver. KTR said we should initiate a protest for the unemployed.

Sanjay lashes out at Assembly resolution on Union Budget

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that it is evil if the Congress, the BRS and the AIMIM passes a resolution in the Assembly protesting against the so called discrimination against Telangana in the Union Budget.

He said that the Assembly resolution against the Union Budget is a 'political black paper' of the Congress and the BRS.

Speaking to the media in New Delhi on Wednesday, Sanjay asked the BRS and Congress leaders to explain



whether they forgot the fact that Telangana has a share in all Central schemes.

He said that Central funds exceed the funds spent by the TG government in the state in the last 10 years.

He asked Congress leaders to reveal whether they had launched any movements in the last 10 years alleging that the Centre did not give funds. It is nothing but having mother's milk and then hitting the breast, he said. He asked the Congress government which released white papers on BRS deceptions to explain why it failed to release white papers on Central funds.

Cong trying to make Musi project its ATM, says Maheshwar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJLP leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy said the Congress government is trying to make the Musi Riverfront Development Project an ATM like the BRS government made the Kaleshwaram Project its ATM. He said that there is a big scam behind the Musi Riverfront Project costing Rs 1.5 lakh crore.

Participating in the discussion in the Assembly on Wednesday on the resolution introduced by the Congress government against the Union Budget for not allocating funds to Telangana, Maheshwar said that Telangana would have



become a desert if special category status had been given to Andhra Pradesh. He made it clear that the Centre has no bias against Telangana.

Criticising the statements of the Congress against Union Ministers G. Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Maheshwar said the Union

Ministers are slaves of Bharat Matha and the people. He said that Telangana Congress leaders have become the slaves of Rahul Gandhi to protect their seats.

The BJLP leader said that it is not proper for the Congress and the BRS to say that the Centre allocated Rs 15,000 crore to Andhra Pradesh. He said that there are Central projects worth Rs 80,000 crore worth in Telangana and the Centre had allocated Rs 9.5 lakh crore to TG in the last 10 years.

The Centre allocated Rs 3500 crore for the Amrut Scheme but the TG government diverted them.

'Harish guides BJLP leader Maheshwar..'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA T. Harish Rao guided BJLP Leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy in the Assembly on Wednesday by passing slips containing points to Maheshwar through first time BJP MLA Dr Palvai Harish Babu.

This happened when Alleti Maheshwar Reddy spoke on the resolution introduced by the Congress against the Union Budget saying that it had failed to allot funds to Telangana.

Maheshwar said the Congress government is trying to blame the BJP-led NDA government by violating the federal spirit. He said the Congress government is criticising the Centre just because the Centre allocated Rs 15,000 crore to Andhra Pradesh.

CM never said anything on Adani collecting power bills: Bhatti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS and the AIMIM opposed the Adani group collecting electricity bills in the Old City and raised the issue in the Assembly on Thursday.

"Revanth Reddy issued a statement that he would give the Hyderabad power circle to Adani," KTR said.

He said the government must not privatise Discoms or affix meters on farm pumps.

Reacting, Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka said that KTR was misleading the Assembly and the state.

"They are saying that the CM said somewhere that (power bills collection) is being given to someone (Adani) on privatisation. He didn't say that. Where did he say that?"



Who said that? Based on what someone wrote in newspapers, how can you speak like that in the Assembly? Does it have any meaning?" he said.

While Bhatti was speaking the CM was heard saying without a mic that there will be a process for everything and we didn't start it.

It may be mentioned here that during a chit-chat in New

Delhi, Revanth said that the Adani group will be given a pilot project to collect power bills in the Old City.

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka expressed disappointment over the lack of support from the opposition for the discussion initiated by the government in the Assembly.

Bhatti accused the TRS and the BJP of prioritizing political gains over the state's interests.

He pointed to the Centre's promises to provide funds for Amaravati and Polavaram in Andhra Pradesh under the State Reorganization Act. He criticized the BRS which claims to stand for Telangana's interests for not arguing strongly against the Centre's discrimination.

CONGRESS DISPLAYS 'GADIDA GUDDU' FLEXIS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress displayed flex banners carrying the message 'Gadida Guddu' (Donkey Egg) targeting the BJP for allegedly 'discriminating' against Telangana in the Union Budget.

Telangana gave eight LS seats to the BJP, but in return, the BJP's Central government gave only a 'Donkey Egg' in the 2024 budget, the Congress said.

The Congress displayed 'Donkey Egg' flexis across Hyderabad attracting public attention. The flexis said, "What the BJP has given to Telangana: Donkey Egg."

In the Lok Sabha elections, the people of Telangana gave eight LS seats to the BJP, but



Telangana got nothing in the Union Budget. There is a huge discussion going on among the people of Telangana about

the discrimination against the state and it has become a widely discussed topic throughout the state. The people of Telangana are turning against the BJP due to this.

Before the LS polls, the Congress had launched a campaign titled 'Gadida Guddu' in Telangana.

Gudur lashes out at CM for criticising Union Budget

BJP State Executive Committee Member Gudur Narayana Reddy lashed out at Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for stating again and again that the Centre gave only a "Gaadida Guddu" (means nothing) to the state in the Union Budget. Issuing a media statement after the discussion in the Assembly on the devolution of funds to the state on Wednesday, Gudur reminded the Chief Minister about funds given by

the Centre in the last 10 years. "Forgetting the Centre's largesse, the CM has been throwing mud at the Centre, particularly at Prime Minister Modi, for political gains," he said. This is nothing but biting the hand that feeds, he said. He said that under various heads the Centre has provided about Rs 8,62,488 crore to the state in the last 10 years and mockingly added that a donkey neither lays eggs nor does Gaadida Guddu exist.

'Make KCR..'

Continued from page 1

He said that he will not stage a hunger strike like KCR and will not act like

TODAY	
ALMANAC	
Month & Paksham:	Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Panchami:	Jul 25 04:40 AM to Jul 26 01:58 AM
Shashthi:	Jul 26 01:58 AM to Jul 26 11:30 PM
Panchami:	Jul 26 11:30 PM to Jul 25 04:40 AM
Nakshatram:	
Purva Bhadrapada:	Jul 24 06:14 PM to Jul 25 04:16 PM
Uttara Bhadrapada:	Jul 25 04:16 PM to Jul 26 02:30 PM
Rahukalam:	1:59 PM to 3:35 PM
Yamagandam:	5:57 AM to 7:33 AM
Varjyam:	01:10 AM to 02:39 AM
Gulika:	9:09 AM to 10:46 AM
Amritakalam:	08:55 AM to 10:24 AM
Ahijit Muhurtham:	11:57 AM to 12:48 PM
HYDERABAD WEATHER	
Forecast: Showers	
Temp: 27°C	
Humidity: 79%	
Sunrise: 5:53 AM	
Sunset: 6:52 PM	
Updated: July 24, 2024 5:00 PM	

Harish Rao saying that he did not get a matchbox leading to several suicides for the sake of Telangana state.

The CM said that he will take up the hunger strike as a leader of the House and KCR should take part in the hunger strike as the opposition leader.

Responding angrily over the Chief Minister's comments, BRS leaders asked for a mic.

However, the Speaker said that there is nothing wrong in the Chief Minister's comments against KCR.

"The CM invited KCR to participate in the hunger strike in New Delhi. What is wrong with it? I also said the same in interviews given to TV channels recently that KCR should attend the Assembly and give suggestions to the government as an experienced politician," the Speaker said.

BRS supports...

Continued from page 1

He reiterated total support for the government-initiated discussion and emphasized their alliance with the people of Telangana, irrespective of being in power or in the opposition.

Highlighting historical grievances, KTR mentioned the Lok Sabha's ban on the term 'Telangana', similar to erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. He accused the Centre of continuing the injustice towards Telangana for 10 years, a sentiment echoed by the Chief Minister's statements regarding Modi's lack of rapport with KCR.

KTR also addressed Revanth Reddy's remarks about Modi and reminded the Assembly of their long-standing opposition to the Centre's discriminatory stance against Telangana. Despite the lack of Central cooperation, KTR pointed out their significant achievements and criticized the opposition for claiming credit for unaccomplished work. He called out the opposition for misleading the public with false claims of allocations and achievements.

18 killed as plane crashes...

Continued from page 1

The Bombardier CRJ-200 aircraft of Saurya Airlines, carrying 19 people, including two crew members and technical staff of the airline, was bound for Pokhara International Airport for regular maintenance service when the accident occurred at 11.11 am (local time).

"Shortly after takeoff from runway 02, the aircraft veered off to the right and crashed on the east side of the runway," said a statement issued by the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal.

It said rescue operations were initiated

immediately and fire was brought under control. "One injured person (Captain Manish Ratna Shakya) was rescued and taken to the hospital, and 18 People were found dead," it added. The deceased were identified as co-pilot S Katuwal, the employees of Saurya Airlines and a Yemeni national (Aref Reda). Manu Raj Sharma, a technician of the airline, his wife Priza Khatiwada and their four-year-old son Adhi Raj Sharma, were among the deceased.

Priza worked as an assistant computer operator at the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation.

Six guarantees to...

Continued from page 1

For implementing the six guarantees given during the recent Assembly elections, the government allocated Rs 53,196 crore.

The government had allocated Rs 4,084 crore to fund the free travel by women in TGSRTC buses.

The government had also allocated Rs 1,065 crore for Rajiv Arogyasri, under which the Congress government enhanced the health insurance coverage for BPL families from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10

lakh.

These were the only two guarantees whose implementation was launched before presentation of the vote-on-account budget.

For the 200 units per month free power scheme, the Finance Minister had allocated Rs 2,418 crore. The scheme was launched in March and so the allocation may go up in the full budget.

For the Indiramma Indlu or housing scheme, the government had allocated Rs 7,740 crore in the vote-on-account budget. Similarly, for the Rs

500 gas cylinder scheme, Rs 723 crore were provided.

The government had allocated Rs 10,000 crore for waiving crop loans up to Rs 2 lakh. The scheme was launched last week.

For loans of up to Rs 1 lakh, the government has already released around Rs 6,098 crore. The government announced that it will spend Rs 31,000 crore by August-end to fully implement the scheme. The state government had made available Rs 14,800 crore for social security pensions under the Cheyutha scheme.

Marginal hike for...

Continued from page 1

The breakup for Andhra Pradesh shows the state will get Rs 15,156.93 crore in corporate tax, Rs 17455.93 crore in income tax, Rs 15,079.39 crore in Central GST, Rs 2,228.46 crore in customs, Rs 469.73 crore in union excise duty and Rs 82.96 crore in other taxes and duties.

Telangana will receive Rs 7,872.25 crore in corporate tax, Rs 9,066.56 crore in income tax, Rs 7,832.19 crore in Central GST, Rs 1,157.45 crore in customs, Rs 2443.98 crore in union excise duty and Rs 43.09 crore in other taxes and duties.

The Centre has allocated Rs 1,600 crore for public sector miner Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL). This includes Rs 1,442.50 crore from internal resources.

SCCL is a joint venture of the Telangana government and the Centre with equity of 51 and 49 per cent, respectively.

MAHALAKSHMI SCHEME

TG govt gave Rs 2,000 cr to TGSRTC: Min Ponnam



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Transport Ponnam Prabhakar said that the government paid Rs 2,000 crore to the TGSRTC out of Rs 2,400 crore liable under the Mahalakshmi scheme. While replying to Siddipet MLA T Harish Rao in the Assembly, Ponnam Prabhakar said, "Since January 9, when the Mahalakshmi scheme was launched, around 70 crore women have travelled in the State. We bought new buses after Congress came into

power but did they buy new buses during the last 10 years?" TGSRTC is getting out from the operation losses to profits. "We have given 21 PRC, due to which the government is spending Rs 35 crore more," the Minister added. "We have paid Rs 80 crore out of Rs 280 crore towards pending bonds to the corporation and will release the pending amount soon. These amounts have been pending since 2013. We have not used PF and CCS funds as the previous government did. Your

(BRS) government used Rs 4,000 crore belonging to the employees of the corporation. But we are paying Rs 300 crore to the corporation every month", the Minister mentioned.

Replying to Harish Rao, the Minister said, "It is true that work on employees' is overloaded, but we are paying those who work even after 8 hours. Occupancy ratio of buses increased to 95 per cent."

Two new routes in city

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) will introduce two new routes in the city from Thursday. One of the routes is between Ghatkesar and Kondapur bearing 282 K route number. This route touches Yamnampet, Rampally X Roads, Nagaram, Kushaiguda, Lalapet, Tarnaka, Shankarmutt, Narayanaguda, Masab Tank, Mehdiapatnam, Nanal Nagar, Gachibowli, Biodiversity, IKEA and HYTEC City. The first bus from the Ghatkesar starts at 6.10 am and the last bus at 3.45 pm. From Kondapur, the first bus starts at 8.40 am.

Another route is between Aramghar to Kondapur bearing 215 route number. This route touches Dairy farm, Hyderguda, Jyothi Nagar, Darga, Khajaguda X Roads, IKEA, HYTEC City and Kothaguda X Roads. The first bus from Aramghar starts at 7.20 am and the last bus at 9.15 pm. From Kondapur, the first bus is at 8.30 am and the last bus is at 10.25 pm daily. Along with that 10 electric AC metro luxury buses would be run between Patancheru to Dilsukhnagar (217 D) bus depots. These buses would ply with a frequency of 22 minutes between the stops.

Aayesha of UoH selected for BRICS Summit

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Shaik Aayesha, PhD scholar from School of Chemistry, University of Hyderabad (UoH) working under Prof. Srinivasa Rao Yaragorla, was selected as one of the delegates for BRICS Youth Summit 2024 and a meeting of the BRICS Youth Ministers being held in Ulyanovsk, Russia from July 22 to 26 under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

The main agenda is to bring awareness among youth to enhance the efficiency of the system of international relations and ensure its further democratisation through BRICS by engaging young leaders across the globe in different panel sessions, discussion sessions.

It will bring together young leaders from Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Iran, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia and will be an important event on the agenda of Russia's BRICS Chairmanship in 2024.

TG allotted Rs 5,336 cr, six times more than previous yr

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana has been allotted Rs 5,366 crore in the railway budget as per the Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw. However, experts say it is less for the development of projects and infrastructure related to railways.

The Union Minister said that the Indian Railways has been allocated Rs 2,62,000 crore for the year 2024-25. A significant amount of Rs 1.09 lakh crore has been allocated for safety related activities. The annual average budget outlay for combined Andhra Pradesh State during 2009-14 was only Rs 886 crore. The budget allocation to Telangana has been witnessing sustained increase with current year's allocation.

The current budget is six times more than the average allocation done during the period of 2009-14 for the combined State.

He said, "Rs 32,946 crore has been allocated for ongoing railway projects such as development of 40 railway stations under the Amrit Bharat station



scheme. About 437 Road Over Bridges (RoB)/ Road Under Bridges (RUB) are being constructed. The railway network in Telangana is now 100 per cent electrified. About 65 kms (average per year) of the new railway tracks have been laid across Telangana State as compared to just 17 kms during 2009-2014," he added.

The 40 stations to be developed are Adilabad, Basar, Begumpet, Bhadrachalam Road, Gadwal, Hafizpeta, Hitach city, Huppuguda, Hyderabad, Jachcherla, Jangaon, Kacheguda, Kamareddi, Karimnagar, Kazipet Jn, Khammam, Lingampalli, Madhira, Mahbubabad, Mahbubnagar, Malakpet, Malkajgiri Jn, Mancherial,

Medak, Medchal, Miryalaguda, Nalgonda, Nizamabad Jn, Peddapalli Jn, Ramagundam, Secunderabad, Shadnagar, Sri Bala Brahmewara Jogulamba, Tandur, Umdanagar, Vikarabad, Warangal, Yadadri, Yakutpura, Zahirabad.

But experts pointed out that the railway budget for the State is very less for the development of projects, infrastructure and other aspects.

A retired railway officer said, "The budget is not sufficient for the development of railway projects and infrastructure."

Another railway official said, "It's really pathetic to allocate such a small amount to the State"

8.64 lakh digitally trained in TG under PMGDISHA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In all, 8.64 lakh people from Telangana were trained under the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA). In Telangana 14,56,226 people registered for the programme. Out of them, 12,10,448 candidates were trained and 8,64,871 candidates were certified.

The PMG DISHA is a scheme to make 6 crore persons from rural areas across India digitally literate, reaching 40% of the rural households covering one person from every eligible household so that people could learn to operate computers/digital access devices like tablets, smartphones, etc., send and receive emails, browse internet, access government services, search for information, undertake cashless transactions.

Two of family die in building fire in Hyd



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 40-year-old man and his daughter died while two others were seriously injured in a fire accident in a building here early on Wednesday, police said.

Fire and police personnel rescued about 20 people trapped in the building.

The flames erupted on the ground floor of the three-storied building under Kulsumpura Police Station limits at around 1 am and subsequently spread to the first and second floors, they said.

After receiving information, fire tenders rushed to the

spot and doused the flames by 3 am.

Four members of a family residing in a flat on the first floor of the building suffered severe burns and were admitted to a state-run hospital, where a man and his 10-year-old daughter succumbed to injuries.

The building owner was running a furniture manufacturing unit on the ground floor, they added.

The blaze is suspected to have been caused due to short-circuit.

A case was registered against the owner of the building and further investigation is on, police said.

SHE Teams nab 117 for misbehaving with women

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad SHE Teams on Wednesday revealed that 117 persons were arrested on July 22 and 23 for misbehaving with women during Bonalu celebrations.

The accused were apprehended from various locations for misbehaving with women in public spaces. They will be produced before the magistrate for further action. It was 24/7 handwork of SHE Teams with commitment to ensure the safety and security of all citizens, particularly women during this Ujjaini Bonalu.

This initiative underscores the ongoing efforts to maintain public order and protect the community, emphasising that such misconduct will not be tolerated.

For assistance or to report incidents, citizens are encouraged to contact the SHE Teams helpline via WhatsApp at 9490616555.

KAPRA PANEL DEMAND

TG govt urged to come up with sustainable alternatives

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Environmental activists and members of Kapra Lake Revival Group urged the State government to come up with sustainable alternatives for idol-making and immersion, with Ganesh Chaturdhi fast approaching.

The environmental enthusiasts pointed out that there are 74 artificial ponds in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits but the ground reality is that instead of immersing the Plaster of Paris (PoP) idols in the artificial ponds, every year majority of the idols are immersed in lakes.

As per data by the Directorate of Enforcement Vigilance and Disaster Management (EVDMD), around 96,218 idols were immersed within the GHMC limits during the 11 days of the festival last year. However, there is no separate data on how many of these idols were immersed in arti-

ficial ponds and lakes.

"Even this year we would face the same hardship, despite the High Court banning making and immersion of PoP idols, the idol-makers have started making idols. If those idols are immersed in the lakes instead of artificial ponds, the lake's condition will deteriorate. In this regard, the State government has not yet taken a decision to curb PoP idols," they added.

Manognya Reddy, a member of Kapra Lake Revival Group, said, "As every year, we have witnessed that PoP idols are immersed in lakes rather than artificial ponds. This year it would be better if the government comes up with proper norms, that PoP idols should be immersed in the artificial ponds and not in the water bodies as it deteriorates the lake condition. The government should encourage idols-makers to make more clay idols and encourage home immersions."



GHMC Additional Commissioner Chandrakanth Reddy speaking at GHMC head office on Wednesday

Telangana Mahila Shakti scheme for women's uplift

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GHMC Additional Commissioner Chandrakanth Reddy said that the government's aim is to economically empower the women in the next five years with the Telangana Mahila Shakti scheme. The scheme was launched by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy in March for the uplift of the Self-Help Groups (SHG) in the State.

Urban Community Development (UCD) project officers, Town-Level Federation (TLF) officers held a meeting in the GHMC head office on Wednesday. UCD Joint Commissioner, officials of Industries Department, Food Processing Society and the Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas (MEPMA) participated in this programme. Additional Commissioner (UCD) Chandrakanth Reddy

said that officials should coordinate to create awareness on canteens, catering units, traditional cuisines, boutiques, DTP Xerox and tailoring on how to utilise the Mahila Shakti scheme. This scheme aims to provide infrastructure, such as stalls for selling SHG-produced goods, training, financial assistance and other support to enhance the livelihood of women participating in SHGs.

Town-Level Federation (TLF) officers should create awareness to the SHG members. He said that canteens, food tracks, cold storage, catering services, service centres and construction equipment could be set up as major group enterprises under the scheme. Telangana pastries, pickle powders, dairy products, hand-made crafts, gift article shops, grocery stores and nurseries could be set up under Major Individual Enterprises.

HABIT-FORMING DRUGS SEIZED

Licences of 20 medical stores cancelled

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Drug Control Administration (DCA) on Wednesday raided several medical stores across Secunderabad and seized habit-forming drugs.

Drugs including Codeine-containing cough syrups, Nitravet (Nitraxepam) tablets, Restyl (Alprazolam) tablets, Ultracet tablets (Tramadol) and Tydol tablets (Tapentadol), etc were seized.

Following the seizure, the DCA cancelled licences of 20 medical stores. Based on inputs from the Commissioner's Task Force, Hyderabad, regarding the illegal sale of habit-forming drugs, the Drug Control Administration, Telangana carried out raids at several

medical shops during the first and second weeks of July as part of a special drive.

The indiscriminate sale of several drugs with habit-forming tendencies, primarily classified under Schedule H1 and Schedule X of the drugs rules, was verified during the raids.

Meanwhile, the DCA raided a medical store in Medchal and seized illegally manufactured medicines worth Rs 96 lakh.

The DCA, in coordination with the officials of the Shameerpet zone and the Prohibition and Excise Department, during the raid, seized large stocks of bulk drugs of various categories, including anticancer, antiviral, antifungal, anticoagulants, antidepressants, which were illegally manufactured.

PLAN FOR FLYOVERS AROUND KBR PARK

Environmentalists flag concerns

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Environmentalists are opposing the proposals by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) to develop six flyovers around KBR Park. They said that the current revival of this proposal, aiming to construct flyovers and widen roads around KBR Park, would severely threaten the park's existence.

Environmentalists Dr Narasimha Reddy Donthi and Kaajal Maheshwari wrote a letter to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy over the construction of flyovers near KBR Park. They said that the Supreme Court of India suggested the establishment of Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ) around all national parks. Specifically, a default 1 km perimeter around parks has been mandated as ESZ. The



KBR Park, however, under the BRS government has been subjected to proposals that drastically reduce this perimeter to a mere 3 to 29.8 meters for the Strategic Road Development Plan (SRDP), undermining the very essence of its protection.

"You are aware that because

of KBR Park, surrounding areas have been protected from floods caused by once-in-a-century, unprecedented rains in Hyderabad in October, 2020. Construction of flyovers and other constructions around it will take away even the fig leaf of this protection to Hyderabad", the letter

read.

They requested the CM to address traffic congestion around KBR Park, which requires a broader, more comprehensive study. Simply widening roads and constructing flyovers will likely increase traffic as this has been studied and documented by traffic experts worldwide.

"Reinstate the eco-sensitive zone to its original 35 meters around KBR Park and declare the entire walkway as an eco-sensitive zone. Beyond 35 meters, a regulation zone of at least 10 Km can be declared, as provided by the Central ESZ Notification", they requested.

"Withdraw all proposals, tenders, and projects related to roads, flyovers, tunnels, multi-level parkings and bridges around KBR Park immediately" letter mentioned.

CM urged to take action on Smita's utterances

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

General Secretary of Union Bank of India Differently-abled Employees Federation (UBIDEF), P Rajashekar has urged Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to direct the Police Department to book a complaint under Section 92 of Rights of Persons with Disability (PWD) Act-2016 against Smita Sabharwal, Principal Secretary of Telangana State Finance Commission, through a letter on Wednesday.

He said, "As a senior IAS

officer in the state, Smita Sabharwal's utterances seem to create insecurity and undermine the potential of diverse talent. These comments promote discrimination and violate the right to equality under the Constitution of India.

The recent judgement of the Supreme Court stated that disabled employees are eligible for IPS and IAS administrative jobs. However, her announcements have a negative impact on working employees and new employment opportunities.



Vision loss linked to cognitive decline among elderly: Study

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A study conducted by the LV Prasad Eye Institute has revealed that vision loss impacts cognitive decline among the elderly. It further revealed that one in four persons suffers from cognitive impairment. Those with vision loss are four times more likely to face cognitive decline as compared to those who don't have vision loss. The study further found that older persons who had worse

vision were more likely to be cognitively impaired. Similarly, cognitive impairment affected one out of every four individuals with near vision impairment. While less than 30% of elderly with mild vision impairment had cognitive impairment, this percentage steadily increases as vision impairment worsens. The study included 15 people with blindness and 60% of them exhibited measurable signs of cognitive decline.

Similarly, mental decline

also increased with age. Women consistently have a higher prevalence of cognitive impairment, and this study found that women were twice likely to be cognitively impaired than men. Severe forms of cognitive impairment leads to dementia.

The study's results suggest that addressing vision loss may be essential to arresting dementia and other forms of cognitive decline in India's elderly population. Dr Srinivas Marmamula, Scientist and

public health researcher at LVPEI, said, "The results exhibit a strong association between vision loss and cognitive loss. While more and more elderly are living in homes for the aged, we have very little evidence-based policy interventions that can help improve their lives and conserve their quality of life. A pair of glasses or safe cataract surgery can go a long way in helping the elderly live independent and fulfilling lives in their sunset years."



Congress can't buy MLAs at high costs like KCR: Raj Gopal

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Komatireddy Raj Gopal Reddy said that he had never sought a Minister post in Revanth Reddy's cabinet and added that he could have become the Chief Minister if he had engaged in lobbying.

On Wednesday, an interesting conversation took place between former Congress MLA Komatireddy Raj Gopal Reddy, former BRS Ministers Prashanth Reddy, Mallareddy, Gangula Kamalakar and Janagaon MLA Palla Rajeshwar Reddy in the lobby.



Raj Gopal told them that the game has just started and that

the former minister of erst-while Nalgonda district will be the first person on the list to go to jail if he becomes the Home Minister.

Incidentally, when asked if Jagadish Reddy will join the Congress, Raj Gopal said, "Then the Congress leaders of Nalgonda will leave the party and join the BRS." However, Raj Gopal said that he had done well in elections and in the LS elections in Bhongir.

"If I become the Home Minister I will make sure that those who are not corrupt in the BRS are protected. We

won't target them," Raj Gopal said. He said they cannot buy people like Prashanth Reddy as he is a stakeholder in the BRS.

Raj Gopal said that KCR bought Congress MLAs by paying Rs 20 crore to Rs 30 crore but ours are only Rs 5 and 10 only, which is why 26 MLAs have not yet come to us.

He said that KCR had won the previous by-election after spending Rs 300 crore and that its effect hit the BRS leading to KCR losing power.

"If I can, I will bring Congress MLAs into the BRS," Prashanth Reddy said.

BJP alleges corruption in land acquisition for industrial park

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

BJP state leader Daram Guruvareddy has alleged thousands of crores of rupees of corruption has taken place in the acquisition of 1,350 acres for the development of industrial park to be set up at Vargal by the TSIIC.

Speaking to the media on Tuesday, he alleged that the TSIIC snatched the lands belonging to the farmers for the project without paying them suitable compensation. The previous BRS regime on the pretext of developing an industrial park acquired the lands and sold them to corporate bodies for higher prices. He alleged former Collector Venkatrami Reddy had played a crucial role in the affair.

However, the High Court intervened



and prevented the acquisition of 371 acres under survey numbers 845, 1209 and 1266. The Green Tribunal issued a stay on

the acquisition of these lands, he said, extending the BJP's support to the farmers who have lost their lands.

He alleged rampant corruption in Gajwel-Pragnapur municipality. He quoted the example of how the municipality and elected people's representatives allegedly looted Rs 29 lakh of public money from the municipality in connection with inauguration of a new building during the Covid-19 pandemic situation. He demanded the Gajwel-Pragnapur municipal chairman and councillors and municipal staff to repay the amount to the municipality. Otherwise, he threatened to lodge a complaint with ACB and also file a cheating case against them.

Also, he demanded that the municipality cancel the allotment of five house numbers to a wakf board site.

CPM demands completion of pending irrigation projects



CPI-M leaders inspecting the works of the Shivanna Gudem reservoir under Marriguda manda in Nalgonda district on Wednesday

PNS ■ NALGONDA

CPI- Marxist (CPI-M) district secretary Mudireddy Sudhakar Reddy, and former MLA Julakanti Ranga Reddy on Wednesday urged the government to complete the pending projects in the district immediately.

Demanding the completion of the pending projects in the district, the party's Nalgonda district committee on Tuesday inspected the Shivanna Gudem

reservoir in Marriguda mandal, the Gottimukula reservoir works in Deverakonda mandal and the Kistaranpalli reservoir works in Nampally mandal.

Speaking on the occasion, the CPI-M leaders demanded that the Congress government immediately complete all the projects.

They said that the previous government had neglected the construction of five reservoirs under the Dindi Lift

Irrigation Scheme for 10 years. He demanded that the present Congress government pay special attention for the completion of these projects by allocating more funds, they said.

Nalla Venkataiah, mandal leaders Saidulu Erpula Yadaiah, Miriyala Venkanna, Bottu Shivakumar, Dhananjaya Goud, Mutthi Lingam, Shivalingam, Srinu, Mallesh, Kommu Lakshmaiah and others were present.

Shadnagar RTC Depot launches accident-free week programme

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

The Shadnagar RTC Depot in Rangareddy District has launched an accident-free week programme starting from July 24 to 30. The initiative, chaired by Depot Manager Usha, aims to promote road safety and reduce accidents.

Urban Traffic Circle Inspector Chandrasekar, who attended as the chief guest, emphasised the importance of precautionary measures for drivers to prevent accidents. He shared valuable advice and guidelines to enhance road safety for both drivers and passengers.

The event saw active participation from Inspector Arjun Kumar, Traffic Inspector SM Ali, supervisors, garage supervisors, staff drivers, and conductors. The program highlights the commitment of the Shad Nagar RTC Depot to ensuring the safety of its staff and passengers through education and awareness.



BJP district president Bokka Narsimha Reddy leading a protest in front of the Yacharam Tahsildar office in Rangareddy district

BJP stages protest demanding new ration cards for the poor

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

BJP district president Bokka Narsimha Reddy has accused the State government of showing laxity in issuing new ration cards.

A protest was organised by Yacharam mandal BJP president Tandra Ravinder in front of the Tahsildar office. The demonstrators submitted a petition demanding that ration cards be granted to every eligible person.

During the protest, BJP district unit president Bokka Narsimha Reddy, Kisan Morcha General Secretary Marripalli Anjaiah, and Kisan Morcha district unit president Jakka Ravinder Reddy criticised the previous government's attempts to cut down the number of ration cards. They alleged that many ration cards were unjustly removed under the pretext of eliminating bogus cards.

The leaders condemned the current Congress government's failure to issue ration cards despite coming to power on promises of six guarantees. They complained that applications from deserving poor had been ignored. The BJP leaders demanded that the government issue ration cards to all eligible people immediately, warning that they would escalate their agitation if their demands were not met.

Implement loan waiver scheme, Collector tells officials



PNS ■ MEDAK

District Collector Rahul Raj has said that crop loans of 47,616 farmers to the tune of Rs 237.50 crore have been waived.

He was reviewing the implementation of the loan waiver scheme with Agriculture Department officials, district lead bank manager and district cooperative department officials at his chambers here on Wednesday.

Rahul Raj said that the government has been trying to implement the loan waiver scheme properly resolving the problems at the field level.

The State government has giving utmost priority to the implementation of the loan waiver scheme for the development of the agriculture sector, he said, adding that every farmer who owned agriculture land and availed the crop loan from the bank is going to benefit under the loan waiver scheme.

If any farmer did not derive benefit under the scheme, he or she should meet the agriculture department, he said asking the agriculture department officials to resolve the technical issues in extending the loan waiver to the farmers.

All farmers are going to be benefited under the loan waiver, he said assuring the farmers that they need not worry at all.

District agriculture officer Govind, Lead Bank Manager Narasimha Murthy, district cooperative officer Karuna and others were present.



Excise Police showing 500 grams of marijuana seized during raid at Elikatta village in Rangareddy district on Wednesday

Excise officials seize 500 grams marijuana in RR dist

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

In a crackdown, the Excise Police on Wednesday seized 500 grams of marijuana in the suburbs of Elikatta village. Acting on a tip-off, the Shad Nagar Excise Police Station intensified their vigilance in the area and seized the marijuana.

The operation led to the arrest of Tarun Josh Jain from Dhulpet on charge of attempting to sell the illegal substance in Elikatta village under Farooq Nagar mandal.

Excise officials detained Jain and confiscated the 500

grams of marijuana from his possession.

The arrest and seizure were carried out under the direction of Shekhar, with Essils Srinunayak, Sunitha, and other police personnel playing key roles in the operation.

The successful bust drew commendations from Excise Enforcement Director VB Kamalasan Reddy, Rangareddy Deputy Commissioner Dasarath, and Sarurnagar Excise Superintendent S. Ujwala Reddy, who praised the Shad Nagar Excise staff for their diligent efforts.

Collector directs doctors to be punctual for duty

PNS ■ BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM

District Collector Jitesh V Patil made a surprise inspection of Mata Shishu Arogya Kendra in Ramavaram on Tuesday.

On the occasion, he visited the outpatient block, post-operative ward, children's outpatient ward, Aarogya Mitra, medicine room, post-natal ward and reception.

After examining the records in the hospital, the Collector advised the authorities concerned to record the details of each patient. He spoke to the patients at the Mata Shishu



Bhadradri Kothagudem Collector Jitesh V Patil inspecting government hospital in Kothagudem

The Collector advised the doctors to be punctual for duty. After inquiring about the number of births per month in Mata and Shishu Hospital, the Collector directed the doctors to take measures to increase the number of deliveries in government hospitals and ensure that more births take place in government hospitals. The officials were directed to submit reports regarding the required facilities in the health center and the work to be undertaken.

Principal Raj Kumar, Dr Sarala, Dr Veerababu and medical staff of the medical college participated in this programme.

Union Law Minister urged to amend new criminal laws

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

A group of advocates, led by senior advocate of Khammam Talluri Dilip Chowdary, on Wednesday submitted a memorandum to Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal at the Ministers' chambers on the premises of Parliament, under the aegis of the BRS Parliamentary Party deputy leader Vaddiraju Ravichandra.

They urged the Union Law Minister to introduce minor amendments to new criminal laws and take up appointment of notaries, which has been kept pending, and

implement advocates' protection bill.

Responding to the notification issued in 2021 for the appointment of the central notaries, over 2,000 applied for the posts, they said, and appealed to the Minister to take steps for their appointment.

The memorandum suggested to the Minister that suggestions of district judges and practicing senior advocates in district courts be taken with regard to amending the new criminal laws.

The Minister agreed to look into the matter.

'Take steps for comprehensive development of Ramagundam'

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

Collector Koya Sriharsha has directed the municipal officials to take steps for the comprehensive development of Ramagundam city with Rs 100 cr funds released by Telangana Urban Finance Infrastructure Development Corporation (TUFIDC). Reviewing the works to be taken up with the funds

with municipal officials here on Wednesday, he wanted the officials to improve the sanitation in the city according to a plan.

Under AMRUT-2 scheme, the progress of Sewerage Treatment Plant works being executed at a cost of Rs 255 crore were also reviewed. Besides, it discussed the plantation drive to be taken up under Vana Mahotsavam.

The other issues discussed were development of junctions, CC Roads, BT road, storm water drains, central lighting, road widening, installation of drinking water pipelines were also discussed. He wanted the municipal authorities to accomplish the works within the stipulated time.

He inspected the 355-bed hospital under construction on the premises of the Area Hospital

at Godavarikhani. Additional Collector Arunasri, municipal commissioner Srikanth and others were present. Afterwards, he inspected the MPDO office at Palakurti and told the officials there to make good use of the panchayat funds to provide safe drinking water to each house. Further, he asked them to pay special attention to maintenance of sanitation in villages.



Tribal Welfare Secretary A Sarath presented a cheque of Rs 1,51,831 to Madhulatha at the Secretariat in Hyderabad

Siricilla tribal student backed by govt to attend IIT

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A tribal student from Siricilla, Badavath Madhulatha, has secured a seat at IIT Patna through her JEE rank but faced financial difficulties.

The Telangana government has come forward to support her. Upon knowing that since she can't attend IIT, she was herding goats, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy immediately directed officials to provide assistance to the deserving student. Following the Chief Minister's orders, officials from the Tribal Welfare department contacted Madhulatha and her family, bringing them to Hyderabad on Wednesday. Tribal Welfare Secretary Sarath presented a

cheque of Rs 1,51,831 to Madhulatha at the Secretariat. Additionally, officials promised an extra Rs 30,000 on top of the Rs 70,000 already provided for the purchase of a high-end computer as per Madhulatha's request. They assured continued support for her future needs.

Madhulatha expressed her gratitude to the Chief Minister, stating that she was overwhelmed by his timely intervention and support at a time when she was worried about her future due to financial constraints. She thanked the Chief Minister for his help. The event was attended by TCRIC Chairman Bellayya Naik and officials from the Tribal Welfare Department.

SP warns police officers of against laxity

PNS ■ BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM

Bhadradri Kothagudem District Superintendent of Police Rohit Raju held a monthly review meeting with police officers at the District Police Headquarters.

Speaking on this occasion, Rohit Raju said that the police officials should work round-the-clock in times of crisis. The police could get good name only when they help the people in times of crisis like floods. He appreciated the police officers and personnel for their efforts to help the people when floods hit the district



Bhadradri Kothagudem District Superintendent of Police Rohit Raju holding a review meeting in Kothagudem on Wednesday

a few days ago. He asked the police officers to educate peo-

ple on new laws. He suggested that the officers seek advice from their superiors regarding enforcement of new laws.

The Superintendent of Police warned that disciplinary action would be taken against those who showed laxity in discharging their duties. He stressed that everyone should work with responsibility to help the people. He emphasised the need to improve the quality of investigation. He asked the officers to exploit technology in investigation.

He said that cases should be registered and strict action should be taken against the peddlers of marijuana as well as

those who consume them. He said that special vigil should be mounted against people who engage in anti-social activities.

He directed the police officers to ensure that the gullible people would not fall victim to cybercrimes. He wanted the officers to keep the anti-social elements under surveillance.

Bhadrachalam ASP Ankit Kumar Sankar, Palvancha DSP Satish Kumar, Ilandu DSP Chandra Bhanu, Manuguru DSP Ravinder Reddy, DCRB DSP Mallayasaamy, Inspector Srinivas, District Police Office AO Jayaraju and CIs, SSILs and staff participated in this programme.

Progress of 2 BHK houses reviewed

PNS ■ SIRICILLA

Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha on Wednesday reviewed the progress of 2 BHK houses in various Assembly constituencies of the district.

He spoke with Panchayat Raj, R and B and engineering officials of various government departments enquiring them about the structures taken up for

construction and how many of them have been completed.

Additional Collector Bheemya Naik, Special Deputy Collector Radha Bai, Panchayat Raj EE Bhumesw, R and B DEE Nagaraju, TSEWIDC EE Anita Singanadh, housing DE Bhaskar and others were present.



Balancing growth with populism

Though the budget 2024 is growth-centric, it has populist overtones and addresses concerns of NDA allies

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the first Union Budget for Modi 3.0 government on July 23, 2024, aiming to bolster India's economic growth while addressing social equity and the interests of the NDA allies. This budget is an exercise in balancing economic growth with political dividends. This budget outlines allocations for infrastructure, green energy initiatives, and the digital economy, reflecting a comprehensive approach to development. The Union Budget 2024-25 focuses on macro-economic growth and fiscal stability but offers limited welfare for the poor, relying on effective policy implementation for success. While the fiscal deficit has improved to 4.9% of GDP, significant disparities persist, with increased capital expenditure intended to boost private investment but widening rural-urban and income divides. The budget maintains a similar outlay as the interim budget, prioritising agriculture, rural development, housing, and MSMEs to create jobs. New measures include direct payments for first-time



employees and incentives for employers to increase hiring. The budget does not adequately address rising inflation, which stands at 5.08%. To support manufacturing, the government has introduced initiatives like the Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs and increased Mudra Loan limits, along with developing industrial parks enhancing agricultural practices through Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and increasing support for natural farming. Despite these efforts, the success of the budget depends on effective implementation and addressing broader economic challenges.

The Union Budget 2024 outlines a comprehensive plan to deal with the rising unemployment by increasing the skill set of the youth. It plans to provide skills to 20 lakh youth over five years. As part of this initiative, 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes will be upgraded into hub and spoke arrangements with a focus on outcome orientation. The course content and design will be aligned with the skill needs of the industry. The budget's positives include the significant investment in infrastructure, expected to create jobs and stimulate economic growth. However, the budget also presents challenges. The ambitious spending plans may widen the fiscal deficit, posing challenges to macroeconomic stability and inflation control. Effective implementation of the proposed schemes and projects remains a critical concern, given historical delays and inefficiencies. The 2024 budget reflects a populist approach, aimed at addressing the concerns of its allies — Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu and has generously allocated funds for their states. The BJP has learned from its performance in the recent Lok Sabha elections, where it faced criticism for not adequately addressing issues like rural distress, job creation, and social equity. By focusing on infrastructure development, rural welfare, and social sector spending, the budget seeks to win back the support of these crucial demographics.

PICTALK



Pigeons fly past the new sculpture 'Natyashastra' installed at Mandi House, New Delhi

RANJAN DIMRI

Indian education system: Building a vibrant nation

By integrating knowledge and skill development with modern practices, we can nurture youth who are proficient and emotionally and physically resilient

Bharat's educational policies are geared towards fostering a balanced approach that integrates learning with modern skills, reduces unnecessary burdens, and nurtures the unique potential of every child. These efforts are crucial for building a future-ready youth capable of seizing new opportunities in a rapidly evolving world. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been a vocal advocate for educational reforms and skill development. One of the landmark steps taken by the government is the introduction of the New National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, established after almost four decades. The introduction of the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has started giving positive dividends. Being a transformative policy, it formalises skill training by integrating it into the education system from Class VI onwards. This policy underpins the importance of combining schooling with skilling, and teaching-learning materials for classes III rd onward are also being made available now. The government's plan to incorporate emerging and



applied areas, such as semi-conductor technology, into the school curriculum is a promising step towards meeting the skilling needs of the diverse and talented Yuva Shakti. Additionally, the School Bag Policy aims to enhance student well-being by addressing the physical burden of school bags. This policy focuses on streamlining educational materials, promoting digital resources, and encouraging ergonomic designs. States like Assam and Madhya Pradesh have taken significant steps to alleviate the burden on students, with new notifications set to take effect from the academic session 2024-25. Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC) outlines the vision and priorities of the government. During the 7th edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC), Prime Minister Modi inter-

acted with students, teachers, and parents, emphasizing the need to create an educational ecosystem where each child's unique individuality is encouraged and fully expressed. The government has been making concerted efforts to achieve this goal, recognizing that cultural and societal expectations often add undue pressure on students. Modi advocates for healthy competition, reminding us that "Teachers are not in a job role but they shoulder the responsibility of grooming the lives of students." With the rapid pace of technological advancements, its adoption in the process of learning is very crucial and technology should be harnessed as a tool for learning, reminding us that "one cannot run away from technology," as the Prime Minister remarked. Reforms are necessary as they can lead Bharat to a higher stage of advancement. The holistic approach involves aligning educational practices with principles that promote mindfulness and resilience. Education should encompass a broad spectrum of human

development, not just intellectual growth. Proper methodologies should be used to assess and nurture various aspects of a child's development. The new education system is all set to enhance individual potential and it also contributes to the nation's economic growth. It is widely admitted that a well-educated population is better equipped to drive economic progress and social mobility, reducing disparities and fostering a more equitable society. Moreover, education contributes to better health, increased civic engagement, and enhanced personal satisfaction. Bharat's examination system needs further reforms. Hence, going forward, the nation is bound to have a more fair, transparent, stress-free, flexible and robust examination system. The holes are being plugged on an urgent basis at all levels. Bharat is on the right path to building a stronger, more vibrant nation where talent, knowledge, and skills thrive.

(The author is the BJP Councillor from Narayana, New Delhi; views are personal)



UMANG BAJAJ

The unfulfilled promise of Ram Rajya

The BJP's electoral setback in Ayodhya and UP, despite the grand Ram Temple inauguration, necessitates introspection on the foundations of cultural nationalism

Covenanted for deity, indifferent to the movement Sidharth Mishra In Hindu tradition, Lord Shiva is the symbol of faith, always speaks the truth, and is Trikaladarshi (knows the past, present and future). In Goswami Tulsidas' Ramcharitramanas, there is a reference to Shiva telling his wife Sati, "Hohi Soi Jo Ram 'Rachi Rakha," meaning what happens has been designed by Ram himself. Shiva explains to his wife that Ram is Param Brahma (ultimate creator), and writes the fate of a person based on his or her deeds. To the followers of Ram, this couplet forms the essence of Ram's divinity and majesty. The starting lines of the couplet are followed by Tulsidas saying, "Ko Kari Tark Badhave Sakha" that is why disputes his decision with inane discussions and then completes the couplet saying "As Kahi Lage Japan Harinama; Gai Sati Jahan Prabhu Sukhdhama," the essence of this being that in seeking refuge in Ram one attains solace as did Sati, Shiva's wife. Though Tulsidas demands faith in Ram nowhere he mentions that a human being's own 'karma' (deeds) would not have a bearing on Ram's 'rachna' (creation). To those for whom Ram is the symbol of the revival of cultural nationalism, it's time to retrospect on their 'karma' which led to Ram's 'rachna' of the setback that they received in the just concluded Lok Sabha polls. Defeat in Ayodhya is indeed the symbol of the setback, which is spread across Ram's territory of Awadh and beyond it. Ramjanambhoomi movement played an important role in the revival and strengthening of the concept of cultural nationalism. The consecration of the statue of Lord Ram at the much-awaited temple should have proved to be the culmination of people's faith in Ram and its natural expression in the electoral gains for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). It did not happen. Celebrated English poet TS Eliot writes in his epochal poem, Hollow Men, "This is the way the world



ends/Not with a bang but with a whimper." Earlier in the same poem, Eliot writes, "Between the conception/ And the creation/ Between the emotion/ And the response/ Falls the Shadow." The question is why the Ramjanambhoomi movement culminated electorally the way it did, not with a bang but with a whimper. The inauguration of the Ram temple in January this year was the event of the century. The fluttering flags bearing Ram symbols across the states, and the cultural build-up through popular Bollywood renditions had even the sceptics once believed in the movement bearing the soul of our culture and nature. It was complete with immaculate camera coverage, with itinerary being unveiled with clockwise precision, weather at its shining best in generally a gloomy climate and a massive build-up of expectation of dawning of Ram Rajya (the rule of Ram, the ideal form of governance). The event, however, surprisingly did not bring good electoral tidings for the BJP. The party strategists were left befuddled at the morally demoralising electoral setback. For the pontiffs of cultural nationalism, the reason for 'shadows between the con-

TO THOSE FOR WHOM RAM IS THE SYMBOL OF THE REVIVAL OF CULTURAL NATIONALISM, IT'S TIME TO RETROSPECT ON THEIR 'KARMA' WHICH LED TO RAM'S 'RACHNA' OF THE SETBACK THAT THEY RECEIVED IN THE JUST CONCLUDED LOK SABHA POLLS

ception and creation, between the emotion and the response' will not be known until they decide to come out of the echo chamber of the 'VIP route' and have a 'darshan' of Ram Lalla by joining the milieu of the masses. Rama Rajya has been defined as the ideal state of society as intended by Lord Ram, comprising perfect harmony, justice, dharma and prosperity, where people live in peace and happiness. Gandhi took the interpretation forward, saying that true Ram Rajya would be to ensure equal rights to both prince and pauper. Ask the Ram Bhakts standing in the line of the paupers, for the darshan of Ram Lalla, if an ideal state had dawned. The management of the whole 'darshan' process at the Ramjanambhoomi temple today is a prototype of how it's a case study of not being the Ram Rajya model. The uncarpeted red sandstone floor of the pathway from the temple entry to the sanctum sanctorum in the heat of the summer leaves the Bhakts with blisters, cursing the temple management for their scorn. Providing carpets to cover the hot stone floor, functional air coolers on the pathway to beat the sultry weather or water coolers to quench the

thirst from standing in a queue is something that should not be beyond the command of 'caring' temple management. But then that care is lacking. The whole environment at the temple grapples with the attitude of Suraksha (security) rather than sewa (service). The teeming throng of untrained private security guards stands out as a sore thumb. The curt replies by these guards to the simple queries of the devout worshipper are all adding to the dwindling goodwill about the temple movement, though not for the temple deity. Ram lives in all humans, as notable lyricist Sahir Ludhianvi penned (*mere rom rom mein basne wale ram*) for Bollywood super hit Neel Kamal. This song over the years has become the anthem for all the Ram worshippers. If the attitude of disdain at the Ram temple is not replaced with that of service, Ram Bhakts would continue to vow for their deity albeit without much goodwill for those associated with the temple movement. (Sidharth Mishra is the author and President of, Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice; views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BUDGET REACTIONS

Madam — It is not unusual for mixed opinions to arise on budgets presented by Central or State Governments. While ruling parties typically praise the budget, opposition parties are quick to criticize it. Congress leader Pawan Khera claims that the job-related schemes are merely copied from the Nyay Patra. If this is true, Congress might feel validated for having their scheme adopted. However, this could simply be Khera's personal view. What the opposition says often has little impact on the central government. Opposition parties have labeled the budget as specific to Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. It is natural for the opposition to be disappointed with the budget, especially since it does not upset the Chief Ministers of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. They had hoped that by denying special status to these states, discontent would grow, possibly leading to a withdrawal of support from Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu. The budget allocates Rs. 15,000 crore for the development of Andhra Pradesh's capital and grants for its backward regions. Bihar receives Rs. 26,000 crore for various road projects and Rs. 21,000 crore for power. An industrial center is planned for Gaya, and there is a welcome initiative to revive Nalanda University. On the fiscal front, the current budget lacks encouragement for savings. The government seems to believe people have no choice but to deposit their money in nationalized banks, thus avoiding tax deductions for savings. It would have been fair if the Finance Minister had demonstrated savings as well.

KV Seetharamaiah|Bengaluru

AN HORRIFIC INCIDENT

Madam — A horrifying incident in Rewa (Madhya Pradesh). I am deeply concerned about the recent incident in Rewa district, Madhya Pradesh, where Mamta Pandey and Asha Pandey were partially buried while protesting against

Kamala is the right choice



This would seem to have come about a little late, a mere four months before the decisive election. For Democrats there are two options. One, go for Kamala by nomination, thereby making her a very probable scape goat in lieu of Biden, given Trump's stamped and vivid image of a clenched fist, post the shooting, or stage a grand show where their candi-

dates at the upcoming convention mount the podium and vigorously debate as to how they intend to run the nation rather than run for office. The party convention must set exemplary tenor and substance by navigating through issues on hand than throwing mud on a Teflon coated Trump, on whom nothing will stick. Under extreme pressure and for want of time on its hands, the party could find great sense in gathering both its wits and resolve to have Kamala as their candidate. Kamala is one person who is most suited to take on Trump. Remember Trump carries a heavy baggage of his own and the recent episode can but blur some of his glaring negatives, not all.

R.Narayanan| Mumbai

road construction on private land. This inhumane action raises serious questions about women's safety under the current government. On one hand, we hear slogans like "Nari Shakti" and "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao," but on the other hand, women are being harassed and buried alive. Is this what we call women's safety, freedom, and security? How long will such incidents continue to occur? The nation cannot tolerate such atrocities. Authorities must address this matter urgently and find a solution to prevent such incidents from happening again. I urge the government to prioritize women's safety and take immediate action to address this issue.

Masood Ahmad |Barabanki

A BOOST TO THE GDP

Madam — This refers to the front page article, "India's GDP to surge 6.5 - 7% in 2024-25 : Economic Survey", (July 23) this is my response. The economic survey of the year 2024 revealed the positive growth figures of India's GDP

surge of 6.5 to 7 % in the year 2024-25. The evangelist numbers are welcoming for speeding up the growth trajectory of India, to make it a 5 trillion dollar economy as soon as possible. Although the inflation figures are stressing, as it burdened the pockets of the locals. But the growth figures are surely welcoming for each one of us. This will also help India to target 'Vikshit Bharat' vision, and help ensure balanced regional development for all together. Sectoral growth with equality from agriculture to export will power boost India to practically visualize these figures in real life. There are provisions in the budget which will definitely lead to the spurt in economic activity, especially the push for employment and skill development is likely to create more jobs and give boost to manufacturing sector. However, it will all depend upon the execution of these schemes.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



GOURAV VALLABH

UNION BUDGET 2024: POINT COUNTER POINT



PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI

Transformative changes for the middle class



The middle class in India has long been the backbone of the nation, driving consumption, innovation, and overall economic growth. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India has witnessed transformative changes that have significantly impacted this demographic. In the last decade, we have moved from a Low Growth, High Inflation Nation to a High Growth, Low Inflation Nation. Currently, we are the only large economy in the world to have High Growth and Low Inflation. The GDP growth rate consistently outpaced other major economies, with 8.2% growth in FY 2023-24 compared to 7.0% in FY 2022-23. These economic improvements have directly benefited the middle class. Primarily, what the middle class expects from a Budget is more disposable income in hand, Quality jobs for the next generation, and an improved quality of life.

More Disposable Income in Hand Generally, the government tries to increase the middle class's disposable income by controlling inflation or by giving tax relief to the personal income tax category. This budget and government fiscal policies provide relief by both instruments. Inflation management has been crucial, with the Modi government adopting an inflation-targeting regime in 2016. This approach stabilized and lowered inflation, which has averaged 5% since 2014, never breaching the 8% mark. In June 2024, retail inflation was 5.08%, with core inflation at its lowest in over 12 years, providing further relief to the middle class and enhancing their purchasing power. In addition, the budget brings significant tax relief for the middle class. FM has rationalized slab rates under the new tax regime and allowed an additional standard deduction of Rs 25,000, effectively making the total standard deductions Rs 75,000 effective from AY 25-26. The new tax regime continues to be the default tax regime of taxation. These changes increase disposable income in the hands of the middle class to the extent of Rs 17,500 per

annum. In other words, after these changes, there will be no tax till income from the Salary of Rs 7.75 Lakh under the new tax regime.

Empowering the Backbone of India The Union Budget 2024-25, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, introduces a series of measures aimed at empowering the middle class and ensuring inclusive growth. This budget focuses on employment, skilling, MSMEs, and infrastructure, which are all pivotal for middle-class prosperity. The budget allocates Rs2 Lakh Crore for education, employment, and skilling, directly benefiting the middle class by facilitating job opportunities for 4.1 crore youth over five years. Schemes like the Employment Linked Incentive provide direct benefits to first-time employees, boosting job creation in the manufacturing sector. Additionally, a new centrally sponsored skilling scheme will train 20 lakh youth, aligning their skills with industry needs and ensuring the middle class remains competitive in the job market. Under the PM Awas Yojana Urban 2.0, the housing needs of 1 crore urban poor and middle-class families will be addressed with an investment of Rs 10 lakh crore. This will include the central assistance of Rs2.2 lakh crore in the next 5 years.

A provision of interest subsidy to facilitate loans at affordable rates is also envisaged. For small business owners within the middle class, the budget introduces a comprehensive package for MSMEs, including a credit guarantee scheme for machinery and equipment purchases and support during stress periods.

A Brighter Future The measures outlined in the budget are set to have profound implications for the middle class. Increased employment opportunities, enhanced skilling programs, and support for MSMEs ensure stable incomes and improved living standards. Affordable housing initiatives make homeownership more accessible to the middle class, and the focus on infrastructure development creates a con-

ducive environment for businesses, fostering economic growth and stability. Let us understand this with the help of an example - The story of a middle-class family. Sachin is a middle-class professional living in Delhi. With the recent changes introduced in the budget, his yearly take-home salary has seen an increase of Rs17,500 due to the new tax benefits.

This increment has allowed Sachin to invest more in his children's education and save for the future. The constant control of inflation also eased his household expenses, making it more affordable for his family to maintain their standard of living. Sachin's son, Amit, recently graduated and was worried about finding a job.

However, with the government's focus on creating employment opportunities, Amit secured a position in a manufacturing firm that benefits from the Employment Linked Incentive scheme. This job provides Amit with a stable income and gives him the confidence to contribute to the family's finances. The government's commitment to skilling programs has also allowed Amit to enrol in a training course that enhances his skills, making him more competitive in the job market. In addition, Sachin's wife, Priya, who runs a small business, has benefited from the support extended to MSMEs. The credit guarantee scheme has enabled her to purchase new machinery, increasing her business's productivity and profitability. The Union Budget 2024-25 is a testament to the government's commitment to fostering inclusive growth and empowering the middle class.

By addressing key areas such as employment, skilling, MSMEs, housing, and infrastructure, the budget paves the way for sustained economic growth and prosperity. As the middle class continues to thrive, it will undoubtedly propel India towards becoming a global economic powerhouse, realizing the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' in 2047.

(The writer is Professor of Finance. XLRI Xavier School of Management and BJP Leader; views are personal)

The budget skips pressing issues



The Union Budget of the newly elected alliance government presented its first budget. Smt Nirmala Sitharaman as the Finance Minister of India presented her 7th budget, and a new record was made too. Considering a lot of promises were made to the people of India and lots of challenges they face - unemployment, price rise, stagnant income one would have hoped that BJP would, after its underperformance in the general election have learnt some lessons and course correct. However it was disappointing to see the same mistake of ignoring the Jann ki Baat, Madam Minister also like the Prime Minister delivered her Mann ki Baat speech. This was to be the Union Budget but now can easily be titled PradhanMantri Sarkar Bachao Yojana announcement where huge financial packages have been earmarked for states that are run by their alliance partners and whose crucial support they need for their government to run uninterrupted- JDU in Bihar and TDP in Andhra Pradesh. While a package worth 59000 crores was announced for Bihar, it was 15000 crores for Andhra Pradesh.

However, their demand for special status has so far not been addressed. Making specific politically motivated state budget allocations over other states' interests sets a wrong precedent for future governments to follow. These funds aren't addressing the requirements but rather addressing their political commitments. Alliance-run Maharashtra, a state that pays the highest taxes to the centre got no specific allocation from the PMSBY (PradhanMantri Sarkar Bachao Yojna) besides many opposition-run states.

It is a shame that the centre has blatantly disregarded the principle of equality but chosen to discriminate between states. Maharashtra seeks new airports, a GIFT city like dedicated business /smart city, highways and roads but all of this was ignored. The real BJP hate for Maharashtra stands exposed yet again. The opposition-led state has now made their displeasure over this discrimination obvious by choosing to boycott an upcoming

NITI Ayog meeting to be chaired by the Prime Minister. In the budget, the Finance Minister introduced an apprenticeship program for youth between 20-30 years of age and committed 1 crore internship programmes for youth in the top 500 companies of India. That would mean every company will have to absorb 20000 interns at Rs 5000/pm stipend earmarked from their CSR. This also means that graduates/postgraduates who are part of the record 9.2% unemployment rate and looking for meaningful employment will have to be content with this program, what it doesn't address is creating jobs or entrepreneurial opportunities for the highly skilled youth. This is the corporate Agniveer programme not meant to address the elephant in the room which is unemployment but rather mock the plight of the youth.

Similarly, FinMin spoke of women-led development but fell short of offering anything that would help address the gender pay gap, bring them more jobs, incentivise savings through tax breaks or ease their burden of inflation in running family budgets. SAMBAL is an umbrella scheme that includes Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, One Stop Centre, Nari Adalat, Mahila Police Volunteer, Women's Helpline etc. In 2020-21, when these schemes were separate, the BE for just four of those included under SAMBAL was ?640 crores, which is more than what has been allocated in the BE for 24-25 (?629 crores).

The Finance Minister and the entire government have been patting themselves on the back for maintaining fiscal prudence and keeping fiscal deficit under check but it is a classic case of operation successful but patient dead with Aam Janta not having enough savings, enough money to invest and consumption growth amongst its weakest ever.

The fact that private final consumption growth was just 4% in 2023-24 against the overall GDP growth rate of more than 8% shows this clearly. The Government has once again managed to turn a deaf ear to the plight of farm-

ers. If shutting down internet services and using tear gas shells to stop the farmers from protesting was not enough, the Union Budget has no mention of a legal guarantee on minimum support price (MSP) for farmers or any support for farm loans through waivers or lower interest rates. With billions continuing to have thousands of crore weddings and stamped-like situations occurring over jobs by unemployed youth, the Union Budget has missed out on addressing wealth inequality at large. While packages for youth employment have been introduced, the Budget does not address reducing the gap between the poorest and the richest sections of the population. Despite the economic survey pointing out the disparity in income with the top 10% accounting for one-third of the income, measures to uplift farmers, and labourers or increase wealth taxes are absent. The Finance Minister's announcement of the reduction of tax on long-term capital gains (LTCG) is a bane in disguise. While seemingly, the tax on LTCG has reduced from 20% to 12.5%, the indexation benefits have been eliminated. This means that profits on sales of property, gold and other unlisted assets will not be adjusted to inflation and a higher amount would be taxable, thus effectively increasing the tax burden on investors, and making investments in property, gold and shares unprofitable. The PradhanMantri Sarkar Bachao Yojana caters to the BJP's essential allies.

The needs of the public, the opposition, and most states have been ignored. While ignoring the concerns of 90% of the nation is not new for this Government, it is disappointing to see it continue after the BJP's performance in the General Elections. One can, however, be hopeful that the increased representation and enthusiasm of the opposition members in Parliament can lead to fruitful deliberations and additions to the Union Budget this session.

(The writer is Rajya Sabha MP, Shiv Sena -Uddhav Balasahab Thackeray, views are personal)

ESG: The key to sustainable business in a post-pandemic world

Environmental, social, and governance considerations are crucial for sustainability in an era marked by environmental degradation

The interest in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations isn't merely a trend—it's a critical pivot towards sustainability in an era marked by environmental degradation and widening social gaps. At its core, ESG represents a comprehensive framework guiding businesses towards practices that not only ensure profitability but also address pressing global challenges.

As we advance in the post-pandemic landscape, collaboration and cooperation are more crucial than ever. For India, these priorities align with ambitious climate targets, a rapidly growing digital economy, and global trade aspirations. Amid climate change and environ



PIYUSH NIRANJANA

mental degradation, there is growing recognition that businesses play a vital role in promoting sustainable development. Last year, Business 20(B20) was one of the most prominent Engagement Groups in India's presidency of G20. It has become an increasingly important forum for private sector leaders to deliberate on subjects such as the adoption of ESG standards. One of the

B20 Action Councils has focused on encouraging the rapid and broad implementation of ESG principles among businesses of all sizes and economic contexts.

Their primary suggestions include creating universally applicable ESG standards and ensuring transparent, comprehensive, inclusive, and equitable disclosures across all regions. ESG goals are typically a set of operational standards that require companies to adhere to better governance, ethical practices, environmentally friendly measures, and social responsibility. It emphasizes non-financial factors as a metric for guiding investment decisions in a world where only financial returns are no longer the sole goal for investors or

employees. ESG enables businesses to have a long-term vision instead of a myopic vision. The horizon of ESG has evolved significantly over the years. It is more than simply checking a box on the compliance checklist. Accelerating a shift to cleaner energy carriers and other efficient technologies can improve global standards of life while also contributing to long-term decarbonization goals. For instance, ESG can align with traditional medicine to forge an environmental path by promoting the use of natural, organic, and sustainable resources in Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) practices, thus reducing the environmental footprint. To



promote greater adherence to ESG standards, businesses must be transparent about their practices and their impact on the environment and society. This can include initiatives such as reporting on greenhouse gas emissions, disclosing supply chain practices and engaging with stakeholders to address concerns about labour standards and human rights. The path to a universally embraced ESG

framework is fraught with challenges. Diverse and sometimes conflicting definitions and standards set by various entities have led to inefficiencies in reporting and general sluggishness in adopting responsible practices on a global scale. The solution lies in harmonizing ESG frameworks for disclosure, reporting, and rating. Such a unified approach would streamline efforts, making it easier for companies of all sizes to participate in the global movement towards sustainability. Companies that address ESG risks tend to experience fewer disruptions, gain more trust, and achieve consistent financial results, adhering to a triple-bottom-line strategy that combines financial

returns with environmental and social norms. Progressive ESG reporting standards, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and dialogue between businesses and civil society can address these challenges. Indian corporations are increasingly incorporating ESG considerations into their business decisions, with several asset management firms launching ESG funds. These ESG-indexed companies have outperformed non-ESG-indexed companies, as per data from the National Stock Exchange (NSE). [1] Investors in India are using novel tools to fund social and environmental initiatives. The Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation, which is also listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange, issued India's first

green bond (BSE). The Corporation raised ?150 crores in capital to help fund the water treatment plant and tertiary sewage. According to a survey conducted by Singapore-based bank DBS and Bloomberg Media Studios, 92% of Indian SMEs said ESG measures are a high priority for their business, compared to 83% of SMEs across Asia.

The corporate world is aligning with climate science, with thousands of businesses adopting initiatives like the Science-Based Targets.

(The writer is member Invest India, the National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency under DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

CG Power reports Q1 standalone PAT at Rs 232.13 cr

CG Power and Industrial Solutions Ltd on Wednesday reported a 21 per cent hike in its standalone profit after tax of Rs 232.13 crore for the April-June 2024 quarter. The company, part of the diversified conglomerate Murugappa Group, had registered a profit after tax of Rs 192.06 crore during the corresponding quarter of last year. For the financial year ending March 31, 2024 the standalone profit after tax stood at Rs 1,004.36 crore. Total standalone income during the quarter under review grew to Rs 2,139.76 crore from Rs 1,791.91 crore registered in the corresponding quarter of last year. For the financial year ending March 31, 2024 the standalone total income stood at Rs 7,760.80 crore. In a statement, the company said the aggregate sales for the quarter were higher at Rs 2,106 crore recording a growth of 19 per cent year-on-year. Margins were higher at 15.4 per cent of sales on account of higher realisations, favourable product mix and cost efficiencies in power systems.



RBI cancels licence of Mahabhairab Coop Urban Bank, Tezpur

The RBI on Wednesday said it has cancelled the licence of Tezpur-based The Mahabhairab Cooperative Urban Bank due to its deteriorating financial condition. Following the cancellation of its licence, the cooperative bank ceases to carry on banking business, with effect from the close of business on July 24, 2024. In a statement, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said the Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Assam has also been requested to issue an order for winding up the bank and appoint a liquidator. Giving reason for the cancellation of the licence, RBI said the lender does not have adequate capital and earning prospects. "The bank with its present financial position would be unable to pay its present depositors in full," it said adding that continuance of the bank is prejudicial to the interests of its depositors. On liquidation, every depositor would be entitled to receive insurance claim amount of his/her deposits up to Rs 5 lakh from Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC).



Strongest incentives from the state should be for EVs: BMW

German luxury carmaker BMW on Wednesday said incentives are necessary to support the growth of the electric vehicle segment. The company, which on Wednesday introduced the all-electric MINI Countryman and electric scooter CE04 in the country, said the market here is still evolving and efforts should continue to smoothen and accelerate this transition. In a press conference here, BMW Group Senior Vice President, Region Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa Jean-Philippe Parain stated that the "strongest incentives from the state should be for EVs". Incentives allow to bring an electric model to a price point where transition can happen towards an electric vehicle, he noted. Parain noted that in some countries, where customers drive longer distances, plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEVs) can be a bridge. "But if I were to speak for India,



Abolition of Angel tax will boost startup ecosystem: CBDT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The abolition of Angel tax for all classes of investors will act to "prompt" innovators and venture capitalists to better invest in startups and any instances of money laundering here will be taken care of by the existing legal mechanism, CBDT Chairman Ravi Agrawal said on Wednesday.

He said the removal of this tax will act to boost the startup ecosystem in India. He would urge the community to "please come forward, please invest as the country is waiting for your investment, initiatives and innovations", Agrawal told in a post-Budget interview.

Asked how would a possible case of money laundering through investor funds be tackled after the removal of the Angel tax, he said if such a violation is found or it is detected that the fund has come through "undisclosed" sources, there are provisions in the respective statute and that will be taken care of.

The head of the direct taxes administration of the country responded in the affirmative

when asked if the taxman would make a reference to its sister agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (ED) if a violation of the anti-money laundering law is noticed. "This (money laundering) issue is one. The intention,

always, was never to dissuade the startups. It was never to put any stop on the investments... we in coordination with the DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade) had actually provided relaxations insofar

as the investments are concerned..." Agrawal said. This (removal of Angel tax) step of the government would actually prompt the startups and also the angel investors to invest in these initiatives and that will help the country, he said.

'Too high' import duty cut on gold to help contain smuggling, boost exports'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The decision to cut "too high" import duty on gold will help in containing smuggling and boost the country's exports of gems and jewellery, CBIC Chairman Sanjay Kumar said on Wednesday.

In the last financial year, seizures of gold made by Customs formation and the DRI together were around 4.8 tonnes, up from 3.5 tonnes in 2022-23.

The Budget has announced a drastic cut in import duty on the precious metal to 6 per cent from 15 per cent.



The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) Chairman said that the duty was hiked in July 2022 as at that time there was a worsening current

account deficit (CAD) due to the geo-political situation.

To cut down on the non-essential imports, the duty was increased.

Budget projection of 10.5% nominal GDP reasonable: DEA secy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth on Wednesday said the Budget has assumed a reasonable nominal GDP growth rate of 10.5 per cent as higher assumption could have led to a larger fiscal deficit.

"As far as the current year is concerned, fiscal prudence places the demand on us that we are realistic or a bit conservative in assuming what the potential revenues may be while at the same time provide adequate provisions for productive priorities of the government. That is what this Budget does," he told PTI in a post-Budget interview.

Between the interim Budget to this Budget, he said there is a higher provision by about Rs 90,000 crore, including for newer schemes.

In that context, he said, "10.5 per cent we feel is a reasonable estimate of nominal growth in

the economy. Because any higher assumptions would then require us to assume more revenues to come and if those revenues don't come in, then we ended up with a higher fiscal deficit." That means more borrowings and it creates its

own set of problems, he said, adding it is better to have conservative estimates. Buoyed by improvement

in revenue collection, the government has lowered the fiscal deficit target to 4.9 per cent for the current financial year as against 5.1 per cent estimated in February's interim Budget.

However, the Budget retained the fiscal deficit estimate at 4.5 per cent for 2025-26 as announced in February.

In absolute terms, the fiscal deficit has accordingly come down to Rs 16.14 lakh crore against Rs 16.85 lakh crore estimated earlier for the current financial year.



Adani Group submits investment proposal to upgrade Nairobi airport

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Kenya Airports Authority (KAA) on Wednesday said it has received an investment proposal from the Adani Group for the upgradation of the airport in Nairobi.

The investment proposal under the public-private partnership has been submitted by Adani Airport Holdings Ltd (AAHL) for Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA).

Currently, AAHL manages seven airports in India and is also developing the Navi Mumbai airport.

In a statement, JKIA Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Henry Ogoye said the proposal came following the Kenyan government approving a medium-term investment plan for the upgradation of the passenger terminal building, runway, taxiway and apron at the Nairobi airport.

Govt earmarks Rs 400 cr for participation in World Expo 2025 in Osaka

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has earmarked Rs 400 crore for participation in the World Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan, which will be held for six months, beginning April 13 next year.

According to the Budget document, an India Pavilion will be set up at the expo.

"The estimated expenditure to be incurred in 2024-25 is Rs 300 crore and Rs 100 crore in 2025-26," it said.

It added that the participation in this mega event will send a message that India will have access to truly global platform to build new connections the world has to offer.

"The multi-billion dollar projects associated with the expo will generate significant opportunities for various sections in India. India Trade Promotion Organization



(ITPO) has been appointed as the nodal agency for the event," it added.

Such events help showcase India's industrial prowess and promote exports.

The country has also participated in a similar expo in Dubai in 2020.

A World Expo is an event that brings together people and innovations from around the world in an effort to address issues facing humankind on a global scale. These exhibitions started with the 1851 Great Exhibition in London and has showcased

innovations like the telephone and microwave.

Further, the document said the government has finalised the "Pradhan Mantri Cha Shramik Protsahan Yojana (PMCSPPY)" and approved for the implementation during 2024-25 and 2025-26.

'Will empower small and medium-scale industries, create jobs'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Budget includes various initiatives to financially empower small and medium-scale industries, which play a crucial role in generating employment, Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy said on Wednesday.

In her Budget speech on Tuesday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a slew of measures for sectors, including infrastructure, manufacturing, healthcare, education, startups, and green energy, among others.

"This Budget envisages sustained efforts and ample opportunities for all. It includes initiatives to financially empower small and medium-scale industries, which play a crucial role in generating employment. It is a visionary



and far-reaching Budget," the Minister for Steel said in a statement.

In the Budget, nine priority areas have been identified with Rs 1.48 lakh crore allocated for education, employment, and skills development. The goal is to create 4 crore jobs, ensuring

better utilisation of human resources, Kumaraswamy, who also holds the portfolio of Union Minister for Heavy Industries, said.

Meanwhile, Vibhor Steel Tubes CMD Vijay Kaushik said the government has given a major boost to infrastructure

RBI tightens norms for cash pay-outs at banks

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The RBI on Wednesday tightened norms related to cash pay-out service at banks, making it mandatory for lenders to keep a record of recipients.

Cash pay-out refers to arrangements for amounts being transferred out of bank accounts to beneficiaries not having a bank account.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has revised its October 2011 framework related to 'Domestic Money Transfer'. The new norms will come into effect from November 1, 2024.

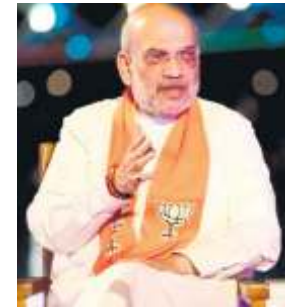
Disbursed Rs 362 cr to depositors of Sahara Group of Coop Societies so far: Shah tells RS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday informed Parliament that Rs 362.91 crore has been disbursed to over 4.2 lakh depositors of Sahara Group of Cooperative Societies as of July 16 this year.

Shah, in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, said this disbursement is facilitated through the CRCS-Sahara Refund Portal, which was established following a Supreme Court order on March 29, 2023, aimed at assisting legitimate depositors in reclaiming their funds.

Presently, the payment of only up to Rs 10,000 is being



disbursed to each genuine depositor against verified claims through an Aadhaar-linked bank account.

"An amount of Rs 362.91 crore has been released to 4,20,417 depositors of Sahara

development in the Budget and increased the outlay by 11.1 per cent to Rs 11.11 lakh crore, which would lead to enhanced demand for various sectors, including cement, steel, power, etc.

M C Garg, CMD of special steel maker Goodluck India said, "The substantial increase in defence capital outlay to Rs 1.72 lakh crore is a major boost for the Indian steel industry."

Sumit Jhunjhunwala, Assistant Vice President & Sector Head - Corporate Ratings, ICRA, said the increased cumulative allocation to flagship schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and the sustained strong funding for the Jal Jeevan Mission are favourable for long steel and pipe manufacturers.

Simplified FDI, reduced tax rates will greatly enhance capital inflows: Deloitte India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The budget announcements of simplifying the FDI and overseas investment regulations, along with reduced corporate tax rates, will greatly enhance capital inflows into the country, Deloitte India said on Wednesday.

Additionally, the abolition of the Angel tax in all forms is a positive step towards encouraging

investment in startups, it said.

Rumki Majumdar, Economist at Deloitte India, said that India needs stable capital for investment, and foreign direct investment (FDI) can significantly boost private capex in greenfield and brown-field investments.

However, FDI flows have been declining globally, and India felt the impact of global

liquidity tightening and uncertainties, she said. "While measures have been announced to improve ease of doing business and reduce the fiscal deficit to boost investor confidence, simplified FDI and overseas investment regulations, along with reduced corporate tax rates, will greatly enhance capital inflows," Majumdar said.

On customs duty rationali-

sation, Saloni Roy, Partner at Deloitte India, said that changes are made to support domestic manufacturing, deepen local value addition and promote export competitiveness.

Changes in basic customs duty (BCD) rate have been announced for various sectors, including medical, mobiles, minerals, solar energy and telecommunications.

Rupee falls 2 paise to hit all-time low of 83.71 against US \$

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated 2 paise to hit its all-time closing low of 83.71 against the US dollar on Wednesday, weighed down by a strong dollar against major crosses overseas amid investors' weak appetite for riskier assets.

Forex traders said the increase in capital gains tax and removal of indexation benefits announced in the FY25 Budget on Tuesday was the main reason for dollar buying as foreign investors sold stocks.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Wednesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 5,130.90 crore, according to exchange

data.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.69 and touched an intra-day high of 83.68 and a low of 83.72 against the dollar during the session.

It finally settled at an all-time low level of 83.71 against the American currency, registering a fall of 2 paise from its previous close.

On Tuesday, the rupee declined 3 paise to 83.69 against the US dollar after the government raised tax rates on capital gains in the FY25 Budget.

"The rupee made a new closing low as buying of dollars continued to attract interest keeping the rupee under pressure.

hmda Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority
Swarnajayanti Complex, Amarnagar, Hyderabad - 500 036.

PUBLIC NOTICE
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
No.063099/EP/MDA/2024/SHTE2684

It is to inform that, Sri Namani Shrivastava, Rep. by its DAGRA M/s. Shree Nirmal, Rep. by its Managing Partners Sri Tara Baidi Reddy & M.Srinivas Reddy have filed an application for Addition / Alteration of approved Building Permission on Plot Nos.4-B(South Part) & 4-B(Part) in Sy.No.568 (Part) situated at Pedda Ambepet(V), Abdulapurmet(M), Range Reddy District to an extent of 1988.32 Sq. Mtrs. for which Building Permission is approved via File No.058747/EP/MDA/2019/SHTE2023.

Therefore, the plots owners / Purchasers / Agreement holders of approved Building Permission on Plot Nos.4-B(South Part) & 4-B(Part) in Sy.No.568 (Part) situated at Pedda Ambepet (V), Abdulapurmet(M), Range Reddy District to an extent of 1988.32 Sq. Mtrs. may file their objections / suggestions in writing if any within (15) days to file office from the date of Publication of this notice with regard to the changes made to earlier approved Building Permission. If no objections / suggestions are received within the stipulated period, the request of the applicant for approval of Revision of approved Building Permission on Plot Nos.4-B(South Part) & 4-B(Part) in Sy.No.568 (Part) situated at Pedda Ambepet(V), Abdulapurmet(M), Range Reddy District to an extent of 1988.32 Sq. Mtrs. will be considered based on the material papers available with this office.

Sd/- for Metropolitan Commissioner,
Director Planning-I, HMDA.

hmda Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority
Swarnajayanti Complex, Amarnagar, Hyderabad - 500 036.

NOTICE FOR OBTAINING QUOTATIONS
Notice No.01/Sealed Quotations/EE-36/SD/2/GHMC/2024-2025 Dt.24.07.2024

Sealed Quotations are invited from Manufacturers, Fabricators, Authorized dealers/ Agencies etc. for the below mentioned items. Name of the work: Sealed Quotations are invited for Supply, delivery, installation, testing, commissioning & others etc., complete of Sewage deodorizing submersible pumps of mentioned specification.

ITEMS REQUIRED: 1. Supply, Delivery of Kinkor make Sewage deodorizing submersible pump (Model No: 11000CW 4PL), Power rating 11 KW and 15 HP with discharge capacity of 4750 Litres/Min. with 6m Head and delivery pipe capacity 150mm, 1440 rpm - Each. 2. Supply, Delivery of Kinkor make Sewage deodorizing submersible pump (Model No: 15000 CW 4PL), Power rating 15 KW and 20 HP with discharge capacity of 4520 Litres/Min. with 6m Head, and delivery pipe capacity 150mm, 1440 rpm - Each. 3. Supporting chain for Pumps - Each. 4. Supply and delivery of MS Pipes for Pumping of 400mm dia (Rim). 5. Supply and delivery of CIDP Flanges (400mm Dia & 250mm Dia) - Each. Document Download Start Date & Time / Quotations Submission Closing Date & Time: Quotations Start Date & Time: 25-07-2024 @ 10.30 AM. Submission Closing Date & Time: 30-07-2024 @ 12.00 PM. Name & Address Officer Cell No.: Sealed quotation can be submitted in the O/o. E.E., Circle-30, GHMC, Sec-30 and on before 30-07-2024 @ 12.00 PM. Cell No. 7331181426/9045606750.

Note: Rate shall be proposed with units. Address of the officer concerned Executive Engineer, Circle-30, and the Head Draftsman, Circle-30, Sec-30, GHMC. Further details and complete specification for the above items can be obtained from GHMC web site: <https://ghmc.gov.in/>. Quotations may be submitted through online ID: aec30reports@gmail.com

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Circle-30, Begumpet, GHMC.

R.O.No: 2023/PPCL/MDVT/2024-25, Dt. 24-07-2024

BEYOND FLAVOURS, BEING THE VOICE OF INDIAN RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

The National Restaurant Association of India aims to lead the Indian restaurant industry to greater profitable growth. Sandeep Balasubramanian, the co-chapter head of NRAI, speaks to *The Pioneer* as he discusses the aim and objective of the association.

AARTI SREENATH

As the leading association representing the Indian restaurant industry, NRAI aims to develop and strengthen the Indian food service sector. For our special segment of Community Wise, *The Pioneer* connects with Sandeep Balasubramanian, the co-chapter head of the association, sharing his experiences, lessons learned and the vision that drives his current endeavours.

His journey is marked by notable stints at Red Bull India and Pernod Ricard India before venturing into the restaurant business. Now, as a prominent figure in Hyderabad's culinary scene, he shares his experiences, lessons learned and the vision that drives his current endeavours.

As the co-chapter head of NRAI Hyderabad, his responsibilities include representing the restaurant industry and addressing its challenges. "The objective is to give a voice to the industry, which is often misrepresented despite its significant economic contribution," he states. The restaurant industry contributes 2% to the GDP and GST revenue of the country and it indirectly supports numerous jobs through delivery services and other associated sectors. NRAI Hyderabad has launched several initiatives, including the first-ever *Indian Food Services Report (IFSR) for Hyderabad*, highlighting the industry's impact.

Under his leadership, NRAI Hyderabad has focused on engaging with stakeholders and consumers to improve the restaurant industry. They organised the first-ever Indian Restaurant Conclave in Hyderabad



in 2021, setting a benchmark for the industry. This event brought together business owners, employees, vendors and potential partners to discuss challenges, employment, hygiene and collaboration. "We emphasised the importance of collective efforts in addressing issues and advancing the industry," Sandeep highlights.

The association promotes local restaurants and food businesses through networking and collective activities. They collaborate with partners from various sectors, including cloud kitchens, cafes, bars and vendors supplying packaging materi-



als and kitchen equipment. Regular events and activities, such as Iftar parties and CSR initiatives, provide visibility and support to members. "These efforts foster a sense of community and collaboration within the industry," he notes.

One significant trend in Hyderabad is the rapid increase in the number of F&B outlets. However, this growth poses challenges, particularly in terms of staffing. To address this, the chapter launched "Mission Kaam," an initiative to train underprivileged individuals and transform them into skilled labor for the F&B industry. "This program aims to bridge the gap between supply and demand by providing employment opportunities to those in need," he explains.

The director highlighted the substantial economic contribution of the F&B industry in Hyderabad. With a market value of 10,700 crore, Hyderabad ranks as the sixth-largest F&B market in India. "The city's young and cosmopolitan population presents significant growth opportunities for the industry," he says. The diverse employment generat-

ed by restaurants, from house-keeping to kitchen staff, supports the local economy. He believes that as the industry grows, its contribution to the economy will continue to expand.

Community outreach is a vital aspect of the NRAI's vision. Through CSR initiatives, they ensure that underprivileged communities and NGOs receive regular food donations. Collaborations with organisations like the Roti Bank facilitate food distribution during festivals, emergencies and disasters. Additionally, they conducted a blood donation camp to support thalassemia patients, demonstrating their commitment to social responsibility. *Mission Kaam* also plays a crucial role in training and upskilling underprivileged individuals, integrating them into the F&B industry," he emphasises.

The founder concludes on the call for collective effort in the F&B industry. "We emphasise the importance of networking, addressing challenges and working together to improve the industry," he states.

He believes that a shift in consumer mindset towards quality will lead to healthier dining choices and a more sustainable industry.



'People's preconceived notion of me as a 'funny sardar' has been dispelled'

TEJAL SINHA

Think of Manjot Singh and our minds gets bombarded with his characters: Young Lucky Singh in *Oye Lucky Lucky Oye*, Dimpy in *Student of the Year*, or the much-loved Lali in the *Fukrey* franchise.

Oye Lucky Lucky Oye brought him into a bigger picture, bringing him a Filmfare Award to his credit. It was indeed a splendid journey; little did he know that this 'Delhi ka Ladka' would one day wake up going for an audition and get selected for a 15-minute role in the film. Well, would you believe it if we said that, never in his dream, he had a thought of becoming an actor? However, ironically, it did become a dream-come-true moment for him.

Beyond any doubt, his humorous elements have always been something that we've enjoyed the most. Still and all, "It's the situations that have been comic. The main thing about comedy is your timing and that's something nobody can easily learn. My timing is good, so it lands automatically. In real life, I'm a serious man and I do not even know how to make people laugh. It's the script, timing and editing that make it look funny."

Now, with his latest, we get to see a different Manjot altogether! "People have been approaching me saying, 'We see a different Manjot, unlike what we had seen previously.' To be honest, I've always wanted to take on a role like this one. Versatility has been introduced by the role of an authoritative person. People would have embraced me much sooner if *Wild Wild Punjab* had been my debut project. People's preconceived notion of me as a 'Funny-innocent Sardar' has been dispelled and they now think that Manjot is capable of doing this as well," shares the *Fukrey* star. "I consider it a great accomplishment that I was able to change people's opinions about me. I've never played 'Macho Sardar' before. I'm being challenged to do more of this by the feedback I'm receiving for it. People have been saying 'Manjot 2.0 ka janam hua hai' in reference to my Honey Paaji character, which is really astounding."

He further gushes that makers do not have much time to sit and explore an actor's versatility. Fortunately, Luv Ranjan and Simarpreet Singh, the directors of *Wild Wild Punjab*, saw that he would fit in the best.

"Every movie, in my opinion, has a specific fate and timing. For the first time in fifteen years, I'm getting calls from a lot of producers and industry people, just as everyone went crazy over my part in *Oye Lucky Lucky Oye*. I'm even being referred to as the movie's 'hero' by some individuals. My character has been an 'alpha-male in this film.'"

Unlike his previous projects, he believes that the film brought out a lot of emotions in his character. There's a little bit of romance, comedy, seriousness and action too. Speaking of actions, he also recalls taking car drifting classes. In fact, the way the character dresses up is also how Manjot dresses up in real life. He is, in fact, a man with his principles and can kill someone or die for his loved ones. "There are a few things that I feel are relatable to many of my characters, be it in *Fukrey*, *Dream Girl*, or even *Wild Wild Punjab*. To be

honest, in this film, I have worked very hard as compared to other projects. In real life also, just like how Honey Paaji loves his car, Paro, I take pride in maintaining my cars, both inside and out and I always try to keep them tidy and spotless. When it comes to style, even I like to be *ek dum tich*. You wouldn't believe, I used to skip school on days when my uniform wasn't clean when I was younger (he laughs)."

Speaking of the rumours of him being approached for Ranbir Kapoor's *Animal*, he goes on to share, "That is indeed true. I even went to meet Sandeep Vanga and inquired about the possibility of it helping me advance in my work. But he was like, 'There's not going to be anything life-changing', but he just wanted me to be in it because he thought I was a good actor. The script was altered in a few places and the role I was called in for was not really significant. However, Sandeep Sir was the one who contacted me to let me know about it. I think everything works out for the best and I'm happy *Animal* performed so well. While Ranbir Kapoor portrayed the alpha in that movie, I am the alpha in *Wild Wild Punjab*, hehe!"

Being a Cancerian, he shares that he loves romance and that there's a lot that he can do, apart from comedy. "I would certainly learn to take action. I love serious drama. There's a lot of drama that happens in my house too, with my dad. There's a perception that if it is a Sardar, then it's going to be a comedy. However, as the team experimented, I was glad I could be a part of this project. In fact, my mom saw me in this character. For the first time ever, she called me after watching my film and said she appreciated me, thanking the filmmakers too. It was so heartwarming."

As we head towards the end of this chat, Manjot brings an exclusive revelation: 'I was also approached for *Fighter*, but that didn't really go well with me. I also got a *Dharma* film, but again, I wanted to wait for that 'one' project. Now I've been getting calls with roles that differ from comedy.'

Actor Manjot Singh has been enjoying the overwhelming response that he has received for his latest film, *Honey Paaji in Wild Wild Punjab*. He discusses with *The Pioneer* about breaking his image as a comedic star and his inclination towards serious drama, among others



I WAS APPROACHED FOR *ANIMAL*, *FIGHTER* AND ALSO FOR A *DHARMA* FILM. HOWEVER, I DID NOT DO THEM BECAUSE I WAS WAITING FOR THAT 'ONE' PROJECT.

Amending well-being with dietary guidelines for people with Dementia

Dementia, a progressive decline in cognitive abilities, influences thinking, memory and the ability to perform regular activities. While dementia has no cure, a healthy, well-balanced diet plays a vital role in managing it. This goes beyond physical health; a balanced diet impacts cognitive function and by adopting a holistic care approach that addresses cognitive and emotional needs, caregivers can significantly improve the quality of life in elders with dementia.

ASPECTS TO COVER FOR NOURISHMENT AND WELL-BEING
By adhering to proper dietary guidelines, we can support the nourishment and overall well-being of elders with dementia. Here are some foods that may be beneficial:

Nutrient-rich foods

- **Fruits and vegetables:** Working as a prime source of essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, fruits and vegetables may help protect brain cells.
- **Whole grains:** Whole grains provide sustained energy and fiber to elders, and help them in digestion. Brown rice, quinoa and whole-wheat bread are considered to be suitable options.
- **Lean proteins:** As protein is essential for muscle health and brain function, the inclusion of lean meats, fish, poultry, beans and lentils in the diet can prove to be helpful for elders.

Adequate hydration

Dehydration can heavily deteriorate cognitive function and may lead to confusion and disorientation in elders with dementia. Since it is a must for them to take sufficient amounts of fluid every day, it is advisable to offer water frequently throughout the day, even if they don't express thirst. Consider flavoured water, infused water with fruits or herbs, or milkshakes as alternatives.

Social dining

It is commonly known that eating with others promotes social interaction, and for elders with dementia, it is specifically crucial for mental well-being. A calm and relaxed dining environment can encourage conversation during meals, ultimately helping the elders.

Incorporate brain-boosting foods

Certain nutrients are known to have a better impact on the brain health of elders with dementia. It is

advisable to consider foods that are rich in

- **Omega-3 fatty acids:** Found in fatty fish, walnuts, and flaxseeds, Omega-3 Fatty Acids support cognitive function in elders and may improve their memory
- **Vitamin B12:** Essential for nerve function, Vitamin B12 is found in meat, fish, dairy products and fortified cereals.
- **Vitamin D:** Deficiency in Vitamin D has been linked to cognitive decline. It is thus advisable to include milk, eggs and fatty fish in the diet of elders.

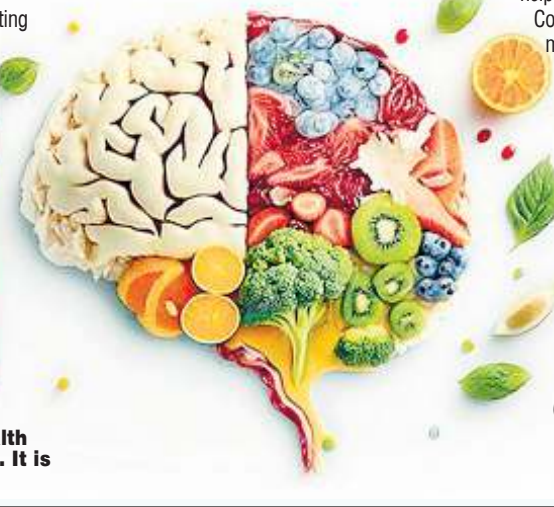
Adapt to progression of dementia

Understanding the dietary needs of elders with dementia is crucial as the condition progresses. In the early stages, it is ideal to establish healthy eating habits, focusing on a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins. These foods provide essential nutrients, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that support cognitive function. As dementia advances to the middle stage, caregivers should prepare easy-to-eat meals with softer foods divided into manageable pieces, as this helps with changes in appetite and swallowing difficulties. Visually appealing and consistently textured meals can help reduce agitation and improve meal acceptance. In the later stages, when dementia becomes more severe, it is essential to address the challenges of appetite loss and swallowing difficulties. Prioritizing thickened fluids, pureed foods, and high-calorie, nutrient-rich options like fortified cereals, mashed potatoes, or creamy soups can help ensure adequate nutrition and support overall well-being.

Caring for elders with dementia requires a holistic approach, with diet being a critical pillar. A balanced diet rich in green leafy vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and lean proteins should be part of their daily regimen. It is important to avoid processed foods, high sugar, and saturated fats. As dementia progresses, dietary patterns and appetite often change. Serving a brain healthy MIND diet (Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) can significantly improve their quality of life. The MIND diet is a hybrid of the DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) and the Mediterranean diet. Nutritional care involves understanding personal preferences, creating a distraction-free environment, using appropriate crockery and cutlery, and providing the right assistance. Proper hydration is crucial, especially in hot weather. Offering beverages like jeera buttermilk, coconut water, freshly made fruit smoothies, and fresh lime water or the healthy drink they might prefer throughout the day helps maintain hydration.

Compassion and care in dietary management can lead to nourishing and enjoyable experiences, promoting well-being throughout the dementia journey. A thoughtful approach to nutrition not only ensures health but also plays a vital role in engagement, mood upliftment, and motivation, significantly enhancing the quality of life for elders with dementia.

(The author, Neha Sinha, is the CEO and Co-founder of Epoch Elder Care.)



what's brewing?



● Sravanthi and Amiksha



Hilife Exhibition, is all set to enthrall Hyderabad with its upcoming exhibition. It will take place at the HICC-Novotel in Hi-tech City, starting from August 6 till August 8, 2024, showcasing an exhilarating exhibition of style, luxury, fashion and elegance.



● Bhuvaneshwari



● Reshma



● Priya



● Reba



● Vrindha



● Kusum

PARTY

Photos by- SV Chary



THE RINGS OF POWER INTRODUCES NEW CHARACTERS

At the head of this year's much-anticipated San Diego Comic Con, *The Lord of the Rings: The Ring of Power* revealed new details, teasing and introducing new characters joining the highly anticipated *Season 2* premiere. The sprawling new additions to the J.R.R. Tolkien adaptation include the great dwarf Narvi (played by Kevin Eldon), the elven map-maker from Eriador-Camnir (played by Calam Lynch), the elven archer from Lindon named Rian (played by Selina Lo) and Mirdania (played by Amelia Kenworthy), who is a protégé of master craftsman Celebrimbor.

Narvi (played by Kevin Eldon)

The great dwarf, Narvi, was described by J.R.R. Tolkien as a "craftsman," a dwarf expert in smithing and a close friend of Celebrimbor. Together, they created the famous *Doors of Durin*, on the west side of Khazad-dûm. Owain Arthur, who returns as Prince Durin IV of the kingdom of Khazad-dûm, said, "He's weaving in and out of the action throughout the season. He's only mentioned in Tolkien's appendices and he's described as a great craftsman. J.D. Payne and Patrick McKay had little to go on, but I think we have successfully turned this footnote into a flesh-and-blood character. As well as being this fantastic architect, we see in *season 2* that he's an adviser as well. He's the right-hand man of King Durin." Speaking about his character as Narvi, Eldon said, "Narvi has an interesting journey in *season 2*, as the king increasingly falls under the power of the rings. These rings are getting under his skin; he's becoming less logical and showing signs of madness. So Narvi has to make a very difficult choice about whether he



obeys his natural instinct, which is to be loyal and to follow the king's wishes, or to abandon that very basic requirement of his life and instead show more loyalty to Khazad-dûm. He gets to a point where he has to leap one way or the other. I'm not going to tell you what he chooses, but it's certainly a dilemma for him."

Camnir's (played by Calam Lynch)

Camnir's originality is unclear, but he is known as an expert elven map-maker, with particular expertise in navigating the woods of Eriador. After unforeseen danger requires finding a new path to Eregion, Camnir's bravery will be put to the test when Elrond's band of warrior-elves encounters an unexpected attack on the road: the Barrow-wights.

Rian (played by Selina Lo)

Reputed to be one of the finest archers in Lindon, Rian is one of the members of Elrond's recently formed band of warrior-elves. Her courage and her aim, will prove invaluable in the fight for Eregion.

Mirdania (played by Amelia Kenworthy)

Mirdania is a protégé of master craftsman Celebrimbor, but her loyalty will be tested when an unexpected visitor arrives in Eregion, with the potential to alter the destiny of the Elven-smiths forever.

The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power Season Two will be available in English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada on August 29 exclusively on Prime Video.

FUN

ARCHIE



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



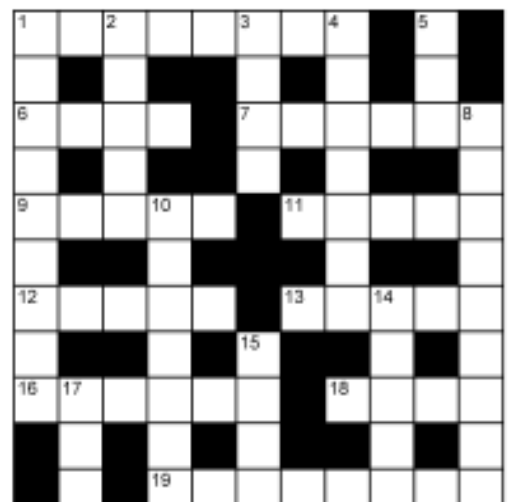
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- Illnesses
- A tool you eat with
- The most destructive type of exploding bomb
- The River Nile flows through this country
- Not as many
- Sooner than expected
- The opposite of fresh
- A keyboard worker
- A clenched hand
- Someone who grows plants

- Glide over snow with long things on your feet
- A worker in wood
- Tugging
- A visitor from another planet
- Mix up with a spoon
- A word of agreement

DOWN

- Not the same
- An apology word
- The mark of an old injury
- Opposite of quickest

SOLUTION



‘You can expect plenty of action scenes from me in Simbaa’

AARTI SREENATH

The trailer of the much-anticipated *Simbaa* was released by the makers on Wednesday, impressing all.

Starring Anasuya Bharadwaj and Jagapathi Babu, *Simbaa* is produced by Sampath Nandi and Dasari Rajendara Reddy under the banners of Sampath Nandi Team Works and Raj Dasari Productions. *Simbaa: The Forest Man*, promises to be a thrilling cinematic experience. Anasuya's dedication and enthusiasm for her craft shines through, making this film one to look forward to on August 9th.

The Pioneer quickly rang a call to the lead actress, bringing to you some exclusive insights. Known for her dynamic presence in Telugu cinema, Anasuya delved into the making of the film, her preparation for the role and her perspective on the industry's future.

Reflecting on the journey of making *Simbaa*, the *Vimanam* actress revealed, "We wrapped up filming nearly a few years ago. Meeting my co-actors at the trailer launch felt surreal because, for many of us, it seemed like we had almost forgotten

about the film. It feels really nice that the trailer has come out well, yet I have to say that it appears to be a movie that must be set in the past. The suspense is still intact, which I appreciate."

When asked about her excitement for the film, she expressed, "When I signed up for *Simbaa*, I was thrilled. It's a serious message film, but it's presented in an entertaining way. It's a crime thriller with a lot of action and you can expect plenty of fights from me, which is new for both me and my audience. Jagapathi Babu Sir plays the main lead, and we all share significant screen space."

"There are a lot of shades to the role I play," shares the *Pushpa* star adding, "I can't reveal whether my character is positive, negative, or grey because it's quite unpredictable and that's the plot's

THE MUCH-ANTICIPATED *SIMBAA*'S TRAILER WAS RELEASED BY THE MAKERS ON WEDNESDAY. *THE PIONEER* ON THE SAME EVENING RANG A CALL TO THE LEAD ACTRESS ANASUYA BHARADWAJ, AS SHE SHARES SOME EXCLUSIVE INSIGHTS ABOUT THE UPCOMING FILM



essence. My director calls it a supernatural crime thriller, while I see it as a psychological crime thriller. I don't prefer method acting for my roles; I make sure I stay connected with the character. This particular character, Akshika, is very different from my real-life persona. She is composed, while I am more energetic and spontaneous."

She further believes that everyone understands the concept of 'Vrikso Rakshati

Rakshitah'. Everyone understands how we are harming the environment and what the implications are. "*Simbaa* has come up with an excellent concept: a supernatural crime thriller. Jagapathi Babu is the film's major strength. Even if someone doesn't enjoy this film, at least it will cause significant change."

As we went ahead in this chat, the *Khiladi* fame also shared her thoughts on the importance of supporting cinema. "I urge every movie lover to give every film a chance. It's important not to judge a book by its cover. There's always a lot of effort and dreams behind making a film. Our film, *Simbaa: The Forest Man*, has a lot to offer. The trailer is just a glimpse; there's much more to explore."

Going further, she reminisced about her time on set, as she shares, "It feels like such a long time, but reuniting with everyone at the trailer launch felt like no time had passed. I mingled well with everyone, including the child actor I shared many scenes with."

In this exclusive chat, the *Rangasthalam* actress also goes on to reveal that she is currently working on two films, but nothing exciting has come her way recently. "What excites me most is returning to television. I've completed seven films in Tamil and Telugu that are yet to release and each role showcases a different side of me. I want my audience to expect the unexpected and hope I can continue to entertain them. I don't have a dream role; I aim to be a director's safe space. I want to work with various technicians and actors and my only worry is missing the chance to collaborate with some of them."

Meanwhile, Anasuya Bharadwaj has revealed that, in one of the upcoming movies of Pawan Kalyan, a song featuring her with the actor will be a highlight. "I am breaking the news for the first time ever. I have done a song with Pawan Kalyan garu. It is going to be a blast."

Though, she did not reveal the name of the film and if the speculations are to be believed, the *Razakar* actress was referring to *Hari Hara Veera Mallu*, one of the three delayed projects headlined by Pawan Kalyan.

Ajith to join *KGF* franchise!



Ajith Kumar recently met with filmmaker Prashanth Neel to discuss the potential of working on two films. According to reports, the first film might be a standalone, while the second could be set in the world of Yash's *KGF*. However, these projects will take at least a year to launch. These two films are expected to be produced by Vijay Kiragandur of Hombale Films.

The *Valimai* actor is now filming *Vidaa Muyarchi*, directed by Magizh Thirumeni. The film is expected to hit theatres around Diwali 2024. After *Vidaa Muyarchi*, he will move on to filmmaker Adhik Ravichandran's *Good Bad Ugly*. "Their first collaboration, which may be *AK 64*, will be a stand-alone production." The report stated that this will go on floors in 2025 and be released in 2026. Their second project, which could be his 65th or 66th picture, will be a prequel to *KGF 3*. "The climax of the second film will lead to *KGF 3* and Ajith's character is touted to be the biggest of them all in the Prashanth Neel Cinematic Universe," stated the press release. Meanwhile, Prashanth Neel has *Salaar: Part 2 - Shouryanga Parvam* and an untitled project featuring Jr NTR in the works. It remains to be seen whether he will do Ajith Kumar's film in between these two ventures.

DARKNESS UNLEASHED WITH TRAILER OF *DEMONTÉ COLONY 2*



Director Ajay Gnanamuthu made his debut with the smash hit horror film *Demonte Colony* (2015), which starred Arulnithi, Ramesh Thilak, Sananth and Abhishek George. A sequel to the film was announced, with Ajay returning as director.

The makers of *Demonte Colony 2* confirmed on Wednesday that the film will be released on August 15. This is the fourth film released on this date, following Prashanth's *Andhagan*, Vikram's *Thangalaan* and Keerthy Suresh's *Raghu*. Thatha. Adding to the anticipation for the release, on Wednesday, star filmmaker Ram Gopal Verma digitally launched the

trailer of the film. Sharing the trailer, RGV also wished the entire team with his best wishes.

Demonte Colony 2 also features Priya Bhavani Shankar, Antti Jaaskelainen, Tsering Dorjee, Arun Pandian, Muthukumar, Meenakshi Govindarajan, Sarjano Khalid and Archana R.

Sam CS composed the music for the horror movie and Harish Kannan did the cinematography. Bobby Balachandran produced *Demonte Colony 2* in collaboration with Vijay Subramanian's White Nights Entertainment and RC Rajkumar's Gnanamuthu Pattarai.

‘It’s embarrassing to do intimate scenes with the crew present’



Many people have expressed interest in *Zee5's Bahishkarana*. Anjali portrayed the lead in this Mukesh Prajapathi-directed period social drama series.

"The success meet was held in Hyderabad and Anjali stated during the event that she is looking forward to taking on more daring and intense parts in her career going forward."

"I don't want to do the same characters anymore. With my OTT productions, I've learned how to play dark roles, which has given me a sense of accomplishment as an actress," Anjali says.

Anjali further said that it is challenging to do intimate scenes with both; be they be a hero or a character actor. "Such scenes are filmed with dozens of crew members, most of whom are men. So, no matter which character I play, the person I am remains the same. It's usually difficult and embarrassing to handle such situations." Anjali also prefers to avoid kissing scenes.

She also says that playing bold parts in *Bahishkarana* was eye-opening and the situations affected her personally.

However, now that she understands how to perform dark roles, she is eager to do more. Ravindra Vijay and Sritej had major parts in this six-episode series.

AHA GODARI MAKES IT BIG AT NEXA STREAMING ACADEMY AWARD



Gyabo Network Pvt Ltd's *Aha Godari*, a film about the River Godavari, won best documentary at the NEXA Streaming Academy Awards, which were held in conjunction with the South Indian International Movie Awards (SIIMA) in Mumbai. The documentary is currently streaming on Aha, which made a remarkable debut at the first-ever NEXA Streaming Academy Awards by clinching an impressive 13 awards.

The awards ceremony also honoured individual excellence. Vijay K Chakravarthy received the Best Cinematographer (Series) award for *Anya's Tutorial*.

On this occasion, Gopavajhala Diwakar was awarded Best Documentary Original. Kiran Mamedu was named Best Production Designer (Series) for *Newsense*. Priyamani Raj was named Best Actor - Critics' Choice (Female) for her performance in *Bhamakalapam 1*. Abhimanyu Tadimeti received the Best Story award for *Bhamakalapam 1*, while Niveditha Sathish and Sharanya Pradeep were honoured as Best Supporting Actor in Series (*Anya's Tutorial*) and Best Supporting Actor in Film (*Bhamakalapam 1*) respectively.

Ratthasachi, which is currently streaming on Aha in Tamil, also received several accolades in the original web category, including Best Film, Best Original

Soundtrack by Javed Riaz, Best Actor (Male Critics Regional) to Kanna Ravi and Best Cinematographer to Jagadeesh Ravi. These awards recognise the film's exceptional storytelling, music, performances and cinematography. Ravikant Sabnavis, CEO of Aha, accepted two awards on behalf of the platform: Best Non-Fiction Original for *Unstoppable* and Best Regional Platform. "These awards, awarded for the first time to an OTT platform, mark a historic milestone for Aha as a leader in regional OTT. They also showcase the dedication and creativity of our talented teams and partners in delivering diverse and captivating stories," adds Ravikant.

‘Revu songs convey strong emotions with creativity & excellence’



A forthcoming film titled *Revu* stars Vamsi Ram Pendyala, Ajay, Swathi Bheemireddy and Epuri Hari in prominent parts with Murali Giniupalli and Naveen Parupalli co-producing it under Samhitha Entertainments and Parupalli Productions. The makers conducted an audio launch event and such exhilaration! Nirman Super Vision journalist Prabhu, along with Parvataneni Rambabu, a senior film journalist, are serving as the executive producers for the film. While finishing all of the paperwork, *Revu* is preparing for a big theatrical release in the second week of August! The flick directed by Harinath Puli with an entertaining plot had legendary lyricists Chandra Bose, Ramajogayya Sastry, Suddala Ashok Teja, Ananth Sriram and Kasarla Shyam attend *Revu's* audio release event in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

Lyricist Chandra Bose voiced during the audio launch. "After coming here and listening to the movie's tunes, I knew I'd found the appropriate choice. It's been a

while since I saw Ashok Teja garu. I am also pleased to meet Ananth Sriram, Kasarla Shyam and Ramajogayya Sastry on this platform. Imran Sastry's songs are as eclectic as his name suggests. The songs convey strong emotions. The music is excellent. We saw both creativity and excellence in the movie." On the other hand, lyricist Ramajogayya Sastry remarked, "After listening to *Revu* songs, I became emotional. If we want diversified and content-rich films, we seek to foreign-language films. However, after hearing *Revu's* songs, one gains hope in the talent of the next generation. Telugu cinema seems to be in good hands, while at the same time I also believe that the Telugu music directors should get greater opportunity." All of the renowned lyricists present at the audio launch have crowned hit Telugu songs. Consequently, in a struggle for survival, *Revu* depicts the life of a fisherman onscreen and one can't wait to watch this captivating tale!

‘The ensemble cast of *Purushothamudu* brought strength to story’



Raj Tarun's upcoming film is titled *Purushothamudu*. Dr. Ramesh Tejawat and Prakash Tejawat are producing this film with a large budget under the label Sri Sridevi Productions. Hasini Sudheer is introduced as the film's leading lady. Ram Bheemana, who has directed films such as *Akatayi* and *Hum Tum*, is currently working on *Purushothamudu*. This film stars Prakash Raj, Murali Sharma, Ramya Krishna, Brahmanandam and Mukesh Khanna.

Purushothamudu will have a worldwide theatrical premiere on the 26th of this month.

On this occasion, director Ram Bheemana stated, "I have directed two films in the past: *Aakatayi* and *Hum Tum*. The producer profited from the movie *Hum Tum*. After a six-year hiatus, I made the film *Purushothamudu*. I am pleased to have found good producers. They gave careful consideration to the film's quality before producing it. I created a clean family entertainer. Our producers cast huge names like Prakash Raj, Ramyakraishna, Mukesh Khanna and Murali Sharma in our film."

Each of them added strength to the plot through their performance."

Purushothamudu tells the story of a wealthy man, who visits a community and what he does there. It appears that the film is similar to Mahesh Babu's *Srimanthudu*. Many films appear to have the same plot. But what is shown in the story is crucial. The makers touched on a point in the film that had never been seen in an Indian film before! Apparently, Raj Tarun has lent his complete support to the film. Hasini Sudhir, the heroine, has an excellent character too. Hasini executed her part flawlessly. Director Veera Shankar was also present at the event as a special guest. Talking at the event, he mentioned that Ram Bhimana is a talented director and he believes that this film will surely be a hit!

Zubin Bharucha helping us, Lankans should take advantage of Indian retirements: Jayasuriya

PTI ■ PALLEKELE

Sri Lanka's interim head coach Sanath Jayasuriya on Wednesday revealed that IPL side Rajasthan Royal's high performance director Zubin Bharucha has helped his batters prepare for the upcoming T20 series against India where he expects them to take advantage of the recent retirements by stars like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. Rohit, Kohli and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja retired from the T20 Internationals after India's World Cup triumph last month. The T20 series against Sri Lanka will get underway here on July 27. Jayasuriya revealed despite some of the Sri Lankan players' involvement in the Lanka Premier League, they have held a six-day camp with Bharucha. "We just started the sessions just after the LPL. Most of the players are playing the LPL, so they were busy with cricket and what we wanted (for them) was to play cricket as much as possible," he said. "We got Zubin from Rajasthan Royals and we had about six days of work and also with the other cricketers who finished with the LPL. I hope the players have learnt what you (management) wanted to do in terms of practice and their



technique. "The preparation was good, and we have two more days in Kandy before the T20 starts," he added. Jayasuriya said the sessions with Bharucha were intense and the players have been able to learn a lot from him. "It is important to learn as international cricketers new techniques, new approaches and shot making to be effective," he said. India also have a new captain in Suryakumar Yadav for T20Is and Jayasuriya, while acknowledging the struggles of his side, urged them to make the most of the opportunity. "Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli are best players in the world.

Looking at their talent and the kind of cricket they have played we all know where they belong, along with Jadeja," Jayasuriya was quoted as saying by Associated Press during a press meet. "Their absence will be loss to the Indian team and we have to take maximum advantage out of that," he said. Heads rolled in the top management of Sri Lanka team after the debacle in the T20 World Cup in the Americas. After Sri Lanka made a preliminary round exit, upon return the team captain Wanindu Hasaranga, head coach Chris Silverwood and high performance consultant Mahela Jayawardena all

resigned. When asked about Sri Lanka's current state, Jayasuriya hoped the players are able to develop themselves. "It is up to the players, we have been doing all the work in terms of practice, we have given training, we have got best coaches. I think Sri Lanka Cricket has provided most of the things and now it is up to the players," he said. "For the present cricketers to come to that level, we have been doing all the necessary work and I hope in next two years there will be a lot of development in these boys," the batting great added. "We need to give a little bit of time. I know, for the cricket-loving public it is frustrating

sometimes but be patient, give us time, we are working ion it. It is really hard work on it with the players and they will do well." The 1996 World Cup winner said Sri Lanka have enough talent in ranks to come out of troubled times while acknowledging the frustration of the fans. "We have enough of talent. What we want (from them) is to go out in the middle and deliver -- it is not easy, we know that," he said. "We have delivered when we were playing and now the time has come, people are waiting for this present team to perform and with what we are doing at the moment they will deliver very soon," he added.



Indian women team's mantra has been to take one game at a time: Deepti

PTI ■ DAMBULLA (SRI LANKA)

Senior player Deepti Sharma said India's mantra in the Women's T20 Asia Cup has been to take one game at a time as conditions haven't really changed from the last time the team played here. India marched into the semifinals with a thumping 82-run win over Nepal on Tuesday after fireworks with the bat from Shafali Verma (81 off 48 balls) and Deepti's impressive 3/13 with the ball. India amassed 178 for 3 after batting first and then restricted Nepal to a paltry 98 for 9 in their 20 overs. "From the first game we are

pretty confident about each (match) and every situation and the condition as well. We are looking forward to semi-final as well," Deepti told the media after the match. She said not much has changed in terms of the nature of the pitches and conditions in Sri Lanka from the team's previous tour to the island nation in June 2022. "Nothing (has) changed, just keep it very simple and just focus for another match. I played (here) last time also and yeah, nothing changed," she said. "We (are) only backing ourselves and you know, conditions are really (the) same."

The right-arm off-spinner is topping the bowling charts with eight wickets in three matches and she credited her success to her readiness to bowl in all situations. "I (am) always ready to bowl in any kind of situation. I like to take the challenges from the front. (It's) nothing, just (that) I'm enjoying each and every match, plan accordingly and what we discussed in the meeting. I just apply myself," she said. "If we win the toss, it's (a) positive (approach) from the upfront. As a batting unit also, we are doing really well from the game one and we finished also well," she added.



Ollie Pope reckons England can make 600 Test runs in a day's play

PTI ■ LONDON

Ollie Pope reckons England can breach the 600-run mark inside a day's play in Test cricket while ruling out any let up to their ultra aggressive 'Bazball' approach with the bat. England hold the record for the most runs scored in a day when they piled up 588 for 6 on the second day of the Manchester Test against India in 1936, and Pope believes the current side under Ben Stokes can eclipse that. "Sometimes we might score 280 to 300 in a day but that's OK and probably because we're reading situations. There might also be a day where we go and get 500 to 600 at some point in the future as well. And that's a cool thing to have," Pope was quoting as saying by 'BBC Sport'. In December 2022, England smashed 506 runs on the opening day of the first Test against Pakistan in Rawalpindi. England are currently 2-0 up in

the three-match Test series against the West Indies after they followed up a victory by an innings at Lord's with a comprehensive 241-run win at Trent Bridge, Nottingham last week. The third and final Test starts on Friday at Edgbaston. The win in Nottingham was the first time England scored 400-plus in both innings of a Test match with totals of 416 and 425. Pope (121 in first innings) was one of three England centurions in the second Test alongside Joe Root and Harry Brook. Pope said there might be times England batters will have to "manage the game a little bit more" but that their attacking Bazball style under coach Brendon McCullum and captain Stokes has now become second nature. "I got asked on day one at Trent Bridge 'do you get told to play like that? No, we don't. It's just our natural games and the way we go about it," Pope said.

Mind Games: The psychological challenge of being Olympian

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Human excellence is often closely linked to human fortitude and Olympics is the prime example of it. The Paris Games, starting on Friday, will be a gathering of 10,500 athletes, 117 of them from India, competing for a mere 329 medals. Needless to say, talent alone won't decide who finishes on the podium. It will also boil down to the mind and how one can discipline it to cope with the grandeur and pressure of the big moments. Visualisation, blocking out the noise and being focussed are among the techniques that are often talked about but are they as easy to implement in a highly competitive environment? "There is a lot of pressure (already) in sports and when you compete at the Olympics, you have to be someone who has gone through a lot of highs and lows as well," explains Dr Divya Jain, a sports psychologist with Fortis Healthcare. "In sports, you're confronted with winning and losing on a day-to-day basis, so it's not about winning every time; it's about how you recover, how quickly you bounce back from a mistake," she said while explaining the difference between Olympians and other athletes. "There is public scrutiny, staying away from family, the noise of the Games... All of these are aspects that athletes have to cope with at a psychological level," she added. For the next few weeks athletes will try to be at the peak of their form. To do that, they have trained physically and



mentally but the medal winners will be those who are a tad more tenacious and focussed than the rest. "Not only do they have their own high expectations, but they also carry the hopes of their entire country and scrutiny of a global audience," says Keerthana Swaminathan, a sports psychologist and president of the Indian Sport Psychologists Association. "Being away from families, friends and home is a part of sportspersons' lives but in Olympics, with all eyes on them, it could lead to further stress and anxiety. "Olympians often have to deal with extensive travel and long periods away from family and friends, which can be really isolating. This combination can take a serious toll on their mental health, making it crucial for them to have strong support systems and access to mental health resources," she adds. And to ensure that Indian athletes have calmer minds, the first of its kind specialised medical team is accompanying the contingent, featuring wellness specialists, and a sleep scientist among the regular medical staff.

"Representing and competing for one's country can instill a deep sense of responsibility and pride but that also adds an additional layer of pressure as athletes at the Olympics often feel that they are competing for national glory," says Dr Nanaki J Chadha, a Sport and Performance Psychologist. Dealing with distractions is something that every athlete needs to learn since focussing on the 'here and now' goes a long way. "It's also about being able to harness that pressure because it's natural for anyone to be in a high-stress situation, to have certain responses to that pressure. Your heart rate may increase, muscle tension may change, your rhythm may change," explains Dr Divya Jain. "So you need to train yourself to work through that pressure and also to harness that pressure to help do better, actually become stronger, (to) have more explosive movement, recognising that that's the body we are preparing, rather than clearing that kind of competition situation," she explains. That mental health is a crucial aspect of an athlete's overall

competitive preparedness has been stressed quite often by India's first individual Olympic gold-medallist Abhinav Bindra. Bindra has often flaked about his own struggles before the Beijing top finish. **WHAT SEPARATES AN OLYMPIC MEDALLIST FROM OTHERS?:** "Medallists have an extraordinary ability to maintain unshakeable focus and concentration, even in the most intense situations," Keerthana says, "They can block out distractions - whether it's the noise of the crowd, the pressure of the moment, or the actions of their competitors - and stay entirely present in their performance," she adds. It is something that Bindra and some of other top Indian sportspersons have also often pointed out. Being flexible to last-minute changes and self-assurance are also an important aspect. "They trust in their training, abilities and preparation, which helps them take risks when necessary and push their limits without fear of failure. This self-assurance also acts as a buffer against the pressure and expectations they face, enabling them to perform at their peak," Keerthana says. The winners also tend to remain focussed for the entirety of the competition, says Dr Nanaki. "Medallists often possess superior mental resilience, allowing them to perform under pressure and that also helps them recover quickly from setbacks. Now, throughout the competition, the ability to maintain focus and concentration is extremely crucial," she says.



For TT great Sharath Kamal, running into Roger Federer tops favourite Olympic memories

PTI ■ PARIS

From lunching alongside tennis icon Roger Federer to taking a set off Chinese legend Ma Long, India's flag-bearer for Paris Olympics, Achanta Sharath Kamal, on Wednesday recalled the most memorable moments from his five appearances at the Games so far. The 42-year-old table tennis legend helped the Indian men's team qualify for the first time in history and is believed to be set for his final appearance at the Games. The multiple-time Commonwealth Games gold-medallist believes that qualifying as a team could become the catalyst of growth for table tennis in India. For someone who has a huge bank of memories from the Olympics having made his first appearance in 2004, Sharath recalled running into Federer at a dining hall in his debut Games. "One day I was just out for lunch and as I was entering from this side, there was another person coming from the other side with a tennis bag and hair let loose. I feel like I have seen him somewhere. I couldn't recognise who he was with his hair let loose," he said in a release from Ultimate Table Tennis. "We pass each other -- we actually cross paths -- (and) he goes to give his bag at the baggage keeping area. I walk in, take my plate looking at what to eat and it suddenly strikes me. Man, it's Roger Federer!" Sharath said he was rather shy at that time but nonetheless searched for the Swiss ace. "He was sitting at one of the tables all by himself. I went as close as possible. I didn't want to get in his place but still got close and I was eating (on the same table)," he continued. "Suddenly, a guy comes in with a reverse hat and shorts and they are clapping hands. I look at him and it's Andy Roddick," Sharath recalled. With the Tokyo Olympics postponed by one year during

to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sharath recalled facing difficulties in training and yet he was able to make a dent in Long's march to the gold medal. "Out of the five times I have played with him, I have won just one set against him and that was in Tokyo. And I am very proud of what happened there, especially coming in after COVID," he added. "India had a very tough situation especially after the second wave. People in the rest of the world started their training back and, mid-way in the lockdown in India, we were still confined to home workouts. I was playing on my terrace. It was very tough. "I was training all the time in India with the limited resources we had. From that difficult mindset to getting to the Olympics and doing my best, I really feel I did well," Sharath continued. Even though he suffered a knee injury during the Beijing Olympics in 2008, Sharath fought bravely to reach the second round. He defeated Spain's Alfredo Carneros in the first and pushed his Austrian friend Chen Weixing to five sets in the next. Also, in 2008, he was still in awe of international athletes and Sharath recalled observing basketball legend Kobe Bryant and his 'mamba' mentality closely during the opening ceremony. Sharath also remembers his Athens 2004 meeting with double trap shooting silver medallist and former sports minister Rajivvardhan Singh Rathore before the final. "Probably, I disturbed him in his alone time, but he was sitting outside and relaxing. Coach Kamlesh Mehta said, 'Come, let's go and wish him' and then we both went and he spoke very nicely, asked about my match etc," Sharath recalled. "He went on to win the medal and after he won the medal, it was so easy for me to go and look at the medal because I had already spoken to him the night before," he said.

New Zealand Olympic soccer team complains after Canadian team drone flown over its training session

AP ■ WELLINGTON

New Zealand says it has complained to the International Olympic Committee's integrity unit after a drone flown over a New Zealand women's soccer team training session was found to be operated by a member of the Canadian team's support staff. Defending Olympic champion Canada and New Zealand meet in their opening match at the Olympic tournament on Thursday. The drone incident occurred earlier this week, the New Zealand Olympic Committee said Wednesday. "Team support members immediately reported the incident to police leading to the drone operator, who has been identified as a support staff member of the wider Canadian Women's football team, to be detained," the NZOC said in a statement. "The NZOC has formally lodged the incident with the IOC integrity unit and has asked Canada for a full review." The Canadian Olympic Committee has



apologized to the NZOC and New Zealand Football. "The Canadian Olympic Committee stands for fair play and we are shocked and disappointed," the statement said. "We offer our heartfelt apologies to New Zealand Football, to all the players affected, and to the New Zealand Olympic Committee." The NZOC said it and New Zealand Football "are committed to upholding the integrity and fairness of the Olympic Games - at this time the NZOC's main priority is to support the New Zealand women's football athletes and wider team as they start their campaign." It's not the first time a Canadian soccer team has been involved in a drone controversy involving an international rival's training session. In 2021 at Toronto, Honduras stopped a training session ahead of its men's World Cup qualifier against Canada after spotting a drone above the field, according to reports in Honduran media.