

Drying up reservoirs in Siddipet worry farmers

Siddipet: Uncertainty in pumping water into four reservoirs built as part of the Kaleshwarm Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS) in Siddipet district is worrying farmers in the erstwhile Medak district and also part of Yadadri-Bhongir district. Since water was let out of the Medigadda barrage, built across the Godavari to pump water into these reservoirs via Mid Manair, the possibility of pumping water from here appears bleak under the present circumstances. The irrigation authorities were planning to pump water from the Yellampally project if it received enough inflows from the upstream Godavari. However, there were no signs of receiving water from upstream as of now since the Babli project in Maharashtra, SRSP, and Yellampally in Telangana were still empty even after the southwest monsoon became active. The four reservoirs built in Siddipet were Ananthagiri Reservoir, Ranganayaka Sagar, Kondapochamma Sagar and Mallanna Sagar.

The Ananthagiri reservoir, built between Siddipet and Rajanna Sircilla districts to meet the irrigation needs of both districts, had 0.73 TMC of water against its full storage capacity of 3.5TMC. Parts of Siddipet town, Siddipet rural, Chinnakodur, Narayanraopet, Cheryala, Maddur and Nanganur mandals of Siddipet district, and Ilanthakunta, Mustabad and Tangallapally

mandals in Sircilla district would get irrigation water from Ananthagiri. The proposed ayacut under the project is 30,000 acres, but they could provide irrigation water to 15,000 acres as work on many canals is in progress. The water will be lifted from Ananthagiri to Ranganayaka Sagar, built at Chandlapur close to Siddipet town. The project is a source of irrigation water for parts of Siddipet, Siddipet rural, Narayanraopet, Chinnakodur, Nanganur, Dubbak, Kondapak, and Kukunurpally mandals. The project had 0.70 TMC of water against its full reservoir level of 3 TMC. The water available now would be sufficient to meet the drinking water needs. The proposed ayacut under the project is 1.10 lakh acres. However, the irrigation department could provide water for 65,000 acres, owing to the incompleteness of some canals.

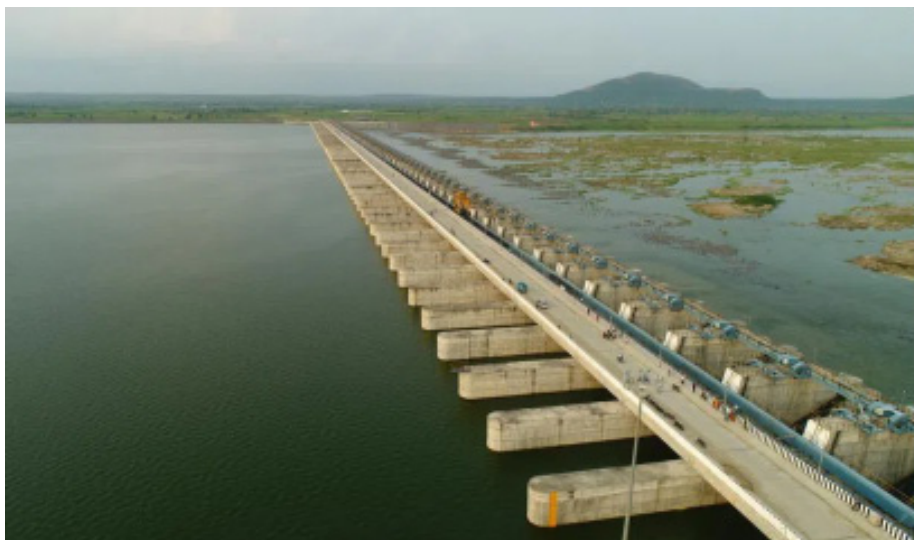
The full reservoir level of Kondapochamma Sagar, built in the Gajwel constituency, is 15 TMC, but it just had 4.5 TMC of water. The proposed ayacut under the project is 2.85 lakh acres in Mulugu, Jagadevpur and Markook mandals in Gajwel constituency and Turkapally, Aler and Rajapet mandals in Yadadri-Bhongir district, but they could provide irrigation water to only 60,000 acres until the last Yasangi as the works of the canals were still in progress. The biggest



reservoir under KLIS was built in Dubbak constituency with a storage capacity of 50 TMC. The project had just a little over 8 TMC of water now. The proposed ayacut under the project is 1.25 lakh acres. Apart from this, these reservoirs would impound 2,000 minor irrigation tanks across the erstwhile Medak district apart from providing water into streams such as Peddavagu, Kudavelly, Haldi and other streams which had dozens of check dams on them. With the delay in pumping of water, the farmers also delayed the taking up of paddy nurs-

eries. Farmers in Siddipet and Medak district will take up paddy cultivation in 7 lakh acres which may take a hit with the delay in pumping. Speaking to Telangana Today, a farmer from Chandlapur, Lingam, said farmers in Siddipet used to look up at the sky for rains until four years ago, after which former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao built the Ranganayaka Sagar. Since then, the face of agriculture had changed like never before. However, they were now forced to look up at the sky again due to the lack of water in the projects, he said.

Telangana govt looking to auction Medigadda barrage sand dunes



Hyderabad: After blaming the previous BRS government for constructing the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project, the

largest of its kind in the world, and also calling it a waste of money, the Congress government here appears to have an eye

on the sand dunes at the Medigadda barrage to make some money. The barrage, a crucial part of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project, which has been the focal point of a major political controversy in the State, is likely to become a crucial source of revenue for the Congress government, with plans being chalked out to generate over Rs.800 crore from the sand that could be extracted from the Medigadda barrage. Since water was released downstream from the barrage after three of the pillars sunk, huge sand dunes got accumulated in the upper part of the project. The State government is now reportedly planning to auction these sand dunes. It is learnt that the Telangana Mineral Development Corporation Limited (TGMDC) has been asked to auction 14 sand blocks located in the Medigadda barrage. An official of the corporation confirmed that talks about auctioning the sand dunes accumulated at the Medigadda barrage were going on at the higher level and that once a

green signal was given by the government, the corporation would invite tenders to auction the sand blocks in July. The TGMDC is learnt to have said that if there were no obstacles in extraction of the sand, the State government could generate huge revenue through auction of the sand. Meanwhile, it is learnt that district level sand committees have started looking for sand blocks in Annaram and Sundilla barrages as well.

Though the State government made a lot of hue and cry over the expenditure on the repair of the Medigadda barrage, it now appears to have no qualms in using the sand accumulated at the barrage for generating revenue. The Medigadda barrage had developed cracks last October and citing the repair works, the government had released the entire water from the barrage. Following this, the sand dunes accumulated around the barrage and now this has become a boon for the State government.

Why the European Commission imposed provisional anti-dumping duties on Indian optical fiber cable makers | Explained

The story so far: In a provisional ruling on June 14, the European Commission's Directorate General for Trade imposed anti-dumping duty on Indian optical fibre cable manufacturers. The actions were taken following an investigation which commenced in November 2023. A month before, the industry-representative body Europacable had complained about dumping from India causing injury to the European industry.

What led to the provisional actions?

Optical fibre cables are a pivotal commodity for facilitating telecommunications and broadband coverage. Representing the industry union of optical fibre cable (manufacturers), Europacable in October 2023 observed that imports of single-mode optical fibre (SMOF) cables from India had increased both in absolute terms and market share. These lower-priced imports, the complainant said, had a negative impact on the quantities sold, the level of prices charged and on the market-share held by European manufacturers. Europacable said that the situation resulted in "substantial adverse effects on the overall performance and the financial situation" of the industry. The allegations were based on a comparison of the domestic prices with the export prices (ex-factory pricing) of the products when sold for export to the Union. The complainant said that the dumping margins calculated on this basis are "significant for the country concerned (India)." Thereafter, in November the same year, the Commission found "sufficient evidence to justify the initiation of a proceeding." The investigation scrutinised the allegations about dumping and injury between October 1, 2022, to September 30 the next year.

What is the anti-dumping duty levied?

Anti-dumping duties have been provisionally levied in the range of 8.7% to 11.4% on Indian cable manufacturers. Birla Cable, Universal Cable and Vindhya Telelinks will face an anti-dumping duty of 8.7%. Polycab India, ZTT India, Aberdare Technologies, Apar Industries, UM Cables and Aksh Optifibre would be encountering an anti-dumping duty of 9.9%. Sterlite Technologies and Sterlite Tech Cables Solutions face a duty of 11.4%. However, these are provisional measures, and companies have access to legal recourse. HFCL emerged as the only Indian manufacturer to have been exempted from the provisional anti-dumping duty, a fact further corroborated by its communications with stock exchanges. "HFCL's products have been preferred by European telecom operators, as they meet the quality, reliability and safety standards, are commercially viable, and guarantee a sustainable supply for the construction of Europe's telecom infrastructure," its statement read. It also mentioned having "long-term engagements" with some of the region's leading telecom operators and ISPs.

Is this a first?

No. The European Commission had earlier imposed an anti-dumping duty on Chinese manufacturers, back in November 2021. Europacable was the complainant here as well. The action followed an



investigation that observed Chinese producers were benefitting from multiple government subsidies including funds to spur innovation along with research and development. They were also granted preferential tax rates as a high-tech industry. The investigation also concluded that Chinese manufacturers benefit from the state-funded China Development Bank Fund, whose purpose is to support projects in key strategic sectors set out by the Chinese government. The Chinese manufacturers were deemed to be guilty of "unfair competition" that was "injurious to the EU industry." Duties were imposed on these concerns in the range of 5.1% to 10.3%. However, this did not mark the end of the tale. The Commission further tightened the anti-dumping duty after it found Chinese companies deliberately decreasing the prices of their exports to 'absorb' the impact of their earlier actions. They were now slapped with new anti-dumping duties ranging from 39.4% to 88%, which the Commission deemed to be the maximum increase allowed.

What can we say about the trade and business dynamics?

As per data from the World Bank's World Trade Integrated Solution, China was the biggest import partner (to the EU) for optical fibre cables in 2023. This was followed by India, U.S., Morocco and U.K. Globally, the top exporters of the commodity were China, U.S., EU, Mexico and Hong Kong — in that order. Considering India's placement in this ecosystem, the anti-dumping duties could potentially translate to cost implications for European consumers. Back in 2021 when the Commission acted against China, it said that with the demand for cables expected to increase, the measures would ensure distributors have a larger competing market. "This is an opportunity for them to keep and develop their business even if their prices

increase due to the anti-dumping duties," it noted. These dynamics, however, could not be realised because China undercut prices further. Back then, concerns also emanated about importers being able to switch suppliers in a relatively short time—it would be "costly" and "time consuming." The Commission, however, derived confidence from the array of importing countries and earlier resilience to find new suppliers during the 2017-18 shortage. Also crucial to note in the 'dumping' context and the investigation period: as captured in the Ministry of Commerce's Import-Export data bank, India's exports (in terms of value) of optical fiber cables declined 11.21% to \$47.8 million in FY 2023-24. In fact, in May last year, India's Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) had also initiated an anti-dumping investigation scrutinising China, Indonesia and South Korea. The investigation observed that because of an increase in the volume of low-priced dumped goods, the domestic industry has not been able to sell the article in significant quantities in the domestic market. This has translated into an inventory pile-up. Separately, the investigation also ob-

served that the dumped imports' impact on the selling price of the domestic industry has led to a "significant loss, decline in cash profit and a significant reduction in the return on capital employed." While it was found that there was an increase in the production as well as capacity (for domestic industry), the fruits could not be utilised fully because of the dumping. It was noted that the complainant was able to maintain their sales and market share by selling articles at a loss. The considerable growth in demand was subsumed by dumped imports — further translating also to a decline in the domestic industry's market share. For perspective— Minister of State for Communication Devusinh Chauhan in a response to a question in the Lok Sabha (August 2023), informed that the existing capacity of the domestic industry was 100 million fiber km, relying on data from industry associations. He added that the market size was approximately Rs 7,000 crore (in 2019) with a CAGR of 6.8%. Mr Chauhan also told the Lower House that domestic investments in the optical fibre industry was approximately Rs 5,000 crores while foreign investments scaled about Rs 600 crore in the last 10 years.

PG aspirants frustrated over NEET postponement

Hyderabad: The Post Graduate (PG) medical seat aspirants in Hyderabad and other districts of Telangana were left in shock and frustration following the cancellation of NEET-PG, which was scheduled to be held on Sunday. According to estimates, over 10,000 PG NEET aspirants from several districts of Telangana and neighboring States like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, had travelled to Hyderabad and

made arrangements to stay in hotels located near the NEET PG examination centres. With the Centre postponing the exams just 10 to 12 hours before the D-day, the majority were upset, angry and frustrated. Following the paper leak allegations in NEET UG, many PG aspirants said that they have lost trust in the National Testing Agency (NTA), which holds the examinations.

DANGEROUS CONSPIRACY TO DISTURB PEACE AND COMMUNAL HARMONY: SAD WORKING COMMITTEE



Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), June 26 – The Shiromani Akali Dal Wednesday cautioned the people of Punjab against “a deep rooted conspiracy to set the State aflame again by disturbing the hard earned atmosphere of peace and communal harmony and to BLAME IT ON Sikhs to defame Punjabis in general and the Sikhs in particular. “A dangerous and devious conspiracy is already at work for communal polarization in Punjab for petty political gains. The old game is being played again to inject communal hatred and violence in the State and to put the blame for it on Sikhs so as to vilify our youth as was done in the eighties,” said a resolution passed at a meeting of the Working Committee of the party.

The Working Committee further emphasized that peace and communal harmony were prerequisites for progress and prosperity of the people of Punjab. The party however reiterated its total commitment to the cause of peace and communal brotherhood as taught by the great Guru Sahiban. “We have made sacrifices for this sacred cause and we will not flinch from our responsibility in this regard,” said the Working Committee.

In a separate and unanimous Resolution, the Working Committee placed its full faith in and appreciation in the “determined and committed leadership of the party president Sardar Sukhbir Singh Badal”. It also authorized the president to reconstitute and restructure the party as per the party’s constitution. The Committee

members also condemned attempts to tarnish the image of the President. It is pertinent to mention that a section of senior Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leaders on Tuesday revolted against Sukhbir Singh Badal, and passed a resolution demanding that he should step down as party chief following the Akali Dal’s debacle in the Lok Sabha elections.

Although there was a strong demand from members of the working committee for “disciplinary action against some leaders who have been playing into the hands of the enemies of Panth and Punjab”, the party president Mr Sukhbir Singh Badal counselled “patience, forbearance and a large-hearted approach based on humility taught to us by the great Guru Sahiban towards all.” After this, the Working Committee passed a resolution which said, “We are a fully democratic party with historic traditions for internal discussion. There is room for everyone’s views, even critical, on the party platform. So, there is no justification for violating decorum and discipline to harm the party.” The party appealed to “erring members” not to play the enemies’ game at a time when the Khalsa Panth, Punjab and the party are already a target of anti-Sikh and anti-Punjab conspiracies which the members have themselves publicly spoken about in the past,” said the WC members said. In another resolution, the party said it would further intensify its efforts towards achieving the goal of a truly federal structure in the country with genuine fiscal and administrative autonomy to

the states. “India is a country, with diverse cultures, languages, religions and regions. Strong states mean a strong nation. The essence of India is diversity but it recognizes unity while preserving this rich diversity.” The meeting also condemned inci-

dents of attacks on Sikhs in the country and blamed it on “provocative communal utterances of important leaders in the ruling party, such as Kangana Ranaut. “All these incidents can be a part of an ongoing conspiracy for communal polarization”.

TIGLA appeals to govt to initiate pending transfers

Hyderabad: The Telangana Intermediate Government Lecturers Association (TIGLA) on Wednesday appealed to the Congress government to initiate government junior lecturers’ transfers, pending since 2018. TIGLA general secretary M Ramakrishna Goud said government junior lecturers were facing several issues as transfers were not taken up since 2018. He also wanted the government to initiate the process for regularizing 411 contract vocational lecturers besides continuing 1,654 guest lecturers services as the academic year has already commenced.

The association appealed to sanction posts and provide adequate facilities, and infrastructure in 12 new government junior colleges sanctioned in the last year. Stating that district intermediate educational officer posts were necessary to monitor intermediate education in the State, Goud said, “for 33 districts, only seven DIEOs are sanc-



tioned. The government should sanction 26 DIEOs and fill them up along with DIEO, Karimnagar.”

The association wanted mid-day meals for government junior college students and sought colleges of excellence for providing offline coaching to students for JEE, NEET and EAPCET. An amount of Rs.20 lakh per college has also been sought from the government for meeting their daily expenses besides for buying lab material in colleges.

Coimbatore Filter Coffee Expands into Premium Café Segment, Launches First Outlet in Hyderabad

Coimbatore Filter Coffee (CFC), a fast-growing startup in the South Indian coffee market, today announced the launch of its first premium café in Hyderabad. The new café, located at Vasavi MPM Grand, Beside Ameerpet metro, marks a significant milestone in the company's expansion plans. Inaugurated by renowned actress Anya Nagalla, known for her roles in films like Vakheelsaab and Malleshham, the Coimbatore Premium Café is designed to offer a premium experience to coffee enthusiasts. The café features a sleek and modern ambiance, catering to the evolving preferences of discerning customers. "We are thrilled to expand our Coimbatore café model with the launch of our first premium outlet in Hyderabad," said Goli Gopi, Founder and CEO of Coimbatore Filter Coffee. "Our goal is to provide our franchise partners with a low-investment opportunity to capitalize on the growing demand for premium coffee experiences. With this new café, we aim to deliver the authentic taste of Coimbatore filter coffee to coffee lovers across the region."

The Coimbatore Premium Café offers an extensive menu, including premium filter coffee, tea, snacks, and milkshakes, all crafted with the same dedication to quality that has made Coimbatore Filter Coffee a beloved brand in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The company now boasts 120 "Lite Model" outlets across these two states. "I love filter coffee, and I'm excited to be a part of the launch of this new premium café," said Anya Nagalla, the chief guest at the event. "I'm confident that coffee lovers in Hyderabad will appreciate the authentic and delicious flavors that



Coimbatore Filter Coffee has to continue its expansion across South Indian states, bringing the unique taste of Coimbatore filter coffee to more coffee enthusiasts nationwide.

HDFC Bank Empowers MSMEs with Special Knowledge Sessions



We understand your world

Ahead of World MSME Day today, HDFC Bank, India's leading private sector bank, started an exclusive campaign for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), to provide an impetus to businesses in deeper geographies. The campaign aims to spread awareness on various banking products and services, government policies for MSMEs and encourage them to adopt digitisation in their business dealings.

As part of the campaign, the Bank will be providing a host of offers on working capital loans, business loans, business cards, trade services and Dukandar Overdraft. The Bank will also run virtual and on-the-ground knowledge sessions in partnership with HDFC SKY, HDFC ERGO, Niva Bupa General Insurance, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, and Aditya Birla General Insurance, among others. The ses-

sions, which are themed around digital transformation of businesses, will happen in the following 15 cities: Indore, Surat, Roorkee, Nashik, Ludhiana, Raipur, Dehradun, Coimbatore, Varanasi, Vizag, Patna, Nagpur, Kanpur, Hubballi, and Guwahati where over 1,000 small and medium businesses will be invited. On the occasion, the Bank has released a special film thanking MSMEs for trusting HDFC Bank as their banking partner.

Mr. Rahul Shyam Shukla, Group Head - Commercial and Rural Banking (CRB), HDFC Bank said, "MSME entrepreneurs, through their perseverance and enterprise, play a strong role in shaping India's economic growth trajectory. HDFC Bank recognises their contribution to GDP, exports and most importantly, employment creation. A large number of micro enterprises do not apply for credit despite being eligible for loans due to lack of access to information. We continue to address MSMEs' financial needs by providing services in over 700 districts, extending education on a variety of government schemes, and by going beyond the usual assessment criteria like firm size, value added, access to trade credit, among others, to specifically address their needs."

As of 31st March, 2024, the Bank's distribution network stands at 8,738 branches and 20,938 ATMs across 4,065 cities/towns. A total of 52% of the branches are in semi-urban and rural areas, along with 15,182 business correspondents, which are primarily manned by Common Service Centres.

M. Sree Abhinav, IPS Clinches Gold in 25M Centre Fire Pistol (NR) Championship



The second phase of X Telangana State Shooting Championship, organized by the Telangana Rifle Association (TRA) under the guidance of Shri. Amit Sanghi, President of TRA, Hyderabad, has concluded successfully. The second phase featured events such as 25M Pistol, 25M Centre Fire Pistol, 25M Standard Pistol, 50M Pistol, Skeet, and Double Trap, showcasing exceptional talent and a spirit of sportsmanship among over 300 participants from diverse backgrounds. The event was graced by the presence of the Chief Guest, Mr. M. Sree Abhinav, IPS, Assistant Director at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA), Hyderabad, who not only is a distinguished officer but also an athlete and a passionate supporter of shooting sports, Mr. Abhinav also participated in the competition and got Gold medal in 25M Centre Fire Pistol (NR) Championship. Additionally, the event was further honored by the presence of Mr. Salalith Tottempudi, Governing Committee Member of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI), President of the Rifle Association of Andhra Pradesh (RAAP), and a prominent figure in Industry. The awards ceremony, held at SATS Shooting Range, Gachibowli, celebrated the achievements of the participants across various categories, including 25M Pistol, 25M Centre Fire Pistol, 25M Standard Pistol, 50M Pistol, Skeet, and Double Trap events. The winners were commended for their dedication, determination, and outstanding performances throughout the competitions.*Results:*

(S105) Clay Pigeon Skeet Shooting (NR) Championship Super Masters' Men (Individual)

1. E. Anil Kumar Reddy - GOLD - 29/

50

2. Dr. Tripuraneni Prabhakar Chowdary -SILVER -15/50

(S-27) Clay Pigeon Skeet Shooting (NR) Championship Masters' Men (Individual)

1. Faisal Yousufuddin - GOLD - 42/50

(S-04) Clay Pigeon Skeet Shooting (NR) Championship Junior Women (Individual)

1. Kunduru Eshanvi Reddy - GOLD - 37/50

2. Zahra Mufaddal Deesawala -SILVER - 37/50

(S-06) Clay Pigeon Skeet Shooting (NR) Championship Junior Men (Individual)

1. Yuvek Battula - GOLD - 47/50

2. Shrey Reddy Earla -SILVER - 43/50

3. Hassan Bin Yesrab -BRONZE - 41/50

(S-05) Clay Pigeon Skeet Shooting (NR) Championship Women (Individual)

1. Rashmmi Rathore - GOLD -44 /50

2. Sonali Raju Nalaparaju -SILVER - 39/50

(S-08) Clay Pigeon Skeet Shooting (NR) Championship Men (Individual)

1. Yuvek Battula - GOLD - 47/50

2. Ashar Hasan Lateef -SILVER - 46/50

3. Ayush Rudraraju -BRONZE - 41/50

(S-16) Clay Pigeon Double Trap Shooting (NR) Championship Men (Individual)

vidual)*

1. Fazal Ahmed Shoeb Mohemmed - GOLD - 42/50

2. Kayomarz Ichhaporia -SILVER - 25/50

3. Syed Sarwar Ahmed Qadri Nadeem -BRONZE - 23/50

(S-32) 25M Centre Fire Pistol (NR) Championship Senior Master Men Individual

1. Niranjana Reddy Kondakrandi - GOLD - 235/300

2. Shafath Ali Khan -SILVER -231/300

(S-81) 25M Centre Fire Pistol (NR) Championship Masters' Men Individual

1. Mohd. Nizamuddin - GOLD - 277/300

2. B.Shankar -SILVER -264/300

3. Gopala Krishna Kalagara - BRONZE - 260/300

(S-30) 25M Centre Fire Pistol (NR) Championship Men Individual

1. M. Sree Abhinav - GOLD -280 /300

2. Neeraj Saranala -SILVER -275/300

3. Veekshith Veer Reddy Anneda - BRONZE - 272/300

(S-43) 25M Standard Pistol (NR) Championship Senior Masters' Men Individual

1. Shafath Ali Khan - GOLD -230 /300

(S-83) 25M Standard Pistol (NR) Championship Masters' Men Individual

1. Mohd. Nizamuddin - GOLD -256/300

2. B. Shankar -SILVER -252/300

3. Nagendrudu Vanamala Pedda -BRONZE - 250/300

(S-39) 25M Standard Pistol (NR) Championship Men Individual

1. Banoth Dinesh - GOLD -256/300

2. Amaan Ali Khan -SILVER -253/300

3. Mahender Pal -BRONZE - 253/300

(S-97) 25M Standard Pistol (NR) Championship Junior Women Individual

1. Leisha Kiran - GOLD -248/300

2. Arcita Karar -SILVER -246/300

(S-35) 25M Pistol (NR) Championship Junior Men Individual

1. Veekshith Veer Reddy Anneda - GOLD -292/300

2. Kaushik Gopu -SILVER -280/300

3. Mohammed Abdul Rehman Khan -BRONZE - 279/300

(S-64) 25M Pistol (NR) Championship Women Individual

1. Arcita Karar - GOLD -267/300

2. Bonagani Sravanthi -SILVER -266/300

3. Bhandaru Samridhi -BRONZE - 265/300

(S-34) 25M Pistol (NR) Championship Junior Women Individual

1. Hasini Manne - GOLD -267/300

2. Arcita Karar -SILVER -267/300

3. Bhandaru Samridhi -BRONZE - 265/300

(S-41) 25M Standard Pistol (NR) Championship Junior Men (Individual)

1. Neeraj Saranala - GOLD - 263/300

2. Syed Ahmer Uddin Ahmed -SILVER - 261/300

3. Amaan Ali Khan -BRONZE - 253/300

Where does India stand with respect to the G-7? | Explained

The story so far: Leaders of the Group of Seven, the U.S., Canada, Germany, France, Japan, the U.K. and Italy, met in Italy's Apulia region from June 13-15, along with the European Union leadership, for a summit to discuss a host of issues. India has been invited to the outreach 11 times, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi attending it for the fifth time.

What was the G-7 summit hoping to achieve?

Bridging differences between the "West and the Rest", finding new ways to fund support for the Ukraine war, investing in Africa and grappling with migration, climate change and artificial intelligence challenges, were all on the agenda for G-7 leaders. They agreed to make \$50 billion more available for Ukraine, carving it out from frozen sovereign wealth funds of Russia, held a special "Energy for Growth in Africa" summit to spur investments in clean energy, attacked China for coercive trade practices, and met with leaders of 10 countries, including India, and multilateral organisations, as part of the "G-7 Outreach", to discuss the concerns of the Global South. Apart from substantive issues, the G-7 grouping has also been trying to battle its own image, as a tired set of countries representing the old world of the 'western elite'. It was also widely commented upon that apart from Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, whose party did well in this month's European Parliament elections, all other G-7 leaders are battling tough election campaigns with sagging approval ratings.

How important is India to the G-7 process?

India has been an important part of the G-7 process for several years now, coming to the grouping's attention in the 2000s for its steady growth figures during the global financial collapse. India is not only a key member of the Global South, and has hosted the "Voice of Global South" conference since 2023, it is also a member of the G-20 troika, along with Brazil and South Africa. Besides, Prime Minister Modi is a central figure at such outreaches, though India is not a member of the G-7. Other countries whose leaders attended the outreach were Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Jordan, Kenya, Mauritania, Tunisia, Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates, along with heads of the African Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations and the World Bank.

Is it an important platform for India?

For India, the outreach session of the G-7 meeting, that follows a day after the main G-7 deliberations, has always been an important platform to showcase its achievements and outlook to the world. The importance of the event and India's participation can be gauged from the fact that Ms. Meloni called Mr. Modi during the election campaign to ensure his participation, and he travelled to Italy just four days after his swearing-in and even before he had proven his majority in Parliament. During



the outreach session, Mr. Modi spoke about the importance of the Indian elections, which he called the "victory of the democratic world", and the importance of harnessing technology and artificial intelligence to bridge global inequality, as well as a roadmap to fight climate change. He said it was important to pay heed to the Global South's concerns, as it bears "the brunt of global uncertainties and tension", a reference to how the developing world looks at unilateral sanctions as well as food, fertilizer and energy security. Mr. Modi spent most of his time in bilateral meetings and held talks with U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Japan Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Ms. Meloni. He also met with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who was a special invitee, and after the photo-op with all the leaders, he spent a few minutes with U.S. President Biden. He released a less cordial photo of his exchange with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, reflecting the poor state of bilateral ties, but the G-7 outreach gave him the opportunity to meet global leaders and set priorities for his new term in office.

What is the future of G-7?

The G-7 is increasingly under attack for being an elitist, non-inclusive group, that doesn't include three of the world's top 10 economies, China, India and Brazil, or representation from the rest of the world, like the G-20 does, for example. In addition, the G-7, which has not increased its membership (in fact, it decreased it, by dropping Russia in 2014), is increasingly being challenged by a grouping like BRICS, that has now doubled its size from the original Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa grouping to include other countries and energy majors like the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iran, as well as Egypt and Ethiopia. That

the G-7 has been unable to change the course of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, or stop Israel's devastating bombardment of Gaza, or deterred China from its inroads into global connectivity and infrastructure and economic influence, is raising more questions about its relevance. Watch: G-7 Summit 2024 | Highlights of PM Modi's meetings with world leaders It remains to

be seen how the G-7, which may have a different composition of leaders, given impending elections in the U.K. and the U.S., stands up to the challenge to re-invent itself as an effective grouping. It will next convene for the annual summit in Canada's Alberta region in 2025; the question is whether India will continue to accept a spot on its margins.

Chhattisgarh police seizes fake currency printed by Maoists



Kothagudem: In a first of its kind development, Chhattisgarh police seized samples of counterfeit currency, printers and printing ink in large quantities and other material from a Maoist hideout in the forests of Korajguda in Sukma district.

Sukma Superintendent of Police, Kiran G Chavan told the media on Sunday that based on a tip off about counterfeit currency being printed by Maoist Kanta area committee, a joint team of district police, DRG Bastar Fighters and CRPF 50

Bn carried out search operations in Mylasore, Korajguda, Danteshpuram and nearby areas Saturday evening.

On spotting the security forces, naxals escaped under the cover of the forests near Korajguda. Upon searching the area one colour printer, one black and white printer and one power inverter, 200 bottles of ink and bundles of fake currency of 50, 100, 200 and 500 denominations, four printer cartridges, nine printer rollers and a gun were found, the SP said.

Are heatwaves natural disasters? | Explained

The story so far: North India has been bearing the brunt of the longest stretch of a heatwave in the last 15 years. Figures from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare suggest that at least a 100 have died from heat-related illnesses from March 1 to June 18 across India though this is likely to be significantly under-reported. The high number of deaths have revived discussions on labelling heatwaves as a natural disaster.

Are heatwaves a natural disaster?

The National Disaster Management Act (NDMA) is the key piece of legislation governing the roles of the Centre and States in responding to a natural disaster. The Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal body that governs the execution of this Act. Several disaster management authorities draw their powers from this legislation and they define which natural calamities qualify for state-backed compensation. The legislation is also the genesis of special funds — at the State-level and the Centre — that can be drawn upon for a disaster. As of now, 12 disasters are notified in the Guidelines on Constitution and Administration of the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), namely cyclone, drought, earthquake, fire, flood, tsunami, hailstorm, landslide, avalanche, cloudburst, pest attack, frost and cold waves. Heatwaves are yet to be included and this has to do with a government body that is unconnected to the institutions under the NDMA.

Which is this body?

The 15th Finance Commission, the constitutional body that decides upon the

revenue sharing between the Centre and States, had in its report “observed” that the list of notified disasters eligible for funding from SDRF and NDRF covers the needs of the State to a large extent and thus did not find merit in the request to expand its scope. States have appealed to the Finance Commission to expand the scope of natural calamities that can be considered a disaster as this makes them eligible for more funds. However, in terms of the aforesaid guidelines, a State Government can use up to 10% of the annual fund allocation of the SDRF, with certain caveats, for providing immediate relief to the victims of natural disasters, other than the aforesaid 12 disasters, that they consider to be ‘disasters’ within a local context in the State. Thus, compensation awarded to those confirmed by State authorities as having succumbed to heatwaves comes from these tranche. The 16th Finance Commission headed by economist Arvind Panagariya may review fresh requests by States.

Are heatwave deaths rising in India?

Heatwave deaths in India decreased from 1,127 in 2017 to 374 in 2021, according to data from the National Crime Records Bureau, though these are classified as ‘accidental deaths’. In 2022, 33 deaths were reported, in 2023, none, and this year at least a 100 have been confirmed. While these are fewer than the 1,100 deaths in Andhra Pradesh in 2016, longer spells of heatwaves are becoming more frequent. State health departments are tasked with furnishing information to the Centre on heatwave-related illnesses and deaths. A challenge with classifying deaths due to heatwaves is that in several



cases people succumb under the combined impact of high temperatures and existing co-morbidities such as cardiovascular disease or hyper tension. Secondly, there are varying definitions of a heatwave. While temperatures above 45 degrees Celsius are considered to have heatwave-like conditions, it can also mean temperatures that are 4.5 degrees or more above what's normal for any place. Several places in the Himalayan States with temperatures in the mid-30s have reported heatwaves, because it is several degrees above normal.

There have been no official reports of heat-related deaths in these places. In most years, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Gujarat, Rajasthan are the States that report most casualties from

heat. There are medical guidelines to help doctors declare, or rule out, suspected cases of heatwave illness but these are often applied unevenly.

What measures do States have in place?

With the frequency of heatwaves rising, State, district, and cities have prepared heat action plans (HAPs). The NDMA and the India Meteorological Department are working with 23 States to develop HAPs. HAPs provide a snapshot of a region's heat profile, including information on the number of past heatwave events, yearly trends in the summer maximum temperature, and surface temperature, and so on, followed by a vulnerability assessment which maps out regions that require immediate attention and a response plan.

100-year-old sacred fig tree saved from becoming history in Hyderabad

Sangareddy-based environmental activist Paladugu Gnaneshwar have saved a 100-year-old sacred fig tree from being cut down.

Sangareddy: Citizens with the support of Sangareddy-based environmental activist Paladugu Gnaneshwar have saved a 100-year-old sacred fig tree from being cut down and removed from the premises of the Lord Shiva Temple near the Rythu Bazaar in Vanasthalipuram in Hyderabad. After coming to know about the attempt of the temple committee to do away with the tree, Gnaneshwar drove from Siddipet to Vanasthalipuram and staged a protest for six hours demanding the temple management to stop felling the tree, the branches of which were already chopped down in the name of pruning. Gnaneshwar spoke to Forest Range Officer (FRO) Indrasena Reddy and informed him about the incident. The FRO said the department had not accorded any permission to cut the tree. However, Reddy did not visit the place to stop cutting the tree or take any action against the culprits, Gnaneshwar said.

Several citizens, particularly children and the elderly, joined Gnaneshwar and staged a protest at the tree holding placards and raising slogans which attracted the attention of more people, who then joined the protest. Finally, temple committee chairman Matam Santha Kumar and other committee members talked to them and assured the protestors that they would not cut the tree. The issue started when the branches of the massive tree, where devotees used to sit after offering prayers, were pruned a week ago. Local citizens Asha Jyothi, Venu Madhav and others raised their voices against the attempt. However, the authorities decided to go ahead to cut the tree, which was when the citizens called Gnaneshwar. Gnaneshwar (26), a resident of Mukthapur in Nagulgidda mandal of Sangareddy district, is currently staying in Siddipet to prepare for competitive examinations.



What can the Railways do to stop accidents? | Explained

The story so far: On June 17, a train accident killed 10 people and injured over 40 near New Jalpaiguri in West Bengal, about 600 km from Kolkata. The mishap was caused when a goods train hit the 13174 Down Agartala Sealdah Kanchanjunga Express in the rear at 8.55 a.m. The two trains were manually cleared to run in the same block section, a mere 15 minutes apart, since automatic signalling was malfunctioning between the Ranipatra and Chatter Hat stations which fall under the Northeast Frontier Railway.

What was the initial response of the Railway Board?

The Railway Board initially said the prima facie cause of the accident was that the loco pilot of the GFCJ container train (goods train), who died in the accident, disregarded the Railways' General and Subsidiary Rules (G&SR) and proceeded at normal speed which led to the collision with the Kanchanjunga Express. The Railways has ordered a statutory inquiry.

Who is at fault?

The Railway Board initially blamed the loco pilot of the goods train; this was later rescinded, but the damage had already been done. It is impossible to operate a train across a block section on the instruction of one person; there's a chain of command and a list of procedures that need to be followed. For instance, the station masters of stations between which a train is running, the section controller (who is stationed at the divisional headquarters and monitors all rake movements), the signal staff and the gatemen between the stations have to be informed in a particular manner, and a line clearance obtained before a train leaves a station. If there is a discrepancy — like an automatic signal failure, for example — it has to be immediately escalated. In this case, the Katihar division (where the accident occurred) Railway Manager Surendra Kumar stated on record that the gateman had informed Rangapani station about the goods train on the same track as the Kanchanjunga Express. An inquiry will take into consideration this statement, and explore who all were privy to this information. While the inquiry will establish the shortcomings which led to the accident, the Railways has often been seen to take action against lower level staff, while officers at higher levels have gone scot-free after accidents.

Is signal failure a routine event?

In a paper, 'Analysis Report by High Level Safety Review Committee,' (2017), Mukesh Mehrotra, a chief signal engineer, noted that only 3% of the accidents in Indian Railways are due to "failure of equipment." During signal failure, trains can be operated under caution. The station master issues a TA-912 notice, which authorises loco pilots to cross a signal in red during signal failures, and a 'line clear' ticket, under the G&SR. The combination empowers the loco pilot to move forward. In this situation, the rule book says that the "driver shall proceed cautiously, so as to stop short [at] any obstruction." But if there is no prior indication that a signal is defec-

tive and the loco pilot suddenly encounters a red signal (stop sign) when the train is on the move, the loco pilot has to stop at the defective signal for a minute during day time, and for two minutes during night time. After this, the loco pilot is expected to proceed with extreme caution at a speed of 15 kmph. This procedure is not applicable when a 'line clear' ticket has been issued. Trains are not detained at wayside stations till the signals are set right. The only rule is that there should be only one train between two block sections at any given point of time. Another train can enter only after this train has left that block section.

Would Kavach have prevented the accident?

Yes. But the much-touted anti-collision device, Kavach, was not installed on this route. Kavach would have slowed down the freight train (it was moving at 45 kmph at the time of accident) as the automatic braking system would have become operational. However, progress on implementation of Kavach has been slow because of lack of vendors. According to the Railway Board, the Kavach system is operational in only 1,500 km. The entire Railways spans nearly 68,000 km. Railway accidents are rare if one takes this statistic into consideration: a minuscule 0.03 accidents happened per million km in both 2020-21 and 2021-22. But this number becomes infructuous if we consider the fact that there were 34 consequential train accidents in 2021-22 in which nine were killed and 45 injured. In 2022-23, however, there were 48 consequential train accidents. In fact, June 2023 witnessed the worst train accident in about two decades in Balasore, where nearly 300 passengers died.

How big of a role does human failure play?

Human failure is a major reason for accidents. In fact, almost all accidents in the recent past have listed human failure as one of the reasons. This includes the derailment of two passenger trains at Kothavalasa railway station (near Vizianagaram) in 2023; the disastrous accident in Balasore involving the Chennai-bound Coromandel Express, the Bangalore-Howrah Express and a goods train; and the 2018 derailment of the New Farakka Express. But this is not applicable in this case. The crew of the GFCJ container train had complete rest before they signed on in the morning of June 17. Loco pilot Anil Kumar, who died in the accident, signed in at 6:44 am after a night off (he had more than 30 hours of rest). His assistant, ALP Monu Kumar, signed in at 06:42 am. His last sign-off was at 1 pm on June 15. This cannot obliterate the fact that there are thousands of vacancies across Indian Railways for loco pilots. On June 20, the Indian Railways has pegged the vacancies at 18,799.

What more needs to be done?

Several committees have closely examined the question of Railway safety. While some of the recommendations have been accepted, others have not been considered for implementation. For instance,



one of the most important recommendations of the Kakodkar Committee is related to division of responsibilities: "Three vital functions (rule-making, operations and the regulation) are all vested in the Railway Board. There is need for an independent mechanism for safety regulation. The Committee recommends the creation of a statutory Railway Safety Authority with enough powers to have a safety oversight on the

operational mode of Railways." At a macro-level, Ramesh Subramanian (Evolution and Diffusion of ICTs in Indian Railways: A Historical Analysis, 2022) argues that since "Indian Railways' fortunes are vastly dictated by political needs rather than profitability," capital available to be invested in newer technologies is limited. The Indian passenger cannot afford massive expenses for modernising the system.

WhatsApp working on new in-app dialer feature; know how it works



New Delhi: Meta-owned WhatsApp is reportedly working on a new in-app dialer feature that will allow users to make calls directly from the app. According to WABetaInfo, users will not need to add contacts to their address book to make calls from the app. Users will find a new floating action button located within the calls tab that will enable access to the in-app dialer. In addition, the report mentioned that after entering a phone number, users will also have the option to save the number to the address book as a new contact or add it to an existing contact card. A messaging shortcut will also be available within the dialer screen that will allow users to quickly

send a message to a phone number they initially planned to dial but chose to message instead, the report added. The feature is presently available to some beta testers who install the latest updates of WhatsApp beta for Android from the Google Play Store, and will roll out to even more people over the coming days, the report said. Meanwhile, WhatsApp is reportedly working on a new feature that will allow users to see all media shared in community group chats. This feature will let community members see an overview of all images, videos, and other media files shared within the community, which will make it easier for them to locate and access shared content.