

Telangana government gears up to present annual budget

Hyderabad: Preparations are in full swing for presenting the first full-fledged budget of the Congress government in Telangana amid high expectations. The focus is said to be on delivering the promises made by the Congress party during the Assembly elections, which is causing considerable pressure on the State treasury. The interim budget, or "Vote on Account," presented by the State government in February this year, was only for four months and is set to expire on July 31. The budget session of the State Assembly is expected to commence in fourth week of July. While the Union Budget is scheduled to be presented on July 22, sources said Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka is likely to present his first full-fledged State budget within a week thereafter. He is holding review meetings with the officials of each department. Historically, budget allocations are increase by 8-15 per cent annually. Yet, the Congress party's extensive promises across various sectors imply an average increase of 40-50 per cent, raising concerns about budgetary control. The State government had presented a Vote on Ac-

count budget of Rs 2.76 lakh crore, which was marginally lesser than previous financial year's budget of Rs 2.77 lakh crore. However, the full budget is expected to exceed that, considering the requirements for implementing the poll promises.

Officials are currently reviewing the State revenue over the last six months, focusing on the income from April, May, and June of this fiscal year. Additionally, strategies to boost State revenue are being evaluated, along with the costs to implement the six guarantees promised by the Congress. The finance department is also grappling with how to fund large-scale schemes such as crop loan waivers and Rythu Bharosa among others. Major sources of State revenue include GST, Excise, Stamps and Registrations, and Sales Tax. Additionally, an average of Rs 4,000 crore is being obtained through market borrowings, grants, contributions, and the State's share of central taxes from the RBI. Together, these sources contributed an average of Rs 15,000 crore in April and May this year. "Considering that the Lok Sabha elections might have impacted the revenue collections, we are expecting an average



monthly revenue of Rs 20,000 crore for the State. Further, the government is aiming to raise at least Rs 25,000 crore during the current fiscal through non-tax revenues including land leases, sales and mining revenue among others," an official in the Finance department explained. Official sources said that currently, the State treasury requires around Rs 11,000-12,000

crore for payment of salaries and pensions along with debt servicing and other mandatory expenditure.

This leaves limited funds for government schemes, capital expenditures, and emergency expenditure. Consequently, officials are calculating payment schedules to clarify fund allocations for various schemes.

Telangana stares at severe water crisis as reservoir levels dip



Hyderabad: Across the State, reservoir levels are dropping further. The storage levels have witnessed no improvement even a month after the new water year was off to a dry start. Major irrigation projects, barring Jurala, have received no significant inflows so far. Issues related to water management and distribution in the previ-

ous season contributed to the depletion in storage levels. Even the joint projects of the two Telugu States, such as Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar, have received zero inflows so far this year. Farmers in the ayacut of the Krishna river projects, who had a crop holiday during both crop seasons last year, are going in for paddy in a big way,

adding further to the demand for irrigation. Though the crop season started on a positive note with widespread pre-monsoon showers this year, the dry spells experienced in the middle of June have cast shadows on the hopes of farmers.

Nagarjuna Sagar, which has an ayacut area of over 6.3 lakh acres in the State is a major source of drinking water supply to several districts, including the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Its present storage has come down to 121 TMC, almost 28 TMC less than its storage on the same day last year. The water levels dipped to 504 feet, nearly six feet below the minimum draw down level of 510 ft.

The present storage capacity of Srisailem project has come down to 37.36 TMC as against the gross storage capacity of 215 tmc. Jurala was the only project which received some inflows in June. Its present storage is above seven TMC as against the gross capacity of 9.66 TMC. The reservoirs in Godavari basin, including those integrated with the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation scheme, have almost been emptied because of the growing demand

for water. Kaddem project has almost gone dry has been left with less than 3 TMC for meeting emergencies. The present storage in Nizam Sagar project dropped to 3.7 TMC as against the gross storage of 17.80 TMC. Unless the project received fresh inflows in the next two weeks, the crops raised in the ayacut may not get irrigation support for long. The Sriram Sagar project has just started receiving inflows in the order of 4000 cusecs. The Bably gates were lifted on Monday, but this Maharashtra project hardly has any water to yield for the SRSP where the preset storage has come down to 10 TMC against the gross capacity of 90 TMC. Singur project has 13 TMC of water as part of its preset storage as against its gross storage capacity of 29.91 TMC. The Lower Manair and Mid Manair have some five TMC each in the preset storage as against their gross storage capacity of 24 tmc and 27 tmc, respectively. Yellampalli project had little over four tmc of water as against its gross storage capacity of 20 tmc. Emergency pumping was commenced to draw water from the project to support the drinking water supply in twin cities. Though the Pranahita river is adding to the inflows to Medigadda barrage, there is no scope for lifting water from Godavari, officials said.

Once a powerful regional force, the Shiromani Akali Dal is now a shadow of its former political self



There seems to be no end to the troubles for Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and its President Sukhbir Singh Badal, as days after the party suffered a major electoral setback in the Parliament polls, a section of senior leadership has raised the banner of revolt. The leadership led by the party's patron and former union minister Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa have asked Badal to follow the path of tyag (sacrifice), step down from the top post and work for the party as a "foot soldier". The rebels have decided to launch 'Akali Bachao Leher' for which a programme will be announced soon. On the other hand, SAD leaders siding with Badal asked the rebels to vent out within the party precincts, not outside.

In no mood to give in, the party president, hit back making the party's cadres, district-level leadership and assembly constituencies in charge stand behind him. "I will not let the power-hungry leaders of the party successful in their designs to divide the party of Punjabi and the Panth," Badal said during meetings with party leaders who came out in his support. According to Badal, the BJP is acting surreptitiously to stage a vertical divide in the oldest (103-year-old) regional party (after the Congress) and termed the rebels as a "frustrated lot" who were always after power and positions. Badal's wife Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal has termed the rebels as "stooges of the Bharatiya Janata Party" (BJP). "The party has given him lots of space to bring back the party on the track

but all attempts have failed. Every leader and worker has worked to take the party to the peak, he (Sukhbir) must introspect where he lags and should better step down," suggested the party's senior leader and former MP Prem Singh Chandumajra. Fall and the downward slide. A popular regional party in Punjab, SAD, which used to have sway over the Panth (Sikh majority) and the peasantry and ran state government successfully for 15 years (1997-2002, 2007-12 and 2012-17) in alliance with the saffron party.

The downslope began in the 2017 state assembly elections when the party won 15 seats and its ally, the BJP, won three. The BJP then blamed SAD for the downfall and criticised them for committing serious errors in governance during two consecutive terms. By then, differences between the two allies came out in the open as BJP leaders in Punjab were pushing to cut off ties but the central leadership resisted. In 2020, siding with the farmers who were agitating and seeking annulment of three farm laws (which were repealed in 2021) SAD severed ties with its ally of 24 years and it faced another debacle in 2022 state polls when Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) won 92 seats out of 117 in the state assembly and SAD which contested in alliance with BSP won just three and BSP one. The jolt was so severe that all seniors including party's patriarch Parkash Singh Badal, Sukhbir, and Bikram Singh Majithia perceived as invincible, suffered

defeats. Then, in the just-concluded Lok Sabha polls, the BSP also walked out, and SAD could win one seat: Harsimrat Kaur Badal was elected for the fourth consecutive term. However, 10 out of 13 candidates fielded forfeited deposits.

Going back to 1996, in a quick move when Atal Bihari Vajpayee led NDA government was formed at the Centre, then president of the SAD Parkash Singh Badal, (Sukhbir's father) announced support to the BJP, leading to a pre-poll alliance. At that time, it came as a shock for party leaders and its ally Mayawati led Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) opposed the move, but the alliance formed government in the state thrice and SAD MPs – Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa, Sukhbir and later Harsimrat Kaur Badal were given berths in the union cabinet during different times. What's the rebels grouse with Sukhbir? "SAD under Sukhbir ran a "lopsided campaign" during the parliament election and failed to give clear vision to the party as the party failed to stitch an alliance with either BJP or BSP nor we were able to support the two panthic candidates," said former MP Chandumajra. At that time the SAD which was running government in alliance with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) faced backlash, so much that they were unable to venture out. Since then, the SAD lost grip over its core strength the Panth (Sikhs) and the peasantry are overlapping in rural Punjab. Then came the state polls of 2017 the alliance lost as party strength vented anger and voted for the

congress, blaming the SAD for failing to nab the culprits. Then came 2020 when farmers began agitation against three farm laws with SAD's leader Harsimrat Kaur Badal as the food processing minister in the Modi cabinet. The SAD supported the bills not realising the rising farmers' anger. What added insult to injury was a video message from Parkash Singh Badal supporting the farm bills. Realising the damage, the party took a U-turn and, siding with the farmers, she resigned from the cabinet and her party severed ties with the old ally. The bills were repealed but could not reverse the damage done to the Akalis. The 2022 state polls gave just three seats to the party. Tough terrain ahead for Sukhbir. The political journey ahead will not be easy for the Akali party chief, particularly when a few leaders, the majority of whom were the protégés of his father, have expressed dissent. Against this backdrop, Badal will bank on a new crop of leaders. "The question is how to bring support base back who have drifted to other parties. The lesson should be learnt that you are losing political space in Punjab," said a political analyst not willing to be quoted. "In Punjab, the two political thoughts are moderate and radical, and Sukhbir is moderate and has a nationalistic approach, it is to be seen how soon he will be successful," said Pramod Kumar who heads the Chandigarh-based think tank Institute of Development and Communication. The grievance of the rebels is that they failed to be in power. Had they won there would be no rebellion, he adds.

CONSERVATION of the birds... Satisfying thirst..“



- Inspiring bird lover“ Jakkula Venkatesh's quest..“ – Programs for the conservation of birds across the entire district“ – Friendship with nature – Help the birds“ – Special awareness for students in educational institutions ““Boath, 4, July, (praja jyothy)““ Adilabad, boath““ The intensity of summer is increasing. It was a time when people couldn't stand their thirst and ran to cold stations to drink cold drinks. If you want to travel anywhere, you have to have a water bottle with you. At a time like this, if we are so thirsty, what will be the condition of the birds due to the intensity of the sun..? Jakkula Venkatesh, a bird lover who thought about the same thing, is inspiring many by setting up bird feeders and water feeders for birds. He is sensitizing the students and the people by undertaking the program 'Friendship with Nature - Helping the Birds' with the aim of bird conservation. ““Who is Venkatesh...?“ He is a small trader. His name is Jakkula Venkatesh. He lives in Both Mandal head-quarter of Adilabad District. As a bird lover, his quest is astonishing. He says that the little things to be done to help the birds help them survive. ““ Did the mind turn to care...?“ Knowing that human survival depends on nature, Venkatesh developed a passion for birds and the natural environment. He says that it is this interest that has made him tighten his waist for the conservation of birds. When summer comes, he visits many parts of the erst-while Adilabad district on his two-wheeler and gives his message for the conservation of birds. He distributes bird feeders at his own expense to satisfy the hunger of the birds. A few years ago, he came across the fact that a bird died of thirst in front of his eyes and since then he has been visiting many educational institutions and groups of people to arrange small water pots and bird feeders for birds and distribute them free of charge. Nirmal surrounding areas he conducted special awareness programs on bird conservation for students in Vasavi High School and Sri

Vidyaniketan schools and other institutions in the district. Apart from this, he is conducting awareness programs for students in educational institutions in Mamda, Tanur, Kubhir, Mudhol and other mandals. ““All this with passion...“ He says that due to the things we do now, the birds are reaching the stage of extinction, some birds have become completely extinct due to the plastic epidemic and pollutants. Similarly, he explains that due to cutting down of forests, birds are also suffering a lot. Venkatesh, who cannot tolerate the loss of bird life, is conducting many programs throughout the district to sensitize the people. As part of this, he is visiting many schools and arranging special meetings for the students and explaining the steps to be taken to protect the birds. He says that they should be friendly with nature or else there will be great danger. He stated that the program of 'Friendship with nature and help to birds' will be expanded across the entire district. As a bird lover, he explains the activities he is doing in terms of nature, environmental protection and the benefits of bird species to humanity. He also explains the methods of preserving the birds so that they do not become extinct. He says that everyone should recognize the damages caused by various types of pollution. Living with nature...“ The role of birds in nature is crucial as the Indian way of life is closely linked with nature. In development, it eats insects in crop fields and helps in yield. Eating dead animal carcasses helps in reducing air pollution. Similarly, birds are useful in plants for pollination of flowers and medicines. Birds are becoming extinct due to the effects of some mistakes made by humans like deforestation, hunting, water, air, noise pollution, soil pollution, excessive radiation. Organisms in nature have the right to live. Nature runs happily with the harmony of all kinds of living things.““Bird feeders should be given as a gift for good deeds.“ – Jakkula Venkatesh, bird lover.““ On birthdays and weddings, if you give a gift of a



plant or water for the birds, a bird feeder, a bird nest, or something like a bird's nest, this tradition will continue to be good for nature. Water tanks should also be installed in the premises of educational institutions. Thus the message of being

friendly with nature goes strong. A healthy life leads to a happy life. Nature teaches man many things and helps him to survive. It is our responsibility to preserve it and provide it to future generations. My desire is to protect birds.

India among most active countries for Meta's Threads globally



In India, popular tags and topics on Threads revolved around film, TV and OTT content, celebrity conversations, and sports.

New Delhi: Meta (formerly Facebook) on Thursday said that India is one of the most active countries for Threads globally. In India, some of the most popular tags and topics on Threads were centred

around film, TV and OTT content, celebrity-related conversations and sports.

Threads has also achieved more than 175 million monthly active users globally, announced Meta Founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg. Moreover, the company mentioned that people using Threads in India were more likely to mention another user and use a video in their posts compared to the global average. “Threads is primarily used for text-based creation, but many people are supplementing their posts with media,” the tech giant said in a statement.

“Photos are also one of the most used features on the app, with one in four Threads posts including at least one. With the introduction of an in-app camera and the growing Photography Threads community, photos have become a popular way to enhance text-first posts,” it added. Looking forward to the next year of Threads, the company said that it is excited to make the app even better for following and discussing “your interests in real-time, and is investing in more features that make people feel most comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas on the app”.

DOTORATE DEGREE AWARDED TO THE TEACHER OF TG MODEL SCHOOL, CHINTHAPALLY



Mr. Mallikhi Ramchander ji, working as a Post graduate teacher in Telugu subject at TG Model school of CHINTHAPALLY in Nalgonda district is awarded the prestigious Dotorate degree by the Osmania University in his subject. He is awarded this Doctorate for his research on the topic "Mahaswatha devi-Keshavareddy navalallo Girijana jeevana chithrana". He did his research under the

supervision of esteemed professor Dr. Chandra shaker Rao.

On this occasion the researcher expressed his thanks to all the panel members of the interview Dr. Rajaratnam, Prof. Kasim, Dr. Chavvada Venkat Reddy, Dr. Silma Naik, Dr. Chandra shaker Rao, Dr. Jagannath Rao, Dr. Bandari Prem Kumar and to the family and friends as they all congratulated him



Dalmia Bharat Commences Commercial Production of Additional 1.0 MT at its Kadapa Plant, Andhra Pradesh



Dalmia Bharat Limited (DBL), a leading Indian cement company, has announced the commencement of commercial production of an additional 1.0 MTPA at its existing cement manufacturing unit in Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh. The integrated cement manufacturing unit in Kadapa unit had an existing capacity of 2.6 MTPA. This expansion brings the company's total installed capacity to 46.6 MTPA, inclusive of its subsidiaries. This strategic expansion with an investment of Rs. 207 crores, aims to meet the growing cement demand in the Southern region and enhance Dalmia Bharat's market presence in the South. The initiative aligns with the company's long-term growth strategy to increase its total installed capacity to 110-130 MTPA by 2031.

Commenting on the expansion, Mr. Puneet Dalmia, Managing Director & CEO,

Dalmia Bharat Limited, said, "The additional capacity expansion at Kadapa along with our recent expansion in Tamil Nadu reinforces our commitment to support the growing infrastructure needs in the Southern region. With the expected focus on overall infrastructure capital outlay and its deployment, we see significant growth opportunities ahead especially in the Southern states where we continue to be a major player delivering quality products."

Dalmia Bharat has established a strong and enduring presence in the Southern region of India, cementing its reputation as a leader in the cement industry. With strategically located manufacturing units in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, it is well positioned to cater to the growing infrastructure demands of the region. This geographic advantage enables the company to effectively support

new projects in roads, railways, airports and ports contributing significantly to the region's economic growth and development.

Motorola launches Razr 50 Ultra flip phone with Google Gemini support in India



Motorola launches Razr 50 Ultra flip phone with Gemini support in India | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement Expanding its flip line-up, Motorola on Thursday launched Razr 50 Ultra in India. Succeeding the Razr 40 series launched last year, the new Motorola Razr 50 Ultra brings generative AI features with Google's Gemini, and Moto ai along with Google Photos support even for the cover screen. Motorola claims that Razr 50 Ultra can withstand 6 lakh foldings/unfoldings. In terms of display, the Motorola Razr 50 Ultra possesses a large 4-inch

cover LTPO pOLED display with 2,400 nits of peak brightness and 1272x1080 resolution. It is a 10 bit panel with a refresh rate of upto 165Hz. The cover screen is protected by Corning Gorilla Glass Victus. The main 10 bit folding display is of 6.9 inch LTPO with upto 165Hz refresh rate, 3,000 nits brightness.

The Razr 50 Ultra runs on a 4,000mAh battery along with a 68W charger that will ship inside the box. Meanwhile, it also supports 15W wireless and 5W reverse charging.

OPPO Reno12 5G Series: Redefining Performance with Stylish Durability

OPPO India announces the launch of the Reno12 5G and Reno12 Pro 5G on 12th July 2024. The Reno12 series, "Your Everyday AI Companion", is designed to enhance user experience with powerful AI features, robust durability, and sleek aesthetics. Innovative Design and Durability

The Reno12 series introduces a Quad-Micro Curved Infinite View screen with Corning Gorilla Glass Victus 2 in the Pro variant and Gorilla Glass 7i in the base model for enhanced durability and scratch resistance. Both models feature a 6.7-inch FHD+ 120Hz Flexible AMOLED display with a 43° quad-micro curve that results in 1.69mm narrow side bezels for a 93.5% screen-to-body ratio. The 10-bit panels display 1.07 billion colours to provide smoother lifelike colour transitions even in bright outdoor conditions with peak HDR brightness up to 1200 nits.

The series boasts an All-Round Armour protection—inspired by a sponge—to boost resistance to drops and impacts. The High-Strength Alloy Framework, comprising metals like copper, magnesium, and silicon, ensures a sturdy and corrosion-resistant build that meets aerospace quality standards. Both devices are IP65-rated for dust and water resistance with reinforced components such as speakers, USB-C port, and SIM card tray. The Reno12 Pro is tested by SGS for Premium Performance 5 Stars Multi-scene protection that covers water- and shock resistance among other features. The Reno12, on the other hand, carries the SGS Performance 5 Stars Multiscene Performance that includes low blue light and a flicker-

free screen to prevent eye fatigue. The Reno12 Pro 5G—available in Sunset Gold and Space Brown—features a Dual-Texture Back crafted from Asahi Dragontrail and Panda Glass. The top half sports OPPO Glow technology that is smudge-resistant, while the lower glossy area is defined by a smooth ribbon that carries the OPPO branding. The Reno12 will be available in three colours: Sunset Peach, Matte Brown and Astro Silver. The Astro Silver colour combines OPPO's Fluid Ripple Texture to create an illusion of liquid on a smooth surface, while Sunset Peach's graphic liquid crystal process creates a fresh take on the 2024 colour of the year. For a more classic look, Matte Brown features a rich cocoa hue in a fingerprint-free finish. Powerful Processor and Battery Life The Reno12 series is powered by the advanced 4nm MediaTek Dimensity 7300-Energy SoC that delivers high performance thanks to its quad 2.5GHz Arm Cortex-A78, balanced by its quad Arm Cortex-A55 for power efficiency. The octa-core CPU ensures seamless usability and extended battery life. The MediaTek APU 655 boosts AI performance, enabling innovative features like AI Clear Face, AI Writer, AI Recording Summary, and AI Eraser 2.0. Both models feature a large 5000mAh battery with 80W SUPERVOOC™ fast charging, capable of charging from 0% to 100% in just 46 minutes. The series promises four years of battery durability that makes it a reliable choice for long-term use. AI-Enhanced Camera System The Reno12 series is equipped with advanced AI-based camera features and high-quality sensors. The Pro version's main 50MP camera, with Sony's LYT-600 sensor and Optical Image



Stabilisation (OIS), captures sharp photos even in low light. It also packs a 50MP telephoto camera with the Samsung JN5 sensor for 2x portrait zoom and up to 20x digital zoom. Images shot with this camera boast great background compression for

more dramatic portraits without facial distortions. The 8MP IMX 355 ultra-wide-angle camera with a 112° field of view (FOV) captures expansive scenes in a single shot. For selfies, the Reno12 Pro comes with the 50MP JN5 sensor with autofocus and a 90° FOV.

Rare and fatal brain-eating amoeba infection | Explained

A 12-year-old boy, E.P. Mridul, from Feroke in Kozhikode district of Kerala, who had been undergoing treatment for primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM) at a private hospital, died on Wednesday night.

This is the third death due to the rare and fatal infection in the past two months in the State. V. Dakshina, 13, of Kannur died of the infection at a private hospital in Kozhikode on June 12. Fadva, 5, of Munniyur in Malappuram, died at the Government Medical College Hospital, Kozhikode, on May 20.

What is PAM? PAM is caused by Naegleria fowleri, an amoeba that thrives in warm freshwater lakes, ponds and rivers. It can also survive in poorly maintained swimming pools in rare cases. Because it can infect the brain and destroy the tissues, this one-celled organism is also called 'brain-eating amoeba'. These infections, though rare, are fatal and 97% of the patients don't survive.

How does the amoeba infect people?

The infection happens when people go for a swim in lakes, ponds or rivers, during summer. Experts say that it could occur if the atmospheric temperature is high and the water levels are low. The amoeba enters the body through the nose and reaches up to the brain. It destroys brain tissues and causes their swelling. In recent cases, children are found more vulnerable to it.

What are the symptoms of PAM?

According to the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) in the United States, headache, fever, nausea, and vomiting are its early symptoms. The progress can happen rapidly. Stiff neck, confusion, lack of attention to people and surroundings, loss of balance, and hallucinations are the later symptoms. Most people die within one to 18 days. It usually leads to coma and death after five days, says the CDC.

How is it diagnosed and what are the treatment methods available?

The infection can be diagnosed through lab tests. However since it is a rare



infection, the detection can sometimes be hard. In Kozhikode, the doctors at the Government Medical College Hospital suspected its possibility in the five-year-old girl from Malappuram after she exhibited symp-

toms similar to that of bacterial meningitis. There are no standard treatment methods available in the country and the doctors are following the guidelines of the CDC now.

A heat island deep in water

The rain storm, which hit Delhi on Friday, June 28, triggered havoc in India's Capital. But it would be naïve to blame climate change for the collapse of civic infrastructure, sudden flooding and shocking damage to the structures, vehicles and services. The chaos raises serious questions about the relevance of existing disaster management plans, building bylaws and the city's drainage system. The authorities could not foresee and cope with the unanticipated and extreme rainfall. This calls for a complete overhaul of the plans as well as the regulatory and institutional frameworks. Delhi is situated along the Yamuna river, which is a source of water as well as drainage. It has 300 Kms long network of canals, 28 major drains (600 kms), 750 minor drains and more than 1000 water bodies, (which have either vanished or have been built upon). With an average height of about 210 m above mean sea level, the plains area generally slopes from north towards south. The topographical relief is provided by the Delhi Ridge which is the culminating spur of the Mewat branch of the Aravalli. The highest point of the range is near Bhati where it is 318.52 metres (1,045 feet) above sea level. Several seasonal rivulets drain the Ridge such as the Barapullah-Kushak Nala system, the Tekhand rivulet out falling into the Yamuna river and the Palam drain out falling into the Najafgarh Drain. Based on the topographical characteristics, the National Capital Territory of Delhi has been divided into 6 drainage basins as follows:

The natural drainage pattern has worked well for many centuries. However, the balance was and continues to be, disturbed by rapid and indiscriminate urbanisation after Independence when about half a million refugees came to Delhi and its population almost doubled. New colonies were built upon low-lying watershed areas. A network of concrete drains, dams, barrages, roads and other services were built all over the city, including the Ring Road along the Yamuna river. This considerably reduced the drainage capacity of the river basin, nullahs, rivulets and retention ponds. There have also been significant changes in the soils, vegetation, habitats, hydrology, fauna and flora. With indiscriminate urbanisation, the river today has become a dirty drain which is almost dry during the summer while floods occur during the monsoon due to the release of water upstream. The water bodies and drainage fall under the jurisdiction of 10 agencies such as the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), Irrigation and flood department, PWD, Delhi Government, DDA, MCD, NDMC, Cantonment Board, etc. This makes it difficult to develop an integrated and coordinated system of flood management. The cleaning and desilting of the drains are usually undertaken as an annual ritual before the monsoon. The proposals under the Master Plan of Delhi 2021, like adopting the concepts of sustainable urban drainage, bio-drainage, zero runoff drainage and integration of green and blue networks remain neglected. For coordinated development, it is necessary to create a single government platform where all the concerned departments work together. Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) is defined as "Collective approaches to manage surface



water that take into account the water quantity (flooding), water quality (pollution) and amenity issues". It focuses on preventive actions and relies predominantly on behavioural changes to be effective. The basic principles of sustainable urban drainage include the following: Integration of drainage with the streets, water supply, sewage, solid waste management and land use. Decentralised planning Efficient resource management Appropriate Systems Design Scalable implementation Based on these principles, the strategies of sustainable urban drainage include the following: Surface water moves through swales and filter trenches that remove the pollutants The peak river discharge is delayed and reduced with the incorporation of retention basins, enabling the storage of water for reuse. Storage in retention/detention ponds and existing drains mitigates flooding and helps groundwater recharge. Infiltration of water to ground through infiltration basins and soakaways improves the quality of water and decreases peak discharge, as well as enables groundwater recharge. Existing water channels and drainage canals in urban areas can be used for continuous on-channel recharge of groundwater, transfer water from these channels to various storage and also store water from the channel with the help of sluice gates. Continuous recharge would take place through deep holes in the channel floor. This requires computer modelling of channel capacities, transfer mechanisms, storage capacities, flood prevention and system operation. The channel filled with water could constitute an urban waterway. Their cleanliness should be maintained with the use of a root zone system, green bridge, mosquito weed, guppy fish to consume mosquito larvae and aeration. The channels should be shaped, landscaped and deepened to increase water storing capacity, wherever possible. Their banks can be the green lungs of the city. While serving the function of on-channel groundwater recharge they also modify

the micro-climate. The conjunctive use of groundwater along with on-channel recharge could also be possible. The existing dirty drains can be converted into attractive landscape trails and greenways, as has been done in Pune, (Osho Dham Park Nallah) and at other places. By segregation of rainwater from wastewater disposal, it can be used for recharging of aquifers and irrigation. Zero run-off drainage envisages complete retention of rainwater in the area by creating retention ponds, lakes and swales for flood/rainwater discharge. The present method of draining stormwater through masonry drains entails huge costs and effort, which also endangers the groundwater aquifer. The creation of water bodies in low-lying areas not only solves the drainage problem but also provides a source of recreation, cattle rearing,

fishing and improvement for the micro-climate. The possible retention systems for drainage are given below: Low area drains (soakaway, in landscaping terms) Ditches and swales Permanent retention ponds Underground collection cistern Depending on the specific aims to be achieved various retention systems offer different advantages. To conclude, it is suggested that a unified 'whole of government platform' be created for institutional synergy as well as review the Drainage Plan of Delhi, the Delhi Disaster Management Plan, and Unified Building Bylaws. The draft Master Plan of Delhi 2041 and Draft NCR Plan 2041 may be given a fresh look to address the issues of climate and disaster resilience, incorporating new technologies and replacing the 20-year horizon with five-year strategies.

Instagram faces major global outage, including India

New Delhi: Meta-owned Instagram on Saturday suffered a major outage globally, including in India, as thousands of users were unable to load Reels and access other options. As per website outage tracking website DOWNDetector, over 6,500 users reported issues with accessing the platform in India at the peak of an outage at around 12.02 p.m.

About 58 per cent reported problems with the feed, 32 per cent with the app, and 10 per cent with server connection.

Users from Delhi, Jaipur, Lucknow, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, and others faced issues with the app. Users took to X to vent their frustration as they were un-



able to log in to the app, load Reels, and others. Everyone going towards Twitter to check if Instagram is down," a user wrote. "I thought my Instagram got hacked cuz there's no way my fyp looks like this. It's all brain rot usually #instagramdown," another user said. One more user stated, "Me going to Twitter to check if it's only my Instagram that's down, or we all are suffering #instagramdown".

Poonam Saxena on Bridgerton, Regency romances and Georgette Heyer

Long before Julia Quinn and #Polin, there was Heyer. Look closely and you see signs of her impeccable research, down to the slang of the time, on screens today. Shonda Rhimes has always found surprising ways to tap into the mood of the moment. Currently, it is her Netflix series *Bridgerton* that has taken over timelines and watchlists. When Season 1 was released in 2020 and became a monster hit, there was some amount of head-scratching. In a universe of shows about dysfunctional families, serial killers, crime and horror, a costumed Regency romance series seemed an aberration. But here's the thing, dearest gentle reader.

Long before the *Bridgertons* arrived, a group of readers (a very, very large group) was already closely acquainted with the charm and appeal of Regency romances. British writer Georgette Heyer (1902-1974) had 51 novels in print when she died, with 50 million copies sold. Most were Regency romances. My friends and I, and indeed much of our generation, couldn't get enough of them in our growing-up years. I've read and re-read her books countless times. But it seems like few people buy her novels today. More's the pity... *Bridgerton* itself is based, of course, on the series of novels by American writer Julia Quinn, each dedicated to the life and loves of one of the family's eight children. Quinn credits Jane Austen and Heyer with basically inventing the Regency romance (not that we needed her to tell us this). This era stretched from about the 1790s to the 1830s, a period of wealth and strict social mores when the aristocracy flourished. The term itself is drawn from a short span, 1811 to 1820, during which George IV served as Prince Regent, stepping in for his ailing father, George III. Austen (1775-1817) remains a powerhouse, with a small industry seemingly dedicated to retelling her stories for the screen. The appeal of Heyer's work was different. She herself made self-deprecatory comments about her books. "I think... I ought to be shot for writing such nonsense. But it's unquestionably good escapist literature," she once said. At the same time, she disliked critics who wrote her off as just another insubstantial romance writer. Because her books were also defined by solid hard work. Her background research was impeccable. Her library contained histories of everything from costumes to coaches. She left behind scores of files with notes on women, business, banking and evolving social norms. Her homework included unearthing the delightful slang of the period. If you were being foolish, you were "making a cake of yourself". If something was popular, it was "all the crack". Every Regency romance writer since has borrowed heavily from the exhaustive research in her books. In her use of such details, she created an amusing and delectable world of the wealthy and titled who swanned about between their London and country homes. Her heroes were intriguing. There was Justin Alastair, Duke of Avon and hero of *These Old Shades* (1926), who was tall and sardonic, with thin lips and heavy-lidded eyes, and who invariably dressed in gold-laced coats, silk waistcoats and jew-



elled cravats. His nickname was Satan, because of his dissolute, wicked past. There was Freddy, hero of one of her funniest books (my personal favourite), *Cotillion* (1953). He was a not-very-bright man, always surrounded by a posse of droll, idle young men, but possessed of exquisite taste and a good, kind heart. Heyer's heroines were spirited and dashing (*Sophia in The Grand Sophy*, 1950), shy and timid (*Hero in Friday's Child*, 1944) or artless, charming ingenues (*Horatia in The Con-*

venient Marriage, 1934). In their polished Hessian boots and long-tailed coats, the men gambled in discreet clubs, went riding and racing, or escorted women to social engagements. The women spent an inordinate amount of time shopping and sighing over gauzy gowns and silver ribbons. Love blossomed in drawing rooms, at card parties and balls. The novels often had the most hilarious climaxes, featuring frantic carriage races, gunshots, and multiple characters tumbling into the same place,

often a remote inn or isolated manor. Through it all, Heyer's wit and humour stood out. You have to be careful reading one of her romances in public, for fear of emitting suppressed snorts of laughter from time to time. (In *These Old Shades*, the Duke of Avon asks his newly acquired page where he was born. The page says that it was not in Anjou, and the Duke responds languidly, "That is of course interesting. Spare me a list of the places where you were not born, I beg of you.")

Enjoy freshly brewed beer straight from tap at this new place in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: Have you ever wondered what it would be like to enjoy a freshly brewed beer straight from the tap, just like in the good old days? Welcoming the taproom experience, Daily Rituals opens one of the first taprooms in Hyderabad at Jubilee Hills. A taproom serves alcoholic drinks, primarily beer from a tap, providing a unique and refreshing experience for beer enthusiasts. Daily Rituals, serves a variety of draught beers, making it a haven for those who appreciate quality brews. "A taproom is a place where draught beer of different kinds is served," explained Varun Reddy, the managing director of Daily Rituals. The place also features a quirky array of beverages, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic. But, what sets it apart is its menu of staple Hyderabadi dishes, blending the old-city charm with a modern, urban setting. "We can accommodate over 350 people! With three distinct levels, whether you're with family, friends, a partner, or just by yourself, there's a section that will make you feel right at home," Varun Reddy shared, and added, "We have a favourite spot



which is the solo tables overlooking the road, perfect for those deep thoughts that come naturally after enjoying our beers." Spanning an area of about 15,000 square feet, the taproom embodies the mantra 'Less is More'. The interior design focuses

on natural lighting, cosy spaces, and witty elements, all while preserving the area's natural flora and fauna. Architecturally, the design ensures that natural light reaches even the most underground levels, creating a bright and welcoming atmosphere."

India's fraying garment industry needs a stitch in time under Modi 3.0

Until then, China dominated garment exports to western markets, commanding a 40% market share in both the EU and the US. However, according to the chief purchasing managers, there were growing headwinds: labour shortage in China's coastal industrial hubs, rising wages and diversion of production capacity toward national consumption. About 54% of purchasing managers said that they would diversify up to 10% of sourcing away from China while 32% said they would diversify more than 10% of sourcing, McKinsey reported. A clear winner emerged—Bangladesh, which McKinsey deemed the “next China” in garment-making and exports. Looking back at the survey, which was conducted 13 years ago at a time when global supply chains were getting further embedded in Asia, one statistic is revealing. When asked about the new sourcing hotspots in the next five years, 89% said Bangladesh, followed by Vietnam, Indonesia and Cambodia. India did not have the confidence of global purchasing managers; in hindsight, they were prescient.

Early this year, the New Delhi-based research group Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) reported that India's global market share in garment trade has declined between 2015 and 2023: share of knitted apparel dropped from 3.85% to 3.10%, and the share of non-knitted apparel dropped from 4.6% to 3.7%. In 2023, China exported \$114 billion worth of garments, the EU \$94.4 billion, Vietnam \$81.6 billion, Bangladesh \$43.8 billion, and India just \$14.5 billion, according to GTRI. Consider the trend in growth. Between 2013 and 2023, while China's garment exports declined by 23.5%, Bangladesh's grew by 69.6%, Vietnam's grew by 81.6%, and India's grew by a marginal 4.6%.

Ajay Shrivastava, a former bureaucrat and the founder of GTRI, stressed how important the entire sector is to the Indian economy and its dream of becoming a manufacturing nation. “The sector [including both textiles and garments] provides jobs to [an estimated] 50 million people,” Shrivastava said. “Textiles and garments are not technology-intensive industries; these are labour-intensive. If we are losing to countries like Bangladesh then it is a sad reality and we have to do something about it.” Shrivastava lays out the entire value chain of the sector. “Cotton is grown in the fields, then cotton fibre is converted into yarns, then yarn into fabric, then fabric into garments. It's sad that we have to export cotton yarns. Ideally, we should convert it into fabrics, but after yarns, our value chain breaks, mostly because of quality issues,” he said.

Another bottleneck plaguing exports is the industry failing to catch up with shifting trends in the fast fashion industry, according to Shrivastava. “We are a historically cotton-growing country. But about 70% of clothing bought by developed countries is made of mixed synthetics—it has overtaken cotton and become a favourite of the fashion industry. Their share in Indian exports is less than 40%.” Hence, Indian factories produce cotton apparel for



the spring and summer seasons in the West, leading to low utilisation during autumn and winter when synthetics and blended fabrics dominate demand. “A factory that runs only six months a year still has to pay the full year's fixed costs. This makes anything made in the factory expensive. With weak synthetics, India's apparel industry is a horse running with one leg tied. The results are low exports, low wages, and low investments in the sector,” Shrivastava said. “Entry into synthetics would make factories run full year and increase wages manifold.”

Fast fashion is a low-margin industry with a complex production process, and one indicator could determine manufacturing success. It is called the Standard Allowed Minute (SAM), which measures the time taken by a worker at a factory unit to make one garment. SAM is a function of skilled workforce, assembly line efficiency and the man-to-machine ratio. According to GTRI, about 80% of Indian exporters fail to meet SAM or other [industry] requirements, thereby limiting their ability to secure orders. Kumar Duraiswamy, joint secretary at the Tirupur Exporters' Association in Tamil Nadu, said that while the man-to-machine ratio in India is about 2:1, it is close to 1.15:1 for China and Bangladesh. “The efficiency of machines is about 80-85% in Bangladesh, China and Vietnam whereas the average for us is about 40%. Now imagine a 10,000 sq.ft factory with the standard expenses producing 5000 pieces in India [compared to] 9000 pieces there—what we get is cheaper products offered by these countries,” he said.

A crucial part of the garment industry is the thousands of weaving and processing units, most of which are informal and small- and medium-sized enterprises. Shrivastava said that these units lack expertise, scale, and technology and remain racked with issues such as power outages

and underutilization, which, in turn, increase weaving costs in India to levels comparable with those in the EU or US. Consider this statistic: Chinese fabric processing units process about 1 million metres of cloth per day compared to less than 20,000 metres in India, according to GTRI's analysis. Duraiswamy inveighed against successive governments' apathy toward the garment industry. “The thing is you cannot transform the MSME sector all of a sudden. The availability of orders, and the trust of the customers, is a big process. And with the policies that we have, people are tired; they do not want to run a garment business,” he said.

In 2021, the government announced that it will build seven Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) parks, as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's “5F vision: Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign.” The parks aim to create an integrated value chain: spinning, weaving, processing, dyeing and printing at one location. “Tirupur - India's largest garment-making hub - is a cluster-based model. About 2000 exporters are supported by 20,000 MSMEs that are part of the different processes in the value chain from yarn to fabric to knitting to dyeing to finishing to sewing, printing, embroidery and packaging. The future is an integrated model but we have to scale up taking the traditional model along because orders by buyers are a function of the manufacturing model, and the transition will take time,” Duraiswamy said. To boost the sector, the government included it in its flagship production-linked incentives scheme, which was launched in 2021. However, under the scheme, fibre manufacturers were prioritised over garment makers and the threshold for investments was between rupees 100 crore to 300 crore, which, according to Duraiswamy, is high for the industry, cutting off most small and medium-

sized manufacturers. “The government has to go to the grassroots and find out about the nature of transformation that is required in this industry. High employment potential is only possible in the garment industry. You are promoting cotton and yarn exports. But exporting one unit of garment generates more jobs than one unit of cotton or yarn,” Duraiswamy said. On June 25, 2024, the newly installed textiles minister Giriraj Singh said that his challenge is to beat China - not Bangladesh - in garment exports, and promised to make small clusters for smaller players in India and revive the making of integrated textile parks. “Who knows how much time it will take to make it happen? This is the time to talk to leading manufacturers and ask them about the problems they face. There are decisions that need to be made now and not in the future,” Shrivastava said. “In Bangladesh, executives from companies such as Zara and H&M planned and designed policies for the garment sector, and the government fully supported them in whatever policy changes and trade facilitation measures they wanted,” he said, noting that India should negotiate both tariff and non-tariff barriers in its ongoing free trade agreement discussions with the United Kingdom and EU. “The EU levies tariffs anywhere between 10-18% on India-made garments while the tariffs for Bangladesh and Vietnam remain zero. However, we have to remember that the EU levies full duty on China-made garments and yet China is their top garment supplier,” Shrivastava said. “Tariff is only one of the factors [that determine success in exports],” Duraiswamy says that an appreciating dollar has made machines expensive - most of which are imported - at a time when small- and medium-sized factories are finding it difficult to get access to credit owing to the adoption of Basel III capital norms by India.