



# sunday pioneer

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Enforcing law against paper leak mere **whitewash:**  
Cong chief Kharge

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FM Sitharaman underlines **CENTRE'S**  
support to states

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Shepherding  
**A DYNASTY**

Dil se

## QUOTE OF THE DAY



The Telangana Congress Government has taken a historic step towards fulfilling 'Kisan Nyay' by waiving agricultural loans up to Rs 2 lakh which will free around 40 lakh farmer families from debts. Whatever we said, we did. The Congress government means a guarantee that the treasury will be used for helping deprived sections like farmers and labourers. The decision of the Telangana government is an example of this. We promise that wherever the Congress is in power we will use India's wealth to help 'Indians' and not 'capitalists'.

- Rahul Gandhi, Congress MP

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## DON'T MISS...

### Sweet lemon yield falls...

The sweet lemon yield during the current season has dropped by 1.60 lakh tons because of adverse seasonal conditions. The farmers apparently suffered a loss of investment at least Rs 20,000 per acre. Rising mercury and ground water receding further have impacted the yield during the current season. The loss of yield is put at 80 per cent. Further, the quality of the salvaged crop is not up to the mark. The farmers suffered loss in investment. The loss in investments made by farmers is put...

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### Security measures tightened...

With the Amarnath Yatra set to begin in a week, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said security arrangements have been tightened and facilities improved for the successful conduct of the pilgrimage. Jammu Additional Director General of Police Anand Jain has reviewed security arrangements along the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, emphasising the need for the highest level of alertness to scuttle any attempt by terrorists to disrupt the pilgrimage, officials said on Saturday...

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### 'Will empower 65L youth with...

Magic Bus, a non-profit organisation in the education and skilling space, aims to impart essential life and employability skills in over 65 lakh young people from marginalised communities over the next five years. The NGO operates in 23 states and union territories and operates out of 117 livelihood centres, of which 17 are all-girl centres. It imparts essential life skills and employability skills in young people from underserved communities. "Since 1999, Magic Bus has impacted 30 lakh adolescents, equipping them with life skills to...

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### Chimps found to 'seek out' plants...

Chimpanzees sought out and ate medicinal plants to treat their injuries, according to a study. While wild chimpanzees are known to consume a variety of plant matter, researchers said it can be hard to figure out if they intentionally seek out medicinal plants to heal their ailments, or "passively" consume plants that happen to be medicinal. The study is published in the journal PLoS ONE. At the Budongo Central Forest Reserve in Uganda, the researchers, including those at the University of Oxford, UK, observed the behaviours and health of 51 wild chimpanzees, belonging to two habituated communities. The researchers observed a male chimpanzee with an injured hand seek out and eat the leaves of a fern, which may...

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## Govt mulling health tourism hub in Hyderabad: Revanth

### ● 'Need to work 18 hours a day to compete with CBN'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy says that he has got an opportunity to compete with Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu.

Revanth was speaking at the 24th anniversary of the Basavatarakam Indo-American Cancer Hospital and Research Institute on Saturday.

"A sportsman's talent will be known when there is a strong opponent on the other side. Earlier, I thought that working 12 hours a day would be enough. But Chandrababu works for 18 hours and we cannot afford to relax. Our officers should work for 18 hours a day and both Telugu states should compete in social welfare and development and become role models to others," Revanth said.

In his address, the Chief Minister expressed his delight at the hospital's long-standing service to the public, fulfilling the vision of its founder, NT Rama Rao. "Seeing this hospital, the brainchild of NT Rama Rao, serving crores of people in the last 24 years is heartening," Revanth said.

He highlighted NTR's dedication to establishing the hospital to serve the underprivileged. He also credited former Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for completing the hospital and continuing NTR's

**"A sportsman's talent will be known when there is a strong opponent on the other side. Earlier, I thought that working 12 hours a day would be enough. But Chandrababu works for 18 hours and we cannot afford to relax."**



mission of helping the poor.

"NTR will surely bless us for providing medical care to those in need," Revanth added. "NTR gave us the legacy of politics and social wel-

fare. We are where we are because of the party he established (TDP)," he said.

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### FDI JUMP IN TG

## Both BRS & Congress claim credit

Both the BRS and the Congress are claiming credit for the increased FDI in the state. While the Congress attributes it to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's visit to Davos, the BRS claims that it is due to the investments that it managed to bag during its tenure. The state has doubled its FDI inflows in FY24 to an impressive USD 3 billion, up from USD 1.3 billion in FY23. In a year of decline in FDI, Telangana along with Gujarat and Tamil Nadu was able to buck the trend. Fiscal 2024 was a

dampener for India as far as overall FDI inflows were concerned, but Gujarat, TN and Telangana saw a 55%, 12% and 130% jump in FDI in FY24. "Telangana leads in terms of percentage growth thanks to the investment of Rs 36,300 crore by Amazon Web Services and Microsoft's investment of around Rs 16,000 crore which were all announced in 2022-23 but materialised in FY 23 and FY 24," said BRS MLA KT Rama Rao in his post on X.

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## Min Ponguleti warns officials of dismissal if they exceed their briefs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy warned officials saying that he would remove them directly if they exceeded their brief instead of ordering transfers.

He said that officials should understand why people are filing complaints against them. Officials should understand how much pain the people are experiencing, he said. Ponguleti was speaking while



visiting Nelakondapalli in Palair constituency on Saturday. He said the Congress government is not for

the rich but is for the poor and asked officials to be always available to the people.

The Minister told officials that the Congress government would not entertain officials who did not care about the public. He asked officials to retrieve lands grabbed by others.

The Minister asked ineligible beneficiaries to withdraw on their own whether they have a ration card or any other card.

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## KCR spent Rs 4.50 lakh cr on agriculture: Niranjan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Minister Singireddy Niranjan Reddy criticised the Congress government for its failure to effectively implement agricultural schemes despite significant budget allocations. He said that the KCR admin spent Rs 4.5 lakh crore on agriculture.

He said that the Congress government discussed only crop loan waiver seven months after taking over and this delay should be highlighted.

He said the Congress government led by Revanth Reddy had falsely presented Rs 31,000 crore as substantial aid without actually delivering a single rupee as debt relief to farmers.

Niranjan criticised certain sections for saying that the crop loan waiver was executed merely because it was discussed in the Cabinet. He compared this to naming an unborn child indicating a lack of real action and premature



celebration.

Niranjan demanded that the Congress government should release details regarding the categories and criteria for waiving farm loans. He accused the government of failing in its commitments and deceiving the agricultural community.

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### Harish asks CM to hike candidate ratio for Group 1 main exam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a public letter addressed to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, BRS MLA Harish Rao raised pressing concerns regarding the fulfilment of promises made to the unemployed and candidates appearing for various group exams.

He began by urging the government to adjust the ratio of candidates allowed for Group 1 main examinations.

He suggested increasing it from 1:50 to 1:100 arguing that this would provide more opportunities for rural students and would be in accordance with the practice in other states.

Continued on Page 2

## Now it is BJP & TDP vs Congress in the race to bag BRS MLAs

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana politics is taking interesting turns. Now, it is the Congress versus the BJP and the TDP in Telangana.

While the Congress is conducting its 'Operation Aakarsh' silently, the BJP and the TDP have entered the scene with their own joint 'Operation Aakarsh'.

It is a known fact that these three parties are targeting the BRS. The Congress is trying to bring BRS MLAs into its fold and is dealing with BRS MLAs individually. Some BRS MLAs are also showing interest in joining the Congress on their own.

Some top Congress leaders are also meeting BRS MLAs to make



them join their party. The Congress strategy is to ask BRS MLAs to merge their party with the Congress after reaching the required figure.

Meanwhile, the BJP has also started its 'Operation Aakarsh' with TDP help. Telangana BJP leaders do not have close ties with BRS MLAs. However, TDP leaders have close links with some BRS MLAs as they were earlier colleagues in the TDP.

The BJP is trying to occupy the second slot in Telangana politics and the TDP is trying to revive itself in Telangana. But the TDP is almost zero now in Telangana. Even though

some BRS MLAs have a soft corner for the TDP they are not ready to join it as they are apprehensive of their future.

The joint operation of the BJP and the TDP is intended to prevent BRS MLAs from joining the Congress and to make them join the BJP or the TDP.

TDP leaders will try to convince BRS MLAs to join the BJP if they have no confidence in the Telangana TDP.

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### 'BRS MLA Kamalakar will join Cong soon'

P2

## Govt may announce 1:100 ratio for Group 1 posts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government is likely to announce the 1:100 selection criteria for Group 1 exams.

Candidates have been knocking on the doors of opposition parties and staging dharnas. Highly placed sources said the government is closely watching developments and is likely to announce the ratio of 1:100 candidates for Group 1 shortly. The Telangana Public Service Commission (TGSPC) issued

Notification No: 02/2024 on February 19 for direct recruitment to 563 posts in Group 1 services.

The preliminary test was conducted on June 9 in 897 centres across 31 TG districts. A total of 3,02,172 candidates appeared for the examination.

The attendance percentage was 74.86% across the state with Wanaparthy witnessing the highest 82.74%.

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## TG govt must probe BRS regime's misdeeds in SCCL: Kishan



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that the BRS government had destroyed the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) by looting it, Union Coal and Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy said the TG government should order a probe into its misdeeds in the SCCL.

He said the BRS government had damaged SCCL financially through its flawed decisions.

"The KCR admin, BRS MLAs and ministers freely looted SCCL and destroyed it. The Congress is just a party of words and its government is not an admin which gets things done."

Continued on Page 2

### Congress government sanctions Rs 20 crore for Bonalu this year

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## OBTUSE ANGLE





# Age matters even in Congress

In good old days, whenever veteran leaders switched parties, it was deemed as a shot in the arm for the party receiving them into its fold. Nowadays, senior turncoats switching to TPCC, driven by young and energetic Revanth Reddy, are detected in some circles for seeking rehabilitation and thus blighting the chances of younger elements waiting in the wings. So, whenever a senior leader joins the party, a video clip of Revanth Reddy's exasperated pre-poll comment "Why did Ponnala Lakshmaiah join BRS just before death?" surfaces in party quarters that do not entertain aged netas. For, these young TPCC leaders are anxious that their own chances would be reduced by the nepo kids who tag along with the veterans and bask in reflected glory. So, all eyes are on how Revanth will handle discontent brewing in these jittery quarters of the party.

## Is Harish Rao's team poking Congress?

Harish Rao's team is giving Telangana Congress a run for their money. Now the talk in Congress circles annoyed by charges of 'power cut is back in TG' is that Harish Rao's team is orchestrating efforts to defame the government. In fact, at one point of time Chief Minister Revanth Reddy too blamed Harish Rao for raising the bogey of power cuts. Whatever be the truth, Team Harish Rao not only takes up a 'powerful' new issue every day, but also responds to every small criticism against him. The state government has learned to take the power-packed matters he raises seriously.

## Are pressers meant only to feed social media?

Reporters' loaded queries often yield

revealing responses from politicians. However, with social media platforms mirroring pressers with just tell-tale clips, it has become trendy for netas to avoid taking questions. Instead, politicians talk whatever they want; knowing what would surely be featured on SM platforms. This is particularly true in the case of leaders of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi. Almost all the scribes who had turned up at the recent press conference of BRS working president KT Rama Rao were angry that he did not take questions. For, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka had held a press meet just before KTR and made serious accusations related to BRS. Since it was KTR's first presser after BRS' washout in the Lok

suggestions like a sincere student on the first day of her class in college. While accepting reporters' tips that she should take up activities and speak with media persons frequently, she offered to speed up her activities with "the support of the media". After she left the room, one of the reporters sighed, saying: "Political leaders take suggestions and heed advice in the beginning, but as the days roll by, the same leaders will develop a haughty attitude and not even glance at reporters".

## Change in approach or strategy?

Some of the actions of Chandrababu Naidu, upon returning to power as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, have raised eyebrows. Curiously, he told party leaders that they would henceforth see a 'changed Chandrababu'

with the administrative apparatus transformed. Accordingly, he directed officials to distribute books to students though he knew they carried the picture of former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Heeding the requests of YSR Congress MLAs, Chandrababu has allowed certain relaxations for YS Jagan in the Assembly. Noticeably, Chandrababu said that there won't be 'revenge politics', but clarified that he would not spare those who had indulged in misdeeds. So, people are wondering: Has Chandrababu changed his attitude or is it part of an unfolding strategy? Others say, it is the proverbial calm before the storm. They say: "In the coming days, YS Jagan will see the 'real' Chandrababu."

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

# REPORTERS' DIARY

Sabha polls, newshounds expected him to at least address those charges. Ever otherwise, ever since BRS lost power in TG, seasoned journalists too have found it difficult to get viewpoints from BRS' brass. "If this trend continues, then hardly anyone will show up," remarked a senior reporter working for a TV channel.

## Beginner's pins and needles

Bharatiya Janata Party Telangana unit Mahila Morcha's new president Dr Mekala Shilpa Reddy was on pins and needles briefly upon taking over and sought feedback from journalists the other day. She suddenly entered the media enclosure in the State BJP office and made enquiries about her dharna earlier that day. She also wanted to know the outcome of her first press conference conducted in the evening the same day, realizing she had felt nervous. She listened to reporters'

## KTR terms defections as Congress hypocrisy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A day after BRS MLA Pocharam Srinivas Reddy joined the Congress, BRS Working President KT Rama Rao described it as "Congress hypocrisy at its peak."

"If it happens with the Congress they cry a river and play victim. If the Congress does the same in Telangana they celebrate it as a triumph. The Congress's awkward double jeopardy and hypocrisy is at its peak. What do you say Rahul Gandhi Ji?," KTR said.

In Haryana, the Congress tried to get its MLA Kiran Chaudhary disqualified for defecting and joining the BJP, KTR pointed out.

"Hypocrisy, thy name is Congress. Rahul Gandhi wants automatic disqualification of defectors.

## Rajanarsimha urges steps to enforce food safety norms

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Health Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha presided over a crucial meeting at the Arogyashree Health Care Trust office in Hyderabad and emphasised the urgent filling of all vacant posts in key departments.

The meeting focused on strengthening the state's medical infrastructure, ensuring food safety and enhancing preventive healthcare under the FSSAI Act.

Rajanarsimha highlighted the government's commitment to rigorous monitoring of food safety standards and hailed the state's efforts to ensure high-quality food.

During the meeting, Rajanarsimha directed officials to intensify surveillance

of food safety standards in hostels and canteens of educational institutions and hospitals.

He called for strict compliance with FSSAI licenses and expanded the deployment of mobile food testing labs to conduct inspections.

The Minister underscored the importance of promptly filling posts in critical areas like the food safety lab and administrative positions in the healthcare sector. He also stressed the need to reinforce blood bank facilities across the state. Rajanarsimha urged the Telangana Medical Infrastructure Development Corporation to speed up its programmes and asked the Drug Control Administration to tackle seasonal diseases effectively.

## TG govt must...

Continued from page 1

If the Congress government is sincere, it should order a thorough investigation into the looting and the manipulation of bills in SCCL. We will write a letter to the state government on behalf of the Centre seeking an inquiry into the robbery that took place in SCCL during BRS rule. But BRS leaders have now launched a campaign of lies against the BJP alleging that the Centre is privatising SCCL," Kishan said. He said that in accordance with the Supreme Court's verdict, the Centre is auctioning coal mines transparently. So far 107 coal mines have been auctioned in nine rounds. As a result, state governments will get about Rs 37,000 crore in revenue. States get 14 per cent of the revenue from the auction of coal mines.

# 'BRS MLA Kamalakar will join Cong soon'

## Kavvampally says cabinet expansion on July 2

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Karimnagar BRS MLA, Gangula Kamalakar, will join the Congress soon, the Manakondur Congress MLA, Kavvampally Sathyanarayana, said here on Saturday.

Kavvampally said the Cabinet would be expanded on July 2 and that Makthal MLA Vakiti Srihari will get a minister post.

He was speaking during a chit-chat with journalists on the Assembly's premises.

Earlier, speaking to the media at the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) office along with Vakiti Srihari, Kavvampally said that BRS MLA Harish Rao should get



his resignation letter ready as the Congress government is going to implement its farm loan waiver scheme by August 15.

He asked Harish not to act like in an earlier incident when he poured kerosene and searched for a matchbox.

Kavvampally said the Congress is waiving the loans of farmers even though the

state had a debt of Rs 7 lakh crore. However, the BJP is waiving only the loans of the mega-rich.

He said that Rythu Bharosa funds would be given to only real farmers and that loans would be waived only if farmers had taken them for cultivation.

Vakiti Srihari said the Congress government is going to waive the loans of farmers by August 15 as promised by Rahul Gandhi. He said the BRS government was in power for 10 years but had failed to implement the farm loan waiver scheme.

He said former Congress governments had waived the loans of farmers at one go.

## Kejriwal has lost 8 kg weight since his arrest: AAP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is lodged in Tihar Jail, has lost eight kilograms of weight since his arrest on March 21, the AAP said on Saturday, while adding that a medical board of the AIIMS has recommended including "paratha and puri" in his diet.

The Delhi High Court on Friday put an interim stay on the bail granted to Kejriwal by a trial court in a money-laundering case linked to the now-scrapped excise policy of his government. The high court is likely to pronounce its reserved verdict on the trial court's bail granted to Kejriwal next week.

## PM Modi holds extensive talks with Bangladesh counterpart Hasina

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday held extensive talks with his visiting Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina to further shore up cooperation in diverse areas including trade and connectivity.

The Bangladesh prime minister began her two-day visit to India on Friday. It is the first incoming bilateral state visit by a foreign leader after the formation of the new government in India following the Lok Sabha elections.

"PM @narendramodi extended a warm welcome to PM Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh at Hyderabad House ahead of their bilateral discussions," external affairs ministry spokesperson



Randhir Jaiswal said on X.

"The two leaders have met each other ten times since 2019, making unprecedented transformations in the relationship," he added.

In the morning, Hasina visited Rajghat and paid rich tributes to Mahatma Gandhi. Ahead of the talks, the visiting leader was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Officials said the focus of the Modi-Hasina talks would be to

## Kharge hails farm loan waiver, says it freed 40 lakh families

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

AICC President Mallikarjuna Kharge said the Congress government of Telangana has taken a historic decision to free the 40 lakh farmer families of Telangana from debts.

In a post on his X account, Kharge said,

"The Congress government has taken a historic decision to free around 40 lakh farmer families of Telangana from debts. Sixteen years ago, the Congress-UPA government waived farm loans and interests amounting to Rs 72,000 crore owed by 3.73 crore farmers.

After that, we waived the loans of farmers in many Congress-ruled states. The Modi government imposed three 'black' laws on farmers, harassed them with barbed wires, tear-gassed them using drones, fired rubber bullets and lathi-charged them.

# Harish asks CM to hike candidate...

Continued from page 1

This adjustment, according to Harish, is crucial as it would help more candidates from Telangana's rural areas to achieve their dream of securing Group 1 jobs which are akin to state-level civil services exams.

Harish emphasized the need to fulfil the election promise of adding 2,000 posts to Group 2 and 3,000 posts to Group 3 services. He pointed out that these commitments were a significant factor in gaining the

votes of the public.

The failure to honour these promises has led to widespread disappointment among job hopefuls who are now struggling. Highlighting the stress caused by closely scheduled exams, Harish requested a more spread-out timetable to allow candidates adequate preparation time.

He noted that the current schedule, with very little time between exams, has been causing severe stress to candidates. Harish referred to a tragic incident in which a

candidate unable to handle the pressure committed suicide.

He called for a revision of the exam schedule to prevent such unfortunate incidents and to ensure that candidates can prepare effectively.

Harish also called for the immediate announcement of a job calendar, detailing the schedule for filling the promised 2,00,000 jobs in the government's very first year in office.

He reminded the Chief Minister that this promise

was a cornerstone of the Congress election campaign and that the public is eagerly awaiting its fulfilment. Despite six months in power, no significant steps have been taken towards this goal, leading to frustration among the unemployed, he said.

In addition to the job calendar, Harish criticized the reduction in the number of teacher posts. He demanded adherence to the Congress manifesto promise of a mega DSC notification to fill up all vacant teaching posts.

## Govt may...

Continued from page 1

As the Group 1 notification was issued after a decade, candidates wanted the government to provide them with a fair chance in the recruitment to the Group I posts.

It may be mentioned here that for recruiting constables and sub-inspectors, the Telangana State Level Police Recruitment Board had effectively revised cut-off marks for the preliminary exams in response to candidates' appeals citing the extended gap after the release of the recruitment notification.

## Panel set up to...

Continued from page 1

"Students' interests and their bright future will always be our government's top priority," he added. The ministry's notification comes two days after Pradhan announced the setting up of the committee.

The panel will make recommendations on reforms in the mechanism of the examination process, improvement in data security protocols and the structure and functioning of the NTA.

It is supposed to submit its report within two months.

The panel also includes former AIIMS Delhi director Randeep Guleria, Central University of Hyderabad Vice-Chancellor B J Rao, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Civil

Engineering at IIT Madras K Ramamurthy, People Strong co-founder and Karmayogi Bharat board member Pankaj Bansal, IIT Delhi Dean of Student Affairs Aditya Mittal and Ministry of Education Joint Secretary Govind Jaiswal.

"The panel will analyse the end-to-end examination process and suggest measures to improve efficiency of the system and to forestall any possible breach. It will conduct a thorough review of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and protocols of the NTA, and suggest measures to strengthen these procedures and protocols along with monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance at every level," the Ministry of Education said in a statement.

# KCR spent Rs 4.50 lakh cr on...

Continued from page 1

"Two crop seasons have passed after the Congress came to power and they have failed to honour their promises. Farmers were promised financial support for three crops, but even the previously promised Rs 10,000 per acre under Rythu Bandhu has not been delivered," he said. Niranjan said the Congress government is trying to undermine the Rythu Bandhu scheme launched by KCR which credited Rs 72,815 crore to 68.99 lakh farmers' bank accounts in 11 instalments covering 152 lakh acres. He pointed out that the Rythu Bharosa scheme is not properly implemented and criticised the government for setting July 15 as the deadline for a ministerial sub-committee to review

the scheme. By then, he said the planting season would be over, rendering the support meaningless.

He argued that data needed to identify beneficiaries for the Rythu Bharosa scheme is already available with the state government and dismissed the sub-committee move as a delaying tactic. He said that determining eligible beneficiaries nowadays is a straightforward task and accused the government of plotting to limit the benefits to a few individuals. He blasted the Congress government for making baseless claims about the misuse of Rythu Bandhu funds and reminded them of the substantial investments made in the agricultural sector during KCR's rule which he claimed strengthened the rural

economy. Niranjan also demanded that the government should stick to its promise to support all farmers irrespective of landholdings and criticised them for neglecting the plight of those with over 25 acres although few. He highlighted the efforts of the BRS administration which had supported farmers through initiatives like free electricity, crop purchases, subsidies on seeds and fertilizers and the construction of new irrigation projects. Niranjan, along with former BRS ministers Errabelli Dayakar Rao, Metuku Anand, Srinivas Reddy and BRS leader Palla Sundar Ram Reddy declared their solidarity with farmers and vowed to fight the Congress government's policies which they said are reminiscent of its past failures.

## Now it is BJP...

Continued from page 1

They will brainwash BRS MLAs by pointing out that the BRS is weakening by the day and that they have no future in that party.

The BJP is gaining ground in Telangana and by the time of the next Assembly elections it may challenge the Congress. Some BRS MLAs who are in business are looking at the BJP to avoid raids by Central investigation agencies like the ED, the CBI and the IT Department.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) recently raided firms belonging to BRS MLA G. Mahipal Reddy. Political observers think that the BJP is trying to frighten BRS MLAs running businesses through such raids.

## Min Ponguleti warns officials...

Continued from page 1

Revanth: Should work 18 hours to compete with CBN

He said the government would hand over constructed houses to the poor within three years and made it clear that the government would give new ration cards and pay pensions.

Ponguleti said the government is going to implement the farm loan waiver scheme with Rs 31,000 crore and added that the opposition was shocked by the government's announcement on waiving farm loans.

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# Congress government sanctions Rs 20 crore for Bonalu this year

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Forest, Environment and Endowments Konda Surekha has said that the Ashada Bonalu festivals, which reflect Telangana's culture and traditions, will proceed as planned. She announced that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has approved Rs 20 crore for organising this year's Bonalu festivities. She highlighted that preparations for the grand celebration of Bonalu are already underway, with the State Festival Committee under the guidance of the Chief Minister overseeing the arrangements.

On Saturday, Minister Surekha conducted a comprehensive review at her office with the Commissioner of the Department of Endowments, focusing on the festival's logistics, budget allocations, and related matters. She further detailed that the sanctioned Rs 20 crore will cover expenses such as temple decorations,



Minister for Endowments Konda Surekha holding a review meeting with officials in Hyderabad on Saturday

procurement of garments, printing of informational materials, ambulance services, and cultural and media-related public relations expenses.

She emphasised that Revanth Reddy will lead the State Festival Committee in ensuring the smooth conduct of the Ashada

Bonalu festival. She underscored the committee's role in addressing any issues that may arise during the festival, including the selection process for festival committees in major temples, which is slated for completion within the next few days.

Surekha reaffirmed the gov-

ernment's commitment to showcasing the cultural richness of Telangana through the Bonalu festivals. She directed officials to prepare contingency plans to cater to the needs of children and the elderly, and to organise promotional activities such as

**On Saturday, Minister Surekha conducted a comprehensive review at her office with the Commissioner of the Department of Endowments, focusing on the festival's logistics, budget allocations, and related matters.**

hoardings and live broadcasts on DD Yadagiri to publicize the Bonalu festivals.

The Minister clarified that the Telangana Congress government is actively coordinating the central organization of this year's Ashada Bonalu festivals.



A crowd gathered to resist eviction from encroached land at Miyapur on Saturday

## ANTI- ENCROACHMENT DRIVE

### Squatters pelt stone at police

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**  
A group of people pelted stones on police and HMDA officials during an anti-encroachment drive in Miyapur area here on Saturday, police said. One site official of Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) sustained injuries in the stone pelting, they said.

According to a senior police official, scores of people had assembled on the land demanding that the government allot it to them and had even erected some temporary structures including huts on it. The land was allotted to the HMDA by the government, but some people tried to encroach on it after which officials along

with police went there to get the land vacated, the police official said. Those encroaching were told it was government land and were told to vacate it, but some among them pelted stones on the police and HMDA officials resulting in injury to one official, he said. The police subsequently dispersed the people from the land.

## Ex- DGP Anjani Kumar showcases shooting skills

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Director General of Police and current Chairman of Road Safety Authority, Anjani Kumar, actively showcased his skills in the 25M Std. Pistol event at the Telangana State Shooting Competitions, which began on Saturday at the SATS Shooting Range in Gachibowli. Over 200 competitors across various disciplines responded to the event.

The competitions were inaugurated by Amit Sanghi, President of the Telangana Rifle Association, events like 10M Rifle/Open Sight Rifle, 25M Pistol, 50M Pistol, and 10M Pistol, showcasing exceptional shooting skills were



conducted.

Amit Sanghi said, the atmosphere was filled with anticipation and excitement as skilled marksmen gathered to demonstrate their precision. Anjani Kumar's participation encouraged young shooters

and added to the event's spirit, he added.

Amit Sanghi also said, "It is heartening to see the enthusiastic participation of our shooters in the Telangana State Shooting Competitions. Their dedication and passion for the sport are commendable."

The team announced that, competition results are being arranged and verified by event officials and will be announced later, offering expertise into each participant's performance and standings.

The Telangana State Shooting Competitions are a significant event in the shooting sports calendar, creating the sport's growth and development in the state.



Minister for Health Damodar Raja Narasimha inaugurating AI-driven dental care hospital in Hyderabad on Saturday

## AI-driven dental care hospital opened in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Health Damodar Raja Narasimha on Saturday inaugurated Dr Gowds Dental Hospital, a renowned name in dental care for over 55 years at Puppulaguda here on Saturday.

This sixth addition to the Dr. Gowds chain, known for its innovative approach since 1967, brings cutting-edge AI technology to enhance patient care and treatment precision.

The new hospital joins existing locations in Koti, Secunderabad, Banjara Hills,

Madhapur, and Gachibowli, continuing the legacy of pioneering dental advancements, from cosmetic dentistry to dental lasers, implants, and clear aligners.

Dr MS Gowd, along with Dr Snigdha Gowd and Dr Shankar, emphasises their commitment to delivering global standard dental care.

Driven by the growing demand for high-quality dental care, Dr. Gowds Dental Hospital has opened its new state-of-the-art clinic in Puppulaguda.

## Police fire in air after gang tries to attack them

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Police opened fire in the air after a four-member gang tried to attack them here, police said on Saturday.

The incident happened under Chilkalguda police station on the intervening night of Friday and Saturday when the gang tried to snatch a mobile phone from one of the personnel involved in the decoy operation.

According to a senior police official, four persons came on two motorcycles and attempted to snatch a mobile phone from one of the police personnel. The gang also tried to attack the police.

"One of the constables in self-defense had to open fire one round in the air, after which the four-member gang surrendered. They were taken into custody and were being questioned," the official said.

## Woman attacked by stray dogs in Manikonda

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A woman was attacked by a pack of dogs at Manikonda on Saturday. The incident happened at Chitrapuri Hills area when the woman was on a morning walk. She was attacked by 15 dogs. She, however, managed to tackle them. During the incident, the woman fell to the ground and managed to get up in time to fend off the canines using a slipper.

The incident raised con-

cerns over the safety of residents in the area. The incident was caught on CCTV cameras; the woman's husband took to social media and expressed dismay over the incident. He also suggested that dogs be fed outside the gate of the community. "She was lucky to survive," he remarked in his video, raising a poignant question about the safety of children in the area. "What if small children face similar attacks from these stray dogs?," the man questioned.

## Two held for robbery bid at jewellery store in Hyderabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Two persons were arrested in connection with the robbery attempt and attack on the owner of a jewellery store here on June 20, police said.

The prime accused had returned from the US and was staying here. He resorted to such crimes and was previously arrested, they said.

The two accused—one of them wearing a burqa and another a helmet had entered the store in Medchal area and threatened to kill the owner. They even stabbed him while trying to loot the shop. However, both the accused were forced to flee after the owner raised an alarm.

Police formed 16 teams and verified 161 CCTV footages in the locality. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Medchal Zone) N Koti Reddy said.

The two accused, aged 36 and 23, were arrested at Nampally here on Saturday, a release from Cyberabad Police Commissionerate said.

## "Masons Against Drug Abuse" Walkathon today

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**  
Freemasons of Telangana are organising a Walkathon—"Masons Against Drug Abuse" in the city on Sunday. The half-kilometer walk will begin from GPO, Abids to Mozamjahi Market, aiming to highlight brotherhood among society members and promote societal values. Freemasonry is a global organization present in many

countries. In India, it has a history of 294 years, and globally it is 307 years old. According to Freemasons, nearly 100 members, along with their spouses and family members, will participate. The run will be flagged off by Assistant Regional Grand Masters Anil Desai, P. Veerabhadru, Manchala Ramesh, Dr. Srirang Abkari, and P. Raj Narsing Rao. Freemasons will carry placards

with messages to raise awareness against drug abuse. The walk is organized on the eve of Universal Brotherhood Day (UBD), observed globally by Freemasons on 24th June each year. UBD commemorates the formation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717, marking 306 years of Freemasonry in its current form. It serves to promote the fundamental principles of Freemasonry.



CBN Forum's founder Xenex Amar speaking after inaugurating Anna Canteen in Hyderabad on Saturday evening.

## Anna canteen launched in the City

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Chandrababu Naidu (CBN) Forum's founder and general secretary, Xenex Amar, established Anna Canteen at the 100 Feet X Roads in Madhapur and inaugurated it along with Forum members, Fans and celebrities on Saturday. The canteen will begin operations from the first week of July, announced Xenex Amar.

During the event, Xenex Amar addressed a meeting and congratulated the newly formed NDA government in Andhra Pradesh. He mentioned that the canteens, first established during the Telugu Desam Party's government, had successfully fed the poor and gained support from the people of the state.

He also criticised the previous YCP government for shutting down the rice canteens, which were named after the Telugu Desam Party, causing dissatisfaction among the poor. Inspired by Chandrababu, he expressed his goal to ensure that no one goes hungry, even in Telangana where he was born.

**During the event, Xenex Amar addressed a meeting and congratulated the newly formed NDA government in Andhra Pradesh. He mentioned that the canteens, first established during the Telugu Desam Party's government, had successfully fed the poor and gained support from the people of the state.**

Xenex Amar clarified that despite the illegal arrest of Telugu Desam leader Chandrababu by the YSRCP government last November, the CBN Forum continued with many service programs. He announced that the forum has expanded its services beyond Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, and will work diligently under the auspices of the forum to fulfill the ambitions of the Telugu Desam Party, NTR, and Chandrababu.

## Bharat Gaurav train commences journey from Secunderabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Divya Dakshin Yatra with Jyotirlinga" 20th Bharat Gaurav "Punya Kshetra Yatra" Train Commences Journey from Secunderabad on Saturday. The Bharat Gaurav Trains from South Central Railway continue to see a huge response from rail users. Started as a Tourist Circuit Train, it provides a unique opportunity for passengers from the two Telugu states. The train began its journey with 592 passengers from Secunderabad Railway Station, covering important tourist spots in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

The South Central Railway, Principal Chief Commercial Manager, Ravindranath along with

his wife, senior citizens on the train, launched the 20th Bharat Gaurav Train from Secunderabad Railway Station. The nine-day Divya Dakshin Yatra with Jyotirlinga offers passengers from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh had a chance to visit significant sites like Tiruvannamalai (Arunachalam), Rameswaram, Madurai, Kanyakumari, Trivandrum, Trichy, and Thanjavur.

According to SCR, the train allows boarding and de-boarding at Secunderabad, Kazipet, Warangal, and Khammam stations in Telangana, and at Vijayawada, Tenali, Ongole, Nellore, Gudur, and Renigunta stations in Andhra Pradesh.

Passengers from various stations have shown interest in the

Bharat Gaurav Train services. The train caters to both AC and Non-AC passengers with a mixed composition of 2 AC (1 coach), 3 AC (3 coaches), and Sleeper (7 coaches).

The General Manager of SCR, Arun Kumar Jain expressed his happiness at the positive response. He mentioned that the Bharat Gaurav trains will boost spiritual tourism in the country, offering pilgrims a hassle-free way to visit culturally significant and historical places. Upcoming Tours Announced by IRCTC are Ayodhya-Kashi: Punya Kshetra Yatra, with a duration of 8 Nights/9 Days, starting from July 9, 2024, to July 17, 2024. Itinerary as Secunderabad

- Gaya - Varanasi - Ayodhya - Prayagraj - Secunderabad. Boarding/De-boarding Stations are Secunderabad, Kazipet, Khammam, Vijayawada, Eluru, Rajahmundry, Samalkot, Pendurti, Vijayanagaram, Titlagarh The second tour is Dev Bhoomi Uttarakhand Yatra by Bharat Gaurav Manaskhand Express With a duration of 10 Nights/11 Days, starting from July 26, 2024, to August 5, 2024. Itinerary as Kathgodam - Bhimtal (2 Nights) - Almora (2 Nights) - Kausani (2 Nights) - Ranikhet - Kathgodam. Boarding/De-boarding Stations as Visakhapatnam, Rajahmundry, Vijayawada, Warangal, Nagpur, Itarsi and Bhopal.



South Central Railway Principal Chief Commercial Manager Ravindranath inaugurating the Divya Dakshin Yatra in Secunderabad on Saturday.







# Govt, opposition face-off on protem Speaker issue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha, the NDA government and the INDIA bloc sparred on the issue of Pro-tem Speaker with Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju accusing the Congress of resorting to lies and the opposition threatening to refuse to join the panel of chairpersons in the House.

President Droupadi Murmu had appointed BJP leader and seven-term member Bhartruhari Mahtab as the Pro-tem Speaker of the Lok Sabha, who is tasked with administering the oath and affirmation to the newly-elected members of the lower house and preside over the election of the Speaker.

The President had also named five senior members - "K Suresh (Congress), T R Baalu (DMK), Radha Mohan Singh and Faggan Singh Kulaste (both BJP) and Sudip Bandyopadhyay (TMC) to assist Mahtab in the process that will take place over the first three days of the Lok Sabha Session commencing on June 24.

The Congress had alleged that the government has violated procedures and conven-



tions and ignored the right of eight-term member Suresh to the post of the pro-tem Speaker, a claim dismissed as "misleading" by Rijiju.

On Saturday, opposition sources said Suresh, Baalu and Bandyopadhyay may not join the panel of chairpersons to assist pro-tem Speaker Mahtab in administering the oath to the newly elected members of the Lok Sabha.

Rijiju had asserted that Mahtab was the senior-most in the House as he was elected for seven uninterrupted terms to the Lok Sabha, while Suresh, though a eight-term member, was not a member in 1998 and 2004.

Suresh had said his claim to the post of pro-tem speaker

was overlooked as he belonged to the Dalit community, remarks that were scoffed at by Rijiju.

BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawala said the Congress had deliberately insulted a "tribal" Parliamentary Affairs Minister by lying on the issue of pro-tem speaker.

"Congress has always insulted Tribals. They called Droupadi Murmu ji Rashtrapati and they even abused her", Poonawala said.

Rijiju said he may be the first tribal to occupy the post of Parliamentary Affairs Minister but he won't be intimidated by the threats and lies of Congress party.

"I will be bound by rules and will strictly follow Prime

Minister Narendra Modi ji's mantra of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas," he said.

Earlier, Congress leader K C Venugopal had described the overlooking of Suresh's claim to the Pro-tem Speaker post as an attempt at "destroying parliamentary norms".

"I have said this before and say this now, the battle for saving our democracy and constitution isn't over yet," Shiv Sena leader Aditya Thackeray said in a post on X.

CPI general secretary D Raja said even after a serious reprimand by the people by cutting the BJP in size, they have not understood the seminal importance of democracy, consultation, parliamentary norms and opposition for the country.

"However, the totalitarian BJP cannot see an opposition member even as Speaker pro tem and thus appointed a turncoat BJP MP to the post," Raja said.

Mahtab, a BJP member from Cuttack, Odisha was appointed as pro tem Speaker by President Murmu under Article 95(1) of the Constitution to perform the duties of the Lok Sabha presiding officer till the election of the Speaker on June 26.

## GOVT RULES OUT CBI PROBE

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The Kallakurichi hooch tragedy, which has claimed 53 lives so far, echoed for the second consecutive day in the Tamil Nadu Assembly on Saturday with the main opposition party AIADMK staging a walkout over the matter.

The ruling DMK hit out at the AIADMK for attempting to do politics over the painful issue and dismissed the plea for CBI inquiry saying the government is transparent.

"The government is transparent, we have not hidden



anything, CBI inquiry is not needed," Law Minister S Regupathy said.

The AIADMK legislators, led by leader of opposition Edappadi K Palaniswami, sought adjournment of the question hour as soon as the

House convened and demanded that they be permitted to raise the Kallakurichi issue.

Speaker M Appavu said question hour cannot be adjourned and told them that they will be given the time they

wanted during zero hour to raise the matter. However, the AIADMK members persisted on their demand and later staged a walkout.

Speaking to reporters outside the House, Palaniswami said his party was denied permission to raise the Kallakurichi issue for the second consecutive day.

"We have information that out of the 183 treated persons 55 were dead; everyday the death toll is rising," he claimed and said several lives could have been saved had the government acted swiftly.

## Delhi's maximum temperature settles at 39.4°C

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's maximum temperature on Saturday was recorded a notch above normal at 39.4 degrees Celsius, the India Meteorological Department said.

The minimum temperature had settled 0.6 notches above the season's average at 28.6 degrees Celsius, it added.

On Friday, rain drenched several parts of Delhi, bringing relief from the intense heat wave that had been sweeping the city.

## Enforcing law against paper leak mere whitewash: Cong chief Kharge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday termed the enforcement of the anti-paper leak law a "whitewash" and asserted that the BJP cannot evade its responsibility in "promoting corruption and education mafia".

The Centre on Friday night operationalised the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, which aims to curb malpractices and irregularities in



competitive examinations and entails provisions for a maximum jail term of 10 years and a fine of up to Rs 1 crore for offenders.

In a post in Hindi on 'X',

the Congress president claimed that 70 question papers were leaked in the last seven years and sought to know why the BJP has taken no action so far.

"No matter how much effort BJP makes in the NEET scam, it cannot escape its responsibility in promoting fraud, corruption and education mafia," Kharge said. He said the law against paper leaks got the President's assent on February 13 this year but was notified only on Friday night.

## UAPA tribunal confirms ban on Tehreek-e-Hurriyat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A tribunal set up under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) on Saturday confirmed the Centre's decision to impose a five-year ban on the Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction) and Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, Jammu and Kashmir.

The one-member tribunal of Delhi High Court judge Sachin Datta was constituted under the stringent anti-terror law in January to assess whether there was "sufficient cause" behind the imposition of the ban.

Upholding the ban, the tribunal held the two organisations were carrying out secessionist activities in the valley with help from across the border to realise the merger of Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan and establish Islamic rule in the Union Territory. The tribunal also upheld the Centre's contention that the organisations were acting on behalf of Pakistan-based terrorist organisations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Hizbul Mujahideen, and were giving constant on ground support for carrying out militant operations in the valley.

## RENUKASWAMY MURDER CASE

### Court remands actor Darshan in judicial custody till July 4

PNS ■ BENGALURU

A court here on Saturday remanded Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa to judicial custody in the Renukaswamy murder case till July 4.

His four alleged accomplices too were sent to judicial custody. The actor was in the police custody since June 11.

The Special Public Prosecutor prayed the court for a direction to lodge the accused persons separately and in different jails across

Karnataka, which was opposed by Darshan's lawyers. Darshan and his aides were taken to the central prison at Parappana Agrahara in Bengaluru.

A huge number of his fans gathered at the court and raised slogans in favour of Darshan. The actor too waved at them from the caged police van.

Thirteen other accused, including the actor's friend Pavithra Gowda, were remanded to 14 days' judicial custody two days ago.



## Quota row: Maharashtra CM vows to prevent caste tensions

PNS ■ NASHIK

The Maharashtra government will ensure that caste tension doesn't erupt in society, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said on Saturday against the backdrop of Marathas and OBCs firming up their stands on reservations.

Shinde thanked OBC activist Laxman Hake and others for withdrawing their indefinite fast following the government intervention.

"We will ensure there is no caste tension in the society," Shinde told reporters in Nashik.

Activists Hake and Navnath



Waghmare were observing fast since June 13 demanding that the OBC quota not be diluted. They called off their agitation on Saturday after a government delegation called on them. Shinde, who chaired a meeting of OBC leaders in Mumbai on Friday, said an all-party meeting will be convened in the first week of the monsoon session beginning June

27. "A good discussion was held on the issue yesterday," he added.

The government has decided to convene the meeting to discuss the issue of extending reservations to "sage-soyare" or the kin of Marathas who possess the Kunbi caste certificate, state minister Chhagan Bhujbal had said.

In January, the state government came out with a draft notification to grant Kunbi status to the 'sage-soyare' (relatives by birth or marriage) of Marathas who have already established that they belong to the agrarian Kunbi community, an OBC group.

## Special programme to fast-track immigration services

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday launched a special programme under which the immigration process for pre-verified Indian nationals and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders will be fast-tracked.

The Fast Track Immigration- Trusted Traveller Programme (FTI-TTP) is a "visionary initiative"

of the government, thoughtfully designed for Indian nationals and OCI cardholders, Shah said.

The FTI-TTP is similar to the Global Entry Program offered by the United States that allows expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travellers upon arrival at select US airports, officials said.

The home minister said the initiative will provide

more facilities for the Indian nationals and OCI passengers coming from other countries.

The launch of the programme is one of the key agendas set for "Viksit Bharat by 2047" and reflects the Narendra Modi government's commitment to enhance travel convenience and efficiency for everyone, he added.

Shah said the facility will be available free of cost for all passengers.

The FTI-TTP will be launched at 21 major airports in the country.

In the first phase, along with the Delhi airport, it will be launched at seven major airports -- Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kochi and Ahmedabad.

It is designed for faster, smoother and safer immigration clearance for international travellers.



## Fresh plea in SC seeks CBI, ED enquiry into NEET-UG exam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A fresh plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking directions to the CBI and ED to investigate alleged irregularities in the medical entrance exam NEET-UG held on May 5.

The petition, filed by 10 students who had appeared for the exam, has also sought a direction to Bihar Police to expedite the investigation in the case and file a report before the apex court.

"The petitioners are fully aware of the ramifications of the cancellation of the examination but there is absolutely no other alternative." The NEET UG Examination of 2024 had many other irregularities, in particular, the gross negligence on the part of the authorities to make the question papers available to the candidates on time.

In some places, the wrong set of question papers was distributed and later recalled," the plea said.

## ‘Defer implementation of new criminal laws’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Saturday demanded that the enforcement of the three criminal laws, which are to come into force from July 1, be deferred, saying the Bills were "bulldozed" through Parliament.

In a post on X, Ramesh said the implementation of the Bills be deferred to enable a thorough review and re-examination by a reconstituted Standing Committee on Home Affairs as they were passed at a time when 146 MPs had been



suspended.

"On Dec 25 2023, the President of India had given her assent to the Bharatiya

Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, 2023. The three far-reaching Bills had been bulldozed through Parliament without proper debate and discussion, and at a time when 146 MPs had been suspended from the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha," Ramesh said.

"Earlier the Bills had been bulldozed through the Standing Committee on Home Affairs without detailed interactions with stakeholders across the country and com-

pletely ignoring the written and very detailed dissent notes of a number of MPs belonging to different political parties, including the Indian National Congress, who were members of the Standing Committee," he said.

Ramesh said the three new laws are to come into effect from July 1, 2024, and the Congress is of the firm opinion that the date should be deferred to enable a thorough review and re-examination of the laws by the reconstituted Standing Committee on Home Affairs.

## Security measures tightened ahead of Amarnath Yatra

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

With the Amarnath Yatra set to begin in a week, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said security arrangements have been tightened and facilities improved for the successful conduct of the pilgrimage.

Jammu Additional Director General of Police Anand Jain has reviewed security arrangements along the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, emphasising the need for the highest level of alertness to scuttle any attempt by terrorists to disrupt the pilgrimage, officials said on Saturday.

Taking part in the virtual 'Pratham Puja' which marks the ceremonial commencement of the Amarnath Yatra - at the Raj Bhavan in Srinagar on Saturday morning, Sinha said 'darshan' for the pilgrims across the country will start on June 29 when the yatra commences.

"The (Shri Amarnath) Shrine Board and the J-K administration have made special arrangements for the pilgrims. In the last two years, the facilities for the yatrīs have improved a lot."

Sinha said the roads leading to the cave shrine have been upgraded and some stretches



have been widened by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) this year. "I think the yatrīs will be able to undertake a smoother pilgrimage this time," he told reporters at Raj

Bhavan after the puja.

The LG said people from all religions have always supported the yatra.

"I appeal to the people of J-K, especially those in the areas

from where the yatra passes through, to keep alive the tradition of supporting the yatra and taking care of the pilgrims this year also. Peaceful and smooth pilgrimage helps create a good image of J-K across the world," he added.

The 52-day pilgrimage will begin from the two tracks -- the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgaon route in Anantnag and the 14-km shorter but steep Baltal route in Ganderbal -- on June 29, a day after the first batch of pilgrims will leave Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu for the valley.

Over 4.5 lakh pilgrims performed the pilgrimage last year

and offered their prayers at the naturally formed ice-shivlingam inside the cave shrine.

Later, at another function, Sinha launched various Swachh Bharat initiatives for the yatra.

"Happy to launch various Swachh Bharat initiatives of Directorate of Rural Sanitation for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2024.

A new logo, Swachh Yatra Anthem, website and mobile application developed by the directorate will greatly benefit our objective of zero-waste pilgrimage," the LG said.

He said J-K is at the forefront of promoting sustainable tourism.

## INDIA CORNER

### Nepal nominates 8 new envoys, including for India



Nepal has nominated eight ambassadors for eight countries, including India, a little over two weeks after recalling the incumbents.

According to the Cabinet sources, former chief secretary and Nepal's ambassador to the

United Kingdom, Lokdarshan Regmi, has been nominated as the new Nepalese ambassador to India. Regmi has earlier held positions of Home Secretary, Finance Secretary and Secretary at the Ministry of Land Reform and Management. The decision was taken by Nepal's Cabinet on Friday. Earlier on June 6, the Nepal government had recalled ambassadors from 11 countries, including those serving in India and the US and appointed under the Nepali Congress' quota, three months after Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' terminated his alliance with the party and joined hands with former prime minister KP Sharma Oli. The development had come three months after the coalition was formed with the support of CPN-UML.

### PETA gifts life-size mechanical elephant to Kerala temple



The non profit organization People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India along with actor Adah Sharma on Saturday gifted a life-size mechanical elephant to Pournamikavu temple here. PETA said, in a statement, that the mechanical elephant, named Baladhasan, was donated to the temple in recognition of

its decision to never own or hire live pachyderms for ceremonies and festivals. The mechanical elephant, the third one to be introduced in a Kerala temple, is around three meters tall and weighs around 800 kilograms, PETA said. Speaking on the occasion, Sharma said, "Technological progress allows us to preserve our deep cultural traditions and heritage while allowing elephants, who are endangered, to live with their families in the jungle. I am delighted to contribute this mechanical elephant with PETA India, enabling followers to participate in sacred rituals in a manner that is both safe for humans and respectful of animals." Pournamikavu Temple's Mukya Karyadarshi M S Bhuvanachandran welcomed the donation and is quoted as having said, "On this auspicious Pournami day, we are delighted to have mechanical elephant Baladhasan with us in honour of all the divine creatures who yearn to roam the earth free and secure with their loved ones.

### Software engineer loses Rs 40 lakh in ‘task fraud’



A 25-year-old software professional from Maharashtra's Thane district allegedly lost about Rs 40 lakh in a "task fraud", an official said on Saturday. The resident of the Kalyan area was cheated between June 6 and June 16, he said. The complainant told the police that two persons contacted him offering a part-time job that involved rating hotels and restaurants online. The man said he was initially paid some money for the "tasks" but was later coaxed into investing in schemes that promised "high" returns. In all, he shelled out Rs 40.4 lakh over ten days, the official said citing the FIR. The man realised he had been conned after he did not get any returns on his investments despite follow-ups. On his complaint, the Kolsewadi police on Thursday registered a case against two persons, including one identified as Avika Mishra, for cheating. A probe is underway to track down the alleged scammers, the official added.



## India's PSUs engine of growth, development: Jitendra Singh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday said the country's public sector undertakings have lived up to the global benchmarks and they are the engine of its growth and development.

Addressing an event here, he said "India, today excels in most of the global benchmarks, in some areas it is at par with other big nations, whereas in other areas it is much ahead of them."

Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel, praised the public sector undertakings (PSUs) for their consistent contribution to the Indian economy and being the engines of growth and development.

The rise of the Indian economy has been possible due to

the contribution of the PSUs, he said.

The PSUs have lived up to the global benchmarks and standards, the minister said.

"It is due to their unparalleled efforts that India has risen in the global innovation index. Today, it is ranked 40 worldwide, ahead of many economies of comparable size, whereas it was at rank 81 in 2014," Singh was quoted as having said in a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry.

The reason why Indian PSUs have excelled in present times is because they have given up the hesitation to incorporate private players, he said, while attending the 1st "ET Government PSU awards" organised by the 'Economic Times'.



## TAX DEVOLUTION, GST COMPENSATION ARREARS

# FM Sitharaman underlines Centre's support to states

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday underlined Centre's support to states through timely tax devolution and GST compensation arrears to stimulate growth.

At the pre-budget meeting with state finance ministers, Sitharaman also nudged states to take advantage of the scheme under which the Centre gives 50-year interest free loan to states for undertaking specified reforms.

In her remarks, the Union Finance Minister underlined the union government's support to states through timely tax devolution, Finance Commission grants, and arrears of GST Compensation being provided for providing stimulus to growth, an official



In her remarks, the Union Finance Minister underlined the union government's support to states through timely tax devolution, Finance Commission grants, and arrears of GST Compensation being provided for providing stimulus to growth, an official statement said.

statement said.

Regarding the 'Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment', Sitharaman mentioned that while most of the loans are untied, a part of it is conditional-linked to citizen-centric reforms by states and sector-specific capital projects and

requested the states to avail these loans by fulfilling requisite criteria.

Most states appreciated the centre's 'Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment' and gave some suggestions for further improvement. The participants also gave several valuable sug-

gestions to the Union Finance Minister for inclusion in the Union Budget for FY 2024-25, along with some State-specific requests, the statement added.

Rajasthan FM and Deputy CM Diya Kumari told reporters that the state has asked for a hike in allocation towards Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP), Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), certain national highways projects and railway lines.

Karnataka Finance Minister Krishna Byre Gowda sought releasing Rs 5,300 crore of already announced assistance for Upper Bhadra Water Project and declare it a national project. He also sought inclusion of cesses and surcharges into a divisible pool so that states get their rightful share in central taxes.

## GRSE to construct four cargo ships for German firm

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Defence PSU Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd on Saturday signed an agreement with a Germany-based shipping company for the construction and delivery of four multi-purpose cargo vessels, an official said.

The contract is worth approximately USD 54 million and the order is to be executed in 33 months, GRSE informed the National Stock Exchange and BSE.

GRSE signed the agreement with shipping company Carsten Rehder Schiffsmakler und Reederei GmbH and Co. KG, Germany, for the construction and delivery of four multi-purpose vessels with an option of building another four ships in near future, the GRSE official said in a statement.

The vessels will be 120 metres long and 17 metres wide and can carry 7,500 metric tonnes of cargo each, the GRSE official said.



The vessels will have a single cargo hold each to accommodate bulk, general and project cargoes, with provision for carrying containers on hatch covers, he said, adding that the ships have been specifically designed to carry multiple large wind-mill blades on deck.

The agreement was signed here by Commodore Shantanu Bose, (ret'd), director (shipbuilding) for GRSE and Carsten Thomas Rehder, managing director for the German shipping company in the presence of Chairman and Managing Director of GRSE, Commodore P R Hari, (ret'd).

The Kolkata-based PSU warship maker has been actively pursuing exports in both maritime and commercial vessels and has built and delivered an offshore patrol vessel to Mauritius, a fast patrol vessel to Seychelles and a passenger-cum-cargo ocean-going ferry to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, the official said.

## 'Entrepreneurship presents viable path to economic rejuvenation'

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Entrepreneurship presents a viable path to economic rejuvenation and a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem can drive sustainable growth, leading cybersecurity major TAC Security founder Trishneet Arora has said.

Arora believes that fostering a culture of entrepreneurship can be the key to revitalizing Punjab's economy and addressing its financial woes and the path to Punjab's prosperity lies in collaboration between entrepreneurs and the government.

He envisions a synergistic relationship where the government provides the necessary infrastructure and policy support, while entrepreneurs drive innovation and growth.

This partnership can create a conducive environment for



businesses to thrive, ultimately benefiting the state's economy, he said.

"Technology and AI have the potential to revolutionize farming in Punjab by enhancing productivity, reducing costs, and ensuring sustainable agricultural practices," Arora said. TAC Security is listed on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and has a market capitalization of Rs 800 crore.

The government, on its part,

must recognize the potential of entrepreneurship as a catalyst for change and work towards creating an environment that nurtures and supports business innovation, he said.

With a staggering debt of Rs 3.74 lakh crore, the state's financial health is in dire need of rejuvenation, he said.

Punjab's economy has traditionally been driven by agriculture. However, the need for diversification is more pressing than ever, he said.

"With precision farming techniques, real-time data analytics, and AI-driven crop management, farmers can optimize their resources, predict yields, and mitigate risks more effectively."

"Embracing these advancements will not only boost the agricultural output but also improve the livelihoods of our farmers."

## Govt buys 71K tons of onion for buffer stock

### Expects retail prices to ease with normal monsoon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has bought nearly 71,000 tonnes of onion so far this year for buffer stock, out of the total target of procuring 5 lakh tonnes for price stabilisation and it expects retail prices to ease with the progress of monsoon over most parts of the country.

According to data compiled by the department of consumer affairs, the all-India average onion retail prices stood at Rs 38.67 per kg on Friday, while the modal price was Rs 40 per kg.

Till June 20th, the Centre has procured 70,987 tonnes of onion, as against 74,071 tonnes procured in the same period last year, a senior official in the department of consumer affairs said.

"The pace of onion procurement for price stabilisation buffer this year is largely comparable with last year, despite about 20 per cent decline in estimated rabi production," the official said, adding that the government is on course to achieve tar-



geted procurement of 5 lakh tonnes for price stabilisation.

The government will exercise the option of holding or releasing onions from the buffer in order to maintain stability in prices of onion, the official said.

The procurement price is a dynamic one, linked to prevailing market prices.

The increase in prices of onion is on account of a shortfall in production in 2023-24 by about 20 per cent each in Kharif, late Kharif and Rabi, over the pre-

vious year due to less rains in major producing areas, the official explained.

To control prices, the government has been taking measures in a graded manner, from August last year starting with export duty of 40 per cent, followed by Minimum Export Price (MEP) of USD 800 per tonne in October, 2024 and imposition of export prohibition from December 8, 2023.

These measures have helped in maintaining domestic availability of onion at reasonably stable prices.

Export prohibition had been lifted from May 4, 2024 with MEP of USD 550 per tonne and 40 per cent export duty in view of substantial stability observed in major mandis like Lasalgaon, in Maharashtra and the prospect of good Kharif production on the back of above-normal monsoon prediction this year.

"The prolonged and extreme heatwave condition currently prevailing over large parts of the country has impacted

## CNG price in Delhi, adjoining cities hiked by Re 1 per kg

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

CNG price in Delhi and adjoining cities was on Saturday hiked by Re 1 per kg following a drop in the supply of subsidised input natural gas.

Indraprastha Gas Ltd, the firm that retails CNG automobiles and piped cooking gas to households in Delhi and adjoining cities, announced the hike in rates on its website.

In New Delhi, CNG will now cost Rs 75.09 per kg, up from the previous rate of Rs 74.09. In Noida, Greater Noida, and Ghaziabad, the price has increased to Rs 79.70 per kg from Rs 78.70 per kg.

There, however, was no change in piped cooking gas prices.

IGL did not give reasons for the increase but sources said the hike was warranted

because the firm now has to buy more imported gas following a drop in domestic supplies.

Natural gas pumped out of the ground and seabed is turned into CNG for running automobiles. But supplies from ONGC's domestic fields have not kept pace with the CNG demand.

Gas from ONGC fields make up for 66-67 per cent of CNG demand of IGL. The rest has to be imported.

Domestic gas supplies are prioritized for piped cooking gas purposes and so there is no hike in that segment, sources said.

However, there has been no change in CNG prices in Gurugram, as it is serviced by a different company.

Other city gas retailers have so far not announced any change in prices.

## 'Will empower 65 L youth with employability skills'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Magic Bus, a non-profit organisation in the education and skilling space, aims to impart essential life and employability skills in over 65 lakh young people from marginalised communities over the next five years.

The NGO operates in 23 states and union territories and operates out of 117 livelihood centres, of which 17 are all-girl centres. It imparts essential life skills and employability skills in young people from underserved communities.

"Since 1999, Magic Bus has impacted 30 lakh adolescents, equipping them with life skills to achieve school, life, and work outcomes. We have empowered over 3.7 lakh youths with life and employability skills, connecting them to sustainable livelihood opportunities. Looking ahead, we aim to extend its impact by empowering over 65 lakh young people over the next five years," Magic Bus India Foundation founder Matthew Spacie told



"We have also aligned with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP), our approach aims to bolster the government's efforts in delivering holistic education, empowering adolescents with higher-order thinking, analytical skills, and socio-emotional learning essential for success in the 21st century," he added. Magic Bus is also operating programmes in Bangladesh, Spacie said

said.

Life skills education serves as

a cornerstone for the holistic development of young people

and are essential for them to navigate life and work in an increasingly technology-driven world, he said.

Magic Bus India Foundation Global CEO Jayant Rastogi stated that the organisation conducts thorough assessments of the demand-supply gap before introducing new skills or phasing out obsolete ones.

"This process involves analysing the demand for specific skills in different geographical areas and evaluating the suitability of individuals to meet those demands. Before initiating any skilling programme, we ensure that there is a clear understanding of the market demand for the skills being imparted," he said.

Additionally, he said, the organisation also engages with potential employers during the programme to align their training with their hiring needs, which helps Magic Bus to tailor its skilling initiatives to the current job market requirements and maximise the employability of its participants.

The organisation targets

young people, 18 to 25 years, from marginalised communities, providing them with the necessary 21st-century skills to obtain grey-collar jobs in the formal sector in the service industry.

Rastogi further stated that Magic Bus has partnered with various state governments to expand the reach of life skills education.

"We have also aligned with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP), our approach aims to bolster the government's efforts in delivering holistic education, empowering adolescents with higher-order thinking, analytical skills, and socio-emotional learning essential for success in the 21st century," he added.

Magic Bus is also operating programmes in Bangladesh, Spacie said.

"Currently, our programmes are operational in Bangladesh, and we are mapping potential countries in South East Asia to understand their needs and take our programmes to newer geographies," he added

## Indian deeptech startups count surges, but funding plummets 77 %

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India saw a significant surge in deeptech startups in 2023 with 480 new ventures emerging, making it the third largest pool globally, a report said.

However, the report by technology industry body Nasscom and global consulting firm Zinnov highlighted the worrying trend of a funding winter, posing a major challenge for these startups.

"India's DeepTech Dawn: Forging Ahead" report also said funding for scaling, talent attraction and retention, and global expansion are the top 3 challenges faced by startups in deeptech innovation.

"India currently has 3600+ deeptech startups, out of which 480 were established in 2023 itself, nearly 2X more than the number of deeptech startups established."

## MONEY MATTERS

## Prestige Estates plans to raise up to Rs 5K cr



Really firm Prestige Estates Projects Ltd plans to raise up to Rs 5,000 crore by selling shares to institutional investors and also monetise its hotel business.

According to a regulatory filing on Friday, the company's board approved 'raising of funds by way of issuance of equity shares or other eligible securities for an aggregate amount not

exceeding Rs 5,000 crore by way of qualified institutional placement (QIP) or other permissible mode." The board also approved plans to "monetise assets of the hospitality segment through its arm Prestige Hospitality Ventures Ltd, by way of issue of shares (through primary or secondary or both)." All these decisions are subject to approval of shareholders. For monetisation of hospitality assets, the board has formed a sub-committee to oversee and structure the process. "The committee is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring compliance with all regulatory requirements."

## Durlax Top Surface IPO subscribed over 161 times



Solid surface manufacturer Durlax Top Surface's Rs 40.80 crore initial public offer has been oversubscribed nearly 161 times, the company said on Saturday. According to the exchange data, the IPO received bids for around 87 crore shares against 60 lakh shares on offer for subscription, Durlax Top Surface said in a statement. Non-institutional

investor category received the highest interest among investors and was subscribed over 415 times. Bids for around 35.52 crore shares were received against 8.56 lakh shares on offer. Retail segment was subscribed over 202 times and the qualified investor segment was subscribed over 48 times, the company said. The company's shares will be listed on the NSE SME platform, Emerge, on June 26. The company had fixed the price band at Rs 65-68 per share for the issue which was open for subscription from June 19-21, it added. The IPO comprises a fresh issue of 42 lakh shares up to Rs 28.56 crore and an offer for sale of 18 lakh shares worth up to Rs 12.24 crore. Out of the fresh issue of Rs 28.56 crore, the company plans to utilise Rs 17.50 crore to part finance working capital requirements and Rs 6 crore towards general corporate purposes. Promoters including Shrawan Suthar and Lalit Suthar hold around 95 per cent stake in the company while public shareholders hold nearly 5 per cent stake.

## Scope of improvement in logistics for Maha growth



Logistics infrastructure and cost of power supply have scope of improvement in Maharashtra for industrial growth, CII Vice President R Mukundan said on Saturday. Mukundan inaugurated the new office of CII Marathwada Zone chaired by Sunil Kirdak. "Last-mile connectivity is important for every industry to run their business smoothly."

Improvement in logistics in terms of national and state highways should take place to keep investments coming. Where industry is less, we need more connectivity there," he told reporters. Efforts should be made to make the western region more competitive in terms of power supply and cost of power. There is a need to reduce the cost of power, he added. These two issues have been addressed well but there is a scope of improvement, Mukundan noted. On prospects of exports, he said, "If we need to export from here, we have to increase the number of airports and port facilities also". CII western region deputy chairman Rishi Kumar Bagla said, some airlines have shown interest to run international flights from here. Work is also underway in the international convention centre here. Chikalthana and Shirdi airports are connecting the region to the South, North and West of the country. Talking about the local issues, Sunil Kirdak said, "We have met the police commissioner here and have put forth some issues. The police have acted on it and regular meetings are expected to happen."

## Establish skill development institutes for workforce enhancement: Gadkari

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, on Saturday urged industries to initiate skill development institutes to create a skilled and industry-ready workforce.

Addressing the CII-Industry Academia Conclave in Nagpur, Gadkari emphasised the need for collaboration between industry and academia to develop skilled manpower. "Coordination between industry and academia is essential

for the skill development of students and enhancing manpower," he stated.

Gadkari suggested that industries should progressively establish their own skill development centres, as well as engineering and polytechnic colleges, to provide both knowledge and practical experience, thereby making students more skilful.

He acknowledged the issue of skilled manpower shortage in industries while educated individuals remain unemployed.

| GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA<br>Panchayati Raj Engineering Department<br>Office of the Executive Engineer, PR Division : Amroor  |   |
|---|---|
| E-Procurement short tender Notice NIT No.01 to 06/2024-25   | Dt: 21.06.2024                              |
| No. of works (B7) Name of the works: Additional works to community halls and construction of SC Community halls, VDC Bhavanam, Fertilizer godowns and compound wall and other works to ramalla bhavan at various places of Amroor and Bakarla assembly constituency of Nizamabad District, Total ECV: 65.00 Lacs. |   |
| Tenders are invited by the undersigned. Tenderers can download the tender schedule from 27.06.2024 10.30 A.M onwards and last date is (7) working days from the date of publishing of each NIT in online. Further details can be seen on the online e-procurement market place (e www.tender.telangana.gov.in)    |   |
| A.O. No. : 38-SPD, 425/EN/PRADIT/12024-25 Dtd: 22-06-2024   | SE: Executive Engineer, PR Division, Amroor |



"That's my gift. I let that negativity roll off me like water off a duck's back. If it's not positive, I didn't hear it. If you can overcome that, fights are easy"  
- George Foreman



Water is a driving force and fuel for all nature. India's water crisis is increasing day by day, especially in metropolitan cities. To address this problem is the urgent need of the hour, say **DR KAUSHAL KANT MISHRA** and **DR VINAY PATHAK**

# SCARY SCARCITY OF LIFE'S DRIVING FORCE

Water is the key resource for sustaining life on Earth. It permeates every aspect of our existence, from the biological processes that occur within our bodies to the agricultural systems that produce our food or source of energy. The critical nature of water is further underscored by its finite availability and the essential roles it plays in maintaining ecosystems, supporting economic activities, and ensuring human health and well-being.

As global populations continue to rise and climate change intensifies, the pressure on our water resources is mounting, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable management and conservation practices. The significance of water cannot be overstated; it is the lifeblood of our planet, making the stewardship of this precious resource a paramount concern for all.

Securing water resources is paramount because, unlike energy, there are no alternative sources for water. It is an imperative that transcends environmental and geopolitical boundaries. We are often guided by the same motivations and methodologies in water related matters like we do for energy.

However, unlike energy, which could benefit from a diverse array of alternative sources, water remains singular in its indispensability and irreplaceability. Energy resources can be substituted, green sources for fossil fuel, solar for coal, nuclear power for thermal power and so on. The situation is quite different when it comes to water.

The total volume of water present on planet earth is constant. If we discount the amount of water contained in meteors, water does not come to this planet in any significant form. Our exorbitant exploitation of this natural reserve is making water ratio available for human diminish alarmingly.

Alternative energy resources like wind energy, solar energy, have become quite reliable alternatives to the traditional fossil fuels. These alternative energy sources do provide pollution free and sustainable means for the planet's energy needs. We can use ethanol for petrol or mixture of both and it still works.

In contrast, water has no such alternatives. These renewable sources are diverse and abundant, enabling a flexible and resilient energy supply system. There is no renewable or alternative water that can replace the freshwater required for drinking, sanitation, agriculture, and industrial processes. This stark difference underscores the critical nature of water and the imperative to manage it wisely.

While advancements in technology have enabled us to harness the power



DR VINAY PATHAK



DR KAUSHAL KANT MISHRA

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SECURING WATER RESOURCES IS PARAMOUNT BECAUSE, UNLIKE ENERGY, THERE ARE NO ALTERNATIVE SOURCES FOR WATER. IT IS AN IMPERATIVE THAT TRANSCENDS ENVIRONMENTAL AND GEOPOLITICAL BOUNDARIES. WE ARE OFTEN GUIDED BY THE SAME MOTIVATIONS AND METHODOLOGIES IN WATER RELATED MATTERS LIKE WE DO FOR ENERGY  
”



of the sun and wind, the same cannot be said for creating new sources of water. Thus, the focus must be on conserving and efficiently managing the water we have, ensuring its availability for future generations.

The absence of viable substitutes for water underscores the urgency of safeguarding our existing supplies through comprehensive, integrated approach encompassing the demand side and also the supply sides of the equation. Ensuring water security involves not only protecting the quality and quantity of freshwater sources but also includes improvements and in the water supply, transmission, sanitation infrastructure to withstand the impacts of climate change and population growth. This requires coordinated efforts at all levels of governance to commit and deploy far reaching policy reforms, technological innovations, and community engagement.

The stakes are high, as the failure to secure water resources could lead to severe social, economic, and environmental consequences. Let's convince ourselves and decide to call water not as water resource but water reserves.

According to a US geological survey the total water reserves on this planet is 1.36 billion kms. Out of this only 2.5 per cent is freshwater and out of that 0.3 per cent is liquid while the rest is frozen in glaciers and poles. Scarcity of water is actually scarcity of access to water reserves, which is pervasive. As per UN estimates around two billion people suffer from some form of water stress. This number is only going to increase in near future.

In the Middle East and North Africa, the annual per capita water availability is less than 500 cubic meters, far below the threshold for water access. Similarly, in Sub-Saharan Africa, recurrent droughts exacerbate the already limited access to safe drinking water, affecting both rural and urban populations.

The world's most populous countries, India and China face significant challenges due to the over-extraction of groundwater depletion and water reserve contamination. In Chennai, the situation turned dire in 2019 when the city's reservoirs dried up, leading to a severe drought. This crisis was exacerbated by delayed monsoons and overdependence on groundwater, prompting emergency measures like water tankers and rationing. Bengaluru's crisis this year in April needs no reminder. The local impacts of water reserve access are profound and varied, affecting communities in different ways depending on their geographic, economic, and social contexts. In regions like California in the United States, prolonged droughts have led to severe water restrictions, affecting agricultural productivity and leading to economic losses.

In India, the state of Maharashtra has experienced recurrent droughts, leading to crop failures and driving rural-to-urban migration as farmers seek alternative livelihoods. These local impacts highlight the interconnectedness of water scarcity with other critical issues such as food security, economic stability, and social cohesion.

Overuse and mismanagement of water reserves are primary drivers of water scarcity. In agriculture, inefficient irrigation practices lead to significant water wastage. For example, traditional flood irrigation methods can lose up to 50 per cent of water to evaporation and runoff. Transitioning to more efficient methods, such as drip irrigation, can substantially reduce water use while maintaining crop yields. In industry, water is often used in large quantities for processes such as cooling, cleaning, and manufacturing. Without proper recycling and reuse strategies, this water is discharged as waste, contributing to the depletion of local water reserve sources. Household mismanagement also plays a role, with excessive water use for

activities such as lawn watering, car washing, and inefficient fixtures leading to unnecessary wastage. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that includes technological innovation, regulatory measures, and public awareness campaigns to promote more sustainable water use practices across all sectors.

Climate change has a profound impact on global water cycles, exacerbating water reserve access scarcity and contributing to the depletion of freshwater reserves. Rising temperatures lead to increased evaporation rates, reducing the availability of surface water in lakes, rivers, and reservoirs. There may be increased rainfall and flooding which sometime increases the chances of contamination of water supplies and infrastructure damage. The variability and unpredictability of climate change's effects on water availability necessitate adaptive management strategies that can respond to these changing conditions. This includes enhancing water storage infrastructure, improving water use efficiency, and developing robust monitoring and forecasting systems to better manage water resources in a changing climate.

In many developing countries, inadequate sanitation infrastructure exacerbates the problem, leading to widespread contamination of drinking water reserves. Addressing water pollution requires stringent regulatory measures to control industrial emissions, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and improve waste management systems. Further, increasing the expenditure in water treatment methods may help mitigate the problem. Public awareness and education campaigns are also crucial in promoting responsible behaviour and reducing pollution at the reserve source. The health and well-being of communities depend on the availability of clean and safe water, making the

prevention and mitigation of water reserve pollution which is a critical component of water reserve management.

Thus, the call to action is clear: we must prioritize water reserves as a central pillar of sustainable development. Efficient water reserves management is key to tackling the problem. We have to ensure sustainable use of water resources. In agriculture, the adoption of advanced irrigation techniques, such as drip-irrigation and sprinkler based systems, can significantly reduce water use while maintaining or even improving crop yields. These new and innovative technologies deliver water directly to the plant roots and reducing the overall need for water.

In the industrial sector, recycled water supply in-plant reuse policy may substantially decrease water consumption. By treating and reusing wastewater within industrial processes, companies can reduce their reliance on freshwater sources and lower their environmental impact. Household water-saving technologies, such as low-flow fixtures, dual-flush toilets, and rainwater harvesting systems, can also contribute to significant water savings.

Encouraging the widespread adoption of these technologies requires supportive policies, financial incentives, and public awareness campaigns. By implementing efficient water management practices across all sectors, we can reduce water wastage, enhance water security, and promote sustainable development. All individuals, industries, and governments need to act collectively and urgently to protect and manage our water reserves. The right time to get together and respond to the call for action is right now. The water we save today is the water we generate for tomorrow.

**DR KAUSHAL KANT Mishra** is Delhi-based senior orthopaedic surgeon  
**DR VINAY PATHAK** is Assistant Professor, IIIT-Sonepat



# FEAST ON A CULINARY RAINBOW!



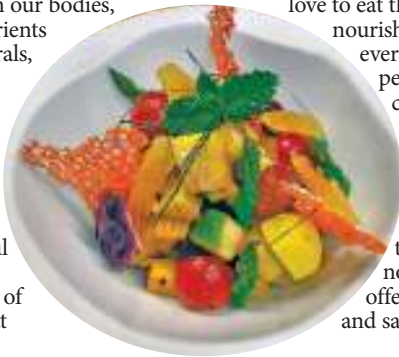
Admiring a rainbow in the sky is an awesome experience but savouring it on your plate is a sensory treat, writes SHARMILA CHAND

How to go about creating a rainbow? Pick and choose different colored fruits and vegetables, toss them together in a bowl, perk up with your favourite seasoning and place it in your plate. Maybe you can line it all up in the sequence of rainbow colours. Or else, enjoy all mixed. Now isn't your plate looking colourful and pretty? Well, it's not just for the visual appeal, but each colour plays its own role, lending a range of nutrients having immense health benefits.

Chef's Flair Ask chefs how to create a rainbow and trust them, they will have a signature dish up their sleeves. It won't be as simple as just tossing up a few ingredients. Rather the dish will be exotic, colorful, flavoursome, nutritious and aesthetically presented. "Take a bite from Elan's Poke Bowl and enjoy a spectrum of flavours and health benefits," says Chef Vijay Thapliyal, Executive Chef, The Lodhi, New Delhi. He elaborates, "We use a variety of ingredients that are locally sourced to ensure the well-being of our guests while inculcating a sustainable future. Coloured vegetables play a significant role in our bodies, providing essential nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, and fibre. By incorporating these colourful ingredients, we broaden our spectrum of nutrients while ensuring our guests enjoy a visually appealing and delightful meal. Elan's Poke Bowl is one of our standout dishes that

embody the rainbow diet. It includes ingredients like edamame beans, silken tofu, red cabbage, pumpkin seeds, red rice, pink carrot ribbons, cucumber dices and sesame dressing, each ingredient lending its own property. Inspired by the Buddha Bowl, this dish has been a staple on our menu and is being served consistently. It's a vibrant, colourful dish that celebrates both colours and flavours, making it a complete meal in itself. The vibrant combination of colours and textures creates a delightful dining experience that tantalises the palate and captivates the visual senses."

Chef Ankur Gulati, Executive Chef, The Claridges, New Delhi loves his vibrant Thai Rainbow Salad. He says, "This delightful dish combines a medley of colourful fruits and vegetables, creating a visual feast and a nutritional powerhouse. Packed with fresh mangoes, bell peppers, purple cabbage, cherry tomatoes, and carrots, this salad offers a spectrum of flavours and health benefits. Rich in vitamins, antioxidants, and fibre, our Rainbow Salad is as good for your body as it is for your eyes. Perfect for those who love to eat the rainbow and nourish their body with every bite. It is perfectly complemented by a zesty Thai chili jam dressing, creating a harmonious blend of sweet, tangy, and spicy notes. Each bite offers a juicy, crisp, and satisfying crunch,



making this salad the perfect way to cool down and nourish your body during the hot summer months." Enjoy a taste of Thailand with every colorful and nutritious mouthful! Rainbow Platters The fact that Rainbow diet is not restricted to any one particular cuisine is evident in the traditional food of every region. If the Indian Thali symbolises a perfect Rainbow platter with different coloured veggies, chutneys, pickles, papads, the Sushi



Boats too exemplify the same. Hence, you dine at Harajuku Tokyo Café, and see how the concept is fully embraced using a diverse array of colourful ingredients. Chef Asami says, "Our Poke Bowls are complete meals that illustrate the concept beautifully. The Bowl consists of white sushi rice topped with a choice of protein, along with fresh, crunchy vegetables like carrots, cucumber, sweetcorn and cabbage. Drizzled with our special house-made sauces, the Bowl offers a



balanced mix of proteins, vitamins and minerals, making it both nutritious and delicious. He further adds, "Let us not forget our Rainbow Sushi and Sushi Boats which showcase a variety of vegetarian options and feature a spectrum of colourful ingredients. These include red bell peppers, carrots, cucumbers, avocados, and purple cabbage. Each ingredient is chosen not only for its taste and texture but also for its nutritional benefits, ensuring a well-rounded, healthful dining experience. By incorporating these colourful ingredients, we ensure that our dishes are not only appealing to the eye but also provide a wide array of essential nutrients, supporting overall health and well-being." Joy In Colorful Bakery! In bakery too, colours and colourful decorations on bakery products act like a visual language, creating a unique character evoking emotions and flavours. For example, at Taj Holiday Village Resort and Spa, Goa, Chef Subhankar Chitrakar's Giant Easter Egg, is such a delightful rainbow that adds warmth, colours and joy to the entire festivities. "It is my favourite and I love to design it patiently using royal icing. You have to let the chocolate egg

cool completely before decorating with icing. Let your imagination run to the moon and back while you deck it up." He adds, "Certain colours are naturally associated with specific emotions and flavours. For instance, red evokes excitement and is linked to flavours like strawberry or cherry. Pink is softer and suggests sweetness like raspberries or watermelon. I use these colour connotations to tell a story about the taste of the pastry before you even take a bite. Colourful sprinkles, chocolate drizzles, or candied fruit pieces can visually highlight the key ingredients in a pastry. This not only creates a unique look but also tells the guest exactly what flavours to expect."

An all-natural fruit jelly is a favourite of Yatendra Rawat, Executive Chef at Hyatt Regency Gurgaon. "It is very simple to make and highly nutritious; kids just love it. It requires very basic and limited ingredients such as cut fruits of your choice, gelatin, sugar, and water. If you want to be a little more adventurous, you can add a bit of your favorite fruit juice to the water and sugar mixture. To prepare it, cook the sugar, water, and gelatin together until a gel texture is achieved. Then, pour the mixture over the cut fruits of your choice and freeze. Once un-molded, it will give you a wholesome dessert that looks like a rainbow."

**To Conclude** Go ahead, have a Rainbow Diet that promises to not only refresh and revitalize you during the hot summer months but also supports your health with a broad spectrum of nutrients.

(Author Intro: Sharmila Chand is an author and freelance journalist who writes on food, travel, art, design, wellness)

## How Best To Spend 48 Hours In Tokyo

Glitz, Glamour, Neon lights secretly protect a soul that resonates profound Japanese traditions and heritage in Tokyo, discovers SHARMILA CHAND

Landing at the international Haneda Airport, I headed straight to Hotel The Peninsula Tokyo which I chose for its location -- right opposite The Imperial Palace and Hibiya Park in Marunouchi district; just a walk away from the famous Ginza, the shopping hub. The hotel's captivating vibes are an added attraction, a seamless blend of traditional Japanese charm and contemporary luxurious elements. From the charms of the centuries-old active volcano Mt Fuji, and the quaint village -- Oshino Hakka, to soaring edifices such as Tokyo Sky Tree, the capital city of Japan packs multiple surprises at every corner. It may not be on top list of travelers as heritage Kyoto but believe me, once you start exploring this city, you will be surprised at its vivacious character, unmatched by any other place in the world. There is an unbeatable synergy between rich Japanese culture and hyper modern metropolitan landscape in Tokyo.

So if you have only 48 hours in this delightful eclectic city, then let's cover it in such a way that you get to see both the East and West side; highlighting tourist trails as well as local hideouts to get a glimpse of real life. I call these my selection which will make an interesting potpourri to explore. **The Iconic Skytree** Start your morning with a visit to the conic Skytree, the world's tallest freestanding tower, rising above the Azuma Bridge. A perfect venue that offers an unparalleled bird's-eye view of the city's vistas, particularly the red-roofed shrines dotted humbly among the huge skyscrapers. **Tsukiji Outer Market**



Now sushi for breakfast may seem a bit unusual, but when in Tokyo, it is a done thing. Trust me, this is an experience worth giving a shot. The market is packed with top-notch sushi options, vegetarian and non-veg both. I thought it was the most exciting way to start my day of Tokyo exploration. **Akihabara for Tokyo Flavour** If not sushi then have a hearty breakfast of your choice and then start with Akihabara. It gives you the real peek into what Tokyo is associated with. In this kitschy district you will find skyscraping arcades, Manga stores, video game stores and a lot more. That's the much talked about **Spend An Hour In Shinjuku Gyoen** Tokyo's most spectacular gardens are in Shinjuku Gyoen. Tourist hotspot, much loved during cherry blossom season as it is home to over 400 cherry trees. You will get to see perhaps the most beautiful sight with baby pink petals all around. Accentuated with coy fish ponds, fruit trees, and exquisite flower beds. Take a

quick look at the Art Gallery here and then a cuppa of coffee at the pretty cafe. **Tokyo's Oldest Buddhist Temple** Senso-ji temple is the oldest Buddhist temple in Tokyo which showcases the rich culture of Japan's Edo Period. Undoubtedly this was my best sojourn. It enshrines a golden image of Kannon -- Buddhist Goddess of mercy. Legend has it that she was miraculously pulled out of the nearby Sumida-gawa by two fishermen in AD 628. The image has remained on the spot ever since but is never on public display. The main entrance to the temple complex is via pretty red Kaminari Mon and Busy shopping street Nakamise-dori. When you enter the gate, do not miss to see statues of Fjinn (the God of wind) and Raijin (the God of thunder), and a stunning carved dragon under the giant red lantern. At the end of Nakamise-dori is the temple itself. The 55m-high five storey Pagoda is a sight to behold. Walk to the eastern edge of the temple complex. Here you will see Asakusa

Jinja, a shrine built in honour of the brothers who discovered the Kannon statue that inspired the construction of Sens-ji. Immerse yourself in a vibrant atmosphere adorned with colorful hanging lanterns. Have a look at various temples and then walk towards Nakamise bustling market that offers a delightful array of traditional Japanese snacks and souvenirs. And yes, don't forget to make a wish at the famous Senso-ji Thunder Gate! **Day 2: 10.30 am Coffee at Shozo** It is always nice to discover special cute small places to have a coffee break. So after winding up breakfast at the hotel, it is a good idea to go to Aoyama district. You will find this area fascinating with plenty of shops and art galleries. My local friends had already told me - a pretty hideout, the Shozo Coffee Store should not be missed and I agree with them. A wooden hut done up with plants was my coffee corner where I had the best caramel latte with a delicious cheesecake. And that set my

mood right to start exploring. **The Grand Meiji-jing: History and Heritage** Tokyo's grandest Shinto shrine is dedicated to the Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken. Their reign (1868-1912) coincided with Japan's transformation from an isolationist, feudal state to a modern nation. Constructed in 1920, the shrine was destroyed in WWII air raids and rebuilt in 1958. The main shrine is built of unpainted cypress wood with a copper-plated roof. It is in a wooded grove accessed via a long winding gravel path. The shrine occupies only a small fraction of the sprawling forested grounds, which contain some 120,000 trees collected from all over Japan. Of this, only the strolling garden Meiji-jing? Gyoen is accessible to the public. It is said that The Meiji emperor himself designed the iris garden here to please the empress and the garden is at its best when the irises bloom in June. **Traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony** If you are not exhausted after lunch, I suggest attend a beautiful tea ceremony at Happo-en. Where on earth you will get to immerse in a real Zen garden in the heart of Tokyo? Happo-en is one of Tokyo's exclusive secrets. Off the touristy beat, hence tranquil, with hundred year old bonsai trees and Japanese carp and cherry trees swimming in a pond. Attend the serene tea ceremony, a lifetime experience, you will not forget. **A Bowl of Ramen Is Quintessential** Ramen and Tokyo go together. A bowl of Ramen is absolutely essential. Stop by at any Ramen joint, as you will find them after every 50 m. There's no shortage of delicious, steaming hot bowls

of rich broth, mounds of noodles and toppings of your choice to be found throughout the city. **Visit Golden Gai in the evening** One evening go to Golden Gai and see the spectacle. Narrow alleys will take you to the buzz of bars, karaoke joints, and sizzling yakitori spots. Have a bite at Omoide Yokochi. It's an uber-narrow strip lined on both sides with hole-in-the-wall yakitori joints. I kept looking at bandana-clad chefs flipping skewers by the dozen over fiery charcoal. That day I was totally immersed in the environs, looking nonstop at the locals, without blinking an eye and also ate like them, shoulder to shoulder. Amidst the heavy smoke and aroma of the grilled food, I was in a bustling and lively world. **Learn Origami Craft** The Happy Origami Crafting Lesson teaches participants how to create intricate figures from traditional washi paper. Beginners can join, no prior experience with origami is required. With this one-of-a-kind experience, you'll be able to learn the ancient Japanese art of origami with the help of an experienced paper folding pro. Seal Your Memories and Bid Farewell To Tokyo Immersing myself in the traditional Japanese culture, exploring the capitals unique character of effortlessly blending tradition and technology, admiring pagodas comfortable next to neon signs, experiencing authentic 'Forest Bathing', my 48 hours were like a fairytale dream!

(Sharmila Chand is an author and independent journalist who writes on Travel and Food)



## Dakshin Yatra Flavours of South

Edesia, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla and Viva, Holiday Inn Aerocity, are delighted to announce an exclusive South Indian food festival, Dakshin Yatra Flavours of South, from June 22 to June 30, 2024. Guests are invited to embark on a culinary journey through the rich and diverse cuisines of South India, with dining experiences available every evening from 7 PM to 11 PM at both locations. Dakshin Yatra promises an authentic and immersive experience with a menu specially curated by the esteemed Chef Reghunath, who will be traveling from Kochi to share his expertise and passion for authentic South Indian cuisine. The festival will feature famous dishes such as Chettinad Chicken, Kerala Prawn & Mango Curry, Dindigul Biryani, Thalassery Biryani, Bisi Bele Bath, Malabar Parotta, and many more. The Dakshin Yatra festival is an opportunity for our guests to experience the rich and diverse flavors of South India right here in New Delhi, says Mr. Shuvenud Banerjee, General Manager at Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla. "We are thrilled to bring this unique experience to our guests, with Chef Reghunath's exceptional expertise



adding an authentic touch to every dish, says Mr Amit Rana, General Manager at Holiday Inn New Delhi International Airport. Complementing the food, the festival will offer a selection of unique cocktails and mocktails that capture the essence of South India, including Madras Magic, Kerala Coconut Cooler, Andhra Mango Mojito, Udipi Uplifter, Ambuli Juice, Neer Majjige, Panakam, Panna, and Nimbu Pani. The ambience at Edesia and Viva will transport guests to the vibrant and culturally rich regions of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. Both restaurants will be adorned with traditional decor, colourful displays, and installations representing the distinct art and culture of these southern states. A dedicated vendor will enhance the dining experience by transforming the space into a visual celebration of South India's heritage.



# A BEACON OF SANATANA DHARMA IN THE MODERN WORLD

PRIYANKA ANAND’S transition from corporate success to spiritual leadership exemplifies her profound commitment to preserving and promoting India’s ancient wisdom.

Inspired by her Guru, Om Swami, she now leads the Vedic Sadhana Foundation, making Sanatana Dharma accessible to the modern world says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

In a world where ancient traditions often struggle to find their place amidst modernity, Priyanka Anand stands as a shining beacon of Sanatana Dharma, illuminating the path for countless seekers. Her journey from a successful corporate career to leading the Vedic Sadhana Foundation is a witness to the power of spiritual transformation and the enduring relevance of India’s ancient wisdom. Priyanka’s life story is one of dedication, faith and a profound commitment to preserving and promoting the timeless teachings of Sanatana Dharma, especially among the younger generation. From a young age, Priyanka was driven by a quest for deeper answers to life’s fundamental questions. This quest took a significant turn when she met her Guru, Om Swami, whose selfless service to humanity and profound vision inspired her to find a new direction. One of the major reasons for her transition was the disconnection she observed between the youth and their Vedic heritage, a disconnection she experienced personally and saw in her own daughter. Guided by her Guru, Priyanka felt a compelling urge to share this transformative experience with others, particularly children, to ensure they appreciate and embrace their cultural heritage. Despite stepping away from her corporate career, Priyanka continues to grip her corporate experience in her current role. The Vedic Sadhana Foundation operates with the dynamism of a startup, driven by a mission to serve and make a lasting impact. Rather than focusing on shareholder value, the foundation is dedicated to sharing the wealth of Dharma with future generations. This approach ensures that the rich heritage of Sanatana Dharma is

not only preserved but also revitalised in a way that resonates with today’s youth. Priyanka’s decision to transition from the corporate world was influenced by several pivotal moments. Under her Guru’s guidance, her interest in exploring the depths of Dharma grew. The powerful teachings of the Bhagavad Gita and other scriptures offered profound answers and insights into life. A particularly significant experience was when her daughter, attending a Catholic school, expressed a desire to become a disciple of Jesus at the age of seven. This moment highlighted the disconnection from their own cultural heritage. Priyanka began sharing stories from the Puranas with her daughter and practicing more rituals at home. These experiences deepened her love for Bhagawan and solidified her path. In times of despair, her Guru was her pillar of strength, much like Krishna to Draupadi, leading her to share this journey with others. At the Vedic Sadhana Foundation, Priyanka strives to make ancient teachings relatable to the younger generation by meeting them where they are online. The foundation has developed the world’s first app for Mantra Sadhana, empowering youth globally through the practice of meditation and mantra chanting. The Sadhana App, used by 90,000 people globally, 75% of whom are youth, makes these practices accessible. Additionally, the foundation holds free Sadhana events across India, allowing youth to collectively embrace and understand the meaning behind these practices. Engaging directly with their curiosity, the foundation answers thousands of queries on their helpdesk, showcasing the beauty and richness of Dharma, which encourages personal exploration and empowers youth to lead better lives.



Incorporating Sanatana Dharma into educational systems is essential for preserving this rich heritage. Key scriptures like the Bhagavad Gita and the Mahabharata can be integrated into the curriculum, teaching them as history rather than mythology. Mindful practices like prayer, meditation and contemplation can profoundly impact students,

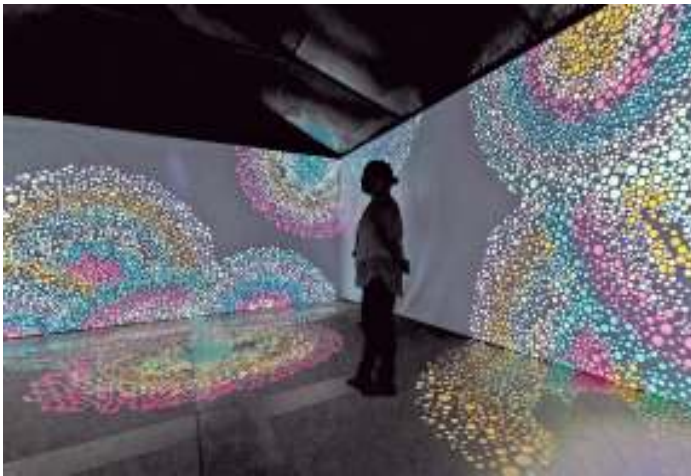
encouraging them to reflect on higher questions of life. Well-trained teachers who understand Sanatana Dharma can inspire students with its values and virtues. Celebrating traditional festivals, rituals and practices creates a vibrant cultural environment, helping students connect with their heritage. Technology, like the Sadhana App, can also be

incorporated into the curriculum, providing students with practical tools for spiritual growth and self-discovery. The impact of the Vedic Sadhana Foundation’s work is evident in stories like Priya’s, who found solace and purpose through the Sadhana App. Struggling with severe mental health issues, Priya discovered the app and started with simple mantra chanting. The practices brought her a profound sense of calm and clarity, transforming her life. Inspired to learn more about Sanatana Dharma, Priya found a renewed sense of purpose and a stronger spiritual foundation. Her story is a powerful testament to the foundation’s life-changing impact. One major challenge in promoting Sanatana Dharma is the reluctance to discuss religion openly. The foundation addresses this by leading by example, proudly celebrating heritage and showcasing its transformative power. Modern-day disengagement from traditional practices due to time constraints and lack of access to authentic information is another challenge. The Sadhana App, created by Om Swami, makes these practices accessible to all, demonstrating their profound impact. Priyanka’s vision for the Vedic Sadhana Foundation is to become a global beacon for Sanatana Dharma, making ancient Indian wisdom accessible and transformative for people worldwide. The foundation plans to establish a stronger presence, inspire the younger generation and collaborate with patrons to ensure a lasting legacy. Upcoming initiatives include the Sadhana Tablet, a dedicated device for performing Sadhana, and the Astro Sadhana App, which integrates astrology with spiritual practices. Programs for children will help them connect with their spiritual roots from an early age.

With a global audience, the foundation plans to expand its reach to digital platforms and establish a strategic physical presence. Relocating to the USA, Priyanka aims to bring ancient Indian wisdom to the forefront, mirroring historical efforts of saints who spread this knowledge globally. By making digital offerings more accessible and organising on-ground events, the foundation hopes to inspire pride in heritage and embrace Sanatana Dharma worldwide. Priyanka’s personal journey and spiritual practice under the mentorship of Om Swami have profoundly influenced her leadership and the foundation’s direction. Rediscovering the transformative power of Sanatana Dharma, she integrates these ancient practices into modern life, driving the foundation’s mission to reconnect individuals with their spiritual roots and promoting mental and emotional well-being through ancient practices. In a world increasingly disconnected from its roots, Priyanka Anand and the Vedic Sadhana Foundation stand as powerful advocates for the preservation and promotion of Sanatana Dharma. Through innovative use of technology, educational initiatives and a profound commitment to spiritual growth, they are ensuring that the timeless wisdom of ancient India continues to thrive and inspire future generations. Priyanka’s journey from a corporate leader to a spiritual guide is not just a personal transformation but a beacon of hope for all seeking deeper meaning and connection in their lives. Her work is a reminder that, with dedication and vision, it is possible to bridge the gap between the ancient and the modern, creating a harmonious path forward for all.

## An Immersive Journey Through Indigenous Australian Culture

“Walking Through a Songline” is a mesmerising digital installation that merges the ancient wisdom of Indigenous Australian Songlines with cutting-edge technology. Presented by the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art and the Australian High Commission, this immersive experience, crafted by the National Museum of Australia and Mosster Studio, takes visitors on a profound journey through the rich tapestry of Aboriginal culture, offering a unique blend of storytelling, art and innovation says **SAKSHI PRIYA**



Songlines, pathways of knowledge that map the routes of Ancestral creator beings. These Songlines are not just historical artifacts; they are living, breathing elements of cultural identity, imbued with values and practices that have been preserved through generations. The installation also features a series of short films, each offering a unique glimpse into different aspects of Indigenous Australian culture. Films like ‘Footprints’ and ‘Bulunu Milkarri’ explore themes of cultural preservation and storytelling, highlighting the vital role that these narratives play in the survival and continuation of Aboriginal traditions. These films add a rich, personal dimension to the exhibition, allowing visitors to connect with the individual stories and experiences of the First Nations people. As you move through the installation, the seamless blend of visual art and storytelling creates a tapestry that is both beautiful and profound. The projections, combined with a beautiful soundtrack, create an atmosphere that is both meditative and expressive. The voices of traditional custodians and knowledge holders resonate throughout the space, adding depth and authenticity to the experience. The collaboration between the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art and the Australian High Commission is a testament to the power of cross-cultural exchange. By bringing this installation to a wider audience, they not only celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Australia’s First Nations people but also uphold a greater appreciation for the diversity and depth of Indigenous cultures worldwide. ‘Walking Through a Songline’ is more than an exhibition; it is an immersive journey that invites you to step into the heart of Aboriginal culture. It is a celebration of life, resilience and the timeless power of storytelling. As you leave the exhibition, the stories stay a reminder of the deep connections that bind us to the land and to each other. This installation is exploring the profound and enduring narratives that continue to shape our world.

Stepping into ‘Walking Through a Songline’ feels like crossing the threshold into another world, one where ancient stories and modern technology converge in a harmonious dance. It feels surreal as it presents an impressive vision of a ‘Perfect World’. It feels like a soulful journey, offering a quiet, therapeutic way that allows the mind to wander into its own world. The collaboration between the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art and the Australian High Commission brings forth a groundbreaking digital installation, ‘Walking Through a Songline’. Produced by the National Museum of Australia and Mosster Studio, this captivating experience promises to be a cultural journey like no other transforms the abstract into the creating an environment that is both surreal and profoundly real. The installation, produced by the National Museum of Australia and Mosster Studio, centers around the captivating story of Naji, which originates from the Dreaming or Bugarregarre time. This narrative is a cornerstone of Aboriginal culture, detailing how spirit beings traversed a barren land, bringing life and water in their wake. As you walk through the space, these stories unfold through a series of stunning projections, enveloping you in a world that feels both timeless and immediate. One of the most compelling aspects of this installation is its ability to evoke a sense of peace and introspection. The quiet,

therapeutic atmosphere invites visitors to lose themselves in the journey, much like the spirit beings did as they traversed the land. Each projection is a doorway into a different facet of the story, each detail meticulously crafted to draw you deeper into the narrative. Visitors are taken on a journey through mesmerising projections that portray Songlines in an artistic and astonishing way. This immersive experience blends ancient knowledge with new technology, allowing visitors to sit quietly in front of each short film and feeling transported to another world. The calm and therapeutic nature of the installation resonates with everyone present. The tale of the Seven Sisters, a highlight of the exhibition, is presented with a blend of awe and reverence. Known as Kungkarangkappa, the story follows the sisters as they are pursued across the desert landscape by Wati Nyiru. The narrative is brought to life through vibrant paintings by First Nations artists, which are projected onto the walls, creating a dynamic and immersive visual experience. The transformation of the sisters into stars is depicted with a poignancy that speaks to the universal themes of resilience and transformation. ‘Walking Through a Songline’ does more than tell a story; it creates an experience that bridges the ancient and the modern. The use of cutting-edge digital technology allows for a multi-sensory journey through the

## SWAY INTO SUMMER SERENITY DISCOVER THE SHEER SPLENDOR OF CHIFFON SAREES

As the balmy breeze of summer is here, it’s time to drape yourself in elegance and embrace the season’s ethereal charm. We’re thrilled to unveil our latest collection, curated especially for the enchanting summer weddings and soirées that await. Crafted with meticulous attention to detail and an unwavering commitment to sophistication, our Summer Chiffon Saree Collection captures the essence of grace and allure. Each saree is a masterpiece, designed to adorn you with effortless glamour and timeless beauty. Light as a Whisper, Radiant as the Sun - Chiffon, renowned for its delicate texture and airy feel, takes center stage in our collection. Impossibly light and luxuriously soft, chiffon drapes like a dream, ensuring you glide through the summer festivities with unparalleled grace. A Kaleidoscope of Hues and Patterns - From the soft pastel tones reminiscent of a summer sunrise to the vibrant hues that mirror the blossoming flowers, our collection boasts a kaleidoscope of colors to suit every mood and occasion. Whether you prefer subtle sophistication or eye-catching exuberance, you’ll find the perfect saree to express your unique style. Intricate Embellishments and Timeless Embroidery - Each saree in our collection is adorned with exquisite embellishments and timeless embroidery, adding a touch of opulence to every ensemble. From delicate floral motifs to intricate threadwork, every detail is meticulously crafted to elevate your look and leave a lasting impression. Effortless Elegance, Unmatched Comfort - Designed with the modern woman in mind, our chiffon sarees marry elegance with



comfort. With their lightweight fabric and fluid drape, they allow you to move with ease and confidence, ensuring you stay effortlessly chic from dawn till dusk. A Timeless Investment - More than just garments, our chiffon sarees are a timeless investment in your wardrobe. Versatile and enduringly chic, they transcend fleeting trends, becoming cherished heirlooms that you’ll treasure for years to come. Drape Yourself in Summer Splendor - As you prepare to step into the enchanting world of summer weddings and events, let our Summer Chiffon Saree Collection be your guide.

Immerse yourself in the sheer elegance of chiffon, and let each saree become a canvas upon which you paint your own summer story. Let this summer be your most stylish yet, as you enchant and captivate in the timeless beauty of chiffon sarees from Atelier Shikaarbagh

### About Atelier Shikaarbagh

Atelier Shikaarbagh is not just a brand, but a celebration of heritage and style. With a legacy inspired by fashion icons Rani Urmila Rajey of Dholpur and Rajmata Gayatri Devi of Jaipur, the brand encapsulates the essence of timeless elegance and grace. The brand is now led by the visionary Founder & Head Designer Maayankraj Singh, Atelier Shikaarbagh is a sanctuary of sartorial splendor, where each creation is a masterpiece in its own right. From resplendent sarees adorned with intricate embroidery to bespoke wedding poshaks that exude regal charm, every creation is meticulously crafted to perfection. The essence of each garment is steeped in heritage craft and design narratives that have stood the test of time. The expression molds itself to the vision and desires of a proud traditional patron, finding their personal signature in a rapidly evolving local, regional and international fashion and styling arena. Their designs have been worn by some of the most prominent personalities, including the esteemed Mrs. Kokilaben Ambani, Mrs. Nita Ambani, Mrs. Smriti Z Irani, Princess Sarvath al-Hassan, Mrs. Sharmila Tagore, Mrs. Hema Malini, Mrs. Kareena Kapoor Khan, Ms. Jahnvi Kapoor, and members of Indian and International royal families. Let me know if you require any more information.

## CHANDU CHAMPION Kartik Aaryan’s Breakthrough Performance Sets the Bar High

“Chandu Champion,” directed by Kabir Khan and produced by Sajid Nadiadwala under Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment, is an enthralling biographical sports drama that tells the inspiring story of Murlikant Petkar, India’s first Paralympics gold medallist

Kartik Aryan stars in the lead role, capturing the essence of a dream that perseveres against all odds and ultimately becomes a reality. The film follows Murlikant Petkar’s life, from his challenging childhood to overcoming personal trauma and societal ridicule. Known as ‘Chandu,’ Petkar’s journey is marked by resilience, perseverance and an indomitable spirit that defies the label of ‘loser’ and aims for Olympic glory. This movie introduces the world to Murlikant Petkar, a hero whose name and achievements were unknown to many, beautifully depicting his journey and making sure everyone knows about the hero who fought for our country and made us proud.

Kartik Aryan delivers an exceptional performance in “Chandu Champion,” showcasing his versatility and dedication to the craft. His portrayal of Murlikant Petkar is deeply moving, capturing the essence of the character’s struggles and triumphs with authenticity. Aryan’s physical transformation for the role is truly inspirational, highlighting his commitment to portraying the character authentically. His performance is an exemplification to his talent and serves as a powerful anchor for the film. Aryan’s dedication to the role shines through, making it one of his standout performances. Vijay Raaz, portraying Tiger Ali, provides a perfect balance to the film with

his nuanced performance. The on-screen chemistry between Aryan and Raaz adds a compelling dynamic, enriching the narrative with authenticity and depth. Kabir Khan’s direction is skillful and sensitive, capturing the essence of Petkar’s life journey. The screenplay is meticulously crafted, combining moments of joy, emotion and pride. Unlike typical sports biographies, “Chandu Champion” combines heartfelt storytelling with engaging entertainment. Sudeep Chatterjee’s cinematography is visually stunning, capturing the highs and lows of Petkar’s journey with breathtaking visuals. While the first half of the film is engaging and well-paced, the

second half slows down slightly. However, the gripping storyline and stellar performances keep the audience invested in Chandu’s journey. “Chandu Champion” is a joyful, emotional and pride-filled depiction of a real-life hero’s extraordinary journey. Kartik Aryan’s powerful performance, alongside Vijay Raaz’s excellent support, makes this film a must-watch. Despite the slower pace in the second half, the film’s heartfelt narrative and inspirational message make it a memorable cinematic experience. “Chandu Champion” celebrates the human spirit and the relentless pursuit of dreams, reminding us that no dream is too big to achieve. Rating: 4/5



# Millions baking across US as heat prolongs misery with little relief



Ar relentless heat wave continued to bake most of the United States on Friday, with numerous areas expected to see record-breaking temperatures and forecasters warning there would likely be little relief through the weekend for most areas.

The steamiest conditions on Friday were expected in parts of Ohio and Indiana, where heat indexes were likely to soar past 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees Celsius) and remain there most of the day. But the Midwest was not the only area being baked, as heat and excessive heat warnings and advisories has been issued across the northeast, the mid-Atlantic and in some western states.

Millions of residents across the country have had their lives disrupted by days of unusually high temperatures. In Michigan, utility crews from several states were working feverishly Friday to restore power to thousands of suburban Detroit customers, two days after severe storms knocked out their power, leaving residents suffering amid a heat wave expected to linger through Saturday.

About 14,000 homes and businesses remained without power late Friday morning in Oakland County, a suburban area north of

“We’ve lost our power before and in the freezer if you don’t open it you’d have about 48 hours, but in this heat, no. In 24 hours the refrigerator was done. Trash day is Monday so I’ll empty it out then.”

“Especially in areas that don’t have a high population density, we’re going to need help,” Walz said. There’s resources there. The rebuilding will happen.”

Detroit, following Wednesday night’s storms that cut power to about 75,000 homes and businesses at its peak, said Brian Calka, DTE Energy’s vice president of distribution operations. Between 500 and 600 crew members from utilities in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois were working with about 1,000 DTE Energy utility workers and another 1,000 tree-trimming contractors to get the power back on amid the heat. Calka said the utility’s goal is to get the power back on for all of those 14,000 customers by late Friday.

Utility crews were working 16-hour shifts to get the power back on and they are being urged to deal with the heat by taking more breaks to rest and more water breaks because they are wearing jeans, long-sleeved shirts, rubber gloves and hardhats for their work, Calka said.

“They are working in very, very tough conditions,” he said.

Among the Michigan residents feeling the heat is Jody DeRusha, whose home in the village of Beverly Hills about 10 miles (16 km) north of Detroit lost power Wednesday night and was also struck by part of a maple tree toppled by high winds in that night’s severe thunderstorm. She has lost everything in her

refrigerator, including a large amount of frozen beef and some halibut and fresh walleye.

“We’ve lost our power before and in the freezer if you don’t open it you’d have about 48 hours, but in this heat, no. In 24 hours the refrigerator was done. Trash day is Monday so I’ll empty it out then,” DeRusha said Friday.

She and her daughter are armed with flashlights and they have been sleeping in their home’s basement, which she said is 10 to 15 degrees cooler than the home, which is stuffy and hovering at about 80 F (26.7 C).

DeRusha, a contract logistics worker for a car transportation company, said she’s been spending time in her car to savour its air conditioning while also recharging her cellphone.

This month’s sizzling daytime temperatures were 35 times more likely and 2.5 degrees F hotter (1.4 degrees C) because of the warming from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas — in other words, human-caused climate change. That is according to World Weather Attribution, a collection of scientists that run rapid and non-peer reviewed climate attribution studies.

The excessive heat wasn’t the only weather-related issue in some states. Several small-town tourist meccas in northern Minnesota continued to be inundated by floodwaters after a deluge of rain earlier this week, prompting the closure of major roads and leaving a costly trail of damage.

On Friday, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz travelled to St Louis County, where people in one town paddled through flood-ridden streets in small boats and local officials estimated the floods had caused at least \$50 million in damage and prompted the closure of more than 40 roads. At a news conference in Biwabik, Walz said he expected a presidential disaster declaration might be imminent, but the damage hadn’t yet reached the necessary threshold. Walz encouraged people to keep track of damage, which could help the state secure federal assistance.

“Especially in areas that don’t have a high population density, we’re going to need help,” Walz said. “There’s resources there. The

dential candidates as weak, confused or senile — especially considering their ages of 81 and 78. Indeed, edited and misrepresented clips have also circulated about former President Donald Trump.

“Any misinformation that seems to reinforce or resonate perceptions or dominant narratives, whether they’re accurate or not, is very effective,” said Erik Nisbet, a professor at



O’Connor, Biden’s physician, wrote in a February memo after the president’s annual physical that he “continues to be fit for duty” and that his stiff gait is the result of arthritic changes in his spine. He said that Biden has reported additional hip pain and started using a new device for his sleep apnea, but that he showed no signs of stroke, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s or other similar conditions. After the fundraiser clip spread online, Biden campaign spokesperson James Singer blasted such negative characterizations as a tactic from those who “are so scared of losing to Joe Biden, they’ll make anything up” to distract voters from Trump’s misdeeds.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre in a press briefing called the videos “cheap fakes,” a term for videos edited using cheap video editing software rather than artificial intelligence. Trump’s campaign has doubled down on the clips and circulated a meme that defined a “cheap fake” as “any unedited video of Joe Biden’s cognitive decline that the Biden administration does not

## Seeing is believing? Not necessarily when it comes to video clips of Biden and Trump

right-leaning outlets around the world — shows how the reach of social media and real concerns about Biden’s age have made the tactic especially powerful in 2024.

Experts say voters can expect to see both Republicans and Democrats weaponizing unflattering, out-of-context moments to label each other’s president.

In southwestern Minnesota, the state department of transportation also closed a portion of eastbound Interstate 90 that was swamped by floodwaters.

Northwestern University who studies media, public opinion and public policy in democracy and elections.

At the G7 summit in Italy, where Biden headed after Normandy, a clip of the president watching a skydiving demonstration was cropped to make it appear as though he wandered off for no reason. A wider view of the video shows he was greeting paratroopers who had just landed. And at a Los Angeles fundraiser last weekend, a pause by Biden as he left the stage amid cheers was used to say the president froze, while Biden’s campaign said he was only stopping to take in the applause. The clips have been especially effective at activating concerns about Biden’s competency, according to Nisbet, because he is the oldest sitting president the U.S. has ever had, and he moves with more difficulty than he once did. Dr. Kevin

want the public to see.”

Experts say these attacks can be iterative, with social media influencers and campaigns piling on one another.

“The attention economy within conservative media helps perpetuate these cycles of circulation and these sorts of misinformation and campaign messaging,” said A.J. Bauer, an assistant professor at the University of Alabama who studies conservative news. For example, the Republican National Committee posted a cropped version of the video of Biden at the G7 summit in Italy shortly after it happened, captioning the post, “What is Biden doing?” The RNC’s post was then shared by right-leaning media outlets — among them, Sinclair Broadcast Group syndicated stations and the New York Post, which embedded the RNC’s post in its story.

## What the 3.2 million-year-old Lucy fossil reveals about nudity and shame

Fifty years ago, scientists discovered a nearly complete fossilized skull and hundreds of pieces of bone of a 3.2-million-year-old female specimen of the genus Australopithecus afarensis, often described as “the mother of us all.” During a celebration following her discovery, she was named “Lucy,” after the Beatles song “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds.”

Though Lucy has solved some evolutionary riddles, her appearance remains an ancestral secret. Popular renderings dress her in thick, reddish-brown fur, with her face, hands, feet and breasts peeking out of denser thickets. This hairy picture of Lucy, it turns out, might be wrong.

Technological advancements in genetic analysis suggest that Lucy may have been naked, or at least much more thinly veiled.

According to the coevolutionary tale of humans and their lice, our immediate ancestors lost most of their body fur 3 to 4 million years ago and did not don clothing until 83,000 to 170,000 years ago.

That means that for over 2.5 million years, early humans and their ancestors were simply naked. As a philosopher, I’m interested in how modern culture influences representations of the past. And the way Lucy has been



depicted in newspapers, textbooks and museums may reveal more about us than it says about her.

**FROM NUDITY TO SHAME**

The loss of body hair in early humans was likely influenced by a combination of factors, including thermoregulation, delayed physiological development, attracting sexual partners and warding off parasites.

Environmental, social and cultural factors may have encouraged the eventual adoption of clothing. Both areas of research — of when and why hominins shed their body hair and when and why they eventually got dressed — emphasize the sheer size of the brain, which takes years to nurture and requires a dispro-

## ‘Managing gestational diabetes in early stages could prevent complications’

Managing gestational diabetes in the earlier stages of pregnancy could help prevent complications and improve delivery outcomes, according to researchers.

Among the most common pregnancy complication around the world, gestational diabetes cases are on the rise and becoming more complex because of increasing obesity, said the authors of a new series published in The Lancet journal.

The international team of researchers, including those from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, said that the condition affects one in about seven pregnancies globally and is typically tested for and treated late into the second or third trimester.

If left untreated, gestational diabetes can lead to high blood pressure, increased risk of caesarean sections, mental health conditions, and complications for the baby at delivery, they said. The authors added that the pregnancy-related condition could also increase the chances of the mother developing health complications later in life, such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Evidence suggests that the reasons for developing gestational diabetes can exist prior to pregnancy and that metabolic changes, such as those in glucose and blood pressure, can be



detected in early pregnancy (before 14 weeks), according to the authors.

Therefore, they have called for urgently bringing in strategies, including testing and diagnosing earlier, to prevent and manage gestational diabetes. This could reduce pregnancy and delivery complications, along with lowering the risk of women developing other health con-

ditions later in life, they said.

“(Gestational diabetes) is a tremendous public health challenge. Women who experience it need support from the medical community, policymakers, and society as a whole to ensure they can effectively access proper treatment, reduce the stigma associated with (the condition), and improve their overall pregnancy

experience,” said series author Dr. Yashdeep Gupta of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

The authors found that 30-70 per cent of women having gestational diabetes experience high blood glucose from early stages of their pregnancy — 20 weeks or sooner. These women were also found to have worse outcomes, compared to those developing the condition in later stages of their pregnancy.

In studies where gestational diabetes was not managed effectively, the authors found these women to be at higher risks of premature delivery (51 per cent), birthing of bigger babies (57 per cent) and caesarean delivery (16 per cent).

Further, women with gestational diabetes were found to be at a 10-fold higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life compared to those not experiencing the pregnancy-related condition, and could possibly be accompanied by hypertension, fatty liver and an increased risk of heart disease.

# Chimps found to ‘seek out’ plants to heal injuries, infections: Study

Chimpanzees sought out and ate medicinal plants to treat their injuries, according to a study.

While wild chimpanzees are known to consume a variety of plant matter, researchers said it can be hard to figure out if they intentionally seek out medicinal plants to heal their ailments, or “passively” consume plants that happen to be medicinal.

The study is published in the journal PLoS ONE.

At the Budongo Central Forest Reserve in Uganda, the researchers, including those at the University of Oxford, UK, observed the behaviours and health of 51 wild chimpanzees, belonging to two habituated communities.

The researchers observed a male chimpanzee with an injured hand seek out and eat the leaves of a fern, which may have helped to reduce pain and swelling. They also recorded another chimpanzee with a parasitic infection consuming the



bark of a cat-thorn tree (Scutia myrtina). The team also tested the plant extracts of tree and herb species in

the reserve, which they suspected were being consumed by the chimpanzees to self-medicate, for anti-inflammatory and antibiotic prop-

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erties. The species included plants not part of the chimpanzees’ normal diet, but being consumed for their healing properties.

The authors found 88 per cent of the plant extracts had antibacterial properties, arresting the growth of bacteria, while 33 per cent of them had anti-inflammatory properties.

Deadwood from a tree in the Dogbane family (Alstonia boonei) showed the strongest antibacterial activity and also had anti-inflammatory properties, suggesting it

could be used to treat wounds, they said.

Bark and resin from the East African mahogany tree (Khaya anthotheca) and leaves from a fern (Christella parasitica) were found to exhibit potent anti-inflammatory effects.

The results suggested that chimpanzees looked for and ate specific plants for their medicinal effects, and the study was one of the first to document evidence of this kind, the authors said.

The medicinal plants growing in Budongo Central Forest Reserve could also be helpful for the development of new drugs to address the challenges of antibiotic-resistant bacteria and chronic inflammatory diseases, the authors said.

The findings demonstrated how watching and learning from our primate cousins may fast-track the discovery of novel medicines, along with emphasising the importance of protecting our forest pharmacies, they said.



## Water emergency halts tourist arrivals at Italy’s popular Capri island

A water emergency prompted the mayor of Capri — one of Italy’s most popular islands — to order a halt to the arrival of tourists on Saturday, in a crisis that has deprived some areas of any water supply.

Without a water supply, it is impossible to guarantee essential services to “thousands of people” who travel to the island daily during the tourist season, Mayor Paolo Falco said. “The health and hygiene situation is explosive, we have taken our countermeasures and activated the crisis unit and issued a restrictive order,” the mayor’s order said.

The emergency was caused by a failure in the mainland’s water system that provides vital supplies to the world-known island.

At the moment water is still supplied to most of the island, but some isolated areas of the upper municipality of Anacapri are already dry. Only local reservoirs supply the network, which in the absence of supplies from the mainland risks being run out.

Meanwhile, tanks are expected to reach the island to support essential services, pending the restoration of full supply.

The Mayor’s order was notified shortly after 0900 a.m. causing an immediate stop to ticket sales.