

'If *GOG* turns out to be a hit, I'll write its sequel story in a ***MONTH***'



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MOVE TO REMOVE KAKATIYA THORNAM FROM STATE LOGO

# ‘Will file case in High Court if the logo is changed’

● BRS stages protests opposing government move

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS leaders staged a protest at Kakatiya Thornam opposing Telangana government's move to remove it from the State logo on Wednesday. The BRS is likely to proceed legally. "We will file case in High Court if the logo is changed," said former MP Boianapalli Vinod Kumar. He said that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy spoke about removing the Kakatiya arch and Charminar symbols from the State emblem, referring to them as two symbols of colonial rule. He stated that during their 11-12 years of Kakatiya rule, Kakatiya rulers protected South India from the feudal system and clarified that the Kakatiyas were not from the colonial administration but rather worked for the welfare of the people. He mentioned



the development of irrigation projects like Ramappa, Pakhal, Laknavaram, Ghanpur, Singur and Nallagonda districts along with the construction of the Panagal reservoir and canals as evidence of their contribution to Telangana's agriculture. He further credited KCR, former Telangana's chief minister, for spearheading the

development of reservoirs and canals through the Mission Kakatiya initiative. Regarding the proposed changes to the State emblem, Vinod Kumar criticised the Chief Minister's comments, stating that removing the Kakatiya arch and Charminar symbols would not serve as a signal of independence but

rather erase historical symbols. He questioned whether the government had the authority to make changes to national symbols without Central government approval, suggesting that he would file a case in the High Court if modifications were made. He emphasised the need for Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to focus on preserving Telangana's history rather than making such controversial statements. He also hinted at someone advising the Chief Minister to change his course of action and noted the signs of Telugu Desam Party's influence on Revanth Reddy. Referring to recent developments, Vinod mentioned the construction of new temples and buildings in Ramappa and Kothapalli, in addition to trikuta temples and structures in various regions.

## Monsoon onset over Kerala, Northeast likely today



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Spurred on by Cyclone Remal, southwest monsoon is expected to hit the Kerala coast and parts of northeast by Thursday, a day ahead of the date forecast by the weather office. "Conditions continue to become favourable for the onset of the southwest monsoon over Kerala during the next 24 hours," the India Meteorological Department said on Wednesday. On May 15, the weather office had announced the onset of monsoon over Kerala by May 31. Weather scientists said that Cyclone Remal, which ripped through West Bengal and Bangladesh on Sunday, had pulled the monsoonal flow to the Bay of Bengal, which could be one of the reasons for early onset over the north-east.

## ‘Political earthquake coming’

Modi questions TMC on its stand over CCA

PNS ■ KAKDWIP

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday alleged that demography in the border areas of West Bengal is changing because of infiltration and accused the Trinamool Congress (TMC) of indulging in the politics of appeasement so that illegal immigrants could settle in Bengal. Modi also said that a major "political earthquake" is expected within the next six months after June 4, the day when the results of the Lok Sabha election would be out. He claimed that the Trinamool Congress government in the state was giving away the rights of "original" OBCs to Muslims by issuing false caste certificates. He said, "The demography in the bordering areas of Bengal is being changed. The TMC is against giving citizenship to religiously persecuted minorities. Why are they opposing the CAA so much? Why are these people (TMC leaders) lying about the CAA?" He asserted that the Matua community members would get Indian citizenship with all



the respect that's due to them. The TMC does not want the Hindus and Matuas to stay in Bengal, Modi alleged while addressing his last election rally in the state in this election at Kakdwip. "To appease a section of the society, the TMC government is openly attacking the Constitution, which has given reservations to Dalits and backward castes. Reservations were looted in West Bengal and false OBC certificates were issued to Muslims," Modi said. He referred to the May 22 Calcutta High Court order that struck down the Other Backward Classes (OBC) status of several classes in West Bengal granted since 2010, finding such reservations to

vacancies in services and posts in the state are illegal. "But the TMC cannot accept this verdict. They are misguiding Muslims by spreading wrong information regarding the court's verdict. Just imagine to what end they can go for appeasement," Modi added. "Today, infiltrators are snatching away the opportunities provided for the youths. They are encroaching on your properties and land and the entire country is worried about that," he said. After counting of votes, these TMC people will run out of steam, the prime minister claimed. "Your one vote will help to change the political direction of the nation.

## BRS demands probe into Som Distilleries scam

Slams Jupally for his statements

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS demanded a sitting judge inquiry into giving permissions to Som Distilleries. Manne Krishank, official spokesperson, Bharat Rashtra Samithi said, "Excise Minister Jupally Krishna Rao's claim of ignorance about the notorious fake liquor company Som Distilleries entering Telangana is irresponsible." The BRS pointed out that while Jupally initially threatened legal action for defamation, he later admitted to being unaware of the permits granted to the company. Adding to the controversy, the BRS highlighted that the Madhya Pradesh government had issued notices to Som Distilleries on February 26, 2024, for selling illicit liquor. Krishank said, "The company's chairman, Jagdish Arora, was charged under Sections 420, 467, 468, 471, and 120B, and was imprisoned. This signifi-



cant detail was not addressed in Minister Jupally's letter." The BRS questioned if the Telangana Congress government was unaware of these serious allegations when granting permits to Som Distilleries. He said, "We cited an incident in Morena, Madhya Pradesh, where 24 people died after consuming illicit liquor linked to Som Distilleries, resulting in the sealing of 20 spirit and receiver tanks by that government. Additionally, the BRS accused the Congress of accepting donations from Som Distilleries, creating a potential conflict of interest.

## PM Modi abuses Cong daily as he has no work to show: Kharage

PNS ■ FARIDKOT

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharage on Tuesday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying he has "nothing" to do but "abuse" the opposition party daily. Addressing a poll rally here for party's Faridkot candidate Amarjit Kaur Sahoke, Kharage also said PM Modi takes the name of the Congress more than that of God in a day. He claimed that people are strongly supporting the Congress, adding that his party will win the polls. The Congress chief alleged that whatever PM Modi says, he never does it. "At least do some work, show some work. Instead he abuses the Congress every day." "Aaj halat ye ho gayi, Modi ji bhagwan ka naam kam lete hain, Congress ka naam zyada lete hain...Rahul ji ka naam zyada lete hain aur humko roz uthkar galiyan dete hain (The situation today is such that



Modi ji takes the name of Congress more than that of God in a day...he takes the name of Rahul Gandhi more and abuses us every day), he said. "He (Modi) is going everywhere to speak against the Congress...such people can frighten us as much as they want, but we will not bow down," he added. Taking a jibe at the PM, Kharage said his (Modi's) "56-inch chest" will not work in Punjab. On PM Modi calling Rahul Gandhi 'shehzada', Kharage said he (Modi) changes a jack-

et and shirt every hour, alleging that he shows off to seek votes. Referring to the BJP's charge that the Congress has done no development in 55 years, Kharage said the grand old party during its tenure built Bhakra dam, ports, roads and set up public sector companies. "What they did," he asked the BJP-led Centre and hit out at Modi for speaking about mangalsutra, buffaloes in his speeches at poll rallies. "People are fed up with them (BJP). People are sufferings due to unemployment and inflation," he said.

## ‘Agniveer scheme introduced to avoid pension to soldiers’

PNS ■ DHARAMSHALA

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Wednesday attacked the BJP-led Centre over the Agniveer scheme, saying that the short-term military recruitment scheme was primarily introduced to avoid giving pension to soldiers. Addressing a press conference here, the former Union minister said that the government is sending young recruits to the borders after just six months of training and then leaving them unemployed after four years. "This approach risks ruining the global reputation of our army and is driven by a desire to balance the government's accounts rather than ensuring



national security," he claimed. The Thiruvananthapuram MP was in Dharamshala to campaign for Anand Sharma, the Congress candidate from Kangra parliamentary seat. Tharoor, who served as India's representative at the United Nations for 29 years, including seven years in World Peacekeeping, expressed pride in the Indian Army's reputation for quality and professionalism.

## ‘Proud that I am going to jail to save my country’



PNS ■ JALANDHAR

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who has to surrender on June 2 in the excise policy case at the end of his interim bail period, on Wednesday said he is proud going to jail to "save" his country. The AAP convener is out on an interim bail till June 1 following an order of the Supreme Court, which has directed him to surrender on June 2. He was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in March in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam.

## Revanth...

Continued from page 1

He condemned the alleged misuse of phone-tapping for political gains and emphasised the need to safeguard democratic principles. He said, phone-tapping is not just a matter of privacy but a threat to national security. He said, those accused of wrong-doing should face consequences. Dr Laxman demanded action against those responsible for the alleged misuse of phone-tapping. Dr Laxman called for police authorities to uphold the law without succumbing to political pressure.

## India successfully...

Continued from page 1

"The flight-test met all the trial objectives, validating the propulsion system and control and guidance algorithm," it said. The ministry said the performance of the missile has been validated from the flight data captured by range tracking instruments like electro-optical systems, radar and telemetry stations deployed at various locations, including the on-board ship. Defence Minister Rajnath

Singh congratulated the DRDO, the IAF and the industry on the successful test-flight of RudraM-II. "The successful test has consolidated the role of the RudraM-II system as a force multiplier to the armed forces," he said. Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman, DRDO Samir V Kamat complimented the DRDO team for their untiring efforts and contribution culminating into the successful flight test, the ministry said in a statement.

## BRS to proceed...

Continued from page 1

The former minister dismissed Revanth Reddy's claims concerning the Kaleshwaram project and suggestion that KCR should be subject to lie detector test for uncovering the truth. He criticised the manner in which Revanth, as Chief Minister, had been speaking about former chief minister KCR. Reddy asked, "On encounters done during the tenures of Chandrababu Naidu and YS Rajasekhara Reddy, if police officials are questioned, would they ever claim encounters were conducted at their behest". He suggested that people should recall that KCR's phone was tapped during the Telangana movement - a charge that was ignored at the time. The former minister downplayed the phone tapping issue as "silly" and warned of legal action if the leaks continued. He accused certain individuals of orchestrating selective leaks to defame BRS leaders. Reddy said, "For a few days, they spread propaganda on Kaleshwaram. Now from Mallanna Sagar, 7 TMC of water is being taken to Musi, Himayath Nagar and Osman Sagar. If Kaleshwaram has failed project, why are you bringing water now. After a few days of spewing venom on Kaleshwaram, now they brought phone tapping to fore". The former minister characterized the Congress government's actions as 'misleading', citing the lack of official responses from the government regarding the ongoing phone tapping allegations.

He said, "Neither Chief Minister, nor Ministers gave any official statement on phone tapping case." He criticised the Congress government for diverting public attention through daily leaks, aiming to malign KCR and BRS leaders. This being so, the TPCC posted in 'X' on its official handle: "Who are the real kings who brought the kingdom i.e. our Telangana martyrs. Making their existence questionable and saying that we are everything to Telangana won't be allowed. Because this is a Prajasa Telangana and Praja Palana is running here. In public governance, people are our Gods and their sacrifices

Continued from page 1

The report underscores the evolving employment scene in Indian cities, where tier 2 and satellite cities are gaining prominence alongside the developing metro. Factors such as talent availability, government support, infrastructure development, and cost considerations are reshaping organizations' location strategies and talent acquisition approaches. Sunit Sinha, Partner and Head of People, Performance,

and Culture at KPMG in India, shares his perspective, stating, "I am proud to present our 'Talent Feasibility Study' report, which highlights the critical importance for organizations to stay abreast of market trends and deeply analyze the factors influencing their choice of work locations. By leveraging information like commercial leasing prices, availability of talent, quality of life for employees, and other such metrics, organizations can strategically position themselves,

attract top talent, and maintain a competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving landscape. The power to shape the future of talent lies in staying informed and adapting proactively." KPMG India's talent availability study, reports that cities such as Hyderabad, Navi Mumbai, and Pune are rising to meet the growing demands and emerging as potential hubs for recruiters seeking diverse talent with critical skill sets.

## Tapped 1,200 phones, Praneeth...

Continued from page 1

My team also passed on information about transportation of money by the Opposition party leaders and supporters to the district police and got such cash seized and shown as hawala money with an intention to avoid criticism by the Election Commission and political parties", one of the prime accused reportedly said in the confession report. Chief of Operations Prabhakara Rao allegedly supported that team. "We also prepared several profiles of political rivals of the TRS party

with the help of a technological tool, which was provided by M/s. Convergence Innovation Labs in Hyderabad", Praneeth Rao reportedly revealed. Praneeth Rao reportedly got the targets for surveillance from Prabhakar Rao and a retired additional SP Venugopal Rao and they allegedly monitored them and informed Prabhakar Rao. They reportedly stopped snooping after elections on November 30. After exit polls, Prabhakar Rao reportedly ordered Praneeth Rao to destroy the evidence after the Congress won in elections and he obeyed it.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha

Tithi: Saptami: May 29 01:40 PM to May 30 11:44 AM

Ashtami: May 30 11:44 AM to May 31 09:38 AM

Nakshatram: Dhanishta: May 29 08:38 AM to May 30 07:31 AM

Shatabhisha: May 30 07:31 AM to May 31 06:14 AM

Rahukalam: 1:51 PM to 3:28 PM

Yamagandam: 5:44 AM to 7:22 AM

Varjyam: 02:20 PM to 03:51 PM

Gulika: 8:59 AM to 10:36 AM

Amritakalam: 11:25 PM to 12:56 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:47 AM to 12:39 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy

Temp: 39°

Humidity: 39%

Sunrise: 5:41 AM

Sunset: 6:46 PM

Updated: May 29, 2024 5:00 PM

## Tank Bund to...

Continued from page 1

Common people are also keen on participating in the celebrations, along with their families. So, special arrangements are being made for their amusement. The authorities concerned are meticulously organizing exhibitions, cultural programmes, and food stalls representing various districts of the state to showcase the rich cultural heritage of Telangana. Numerous cultural events featuring traditional, folk, and modern performances are being conducted on the main stage. The Telangana state anthem "Jaya Jaya He Telangana" will be presented to the accompaniment of the police band. Decorations, cultural performances, and food courts

are being arranged with special care to create a festive ambience, drawing crowds from various parts of the state. Around 80 stalls are being set up along the Tank Bund, showcasing handicrafts, self-help group products, agricultural produce, and food stalls from leading hotels in the city. Officials have reviewed preparations for Tank Bund arrangements. On Wednesday evening, senior officials from various departments inspected the arrangements at Tank Bund venue. Orders have been issued to officials concerned regarding stage decoration, seating arrangements for dignitaries and attendees, barricading, parking, traffic management, power supply, and police deployment.

## CM finalising state...

Continued from page 1

Hindi has been added as additional language in all the three logo samples. The designs had variations in themes, including Buddhakamma, Charminar and Buddha Statue. Colours used in the logo samples were largely red and blue, compared to the green color used in the existing logo.

This being so, the TPCC posted in 'X' on its official handle: "Who are the real kings who brought the kingdom i.e. our Telangana martyrs. Making their existence questionable and saying that we are everything to Telangana won't be allowed. Because this is a Prajasa Telangana and Praja Palana is running here. In public governance, people are our Gods and their sacrifices

are our pillars. We are going to honour their memories, change our State logo according to their ambitions. Let national integrity shine, the influence of Telangana will increase. It is the will of this people's government to have our state logo so that the existence of the movement is eye-catching and every citizen of Telangana will think that this is our state."

## ‘31.22% decrease in...

Continued from page 1

Furthermore, the company reported that the duration of interruptions also witnessed a noteworthy decline. In the corresponding period last year, there were 10,558 hours of interruptions, whereas this year saw a reduction to 7,262 hours, marking a decrease of 3,296 hours or 31.22%. These improvements are a

result of comprehensive measures undertaken by the company, including pre-monsoon inspections, efficient line operations, jumper replacements, and prompt pole repairs. Additionally, the installation of capacitor banks on 200 feeders and management of power factors on 530 feeders have successfully addressed low-voltage issues, enabling uninterrupted service provision.





HI-TEC CITY, GACHIBOWLI CORRIDORS POTENTIAL CENTRES

# Hyd prime destination for portfolio acquisitions

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad stands at \$3.8 billion for REIT investment potential, driving by its booming Grade A office stock and strong demand from global GCCs, offering healthy opportunities for SM REITs. According to the JLL-Property Share report, the market is led by assets in the HI-TEC City and Gachibowli corridors, which account for 84% of the available potential, representing a \$3.7 billion opportunity. With attractive valuations for a wide range of well-leased and mid-sized assets, Hyderabad is a prime destination for portfolio acquisitions by SM REITs. The report states, India's fractional ownership market is witnessing growth, with significant potential for investors in the top seven markets. Currently valued at around \$500 million, this market is expected to surpass \$5 billion in Assets Under Management (AUM) by 2030 despite regulatory compliance challenges.



The JLL-Property Share report gives information regarding growth potential of India's real estate fractional ownership market, providing insights for those seeking opportunities. Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Bengaluru and Hyderabad are leading the way in terms of investment prospects. Mumbai and Delhi NCR account for nearly 50% of the SM-REIT worthy assets across the top seven (Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Kolkata, Chennai, Pune,

Hyderabad, Bengaluru) markets of India. Bengaluru and Hyderabad follow with 15% and 11% shares, respectively. The fractional ownership market in India is projected to grow over 10 times and exceed \$5 billion by 2030, according to recent findings. With a vast portfolio of over 328 million sq. ft. of office assets valued at approximately \$48 billion, which are considered suitable for Small and Medium REIT invest-

ment, the potential for investment in this sector is tremendous. Fractional ownership is a concept where multiple investors collectively own a share or fraction of a high-value asset, such as real estate, without having to buy the entire property. The tech markets display notable growth potential, with attractive investment opportunities found in well-leased mid-sized assets that fall under the scope of SM REITs.

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## Implementation of official language in banks reviewed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The first half year meeting of the Bank Town Official Language Implementation Committee (Bank & Insurance), Hyderabad for the year 2024-25 was held on May 28 at State Bank of India, Local Head Office, Hyderabad.

The meeting was chaired by Rajesh Kumar, Chief General Manager, State Bank of India, Hyderabad Circle.

The status of official language implementation in member offices was reviewed. Rajesh Kumar guided all the member offices and motivated them to maintain the pace of Rajbhasha implementation and make continuous progress. While addressing the House, he said that for Hindi implementation, it is necessary for us to change our mindset. After discussing the action plan for the coming half-year, the winners of various Hindi competitions organised under the



aegis of TOLIC in the member offices in the last half year were honoured with certificates and prizes.

Under this, Reserve Bank of India, State Bank of India (Amravati), Life Insurance Corporation of India, National Housing Bank, SIDBI, Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Union Bank of India, Canara Bank, NABARD-Telangana were awarded for

best performance in Hindi. Anirban Kumar Biswas, Deputy Director (Implementation), Home Ministry, Rajesh Mahana, General Manager, Reserve Bank of India, Dr KVS Prasad, General Manager, NABARD (Andhra Pradesh) and Om Narayan Sharma, Chief General Manager, State Bank of India, Local Head Office, Amravati, were present on the occasion.

## TSCPCR to take action in illegal sale of kids in State

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In the light of illegal sale and adoption of children in the State, the Telangana State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (TSCPCR) has taken the issue as suo motu and communicated to the Director of Women Development and Child Welfare Department, IG, Hyderabad to take immediate measures to inquire into the matter and take appropriate action.

Following the action initiated by the police and authorities concerned, 16 children have already been rescued and sent to Shishu Vihar, Hyderabad, for immediate care and protection. The Commission stated that it has communicated with the Director for a thorough inquiry to trace out the actual culprits involved in this racket and to take appropriate action.

## Man nabbed for outraging modesty of minor girl

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Based on a complaint filed by the victim's father, Kacheguda Railway Police nabbed an accused for outraging the modesty of a minor girl in a moving Venkatadri Express plying to Kacheguda from Tirupati on Wednesday.

As per the complaint, on Tuesday at 6:30 pm, the victim's father, along with his wife and daughter, were travelling from Tirupati to Kacheguda in Train No 12798 (Venkatadri Express) in S3 coach where his daughter was sleeping on the upper berth while his wife was sleeping in the lower berth. During the journey, the victim's father noticed that the accused T Prathap (43), S/o

Subbaiah, Home Guard of Kodur Law and Order Police Station, AP, outraged the modesty of the victim by touching her private parts.

On receipt of the complaint, SHO, Railway Police, Kacheguda, registered a case in Cr.No.100/2024 U/s 354 IPC, 9 r/w 10 POCSO Act-2012, and Section 147, Railway Act. R Yellappa, Inspector of Police, Kachiguda, arrested the accused and produced him for judicial custody.

The case is being investigated by IRP, R Yellappa, Kachiguda RPS, under the guidance of Shaik Saleema, SRP, Secunderabad, under the supervision of SN Jawed, DSRP (U), Secunderabad.

## KARIMNAGAR TEAM STANDS AS RUNNER-UP HCA T20 winner is Medak team

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Medak district team won the HCA Inter-District T20 Cricket Tournament trophy organised by Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA), while Karimnagar was the runner-up. Medak, who won the toss and batted first in the final at the Uppal Stadium on Wednesday, scored 168/4 in 20 overs.

Chasing the target, Karimnagar scored only 145/6 in 20 overs and lost to Medak. Medak team won by 23 runs. Medak batter Mohammad Afridi scored a half-century (80 runs from 40 balls with 7 sixes and 2 fours). HCA President Jaganmohan Rao gave his own funds of Rs 50,000 cash award to Afridi.

At the closing ceremony, Jaganmohan Rao said that like this year, every year, summer camps will be conducted across the State and later the



HCA president Jagan Mohan Rao and vice-president Daljit Singh presenting the trophy to Medak team Captain

inter-district T20 tournament will be conducted. He said, "After discussing in the Apex Council, we will soon name a famous cricketer for this tournament."

He said satellite academies would be started in Hyderabad and free training and accommodation provided to the cricketers who come from the

## CS call to make Amrabad Tiger Reserve a plastic-free zone

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari instructed the officials to formulate an action plan to ensure that the Amrabad Tiger Reserve becomes a complete plastic-free zone by the end of July, during a meeting with officials of forest, panchayat raj and Pollution Control Board on Wednesday.

The Chief Secretary directed the officials to enforce a ban on use of plastic bags and bottles in the Amrabad Tiger Reserve area. Additional check



posts should be established to remove banned plastic articles and promote alternatives to plastic through eco-friendly products like paper bags, cloth

or jute bags and leaf plates. Officials were also told to take up massive awareness campaigns through print and electronic media as well as by erecting sign boards at panchayat, district and State level. Local vendors all along the highway should be sensitised about the ban on use of plastic in the Tiger Reserve area.

She asked the officials to expedite the process of relocating people living in four habitations under the Amrabad Tiger Reserve as per the timelines.

Funds available under the Haritha Nidhi should be utilised within that year. Santhi Kumari also asked the endowments department officials to take steps to eradicate usage of plastic at the Maisamma temple in Mahbubnagar district.

Principal Secretary EFS&T Vani Prasad, Principal Secretary PR&RD Sandeep Kumar Sultania, PCCF RM Dobriyal, Member Secretary TSPCB Buddha Prakash Jyothi and Commissioner Endowments Hanumantha Rao were present.

RESEARCH IN MULTIPLE DISEASE AREAS

## CSIR-CCMB, Aganitha sign MoU to apply AI in therapeutic design

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Combining the power of Deep Science and Deep Tech to bring novel medicines to market faster, the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Aganitha, a new generation in silico solutions provider, have signed an umbrella memorandum of understanding (MoU) to apply generative AI solutions for designing novel therapeutics and research tools addressing needs in multiple disease areas on Wednesday.

This strategic collaboration is designed to translate discoveries from the globally acclaimed research labs of CCMB into therapeutic candidates through the application of Aganitha's Generative AI solutions for biopharma R&D. Initial areas of collaboration include target analysis, small

molecule design, antibody and nanobody engineering for addressing Malaria, Tuberculosis (TB) and neurological disorders.

Dr Puran Singh Siiwali, Senior Principal Scientist at CCMB, explained the significance of this collaboration in Malaria studies, stating, "We continue to struggle with controlling malaria due to drug resistance of the pathogen, lack of broadly available vaccines and insecticide resistance of mosquitoes. Collaborative efforts of interdisciplinary experts are necessary to develop new drugs and vaccines for malaria. Towards this goal, we are leveraging Aganitha's Generative AI capabilities in small molecules space for validated parasite drug targets to predict, test, and optimise potential anti-malarial compounds."

Dr Raghunand Tirumalai, Senior Principal Scientist at CCMB, summarised the

advances that can made through this collaboration in TB research, saying, "In collaboration with Aganitha, we are working towards the structure-based discovery of small molecule inhibitors targeting essential proteins of Mycobacterium tuberculosis."

Dr Janesh Kumar, Senior Principal Scientist at CCMB, studying neurotransmission in the central nervous system noted, "The collaboration between CSIR-CCMB and Aganitha to develop nanobody binders targeting a class of neurotransmitter receptors, called the GluD1 receptors, marks a significant stride in neuroscience and pharmacology."

These nanobodies might serve as precise molecular tools to modulate GluD1 receptor activity, potentially unlocking novel therapeutic avenues for neurological disorders like Alzheimer's and epilepsy."

## Solar plant set up at Leachate Plant

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A solar plant was established at Jawharnagar Leachate Plant to reduce carbon footprint. Ramky Infrastructure Limited's Managing Director YR Nagaraja, announced that a 1 MW solar plant has been commissioned to meet the plant's power needs and to lessen the carbon emissions. He showcased the upcoming



projects at a press meet in the city on Wednesday.

Upon successfully handing over two sewage treatment

plants of sizes 15 piston-operated mechanical leak detectors (PMLD) and 4.15 MLD in Hyderabad and 5 MLD, another

320 MLD and 64 MLD will be commissioned by Q1 next year, Nagaraja added.

He said the company's net worth has doubled in the last four years due to its focus on sustainable development projects.

He stressed that the water problem is going to be a big crisis and that his management is working on projects based on society's needs.

## Cyberabad cops register a hit-and-run case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Raidurgam police of Cyberabad have registered a hit and run case on Wednesday.

A car, in a rash and negligent manner went towards Khajaguda to Tolichowki jumping the red light signal and hit a bike from the front side at 6:30 am. Two people were travelling on the bike fell down from the bike and sustained severe injuries. They were shifted to premium hospital. The injured were identified as Kodari Satyanarayana and Kodari Kantha Rao who were moving towards JRC convention to Dargah.

On inquiry, Raidurgam Police came to know that the car driver Sudheer Reddy, along with his two friends Ravi Teja and Rohit Reddy were going to their house at Manikonda when the mishap occurred.

## Man held for hoax call about 'bomb' in Praja Bhavan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Police on Wednesday arrested a man for making a hoax call on Tuesday that a bomb would explode at Jyotirao Phule Praja Bhavan and Nampally court.

The police traced through GPS location and found the suspect, identified as Shiva Ram Krishna and arrested him. The police produced the accused before the Nampally court. Nampally Police said a case has been registered under

Sections 386,505(1)(b), 505(2),507 IPC on Tuesday.

After receiving the call from 100, the Bomb Disposal Squad thoroughly checked Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka's residence, the Praja Bhavan. The police confirmed that it was hoax call.

The Bomb Disposal Squad visited Criminal Courts Complex, searched the total building with the help of sniffer dogs and bomb detecting equipment and found nothing suspicious.



## FLO Hyd starts training in vegetable farming

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Training women in commercial vegetable farming, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry's (FICCI) women's chamber, FLO Hyderabad, has opened a "Centre of Excellence for Training Women in Vegetable Farming" at Ravalkole village in Medchal district.

This initiative, in partnership with the East-West Seed Knowledge Transfer Foundation, aims to train 100 women. The training will cover cultivation, management and harvesting of 50 hybrid veg-

etable varieties.

According to the FLO Hyderabad, over the next three crop seasons, the Centre of Excellence will provide training to these women farmers, focusing on efficient, profitable and sustainable farming practices. They will learn to grow a diverse range of vegetables, including bitter gourd, chilli, cauliflower, cabbage, ridge gourd, bottle gourd, cucumber, pumpkin, red sorrel, okra and onion.

The programme not only aims to improve their farming skills but also to empower them to become trainers with-



in their communities, creating self-sustaining network of knowledge.

The Centre of Excellence provides, advanced techniques

to enhance crop diversity, productivity and water efficiency as a part of training, benefiting both the farmers and the environment. Additionally, the programme will include classes in digital and financial literacy to help the women manage and grow their agricultural businesses. They will also receive health and nutrition advice and health checks.

This year-long initiative, in collaboration with the East-West Seed Knowledge Transfer Foundation, is part of FLO Hyderabad's effort to empower women at the grassroots level.

Chairperson of FLO Hyderabad, Priya Gazdar said, this initiative's alignment with FLO's mission of empowerment, aims to create financial independence and address gender variation in agriculture.

The partnership with East-West Seed, which has trained over 80,000 smallholder farmers in India since 2016, marks a significant step for FLO Hyderabad, hoping the Centre of Excellence will become a beacon of hope and opportunity, showcasing the potential of inclusive and empowering agricultural practices, she added.

## OU hosts Tech Summit 2024 in collaboration with RaysHigh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Osmania University's Osmania Technology and Business Incubation (OTBI) partnered with RaysHigh, a leading cloud computing and cybersecurity startup, hosted Tech Summit 2024 on its premises on Wednesday. The event focused on how innovative solutions can transform businesses across various sectors.

The summit highlighted RaysHigh's commitment to leveraging cutting-edge cloud services and robust cybersecurity

to drive growth and improve operational efficiency for clients. Their suite of advanced cloud solutions caters to diverse needs, ensuring seamless integration, scalability and flexibility.

The firm's approach addresses current needs while anticipating future challenges, ensuring clients are well-equipped for the digital age. This allows businesses to optimise operations and reduce costs.

It was attended by industry leaders including Rakesh Gunti, CEO & Founder, RaysHigh, Dr Uday Shankar Peyyeti, Vice-

President, Head-Sales & CSR, PamTen Inc, Dr Sriram Birudavolu, CEO, Cyber Security Centre of Excellence, DSCI, Prof Ramachandram Sirandas, Expert, Angel/VP, Brane Enterprises Pvt Ltd, Prof. E Vidya Sagar, Director, Osmania TBI, Arla Bhanu Prakash Reddy, Director, GrayLogic Technologies Pvt Ltd, Vijay Bawra, Head, Startup Innovations, T-Hub, and Prof P Chandra Sekhar, I/c Principal, University College of Engineering (A), Osmania University.



# Who will have the last laugh over guarantees?

The gruelling seven-phase Lok Sabha polls as well as the Assembly elections in some states are about to be over. Going by the voter turnout in various phases, it is difficult to predict the results this time.

The incumbent Bharatiya Janata Party and the opposition bloc are very confident of their victories, though there is no palpable wave that can help any party sweep the polls; leave alone the massive crowds at public meetings addressed by various leaders. We cannot take it for granted that the huge responses to public meetings addressed by various leaders indicate success of the respective parties. There have been many examples in support of

this view. The significance of the Lok Sabha polls this time is that not only was there huge attendance of people at public meetings, but the polling percentages were very high in most of the states, compared to those of the previous elections.

As per political indications and considering other factors, it will not be a cakewalk for either BJP or INDIA bloc as the elections this time were held based on very sensitive and key issues that would deeply impact the outcome of the elections. The BJP's Ram astra in the last phase of the poll and the Congress party's Agniveer and other issues to counter went deep into the minds of people. The staggered election

schedule this time has given political parties enough time to assess their performance in various phases and take remedial steps to enhance their chances of victory based on the feedback.

A party coming to power three times consecutively, particularly at the national level, is indeed a rare phenomenon, given the fast-changing socio-economic issues and other factors. In the backdrop of changing aspirations and expectations of the people during the last decade, the political parties this time resorted to guarantees so much so that people have begun to think that those promises are no longer empty, but backed by the parties' studied resolve to implement



them. Both the incumbent BJP and the opposition bloc competitively tried to lure and bring people into their fold. How far they will be successful in implementing the

**As per political indications and considering other factors, it will not be a cakewalk for either BJP or INDIA bloc as the elections this time were held based on very sensitive and key issues that would deeply impact the outcome of the elections. The BJP's Ram astra in the last phase of the poll and the Congress party's Agniveer and other issues to counter went deep into the minds of people**

promises after coming to power is a matter of speculation. But, going by the massive voter turnout, it appears that the guarantees did their magic both for the ruling and oppo-

sition parties. In the dance of democracy, every party, whether regional or national, played their tunes to mesmerise people. By any count, this election will be very

crucial; and whichever party comes to power, the nation's progress, development, and fulfilling of people's aspirations should be the guiding factors. Every party that aspires to come to power will have its agenda of making the nation progress. There should not be any doubt about this factor. But it is accelerated progress and significant developmental activities that matter for a huge nation like India, which still struggles to bring the majority of people out of the poverty line. The sure way for it to happen will be ensuring and enhancing employment opportunities to make people progress in their efforts, rather than giving them economic benefits that will not last long.

Clamouring for power is the natural right of political parties. But how successful they are in implementing the commitments made in their manifestoes will decide their credibility.

During the present Lok Sabha elections, the fight for power at the Centre reached a crescendo with all parties, in a competitive spirit, making guarantees relating to their promises. In this dance of political guarantees, who will have the last laugh is to be seen and whose tune will click finally is generating an interest that has never been seen in any election held so far.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

## State govt urged to clear pending bills of sarpanches

PNS ■ MULUGU

The Telangana Sarpanches' Association joint action committee state president S Yadaiah Goud on Wednesday demanded that the state government to clear the pending bills of the sarpanches.

He threatened to launch demonstrations locking the constructions taken up at the village level. He alleged that the BRS sarpanches were victimized by the Congress government. He felt that it was not proper on the part of the Congress government.

He appealed to Panchayat Raj Minister Seetakka to resolve the problem. If the government failed to resolve the problem, he threaten to organise a massive movement against the government.

## Cotton farmers continue to pour into Adilabad for seeds

PNS ■ ADILABAD

Cotton farmers on the second day on Wednesday formed long queues to buy cotton seeds. The farmers braved scorching heat and waited in long queue.

Cotton growers poured into Adilabad from several parts of the district and waited in long queues in front of 61 seed outlets in the town. Again on Monday, each farmer was allowed to buy only two bags of seed, each weighing 450 grams.

Farmers repeated the allegation that they could not get adequate quantities of seeds because of diversion of seeds.



Farmers waiting in front of an outlet to buy cotton seeds in Adilabad on Wednesday

The farmers preferred to buy Rashi-659 variety as it proved high-yielding one.

The farmers had to go all the way to Adilabad from different places in the district

because the high-yielding variety was not made available at mandal headquarters.

Meanwhile, the District Agriculture officers advised the farmers to buy the seeds at the outlets nearer to their villagers. But the seeds were not made available at the mandal headquarters, the farmers said. The officials said that the government has taken all steps to make adequate quantities of seeds available for farmers at all outlets and the farmers need not worry about the availability of seeds.

The also advised farmers keep bills of the seeds till the crop is harvested.

## PHONE TAPPING CASE

### Caste accelerated my promotion: ex-DSP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Retired IPS officer Prabhakar Rao reportedly gave accelerated promotion to police officer Praneeth Rao though the latter was reportedly given disciplinary action by the then Nalgonda District Superintendent of Police. The accelerated promotions were allegedly given on the basis of Praneeth Rao's caste. Praneeth Rao was first promotion as Inspector of Police on December 29 in 2017, and later as Deputy Superintendent of Police on March 31 in 2023.

Then Praneeth Rao reportedly worked under Prabhakar Rao and he obeyed whatever the latter ordered him to do, which was allegedly beneficial to the TRS which was later rechristened as BRS. A team



of nine members reportedly worked for the BRS party under one of the prime accused Praneeth Rao, some of them got under the caste equations.

"With the blessings of IGP Prabhakar Rao, a proposal was made for my accelerated promotion as DSP in 2021. Again, my promotion file was moved in 2022 December

and I got promotion as DSP in 2022. I am the first person to become DSP in my batch. Thanks to IGP Prabhakar Roo as a reward to all the clandestine and unauthorised works I did using all the facilities provided to me in SIB office for official lawful duties" Praneeth Rao reportedly said in the confession report.

Even retired IGP Prabhakar Rao reportedly got the benefits on the basis caste consideration. "Prabhaka Rao retired in June 2020. Then the government appointed him as Chief of Operations to the SIB and was in charge till June 2023. Again he got another extension as Chief of Operations in June 2023" Praneeth Rao reportedly said in the confession report.

## Instead of six guarantees, Congress got five liquor brands: BJP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP Spokesperson N V Subash said that instead of six guarantees, Congress got five liquor brands to Telangana.

In a media briefing at the BJP Telangana State office on Wednesday, party representatives and state media in-charge raised serious allegations against the Telangana state government, accusing it of pursuing a controversial liquor policy amidst ongoing farmer struggles. Subash, Kishore Poredy and others unveiled a series of key points, shedding light on the government's recent decisions and their pur-

ported consequences on Wednesday.

The focal point of the accusations was the Telangana government's adoption of a liquor policy aimed at bolstering State revenue. The move, according to BJP representatives, has led to the introduction of five new liquor brands, resulting in a deliberate shortage of liquor in the State. These new brands, the BJP claimed, have been introduced with the sole purpose of increasing revenue, raising concerns about the government's priorities amidst pressing issues such as farmer distress.

Moreover, suspicions of polit-

ical influence surfaced as the company SOM Distilleries and Breweries Limited was granted permission to produce its beer brand in Telangana, with allegations of ties to a senior Congress leader from Madhya Pradesh.

The BJP further criticised the Telangana government's approach to liquor distribution, especially following the cancellation of belt shops, and questioned the government's commitment to public health, particularly in light of recent appointments of liquor shop managers. The BJP also lamented what they perceive as the Congress party's neglect of

farmer issues, accusing Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of indifference towards farmers' struggles and prioritizing political gestures over substantive action.

In response to Revanth Reddy's comments regarding improvements in power supply to agriculture, the BJP accused the Congress party of engaging in irrelevant discussions and issuing empty threats instead of addressing the genuine concerns of farmers. With farmers facing crop losses and suicides, the BJP urged the Chief Minister to prioritize tangible solutions over political maneuvering.

## Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple hundi nets Rs 4 crore in 35 days

PNS ■ YADADRI

The Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at Yadadri, which is described as Telangana's Tirupati, has received Rs 3,93,88,092 by way of hundi offerings during the past 35 days.

The hundi offerings were counted on Tuesday in the Satyanarayana Swami Vrata Mantap of the temple.

The number of footfalls of devotees has been increasing with each passing day during the current summer. Devotees not only from Telugu states but also from other states have been thronging the temple. Therefore, the temple is bursting at the seams with the



unprecedented number of visiting the temple. As a result, the hundi offerings from the devotees have increased significantly. Besides receiving Rs

3,93,88,092 in cash, the temple received 174 grams of gold, seven kg of silver, temple Executive Officer Bhaskar Rao said. Besides, devotees dropped

currency notes belonging to various countries too. On the whole, he put the total hundi revenue of the temple at Rs 4 crore.

During the recent weekends, significant number of devotees thronged the temple because of summer vacation. On May 26 (Sunday), the temple received record-level of Rs 1.02 crore by way of hundi offerings. On Friday, the total amount received by way of hundi revenue was Rs 48.44 lakh. On Saturday, the revenue increased to Rs 62.55 lakh.

On Sunday last, at least 81,000 visited the temple, while 75000 visited the temple on Saturday. The Friday saw at least 60,000 visiting the temple.

## A private employee loses Rs 20 lakh in 'FedEx scam'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Cyber criminals posed as FedEx employees and law enforcement officers extorted Rs 20 lakh from a private employee in Hyderabad.

The victim had received a video call on May 26, The caller told him that a parcel could not be delivered by Fedex. He opted to speak to a Fedex employee and was connected to a someone.

The name of the Fedex employee was given as Jason Thomas. He was informed that the parcel had been confiscated by airport customs due to the presence of illegal drugs. He was instructed to file a FIR at the nearby Mumbai Police Station. However, he mentioned his location in Hyderabad and expressed his inability to go to the police station. Subsequently, an individual identifying himself as Prataash Kumar, from the Mumbai Cyber Crime Branch, recorded the statement over Skype. During the Skype conversation, he was interrogated about his activities in Mumbai, acquaintances, and the possibility of his identity being stolen.

The victim offered to visit the local police station in

Hyderabad, but he was informed that the investigation would be conducted online as an FIR had been lodged with the CBI. Allegations were made that his Aadhaar Card had been activated in multiple states and used for money laundering. He was warned that the victim was a primary suspect, and an arrest warrant could be issued against him.

With the promise of issuing a NOC and removing his name and Aadhaar from all records associated with illegal bank accounts. Furthermore, he was instructed to maintain continuous audio and video communication with the authorities until the investigation concluded. Any attempt to communicate about the case externally would result in immediate arrest. Subsequently, he was coerced into transferring Rs 20,00,000 to a specified account under the guise of running a software check on his account for fraudulent activities.

After the victim understood that he was deceived, he filed a complaint in the Cyberabad Cyber crime police station. The case was registered under sections of 170,420,464, 468,467,471 IPC, and 66-C IT act.

## Quack's 'clinic' raided; medicines worth Rs 8,000 seized

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Drug Control Administration (DCA) on Wednesday raided a clinic operated by a quack and seized medicines worth Rs 8,000.

The quack was identified as K Swarupa who operated the clinic under the name 'Swarupa First Aid Centre' at Gachibowli and practised without qualification. During the raid, DCA officials detected medicines stocked on the premises without any drug license.

A total of 17 varieties of medicines, including antibiotics,

analgesics, etc. were found stocked at the premises. The DCA officials found several antibiotics at the clinic during the raid. Indiscriminate sale of antibiotics by unqualified persons may have disastrous consequences on the people's health, including the emergence of 'antimicrobial resistance'.

The samples were lifted for analysis. Further investigation will be carried out, and action will be taken as per the law against all the offenders, said VB Kamalasan Reddy, Director General Drug Control Administration.

## Woxsen University hosts entrepreneurial excellence summit

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Woxsen University's School of Business concluded its inaugural entrepreneurial excellence summit 2024 as part of its efforts to foster entrepreneurial spirit and innovation.

The summit featured a strategic partnership with 'WE HUB', India's first state-led incubator which provides comprehensive support for women entrepreneurs, including technical, financial, governmental, and policy assistance. Another highlight of the event was the launch of Woxsen University

Confederation of Indian Industry research report, about role of leaders in the post-Covid era of algorithms and emerging technologies.

This collaboration aims to cultivate a robust network of entrepreneurs, enhancing the entrepreneurship ecosystem and potentially offering mentorship and insights to Woxsen student entrepreneurs. Through this partnership, Woxsen and WE HUB will co-develop workshops and platforms targeting both rural and urban women entrepreneurs, focusing on skill development, incubation, and business upgradation.

## Task Force nabs two for burglary; Rs 6.70 lakh seized

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner's Task Force (Central Zone) on May 28 arrested two persons involved in burglary and seized gold and silver ornaments worth Rs 6,70,000 from them.

The accused were identified as Ratlavath Shankar Naik (31), a native of Nagarkurnool; Bandravalli Rakesh (21), a resident of Vanasthalipuram and a native of Mahaboobnagar. They were involved in cases under various police limits, including Keersala police station, Mahabubnagar rural, Neredmet, Rajendra Nagar and Wanaparthy town.

The Task Force seized 80 grams of gold, 25 grams of silver, a bike and three mobile phones from Naik and Rakesh. Naik is a serial offender and has been involved in burglaries since 2012. He was arrested by Gadwal Police in an attempt to murder case. Naik was arrested several times for property theft in Hyderabad, Cyberabad, Rachakonda, Mahabubnagar and Vijayawada, Guntur, Ongole in Andhra Pradesh.

## DCA seizes overpriced medicines

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Drug Control Administration (DCA) conducted raids at multiple locations on May 28 and 29 and seized over-priced medicines along with those making misleading claims to cure eye diseases and fever.

In a raid conducted at a medical shop in Shameerpet, the DCA seized overpriced medicine 'Testra-200 Capsules'.

The product was being sold at Rs 29.80 per capsule, while the ceiling price fixed by the Central government, including wholesale price is Rs 22.12 for one capsule. Hence, the maximum retail price (MRP) should not be more than Rs 24.77 for one capsule.

In a separate event, the Drug Control Administration seized certain medicines due to misleading advertisements. The medicines were P-Mycetin

ointment, an allopathic medicine which claimed to treat 'diseases of eye', and Mahasudarshan Kadha, an Ayurvedic medicine which claimed to treat 'fever'.

Stocks of 'P-Mycetin ointment' were seized during the raid carried out at the medical shop in Kapra, Medchal-Malkajgiri district. Stocks of 'Mahasudarshan Kadha' were seized during the raid at a medical shop in Khammam.

## 55RMPs and PMPs booked for violating NMC Act

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Medical Council Members, in a move aimed at safeguarding public health, conducted surprise inspections in various districts to address the growing concerns over counterfeit medical practices.

Identifying the pressing needs of the rural population, especially in areas lacking qualified medical practitioners, the council is rigorously enforcing the provisions of the National Medical Commission (NMC) Act, registering cases against unauthorised practitioners. Under the purview of the Telangana Medical Council, 55 individuals practicing as Registered

Medical Practitioners (RMP) or Private Medical Practitioners (PMP) have been found to be in violation of Section 34, 54 of the NMC Act, with cases being registered against them.

These unauthorised practitioners were found administering antibiotics, steroid injections, distributing contraceptive tablets in some centres, and performing procedures in clandestine operation theaters, highlighting the gravity of the situation. Present during the inspections were dignitaries including Dr G Srinivas, Vice-President of the Telangana Medical Council, Dr Sheshu Madhav, Legal Affairs Coordinator; Dr Shrikant,

Chairman of the FMG, Dr Naresh Kumar, Chairman of the Public Relations Committee; Dr Ravi Kumar, Chairman of the Finance Committee; along with EC members Dr Vishnu, Dr Imran Ali, co-opted members Dr Rajeev Nayak, HRDA leaders Dr Santosh Reddy, and IMA state president Dr. Pulla Rao.

As a result of these inspections, several RMP/PMP unauthorised practitioners have been forced to shut down their centers.

Notable senior physicians Dr. Pularao, Dr. Daivadheenam, Dr. Ramesh, and Dr. Phani Kumar actively participated in the enforcement drive.



INDIA CORNER

## Ten Naxalites including four minors surrender in Chhattisgarh

Ten Naxalites including four minors surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district on Wednesday, police said. The surrendered Naxalites were residents of Rekhawaya village in neighbouring Narayanpur district and worked under the Indravati area committee of the Maoists in the south Bastar region, said Dantewada Superintendent of Police Gaurav Rai. With this, 815 Naxalites -- including 180 who were carrying cash rewards on their heads -- have so far quit violence in the district under the 'Lon Varratu' (return to your home) campaign launched in June 2020 by the police, officials said. These ten cadres turned themselves in before senior police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officials while stating that they were impressed by the 'Lon Varratu' drive and disappointed with the hollow Maoist ideology, SP Rai said. Most of them were members of the Janata sarkar militia of the Maoists, he added.



## Meghalaya, Nagaland students exempted from CUET in state

The Central Government has exempted undergraduate students of Meghalaya and Nagaland seeking admissions to colleges affiliated to central universities in the two states from CUET, officials said on Wednesday. The North Eastern Hill University in Meghalaya and Nagaland university in Nagaland are central universities. Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma has thanked Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for exempting undergraduate students of Meghalaya seeking admission in colleges affiliated with North Eastern Hill University, a central varsity. "Happy to inform our students that admissions to affiliated colleges to Central University's in Meghalaya have been exempted from CUET for this academic year. I thank @dpradhanbjp ji for his continuous support and understanding," the Meghalaya CM said in a post on X.



## Prajwal Revanna's anticipatory bail plea in rape case rejected

A Special Court here on Wednesday rejected the anticipatory bail plea of suspended JD(S) leader Prajwal Revanna, who is facing allegations of sexually abusing several women, in a rape case. The special court for Elected Representative dismissed the bail application moved by his advocate Arun. According to official sources, Prajwal has booked a return flight ticket to Bengaluru from Munich on May 30, and is expected to land in the city in the small hours of May 31. Prajwal, grandson of JD(S) supremo H D Deve Gowda, is accused in an alleged rape and sexual harassment case involving a 47-year-old woman. He reportedly left for Germany on April 27, a day after Hassan Lok Sabha segment went to polls, and is still at large. On May 18, the Special Court for Elected Representatives had issued an arrest warrant against Prajwal Revanna, following an application moved by the SIT.



# Modi hints at 'conspiracy' behind Naveen's 'deteriorating' health

Odisha CM says 'I am in perfect health'

PNS ■ BARIKAPADA/BALASORE (ODISHA)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday hinted at a "conspiracy" behind the "sudden deterioration of the health condition of Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and said if the BJP formed the government in the state, it will constitute a special committee to probe the facts.

"Is the lobby that is currently running the Patnaik government on his behalf responsible for it?" Modi said while addressing election rallies in Mayurbhanj and Balasore Lok Sabha seats in Odisha.

Reacting strongly, Patnaik said: "Let me assure the PM that I am in perfect health and I have been campaigning in the state for the last month. He has stated publicly earlier that I am his good friend. All he had to do was pick up the telephone and ask me about my health.



But a number of BJP people from Odisha and Delhi are spreading rumours about my health.

Patnaik also posted on X that "4.5 crore people of Odisha are my family. My dear mothers, the youth must give a proper response to this disrespect by voting on June 1st."

Modi, in his rally just days ahead of the last phase of the

Lok Sabha election, also said that well-wishers of Naveen babu are worried over his deteriorating health condition.

"It has been worsening over the last one year. Is there a conspiracy behind this? Is the lobby that is currently running the Patnaik government on his behalf responsible for it? If the BJP forms the government in Odisha after the ongoing

assembly elections, it would constitute a special committee to ascertain the reason behind the deterioration of Patnaik's health," Modi said.

He also added that the "mystery behind Naveen babu's deteriorating health condition should be revealed as the people of the state have the right to know the reason."

The PM's remark on Patnaik's health condition came a day after Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma alleged that bureaucrat-turned-politician V K Pandian was "controlling" even the hand movements of the Odisha CM.

Sharing a video showing Patnaik's hand shaking while delivering a speech at a meeting and Pandian putting it on a table, Sarma said in a post on X, "This is a deeply distressing video. Shri V K Pandian ji is even controlling the hand movements of Shri Naveen babu."

## Missing Kashmiri poet traced to police custody in PoK

PNS ■ ISLAMABAD

A missing Kashmiri poet has been traced to be in the custody of police in the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), the Islamabad High Court was informed on Wednesday, two weeks after he disappeared from Rawalpindi.

Ahmad Farhad's wife had filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) claiming that he had been abducted from his home.

When neither police nor any intelligence agency claimed responsibility for his custody, Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, who was hearing the case, on May 24 issued an eight-page written order, summoning Law Minister Azam Tarar along with the sector commanders of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Military Intelligence (MI) and director of Intelligence Bureau (IB) as well as the defence and interior secretaries in person before the court on May 29.

## Rahul, Akhilesh will blame EVMs for poll defeat: Shah

PNS ■ MAHARAJGANJ (UP)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday took a jibe at the Samajwadi Party and Congress, saying they have decided to blame electronic voting machines for their defeat in the Lok Sabha polls.

At a public meeting in support of party candidate Pankaj Chaudhary here, he also claimed that the BJP has crossed the majority mark in the first five rounds of polls.

"The counting is on June 4. In the afternoon the two 'shehzade' (Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav) will hold a press conference and say we lost the election because EVM was defective," he said.

"Modi has crossed 310 seats in five rounds. Rahul baba you will not get even 40 seats and the other 'shehzade' (Akhilesh Yadav) will just get four seats," he said.

He said the opposition does not have a PM candidate and say that they will have five PMs in five years.

"This is not a general store but a nation of 130 crore people.



"This is not a general store but a nation of 130 crore people. Can such a PM work?" he asked. Targeting the opposition, he said Congress leaders say that Pakistan has an atom bomb but BJP people are not scared of atom bombs

Can such a PM work?" he asked.

Targeting the opposition, he said Congress leaders say that Pakistan has an atom bomb but BJP people are not scared of atom bombs.

"Pakistan occupied Kashmir is and will remain part of India and we will take it back," he asserted.

Referring to the Sahara scam, Shah claimed it occurred when the opposition was in power.

"Arre Akhilesh (Akhilesh Yadav) the scam took place in your government. Modi ji started the process of refund," he said.

Sahara group firms were accused of circumventing regulations with Ponzi schemes. The group has denied the charges.

Seeking to strike a chord with farmers, Shah said, "It is the death anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh today. Narendra Modi did the work of giving him Bharat Ratna and gave respect to all the farmers of Uttar Pradesh."

Shah also accused the previous governments of shutting down sugar mills and promised that a new mega sugar mill will be constructed in Maharajganj if the BJP comes to power again.



HC NOTICE TO BBC ON DEFAMATION PLEA

## BJP govt harming tourism sector in Himachal Pradesh, alleges Priyanka Gandhi

PNS ■ SHIMLA/MANDI

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday accused the BJP government at the Centre of harming small and medium businesses, including the tourism sector in Himachal Pradesh.

Claiming that demonetisation and Goods and Service Tax (GST) implementation hit the tourism industry of the state, she promised to strengthen the sector with a focus on small and medium businesses if the Congress was voted to power in the Lok Sabha elections.

Addressing an election rally in Kullu, Gandhi accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of handing over public property of the country such as ports, airports and coal mines to "his industrialists friends."

"Even in Himachal today, maximum cold stores are

owned by Adani who decides the rate of apples and the fate of apple-growers," the Congress general secretary alleged.

In addition, Gandhi claimed that import duty on apples coming from the US has been reduced, while local producers have to pay the GST imposed on agricultural implements and equipment. Due to this, apple-growers in the state are affected by the imported apples from the US that have flooded the markets, she added.

Gandhi also alleged that people are now "dying due to the Covid vaccine" and that the BJP had taken a Rs 52-crore donation from a manufacturer.

Despite being in power for 55 years the Congress could not become the richest party but the BJP has become the richest party in the world in just 10 years, she said.

## RAILWAYS LAND-FOR-JOB CASE

### Court pulls up CBI for delay in filing "conclusive" charge sheet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Wednesday pulled up the CBI for the delay in filing a "conclusive charge sheet" in the alleged land for job scam in the Indian Railways involving RJD chief Lalu Prasad and several of his family members.

Special Judge Vishal Gogne expressed displeasure over the CBI seeking more time "on every date" to file the charge sheet.

The judge directed the central probe agency to file the final report by June 7.

The CBI had filed a supplementary charge sheet against three accused-two candidates, Ashok Kumar and Babita, and Bhola Yadav, who was the personal secretary to Lalu Prasad when he was the railway minister, in March.

The court had on February 28 granted bail to Prasad's wife and former Bihar chief minister Rabri Devi and their daughters Misa Bharti and Hema Yadav in the case.

The CBI has alleged that several people were appointed to Group 'D' positions in various zones of the Indian Railways from 2004 to 2009.

## Rajkot fire: FIRs against owners of 18 illegal game zones

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

In the aftermath of the Rajkot game zone fire tragedy, Gujarat Police has launched a crackdown and booked owners of 18 such recreation facilities which are allegedly operated without valid permissions, officials said on Wednesday.

Gujarat Minister of State for Home, Harsh Sanghavi, on Tuesday, directed all police commissioners and superintendents of police to register FIRs against the managements of illegal game zones after holding a meeting with state DGP Vikas Sahay and other

senior officers in Gandhinagar, an official release said.

At least 27 persons, including children, were killed in a massive fire at TRP Game Zone on May 25.

Sanghavi instructed the police officers to register FIRs against the owners of the game zones running without fire NOCs or other mandatory licenses and permissions, it stated.

In Rajkot city, police sealed eight game zones, including a water park, and registered cases against their owners for operating without any permission, police said, adding FIRs were



registered under section 336 (Act endangering life or personal safety of others) of the IPC and under provisions of the Gujarat Police Act.

In Ahmedabad, police sealed four such illegal game zones and filed cases against their

police by showing these NOCs. None of these four game zones had acquired our permission before starting their operations," said Malik.

In Surat, a total of six game zones situated in Rander, Pal, Umara and Vesu areas were sealed and complaints were registered against their owners for running these facilities without valid permissions, police said.

The Rajkot fire incident is being probed by the Special Investigation Team set by the state government and the city police, who have arrested five persons so far.

## Does PM believe Lord Jagannath to be his devotee, asks Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi whether he was withholding Rs 7,000 crore of paddy procurement funds to West Bengal and if the CBI case against BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari has got "washed away" in the ruling party's "washing machine".

Raking up the BJP candidate Sambit Patra's recent remarks that even "Lord Jagannath is a devotee of Modi", Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also asked if the PM believes Lord Jagannath to be



his devotee.

Ramesh said that the Patra's remarks are "deeply insulting" to crores of Lord Jagannath's devotees across the world.

"The outgoing PM himself

has claimed that he was not biologically born but sent to Earth by the Creator himself. Can he tell us where he claims to fit in the pantheon of Indian Gods? Does he truly believe Lord Jagannath to be his devotee?" he asked.

Ramesh also asked if the prime minister prioritised his PR over vaccines and funds under the National Health Mission.

"Today's questions for the outgoing PM's West Bengal visit: Is the outgoing PM withholding Rs 7,000 crore of ration funds so that his face is plastered on ration shops?"

## SIBAL ON MODI'S MEDITATION Good if he is going for 'prayashchit'

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Raising questions over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meditation at Rock Memorial from May 30 to June 1, Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Wednesday said it is good if he is going to Kanyakumari for "prayashchit" (atonement).

"The person who does not understand the meaning of 'vivek' (wisdom), what 'dhyana' (meditation) he will do. If he is going for 'prayashchit', then it is a good thing or if he is going to take inspiration from writings and speeches of Swami Vivekanand, even then it is good," said Sibal.

The prime minister will meditate from the evening of May 30 to the evening of June 1 at Dhyana Mandapam, the place where Vivekananda — a spiritual icon admired by PM Modi — is believed to have had a divine vision about 'Bharat Mata', BJP leaders said on Tuesday.

Sibal alleged the BJP-led government at the Centre does not talk about its achievements because it has "nothing to show". "What have they done for the last 10 years? Has the prime minister said during his speeches what he did during 10 years? What are their achievements," Sibal said in a press conference here.

TMC to complain to EC, if PM Modi's meditation is televised: Mamata

PNS ■ BARUIPUR (WB)

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said that the Trinamool Congress will complain to the Election Commission if Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meditation in Kanyakumari is televised, alleging that it would amount to violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).

PM Modi is scheduled to meditate at Vivekananda Rock Memorial, a monument built in tribute to Swami Vivekananda, in Kanyakumari following the culmination of the Lok Sabha polls campaign on May 30, according to BJP leaders. "We will complain. He can meditate, but televisions cannot show it," she said, alleging that this will amount to "violation of the MCC." "Does anyone have to get cameras for doing meditation?" she asked, claiming that it was a way of campaigning.

ments," Sibal said in a press conference here.



## 'Exposure to air pollution linked to poor mental health'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Children exposed to air pollution could be at higher risk of experiencing mental health problems, including depression and psychosis, as youths, a new research has found.

The study examined the long-term effects of children being exposed to air and noise pollution while in mother's womb, early childhood and teenage.

The effects on three common mental health problems were analysed -- anxiety, depression and psychosis, a mental state in which an individual loses touch with reality and can experience hallucinations.

Researchers, led by those at the University of Bristol, UK, found that for every 0.72 micrograms per cubic metre increase in PM2.5 pollutants in the air during pregnancy, the chances of experiencing psychosis increased by 11 per cent, while those of experiencing depression increased by 10 per cent.

For the same exposure during childhood, the chances of psychosis were found to increase by 9 per cent.

The findings are published in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open.

"This is a major concern,



because air pollution is now such a common exposure, and rates of mental health problems are increasing globally," the study said.

"Given that pollution is also a preventable exposure, interventions to reduce exposure,

such as low emissions zones, could potentially improve mental health," said lead author Joanne Newbury from the University of Bristol.

Exposure to pollution could be rapidly reduced by making targeted interventions available

for vulnerable groups, including pregnant women and children, Newbury said.

For the study, the researchers analysed the data of over 9,000 participants from the Children of the 90s birth cohort, founded in Bristol. The cohort includes more than 14,000 pregnant women, recruited in 1991 and 1992, and were subsequently followed-up, along with their children.

The researchers compared the participants' mental health reports when they were 13, 18 and 24 years old against outdoor air and noise pollution in Bristol at those points in time.

"An increase of 0.72 micro-

grams per cubic centimetre in PM2.5 levels during pregnancy and during childhood were associated with elevated odds for psychotic experiences. Pregnancy PM2.5 exposure was also associated with depression," the authors wrote.

Further, being exposed to higher noise pollution in childhood and teenage was linked with raising the chances of anxiety by 19 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively.

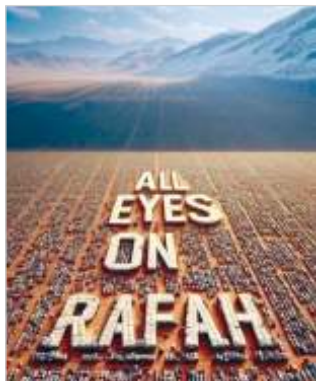
"Childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood are critical periods for the development of psychiatric disorders: worldwide, nearly two-thirds of those affected become unwell by the age of 25.



## Heed caution

All may seem lost in the Israel-Palestine war, but there is still time to save humanity in Gaza

The city of Rafah, which translates into wellbeing or prosperity in Urdu, experienced the trauma of seeing at least 45 people — including children — killed at a refugee camp in its midst following an Israeli airstrike in Gaza. Understandably, the act caused international indignation and further isolated Israel over the war with Palestine, coming only days after the International Court of Justice ordered the Jew nation to cease its operation in Rafah. Although the top UN court ordered Israeli forces last week to stop their operations, they persisted in their assault on the border town, which was long thought to be the last remaining shelter in the territory. Meanwhile, as international solidarity poured in for the Palestinians impacted by the Israeli strikes, the slogan “All Eyes On Rafah” has become popular on social media. The expression alludes to the continuous slaughter occurring in Gaza city, and several famous people have posted condolences along with the hashtag #AllEyesOnRafah. The cry for awareness of the ongoing battle has



gained traction with the use of this slogan. Prior to Israel intensifying its military operation on the Gaza side of the border earlier this month and seizing control of the crossing, Rafah served as a primary port of entry for humanitarian aid. Over one million Palestinians have fled the fighting in Rafah; the majority of them were already displaced due to the conflict between Israel and the Hamas. Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden does not seem to be changing his stance on Israel, according to the White House, because the incident “did not cross a red line” that would require adjustments in US support.

This is despite the fact that Israeli tanks have been seen rolling down central Rafah for the first time since the war began on October 7 last year. In another setback to Israel globally and perhaps as part of a larger signal for it to stop bloodying the Gaza Strip with the murder of innocent people — nobody actually minds if only the Hamas terrorists are annihilated — Spain, Norway and Ireland have acknowledged Palestine's independence. The three countries did not recognise the existence of a State; they just acknowledged its potential. As a result of the change, the Palestinian Authority and the three nations will have closer diplomatic ties. Everyone has declared that they will acknowledge Palestine based on its pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem serving as its Capital. Already, 143 of the 193 members of the UN General Assembly have recognised Palestine. The latest acknowledgments are the most compelling proof to date that the concept might be gaining support in the economically and diplomatically powerful western European States. The West Bank, which Israel has occupied, and the Gaza Strip, which is under siege and where Israel is conducting a war that has claimed more than 36,000 lives, make up what is left of ancient Palestine. However, it must be recorded to his credit that Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the Rafah incident was a “tragic mishap”.

### PICTALK



Lovebirds at their enclosure on a hot summer day, in New Delhi

PTI

## Electric vehicles lead eco-friendly commute

Electric two-wheelers, with their zero tailpipe emissions, are providing an efficient and sustainable transport option for urban mobility

In the 1980s, the introduction of Maruti 800 changed the landscape of the automobile industry in India for decades to come. Cut to 2024 and we are heading towards a similar revolution in the years to come - but with a little twist. Countries worldwide are addressing climate change by striving to reduce their carbon footprints. The adoption of electric vehicles (EVs), particularly electric two-wheelers (E2Ws), has emerged as a significant step in this effort. Understanding the environmental impact of E2Ws compared to conventional counterparts is crucial. There is compelling evidence supporting their widespread adoption as part of the transition towards sustainable transportation systems. Traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) motorcycles and scooters contribute to air and noise pollution. E2Ws have zero tailpipe emissions and thus, help in mitigating pollution levels significantly. In urban settings, they help in alleviating



ating noise levels as well. Another advantage is that their powertrain is more efficient when compared to ICE vehicles. Since the conversion of electrical energy into mechanical energy is more effective, E2Ws have minimal energy wastage and a diminished carbon footprint. E2Ws also operate quietly and without vibrations or petrol fumes. There is ongoing innovation to close the performance gap between electric and their conventional fuel-powered counterparts. While ICE engines require warm-up for optimal perfor-

mance in cold weather, E2Ws operate at full capacity instantly. This makes the ride hassle free in any condition. Their advanced features like Android-based instrument clusters and mobile app connectivity further enhance the overall experience. In contrast with conventional ICE vehicles, there is a notable difference in the energy efficiency of E2Ws. The electric motors are great at converting a larger portion of electrical energy from the grid into power at the wheels. This makes them highly effective in utilising

energy. The heightened efficiency indicates that they require less energy to travel the same distance, thereby reducing their environmental footprint even more. The production and upkeep of electric two-wheelers requires fewer resources and less energy. Their minimal maintenance requirements lead to decreased energy usage and a smaller environmental footprint. E2Ws are a promising solution for reducing carbon footprints and advancing towards a more sustainable transportation paradigm. There is a need to address certain challenges such as those around infrastructure and accelerating the transition to renewable energy sources. This will help realise the full potential of E2Ws in mitigating environmental impact. With concerted action from policymakers, industry stakeholders and consumers, E2Ws are set to play a significant role in shaping a greener, more sustainable future for transportation.

(The writer is Founder & CEO, Motovolt Mobility; views are personal)

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TUSHAR CHAUDHARY

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## Spiritual institutions under attack in Bengal

The assaults on the Ramakrishna Mission raise serious concerns about the State's political climate and its impact on religious harmony



PRAFULL GORADIA

West Bengal is again in the news and again for the wrong reasons. The premises of the venerable Ramakrishna Mission at Jalpaiguri have been vandalised by the goons of the State's ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC). That hasn't been the only incident of attacking a religious or spiritual centre. The ISKCON temple premises in the State have also been the target of the TMC brigade, as the State's chief minister Mamata Banerjee suspects the organisation's monks of being BJP sympathisers. So too have the premises of the Bharat Sevashram Sangh (BSS) at Beldanga in the district of Murshidabad suffered the ire of the ruling party's roughnecks. One of the BSS monks Kartik Maharaj has drawn Mamata Banerjee's ire as he is thought to be working towards influencing voters in favour of the BJP. Banerjee also believes that the ISKCON is playing a similar role.

The Ramakrishna Mission or RKM, as it is also known, headquartered in Kolkata's Belur Math was founded in 1897, by the great spiritual Ramakrishna Paramahansa's most renowned disciple, Swami Vivekananda. The latter was truly a global icon of modern Hinduism and planted the flag of Sanatana Dharma in the West, beginning with his spiritual conquest in Chicago in 1893 at a conference of the World Parliament of Religions. Though the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) was founded in New York, its founder Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada or Srila Prabhupada was born in Calcutta and ventured to the US only in his old age, at 69, to spread the message of Krishna to America and the rest of the world. To vandalise such highly regarded institutions such as the venerable Ramakrishna Ashram and the internationally respected ISKCON, which has over 160 temples across the globe and that too by some citizens of a country that is predominantly Hindu, is unthinkable and unpardonable. It is possible that the perpetrators of these attacks are not



Hindus but people belonging to another religion. Nevertheless, the message that comes out from these recent episodes of temple vandalism is of the Hindus as a people being religious-suicidal. This is all the more unfortunate for two reasons. The Ramakrishna Mission is world famous since it was Swami Vivekananda who single-handedly informed the world of the wonder that Hinduism is. It is ISKCON that enables so many countries, with its magnificent temples, to worship in the Hindu way of “Hare Rama, Hare Krishna”. Secondly, it has been only a few years since the image of Hindu India began to shine, after centuries of suppression. We now have the sordid spectacle of temple and ashram premises being attacked by goons with guns, in West Bengal of all places. It was just over a century ago that Congress leader Gopal Krishna Gokhale had said, “What Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow”. It signified the province of Bengal was a leader. Is this what leaders do and that too for winning some seats in four or five constituencies? Just look back at the Renaissance, which in many ways, was comprehensively

“ONE COULD GO ON AND ON ABOUT BENGAL'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COUNTRY. MODERN INDIA'S GREATEST POET WAS RABINDRANATH TAGORE, AGAIN A GIFT OF BENGAL. HIS LYRICS ARE TODAY'S NATIONAL ANTHEM

led by Bengal. But before that, let us not forget Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who is considered by many to have been an avatar of Krishna. Chaitanya saved at least a part of Bengal for Bharat; but for him, the whole of the province would have been swallowed by Pakistan and then ruined. He stood between the conversion of the poorer Bengalis to Islam and saving them so that today they can worship Krishna. Ramakrishna Paramahansa was also a divine gift of Bengal, who himself had a glimpse of the divine. One could go on and on about Bengal's contributions to the country. Modern India's greatest poet was Rabindranath Tagore, again, a gift of Bengal. His lyrics are today are national anthem. One cannot ever forget Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and his stirring song Vande Mataram, which became the freedom anthem of India's national movement and inspired countless revolutionaries to armed action for combating the colonial raj, as well as to embrace the gallows in their supremely inspired quest. Bengal is a virtual encyclopaedia of the 19th and 20th-century, greats of India. It would need an entire volume to describe how and when the

saga began to sour. From the climbing of lofty heights of art, culture, literature and industry, Bengal began to slip towards an existence that wouldn't be envied in the least. The late Nirad Chaudhari, one of the finest writers the English language world has seen, gave vent to this angst by saying that the people of his are the “finest virtuosi of factiousness”, not a flattering comment, though this writer, having being raised in Bengal and able to speak fluent Bengali, is wont to take a much more positive view. The sense of being Bengali is of course very pronounced, but the unity a common language can foster cannot stand before the pull of religion, as has been the historical experience throughout most significant parts of the world. That the State that led India's renaissance in the 19th century has fallen into this travesty is a sad tale, but Bengal has been known to come back strongly towards nationalism every time it is felt that the province might have gone astray. Perhaps therein lies the silver lining. (The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha; views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### TAIWAN STAYS STRONG AMID TENSIONS

Madam — Apropos the news story “Taiwan tracks dozens of Chinese warplanes and navy vessels off its coast on the 2nd day of drills,” published on May 24, this is my response. It's concerning to witness the escalation of tensions between Taiwan and China. Taiwan's tracking of Chinese military activity showcases their vigilance in the face of increasing pressure from Beijing. Despite the provocative displays from China's People's Liberation Army, Taiwan remains steadfast, with President Lai Ching-te affirming the nation's commitment to freedom and democracy. The ongoing dispute in Taiwan's parliament underscores the internal challenges they face, yet life continues in Taipei uninterrupted. China's aggressive stance, citing the one-China principle, only adds to the volatility of the situation. The international community must closely monitor these developments to ensure stability in the region and uphold Taiwan's sovereignty.

Avani Singhania | Kolkata

#### TACKLING E-WASTE THROUGH ACTION

Madam — Apropos the news story “Mitigating the e-waste crisis,” published on May 28, this is my response. As technology advances, our reliance on electronic devices deepens, yet the consequences of our digital age loom large. E-waste, a byproduct of our tech obsession, poses a multifaceted threat to both environment and health. The toxic cocktail of substances found in discarded electronics, if not handled properly, can seep into soil, water and air, wreaking havoc on ecosystems and human well-being alike.

The staggering statistics from the Global E-Waste Monitor 2020 paint a grim picture of our unsustainable habits. However, solutions are within reach. Governments must enforce stringent regulations on e-waste management, while manufacturers bear responsibility for the entire lifecycle of their products.

#### Hospital fire prompts safety overhaul



Apropos the news story “Once burned, Govt orders fire audit of all hospitals,” published on May 28, this is my response. Reading about the tragic fire at the neonatal hospital in Delhi, which resulted in the deaths of seven newborns and injuries to five others, is heartbreaking. This incident starkly highlights severe lapses in hospital management and safety protocols. The hospital was operating on an expired license and lacked fire department clearance, which is both shocking and unacceptable.

Anaya Patel | Pune

Investing in innovative recycling technologies and promoting eco-friendly design can mitigate the e-waste crisis. Ultimately, individual action is paramount. From conscientious disposal practices to advocating for systemic change, each of us holds the key to a cleaner, greener future. Let's embrace the challenge of recycling our e-waste and pave the way for a more sustainable tomorrow.

Aryan Malhotra | Chandigarh

#### SCIENCE ARCHIVES DRIVE PROGRESS

Madam — Apropos the news story “Science Archives Preserve Our Scientific Legacy,” published on May 28, this is my response. As an ever-evolving discipline, science continually shapes our understanding of the world and our place within it. Reading the newspaper daily, I'm constantly reminded of how each discovery and innovation contributes to our present and builds the foundation for future generations. The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, highlighted the power of scientific advancements in real-

time, transforming our lives and becoming a part of history. Scientific knowledge is inherently cumulative, with each generation of scientists building upon the work of their predecessors. This continuity drives not only intellectual progress but also economic and societal growth. The significance of preserving scientific archives cannot be overstated, as they store invaluable materials—research notes, experimental data and historical correspondence—that offer insights into the development of scientific thought. In India, initiatives like the Archives at NCBS play a crucial role in preserving our scientific heritage. However, with the risk of losing digital data, systematic conservation efforts are vital. Governments should mandate the periodic submission of research documents to ensure the longevity and impact of scientific work, safeguarding it from becoming lost to time.

Devika Menon | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)



FIRST COLUMN

MICROMANAGEMENT AND UNDERMANAGEMENT

It is crucial to balance these extremes by ensuring employee empowerment



SAKSHI SETHI

In the realm of leadership and management, micromanagement and under management represent two extreme ends of a spectrum posing significant challenges to organisational success. While micromanagement leads to decreased autonomy, innovation and job satisfaction, under management results in a lack of direction, motivation and accountability. By understanding the impacts of these management styles and implementing strategies that balance oversight with empowerment, organisations can foster a productive, innovative and satisfying work environment. Micromanagement involves excessive control and oversight while under management is characterised by a lack of adequate supervision and support.

In the spectrum of management styles, micromanagement and under management represent two extremes, each with distinct characteristics and consequences for the workplace. In an organisation, if one is micromanaging the team and not giving its employees the freedom to work, will eventually drive away great talent while settling for mediocrity resulting in fostering anxiety and ultimately leading to negative impacts on overall organisational productivity and job satisfaction. Along with this, decreased employee morale, reduced creativity and innovation, lower productivity, increased stress and burnout, high turnover, poor performance and accountability are some of the impacts of both micromanagement and undermanagement that can be detrimental even though they manifest differently. Various research studies have shown that micromanagement stifles creativity and innovation.



It is negatively correlated with job satisfaction and positively correlated with stress and burnout. Employees under micromanagement reported lower engagement and higher intentions to leave their jobs. While on the other hand, the effects of under management found that employees lacking adequate supervision and feedback exhibited lower job satisfaction and performance.

It becomes of utmost importance to strike a balance between the two by adopting management practices that provide appropriate oversight while empowering employees. Balancing between micromanagement and under management involves adopting a management style that provides appropriate oversight while empowering employees. By fostering a culture of trust and empowerment; setting clear goals and expectations; and promoting a results-oriented culture can help the organisation create a positive and productive workplace where both managers and employees thrive. There is no denying the fact that balancing micromanagement and undermanagement is crucial for creating a productive, positive and effective workplace. By finding the middle ground, managers can provide the necessary support and oversight while empowering employees to take initiative and innovate.

Remember, be it micromanagement or undermanagement, both can have far-reaching negative effects on both the employees as well as the organisation. By understanding the causes and impacts and then implementing strategies to promote trust, autonomy and effective communication, organisations can create a more positive and productive work environment. Moving away from micromanagement not only enhances employee satisfaction and performance but also contributes to the long-term success and health of the organisation. Micromanagement and undermanagement, as opposite ends of the management spectrum, both present significant challenges to organisational effectiveness and employee well-being. While micromanagement stifles autonomy and innovation through excessive control, under management leaves employees directionless and unsupported. Both styles can lead to significant issues within an organisation, highlighting the need for a balanced approach to effective leadership.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

# Relevant skill sets can combat unemployment



DINESH SOOD

The rapid digital shift necessitates comprehensive strategies to address skill gaps and ensure inclusive growth. Public-private partnerships are essential



The service sector has undeniably been the primary driver of India's growth since 2000. The exceptional performance of certain modern services has unequivocally contributed to the creation of more productive and decent employment. The reliance on services for economic growth unequivocally demands a fully developed job market, enabling a free flow of the workforce. The absence of such mechanisms will undoubtedly lead to rigidity in the services sector, curtailing growth against the backdrop of the increasingly important position of the services sector. The key focus areas include the pivotal role of technology in shaping the services sector and stimulating job growth in other sectors through multiplier effects.

The momentous transformation of the Indian economy is irrefutably being spearheaded by the service sector, which unequivocally contributes more than 50 per cent of the GDP. The sector's expansion is not happening in isolation but is deeply intertwined with global technological advancements. Technological progress has undeniably been a catalyst for efficiency, customer satisfaction, market expansion and data-driven decision-making within firms. It has also undeniably given rise to new service categories, such as e-commerce and other tech-based services like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT), revolutionising the sector.

The relationship between the service sector's growth and technological innovation is undeniably mutually beneficial. As the service sector expands, it undeniably fuels further innovation in technology-based solutions. New ventures and their technological needs undeniably push for continuous technological advancements to gain the competitiveness needed to maintain their foothold in the dynamic industry. This competition and need for differentiation undeniably lead to increased investments in research and development (R&D) and open innovations, benefiting both the firms involved and the public. The introduction of 5G and the ongoing development of 6G technologies have significantly enhanced connectivity, service



THE SERVICE SECTOR UNEQUIVOCALLY OFFERS BOTH ABUNDANT OPPORTUNITIES AND FORMIDABLE CHALLENGES. ADDRESSING CHALLENGES DEMANDS A RESOLUTE, COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH WITH ASTUTE POLICIES AND UNWAVERING IMPLEMENTATION

delivery speed and overall efficiency in India. Efforts to improve digital literacy have further accelerated technology adoption, with 70 per cent of businesses identifying as "Digital Businesses" and the country exhibiting the highest fintech adoption rate at 87 per cent. The application of AI in business operations has markedly improved operational efficiency, customer satisfaction and decision-making, positioning India as a global leader in AI adoption. However, the rapid digital transformation necessitates a balance between creating employment and providing the relevant skill sets for technology-demanding jobs for a new generation is a national need.

The service sector unequivocally offers both abundant opportunities and formidable challenges. Addressing challenges demands a resolute, comprehensive approach with astute policies and unwavering implementation. Public-private partnerships and policies aimed at bridging the skill gaps must be executed with unwavering effectiveness. Educational institutions must urgently revamp their curriculum to directly align with the market's skill demands.

Technological advancement, while propelling economic growth, undeniably necessitates relentless skill development. To fully exploit technological progress, educational institutions must steadfastly ensure their curriculum is consistently updated and in sync with the latest innovations.

**Skill Gap:** In India, the skill gap in the labour force is a significant challenge, with only 51 per cent of the youth deemed employable due to a lack of necessary skills. This issue is exacerbated by the country's diverse socio-economic conditions, particularly affecting those in rural areas and from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who lack

access to quality education and training. This situation perpetuates cycles of poverty and aggravates wage inequality. Moreover, inadequate emphasis on developing non-technical skills such as communication, critical thinking and leadership, which are increasingly in demand, further compounds the problem. The absence of these skills from the curriculum of most educational institutes compels employers to choose candidates only from a handful of premier institutes. Additionally, there is a significant mismatch between the skills taught and those required by employers, leading to unemployment even among the formally educated.

Efforts to bridge this gap must include public-private partnerships (PPPs), such as the initiative to upgrade Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to train 150 million people by 2024. These initiatives are crucial steps toward aligning educational outcomes with market needs, emphasising the vital importance of both technical and non-technical skills development to enhance employability.

**Gender Inequality:** Female employability in India has consistently exceeded male employability from 2020 to 2023, but there was a drop in 2024. Furthermore, it has been higher for seven out of eleven years of the Wheelbuz India Skills Reports. However, there has been a persistent gap between female and male labour force participation, indicating a clear bias against employing women over men. This bias is diminishing as female labour force participation has risen over the years, but substantial improvement is still necessary.

The Indian Government has implemented various initiatives to foster gender-inclusive employment, aim-

ing to bridge the gender gap in the workplace, making employing female labourers more lucrative while also ensuring it does not come at the cost of pay disparity. One significant legislation is the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976, designed to eliminate the wage gap between genders by ensuring equal pay for equal work. However, the act faces challenges, such as the narrow interpretation of the same work or work of a similar nature and the onus on employees to prove discrimination, which is difficult due to workplace power dynamics and legal complexities.

Additionally, the Government has launched schemes like Mission Shakti and the Deendayala Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), focusing on women's skill development and employability. These initiatives include exclusive training institutes for women, industry-oriented courses and partnerships with private sector bodies and NGOs. To encourage female participation in skill development, 30 per cent of seats in ITIs and ITCs are reserved for women.

These measures represent a comprehensive and assertive approach to promoting gender equality in employment, highlighting the crucial importance of legislative support, skill development and financial empowerment in achieving a more inclusive workforce. These unwavering steps will guarantee the complete realisation of the Indian economy's potential and the equitable distribution of the benefits of skills development.

(The writer is Co-Founder and MD, of Orane International, a Training Partner with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), Network Member, of India International Skill Centres, an initiative of GoI. Views expressed are personal)

# The dawn of AI: Balancing innovation and prudence

As AI advances, it is essential to strike a balance between harnessing its advantages and addressing its challenges to ensure a sustainable future

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the ex-novo computer technology that essentially deals with developing machines capable of imitating human behaviour. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines AI as the "ability of a computer or robot to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent beings such as perception, critical thinking and decision-making". As far as the human mind is concerned, first, it processes the information, analyses the processed information from various angles and finally arrives at a logical conclusion. On the contrary, AI is a software programme that solely relies on pre-fed computer data to answer a query. In the entire process, the computer system behaves like



M J WARSI

a human mind. AI is the order of the day and admittedly, holds the potential to bring about revolutionary changes in communications, defence, healthcare and agriculture. In fact, till recently, the task that was considered impossible even for a machine to perform now AI has turned into a reality. AI has considerably brought computers very close to imitating the human mind, thus, diminishing the gap

between man and machine. Today AI has found its application in a variety of fields such as education, finance, defence, agriculture and healthcare. Leading medical research institutions use AI for experiment, diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of deadly diseases. AI facilitates high-quality tissue sample analysis that paves the way for precise prognosis. In this day and age pharmaceutical companies are using AI for drug discovery and chemical analysis. With the help of AI doctors and healthcare professionals can precisely diagnose serious medical conditions such as cancer and stroke. In the education sector too, AI plays an important role. AI has proved to be an extremely handy tool to develop study material, student

evaluation, grading and monitoring. Thus, teachers save their precious time which they can utilise in productive academic pursuits as well as engage in meaningful discussions with students. AI-powered virtual educator robots substantially improve teaching and learning outcomes. Now let us see some of the imminent dangers of AI. The picture is not as rosy as it appears for the AI. Widespread indignant use of AI in almost every sphere of human activity is bound to raise some serious concerns concerning privacy, data security and transparency. Psychological well-being and social issues warrant our immediate attention. Companies are gradually replacing humans with AI-powered robots to perform

specific tasks at the workplace. This causes anxiety among employees and adversely affects their mental and emotional well-being. The technical dexterity of computers is also a major challenge for humans in the workplace. Of late AI AI-driven Deepfake videos and online Bots have spread at an alarming pace. Deepfake videos and online Bots are capable of orchestrating a fabricated consensus and manipulating public opinion. Fake news spreads like wildfire disturbing peace and leading to social unrest. Another disadvantage of AI is that it makes it extremely tough to distinguish between the original and the fake. AI-induced human rights violations should be stopped at the earliest. AI-powered changing

technology landscape has jeopardised data security, privacy, dignity, employment, equality, political rights and secrecy. Experts and sociologists have expressed reservations regarding the detrimental impacts of over-reliance on AI and human robots in important sectors like healthcare, law, marketing, accounting, education, management, technology and workplaces. AI's technological diligence, incredible analysis power and the ability to perform repetitive tasks may lead to huge layoffs. Consequently, this gives rise to a disproportionately high unemployment rate. Employees and the labourers may be subjected to discrimination and disparities and their professional and social security may be at stake. To

check the AI misuse a well-defined and comprehensive technological-labour policy is the need of the hour. Some of the measures that help workers survive in the AI-driven landscape are regular upgradation of employee skills through appropriate training, honing up of technical skills and developing Soft skills. Lo and behold! Let's not lose sight of the fact that AI is completely devoid of human temperament, comprehension and creativity. The human mind is blessed with infinite creative power and Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). These supreme attributes propel human beings to an elevated plane and place them on a higher pedestal than machines. On the contrary, AI is data-driven and follows a defined tra-

jectory, thus, fails to capture human emotions, perception and the ability to perform tasks by adapting to a given environment. Since AI is in its nascent stage, therefore, it is too soon to assume that AI can take over humans shortly as humans continue to be the *fons et origo* of originality and innovation. Another threat that scares us is that if ever in the future technologically advanced machines take Man as their enemy then the entire human race may face existential crises. Pre-empting these dangers the US and the European countries have taken a locus standi to oppose AI and have taken stringent legal measures to curb AI's capricious use.

(The writer is a professor; views are personal)



MONEY MATTERS

## Lauritz Knudsen to invest Rs 850 cr in next 3 years

Lauritz Knudsen, formerly known as L&T Switchgear, on Wednesday said it will invest Rs 850 crore on technologies, products and expansion of its manufacturing capabilities in the country over the next three years. Larsen & Toubro (L&T) had in 2020 sold its electrical and automation business to Schneider Electric for Rs 14,000 crore and is now a part of Scheider Electric Group. Schneider Electric Chief Executive Officer Peter Herweck said the new company "aims to strategically invest Rs 850 crore over the next three years, further establishing its role as a significant player in India's rapid growth trajectory in the electrical sector". He was speaking during the launch of its new brand identity, "Lauritz Knudsen Electrical and Automation". Deepak Sharma, Zone President, India, MD & CEO, Schneider Electric India, said the investment is "to bring the next phase of our technologies and products and of course expanding our manufacturing capabilities in the country."



## Rupee falls 21 paise to close at 83.39 against US dollar

The rupee settled 21 paise lower at 83.39 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, tracking a negative trend in domestic equities and elevated crude oil prices. Forex traders said dollar demand from importers and oil marketing companies (OMCs) also weighed on the rupee. However, foreign inflows in the bond markets ahead of inclusion on India's government bonds in global bond index cushioned the downside. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.22 and finally settled for the day at 83.39 (provisional), down 21 paise from its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee pared initial gains to settle 5 paise lower at 83.18 against the US dollar. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on month-end dollar demand from OMCs and importers to meet their obligations. Risk aversion in global markets and a strong US dollar may further pressurize the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.



## Hindalco shares climb nearly 4 pc; hit record high

Shares of Hindalco Industries jumped nearly 4 per cent to hit a record high on Wednesday as the US-based Novelis Inc, part of the company, will launch an initial public offer to raise up to US\$ 945 million. The stock climbed 3.64 per cent to settle at Rs 705.35 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it rallied 4.82 per cent to a record high of Rs 713.40. On the NSE, shares of the company went up by 3.52 per cent to Rs 705.30 each. Novelis Inc will launch an initial public offer (IPO) to raise up to US\$ 945 million, with an estimated equity valuation of up to US\$ 12.6 billion. In the proposed public issue, around 45 million shares will be sold by Novelis Inc's sole shareholders A V Minerals (Netherlands) NV, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hindalco Industries Ltd. The company will not receive any proceeds. Novelis, a leading player in the production of innovative aluminium products and solutions, announced the launch of its roadshow for the IPO of 4,50,00,000 (45 million) common shares held by its sole shareholder.



# S&P ups India's outlook to positive

Raises hope for ratings upgrade in 2 years

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After a gap of about 10 years, S&P Global Ratings on Wednesday upped India's outlook to positive from stable on robust growth prospects for next three years and public spending, and raised hopes for an upgrade in two years provided the government continues reforms and policies to keep fiscal deficit under check.

While retaining India's sovereign rating at the lowest investment grade of 'BBB-', S&P said its expects broad continuity in economic reforms and fiscal policies, irrespective of the election outcome. Results of the ongoing gen-



eral elections will be announced on June 4. "India outlook revised to positive on robust growth and rising quality of Government spend," S&P said, while affirming long-term rating at 'BBB-'. The ratings are looked at by investors as a barometer of the country's creditworthiness and has impact on borrowing costs. Last in 2014, S&P had upped India's outlook to stable from

negative. "Our positive outlook on India is predicated on its robust economic growth, pronounced improvement in the quality of government spending, and political commitment to fiscal consolidation. We believe these factors are coalescing to benefit credit metrics," S&P said. Irrespective of the June 2024 general election results, S&P expects the incoming govern-

"Our positive outlook on India is predicated on its robust economic growth, pronounced improvement in the quality of government spending, and political commitment to fiscal consolidation. We believe these factors are coalescing to benefit credit metrics," S&P said.

ment to carry on economic reforms to support the "growth vigor", continued infrastructure investment drive, and commitment to fiscal consolidation. The finance ministry has been pushing for a rating upgrade on the back of improved fiscal management and strong economic fundamental, including high foreign exchange reserves.

## AES seeks shareholders' nod to raise Rs 12,500 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Energy Solutions will seek shareholders' approval to raise Rs 12,500 crore in its annual general meeting on June 25.

The company is looking to raise funds by way of qualified institutions placement (QIP) to eligible investors through issuance of equity shares and/or other eligible securities.

The board of Adani Energy Solutions on Monday approved the proposal to raise up to Rs 12,500 crore through issue of equity shares on QIP basis or other modes.

According to the notice for the AGM, the company will seek the approval of the shareholders at the ensuing annual general meeting scheduled to be held on June 25, 2024.

## RURAL BANKING OUTREACH

# Centre to enlist dairy, fishery co-operatives



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is planning to launch a nationwide programme to rope in dairy and fishery cooperative societies as banking correspondents to expand financial services in rural areas, a top official said on Wednesday.

Ministry of Cooperation Secretary Ashish Kumar Bhutani said the programme would leverage the existing network of dairy and fishery cooperatives to act as "bank mitras" or banking agents by offering services such as

micro-ATMs and lower-interest farm loans. "The pilot has been rolled out at the state level in Gujarat. We intend to nationally roll out shortly," Bhutani said while addressing a cooperative summit organised by PHDCCI here.

The plan follows a pilot project launched in two districts of Gujarat where members of dairy and fishery cooperatives were able to access banking services closer home, including doorstep delivery of microloans and facilitating other transactions.

Under the nationwide pro-

gramme, these cooperative societies will be engaged as banking correspondents of district and state cooperative banks, official sources said.

To enable delivery of branchless banking services, the cooperatives will be provided with micro-ATMs with support from the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the state agency tasked with development of rural India. Cooperative members will also be issued Kisan Credit Cards, which typically offer farm loans at lower interest rates.

## Irdai to health insurers: Decide on cashless authorisation in 1hr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Regulator Irdai on Wednesday released a master circular on health insurance specifying that an insurer will have to decide on cashless authorization within one hour of request.

The master circular on Health Insurance products reveals 55 circulars issued earlier and it is a significant stride towards reinforcing the

empowerment of policyholders and bolstering inclusive



health insurance, Irdai said in a statement.

"The circular has brought in one place the entitlements in a health insurance policy available to a Policyholder/prospects for their easy reference and also emphasizes measures towards providing seamless, faster and hassle-free claims experience to a policyholder procuring health insurance policy and ensuring enhanced service standards across the health insurance sector, it said.

## 'North-East states, J&K lead in Aadhar-enabled transactions'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

North-eastern states and Jammu & Kashmir are increasingly adopting Aadhar-enabled financial services, according to a report.

Meghalaya topped the list with a 1000 per cent growth in AePS (Aadhaar Enabled Payment System) transaction value and a 712 per cent increase in the number of

transactions, followed by Nagaland and Assam, the



report by fintech firm PayNearby said. Retail stores in Jammu and

Kashmir witnessed a growth of over 134 per cent in value and 89 per cent in the volume of Aadhar-enabled payment transactions in FY24.

The 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Digital Empowerment' report by PayNearby, a company that offers branchless banking and digital network, drew insights from transactions across 12 lakhs plus retail touchpoints throughout the country.

## ADB commits US\$ 2.6 billion in sovereign lending to India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asian Development Bank (ADB) committed US\$ 2.6 billion (about Rs 21,500 crore) in sovereign lending to India in 2023 for various projects.

The fund is aimed to strengthen urban development, support industrial corridor development, promote power sector reforms, build India's climate resilience, and

enhance connectivity. ADB also extended US\$ 23.53 million in technical assistance and US\$ 4.1 million in grants under the sovereign portfolio.

In addition, ADB committed over US\$ 1 billion for private sector projects during the past year, the Manila-based multi-lateral development bank said in a statement.



## Investor wealth erodes by Rs 5.12 L cr in 4-day fall in markets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investors' wealth eroded by Rs 5.12 lakh crore in four straight days of fall in the equity markets which witnessed profit-taking after a record-breaking rally and caution ahead of the results of the Lok Sabha polls.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 667.55 points or 0.89 per cent to settle at 74,502.90 on Wednesday. It fell below the 75,000-mark during the day and tanked 715.9 points or 0.95 per cent to 74,454.55.

The barometer fell amid selling in bank stocks and weak global trends. In four sessions since May

24, the benchmark gauge dropped 915.14 points or 1.21 per cent amid profit-taking by cautious investors. The BSE benchmark Sensex hit an all-time high of



76,009.68 on May 27. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies eroded by Rs 5,12,921.96 crore to Rs 4,15,09,713.94 crore (USD 4.98 trillion) in the four ses-

sions to Wednesday. From its all-time peak, the BSE benchmark is down 1,506.78 points or 1.98 per cent.

The combined market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies hit the USD 5-trillion milestone for the first time on May 21.

The NSE Nifty declined 183.45 points or 0.80 per cent to 22,704.70.

"Nifty dropped by 183 points, marking the fourth consecutive decline as election jitters triggered intense selling. The Sensex fell by nearly 668 points to 74,503," said Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd..

## Silver continues to glitter, hits lifetime high of Rs 97,100 per kg

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Silver prices hit a lifetime high levels of Rs 97,100 in the local market on Wednesday, while gold prices rose Rs 250 in line with strong trends in the overseas markets, according to HDFC Securities.

Continuing its winning run for the third straight session, silver soared Rs 1,150 to Rs 97,100 per kg. It had closed at Rs 95,950 per kg on Tuesday. In the futures trade, silver also hit a lifetime peak of Rs 96,493 per kg on the Multi

Commodity Exchange (MCX) on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the gold prices climbed Rs 250 to Rs 73,200 per 10 grams in the national capital.

In the previous session, the precious metal prices had settled at Rs 72,950 per 10 grams.

"Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 73,200 per 10 grams, up Rs 250 against the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst, Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

## TEPC exploring global markets for exports of Indian telecom products

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

The Telecom Equipment & Services Export Promotion Council (TEPC) is exploring global markets and has set up a regular participation schedule in international trade shows to promote Made in India products, its Director General Arun Gupta said on Wednesday.

He further said the region-wise market development focus is on ASEAN, Africa, Europe and other developing economies. TEPC has been set up by Government of India to promote and develop export of telecom equipment and services.

Gupta said the aggressive marketing campaign is aimed at

generating 15 per cent year-on-year annual growth to achieve US\$ 100 billion telecom equip-



ment exports by 2047.

He was speaking at ATX Enterprise exhibition being held here from May 29-31, 2024.

TEPC has over 160 members and the industry is averaging at US\$ 8 billion a year.

"Our member companies are exporting to over 75 global markets," Gupta told PTI adding that optical fibre, network and 4G & 5G equipment manufacturers are being put in the forefront of TEPC export campaign.

Amit Pasari, a governing council member of TEPC, said India is being represented by 27 companies and 110 delegates at the exhibition.

He underlined the government-initiated R&D in the telecom equipment manufacturing sector, pointing out the importance of ongoing development of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).

## Ctrl-S AI-ready datacenter inaugurated in Hyderabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With Artificial intelligence ready along with advanced cooling technologies, built to seismic zone 2 standards, fully flood-proof, and featuring 9-layer physical security, CtrlS Datacenters Ltd, Hyderabad DC3 has a built-up area of 1.34 lakh sq. ft and a 13 MW IT load capacity. It is a ground plus 5-storeyed facility aiming for LEED Platinum certification by using renewable energy and advanced water recycling along other sustainable initiatives. CtrlS Datacenters is the first and only Google Cloud Partner Interconnect provider in Hyderabad, offering cloud connect services from Google, Oracle, Azure, and AWS via CtrlS Cloud Connect.

Datacenter announced that it operates three facilities in Hyderabad, one in HITEC City and two in the Gachibowli financial district. According to the CtrlS Datacenters Ltd, Hyderabad DC3 has a built-up area of 1.34 lakh sq. ft and a 13 MW IT load capacity. It is a ground plus 5-storeyed facility aiming for LEED Platinum certification by using renewable energy and advanced water recycling along other sustainable initiatives. CtrlS Datacenters is the first and only Google Cloud Partner Interconnect provider in Hyderabad, offering cloud connect services from Google, Oracle, Azure, and AWS via CtrlS Cloud Connect.

## 67% startup employees prefer to move to established firms: CIEL HR report

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Nearly 67 per cent of employees working in startups prefer to move to established firms on account of job security, better pay, and financial stability, a study conducted by CIEL HR Services said.

The report also revealed that the startup sector has been facing a severe high attrition rate, with an average tenure being 2-3 years.

Some of the key findings undertaken by the city-based human resource solutions provider CIEL HR Services indicate that a secured job ranks high on the list of concerns for employees in the

"Startups play a vital role as key catalysts for growth, fuelling innovation and generating employment in diverse sectors. With 65 per cent of companies planning to increase hiring in the coming months, the future looks promising for the startup ecosystem"



startup sector with 40 per cent of the respondents expressing "unease".

Similarly, 30 per cent of participants commented that the promise of better pay was another factor in moving towards established firms, as it ensures financial stability.

About 25 per cent of the candidates have also attributed a lack of work-life balance in startups as a factor for their decision to join reputed concerns.

Commenting on the CIEL Works-Startup Report 2024, CIEL HR Services Managing Director and CEO Aditya Narayan Mishra said, "Startups play a vital role as key catalysts for growth, fuelling innovation and generating employment in diverse sectors. With 65 per cent of companies planning to increase hiring in the coming months, the future looks promising for the startup ecosystem."

## For women travellers, IndiGo introduces new feature for seat selection

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Women booking tickets in an IndiGo flight can now know about the seats that have already been booked by other female passengers at the time of web check-in, with the airline introducing the new feature after a market research.

IndiGo is the country's largest domestic airline with a

market share of over 60 per cent and carried 80 lakh passengers in April, as per an official data. In a release on Wednesday, the airline said it has introduced a new feature that aims to make the travel experience more comfortable for female passengers.

"This has been introduced basis market research, and is currently in pilot mode aligning with our #GirlPower ethos.

**GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (GHMC)**  
**'E' PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE**  
NIT No. 04/EE/GHMC/IDN-21/2024-25 Date: 29-05-2024  
Tenders are called vide No. 04/EE/GHMC/IDN-21/2024-25 (Item No. 01 to 05) Dt: 29.05.2024. Through 'e' procurement for (05) works with an estimated Cost of Rs. 206.70 Lakhs. The sale of bids is open on the website 'e' procurement market place from 11.06 AM on 30.05.2024 onwards. Last date for submission of bids is 31.05.2024 at 11.00 AM. Sale of bids closes one hour before the submission time. Further details can be seen on the website https://tender.telanganagov.in. Sd/- Executive Engineer, R.O.No: 87-PP/LC/ADVT/10224-25 Dt: 29.05.2024 Chandanagar Circle-21, SLP Zone: GHMC



## Preserving the dying tradition of the Lambani community

SHIKHA DUGGAL

A one-of-a-kind community effort known throughout the country that showcases the beauty of the Lambani community to metropolitan audiences, Banjara Kasuti is winning over fashionistas and others' hearts. People in the country refer to them as a mix of trending fashion and tradition with ecological ethics! Most importantly, during an exclusive chat with the founder, we learn that their objective is not just to preserve the dying tradition of the Lambani ladies but also to uplift them financially and socially.

"I've always been captivated by the Lambani community (*Banjaras*). As a child, the extensive use of mirrorwork, along with brilliant hues in harmony with nature, as well as the distinctive artwork on the outfits worn by the Lambani women, was oftentimes the highlight of my day. However, when I returned to my hometown after decades, the colours that marked the 'Banjaras' were missing; the community was progressively slipping away from its

own art form. Furthermore, huge seasonal migratory patterns in recent years have brought a gradual end to the Lambani artform, with them fleeing to cities for better prospects," Asha Patil thinks back on. In light of this, Seema and Asha decided to start Banjara Kasuti, an effort aimed at reviving the art form while also strengthening the community, particularly Lambani women!

Our interview allowed us to shed light on how, for the past seven years, they have supported the entire ecosystem while also empowering Lambani ladies and khadi weavers through their fashion industry initiative. The founder continued, "We advance the trend by combining current fashion with local culture through the use of Lambani embroidery on organic textiles. We place a strong emphasis on combining traditional artistry and contemporary designs to not only promote the use of handwoven materials but also to ensure financial security for local artisans without sacrificing their identity. In fact, we have proudly empowered over 120 women since its beginning, and we hope to empower another women too."

You may call it an initiative that not only seeks to provide dignity, social security, and financial independence to Lambani women but also to maintain their clothing customs by instilling their legacy! Moreover, "While empowering the these women to rediscover their love and admiration for their art form, the initiative also promotes financial stability for both the them and local cotton and khadi weavers by providing a consistent monthly income, as well as access to banking services, education, and healthcare for all community members. Several ladies from the

community have come out to share their experiences with us. One example of perseverance and empowerment is Leela (name changed), a young woman who would do odd jobs as needed—even if it meant working at 40°C—to help her family's finances. However, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, Leela's husband lost his job as well, forcing her to bear the full burden alone. Leela gained a second chance at life after being introduced to our community initiative by her community members. With a set monthly income, Leela was finally able to leave her odd occupations and establish a stable foundation for her family, ensuring that her children's education continued. Such incidents continue to motivate us to work tirelessly for the benefit of the 'Banjaras' and to alter their lives."

Asha Patil, who lives with the large Lambani population, saw that the women in this community were abandoning their traditional garb in favour of synthetic saris. She then established the goal of reviving the magnificent Lambani handwork while also uplifting the women's community. At the same time, the founder had been doing the following: "In the organisation, there is a practice of incorporating Lambani community members in the design decision-making process. We connect with them in an open and mutually respectful manner, valuing their diverse culture and knowledge. We collaborate with participants to create one-of-a-kind designs that honour their cultural history while also reflecting artistic traditions. This means that by working together, we want to accurately depict this community."

They currently provide regular monthly wages to more than 60-80 women from the Lambani community. It only utilises handwoven fabrics, which benefits the weaver

community. As a result, the communities are gradually becoming self-sufficient, and the members are proud of their newly acquired weaving and embroidery skills. With this effort, they hope to reach 120 women by mid-2023 and ensure that all families in the Lambani neighbourhood have access to banking, education, and healthcare.

What more? "Beyond financial support, our initiatives aim to empower individuals to become responsible, self-sufficient members of the community. Women artisans are prepared to progress and become leaders in their communities after receiving assistance from mentorship and leadership education programs, as well as gaining skills and knowledge through skill-building seminars and training programs. Furthermore, we have provided them with a platform from which to speak out and expose people to the culture they represent, all while campaigning for social change and the enrichment of Lambani traditions." Fundamentally, they seek to support the Lambani ladies, whose handicrafts have been playing the game in all their textures and brilliant colors even before the term 'sustainable' became popular. They hope to provide Lambani craftspeople with an excellent opportunity to earn a living by producing comfortable silhouettes while also preserving and revitalising the tradition by seamlessly blending hand-woven fabrics!

On the call, the founder sounded overjoyed and expressed it to us, saying, "Recognising our role in empowering the 'Banjaras', we are only trying to foster a powerful sense of community for these women, providing them with a safe space to not only work together but also share their joys and burdens. Furthermore, from a history preservation standpoint, we continue to strive to promote the Lambani art form."

**BANJARA KASUTI, A ONE-OF-A-KIND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE NOT ONLY AIMS TO PRESERVE THE VANISHING CULTURE OF THE 'LAMBANI' LADIES BUT ALSO TO UPLIFT THEM, FINANCIALLY AND SOCIALLY. THIS WEEK, *THE PIONEER* CONNECTS WITH THE FOUNDER TO DISCUSS MORE IN DETAIL ABOUT THEIR MISSION AND WELFARE FOR THE COMMUNITY.**



## Fitness is more than just appearing muscular and ripped!

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

Yogesh Bhateja's journey from the busy streets of Delhi to the glittery world of Mumbai has been nothing short of extraordinary. Little did he know that this leap of faith would take him to the dazzling world of Bollywood.

He has been drawn to difficulties since he was very young. He began by playing soccer alongside older players and competing in various events. As he earned a bachelor's degree in physical education, he focused on becoming a soccer player and even coached school teams. He says, "However, I wanted more, so I delved into bodybuilding, transforming from a 56 kg boy to a 75 kg bodybuilder. While competing in the bodybuilding competition, I finished in top five, but I quickly realised my true passion was coaching and assisting others in their transformation."

He had already coached hundreds of people in leading fitness clubs and was enjoying a successful career when a buddy, a celebrity trainer, asked him to manage his gym.

Embracing the challenge, he recalled, "I moved to Mumbai in 15 days. There, I met my first Bollywood client, Sonu Sood, and worked on films like *Rajkumar* and *Happy New Year*. This opportunity led to training other superstars, such as Farah Khan, Kapil Sharma, Esha Gupta, Tamannah Bhatia, Neetu Singh Kapoor, and Sunil Grover. My journey from a youngster to a superstar fitness coach in Bollywood exemplifies my adaptability and desire to take on new challenges, finally finding fulfillment in improving lives."

Moving from a secure career to a competitive climate was one of the most difficult tasks he experienced, he admits. "Working with celebrities presented unique chal-

lenges such as erratic schedules, long working hours, and high expectations. However, my adaptability enabled me to overcome these challenges." He learned to construct successful training plans on the fly, based on their physical, mental, and emotional states, ensuring they received the best possible instruction even under difficult circumstances.

Working with celebs like Sonu Sood, Kapil Sharma, and Kangana Ranaut has been extremely rewarding, he says. "Each transformation is meaningful, and seeing them achieve their fitness goals is deeply satisfying. Training Sonu Sood for *Fateh* was especially noteworthy owing to the irregular shoot schedules and inclement weather, but his dedication made it a memorable experience." He explains, "Sonu Sood introduced me to Kapil Sharma, whose hectic schedule made frequent exercises difficult. However, his hardworking spirit shone through, and we frequently practiced late at night. Many stars praised his stunning metamorphosis on *The Kapil Sharma Show* and in his films."

He proceeds to say that training Kangana Ranaut has always been both enjoyable and difficult. During

*Manikarnika*, she gave him only 21 days to assist her in acquiring a size zero figure for Cannes, and they were successful. For *Panga*, she needed a robust, heavy appearance, but for *Thalaivi*, she gained 20 kg safely. Following *Thalaivi*, they concentrated on shedding the weight for *Dhaakad*, ensuring she was fit and flexible for action scenes. Her commitment to functional training is amazing!

He also believes it is critical to always study and stay current with the latest trends and techniques in the fitness industry, and explains, "To accomplish this, I often attend workshops, gain new certifications, and stay informed about improvements in fitness training."

He combines functional training and classical bodybuilding to improve speed, flexibility, explosiveness, and overall agility, helping clients create a leaner, stronger physique, he claims. "For Sonu Sood's preparation for *Fateh*, I designed two training splits that featured movements like archers, clap push-ups, human flag, front lever, cossack squats, explosive lunges, and box jumps. These workouts dramatically improved his performance and recovery, ensuring that he was physically ready for the demanding part."

Throughout his life, he has been committed to discovering innovative training methods. As a full-time soccer player, he gained a thorough understanding of the human body, sport-specific training techniques, and methods for improving physical performance. He adds, "My path into bodybuilding expanded on this knowledge. I learned about body adaptation to different diets and nutrition strategies, whether for muscle gain or competitiveness, using calorie deficit diets."

At this point in his career, he feels a great deal of professional obligation. He wants to help and reach out to the masses in order to alter their lives and guide them, as a lot of misinformation and

phony influencers are deceiving these innocent people. He has devised some highly affordable, sensible, and feasible exercise regimens for people, taking into account a variety of factors such as age, gender, lifestyle, work culture, eating habits, health problems, and so on, to assist people who do not have access to or the luxury of time to visit gyms. The fitness business is continuously changing with new innovations.

Even social media has a huge impact on individuals. It has made individuals more concerned with their appearance, which has both positive and negative consequences. Many people aim to look fit and healthy and are cognizant of eating appropriately. He continues, "However, there has been an upsurge in drug addiction, with young individuals turning to steroids to obtain a more muscular body in a shorter period of time. I've even been approached by 16- to 17-year-olds inquiring about steroid cycles." To avoid this, the application must be monitored and modified regularly. Feedback and modifications are based on each person's specific preferences and progress. Periodic evaluation of progress and goal changes are required, as initial plans may not always function flawlessly due to the body's limits. It is critical to keep the customer on track by implementing plan improvements on schedule, as suggested by the interviewee.

He ends by stating that fitness is more than just appearing muscular and ripped. He always makes sure his customer is in a healthy mental state. For him, completing a scheduled routine is unimportant. He only wants a pleasant session that ends with a big smile on celebs' face, which does not always come with an aggressive workout. Sometimes it's a solid moderate-intensity session, sometimes it's HIIT, and many times it's just trying out a new tough and complex activity. He focuses on appropriate posture and breathing patterns while working out, which leads to a successful session!

Celebrity fitness coach Yogesh Bhateja, who has had a remarkable journey, who moved from a secure career to a competitive path, interacts with *The Pioneer* over an exclusive chat taking us through his journey, and transforming his B'wood clients, among many more.



## A closer look at Sarcomas!

Sarcomas are a rare group of cancers that begin in the bones or soft tissues of the body. It accounts for about 1% to 2% of all cancers that affect children, adolescents, and even adults. Although bone cancer can develop anywhere in the body, it mostly develops in the arms and legs.

Since it develops deep in the body and becomes evident after the appearance of a lump, one might not be able to see any significant signs or symptoms. This makes, early diagnosis of sarcoma very crucial.

### How bone sarcoma is diagnosed?

Sarcoma of bone is a type of cancer that requires various tests for accurate diagnosis, although not all tests are necessary for every individual. When selecting diagnostic tests, doctors take into account several factors such as the suspected type of cancer, the patient's signs and symptoms, age, general health, and the results of previous medical tests.

### Here are the tests commonly used to diagnose and determine the stage of bone sarcoma:

**Bone scan:** A bone scan aids in determining the stage of a bone sarcoma. A small amount of radioactive tracer is injected into a patient's vein, which collects in areas of the bone. A special camera detects the radiation emitted by the tracer, creating images. Healthy bone appears lighter, while areas affected by cancer cells or fractures stand out.

**Blood tests:** Laboratory blood tests alone cannot diagnose sarcomas. However, in some cases of osteosarcoma or Ewing sarcoma, elevated levels of alkaline phosphatase and lactate dehydrogenase may be present. It's important to note that these substances can also be elevated due to non-cancerous causes, such as normal growth in children or healing broken bones.

**X-ray:** X-rays use a small amount of radiation to create images of the body's internal structures. They provide a visual representation of the bones and can help identify any abnormalities or tumors.

**Computed tomography (CT or CAT) scan:** CT scans utilise x-rays taken from different angles to create detailed 3-dimensional images of the body. They can measure tumor size

and identify abnormalities or tumors. Contrast medium, a special dye, may be administered to enhance the image's clarity.

**Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI):** MRI employs magnetic fields instead of x-rays to produce detailed body images. It can measure tumor size and detect involvement of nearby soft tissues. Contrast medium may or may not be used to enhance the image's quality.

**Positron emission tomography (PET) or PET-CT scan:** A PET scan is often combined with a CT scan to determine the stage of a bone sarcoma. A radioactive sugar substance is injected into the body, which is absorbed by cells that actively use energy, including cancer cells. The scanner detects this substance, producing images of organs and tissues.

**Biopsy:** A biopsy involves the removal of a small tissue sample for microscopic examination. While other tests may suggest cancer, only a biopsy can provide a definitive diagnosis. A pathologist analyzes the sample to confirm the presence of cancer. Biopsies can be performed through a needle or by making a small incision, depending on the tumor's location. It is crucial to undergo the biopsy process in a specialised center, as the procedure is extremely



important both in diagnosis and proper treatment outcome. Additionally, an expert pathologist should review the tissue sample to ensure an accurate diagnosis of sarcoma.

After conducting the necessary diagnostic tests, the doctor will discuss the results with the patient. In the case of a cancer diagnosis, these results assist in describing the cancer and determining its stage and grade. Staging and grading help guide the appropriate treatment approach. It is crucial for individuals with bone sarcoma to seek care at a sarcoma specialty center, where experts can ensure accurate diagnosis and provide appropriate treatment.

(The author, Dr. Anmol Chugh, is a Consultant, Plastics & Aesthetics Centre, at CK Birla Hospital.)



# THE COOLEST SIP THIS SUMMER

This summer's drink with the most chill is just a click away! No, not iced tea, cold coffee or flavoured water. The perfect antidote to the scorching heat - is the new selection of bubble teas now bubbling all day at a

Burma near you. Pick



from an all-new selection of bubble teas in refreshing flavours like Berry Matcha, Lotus Biscoff, Citrus Hibiscus and Wildberry and the star, Korean Banana bubble tea – a special collaboration with GOT Tea. What's more, you can even customise your drink with fun toppings like cheese foam, coconut jelly, vanilla custard or even black grass jelly! So whether you're a Boba-head or a first time sipper, you'll be spoilt for choices of sweet, chewy tapioca pearls dunked in freshly, brewed chilled tea in the most amazing flavour combinations yet.

Trending around the world, bubble tea, an Asian delicacy, has gained popularity in India too. Bubble teas in a variety of incredible flavours from classic milk teas to fruit-infused creations and vegan options too, are a summer favourite. All natural without any artificial flavouring or additives, and made with high-quality tapioca pearls and in-house syrups. This delicious beverage creates moments of joy for any and every mood or occasion in your day. We bet bubble teas are the coolest sip this summer because they come in a variety of flavours!



# Moana and Maui are back!



The new teaser trailer for Walt Disney Animated Studios' *Moana 2* is here. Moana voyages back to the big screen this November in the all-new feature film starring Auli'i Cravalho and Dwayne Johnson as Moana and demigod Maui, respectively.

Opening in theatres on November 29, 2024, *Moana 2* reunites Moana and Maui three years later for an expansive new voyage alongside a crew of unlikely seafarers. After receiving an unexpected call from her wayfinding ancestors, Moana must journey to the far seas of Oceania and into dangerous, long-lost waters for an adventure unlike anything she's ever faced. Directed by David Derrick Jr., Jason Hand and Dana Ledoux Miller, and produced by Christina Chen and Yvett Merino, *Moana 2* features music by Grammy® winners Abigail Barlow and Emily Bear, Grammy nominee Opetia Foa, and three-time Grammy winner Mark Mancina.

## Policybazaar redefines strength

In recognition of the Mental Health Awareness Month, Policybazaar, launches a brand film. Through the self-narrated story of Kargil war hero, Aji Vishisht Seva Medal Winner, Major General Vikram Dogra, the film brings out the critical importance of prioritising mental health and coping with conditions like depression. This campaign brings a much-needed shift in perspective as it portrays an army officer, who fits the textbook definition of strength, discussing just how much courage it takes to battle through mental health issues.

## Propelling Gen AI led sustainability solutions

EcoRatings has successfully secured USD 1 million in pre-seed funding from a consortium of investors including We Founder Circle, 888 VC, Vinnars, Indigram Labs Foundation and Google in a mix of equity and grant. The platform enables organisations to meet sector-focused goals in an evolving ESG environment.

## Aparna Constructions forays into retail

Aparna Constructions and Estates Private Limited, has announced their foray into the retail-commercial and the entertainment segments with the launch of Aparna Neo Mall and Aparna Cinemas in Hyderabad. Located in the rapidly developing Nallagandla region, Aparna Neo is spread across 3.67 acres with an impressive expanse of 3.5 Lakh square feet, and is the only mall within the 8 km radius. Aligned with their broader business diversification goals, Aparna Constructions has made a strategic investment of INR 252 CR in Aparna Neo and an additional investment of INR 32 CR in Aparna Cinemas.

## KIET group attains autonomous status

KIET Group of Institutions, proudly announces that it has been granted autonomous status. This significant milestone marks a new era of academic freedom and innovation for the institution, which has been shaping the future of technical education since its inception in 1998 by the Krishna Charitable Society.

## DADU'S launches its biggest outlet at Kompally

Dadu's, renowned for its traditional and contemporary Indian sweets and snacks announced the opening its newest outlet at Kompally, Hyderabad. The primary highlight of this establishment is the introduction of Banquets an impressive convention space for hosting events and socials. The five-floor building is spread over a total area of ten thousand square feet will house both Dadu's Sweets and Masala Republic.

## #EaseHerWorkFlow

On the occasion of Menstrual Hygiene Day, Patee Sanitary Pads, proudly announces the launch of its latest campaign, #EaseHerWorkFlow. This initiative is an extension of the larger #Pareevartan campaign, which has been dedicated to promoting awareness, education, and empowerment regarding menstrual hygiene since its inception last year.

LISTENINGS






Two teams from Mahindra University reached the final round, both emerging victorious at the Babson Collaborative Global Student Challenge 2024. This year, over 2,414 students from 25 schools across 20 countries participated in this prestigious competition.




Pfizer India and Yashoda Hospitals joined hands to inaugurate a new dedicated Centre of Excellence (CoE) for adult vaccination in Yashoda Hospitals in HITEC City. It will offer immunisation against a range of vaccine-preventable diseases that are increasingly affecting the population, including Pneumococcal disease, Influenza, Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), and Hepatitis A and B, among others.


### ARCHIE



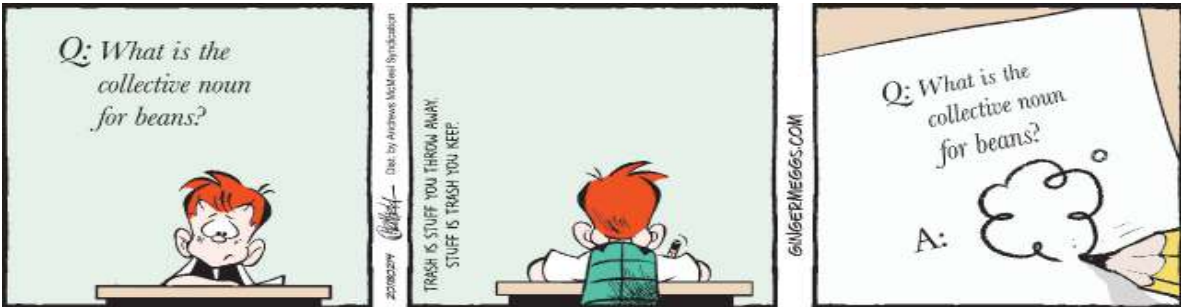
### GARFIELD




### NANCY




### GINGER MEGGS




### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD

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

### SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

### ACROSS

- The person next door
- Ships tie up here
- Someone in a play
- A drawer for money in a shop
- Precious stones
- A hard safety hat
- A stopper for a bath or sink
- A thick soft quilt used as a cover for a bed
- A sheep's babies
- A country in South America

### DOWN

- A letter sent from one computer to another
- Birthday present

4 These stop a vehicle

5 Unlace

6 Observed

8 Quits from a job

11 Boil water in this

13 A body organ

15 A pale yellow colour

16 Apartment

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

Q: What is the collective noun for beans?

A:



## ‘If *GOG* turns out to be a hit, I’ll write its sequel story in a month’

With *Gangs of Godavari* nearing its release, the anticipation around the film has only been going high. Now, ahead of the release, the director, Krishna Chaitanya, shares insights and the creative vision behind the project.

K. RAMYA SREE

Vishwak Sen, the dynamic actor known for his versatile performances, is set to embark on a thrilling journey with his upcoming project, *Gangs of Godavari*. Teaming up with actresses Anjali and Neha Sshetty, Vishwak is poised to deliver yet another powerful portrayal in this intense gangster drama, which is directed by Krishna Chaitanya and bankrolled by Sithara Entertainments.

With each film, Vishwak Sen has been redefining his craft, and *Gangs of Godavari* promises to be no exception. Set against the backdrop of the Godavari region, the film delves into the murky world of organised crime, showcasing Vishwak’s ability to inhabit complex characters with depth and nuance.

In anticipation of the film’s release on May 31, director Krishna Chaitanya engaged with us, offering insights into the making of *Gangs of Godavari* and the creative vision behind the project.

Speaking about why he chose to tell the story of violence that happens in the Godavari region, he shared, “Just like you see in Rayalaseema and Telangana, there are murders and conflicts in Andhra as well. Showing Godavari in a picturesque way every time felt very cliché for me. We are not that; there is more to Godavari than just its nature. I wanted to be real. Through this movie, I got the opportunity to show a good story paired with good emotions. From production to the whole cast and crew, everyone supported my story. The entire story is fictional.”

He added, “*Gangs of Godavari* unfold the saying, ‘You are your own enemy.’ I made this film within the limits of the liberty I had. Personally, this story is very close to mine. Everyone can take action, but emotions can be shown only if you feel them. In this film, the last 20 minutes will be an emotional rollercoaster. It will hit people hard, and I am very confident about it. This movie will be

very emotional.”

The director further reveals that he didn’t make any changes to the story of the film after Vishwak came on board. The only apprehension he had was the accent. He further goes on: “Vishwak speaks Telangana, and our story was set against an Andhra backdrop. So I told him to focus a little more on the dialect. We hired a tutor. He learned for 15 days, and within a month, Vishwak did a good job. On this occasion, I also want to clarify that this movie has so many gangs in it, but this is not a gangster story, and I request that people not consider it a gangster film. There are no gangsters in this movie.”

While there are rumours that this film will have a sequel, the director clarified that he wants to make a sequel for this movie; however, nothing has been finalised yet. “If this movie turns out to be a hit, then I will write the sequel story in a month and make the film. I write stories very quickly, good or bad. The only advantage with it was that there was no delay because of me in any way. I am not here to please people. I do what I like, but I will be accommodating,” he laughed.

About the special song in the film, the director and Vishwak shared a funny banter. When Vishwak asked Chaitanya how he was performing, the director had only one thing to say, and in his words, “I told Vishwak, ‘Vishwak, you dance however you want to; nobody is going to look at you anyway in this item song.’ I feel that in a special song, if the attention goes to the hero, then we failed. Ayesha Khan performed extremely well in the song, and I was very happy about it.”

On the other hand, for the director, the film *Powerbat* is one of his most awaited films, which he wrote in two parts already. Giving clarity on when that movie will take off, he shared, “When I wrote the story for *Powerbat*, the first part was 2,280 shots. I have divided it, and this is a story that I like very much, but because of the limitations, I cannot do *Powerbat*. I need a hit for producers to put their trust in me. It’s a big story, so it will be in two parts whenever it materialises.”

## PIC TALK

Megastar Chiranjeevi and actor Ajith met recently on the sets of *Vishwambhara*. Actor Ajith, who was in Hyderabad shooting for his upcoming film *Good Bad Ugly* for the next 20 days, took some time out to meet Megastar, who was shooting for *Vishwambhara* in the vicinity. As the duo recalled some eventful memories, Megastar took to his Instagram account, where he shared their picture and wrote: “Had a surprise Star guest on the sets of *#Vishwambhara* last evening. The very

affectionate Ajith Kumar who’s shooting next doors visited and we spent some great time chatting up and fondly recollecting the time of his debut film *Prema Pushtakam* whose music launch was done by me. And what’s more, his better half, Shalini acted as one of the endearing kids in my film *Jagadekaveerudu Athiloka Sundari*. Clearly there were memories galore to cherish. I was so delighted at the peaks of stardom Ajith has attained over the years and yet how he remained a beautiful soul at heart! (sic).”



## Second single from *Bharateeyudu 2* out now

Superstar Kamal Haasan’s *Bharateeyudu 2* has become one of the most anticipated films of 2024. Adding to the excitement, the second single from the film was released on Wednesday.

The song, *Chengaluvu* offers a melodious journey into romance, showcasing the undeniable chemistry between talented actors Siddharth and Rakul Preet Singh. Crafted with poetic lyrics by Rama Jogaiah Sastry, this enchanting track, sung by Abby V and Shruthika Samudhrala, beautifully captures the essence of love, contrasting the powerful and period-driven vibe of the previous single, *Souraa*. With the film’s audio rights secured by the renowned label Sony Music, fans can expect a grand launch event scheduled for June 1 at Nehru Stadium, Chennai,

offering a glimpse of the *Indian 2* cast and crew in person.

Scheduled for release on July 12, *Bharateeyudu 2* (*Indian 2*) promises a captivating cinematic experience, boasting an ensemble cast that includes Siddharth, SJ Suryah, Kajal Aggarwal, and a host of other talented actors. Directed by S Shankar, the sequel to the 1996 hit film *Indian* is produced by Lyca Productions and Red Giant Movies, featuring stunning cinematography by

Ravi Varman and Rathnavelu, complemented by the expert editing of A Sreekar Prasad. As anticipation builds, mark your calendars for the release of *Bharateeyudu 2* (*Indian 2*), a film set to mesmerise audiences with its gripping narrative, stellar performances, and visual splendour, promising an unforgettable cinematic journey.



## Sathyaraj denies acting in PM Modi’s biopic

Actor Sathyaraj refuted speculation that he might feature in a biography about Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a pre-release event on Wednesday, May 29.

The veteran actor mockingly implied that if his friend, the late filmmaker Manivannan, who supported the anti-caste icon Periyar, had directed the picture, he would have been in it. Sathyaraj also made a jest, saying that if modern Tamil anti-caste filmmakers like Vetrimaaran, Pa Ranjith, or Mari Selvaraj directed the Modi biopic, it would “come out well.”

He clarified, “Nobody has approached me [to play the role of Modi]. Even if they do ... I may have acted in it if it were directed by my friend, the late director Manivannan, who used to show characters ‘as they were.’” Sathyaraj joked that he was prepared to play the lead role in the biopic, even if Vijay Milton, the director of Mazhai Pidikatha Manithan, didn’t use any propaganda. Continuing in the same spirit, he declared that if Vetrimaaran, Pa Ranjith, or Mari Selvaraj were to direct Modi’s biography, he would be willing to play the role! The directors listed above are all against the right-wing. Meanwhile, if the reports are to be believed, he will be playing the chief antagonist in AR Murugadoss’ *Sikandar* with actor Salman Khan.

## Ananda Krishnan’s *Non Violence* set to hit screens soon

*Non Violence*, a refreshing cinematic venture backed by AK PICTURES Lekha, is all set to grace the silver screen under the directorial prowess of Ananda Krishnan, renowned for his work in the acclaimed film *Metro*. Featuring a stellar cast including Metro Shirish, Bobby Simha, and Yogi Babu in pivotal roles, this project is poised to enthrall audiences with its captivating storyline.

Set against the backdrop of Madurai in the 1990s, *Non Violence* delves into the events unfolding within the confines of Madurai prison during that era. Director Ananda Krishnan, known for his adept storytelling, has meticulously crafted a screenplay that promises an engaging cinematic experience. With the consecutive success-

es of *Metro* and *Kodiyil Oruvan* under his belt, expectations are high for Ananda Krishnan to achieve yet another triumph with this film.

Given the film’s historical setting, the production team has spared no effort to authentically recreate the ambience of the 1990s on screen. From meticulously curated props and wardrobes to carefully selected filming locations, every detail has been attended to, ensuring a truly immersive experience for viewers.

In addition to Metro Shirish, Bobby Simha, and Yogi Babu, the film features a talented ensemble cast including Aditi Balan, Garuda Ram, Aditya Kathir, and many others in pivotal roles.

As the shooting of the film nears its final stages, fans eagerly await the official announcement of the teaser and trailer release dates. *Non Violence* is scheduled for release in multiple languages, including Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, and Hindi, promising to reach a diverse audience across the country.



## ALLU ARJUN, RASHMIKA MANDANNA EXHIBIT ADORABLE CHEMISTRY IN *SOOSEKI*

The pan-Indian action spectacle *Pushpa 2* has been generating immense buzz with its captivating promotional content. Following the resounding success of the teaser, which garnered boundless adoration from fans, the film’s first song, *Pushpa Pushpa*, emerged as a mesmerising title track with widespread appeal. Now, the spotlight is on the second single, *Sooseki*, which promises to capture hearts with its enchanting melody. Titled differently in various languages—*Angaaron* in Hindi, *Soodaana* in Tamil, *Nodoka* in Kannada, *Kandaalo* in Malayalam, and *Aaguner* in Bengali—the track encapsulates the romantic essence shared between the protagonists, Pushpa Raj and Srivalli, portrayed by Allu Arjun and Rashmika Mandanna, respectively. While the first song showcased the hero’s robust persona, *Sooseki* unfolds a different charm. Chandrabose’s lyrical prowess, coupled with Shreya Ghoshal’s soulful rendition, elevates the on-screen chemistry to new heights. Ganesh Acharya’s choreography adds to the song’s allure, offering an addictive visual treat.

Interestingly, the lyrical video is crafted from behind-the-scenes footage of the song’s creation, hinting at a surprise in Allu Arjun’s appearance. Conceptually, the song delves into Srivalli’s perspective, highlighting her unwavering belief in Pushpa Raj’s inherent goodness despite potential misunderstandings. Director Sukumar’s meticulous attention to detail ensures that each element exceeds audience expectations. Produced by Mythri Movie Makers and Sukumar Writings on a grand scale, the film boasts stellar technical expertise, with cinematographer Miroslav Kuba Brozek poised to deliver his finest work yet. The production design by S Rama Krishna and N Monica further adds to the film’s visual splendour.

*Pushpa: The Rule* is slated for a worldwide release on August 15, 2024, promising an immersive cinematic experience in multiple languages. With its captivating storyline, stellar performances, and captivating music, the film is poised to captivate audiences across the globe.



## Folk singer Nernala Kishore’s *Dachanna Darilo Thyagala Paata* launched

On the occasion of 10 years of achieving Telangana state, Nernala Creations is coming up with *Dachanna Darilo Thyagala Paata*, which was launched grandly in Prasad Lab on Wednesday. This song was shot to commemorate the sacrifices of the martyrs who breathed life into the Telangana movement and laid down their lives for a separate state. It was conceptualised, written, sung, and directed by popular folk singer Nernala Kishore. This song was shot at the famous Kothagattu and Molangur hillocks of Karimnagar district, with more than 200 artists acting in it.

The motivations of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the Telangana state were shown heart-touchingly. A.D.M.S. Shivaji impressed in the special role of legendary poet and singer Gaddar.

He said that this song is being dedicated to the families of Telangana martyrs. Nernala Kishore asked everyone to cherish this song, which was released by the families of Telangana martyrs.

MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud, professors Haragopal, Kodandaram, senior journalist Pasham Yadagiri, High Court advocate Gopal Sharma, film directors N Shankar, Hero Sanjosh, Arunodaya Vimalakka, and Vimala Gaddar (Vennela) participated as guests in the song launch event. This song was choreographed by D.O.P. Shantiraj.



# FINAL CHANCE FOR KOHLI, ROHIT TO GIVE INDIA ICC TROPHY AFTER 13 YEARS

PTI ■ BENGALURU

It's tough to find two cricketers who are so different from each other yet so closely intertwined by the same thread of fate as Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma. Rohit's initiation into top-flight cricket came at the idyllic Belfast in 2007 and Kohli's a year later at the more conventional Dambulla. Another intriguing chapter of this journey together will potentially come to an end next month in the stunning Caribbean Isles. The next T20 World Cup is in 2026, to be jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka, but Rohit would be touching 40 then and Kohli would be 38. The 50-over version is a further one year away. It's hard to see them playing in any of those, considering the increasingly strike-rate oriented nature of the game. So, both Rohit and Kohli will want to leave the stage with the winner's medal around their neck next month. Should they achieve that, it would be their second each after the 2007 T20 World Cup (Rohit) and the 2011 50-over showpiece (Kohli). And it will be a perfect send off for two players who have had an immeasurable impact on India's white-ball fortunes in the last 17 years.

However, the Kohli-Rohit story is not one of bromance. It's based more on mutual respect and the awareness that they should not step into each other's space. Kohli has talked about the admiration he has had for Rohit since the very beginning of their careers. "I was filled with curiosity about a player. People kept on saying - 'This is one player who is rising rapidly'. I used to wonder that even though I am a young player, no one talks about me, then who is this player. "But when he (Rohit) stepped out to bat, I was all quiet. It was amazing to watch him play. In fact, I haven't seen a player time the ball better than him," Kohli had said in 'Breakfast With Champions'. Contrasting in nature, their batting has been high art for the masses to which they added a dash of modernity later. Of the two, Kohli is the more all-format batter, who has adapted more fluently with the changing face of the game. He has scored in every corner of the cricketing world in a show of consistency that was rarely witnessed after the halcyon days of Sachin Tendulkar. While Rohit built his own edifices in white-ball formats, the Mumbai-man remained a



reluctant visitor in Test cricket's elite corridors for the better part of his career. A move up to the opener's role helped Rohit unshackle himself a bit in Tests in the later part of his career. But for now, Kohli and Rohit will have to lean on their vast experience in T20 cricket to fuel India's run in the World Cup. Rohit will certainly open and if his approach in last year's World Cup and in the just-concluded IPL can be taken as a sign, the skipper will continue his selfless, aggressive approach. Herein, Rohit has an inherent advantage. His natural big-hitting abilities will help him pursue his batsmanship without many improvisations. That one-legged pull of his is a cosy meeting point between elegance and malevolence. But Kohli's game is slightly different. He can pull off those occasional big hits - a swat-flick six or a flat-bat smash over bowler's head. A quick rewind to his pick-up shot off Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf during the 2022 T20 World Cup will vouch for that. Still, there is a sore point. Kohli has often struggled to score off spin, especially against the left-arm variety. His career strike-rate against slow bowlers hovers around mid-120s in T20s.

Several times, it has impeded his progress in the middle innings but during this year's IPL, he seemed to have found a solution. He brought out the slog-sweep against spinners, and it had a healthy influence on his strike-rate as Kohli made 260 runs from 188 balls and struck 15 sixes against them. His strike-rate against spin touched 139, a marked improvement from his overall IPL strike-rate of 124. "It was me mentally putting myself in that situation. I did not practice that at all," he explained. "I know I can hit it because I have played that shot a lot in the past. So, I just felt like I needed to take a bit more risk," Kohli said of his new approach against spin. This might come in handy for him in the T20 World Cup where the pitches are expected to become progressively slow, increasingly bringing spinners into the game. Beyond the realm of cricket, the two veterans' final charge at an ICC trophy — personally and for the team — would be a captivating sight. For the fans, this World Cup would be about drinking it in as much as they can because once this duo leaves the stage, there will be an immense emptiness.

## Only Bumrah is executing yorkers consistently: Lee

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Legendary Australia speedster Brett Lee feels apart from Jasprit Bumrah, pacers are failing to nail yorkers effectively in the death overs and he wants them to master the pivotal delivery. Bumrah is one of the most complete bowlers in world cricket at the moment. He can bowl wicket-taking deliveries without leaking runs but the most lethal weapon in his armoury is his toe-crushing yorker, which he, more often than not, executes perfectly in the death overs. "On a general rule, other than Bumrah, we haven't seen enough fast bowlers nailing their yorkers recently. "I want to see fast bowlers bowl more yorkers. I still don't reckon they execute enough yorkers at the death," Lee said at the launch of the Legends Intercontinental T20 league recently. With the recently concluded IPL featuring scores in excess of 200 regularly, Lee believes the fast bowlers would be more economical had they nailed yorkers. "If you look back at 17 years of Indian Premier League, on average a yorker goes for a strike rate of less than 100. Which tells me that one run or less per bowler that's executed. "Now, when you bowl a yorker and you've got guys who can go down and scoop you over the head, well that puts pressure on you as a bowler. "You've got to set in the right field and put two men back, third man fine and back and then bowl," Lee added. As T20 cricket progresses, the game is tilting more and more towards the batters. With the 'Impact Player Rule' and flat decks, bowlers struggled in the IPL. Lee, like several other former players, called for a balance between bat and ball. "I'm all for batters smacking the ball all over, but there has got to be something for the bowlers too. I'm not asking for a green top, where teams bowled out for 110, because that's not good for cricket either. "You want a good total, I think. Anywhere around that 185 mark to 230 is a good score. We've seen scores now of 265, 270, 277. "It's really hard because most bowlers now are going for 45 to 50 off their four overs," he said. **WARNER HAS EARNED THE RIGHT TO GO ON HIS OWN TERMS:** Australia's charismatic young batter Jake Fraser-McGurk set the stage ablaze in his debut IPL season with many calling for his inclusion in Australia's T20 World Cup squad.



However, the selectors decided to go with veteran opener David Warner, who is set to retire after the tournament, Travis Head and Mitchell Marsh in the top-order. McGurk, who is a top order batter and Warner's Delhi Capitals teammate, though has been named as a travelling reserve. "David Warner has earned that right to go out on his own terms. And if things don't happen for whatever reason, then he's (McGurk) definitely there to take part," Lee said. Although Warner did not have a particularly great IPL as he missed several matches due to an injury, the Southpaw has scored 834 runs in T20 cricket since 2021 at a strike rate of around 150. He was woefully out of form ahead of the 2021 T20 World Cup but ended up being the player of the tournament, playing a vital role in Australia's maiden World Cup win in the shortest format. On the other hand, 22-year-old McGurk, who was called in as a replacement for Lungi Ngidi at Delhi Capitals, gave an excellent display of explosive batsmanship, smashing four half-centuries in nine games at an astronomical strike rate exceeding 234. "I think if you go over there as a reserve batsman, you definitely have a chance to get an opportunity. "That happened this year with the Delhi Capitals, he wasn't even picked in the squad. "Ricky Ponting rang him up late night and said come in and had a few injuries. So right time, right place. "But the advice to him, and he articulated it beautifully to say that he's only 22 years of age (aram se aram se) - He's got time. There's no point rushing it," Lee said.

## ABD laments racial quota chatter around SA T20 World Cup squad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As de Villiers is not surprised that just days before South Africa renews its quest for an elusive World Cup, the talk back home is all about racial quota in the team. It's a rinse-and-repeat sort of situation and de Villiers, who retired in 2018, is glad that he is a mere spectator to the situation now. "...It's a shame going into a tournament to have the focus on that. I mean it's nothing new, it's just a shame," lamented one of the greats of South African cricket. "Luckily this time around, I've had nothing to do with anything over there. I'm just a spectator," the 40-year-old said in an interaction with PTI facilitated by 'Jio Cinema'. The cause of outrage is the presence of just one black player in the squad for the T20 showpiece that will take place

in the Americas from June 1. Considered the perennial bridesmaids, who tend to choke in crunch situations, South Africa somehow are always in the pre-tournament favourites bracket without actually living up to the tag. And having a deeply divisive topic take centre-stage just days before they begin their campaign is a far-from-ideal build-up for a country that has a troubled past when it comes to race relations. The Proteas will start off against the Netherlands in New York on June 8. Over the course of a season, six players of colour are required to be in the South Africa playing eleven including two from the black African community as per the policy introduced in 2016. With Kagiso Rabada being the only black African in the T20 World Cup squad, the national team is set to miss its target.



Another black-African, Lungi Ngidi, is part of the travelling reserves. The other players of colour include Reeza Hendricks, Bjorn Fortuin, Keshav Maharaj, Tabraiz Shamsi and Ott Niel Baartman. "There are controversial moments back home as per usual with the South African squad just before a World Cup," de Villiers said. "I think it's a good team. It's a shame about Lungi... (he) lost a

bit of form, had a couple of injuries. Otherwise, he most probably would have been in the squad and there wouldn't have been any controversial stuff back home," he added. At the moment, Cricket South Africa doesn't have a committee of selectors and the team is picked by head coaches Shukri Conrad (Tests) and Rob Walter (white-ball cricket). "Sometimes these things happen and it puts you under a

bit of pressure as a selection panel and as a coach and a captain," de Villiers said. "From what I remember is with the quota system, it's an average team, an average number over the season and they don't really look at every series, but as journalists sometimes enjoy steaming up things a bit," he tried to put things in context. Following the selection of the squad earlier this month, former Sports Minister Fikile Mbalula and former CSA and ICC president Ray Mali questioned the composition of the side. "Only one African player selected in the Proteas Team for the upcoming T20 World Cup 2024 Team. Definitely a reversal (reversal) of the gains of transformation and doesn't reflect fair representation of all South Africans in the national cricket tea," Mbalula wrote on X.

PTI ■ PORT OF SPAIN

Short of players, a nine-man Australia Sneeded as many as four support staff members on the field, including chief selector and head coach, in their T20 World Cup warm-up against Namibia but that did not change the expected outcome of the game. Australia won the game by seven wickets with impressive performances from David Warner (54 not out off 21 balls), fit again Josh Hazlewood (2/5) and leg-spinner Adam Zampa (3/25). They chased down Namibia's 119 with 10 overs to spare. With the likes of Pat Cummins, Travis Head, Mitchell Starc, Cameron Green, Marcus Stoinis and Glenn Maxwell given extra time at home following the two-month long IPL, chief selector and former captain George Bailey and head coach Andrew McDonald were among

## Selector, head coach take field for nine men Australia in T20 World Cup warm up

the support staff who were forced to take the field. 46-year-old fielding coach Andre Borovec also took the field alongside Bailey when skipper Mitchell Marsh opted to bowl against Namibia. When Marsh and Hazlewood went back to the dressing room, McDonald and 49-year-old batting coach Brad Hodge had to step on the field. Hazlewood, playing hist first game in three months, looked in good rhythm. "Obviously, we didn't have a full quota of players but the guys who played, probably a few of us needed to coming off a big layoff," Hazlewood told



cricket.Com.Au after the game on Tuesday. "I know a number of the bowlers were coming off a long break which is pretty unusual in our system, but it's good to get out there, playing is always different to training. "The wicket looked a little bit tough early, a little bit slow, which is probably what we're going to encounter here in the West Indies. "So a nice hit out, got the result and we move onto the West Indies in a few days." Australia Test and ODI skipper Cummins, Head and Starc were part of the IPL final played in Chennai on Sunday.

## India getting used to cooler temperatures, playing white ball games in morning

PTI ■ NEW YORK

After two months of intense competitive cricket under night lights, the Indian cricket team, sans Virat Kohli, began its preparations for the T20 World Cup with a morning training session here, keeping in mind the 10.30am starts for all its preliminary games. Kohli took a break for personal work after RCB's IPL ouster and in all likelihood, he will join the squad by Friday. But it is not clear if he would be able to take part in the only warm-up game against Bangladesh on Saturday after a long flight. Having played 90 per cent of the matches under lights in the scorching Indian summer, the idea would be to adjust to pleasant mornings where temperatures will hover between 25 to 27 degree celsius with very less humidity. A white kookaburra in slightly windy mornings could be a challenge and to be prepared for that, the severely jet-lagged bodies need to get used to morning conditions.

And this is why the support staff, before initiating the skills training (net sessions) on the practice pitches at a ground on the outskirts of the city, have decided to help the players acclimatise with the conditions. With 14 players checking in, there was light jogging, routine shuttle runs, and a bit of foot volley to get into the groove. "They have been away two and half months from us and getting to know where they stand and what needs to be done before the World Cup is the goal. The (first) goal is to spend 45 minutes in the heat to get going," Strength and Conditioning coach Soham Desai told bcci.Tv. "We came in the day before yesterday and we just eased into our routines here, the players are just getting used to the time zone. Today we are having our first ground session," he added. As far as the players are concerned, there is an element of curiosity about playing cricket in New York. The Indian teams, over the years, have played primarily in Florida at the Fort Lauderdale ground during



their tours of the West Indies. "First time we are going to play cricket in New York, it's going be

fun," all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja said. "We have not yet played cricket,

came here for a team activity today. Hopefully, it will be good. The weather is really good, so we

are looking forward to it." Skipper Rohit Sharma's deputy Hardik Pandya seemed excited

with the "bright sunshine" and "good vibes" while Suryakumar Yadav wanted to know more about the diaspora's cricket interests. "I heard cricket is growing here in the US. So we are really excited and the first day here was amazing, so very excited for the few days coming up," Surya stated. India, the 2007 T20 World Cup champions, will start their campaign here on June 5 against Ireland, followed by the big game against arch-rivals Pakistan on June 9. They take on hosts USA on June 12 before the cricket caravan moves to familiar Lauderdale in Florida for the game against Canada on June 15. India are supposed to be clubbed A1 irrespective of where they finish in the group and will then proceed to the Caribbean islands for the Super 8 phase of the tournament where they would meet Australia, New Zealand and Sri Lanka. None of the Indian main squad players featured in the IPL finals held on May 26 in Chennai.