

sunday pioneer

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

Even though I tease some people (KTR) as management quota products, it works only the first time. Sridhar Babu, the son of Sripada Rao, came into politics and turned out to be a merit candidate. As a Minister, he is continuing his father's legacy in politics. Sridhar Babu is running the show in the new Congress government of Telangana. He decides whether someone's voice should be allowed or not in the Assembly

- A. Revanth Reddy, CM TS

DON'T MISS...

Bandi demands probe into...

BJP Lok Sabha member and party's national general secretary Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Saturday accused the family of former chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao of grabbing Rs 500 worth of Bhodan lands. He also alleged that the illegal activities of former MP Vinod's family in the name of Bhodan lands were also true. Speaking to the media at Shyampet, the BJP leader demanded that the Congress government headed by A Revanth Reddy order an inquiry into the Bhodan lands...

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India eliminates extreme poverty...

India has eliminated extreme poverty, a commentary authored by economists Surjit Bhalla and Karan Bhasin in a leading American think-tank The Brookings Institution said, citing the just released consumption expenditure data for 2022-23. In the article, the two noted economists cite the data to say real per capita consumption has grown 2.9 per cent per annum since 2011-12, with rural growth at 3.1 per cent being significantly higher than urban growth of 2.6 per cent. Also, there has been an unprecedented...

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Jal Shakti Ministry introduces...

In a bid to enhance sanitation practices across India's tourism sector, the Centre has introduced the Swachhata Green Leaf Rating initiative to elevate aesthetic and sanitation standards at popular destinations. The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, under the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, in conjunction with the Union Ministry of Tourism, has introduced this concept, the Jal Shakti Ministry said in a statement. Union Minister for Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat emphasised the need for all tourist facilities to...

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WHO calls for awareness on...

On the eve of the World Birth Defects Day 2024, the World Health Organization on Saturday highlighted the need to raise awareness about birth defects and accelerate actions to prevent, detect and manage congenital anomalies which occur during intra-uterine life of infants. 'We are reminded that every journey matters and the journey of health indeed begins before birth,' Saima Wazed, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia said in a statement. A regional guidance document on screening newborns for three conditions -- hearing impairment, eye abnormalities, and neonatal hyperbilirubinaemia -- is being released on this occasion to facilitate capacity-building of member states, Wazed said. She pointed out that...

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Indiramma Housing Scheme launch in TS on March 11

Land and Rs 5 lakh will be given to the poor who do have sites

Rs 5 lakh aid to those who construct houses on their own sites 3,500 houses to be constructed in an Assembly Constituency



the release of funds in a phased manner. He said that strict guidelines would be framed to prevent the misuse of funds given to beneficiaries.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy announced that the 'Indiramma Housing Scheme' would be launched on March 11 and ordered officials to make arrangements for the launch of the housing programme for the state's poor.

The government is launching the housing scheme as part of the six guarantees, the Chief Minister said. Under the Indiramma Housing Scheme, the government will provide financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh to construct houses for those who have a site. A piece of land and Rs 5 lakh will be given to the poor who do not have a site.

The Chief Minister asked officials to prepare rules and guidelines for

the Chief Minister directed officials to extend the housing scheme to all the eligible poor who do not have houses. Officials have been asked to finalise guidelines accordingly. The CM said that priority should be given to the eligible who had filed applications through Praja Palana.

The CM warned officials not to repeat the mistakes committed by the BRS government while constructing double-bedroom houses and that the scheme's benefits should go only to bonafide applicants.

A tentative decision was taken to allot funds to construct 3,500 houses in each constituency at the meeting. The CM expressed his hope that

the dream of the poor to own a house would be fulfilled in a phased manner.

Govt to record biometrics of pregnant women, infants

Special policy for transgenders

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy ordered officials to record the biometrics of pregnant women, infants and children and to install CCTV's at all centres. Biometric systems will be set up in all the 35,000 Anganwadi centres in the state, he said. The CM asked officials to ensure the preservation of all records in digital form so that



auditing can be done easily.

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Centre sanctions IIHT to TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Agriculture, Marketing, Cooperation and Textiles Minister, T. Nageshwar Rao requested the Secretary of the Union Textiles Department to sanction an Indian Institute of Handloom Technology (IIHT) for Telangana during the official's recent visit to the state.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and the Minister also appealed to Union Minister Piyush Goyal to consider the government's request to set up an IIHT in Telangana during their Delhi visit. In response to the government's plea, the Centre sanctioned an IIHT to Telangana on March 1, 2024.



The establishment of the Indian Institute of Handloom Technology (IIHT) in Telangana will help students acquire a technical degree and diploma in Textiles in their own state. In the past, students would have to go to AP and Orissa for studies in handloom technology.

Continued on Page 2

KCR to visit Telangana Bhavan, hold talks on LS candidates

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

BRS President K. Chandrasekhar Rao is coming out of his farmhouse from Sunday and will interact with BRS leaders at the Telangana Bhavan, the party's headquarters. The main objective of these meetings is to select Lok Sabha candidates.

KCR's decision to come to Telangana Bhavan will gladden BRS cadres, senior leaders said. KCR will review one Lok Sabha constituency a day. Each Lok Sabha constitu-



cy consists of seven Assembly constituencies. Senior BRS leaders from every Assembly constituency will be invited to these meetings.

KCR will try to gather a picture

FIRST LIST RELEASED WITH 195 NAMES

BJP announces 9 LS candidates in Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

For the first time, the BJP bagged the credit of announcing its candidates much before the release of the election schedule for the Lok Sabha. The ruling Congress and the main opposition party, the BRS, have not announced their candidates so far.

The BJP announced its first list for Telangana with nine names. Telangana has 17 Lok Sabha seats and the BJP has to name eight more candidates. The BJP high command announced the first list with 195

names including nine for Telangana LS seats.

In the first list, except in Zaheerabad and Malkajigiri, there is no problem for the party in the remaining seven LS seats. Many candidates are in the run for the BJP ticket in Malkajigiri and Zaheerabad.

Leaders like BJP Madhya Pradesh in-charge P. Muralidhar Rao, former MP Chada Suresh Reddy, former MLA Kuna Srisailem Goud, educationist Malka Komuriah, T. Veerender Goud, Pannala Harish

Reddy, Karuna Gopal and many others were in the race for the Malkajigiri ticket. However, the party chose former Minister Eatala Rajender for Malkajigiri.

Meanwhile, the BJP gave the ticket to sitting MP BB Patil, who quit the BRS and joined the BJP on Friday. However, the BJP leaders of Zaheerabad staged a protest in front of the BJP State office demanding that the party should not give a ticket to BB Patil.



Nine candidates-Bandi Sanjay, D Arvind, E Rajender, B Narsaiah Goud, P Bharath, BB Patil, G Kishan Reddy, Madhavi Latha, K Vishweshwar Reddy



LOK SABHA POLLS

EC for action against officials indulging in favouritism

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Election Commission of India on Saturday directed all the district magistrates and superintendents of police to take strong action against officials, who are indulging in favouritism.

The poll body's move comes in a bid to ensure "temptation free (prahlohan-mukt)" Lok Sabha elections and provide a level-playing field to all the political parties.

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Cabinet sub-panel to decide on statues along Tank Bund

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said the government will constitute a Cabinet Sub-Committee and would take a decision regarding installing statues on the Hyderabad Tank Bund.

The government will examine the case for installing the statues of Telangana's leaders Chakali Ailamma and Sardar Sarvai Papanna, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said while attending the 87th birth anniversary celebrations of former Assembly Speaker D. Sripada Rao on Saturday.

"All famous persons of Telangana influenced the country's politics and stood as a role model, whether it is Komaram Bheem, Ramji Gond, Chakali Ailamma, Sardar Sarvai



Papanna and new age politicians like PV Narasimha Rao and Jaipal Reddy. Sripada Rao needs to be respected. We will discuss with the Tourism Minister and constitute a Cabinet

sub-committee to decide the statues to be installed on Tank Bund," the CM said.

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Hyderabad lac bangles gets GI tag

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The famous Hyderabad Lac Bangles of Telangana got a GI registration tag from the GI Registry of the Government of India. This will be the 17th product from Telangana to get the GI registration tag.

The application was filed by the Creasant Handicraft Artisans Welfare Association on 23/06/2022 for Lac bangles with GI No: 917 and the process was completed in 18 months.

The application was facilitated with support from the Industry and Commerce Department of the Government of Telangana.

The certificate will be handed over to the artisans shortly.

Laad Bazaar in Hyderabad is a famous historic market known for its bangles. The lacquer used to craft these bangles are adorned with artificial diamonds. Legend has it that Sultan Muhammad Quli Qutub Shah, the founder of Hyderabad, established the market for the wedding of his daughter. The tangle of bangle shops came later. Laad means lacquer.

The LAC bangles legacy goes back 500 years with several generations perfecting the art of making intricate and well-designed lac bangles.

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OBTUSE ANGLE



Activist calls for restoration of all 300 step wells in TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The country has over 3,000 step wells which are several hundred-years-old. Telangana has 300 step wells. FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) on Friday till late evening organised a unique programme of mythology, heritage, culture and water conservation at Bansilalpet step well.

Speaking on the occasion, Kalpana Ramesh, activist of SAHE Foundation, said step wells have great significance. They remind us of the history of the bygone era. Kalpana wished that all the 300 step wells in the Telangana would be restored very soon.

Bansilalpet step well was revived after an 18 months effort. It can store water upto 22 lakh litres and annually up to a few crores. Step wells reduce flooding of the area. Our dream is to make Bansilalpet step well water potable, she said.

The success story of Bansilalpet step well restoration resonated in New Delhi and they have invited us to restore one age old step well in Rashtrapati Nilayam in



Hyderabad, she shared. Water is a beautiful natural resource, she concluded.

Akshat Gupta, another activist, shared sacred stories from mythology. He gave a sneak peek into mythology and heritage. Explaining what is 'BHAGWAN' he said BH(bhoomi) is soil; A means (agni) fire; G means (gagan) sky; WA means (wayu) air and N means

(neer) water. Bhagwan is nothing but panchbooth. He is around us. He is everywhere. He was in conversation with Ritu Shah, Chairperson of FLO. The programme ended with a Kathak performance by Aakruti Kathak Kendra. Mahishasura Mardini Stotra was the highlight of their performance.

Ritu Shah, in her opening

remarks, asked the audience about 150 in number to step into a realm of enchantment and wonder as we embark on a captivating journey into the depths of mythology and heritage. Immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of our cultural heritage as we explore the myths and legends that have shaped civilisations throughout the ages.

Three sanitation workers die while cleaning manhole in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In an incident reported from Kulsumpura on March 1, three sanitation workers died due to asphyxiation while cleaning a manhole.

The deceased persons are M Srinivas (40) V Hanmanth (42) and M Venkateshwar Rao (40).

The police said Srinivas, a sanitary worker, and a couple of other workers were hired to clean manholes by a company. The victims were hired on daily wages by the Ayyappa Infra contract agency, on a daily wage basis. Another coworker, Jeevan Raj, who tried to help them fell ill due to inhalation of the poisonous gas.

The contract agency Ayyappa Infra failed to provide their labourers with breathing masks, which led to the death of three persons, the relatives complained. The Hyderabad Police registered a case of culpable homicide against the contract agency over the death of the sanitation workers and a probe is underway.

Temperatures soar in Hyd, Begumpet hottest

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Planning and Development Society has revealed that temperatures are on the rise in the city, especially the areas under the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC).

Temperatures have reached 38° Celsius in Begumpet (38.6°C) and Saroornagar (38.3°C), Karwan (37.7°C), Jubilee Hills (37.6°C) and Yousufguda (37.6°C) came in the top 5 hottest areas under the GHMC with temperatures above 37 degrees, while Khairatabad recorded 34 degrees Celsius.

Hyderabad's summer is characterised by scorching temperatures that often exceed 40 degrees Celsius, particularly in March and April. This prolonged period of intense heat poses various challenges for residents, necessitating specific strategies to cope effectively.

The extreme heat in Hyderabad significantly increases the risk of heat-related illnesses, including heat strokes and heat exhaustion.



months in Hyderabad. It is recommended to drink plenty of water throughout the day to prevent dehydration. Using cooling methods like air conditioning, fans, or cool baths can help regulate body temperature and provide relief from the oppressive heat.

To minimise exposure to extreme temperatures, it is advisable to avoid outdoor activities during the hottest parts of the day. Engaging in physical activities or running errands early in the morning or later in the evening can help reduce the risk of heat-related issues.

Additionally, the hot and dry weather conditions can lead to dehydration and other health issues. Individuals with pre-existing medical conditions such as chronic kidney and heart ailments, diabetes and senior citizens are particularly vulnerable to these health risks.

Staying well-hydrated is crucial during the summer

Suppliers' ultimatum on Rs 400 cr pending bills

PNS| HYDERABAD

Twin Cities Hospitals Suppliers Association president KB Rama Chandra said that the government has not been clearing the bills of Rs 400 crore to the distributors and suppliers of medicine to the various hospitals in the city. "If the government does not release the bills, we could not supply the drugs to the TSMSIDC, ESIC, Gandhi, Osmania and Nilofar hospitals after March-end," he mentioned.

A medicine supplier Sagar said, "Usually, the government releases our bills every three to five months, but now it has crossed more than one year. We already got the loans from the banks to supply medicines. Now banks are also not giving any loan and additionally they are asking to pay the loan amount. In this situation what we can do except ask for money from the government. If they fail to release the bills, we cannot supply any more to the hospitals."

"Since last one year we have

not received payment from the ECI Directorate Office and the bills are held in the Pay and Accounts Office (PAO). In this regard, we met the ESIC director general and we gave representation. At that time, he informed us that the budget had already been released to the State government. But we have not got bills from the government. So we are urging the Congress government to release our bills before the Lok Sabha election code," he mentioned.

Rama Chandra said, "We have to get around Rs 100 crore from ESIC, Rs 15 crore from Gandhi, Rs 60 crore from NIMS and around Rs 400 crore money has not been paid to us since the last 18 months. We are around 750 suppliers and nearly 150 varieties of medicines are being supplied to the hospitals across the State."

TS aims to create 100 Global Export Champion MSMEs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The government wants to create 100 Global Export Champion MSMEs who not only serve the State where they are located but serve the world by exporting their products, said Dr E Vishnu Vardhan Reddy, Vice Chairman & Managing Director, TSIIC.

The Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) organised a full-day MSME Conclave on Saturday at Hotel Radisson Blu, Hyderabad. Dr Vishnu Vardhan Reddy said good days have come for MSMEs. The new government accords a top priority to this sector. The government is so firm that if any major policy decisions are made, they will be first about MSMEs.

Telangana is well known for the aerospace and pharmaceutical industries because of its healthy MSME ecosystem and its support. The government is proposing to strengthen the State Finance Corporation. The government



Speakers at the full-day MSME Conclave in Hyderabad on Saturday

is also focusing on skilling and towards this direction 65 ITIs in the State are upgraded as advanced technology centres. Their target is to train 10,000 ITIs in the next year and one lakh in the next few years, the TSIIC top official said.

MM Pallam Raju, Former Union cabinet minister of HRD & former minister of state for defence, Govt. of India, was the chief guest and Dr Vishnu Vardhan Reddy was the guest of honour.

Dr G Malsur, Director of Industries, Govt. of Telangana;

Meela Jayadev, President, FTCCI; Premchand Kankaria, Chairman of Banking Finance & Insurance Committee of FTCCI; Manju Sharma, GM, State Bank of India, Hyderabad; Srinivas Garimella, Managing Director, Daifuku Intralogistics India Pvt. Ltd were present.

Speaking on the occasion, Pallam Raju said that we are living in an integrated world. So it matters the most the way we look after workers and keep the working environment.

Afzalgunj Police nab three for vehicle theft

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Afzalgunj Police on Saturday arrested three persons involved in vehicle theft and recovered four two-wheelers from them.

The accused were identified as Mohammed Imran (20), a labourer and resident of Nampally; Allam Suresh (40), a resident of Doodh Bowli and Shaik Shahbaz (24), a resident of Chandrayangutta. Victim Mukesh Tiwari, in his complaint, stated that his bike went missing from the parking lot of his building on February 5.

Based on the complaint the Afzalgunj Police registered a case and initiated the investigation and located the vehicles.

Following the interrogation, Imran revealed that he was previously involved in theft case under Nampally police station, while Suresh was involved in four cases of theft.

TSRTC bags five national bus transport excellence awards

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) has got five prestigious national bus transport excellence awards, which will be given by the Association of State Road Transport Undertakings (ASRTU), a Central government sector body. The corporation will receive awards for the year 2022-23 in road safety, fuel efficiency management, staff welfare, use of technology, among other categories.

TSRTC won the first prize in road safety, staff welfare, better service to passengers through technology and fuel efficiency management and second prize in urban category. ASRTU has announced that five awards will be presented to TSRTC on March 15 in New Delhi.

Minister for Transport Ponnamp Prabhakar has appreciated the TSRTC officers and



staff who worked hard to get the awards. He said that the corporation got these awards because of the commitment, dedication and discipline of the staff.

TSRTC MD VC Sajjanar said that the corporation has become a role model for the country in the public transport system by winning the national bus transport excellence awards. All these awards are a symbol of the efforts of the officers and staff for the development of the corporation and for providing better and quality services to the passengers.

Hyd Commissioner transfers 63 inspectors

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In the latest round of transfers, Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Kothakota Sreenivas Reddy on Saturday transferred 63 inspectors.

Some of the inspectors transferred are R Raghunath, who is currently serving at the Central Crime Station, has been transferred as the Station House Officer (SHO) of Bahadurpura; S Srinivasa Chary, who is currently posted at the Cyber Crime unit, has been transferred as SHO of Sultan Bazar; P Laxmikath



Reddy, who is currently serving as the Detective Inspector of Bahadurpura, has been transferred as SHO of Kacheguda; Shaik Jakhir Hussain, who is currently serv-

ing as the Detective Inspector of Banjara Hills, has been transferred to the Task Force; K. Raghukumar, who is currently serving as the Detective Inspector of Chandrayangutta, has been transferred as the SHO of Langar Houz Police Station; S Balaswamy, who is currently serving as the Detective Inspector, Charminar, has been transferred to the Task Force; G Lingeshwar Rao, who is currently serving as the Detective Inspector of Khairatabad, has been transferred as SHO of Afzalgunj police station.

41 inspectors transferred in Cyberabad commissionerate

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Cyberabad Commissioner of police Avinash Mohanty on Friday issued orders of transferring 41 inspectors working in the commissionerate.

Gachibowli Station House Officer (SHO) Bashipaka James Babu has been transferred to Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) in Cyberabad. M Venkateshwar Rao was transferred to KPHB police station, G Venkat Ram

Reddy to Attapur, K Chandra Shekhar to Shadnagar, Mohd Habibuallah Khan to Shankarpally and K Narendar Reddy to Shamshabad police station as SHO.

R Shyam Sunder Reddy transferred to Medchal zone Special Operation Team (SOT) from Balanagar zone. Inspector Shiva Kumar was transferred to Balanagar zone SOT, T Sanjay Kumar transferred to Shamshabad zone SOT.

Owaisi asks TS govt to take up Old City Metro

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All India Majlis E Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) President Asaduddin Owaisi on Saturday urged the Telangana government to take up Old City Metro rail development.

Addressing a gathering at the AIMIM's 66th foundation day, the Hyderabad MP said, "Members from the BJP abuse AIMIM and say that there is no development in the Old City of Hyderabad, whereas their definition of development includes establishing pubs and



casinos here."

He further said, "The AIMIM is taking steps to develop the Old City. I have spoken to the Telangana Chief Minister regarding the Old City Metro. I have requested him to commence the formalities and lay the foundation

stone for a Metro line from Mahatma Gandhi bus station to Falaknuma. I am told that the Chief Minister will visit Falaknuma to lay the foundation stone on March 7. I welcome him."

"I request the Chief Minister to provide more funds for road widening; also commence the construction of the two bridges for hawkers. There is a plan to develop the bridge over Mir Alam Tank and the beautification of the Musi river. I urge the government to initiate all of these at the earliest," the Hyderabad MP added.

Rakesh, Jayanti enthral Hyderabadis

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Uttar Dakshin's Classical Concert Series was held at Jawaharlar Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University (JNAFAU) featuring Rakesh Chaurasia, this year's Grammy Award Winner along with others.

Uttar Dakshin concert series fosters regional harmony between North and South India. The part of its six-city tour spanning Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Bengaluru and Ranchi came to Hyderabad.

Presented by Vivid Arts, in collaboration with Surmandal, Hyderabad and support from LIC of India and ONGC, Uttar Dakshin presented a captivating duet featuring this year's Grammy Award Winner, Rakesh Chaurasia, on the flute, and illustrious Carnatic virtuoso, Dr Jayanti Kumaresh on the Saraswati Veena, with solos followed by Jugalbhandi. These



Rakesh Chaurasia



Jayanti Kumaresh

luminaries of the classical music world enchanted audiences.

Joining these maestros on stage were a lineup of accomplished accompanying artists, including Narahari on tabla, Jayachandra Rao on the mridangam and Giridhar Udupa

on the ghatam, adding depth and richness to the musical tapestry.

Before the beginning of the concert, a homage was paid to Pankaj Udhass who passed away recently.

Rakesh Chaurasia began his performance with Raag Poorva

Kalyan. He immersed audience with his flute recital and jugalbhandi. Rakesh said Mohan Hemmadi's (a connoisseur of music) death was a great loss to the classical musical world.

Later Dr Jayanti Kumaresh started her solo Veena recital with raag Amritha Vashini, a

composition welcoming rain. This 13th edition of Uttar Dakshin promised a celebration of musical diversity, showcasing the distinct styles of two masterful artists. The evening kicked off with the musicians guiding listeners on an unforgettable musical odyssey.

ECI transfers six police inspectors

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the Election Commission of India has transferred six police officers under the Hyderabad police commissionerate.

The Inspectors are Ch Parasuram, Task Force (Spl Branch), Satani Raghavendra, SHO, Falaknuma (Spl Branch), Khaleel Pasha, Task Force (Spl Branch), Rama Krishna Madha, SHO, Market PS (Spl Branch), Anuradha B, Station House Officer, WPS, South East (ICCC) and G Nagaraju SHO, Ramgopalpet (IT Cell).

The officers were directed to report to their new postings immediately.



GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

NOTICE INVITING SEALED QUOTATIONS

No. 02/EE-HH/HG/MC/2023-24. Date: 01-03-2024

Scope of Work: Invitation of sealed quotations for certain Electrical, water supply, sanitary items and, pumpset repairs etc., for repairs to 2BHK projects of GHMC. Start Date/Last Date & Time for Receipts of Quotations: Release of Notification: 03/03/2024 @ 10.30 AM. Last date for Submission of Quotations: 05/03/2024 @ 3.00 PM. Opening of sealed cover Quotations: 05/03/2024 @ 3.30 PM. Name & Address Office Ph No.: Further details can be had from GHMC Website @ <http://www.ghmc.gov.in> and from Sri. P.V. Ravinder, EE (H-3), GHMC, O/o Executive Engineer - II (Housing), GHMC, 2nd Floor, Municipal Building, Hari Hara Kalia Bhavan, Secunderabad - 500003, Mobile No. 7995085328. e-mail: ee3housing_ghmc@gmail.com. Further details can be seen at <http://www.ghmc.gov.in> Sd/- Executive Engineer, (Housing-3), GHMC. R.O.No: 10124-PP/LCL-AGENCY/1023-24, Dt. 02.03.2024



NORTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED

CIN No. U40109TG2000SGC034119

SHORT TENDER NOTICE No.09/2023-24 of DEE/OPI/ARMOR With Specification No.01/2023-24

Sealed tenders are invited from TSNPDCL registered contractors of Nizamabad District (East) for various electrical works in Armored Division of Operation Circle Nizamabad. The details of the works and other information can be obtained from our website www.tsnpdcl.in. Sd/- Divisional Engineer Elect., Operation, Armored

Short Tender Notice No.19/23-24 of DEE/OPI/Metpally with Specification No.01/2023-24

Sealed tenders are invited from TSNPDCL from registered contractors of Jagtial District for the various works in Metpally Division. The details of works can be obtained from our website www.tsnpdcl.in. Sd/- Divisional Elect., Engineer, Operation, Metpally

Tender Notice No.T-11/2023-24 of DE/OPI/WYRA with Specification No.01/2023-24

Sealed tenders are invited from TSNPDCL all registered contractors for fixing of agency for Estimate proposal for E/s to 16/80 HP Agt loads to Sri Gajulapara Srinivasa rao and others at Gollanapadu village in operation section Wyra Rural in Wyra division (A-2301-01-04-02-02-006) of Khammam Circle. The details of the tender can be obtained from our website www.tsnpdcl.in. Sd/- Divisional Engineer, R.O.No: 1004-PP/LCL-AGENCY/ADVT/11/2023-24, Date:02.03.2024 Operation : TSNPDCL, Wyra



What is the agenda? Why change names of criminal laws?

Whether calling the Indian Penal Code, 1860, Criminal Procedure Act, 1898, and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 “linguistic imperialism”?

Very soon the name of the Indian Constitution also will be changed to Bharatha Samihita. Another step in another phase is: “The committee finds that as the text of the Sanhita is in English, it does not violate the provisions of Article 348 of the Constitution. The committee is satisfied with the response of the Ministry of Home Affairs and holds that the name given to the proposed legislation is not in violation of Article 348 of the Constitution of India” according to the Parliamentary panel on November 21, 2023, in its report submitted to Rajya Sabha.

This panel has held that the Hindi names given to the three proposed criminal laws

are not unconstitutional. This panel has dismissed criticism against the move by some political parties and their leaders.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs headed by BJP MP Brijlal has taken note of the wording of Article 348 of the Constitution, which says that the language to be used in the Supreme Court and the High Courts, as well as for Acts, Bills and other legal documents shall be in English language.

The government introduced three bills in the Lok Sabha to replace laws that form the backbone of criminal jurisprudence in India: the Indian Penal Code (1860), the Indian Evidence Act (1872), and the Criminal Procedure Act (1898). With Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Sakshya (BS), and Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) that would respectively respect the

An important change in the BNS Bill concerns “repealing” sedition. On this Home Minister says: “We are repealing sedition” that shows the much-debated provision, Section 124A of the IPC, pertaining to sedition as an offence has been re-invented. Section 150 of the BNS Bill deals with the offence of endangering the sovereignty unity and integrity of India but it does not use the word ‘sedition’. It reads ...

colonial-era statutes, the government aims to achieve a transformation in the criminal justice system and ensure delivery of justice within a maximum of three years.

The Home Minister said: “From 1860 to 2023, the country’s criminal justice system functioned as per the laws made by the British. With these three laws, there will be a major transformation in the

criminal justice system.” He said that the bills fulfil one of the “panchpruns” (five vows) announced by the Prime Minister on August 15, 2022, to “erase all the signs of British slavery”.

“From 1860 to 2023, the country’s criminal justice system functioned as per the laws made by the British. With these three laws, there will be a major transformation



PROF. M SRIVIDYA ACHARYULU

Dean, Mahindra University, Hyderabad

in the criminal justice system,” he said.

‘Re-invented’ sedition

An important change in the BNS Bill concerns “repealing” sedition. On this Home Minister says: “We are repealing sedition” that shows the much-debated provision, Section 124A of the IPC, per-

taining to sedition as an offence has been re-invented. Section 150 of the BNS Bill deals with the offence of endangering the sovereignty unity and integrity of India but it does not use the word ‘sedition’. It reads:

“Whoever, purposely or knowingly, by words, either spoken or written or by signs, or by visible representation, or by electronic communication or by use of financial means, or otherwise, excites or attempts to excite, secession or armed rebellion or subversive activities or encourages feelings of separatist activities or endangers sovereignty or unity and integrity of India; or indulges in or commits such acts shall be punished with imprisonment for life or with imprisonment which may extend to seven years and shall also be liable to fine.”

The BNS bill has new provisions for the death penalty for raping a minor below the

age of 18 years, sexual exploitation of a woman after hiding her identity, punishments for mob lynching, and 10 years imprisonment for crimes against children, among others.

Community service

Simultaneously, the bill proposes first-time community service as punishment for petty offences. Offences against women and children, murder, and offences against the State have been given precedence. The various offences have been made gender neutral, the statement and object of the BNS Bill said. Under the BNSS Bill, to stop the political use of punishment waivers by governments, a new provision has been made that death sentences can only be converted to life imprisonment, and life imprisonment can be pardoned only within seven years

of punishment.

The Home Minister referred to the recent release of criminal-politician Anand Mohan in Bihar and said provisions have been made to ensure that those with political influence do not escape the law. The use of forensic science to increase convictions in cases is also in focus, the Minister said. “The aim is to take the conviction rate to 90 per cent,” he said.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS-2023), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS-2023), and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA-2023) were introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 11. The proposed laws will replace the Indian Penal Code, of 1860, the Criminal Procedure Act, of 1898, and the Indian Evidence Act, of 1872 respectively. Problem is: Whether the MPs and the people had enough time to read, study and understand the implications?

Bandi demands probe into ‘grabbing’ of Bhoodan lands

The BJP leader alleged that the KCR family grabbed the lands worth Rs 500 cr

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP Lok Sabha member and party’s national general secretary Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Saturday accused the family of former chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao of grabbing Rs 500 worth of Bhoodan lands. He also alleged that the illegal activities of former MP Vinod’s family in the name of Bhoodan lands were also true.

Speaking to the media at Shyampet, the BJP leader demanded that the Congress government headed by A Revanth Reddy order an inquiry into the Bhoodan lands. The probe would bring the scandal into open, he said.



He wondered why the Congress government has been shying away from ordering a CBI inquiry into the alleged corruption and defective works in the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project. He recalled that Revanth Reddy, during the campaign

for the Assembly elections, demanded a CBI probe into the Kaleshwaram project issue.

He exuded confidence that the BJP would win at least 350 seats in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. He was optimistic about his party’s chances of winning all 17 Lok Sabha seats in Telangana.

He appreciated the gesture of the Union Defence Ministry to part with its lands for the construction of an elevated corridor on the Hyderabad-Ramagundam-Karimnagar highway.

It is the responsibility of the Congress government in Telangana to implement the promised six guarantees, he

said.

He alleged that government officials have been denying benefits under the scheme meant to prove LPG cylinders at Rs 500 to the poor.

There are an estimated 90 lakh white ration card holders in Telangana. He demanded that the State government ensure that the eligible people get the benefits.

Bandi Sanjay said that he would take part in the public meeting to be addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Adilabad on March 4.

He said that the Prajagatya Yatra would be suspended on March 8 and 9 in connection with the Sivaratri festival.

Yadadri to be restored to its original name of Yadagirigutta

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Minister for Roads and Buildings Komati Reddy Venkat Reddy on Saturday said that the name of Yadadri would be restored to its original name Yadagirigutta. A government order would be issued soon in this regard.

It may be recalled that local MLA and Government whip Beerla Ailayya made a statement in this regard.

In an informal chat with media here, Venkat Reddy responded to the issue of restoring to the original name of Yadagirigutta. He said that he requested Rahul Gandhi to contest from Bhongir. He exuded confidence that the Congress would capture Bhongir, Nalgonda and Khammam Lok Sabha seats.

CPM demands relief for farmers in distress

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) State secretariat member Julakanti Ranga Reddy has demanded that the Congress government constitute drought teams to survey the wilting crops.

Addressing the CPI-M district committee meeting here on Saturday, Ranga Reddy urged the government to fill tanks with Krishna water to save the standing crops under Nagarjunasagar Left Canal and Aliminetti Madhava Reddy Srisailem Left Canal Project (AMRP) and to provide water to the cattle.

The State government should take steps to fill all identified tanks in the Nalgonda district given the current summer season.

Not even 30 per cent of the



CPI-M State secretariat member Julakanti Ranga Reddy speaking at a meeting in Nalgonda on Saturday

area under paddy was covered so far during the Yasangi season. The farmers are in great distress, he said.

The farmers have been sinking borewells in villages to save the standing crops, but they are striking water, he

observed. It was high time that the State government constituted a drought team for the survey.

CPI-M district secretary Mudireddy Sudhakar Reddy urged the government to implement six guarantees.

231 prisoners waiting for premature release

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The State government has selected the premature release of 231 prisoners, comprising 212 life convicts and 19 non-life prisoners, who are having good conduct in prisons for premature release on the occasion of January 26, 2024. But the Governor’s assent has not been given to the proposal of this release.

According to the prison department sources, “The premature release file is pending for the signature of Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan as she is taking consideration of legal opinion. After considering the opinion she will take a call.” The Governor is empowered to

grant remission under Article 161 of the Indian Constitution.

Since 2014, Telangana State’s premature release has been granted on two occasions in 2016 and 2020.

BSP State president RS Praveen Kumar took Social media platform ‘X’ and posted, “It seems the files of 231 life convicts of Telangana who completed 10 years of imprisonment and those are eligible as per guidelines issued by the government have been sent to your office for premature release on the eve of Republic Day 2024. Their families have approached us and are eagerly waiting for your decision. I request you to kindly take a decision on this.”

Trainee IAS officers visit GHMC to study best practices

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Trainee IAS officers from different states have visited the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation office to study best practices in the corporation. They are getting training in Mussoorie and visited the GHMC on Saturday as part of a two-day visit to the State. GHMC Commissioner Ronald Rose explained the best practices of GHMC through a power-point presentation in Buddha Bhavan meeting hall.

Commissioner Ronald Rose and concerned HODs explained about sanitation,



Commissioner Ronald Rose and HODs concerned explaining to the trainee officers at the GHMC head office on Saturday

solid waste management, C and D dump yard, garbage col-

lection, SNDP, town planning, house permits, greenery, model

graveyard, multi-purpose function hall, foot over-bridge, two bedroom houses, distribution of lakes, street-lights, traffic signals and EV charging stations.

They also talked about the awards received on lakes development, greening and the employment opportunities for unemployed young women and young men.

In all, 17 IAS officers from different states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Uttarakhand will study the functioning of solid waste management, T-Hub and industrial Park in Dundigal and Jawahar Nagar.

Radisson drugs case: Krish tests negative in drug test

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telugu film director Krish Jagarlamudi has reportedly tested negative in a urine test of drugs. However, blood test reports would take more time than urine tests.

On Friday, the Gachibowli police reportedly interrogated him for more than an hour. According to sources, the police may ask him for interrogation, even though the test result was declared negative.

One of the missing persons in this case is suspected to have escaped from the country. Accused G Vivekanand, Nirbhay and S Kedarnath reportedly tested positive while tested with drug test kit. So far, Gachibowli police have reportedly named 12 accused in the First Information Report (FIR).

Also on Friday, the High Court asked the police to state their stand on Monday, March 4 on the anticipatory bail petition of accused Krish Jagarlamudi.

Inspection teams to ensure free and fair elections



Election Nodal Officer Prakash Reddy and other officers conduct a training programme for SST and FST teams at the GHMC head office

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Election Nodal Officer Prakash Reddy said that the inspection teams would play an active role in making the election free and peaceful without falling a prey to inducements. In view of upcoming parliamentary elections, a training programme was organised for the Static Surveillance Team (SST) and Flying Squad Team (FST) at the GHMC head office on Saturday.

Election Nodal Officer Prakash Reddy explained to

the officials about the responsibilities in accordance with the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and to follow the rules and regulations. If not, action would be taken as per the election regulations.

Prakash Reddy said that every act of seizing should be video-graphed to comply with election norms while seizing cash and other items. FST teams would perform their duties from the release of the election notification, while the SST teams would perform their duties from the nomination process.

Road laid by ex-minister Malla Reddy removed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The officials removed a road in Gundla Pochampally municipality on Saturday, which was laid by former minister Chama Kura Malla Reddy. The authorities removed the road laid by Malla Reddy in the HMDA layout reportedly on the orders of the Medchal Collector.

Malla Reddy reportedly occupied 2,500 yards of land in the HMDA layout in Gundla Pochampally municipality and laid the road.

When Malla Reddy paved the road, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, who was an MP, complained to the authorities about it. However, no action was taken. Now that the Congress government has come to power, the land issue has once again come to the fore.



NEWS FROM ANDHRA PRADESH

BJP getting ready to contest all seats

State leaders confused over alliance with TDP-JSP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The BJP high command in Delhi is confusing the State leaders regarding the alliance with TDP-JSP. According to reports, the BJP seems to have a double stance on alliance. On the one hand, TDP is set to be roped into the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on March 5. At the same time, the BJP high command has reportedly asked the party leaders to send the list of aspirants for all the 175 Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha seats.

BJP State general secretary B Siva Narayana said that an action plan is being finalised on how to approach the people across the State ahead of the elections. A meeting was held on Saturday to discuss the candidates for the parliamentary constituencies.

He said that another discussion will be held on who should be fielded in Assembly constituencies and claimed that the people of Andhra Pradesh are ready to support BJP. He said that the meeting with the rest of the district leaders will be held on Sunday.

Siva Narayana said that there was



a good response from the people to Prajapuru and Palaleku Podam programmes. There will be an elaborate discussion on how to contest all 25 Parliament, 175 Assembly seats in the coming elections. He added that the matter of alliances will be decided by the high command.

He further said that during the 2019 elections, false propaganda was carried against BJP that led to the drop in voter percentage. Through various programmes, the BJP State leaders have explained to the people what the Modi government has done. “There was no discussion on alliances, only the leaders expressed their views on alliance,” he added.

YSRCP expects a record 15 lakh turnout at Bapatla Siddham

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSR Congress Party is all set to conduct the fourth and final Siddham cadre meeting in Addanki in Bapatla on March 10. The party leaders are making elaborate arrangements for a massive gathering of 1.5 million (15 lakh) leaders, cadre and supporters. With this meeting, the party plans to make a big political statement in the central zone after having hijacked the narrative in both Uttar Andhra as well as Rayalaseema.

Elaborating on the arrangements being made for the event, regional coordinator and Rajya Sabha member V Vijayasai Reddy informed the media that the party was expecting a footfall of 1.5 million (15 lakh) people this time, superseding the Siddham Anantapur turnout of one million. He said that the surveys conducted before and after the Siddham meetings stated that the YSRCP graph has increased. “Considering the response of the people to the meetings,



President Murmu pays homage to Santha Kabi Bhima Bhoi in Sambalpur

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday paid homage to Santha Kabi Bhima Bhoi in Odisha's Samabalpur district. The president visited Rairakhol and offered floral tributes to the statue of the saint. Accompanied by Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, she then went to Cousathi Siddhankara Dhooni Mandap at Madhupur and paid homage to the revered figure from the 19th century by pouring oil on the ever-lighted 'Havan'. She then visited the nearby Chausathi Siddhi Ashram. There, the president had a brief discussion with the monks and enquired about the old trees of the ashram. She also planted saplings in the ashram premises. She was presented with a photo of Santha Kabi Bhima Bhoi and a book. She also interacted with the people at the ashram, and distributed chocolates among the children.

Dynasts scared of contesting LS polls, trying RS route: Modi

PNS ■ AURANGABAD (BIHAR)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday hit out at the opposition, saying that "dynasts" were scared to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha and were seeking the Rajya Sabha route to enter Parliament. He launched a veiled attack on the Congress-RJD alliance in Bihar, claiming the NDA has "pushed to the margins" those who "indulged in dynastic rule and created terror in the minds of the people". Addressing a rally in Aurangabad district, Modi said it was his "guarantee" to ensure that Bihar witnessed development, the rule of law and that its women lived free from fear. "Bihar now again has a double-engine government. The NDA has pushed to the margins political dynasts in Bihar," he said, in an obvious reference to the recent return to the BJP-led coalition of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar who was present on the dais. The PM said Bihar is the land of Goddess Sita and enthusiasm was palpable in the state when Ram temple was consecrated in Ayodhya. He said that Bharat Ratna to former chief minister Karpoori Thakur was an honour for entire Bihar. "An earlier generation in Bihar had been condemned to live in fear. So many youngsters were forced to migrate. We must not allow those times to return," Modi said, in an apparent reference to the RJD rule.



I will remain with NDA forever, Bihar CM Nitish Kumar assures PM

PNS ■ AURANGABAD (BIHAR)

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday assured Prime Minister Narendra Modi that he would remain with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) forever. Speaking on the occasion of unveiling function of

the projects worth Rs 21,400 crore in Aurangabad district by Modi, Kumar said, "I am confident that the NDA coalition will win more than 400 seats in the coming Lok Sabha polls. I assure the PM that now I will remain in NDA forever". Kumar dumped the R J D - l e d Mahagathbandhan and

returned to his old ally BJP last month. "We welcome you (the PM) in Bihar. Lots of developments are taking place in Bihar. I am confident that now things will move faster and Bihar will reach new heights of development. People of Bihar will now feel economically more empowered," said

Projects worth Rs 21,400 cr unveiled in Aurangabad

PNS ■ AURANGABAD (BIHAR)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled development projects worth Rs 21,400 crore in Bihar's Aurangabad district on Saturday. The PM unveiled the projects at an official function in Ratanwa village. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Governor Rajendra V Arlekar, Deputy CMs Samat Chaudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha, and several Union ministers were among those present at the programme. This is Modi's first visit to Bihar since the BJP-led NDA returned to power in the state after CM Nitish Kumar, who heads the JD(U), dumped the Mahagathbandhan. Addressing the programme, Kumar told the prime minister that he would remain in the NDA forever. Modi unveiled national highway projects worth over Rs 18,000 crore. He also laid the foundation stone for a six-lane bridge over the Ganga, which will be constructed parallel to the existing JP Ganga Setu. He dedicated to the nation three railway projects, which include the doubling of the Patliputra-Pahleja line and a 26-km-long new line between Bandhua and Paimar. The PM also inaugurated 12 projects worth over 2,190 crore under the Namami Gange scheme.

INDIA CORNER

Cow dies in country bomb explosion in Tiger reserve



A cow died in a blast triggered by a country-made bomb in the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve here, police said on Saturday. According to police, the five-year-old cow was part of a herd of five owned by Thayappa, a local farmer in the Dignarai forest area near

Thalavadi in STR. The herd is used to grazing inside the forest area. On Friday evening, the ill-fated bovine bit a country-made bomb hidden within the grass and fell down due to injuries on its face and mouth. The bomb was allegedly kept by some persons in the area to scare wild boars and other animals from straying into their fertile land, police said. Despite the injuries, the cow managed to return to its owner who rushed it to a veterinary doctor in the area for first aid. However, the cow died there, police said. Thayappa informed the forest officials and police about the incident and a case has been recorded for investigation.

LG nod for CBI probe against Satyendar Jain



Delhi LG V K Saxena has granted sanction for a CBI probe against former minister Satyendar Jain in a complaint of extortion filed by money laundering accused Sukesh Chandrashekhar, officials said on Saturday. Jain is accused of extorting Rs 10 crore

from Chandrashekhar as "protection money". A former director general of Tihar jail was also accused in the matter, the Raj Niwas officials said. The LG has given his nod for a CBI inquiry against Jain under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act, they said. Jain, a former home minister in the Kejriwal government, was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case in May 2022 and is lodged in Tihar jail.

Writing 'Bharatmata' with saplings: Guinness record



PNS ■ CHANDRAPUR

A Guinness world record was set in Chandrapur in Maharashtra on Saturday after 65,724 saplings were used to write 'Bharatmata' in Hindi, an official said.

26 species to write 'Bharatmata' in Hindi," Swapnil Dangrikar, Adjudicator of Guinness World Records, who was present at Rambhag during the programme, said. He handed over the certificate to state Forest Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar during a ceremony held near the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve. Hailing the efforts of the forest department, Mungantiwar said such feats will boost the morale of the staffers. "After these saplings grow into trees, one will still see Bharatmata written when aerial photography is done with the help of a drone," Mungantiwar said.

The feat was achieved as part of the 3-day Tadoba Festival underway here, he said. "The officials of the Forest Department have set the world record at first attempt by using 65,724 saplings from



Rahul to address rally in Bhiwandi during Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra

PNS ■ THANE

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will address a rally at Bhiwandi in Maharashtra's Thane district on March 15 as part of his ongoing Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, which is also set to make a night halt there, party functionaries said. Interestingly, Gandhi is facing a case of criminal defamation filed by a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) worker over the former's alleged statement made at an election rally near Bhiwandi 10 years back (in March 2014), that "the RSS people killed Mahatma Gandhi". The district unit of the Congress is making all necessary arrangements for the yatra, they said. Gandhi's yatra is scheduled to enter Maharashtra from neighbouring Gujarat on March 10. In the state, it will pass via Nandurbar, Dhule, Malegaon and Nashik, Bhiwandi and Mumbai, the Congress has said. Former state Congress president and ex-minister Balasaheb Thorat visited Thane

Gandhi's yatra is scheduled to enter Maharashtra from neighbouring Gujarat on March 10. In the state, it will pass via Nandurbar, Dhule, Malegaon and Nashik, Bhiwandi and Mumbai.

city and Bhiwandi on Saturday to take stock of the preparations. Talking to reporters, Thorat said that after entering Nandurbar on March 12, Gandhi will reach Bhiwandi on March 15, where he will interact with local citizens. "Later, the yatra will make a night halt in Bhiwandi before proceeding to Thane and then to Mumbai on March 16. The next day (on March 17), a public rally of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) will be held in Mumbai," he said.

Ruckus in J'khand Assembly over Spanish tourist's gang-rape

PNS ■ RANCHI

Uproarious scenes were witnessed in the Jharkhand Assembly on Saturday over the alleged gang-rape of a Spanish woman in Dumka district, leading to two adjournments of the House. The House also witnessed a ruckus over the alleged misuse of central agencies against non-BJP governments. A Spanish tourist was allegedly gang-raped in Dumka district, where she and her partner were camping in a makeshift tent on Friday night after crossing over from Bangladesh on a two-wheeler.

Gujarat CM offers prayers at Ayodhya Ram temple with ministers; calls it 'indescribable' experience

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, his cabinet colleagues, and legislative assembly Speaker Shankar Chaudhary offered prayers at the Ram temple in Ayodhya on Saturday. Patel expressed joy over his visit to the temple and termed the experience as "indescribable". In a release issued by the state government, Patel said the prime minister's perseverance and commitment had ensured the temple's inauguration. The construction of the Ram temple is a proud occasion, especially for the Gujarati community, as the temple was consecrated by Prime Minister Modi, who hails from Gujarat, the release quoting the chief minister stated. He further said that the



state government has allocated Rs 10 crore in this year's budget to build the Gujarat Yatri Bhavan to facilitate ease of travel for pilgrims visiting the temple from Gujarat. The total cost of the project was Rs 50 crore, he said. Patel thanked Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for providing land for the Yatri Bhavan and making arrangements for pilgrims visiting the

holy city, particularly by the 'Aastha' trains from Gujarat. The chief minister presented a painting depicting the events of Shabari Mata and Lord Ram to the trustees of the Ayodhya Ram Mandir Janmabhoomi Trust. During the visit, Patel was accompanied by state cabinet ministers, Speaker Shankar Chaudhary and chief whip Balkrishna Shukla.

India eliminates extreme poverty: Brookings' article

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has eliminated extreme poverty, a commentary authored by economists Surjit Bhalla and Karan Bhasin in a leading American think-tank The Brookings Institution said, citing the just released consumption expenditure data for 2022-23. In the article, the two noted economists cite the data to say real per capita consumption has grown 2.9 per cent per annum since 2011-12, with rural growth at 3.1 per cent being significantly higher than urban growth of 2.6 per cent. Also, there has been an unprecedented decline in urban and rural inequality. The urban Gini declined from 36.7 to 31.9; the rural Gini declined from 28.7 to 27.0.



The Gini coefficient, or the Gini index, measures the inequality of income distribution, whereas a higher value closer to one (or 100 per cent) represents greater inequality. "In the annals of inequality analysis, this decline is unheard of, and especially in the context of high per capita growth," the

article states. High growth and a large decline in inequality have combined to eliminate poverty in India, it said, citing the PPP of USD 1.9 (purchasing power parity at 2011 prices and not the PPP USD 2.15 line at 2017 prices). This, the economists argued,

was more because the PPP of USD 1.9 closely corresponds to the official India Tendulkar poverty line. The Headcount Poverty Ratio (HCR), the proportion of a population that lives below the poverty line, has declined from 12.2 per cent in 2011-12 to 2 per cent in 2022-23, equiv-

alent to 0.93 percentage points per year. Rural poverty stood at 2.5 per cent, while urban poverty was down to 1 per cent. "These estimates do not take into account the free food (wheat and rice) supplied by the government to approximately two-thirds of the population, nor utilisation of public health and education," the authors noted in the commentary. The decline in HCR is remarkable given that in the past it took 30 years for India to witness a similar decline in poverty levels, which has now been witnessed over 11 years, the article said. Given the near elimination of extreme poverty, India should now graduate to a higher poverty line, which would provide an opportunity to

redefine existing social protection programmes to give greater support to the genuinely poor, it added. "Official data now confirms that India has eliminated extreme poverty as commonly defined in international comparisons," the economists said. This is an encouraging development with positive implications for global poverty headcount rates. This also means that the time has come for India to graduate to a higher poverty line much like other countries. The transition to a higher poverty line provides an opportunity to redefine existing social protection programmes, particularly with the objective of better identification of intended beneficiaries and providing greater support to the genuine poor, it added.

Jayant Sinha not to contest LS polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP MP Jayant Sinha on Saturday said he has requested the party president J P Nadda to relieve him from direct electoral duties, joining the list of party leaders not contesting the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. In a post on social media platform 'X', the MP from Jharkhand's Hazaribagh said he will continue to work with the party on economic and governance issues. The BJP is said to be contemplating giving tickets to several new leaders and some other sitting MPs also are understood to have told the party that they would like to focus on other organisational work. Earlier in the day, BJP's

East Delhi MP Gautam Gambhir also said he asked the party to relieve him from political duties so that he can focus on his upcoming cricket commitments. Sinha, a former union minister, said he wants to focus his efforts on "combating global climate change in Bharat and around the world". "I have had the privilege of serving the people of Bharat and Hazaribagh for the past ten years. Moreover, I have been blessed by the many opportunities provided by Prime Minister Narendra Mod, Home Minister Amit Shah and the BJP leadership. My sincerest gratitude to all of them. Jai Hind!" he said in his post on X.

FINANCING AND DEVELOPING COOPERATIVES ACROSS THE NATION

Shah launches NUCFDC

Calls for establishing one urban cooperative bank in each town

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

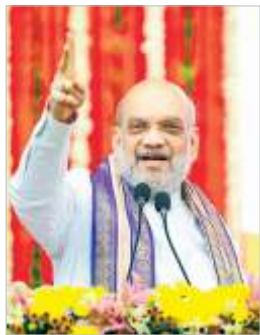
Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Saturday launched the National Urban Cooperative Finance and Development Corporation (NUCFDC) and asked the umbrella body to set up one urban cooperative bank in each town.

He also said urban cooperative banks should upgrade themselves to provide ATM facility, credit/debit cards, clearing system, maintain SLR (statutory liquidity ratio) limit and refinancing.

NUCFDC has received the RBI approval to function as a non-banking finance company and a self-regulatory organisation for the urban cooperative banking sector.

After launching NUCFDC, Shah said, "After 20 years, NUCFDC has been established. This is the need of the hour. I am happy the RBI has given approval for this."

The minister said he felt the absence of an umbrella organisation when he had an oppor-



He also said urban cooperative banks should upgrade themselves to provide ATM facility, credit/debit cards, clearing system, maintain SLR (statutory liquidity ratio) limit and refinancing.

tunity to work with National Federation of Urban Cooperative Banks and Credit Societies (NAFCUB) when there was a crisis in Gujarat.

Some urban cooperative banks would not have suffered losses if there was NUCFDC, he added.

Shah mentioned that there were several deliberations and even reports, including from the Vishwanathan Committee emphasised the need of an umbrella body for urban coop-

erative banks. "I am confident there will be multi-fold growth in the urban cooperative banking sector with the setting up of NUCFDC," he added.

Highlighting the wider role of NUCFDC, Shah said urban cooperative banks have been operating in India for a long time, but could not grow rapidly even though they can play a key role in the country's economic growth, he said.

For urban cooperative banks

to grow and survive, they should upgrade themselves and follow the RBI guidelines. The main objective of NUCFDC should be to help urban cooperative banks adhere to the Banking Regulations Act and bring professionalism in their work, the minister said.

Like other commercial banks, Shah said urban cooperative banks should provide ATM facility, credit/debit cards, clearing system, maintain SLR (statutory liquidity ratio) limit and refinancing.

"I believe for small banks, NUCFDC is a 'suraksha kavach' (safety net)," he said. There are more than 1,500 urban cooperative banks with 11,000 branches and a deposit of Rs 5 lakh crore across the country, he added.

The minister said NUCFDC should achieve its target paid up capital within a year and not depend on others. National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) has committed Rs 200 crore in it.

Cong accuses Modi govt of helping the rich

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday accused the Modi government of helping the rich industrialists and waiving off bad loans of corporates and alleged that it has upgraded facilities at the Jamnagar airport using the tax-payer's money only to facilitate the guests of a rich industrialist.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh alleged that the Jamnagar airport in Gujarat is near the Pakistan border and is sensitive to defence concerns.

He also alleged that even while the government is seen standing with the rich, it is demolishing houses of the poor and farmers seeking a minimum support price (MSP) for their produce have to face bullets.

"When it comes to helping out his rich industrialist friends, Prime Minister Modi is willing to do anything," he alleged, claiming that he "has declared

the Jamnagar airport an international airport for 10 days".

"He has ordered the doubling of the size of the passenger terminal - with taxpayers' money - just to make life more convenient for the wedding guests.

The Jamnagar airport is close to the Pakistan border, and is sensitive to defence concerns - but the private jets of the wedding guests have even been allowed to use the Indian Air Force 'technical area'," Ramesh alleged in a post on X.

"Of course, this is not a new development. The Prime Minister has spent his whole career in politics helping out his billionaire friends," the Congress leader alleged citing examples in this regard.

He alleged that the government ensured that six out of six airports being privatised went to Adani, allowed two companies to take over 90 per cent of India's airline market and wrote off Rs 14.5 lakh crore of bad loans by corporates.



Bengaluru hotels to enhance security

PNS ■ BENGALURU

A day after a low intensity bomb blast at a popular city eatery left 10 people injured, Bruhat Bangalore Hotels Association on Saturday said it will chalk out a plan to enhance the security system at all hotels across the city and would also discuss the preventive measures to be taken to make public places safer.

On Friday afternoon, the Rameshwaram Cafe witnessed a bomb blast at its Brookefield branch following which security has been tightened across the state and its capital city.

According to the Association, it will be convening a meeting with police officials, hotels owners and other stakeholders to discuss the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to maintain vigil in hotels.

They would also discuss the do's and don'ts in hotels, review the SOPs and step up security measures to avert any such untoward incidents in the near future.

It will also discuss having in place an enhanced security system in place and work towards having a zero tolerance approach against movement of any "suspicious individuals" and those "loitering" in the hotels henceforth. President of Bruhat Bangalore Hotels

Association, PC Rao said that once the police investigation is concluded, they would soon call up a meeting with the police department, cafe and hotel owners as well as other stakeholders to discuss and chalk out a detailed plan to enhance the security system at the eateries so as to avoid such unfortunate incident in future.

"We are working on ways to enhance the security system and ensure safety of people at public places but for now we are waiting for the formal report from the police department on how it (blast) happened. Once the investigation is over, we will take up the matter and chalk a detailed plan. Our discussions are on and we are definitely calling for a meeting next week with police officials and other members in the hospitality business," he told PTI.

Emphasizing that such incidents have occurred in public places like hotels, railway stations, bus stands, he said, such people can target any public place and so we as citizens of Karnataka and Bengaluru should be careful and do the needful as a responsible citizen to keep our city safe and secure.

"We need to know and analyse what actually happened and how it happened, and take preventive measures accordingly.

Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages to invest Rs 350 cr in Madhya Pradesh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB), the bottling arm of Coca-Cola in India, has announced a Rs 350 crore investment in Madhya Pradesh for setting up two manufacturing lines at its Rajgarh plant.

The announcement, made during the Regional Industry Conclave in Ujjain, takes HCCB's total investment in the state to more than Rs 660 crore, according to a statement.

"The fresh infusion of capital will see the introduction of 2 new, state-of-the-art manufacturing lines at HCCB's factory in Rajgarh.

Innovative steps in pipeline to make J-K popular tourist spot



PNS ■ JAMMU

From contemplating taking up projects in public-private partnership mode to inviting high-profile domain experts, the Tourism department in Jammu and Kashmir is working on a renewed plan to make

the region a popular tourist destination, officials said on Saturday.

The department also intends to hold Formula 4 races in association with private players, the officials said after a review meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on

the renewed tourism development plan.

They said Friday's meeting, which was attended by Tourism Commissioner Secretary Yasha Mudgal, discussed the new innovative steps to make Jammu and Kashmir the most popular tourist destination in the country.

Among other initiatives, the officials said the department is contemplating taking up projects in public-private partnership mode in both the Jammu and the Kashmir divisions for increasing footfall.

It has also decided to conduct a three-day conference with high-profile domain experts in areas such as administration, hospitality, tourism academia and ecotourism.

Rise of customer care fraud a significant concern: Haryana Police

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Asserting that it is committed to combating cybercrimes, Haryana Police on Saturday said the rise of 'customer care frauds' was an area of concern.

In a statement, the state police urged people to verify the authenticity of any communication that sought personal or financial information.

Police said many individuals, in search of customer support numbers via search engines, end up contacting fraudulent numbers.

These imposters, posing as customer care representatives, exploit the situation to extract personal and financial information, culminating in financial losses for the victims, they said.

"In an era where digital convenience has become integral to our daily lives, it has



also opened up avenues for cybercriminals to exploit unsuspecting citizens," the police said in a statement.

Haryana Police had earlier highlighted an alarming rise in cybercrime tactics targeting individuals across the state.

"From impersonation scams to fraudulent job offers, the digital domain is fraught with hazards that the public needs to be aware of and guard against," Haryana Director General of Police Shatrug

Kapur in a statement here.

Police also highlighted the menace of online job fraud, where cybercriminals create fake job portals or impersonate officials from renowned companies.

Unsuspecting job seekers are lured into sharing sensitive information or transferring money for non-existent job opportunities, registration fees, or training programmes, police said.

Another method of fraud is the Telegram task scam, where victims receive unsolicited messages offering easy money for simple tasks, only to find themselves trapped in schemes that require financial investments, ultimately leading to losses, said police.

"In light of these threats, the Haryana Police urges the public to remain vigilant and cautious," police said.

AI platforms must seek approval for deploying under-trial AI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after Google's AI platform's response to queries on Prime Minister Narendra Modi generated controversy, the government has issued an advisory for social media and other platforms to label under-trial AI models and prevent hosting unlawful content.

In an advisory issued to intermediaries/platforms on March 1, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology warned of criminal action in case of non-compliance.

"All intermediaries or platforms to ensure that use of Artificial Intelligence model(s) /LLM/Generative AI, software(s) or algorithm(s) on or through its computer resource does not permit its users to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, store, update or share any unlawful content," the advisory said.

Jal Shakti Ministry introduces Swachhata Green Leaf Rating

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to enhance sanitation practices across India's tourism sector, the Centre has introduced the Swachhata Green Leaf Rating initiative to elevate aesthetic and sanitation standards at popular destinations.

The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, under the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, in conjunction with the Union Ministry of Tourism, has introduced this concept, the Jal Shakti Ministry said in a statement.

Union Minister for Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat emphasised the need for all tourist facilities to elevate aesthetic and sanitation standards at popular destinations.

"As ambassadors of our country's hospitality and development, all our tourist facilities should actively involve themselves in enhanc-



The Bison Resort in Madhya Pradesh's Narmadapuram

ing the aesthetic and sanitation levels of our tourist spots," he said in a post on X.

He also stressed the potential for increased tourist footfall and enhanced brand value within the hospitality sector through investment in responsible sanitation practices.

The Bison Resort in Madhya Pradesh's Narmadapuram has emerged as a pioneer by secur-

ing the inaugural Five Swachhata Green Leaf Rating Certificate of Recognition, the ministry said.

Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation Secretary Vini Mahajan highlighted the transformative potential of initiatives such as the Swachh Bharat Mission and the Swachhata Green Leaf Rating in redefining the tourism sec-

tor's image, positioning it as a global beacon for cleanliness and responsible tourism.

The launch of the "National Pilot on Swachhata Green Leaf Rating in Hospitality Facilities" took place in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district and Assam's Kaziranga National Park.

The launch included orientation sessions and interactive engagements with hotels, resorts and homestay owners, aimed at fostering awareness and adoption of sustainable tourism practices.

The ministry said the Swachhata Green Leaf Rating booklet, unveiled during a national conference in Lucknow in January, serves as a comprehensive guide for establishments committed to championing sustainable development and upholding world-class sanitation standards.

MONEY MATTERS

Coal production mines rises 27% in Apr-Feb



The coal production from captive and commercial mines has increased 27.06 per cent year-on-year to 126.8 million tonnes (MT) in the April-February this fiscal. The coal dispatch from the captive and commercial mines in the first eleven months of the current financial year also rose 29.14 per cent to 128.88 MT over the corresponding period of

previous fiscal, the coal ministry said in a statement. The total coal production and dispatch in February was 14.85 MT and 12.95 MT, registering an increase of 37 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively. In the year-ago period, The total coal production and dispatch stood at 10.85 MT and 9.72 MT, respectively. As of February 29, 2024, the total number of producing mines was 54, with 35 allocated to the power sector, 11 allocated to the non-regulated sector, and 8 for the sale of coal. Of the 91 mines awarded under commercial coal auctions, seven blocks have already started production.

Modi a 'speed breaker' for economy: Rahul



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has become a "speed breaker" for the "rapidly-growing" economy under the UPA. In a post on X, he also claimed that while the Congress gave a boost to development by empowering the poor, the prime minister is "hollowing out" the country for

the benefit of his "few friends". "Narendra Modi has become a 'speed breaker' for the rapidly growing Indian economy under the UPA government," Gandhi said in his post in Hindi. "The Congress gave impetus to development by empowering the poor, whereas Narendra Modi is hollowing out the country for the benefit of a few friends," he wrote. The development of the country is impossible without keeping the countrymen at the forefront of policies," the former Congress president said. "Contrary to false propaganda, the BJP government is nowhere near the Congress on the economic front. The figures are testifying to this," Gandhi said using a video highlighting the comparison between the UPA and the NDA governments on the economic fronts.

Naukri, 99acres, other apps make a comeback



Google has reinstated some popular Indian apps it had removed from its Play Store, including Naukri and 99acres, amid the government's clear signal that the delisting of Indian apps cannot be permitted. Sources said reinstating some of the apps was not linked to the government's position but with the concerned apps complying with the Play Store

Billing policies. Info Edge founder Sanjeev Bikhchandani, in a post on X, confirmed that many Info Edge apps are now back in the app marketplace. "Many of the Info Edge apps are back on the Play Store. An effort very well led by (company MD and CEO) Hitesh and the entire Info Edge team. People were up all night for this. Great crisis management," he said. Taking a strong view of Google pulling out some apps from its Play Store, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told PTI that the delisting of Indian apps cannot be permitted and that the tech company and startups concerned have been called for a meeting next week. In an interview, IT and Telecom Minister Vaishnaw said the startup ecosystem is key to the Indian economy and their fate cannot be left to any big tech to decide. The minister's comments assume significance as Google on Friday began removing some apps, including popular matrimony apps, from its Play Store in India over a dispute on service fee payments.

Lulu Group to visit Vijayapura to decide on food processing unit



PNS ■ BENGALURU

A team of Lulu Group, a leading multinational diversified conglomerate that has planned to set up a export oriented full-fledged food processing plant will visit Vijayapura soon and conduct site visits to decide where the food processing unit should be set up, officials said on Saturday.

Top representatives of the Lulu Group held a preliminary meeting about the proposed project with the Minister of Large and Medium Industries M B Patil, who is also the district in-charge minister for Vijayapura, they said.

Lulu Group export divi-

sion CEO Najbuddin, Director Anant and his team participated in the meeting held on Friday at Khanija Bhavan.

In a statement issued by the Minister's office, Patil was quoted as saying that the team of Lulu Group will visit Vijayapura soon and will conduct site visits to decide on where the food processing unit should be set up.



Delhi HC sets aside bank's order declaring Ratul Puri as wilful defaulter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has set aside Bank of Baroda's decision declaring businessman Ratul Puri as a wilful defaulter under Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines.

The court said the forensic audit report did not verify the source of funds invested in the subsidiaries of Moser Baer India Ltd (MBIL), with which Puri was earlier associated, and the bank could not have issued show cause notice to the petitioner for wilful default without verifying the source of funds.

QULI QUTUB SHAH URBAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, HYDERABAD
TENDER NOTICE
No.22/CEI/QOSUDA/2023-24 (7 days) (5th call) Date: 01-03-2024
Name of work: 1) Facade Development at Laxmi Bazar, Charaminor, Amount: Rs. 36.36 Crore. 1) Bid doc. Download Start : Date: 02.03.2024 @ 03.00 P.M., 2) Download End: Date: 11.03.2024 @ 04.30 P.M., 3) Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids: Date: 11.03.2024 @ 04.30 P.M., Bid Opening: Date: 11.03.2024 @ 04.45 P.M., Name & Address Officer Cell No.: Sri G. Guruvuora Chief Engineer, QOSUDA, Darulshira, Hyderabad. 9969485572. For further details can be seen at e-procurement @ <https://eprocurement.telangana.gov.in>
B.O.No: 1015-PPCL/ADVT/10023-24 Dt: 02.03.2024 Sd/- Chief Engineer, QOSUDA

"I really believe that what I do as an actress is my God-given talent. This is my calling, not my career!"
— Angela Bassett



HUMA QURESHI, the acclaimed Indian actress, has carved her niche in the film industry with her remarkable talent and versatile performances. Her breakthrough role in Anurag Kashyap's crime thriller *Gangs of Wasseypur* garnered widespread acclaim, establishing her as a force to reckon with in Bollywood. Known for her ability to portray complex characters with nuance and authenticity, Qureshi has since delivered captivating performances in web series like *Laila Maharani*. Beyond her acting prowess, she advocates for social causes and gender equality, using her platform to address important issues. Huma Qureshi continues to captivate audiences with her talent, proving herself as one of the most compelling actresses of her generation. She spoke to the **PIONEER** about her craft and career

ACTRESS OF DEPTH AND VERSATILITY



CAN YOU share a bit about your journey into the film industry and how you got your start as an actress?

I was into theatre in college and that's where I discovered my love for acting. I moved to Mumbai with the intention of becoming an actor. In my initial days in the industry, I did a commercial which was directed by Anurag Kashyap and he offered me *Gangs of Wasseypur*. That's how my journey in cinema was kickstarted.

What motivated you to pursue a career in acting?

In school I used to keenly participate in extra-curricular activities. Whether it was elocution, debates or plays. When I went to college, I was deeply attracted to theatre and was bitten by the acting bug. I moved to Mumbai with the dream of becoming an actor.

Of all the roles you've played so far, which one has been the most challenging, and why?

I have played roles which have challenged me as an actor and made me push myself out of my comfort zone. It's difficult to choose any one role. I thoroughly enjoyed playing both *Mohsina* and *Jhilmil* even though they belong to completely different worlds. In the recent past, whether it was *Tarla*, *Monica*, *Shalini* or *Rani Bharti* - they are all strong women who will not be deterred by society or it's norms and will rise above their circumstances with sheer will power and be unapologetic about their ambitions.

Can you tell us about any upcoming projects that you are excited about?

The third season of *Maharani* will be streaming soon. I think this is one of the only shows which has a female protagonist and has been commissioned for the third season. I am really looking forward to how people receive it.

How do you think the film industry has evolved during your career, especially in terms of roles for women and what changes would you like to see in the entertainment industry, particularly in Bollywood?

It's important for every actor to figure out their own path. There always will be a plethora of roles to play and actors must

I WAS INTO THEATRE IN COLLEGE AND THAT'S WHERE I DISCOVERED MY LOVE FOR ACTING. I MOVED TO MUMBAI WITH THE INTENTION OF BECOMING AN ACTOR. IN MY INITIAL DAYS IN THE INDUSTRY, I DID A COMMERCIAL WHICH WAS DIRECTED BY ANURAG KASHYAP AND HE OFFERED ME *GANGS OF WASSEYPUR*. THAT'S HOW MY JOURNEY IN CINEMA WAS KICKSTARTED

choose roles that work for them. The parameters for choosing roles are one's own. The sets have more women in all departments of filmmaking. Even though it's still not a level playing field, for example, the pay gap between male and female actors is still an issue, the industry has space for everyone and is constantly evolving

How do you approach preparing for a new role? Are there any specific methods you follow?

Not really. For me, reading the script multiple times helps. I just follow the script and the director's vision. Of course as an actor I improvise where it makes sense. But, essentially, I rely on the script for shaping my role.

Balancing personal and professional life can be challenging. How do you manage to maintain that balance? What are your favorite ways to unwind and relax when you're not working? I love sleeping. On days when I am not shooting, I am usually catching up on my sleep or hang out with my friends and family.

In recent years, many actors have become advocates for social issues. Are there any causes that you are particularly passionate about? How do you see your platform as an actress contributing to social change or awareness? I made a film which addressed body shaming called *Double XL*. As an actor one is expected to fit a mould but I have never adhered to that. My film was about how the skills a person has is far superior and what matters more than the looks or the how much they weigh. There has always been a lot of pressure on women to look a certain way and I have always advocated against that thought process.

What advice would you give to aspiring actors who are looking to enter the film industry?

Every individual's journey is different and they have to write their own story. What worked for me might not work for someone else. Focus, determination and resilience are key qualities.

Are there any lessons you've learned in your career that you wish someone had told you earlier?

I am glad that I got the opportunity to be on the journey and experience it for myself.



I LOVE SLEEPING. ON DAYS WHEN I AM NOT SHOOTING, I AM USUALLY CATCHING UP ON MY SLEEP OR HANG OUT WITH MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY





Jewellery

THAT REFLECTS YOUR STYLE



Recognised for its enduring value and cultural significance, handcrafted jewellery continues to be a preferred choice among discerning individuals looking to make meaningful and lasting investments in precious metals and stones. As the wedding season approaches, we speak to jewellery expert **GUNJAN SONI** about the latest trends. By **NIVI SHRIVASTAVA**



BRIDAL BLING

KNOWN for its stunning bridal pieces and intricate sets, the House of MBJ is famous for designing statement necklaces, chandbalis, jhumkas and chandelier earrings, and beautifully crafted maang tikkas. Speaking about the latest trends for brides, Gunjan informs, “We understand the importance of making every bride’s special day even more magical. We offer a curated selection of bridal jewellery that captures the essence of timeless elegance and contemporary flair. In terms of specific styles, we specialize in traditional, antique, and modern designs, ensuring that there’s something for every bride’s taste and preference. Whether

you’re looking for a classic Kundan or Gold set, a regal Polki ensemble, or a modern diamond-studded piece, our bridal collection is designed to cater to diverse style sensibilities. Each piece is meticulously crafted to complement the bride’s attire and enhance her natural beauty on her wedding day.”

As for the latest trends in bridal jewellery, the market is currently witnessing a surge in demand for contemporary yet traditional designs. Brides are gravitating towards statement pieces that blend cultural aesthetics with a modern twist. Adding further, Gunjan says, “Personalized and customizable jewellery is gaining popularity, allowing brides to add a personal touch to their bridal ensembles. For brides who

appreciate versatility, convertible jewellery is a trend to watch. Pieces that can be worn in multiple ways, such as detachable necklace pendants or convertible earrings, provide brides with the flexibility to create different looks throughout their wedding festivities. This year, we have launched the AZRA bridal collection, which aims to transport wearers to a world of timeless charm and magical allure. Each piece in this collection is meticulously crafted to capture the essence of elegance, sophistication, and grace. The collection showcases an array of exquisite gemstones, including radiant diamonds, lustrous pearls, and vibrant colored gemstones, each carefully selected for its exceptional brilliance and symbolic significance.”



EVERYDAY ELEGANCE

APART from bridal sets, contemporary jewellery with modern aesthetics is also a huge hit among young buyers, who love sporting layered necklaces for both festive and daily occasions. For festive styling, Gunjan recommends, “Consider mixing various lengths and styles of layered neckpieces with Indian wear, while delicate and dainty options work seamlessly for daily wear. Statement earrings with intricate details and vibrant gemstones are perfect for adding glamour to festive attire, while smaller, more subtle statement earrings can elevate daily outfits. Stackable rings and bracelet stacks remain en vogue, allowing for creative expression in both festive and daily ensembles. Choker necklaces, especially those with unique detailing, effortlessly enhance traditional outfits for celebrations, while simpler versions make for stylish daily accessories. Personalized jewellery, such as pieces with initials or significant dates, adds a sentimental touch suitable for both special occasions and everyday wear.”

A BLEND OF TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Currently, young jewellery buyers in India reveal a strong affinity for contemporary designs that seamlessly merge tradition with modernity. Brands have noticed a particular fondness for minimalist pieces that effortlessly complement everyday wear. Versatility is paramount, as youngsters look for designs that effortlessly transition



from casual to formal settings, meeting diverse lifestyle needs. Gunjan reveals, “Our customization options allow for personalization with initials or birthstones and resonate deeply with this dynamic demographic seeking self-expression. We prioritize ethical and sustainable practices in jewellery production, aligning with the heightened environmental consciousness among young consumers. Collaborations



with influencers and celebrities, along with our commitment to affordability and technology integration such as virtual try-ons, enrich the shopping experience for our patrons. While embracing contemporary trends, we also honour the cultural significance of jewelry, offering pieces that celebrate India’s rich heritage.”



ARTIST’S TRIBUTE TO AMBASSADOR OF HOPE

75 Portraits of Prime Minister NARENDRA MODI Unveiled in Delhi



DR Avinash Kate, the Dean of Shantamani Kala Kendra at Jain University, has embarked on an extraordinary artistic endeavour by creating 75 emotion-filled portraits of Shri Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India. These diverse portraits, capturing various facets of Shri Modi’s work, emotions, and devotion to ‘Bharat Mata’, have been meticulously crafted on canvas using acrylic colors. The exhibition, which also includes a compilation detailing Modi’s journey as the Prime Minister, was unveiled to

commemorate his leadership and representational role in shaping the modern India. This unparalleled artistic feat marks a global first, with no other artist having created such an extensive series of portraits of a single individual in various forms. Dr. Avinash Kate dedicated three months of tireless effort to this meditative process, indirectly guided by spiritual influences, adding a profound dimension to the creation of these soulful portraits. Reflecting on the exhibition, Dr. Avinash Kate expressed, “The inspiring leadership

and unwavering commitment of our esteemed Prime Minister have been a constant source of motivation for me. This collection serves as a depiction of his emotional journey, portraying him as a true ambassador of hope.” Acknowledging the support received, Dr. Chenraj Roychand, Chancellor of JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), stated, “The collection provides a unique glimpse into Dr. Kate’s inner imagination, capturing the essence of Shri Modi’s emotions, whose leadership has not only shaped the

present but is paving the way for a future where India stands tall on the global stage.” The exhibition, held at the Constitution Club, New Delhi, attracted a significant number of art enthusiasts and prominent figures directly involved in the project, including Dr. Chainraj Roychand (Chairman of Jain University) and Dr. Gani Rajendra Vijay Maharaj (Founder of Sukhi Foundation Parivar, tribal Jain saint), among others. For his commitment and dedication, Dr. Avinash Kate has received numerous prestigious

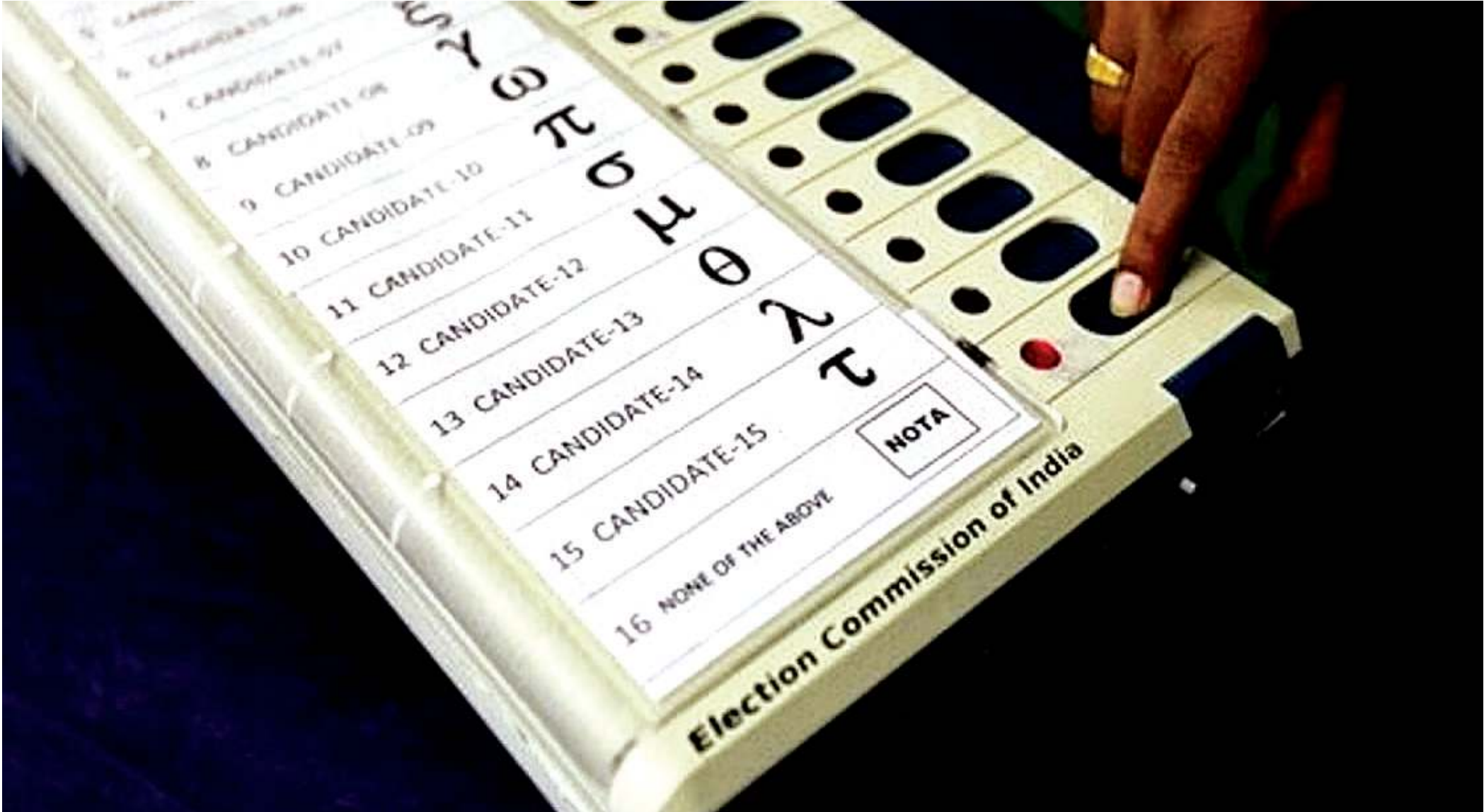
awards and honors, including recognition in world records, international records, and the Limca Book of Records. Shantamani Kala Kendra, where the exhibition took place, stands as a testament to the university’s commitment to promoting various art forms, including Fine Arts and Performing Arts, while JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) continues to be recognized among the top educational institutions in India, fostering a learner-centric environment that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship.

NOTA: THE SILENT REVOLUTION OR THE ILLUSION OF CHOICE?



ASTHA RANJAN

NOTA CONTINUES TO BE A TOOL OF DISSENT IN THE ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY. IT EMPOWERS THE ELECTORS TO REGISTER THEIR DISCONTENT WITH THE POOL OF CANDIDATES WHILE MAINTAINING SECRECY, THUS PERSUADING PARTIES TO FIELD BETTER CANDIDATES



It's impeccable to christen the word as the 'Sankat Mochan' of democracy in political Lanka, as each vote deserves a political Ayodhya, not a chaotic Lanka. With the 2013 judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India (PUCL v. Union of India), a firm position was set that in an exceedingly legal system, electors must be given the right to reject, which owes its genesis to freedom of speech and expression (Art. 19(1)(a)). However, this was substantially necessitated on account that secrecy of casting a vote was duly recognised under the provisions of the Representation of People's Act, 1951, and the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, as being fundamental to free and fair elections. The 170th Report of the Law Commission, 1999, while laying down the chassis of NOTA,

recommended a method to ensure the purity of elections, keep out criminals and other undesirable elements, and minimise the role and importance of caste and religion. Pursuant to this, no candidate could be declared returned unless he obtains at least 50% of the votes cast, and to determine such a percentage, even the negative vote would be treated as votes cast. The report also recommends a 'run-off' and fresh election if candidates fail to secure the requisite percentage. This was endorsed by the Background Paper on Electoral Reforms, 2010. Even in Columbia, blank votes are considered to be valid ones and there stands similar provision to this effect. However, in its press release dated October 28th, 2013, the Election Commission of India clarified while referring to provisions of the Conduct of

Elections Rules, 1961 (clause (a) of Rule 64) read with the Representation of the People's Act, 1951 (Section 65), that even if the number of electors opting for NOTA option is more than the number of votes polled by any of the candidates, the candidate who secures the largest number of votes has to be declared elected. This implies that even if 99% of the electors rejected the candidature of all the candidates, conversely, in defiance of their mandate, the candidate who managed to secure just 1% of the votes could be declared to be returned. This serves as a testimony of NOTA having no electoral value in India, ergo, there's no wrong in deeming it nothing more than a protest vote. Be that as it may, to justify the forthcoming quote "Not all battles are fought for victory. Some are fought simply to tell the world that someone was there on the battlefield"

(Ravish Kumar) in an electoral democracy could set the stage for catalysing NOTA as just a token of gesture which is bound to be unjust. Nevertheless, NOTA continues to be a tool of dissent in the electoral democracy. It empowers the electors to register their discontent with the pool of candidates while maintaining secrecy, thus persuading parties to field better candidates. In the 2018 Assembly election of Madhya Pradesh, NOTA bagged fifth largest tally of votes polled (1.42%) which was more than SP (1.3%) and AAP (0.66%). Similarly, in Karnataka, NOTA secured more votes than BSP and CPI (M) which are national parties. The figures are indicative of the significant usage of NOTA in numeric sense, however, its impact still remains insignificant. The State Election Commission of Haryana deviated from the

practice of Election Commission of India during the Municipal Elections. A notification dated November 22nd, 2018 by the SEC, Haryana deemed NOTA to be a 'Fictional Electoral Candidate'. It further went on to state that if a situation arises where NOTA receives the highest number of votes, then a fresh election would be conducted. All candidates who received lesser vote than NOTA would become ineligible from contesting the re-election. Similar notification was also published by the SEC, Maharashtra in the same year. In yet another development from the past, the Supreme Court issued a notice to the Centre and the ECI on March 15th, 2021 on a PIL which sought a direction to the poll panel to nullify an election result and conduct a fresh poll if the maximum votes in a particular constituency were for NOTA.

For a democracy to survive in its true form it is essential that the best available men should be chosen as people's representative and if electors find none from the roster to be suitable enough, negative voting is necessitated. However, the rationale behind the 2013 judgement of the Apex Court has failed to bear fruits. In a vibrant democracy, voter's choice must be of paramount and if they palpably reject all the contesting candidates, their choice should be empowered by way of a fresh election. In the existing scenario, if we picture the electoral stage as a grand theatre; NOTA plays the role of a silent spectator, leaving no tangible mark on the political drama. Thus, even with the popularity of NOTA among the electors experiencing a significant rise over the years, the question of whether it is 'revolutionary' or mere 'illusionary' lingers.

Adaptability is key in today's ever-changing business landscape, and many businesses struggle to keep up with rapid changes. That's where composable architecture steps in as the game-changer. Composable architecture is like the Lego bricks of digital transformation. Brands can create independent, reusable, and scalable building blocks, mixing and matching them to fit their needs. The best part? It's fast. Brands can try new solutions, make changes, fail fast, and learn from failures quickly, making their business more agile. Take the Netflix vs Blockbuster case. Netflix embraced change early on, initially delivering DVDs by mail and then swiftly transitioning to a streaming platform. On the contrary, Blockbuster failed to adapt promptly. Even though they understood that Netflix's approach was the future, they didn't evolve quickly enough. As a result, Blockbuster couldn't keep pace and eventually faced failure. It's a lesson that being late to adjust can lead to significant consequences. The result? Blockbuster went bankrupt, while Netflix became a leader in online entertainment. The lesson? Digital transformation is no longer a choice; it's a necessity. To stay ahead, brands need a flexible and agile architecture, making composable architecture the future of digital transformation. And it comes with benefits:

The Role of Composable Architecture in Your Digital Transformation Journey

VELOCITY

One big plus of composable systems is how quickly you can get things done. Gartner predicts that by 2024, 70% of big and medium-sized companies will focus on composable to make their apps easy to put together. Teams using composable web setups show real business benefits, like faster go-to-market time.

AGILITY:

Composable architecture involves assembling systems through loosely coupled components, creating a modular structure with easily combinable, detachable, and reusable parts. Furthermore, composable architecture minimizes vendor lock-in to a great extent, allowing brands to build piece by piece. If one vendor doesn't have the required technology, a brand can get it from another, creating a customized structure using best-of-breed technologies.

SECURITY

Maintaining and updating codebases in monolithic



MAYANK MISHRA

Brands can create independent, reusable, and scalable building blocks, mixing and matching them to fit their needs. The best part? It's fast. Brands can try new solutions, make changes, fail fast, and learn from failures quickly, making their business more agile



structures affects the entire system. However, composable architectures allow alteration in each component independently, making the process far less cumbersome and risky to deploy.

REUSABILITY

The key benefit of composable architecture is the ability to reuse components. The modular

system reuses and connects standards and patterns through APIs. With reusability as a central focus, any existing modules can be reused or serve as the foundation for a new application or service. Furthermore, reusability of components lowers the development costs to a great extent.

QUICKER INNOVATION

Legacy systems are complex to handle and need lots of time and resources to change, keep up, and improve. Besides, multiple teams have to be involved in the entire process. Composable architecture offers a more manageable IT upgrade setup, allowing seamless integration and feature launches. With composable architecture, IT can focus on developing new ideas and giving customers a better experience instead of dealing with routine tasks like marketing and maintenance.

OMNICHANNEL CAPABILITIES

A flexible digital experience platform (DXP) combined with a headless content management system (CMS) makes creating and sharing content smooth. This allows marketers to keep a consistent presence on various digital platforms and devices, all from one central place. They can quickly and easily improve and send out campaigns to reach their target audience wherever they are.

While the many benefits of composability make it desirable

for significant brands, they must first check if they have the proper framework to adopt a composable architecture. This can be done using MACH.

MACH

- M — Microservices: Independent services connected via APIs.
- A — API-First: APIs linking applications or services.
- C — Cloud-Native: Applications designed for the cloud, ensuring scalability.
- H — Headless: Decoupling front-end and back-end for flexibility.

As the business ecosystem changes, companies are figuring out that composable architecture is not only the future for business continuation but also a smart move as it makes everything work better.

Companies like Walmart, Asics, Mantel, and Shell have adopted composable architecture for efficient operations. It's not just a trend; it's the usual way of doing things now. Digital transformation is not a one-time destination; it's an ongoing journey. The process is similar to building a stack of blocks- each piece added on-demand as your business grows. Composable architecture is the foundation of your digital transformation journey. So adopt it now and make the transformation agile and enjoyable.

(The writer is VP of Engineering, Contentstack)

90% of Himalayas will face year-long drought at 3^o warming

About 90 per cent of the Himalayan Region will experience drought lasting over a year if global warming increases by 3 degrees Celsius, according to new research.

The findings, published in the journal *Climatic Change*, show that 80 per cent of the increased human exposure to heat stress in India can be avoided by adhering to Paris Agreement's temperature goals of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to 3 degrees Celsius warming.

The team led by researchers at the University of East Anglia (UEA) in the UK quantified how climate change risks to human and natural systems increase at a national scale as the level of global warming increases.

A collection of eight studies -- all focusing on India, Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Ghana -- shows that the risks of drought, flooding, declines in crop yields, and loss of biodiversity and natural capital greatly increase for each additional degree of global warming.

It found that in India pollination is reduced by half at 3-4 degrees global warming compared to a quarter reduction at 1.5 degrees.

Limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius allows half the country to act as a refuge for biodiversity, compared with 6 per cent at 3 degrees, the researchers said.

The team found very large increases in the exposure of agricultural land to drought with 3 degrees Celsius warming -- more than 50 per cent of the agricultural land in each of the countries studied is projected to be exposed to severe droughts of longer than one year over a 30-year period.

However, limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius would reduce the increase in exposure of agricultural land to drought by between 21 per cent (India) and 61 per cent (Ethiopia) as well as reduce economic damages due to fluvial flooding. This happens when rivers and streams break their banks and the water flows out onto the adjacent low-lying areas.

Avoided increases in human exposure to severe drought are also 20-80 per cent lower at 1.5 degrees Celsius than 3 degrees Celsius across the six countries, the researchers said.

Economic damages associated with sea-level rise are projected to increase in coastal nations, but more slowly if warming was limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius, they said.

The researchers warned that more effort is needed to reduce global warming, as currently the policies in place globally are likely to result in 3 degrees Celsius of global warming.

One paper explored the risks to plants and vertebrates due to increases in global warming, and another developed a new natural capital risk register for each of the six countries that also included the projected changes in the risk stemming from future human population changes.

This combination shows that many areas in the six countries are already at high natural capital risk at 1.5 degrees Celsius when effects of increasing human population are accounted for.

The findings also showed that an expansion of protected area networks is necessary in order to deliver climate resilient biodiversity conservation.

"The results presented in this collection confirm the need for the implementation of climate policies aligned to the Paris Agreement limits if widespread and escalating climate change risk is to be avoided," said lead author of the paper, Professor Rachel Warren, from the UEA.

"They provide additional confirmation of the rapid escalation of climate change risks with global warming found in the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) 2022 report, which identifies how the risk of severe consequences increases with every additional increment of global warming," Warren said.

Although these studies focus on the risks to six countries only, other nations are projected to experience similar issues, the researchers said.

Greater emphasis needs to be placed on both climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation to avoid large increases in risk to both human and natural systems, they said.

"For example, a good way to combat the effects of climate change on natural systems and soak up carbon from the atmosphere is to restore ecosystems to their natural state, especially if warming can be held to 2 degrees Celsius or less. This has the additional benefit of restoring the natural capital bank in these areas," said study co-author Jeff Price, also from the UEA.

The work focuses on developing countries as they tend to be more vulnerable to climate change than others. Spanning the continents of Asia, Africa, and South America, the case studies present examples of both large and small countries and cover a range of levels of socioeconomic development.

The risks assessed are the additional risks due to anthropogenic or human-induced climate change corresponding to the elevated global warming in comparison with a baseline of levels of risk in 1961-1990, when warming was approximately 0.3 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Together the studies provide a harmonised assessment for the six countries of projected changes in exposure of humans and land to climate-related hazards, such as drought, water stress, fluvial and coastal flooding, and the projected effects of climate change on biodiversity, as well as the economic and societal implications of climate risks.



having me here. God bless your union. I wish you the best. Congratulations," she said. As the prelude of her song 'We Found Love' played, Rihanna asked the audience members if they believed in love. "Make some noise for love right now. Send some extra love to the bride. It's my honour to be here and I want you to put your hands together like this," the multiple Grammy winner said before singing the popular track. The Ambani family presented Rihanna with a bouquet and posed for the shutterbugs together after her performance. Later, actor Janhvi Kapoor shared a reel of her shaking a leg with Rihanna on her song 'Zingaat' from her debut film 'Dhadak'. "This woman is a goddess. Stop it goodbye," Kapoor captioned the video. Before flying out on early Saturday morning, the singer took selfies with women cops and obliged the paparazzi with pictures. Rihanna was also photographed sharing a hug with one of the women police officers. According to multiple media reports, the Barbadian singer was paid Rs 74 crore for performing at the celebration. Meta founder Mark Zuckerberg with philanthropist-wife Priscilla Chan, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, former US president Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka, corporate leaders Gautam Adani, Nandan Nilekani, and Adar Poonawala, cricketers Sachin Tendulkar, MS Dhoni, Rohit Sharma and spiritual leader Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev are also part of the pre-wedding festivities. Other well-known film personalities who have been invited for the event are Amitabh Bachchan, Rajinikanth, Aamir Khan, Karan Johar, Ranbir Kapoor-Alia Bhatt, Anil Kapoor, and Madhuri Dixit. In 2018, music icon Beyonce performed at Mukesh Ambani's daughter Isha's wedding.

Rihanna rocks the stage at Anant Ambani-Radhika's pre-wedding bash, says 'thank you for having me'

In her first performance in India, pop star Rihanna set the stage on fire at the day one of the lavish pre-wedding event of billionaire Mukesh Ambani's son Anant and his fiancée Radhika Merchant. The international music sensation, who belted out hit songs such as 'Diamonds', 'Where Have You Been', 'Rude Boy' and 'Pour it Up', had Indian film celebrities like Shah Rukh Khan-Gauri Khan, Ranveer Singh-Deepika Padukone, Shreya Ghoshal and Shiamak Davar grooving to her tunes. Dressed in a shimmering body-hugging fluorescent green and pink outfit, Rihanna put up her best moves and also interacted with the audience at the grand event, which is being held over three days at a residential township situated close to Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL)'s petroleum refinery near Jamnagar city. The 38-year-old singer-songwriter thanked the Ambanis for making her a part of the family affair. "Thanks to the Ambani family I'm here tonight in honour of Anant and Radhika. Thank you for

Pulse oximeters may be overestimating oxygen saturation in dark skinned people, finds study

Pulse oximeters, now common in many households for measuring oxygen saturation in blood, could be overestimating their readings in dark skin-toned people, new research analysing 44 studies over the last five decades has found.

Researchers in the UK assessed more than 733,000 oxygen saturation readings taken from over 222,000 people, including almost 70,000 people of non-white ethnicity. The team said that most of the studies (30 out of 44) analysed revealed evidence of these medical devices being inclined to overestimate oxygen saturation in blood in participants with darker skin tones, even though they found it challenging to determine 'by how much', based on the current available data.

The researchers said that a major finding in these studies related to the incidence of occult hypoxaemia - medical condition of having abnormally little oxygen in the blood - with an incidence of up to 21.5 per cent in Black patients.

"Most studies reported an occult hypoxaemia incidence 25-75 per cent higher in Black compared with White patients, with other ethnic groups having a 25-50 per cent higher incidence," the researchers wrote in the study published in the British Journal of Anaesthesia.

Intensive Care Medicine in the University of Plymouth, UK.

"If those levels are being overestimated - so, for example, if a device is telling someone their oxygen saturation is 98 per cent whereas it is in fact significantly lower - it could realistically mean people are missing out on treatments they need," said Martin.

He said that the concern arose out of the use of these devices in the community, where additional tests to ascertain unwell patients like blood tests and physical assessments are not available as they are in hospital and other healthcare settings.

Acknowledging limitations to the study, the researchers said all the studies were conducted in high-income countries, where the majority of the population have light skin tones.

This they said was relevant as low- and middle-income countries often have a higher proportion of people with darker skin tones and funding for healthcare may be such that pulse oximetry is the only available monitor for unwell patients.

The study findings are currently being explored in more detail, the researchers said, with recruitment of 900 critically ill patients differing in skin tones underway in the UK.



AI shows prostate cancer is not just one disease

Scientists have used artificial intelligence (AI) to reveal a new form of aggressive prostate cancer which they said could help thousands of lives by revolutionising how the disease is diagnosed and treated in the future. The study, published in the journal *Cell Genomics*, reveals that prostate cancer, which affects one in eight men in their lifetime, includes two different subtypes termed evotypes.

The findings, led by researchers at the University of Oxford, and the University of Manchester, UK, could help provide tailored treatments to each individual patient according to a genetic test which will also be delivered using AI, they said. "Our research demonstrates that prostate tumours evolve along multiple pathways, leading to two distinct disease types," said lead researcher Dan Woodcock, from the University of Oxford.

"This understanding is pivotal as it allows us to classify tumours based on how the cancer evolves rather than solely on individual gene mutations or expression patterns," Woodcock said. The researchers worked together as part of international consortium, called The Pan Prostate Cancer Group, set up by scientists at The Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) and The University of East Anglia, UK, to analyse genetic data from thousands of prostate cancer samples across nine countries.

The team's collaboration with Cancer Research UK (CRUK) aims to develop a genetic test that, when combined with conventional staging and grading, can provide a more precise prognosis for each patient, allowing tailored treatment decisions.

Day not far when you will celebrate 'Herath' festival in Kashmir: LG to KPs

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is taking Jammu and Kashmir and the country forward and soon the 'Herath' festival will be celebrated in the valley, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha said at a gathering of Kashmiri Pandits here.

Mahashivratri is celebrated as 'Herath' by the Kashmiri Pandit community.

Speaking at a 'Herath Milan Samaroh' organised by 'Youth All India Kashmiri Samaj' here, the Lt Governor informed the gathering that PM Modi would visit Srinagar on March 7 and requested all those present in the valley to attend his programme.

In the last eight to 10 years under the leadership of Modi, the country has witnessed a change in the political style and work culture, as a result of which the country is moving ahead to become a world leader, Sinha said.

"We have such a government at the Centre which is speaking the same language in Delhi, Jammu and Srinagar. The time has passed when some people used to speak differently at these places.

"There are some things which if spoken creates problems. The prime minister is taking the country and J&K forward and the day is not far when you will celebrate Herath in Kashmir rather than in Jammu," he said.

The Lt Governor said 'Herath' is an integral part of our rich cultural and spiritual heritage. "May the festival usher in the happiness, prosperity and well-being of all," he said.

"A new period of renaissance began sometime back. We will regain the lost reputation and emerge as the world leaders. The young generation has to prepare for themselves to fulfil their duties in the new India," Sinha said.

Extending his felicitations to the people, the Lt Governor appreciated the 'Youth All India Kashmiri Samaj' for working towards the welfare of the people of J&K for over two decades and reconnecting future generations of the community with their roots.

WORLD BIRTH DEFECTS DAY

WHO calls for awareness on congenital anomalies, releases toolkit

On the eve of the World Birth Defects Day 2024, the World Health Organization on Saturday highlighted the need to raise awareness about birth defects and accelerate actions to prevent, detect and manage congenital anomalies which occur during intra-uterine life of infants.

"We are reminded that every journey matters and the journey of health indeed begins before birth," Saima Wazed, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia said in a statement.

A regional guidance document on screening newborns for three conditions -- hearing impairment, eye abnormalities, and neonatal hyperbilirubinaemia -- is being released on this occasion to facilitate capacity-building of member states, Wazed said.

She pointed out that the contribution of congenital disorders to death is increasing globally among children aged below 5 years.

Between 2000 and 2021, the contribution of birth defects to child mortality increased in our WHO South-East Asia Region from 4 per cent to 11 per cent, and globally from 4.6 per cent to 8 per cent, she said.

"Birth defects are sadly now the third most common cause of death among under-5 children in our Region, accounting for 11 per cent of the total. This is equivalent to the deaths of 300 under-5 children every single day," Wazed said.

Birth defects not only have a profound impact on individuals but also place a considerable burden on families, friends, the community and health-care systems.

The WHO regional director said while genetics plays a major role in their aetiology (study of the causes of a disease), many birth defects are preventable through addressing environmental factors. These include exposure to pollutants, lifestyle choices and socioeconomic conditions that affect pregnant women and fetuses.

Since 2014, WHO has supported all our member states to drive rapid and sustained reductions in maternal, newborn and child mortality, which includes targeted action to prevent, detect, manage and care for birth defects, Wazed said.

An integrated approach has been adopted to implement interventions for the prevention and treatment of birth defects in existing national programmes, she said.

"Guided by the Regional Strategic Framework, all our member states have national plans for prevention and control of birth defects," she added.

Accelerating prevention, management and care for birth defects is a priority, and we as a region have issued a "call for action" in five key areas, Wazed highlighted.

First, countries need to place birth defects high on their agenda and expand commitment and leadership at both the policy and programme levels, along with commensurate financial allocations, she said.

Secondly, the new regional document and videos on universal newborn screening of three conditions -- hearing impairment, eye abnormalities and neonatal hyperbilirubinaemia -- provide guidance on how simple bedside tests can be integrated within the existing health system, she added.

Third, focus should be laid on improving the coverage and quality of preventive interventions such as rubella immunisation, food fortification and quality pre-conception and antenatal care.

"Fourth, our Member states must work together with community-based networks, platforms and organisations, to recognize the challenges, hard work and perseverance of parents, caregivers and families of children with birth defects, and to empower them to access services and support, including social protection," Wazed stated.

