

Coaching centres have become 'death chambers'
 5

SFIO PROBE INTO SAHARA GROUP OF COMPANIES UNDERWAY: FM
 8

Chiyaan Vikram researched many tribes for THANGALAN
 P12

QUOTE OF THE DAY
 The pioneer
 By-elections are inevitable in Telangana and the MLAs who defected will be taught a lesson by the people. The BRS will continue its legal battle based on Supreme Court rulings and the advice of legal and constitutional experts. The issue of disqualifying the MLAs who had defected will be resolved within a month through either the HC or the SC. The Congress is encouraging defections in Telangana while preaching against it at the national level
 -K Taraka Rama Rao, BRS MLA P4

DON'T MISS...

CM Naidu to unveil 'AP Vision 2047'...

The Andhra Pradesh government is set to unveil the 'AP Vision 2047' document on October 2, to achieve 15% growth in each district. Principal Secretary of Finance, Peeyush Kumar, outlined the plan at a collectors' meeting on Monday. The document focuses on four primary objectives: Zero Poverty, Social and Physical Infrastructure Development, Demographic Management, and Ease of Living. Kumar noted that the plan will prioritize 12 key areas and will be introduced by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. Currently titled...

-PAGE: 2

Most of employed rural youth want...

Around half of rural men aged 18 to 25 are employed while only a quarter of the women in the same age bracket are working, according to a survey involving 5,169 youths across villages of the country, the report of which was released on Monday. The report added that 70-85 per cent of the youth said they wanted to change their jobs. The State of Rural Youth Employment 2024, brought out by the Global Development Incubator (GDI), Global Opportunity Youth Network (GOYN), Development Intelligence Unit (DIU), and...

-PAGE: 5

Over Rs 177 cr lost on account of...

As much as Rs 177 crore was lost on account of credit, debit card and internet banking frauds in the 2023-24 fiscal, Parliament was informed on Monday. In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said the amount of loss due to cyber fraud has increased from Rs 69.68 crore in FY23 to Rs 177.05 crore in FY24. The quantum of loss in FY22 was Rs 80.33 crore, it was Rs 50.10 crore in FY21 and Rs 44.22 crore in FY20. Chaudhary further said to help customers...

-PAGE: 8

With so much spin on offer, game...

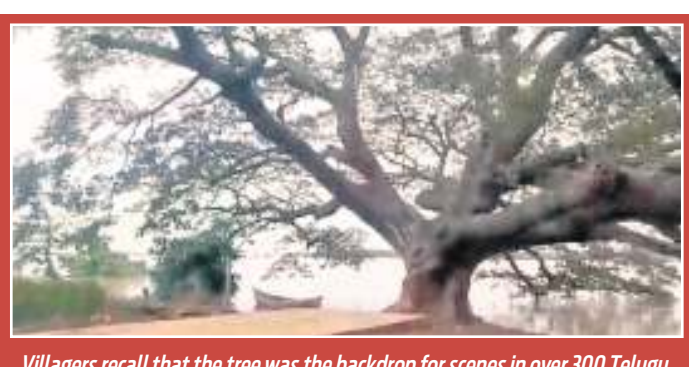
"Was it a shock? I would say yes," said India's assistant coach Abhishek Nayar as he tried to make sense of the unexpected defeat to Sri Lanka in the second ODI, blaming it on the spin-friendly conditions that have the potential to completely alter the course of a match. India's fragility against spin was once again on display as leg-spinner Jeffrey Vandersay wreaked havoc with a six-wicket haul to hand the visitors a 32-run defeat in the second ODI here on Sunday. "...There is a surprise. But you anticipate and..."

-SPORTS

150-yr-old 'Cinema Tree' slips into history

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

A historic 150-year-old tree, renowned for its role in numerous cinema shoots, has been uprooted and collapsed on the bank of the Godavari River at Kumara Devam village in Kovvuru mandal of East Godavari district. The tree, a beloved landmark in the Telugu film industry, has been featured in many blockbuster movies, becoming a sentimental symbol for cinema enthusiasts. It attracted visitors from across the region who came to see the iconic tree that graced the screen. Villagers recall that the tree was the backdrop for scenes in over 300 Telugu films, including classics like *Shankarabharanam* (1980), *Padipantalu* (1975), *Sitaramayyagari Manumaralu*, and *Trisulam*. Notably, the 1960s hit song 'Godari Gattundi-Gattumeeda Chettundi' from *Mugamanusulu* and scenes from the film *Rangasthalam* featuring Ram Charan were also filmed here.



Villagers recall that the tree was the backdrop for scenes in over 300 Telugu films, including classics like *Shankarabharanam* (1980), *Padipantalu* (1975), *Sitaramayyagari Manumaralu*, and *Trisulam*. Notably, the 1960s hit song 'Godari Gattundi-Gattumeeda Chettundi' from *Mugamanusulu* and scenes from the film *Rangasthalam* featuring Ram Charan were also filmed here.

Sitaramayyagari Manumaralu, and *Trisulam*. Notably, the 1960s hit song 'Godari

Gattundi-Gattumeeda Chettundi' from *Mugamanusulu* and scenes from the film

Pawan envisions strong Panchayat Raj system

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj K Pawan Kalyan has vowed to strengthen the Panchayat Raj system, announcing that 13,326 village meetings will be conducted across village panchayats. Addressing the Collector's conference at the Secretariat, chaired by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Pawan Kalyan outlined the State's goal to provide drinking water to 5.4 crore households this financial year under the Jal Jeevan Mission. He highlighted the launch of a liquid waste management project in the Pithapuram constituency as a pilot initiative. "The government is also focusing on road infrastructure, with plans to repair 4,721 km of damaged roads across the State this year," he noted. Pawan Kalyan said that the State's notified forest area spans 37,400 square km, accounting for 29.23% of the total forest area. Additionally, there is a

“He commended the State's recent election results, with the alliance securing a 93% strike rate, reflecting the public's confidence in the government. "We must uphold this trust," he asserted. "Previously, IAS and IPS officers competed to work in AP. Our goal is to restore that prestige. Our government is committed to accountability and progress," he affirmed.



10,221 sq. km green corridor to the forests. He emphasized the need to promote afforestation in Panchayat lands. He commended the State's recent election results, with the alliance securing a 93% strike rate, reflecting the public's confidence in the government. "We must uphold this trust," he asserted. Kalyan criticised the previous YSRC administration for mismanaging systems, leading to a decline across various sectors. "Previously, IAS and IPS officers competed to work in AP. Our goal is to restore that prestige. Our government is committed to accountability and progress," he affirmed. Expressing eagerness to learn from senior leader Chandrababu Naidu, Pawan Kalyan pledged to strengthen institutions and maintain momentum. "We are dedicated to advancing AP and securing cooperation from IAS and IPS officers to contribute to India's emergence as a superpower by 2047," he concluded.

COLLECTORS' CONFERENCE CM sets tone for progress

Officials to engage with public every month as part of 'Pedala Sevalo' initiative

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has underscored the importance of development and public engagement during the District Collectors conference on Monday. Highlighting the contrast with the previous government's actions, including the demolition of Praja Vedika, Naidu stated that this ongoing conference should mark the beginning of the State's progress. Chairing the first Collectors conference since assuming office, the Chief Minister directed officials to engage with the public on the 1st of every month through the 'Pedala Sevalo' (In Service of the Poor) programme. He announced that a vision document for the State's development would be released on October 2. Naidu criticised the previous government's inefficiency, which he claimed had tarnished Andhra Pradesh's reputation. The Chief Minister called for frequent ground-level visits by IAS officers to address public concerns empathetically.



- The vision document for state development is to be released on October 2.
- CM criticises the previous gov't inefficiency and its impact on AP's reputation.
- Frequent ground-level visits by IAS officers encouraged to address public concerns.
- CM projects AP to become the third-largest economy in India by 2029.
- Post-1995 economic reforms highlighted as a catalyst for India's growth.
- CM acknowledges the challenges of rebuilding the state and the need for innovative solutions.
- Collectors urged to work hard, think globally, and counter false propaganda against the gov't.

Collectors instructed to create district-level vision documents and show results in 100 days.

'SAND BOOKING THROUGH SECRETARIATS'

VIJAYAWADA: Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has announced that customers in need of sand can now book their supplies through the local secretariat. He said that sand is a natural resource and that ensuring transparency is crucial so that all citizens have access to free sand.



Collectors hold key to gov't performance: CS

Neerabh details a newly formulated 100-day plan for implementation of gov't initiatives

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad has emphasised the pivotal role of District Collectors in upholding the State government's performance and reputation. He made these remarks during the inaugural session of the District Collectors' conference, chaired by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, at the Secretariat on Monday. Highlighting the significance of the conference, Chief Minister Naidu described it as crucial for the State's reconstruction efforts. He stressed that District Collectors are ultimately responsible for reflecting the government's performance over the next five years and maintaining its reputation. Chief Secretary Prasad detailed a newly formulated 100-day plan for the government's initiatives, urging the Collectors to implement it effectively.

12 NSP gates lifted



The NSP is receiving an inflow of

2,74,000 cusecs and releasing 1,13,889 cusecs downstream. The water level at NSP is currently at 583.60 feet, against a total capacity of 590 feet. Out of the total storage capacity of 312.5 TMC, 293.39 TMC has been impounded. More gates are expected to be lifted due to the continuing heavy inflow.

After a long gap, the crest gates of the Nagarjuna Sagar Project (NSP) dam were lifted on Monday to discharge floodwater downstream. This action was taken in response to the heavy inflow of water, following the lifting of the crest gates at the Srisailem Project. Superintending Engineer Nageswara Rao and Chief Engineer Anil Kumar of the NSP performed a traditional 'Jala Harathi' ceremony at the reservoir before lifting the crest gates.

Heavy inflows at Pulichintala dam

VIJAYAWADA: Irrigation officials of the Andhra Pradesh government lifted the crest gates of the Pulichintala project late on Monday night, to release floodwater downstream to the Prakasam barrage. Four gates of the Pulichintala were raised to discharge 20,083 cusecs of water. The reservoir is currently receiving 30,388 cusecs from the NS project. With expected heavy inflows tomorrow, additional gates may be lifted to manage the excess water.

Excise case: HC upholds Kejriwal's arrest by CBI

Asks him to move trial court for bail

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

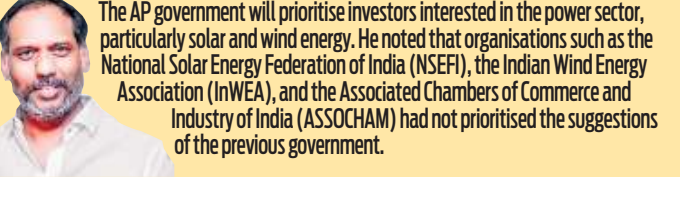
The Delhi High Court on Monday upheld Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's arrest by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the corruption case stemming from the alleged excise policy scam, dealing a massive blow to the AAP leader. Justice Neema Bansal Krishna dismissed Kejriwal's plea challenging his arrest, holding that it cannot be said it was without any justifiable reason. The high court also disposed of the AAP national convener's bail plea and granted him liberty to approach the trial court for relief. The high court had on July 17 reserved its order on his plea challenging his arrest by the CBI. It had reserved the order on the AAP leader's bail plea on July 29 after hearing the arguments of the counsel for Kejriwal and the central agency. Kejriwal was arrested by the CBI on June 26 from Tihar Jail, where he was lodged in judicial custody in a connected money laundering case filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).



Invest in renewable energy: Minister to NRIs

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar has highlighted the ample opportunities for entrepreneurs to invest in Andhra Pradesh, asserting that no other state in India can match AP's geographical advantages. During a virtual meeting with Indians settled in the United States, the minister urged non-resident Indians to confidently establish industries in the state, emphasizing the politically stable government. Minister Ravi Kumar assured that the TDP government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, is prepared to provide the necessary facilities for investors. He criticized the policies of the previous YSRC government, which he claimed had deterred industrialists, leading to the cancellation of investment agreements and a decline in new investments. The minister stated that the



The AP government will prioritise investors interested in the power sector, particularly solar and wind energy. He noted that organisations such as the National Solar Energy Federation of India (NSEFI), the Indian Wind Energy Association (InWEA), and the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) had not prioritised the suggestions of the previous government. The current coalition government is committed to restoring investor confidence and will soon introduce the country's best industrial policy for the next five years. The minister emphasized that the AP government will prioritize investors interested in the power sector, particularly solar and wind energy. He noted that organizations such as the National Solar Energy Federation of India (NSEFI), the Indian Wind Energy Association (InWEA), and the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) had not prioritized the suggestions

A historic waiver - putting farmers' interests ahead

Disproving all apprehensions and dismantling opposition propaganda, the Revanth Reddy-led Congress government in the State has begun waiving off farmers' loans. This initiative demonstrates the government's strong commitment to the welfare of farmers. Not only was the promised loan waiver initiated within the deadline, but this year's State Budget also saw the highest allocation for the agriculture sector.

It is pertinent to note that the loan waiver for farmers was initiated in accordance with the promise made during the 'Raithu Declaration' announced at the Warangal public meeting in May 2022 by

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, and the Congress government began implementing it within eight months of coming to power in the State.

The State government has liberated lakhs of farmers in Telangana from the shackles of indebtedness and associated agony. Farmers are now free from a burden they have long awaited relief from. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy compared this historic waiver to India's independence. Lakhs of farmers felt overwhelming joy when they received the message from the banks, akin to the national jubilation when India declared independence. He said that the Congress government had promised to

It is pertinent to note that the loan waiver for farmers was initiated in accordance with the promise made during the 'Raithu Declaration' announced at the Warangal public meeting in May 2022 by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, and the Congress government began implementing it within eight months of coming to power in the State.

make agriculture a profitable sector and all its initiatives substantiate that statement.

The State government allocated Rs 31,000 crore for the farm loan waiver, a record amount for any State government in the country. Despite

several financial challenges, the government aggregated monetary resources for this purpose.

The loan waiver process began on July 18, 2024, with the release of Rs 6,098 crore, benefiting 11 lakh farmers in



BOREDDY AYODHYA REDDY
Chief Public Relations Officer to Chief Minister

the first phase. The event was organised at the Dr BR Ambedkar Telangana

Secretariat in the presence of all Cabinet members, farmers, and the Chief Minister himself. Loans of up to Rs 1 lakh were waived off in the first phase.

In the second phase, Rs 6,198 crore was released, benefiting 6.40 lakh farmers with loans of up to Rs 1.50 lakh. In just 12 days, the State government released Rs 12,000 crore, benefiting 17 lakh farmers. The event was held on July 30, 2024, at the State Assembly. The Chief Minister remarked that it was his biggest achievement to see the sparkle of joy in the eyes of farmers.

The Opposition had tried to mislead people by claiming that the Congress government in Telangana would not be able

to waive off the loans and challenged the government to do so by August 15 as promised. However, to the surprise and dismay of the opposition leaders and the joy of farmers, the government kept its word by pooling the necessary funds.

While the opposition may find it hard to believe, it is in the DNA of the Congress to support the interests of farmers and the agricultural sector. The slogan 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' was coined by the Congress. The Green Revolution took place during Congress rule. Major projects like Bhakranagall and Nagarjunasagar were built to benefit farmers. Indira Gandhi nationalised banks to provide

low-interest loans to poor farmers. The Manmohan Singh government, led by Sonia Gandhi, introduced the Food Security Act, waived loans worth Rs 72,000 crore and supported farmers. Congress has consistently proven itself to be a farmer-friendly party by providing seeds, fertilizers on subsidy, free electricity, crop insurance and minimum support price.

The welfare and farmer-friendly initiatives will continue under the Congress regime to achieve higher goals in the agriculture sector, making it more profitable, ensuring financial security for farmers and providing food security for the people.

CM Naidu to unveil 'AP Vision 2047' on Oct 2

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government is set to unveil the 'AP Vision 2047' document on October 2, to achieve 15% growth in each district. Principal Secretary of Finance, Peeyush Kumar, outlined the plan at a collectors' meeting on Monday. The document focuses on four primary objectives: Zero Poverty, Social and Physical Infrastructure Development, Demographic Management, and Ease of Living. Kumar noted that the plan will prioritize 12 key areas and will be introduced by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. Currently titled 'Vikasit Andhra Pradesh', the document is open to title suggestions.

"The government aims to reach 15% growth in every district," Kumar said. He added that Niti Aayog officials will



"The government aims to reach 15% growth in every district."

collaborate with government representatives from September 6 to 8, and feedback from various departments is expected by September 15. Additionally, the document will be open for public input from September 1 to 15.

K. Kannababu, Secretary of Social Welfare, Tribal Welfare, and Panchayat Raj, detailed the plans for pre-matric and post-matric hostels and resident

schools. He also outlined the social sector objectives for the coming year.

P. Bhaskar from the GAD services discussed the status of BC welfare in the state. K. Harshavardhan, Secretary of the Minority Welfare Department, provided details on the state's minority population, which totals 43.46 lakhs out of 493.87 lakhs. He also presented the survey status of

Waqf lands and the action plan for future land surveys.

A. Surya Kumari, Secretary of Women, Child Welfare, and Disabled Welfare, Siddharth Jain, Commissioner of Civil Supplies, and other IAS officials reported on the progress and status of their respective departments.

G. Anantharam, Special Principal Secretary of the Forest Department, emphasized the need to expand forest areas. He noted that while the sapling planting program was previously part of the rural employment guarantee scheme, it has been inactive for the past four years. The department plans to restart this initiative on a large scale, including a seed distribution program costing Rs. 13.5 crore. Collectors will oversee the planting of 50 lakh seeds in each district.

High-level probe into train coach fire

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A high-level inquiry has been initiated by East Coast Railway to investigate the fire that engulfed an empty air-conditioned coach at Visakhapatnam Railway Station on Saturday. A team led by senior railway officials, including Chief Electrical Engineer Surath Jani, Chief Rolling Stock Engineer SC Behera, and Chief Security Commissioner BS Nath, reached the spot the same night.

The committee has commenced a comprehensive investigation, examining the station yard and the damaged coach at the Maintenance Depot. Extensive interviews with railway officers, staff, and station personnel are being conducted to gather crucial details about the incident.

To ensure a thorough technical assessment, experts from Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, and Research Designs and Standards Organization, Lucknow, have been dispatched to Visakhapatnam. A state forensic team also joined the investigation on Saturday. The cause of the fire is yet to be determined, and the inquiry is currently underway.



Municipal Minister P Narayana inaugurated a gym at the Veterinary Colony in Vijayawada on Monday.

'Civic bodies' income delinked from CFMS'

Municipalities & corporation now free to utilize funds independently on local projects

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA & UD), P Narayana, has revealed that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has agreed to allocate the income generated within Municipalities and Corporations for their respective development projects. This income can now be utilised independently without being linked to the Comprehensive Financial Management System (CFMS).

Minister Narayana, accompanied by Vijayawada East MLA Gadde Rama Mohana Rao, inaugurated a newly established gym at the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Park in the Veterinary Colony of the 4th division on Monday. During the event, he actively participated in exercises and cycling at the gym.

Addressing the gathering, Minister

Narayana alleged that the previous YSRCP government had redirected approximately Rs 1,900 crore, intended for various Municipalities under CFMS, to other purposes. This diversion, he claimed, led to halted development in many Municipalities across the state. He criticised the previous government's negligence, which resulted in the central government withholding funds worth crores of rupees meant for municipal development.

Minister Narayana further mentioned that around Rs 50,000 crore was allocated to the State, of which Rs 17,000 crore was to be paid by the state government as its share. However, this amount was not paid by the previous administration.

He also pointed out that many funds under the AMRUT scheme phase 2 have not been released to the state. Additionally, he noted that the central government did not release Rs 2,980 crore sanctioned

in 2021 under the Swachh Bharat initiative due to the non-payment of the state's share of Rs 150 crore. He said that efforts are being made to secure the pending funds from the Central government with the cooperation of CM Naidu.

Minister Narayana highlighted the government's initiatives to create employment opportunities for the youth and drive overall development in the state. He explained that with support from the Swachh Andhra Corporation and Urban Greening Corporation, the state government is taking steps to enhance greenery. Moreover, he announced that the government would soon convene a meeting with people's representatives and officials to discuss the development of Vijayawada. Lastly, he praised the residents of NTR Colony for establishing a gym and providing gym equipment using their funds.

Collectors hold...

Continued from Page 1

He called on them to work diligently in resolving issues arising during the execution of government programs, thereby enhancing the government's image. Prasad underscored the importance of promptly addressing public grievances. He advised Collectors to escalate unresolved issues to higher authorities if necessary. Commending their proactive approach in distributing NTR Bharosa pensions, he encouraged them to extend the same enthusiasm to other government initiatives.

Expressing confidence in the Collectors' ability to ensure the success of the 100-day plan, Prasad reiterated the vital role they play in the state's development. He highlighted their responsibility for the successful implementation of government programs and emphasized the priority of addressing public grievances.

In summary, the Chief Secretary's address reinforced the District Collectors' critical function in driving the state's progress and ensuring effective governance.

AP under 'Red Book' rule: Perni

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Perni Venkatramaiah (Nani) has launched a scathing attack on the TDP coalition government's administration, accusing it of abandoning the principles of the Constitution of Babasaheb Ambedkar in favour of a 'Red Book' constitution. Speaking at a press conference at the party's central office on Monday, Nani condemned the coalition government, led by Chandrababu Naidu, Pawan Kalyan, and Narendra Modi, for its alleged failure to maintain law and order.

Nani argued that the current



criticising the state's deteriorating situation.

Highlighting the recent murder of YSR Congress Party worker Subbarayudu in Mahanandi mandal of Nandyal district, Nani described it as a clear case of government-sponsored violence.

He criticized the government for its failure to uphold law and order, citing multiple instances of police inaction or complicity in violence.

Nani expressed outrage over the increasing attacks on police officers by ruling party leaders, noting that such incidents have become routine in Andhra Pradesh. He recounted

an incident in Seetharampuram where, despite repeated pleas for protection, the police failed to act until after the murder occurred.

Reflecting on past events, Nani recalled that in 2014, Chandrababu Naidu, at his first district collectors' conference after taking office, instructed collectors to allow party workers to earn money, as they had been out of power for ten years. Nani contrasted this with YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's approach, emphasizing Reddy's directive to work beyond party lines and his leadership's dignity and magnanimity.

Nani also criticized Chandrababu Naidu for not addressing key manifesto promises, such as the Super Six and gas cylinders, during the recent collectors' meeting. He mocked Naidu's frequent claim of insufficient funds, reminding that the state treasury was empty when Naidu left office in 2019. Despite this, Jagan Mohan Reddy did not renege on his commitments.

Jagan to visit attack victim at V'wada hospital today

VIJAYAWADA: YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president and former chief minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy is set to visit party leader Gijunipalli Srinivasa Rao, who is undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Vijayawada on Tuesday. Srinivasa Rao was attacked by TDP supporters in Jaggaiahpet, NTR district. After concluding his engagements in Bengaluru, Jagan Mohan Reddy will travel to Gannavaram and then proceed

directly to the hospital to meet with Srinivasa Rao. Following the hospital visit, he will return to his residence in Thadepalli. On Wednesday and Thursday, Jagan will hold meetings with local representatives from the united Visakhapatnam district. During these two days, no other meetings with the party president will be possible. The party central office has requested that all leaders and workers take note of this schedule.

Excise case: HC...

Continued from Page 1

The chief minister, who was arrested by the ED on March 21, was granted bail by the trial court in the money laundering case on June 20. However, the trial court's order was stayed by the high court. On July 12, the Supreme Court granted him interim bail in the money laundering case. The excise policy was scrapped in 2022 after the Delhi lieutenant governor ordered a CBI probe into alleged irregularities and corruption involving the formulation and execution of the excise policy.

According to the CBI and the ED, irregularities were committed while modifying the excise policy and undue favours extended to licence holders

Bangladesh slides...

Continued from Page 1

She arrived in India in a C-130J military transport aircraft of the Bangladesh Air Force. She is likely to meet her daughter Saima Wazed, who is based in Delhi and working as the WHO's regional director for South-East Asia.

Back home in Dhaka, restive crowds, their protests giving way to jubilation that the Hasina rule had ended, swarmed the airport and even spilled into the runway. The Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre in the city's Dhanmondi area was damaged. Four Hindu temples suffered "minor" damages across the country, eyewitnesses and a community leader said. The Bangabandhu memorial museum - dedicated to Mujibur Rahman who was assassinated along with his wife and their three sons while serving as president in 1975 - was also vandalised. Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana had survived the purge as they were abroad. Hasina then spent six years in exile in India. The home of Dr Wajed Miah, Hasina's husband, was not spared either in the vortex of violence on Monday, local reports said. From Ganabhadan, the prime minister's official residence, came extraordinary visuals of protesters storming in and walking away with sofas and even chairs.

12 NSP gates...

Continued from Page 1

Twelve gates were raised to a height of five feet to release excess water to the downstream Pulichintala Project. A siren was sounded to alert downstream residents before the release.

Engineers reported that the NSP is receiving an inflow of 2,74,000 cusecs and releasing 1,13,889 cusecs downstream.

The water level at NSP is currently at 583.60 feet, against a total capacity of 590 feet. Out of the total storage capacity of 312.5 TMC, 293.39 TMC has been impounded. More gates are expected to be lifted due to the continuing heavy inflow. The scenic release of water attracted many tourists to the Nagarjuna Sagar Project.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha

Tithi: Dwititya: Aug 05 06:03 PM to Aug 06 07:52 PM

Trititya: Aug 06 07:52 PM to Aug 07 10:06 PM

Nakshatram:

Magha: Aug 05 03:21 PM to Aug 06 05:44 PM

Purva Phalguni: Aug 06 05:44 PM to Aug 07 08:30 PM

Rahukalam: 3:32 PM to 5:07 PM

Yamagandam: 9:11 AM to 10:46 AM

Varjyam: 02:39 AM to 04:26 AM

Gulika: 12:21 PM to 1:57 PM

Amritakalam: 03:05 PM to 04:51 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:56 AM to 12:47 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Showers

Temp: 32°

Humidity: 78%

Sunrise: 5:49 AM

Sunset: 6:37 PM

Updated: August 5, 2024 5:00 PM

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

No. 1 to 18/2024-2025/AE1 Date: 02-06-2024

Name of the work: Operation and Maintenance of 19 CPWS Schemes for the year 2024-25 in erst while Vizianagaram District. Estimate Cost: Rs. 1631.80 Lakhs.

Tender Document available date and time: 09.08.2024 at 11.00 AM to 23.08.2024 at 3.00 PM. Other details will be available in website: www.approcurement.gov.in. Ph: 9100120737.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, RWS & S Circle, Vizianagaram

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

Water shortage: Paddy crop under GPS canal dries up

Around 5,000 acres in NTR and Krishna districts hit as water not released to the canal

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Gollapudi Lift Irrigation Scheme (GPS) ayacut, despite having plenty of available irrigation water from River Krishna and receiving huge flood water from the Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar Project (NSP) as well as the Pattiseema Lift Irrigation Scheme (PLIS), has been neglected by the Water Resources Department.

There are cracks on many paddy fields in Nunna, Pathapadu and other villages of Vijayawada Rural in NTR district and Mustabada village of Gannavaram mandal in Krishna district, caused due to the lack of timely irrigation. If the situation continues, the farmers will suffer even more losses.

Even though the Kharif paddy season started a month ago, the Andhra Pradesh State Irrigation and Command Area Development Authority (IDC) has not released irrigation water to the GPS scheme so far. As a result, around 5,000 acres of ayacut in the NTR and Krishna districts are facing severe water shortage, and paddy fields are drying up.

The GPS canal from Gollapudi near Vijayawada to Mustabada near Gannavaram is the main irrigation source for around 7,000 acres in the NTR and Krishna districts. However, many agriculture fields have been converted



Cracks on the paddy fields in Nunna village caused due to water shortage

into real estate ventures, reducing cultivation to 5,000 acres. Of these, more than 4,000 acres are in Vijayawada Rural and the remaining 1,000 acres are in Mustabada village.

The GPS canal has been neglected by the governments for the past few years. Earlier, this canal was under the purview of the Water Resources Department. Later, it came under the supervision of the Irrigation and Command Area Development Authority. Furthermore, the canal is filled with silt and weeds that disrupt water flow.

For the water release, the government has constructed a pump house on the riverbed at Gollapudi, and water is being released into the canal through

GPS canal, according to the farmers. Additionally, the water flow in the canal is obstructed by the silt and weeds, they said.

Kolli Koti Reddy, a young farmer from Nunna village, has said that as no water has been released, the paddy cultivation under the canal is hard. Some farmers lifted water using motors from the GPS canal, but it is not sufficient, he said.

"We invited the attention of Gannavaram MLA Yarlagadda Venkata Rao to the issue a week ago. None of the officials has responded. The paddy fields are drying up due to the lack of irrigation water. If the authorities do not respond, they will face more losses," he said.

Another farmer, M. Sivaramaiah, said that the GPS canal had not been developed for the past five years. Even the previous State government did not release a single penny for the canal development. At this stage, the farmers are hoping that the TDP-led NDA government will develop the canal, he added.

The flood water releases started from the NSP, and the water will enter River Krishna shortly. So, he requested the IDC officials to release water immediately to the GPS canal to protect the standing paddy crop. Otherwise, the paddy plants will dry up, he said.

motors. It's the responsibility of the farmers to pump water from River Krishna, and no funds have been released for several years to maintain the pump house, according to the farmers.

Even during the summer season, the government failed to conduct desilting in the canal, which is the main source of water for many villages of Vijayawada Rural. While the State government released irrigation and drinking water a month ago, there were no releases to this canal.

Normally, the Water Resources Department releases irrigation water to canals in June or July. However, it's August and the IDC officials have not released water to the

Over 1 lakh trees cut down illegally during YSRCP rule: V'wada MP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In response to a query from Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath about tree loss during the last five years under the YSRCP regime, Union Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change Bhupendra Yadav reported that 104,396 trees were illegally cut down in Andhra Pradesh during this period. Annamayya district saw the highest number of illegal tree felling, with 27,178 trees removed, followed by Dr BR Ambedkar Konaseema district with 25,953 trees. The Minister also highlighted that illegal tree-cutting occurred across 13 districts in the state.

Additionally, the Minister revealed that Andhra Pradesh's



forest cover has decreased by 769.66 hectares over the past five years. Specifically, the Guntur district experienced a

reduction of 165.07 hectares, while the ASR district saw a slight decrease of 2.24 hectares. It was noted that forest areas

have diminished significantly in all eleven districts of the state. The "Trees Outside Forests in India" (TOFI) program has been introduced in Andhra Pradesh, along with other states including Assam, Haryana, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh.

Following the statement, MP Sivanath criticised the current administration, alleging that the 104,396 trees were cut down specifically for the benefit of YS Jagan. He claimed that the previous government had erected screens to obstruct public view of Jagan's convey, leading to illegal tree felling. Sivanath accused Jagan of harming both the state's economic situation and its environment.

Veerabhadra Swamy annual fest from Aug 9-17

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Narayanavanam-based Bhadra Kali Sameta Veerabhadra Swamy annual fest will be observed between August 9 to 17 in a grand manner by TTD.

The annual Brahmotsavams will commence with 'Ankurarpanam' on August 9 followed by 'Dhwajaroohanam' at 6 pm. Later, 'Chandra Prabha Vahanam' takes place from 7.30 pm onwards.

Every day the morning 'vahanams' are between 9.30 am and 10.30 am and evening 'vahanams' are from 7 pm to 9.30 pm.

The important festival days include 'Agni Gunda Pravesam' on August 13 followed by 'Puli Vahanam', 'Rathotsavam' on August 15 at 3 pm, and 'Kalyanotsavam'. The devotees can participate in the payment of Rs 500 per ticket on which two persons will be allowed.

On the last day on August 17, 'Veera Khadga Snanam' will be performed followed by 'Pallaki Utsavam' and 'Dhwajavarohanam' in the night.

TTD All Dharmic projects will organise devotional cultural programmes on these days.

Blueprint to transform Visakhapatnam into world-class metropolis

Focus on tourism, infrastructure, and urban development

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA) Commissioner KS Viswanathan has announced an ambitious blueprint to transform Visakhapatnam into a world-class metropolis. With a comprehensive focus on



tourism, infrastructure, and urban development, the VMRDA is poised to address key challenges and unlock the region's full potential.

During a press conference on Monday, Viswanathan acknowledged delays in plot auctions but assured the public that approximately 1,000 plots would be auctioned soon. To cater to the middle-income group, the authority is planning affordable layouts, ensuring equitable urban development. Highlighting the financial imperative, the Commissioner emphasised the need to accelerate plot

sales in MIG Smart Township layouts to generate essential funds for further development.

To improve efficiency and public convenience, Viswanathan announced that VMRDA will launch an online platform for various services. This platform will enable online bookings for facilities like the Children's Arena, Gurajada Kalakshetram, and other parks. Moreover, rent collection for shopping complexes will also move to this online system, streamlining processes and enhancing user experience.

Visakhapatnam residents yearn for peace, security: Commissioner

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a resolute declaration of commitment to public service, Police Commissioner Dr Shankha Brata Bagchi has made his personal contact number 7995095799 accessible to the public since assuming office. Issues ranging from public alcohol and marijuana consumption to traffic congestion and criminal activities dominated the calls received. "The people of Visakhapatnam yearn for peace and security," Commissioner Bagchi emphasised in an interview with The Pioneer. To tackle these challenges head-on, special attention is being given to combating ganja trafficking, managing traffic flow, and curbing rowdy behaviour.

"We are closely monitoring released rowdy elements and illicit settlements," Commissioner Bagchi affirmed. "Those engaging in



disruptive activities will face consequences, including imprisonment." Land encroachments and grabs have also drawn significant attention, with rigorous inquiries and collaborative efforts with Revenue authorities underway. Corrective action will be taken against proven offenders," assured Commissioner Bagchi.

Highlighting infrastructural deficiencies, including over 1,000 non-functional CCTV cameras, urgent measures are being implemented.

Hearing in Pinnelli's bail plea adjourned

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a setback to former MLA Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy, the High Court on Monday adjourned the bail petition by one week. The bail petition came up for hearing on Monday. Even before the arguments began, the bench adjourned the bail petition to next week.

Counsel for Pinnelli filed petitions seeking bail in both the cases registered by the Palnadu police. However, the hearing on these petitions was adjourned by the High Court bench.

Pinnelli, who has been eagerly waiting for bail, is once again disappointed with the adjournment of hearing.

Work hard, start studying to achieve success, students told

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Mylavaram MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad has emphasised the importance of education in their overall development. He encouraged the students to work hard in order to achieve success in life. He also stated that poverty should not hinder access to education, and that the government is prioritising educational initiatives. MLA Krishna Prasad, TDP NTR district president N Raghuram, Jana Sena Party Mylavaram in-charge A Rammohana Rao alias Gandhi and others distributed books and bags to the VVR Government Junior College at Mylavaram on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Krishna Prasad appealed to the students to utilise the Vidya Kanuka presented by the



government. "Many stalwarts who are in top positions in the State have completed their studies in government schools and colleges. Besides education, culture, discipline and having a competitive spirit are important," he said. He expressed confidence that employment opportunities would be increased under the able leadership of Chief Minister

N Chandrababu Naidu, he added.

Later, he said science and technology were developed on par with changes in the country and suggested that the students use mobiles and technology for their overall development. Later, he announced that he will present prize money to talented students next year.

UTTARANDHRA SUJALA SRAVANTI

Govt committed to project: MP CM Ramesh

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

MP CM Ramesh reaffirmed the alliance government's unwavering commitment to the ambitious Uttarandhra Sujala Sravanti project, aimed at providing essential drinking and irrigation water to the area. Addressing a media conference at the MP camp office in Anakapalli on Monday, Ramesh emphasized the importance of this project for the local population and outlined the government's plans for the upcoming local body elections.

Ramesh highlighted the central government's approval of the SC classification, praising the Prime Minister's dedication to fulfilling a long-standing election promise. He underscored the alliance's strategic positioning for the local body elections, confirming that an alliance candidate will be in the fray.

In a major infrastructure boost, Ramesh announced the approval of a six-lane national highway connecting Visakhapatnam to Vijayawada. The tenders for this project will be called soon, with work expected to commence shortly. Additionally, ongoing surveys for a national highway from Tuni to Narsipatnam, Madugula, Chodavaram, and Kothavalasa promise to pave the way for industrial development in the region.



Significant efforts are being made to enhance agricultural logistics, with special arrangements underway to transport locally grown fruits by train, a move that will greatly benefit betel nut farmers near Payakaraopet. Ramesh also shared positive updates from the Railway Minister regarding the development of Anakapalli railway station into a model station.

Furthering the region's industrial prospects, authorities have been directed to acquire 5,000 acres of land to establish an industrial corridor near Madugula and Chodavaram. The Uttarandhra Sujala Sravanti scheme aims to bring

Polavaram water to Anakapalli, with the Detailed Project Report (DPR) currently being prepared. Within the next one or two years, Godavari water is expected to reach the area via the Polavaram Left Canal.

Ramesh expressed optimism about the potential for setting up hydrogen companies in the district and mentioned ongoing efforts to create a furniture manufacturing cluster, which would generate substantial employment opportunities. Addressing infrastructure challenges, he noted the recent rain damage to district roads and has ordered immediate patchwork repairs. He criticized the pre-

vious government for diverting Rs. 400 crore of New Development Bank funds, resulting in the current poor state of the roads. The alliance government plans a permanent solution, with road repairs set to start soon, and completion of patchwork on national highways damaged by rains. Confirming the alliance candidate's participation in the upcoming MLC elections for local bodies, Ramesh stated that CM Chandrababu is expected to announce the candidate within a day or two. Emphasizing the importance of united support, Ramesh has already discussed the matter with district MLAs, BJP, and Jana Sena leaders.

CPM-CITU protest against Kovvada Nuclear Plant

A catastrophic nuclear accident could devastate a vast swathe of the coastline

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

A powerful demonstration against the proposed Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) in Kovvada, Srikakulam district, was held on Monday, led by CPM and CITU leaders. The protest, which saw participation from residents of neighbouring villages like Patharlapalli, Kothapalem, and Allivalasa, underscored the deep-seated fear and anger over the potential environmental and human catastrophe the plant poses.

CPM district secretary D Govinda Rao and CITU district secretary Ch Ammannaidu spearheaded the demonstration, delivering fiery speeches that highlighted the grave risks associated with locating a nuclear facility in a region prone to seismic activ-

ity. "The Kovvada region is a ticking time bomb," warned Rao, emphasizing the potential for a catastrophic nuclear accident that could devastate a vast swathe of the coastline, impacting millions of lives.

Ammannaidu echoed these concerns, stating, "The government's decision to prioritise nuclear energy over the safety and well-being of the people is unconscionable. We cannot afford to gamble with the future of our region."

The protest featured a series of powerful demonstrations, including placards and banners carrying messages against the NPP. Local residents shared their fears and concerns, expressing apprehension about the potential impact on their livelihoods, health, and the environment.

"We are fishermen. The sea



is our life. A nuclear accident will destroy our fishing grounds and our way of life," said Ramu, a local fisherman. "We will not allow this to happen."

The leaders of the protest

called for a complete halt to the NPP project and urged the government to invest in renewable energy sources as a safer and more sustainable alternative. They also demanded a comprehensive assess-

ment of the potential risks and impacts of the plant, including a thorough study of the seismic zone. The organisers have vowed to continue their struggle until the project is permanently abandoned.

Spl CS asks collectors to take steps to check communicable diseases

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Special Chief Secretary of the Medical and Health Department, MT Krishnababu, has explained the health, medical and family welfare situation in the State. During the Collectors conference on Monday, he said that the collectors should take special measures on MCH services and communicable diseases in the districts. The target was for 100 per cent TB notification by 2027, zero cases of Filariasis and zero cases of Leprosy by 2027. He also spoke on NCD Management, Cardiac Care, and Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.



Said measures should be taken on the issues of tribal health, mental health and quality compliance in the districts. Telemenus call centre has been set up, and de-addiction centres are also being set up. We have certified 760 facilities in NQS certification. This is the highest number in the country and we are targeting to get 100% NQS certification by the year 2025-26. The deworming day should be held on 20th August. Albendazole tablets should be supplied to children aged 1 to 19 years.

He said, "Measures should be taken on the issues of tribal health, mental health and quality compliance in the districts. Telemenus call centre has been set up, and de-addiction centres are also being set up. We have certified 760 facilities in NQS certification. This is the highest number in the country and we are targeting to get 100% NQS certification by the year 2025-26. The deworming day should be held on 20th August. Albendazole tablets should be supplied to children aged 1 to 19 years."

RP Sisodia, Special Chief Secretary Stamps and Registrations said that in Sri Sathya Sai, Tirupati, Chittoor, YSR, Annamayya, Prakasam and other districts registrations (gift, sale) of freehold (ownership rights) lands have been done hugely and they want to re-examine them. They also want to examine how (22A) prohibited lists, assigned, dotted, Inam land conditional

patna etc. Coordination between officials of revenue and registration departments is a must, he said adding settlement of land disputes and preservation of files are very important. On this occasion, the case of burning revenue records in the Madanapalle sub-collector office was specially mentioned. Collectors should take responsibility for the implementation of rules in land conversion. AK Singhal, Special Chief Secretary Municipal Administration said that 100 Anna Canteens will be launched from August 15 and the remaining 83 canteens are likely to be launched on September 23. He disclosed the details of urban local bodies, census, water tap connections, UGD connections and garbage collection. The topics of expansion of drains, garbage dumps, pipe leakages, pipelines are explained. Bank loans have been provided to 39,399 beneficiaries of TIDCO houses. He said that all the facilities have

already been provided to 120 TIDCO colonies and AMRUT, AMRUT 2.0, APUWSSMP and other schemes are being implemented for 12.66 lakh houses.

Shashibhushan Kumar, Special Chief Secretary Panchayat Raj and Rural Development explained the programs and schemes being implemented by PR & RD. Panchayati Raj Institutions (3 Tier System), MGNREGS, Jalakala, Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP), NTR Bharosa Pension Distribution, Jal Jeevan Mission, State Development Scheme, NTR Sujala, Rural Roads, Rural Infrastructure, Swachh Bharat Mission programmes were revealed. SERP targets for next year have been mentioned.

Ajay Jain, Special Chief Secretary of Housing revealed programmes like development, welfare, employment generation and poverty elevation

were revealed in the housing sector. PMAY (Urban), PMAY (Rural), PM Janman, and NTR rural housing programmes were explained. He said that a total of 26,28,353 houses have been given permission, of which 11,42,049 houses have already been completed. He said that out of 5,44,113 houses sanctioned under NTR Rural Housing, 4,56,929 houses have already been completed and 87,184 are under construction.

V Vinay Chand Secretary Tourism and Culture briefed about the programmes undertaken in Simhachalam, Annaram and Vedagiri areas. In ASR district Araku, Lambasingi and Gandikota in Kadapa district projects under Swadesh Darshan 2.0 with the help of the central government were briefed. He also mentioned the status of projects undertaken at Ahobilam in the Nandyal district and Nagarjuna Sagar in the Palnadu

district. He said that Oberoi Group of Hotels, Novotel Hotels, Hyatt Regency Hotel, and Mayfair Hotels and Resorts have been constructed to further promote tourism.

Saurabh Gaur spoke about the Public Grievance Monitoring System, CM Core Dashboard, District RTG Centers, CC Cameras, e-procurement etc. District-wise 4G connectivity details have been explained. He said that 2,305 towers have been installed in 5,423 villages.

Principal Secretary K Sunitha has guided the Collectors to identify Handloom, handicraft and textiles as the second largest employment provider after agriculture. Speaking at the Collectors conference she has asked for setting up of garmenting units in LIG housing layouts where there are more than 1000 houses by encouraging textile investments in border districts of metropolitan cities like Chittoor, Nellore, Anantapur, Satyasai, Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam and Vijayanagara.

Mentioned that the Textile engineering in Vignana, and Polytechnic institutions in Guntur and Madakasira, have only 25% enrolment though they have good future, the Collectors should ensure that these institutions have sufficient students as there is a demand for them. Since AP has the highest number of varieties of handlooms, the people with the potential to work in handlooms and handicrafts should be identified in the skill census and new societies should be formed.

4-year-old girl abducted, found hurt outside village

PNS ■ ELURU

A disturbing incident unfolded in Pallerlamudi village, Nuzvid mandal, when a miscreant abducted a four-year-old girl from her home on the night of Sunday. The child, who had been sleeping with her parents, was discovered with injuries at the NTR station on the outskirts of the village in the early hours of Monday.

The police have not yet confirmed if the girl was sexually assaulted. Authorities report that after midnight, the abductor stealthily took the girl from her home, stole her silver anklets, and left her on the outskirts.

A passerby noticed the injured girl and alerted her parents, who promptly retrieved her and took her to their home. RDO Bhavani Shankar visited the scene and met with the girl's parents. She stated that the child was initially taken to the

A passerby noticed the injured girl and alerted her parents, who promptly retrieved her and took her to their home. RDO Bhavani Shankar visited the scene and met with the girl's parents. She stated that the child was initially taken to the government hospital in Nuzvid and later transferred to the GGH in Vijayawada. Fortunately, the girl's condition is stable, but further investigation is required to determine the full extent of her injuries and whether she was sexually assaulted.

government hospital in Nuzvid and later transferred to the GGH in Vijayawada. Fortunately, the girl's condition is stable, but further investigation is required to determine the full extent of her injuries and whether she was sexually assaulted.

The police have launched an investigation, including reviewing CCTV footage, to identify

the perpetrator. They suspect that the motive behind the abduction was to steal the girl's silver anklets.

Housing Minister K. Parthasarathy expressed his shock over the incident and instructed the police to arrest the culprit swiftly and enforce strict measures.

He has also sought updates from the SP regarding the case.

ROOF COLLAPSE INCIDENT

MLA Akhila Priya hands over ex gratia to kin of victims



PNS ■ NANDYAL

Allagadda MLA Bhumika Akhila Priya on Monday handed over Rs 10 lakh ex gratia to the kin of four people who were killed in a roof collapse incident.

Four members of a family including the couple and their two daughters were killed when the roof of their house collapsed and fell on them when they were asleep a few days ago at Chinna Vangali village in Chagalamarri mandal. However, one of their daughters was studying by staying in a hostel and she escaped death.

However, she lost her parents and two siblings in the mishap. Moved with her heartening fate, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu announced Rs 10 lakh to 14-year-old girl Prsanna.

MLA Akhila Priya went to their house at Chinna Vangali village on Monday and handed over the ex gratia cheque to the girl. Akhila Priya assured the girl of extending all help till she settled in her life. Akhila Priya, who is also a former Minister, appealed to the people to inform the officials about the dilapidated houses.

I&PR role in good governance vital, says Director Shukla

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Information and Public Relations (I&PR) department is set to enhance good governance by efficiently communicating state government initiatives, decisions, and policies to the public, according to I&PR Director Himanshu Shukla.



Addressing the Collectors' conference on Monday, Shukla introduced a new dashboard developed by the I&PR department using AI technology, following directions from Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. He highlighted that the

dashboard now includes updates on development programmes, issues, and preventive reporting from all government departments for the period between July 17 and July 28, accessible to government officials.

Evolve action plans to fill reservoirs, DCs told

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On Monday, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu directed District Collectors to formulate a comprehensive action plan to ensure reservoirs and ponds are filled efficiently to maximize water usage.

During a review of the state's water resources at a Collectors' conference, the Chief Minister emphasised the importance of promoting crops that require minimal water. He instructed the Collectors to ensure the timely filling of all drinking water tanks across the state and set a goal of providing irrigation water to every acre of farmland.

Highlighting the necessity of interlinking the state's five major rivers—the Krishna, Godavari, Pennar, Nagavali, and Vamsadhara—along with 35 smaller rivers and 38,422 minor irrigation facilities, Mr. Naidu stressed the importance of utilizing every available drop of water during the current rainy season.



With four crore acres needing irrigation across 26 districts, he urged for efficient water use.

The Chief Minister also called for a review of lift irrigation schemes that can be revived with minimal expenditure and instructed the Collectors to collaborate with the Agricultural Department to promote high-yield crops that use less irrigation water.

He underscored the importance of supplying irrigation water to even the tail-end areas and instructed Collectors to carefully monitor canal water releases and make timely decisions.

Naidu stressed the active participation of the Irrigation, Revenue, Police, and Rural Water Supply departments, as well as other relevant bodies. He criticized the previous administration for failing to allocate funds for essential infrastructure, such as gates for irrigation projects, and warned that any negligence leading to the loss of gates would result in the suspension of the Assistant Engineer and Deputy Engineer responsible.

Reiterating the need for river interlinking, the Chief Minister urged Collectors to use drones to monitor canals and irrigation projects, stating that any failures or mistakes could reflect poorly on the government, which he is keen to avoid.

'Volunteer' system will stay: Dola

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Minister for Social Welfare Dola Bala Veeranjaneeya Swamy denied news reports that the coalition government would abolish the 'Volunteer' system.

In a statement here on Monday, the Minister said that the TDP had assured to continue to the volunteer system after coming to power and they abide by it.

He also denied the speculative news items appearing in a

section of media spreading fears that the NDA-led AP government would abolish the volunteer system.

"The TDP will not deviate from its assurance and there is no question of revoking the 'Volunteer' system. There is no need for the volunteers to worry about their job. Misleading news is being disseminated to tarnish the image of the government," he stated and warned of taking stringent action against those who are spreading such false news.

Engineering girl student ends life



PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

An engineering girl student committed suicide by hanging herself to the ceiling fan in her hostel room at Macharla on Monday.

Police said that the deceased Jakkir Renuka (20) was studying B.Tech second year at a private engineering college in Macherla. She belonged to Dhone in Kurnool district. The students saw the deceased hanging from the fan in the hostel room and informed the principal. The reason for her extreme steps is yet to be ascertained, police said.

DEFECTION OF MLAS BRS intensifies move for legal action

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS has intensified its attempts to launch legal action regarding the disqualification of its MLAs who had defected to the Congress. A team of senior BRS leaders, led by Working President KTR and Harish Rao held discussions with legal experts in New Delhi.

The BRS representatives also met constitutional experts on Monday. Constitutional expert Aryaman Sundaram told the BRS team that the Supreme Court has already delivered many verdicts regarding defections by MLAs, including those related to Manipur. He emphasized that, unlike in the past, the Speaker cannot indefinitely delay the decision on disqualification.

BRS leaders provided the legal experts with petitions filed in the High Court regarding the disqualification of three of its MLAs and the complaints made to the Speaker concerning the MLAs who had defected.

Given the clear guidelines of



BRS brass meeting legal experts in Delhi on Monday

the Supreme Court, the legal experts said the High Court is unlikely to postpone its decision for an extended period. If the High Court does not announce a verdict promptly, the matter may be taken to the Supreme Court.

KTR said the BRS will continue its legal battle based on Supreme Court rulings and the advice of legal and constitutional experts. He expressed confidence that the issue of disqualifying the MLAs who had defected will be resolved within a month through either the High Court or the Supreme Court.

KTR asserted that by elec-

tions are inevitable in Telangana and that the defecting MLAs will be taught a lesson by the people. He criticized the Congress for encouraging defections in Telangana while preaching against it at the national level. He assured that the Congress would be taught a fitting lesson with the help of courts soon. Senior BRS leaders, including former minister Harish Rao, Jagadish Reddy, Gangula Kamalakar, Rajya Sabha Member Vaddiraju Ravichandra, MLA Kotha Prabhakar Reddy and other party leaders attended the meeting with constitutional experts.

Class 10 girl found dead in hostel room

PNS ■ KURNOOL

A heartbreaking incident occurred in Macchumarri village of Mantralayam mandal, on Monday, where 15-year-old Parvati, a Class 10 student, was found dead in her hostel room.

The young student, who was staying at the hostel while attending a private school, reportedly took her own life by hanging from the ceiling fan. Parvati hailed from Sumkeswari village.

Police are investigating the circumstances that led to this tragic event.

The police have registered a case and have sent the body to the GGH for a post-mortem examination.



Land dispute petitions up by 40%

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The number of petitions related to land disputes has surged from 10% to 50%, pointing to potential irregularities and significant errors during the previous administration.

At a Collector's conference on Monday, Registration Department Special Chief Secretary RP Sisodia highlighted that while land dispute petitions were once at 10%, they have now climbed to 50%.

"The dramatic rise in land dispute petitions suggests serious issues during the YSRCP's five-year term. The influx of complaints about land grabbing, encroachments, and forced land acquisitions indicates that problems were prevalent in the previous government," Sisodia stated. He urged Collectors to address these



The dramatic rise in land dispute petitions suggests serious issues during the YSRCP's five-year term. The influx of complaints about land grabbing, encroachments, and forced land acquisitions indicates that problems were prevalent in the previous government.

disputes promptly.

Sisodia also noted irregularities in assigned lands, mentioning that D patta lands were previously used as gifts. He advised Collectors to review such cases thoroughly to ensure justice for affected individuals. A significant number of land dispute cases have emerged from Tirupati, Chittoor, YSR, Annamayya, and Prakasam districts. He proposed forming a committee, led by a Deputy Collector, to expedite the resolution of these disputes.

Additionally, Sisodia criticised the recent fire accident at the sub-collector's office in Madanapalle, which exposed security lapses due to non-functional CCTVs. He called for heightened security measures for government officials, emphasising the need for better protection and oversight.

Velugu animators stage dharna

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Velugu animators, ASHA workers, midday meal workers and employment assurance scheme field assistants here on Monday took out a rally in the main streets of the city and staged a dharna in front of the Collectorate here on Monday, protesting against political harassment and forcing the workers to submit resignations.

CITU national vice president G Babryani, district Asha workers union general secretary Chandramalla

Padma, AP Anganwadi workers and helpers union district president Dadala Padma, and AP Velugu AOA Employees Sangham district general secretary Ganga Bhavani have led the rally and dharna.

They alleged that midday meal workers, employment assurance scheme field assistants, and Velugu animators in Tuni, Kotananduru, Jaggampeta, Kajuluru, U.Kothapalli, Tallarevu, and Kakinada rural mandals were being forced to tender resignations by the TDP alliance leaders. They also recalled

that at the time of the elections, these leaders promised them employment and safety, but after coming to power, they conveniently changed their stand and removed them on the lines of the Jagannathan Reddy government. They warned that if the leaders did not change their attitude and continue harassing scheme employees, they were bound to incur the people's wrath. Later, they called on the collector in a delegation and submitted their demands.

ACROSS THE STATES



Peacocks died of heat stroke in Palam in June: Min

The 27 peacocks found dead at the Palam air base in June had succumbed to heat stroke and a post-mortem revealed they had no disease, Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav said in the Lok Sabha on Monday. He said the Central government is very concerned about the protection of the country's national bird and has taken several steps. The government has designated two sanctuaries in south India for peacocks, he said during Question Hour. "Twenty-seven peacocks died during the summer. Their postmortem were done and no disease was found. The peacocks died due to heat stroke," he said. The minister said there are three types of peacocks. Those found in India are also available in Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Another type is found in China, Cambodia and some other Asian countries and the third species in Congo. "According to international reports, the peacocks found in India is the safest. Those found in China and other Asian countries are in the category of endangered while



Ahead of I-Day, CISF to intensify security checks

Ahead of Independence Day, the CISF will intensify security checks at metro stations from August 5, the DMRC said on Monday and advised commuters to plan their journeys accordingly. The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) also urged passengers to cooperate with security personnel. "In view of the enhanced security arrangements ahead of Independence Day on August 15, security checks for passengers will be further intensified by the CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) across metro stations from Tuesday," the DMRC's principal executive director Anuj Dayal said. The enhanced checks might result in longer queues at some metro stations, especially during peak hours, he added. The DMRC advised the passengers to allow for additional time for their commutes. "Passengers are requested to cooperate with the security personnel during security checks," it said.



Nobel Prize-winning physicist Tsung-Dao Lee dies at age 97

Chinese-American physicist Tsung-Dao Lee, who in 1957 became the second-youngest scientist to receive a Nobel Prize, died Sunday at his home in San Francisco at age 97, according to a Chinese university and a research center. Lee, whose work advanced the understanding of particle physics, was one of the great masters in the field, according to a joint obituary released Monday by the Tsung-Dao Lee Institute at Shanghai Jiao Tong University and the Beijing-based China Center for Advanced Science and Technology. Lee, a naturalized US citizen since 1962, was also a professor emeritus at Columbia University in New York. Robert Oppenheimer, known as the father of the atomic bomb, once praised Lee as one of the most brilliant theoretical physicists of the time, whose work showed "remarkable freshness, versatility and style." Lee was born in Shanghai on November 24, 1926, the third of six children to a merchant father, Tsing-Kong Lee, and a mother, Ming-Chang Chang, who was a devout Catholic, according to local newspaper Wenhui Daily.

Coaching centres have become 'death chambers'

Supreme Court issues notices to Centre, Delhi govt



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

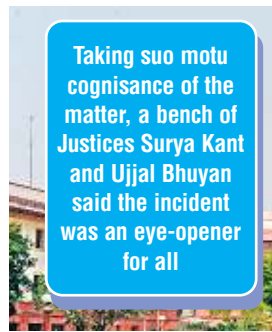
Coaching centres have become "death chambers" and are playing with the lives of students, the Supreme Court said on Monday as it issued notices to the Centre and the Delhi government on three IAS aspirants drowning in the basement of an institute here.

Taking suo motu cognisance of the matter, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan said the incident was an eye-opener for all.

On July 27, three civil services aspirants drowned in the basement library of Rau's IAS Study Circle in the Old Rajinder Nagar area here after it was flooded following heavy rain.

Seven people, including Rau's IAS Study Circle CEO Abhishek Gupta and coordinator Deshpal Singh, have been arrested in the case.

"This is horrible what we are reading. If need be, we will even close down these coaching centres. For the time being, the



Taking suo motu cognisance of the matter, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan said the incident was an eye-opener for all

coaching should go online, unless there is meticulous compliance of building regulations and other safety norms.

"These places (coaching centres) have become death chambers. Coaching centres are playing with the lives of these aspirants who have come from different parts of the country with dreams and are working hard," the bench said.

"The recent unfortunate incident which took away lives of three young aspirants who joined the coaching centres for their career is an eye-opener for



vices and the civic body to inspect all coaching centres here to ascertain if they are complying with the fire safety norms.

Terming the plea frivolous, the apex court dismissed the appeal while imposing a cost of Rs 1 lakh on the association and said no coaching centre should be allowed to operate unless there is compliance with fire safety norms and other requirements.

On Friday, the high court transferred the probe into the deaths of the three students from Delhi Police to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) "to ensure the public has no doubt over the investigation".

The three who died were Shreya Yadav (25) of Uttar Pradesh, Tanya Soni (25) from Telangana and Nevin Delvin (24) from Kerala.

Students enrolled in various coaching institutes have been protesting since the incident, demanding improved safety measures at coaching centres.



INDIAN CULTURAL CENTRE VANDALISED

4 Hindu temples suffer damages in Bangladesh

PNS ■ DHAKA

An Indian cultural centre was vandalised by an unruly mob in Bangladesh's capital and four Hindu temples suffered "minor" damages across the country on Monday, eyewitnesses and a community leader said.

Kajol Debnath, Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council leader, said he has received reports that at least 4 Hindu temples were damaged across the country.

"These are minor damages," he said. However, some Hindu community leaders are afraid in the wake of the tense situation after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster.

The Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre located in Dhaka's Dhanmondi area was damaged by the unruly mob, according to eyewitnesses. The protesters also set fire to several key locations in Dhaka, including Bangabandhu Bhaban, also known as the

Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, at Dhanmondi 32, the Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported.

The museum was dedicated to Hasina's father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who was assassinated while serving as president in 1975.

The development comes as a massive protest forced Prime Minister Hasina to resign and leave Bangladesh. Army Chief General Waqar-uz-Zaman announced that an interim government was being formed and urged protesters to end the violence. The Centre, formally inaugurated in March 2010, promotes bilateral cultural linkages between India and Bangladesh by organising cultural programmes, cultural seminars, workshops and engaging India based Gurus professionals and trainers for Yoga, Hindi, Indian classical Vocal Music and Indian Dances such as Kathak and Manipuri.

Assembly polls in J-K will be held in September: Kishan



PNS ■ R S PURA (J-K)

The Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be held in September, Union Minister G Kishan Reddy said on Monday, urging people in the Union Territory to vote the BJP to power for maintaining the "development tempo" and rooting out terrorism.

He said the activities of Pakistan and its intelligence agency ISI have been largely curtailed in J&K after the abrogation of Article 370 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government on

August 5, five years ago and warned the neighbouring country against supporting terrorism in the Union Territory.

Reddy, who is also election in-charge of the BJP in Jammu and Kashmir, was addressing 'Ekatma Mahotsav' rally organised by his party on the fifth anniversary of Article 370 abrogation at the Bana Singh Stadium here in the outskirts of Jammu. BJP national general secretary in-charge J&K Tarun Chugh and J&K BJP president Ravinder Raina were among the other prominent speakers.

LS passes demands for grants after applying guillotine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Monday approved the budget estimates for expenditure contained in the demands for grants for different ministries after applying a guillotine.

The guillotine was applied after the House discussed demands for grants of 4 ministries -- Railways, Education, Health and Fisheries.

The House also passed the Appropriation Bill 2024, which authorises the government to use certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2024-25.

Guillotine means that the demands for grants for the ministries, on which it is being applied, are considered approved without a discussion.

Spend more on health infrastructure: Nadda to states

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Health Minister J P Nadda on Monday urged state governments to spend more on improving healthcare infrastructure and dismissed opposition allegations on reduction of allocations under the PM-Ayushman Bharat Healthcare Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) this year.

"We don't believe in just making announcements. We believe in effective planning, ensuring last mile delivery, identifying bottlenecks in last



mile delivery and taking steps to remove them," the minister said.

Nadda dared Trinamool Congress members, who were protesting, to tell the House why the West Bengal government had not shared the dengue registry with the Centre.

On opposition claims on reduction of funds for the health infrastructure mission, the health minister said states were able to spend just Rs 1,806 crore out of the bud-

getary allocation of Rs 4,200 crore in last year's budget.

"We are giving money, but it is not spent. You spend the money, we will allocate more funds if the existing funds are spent," Nadda said, adding that Rs 3,200 crore have been earmarked for PM-ABHIM this year.

Nadda said the Modi government has placed healthcare as a priority sector in the allocation made in the Union Budget.

"The health policy released in 2017 had set a target of 2.5 per cent of GDP for the healthcare sector by 2025. In this year's budget the allocation for the health sector is 1.9 per cent of the GDP and we are on track of achieving the target," the health minister said.

Nadda said that in 2013-14, the budget for the health sector was Rs 33,278 crore, and today it stood at Rs 90,958 crore, which is an increase of 164 per cent.

Most of employed rural youth want to switch job

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Around half of rural men aged 18 to 25 are employed while only a quarter of the women in the same age bracket are working, according to a survey involving 5,169 youths across villages of the country, the report of which was released on Monday.

The report added that 70-85 per cent of the youth said they wanted to change their jobs.

The State of Rural Youth Employment 2024, brought out by the Global Development Incubator (GDI), Global Opportunity Youth Network (GOYN), Development Intelligence Unit (DIU), and Transform Rural India Foundation (TRI), is based on

interviews with 5,169 rural youths between 18 and 35 years of age.

The survey findings indicate that more than half of the male youth aged 18-25 are employed, whereas only a quarter of the female youth in the same age bracket are working.

Among those aged 26-35, about 85 per cent of men are employed, and nearly 10 per cent are currently unemployed after having worked earlier.

In contrast, 40 per cent of women in this age group are employed, while a quarter had exited the workforce, and a third had never been employed.

"These findings highlight a gender disparity where most



employed individuals were male, while a majority of those who had never worked were female," a statement on the report said.

According to the report, 70 to 85 per cent youth currently employed expressed a desire to change their jobs, seeking new

opportunities.

"Among those aiming for a career change, a majority of both genders and age groups showed interest in starting small manufacturing, retail, or trading ventures.

However, younger women stood out with a preference for

securing salaried positions in government roles," the report said.

The report stressed on finding out what the rural youth wants.

"Rural India makes up 70 per cent of the country but contributes only 46 per cent towards the country's GDP. Rural India is also home to two-thirds of India's 378 million youth, with agriculture and allied activities employing 80 per cent of these youth. However, with low productivity and decreasing returns, overall low value-added economic activity in rural areas, and seasonal distress migration, hidden/under employment is a critical challenge in the country," the report said.

MANIPUR VIOLENCE

SC extends tenure of Mittal panel by 6 months

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday extended by six months the tenure of the Justice Gita Mittal committee set up to oversee relief and rehabilitation of the victims of ethnic violence in Manipur. A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Misra extended the term of the panel after it was informed that its tenure ended on July 15.

"The committee chaired by Justice Gita Mittal stands extended by six months," the bench said.

On August 7 last year, the bench had ordered setting up of the committee of three former women high court judges to oversee relief and rehabilitation of the victims and compensation to them besides asking former Maharashtra police chief Dattatray Padsalgikar to monitor the probe in criminal cases.

The committee was authorised to submit its reports directly to the top court which is monitoring the cases related to ethnic strife.

The panel, headed by former Jammu and Kashmir High Court Chief Justice Mittal, includes Justices (retd) Shalini P Joshi, a former judge of the Bombay High Court, and Asha Menon, an ex-judge of the Delhi High Court.

BJP likely to get chairmanship of 7-8 LS committees, Cong three

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP may get the chairmanship of seven to eight department-related parliamentary committees of the Lok Sabha, the Congress three and the Samajwadi Party one, sources said on Monday as the process for the constitution of 16 of these panels gets underway.

No other party, including the Trinamool Congress that is the fourth largest with 29 MPs, has the numbers to

give them a numerical claim over the chairmanship of a committee, they said, adding that Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla would use his discretion to ensure fair representation at the top of these panels and among their members.

The department-related committees, 16 headed by Lok Sabha MPs and eight by Rajya Sabha members, are a key multi-party oversight over the working of different ministries, allowing their members to interact with

stakeholders and influence policy.

The BJP, party sources said, might back some of its allies, especially the Shiv Sena, to get at least one chairmanship.

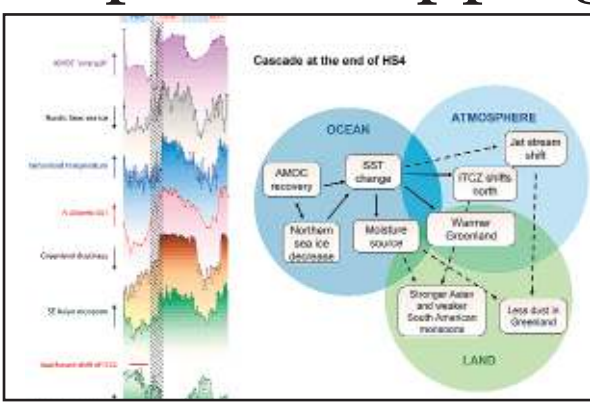
The Sena is the only major BJP ally without a Cabinet portfolio in the central government. With the opposition's strength in the Lok Sabha sizeably higher than the previous House, their representation in these panels is also likely to go up considerably.

'Climate data, knowledge not enough to predict tipping points'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Current data and understanding of Earth's climate are not up to the task to accurately predict tipping points, or points of no return, for critical regions including tropical rainforests, according to a new study.

Climate tipping points play out in response to human-caused global warming and are marked by irreversible changes and consequences. To predict a climate tipping point, scientists use past information to extrapolate or



extend the trends into the future. Citing "huge" gaps in past long-term data and an inadequate understanding of climate-related processes, the study's authors said that the idea of predicting climate tipping points, while appealing, is "fraught with uncertainties."

"Our research is both a wake-up call and a cautionary tale," said Maya Ben-Yami, a doctoral researcher at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), Germany, and lead author of the study published in the journal Science Advances.



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Justice delayed

Chief Justice of India highlights frustration over court delays, calls for urgent reforms to address pendency

The Chief Justice of India has voiced a growing concern shared by many: the prolonged delays in Indian courts are causing immense frustration among the public, turning the judicial process into an unwelcome ordeal. In a recent statement, the Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud remarked, "People get fed up with protracted court proceedings, the process becomes a punishment." This stark observation brings to light the urgent need to address the pervasive issue of case pendency in India's legal system. The Indian judiciary is grappling with an overwhelming backlog of cases, which has long been a subject of public discontent and legal scrutiny. The Chief Justice of India's recent statement underscores the severity of this issue, highlighting how extended court delays are not only hindering justice but also eroding public trust in the legal system. As of recent estimates, over 40 million cases are pending across various levels of the Indian judiciary and may take 300 years to clear it at the going pace. This staggering number includes civil, criminal, and administrative cases, many of which have been unresolved for years or even decades.



The backlog creates a bottleneck that prevents timely justice, leading to prolonged legal battles and increasing costs for the litigants. Extended delays can lead to a lack of confidence in the judiciary, with people perceiving the legal process as slow and inefficient. When cases languish in the courts for years without resolution, individuals begin to doubt the effectiveness and reliability of the judicial system. Knowing that legal proceedings are likely to be drawn out, many individuals may avoid seeking justice through the courts altogether.

This reluctance is particularly pronounced among those who cannot afford prolonged litigation or who need prompt resolution due to personal or financial constraints. The inordinate delays can drive people to seek alternative, and often extrajudicial, means of resolving disputes. Moreover, businesses and investors rely on a robust legal system to enforce contracts and resolve disputes. Addressing these delays is crucial for maintaining the integrity and efficacy of the judicial system and ensuring that justice is accessible and timely for all citizens. Several factors contribute to the chronic issue of case pendency in India. A significant number of judicial positions remain unfilled. The legal procedures in India can be highly complex, often leading to unnecessary delays. Many courts lack the necessary infrastructure and technological support. But the biggest source of delay is the practice of frequent adjournments, often granted for frivolous reasons. A Bollywood film dialogue 'tareekh pe tareekh' sums it up succinctly. Some issues have been dealt with in the amendments to the Indian penal code which are now called 'Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita' but a lot more needs to be done to expedite justice and establish a rule of law! As the saying goes, "Justice delayed is justice denied," and the legal system must cope with the needs of a fast-paced society that we have today.

PICTALK



People take a dip before performing rituals on the occasion of 'Aadi Amavasai', in Rameshwaram

Grim prospects for peace in West Asia

The killing of Hamas leader threatens to derail any hopes for a ceasefire in Gaza further complicating efforts for peace in the region



UMANG KOHLI



Israel seems to have eliminated Hamas leader Haniyeh, using an airborne guided projectile in an early morning attack. Haniyeh was in Iran for the Iranian president's swearing-in ceremony as a state guest and was staying in one of the residences for veterans. The events in the Middle East are shaping dangerously, the things as they are turning out to be, it's not out of the scope of imagination that soon Iran may be part of a major regional conflict.

We have already seen that a confrontation between Hezbollah and Israel is underway in Lebanon. However, Israel has still not taken responsibility for the strike. Israel has been accusing Iran of harbouring Hamas leaders like Haniyeh and has openly vowed to kill them. Israel not taking responsibility for the attack shows that it does not want a direct confirmation with Iran right now. It remains to be seen how things play out, there is also a section in Israel that is suspicious of Iran's state media's claim that Haniyeh has even been killed.

Having said that there are little or no takers of the version that Israel is not responsible for the killing of Hamas's political leader. Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa has condemned the assassina-

tion of Ismail Haniyeh and termed it a violation of the entire international rule of law. The act is a grave violation of Iran's sovereignty and the supposed security bubble of the Iranian capital. This is likely to have far-reaching consequences in the short and the long term. Haniyeh, normally based in Qatar, had been the face of international diplomacy for Hamas. He had been an important part of internationally brokered indirect talks on reaching a ceasefire in the Palestinian enclave. This killing appears to set back chances of any imminent ceasefire agreement in the 10-month-old war in Gaza and Lebanon. Vowing to retaliate, Iran declared three days of national mourning. Iran has blamed the U.S. for providing Israel with the missiles that have been fired, and hence holding it directly responsible. The US itself has accepted that the risk of escalation is certainly up right now.

The killing of Haniyeh has made the task of de-escalation, deterrence and dissuasion towards war, which is the goal of the UN and the international community, much more complicated. It has given a reason for those who want things to escalate on



HEZBOLLAH WILL FIND LEGITIMACY IN TAKING ON ANY POSSIBLE TARGET IN ISRAEL, CIVIL OR MILITARY. IRAN WOULD FIND IT CONVENIENT TO DIRECTLY USE SOME OF ITS MISSILES AGAINST ISRAEL AND THE YARDSTICK TO JUDGE ITS EFFECTIVENESS WOULD BE THE NUMBER OF CIVILIANS KILLED

both sides to scuttle chances of peace and also provided them with the fodder to fuel further attacks on each other with impunity.

The immediate consequences of this escalation, Netanyahu will get support from the far right in Israel and he may push for attacks deeper into Lebanon. Hezbollah will find legitimacy in taking on any possible target in Israel, civil or military. Iran would find it convenient to directly use some of its missiles against Israel and the yardstick to judge its effectiveness would be the number of civilians killed. The Houthis will attack commercial ships in the Red Sea even more, leading to loss of business and livelihood across the world. Palestinians would cry on the streets for lack of food and medicine even more, but like always would only get lip service. Oil prices will go up and some people will make even more money.

More arms would be sold and better technology would be used to kill more people in less time. More and more areas may become dangerous even for the media. Schools and hospitals may be targeted even more since all the terrorists are hiding there only. In the US leaders would keep

blaming each other for the escalation with each side doing what is required to be done to get votes. UN is likely to look even more helpless in the days to come.

Apart from this humanity would be disgraced for it does not feel ashamed of any act of inhuman violent behaviour anymore. Aircraft carriers from the US will be deployed to safeguard the territorial integrity of Israel. There will be calls for people to join hands in the name of religion, and they will, only humanity will be divided and more people will die. Some people in India may find this killing of Haniyeh a great act of bravery, and they may even ask the political hierarchy to take lessons or even replicate this kind of attack.

Little do they realise that Israel has been fighting for existence, and are not at peace with themselves, peace has eluded them since their existence. However, we as a country are at peace and no one can dare challenge our existence, and hence we should never think of acting whimsically.

(The writer is expert on geopolitics and international Affairs. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FOOD SECURITY VS RISING PRICES

Madam — Apropos "Modi reaffirms India's role as Vishwa Bandhu, Aug 4. According to him, India has become a food surplus country and second largest producer of foodgrains, fruits and vegetables etc. But the high prices of cereals, pulses, edible oils, vegetables and fruits etc. has indeed impacted households across the country and made them beyond affordability of many.

According to the Economic Times, since November 2023, food inflation in the country has persisted at around 8% year-on-year. The Opposition too raises repeatedly about high food inflation. Per capita consumption of pulses, fruits and vegetables in India are one of the lowest in the world. Low consumption of them affects overall health, leading to deficiencies in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants and accordingly Indians are deficient in them, particularly in children it is a grave concern. Vegetarianism is a major dietary choice in India, therefore, plant-based food must be available at affordable prices in adequate quantities for a healthy nation.

O Prasada Rao | Hyderabad

INDIAN HOCKEY TEAM EXCELS

Madam—Who could have asked for more intriguing and a close contest in Sunday that added yet another unforgettable moment to India's hockey history that snatched victory from the jaws of defeat that once loomed large.

After surprising world class Australia in a span of 52 years, India continued their winning streak by defeating England 4-2 in a nail biting finish in Olympics Hockey that kept millions of fans glued to their t.v. sets. With this resounding win, India enter into the semi finals.

The national game of India Hockey is again in the limelight as India produced a real fitting spirit especially at a critic moment when the odds are stacked against them as they were reduced to 10. This also could not dampened their spirit as Veteran Goalkeeper P.R Sreejesh saved one goal after to showcase her

Quota within quota



This refers to the news report, "Apex Court Upholds Quota Within Quota" (August 3). The Supreme Court's historic verdict now allows states to sub-categorize Scheduled Castes (SCs) for reservations. This sub-categorization is crucial as many SCs, particularly marginalized groups like the Balimiki in North India, Madiga and Arunthathiyar in South India, and Mang in Maharashtra, have been left behind in accessing benefits meant for SCs. Previously, states struggled to ensure their share of benefits due to an

earlier Supreme Court judgment in the EV Chinniah case. However, the recent Supreme Court ruling has highlighted the political dilemma faced by parties. During the assembly elections in Telangana last year, Prime Minister Modi announced a committee to examine the Madigas' demand for sub-categorization. Implementing this sub-categorization is challenging in many other states, as it faces opposition from NDA ministers like Chirag Paswan and Ramdas Athawale. Sub-categorisation could affect the interests of dominant castes such as Paswan in Bihar, Mahars in Maharashtra, and Jatavs in UP, Rajasthan, and Delhi. Will the BJP risk losing Paswan's support in Bihar? Additionally, the BJP is seeking to gain Jatav votes in UP, traditionally supporters of the BSP. Therefore, it will be interesting to see the BJP's stance on the Supreme Court's decision.

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

protest that even saved penalties to see India remain in contention for a medal. This achievement has added yet another feather in the cap of Indian hockey since the 1972 Munich Olympics that India reached the semifinals in back to back games, followed the bronze medal in Tokyo.

The English team could not penetrate the Great wall of India as Indian players fought like warriors throughout the match and took it to the penalties. It seems that the golden era of Indian hockey is returning. No matter what the outcome of the forth coming matches, but one positive is the world class overall performance and team coordination, cooperation, fighting spirit until the last, hard work has really won hearts of millions.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH

Madam—A bulletin issued by the World Health Organization explores the increasing smoking among women and its health effects on children or unborn babies. A shocking reality has come to light.

Children's lungs are affected by women who smoke. Also, such children have weak immune system and children suffering from diseases like asthma are struggling with lung related diseases throughout their life. In adolescence and old age, such children's immunity decreases. It has been found.

Women are also suffering from various lung diseases due to the addition of v-cigarettes and e-cigarettes. The major disease in these patients is asthma. It has been observed significantly. Also, children in such households are constantly sick due to various reasons. Increasing smoking among women affects the infant and children born with smaller lungs and weak immune system. It has been found that India has. Also, the warning given by the World Health Organization must be taken seriously. The problem of babies born with small lungs due to smoking is a big challenge.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Mumbai

Handling disrespect and finding inner peace

We should recognise the value of pausing and reflecting, to determine whether our reactions to perceived insults are genuinely justified



SANJAY CHANDRA

I read a beautiful story by a well-known Indian author about a middle-class household. The lady of the house locks herself in an earmarked dark room whenever she feels unloved and uncared for by her family. We too retreat to our inner self, the equivalent of our dark room, sometimes in our lives. During a recent vacation, my wife's friend compared me to a beast of burden.

The adjective is also often used by parents admonishing their good-for-nothing sons. The word is probably also applicable to all husbands. I sulked till a couple of hours later, I gave it back to her.

This time my wife objected, forcing me into another sulk. They had probably expected a better sense of humour. I was not amused. A friendly neighbour objected to my entrance to attend a meeting in a rather loud stage whisper for reasons I was unaware of. I was asked to wait outside. It turned out that he was retaliating to an earlier fight with another neighbour. He had probably expected



me to empathise with his unexpressed anguish. I felt insulted. Another time, a neighbour acting as an observer in society elections, got up rather aggressively, started shouting at me, and asked me to get out, on the grounds of some rules not mentioned anywhere.

A couple of hours later, he came out and shook hands with me. I tried to mend fences by putting on my best smile. He rudely turned his face away, telling anyone who cared to listen, "He is a writer; he does not even know the rules." I could not understand the relationship between a writer and knowledge of

unwritten rules. Rationally thinking about the incident a day later, I thought he was probably venting his frustration about inadequate writing skills. It was no consolation.

I faced several unpleasant events in my professional life. I took them in my stride. One such incident happened within a few weeks after I had joined my first working post in the railways.

I sat in the senior foreman's office after my usual morning round of the maintenance shed, when I was interrupted in my discussions by the entry of 30 odd staff led by a union leader. Listening to the problems, I was startled by the landing of an earthenware teacup on the table.

They were trying to gauge my reaction. I took it as a management challenge, not an insult. I witnessed a cat-fight between two young ladies in an upmarket shop in Delhi. One lady had tried to get ahead of the other at the payment counter. I was relieved that it remained a verbal duel,

rather than turning into a fisticuff. In another incident, a mother trying to help her teenage son choose clothes was rudely snubbed by the latter, "Do not talk like a fool!" The mother had tears in her eyes as she surreptitiously looked around, and then fussed some more over her child. I too looked the other way, embarrassed at the rude snub in public to a mother's affection.

There are many such incidents that we face in our lives. We take a few more seriously than the others, while others we shrug off. The line between a perceived insult and rational logic is often blurred. It is easy to cross this line without even realising it. It may save a visit to the inner dark room, if we do not react, but pause, reflect, and remember the Greek philosopher, Epictetus, "It is not he who reviles or strikes you who insults you, but your opinion that these things are insulting."

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

**FIRST COLUMN**
STRATEGIES TO COMBAT CHRONIC STRESS

Understanding and managing stress effectively is essential for a healthier life



SAKSHI SETHI

The human body is designed to experience stress. The 'fight or flight response' otherwise thought of as an 'acute stress' response are inbuilt mechanisms that allow an individual to deal with threats to survival. Stress at the workplace can arise from various factors, often stemming from the demands of the job, the work environment and individual characteristics. Chronic stress is a state of ongoing, persistent stress that can develop when a person faces prolonged challenges or pressures without adequate periods of relaxation or recovery. Unlike acute stress, which is short-term and can even be beneficial in certain situations (like a deadline or a sudden challenge), chronic stress lasts for an extended period and can have deleterious effects on both physical as well as mental health.

Signs of chronic stress at the workplace can manifest in various ways, affecting an individual's physical health, emotional well-being, cognitive abilities and behaviour. Cognitive-behavioural approaches, mindfulness training and resilience-building programs have been shown to help employees manage stress more effectively. These strategies can enhance employees' ability to cope with stressors and reduce the negative impact of stress on their health and performance. It can lead to significant economic costs for employers, including healthcare expenses, lost productivity, absenteeism and turnover. Organizations through interventions such as job redesign, flexible work arrangements, employee wellness programs and stress management training can reduce chronic stress as these interventions aim to reduce job



demands, increase job control and provide employees with the resources they need to cope effectively with stress. Recognizing these signs early can help in addressing the underlying issues before they escalate. Research shows that in the United States, the American Institute of Stress (AIS) has estimated that around 40% of worker turnover is due to stress and the cost of stress in the workplace has been estimated to be over \$300 billion per year.

Studies also show that perceptions of stress and coping mechanisms can vary across cultures. The shift to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced new stressors related to work-life balance, isolation and digital overload. Ongoing research is exploring how these changes affect chronic stress levels and what interventions are most effective in this new work environment. Furthermore, studies highlight the role of leadership in either mitigating or exacerbating stress. Supportive leadership styles, clear communication and recognition of employee efforts can reduce stress, while authoritarian or inconsistent management can increase it. There is no denying the fact that different industries have unique stressors. For instance healthcare professionals often face stress due to high-stakes decision-making and emotional demands, while employees in tech industries might experience stress from rapid changes and constant innovation.

This type of stress can lead to individual burnout, which is when the body's budget is depleted. Unlike acute stress, which is short-term and can even be beneficial in certain situations such as a deadline or a sudden challenge, chronic stress lasts for an extended period. It can have detrimental effects on both physical and mental health. It is the chronic stress that comes from any area of our lives that can lead to a place of exhaustion and demotivation. It's tough, but the individual needs to find the will within self to get inspired and take recovery into their own hands. Understanding the sources of stress is crucial for both employees and employers to develop strategies to manage and reduce stress, thereby creating a healthier and more productive work environment.

(The writer is an educator, views expressed are personal)

Japan's defence dilemma: Pacifism vs security

SANTHOSH MATHEW

As the world commemorates the 79th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan contemplates pivotal shift in its defence policy



As the world commemorates the 79th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a profound moment of reflection intersects with a pivotal shift in Japan's defence policy.

On August 6 and 9, 1945, the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan were devastated by atomic bombs dropped by the United States, marking a pivotal moment in World War II and the history of warfare. The bombings resulted in the immediate deaths of tens of thousands of people, with the total number of casualties, including those from radiation sickness and injuries, rising to over 200,000. Hiroshima, targeted first, saw the "Little Boy" bomb obliterate much of the city, while Nagasaki was struck by the "Fat Man" bomb three days later.

The immense destruction and loss of life precipitated Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945, effectively ending World War II. These events also ushered in the nuclear age, highlighting the devastating power of atomic weapons and sparking global debates on nuclear ethics, warfare, and disarmament. The bombings remain a somber reminder of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear conflict and the importance of striving for peace and international cooperation.

The devastation, which claimed the lives of civilians, imprinted an indelible mark on the nation's collective consciousness and laid the foundation for its pacifist constitution. In the aftermath of these horrific events, Japan adopted a policy of defensive neutrality, enshrined in Article 9 of its constitution, renouncing war and prohibiting the maintenance of armed forces for combat.

This commitment to pacifism became a cornerstone of Japan's identity, earning it a place of respect in the global community and even frequent nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize. However, as



JAPAN'S NEW NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY IS A RESPONSE TO THE GROWING TENSIONS IN THE REGION. NORTH KOREA HAS ALREADY CONDUCTED MISSILE TESTS CAPABLE OF REACHING JAPANESE TERRITORY, WHILE CHINA'S INCREASING ASSERTIVENESS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

the world grapples with evolving geopolitical threats, Japan has announced a significant shift in its defence policy.

The government has decided to allocate 2% of its GDP to defence spending, marking a departure from its longstanding pacifist stance. This decision, driven by perceived threats from North Korea and China, positions Japan as the second-largest arms importer globally, following Saudi Arabia.

Japan's new national security strategy is a response to the growing tensions in the region. North Korea has already conducted missile tests capable of reaching Japanese territory, while China's increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea and its broader regional ambitions have raised alarms in Tokyo.

These developments have prompted Japan to reconsider its post-World War II defence posture. Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, a staunch advocate for revising Japan's pacifist constitution, argued that the nation must strengthen its military capabilities to counter regional threats. Although Abe's tenure saw some legislative changes allowing for a modest self-defence force, widespread public opposition prevented a complete overhaul of Article 9.

Nonetheless, Abe's vision of a robust Japanese military continues to influence current policies. Current Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, with the backing of both the House of Councillors and the House of Representatives, has pressed forward with this new defence agenda. However, public

sentiment remains largely against these changes. According to a Kyodo News Agency survey, 80% of the population opposes the government's constitutional amendment efforts, reflecting a deep-rooted commitment to pacifism among the Japanese people.

The decision to shift defence policies on the anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is particularly poignant. The memories of the atomic bombings serve as a stark reminder of the horrors of war and the importance of peace. The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was not just a military strategy but also an unprecedented human tragedy. The bombings, justified by the U.S. as necessary to end the war, were, in reality, cruel scientific experiments that unleashed untold suffering and long-term consequences.

The atomic bombings forced Japan to adopt a peace-oriented constitution, promoting disarmament and dialogue over conflict. Article 9 has been a symbol of hope and a testament to Japan's commitment to ensuring that such devastation never occurs again.

The policy shift, therefore, raises important questions about the future of pacifism in Japan and its role in international peace and security. As Japan increases its defence budget and modernizes its military capabilities, it steps into a complex and competitive arms race.

The nation that once stood as a beacon of pacifism now finds itself at a crossroads, balancing its historical commitment to peace

with the pressing need to address contemporary security challenges. The legacy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki endures, reminding the world of the catastrophic consequences of war and the enduring value of peace.

As Japan navigates this new defence trajectory, it must reconcile its past with its present, ensuring that the principles of peace and humanity remain at the forefront of its national identity. In the shadow of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan's defence policy evolution marks a significant chapter in its history. The world watches closely as Japan seeks to uphold its commitment to peace while safeguarding its future in an increasingly uncertain global landscape.

The devastating bombings marked a turning point in World War II, leading to Japan's surrender and the end of the conflict. These tragic events imprinted a commitment to pacifism in Japan's national consciousness, enshrined in its post-war constitution.

However, with rising geopolitical threats from North Korea's missile tests and China's regional ambitions, Japan has no choice but to reconsider its pacifist stance and increase its defence spending, sparking a national debate on the future of its long-held commitment to peace.

(The writer is an associate professor Centre For South Asian Studies, School of International Studies & Social Sciences Pondicherry Central University; views are personal)

Bangladesh's political shakeup: A diplomatic setback for India

The resignation of Sheikh Hasina poses a significant challenge for New Delhi, as it now faces an uncertain political situation in its neighbouring country

While Bangladeshis may be celebrating the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after she was forced to resign and flee the country on Monday, her removal is a huge blow to India. Not only had New Delhi-Dhaka ties flourished under her prime ministership but the Awami League leader had been mindful of India's strategic interests. She had even tried to keep India's strategic interests in mind vis-à-vis China while adroitly balancing relations with both. During her 15 years of unbroken rule, New Delhi-Dhaka ties enjoyed both stability and mutual trust.



PARUL CHANDRA

worry about. For one, it now has to deal with a new dispensation after having built a very comfortable working relationship with the Sheikh Hasina government over the last 15 years. Secondly, it will also have to contend with the fact that it is the army that will be exercising actual control even with an interim government in place. Thirdly, India will be dealing with an entirely new politi-

cal set-up if and when elections are held in Bangladesh to install a new government. With India having thrown all its weight behind Sheikh Hasina, it may be faced with a huge challenge to build ties with the Opposition parties. India could also be in deep trouble if the pro-Pakistan Bangladesh National Party (BNP) returns to power. It had recently triggered anti-India sentiments in Bangladesh by carrying out an 'India Out' campaign which fortunately fizzled out early. Opposition parties can fan the simmering of these sentiments again, especially given how closely New Delhi was identified with her government.

Indeed, for New Delhi, ties with Dhaka had been a "son-

ali adhayay" (golden chapter) under Sheikh Hasina who delivered on New Delhi's expectations, while choosing to downplay India's inability to deliver on the important Teesta waters sharing agreement. But with a new government in power, all this might change. New Delhi, therefore, will have to deftly manoeuvre its way through a tricky diplomatic situation now. It has no choice but to do so given that it has vital stakes in the stability of Bangladesh, ranging from the economic to the strategic, in a country with which it shares a 4,096-km long border.

It will also be hoped that the situation in Bangladesh will stabilise soon, knowing well that prolonged instability



there can have serious security and economic ramifications for India. For instance, taking into account New Delhi's security concerns, Sheikh Hasina had cracked down on northeast insurgents sheltering in Bangladeshi territory early on in her second stint as PM. Her government's relentless pursuit of the pro-Pakistan

BNP as well as its ally JeI, also helped India's security interests. Equally worrying for India has been the rise of other radical Islamist outfits like the Hefazat-e-Islam in Bangladesh, which had organised anti-India protests ahead of PM Narendra Modi's visit there.

The over one million Rohingya refugees who fled Myanmar and are sheltering in Bangladesh too have been a security concern for India. Already home to a sizable number of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, India would also be concerned about a further influx of refugees seeking to flee their troubled country. With five Indian states in the northeast sharing a border with Bangladesh, any such

influx could pose a huge security challenge for the region.

Additionally, prolonged turmoil there could hurt Indian efforts to boost connectivity to the NE via Bangladesh using rail links and the sea route. India has for long been seeking alternative routes to bypass the vulnerable Siliguri corridor, which if blocked can cut off land access to its entire NE. The push for shorter routes to the NE via Bangladesh, which would cut down time and costs for the movement of goods, could also receive a setback.

The quota stir has already hit bilateral trade after the movement of trucks was stalled at the land ports. While cross-border trade

has now resumed, there have been huge economic losses on either side. Prolonged turmoil can only worsen trading ties between the two countries. Bangladesh is India's biggest trading partner in South Asia. In FY 2022-23, the bilateral trade was \$15.9 billion, though it remains heavily skewed in favour of India. A lot is at stake for India as its close neighbour witnesses some tectonic changes in its governance and political landscape. It means it will have to put in all its diplomatic and political effort into its outreach to whoever is in charge of the new dispensation in Bangladesh.

(The writer is a senior New Delhi-based journalist writing on foreign affairs)

IN BRIEF



Cargo traffic at major ports grows 5.92% to 70.08 MT: IPA

Cargo traffic at 12 major ports in the country grew 5.92% to 70.08 million tonnes (MT) in July from 66.17 MT handled in the year-ago period, according to the data released by major ports' apex body Indian Ports Association. The data also showed that 10 of these major ports logged positive growth in cargo traffic handling, while the remaining two saw a negative growth, as per the IPA. The 12 major ports are Deendyal (Kandla), Mumbai, Mormugao, New Mangalore, Cochin, Chennai, Ennore (Kamarajar), Tuticorin (VO Chidambaram), Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia) and Jawaharlal Nehru Port. In July, IPA said Cochin Port registered the maximum cargo growth at 24.77%, followed by Visakhapatnam Port (10.80%) and JN Port (9.07%). Chennai Port handled 8.89% more traffic compared to July 2023, while cargo traffic at Deendyal Port and V O Chidambaram Port grew 7.13% and 6.74% respectively.



CIL, GAIL to set up coal-to-synthetic natural gas project

State-owned CIL on Monday said it has entered into a joint venture agreement with GAIL (India) Ltd to set up a coal-to-synthetic natural gas project in West Bengal. While Coal India Ltd (CIL) will have 51 per cent shareholding in the joint venture, GAIL, the nation's largest gas transportation and distribution firm, will have 49 per cent. The joint venture will be incorporated as a private limited company. The initial paid-up share capital is Rs 1 lakh, CIL said in a BSE filing. The registered office of the joint venture will be in West Bengal and CIL and GAIL each will have the right to nominate three executives as directors of the JV. Earlier this year, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs had approved setting up a coal-to-synthetic natural gas project through a joint venture between CIL and GAIL, and a coal-to-ammonium nitrate project through a venture between CIL and BHEL.



UPI transactions jump to Rs 60 lakh cr

UPI transactions in the first three months of the current fiscal have grown over 36 per cent to Rs 60 lakh crore, Parliament was informed on Monday. As per the details of UPI transactions shared by Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary in the Lok Sabha, 4,122 crore UPI transactions worth Rs 60 lakh crore took place between April and June in 2024-25. In the April-June period, 2,762 crore UPI transactions took place, having a value of Rs 44 lakh crore. For the full fiscal 2023-24, 13,113 crore UPI transactions were made with a value of Rs 200 lakh crore. In FY23, a total of 8,371 crore UPI transactions took place with a value of Rs 139 lakh crore, while in FY22, there were 4,596 crore transactions involving Rs 84 lakh crore. Chaudhary further said that a facility of cardless cash deposits on an interoperable basis has been extended through UPI. Presently, this facility has been made available by a select few banks.

Global equity rout

Investors lose Rs 15L cr in single day

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Stock markets crashed nearly 3 per cent on Monday due to across-the-board selling in banking, IT, metal and oil & gas shares following a global equity rout, wiping out more than Rs 15 lakh crore of investor money in a single day.

The 30-share BSE Sensex plummeted 2,222.55 points or 2.74 per cent to settle at over a month's low of 78,759.40, marking its worst single-day retreat since June 4, 2024. During the day, the index tanked 2,686.09 points or 3.31 per cent to 78,295.86. The NSE Nifty slumped 662.10 points or 2.68 per cent to settle at more than a month's low of 24,055.60. During the

day, it tumbled 824 points or 3.33 per cent to 23,893.70. Nifty also saw its worst single-day fall since June 4, 2024, when markets crashed more than 5 per cent due to general election results. Sensex and Nifty had

total losses in two days to more than Rs 19 lakh crore. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge dropped 4.21 per cent and midcap index plummeted 3.60 per cent. An over 12 per cent plunge in Japan's Nikkei

Sensex and Nifty had declined more than 1 per cent in the previous session on Friday. In two sessions to Monday, the key indices have corrected around 4 per cent

declined more than 1 per cent in the previous session on Friday. In two sessions to Monday, the key indices have corrected around 4 per cent. Investors lost more than Rs 15 lakh crore in the market crash as the total valuation of BSE-listed companies dropped to Rs 441.84 lakh crore on Monday. Investors lost Rs 4.46 lakh crore on Friday, taking the

and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East dented market sentiment, analysts said. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled sharply lower. Japan's benchmark stock index plunged 12.4 per cent on Monday, compounding a global market rout set off by investor concerns that the US economy could be headed for recession.

A report on Friday showing hiring by US employers slowed last month by much more than expected convulsed financial markets, vanquishing the euphoria that had taken the Nikkei 225 to all-time highs of over 42,000 in recent weeks.

On Monday, the Nikkei closed down 4,451.28 points at 31,458.42. It had dropped 5.8 per cent on Friday, making this its worst two-day decline ever. Its worst single-day rout was a plunge of 3,836 points, or 14.9 per cent, on October 19, 1987, a global markets crash that was dubbed "Black Monday" but proved to be only a temporary setback despite fears it might have augured a worldwide downturn. European markets were also trading with deep cuts. The US markets ended significantly lower on Friday. From the Sensex pack, Tata Motors slumped over 7 per cent. Adani Ports, Tata Steel, SBI, Power Grid, JSW Steel and Maruti were the other big laggards.

Rupee tumbles 31 paise to close at all-time low of 84.03 against US \$

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee slumped 31 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.03 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, following a sell-off in broader global markets amid rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and worries over recession in the US.

Forex traders said the downfall in the domestic unit came on the heels of a sharp downturn in the Indian equity markets and significant foreign fund outflows.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.78 and touched an intra-day high of 83.76 and a low of 84.03 against the dollar during the session.

It finally settled at its fresh record low level of 84.03 (provisional) against the American currency, down 31 paise against its previous close. On Friday, the rupee settled 1 paise higher at 83.72 against the US dollar in a range-bound trade.

Indian economy likely to grow at 7-7.2% in FY25: Deloitte

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's economy is expected to grow at 7-7.2 per cent in the current fiscal year driven by robust economic fundamentals and continuity in domestic policy reforms, Deloitte India said on Monday.



The August update of Deloitte's India Economic Outlook said several initiatives in the Union Budget 2024-25 toward improving agriculture productivity, creating jobs for the youth, and in manufacturing and addressing the challenge of access to finance for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), would

help improve supply-side demand, curb inflation, and prop up consumer spending, especially in rural areas.

Deloitte India Economist Rumki Majumdar said, India will witness robust growth in the second half after a period of uncertainty in the first six months of the year. "Key contributing factors include the continuity in domestic policy reforms, reduced uncertainties in the US post-elections, and more synchronous global growth within a low inflation regime."

Additionally, improved global liquidity conditions, as central banks in the West ease their monetary policy stance, will enhance capital flows and drive higher investments, particularly in the private sector," Majumdar said. Observing that strong economic fundamentals would drive GDP growth between 7 per cent and 7.2 per cent in FY25, the Economic Outlook report said effectively addressing the urban-rural consumer spending gaps, inflation, and employment concerns can significantly enhance the affordability of aspirational rural consumers.

"The much-desirable policy pivot was evident in the Union Budget presented last month. Reducing the urban and rural spending gap in the coming years will ensure sustained consumer demand from a larger consumer base," it added.

Deloitte India's growth projection is at par with that of RBI, which projected FY25 growth at 7.2 per cent. It is higher than Finance Ministry's Economic Survey which estimated GDP expansion between 6.5-7 per cent.

SFIO probe into Sahara group of companies underway: FM



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) is carrying out a detailed probe into the matter related to the Sahara group of companies and it is also looking into the reason behind a sizeable number of investors not coming forward to claim the invested money in the company, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in Lok Sabha on Monday.

Sitharaman also said the entire affairs of the Sahara group are being monitored by the Supreme Court and the government is acting according to the directives of the apex court.

"It is true that only small investors have come forward to claim the refunds. The SFIO is investigating the entire matter. It is also looking into why all the investors have not come forward to claim the refunds and where are they. "The SFIO is going into a

detailed analysis of this. We hope that at the end of it more legitimate claimants come and we can give the money," she said during Question Hour. The minister said the whole picture will be clear and action can be taken after the detailed analysis of the SFIO. "I want to dispel this thought that the government of India

is not doing anything. We are constantly reporting to the Supreme Court.

"Three panels of retired judges of the Supreme Court are monitoring us. They are approving every claim. Let no one doubt the intent and interests of the central government which is doing its best," she said.

'Public sector banks' NPAs on Mudra loans fall to 3.4%

Public sector banks' non-performing assets associated with the Mudra loan category have declined to 3.4 per cent in the 2023-24 fiscal, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday.

This marks an improvement from 4.77 per cent in 2020-21, 4.89 per cent in

2019-20, and 3.76 per cent in 2018-19, she said in response to a query in the Lok Sabha during the Question Hour.

Sitharaman addressed questions regarding the non-performing assets (NPA) associated with Mudra loans, highlighting a significant reduction in NPA rates over the past few years.

No proposal to merge public sector general insurance cos

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Monday said there is no proposal under consideration for merger of public sector general insurance companies.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said Rs 17,450 crore was infused during 2019-20 to 2021-22 in three PSU general insurance companies namely Oriental Insurance, National Insurance and United India Insurance to focus on their growth.

"There is no proposal under consideration of government at present for merger of public sector general insurance companies," Chaudhary said.

In the Budget for 2018-19, the then finance minister Arun



Jaitley had announced that the three companies would be merged into a single insurance entity.

However, the merger process could not be completed due to various reasons, including poor financial health of these companies.

In reply to another question on non-performing assets in the MSME sector, Chaudhary

said the total credit outstanding of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) to the sector as on March 31, 2024 is Rs 28.04 lakh crore of which non-performing assets is Rs 1.25 lakh crore.

The gross NPA percentage of SCBs for the MSME sector is 4.46 per cent as against 2.74 per cent for total loans and advances, he added.

Sebi proposes uniform timeline for credit, trading of bonus shares

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi, Aug 5 (PTI) Markets regulator Sebi on Monday proposed a uniform timeline to ensure timely credit and trading of bonus shares in a bid to streamline the process to enable T+2 trading of such shares after the record date.

The current ICDR (Issue of

Capital and Disclosure Requirements) rules prescribe overall timelines regarding implementation of the bonus issue, however, there are no specific timeline on credit of bonus shares and trading of such shares, from the record date of the issue.

"Thus, absence of any specific guidelines on this aspect leads to non-uniformity with

reports to timelines in which shares are credited and made available for trading in bonus issue," Sebi said in its consultation paper.

Currently, after a bonus issue, existing shares continue to trade under the same ISIN, and the new bonus shares are credited and available for trading within 2-7 working days post record date.

Further, customers can also report financial fraud on the official customer care website or branches of banks.

Gold rises Rs 250 to Rs 72,800 per 10g; silver tumbles Rs 1,300

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose by Rs 250 to Rs 72,800 per 10 grams in the local market here on Monday amid increased demand from jewellers.

The precious metal settled lower at Rs 72,550 per 10 grams in the previous session on Saturday.

Extending its losses for the third straight day, silver prices tumbled by Rs 1,300 to Rs 84,200 per kg on decreased offtake by coin makers and

industrial units, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

It had ended at Rs 85,500 per kg in the previous session.

In addition, gold of 99.5 per cent purity increased by Rs 250 to Rs 72,450 per 10 grams from the previous close of Rs 72,200 per 10 grams.

In the international markets, Comex gold is trading at US\$ 2,461.10 per ounce, down by US\$ 8.70 from the previous close.

Over Rs 177 cr lost on account of banking frauds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As much as Rs 177 crore was lost on account of credit, debit card and internet banking frauds in the 2023-24 fiscal, Parliament was informed on Monday.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said the amount of loss due to cyber fraud has increased from Rs 69.68 crore in FY23 to Rs 177.05 crore in FY24. The quantum of loss in FY22 was Rs 80.33 crore, it was Rs 50.10 crore in FY21 and Rs 44.22 crore in FY20.

Chaudhary further said to help customers recover the loss on account of fraudulent

transactions, the RBI has issued instructions to banks on limiting the liability of customers in cases of unauthorised electronic banking transactions.

A customer need not bear any loss if the deficiency is on the part of the bank and in cases, where the fault lies neither with the bank nor with the customer but lies elsewhere in the system and the customer notifies the bank within three working days of receiving the communication about the unauthorised transaction.

Where the loss is due to the customer's negligence, the customer has to bear the entire loss until he/she reports the unauthorised transaction to the bank.



Where the fault lies neither with the customer nor with the bank and lies elsewhere in the system, and the customer

reports between 4-7 working days of the unauthorised transaction, the maximum liability of the customer ranges from Rs

5,000 to Rs 25,000, depending on the type of account/instrument.

If the unauthorised transac-

tion is reported beyond 7 working days, the customer liability shall be determined as per the bank's Board approved policy.

"The burden of proving customer liability in case of unauthorised electronic banking transactions shall lie on the bank," Chaudhary said.

To facilitate the citizens to report any cyber incidents, including financial frauds, the Home Ministry has launched a National cybercrime reporting portal (www.cyber crime.gov.in) and a National cybercrime Helpline Number '1930'.

Further, customers can also report financial fraud on the official customer care website or branches of banks.

what's brewing?

TIGER OPENS HIS FIRST DANCE ACADEMY

Bollywood's youngest action superstar, Tiger Shroff, is not only known for his gravity-defying action sequences but has often broken the internet with his signature dance moves. From *Whistle Baje to Jai Jai Shivshankar*, Shroff's dancing skills have taken the box office by storm. Now, the actor is taking his passion for dance to the next level with the launch of his first-ever dance academy, 'Matrix Dance Academy'.

The actor is also the driving force behind 'Prowl', an activewear and accessories brand and 'MMA Matrix', and his new venture is another addition to his cap as an entrepreneur. Through 'Matrix Dance Academy', Tiger Shroff envisions spreading the essence of dance across the country by delving into the intricacies of the various dance forms, such as contemporary, jazz, hip-hop, ballet and others. With this new venture, Shroff aims to provide aspiring performers with world-class instructors, expert guidance and an opportunity to shine on stage. As Tiger Shroff steps into this exciting new role, his audience eagerly anticipates the impact of his academy on the future of dance in India. On the career front, Tiger Shroff is now gearing up to showcase #TheTigerEffect in its full glory in *Baaghi 4*.



Iulia on her song Raat Baaki in Citadel: Honey Bunny!

Iulia Vantur has once again surprised us with her musical talent in her rendition of the iconic song *Raat Baaki* that was used for the trailer of *Citadel: Honey Bunny*. The upcoming series features Varun Dhawan and Samantha Prabhu.

The famous *Avengers* directors, Russo Brothers, are the executive producers of the series, along with Raj and DK. It looks like Iulia's captivating version of the song has become a highlight of the trailer, as the producers, who chose her voice, posted about it: "What a lovely voice; it elevated the teaser and how."

Expressing her surprise and joy, Iulia said, "You never know where your voice will reach! I was pleasantly surprised to find out that my rendition of the song *Raat Baaki* has reached a global audience through the teaser of *Citadel: Honey Bunny*. It's a wonderful feeling to see my work resonate with so many people and to receive such positive feedback. This experience has truly reinforced the magic of music and the unpredictable ways it can touch lives. I'm grateful to the producers for choosing my song; it comes as an important recognition of many years of constant work and commitment to what I love the most: music, in that in Hindi, a



language that I've learned in the most beautiful way... through music itself. I'm really grateful!"

Varun and Samantha also expressed their gratitude for Iulia's contribution. The track has been composed by Sajid-Wajid and the fans cannot stop humming it and appreciating Iulia's vocals.

Priyanka wraps filming on The Bluff

Actor Priyanka Chopra recently treated fans to a behind-the-scenes glimpse from the set of her upcoming Hollywood film, *The Bluff*. In a series of photos shared on her social media, Priyanka can be seen covered in fake blood, hinting at the intense action sequences that will feature in the movie. The actress has just wrapped up filming for the project, which is set in the violent era of the 1800s on pirate ships. On Monday, August 5, Priyanka posted a collection of striking images showing her with what appeared to be injuries and smeared in fake blood, emphasising the physically demanding nature of her role. One photo, in particular, highlights her hand as appearing severely injured. She captioned the photos, "Bloody fun times on *The Bluff*. Last week of filming! PS: For those who don't know, I'm on a film set and it's all makeup. The 1800s on pirate ships were violent times! It is incredible to see how every department on a film crew turns make-believe into reality. #magicofthemovies (sic)."

In addition to her own posts, The Academy Grand Cayman Martial Arts School also shared a photo featuring Priyanka with New Zealand actor Karl Urban, who is part of the cast. The martial arts school expressed their gratitude to both actors for the amazing experience of working with them on the film, suggesting that the action choreography was a key part of the production.

The Bluff is not the only project keeping Priyanka busy. She has recently finished filming 'Heads of State', an action-packed film where she stars alongside heavyweights like Idris Elba and John Cena. Additionally, fans can look forward to seeing her in the second season of 'Citadel', a popular series that continues to expand her impressive portfolio. Priyanka's recent updates have sparked excitement among her followers, giving them a taste of the thrilling action and dedication behind her upcoming projects. Her willingness to take on such challenging roles continues to showcase her versatility and commitment as an actress in Hollywood.

Olympian Rebecca reflects on her heartbreaking miscarriage

Rebecca Adlington, OBE, one of Britain's most celebrated Olympians, is currently shining in a new role as a BBC presenter for the Olympic Games in Paris this summer.

However, Rebecca has also been in the public eye for deeply personal reasons. Last autumn, she experienced a devastating miscarriage at 20 weeks. Rebecca, 33, from Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, has two young children: Summer, 7, with her ex-partner Harry Needs and Albie, 2, with her husband Andy Parsons. The loss of their daughter, Harper, has been a profound challenge for the family. In an interview earlier this year, Rebecca shared how they are coping with the loss, stating, "We'll never forget her." Reflecting on the difficult period, Rebecca said, "After my miscarriage last October, physically and emotionally, the back end of last year was tough. We'll never fully get over what happened, but Harper will always be part of our family." She mentioned that even her two-year-old, Albie, acknowledges Harper, saying, "My sisters are Harper and Summer. Harper's ashes are kept at home, and the family often talks about her, keeping her memory alive."

When Rebecca initially shared the news of her stillbirth on social media, she wrote, "I don't really have the words right now, but unfortunately, we went for our 20-week scan this week and they found no heartbeat. I gave birth to our angel, Harper, on Friday at 7 p.m. We held her and had time with her. We will forever love her and remember her." She expressed gratitude towards the staff at Wythenshawe Hospital in Manchester for their exceptional care and kindness during this difficult time.

Rebecca also praised her husband, Andy, for his unwavering support and love, stating, "Your selfless support, love, and help are truly amazing. I couldn't have survived without you. We are truly heartbroken. Our beautiful girl. Rest in peace."

This heartbreaking event followed a previous miscarriage a year earlier at 12 weeks, which led to emergency surgery and a battle with sepsis. Despite these trials, Rebecca continues to demonstrate remarkable strength and resilience, both in her personal life and in her professional endeavours.



Abhishek Banerjee's Stolen gains global acclaim

Actor Abhishek Banerjee's film *Stolen* has recently achieved significant recognition by winning the Audience Choice Best Film and Best Director awards at Japan's Skip City International Digital Cinema Festival. This accolade adds to the film's success at other prestigious international film festivals, including the Venice Film Festival 2023, BFI London and the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM).

Banerjee, known for his roles in web series and films such as *Pataal Lok*, *Rashmi Rocket* and *Rana Naidu*, has expressed his joy at the international acclaim. "This is my first international film, and the positive response from global audiences has been overwhelming," he shared. "Seeing people from different parts of the world appreciate and applaud your work gives a sense of pride. It feels like you're

not only achieving something personally but also bringing glory to your country." Discussing the film's release in India, Banerjee remains optimistic despite some uncertainty. "As someone who doesn't fully grasp market conversations or sales pitches, I believe there's an audience for every kind of film in India. We are a vast market of moviegoers, and a good film should find acceptance here," he said. "*Humare yaha kisi bhi tarah ki films chal sakti hain. Sabke liye audience hain.*"

Directed by Karan Tejpal, *Stolen* features Banerjee as Gautam Bansal, an upper-middle-class man caught between morality and self-interest. Banerjee views his character as a representation of societal hypocrisy, yet he believes the film's essence can be appreciated universally. "You don't need an intimate understanding of India to grasp the film's message," he remarked. The actor also highlighted how international recognition boosts the confidence of the entire team. "We received the loudest cheers and applause at the MAMI film festival. It's heartening to see people talking about the film globally. Even in India, there's a growing curiosity and expectation because of the positive buzz from abroad," he concluded. Banerjee's experience underscores the

significance of indie films in bringing international acclaim and pride to the country. "I feel very proud and glad I did *Stolen*. Hopefully, I will continue to find films that allow me to represent my country proudly on the global stage," he added.

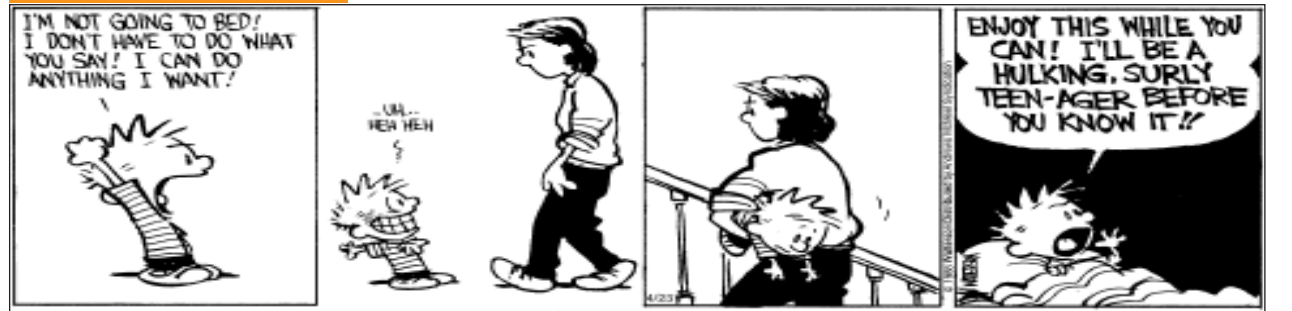


FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



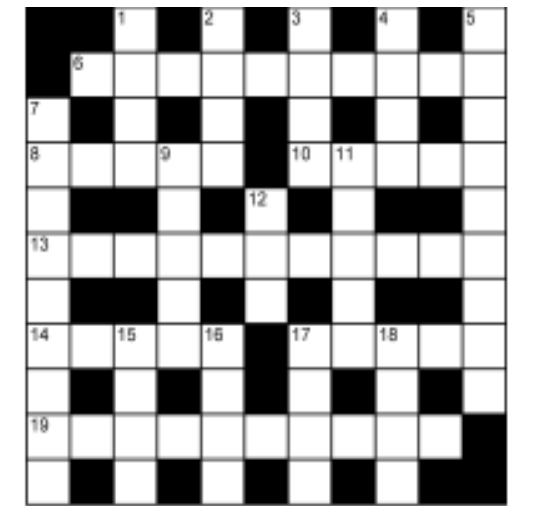
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- 6 A warning tower for ships
- 8 Wide awake and watchful
- 10 Robbery
- 13 Your mother's mother
- 14 Stories
- 17 The number of legs on a tripod
- 19 A nice place to go out to for a meal

DOWN

- 1 Donate
- 2 Talk with in a friendly way
- 3 Injured by a bullet
- 4 Make well again
- 5 Periods of 100 years
- 7 Female children
- 9 Wash the soap out of

SOLUTION

Z	I	G	Z	A	G	S	W	A	P
E	L	E	P	A	T				
S	T	A	N	E	A	L	O	R	
O	B	S	E	R	T				
S	A	N	T	O	R	E			
U	B	R	O	T	H	E			
M	E	I	S	C	E	D			
M	E	X	I	C	O	D	I	C	E
E	T	H	P	C					
R	A	T	S						
C	A	N	E	L	S				

Mijayawada



Kay Kay Menon has been one of the finest B'wood stars, known for his raw, intense and versatile performances. Soon to be seen donning a detective character in *Shekhar Home*, the lead actor speaks to *The Pioneer* as he discusses bringing unique Indian flavours to his character, his experience filming in historically rich locations and more

'PRODUCTION FACED QUITE A CHALLENGE FINDING LOCATIONS MATCHING SHEKHAR'S VIBE'

AARTI SREENATH

Shekhar Home, a highly anticipated series based on the classic detective Sherlock Holmes, is scheduled to debut soon, enchanting viewers with its unique mix of Indian essence and thrilling narrative. Starring the versatile actor Kay Kay Menon in the titular role, the show promises to offer a fresh take on the detective genre. Menon, known for his nuanced performances and ability to bring complex characters to life, takes on the challenge of portraying Shekhar, an eccentric and unpredictable investigator. Set in 1990s Bengal, the series explores the mysteries and supernatural elements that surround the sleepy town of Lonpur, all while staying true to its Indian roots. As fans eagerly await its release, Shekhar Home is poised to become a must-watch in the world of Indian entertainment. During a candid conversation, Kay Kay Menon discussed his thoughts on portraying the lead role in the upcoming series, his approach to the character and how he infused an Indian essence into the portrayal, while also reflecting on the challenges and nuances of adapting a story set in 1990s Bengal. When asked how he approached the role by bringing a unique Indian flavour while staying true to the essence of Sherlock Holmes, the *Life in a Metro* star remarked, "Being Indian naturally helped. The scriptwriters, who are also Indian, have experienced life here, which made the transition smoother. For me, it was more about understanding Shekhar's character

and finding that person within myself." The ABCD actor's portrayal of Shekhar Home promises to be a captivating blend of Indian sensibilities and the classic detective genre, making it a series to watch out for. "Shekhar, as I discovered, is quite eccentric, a maverick with a unique sense of humour that he doesn't even realise he has. People find him funny, but he's also unpredictable. These elements combined were my contributions as an actor to shaping Shekhar from the script and adding an Indian touch." The series, as we are all well aware of, is set in the 1990s in Bengal, a period without modern conveniences like Zoom meetings and smartphones. *Haider* fame, explained how this influenced his portrayal, saying, "Back then, the time period had its own pace and rhythm. The fictional town of Lonpur, where the story unfolds, is depicted as a sleepy place. I derived Shekhar's persona from this easy-going setting with a unique rhythm. The production team faced quite a challenge finding locations that matched this vibe. We shot on the outskirts of Bolpur, near Shantiniketan and Haldia, among other places. Visiting these locations was fascinating for us as actors." Reflecting on the experience of filming in historically rich locations, he shared, "There's an old-world charm in these places that you can feel in the air. It's like time has stopped. Even with modern vehicles around, the essence of the place remains intact. It's a subjective experience; some feel it, some don't. For me, it was palpable." Discussing his on-screen chemistry with co-star Ranvir Shorey, who plays Jayvrat

Sahni, *The Special Ops* fame noted, "Ranvir and I hit it off instantly. We have what I like to call a 'jugabandi.' He's a brilliant actor, and we improvised a lot on set. There were moments when the directors would say, 'How much more will you improvise?' It was great fun." When asked if he believes in the supernatural events happening, he responded thoughtfully, "I don't disaffirm anything I don't know. Just because I haven't experienced it doesn't mean it doesn't exist. In acting, you often get carried away; you immerse yourself fully into the character. Sometimes, things happen beyond human design. That's the magic of acting—it goes beyond intellectual design. That's why I never take ownership of my performances; there's always an element of something beyond." The *Mumbai Meri Jaan* actor also emphasised that he didn't delve into *Sherlock Holmes* stories or other detective literature to prepare for the role. "I'm playing Shekhar, not Sherlock. I'm more interested in the human being I'm portraying. Each character, whether a cop or a detective, is unique. For me, the person I'm playing is more important than the role itself." Finally, when asked about the wordplay in the show's title, *Shekhar Home*, *The Black Friday* star admitted, "I was as intrigued as you are. Once I read the script, everything made sense. The surname 'Home' is actually quite common—just Google it!" Kay Kay Menon's portrayal of Shekhar Home promises to be a captivating blend of Indian sensibilities and the classic detective genre, making it a series to watch out for.

FRIENDSHIP HITS HIGH NOTES

Lisa Mishra live!

SHIKHA DUGGAL

The House of McDowell's Soda presented *Yaari Jam*. The popular Gen Z artists Ritviz, Sanam, Lisa, Lohitika and Zaeden performed live at this thrilling musical spectacle. At that point, we looked into an exclusive conversation with Lisa Mishra, an American singer.

Yaari Jam actually commemorated friendship. The musician shares a poignant tale of how friendship has impacted her musical path, saying, "Since friendship is something I share with my band, friendship has been essential to my creative journey. After six years of togetherness, they rank among the people in Mumbai with whom I am closest." *Yaari Jam* made this friendship day even more special by throwing a star-studded night and having a great time with pals.

"To me, it is simply a part of who I am. Since I'm Indian American, I believe that creating music in multiple languages is true for me and comes effortlessly. Fans can undoubtedly anticipate some of their favourite covers and mashups. And of course my originals, which blend Hindi and English," she gave some insight into how she approaches fusing several musical genres in her live performances. Everyone was seen singing and swaying to the newest tracks that were topping the charts. *Yaaron Waali Baat* emphasised how little deeds may have a profound effect on friends and the many opportunities that result from deep connections. *Tareefan* fame continued the discussion, saying, "We really did have songs about friendship built into our set list, so the audiences really enjoyed our set. I believe that people witnessed our enthusiasm while performing and the friendship among my band members, which is greatly impacted by *Yaari Jam*."

On the other hand, though, "Kehlani and SZA are the two artists that I believe have inspired me the most recently. They seem to speak quite easily and they are two women who genuinely just know who they are. I therefore draw inspiration from them and sort of just do what I need to do rather than adhering to the status quo for female performances. And you know what? By observing them being who they are, I've learned to be myself."

Additionally, she believes that every performance she has ever given has something to offer everyone. Therefore, she believes that the best approach to introducing her fan base to the new music she released this year is to also sprinkle in a few covers and well-known favourites so they never feel left out. She constantly attempts to make sure that her own original work is available in addition to something for older and younger audiences. "I believe that the musicianship in my music

American-Indian singer Lisa Mishra talked candidly about her experience at *Yaari Jam*, a music-filled celebration of friendship, in an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*. While performing with well-known Gen Z musicians, she thought back on the significant impact friendship had had on her career. She also discussed the ways in which her close relationships with her bandmates have influenced her creative process!

has only grown stronger as it has aged. Our live set was the culmination of years and years of practice, honing my craft as a composer and arranger. I prefer to go slowly. I don't believe that worrying or paying attention is necessary on performance day. We are a very seasoned group of individuals. Because our band is so close-knit and, in my opinion, extremely situation-adaptable, we don't like to over-think things. On the day before the performance, we relax," *The Wakhra Song* fame adds.

Lisa carries a lot of profound emotion in her song *Saza*, which is from her most recent album, *Sorry I'm Late*. It appears that listeners relate to the song a lot. It's a lovely, straightforward song about heartbreak and a lack of resolution. Moreover, "it's all about the supporters. I talk a lot when I'm on stage. It's fun around here. We laugh and joke around. I behave as though they are my buddies. I don't know if it can startle some people to see how much audience participation there is during my set! In my opinion, being a performer means creating an environment that is enjoyable, secure and friendly for everyone, even those who haven't heard my music. As opposed to a rigid, formulaic approach that has never seemed to work for me, I prefer to keep things simple and honest. That's how I think it's done much better by others. I still need the crowd interaction's versatility."

Naadaaniyan fame is over-joyed with the quantity of songs she has put out this year, particularly her first album. She believes that in order to compose another project or work with new people, she is currently in a place where she may gather more stories and experience life once more. She believes that she is re-entering a state of self-discovery and that music will come from it, but nothing concrete just yet.



You've just had a scrumptious *biryani* and are craving a *shahi tukda*. Well, you're not alone. A recent survey reveals that 82% of Indians prefer indulging in traditional sweets like *Rasmalai* and *Shahi Tukda* following their meals. This preference for traditional sweets stands out significantly against other dessert options, such as chocolates, ice creams and Western desserts like cakes. This insight highlights a significant trend in the Indian culinary landscape, underscoring the enduring appeal of mithais as the quintessential post-meal treat.

Cultural significance of 'Mithai'

Mithais are a deeply ingrained part of India's food culture and they reign supreme after meals for several reasons. Indian cuisine is known for its bold flavours and spices and *mithai* provides the ideal sweet counterpart, balancing the heat and adding a perfect end note to a flavorful meal. The tradition of wanting something sweet after lunch or dinner is a deeply ingrained cultural practice, often encapsulated in the phrase 'Kuch meetha ho jaye'. This practice not only satisfies the palate but also symbolises a sweet ending to a meal, making desserts an integral part of the dining experience.

Diversity of flavours and textures

From rich milk-based sweets like *barfi* to lighter, nut-filled options like *peda*, there's a *mithai* for every taste and occasion. The diversity of Indian sweets caters to a wide range of preferences, ensuring that everyone finds something they enjoy. This variety is one of the reasons why *mithai* remains a favorite among Indians.

The traditional recipes, often passed down through generations, offer a sense of nostalgia and comfort, while innovative twists on these classics cater to modern tastes and trends. Traditional sweets have been given a modern twist to appeal to contemporary palates. For instance, vanilla *barfi* combines the rich, creamy texture of classic *barfi* with the subtle, aromatic flavour of vanilla, creating a delightful fusion that maintains the essence of the original while introducing

a new taste experience. Similarly, *mithai sundaes* blend traditional sweets with ice cream, offering a refreshing take on beloved desserts like *gulab jamun* or *jalebi*, served with a scoop of vanilla or pistachio ice cream.

Natural ingredients and nutritional value

Many traditional Indian sweets are made with natural ingredients like milk,

nuts and ghee. These ingredients not only offer a burst of flavour but can also be a source of essential nutrients. Milk provides calcium and protein; nuts add healthy fats and vitamins; and ghee, when consumed in moderation, offers a rich taste and several health benefits. This focus on natural, wholesome ingredients sets *Mithai* apart from many other dessert options that rely heavily on processed

Untapped market potential

The post-meal impulse consumption of Indian sweets represents a huge white space and a massive untapped opportunity. Despite the widespread love for traditional sweets, the market for post-meal indulgence remains relatively unexplored. New-generation one-stop shops and innovative dessert brands are beginning to tap into this potential, creating products that cater to the evolving tastes and preferences of Indian consumers. These

brands are not only focusing on traditional favourites but also introducing fusion sweets that combine the familiar with the novel, appealing to a broader audience.

Trends in consumer preferences

The recent data indicates a noticeable shift towards healthier dessert options. Consumers are becoming more conscious of their dietary choices, seeking sweets with less sugar, healthier ingredients, and greater nutritional value. This trend has led to the emergence of innovative and fusion variations of traditional desserts, such as *mithai sundaes* and *vanilla angoori basundi*. These new creations retain the essence of traditional sweets while offering a modern twist that caters to contemporary tastes.

Saccharine saga

The enduring popularity of traditional Indian desserts is a testament to their cultural significance, diverse flavours and nutritional value. As consumer preferences evolve, there is a growing demand for innovative and healthier options within the category of traditional sweets. By understanding and tapping into these trends, brands and businesses have the opportunity to redefine indulgence and cater to the ever-evolving tastes of Indian consumers. This dynamic landscape offers a promising future for the post-meal consumption of *mithai*, ensuring that these beloved sweets continue to hold a special place in the hearts and palates of Indians.

(The author, Sanket S, is the co-founder of Scandalous Foods.)

'KUCH MEETHA HO JAYE'



WITH SO MUCH SPIN ON OFFER, GAME CAN TURN ON ITS HEAD: INDIA ASSISTANT COACH NAYAR

PTI ■ COLOMBO

“Was it a shock? I would say yes,” said India’s assistant coach Abhishek Nayar as he tried to make sense of the unexpected defeat to Sri Lanka in the second ODI, blaming it on the spin-friendly conditions that have the potential to completely alter the course of a match.

India’s fragility against spin was once again on display as leg-spinner Jeffrey Vandersay wreaked havoc with a six-wicket haul to hand the visitors a 32-run defeat in the second ODI here on Sunday.

“...There is a surprise. But you anticipate and understand that in these conditions the game can turn on its head because there is so much spin on offer,” Nayar said at the post-match press conference.

India were chasing 241 on a pitch that had plenty of assistance for the spinners, and they ended up at 208 all out in 42.2 overs. In the previous game as well, the Indian batters barring skipper Rohit Sharma had struggled.

“Even if you look at the last game, it was relatively easy to score against the new ball. As the ball got older, the conditions when batting second got slightly tougher. Sometimes in tough conditions, especially in the 50-over format, this happens,” he added. The assistant coach said the think-tank will reflect on what has gone wrong so far.



“We want to go back and understand, and rectify, why it happened twice in a row. The day before yesterday, we were able to stitch partnerships but today we lost quite a few wickets in a bundle.” India shuffled their middle order, promoting Shivam Dube (0) to the number four spot, while maintaining the right-left batting combination with Shreyas Iyer (7) and KL Rahul (0) at numbers six and seven, respectively.

“My belief is that in any sport, position only matters if you’re playing in different areas of a game. We lost wickets in the middle phase, and that’s where the middle order batters batted. It’s not as if middle order batters batted towards the end. “The thought process was right. When it doesn’t work out, these questions are asked often. But I’ve always believed that if a middle order batter bats as a middle order batter, it is the right decision,” Nayar said.

Nayar feels there is more pressure on the team batting second. “When you are batting first, there is less pressure. When you are chasing, the pressure is more because you have to keep an eye on the run rate, wickets. “Whenever you bat first, you often have partnerships. Wellalage batted really well, both in the last game and this game. They scored important runs in the lower order.”



Dinesh Karthik appointed SA20 league ambassador

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

Former India wicketkeeper Batters Dinesh Karthik was on Monday appointed the league ambassador of the SA20 League.

Karthik, who is the first Indian player to be associated with the South African tournament, retired from all forms of cricket earlier this year. “The league has been electric in the first two seasons with some of the world’s best players on show and exciting young

talent putting up their hands on the global stage,” Karthik was quoted as saying in a media release.

“Karthik will be working very closely with fellow SA20 ambassador AB de Villiers and the management team to help strengthen the league’s global fan base and reinforce brand awareness across key strategic markets in India and the United Kingdom,” the release added.

Former South Africa captain and league commissioner

Graeme Smith expressed, “His exceptional cricketing talent and personality make him the perfect fit for our league and his involvement will undoubtedly elevate the league’s status globally and in India.”

The SA20 comprises six franchises -- MI Cape Town, Joburg Super Kings, Durban Super Giants, Paarl Royals, Pretoria Capitals, Sunrisers Eastern Cape, all of which are owned by the owners of IPL teams.



Former England batter Graham Thorpe dies at 55

PTI ■ LONDON

Former England and Surrey batter Graham Thorpe has died aged 55 after battling a “serious illness” since 2022, the country’s cricket board announced on Monday.

Considered one of the finest batters of his generation, Thorpe was hospitalised shortly after being named the head coach of Afghanistan in 2022 but the details of his medical condition are not known.

He is survived by his wife Amanda and four children, Henry, Amelia, Kitty and Emma.

“It is with great sadness that the ECB shares the news that Graham Thorpe, MBE, has passed away,” ECB said in a statement, without giving the exact cause of his death.

“There seem to be no appropriate words to describe the deep shock we feel at Graham’s death. More than one of England’s finest ever batters, he was a beloved member of the cricket family and revered by fans all over the world,” the statement read.

Thorpe began his Test career in 1993 with an Ashes century and repeated the feat on the

return tour, in Perth in February 1995. The left-hander was also instrumental in England’s back-to-back series wins in Pakistan and Sri Lanka during the 2000-01 season.

A lynch-pin of England’s middle order, he went on to play 100 Tests for England between 1993 and 2005 and averaged 44.66 with 16 centuries.

He also represented the Three Lions in 82 ODIs, collecting 2830 runs at an average of 37.18.

Thorpe enjoyed success at the county level as well. He was picked at the under-11 level by Surrey and played for them for 17 years, scoring close to 20,000 runs for the team.

“Graham is one of the great sons of Surrey and there is an overwhelming sadness that he will not walk through the gates of the Oval again. He is a legend of Surrey and brought great pride to the Club wearing both the Three Feathers and the Three Lions.

“He made outstanding contributions to the Club as a cricketer, and as a man, and he will be so sorely missed,” said Oli Slipper, Chair at Surrey CCC.

From ‘monkey boy’ to ‘horse guy’, Stephen is soaking up in limelight

AP ■ PARIS

Stephen Nedoroskik is cleaning into his newfound stardom as a geeky, bespectacled, Rubik’s Cube-solving video gamer who just won two bronze medals at the Paris Olympics.

“It’s still just surreal to me. I wake up in the morning, I’m like, Oh my gosh, I’m a two-time Olympic medalist! It is so cool,” he told The Associated Press. With both medals hanging around his neck, he beamed and laughed as he marveled at his rise to fame and the attention his speciality in gymnastics is receiving.

The 25-year-old U.S. gymnast finished third in the pommel horse on Saturday, five days



after helping the American men’s team earn bronze - its first Olympic medal in 16 years. Along the way, he’s captured the hearts of Olympics viewers with his endearing personality and nerdy tendencies. Images and clips of Nedoroskik

removing his glasses and centering himself before hopping on the pommel horse for a focused routine have gone viral. The memes and tweets have likened him to Clark Kent taking off his glasses and transforming into a hero. “The memes are hilarious and

I’m loving them all,” he said. Internet fodder aside, Nedoroskik and his eyeglasses have brought visibility to an eye condition called coloboma, which occurs when part of the tissue that makes up the eye is missing. Fans have approached him thanking him for being a role model for children who need to wear glasses.

“Even just last week, for the first time, I met someone else who has the same eye condition as me,” Nedoroskik said - a young boy whose mother said he really wanted to meet the gymnast. “It was also my first time meeting someone outside my family that has that disease. That was so cool to see that. And, you know, he was just so happy.”



Great Scottie! Scheffler gets Olympic gold medal in thriller

AP ■ SAINT-QUENTIN-EN-YVELINES (FRANCE)

Scottie Scheffler was a model of calm and greatness as he delivered the greatest closing round of his career.

The final two hours were about charges and collapses, pure theater that ended Sunday with the Olympic gold medal fittingly draped around the neck of golf’s No. 1 player.

It was only when Scheffler stood on the top podium, when the final few bars of the national anthem belted out across Le Golf National, that he lost control. The medal dangling beneath his right hand fixed across his chest, Scheffler raised his left arm to cover the sob.

Tears are nothing new for Scheffler. His latest trophy brought out his very best. Four shots behind to start the final round, six shots behind early on the back nine, Scheffler birdied five of six holes down the stretch and matched the course record with a 9-under 62 for a one-shot victory over Tommy Fleetwood.

“It’s been a long week. It’s been a challenging week. I played some great golf today, and I’m proud to be going home with a medal,” Scheffler said. “These

guys played tremendous golf and I think we should all be proud of the golf that we played this week.” It was a show-stopper, the best of the three men’s competitions since golf returned to the Olympic program in 2016 before 30,000 spectators that got their euros’ worth.

The remarkable surge by Scheffler, who shot 29 on the back nine. The relentless play of Fleetwood (66) and Hideki Matsuyama, who had birdie chances on the final six holes and had to settle for pars for a 65 to win the bronze.

And there was a stunning collapse by Jon Rahm, who saw a four-shot lead disappear in two holes and his hopes vanish with a double bogey; by Rory McIlroy, one shot behind until hitting wedge into the water; and by Xander Schauffele, the PGA and British Open champion who had a chance to win another gold until playing a four-hole stretch in 4-over par.

Not to be overlooked was Victor Perez of France, who hit the opening tee shot on Thursday and came within one shot of a medal on Sunday. He should know the lyrics to “La Marseillaise” if he didn’t already. Fans serenaded him on just about every tee.

High jumper Yaroslava wins Ukraine’s 1st individual gold of Paris Olympics

AP ■ SAINT-DENIS (FRANCE)

It was a night for war-torn Ukraine to rejoice.

Thousands of Ukrainians watched on YouTube as high jumper Yaroslava Mahuchikh won gold for the country she was forced to flee, then celebrated with two teammates who also medaled at the Paris Olympics on Sunday.

Iryna Gerashchenko shared bronze in the high jump and Mykhaylo Kokhan then claimed a bronze in the hammer throw, too - doubling Ukraine’s Olympic medal haul from three to six in the span of about an hour.

“Medals are very important for Ukraine because the people are having a very happy time, and they can cheer us and they can celebrate this with us and not think about the war for one day,” Kokhan said.

Mahuchikh, who left her home due to the war with Russia, earned Ukraine’s first



individual gold of these Summer Games, following a victory in women’s team saber fencing on Saturday. She is from Dnipro, a city of nearly 1 million located only about 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the front lines of the war. When Russia invaded, she piled as much as she could into her car and left town quickly. On her way out, she heard gunfire and could, at times, see shells raining down miles away.

The next time she returns, it will be as an

Olympic champion. Once the medals were assured, Mahuchikh and Gerashchenko ran down the track waving Ukrainian flags, prompting a standing ovation at the Stade de France.

Then, when the two high jumpers were given special permission to run over and embrace Kokhan, all three Ukrainian medalists posed together with their blue and yellow flags.

It wasn’t all about celebrating, though. Mahuchikh also recalled the “almost 500 sportsman (who) died in this war.”

“They will never compete. They will never celebrate. They will never feel this atmosphere,” she said, adding that her gold medal is “really for all of them.”

Mahuchikh succeeds Tokyo gold medalist Maria Lasitskene, a Russian who - along with everyone else from her country - has been banned from track and field’s international events since the country invaded Ukraine.

Boxer Cindy becomes first athlete competing as refugee to clinch Olympic medal

AP ■ VILLEPINTE (FRANCE)

Boxer Cindy Ngamba made history by becoming the first athlete competing as a refugee to clinch an Olympic medal.

The 25-year-old originally from Cameroon offered hope for the Refugee Olympic Team that was created to call attention to the plight of refugees across the world.

Ngamba’s victory at the Paris Games comes after a fierce bout with French boxer Davina Michel in the women’s 75-kilogram quarterfinals in front of a passionate French crowd.

Ngamba, who screamed and pumped her fist when she won, has scored at least a bronze medal as she advances to the semifinals Friday night. She will face Atheyna Bylon, who ensured that Panama would get its fourth-ever Olympic medal with her own win shortly after Ngamba’s fight.

“It means the world to me to be the first ever refugee to win a medal,” Ngamba told reporters. “I want to say to all the refugees around the world ... Keep on working hard, keep on believing in yourself.” She was a flag bearer for the 37

athletes making up the biggest Refugee Olympic Team since the idea was born ahead of the 2016 Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro. The International Olympic Committee created the team as a way for displaced athletes and migrants to participate fully in the Olympics without help from national federations.

Ngamba moved to the United Kingdom at the age of 11 and said she was granted refugee status in 2021 because she could have been imprisoned for being gay in Cameroon. She has said boxing has been her escape from the chaos - it’s also lifted her up to the international stage.

She told reporters Sunday that she struggled when she first moved to the U.K., going from a bubbly kid in Cameroon to an introvert as she learned English and adapted to her new home. She said she found her home in boxing and on the Olympic team.

“I had my family and my team by my side every day,” she said. “The refugee team welcomed me with open arms.” Ngamba, who upset former world



champion Tammara Thibault of Canada in her first bout, entered her Sunday match aggressively against Michel, quickly dodging the French boxer’s swipes. Michel received deafening cheers from French fans, while Ngamba said she heard boos in North Paris Arena.

“I think I only listened to boos as I walked into the ring,” Ngamba said, adding that the spectators were just another group of people who didn’t believe in her throughout her journey to get where she is today.

While some of the athletes on the refugee team have already won Olympic medals for their countries in past Games, Ngamba has been seen as the team’s best chance at medaling in Paris.

The success of Ngamba and other athletes on the refugee team comes at a time of record migration and as 100 million people around the world have been forcibly displaced from their homes. The Refugee Olympic Team has nearly quadrupled in size since its debut.

The team is “a symbol of inclusion, of equality, of achievement for a large community around the world of

refugees and displaced people,” U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi told the AP in an interview last week.

Grandi congratulated Ngamba, writing on X: “You do us all very, very proud! And now onward to gold!”

The refugee team was among the first Olympic delegations to cruise along the Seine River in the opening ceremony last week.

Ngamba’s victory comes as women’s boxing has drawn intense scrutiny in recent days as fighters Lin Yu-ting of Taiwan and Imane Khelif of Algeria faced a cascade of online abuse, with comments falsely describing them as transgender or men. Both boxers won their fights this weekend as the IOC backed both women and warned against turning the competition into a “witch hunt.”

Looking forward to her next match, Ngamba wants to keep sending a message of hope to refugees everywhere, saying that while she’s got at least a bronze medal locked down, she’s going for gold.

“Hopefully in the next round, I will get the job done - not hopefully.”

Chiyaan Vikram researched many tribes for *Thangalaan*

PNS | HYDERABAD

Actor Chiyaan Vikram shed light on his role in the much-anticipated film *Thangalaan*, offering a glimpse into the making of this epic period drama. Vikram discussed his collaboration with director Pa Ranjith, the extensive preparation for his role, and his admiration for fellow stars.

Vikram's enthusiasm for *Thangalaan* was palpable as he explained what drew him to the project. Vikram began, "My admiration for Pa Ranjith played a significant role. I've always been a fan of his work and have long wanted to collaborate with him. When he presented the story of *Thangalaan*, I was instantly captivated. The narrative transcends traditional boundaries. It's not confined to any particular language or region; it has a universal appeal. The film goes beyond just gold hunting to explore themes of freedom and the human spirit. Ranjith's storytelling is similar to the immersive experience we had with *Sarpatta Parambarai*. I believe *Thangalaan* will resonate with audiences globally."

The conversation then turned to the film's unique aspects, particularly Vikram's preparation for his role as a tribal leader. "Absolutely, the tribal leader in the film has a distinct and authentic appearance," Vikram noted. "Initially, I wondered if the look might resemble something from *KGF*, but I quickly realised this character is unique. Preparing for the role involved extensive makeup sessions, which sometimes took several hours for application and removal. We shot under extreme conditions—both cold and heat—but passion for the role makes such challenges secondary. My focus was always on embodying the character fully, rather

than seeking awards. While I value awards, the audience's response is what truly matters."

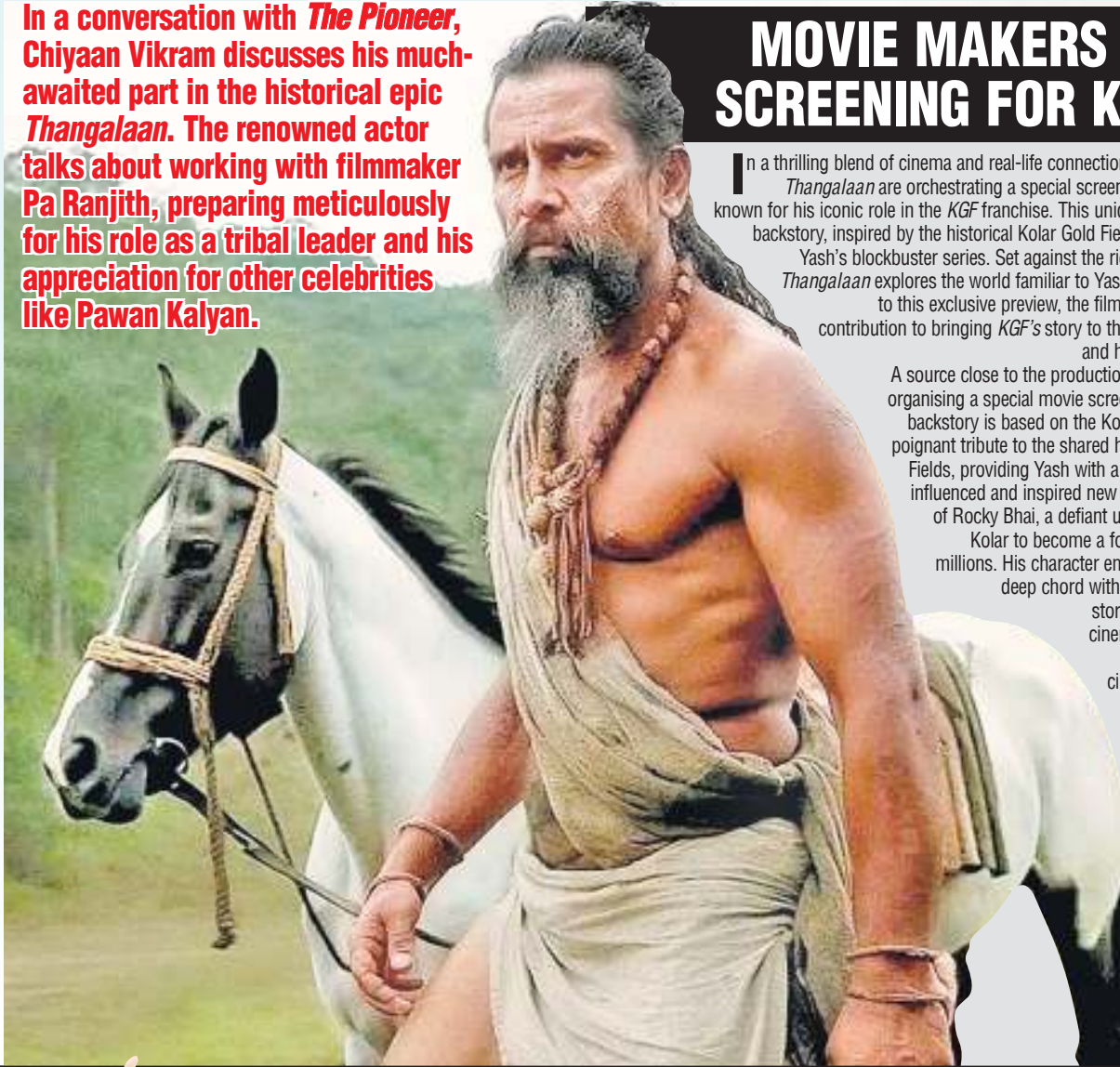
In terms of authenticity, Vikram revealed that he undertook significant research to portray the tribal leader effectively. "Yes, indeed," he confirmed. "I delved into research on various tribes, including African ones, to better understand their appearance and culture. This research was crucial for capturing the essence of my character. We aimed to get as many scenes right in a single take as possible, even if it sometimes took 30 attempts. Despite the absence of subtitles, we've crafted a film that connects with audiences across all languages in India. I'm confident *Thangalaan* will surprise and engage viewers in theaters."

The discussion also touched upon Vikram's respect for Power Star Pawan Kalyan. "Certainly," Vikram said with admiration. "I've always respected Pawan Kalyan for his commitment and dedication, both in cinema and politics. His decade-long involvement in politics and his current role as Deputy CM are truly commendable. It shows that someone can make a meaningful impact beyond their primary field of work. His journey offers inspiration to many, including those of us who contemplate entering politics."

As the interview wrapped up, Vikram shared his hopes for the film's audience. "I hope *Thangalaan* leaves audiences with a sense of wonder and excitement," he said. "The film is crafted to offer an immersive experience, much like how we were immersed in the story during its making. I believe it will be a surprising and memorable experience for everyone who watches it."

With the film's grand release on the horizon, Vikram's insights offer a tantalizing glimpse into what promises to be a captivating cinematic journey.

In a conversation with *The Pioneer*, Chiyaan Vikram discusses his much-awaited part in the historical epic *Thangalaan*. The renowned actor talks about working with filmmaker Pa Ranjith, preparing meticulously for his role as a tribal leader and his appreciation for other celebrities like Pawan Kalyan.



MOVIE MAKERS PLAN SPECIAL SCREENING FOR KGF STAR YASH

In a thrilling blend of cinema and real-life connections, the creators of the highly anticipated film *Thangalaan* are orchestrating a special screening event exclusively for Rocking Star Yash, known for his iconic role in the *KGF* franchise. This unique gesture underscores the film's intriguing backstory, inspired by the historical Kolar Gold Fields (KGF), a location prominently featured in Yash's blockbuster series. Set against the rich backdrop of Kolar's gold mining heritage, *Thangalaan* explores the world familiar to Yash's fans from the *KGF* saga. By inviting Yash to this exclusive preview, the filmmakers are not only honoring his significant contribution to bringing *KGF*'s story to the big screen but also celebrating the cultural and historical connections between the two films.

A source close to the production revealed, "The creators of *Thangalaan* are organising a special movie screening for *KGF* star Yash, given that the film's backstory is based on the Kolar Gold Fields." This event promises to be a poignant tribute to the shared history and cinematic depiction of Kolar Gold Fields, providing Yash with a firsthand look at how his legendary role has influenced and inspired new narratives in Indian cinema. Yash's portrayal of Rocky Bhai, a defiant underdog who rises from the dusty streets of Kolar to become a formidable force in the gold mines, captivated millions. His character embodies resilience, power, and grit, striking a deep chord with audiences and setting a new benchmark for storytelling and character development in Indian cinema. The *KGF* franchise has not only elevated Yash's stardom but also revolutionised cinematic storytelling, making it a landmark in Indian film history.

Thangalaan is poised to be another cinematic spectacle from the South, delving into the real story of the Kolar Gold Fields during the British exploitation era. The film continues the South Indian industry's trend of presenting unique and compelling concepts. Directed by Pa. Ranjith and starring Chiyaan Vikram and Malavika Mohanan in prominent roles, *Thangalaan* is set for a worldwide release on August 15, 2024, in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. The music for the film is composed by G.V. Prakash Kumar.

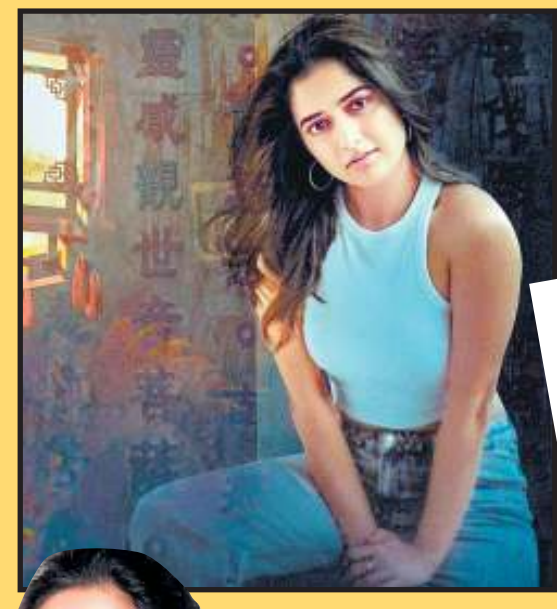


Ashika Ranganath onboards Karthi's *Sardar 2*

Hero Karthi's film *Sardar* has been a blockbuster hit in both Tamil and Telugu. Recently, the regular shooting of *Sardar 2* commenced on a grand set in Chennai. Directed by PS Mithran, who also directed the prequel, *Sardar 2* is being produced by Prince Pictures on a grand scale. In this film, Malavika Mohanan stars as the female lead and SJ Surya plays a powerful role.

The makers have recently shared another exciting update. In *Sardar 2*, the dazzling beauty Ashika Ranganath will appear as another female lead. The makers welcomed Ashika Ranganath to the project while sending her birthday wishes.

Sardar 2 is set to be a high-budget film with a huge scale. The top technicians are working on this movie. Yuvan Shankar Raja will provide the music for *Sardar 2*. The cinematography is handled by George C. Williams, with Diip Subbarayan as the stunt director. Rajeev Nambiar is the production designer. Vijay Velukutty is the editor, and AP Paul Pandi is the production executive. E. Venkatesh is the co-producer, and S. Lakshman Kumar is the producer.



Introducing Devaraj as 'Mundadu' in *Kannappa*

The buzz around Vishnu Manchu's ambitious pan-India project, *Kannappa*, continues to build as production moves ahead swiftly. With the film featuring extensive VFX work, the team is dedicating ample time to perfecting post-production details. As part of the promotional strategy, the creators are unveiling key characters from the movie.

The latest reveal introduces Devaraj as Mundadu. The character poster showcases him in a fierce and commanding presence, wielding an axe and casting a steely gaze. Mundadu is the formidable chief of the Erukalu clan, residing deep within Nilipala

Hill. Known for their mastery of axes and maces, the Erukalu warriors are celebrated for their unparalleled combat skills. Mundadu's rule is absolute, while his son Bebbuli harbours ambitions for the throne. The clan is renowned for their consumption of the enchanted steam of Nandi Vinti, further adding to their mystique.

Kannappa delves into the legendary tale of Bhakta Kannappa and his unwavering devotion to Lord Shiva. The film is set for a grand release in December and will be available in multiple languages, including Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Hindi, and English.

SAMYUKTHA STEPS UP TO HELP WAYANAD LANDSLIDE VICTIMS

Numerous celebrities have stepped up to assist the victims of the devastating landslides in Wayanad, Kerala. Among them, the prominent actress Samyuktha has made a donation to aid the affected individuals. The talented actress took to social media to express her sorrow and call for public support. She personally handed over her donation to the Vishwasanthi Foundation and shared a picture of the event online. Actor Mohanlal's ViswaSanthi Foundation has announced a contribution of Rs 3 crore for relief efforts.

Samyuktha wrote, "It deeply pains me to witness the calamity that has devastated the lives and livelihoods of our beloved people in Wayanad. I stand in solidarity with them and, as a first step in extending my support, I am contributing to the Vishwasanthi Foundation for the noble work they are undertaking in Wayanad. I urge everyone to join this cause. Let's donate to Wayanad and offer our prayers and support to those in need, @viswasanthifoundation."

Following her success in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada films, the actress is now busy with her Bollywood debut film *Maharagni* and several other exciting projects, including *Swayambhu*.



Sparks fly: Janhvi and Jr NTR ignite screen in *Chuttamalle*



The team behind *Devara* has unveiled the second song from the highly anticipated film, showcasing the undeniable chemistry between Jr NTR and Janhvi Kapoor. Released on August 5, this romantic track has already generated a buzz among fans and movie enthusiasts. The song, titled *Chuttamalle*, is a captivating addition to the film's soundtrack and has been composed by the talented Anirudh Ravichander.

Renowned for his ability to blend traditional and contemporary music, Anirudh has crafted a beautiful melody that perfectly complements the film's narrative.

Shilpa Rao lends her soulful voice to *Chuttamalle*, delivering a performance that captures the emotional depth of Janhvi Kapoor's character. The lyrics, written by the lyricist Rama Jogayya Sastry, narrate a heart-felt tale of love and longing. In the song, Janhvi's character expresses her deep thoughts and emotions about her lover, portrayed by NTR. The lyrics paint a vivid picture of her being completely immersed in her lover's thoughts, highlighting the romantic tension between the two characters.

In a genre that typically emphasises energetic dance numbers, this track offers a refreshing change with its focus on a solo female vocal performance. Shilpa Rao's vocals beautifully capture the essence of Janhvi's character, who is depicted as a rural girl. The choice to feature a solo female voice in a mass movie setting is unconventional, yet it adds a layer of depth and authenticity to the narrative.

NTR, known for his powerful screen presence and dynamic performances, showcases a more subdued and introspective side in this song. While he delivers some impressive dance steps, he maintains a calm and composed demeanour, allowing the emotional weight of the song to take center stage. Janhvi Kapoor, on the other hand, exudes glamour and elegance, perfectly embodying her character's allure and charm.

OM SHIVAM COMPLETES ITS SHOOTING

The film *Om Shivam* marks Bhargav Krishna's debut as the lead hero under the Deepa Movies banner. Produced by K.N. Krishna Kanakapura and directed by Alwin, this film is being made in Telugu, Tamil and Kannada. Viranika Shetty stars as the female lead. According to the film team, *Om Shivam* blends commercial elements with surprising twists in the life of a devout Shiva devotee. Producer K.N. Krishna Kanakapura revealed that the shoot took place in various locations. Director Alwin added that the film has completed shooting and is now moving swiftly through post-production.

The director emphasised that the film's story, music and cinematography are key highlights. After being impressed by the story, the decision was made to produce the film in multiple languages. A well-known audio company is preparing to release the soundtrack in all three languages soon.



Pushpa 2: The Rule climax action shoot is on

Pushpa 2: The Rule is set to be icon star Allu Arjun's most ambitious film yet. This pan-Indian action extravaganza has already generated significant buzz with its expertly crafted promotional content. The teaser has been a massive hit, showcasing the prowess of director Sukumar. The film's first song, *Pushpa Pushpa*, has captivated audiences with its dynamic appeal, while the second track, *Sooseki* in Telugu, has also been a tremendous success. Rock star Devi Sri Prasad continues to deliver unforgettable music.

Currently, the film is shooting a climactic action sequence that perfectly embodies Sukumar's vision. Allu Arjun is leading this extensive shoot, joined by key cast members, on a specially built set at Ramoji Film City. The climax is expected to be a thrilling highlight, promising to give viewers an exhilarating experience in theaters.

Produced on a grand scale by Mythri Movie Makers and Sukumar Writings, the film is being overseen by producers Naveen Yerneni and Y Ravi Shankar, ensuring top-tier quality. Cinematographer Mireslow Kuba Brozek is set to deliver some of his finest work, while S. Rama Krishna and N. Monica's production design, along with other technicians, are poised to achieve remarkable acclaim.

Pushpa 2: The Rule is slated for a grand worldwide release in multiple languages on December 6, 2024.

COMMITTEE KURROLLU LIGHTS UP PITHAPURAM AHEAD OF ITS RELEASE

The eagerly awaited film *Committee Kurrollu* is set to make its debut on August 9, and the buzz around it is already electrifying Pithapuram. As part of its promotional campaign, the film team is actively engaging with the community, generating considerable excitement in the area.

A key highlight in the lead-up to the release is the pre-release event, scheduled for August 5 in Hyderabad. This event has drawn significant attention due to the presence of Niharika Konidela, who has stirred up considerable interest in the Pithapuram constituency. Niharika's connection to Jana Sena leader and current Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan—her uncle—has made her appearance in the constituency a hot topic within the film industry.

Produced by Niharika Konidela under Pink Elephant Pictures LLP and Sriradha Damodar Studios, *Committee Kurrollu* is directed by Yadhu Vamsi.

Despite featuring a fresh cast, the film has captured the public's attention, thanks in part to the positive reception of its teaser and songs. Veteran editor Anwar Ali is bringing his expertise to the post-production phase, ensuring a polished and engaging final product. Music director Anudeep Dev has crafted a compelling soundtrack that complements the film's narrative, while cinematographer Raju Eedurolu captures the story's essence with his striking visuals.

Behind the scenes, *Committee Kurrollu* benefits from a strong creative team, including the writing duo Venkata Subhash Cherla and Kondal Rao Adagalla. Their dialogue brings a unique authenticity to the film, reflecting the rich, relatable language of its rural setting. With its innovative approach and dedicated team, *Committee Kurrollu* promises to deliver a captivating cinematic experience when it releases on August 9.

