



- Revanth Reddy, CM Telangana

P4

-PAGE: 3

-PAGE: 5

-PAGE: 8

-SPORTS

Continued on Page 2

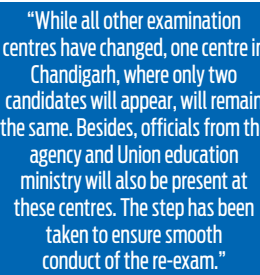


The police have shifted the recovered bodies to GGH in Bapatla for postmortem and have registered a case.

Chief Secretary Prasad instructed officials from the Panchayat Raj, RWS, Medical Health, and Municipal Departments to implement the action plan vigorously to combat diarrhoeal diseases. Over the past four months, numerous

Continued on Page 2

The National Testing Agency (NTA), under fire over the lapses in the conduct of NEET and UGC-NET, is gearing up to conduct on Sunday a retest for the medical entrance exam for 1,563 candidates who were earlier awarded grace marks to make up for the loss of time at six centres.



staged protests across the country over the alleged irregularities and demanded the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who skipped the Delhi University's Yoga Day event where some students held a protest against the alleged irregularities.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra launched a scathing attack on the government, saying the issue has become a national problem under the BJP rule which has "ruined the future" of crores of youth.

The protests came a day after Pradhan ruled out any immediate

"While all other examination centres have changed, one centre in Chandigarh, where only two candidates will appear, will remain the same. Besides, officials from the agency and Union education ministry will also be present at these centres. The step has been taken to ensure smooth conduct of the re-exam," a senior NTA official added.

‘Onus on developed nations to handhold developing countries’

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In his inaugural address at the Environment Social & Governance Summit 2024, Member of Parliament M Sribharat underscored the critical role of individual actions complemented by robust institutional support in advancing Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles worldwide. Hosted by the Confederation of Indian Industry AP Chapter, the summit's theme "Building Sustainable Business & Greener Tomorrow" resonated strongly with Sribharat's call for concerted efforts towards sustainable economic development.

Highlighting the imperative for equitable global participation, Sribharat emphasised the responsibility of developed nations in aiding developing economies to achieve sustainability goals. "The burden of



developing a sustainable economy should be shared globally," he asserted, advocating for supportive frameworks that balance efficacy with economic feasibility.

Dr. V Murali Krishna, Chairman of CII Visakhapatnam, echoed these sentiments, stressing the need for comprehensive frameworks to ensure health, safety, and environmental sustainability across India's diverse workforce. "Safety and sustainability are not mere options but essential imperatives," he emphasized, aligning with the summit's focus on integrating these principles into business operations.

Sanjay Kumar Jha, Executive

Director of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL), outlined India's ambitious environmental targets during his keynote address. Highlighting India's goal to become the world's third-largest economy, Jha affirmed IOCL's commitment to reducing fossil fuel dependency and achieving net-zero emissions by 2070. Jha detailed IOCL's strategic initiatives, including the establishment of a green hydrogen refinery in Panipat and plans for extensive tree-planting efforts totaling 6 million trees. He also emphasized the expansion of LPG stations and city gas distribution networks in Guntur and Visakhapatnam, crucial for enhancing sustainable energy access across industrial and residential sectors.

In a special address, Ashish Jain, President of Corporate Strategy at GMR Group, reiterated the profound impact of climate change on global ecosystems. Jain emphasized GMR Group's steadfast commitment to sustainability, guided by a robust framework encompassing 24 key ESG topics. He stressed the importance of identifying tangible and intangible benefits of ESG investments, advocating for a holistic approach that prioritizes long-term environmental stewardship.

The summit, attended by industry leaders and policymakers, concluded with a consensus on the pivotal role of collaborative efforts in achieving sustainable economic growth. As nations strive towards net-zero emissions and enhanced environmental stewardship, initiatives outlined by speakers underscored a collective commitment to a greener, more sustainable future.

Truth prevailed, says Bhuvaneswari

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Nara Bhuvaneswari, spouse of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, witnessed his return to the Legislative Assembly as Chief Minister live on television on Friday. Bhuvaneswari tweeted about Chandrababu Naidu fulfilling his vow to re-enter the Assembly as Chief Minister, stating, "Nijan-Gelichindi, Prajaswayaman Nilichindi and Prajalaku Pranamam" (Truth prevailed - Democracy has won - Thanks to the people). She recalled his commitment made after leaving the Assembly due to alleged disrespectful comments against his family members.

Chandrababu Naidu had vowed to return to the Assembly only upon assuming the role of Chief Minister, a promise he kept after a hiatus of two and a half years. His



emotional departure in November 2021, citing disrespectful remarks, marked a turning point. Following a recent electoral victory where the Telugu Desam Party-led alliance secured a significant majority, Naidu ceremoniously re-entered the Assembly on the first day of the new session. He reverentially bowed and touched the ground at the entrance before stepping inside.

Members of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and its allies warmly welcomed him

with chants of 'Welcome to the august House' and slogans celebrating the triumph of truth and democracy. TDP legislators displayed placards adorned with Naidu's image, underscoring their support and jubilation at his return.

Naidu, who had refrained from entering the House since November 19, 2021, due to the incident involving personal remarks against his family members, expressed deep emotion during the welcome.



World looking at yoga as powerful agent of global good: Modi

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

The world is looking at yoga as a powerful agent of global good, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on International Yoga Day on Friday while stressing that it has the potential to transform the economy of Jammu and Kashmir by attracting more tourists.

Choosing the SKICC on the picturesque banks of the Dal Lake to lead the nation in celebrating the 10th International Yoga Day, the prime minister described yoga as not just knowledge but also a science.

"When people talk about yoga, most of them think it is a spiritual journey as if it is to find Allah, Ishwar or God... Leave aside the spiritual journey which can happen any time later. For now, you can focus on personal development and yoga is part of that.

"If you approach it that way, I am sure you will get a lot of benefits. Personal development leads to the benefit of society, which in turn leads to the benefit of humankind," he said while addressing a gathering at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre.

The prime minister's event was scheduled to be held in the open but early morning rain forced the event indoors. Unmindful of the rain, scores of students were amongst those who joined the prime minister in performing various asanas on the occasion. They also requested for him for selfies and he happily obliged.

Modi, who was last in Srinagar in March to address a public rally, put out a tweet saying, "Post Yoga selfies in Srinagar! Unparalleled vibrancy here, at the Dal Lake", and posted pictures of him taking selfies with students.

FINANCIAL MISCONDUCT OF VISAKHA SARADA PEETHAM

Jana Sena leader calls for CBI, ED probe

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Jana Sena Party (JSP) leader and GVMC corporator, Peethala Murthy Yadav, has called for an investigation into the assets and alleged financial misconduct of Visakha Sri Sarada Peetham, demanding the intervention of both the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Yadav, speaking to the press on Friday, accused the influential seers of Visakha Sri Sarada Peetham, Swaroopanandendra Saraswati and Swatmanandendra Saraswati, of exploiting political connections for personal enrichment. He alleged that between 2019 and 2024, the Peetham amassed government lands worth a staggering Rs 500 crore, purportedly through dubious deals with former Chief Ministers YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and



K Chandradhar Rao, under the guise of religious rituals. Highlighting what he described as glaring discrepancies, Yadav questioned the origins of the peetham's immense wealth, noting that the spiritual leaders possess assets exceeding Rs 100 crore along with substantial holdings in gold. He pointed to a suspicious rise in the peetham's fixed deposits, which surged from a modest Rs 1 crore in 2018 to a formidable Rs 44 crore by 2024, alongside alleged benami accounts holding more than Rs 60 crore.

Expressing further con-

cerns, the JSP corporator emphasised the absence of a legitimate 'dharmaadhikari' overseeing the peetham's affairs, suggesting a lack of proper governance structures. He also alleged internal strife over property disputes involving sums in the crores. Calling upon the government to act decisively, Yadav urged authorities to thoroughly investigate the Peetham's operations, recover any unlawfully acquired assets, and conduct a comprehensive inquiry into the alleged malpractices.

The demand by Yadav has sparked widespread interest and concern, raising pertinent questions about the accountability and transparency of religious institutions entangled in political webs. As public scrutiny intensifies, all eyes now turn to the response of investigative agencies and the future course of action in this unfolding scandal.

Jagan enters House through rear entrance

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Chief Minister and YSRCP president, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, entered the Assembly premises through the rear gate on Friday. Anticipating protests by Amaravati farmers, he avoided the usual Seed Axis Road route, which he had used during his tenure as Chief Minister. Upon arrival, YS Jagan took oath as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, administered by Protam Speaker Gorentla Buchaiah Chowdary. After taking the oath, he proceeded to his chamber within the Assembly premises.

YS Jagan arrived at the Assembly five minutes after the session had started, ensuring his timely entry for the oath-taking ceremony.

YSRCP CHIEF TO AVOID AYYANNA'S SWEARING-IN

As Narsipatnam MLA and senior TDP leader Chintakayala Ayyannapratrudu will official-



ly take charge on Saturday, YSRCP chief and Pulivendula MLA YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has decided not to attend the Legislative Assembly sessions on that day.

Reports suggest that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy prefers to stay away from the Speaker's swearing-in ceremony. Traditionally, the elected Speaker is seated by both rul-

ing and opposition leaders, a practice that Jagan has supported in the past. However, this time he has chosen to attend to personal matters.

On June 22nd, Jagan will leave his residence in Tadepalli at 10 am and travel to Pulivendula. YSRCP sources have revealed that he will stay in Pulivendula for three days and be available to the people there.

YSRCP leaders urge CRDA not to demolish party's new office building

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) has accused the Telugu Desam Party (TDP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in Andhra Pradesh of conspiring to demolish their newly constructed party office in Tadepalli. The Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) has issued

orders for the demolition of the YSRCP office.

Previously, the YSRCP challenged the CRDA's preliminary proceedings in the High Court. Ponnayolu Sudhakar Reddy, representing the YSRCP, argued the case. After hearing both sides, the High Court directed that the authorities must follow due legal process regarding the provisional order dated

June 10, 2024. During the proceedings, the Office of the Advocate General assured the High Court that they would adhere to the legal procedures stipulated by the Act.

Despite this directive, YSRCP officials learned that on Friday evening, around 7:00 pm, officials from the Mangalagiri Tadepalli Municipal Corporation visit-

ed the office premises. They instructed the watchman to open the premises at 4:00 am on Saturday to commence demolition activities.

The YSRCP demanded the prevention of any demolition activities until all legal procedures are properly followed. This includes the issuance of a final confirmation order and allowing for any subsequent legal processes.

AP govt... Kejriwal to remain in jail

Continued from Page 1

Special Chief Secretary for Health, Medical and Family Welfare, MT Krishna Babu, stressed the importance of extensive water quality testing statewide, mandating that all freshwater sources be checked. He outlined plans for the distribution of ORS packets and zinc tablets and emphasized the need for preventive measures such as rotavirus and measles vaccinations. Rapid action is required in high-risk areas, with participation from relevant departments and voluntary organizations.

Krishna Babu also directed the formation of a district-level inter-sectoral task force committee under the Health Department by June 22. He ensured that there would be an adequate stock of ORS, zinc, and IV fluids. A detailed micro plan at village, ward, PHC, UHC, and district levels will be prepared, along with a communication strategy and monitoring mechanism from June 24 to 30.

Special Chief Secretary for the State Municipal and Urban Development Department, Anil Kumar Singhal, stated that Municipal Commissioners would be responsible for diarrhoea control in urban areas. He instructed them to review the management of various drinking water sources and pipelines.

The meeting was also attended by State Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Department Principal Secretary Shashi Bhushan Kumar, Principal Secretary of Women and Child Welfare G Jaya Lakshmi, and other officials.

HC's interim stay on trial court's bail order



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Embattled Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will have to remain in jail for now with the Delhi High Court on Friday putting an interim stay on a trial court's order granting him bail in the money laundering case linked to the alleged excise scam.

The AAP national convenor, who was arrested on March 21 by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), could have walked out of Tihar jail on Friday had the high court not granted the interim relief to the central anti-money laundering agency.

"Till the pronouncement of this order, the operation of the impugned order shall remain stayed," a vacation bench of Justice Sudhir Kumar Jain said and asked the parties to file written submissions by June 24.

The high court said it was reserving the order for 2-3 days as it wanted to go through the entire records.

It also issued notice to Kejriwal seeking his response on ED's plea challenging the trial court's June 20 order by which he was granted bail. It listed the plea for hearing on July 10.

The ED's lawyer mentioned for an urgent listing its petition challenging the trial court's bail order which was passed late Thursday evening.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) S V Raju, representing the ED, contended that the trial court's order was "perverse", "one-sided" and "wrong-sided" and that the findings were based on irrelevant facts. The relevant facts, he claimed, were not considered by the special judge.

"Material facts were not considered by the trial court. There cannot be a better case for cancellation of bail than this one. There cannot be greater perversity than this," he argued.

Seeking a stay on the trial court's order, he contended that the ED was not given adequate opportunity to argue its case.

The application for stay was vehemently opposed by senior advocates Abhishek Singhvi and Vikram Chaudhary, representing Kejriwal. They said Article 21 (protection of life and personal liberty) of the Constitution does not exist for the ED for which the liberty of a person figured low in priority.

Singhvi said the ED argued for 3 hours and 45 minutes before the trial judge.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.



Minister for Mines and Geology and Excise Kollu Ravindra performing yoga asanas in Machilipatnam on Friday



Minister for Health, Medical and Family Welfare Satya Kumar, MP CM Ramesh and others performing yoga asanas in Vijayawada on Friday

Yoga is the best way to improve health: Minister

International Yoga Day observed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The 10th International Yoga Day was celebrated in NTR and Krishna districts on Friday, with various programmes. Minister for Health, Medical and Family Welfare Satya Kumar Yadav participated in the yoga session conducted at A Plus convention in Vijayawada, while Minister for Mines and Geology and Excise Kollu Ravindra participated in the Yoga Day programmes held at the Police Parade Grounds in Machilipatnam.

Ayush Department organised the Yoga Day celebrations at the A Plus Convention in Vijayawada. Dr Manthana Satyanarayana Raju supervised the yoga session.

On the occasion, Minister Satya Kumar launched the online registration of the Pharmacy and Doctors' Website and released a training book for ASHAs and ANMs. Kolavennu MPP School students, Manthana Ashrama students and the students of IIIT Nuzvid campus performed yoga asanas.

Minister Satya Kumar, Anakapalli MP CM Ramesh, MLAs Kolikapudi Srinivasa Rao, S Eswara Rao, Health Department Special Chief Secretary MT Krishna Babu, Commissioner Dr Venkateswar, Ayush Commissioner Dr SB Rajendra Kumar, NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao, Aarogya Sri Health Care Trust CEO Dr G Lakshmisha, Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar and Vijayawada Sub Collector Bh Bhavani Sankar also participated in the yoga session.

Minister Satya Kumar said



Students performing yoga asanas as part of the 10th International Yoga Day celebrations in Vijayawada on Friday

Minister Satya Kumar, Anakapalli MP CM Ramesh, MLAs Kolikapudi Srinivasa Rao, S Eswara Rao, Health Department Special Chief Secretary MT Krishna Babu, Commissioner Dr Venkateswar, Ayush Commissioner Dr SB Rajendra Kumar, NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao, Aarogya Sri Health Care Trust CEO Dr G Lakshmisha, Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar and Vijayawada Sub Collector Bh Bhavani Sankar also participated in the yoga session.

yoga is the heritage of Indian culture and also the best way to improve health. "According to Swamy Vivekananda, yoga is the best thing to strengthen the body and mind. The theme of this year's International Yoga Day is 'Yoga for Self and Society'. Around 175 countries are practising yoga and it is the pride of our country," he said.

"The youth should practice yoga and meditation. Also, the parents should create awareness of yoga among their children," he added.

Meanwhile, NTR District Water and Management Agency (DWAMA) Project Director J Sunitha attended Yoga Day observance held at Sobbanna Tank along with Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Agency (MGN-REGA) workers at Pathapadu near Vijayawada. The tank was developed under the Upadhi scheme. Also, Yoga Day was celebrated by all departments in NTR and Krishna districts.

Yoga relieves stress: Kollu Ravindra

During the Yoga Day celebrations held at the Police Parade Grounds in Machilipatnam, Minister Kollu Ravindra said that practising yoga gives relief from mental stress. Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the initiative to introduce yoga in the United Nations Organisation (UNO) in 2014 and since then world countries have observed June 21 as International Yoga Day, he recalled.

Krishna District Collector DK Balaji, SP Adnan Nayeem Asmi, DRO K Chandrasekhar Rao, ASPs G Venkateswara Rao, SVD Prasad, KRRC Deputy Collector Sri Devi, Ayush Senior Medical Officer B Kalpana Kataksham, Machilipatnam Municipal Commissioner Bapi Raju, Krishna District Sports Development Officer Jhansi and others were present.

JSP MLA enters Assembly premises in traditional fisherman's attire

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

MLA Bommidi Nayakar made a striking entrance at the Assembly premises during the oath-taking ceremony by donning traditional fisherman attire. Hailing from the fishing community, Nayakar's attire included a party scarf wrapped around his head and a 'panche kattu', complemented by a fish net draped over his shoulders. He sported a basket tied around his waist, making a unique statement as he stepped into the Assembly.

Nayakar, representing the Narsapuram constituency under the JanaSena Party, garnered significant attention for his distinctive attire, a departure from the conventional legislative dress. Members from various political parties including Telugu Desam, BJP, and JSP extended their congratulations to him for his innovative approach.

His victory in the recent elections with a substantial majority from West Godavari District has set a new precedent. Nayakar expressed grat-



itude for the support received from the fishing community and credited JanaSena leader Pawan Kalyan for championing their cause. Kalyan's steadfast belief in the potential of fishermen played a

crucial role in Nayakar's electoral success.

"I dedicate my victory to the fishing community, whose concerns I will prioritize as I work towards the development of our constituency,"

remarked MLA Bommidi Nayakar. His pledge underscores a commitment to uplift the marginalized fishermen community, whose welfare he aims to enhance through legislative efforts.

Case filed against Kodali Nani, followers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Based on a complaint from former ward volunteers, the Krishna district police registered a case against former minister Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao alias Nani and his five followers on Friday. The Gudivada police have received many complaints from the ward volunteers and later cases were registered. Former volunteers of Gudivada 1 and 36 wards complained at the one-town police station.

According to the complaints, several former ward volunteers of Gudivada 1 and 36 wards have complained against ex-minister Kodali Nani, his close associate Dukkupati Shashibhushan, YSRCP Gudivada Town president Gorla Srinu and two other YSRCP leaders.

Farooq assumes office as Minority Welfare Minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Nasyam Mohammad Farooq assumed office as Minister of Law and Minority Welfare of Andhra Pradesh on Friday. He took charge as minister after interfaith prayers, especially namaz, at 2 pm in the chamber allotted to him (room no 212) in the 3rd block of the state secretariat.

On this occasion, the minister said he signed the Waqf Board files after examining. He said that through central schemes like the Prime Minister's Jan Vikas Center (PMJVK), skill development, education, health and other infrastructure should be provided for minorities, after discussing with the higher authorities will take an appropriate decision. He said that the previous government had ignored 77 projects worth Rs 643.54 crore sanctioned during 2014-19 under PMJVK. As there has been no progress in the projects in the last five years, Secretary of the Minority Welfare Department K Harshavardhan was directed to instruct the District Collectors to complete those works quickly. He asked to take steps to prepare new proposals on behalf of the state and submit them to the central government.

Minister Farooq said Waqf



Board, Urdu Academy under School Education and Minority Finance Corporation that are under Revenue will be named as Minority Welfare Department. He said that in the past, he worked for the development of the minority Muslims and Christians and they brought to his notice many problems in Dargahs and Waqf Boards and they will thoroughly discuss and resolve them. The minister briefed the efforts made by CM Chandrababu Naidu for the development of churches. Good facilities will be provided for Haj pilgrims. He said that he will work with the aim of increasing the economic living standards of the minorities.

Minister Farooq said that abroad education will be named after former President of India

APJ Abdul Kalam. Soon the relevant file will be sent to the chief minister for approval. He recalled that in the past, education abroad had the names of people like NTR and Ambedkar, but the previous government renamed them. He said that they have the credit of spending hundreds of crores for the welfare of minorities and the implementation of quality education.

Guntur East MLA Mohammad Naseer, Minority Welfare Principal Secretary Harshavardhan, Law Secretary Prabhakar Rao, Waqf Board CEO Abdul Khader, Urdu Academy Director Mastan Wali, MHPS Founder State President Maulana Hussain Ahmed, Minority Department officials, staff and others were present.

Vizag Police mark Yoga Day with impressive session

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam city police displayed a strong commitment to health and well-being with a large-scale yoga session at the Armored Reserve police grounds in celebration of International Yoga Day. The event drew an impressive turnout of around 700 city police officers, who were guided through the yoga postures by esteemed faculty members from the Art of Living foundation.

Police Commissioner Dr. A. Ravi Shankar led the session. He emphasised the critical importance of health for police personnel, who face unique and demanding work-related stresses. "It is a privilege to participate in this yoga programme on International Yoga Day amidst such a refreshing atmo-



sphere. We've already conducted health checkups for everyone, with results sent directly to your phones. Please review these results, and we will soon facilitate online consultations with health professionals to address any concerns," he said.

Highlighting the potential health disparity between police personnel and other government employees, Dr. Ravi Shankar urged officers to take care of their health. He specifically pointed to yoga as a key practice for maintaining men-

tal and physical strength. "Regular yoga practice fosters well-being for both the body and mind, reduces stress, improves self-control, and enhances blood circulation," he underlined.

Joint Commissioner of Police



Dr K Fakeerappa, DCP (Crimes) Venkata Ratnam, and Art of Living senior faculty Aruna Tumarada were present on the occasion, apart from ADCPs, ACPs, CIs, RIs, SSIs, RSIs, and numerous other police personnel.

Health experts outline steps to combat seasonal diseases

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Medical and Health Officer Dr P Jagadeeswar Rao raised an urgent call to action against seasonal diseases, with a strong focus on dengue, malaria, and other insect-borne illnesses. Addressing the media on Friday, Dr. Rao emphasised the need for preventive measures as the rainy season approaches.

Dr. Rao highlighted that diseases such as malaria, dengue, chikungunya, and filariasis are transmitted by insects, making it essential for the community to engage in preventive efforts. He stressed the importance of eliminating mosquito breeding sites and taking steps against these diseases.

District Malaria Officer Tulsi Raj detailed a comprehensive set of measures to prevent mosquito breeding. Key recommendations include maintaining cleanliness around homes, avoiding the disposal of garbage

Outline comprehensive set of measures to prevent mosquito breeding



in nearby canals, and repairing leaks to eliminate stagnant

water. Additionally, residents are advised to change air cool-

er water weekly, sprinkle kerosene or oil on stagnant

water, and remove items like discarded tires and coconut shells that can collect rainwater.

Further preventive actions outlined by Tulsi Raj involve introducing gambusia fish to control mosquito larvae and ensuring that water is not stored around homes every Friday. Other important measures include preventing water accumulation at construction sites and in flower pots, and installing gas pipes on septic tanks to block mosquito entry. These steps are critical to curbing mosquito populations and reducing the risk of insect-borne diseases.

District Media Officer B Nageswara Rao emphasised the critical need for public awareness regarding mosquito eradication. He advised the use of mosquito nets and regular fogging around homes to keep mosquito populations in check. Dr S Jeevana Rani,

District Disease Control Officer, echoed the call for shared responsibility in mosquito control. She underscored the importance of cleanliness and awareness, including adult BCG vaccination.

Dr. Samatha, District RBSK Coordinator, highlighted the necessity of preventing mosquito breeding within homes and raising awareness about chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and cancer. Tulsi Raj concluded the conference by announcing that fogging operations are already underway in urban areas, particularly around hostels, to curb mosquito growth. She called for public cooperation in maintaining cleanliness and reducing malaria cases.

Dr S Jeevana Rani, B Nageswara Rao, Dr N Samatha, and Nagabhushanam, MPHEO, and other health staff were present.

Couple found dead in V'wada; suicide pact suspected

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A tragic incident unfolded in Ramalingeshwara Nagar, Vijayawada, where a couple was found dead in their residence on Friday afternoon. The bodies of Chandrala Naga Raju (32) and Pavithra (28) were found by residents who informed the police immediately.

According to police reports, Raju, a daily wage labourer from Bantumilli, and Pavithra, who engaged in tailoring and stitching from their rented home in Ramalingeshwara Nagar, took their lives in what appears to be a joint decision. The couple, married for seven years after falling in love in Avanigadda, faced challenges recently. Raju, battling alcohol

addiction, had ceased working, while Pavithra managed household finances with financial support from her parents.

Pavithra's mother informed police that Raju had contacted her, stating that Pavithra had taken her life in his absence. Upon returning home around 2:30 pm, he discovered the tragic scene and subsequently conveyed his own intent to end his life. Pavithra's mother rushed to the residence, where she discovered both deceased and promptly notified the authorities. A case has since been registered.

This incident has cast a pall of sadness over the neighbourhood, prompting reflections on the challenges faced by families in similar circumstances.

Supply vegetables at subsidised prices in Rythu Bazars: Collector

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Sumit Kumar has directed the officials to take steps to sell vegetables at subsidized prices at Rythu Bazars in the district.

The Collector held a meeting with the officials concerned and reviewed the spiralling prices of vegetables. He said that because of the daily increase in the prices of vegetables in the open market, a committee has been formed with the officials of the relevant departments.

The Collector said that it is proposed to buy the vegetables directly from farmers and sell them at subsidized prices through Rythu Bazars. The Collector directed the officials to buy tomatoes from the Madanapalle wholesale market. The officials were ordered to summarize the



price fluctuations of vegetables in the next two days and asked them to take action immediately.

When the problems of Bhimavaram Rythu Bazar were brought to the notice of

the district Collector, he directed the officials to get the RO plant repaired at a cost of Rs 40,000 and submit proposals for the repairs of toilets. It was ordered that the prices must be displayed in front of

the meat shops set up in Rythu Bazar. The estate officer was advised to take measures to stop the vehicles in the parking place so that there is no trouble for the users. Civil Supplies Corporation

district Manager T Shivaram Prasad, DSO N Saroja, district horticulture officer R Devanand Kumar and marketing officer S Sunil Kumar were among those who were present.

Union Minister exhorts all to make yoga part of life



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Union Minister of State for Heavy Industries and Steel Bhupatiraju Srinivasa Varma has exhorted the people to make practising Yoga as a part of life.

The Union Minister participated in the 10th International Yoga Day programme and practised yoga in which district Collector Sumit Kumar also took part. The programme was held on the campus of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan School here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister Srinivas Varma said yoga is a part of the ancient culture of India. He exhorted all to adopt the ancient lifestyle including practicing yoga. Everyone can do yoga and no one has any limitations, he said, adding that yoga gives wonderful results. He lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his efforts to introduce yoga to the world.

The Union Minister said that not only in India but also in other countries, yoga is being practised now. "Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that no matter how much work stress he is in, no matter which country he is on a tour, he practices yoga," Varma recalled.

On this occasion, District Collector Sumit Kumar said

that there is intense competition in every field in the world today and people are under mental pressure due to it.

He observed that physical activity has decreased and therefore people are suffering from diseases like obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure at a young age. Yoga contributes a lot to mental peace and physical health, he stated. Recognizing the importance of yoga, all countries around the world are celebrating yoga on June 21 as International Yoga Day, the Collector maintained.

Collector Sumit Kumar advocated for the students to practice games and yoga to get rid of mental stress in studies and competitive exams. He opined that everyone can be healthy if they do yoga every day. Superintendent of Police Ajit Vejudla regretted that due to technology and modern tools, physical activity has reduced and everyone should do physical exercise for at least 20 minutes a day so that mental and physical balance can be achieved.

Joint Collector CV Pravin Aditya, DRO J Uday Bhaskar and additional SPs Bhima Rao, ATV Ravi Kumar and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Secretary UK Viswanatha Raju were among a host of dignitaries who took part in the programme.



YSRCP MP Mithun Reddy in talks with BJP?

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a sensational disclosure, Jammalamadugu BJP MLA C Adinarayana Reddy has announced that Rajampet YSRCP MP Peddireddy Midhun Reddy has initiated discussions with the BJP's top leadership regarding a potential party switch. Reddy made these sensational remarks in the Assembly lobbies in Amaravati, suggesting an imminent disintegration of the YSRCP.

According to Adinarayana Reddy, Midhun Reddy has been in consultation with senior BJP leaders, signalling a possible vacancy of YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh. He further claimed that barring Avinash Reddy, all YSRCP MPs are prepared to join the BJP if the party gives the nod. Despite his statements, MLA Adinarayana Reddy clarified that he does not seek a leadership role within the BJP. However, he confirmed that Midhun Reddy remains in contact and is pressing for his father, Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy, to also join the BJP.

Meanwhile, Transport Minister M. Ramprasad Reddy has firmly opposed the inclusion of Peddireddy's family in the BJP. He declared that individuals like Peddireddy and Midhun Reddy would not find a place in the BJP and predicted their eventual incarceration. Minister Ramprasad Reddy said that evidence of Peddireddy's corruption and scams will soon be revealed, leading to a thorough investigation into the alleged atrocities committed by his family.

TG CM hits back at KTR over Singareni coal block auctions

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy hit back at KTR on the issue of coal block auctions affecting SCCL.

Responding to KTR's tweet questioning the government's stance, Revanth vehemently opposed any privatisation attempts arguing they would be 'detrimental' to the state.

KTR's tweet that sparked the debate said: "Revanth Garu, as the TPCC president and MP, in 2021, you had asked the Centre to stop the auction of coal blocks and transfer the four coal blocks to SCCL. Now, as Chief Minister, to the absolute dismay of the people of Telangana, you have sent your Deputy CM to participate in the auctions that you and the Congress had opposed vociferously earlier. Can you explain the reasons for this change of heart and compulsions (if any) that led to this? Do you not agree that the auc-

tioning of Telangana's coal blocks will pave the way for the eventual privatisation of SCCL under the guise of disinvestment? Why is your government not questioning the Centre on the direct allocations of mines (exempting from auctioning) to PSUs in Gujarat and Orissa by the NDA admin? Why is a Telangana PSU not being given the same treatment?"

"KTR garu," Revanth Reddy's response began, "Since you have not cared to hear anything the people of Telangana spoke for 10 years, it is unlikely that you will care to listen to facts now. But the hope in our hearts tries nevertheless."

He went on to accuse KTR and the BRS of turning a blind eye when previous administrations, both at the Centre and in the state under KCR, auctioned off coal blocks from Singareni to private companies.



UNIDO team holds comprehensive assessment meeting

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) recently conducted a comprehensive assessment meeting at the Command Control Room on the premises of the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation on Friday. The objective of the mission was to evaluate the progress of the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation project funded by GEF (approximately Rs.11 crore). The team also visited the Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) in Vijayawada.

The Municipal Commissioner



of Vijayawada, Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar addressed the delegation, providing insights into the GEF-funded project titled 'Rejuvenation of STPs and DP Stations and Installation of Biogas Energy Plants in VMC.' The commissioner highlighted the

2-month 'Stop diarrhoea' drive in Eluru from July 1

PNS ■ ELURU

Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh has directed officials to take measures to prevent the spread of diarrhoea in the district. Announcing a two-month-long awareness campaign, the Collector stated that the campaign would run from July 1 to August 31.

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad held a video conference with District Collectors on Friday from the State Secretariat to discuss efforts to curb the spread of diarrhoea (Stop Diarrhea Campaign). District Collector Prasanna Venkatesh and officials from various departments participated in the video conference.

Following the video conference, Collector Venkatesh announced the formation of a district-level task force committee to implement the 'Stop Diarrhea' campaign from July 1 to August 31.

"The focus is on early preventive measures to ensure that diarrhoea cases do not spread within the district," said the Collector. He emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach involving the Department of Health, Rural Water Supply (RWS), Panchayati Raj, and other relevant departments.

"A robust communication strategy and monitoring mechanism should be established to prevent the spread of diarrhoea. Efforts should be concentrated on areas with previously reported cases. Water sample testing must be intensified, and extensive awareness programs should be organized to keep the public informed," the Collector instructed officials.

The Collector also urged officials to advise the public to drink boiled water and ensure that drinking water tanks in schools and hostels are cleaned.

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad highlighted the necessity of a strong field-level operation to control diarrhoea spread, especially with the onset of the rainy season, which increases the risk of water pollution.

The meeting was attended by key officials, including DMHO Dr. S Sharmistha, DCHS Pal Satish Kumar, RWS SE Satyanarayana, and Municipal Commissioner Venkata Krishna.



ASR Collector urges vigilance amid diarrhoea threat

PNS ■ PADERU

District Collector M. Vijaya Suneetha has rallied officials to bolster efforts against the looming threat of diarrhoea outbreaks. With nearly one lakh children under five years old in jeopardy, the district administration has launched a proactive campaign to stem the tide of potential health crises. In a crucial meeting held on Friday, Collector Suneetha underscored the urgency of preventive measures, particularly advocating for the boiling of water as a critical safeguard. Citing alarming reports of water contamination across 217 areas, including vital administrative hubs, the Collector pressed for ramped-up bleaching and chlorination processes. Rigorous water quality testing protocols have been mandated to ensure the populace's safety.

Highlighting the government's unwavering commitment to tribal areas, the Collector enjoined health, water supply, and local governance bodies to maintain unwavering vigilance. Crucial supplies, including medicines, Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) packets, and zinc tablets, are being swiftly mobilized to fortify the district's defences against potential outbreaks.

Assurances from District Medical Health Officer Dr. Jamal Basha regarding adequate medical reserves provided a semblance of relief. A stockpile boasting 3.75 lakh ORS packets, 7,500 zinc fluids, and essential medications like Metrogyl, Furazolidone, and



Cifran tablets stands poised to combat any surge in diarrhoea cases.

The emergency meeting drew participation from a consortium of key stakeholders, including health officials Dr. Krishna Rao and Dr. Prasada Rao, as well as administrative figures such as Dr. Vishwamitra and N. Suryalakshmi. Plans were deliberated upon to orchestrate expansive awareness programs and disseminate critical health advisories across the district.

Residents were urged to maintain vigilance and seek immediate medical attention upon detecting symptoms, underlining the pivotal role of swift action in containing diarrheal illnesses and safeguarding public health integrity. As the district braces itself against potential challenges, the resolute stance of officials and proactive measures taken offer a beacon of hope amidst looming health concerns. The concerted efforts led by Collector Suneetha exemplify a determined response to protect the community's well-being in the face of adversity.

Beneficiaries of TIDCO housing scheme plunged into uncertainty

Scheme mired in issues over eligibility, allocation, and political interference

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The fate of thousands of beneficiaries of the Township and Infrastructure Development Corporation (TIDCO) housing scheme in Visakhapatnam hangs in the balance as confusion and controversy continue to plague the initiative. Launched in 2016 by the then TDP government to provide housing for the urban poor, the scheme has been mired in various issues such as eligibility, allocation, and political interference.

Initially, out of 3,47,284 applicants, 2,03,438 were declared eligible by Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) officials. The government planned to build flats of 300, 365, and 430 square feet in 31 layouts across the city and its suburbs. Applicants were required to pay between Rs. 25,000 and Rs.



1 lakh, depending on the size of the flat. However, only 43,844 applicants made the required payments.

It was aimed to construct 55,000 houses in areas including Sangivalasa, Bakkannapalem, Kommadi, and Dabbanda. Slum clearances facilitated the construction of 24,192 houses across 31 layouts. By 2019, nearly 4,000 houses were completed and allocated through a lottery system.

The situation took a turn in 2019 when the YCP government came to power and cancelled the previous allotments, alleging irregularities in the selection process. A subsequent survey disqualified 13,761 applicants and confirmed eligibility for 30,083 others who had made payments. Due to a shortfall in housing units, 24,192 houses were allocated via lottery, while other applicants received refunds and land in Jagananna

colonies. Despite promises by YSRCP leaders to complete and distribute the TIDCO houses within a year, progress has been slow. In their five-year tenure, only 7,456 houses were handed over, including the 4,000 completed under the TDP regime. Many beneficiaries vacated their homes soon after moving in due to inadequate infrastructure, leaving only about 4,000 residents enduring minimal facilities.

YCP's allocation process was criticised for alleged irregularities and political bias. With TDP's recent return to power, there are rising expectations that the house allotment and beneficiary selection processes will be revisited. This potential revision adds another layer of uncertainty for the beneficiaries, who remain hopeful yet wary of the unfolding developments.

'Job Mela' at Vikas today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vikas Educational Institutions Chairman Naredla Narsi Reddy and Vice-Chairman Naredla Satyanarayana Reddy have said that their institution will conduct a job mela on the campus at Nunna near Vijayawada on Saturday.

Renowned companies such as Excelr, Vivid, Chola MS, NTT, ICICI Lombard, Raj Groups and others are to be attending the pool campus drive, they said in a press release here on Friday.

Further, they said candidates who passed out Degree, Diploma, BTech, B Pharmacy and other courses in 2022, 23 and 24 are eligible. Interested candidates can directly attend the job mela on Saturday, they asked.

Savita conducts surprise inspection of BC hostel

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State BC Welfare Minister S Savitha conducted a surprise inspection of the Government Backward Classes Boys Hostels in Vidut Colony, Vijayawada on Friday. On the occasion, the Minister spoke to the students and enquired about the food provided in the hostels and the infrastructure.

The Minister inspected the hostel surroundings, dining room and kitchen. The officials were directed to pay special attention to cleanliness. The minister said that there is a need to modernize the dining room and kitchen rooms.

Later, the minister had lunch with the students and inquired about the quality of the food. Minister Savita reprimanded the warden as the rooms used by the students were not clean.

The students were directly asked about the quality and



quantity of food items. She expressed anger over the poor quality of food provided to the students and warned the warden to change.

The minister gave the

phone number to the students to call her directly if they have any problems in the hostel. Many local public representatives and others participated in this programme.

INDIA CORNER

Group flaunting ‘koyta’ barges into Pune house, assaults three

The Pune police have arrested eight persons after a group of people carrying ‘koyta’ (billhook) forcibly entered a house on the city’s outskirts and injured three members of a family, an official said on Friday. The incident took place at Kirkatwadi village in the Sinhgad Road area on Thursday night. Citing the FIR, the official said that 10-15 people went on a rampage after barging into the home of a youth at Bhairavnath Nagar. They allegedly attacked him, his mother and an elderly relative over a petty issue. Police said they have registered a case under Indian Penal Code sections 307 (attempt to murder), 354 (molestation) and the ones concerning rioting and arrested eight of the alleged attackers. A minor has also been apprehended, said Sachin Wangade, senior inspector of Haveli police station. Meanwhile, Baramati MP Supriya Sule demanded action against the billhook-wielding group.



Red alert issued in Karnataka, warning of extremely heavy rain

The Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) has issued a red alert for coastal Karnataka, which is likely to receive extremely heavy rainfall on June 22. It also said thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds (30-40kmph) are likely at isolated places across the state. According to a KSNDMC advisory, between June 23 and June 26 isolated heavy rains are also expected in certain areas of the Krishna basin. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has also issued a weather forecast stating that coastal and adjacent districts in interior Karnataka are very likely to receive heavy to very heavy rains. Although the Southwest Monsoon has further advanced into some more parts of Maharashtra, the remaining parts of Vidarbha, some parts of Madhya Pradesh, some other parts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha, some parts of Gangetic West Bengal.



Cong leader seeks education min resignation over NEET row

Mumbai Congress chief Varsha Gaikwad on Friday demanded the resignation of Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the alleged irregularities in NEET-UG. Taking part in a protest organised here by her party over the issue, she also questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ‘silence’ on the students’ plight. “Education minister Dharmendra Pradhan should resign on moral grounds,” said Gaikwad, who was elected to the Lok Sabha from Mumbai North Central constituency in the recently held elections. “Prime minister Modi has not uttered a word about the hardship faced by students due to the irregularities that have come to light,” she said, while also adding that education should not be politicised and students should get justice.



ED acting as if Kejriwal ‘most wanted terrorist’: Sunita

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal’s wife Sunita Kejriwal lashed out at the ED for challenging her husband’s bail order in the high court, accusing it of acting as if the AAP national convener was the “most wanted terrorist in India”. Speaking in south Delhi’s Bhogal where Delhi Water Minister Atishi began an indefinite hunger strike to press on her demand for getting more water from Haryana, Sunita Kejriwal said dictatorship in the country has crossed all limits. “It was only yesterday your chief minister got bail. In the morning, the order was supposed to be uploaded. Even before the order was uploaded, the ED approached the Delhi High Court. This happened as if Kejriwal is the most wanted terrorist in India,” Sunita Kejriwal said.



Sunita also read out a message from Kejriwal, who is currently lodged in Tihar jail, in which he expressed hope that Atishi’s ‘tapasya’ would be successful

has crossed all limits. The ED does not want to give anyone liberty and has gone to the high court against the chief minister demanding a stay (on his bail). The high court’s decision is yet to come. We hope the high court will deliver justice,” she added. Before reaching Bhogal, Sunita had also accompanied Atishi and other AAP leaders to Raighat to pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi.

Sunita also read out a message from Kejriwal, who is currently lodged in Tihar jail, in which he expressed hope that Atishi’s ‘tapasya’ would be successful. The chief minister said he was immensely pained by seeing on TV the plight of the people facing water shortage amid the ongoing intense heat-wave, he said. “It’s our culture to provide water to the thirsty.

BJP’s conspiracy ‘exposed’; so, ED challenged it in HC: AAP MP

AAP leader Sanjay Singh on Friday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of making a mockery of the justice system after the Delhi High Court put on hold a trial court order granting bail to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the money laundering case linked to the alleged excise scam.

Singh said the trial court’s bail to the Delhi chief minister “exposed” the conspiracy of the BJP and the party should apologise to the Aam Aadmi Party and Kejriwal. Taking to X, Singh said in a post in Hindi, “Look at the hooliganism of the Modi government, the trial court’s order has not yet come, even

a copy of the order has not been received, so Modi’s ED reached the High Court to challenge which order? What is happening in this country? “Modi ji, why are you making a mockery of the justice system? The entire country is watching you?” the AAP MP said. At a press conference, Singh termed the trial court

order was “historic” and completely “exposed” the role of the BJP government and ED operated by it. “The court order clearly shows that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is fabricating facts against us and presenting documents in its favour in the court, statements are taken from witnesses under pressure,” he said.

AHEAD OF ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Maharashtra Council polls crucial test for parties

PNS ■ THANE

The biennial elections to 11 seats in the Maharashtra legislative council from the MLA quota will be a crucial test for the ruling Mahayuti and the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) ahead of the assembly elections to be held later this year. With 14 vacancies in the 288-member house, the electoral college is 274 and the quota for the winning candi-

date is 23. Out of the 11 seats, the MVA can get two and the ruling alliance nine as per their numerical strength in the lower house of the state legislature. Congress can get one candidate elected as an MLC, while the Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) can get one candidate. BJP can get five, leaving the rest four for allies Shiv Sena and NCP. The elections are scheduled

to be held on July 12 and nominations will open from June 25. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has 103 MLAs, followed by the Ajit Pawar-led NCP’s 40, Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena’s 38. The Congress has 37 MLAs, Shiv Sena (UBT) 15 and Sharad Pawar-led NCP 10. NCP MLAs Ashok Pawar and Nawab Malik have not given affidavits supporting either of the two factions.

Six persons fire rounds in air to spread terror

PNS ■ PUNE

Six persons on two motorcycles allegedly fired rounds in the air at different locations in Talegaon Dabhade town in Pimpri Chinchwad area near Pune in a bid to spread terror, police said on Friday. The incident took place around 8 pm on Thursday, they said. “Six persons came on two motorcycles and fired shots in the air at four different

places, including Shala Chowk, Maruti Chowk and Gajanan Temple area in Talegaon Dabhade area,” a police official from Pimpri Chinchwad said. “The preliminary probe indicated that the unidentified accused persons’ act of firing in the air was meant to spread terror in the area. We have launched a manhunt to trace these criminal elements and the process to examine the CCTV footage is underway,” he said.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea challenging certain alleged controversial dialogues and scenes in Annu Kapoor-starrer movie ‘Hamare Baarah’.

The Bombay High Court had on June 19 allowed the release of the movie after its makers agreed to delete certain objectionable portions. The matter came up for hearing on Friday before a vacation bench of justices Vikram Nath and S V N Bhatti, which allowed the petitioner to withdraw the plea. “By this writ petition, I have challenged certain controversial dialogues and scenes in the picture,” the counsel appearing for the petitioner said. The top court said a similar petition had come up before it last week. It said the Bombay

High Court has allowed the release of the movie and the petitioner can challenge that order. “The high court has examined it and thereafter, the high court has allowed the movie to be screened. Now, if you are still aggrieved, challenge it,” the bench said.

The petitioner’s counsel said he had filed the plea in the apex court on June 7 but it could not be listed earlier. “We are not inclined to hear this matter on merits today,” the bench observed. “Let us follow the procedure which is consistent with our system,” it said, adding the high court had seen the movie and asked for expunging few scenes and dialogues. “If you seek leave and file an appeal (against high court order), then it would be correct for this court to examine your independent grounds...,” the bench said.



Goa govt trying to close down Dabolim airport to help privately-run MIA, claims Cong MP

PNS ■ PUNJAB

A day after Qatar Airways shifted its operations from Dabolim airport in south Goa to Manohar International Airport (MIA) in north Goa, Congress MP Viriato

Fernandes on Friday alleged the state government was trying to close down the former and asserted he would raise the issue in the Lok Sabha. Addressing a press conference, he said the BJP government here was trying to help

the privately-run Manohar International Airport in Mopa at the expense of the facility in Dabolim. “There is consistent pressure on airlines to shift their operations to the private airport managed by the GMR group.



When translation led to war of words between Nehru, Harivansh Rai Bachchan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hindu, Urdu or something in between. That was the kernel of an argument between first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Hindi poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan over the translation of a presidential address from English to Hindi that was to be read by vice president Zakir Husain. Nehru thought that Bachchan’s translation of president Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan’s speech was too complex and the Hindi poet was adamant it was not, says the book “Nehru’s First Recruits” by journalist Kallol Bhattacharjee. Both were unwilling to relent. Recounting what had happened, the book says Nehru lost his cool with Bachchan, whom he had recruited as an

officer on special duty for Hindi at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Bachchan, who authored the landmark “Madhushala”, joined the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) in 1955 on a monthly salary of Rs 1,000, a good Rs 250 hike from his previous job as a producer in the All India Radio (AIR), according to the book. The major part of his responsibility in the MEA included translating speeches of the president and the vice president -- the commonly used Hindi name ‘Videsh Mantralaya’ for ‘External Affairs Ministry’ was, in fact, coined by Bachchan. The argument with Nehru happened when Bachchan translated the president’s speech in English into Hindi.

Powerloom worker electrocuted

PNS ■ THANE

A 49-year-old worker from Bhiwandi in Maharashtra’s Thane district died of electrocution at a powerloom unit, police said on Friday. The incident took place on Thursday night, they said.



“Hari Mohan Singh received

an electric shock while working at the powerloom unit around 8 pm. He was rushed to a hospital, where the doctors declared him dead,” an official of Bhiwanda police station said. The body of the deceased has been sent for a post-mortem to a government.

Worldwide enthusiasm marks 10th Yoga Day

PNS ■ NEW YORK/TEL AVIV

Thousands of yoga enthusiasts from across the world rolled out their yoga mats as they joined day-long sessions of the ancient Indian practice to commemorate the 10th International Day of Yoga on Friday. Recognising its universal appeal, in December 2014, the UN proclaimed June 21 as the International Day of Yoga. The draft UN General Assembly resolution establishing the International Day of Yoga was proposed by India and endorsed by a record 175 member states. The Consulate General of India in New York along with the Times Square Alliance hosted special yoga sessions at the iconic Times Square. Amid heat advisories in place for the New York area, which experienced temperatures as high as 93°F (33.8°C) during the day, people from all walks of life and nationalities arrived early morning on Thursday and rolled out their yoga mats in the heart of the popular New York City desti-



nation. Yoga instructor and breath meditation teacher Richa Dhekne, who has over two decades of experience as a volunteer and faculty member with the Art of Living Foundation, led the yoga and meditation session hosted by the Consulate General of India in New York. Several other yoga teachers and experts led various meditation, exercises and breathing sessions throughout the day at Times Square, as thousands participated in the day-long activities. In Washington, hundreds of

yoga enthusiasts came together to observe the day at an event that was addressed by India’s Deputy Ambassador to the US Sripriya Ranganathan. At the picturesque Wharf, overlooking the Potomac River, the International Yoga Day event on Wednesday began with prayers and Indian classical dance performances. The yoga session highlighted the spirit of oneness and harmony inspired by the ancient Indian practice. Over three hundred people from across Israel rolled out yoga

mates and performed asanas as they participated in International Yoga Day celebrations at the Peres Centre for Peace and Innovation in Tel Aviv. First Lady Michal Herzog was the chief guest at the main International Yoga Day event on Thursday. A series of events were held across the country. The event was organised by the Embassy of India in Israel in association with the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality and the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Israel.



Corps Lieutenant General Sanjay Mitra along with

‘World adopting our cultural heritage’

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday participated in a yoga programme with military personnel on the occasion of the 10th International Yoga Day at the training centre of Strike 1 Corps Headquarters here. About 600 people including Army Chief General Manoj Pandey and General Officer Commanding of Strike 1

senior officers, Agniveers, families and children participated in this programme. Singh described the day as a matter of pride for the nation as the world is accepting and adopting this great cultural heritage of India with enthusiasm. He gave credit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking yoga to the world.

Yoga for self and society

PM Modi celebrates International Yoga Day in Kashmir, emphasising Yoga's role in fostering peace and unity

On June 21, 2024, International Yoga Day gave new meaning to the people of Kashmir as the Prime Minister celebrated it with them. Prime Minister Narendra Modi marked a momentous occasion by celebrating International Yoga Day in the scenic valley of Kashmir. This event was not only significant as a global celebration of yoga but also as a powerful symbol of peace, unity and cultural heritage in a region that has seen its share of strife and conflict. Kashmir, often referred to as 'Paradise on Earth' due to its breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural tapestry, was chosen by PM Modi as the venue for this year's International Yoga Day celebration. The event was held at the iconic Shalimar Bagh in Srinagar. International Yoga Day, celebrated on June 21 each year, was established in 2015 following a resolution proposed by PM Modi at the United Nations General Assembly in 2014. The day aims to raise awareness about the benefits of practising yoga, a 5,000-year-old tradition that originated in India. It emphasises the integration of body, mind and spirit, promoting a balanced and harmonious lifestyle. This year's theme, yoga for self and society resonated deeply in Kashmir, a region known for its complex socio-political challenges.



By celebrating Yoga Day in Kashmir, PM Modi aimed to convey a message of reconciliation and the potential for a peaceful future. Indeed, Prime Minister Modi has always used the symbols very effectively and conveyed the message to the people, celebrating Yoga Day in Kashmir was no exception. The choice of Kashmir as the venue for this significant event is

laden with symbolism. The region, which has faced decades of conflict and unrest, witnessed an outpouring of support for the celebration, reflecting a desire for peace and normalcy. PM Modi's presence and the enthusiastic participation of residents is a step towards healing and bridging divides. This was PM Modi's first trip to the union territory since being re-elected for a third consecutive term. During this visit, PM Modi launched several significant developmental projects and participated in International Yoga Day 2024 activities. PM Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for various developmental projects valued at over Rs. 1,500 crores. The Prime Minister addressed the gathering. He underscored the importance of yoga in promoting health and unity. The Prime Minister took this occasion to send a strong message across the border that all acts of terrorism would be thwarted. Indeed, the trip did reinforce the confidence of the people as it came just weeks after the Jammu attacks. This would also be a message to the security forces also to beef up the security. PM Modi's visit underscored his commitment to the development and integration of Jammu and Kashmir. Indeed, the event was not just a display of yoga poses but a concerted effort to promote wellness and unity of the State.

PICTALK



People perform yoga in the Yamuna river on the 10th International Day of Yoga, in New Delhi

PTI

India's solar industry is a goldmine for investors

The surge in global demand for renewable energy has placed solar power at the centre stage, particularly in India

India's solar energy sector is shining brighter than ever, emerging as a goldmine for investors and entrepreneurs. The market, valued at \$38 billion in 2021, is set to grow exponentially, reaching \$238 billion by 2032, driven by an impressive 40 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR). The surge in global demand for renewable energy has placed solar power at the centre stage, particularly in India. With supportive Government policies, technological advancements and an increasing shift towards sustainability, the solar energy sector is witnessing unprecedented growth. Entrepreneurs and investors capitalise on this momentum, prioritising their goals to reap substantial benefits in the coming years.

Tech Advancements
Technological innovations are at the heart of the solar industry's success. Commercial solar panels have gotten way better at turning sunlight into electricity, cranking up the power they can produce per square foot. The switch from polycrystalline to more advanced bifacial solar panels, which can generate power from both sides, shows how



the industry is focused on squeezing out as much efficiency as possible. In recent years, PERC (Passivated Emitter and Rear Cell) technology has been predominant in India's solar panel market. However, due to efficiency limitations in mass production, there is a gradual shift towards more advanced technologies like TOPCon (Tunnel Oxide Passivated Contact) and HJT (Heterojunction Technology). **Government Policies**
The Indian Government's policies have played a crucial role in transforming the solar energy landscape. The Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, with substantial financial allocations (PLI-I with Rs. 4,500 crores and PLI-II with Rs. 19,500 crores), are designed to boost domestic manufacturing of solar components.

Further bolstering the "Make in India" initiative, the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) was reinstated on April 1, 2024, ensuring quality control and encouraging the use of domestically manufactured modules. Various projects by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), such as the CPSU Scheme Phase-II, PM-KUSUM Component B and the Grid-connected Rooftop Solar Programme Phase-II, mandate the use of Domestic Content Requirement (DCR) solar panels, providing subsidies to promote the adoption of solar energy.

Environmental Impact
The solar industry in India isn't just about fulfilling energy requirements - it's also helping the environment. By using more solar power and relying less on fossil fuels, the solar industry is assisting in eliminating greenhouse gas emissions and fighting climate change. Shifting towards renewable energy, like solar power, is super crucial for India's climate goals and ensuring a sustainable future. **Market Potential and Investment Opportunities**

India's solar energy market presents a plethora of opportunities for investors and entrepreneurs. The sector's rapid growth and the increasing acceptance of solar power for both commercial and personal uses underscore its potential. With Government support and ongoing technological advancements, the barriers to entry are diminishing, making it an attractive proposition for new ventures. Besides, technological advancements enhance efficiency and reduce costs, increasing profitability. Entrepreneurs can explore various segments within the industry.

On a larger front, the global shift towards sustainability ensures a steady demand for solar energy solutions, providing businesses with a long-term growth trajectory. Moreover, India's solar industry's robust market potential, Government support and technological innovation make it a compelling opportunity for those looking to invest or start a venture in renewable energy. *(The writer is the CEO, of Gautam Solar; views are personal)*



GAUTAM MOHANKA

NEET: Malice extends beyond a flawed exam

The Supreme Court's recent directive to the Govt to meticulously address any lapses in the NEET examination underscores the critical nature of the fiasco

Plans do go awry. Who could say this better than Modi Sarkar 3.0? Prime Minister Narendra Modi had planned a blitzkrieg of the first 100 days of good governance. It doesn't seem to be happening as of now. First the number of BJP members elected to Lok Sabha did not sufficiently pile up, forcing a toned-down deportment of the Government.

Worse has been the marks manipulation controversy generated around the results declared by National Testing Agency (NTA) of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to the undergraduate courses in the medical colleges across the country. The Supreme Court on June 18 told the Union Government and the NTA to ensure that even '0.001 per cent negligence' in conducting the NEET-UG 2024 exams be looked into with all seriousness considering the immense labour that the candidates have put in for preparing the nationwide examination. Thankfully, we have a mature leader like Dharmendra Pradhan as Union Education Minister, who is expected to steer through the crisis and not a Smriti Irani or a Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank camping at the Shastri Bhawan, the seat of the Ministry of Education. Pradhan has so far shown the patience and perseverance in handling this gargantuan-like crisis.

The mess around NEET is much deeper than just the alleged malpractice in the conduct of the examination and the manipulation of marks. It's a question of the very high financial and emotional stakes involved, given the limited number of the seats available in the medical colleges. Over 15 lakh students appear for the NEET annually to fight over about 83,000 seats available. Less than half of these seats are available in the Government-run colleges. More than half of the seats in these colleges are allotted under various quotas. Thus, many deserving candidates are unable to secure admission to Government colleges. The fees in the private medical colleges in India are unbelievably



expensive, often touching Rs one crore for the entire course. For middle-class families, these costs are untenable, prompting them to look for more affordable options abroad.

Thus the medical college market in countries like China, Ukraine, Russia and Kyrgyzstan. Here the cost of education at the best is less than half of what the private medical colleges charge. No wonder if there is COVID happening in China, war happening in central Asia or hooliganism in Kyrgyzstan, miserable State of the Indian students makes news.

The problems of these students don't end here. Even on the successful completion of the course, an uncertain future awaits them. The medical degrees obtained from foreign universities must be recognised by the National Medical Commission of India (NMC). Even if the college is recognised, the medical graduates need to clear the Foreign Medical Graduates Examination (FMGE) conducted by NMC to practice in India. The pass rate for FMGE is relatively low.

This shortage of seats explains the repeated noise of corruption around the medical entrance tests for several years

THE SHORTAGE OF MEDICAL SEATS IN INDIA, COUPLED WITH HIGH FINANCIAL AND EMOTIONAL STAKES, FUELS CORRUPTION IN ENTRANCE EXAMS AND DRIVES STUDENTS TO SEEK MORE AFFORDABLE EDUCATION OPTIONS ABROAD

now. The most prominent among the many fallouts of this situation are higher prices, long wait times and increased competition for the limited available resources.

When shortage occurs, an environment is created where individuals or stakeholders may be willing to pay bribes to secure access to the limited resources.

Today, in the NEET eco-system, there aren't just the students and testing agencies who are participating. It can be safely said that the financial stakes at this examination is much higher for the horde of coaching centres and admission counsellors than the students themselves.

Then there are the people who manipulate the system to make entrance into an Indian college 'convenient' lest the candidate ends up selling family silver for an admission in a private college in India or go through the rigmarole of enrolling in a foreign medical college and face an uncertain future.

The expected role of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in the current crisis would be to provide an immediate relief to the injury and pain caused to the lakhs of students by the NTA, which con-

ducted NEET 2024. The larger relief would only come by investment in the health infrastructure sector.

Increasing the number of medical seats in Government and private colleges, in the higher numbers in the former category, would lessen the need for students to seek education abroad or the manipulators having a field day. This requires substantial investment in medical infrastructure and faculty.

This would not come by the mere initiative of either Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan or the newly-appointed Health Minister JP Nadda. There has to be a Government vision and more importantly the political will to break the cartel of the private medical colleges.

The management of these colleges maintains a Octopus-like stranglehold over the medical education system through its various arms like the coaching centres and the counsellors. The 'costly' admission process is the first step towards the crass commercialisation of the medical sector in this country. About it on some other day.

(The writer is author and president, Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice, views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WILDLIFE FIRES IN UTTARAKHAND

Madam — Apropos the news story "Forest fires are a grim environmental reality," published on June 21, this is my response. The recent wildlife fires in Uttarakhand highlight a pressing environmental and societal issue. These fires are not just a natural calamity but a reflection of human irresponsibility and systemic failures. Environmental pollution, an unrestrained culture among youth and weak law enforcement have contributed to these destructive events. Global warming, largely driven by hydrocarbon fuel use, has exacerbated the situation, similar to patterns seen in Australia and the USA.

Local industries and vehicular pollution have significantly warmed the atmosphere, making the naturally fire-prone Chir Pine forests even more vulnerable. Additionally, reckless behaviour, such as setting fires for social media fame and illegal activities like unauthorised construction and tree felling, further fuel these disasters. The media often needs to delve more deeply into such incidents' root causes and preventive measures. A more profound understanding, perhaps through the lens of Vedic Physics, could offer comprehensive solutions by integrating ancient wisdom with modern scientific approaches.

Kundan | Delhi

ESSENTIALS FOR SUCCESS

Madam — Apropos the news story "Benefits of integrating offline and online channels," published on June 21, this is my response. The management of offline and online channels often operates in silos, with little intersection in their strategies. This separation ignores the fundamental fact that consumers are people whose decision-making spans both realms.

Consumers today engage with brands through multiple touchpoints—retail stores, social media, online reviews and influencer videos—making integrated channel management essential. The AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Decision, Action) highlights the need for a coherent strategy across channels, as purchases

UGC to revamp higher education



Apropos the news story "UGC set to revolutionise higher education in India," published on June 21, this is my response. The University Grants Commission's decision to allow biannual admissions in higher education institutions is a significant move. It aims to increase student intake and introduce new programs in emerging areas, aligning Indian education with global standards. This policy mirrors the successful biannual admissions in Open and

Distance Learning and Online modes, which saw nearly half a million additional enrollments. While this decision offers flexibility and opportunities for students, especially those aspiring to study abroad, it raises concerns about infrastructure and faculty requirements. Educational experts worry about maintaining quality amid increased quantity. However, the global model of continuous education and skill upgrading, seen in countries like Germany, highlights the potential benefits. In India, there is a need to change the mindset towards vocational training and practical experience. Successful examples, like IIT graduate Mr Khatri, show that determination and expertise can lead to significant achievements. For the biannual admission system to succeed, policymakers must focus on engaging students and providing practical, hands-on learning experiences.

Bittu Jaat | Jind

can occur either offline or online. Structural issues and managerial specialisations contribute to the disjointed approach, but evolving consumer behaviour demands integration. While offline channels have a long-standing command-and-control structure, online channels are rapidly gaining significance. Companies must adopt integrated thinking to enhance customer experience and ensure sustainable success.

Mitali | Noida

WOMEN AND UNPAID WORK

Madam — Apropos the news story "The Unseen Burden of Women's Unpaid Labour," published on June 21, this is my response. The early 60s saw Canadian writer Alice Munro dismissed as a mere 'housewife who finds time to write short stories.' Munro's eventual Nobel Prize in 2013 underscored the absurdity of this condescension. Economist Claudia Goldin's research reveals that women's careers are often constrained by societal expectations that idealise their roles as unpaid caregivers. This has tangible impacts: women global-

ly spend 76.2 per cent of their time on unpaid care work, three times more than men. In regions like the Pacific and Asia, men contribute the least.

The burden of unpaid care work keeps 606 million working-age women out of the labour market, compared to just 41 million men. This disparity is reflected in economic metrics; for example, women's unpaid work could be worth up to 40 per cent of GDP in some countries. Additionally, the "motherhood penalty" persists, reducing women's career prospects and earnings. Conversely, men often receive a wage bonus upon becoming fathers. To bridge this gap, significant investments in childcare and care industries are crucial. Research shows that such investments could create millions of jobs and significantly boost women's employment rates. Meeting these needs is essential to achieving gender equality and fulfilling global commitments to women's economic justice.

Jitu Majumdar | Kolkata

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

THE ART OF ANGER MANAGEMENT

Anger or an outburst is an emotion which invariably leads to antipathetic results



RAVI VALLURI


Aeons ago lived a sagacious teacher who adopted unusual techniques as part of his pedagogy while imparting knowledge to his students. One day he provided his students with an empty jar and a bagful of pebbles. He directed them to fill the jar with as many pebbles as they could. The students fretted as they struggled to insert the pebbles in the jar, but eventually managed to insert them. Subsequently, the teacher gave them a bag of sand and guided them to pour it into the jar. The sand filled in all the gaps between the rocks. Eventually, the teacher gave them a pitcher of water and asked the students to pour it into the jar which filled in all the remaining gaps. It was then pronounced that the jar represented our lives and the pebbles, sand and water typified what we live with. The teacher went on to State, “If we fill our lives with anger (represented by the pebbles), there will not be any room for anything else. But if we focus on the important things (represented by the sand and water), we could discover a State of happiness and balance.” Among the students lived a boy who was disposed with a foul temper. He would get angry at every little issue. One day, the sagacious teacher gave him a bag of nails and told him, “Every time you get vexed, hammer a nail into that front wall.” And thus began the activity. On the first day, the boy hammered 50 nails. The following day, he hammered 40. Each time he went up to the wall, he repented being piqued. It was quite a challenge to hammer a nail into the bricks of the wall! Slowly, the stripling discovered that controlling his rage was easier than hammering countless nails into the wall. The strapping youth had already become a laughing stock of his batchmates performing this wasteful exercise. Over a period, the number of nails hammered began to diminish much to the amazement of the student and his friends.



Eventually, came a day when he was not cross and became joyous about the fact. The perspicacious teacher assigned the student yet another task, “If you do not get provoked the entire day, remove one nail from the wall.” After many days, eyebrows were raised as all the nails were extricated from the wall. Finally, the teacher took the student near the wall and asked him what he saw. The student replied that he could view holes in the wall. “These holes are like the scars that one leave’s on individuals when a person gets exasperated. No matter how many times you apologise, the scar does not vanish.” “Thus, I suggest you to do two things; realise that words once uttered linger on. Your irascibility hurts others and leaves a dampener on all.” He continued, “Each time you feel outraged, ‘hammer a nail’ in the wall. The simplest thing you can do is to carry a pocket diary and draw a line each time you get annoyed. At night, count the number of lines drawn for that day. If you make this a habit, each time you would become waspish, you would be reminded to note it down.” “Once you follow this regimen, your awareness and memory muscle about the damage you were inflicting among the people with whom you interact would increase.” The student had learned his lesson, through this ingenious teaching imparted by his teacher. *(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)*

Generative AI revolutionises smart wearable technology

By leveraging AI for coaching and healthcare, wearables are setting new standards in user experience and functionality



C P KHADELWAL

A decade ago, wearable technology was just taking early strides. Today, generative AI — a subset of artificial intelligence — is making its presence felt across diverse domains such as fashion, health, entertainment and more. With smart wearables gaining greater popularity worldwide, the fusing of fashion and innovative technology is permitting smart devices to function as icons of personal styling, connecting every element of users’ lives. As these aspects play out, generative AI is steadily showcasing several novel dimensions of personalisation and functionality. **Personalised Insights** The rising popularity of AI-enabled wearables is partly because of their ability to offer

employing AI algorithms, advanced fitness trackers analyse the user’s data to provide personalised insights and coaching. A dynamic, bespoke approach is adopted in managing the user’s health and well-being as the smart device adapts to each person’s preferences, goals and individual fitness levels. For instance, an AI-driven coaching algorithm, Zepp Coach, offers customised guidance so its users can train and recover more effectively. A user simply needs to enter his or her physical characteristics, exercise experience level and preferred number of training days each week into the app. The app then builds a personalised training regime for every user. As the days progress, the Zepp Coach app monitors



each person’s fitness level, fatigue threshold and current training status. Based on this data, it recommends a reduction (or increase) in training intensity. **Wearables in Healthcare** Besides personal training, generative AI-linked wearables are deployed in healthcare with a similar model of leveraging user data to provide personalised counsel and insights. For example, the WHOOP Coach app uses a generative AI feature to offer extremely personalised, precise advice and suggestions by using GPT-4 — the most advanced generative AI system of OpenAI. Thereby, WHOOP can discover patterns and connections in the data of users and then offer instant, conversational, customised responses to their

healthcare practitioners can employ preventive measures. Propelled by the power of predictive analytics, smart wearables are driving a steady shift from a purely reactive to a proactive healthcare model. Taking these capabilities one level higher, generative AI is empowering wearables with the capability to sense and react to the emotions of users. These emotion-sensing algorithms can analyse facial expressions, monitor heart rate variability and check other physiological cues to assess the emotional State of users. **Immersive Reality** Then there is smart clothing with adaptive features that respond to environmental circumstances and user preferences. Such smart clothing offers temperature-regulating textiles and dynamically adjustable apparel tightness for maximum comfort, especially when users engage in physical activities. Or consider language translation earbuds that offer contextual understanding. Backed by generative AI, these language translation earbuds go way beyond mere word-for-word translations. Through advanced contextual understanding, these earbuds can comprehend the idioms, cultural references and nuances of a specific language. By eliminating language barriers, this smart innovation facilitates seamless and efficient cross-cultural communication. Another exciting wearables category is immersive AR (augmented reality) glasses. Generative AI has allowed these glasses to take a giant leap forward by delivering immersive experiences for users, seamlessly blending the virtual realm with real-world surroundings. This is not all. Generative AI has even revolutionised navigation-aiding wearables for visually impaired people. Through AI algorithms, smart navigation devices can interpret the environmental data to offer real-time details about any obstacles, the surroundings or necessary directions. With these wearables, visually challenged users can enjoy enhanced mobility and a certain level of independence that is not possible otherwise. *(The writer is CEO of PR Innovations, brand custodian of Amazfit India, views are personal)*



India faces a severe groundwater crisis

The groundwater clock is ticking towards day zero. India needs a combination of strategy and investment to safeguard and revitalise the same



KOTA SRIRAJ



According to the India Water Portal, India uses 25 per cent of all groundwater extracted globally, ahead of the USA and China. Nearly 70 per cent of the water supply in Indian agriculture today is groundwater. For a resource that is under such heavy use, India still lacks a contingency plan when it comes to dealing with groundwater depletion and over-exploitation. Predictably, the writing on the wall is becoming increasingly clear. On June 19th, 2024 the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) dropped the shocking news that Delhi has already extracted 99 per cent of its available groundwater. The latest CGWB report revealed a decline in both annual recharge and available groundwater for extraction in the city. According to the CGWB’s findings, Delhi’s net annual groundwater recharge in 2023 was measured at 0.38 billion cubic meters (bcm), with only 0.34 bcm available for extraction. Shockingly, nearly all accessible groundwater has already been extracted, totalling 99.1 per cent. The concerning aspect here is the increased rate of extraction despite reduced groundwater recharge. These trying conditions come at a time when Delhi is already reeling under the worst heatwave in the last 120 years which has claimed 192 lives so far. Sadly the issue of water distressed cities is becoming a worrying trend across India. Bangalore hit rock bottom earlier this year with over 500 million litres of water deficit daily with over 7000 borewells running dry. Coupled with abnormally harsh summers the water scarcity conditions can not only take a toll on human lives but also bring the urban economy to a grinding halt. This trend of drying up groundwater may, unfortunately, become the norm for



INDIA’S WATER RESOURCES FACE A BLEAK FUTURE; THE GOVERNMENT MUST ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH A NATIONWIDE WATER BODY CENSUS, RAINWATER HARVESTING AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

most cities in India unless urgent remedial measures are taken. But sadly, most of the action taken is at best knee-jerk and impulsive with neither long-term strategy nor investment attached to it. Consecutive Governments, both at the State and central levels have always dealt with groundwater-related issues on a passive basis instead of a proactive basis. As a result every year the nature of the problem not only becomes complex but also more difficult to solve. The future of India’s water resources looks bleak and the Government must deploy a plethora of measures to ensure that the future generations have enough of this precious resource. As a first step, the central Government must conduct a nationwide satellite-assisted natural water body census along with the measurable extent of the water body. This will not only quantify the number of water bodies but will also capture any encroachment of the same. Additionally, steps have to be taken to rejuvenate and revive these water bodies. This can be done by removing the vegetation and setting up artificial groundwater recharge points such as percolation wells. Apart from this, the roping in of local municipal authorities, especially the anti-encroachment departments can help remove unauthorised occupation from the water body area. The central Government in association with State Government authorities can work on measures

such as metered borewells to monitor and regulate groundwater extraction. The concept of metered borewells is not new. The State of West Bengal has metered borewells for a while now and as a result, the State has been experiencing better levels of ground water. The same can be replicated across India, especially in Karnataka which is witnessing over-exploitation of groundwater. Yet another measure that needs sincere application is rain-water harvesting(RWH). Even though a much-talked-about concept, RWH has seen minimal implementation in India. Bangalore is an apt example of the abysmal application of RWH. According to Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) data, only 1.8 lakh out of the 19 lakh eligible properties in Bengaluru have installed rain-water harvesting systems. Experts have opined that the city harvests only 10 per cent of the rainwater while the rest 90 per cent drains away wasted. Conditions such as these point towards the unfortunate reality of hyped concepts that receive very little implementation. The Government must try and understand the latent potential of RWH and ensure that not only residential but commercial properties across India implement RWH and the same must be enforceable by law. However conventional remedial measures may still not be able to rein in the runaway groundwater scarcity problem. Since the scale of the problem has risen, the Government must explore invest-

ments in innovative technologies to bolster the efforts to revive and boost the groundwater table in India. Efficient farming technologies that rely less on water for instance can make a huge difference. Investments in precision agri-technology for the usage of groundwater for irrigation are an ideal solution for providing optimal water usage. This saves water compared to traditional flooding methods which increases output while conserving resources and reducing water wastage. Similarly, App-driven water meters that automatically regulate extraction and smart groundwater pressure sensors that maintain critical and minimum water levels can all help alleviate the burdens weighing on groundwater. With water scarcity spreading region-wise across India and with a rapidly increasing water use the structural imbalance between water supply and demand continues to widen. Therefore it is time that the Governments in association corporate under corporate social responsibility schemes (CSR) must increase capital expenditure on smart technologies that can actively provide solutions to water scarcity and water quality issues besides improving sustainability of water resources. The groundwater clock is ticking towards day zero. India needs a combination of strategy and investment to safeguard and revitalise the same. *(The author is a policy analyst. The views are personal)*

MONEY MATTERS

Retail inflations for farm, rural workers remain almost flat

Retail inflation for agricultural labourers and rural workers remained almost flat at 7 per cent and 7.02 per cent, respectively, in May as against the two comparative figures of 7.03 per cent and 6.96 per cent a month ago. The corresponding figures in May 2023 were 5.99 per cent for CPI-AL (Consumer Price Index-Agricultural Labourers) and 5.84 per cent for CPI-RL (Consumer Price Index-Rural Labourers), a labour ministry statement said. According to the statement, the point-on-point inflation rate based on CPI-AL was recorded at 7.00 per cent in May 2024, showing a deceleration from 7.03 per cent in April this year. Conversely, it stated that for CPI-RL, the inflation rate was recorded at 7.02 per cent in May 2024, a marginal increase from 6.96 per cent in the preceding month. The All-India Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL) and Rural Labourers (CPI-RL) registered an increase of 6 points each in May 2024, reaching levels of 1,269 and 1,281, respectively.



Peak XV Partners most active investor in India: Hurun India

Venture Capital firm Peak XV is the most active investor in Indian startups with investment in 47 entities, according to ASK Private Wealth Hurun India Future Unicorn Index 2024. According to the index report, Peak XV is followed by Accel which has invested in 25 companies that are poised to become the next generation of unicorns. "With an impressive portfolio of 47 investments, Peak XV Partners emerges as the top investor in the ASK Private Wealth Hurun India Future Unicorn Index 2024, the report said, adding that Peak XV Partners registered successes by investing in Turtlemint, CleverTap and Classplus, among others. The report said that the number of unicorns -- startups valued at over USD 1 billion -- slipped by one to 67 in 2023. Peak XV is an investor in 70 per cent of India's unicorns. "Ranking 2nd on the ASK Private Wealth Hurun India Future Unicorn Index 2024, Accel has made investments in 25 companies that are poised to become the next generation of unicorns.



Bank of Maharashtra pays Rs 857 cr dividend to govt

State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) on Friday presented Rs 857 crore dividend cheque to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The cheque was handed over by BoM managing director Nidhu Saxena and executive director Asheesh Pandey in the presence of Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi. The bank declared a dividend of Rs 1.40 per equity share (14 per cent) for FY24, BoM said in a statement. The Government of India holds an 86.46 per cent stake in the Pune-based bank. This dividend payment reflects the bank's impressive financial performance during the fiscal year, it said. The bank's net profit increased by 55.84 per cent to Rs 4,055 crore in FY24, compared to Rs 2,602 crore in the previous fiscal year. The bank has recorded a 15.94 per cent improvement in total business and a 15.66 rise in deposit mobilisation for the 2023-24. BoM has consistently shown resilience and adaptability to changing market dynamics, enabling it to remain at the forefront in terms of service delivery and customer satisfaction, it added.



Get InvITs under purview of bankruptcy law: SBI MD

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs) are enjoying immunity from insolvency proceedings and should be brought under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, a top official from SBI said on Friday.

Ashwini Kumar Tewari, the managing director of the bank, said lenders need the assurance of being able to recover their dues from InvITs in case of a default and added that they are in touch with the Reserve Bank and the government on the same.

"We need to bring these trusts, which are bankruptcy remote, within the purview of the IBC because that will go a long way in giving us the assurance that this is like any other asset," Tewari said, addressing an NBFC event organized by industry lobby Assocham here.

He elaborated that at present, the primary responsibility of an InvIT or a special purpose vehicle under it is towards the trust holders and there are 'gaps'



Ashwini Kumar Tewari, the managing director of the bank, said lenders need the assurance of being able to recover their dues from InvITs in case of a default and added that they are in touch with the Reserve Bank and the government on the same.

management at entities, which is a key feature under the IBC provisions and has already been invoked in the past.

He also made it clear that SBI is "very bullish" on the InvITs space because it takes away the long-term risk from the bank after a project is completed, and also because it provides steady flow of cash to pension funds and other investors.

The IBC was promulgated in December 2019 while InvIT saw the maiden listing in 2017.

Meanwhile, Tewari also questioned the need for a non-banking financial company (NBFC) to have a long list of lenders, and pitched for consortium arrangements in the same.

"We feel that if there are so many banks involved, each with a smaller share and yet the overall credit size is large, the only conclusion which can be drawn is the follow-up, and the control mechanism on the portfolio then is so much lesser. And that is something we are not very comfortable with," he said.

GST rate rationalisation panel reconstituted; Bihar Dy CM Samrat Chaudhary convenor

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary has been appointed as the convenor of the GoM on GST rate rationalisation.

According to an official memorandum posted on the GST Council secretariat website, the other members of the reconstituted panel are Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna, Goa Transport Minister Mauvin Godinho, Rajasthan Medical, and Health Services Minister Gajendra Singh.

The GoM also includes West Bengal Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya, Karnataka Revenue Minister



Krishna Byre Gowda, and Kerala Finance Minister K N Balagopal.

The seven-member GoM has been tasked with suggesting required rate rationalisation and correction of inverted duty structure with an objective of simplifying the rate structure, reviewing the GST

exemption list and enhancing revenues from Goods and Services Tax (GST).

This is the second time that the GST rate rationalisation panel was reconstituted.

The GoM was originally set up in September 2021, under then Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai. Under his chairmanship, the panel had submitted an interim report to the GST Council in June 2022, proposing changes in tax rates for some goods and services to rationalise the levy.

Following the change in government in Karnataka after the assembly elections in May last year, Byre Gowda became the revenue minister. The rate rationalisation panel was then

reconstituted in October last year, making UP Finance Minister Khanna as the convenor.

After JD(U)-BJP alliance formed the government in Bihar in January this year, the finance portfolio was given to the state Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary, replacing Vijay Kumar Chaudhary.

The reconstitution of the GoM on GST rate rationalisation was required so as to include Samrat Chaudhary in the panel.

The rate rationalisation panel will now have a task at hand to submit a final report to the GST Council suggesting changes in tax rates and slabs to usher in reforms.

TN fireworks factory workers to be given safety training

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Workers employed in fireworks factories in Virudhunagar and eight other districts that have a high concentration of fireworks-making units will be provided safety training this year to prevent fire accidents, Tamil Nadu Labour Welfare Minister C V Ganesan said on Friday.

Asserting that safety measures were essential during the manufacture of fireworks, especially in handling chemicals, to prevent workplace fire accidents, the minister informed the assembly that the government proposed to impart safety training to 7,500 workers.

This refresher course would be provided at a cost of Rs 24.90 lakh to the treasury, Ganesan said winding up the debate on the demand for grants to his department.

DEE Development Engineers IPO gets subscribed 99 times

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

The initial public offer of piping solutions provider DEE Development Engineers got subscribed 98.98 times on the last day of subscription on Friday.

The Rs 418 crore initial share sale got bids for 1,47,92,58,933 shares against 1,49,44,944 shares on offer, according to NSE data. The

portion for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) received a whopping 201.91 times subscription while the category for non-institutional investors got subscribed 143.43 times. The part for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) received 22.52 times subscription. The Initial Public Offer (IPO) has a fresh issue of up to Rs 325 crore and an offer for sale

of up to 45,82,000 equity shares. The price range for the offer is Rs 193-203 per share.

Dee Development Engineers Ltd on Tuesday said it has mobilised a little over Rs 125 crore from anchor investors.

Of the Rs 325 crore fresh issue proceeds, Rs 175 crore will be used for payment of debt, Rs 75 crore for funding working capital requirements, and the remaining Rs 75 crore will be used for general corporate purposes.

Dee Development is an engineering company, providing specialised process piping solutions for industries like oil and gas, power (including nuclear), chemicals and other process industries through engineering, procurement and manufacturing.



'Brand J-K successfully promoted on global platform'

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Union Territory administration has been successful in promoting brand Jammu and Kashmir on the global platform, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said here on Friday.

Sinha made these remarks after inaugurating J&K Trade Show 2024 at Kashmir Heritage Government Arts Emporium here.

In his address, the Lt Governor welcomed the artisans, weavers, growers and business entrepreneurs.

He lauded the endeavour of the industries and commerce department and J&K Trade and Promotion Organisation (JKTPO) to promote the diverse sectors of handicraft, handloom, agriculture and horticulture.

Fiscal incentives could help accelerate transition to e-vehicles among auto-rickshaws: White Paper

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

By prioritising fiscal incentives, streamlining state processes, facilitating affordable financing and addressing regulatory challenges, India can accelerate the transition to electric vehicles in the auto-rickshaw segment, according to a whitepaper providing a blueprint on retrofitting ICE three-wheelers to electric.

Initiatives such as zero emission vehicle credits, fostering an insurance ecosystem, addressing infrastructure barriers, and promoting awareness among driver partners further contribute to creating an enabling environment for nationwide retrofitment adoption, the whitepaper released here on Friday said.

Through these coordinated efforts, India can effectively pave the way for a sustainable and electrified future for its three-wheeler fleet, significantly reducing emissions and operational costs while extending the lifespan of existing

vehicles, according to the whitepaper 'Powering Progress - A Blueprint for Retrofitting Three-Wheelers Internal Combustion Engine to Electric'.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) and the International Copper Association of India released the whitepaper commissioned by the Telangana government.

The whitepaper includes an analysis of the electric three-wheeler retrofitment ecosystem and offers a blueprint for the widespread adoption of retrofitment technologies across the country.

The whitepaper was launched at a 'Workshop On Advancing Electrification of Passenger Auto rickshaws through Retrofitment Solutions: A Blueprint for Indian Cities' in the presence of Telangana Special Chief Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Jayesh Ranjan, NRDC India Country Head



Dipa Singh Bagai and ASCI officials.

Currently, India has an extensive fleet size of 7.4 million passenger-autos which is expected to reach 11 million by 2030, the whitepaper said.

"The tailpipe emissions from auto rickshaws under best case operating conditions constitute nearly 10 per cent of the total road transport emissions in cities," it highlighted.

Despite the array of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives provided by both national and sub-national governments in India, the penetration rate of passenger electric auto-rickshaws remains low, standing at only 6.2 per cent, it said, adding that this sluggish adoption can be attributed to the high capital costs of new electric vehicles and lack of public awareness regarding cost-effective

technologies to retrofit older vehicles to electric.

The whitepaper made several recommendations including on providing fiscal incentives to harness potential of retrofitment solutions and said implementation of these steps could help accelerate the adoption of retrofitment technologies in the three-wheeler segment.

On the benefits of retrofitment, the whitepaper said retrofitting has emerged as a viable solution to address the declining efficiency and increasing operational costs associated with aging vehicles, such as ICE auto-rickshaws.

"This technology extends the lifespan of these vehicles by an additional 5-7 years, resulting in direct reductions in resource consumption and carbon emissions," it further highlighted.

Electric vehicle retrofitting involves converting conventional petrol or diesel vehicles into electric ones by replacing the original engine with an electric powertrain.

Zepto valued at US\$ 3.6 bn in latest fund raise; eyes IPO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Grocery delivery startup Zepto on Friday said it has raised USD 665 million in an investment round that valued the firm at USD 3.6 billion, almost triple of what it was worth a year back, and is preparing to list soon.

The fund raise will help Zepto compete with e-commerce giant Amazon, Zomato-owned Blinkit, and home-grown firms such as Swiggy's Instamart and Tata Group's BigBasket in the hyper-competitive grocery delivery space that is marred by high investments and low margins.

The three-year-old startup raised USD 665 million from new investors, including New York-based private equity firm Avenir Growth Capital, venture firm Lightspeed, and Avra Capital, a new fund started by former Y Combinator Continuity head Anu Hariharan and Andreessen Horowitz. Existing investors



including Glade Brook, Nexus, and StepStone Group also participated, the Mumbai-based firm said in a statement.

Aadit Palicha, 21, who co-founded Zepto with childhood friend Kaivalya Vohra in 2021 after dropping out of Stanford's computer science programme and returning to India, said the company's gross merchandise value, or the value of total transactions through the platform, has "multiplied year-on-year to a base of USD 1 billion", and


over 75 per cent of its 341 dark stores are profitable at a core operating level.

Zepto is "pretty close" to becoming operating cash flow positive and would look to go public and a listing in Mumbai in near future.

The startup plans to double warehouses that are used to deliver groceries within 10 minutes in a radius of two kilometers to more than 700 by March 2025 by reinvesting sales from mature stores to fund the expansion.

Jonathan Majors boards revenge thriller *Merciless*

Embattled American actor Jonathan Majors has found his first feature film role after being convicted in a case of domestic assault. The actor will star in *Merciless*, an upcoming movie from Martin Villeneuve, the younger brother of *Dune* filmmaker Denis Villeneuve, reported Variety. In *Merciless*, Majors will play the role of a top CIA interrogator who, after the woman he loves is overtaken by a malevolent force, is forced to go even darker to defeat it. Villeneuve, best known for the sci-fi film *Mars et Avril*, will direct the project from a script by Frank Hannah. Christopher Tuffin will produce along with Kevin Townsend and Kevin DeWalt. Amanda Delaplaine, Chris Ochs, Andrew Bates, and Ben DeWalt will serve as executive producers. Majors was considered among the rising stars of Hollywood with acclaimed performances in movies and shows such as *Lovecraft Country*, *Creed III* and the *Marvel* title *Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania*, before a much-publicised trial for assaulting his ex-girlfriend Grace Jabbari brought his downfall. In December 2023, he was found guilty of one count of misdemeanour third-degree assault and one count of second-degree harassment by a Manhattan jury. Though he avoided jail time, the actor was sentenced to participate in an intervention program. Following the guilty verdict, Majors was dropped by Marvel Studios, which had cast him as Kang the Conqueror, the supervillain character he was supposed to reprise in future *Marvel Cinematic Universe* (MCU) movies.






DILJIT REVEALS HIS PRIOR WORK RAPPORT, WHICH LED HIM TO GIVE KJO *LOVER* FOR FREE

Singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh opened up about giving Karan Johar his song *Lover* in *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani*, without charging a single penny. He stated that it wouldn't have mattered much if he had taken money from Karan because the man is wealthy and doesn't require anything for himself. Diljit said to Sucharita Tyagi on her YouTube channel, "I am not friends with anyone as such," clarifying that allowing Karan to use the song *Lover* wasn't an act of friendship because he isn't friends with anyone in the profession. "What good is it if I've worked with someone once and they need something and I can help them? I would have performed his surgery for free if I had been a doctor (laughs)." Diljit emphasised that doing good deeds for people you know is more important than doing things for free. "I sing a song for my buddies who are music producers if they do a song for me. What you can do for someone you already know is all that matters. There is nothing like giving it away for free," he added. The singer, who is putting Punjabi music on the global map, mentioned that even if Karan Johar had paid him, it wouldn't have made him rich. "If he paid me, how much richer would I have gotten? He thought about it; that's a good thing. But he isn't short of money, and I also don't need much, so I said, 'Take it, use it,'" Diljit Dosanjh shared. Earlier, Karan Johar had expressed his gratitude to Diljit for allowing him to use the song. *Lover* plays in the background in *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani* when Alia Bhatt's Rani and Ranveer Singh's Rocky exchange houses and start living with each other's families.


BEN AFFLECK OPENS UP ON JLO'S ENORMOUS POPULARITY

In the opening segment of the fourth season of Kevin Hart's talk program *Hart to Heart*, Ben Affleck made an appearance. Shot allegedly prior to the couple's separation, Affleck talked about his wife, Jennifer Lopez, an actor and singer, and her enormous success. Additionally, he talked about his "resting hard" face when he sees paparazzi. Affleck mentioned Lopez a number of times during the episode. Speaking about the popularity he enjoys, Ben Affleck mentioned, "We went somewhere with [Lopez]—I can't remember because she's so famous, and she creates this—people love her, and she really represents something important to people." "(To me,) people are like, 'Hey, I like your movie,' and then they're like, 'AAHHHHH! J-LO! It's amazing, you know what I mean?'" he told Hart. Recounting an incident when they, along with their children, were mobbed at Times Square, he said, "We get out with her, all the kids, through Times Square, and the s--t was like f--kin' bananas." Affleck, JLo and everyone were getting late for a play and decided to take a walk to reach faster. That's when people spotted Lopez and rushed to get a glimpse of her. "I was like, 'Oh my God.' There was a lady; she was smoking weed, in a full purple skintight suit -- she's a heavy lady—and she started running backwards while filming, going, 'J-LO!!' Like a herald, that then gets everyone else, and then all the tourists come in," he recalled. While on vacation in Italy, Jennifer Lopez was observed amid rumours of their divorce.



Kakuda features spine-tingling moments with side-splitting humour

The makers of Sonakshi Sinha, Riteish Deshmukh, and Saqib Saleem-starrer supernatural comedy *Kakuda* unveiled the first look poster of the star cast on Friday, announcing that the movie will be released on July 12. Taking to social media, the makers shared a spooky poster in which Riteish is in the middle, standing with a device in his hand. He has a rugged look, tattoos on the left hand and left arm, and kohl on his eyes. Next to him is Sonakshi, who looks scared in the picture and is holding a torch. On the other side of Riteish is Saqib, who is giving a goon-vibe and holding a torch. Behind the trio, there is a ghostly figure watching them closely. The film is a rollercoaster ride of laughter and chills, revolving around the cursed village of Ratodi. The film features spine-tingling moments intertwined with side-splitting humour. It also stars Aasif Khan. Directed by Aditya Sarpotdar and produced by Ronnie Screwvala, it will release on July 12 on ZEE5.





Isha Koppikar recalls how an A-list actor from B'wood asked her to meet alone


Isha Koppikar has shared some bad incidents that happened to her when she was first starting out in the film business. The actor opened up about the incidents—in which she was asked to meet alone by an A-list actor—in a recent interview with Siddharth Kannan. In the new interview, the *Krishna Cottage* fame shared, "One actor asked me to meet him alone, without my driver or anyone else, because there were rumours about him being involved with other actresses. He said, 'There are already controversies about me, and the staff spreads rumours.' But I refused him and told him that I couldn't come alone. He was an A-list actor from the Hindi film industry. I must be around 22-23 years old that time." She went on to add, "I was 18 when a secretary and an actor approached me for casting couch. They told me that to get work, you have to be 'friendly' with actors. I am very friendly, but what does 'friendly' mean? I am so friendly that Eka Kapoor once told me to have some attitude." She also added how many would touch her inappropriately and tell her to be friendly with the heroes in a sleazy manner. *Ek Tha Dil Ek Thi Dhadkan*, released in 1998, was Isha's Bollywood debut. She later acted in movies such as *Fiza*, *Pyaar Ishq Aur Mohabbat*, *Company*, *Kaante*, *Pinjar*, and *Dil Ka Rishta*. Alongside Shah Rukh Khan and Priyanka Chopra, she also starred in *Don*.

Inside Out 2 spin-off series is on the way


Did you enjoy *Inside Out 2*? Get ready for more intense roller coaster experiences! Entertainment Weekly was informed by Pete Docter, the chief creative officer of Pixar, that a spinoff series will debut on Disney Plus. *Inside Out 2* broke box office records when it debuted in theaters on June 14. *Inside Out*, the 2015 prequel, followed Riley's journey through the five main emotions—joy, sadness, fear, anger, and disgust. Riley struggled to deal with new feelings in the sequel, including anxiety, ennui, envy, embarrassment, and nostalgia. Pete Docter, the chief creative officer of Pixar, revealed to Entertainment Weekly that a spinoff series for Disney+ is in the works following the company's success. As of now, Spring 2025 will see *The Inside Out* series debut on the streamer. Pixar, who is looking to expand the *Inside Out* universe after the sequel's success, will explore how Riley's dreams are made. Docter said, "We've continued the exploration of the power of dreams and how they affect us in our waking lives as well. So it's pretty cool." He added, "We said at the beginning that if there's nothing there that we all think has a deeper resonance, we won't do it. But when Kelsey came back with Anxiety as a character and a plot line, all of us were like, 'That was a huge part of my junior high existence. I think there's something there.'"




ARCHIE




GARFIELD




NANCY




GINGER MEGGS




CAVIN AND HOBBS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	
6			7		8
9			10		
12	13			14	15
17				18	
19					

ACROSS

1 A curved wooden thing thrown by an Australian Aborigine
6 The steps on a ladder
7 Inexpensive
9 Manufactured
10 Say again
12 Thief
14 Ripped
17 The skin on top of the head
18 Fortunate
19 Family members who lived long ago

DOWN

2 Possessed
3 A tall pole on a yacht
4 More wealthy
5 A female relation
6 Comments
8 Things made of kiln-baked clay
11 Humans
13 You remember and think with this body organ
15 Happen
16 Apartment

SOLUTION

P	E	A	C	E	D
A	P	R	I	L	E
B	E	E	T	O	R
A	F	I	C	E	S
C	H	E	L	D	B
U	A	L	I	D	A
T	A	S	E	S	E
E	S	A	L	E	O
C	O	N	T	R	O

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

PRESSURE BUILDING ON TOP-ORDER AS INDIA TAKE ON BANGLADESH

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

The ever-present tension of their over a decade-long big-stage rivalry would make for an engrossing sub-plot when an undefeated India takes on a faltering Bangladesh, both teams desperately hoping for their batting stars to strike form in the Super Eights clash of the T20 World Cup here on Saturday.

The overall head-to-head record is overwhelmingly in India's favour but Bangladesh have been known to be plucky and Rohit Sharma and his men would be wary of that.

The two South Asian neighbours have also been locked in some off-field drama in the past with Bangladesh often expressing its misgivings with India's financial might in the sport.

At the ongoing World Cup though, there is no doubt that India are as mighty a cricketing power to be a serious title contender.

The Men in Blue produced a professional performance against Afghanistan in their opening Super Eights match. With only a travel day separating their remaining two games, they would be hoping that the players, who have not performed as per expectations so far, deliver the goods.

Top of that list would be the opening pair of Virat Kohli and

Rohit Sharma, both of whom have got starts but have not been able to turn them into defining knocks. They have made a conscious effort to force the pace but have ended with minimal returns.

Another under-pressure team member is left-hander Shivam Dube, who was picked in the World Cup squad to hammer sixes in the middle and death overs.

However, the IPL form that helped him seal a World Cup berth has deserted him and he is yet to come to the party.

The southpaw did make an unbeaten 31 against the USA in a group league game but it was Suryakumar Yadav's effort that made the difference ultimately. Another failure might force the team management to consider Sanju Samson in the middle order.

The biggest positive in the batting department in the Afghanistan game was Hardik Pandya's cameo. The all-rounder is known for his brutal hitting and that was on display on Thursday.

On the bowling front, India are expected to retain the combination having given the first opportunity of the tournament to crafty left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav.

The wickets in the Caribbean have provided enough help for the spinners, prompting India to play three at the Kensington Oval.



The combination is likely to continue here with Kuldeep retaining his place at the expense of Mohammed Siraj.

"Playing three left-arm spinners, I feel there is an advantage. There are three left-arm spinners out of which we have two finger spinners and

one wrist spinner," said Axar Patel after the Afghanistan game.

"The combination of the three of us is very good. We have a good team. We communicate well. Like whoever comes to bowl first, we communicate what is working and what is

not. I think that is very important when you bowl as a unit," he added.

India's sole aim in the Caribbean is to win the trophy and a solid performance against Bangladesh will be another step forward in that context. A tougher battle

awaits against Australia on June 24.

Bangladesh, who have struggled with their batting throughout the tournament, find themselves in a must win situation after the loss to Australia.

The lack of power-hitters is

hurting them and there is no quick fix to that problem. The under-performance of opener Litton Das and Tanzid Khan has also compounded Bangladesh's woes.

"It's very important for the top-order to get runs like we did today, that's a big boost, hopefully the bowlers will continue their form. Looking for a good show against India in our next match," Bangladesh captain Najmul Shanto said after the loss to Australia here on Friday.

Both Shanto (41) and Towhid Hridoy (40) did well but the rest of the line-up was not quite up to it.

They will need to find a way to tackle Bumrah, who has been sensational thus far, taking eight wickets at an unparalleled economy rate of 3.46 runs per over.

The pacers, led by Mustafizur Rahman, have done alright but leg-spinner Rishad Hossain needs more support in the spin department.

SQUADS:

Bangladesh: Tanzid Hasan, Litton Das, Najmul Hossain Shanto (captain), Shakib Al Hasan, Towhid Hridoy, Mahmudullah, Mahedi Hasan, Rishad Hossain, Taskin Ahmed, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Mustafizur Rahman, Jaker Ali, Tanvir Islam, Shoriful Islam, Soumya Sarkar.

India: Rohit Sharma (captain), Hardik Pandya, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammad Siraj.

Big margin between Bumrah and rest, India fortunate: Manjrekar

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN

India are fortunate to have a bowler of the calibre of Jasprit Bumrah, who is head and shoulders above the rest in international cricket, feels former batter Sanjay Manjrekar.

Bumrah bowled an incisive spell (3/7) to guide India to a convincing 47-run victory over Afghanistan in their opening Super Eights fixture of the T20 World Cup here.

With the bat, Suryakumar Yadav was the star performer as he slammed a 28-ball 53 to power India to 181 for eight in 20 overs.

"There were many matches when we had not conceded the boundary and look at the difference between him and the couple of other seamers," Manjrekar told ESPNcricinfo.

"They were also international standard, but quite rightly I mean, he's looking even better and when you look at all the top-class bowlers around the world.

"There's a big margin between them

and Bumrah and India is so fortunate to have him in your playing 11," Manjrekar added.

Former India captain Anil Kumble also lauded Bumrah's performance.

"The kind of understanding of his own bowling you can make out, even when he got Rahmanullah Gurbaz out on a slower ball and wide line. He gets the execution perfect.

"For each batsman he would have figured that out and then doing it right in a big game. This doesn't come easy and I think he has given limited boundaries in the entire tournament," Kumble said.

Regarding Suryakumar, Manjrekar said his presence puts India at an advantageous position.

"This is the advantage India have for having one of the best T20 batters in the world. Tricky pitch, Rashid Khan on song and again you saw the value that Suryakumar Yadav brings to any team.

"And again the thing to like about him which is not really highlighted much is



the amount of ground shots that he plays. He chips the balls over the infield in the gaps.

"So, he's not somebody who's always looking for sixes which means sometimes there can be miss-execution trying to extract power," Manjrekar said.

KUMBLE HAILS SKY IMPACT IN SUPER 8S: Kumble said Suryakumar regaining form in the Super Eights is a good sign for India.

"It (Suryakumar's presence) gives India the kind of power and stroke play that you need from someone who's batting at number four," said Kumble.

"It certainly puts pressure on the opposition bowlers because it's not easy to control a Surya in this kind of a form.

"You don't know where to bowl, wherever you bowl, you find it hard to stop him from scoring boundaries.

"So, yeah, it certainly augurs well. First game of the Super 8s and you have Surya coming back into this kind of form," Kumble said.



India to tour South Africa for 4-match T20I series in November

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

India will tour South Africa for a short four-match T20I series in November this year, CSA and the BCCI announced in a joint statement on Friday.

As per the itinerary released by Cricket South Africa (CSA), the series will begin on November 8 at the Hollywoodbets Kingsmead Stadium in Durban, followed by matches in Gqeberha on November 10, Centurion on December 13 and Johannesburg on November 15.

"I would like to thank the BCCI for their continued support to South Africa's cricket, and world cricket in general," CSA chairperson Lawson Naidoo said in the statement.

"Any tour by the Indian cricket team to our shores is filled with amazing camaraderie and exciting cricket, and I know our fans will be eagerly awaiting this series which will showcase the exceptional talent from both teams," he added.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah added: "India and South Africa have always shared a deep and strong bond, one that both nations take great pride in. The Indian Cricket Team has consistently received immense appreciation and love from South African fans, and this sentiment is equally strong among Indian fans towards the South African side.

"I am confident that the upcoming series will once again highlight the on-field cricketing excellence and deliver enthralling, high-intensity contests."

India's short tour has been accommodated between their home Test series against New Zealand and their tour of Australia for the Border-Gavaskar series.

Cummins takes first hat-trick at T20 World Cup 2024

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

Australia pacer Pat Cummins grabbed the first hat-trick of the ongoing T20 World Cup during the team's Super Eights match against Bangladesh here.

The 31-year-old removed experienced campaigner Mahmudullah and Mahedi Hasan off the last two deliveries of the 18th over and then returned to dismiss Towhid Hridoy with the first ball of the last over to claim the seventh hat-trick in T20I World Cups.

"I didn't know I was on a hat-trick. I did the previous over, I saw it come up on the screen and by the time my next over came around I totally forgot about it," Cummins said at the post-match press conference.

"So, I think Stoinis ran in from the deep, was cheering and I was like, oh yeah, forgot about that. So, yeah, nice one," he added.



It was also the first hat-trick of Cummins' career for Australia.

"I had a few (hat-tricks) in juniors but never for Australia. I think I got one in grade cricket, maybe fourth grade. And I think I got one in second 11 when I was 17.

"And I think the hat-trick ball was similar. It was the first ball of the last day when it was Joe Burns.

"And I went to bowl a slower ball and he ducked underneath it and it hit the ball on the full. So yeah, not too dissimilar to today's," he recalled.

The fast bowler, who has been enjoying a purple patch in international cricket over the past year, finished with figures of 3/29, as Australia defeated Bangladesh by 28 runs via the Duckworth Lewis method at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium.

"(Ashton) Agar and (Nathan) Ellis on the bench have T20 hat-

tricks so good to join that club," Cummins, who was adjudged the player of the match said.

"Pretty awesome to tick that off. Boys are welcoming me in the club. Good club to be part of," he added.

The country's Test and ODI captain thus joined Brett Lee, the only other Australian to take a T20 World Cup hat-trick, which also came against Bangladesh.

Lee was the first to claim a hat-trick in the marquee event way back in 2007 and the Australian remained the only one to achieve the feat until the 2021 edition when Ireland pacer Curtis Campher (2021), Sri Lankan spinner Wanindu Hasaranga (2021) and South African quick Kagiso Rabada joined the elusive list. Other bowlers to claim a hat-trick in the T20 World Cup include UAE's Karthik Meiyappan (2022) and Joshua Little (2022) of Ireland.

West Indies face crunch USA clash

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

West Indies cannot afford another misstep as they take on a tenacious USA outfit in the Super Eights of the T20 World Cup here, seeking to renew their quest for an unprecedented third title.

After remaining unbeaten in the group stage, the West Indies slumped to an eight-wicket loss to defending champions England in their opening Super Eight fixture, paying the price for playing out as many as 51 dot balls and failing to rotate strike.

The heavy defeat to England has not only pushed Rayman Powell and his men to the bottom of the group but they now have -1.343 net run rate and need to win big to keep their hopes of lifting the

title at home alive.

USA, on the other hand, haven't won any game since their victory against Pakistan earlier this month. But they gave a good account of themselves against India and almost shocked South Africa, falling just 18 runs short of the Proteas' 194/4 against a high-quality bowling attack.

The co hosts of the tournament have shown that they are not here just to make up numbers and are not to be taken lightly. They have played an aggressive brand of cricket so far and in likelihood will continue to do so in the coming matches.

"Of course, I would say we're playing good cricket and the team is gelling well together and at the end of the day we know that we're going to be the

underdogs for all teams that we played against in the Super 8s.

"So, we're just here to play good cricket and if we go in, we win - if we lose, we lose," USA batter Steven Taylor said at the pre-match press conference.

However, their weakness is their inexperienced bowling attack that sometimes lacks discipline, and the West Indies, who are blessed with big hitters like Nicholas Pooran, Andre Russell, Powel, will like to capitalise on that.

"We did lack discipline in the bowling at times. Once we play good cricket we can beat any team in the world. But we



need to be a lot more disciplined," vice-captain Aaron Jones had said after the game against South Africa.

Even though they have their backs against the walls, West Indies coach Darren Sammy asserted their "spirits are not dampened".

"In a tournament, there's a game where the opposition will get the better of you. But that doesn't mean you're out of it. Now, in order to win, we've got to win all our matches. And that's what we'll focus on," Sammy said.

Brandon King, who suffered a side strain and was forced to retire hurt against England, remains a doubtful starter for the hosts. If he doesn't recover, Shimron Hetmyer could take King's place in the playing XI.

USA have been without skipper Monank Patel since their game

against Pakistan.

TEAMS (FROM):

West Indies Squad: Rovman Powell (c), Brandon King, Johnson Charles, Nicholas Pooran (wk), Sherfane Rutherford, Andre Russell, Romario Shepherd, Roston Chase, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Gudakesh Motie, Obed McCoy, Shamari Joseph, Shimron Hetmyer and Shai Hope.

USA: Monank Patel (c), Aaron Jones, Andries Gous, Corey Anderson, Ali Khan, Harmet Singh, Jessy Singh, Milind Kumar, Nisarg Patel, Nitish Kumar, Noshutush Kenjige, Saurabh Nathralvakar, Shadley Van Schalkwyk, Steven Taylor, Shayan Jahangir. Reserve Players: Gajanan Singh, Juanoy Drysdale, Yasir Mohammad.

RASHMIKA MANDANNA'S TRAVEL TALES THROUGH EXOTIC ESCAPADES



Rashmika Mandanna, hailed as India's National Crush, lives by the mantra of seizing every moment. Between her packed schedules, she indulges in exotic getaways that become colourful chapters in her life's narrative, documented vividly on her Instagram—a canvas of admiration from her legion of followers. From the tranquil landscapes of Italy to the opulent resorts of the UAE, the fashion avenues of Paris, the cultural richness of Tokyo, and the glittering events of Dubai, Rashmika's travels are a testament to her zest for life, beauty, and joy. Not long ago, Rashmika shared striking monochrome snapshots from her Italian sojourn, exuding effortless charm against the backdrop of Italy's picturesque vistas. Her stylish shades added a touch of glamour, resonating perfectly with the elegance of her surroundings. Celebrating her birthday, Rashmika chose the serene Bani Yas Island in Abu Dhabi, where she stayed at the luxurious Anantara Sir Bani Yas Island Resort. Her heartfelt posts captured moments of tranquility and happiness, resonating deeply with her audience. Rashmika's globetrotting adventures also took her to the fashion capital, Paris, where she graced the Milan Fashion Week in impeccable style. Her

Instagram carousel showcased a stunning black dress, complemented by a matching coat and chic sneakers, blending urban charm with haute couture. Tokyo, a longtime dream destination for Rashmika, finally became a reality. She attended an awards ceremony in a breathtaking ensemble, fulfilling a childhood aspiration. Amidst her busy schedule, she explored Tokyo's vibrant culture and iconic landmarks, creating memories cherished by her and her team. In Dubai, Rashmika's visit for a high-profile shop launch event was nothing short of glamorous. Dressed in a mesmerising golden glitter saree, she captivated onlookers, who gathered in admiration. Videos from the event captured the euphoric cheers of her fans, underscoring her immense popularity both in India and abroad. With each adventure, Rashmika Mandanna continues to inspire wanderlust enthusiasts and fashion aficionados alike; her travels are not merely destinations but celebrations of life's boundless experiences. As she embarks on new escapades, her journey remains a captivating narrative of exploration, elegance, and cultural discovery.



Saiyami Kher excited to join Sunny Deol in Gopichand Malineni's next film



In a significant collaboration for Indian cinema, Saiyami Kher expresses her excitement about joining forces with veteran actor Sunny Deol for the upcoming film *SDGM*, produced by the makers of the blockbuster *Pushpa 2*. Announced with much fanfare, *SDGM* is set to be a highly anticipated project under the direction of renowned filmmaker Gopichand Malineni. The film promises an unforgettable cinematic experience, blending talent and vision to create compelling storytelling. The official launch event for *SDGM* took place on Thursday in Hyderabad, attended by both Sunny Deol and Saiyami Kher, marking the beginning of what promises to be an exciting production journey. Filming is scheduled to commence on June 22, 2024. Reflecting on her role in the film, Saiyami Kher, known for her standout performances, shared her enthusiasm: "I am thrilled to be a part of *SDGM*. It's a dream come true to work alongside Sunny Deol, an icon of Indian cinema. After *Ghoomeer*, this opportunity marks a significant milestone in my career. I've been eagerly waiting to be part of a proper commercial film, and I'm grateful for this chance. Gopichand Malineni's vision for the film is truly exciting. I can't wait to embark on this journey and bring our story to life. I am thankful to the producers for their belief in me and for providing this grand platform to showcase my abilities." The producers, riding high on the success of *Pushpa*, are confident that *SDGM* will captivate audiences with its unique storyline and powerful performances, promising another stellar addition to their repertoire.

AJITH BEGINS SHOOTING FOR VIDAAMUYARCHI IN AZERBAIJAN

In an ambitious move set against the backdrop of Azerbaijan's stunning landscapes, the final shooting for actor Ajith's much-anticipated Tamil film *Vidaamuyarchi* commenced on Friday. This marks a significant milestone as the production team gears up for a 22-day shoot in the picturesque country. *Vidaamuyarchi*, a film that has been generating buzz since its announcement, promises to be a visual treat for audiences with its unique narrative and exotic filming locations. Directed by acclaimed filmmaker Magizh Thirumeni, the movie has already captured attention for its intriguing storyline and star-studded cast. Said to be a suspense thriller, Sanjay Dutt, Arjun, Arun Vijay, Regina Cassandra, and Aarav are said to be playing crucial roles in the film. Azerbaijan, known for its blend of modernity and ancient culture, provides an ideal canvas for the film's narrative to unfold. The decision to shoot in Azerbaijan underscores the production team's commitment to delivering a cinematic experience that transcends borders and captivates global audiences. Scheduled for release during Diwali, the festival of lights celebrated with fervor across India and the diaspora, *Vidaamuyarchi* is poised to be a blockbuster hit. The film will have Anirudh Ravichander scoring the music and Nirav Shah as the cinematographer.



Regina Cassandra pens a heartfelt note as she joins SDGM

Regina Cassandra, celebrated for her impactful roles, embarks on a new cinematic journey with director Gopichand Malineni's upcoming project, alongside Bollywood icon Sunny Deol. The collaboration under Mythri Movie Makers has sparked excitement, prompting Regina to share a heartfelt message on her Instagram. "To new beginnings and new adventures! Starting off on a promising note with a team of legends," Regina expressed, signaling her enthusiasm for the project. *SDGM* has garnered immense anticipation since its announcement, with filming set to commence shortly. Regina's radiant appearance in a golden-hued saree, glimpsed in shared photos, has already captivated fans, who eagerly await details about her role in this grand venture. As Regina Cassandra prepares to delve into this ambitious undertaking, the film promises to be a significant addition to her diverse and illustrious career. Stay tuned for more updates as this collaboration unfolds into what promises to be an exciting cinematic spectacle.



Kaala Bhairava's melodious voice for Pottel strikes a chord

Directed by Sahit Mothkhuri, *Pottel* unfolds against a rustic backdrop, promising a narrative that is both refreshing and sincere. The film has already garnered significant praise for its genuine portrayal of emotions, generating palpable excitement among viewers. The musical journey of *Pottel* continues to captivate audiences, with its first three songs becoming instant hits, and now the release of its fourth single has further heightened anticipation. *Buji Meka*, the latest offering, is a poignant and soul-stirring track that encapsulates the essence of the film. Composed by Shekar Chandra, the song's haunting melody provides a perfect backdrop for the evocative lyrics penned by Kasarla Shyam. Kaala Bhairava's emotive vocals breathe life into the composition, infusing it with a deep emotional resonance that strikes a chord with listeners.



Directed by Sahit Mothkhuri, *Pottel* marks his third directorial venture, featuring Ananya Nagalla as the lead actress alongside Yuva Chandraa Krishna. The film is produced by Nishank Reddy Kudithi and Suresh Kumar Sadige, with cinematography by Monish Bhupathi Raju, editing by Karthika Srinivas, and art direction by Narni Srinivas. With its natural visuals and heartfelt performances, *Buji Meka* promises to be a soothing and touching addition to the film's musical repertoire. The makers of *Pottel* are gearing up to bring this heartfelt narrative to theatres soon, aiming to deliver an authentic cinematic experience that resonates with audiences.

Harish Shankar launches Ma Ooru Srikakulam title song from Srikakulam Sherlock Holmes

Director Harish Shankar, renowned for his blockbusters, has unveiled the title song *Ma Ooru Srikakulam* from the upcoming crime comedy thriller *Srikakulam Sherlock Holmes*. Directed by Mohan, known for his writing prowess, the film stars Vennela Kishore and Ananya Nagalla in lead roles. Produced by Vennapusa Ramana Reddy under Sri Ganapathi Cinemas and presented by Lasya Reddy, the film's first-look poster has already received an enthusiastic response. With the launch of the title song, the movie's musical promotions have kicked off in earnest. *Ma Ooru Srikakulam*, composed by Sunil Kashyap, is a catchy and emotive number. The lyrics penned by Saraswati Putra Ramajogaiiah Sastry beautifully capture the essence of Srikakulam. Mangli's energetic vocals add a charming layer to the song, which is complemented by impressive visuals. During the song launch event, Harish Shankar

expressed his delight, stating, "I am very happy to launch the title song of *Srikakulam Sherlock Holmes*. The title itself is quite amusing. I have known Mohan since his days as a writer, and he is exceptionally talented. I've seen the visuals, and they are top-notch, with Mangli delivering a brilliant performance. I anticipate a unique film from Vennela Kishore and wish the entire team all the best." The film boasts a stellar technical crew, including music by Sunil Kashyap, lyrics by Ramajogaiiah Sastry and Kasarla Shyam, cinematography by Mallikarjun, and editing by Avinash Gurlinka. Suresh Bimamani, known for his work on *Baby*, handles the art direction, while Rajesh Ram Bala serves as the executive producer. With promising talent and a compelling storyline, *Srikakulam Sherlock Holmes* is poised to deliver an entertaining blend of crime, comedy, and thrills, promising audiences a memorable cinematic experience.

PIC TALK



Varalaxmi Sarathkumar invites Allu Arjun to her wedding, shares heartwarming moments

Varalaxmi Sarathkumar, the soon-to-be bride, and her fiancé Nicholas Sachdev had a special meeting with superstar Allu Arjun recently, as she extended a warm invitation to her upcoming wedding. The actress took to her social media today, June 21, to share delightful pictures from the memorable occasion. During her visit, the popular actress also had the pleasure of meeting Allu Arjun's father, Allu Arvind, capturing moments with him as well. Varalaxmi Sarathkumar and Nicholas Sachdev got engaged on March 1 this year in an intimate ceremony attended only by close family members. While reports suggest their wedding is slated for July, there has been no official confirmation as yet.



EVOL: A unique reverse love story set to captivate audiences

In today's film industry, whether big or small, original content that resonates with audiences is paramount. This trend has spurred directors and producers to continuously innovate. In line with this ethos, a compelling trailer has been released for the intriguing movie *EVOL* (LOVE). *EVOL* stars Surya Srinivas and Siva Boddu Raju as the male leads, with Jennifer Emmanuel portraying the female lead. Producer-director Ram Yogi Velagapudi has unveiled that *EVOL* will present a reverse love story, marking a departure from conventional narratives. The recently released trailer has already garnered positive feedback, signaling an eager anticipation among viewers. The film's detailed presentation will unfold

during a press conference at Prasad Labs on Friday, where Director Ram Yogi Velagapudi, also the producer under Nakshatra Film Labs in association with Theda Batch Cinema, will reveal more about the project. He emphasised that *EVOL* has completed its filming and is poised for release, boasting a storyline centered around the complexities of friendship. Combining elements of a crime thriller with commercial appeal, the movie promises a gripping viewing experience. Filmed against the scenic backdrops of Hyderabad and Vizag, *EVOL* showcases a narrative that promises to challenge and engage audiences alike. As anticipation mounts, fans and cinephiles alike await the unveiling of this distinctive cinematic offering.

