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Prez Murmu receives Fiji's highest civilian award

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'HANDLING WEAPONS AND PERFORMING STUNTS ON SET POSED ITS OWN RISKS'



'Aasa Kooda opened new career OPPORTUNITIES'

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QUOTE OF THE DAY



Thousands of farmers are calling the BJP helpline saying that their loans have not been waived. We appointed a person to receive the calls of farmers who did not get their loans waived thinking that only a few will call. But the helpline is getting thousands of calls from farmers. Farmers are now worried as their loans are not getting waived. They say that they don't understand on what basis the crop loan waiver scheme is being implemented

- G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister

P4

DON'T MISS...

Case filed against YSRCP MLC on...

A case was registered against YSRCP MLC KRJ Bharat in Arundel police station on Tuesday, following allegations that he issued a recommendation letter to a devotee to participate in Thomala Seva at the famous hill shrine of Tirumala in exchange for money. The complaint, lodged by Chittibabu, accuses MLC Bharat of taking Rs 3 lakh to provide the recommendation letter. As a result, the police have registered a case against MLC Bharat and his assistant, Mallikharjun. It is noteworthy that KRJ Bharat unsuccessfully...

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Over 84% dists prone to extreme...

More than 84 per cent of the districts in India are prone to extreme heat waves and 70 per cent are experiencing a rise in the frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall events, according to a new analysis. The report, "Managing Monsoons in a Warming Climate" by the independent developmental organisation IPE Global Limited and Esri India Technologies, said the country was experiencing extended summer-like conditions during the June-September monsoon. Abinash Mohanty, head of Climate Change...

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Veg thali price rises 11% due to high...

Vegetable thali's price increased 11 per cent in July compared to June this year due to higher prices of tomatoes on a monthly basis, according to a report. Non-veg thali also turned costlier by 6 per cent in July compared to June 2024, the Crisis Market Intelligence and Analysis' monthly 'Roti Rice Rate' report stated. The cost of veg thali, which comprises roti, vegetables (onions, tomatoes and potatoes), rice, dal, curd and salad was at Rs 32.6 per plate in July 2024 against Rs 29.4 per plate in June 2024, according...

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India Batters in focus against...

The onus will be on Indian batters, particularly the talismanic Virat Kohli, to follow the path laid down by skipper Rohit Sharma and tactfully counter the spin challenge in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday to avoid their first series defeat to Sri Lanka in 27 years. It's certainly not the start Gautam Gambhir, a stickler for victories, would want in his first ODI assignment as the team's head coach. India's previous bilateral ODI series defeat against the Islanders came in 1997. The Arjuna Ranatunga-led...

-SPORTS

Revive and speed up projects on hold: CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has criticised the YSRCP government for halting numerous infrastructure projects initiated by the Telugu Desam government from 2014 to 2019. During a review meeting on the Infrastructure Investment Department on Tuesday, Naidu directed officials to re-list and expedite the completion of projects that were cancelled or suspended by the previous administration.

Naidu expressed frustration that the YSRCP government had impeded wealth creation by stalling critical infrastructure initiatives. He emphasised the need to get these projects back on track swiftly. The CM specifically highlighted the importance of advancing projects under the Andhra Pradesh Maritime Board, AP Maritime Infrastructure Development Corporation, Special Purpose Vehicles, and AP Inland Waterways Authority. He also called for the rapid completion of ports and fishing harbours.

The CM instructed officials to proceed with the Inland Waterways Authority projects, which had been initiated after extensive planning. He outlined additional infrastructure goals, including the construction of airports and airstrips in Dagadarthi (Nellore district), Kuppam (Chittoor district), Nagarjunasagar (Palnadu district), and Moolapet (Srikakulam district). He noted that while these projects had previously received approval and completed land acquisition, the YSRCP government halted



- Raps YSRCP govt for halting infrastructure projects started by the TDP govt
- Key areas for focus include the Andhra Pradesh Maritime Board, AP Maritime Infrastructure Development Corporation, and AP Inland Waterways Authority.
- Naidu emphasises the need to complete ports, fishing harbours, and airport/airstrip projects across the State.
- CM directs the exploration of additional airports/airstrips and flying training centres.
- CM plans to reorganise state corporations and integrate the AP Fiber Net project.
- CM calls for the reinstatement of several corporations and their integration with the CCTV network.
- Naidu criticises the previous government for inefficiencies and debt accumulation related to Fiber Net connections.

progress. Naidu aims to establish airports and airstrips in 12 to 14 locations across the state and also directed officials to explore constructing airports or airstrips in Tadipatri (Anantapur district) and Tuni (Kakinada district). Additionally, he proposed setting up flying training centres at Kurnool Airport and designing projects to facilitate air cargo transport.

Naidu also announced plans to reorganise various state corporations. The AP Aviation Corporation will be brought under the General

Administration Department (GAD), while the AP Digital Corporation will be transferred to the Information & Public Relations Department (I&PR). The AP Towers Corporation will be merged into AP State Fiber Net Limited. He highlighted that the AP Fiber Net project, which was completed at just 10 per cent of the projected cost by using existing utility poles, has constructed 24,000 km of Fiber Net and provided 900,000 connections.

Continued on Page 2

UK baulks to provide refuge to Hasina

She may remain in India for a couple of days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina's plan to travel to London has hit a roadblock following the UK's hesitation to provide her refuge and she is unlikely to move out of India for the next couple of days, people familiar with the matter said on Tuesday.

Hasina, who landed at the Hindon airbase on Monday in a C-130J military transport aircraft hours after resigning as the prime minister, has been shifted to an unspecified location in Delhi under tight security, they said.



Continued on Page 2

Hasina in shock, govt giving her time: EAM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar told an all-party meeting on Tuesday that Bangladeshi leader Sheikh Hasina, who has arrived in India after quitting as prime minister following extraordinary protests in the neighbouring country against her rule, was in shock at the turn of events, sources said.

The government is giving her time to recover, before enquiring

about her future plans, Jaishankar said, briefing political leaders in the Parliament House.

The minister said India has spoken to the Bangladesh Army chief to ensure the safety of more than 10,000 Indian students in that country and also taken up the issue of attacks on Hindu minorities, according to a couple of leaders who attended the meeting.

Continued on Page 2

B'desh Prez dissolves Parliament, paves way for fresh polls

PNS ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin dissolved Parliament on Tuesday paving the way for fresh elections and an interim government was taking shape, a day after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina abruptly resigned and fled the country following weeks of violent anti-government protests.

President Shahabuddin met the key coordinators of the student movement at Bangabhaban (presidential palace) in the evening to discuss the current situation and the shape of the interim government, media reports said.



Permissions for layouts, buildings to be simplified: Min

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Municipal and Urban Development Minister Ponguru Narayana has announced that the process for layout regularisations and building permissions will be simplified statewide, though strict actions will be enforced against rule violations.

During a review meeting at the CRDA headquarters in Vijayawada on Tuesday, Minister Narayana engaged with representatives from various builders' associations. The representatives urged for



measures to stimulate the real estate sector and highlighted issues related to Nala Tax, Vacant Land Tax, Fire Permits,

Airport Bonds, and TDR Bonds. They also raised concerns about the online permit system.

Continued on Page 2

- Special focus on unauthorised layouts
- Jungle clearance work in Amaravati from tomorrow
- R-5 zone beneficiaries to get houses in their respective areas
- Town Planning Dept to be linked with Revenue Dept

APERC announces revised transmission tariffs for 2024-29

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (APERC) has unveiled the new transmission tariffs for the period spanning from FY 2024-25 to FY 2028-29. This decision follows the review of Tariff Petition 77 of 2023 filed by APTRANSCO. The comprehensive order is available for review on the APERC website at www.aperc.in.

In terms of investment, APTRANSCO had filed for a total of Rs 15,729.41 crore over the five years, but the APERC has approved an investment of Rs 10,692.98



crore, reflecting a shortfall of Rs 5,036.43 crore. Regarding the net aggregate revenue requirement, APTRANSCO's initial request was for Rs 25,304.18 crore, while the Commission approved Rs 19,994.60 crore, resulting in a dif-

ference of Rs 5,309.58 crore. Transmission losses are to remain at 2.75% for FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26, with a slight reduction to 2.70% for the following years. Peak demand projections have been adjusted, with the filed peak demand increasing from 15,226 MW in FY 2024-25 to 19,913 MW by FY 2028-29, whereas the approved figures are slightly lower, ranging from 14,610 MW to 19,019 MW. This adjustment reflects a difference in demand forecasts ranging from -616 MW to -1,178 MW.

Continued on Page 2

Crest gates of projects lifted

PNS ■ GUNTUR

River Krishna remains in spate with heavy inflows, leading to the lifting of crest gates at the Srisailem, Nagarjuna Sagar (NSP), and Pulichintala projects to release floodwaters into the sea.

At Nagarjuna Sagar, 22 crest gates were opened to discharge 3,14,761 cusecs of water to the downstream Pulichintala project. This significant project, vital to both Telugu states, is currently receiving 3,54,831 cusecs of water. Additionally, floodwater is being diverted through the Left and Right canals from NSP for irrigation in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The water level at NSP stands at 585.40 feet, close to its full capacity of 590 feet, with 298.58 TMC of water impounded out of a total capacity of 312 tmc.

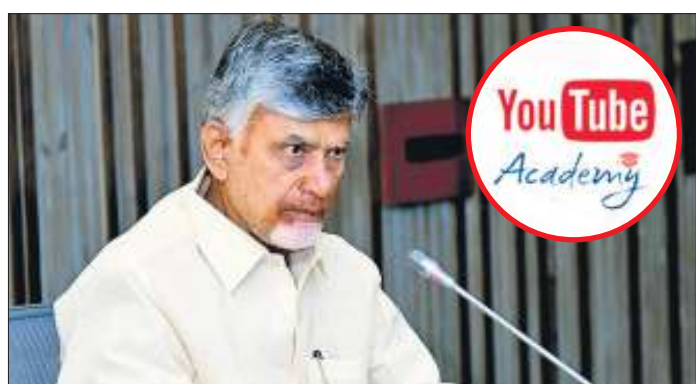
YouTube Academy on the anvil in Amaravati

CM takes part in virtual meet with executives of tech giants over AP's digital prowess

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government and leading tech companies Google and YouTube held a virtual conference, marking a significant milestone in the State's digital evolution. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu led the meeting, which aimed to explore strategic partnerships to boost the State's technological advancement.

The conference featured Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu and prominent Google executives, including Neal Mohan, Global CEO of YouTube; Sanjay Gupta, President of the Asia Pacific Region at Google; Leslie Miller, Global VP of YouTube; and Sreenivasa Reddy, Managing Director of Government Affairs, India.



Discussions centred on potential collaborations to enhance digital infrastructure, advance skill development, and utilize technology for efficient governance.

Chief Minister Naidu emphasised Andhra Pradesh's commitment to becoming India's digital hub. "Our state is on a path to becoming a leading digital centre, and we are excit-

ed about the opportunities to partner with global leaders like Google and YouTube," Naidu stated.

Google representatives praised the State's progress in digital infrastructure and reiterated their support for fostering innovation and skill development across India.

In addition to proposing a YouTube Academy in Amaravati, both parties agreed to further explore collaboration opportunities. An MoU will soon be signed under the initiative "AI for Andhra Pradesh, Powered by Google." This extensive partnership will focus on AI applications in agriculture, healthcare, sustainability, skill development, startup ecosystems, AI workforce development, MSME support through digital credit, and AI-driven governance.

Naidu calls for efficient water management amid flooding

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has instructed the Water Resources Department to ensure that all major reservoirs and minor irrigation ponds across the state are filled with the incoming floodwaters. Emphasising the need to maximise water utilisation, he directed that every acre under cultivation be irrigated to prevent water wastage. This directive came during a review meeting with water resources officials held on Tuesday.

G. Sai Prasad, Special Principal Secretary of Water Resources, presented an overview of various state projects and current water levels in reservoirs via a PowerPoint presentation. Chief Minister Naidu inquired about the volume of water reaching different reservoirs and urged offi-

cials to conduct field-level analyses to ensure that reservoirs are filled.

The Chief Minister underscored the priority of completing the Polavaram project, a crucial infrastructure endeavour for the state. He emphasised the need to replace the damaged diaphragm wall with a new one within the next two seasons and to have it operational by June next year. Naidu also indicated plans to discuss the project with Central government officials and instructed state officials to travel to Delhi for further negotiations. Additionally, he called for the expedited completion of Phase 1 of the Veligonda and Chintalapudi lift schemes. Naidu highlighted the importance of advancing the river linking projects between the Godavari-Penna and Vamsadhara-Nagavali rivers.

The functioning of oppn in AP must reflect real democracy!

The spirit of true democracy can be felt by people only when opposition parties work with commitment, irrespective of their individual strength in the legislature. Electors determine the ruling and opposition parties, depending on their performances against the backdrop of promises made in the manifestoes released ahead of the polls. Thereafter, it is the responsibility of the parties to discharge their respective functions.



elections, is the only major 'opposition' party in the House. As per rules followed by Legislatures across the country, a political party that secures 10% of the seats in the House shall be given the status of 'principal' opposition party. However, YSRCP has just 6% (11) of the total 175 seats in the House. In the previous House under the YSRCP rule, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) hardly got the required numbers to secure the status of principal opposition. Former chief minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has sought the status of principal opposition in the House by writing a letter to Speaker Ch. Ayyanna Prasad in this regard. The plea was rejected by the presiding officer of the House. After tasting a humiliating

Presently, in the state of Andhra Pradesh, a clear picture with regard to a robust Opposition is yet to emerge, going by the functioning of opposition and ruling parties. The Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP), which had secured only 11 seats in the recent Assembly elections, is the only major 'opposition' party in the House.



M D RATNA KUMAR Senior Journalist

with BJP in the backdrop of the Kargil War that evoked sympathy for then prime minister AB Vajpayee. The then Congress emerged as the biggest ever opposition party in the AP Legislative Assembly since its formation, securing 91 seats (30% of the total 294 seats). Working effectively as Leader of the Opposition (LoP), Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy could snap the winning spree of Chandrababu in the 2004 elections. However, Jagan has drawn flak from political circles as well as the general public over his persistent demand for LOP status to YSRCP.

In fact, Jana Sena Party (JSP) has secured enough seats (21) to get the status of principal opposition. The JSP in Andhra Pradesh and the Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJP) in Bihar are the only two political parties

which registered 100% strike rate in the 2024 General Elections. But JSP, headed by film actor Pawan Kalyan, chose to be in the ruling dispensation. He would have got more political mileage had he chosen to be LOP. That would have created room for JSP to emerge as an alternative political force in the state in the future.

In the 12th House in the erstwhile combined AP, more than 10 parties had representation in the House. Most of those parties had highlighted well burning issues from time to time for proper redressal. In Tenth House (1994-99) of APLA, Left parties (CPI- 19, CPI-M- 15) had done well even without numbers. After a split in TDP following dethronement of NTR by Chandrababu Naidu, in the group of MLAs that formed

NTR-TDP, consisting 29 members at one point of time, as its chief, tried to convince them by saying that their group would get the status of principal opposition if only they remained united. But Chandrababu tactfully saw to it that most of them rallied behind him.

Presently in Andhra Pradesh, there is uncertainty about the emergence of an effective opposition party with real fighting spirit. Jagan has to put his party's defeat behind him and protect his flock, considering that half of the legislators belonging to his party are from the reserved categories. Concentrating on effective functioning on the floor of the House is the need of the hour for Jagan in the interests of his political future. It is advantage democracy as well.

Sribharat urges Central govt to increase cancer screening tests

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In an address to the Lok Sabha today, Visakhapatnam MP Sribharat advocated for a substantial overhaul of India's cancer screening initiatives.

His remarks come amidst troubling data indicating a 13% increase in cancer cases over the past five years, with forecasts suggesting the number of cases could reach 1.57 million by 2025.

Sribharat underscored the crucial role of early detection in combating cancer, emphasising that timely diagnosis can drastically improve treatment outcomes and save countless lives.

He drew a stark comparison between India's current cancer screening rates and



The crucial role of early detection in combating cancer, emphasising that timely diagnosis can drastically improve treatment outcomes and save countless lives. He drew a stark comparison between India's current cancer screening rates and those of the United States, highlighting a significant gap that must be addressed.

those of the United States, highlighting a significant gap that must be addressed.

In his address, Sribharat called on the central government to significantly boost the number of cancer screening tests conducted across the country.

He advocated for an increase in funding dedicated to cancer research, arguing that enhanced investment is essential for developing more effective treatment options and understanding the disease better. Furthermore, he urged

for the integration of artificial intelligence into cancer detection and treatment protocols, citing its potential to revolutionize the accuracy and efficiency of diagnoses.

Sribharat's appeal reflects a broader concern over the state of cancer care in India.

By calling for these measures, he aims to bridge critical gaps in the healthcare system and ensure that advancements in medical technology and research translate into tangible benefits for patients.

His push for reform seeks not only to improve screening rates but also to foster a more proactive and innovative approach to cancer management nationwide.



CID to probe files burning case

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The investigation of a fire accident at the Sub-Collector's office in Madanapalle has been entrusted to the CID.

DGP Dwaraka Tirumala Rao here on Tuesday issued orders handing over the investigation to the CID. The CID officials will carry out a comprehensive inquiry on the files burning case.

Several vital files relating to the lands were gutted in a fire accident which took place on July 21 night at the Madanapalle Sub-collector office. The police registered nine cases in the case.

AP govt to launch 2-month campaign against HIV/AIDS on August 12

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Assistant Project Director (APD) of the Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Control Society (APSACS), Dr. Saraswathi, has emphasised the critical need to raise awareness about the spread of HIV/AIDS. She urged officials to take action to eradicate HIV/AIDS from the State. As part of this initiative, the government plans to conduct a two-month awareness campaign starting on August 12, in collaboration with 18 line departments.

APSACS convened a Joint Working Group Committee meeting in Vijayawada on Tuesday to prepare for the campaign. The meeting was chaired by Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Joint Director (JD) Dr. Manjula.

Addressing the meeting, Dr. Saraswathi highlighted the need for cooperation and support from various government



departments. She stressed the importance of fulfilling their responsibilities promptly and suggested that any department with more than 100 employees appoint a Complaint Officer. She encouraged everyone to get tested for HIV/AIDS.

Dr. Saraswathi expressed optimism that with collective support, HIV/AIDS could be eradicated from the state by 2030. She noted a significant decrease in the number of new cases compared to previous years and emphasised the availability of high-quality medicines provided by the government, urging regular use to combat the disease. The primary focus, she explained, is to raise

awareness among the public about HIV/AIDS.

IEC JD Dr. Manjula announced that Minister Satya Prasad would inaugurate the state-level HIV/AIDS awareness campaign on August 12. She mentioned that 96 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are participating in the campaign to educate people about HIV/AIDS and explained the importance of the awareness program through a PowerPoint presentation.

JD Dr. Bhagya Lakshmi, Dr. Kameswara Prasad, Dr. Chakravarthi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, and others attended the meeting.

YS Jagan moves HC for restoration of security cover

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP president and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has filed a writ petition in the Andhra Pradesh High Court to restore his security cover, which was reduced after June 3. Jagan argued that his safety is at risk due to the volatile political climate. He noted that his security was significantly reduced from 139 personnel, including Z+ security, to just 59 without any prior notice, which he claims violates natural justice principles.

Despite the seemingly high number of security personnel, Jagan pointed out that only two personal security officers are with him at any given time. He said that before becoming chief minister in 2019, he was already under high security due to the State's political situation. The security arrangements during his tenure as chief minister included armed static guards, personal security officer teams, a Counter Assault Team from the OCTOPUS wing, escorts, watchers, Chief Security Officers, and trained drivers, highlighting the comprehensive nature of his previous security cover.

Jagan consoles victims of TDP attack

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP Chief and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy visited a private hospital in Vijayawada on Tuesday to console Ginjupalli Srinivasa Rao, a YSRCP leader from Nawabpeta in Jaggayyapet constituency, and other party workers who were seriously injured in an attack by alleged TDP workers.

Addressing the media outside the hospital, Jagan strongly condemned the assault, calling the TDP members ruthless and inhuman. He said that such violent actions would only increase public anger and resistance against the perpetrators.

Jagan called for the Governor's intervention, urging immediate attention to the state's deteriorating law and order situation. He announced plans



to highlight these injustices to national political parties and bring the matter to the High Court and Supreme Court. Given the numerous injustices, Jagan wondered why the President's Rule should not be imposed, stressing that the current administration was losing control and legitimacy.

He also informed that he would visit the family of a YSRCP worker who was

killed by TDP goons in Sitarapuram, Nandyala district, on Friday.

Jagan criticised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for failing to deliver on key promises such as Rythu Bharosa, Amma Vodi, fee reimbursement, and zero-interest loans.

He accused Naidu of prioritizing violence over welfare and attempting to create an atmosphere of fear to suppress dissent.

AP Guv Sameera Nazeer plants trees in Raj Bhavan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor of Andhra Pradesh S Abdul Nazeer and First Lady Sameera Nazeer planted saplings in Raj Bhavan lawns here on Tuesday as part of the tree plantation programme. Governor Abdul Nazeer has asked all the Universities of Andhra Pradesh to initiate a comprehensive sanitation and cleaning programme for the drainage systems, toilets and entire campus premises of universities and other educational institutions, including all buildings and associated facilities under the Swachh Bharat programme.

The Vice Chancellors have also been instructed to take up tree plantation on a large scale in available areas within the campuses of universities and educational institutions, ensuring



their survival through adequate watering, manuring, proper protection, and monitoring their growth with the help of geotagging.

Dr M Hari Jawaharlal, Secretary to the Governor and other officers and staff members of Raj Bhavan have participated in the programme.

Revive and...

Continued from Page 1

However, due to inefficient governance under the previous administration, the number of connections had fallen to 500,000, and service quality had deteriorated. Naidu criticised the YSRCP government for accumulating a debt of Rs 1,258 crore on this project, despite offering affordable internet and cable TV services through set-top boxes at Rs 149 per month.

The Chief Minister directed the reinstatement and restoration of services for the Content Corporation, Drone Corporation, AP Towers Corporation, and Gas Infrastructure Corporation. He also called for integrating these entities with the CCTV camera network for enhanced monitoring and management.

UK baulks to provide refuge to...

Continued from Page 1

The former Bangladesh prime minister, accompanied by her sister Sheikh Rehana, planned to leave for London from India to take temporary refuge but the option is not being pursued now. This is after the UK government indicated that she may not get legal protection against any possible probe into the massive violent protests in her country, they said.

Hasina is now known to be considering several options including the United Arab Emirates, Belarus, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Finland, said a source. The Awami League leader planned to travel to London through India and her aides informed Indian authorities about it before she landed in Hindon on Monday, the people cited above said.

Hasina decided to travel to London as Rehana's daughter Tulip Siddiq is a member of

the British Parliament. Tulip is economic secretary to the Treasury and Labour MP for Hampstead and Highgate.

In a statement, British foreign secretary David Lammy said in London on Monday that Bangladesh has seen unprecedented levels of violence and tragic loss of life in the last two weeks and people of the country "deserve a

full and independent UN-led investigation into the events". Under the UK's immigration rules, it is not possible to apply for asylum from outside the UK and each asylum claim is carefully considered on its individual merits on a case-by-case basis.

The UK has a record of providing protection for people who need it but at the same time there is no provision within its immigration rules for someone to be allowed to travel to the UK to seek asylum or temporary refuge, said an expert.

Those who need international protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach; that is the fastest route to safety, the expert added.

Hasina in shock, govt giving her...

Continued from Page 1

Replying to questions from various leaders, including Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Jaishankar did not outright rule out the role of foreign countries in the unrest in Bangladesh, but emphasised that the situation is too fluid and that the government has been keeping a watch on the evolving scenario, they said. Gandhi had asked if foreign governments might be involved in fuelling the crisis in Bangladesh. He had also enquired about the immediate and long-term

strategy to deal with the situation, the sources said, adding that questions regarding Hasina's future role in her country's politics were asked as well.

The minister, however, was at pains to explain that Bangladesh is in a state of flux and its situation is far from stable, suggesting that it is too early for him to be categorical about a lot of issues.

Hasina has arrived in India along with some close relatives, he said, adding that the national security adviser is taking appropriate measures for their security.

Permissions...

Continued from Page 1

Minister Narayana informed the media that regulations issued by the Town Planning Department will be streamlined to prevent issues. He mentioned that a team from the Town Planning Department is being sent to study regulations in other states, and Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu will lead a special drive focused on town planning. A similar drive has already been organised in the Nellore Corporation. Moving forward, town planning applications will be addressed in one municipality each week. Additionally, the Town Planning Department will be integrated with the Registration Department to resolve revenue-related issues. This integration has been discussed with Revenue Minister A. Satya Prasad and aims to facilitate easier access for the public.

APERC announces revised...

Continued from Page 1

Transmission charges have also been revised. The filed charges, which were expected to rise from Rs 221.17 per kW per month in FY 2024-25 to Rs 247.85 by FY 2028-29, have been approved at lower rates, starting from Rs 180.83 per kW per month in FY 2024-25 and increasing to Rs 208.67 per kW per month by FY 2028-29.

In response to requests from renewable energy users, APERC has set specific tariffs for energy injected at the entry point, rather than based on contracted capacity. These tariffs are Rs 0.37 per unit for FY 2024-25, Rs 0.40 for FY 2025-26, Rs 0.42 for FY 2026-27 and Rs 0.44 for FY 2028-29.

Despite APERC's request for increased O&M costs to accommodate future wage revisions, the Commission has maintained the O&M costs according to existing regulations. APERC has issued several

important directives. APTRANSCO is required to submit annual performance petitions detailing gains or losses by November 30 each year. The Commission has granted APTRANSCO the liberty to file for true-up or true-down adjustments for the 4th Control Period within one month of the order's issue. Additionally, interest during construction will not be permitted for project delays exceeding one month (for projects with completion schedules of up to one year) or three months (for projects extending beyond one year), unless prior approval for an extension is obtained.

All APTRANSCO projects must comply with the Andhra Pradesh Works of Licensees Rules, 2007, with serious consequences for any deviations. Furthermore, APTRANSCO must ensure that all energy account details and transmission system availability are published monthly on its website.

Rs 81 lakh released under MGNREGS in last five years

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Union Minister of Rural Development Kamlesh Paswan has said that the number of workers who sought employment under the MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh from 2019 to 2024 is 4,48,49,710. The number of workers who were employed was 3,73,35,517. Also, in the last five years, Rs 81,03,406 lakhs has been paid, the Minister said, replying to a question of Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sianath in Parliament.

Similarly, in the current financial year 2024-25, under MGNREGS scheme, hundred percent fund transfer orders (FTOs) will be prepared within 15 days of the completion of the master rolls, he said, and explained that the workers will be paid through the National Electronic Fund Management System (NE-FMS) as per the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) protocol in their bank/post office accounts.

Minister assures support to sexual assault victim

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Minister for Housing and Information & Public Relations (I&PR), Kolu Parthasarathy, visited the survivor of the sexual assault incident in Pallerlamudi and her family members at the Old Government General Hospital in Vijayawada on Tuesday. He expressed concern and stated that society does not accept such acts. He assured the victim's family that the government will ensure the accused is punished, and support the victim's family.

The girl, hailing from Pallerlamudi village of Nuzvid Rural mandal in Eluru district, has been undergoing treatment at the Old Government Hospital in Vijayawada. The Minister spoke to the doctors about her health condition.

Speaking to the media, Parthasarathy said that society should condemn such incidents. The police have arrested the accused in the rape attempt of a girl at Rentachintala, he said. He added that the accused will be booked under POCSO Act and



I&PR Minister K Parthasarathy interacting with the family members of the survivor of the Pallerlamudi incident, at Old GGH in Vijayawada on Tuesday (Photo: Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar)

stringent action will be taken against him.

Further, he stated that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha promptly reacted to the incident and gave specific instructions to the Police Department about the arrest of

the accused. The State government has provided immediate financial support to the victim's family after discussing the matter with the officials concerned, he explained.

Meanwhile, the Minister inspected the sanitation maintenance on the premises of the Old

GGH. He directed the officials to take measures to build trust among the people in government hospitals. Old GGH Superintendent Dr Venkateswara Rao, Deputy Superintendent Dr Vinay, RMO Dr Sobha, Dr Himabindu and others accompanied Minister Parthasarathy.

Adequate security provided to Jagan: Home Minister Anitha

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Home Minister V. Anitha has said that adequate security measures are in place for former chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy. She questioned the necessity of 980 security personnel for a former CM and suggested that Jagan's petition in the High Court for increased security and opposition status was politically motivated.

Speaking to the media at the party's central office on Tuesday, the Home Minister highlighted a surge in complaints related to land grabbing, attacks, and illegal activities during the previous government. She noted that victims from Pulivendula were coming to the Praja Darbar to voice their grievances.

Addressing the media on Jagan's High Court petition for security restoration, the Home Minister remarked, "980 security personnel is equivalent to the population of a small village. Jagan is asking for security on par with that of a village panchayat. The government is providing him security



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ty befitting a former CM. Filing a petition in court to seek such security is unjust and attempts to portray the government poorly."

She further questioned Jagan's renewed focus on the knife attack incident after five years, noting that he did not pursue the case while in office. "Despite multiple court summons, Jagan did not appear, which indicates a political drama. Additionally, for opposition status, a party must have at least 10 percent of the assembly seats," she added.

On social media, Minister Nara Lokesh also commented

on the security issue, questioning why Jagan feels insecure despite having Z+ security. Lokesh noted on 'X' (formerly Twitter) that Jagan currently has 58 security guards and two escort teams, including a convoy with 10 armed guards and two state-of-the-art Land Cruiser bulletproof cars. He questioned the need for 986 security personnel under these conditions.

Lokesh's remarks came after Jagan filed a case in the High Court on Monday, challenging the state government's reduction of his Z+ category security.



Minister Kollu Ravindra distributing medicines to the people at a medical camp near Machilipatnam on Tuesday

'Insurance cover up to Rs 25L under NTR Vaidya Seva'

Scheme will be announced by CM Naidu soon

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Mines & Geology and Excise Kollu Ravindra has revealed that the government is mulling a new health policy. "This policy will offer medical treatment as part of an insurance scheme, providing coverage up to Rs. 25 lakh under the NTR Vaidya Seva," he said. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu will be announcing the details of the new scheme shortly, he added. Minister Kollu Ravindra, along with former MP Konakalla Narayana Rao, inaugurated the free medical

camp organised by the Manavatha Voluntary Organisation at Pothepalli Jewelry Park near Machilipatnam on Tuesday. He distributed medicines free of cost to those who took treatment.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Ravindra said that more voluntary organisations should come forward to serve society by conducting medical camps. "Due to food habits, changes in the atmosphere, and pollution, many people are suffering from various diseases and getting treatments in hospitals. They are

spending more money, especially on medical treatments. Free medical camps will be really helpful to the people," he explained.

Further, he stated that the State government is mulling including the NTR Vaidya Seva in the Central health schemes and offering health services worth Rs.25 lakh. This scheme will also be announced by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu soon, he said. He added that the government will re-launch Anna Canteens on August 15. Around 100 canteens will be made available to the poor.

Guntur East MLA vandalises plaques, draws flak

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The residents of Rajiv Gandhi Nagar in Guntur are outraged by the recent actions of Guntur East MLA Sheikh Nazeer Ahmed. In a shocking display of overreaction, MLA Nazeer Ahmed personally destroyed plaques installed for road projects by the

previous government using a sledgehammer.

This act of vandalism has caused significant anger and disappointment among the local residents, who are questioning how an elected representative could engage in such destructive behaviour while holding office. The plaques were an important



part of the community, symbolising development efforts, and their destruction has been seen as a disrespectful and unnecessary act. The residents are calling for immediate action against the MLA to prevent such incidents from happening in the future and to uphold the integrity of public office.

Tribals of Koruprolu demand MGNREGA jobs, basic amenities

Despite lack of roads, they are forced to travel six km for MGNREGA work

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

The tribal residents of Koruprolu village, located in the MK Patnam panchayat of Rolugunta mandal, took to the streets on Tuesday demanding job cards under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and meaningful local employment opportunities.

Koruprolu, a remote village housing 10 Konda tribe families, has long been plagued by a severe lack of basic services. The village's isolation is underscored by its inadequate road connectivity, a condition that has forced residents to traverse six kilometers just to access employment opportunities under MGNREGA.

Despite holding MGNREGA job cards, the villagers have been systematically



denied local work. The administration's drastic move to cancel their job cards, citing insufficient work in the village, has effectively thrust many into an exodus, contrary to the scheme's primary goal of curbing forced migration by providing local employment. The protest, led by activists Gemmilla Subbarao, M Kondababu, and K Govindarao, sought to bring the dire situation to the fore-

front. They demanded that the district administration not only reinstate the job cards, but also guarantee employment opportunities within the village. The activists emphasised that the failure of the MGNREGA scheme to deliver on its promises has pushed the villagers into a desperate struggle for survival.

"The lack of road connectivity also jeopardises emergency services during the rainy season, exacerbating our already critical situation," the villagers declared in a collective outcry. They condemned the scheme's failure to prevent migration and fulfil its intended purpose of stabilising rural livelihoods. The demands for immediate intervention reflect a broader crisis affecting remote tribal communities, highlighting the urgent need for effective implementation and infrastructure improvements.

Speed up sanitation works: GVMC Commissioner

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a bid to improve the living conditions of residents in Visakhapatnam's hilly areas, GVMC Commissioner P. Sampat Kumar has ordered a comprehensive sanitation overhaul. During a field inspection, Kumar assessed sanitation work in progress in YSR Nagar, FCI godowns, and Kapparada, encompassing wards 45, 47, and 53 of Zone-5.

Kumar emphasised the immediate need to accelerate ongoing sanitation efforts and ensure the uninterrupted functioning of Anna Canteens. He highlighted the importance of efficient drainage systems in these canteens to prevent recurring sewage overflows.

In the residential hill areas of Kapparada, Kumar meticulously examined drainage infrastructure, road conditions, and overall sanitation practices. He directed officials to intensify efforts to maintain cleanliness and prevent waste dumping in drains.

An awareness campaign tar-

getting shopkeepers and street vendors is planned to discourage the improper disposal of waste.

To address infrastructure deficiencies, Kumar instructed the Superintending Engineer to install streetlights in poorly lit areas and undertake thorough repairs of damaged drains. He acknowledged the absence of an underground drainage system as a primary challenge and stressed the need for educating residents on proper sewage management.

Given the high population density in these areas, Kumar has directed the Zonal Commissioner to reassign elderly sanitation workers to less strenuous duties and deploy fit personnel to expedite routine sanitation tasks.

The inspection was conducted in collaboration with Executive Engineer Matsya Raju, Assistant Executive Engineer Prasanna, Assistant Medical Officer Dr. Sunil Kumar, ACP Venkateswara Rao, Horticulture Officer Archana, and other sanitation and amenities secretaries.

Suspect in assault on 4-year-old girl arrested



PNS ■ ELURU

The suspect in the assault of a four-year-old girl has been arrested in Rentachintala. Charges under the POCSO Act have been filed against him.

K. Parthasarathi, Minister for Housing, visited the injured girl at the old Government Hospital in Vijayawada on Tuesday and consulted with doctors regarding her condition.

The girl, from Pallerlamudi village, was abducted from her home on Sunday night while sleeping with her parents. She was later found injured on the outskirts of the village. Police

have yet to confirm whether the assault involved sexual abuse.

She has been admitted to the Government General Hospital (GGH) in Vijayawada for advanced medical care. After visiting her, Minister Parthasarathi condemned the attack, describing it as an inhumane act committed by someone in an intoxicated state.

The Minister has directed the police and district officials to ensure that the perpetrator is brought to justice and promised that the government would extend gratia to the girl's family. According to the doctors, the girl is now out of danger.



Durga Temple EO Rama Rao inspecting the developmental works on the temple premises in Vijayawada on Tuesday

Officials inspect works at Durga temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Executive Officer (EO) at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada, KS Rama Rao, inspected the ongoing developmental works on the temple on Tuesday. He enquired the engineering department officials about the progress of various works. The EO instructed the officials to speed up the works and complete

them within the stipulated time. Durga Temple Executive Engineer L. Rama explained the progress of the ongoing works.

Later, EO Rama Rao checked the free Prasadam distribution and gave instructions to the officials.

Meanwhile, Nandyal District Collector Rajakumar Ganiya visited the Durga temple. The temple authorities accorded a warm welcome to the Collector.

Cybercrimes shoot up in Port City; Rs 100 crore lost

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Rs 18 crore frozen in various bank accounts

The Visakhapatnam Police have warned that there is an alarming surge in cybercrime, with over 13,000 residents falling victim to various online scams, resulting in losses totalling approximately Rs 100 crore. Of this amount, Rs 18 crore was held or frozen in various bank accounts. In a groundbreaking initiative, the city police, led by Commissioner Dr. Shanka Brata Bagchi, Joint Commissioner Dr. Kanginelli Fakkeerappa, and the cyber-crime wing, have successfully released Rs 4.6 crore of the frozen funds to 150 victims.

The rise of technology has ushered in a new era of crime, where cybercriminals employ a wide array of tactics to deceive and exploit individuals and organisations. These tactics include posing as bank employees, linking Aadhaar cards, and impersonating courier services to dupe people into sending money for fake deliveries. The proliferation of e-commerce and online transactions has led to an increase in phishing scams, investment frauds, and part-time job scams. Additionally, task games and easy money schemes are becoming increasingly popular, promising quick financial gains but often resulting in substantial financial losses. Cryptocurrency fraud, honey trap schemes, and fake TRAI fraud are also rampant.

The threat of cybercrime extends beyond financial loss, encompassing serious offenses such as identity theft, cyber-



The rise of technology has ushered in a new era of crime, where cybercriminals employ a wide array of tactics to deceive and exploit individuals and organisations. These tactics include posing as bank employees, linking Aadhaar cards, and impersonating courier services to dupe people into sending money for fake deliveries.

stalking, distribution of pornography, and trafficking. Despite the growing concern, many cases of cybercrime go

unreported. The figures that are available are alarming, but represent only a fraction of the actual occurrences.

"The number of cybercrimes is increasing daily, with new types of cybercrime emerging regularly. If victims report the crime promptly within one hour, the lost money can be frozen immediately. This allows us to proceed legally and return the money to the victims. The sooner it is reported, the higher the chances of freezing the funds," stated Dr. Shanka Brata Bagchi.

"Freezing the money prevents it from reaching fraudsters' accounts, allowing us to claim it from the respective bank and return it to the victims," Dr. Bagchi explained.

Case filed against YSRCP MLC on corruption charges

PNS ■ GUNTUR

A case was registered against YSRCP MLC KRJ Bharat in Arundelpet police station on Tuesday, following allegations that he issued a recommendation letter to a devotee to participate in Thomala Seva at the famous hill shrine of Tirumala in exchange for money.

The complaint, lodged by Chittibabu, accuses MLC Bharat of taking Rs 3 lakh to provide the recommendation letter. As

a result, the police have registered a case against MLC Bharat and his assistant, Mallikharjun. It is noteworthy that KRJ Bharat unsuccessfully contested against Nara Chandrababu Naidu in the Kuppam Assembly constituency in the last elections.

Speaking to the media, MLC Bharat denied the allegations, stating he had not sold pooja tickets for YSRCP the Tirumala Venkateswara Swamy. He also asserted that he did not have a



PRO and did not know Mallikharjun, the person against whom the case was registered.

"A false case has been registered against me because I contested against Chandrababu Naidu in Kuppam. The case aims to defame me. I am the son of a former IAS officer, and I am not in such a poor state to sell pooja tickets for YSRCP the Tirumala shrine. The case is politically motivated. I will face it," he said.

75 quintals of PDS rice seized; six held

PNS ■ ELURU

The SEB officials seized 75 quintals of ration rice while being transported illegally and held six persons at Desavaram village in Chintalapudi mandal on Tuesday.

Vigilance Inspector P Shivarama Krishna said that on a tip-off that a huge quantity of ration rice was being transported illegally, the SEB and vigilance officials conducted a checking of vehicles.

They found 35 quintals of rations being transported in



a vehicle and 40 quintals of rations of rice were being transported in another vehicle. The rice was distributed through the Public Distribution System to the beneficiaries. However, the PDS rice was purchased at a cheaper price and transported to Kakinada from which the PDS rice is exported to foreign countries.

They seized the ration of rice worth Rs 3 lakh. The ration rice was being transported to Kakinada. The officials seized the rice, and two vehicles and registered cases against six persons.

Lokesh's 'Praja Darbar' a huge hit

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh's 'Praja Darbar' event was held on Tuesday, attracting people from across the State who came to voice their grievances. The crowd shared various issues they faced during the five years of YSRCP rule, seeking the young leader's intervention.

People presented a wide range of concerns: some reported land grabs, while others requested permanent housing. There were numerous appeals for the reinstatement of pensions for the elderly, widows, and disabled individuals, which had been discontinued by the previous government. Additionally, requests for medical aid and solutions to personal problems were prominent.

Nara Lokesh assured attendees that their problems would be addressed. Representatives from the APEH Association



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urged the minister to enforce High Court orders, highlighting injustices faced during the YSRCP regime. Staff from Kasturiba Gandhi Girls' Vidyalayas appealed for the recognition of CRT and PGT part-time faculty as contract teachers.

Ajmira Laxman from Rajagopalapuram, ASR dis-

trict, demanded justice for his 16-year-old son, who was murdered under the influence of ganja. K. Madhavi from Vijayawada Vambay Colony, who completed her PG in 2016-18, requested assistance in obtaining her certificates, which were withheld due to non-payment of the fee reimbursement.

All India cattle census from Sept 1

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

The 21st All India cattle census will begin on September 1, 2024 and conclude on December 31, 2024.

East Godavari district Collector P Prashanthi, along with Animal Husbandry DD Dr Makkena Venkateswarulu, released wall posters to sensitize people on the cattle census here on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Prashanthi asked the enumerators and staff concerned to avail the opportunity of the training programme to take part in the cattle census.

"All the participants in the training should familiarize themselves with the new software. The upcoming cattle census in the district should be completed with dedication and accuracy," she told them and asked that all the details be submitted within the stipulated time regime. The Collector



said that training is being organized to impart training to the enumerators which begins on August 6 and ends on August 9 th.

The district-level cattle census training program began at District Animal Husbandry Department Meeting Hall in East Godavari District for which enumerators from Anaparthi, Bikkavolu, Kadiam,

Rajamahendravaram Rural, Rajamahendravaram Urban, Gopalapuram and Talappudi mandals participated. She directed the enumerators to visit every household to know the number of cattle they had. The cattle census should be carried out without flaws and blunders, she told them.

Andhra Pradesh has earned a reputation for its richness in

livestock such as Ongole breed bulls and Nellore sheep, she said adding that 1.16 lakh families in the district are engaged in this sector. Dr Makkena Venkateswarulu emphasized accurate data collection and the use of advanced software. District nodal officer A Veeraprasanna Kuar and other officials were present.

Gangaiah is new SE of V'wada irrigation circle

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna Special Division Executive Engineer (EE) P Gangaiah has been appointed as in-charge Superintending Engineer (SE) for the Irrigation Circle, Vijayawada. Also, the government transferred the present in charge SE TJH Prasad Babu on administrative grounds. Special Chief Secretary of the Water Resources Department G Sai Prasad issued G.O.Rt.No.263 in this regard here on Tuesday. According to the GO, Prasad Babu was directed to report to the Engineer-in-Chief (ENC Admin) office for further posting. Krishna Special Division EE P Gangaiah has been kept SE Full Additional Charge (FAC) until further orders.

Naidu failed in fulfilling promises: Kakani



PNS ■ NELLORE

Former minister Kakani Govardhan Reddy has lambasted Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for indirectly admitting his inability to fulfil poll promises in his recent meeting with collectors and SPs and said the meeting ended without addressing crucial issues and without any substantive discussion on the implementation of election promises and the selection of beneficiaries. Speaking to media at his camp office in Nellore here on Tuesday, the former minister slammed Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu stating that despite earlier claiming he would increase revenue to meet these promises, he failed to provide any direction during the collectors' conference. "Additionally, he instructed collectors to create vision documents and focus on wealth creation.

100 Anna Canteens to open on I-Day: Narayana

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Municipal Minister P Narayana has announced that 100 Anna Canteens will be inaugurated across the State on August 15, Independence Day. During a virtual review with officials on Tuesday, the Minister discussed the progress of Anna Canteen construction, the desilting of drains, and other key issues.

Minister Narayana enquired about the construction status and kitchen details of the canteens. Officials confirmed that all 100 canteens will be ready by August 10. The minister said that municipal commissioners should prioritise the completion of these canteens over the next week. The canteens will be operational in 33 municipalities across the state.

The minister also instructed officials to expedite the construction of the remaining 83 canteens, aiming to have 20 more ready by the end of September. He stressed the importance of ensuring adequate food storage space and reliable water supply, advising municipal commissioners to maintain close coordination with the serving teams to ensure cleanliness and efficiency.

In addition, the government has allocated Rs 50 crore for desilting drains to prevent disease outbreaks during the rainy



season. Minister Narayana directed that desilting work be completed by August 20, with municipal commissioners conducting random inspections to ensure compliance. The minister will also conduct inspections in two or three municipalities each week.

Furthermore, Minister Narayana urged municipal commissioners to focus on providing basic facilities to TIDCO houses. The Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) has been tasked with creating these facilities, and the responsibility has been distributed among the respective Urban Development Authorities (UDAs) and municipalities.

Special Chief Secretary Anil Kumar Singhal, Municipal Administration Commissioner Harinarayanan, TIDCO MD Sai Kanth Verma, and several other officials participated in the virtual review.

'Major reservoirs in AP full'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Minister for Water Resources, Nimmala Ramanaidu, has stated that the major reservoirs in the State are filled with ample water. The government is planning to supply Krishna water to fulfil the irrigation and drinking water needs in the Rayalaseema districts through the Srisailem Right Canal, Handri-Neeva, and KC Canal from the Pothireddipadu Head Regulator.



Addressing the media at his chamber at the Secretariat at Velagapudi on Tuesday, the Minister said that the govern-

ment is aiming to fill all reservoirs in the State with floodwater by not discharging them into the sea. For that, they have given clear instructions to all departmental officers, he said.

He mentioned that steps are being taken to provide irrigation water to the Krishna Delta through the canals. To address the shortage of irrigation water, he recommended that farmers advance the paddy plantation in the Delta in the current Kharif season.

Heavy rain likely in north coastal AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The Meteorological Centre has forecast heavy rain at isolated locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 48 hours. The same conditions are anticipated in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh within the next 24 hours.

According to the daily weather report, thunderstorms with lightning and strong surface winds, reaching speeds of 30-40 km/h, are expected in isolated areas of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh. The report

also predicts similar weather patterns, including thunderstorms, for South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next five days.

Additionally, light to moderate rain or thundershowers are likely at various locations across North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next week. The Southwest monsoon remains active in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and normal in Rayalaseema.

Thousands of farmers calling us saying their loans not waived: Kishan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Stating that thousands of farmers are calling the BJP helpline saying that their loans have not been waived, Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy said that farmers are worried as their loans are not getting waived. He said that farmers have been saying that they did not understand on what basis the Congress government is implementing its farm loan waiver scheme.

Kishan said that they had appointed only a single person to receive the phone calls of farmers who did not get their loans waived thinking that there might be only a few

farmers. However, the helpline is getting thousands of calls from farmers, he said.

Addressing the Telangana BJP's office bearers here on Tuesday, Kishan said the Congress government is not implementing its assurances. He called upon party leaders to work hard in the next four years and that 36 per cent of people had voted for the BJP in Telangana. "We have to take the people's verdict as a challenge and work with dedication. Prime Minister Modi is going to hoist the national flag at the Red Fort for the 11th time on August 15. BJP activists must ensure that the tricolour flies on every house in the state," he said.

Celebrating six decades of India's space programme

'ISRO's space programme has made outstanding contributions to national development'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Celebrating six decades of India's space programme, distinguished Indian aerospace scientist and engineer Dr BN Suresh underscored the impact on 1.3 billion Indians, aligning with the vision of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai. Delivering the 11th Dr V Bhuja Rao Endowment lecture, jointly organised by GITAM Deemed to be University Mechanical Engineering Department and the Condition Monitoring Society of India (CMSI), Dr Suresh highlighted the extensive contributions of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) towards national development.

Dr. Suresh, a Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri awardee, emphasised the significant advancements made since ISRO's inception in the early 1960s. "ISRO's space programme has made outstanding contributions to national development," he stated. "From remote sensing to communication, navigation, disaster management, and weather monitoring, our state-of-the-art spacecraft meet various vital application needs."

He mentioned that India boasts the largest constellation of active spacecraft, particularly serving the Asia Pacific Region. ISRO's Geo-portal Bhuvan, serving as a gateway to Indian earth observation, and the regional navigation system NAVIC, used in applications like vehicle tracking, smartphones, real-time train information, and satellite-based fishery services, were



highlighted as key achievements. Dr. Suresh expressed optimism about the Gaganyaan programme, slated for launch in the next two to three years, which is expected to further enhance ISRO's success rate.

Dr V Bhuja Rao, former Director General of DRDO and a distinguished defense scientist, discussed the impact of cutting-edge digital technologies like IoT, analytics, mobility, and cloud in Industry 5.0. He particularly emphasised the role of condition monitoring in developing new business models.

Prof Y Gowtam Rao, GITAM In-Charge Vice-Chancellor, noted India's notable progress in joint space missions with international counterparts, positioning the country to play a global role in the future of international space exploration and utilisation. Dr. P.V.S. Ganesh Kumar, CMSI president, briefed the audience on CMSI's activities and presented life member-

ships to selected students. Prof. V Srinivas, head of GITAM School of Technology Mechanical Engineering Department, Dr Abraham Varghese, NSTL Director, Programme Coordinator Prof. MRS Satyanarayana, and Convener Dr. K.V.S. Seshendra Kumar were present at the event. The distinguished gathering reflected on India's remarkable journey in space technology and its profound impact on the common man.

India's space programme, initiated by ISRO, has been instrumental in national development. The country's advancements in remote sensing, communication, and navigation have been pivotal in transforming the lives of millions. As India continues to push the boundaries of space exploration with projects like Gaganyaan, the legacy of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai and the visionaries who followed him remains evident, inspiring future generations to reach for the stars.

12 red sanders logs seized; four smugglers arrested



PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Task Force police seized 12 red sanders logs and arrested four smugglers at Venkatagiri.

A Task Force police team led by RI Chiranjeevulu and RSI P Suresh conducted a combing in the forest area in the Venkatagiri forest range.

When they reached Venkatagiri Hills, they noticed

two motorcycles and some people roaming there.

When the police were approaching them, they tried to flee, but the police chased and apprehended four smugglers Dandu Surendra, P Penchalaiah, T Venkatesh and K Suresh Babu and seized 12 red sander logs and the two motorcycles. A search was launched to arrest the smugglers who managed to escape.

Man shoots himself dead

PNS ■ KADAPA

A man allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself with a country-made gun, resulting in his instant death at Mudinenivandlapally village in Sambepalli mandal, Annamayya district, on Tuesday.

Police reported that the deceased, Rajagopal, was a resident of Bonamala village in Chinnaondam mandal and was involved in the brick business. He had incurred significant losses and had borrowed money from moneylenders. Unable to repay the debts and cope with the pressure from the lenders, he took the extreme step.

Authorities seized a country-made gun from the scene, registered a case, and transferred the body to GGH for postmortem.

3 suffer burn injuries in gas cylinder blast



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Three persons, including a couple and a girl, sustained serious burn injuries when a domestic gas cylinder exploded at L Agharam in Tadepalligudem on Tuesday.

Police said that the incident took place in the C Block of the TIDCO housing colony when the injured persons were

cooking food in the kitchen.

Flames spread all over the kitchen in which Bodapadu Murali, his wife Kumari and another girl Neelima sustained burn injuries. They were admitted to the GGH here where the condition of Murali and his wife was said to be very critical. A gas leak from the cylinder is suspected to be the reason for the mishap.

ACROSS THE STATES



UP girls board train to escape stalkers, travel 140 km

A freight train guard emerged as saviour for two girls who boarded a train at Hathras station to escape from some stalkers and reached Etawah, about 140 km away from their city in Uttar Pradesh. A railway official said that the guard (also known as train manager), Ravineet Arya, was on his way to sign on for his duty at Etawah station at around 11 pm on August 3 when he spotted the two girls sitting at one end of the platform bench in a distressed condition. "Arya asked them if they needed any help. They told him that they were the residents of Hathras and were returning from a tuition centre when some anti-social elements started stalking them," the official said. He added, "They got very scared and finding Hathras station nearby they hurriedly entered the station and got into a train to hide themselves. The train departed within a few minutes." According to railway sources, the girls contacted their families through their mobile phones from the moving train but the family members were also clueless how to handle the situation and where to ask them to get off.



577 jawans died due to heart attack, illness: Govt

A total of 577 CAPF personnel have died due to heart attack and illness in Naxal-affected states over the last five years, with the maximum being from the Central Reserve Police Force, the government told Parliament on Tuesday. The data was provided by Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai as part of a written reply in the Lok Sabha. Through year-wise data for five years between 2019-23, the minister stated that 297 CRPF personnel died due to heart attack and illness followed by 108 from the Border Security Force (BSF). The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) lost 76 personnel due to these medical conditions, 74 from the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and 22 from the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), the data revealed. "No specific unusual causes of heart attack and illness in Naxal-affected areas have been observed," the minister said.



IIT Madras receives donation of Rs 228 cr from alumni

Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, here has received a funding of Rs 228 crore from US-based industrialist and entrepreneur Dr Krishna Chivukula, officials said on Tuesday. It is considered to be one of the single largest donations received by IIT Madras, which would utilise the funds for taking up various initiatives, the institute's Director V Kamakoti said here. "Nearly after 53 years, our alumni Dr Krishna Chivukula, has come to give Rs 228 crore as an endowment to IIT-Madras. He had studied M Tech in aerospace engineering during the 1970s and has established companies which are engaged in manufacture of components for aeroplanes," Kamakoti told reporters. "This is one among the single largest endowments that has been received by IIT Madras in its history," he said on the fund received from Chivukula. IIT Madras officials said the institute raised funding of Rs 513 crore during 2023-24 which is a 135 per cent increase received from the previous financial year. The total amount raised through alumni alone during 2023-24 was Rs 367 crore which is also an increase of 282 per cent over the previous year.

BORDER FORCES ON ALERT: EAM IN PARLIAMENT

India monitoring minorities' situation in Bangladesh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is monitoring the situation of minorities in Bangladesh and is in "close and continuous" touch with the Indian community there through its diplomatic missions, the government said on Tuesday. Reading out a statement both in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar further said India naturally remains deeply concerned till law and order is visibly restored in the neighbouring country and that

it has instructed its border guarding forces to be exceptionally alert in view of the complex and still evolving situation there. Jaishankar briefed the MPs on former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's "very short notice" request to come to India "for the moment".

Hasina arrived in India Monday evening in a Bangladesh Air Force aircraft, presumably on her way to London or some other European destination, after she had to quit as prime minister with the country plunging



'India naturally remains deeply concerned till law and order is visibly restored in the neighbouring country and that it has instructed its border guarding forces to be exceptionally alert in view of the complex and still evolving situation there'

into uncertainty in the wake of violent street protests over job quota. "On August 5, demonstrators converged in Dhaka despite the curfew. Our under-

standing is that after a meeting with leaders of the security establishment, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina apparently made the decision to resign. At very short notice, she requested approval to come for the moment to India," Jaishankar said. "We simultaneously received a request for flight clearance from Bangladesh authorities. She arrived yesterday evening in Delhi. The situation in Bangladesh is still evolving," he said. Jaishankar pointed out that Bangladesh Army Chief General Waqar-uz-Zaman addressed the nation on August



Priyanka Gandhi didn't attend Ambani wedding: Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra did not attend the Ambani wedding and was not even in India at that time, party leaders said on Tuesday, dismissing claims made by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey in this regard.

While Congress leaders took to X to rubbish Dubey's claim, party leader K C Venugopal also raised the issue in the Lok Sabha. He was backed by Nationalist Congress Party (SP) MP Supriya Sule, who said there was nothing wrong with attending the wedding. In a post on X, Congress's Supriya Shrinete accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP of lying.

"Nishikant Dubey told a blatant lie in the Lok Sabha that Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi attended Ambani's wedding," she said. "This is absolutely wrong, she did not go there at all. She was not even in the country, your home minister must know this -- he has an old and bad habit of keeping track of everyone," the Congress leader added.

Miscreants vandalise Hindu temples, households

PNS ■ DHAKA

A number of Hindu temples, households and businesses were vandalised, women assaulted and at least two Hindu leaders affiliated with the Awami League party killed in violence in Bangladesh following the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, community leaders claimed on Tuesday. "We have compiled some incidents of the vandalisms in different parts of the country exposing the Hindu and other minority communities to anxiety,"

Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council leader Kajol Debnath told PTI on the margins of a meeting of the group here. According to the available information, two Hindu leaders, who were incidentally leaders of Hasina's Awami League (AL) party, were killed in north-western Sirajganj and Rangpur, Debnath said, adding that the Council was still gathering more information. Debnath said the attackers "plundered shops, temples and houses and assaulted Hindu women" while many were injured

during the assaults amid the fast-paced political developments following the fall of Hasina's government. A day after Hasina resigned and fled the country following massive protests against her government over quota in government jobs, violence that had started afresh over the weekend, continued overnight and led to a total of over 400 being killed since mid-July. "The situation is grave and Hindus are being attacked across Bangladesh," the Unity Council's general secretary Rana Dasgupta said.

INDIA bloc protests against GST on health, life insurance premiums



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

INDIA bloc parties staged a protest in Parliament premises on Tuesday to press for the roll-back of 18 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) on life and health insurance premiums. MPs from various parties such as TMC, Congress, AAP and NCP (SC), among others, participated in the protest on the steps leading to the Makar Dwar of Parliament. Carrying placards reading "Tax terrorism", the protesting MPs raised slogans demanding that the GST on life and health insurance premiums be rolled back.

Later, in a post in Hindi on X, Congress president

Malikarjun Kharge said, "Today in the Parliament premises, INDIA parties demanded immediate removal of 18% GST on health and life insurance premiums as this extortion is a severe blow to our people, especially the middle class."

"The middle class is already struggling under the burden of the Modi government's tax collection policies. India's medical inflation rate is the highest in Asia in 2024 - at 14%! On top of that, this 'Gabbar Singh Tax' on life insurance and health insurance is inhuman, and another condemnable example of BJP's policy of plundering from 'opportunity in disaster'," Kharge said.

SC to consider hearing Punjab's plea for release of rural devp funds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to consider listing an interim plea of the AAP-led Punjab government seeking release of over Rs 1,000 crore urgently from the Centre on account of alleged dues pertaining to the Rural Development Fund.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra was urged by lawyer Shadan Farasat, appearing for the state government, that an interlocutory application (IA), in a pending lawsuit against the Centre, has been filed seeking urgent release of over Rs 1,000 crore as an interim measure.

"We are only requesting that the IA be listed next week...if possible. There is an urgent need for funds," he said. The CJI agreed to list the plea for an early hearing.

The Bhagwant Mann government, in 2023, had moved the top court alleging non-release of the Rural Development Fund (RDF) and withholding a portion of the market fee by the Centre.

Prez Murmu receives Fiji's highest civilian award

PNS ■ SUVA (FIJI)

President Droupadi Murmu was on Tuesday conferred the Companion of the Order of Fiji, the country's highest civilian award, as she hailed the ties between the two countries and said India stands ready to partner with Fiji to build a stronger, resilient, and more prosperous nation.

"President Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere of Fiji conferred the Companion of the Order of Fiji upon President Droupadi Murmu. This is the highest civilian award of Fiji," the President's Office said in a post on X. Murmu, who is on a two-

day visit to Fiji, described the honour as "a reflection of the deep ties of friendship" between India and Fiji. This is the first visit by an Indian head of state to the archipelago nation.

President Murmu also addressed the Fijian Parliament.

"As India emerges strongly on the global stage, we stand ready to partner with Fiji, according to your priorities, to build a stronger, more resilient, and more prosperous nation. Let us come together to unlock the full potential in our partnership for the mutual benefit of people of both our beloved countries," she said while



Amit Shah congratulates Prez

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday congratulated President Droupadi Murmu on being conferred with Fiji's highest civilian honour, saying it not only enhanced India's prestige on the world stage but also strengthened diplomatic ties between the two countries. "The honour not only enhances Bharat's prestige on the world stage but also strengthens the cultural, historical and diplomatic ties between both nations, reaffirming our partnership for the greater good of humanity," Shah wrote on X.

addressing the Parliament. She said that despite the vast difference in size, India and Fiji have much in common, including vibrant democracies. She recalled that almost 10 years ago, speaking in this same Hall, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had underlined some basic values that unite India and Fiji.

Indian mission in UK issues safety advisory amid violent clashes

PNS ■ LONDON

The High Commission of India in London on Tuesday issued a safety advisory for Indian nationals to "stay vigilant and exercise due caution" amid ongoing violent clashes which have targeted immigrants and asylum-seekers in parts of the UK since last week. The advisory posted on the social media

channels of the Indian mission also provides emergency contact information for anyone in need of urgent assistance.

It comes a week after the fatal stabbing of three young girls in Southport, north-west England, and incorrect social media claims over the UK-born suspect's asylum-seeker status. "Indian travellers would be

aware of recent disturbances in some parts of the United Kingdom. The High Commission of India in London is closely monitoring the situation," reads the message entitled "Advisory for Indian Citizens Visiting the UK." "Visitors from India are advised to stay vigilant and exercise due caution while travelling in the UK.

Dumping of plastic causing degradation in river banks: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has said dumping of plastic is causing serious environment degradation and also impacting aquatic life in the river banks and water bodies in the country.

A bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and S V N Bhatti said collective effort is required to be made by the responsible authorities with the cooperation of people.

"The dumping of plastic is causing serious environment degradation and also impacting aquatic life in the river banks and the water bodies in the country. Unless concerted effort is made by the responsible authorities with people's cooperation, irrespective of the efforts to target illegal/unauthorized constructions, the desired improvement of the quality of the water in river Ganga/all other rivers and water bodies in the country will remain illusory," the bench said.

The top court directed Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati to file an affidavit within four weeks on the issue.

Over 84 pc dists prone to extreme heat waves, says report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 84 per cent of the districts in India are prone to extreme heat waves and 70 per cent are experiencing a rise in the frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall events, according to a new analysis.

The report, "Managing Monsoons in a Warming Climate" by the independent developmental organisation IPE Global Limited and Esri India Technologies, said the country was experiencing extended summer-like conditions during the June-September monsoon. Abinash Mohanty, head of Climate Change and Sustainability Practice at IPE Global Limited and the author of the study, said, "Our analysis suggests that eight out of 10 Indians will be highly exposed to extreme events by 2036."

"Embracing hyper-granular risk assessments and establishing climate-risk observatories should become a national imperative to safeguard Indian agriculture, industry and large-scale infrastructure

al projects from the vagaries of climate change," he said.

The report said Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Tripura were the top five heatwave hotspot states in the 2013-22 decade.

It said 74 per cent of districts in the coastal regions, 71 per cent in the plains, and 65 per cent in the hills had 'high to very high' exposure to extreme heat waves.

Districts in the plains and hills experienced a 36 per cent increase in heatwave days during the 2013-22 decade while coastal districts recorded a 30 per cent rise, it added.

"Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Tripura were the top five heatwave hotspot states in this decade," the report stated. It also noted that the decade recorded fewer cumulative heatwave days compared to the previous two decades.

The decade's most impactful extreme heatwave event occurred in 2015, the second deadliest after the 1998 event.

SC TO IMA PRESIDENT

Was apology published in newspapers where item carried?

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked Indian Medical Association (IMA) president R V Asokan whether his unconditional apology to the apex court over his "damaging" statements in an interview to PTI was published in all those newspapers which carried his interview.

In the interview to PTI, where he had answered queries about Patanjali Ayurved Ltd's misleading advertisements case, Asokan had said it was "unfortunate" that the Supreme Court criticised the association and also

some of the practices of private doctors.

The court also observed that the apology needs to be published in the newspapers by Asokan personally and not from the funds of the IMA.

The top court is hearing a plea filed in 2022 by the IMA alleging a smear campaign by Patanjali against the Covid vaccination drive and modern systems of medicine.

On July 9, Asokan had told the apex court that his unconditional apology to the court was published in various publications.

The IMA's counsel had said that Asokan's unconditional apology was published in the association's monthly publication, on the IMA website, as also by PTI. During the hearing on Tuesday, a bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Sandeep Mehta told the IMA's counsel that the apology should have been published in all those newspapers where Asokan's interview was carried. "Was it published in all those newspapers where your inter-



view was published," the bench asked, adding that the IMA president was inviting trouble. Senior advocate P S Patwalia, appearing for the IMA, told the

bench that Asokan would take appropriate steps to purge himself of the contempt.

The bench has posted the matter for further hearing on August 27.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Ignominious exit

Sheikh Hasina resigns as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and flies to India leaving New Delhi in a quandary

It was writing on the wall which Sheikh Hasina the former Prime Minister of Bangladesh could not read. The people had turned against her. No wonder she had no choice but to resign and leave for the friendly country, India. The protests over the past few months paralysed Bangladesh. The initial spark was the students' demand for doing away with the reservation for the relatives of freedom fighters which evolved into a broader demand for political reforms and the resignation of Hasina Government. The unrest reached a crescendo, with more than 100 deaths in violent clashes between protesters and security forces. Protesters eventually stormed her official residence. Sheikh Hasina's political career has been a roller coaster ride. She is the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding leader and first President of Bangladesh. Hasina's political journey began in earnest after the assassination of her father and most of her family members in 1975. Exiled in India during the subsequent military regimes in Bangladesh, Hasina was elected as the President of the Awami League in 1981. She returned to Bangladesh in 1981. She was instrumental in reviving the Awami League and making it a formidable political force.



Sheikh Hasina first became Prime Minister in 1996 after the Awami League won the general elections. Allegations of corruption and political instability led to her party's defeat in the 2001 elections. But she returned to power in 2009 after the Awami League's landslide victory in the 2008 elections. Her subsequent terms as Prime Minister (2009-2024) have been marked by significant economic growth but also highhandedness which ultimately led to her downfall. Her tenure has

been marked by efforts to consolidate power, leading to accusations of authoritarianism and suppression of dissent. But the fact remains that under her leadership, Bangladesh has made significant strides in poverty reduction, women's empowerment, and achieving key development milestones. After a long rule of 15-years she was out of sync with the ground realities; calling people traitors and clamping curfew and issuing shooting orders were grave mistakes which she had to pay for. Her ouster has put New Delhi in fix. India will now have to navigate the uncharted choppy waters of diplomacy in the Bay of Bengal. The alternatives to Hasina's government include the right-wing Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the Jatiya Party, and the army, all of which perceive India as a dominant influence and would like to keep her at bay. The volatility in Bangladesh raises security concerns for India, particularly in the border regions. Sheikh Hasina's departure has significantly altered the political dynamics. No matter who replaces Hasina it would adversely affect Indo-Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh may now move closer to China. New Delhi will have to deal with the interim government and make friends with the BNP and Jatiya party not to mention the army Generals who would be calling the shots for a while till new elections take place.

PICTALK



People walk to their work as torrential rains lash Shimla

Why a national security strategy is vital for India



ASHOK K MEHTA

The military has always codified its practices and procedures for institutional memory. So why is the Government shy of it and using the CDS to justify it?

It is official now. After a decade of speculation over not whether and when a National Security Strategy (NSS) will be prepared and released, we were told that a written NSS is not needed. India's second CDS, Gen Anil Chauhan, recently said at India International Centre New Delhi while releasing the book Indian Craft of War, that a National Security Policy, using the term as an alternative to NSS, was not needed in writing. He added: "we have practices and processes in place...otherwise how did we do Article 370; handle COVID; Balakot air strikes...". A cerebral retired General noted, "it is in the head".

That we have gone on for 75 years without NSS does not mean we don't need one. The strategic ambiguity over not naming adversaries, missions, risks and opportunities is not worth a naya paisa in the contemporary geopolitical context. The contradiction is this: in the cradle of strategic thinking, Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, its Commandant, Lt Gen Verinder Vats, regularly underlines the virtues of NSS to his triservice students. There is no merit in explaining why a written document is necessary, indeed essential.

All democracies, even authoritarian regimes have an NSS or White Paper on defence and security. For starters you can open former COAS Gen MM Naravane's latest unreleased book, Four Stars of Destiny, to learn of his unenviable predicament in waiting for orders during a grave and critical operational situation on LAC post-Galwan. Tragically, the Indian military has shied away from demanding a White Paper, Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) or any political guidance from the ruling political class. At a recent seminar on national security at New Delhi's IIC, former NSA Shiv Shankar Menon disclosed categorically that during the UPA regime, a draft NSS was prepared thrice but it never saw the light of day. For Menon's presentation, the discussion was former defence security NN Vohra, former Governor J&K, and Principal Secretary to



the Prime Minister.

He endorsed Menon's claim and if further confirmation was needed it came from former Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran who was chairing the event. All three stated that the absence of political will let the NSS drafts collect dust. This raises the issue of the role and responsibility of not only civil servants but also more importantly of Service Chiefs who fail to persuade or even gently coerce the PM/RM on the issuance of written directives. In their single-service operational mission papers, they guesstimate their likely missions from the speeches of the Prime Minister during the Combined Commanders' Conferences or elsewhere. The BJP/NDA government has fared no better than the UPA in providing political guidance to the armed forces. Its stellar achievement though was the creation of CDS, which for lack of consensus both among the armed forces and the political class, remained missing for decades.

Then, in a burst of zeal, the BJP announced the appointment of CDS in December 2019 without consulting anyone. It is now stuck in the old groove of securing consensus among the military over theorisation. It has taken a full five and a half years for RM Rajnath Singh to state, that too, in response to



TRAGICALLY, THE INDIAN MILITARY HAS SHIED AWAY FROM DEMANDING A WHITE PAPER, STRATEGIC DEFENCE AND SECURITY REVIEW (SDSR) OR ANY POLITICAL GUIDANCE FROM THE RULING POLITICAL CLASS

a question during an interview with PTI in May that consensus is growing among the services. Also in May, Gen Chauhan stated during a lecture at USI New Delhi that theorisation was "imminent" though "there were differences over reforms". As CDS has become synonymous with theatrisation the government needs to be as decisive in setting a deadline for its blueprint and implementation as it was in appointing the CDS. But the IAF, especially has been saying that an NSS is a prerequisite to theatrisation. In 2018 when the Defence Planning Committee was created under NSA Ajit Doval, it was widely expected that an NSS would be prepared by it. It is no secret that two drafts of NSS are lying with Doval - one prepared by Integrated Defence Staff and another by NSC Secretariat in 2021-22. But Gen Chauhan has closed the door to a scripted NSS though he did release last month a written tri-service cyber-space doctrine. Earlier, a tri-service Training Doctrine was also released which attracted severe criticism for its loopholes. One can ask how these documents can be written when there is no NSS and National Defence Strategy. India is the only emerging power with the fifth largest economy and fourth largest armed forces that does not

have an NSS/NSP though it has fought four short wars, - lost one, won one with the remaining two ending in stalemate - and one casualty-ridden successful border skirmish.

There is hardly any mention or recognition of India's first out-of-area 32-month IPKF CIS mission in Sri Lanka where coercive diplomacy failed even as 1171 Bravehearts sacrificed their lives. The CDS recently called IPKF a minor operation. High time an NSS was written after a strategic defence review. I can vouch for it as a member of the Defence Planning Staff, the forerunner of IDS, which produced the country's first Defence Plan 2000 in 1988 after conducting a Security and Technology Environment Review that was lauded in Parliament. It was possible due to the political guidance from RRM Arun Singh and three dynamic service chiefs. The military has always codified its practices, processes, and procedures to be good for institutional memory. So why is the government shy of doing it and using CDS to justify it

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BURDEN OF OVER TOURISM

Madam — Apropos the article, "The global crisis of over-tourism", published on August 5, this is my response. With tourism expanding globally all the time, the term 'overtourism' is becoming a concern, which highlights the spiralling number of visitors taking a toll on cities, landmarks and landscapes. As tourist numbers worldwide returned towards pre-pandemic levels, the debate around what constitutes 'too many' visitors continues. Dealing with overtourism, therefore, has become a priority. But despite the mounting howls of protest, tourism promotion endures and unsustainable hordes of tourists continue to descend on cities, beaches and other natural wonders. In an effort to manage the flow of tourists, some cities have taken drastic measures to limit the effects of overtourism, including the introduction of new revised taxation arrangements and fines linked to new local laws. But it's a fine line to tread.

If tourist arrivals see a dramatic decline, it would likely have considerable economic repercussions for those who rely on them. Tourism should be part of the wider destination management system, which must also consider transport and mobility, the preservation of public spaces, the local economy and housing, among other aspects of daily life. Therefore, research, planning and a close dialogue among city administrators, the tourism industry, civil society groups and local residents are essential.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

DEATH OF SANITATION WORKERS

Madam — In the span of last six months, 43 sanitation workers lost their lives while cleaning sewers and septic tanks. These deaths took place despite manual scavenging has been banned and several policy measures have subsequently been put in place to prevent it. The fact is that despite recognising the dehumanising nature of their occupation and understanding how their caste status further

Djokovic wins gold medal



Djokovic carved out a break point in the second game of the opener and three more in the

fourth, all saved by the Spaniard but the vintaged tennis won the first gold medal for the veteran tennis player. Then it was Serbia's turn to demonstrate his famed powers of resilience off three break points in the fifth game and another five in a marathon ninth game.

In a roller-coaster duel, Alcaraz served a set point in the 12th game but his senior opponent dominated the tie break to claim the opener after 93 minutes on court Philippe Chatrier. There was no let up in the second set and the serve volley game saw veteran Djokovic having greater control in the tie-break to win the game, set, match and the gold medal in a scintillating display of tennis.

Jayanthy CK Maniam | Mumbai

SHEIKH HASINA RESIGNS

Madam — Now that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh has resigned, a new chapter begins in the country's history. This could be a positive sign for a brighter future. On Sunday, fierce clashes in Bangladesh resulted in the deaths of 91 people, and last month, around 150 demonstrated against the government's failure to address conflicts. This illustrates that the government has been too arrogant and stubborn to describe.

The Bangladeshi Government lost the touch with ground reality and ignored the concerns of its people. It is not rocket science to implement a few amendments in the quota system, but the government's behavior had been arrogant to say the least. It only confined itself to the welfare of its supporters. There is hope for a prompt restoration of stability in the neighboring country.

Jakir Hussain | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Suppressing scientific studies is injurious to nation's health

Limiting scientific inquiry not only jeopardises public safety but also undermines trust in the authorities responsible for managing such crises

The recent instance of the Kerala government's contentious gag order banning scientific institutions from studying the land slide-affected areas of Wayand has been met with resistance from the scientific community and civil society. Hours later, the order was withdrawn at the behest of the state's Chief Minister. But what is still worrying is how a government or a bureaucrat drafts such an insane order restricting the scientific community from undertaking any studies at Meppadi Panchayat, Wayand, where the multiple landslides occurred on the morning of July 30 and airing their views to the media. Whatever has happened in Wayand in the Western Ghats region or the Uttarakhand or Himachal Pradesh in the Himalayan belt is due to the hiding of scientific information from the public.



These occurrences have emphasised the urgent requirement for thorough catastrophe planning and response methods, encompassing catastrophic earthquakes and tsunamis, industrial mishaps, and pandemics. An essential component in formulating these strategies is the implementation of scientific research carried out at disaster sites. Research conducted at catastrophe sites can improve preparedness and response techniques, ultimately preserving lives and mitigating economic losses in future occurrences. Imposing restrictions on scientific study threatens the general population's safety and erodes people's confidence in the authorities and organisations responsible for managing disasters. Freedom of scientific expression is crucial for all types of scientific research. To

foster the continuous acquisition of knowledge, it is essential to create an atmosphere where scientists can openly communicate their ideas, exchange discoveries, and provide constructive criticism to one another without any concerns about being censored or facing negative consequences. Impeding scientific studies and suppressing the freedom of expression within the scientific community presents a severe danger to the advancement and credibility of Science. Science and scientific facts reveal the truth because researchers conduct systematic studies. In that case, why should one hide it from the media or the public? Unfortunately, every scientist in the country needs approval from their higher-ups to publish a paper or even a popular science article.

A committee of few who don't have any work except criticising others oversees the author's creativity. It's a pathetic situation. It's like making things more complicated so that no one dares to venture into new things. Over the past few years, there has been a concerning

increase in the occurrence and severity of catastrophes, including those caused by nature and human activities. These occurrences have emphasised the crucial requirement for thorough catastrophe planning and response methods. During the Joshimath sinking incident, there were reports of ISRO satellite images that showed that many parts of the Himalayas, including the famous Shimla ridge, were sinking. Unfortunately, that report soon vanished from the public domain. Had the information been available, people would be prepared to move from these regions instead of clinging to it. Restricting scientific investigation and hiding the information can lead to misinterpretation by unscrupulous historians, who may distort the true scientific explanations of natural disasters for their interest. This could harm future generations' comprehension of the scientific causes underlying these calamities.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru. Views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN



FIRST COLUMN

ACCEPTANCE - THE KEY TO REDUCING SUFFERING

When we accept reality, our anger tends to decrease and the pain subsides considerably



BY RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

If you ask anyone what is suffering? they would simply say that it is something that's caused by or is a result of negative events that happen in our life. However, this is not so, because in an actual sense, suffering is never what happens, it is how you feel about what happens in your life. We must understand that suffering is a feeling and our strongest feelings are nothing but our emotions, and when emotions get negative, they give pain. So, in simple words, suffering is our resistance to our negative emotions and our pain. It's a pain about our pain. Hence, we must understand the fact that suffering is the result of OUR emotions and not the events of our Lives.

We all experience pain in our day-to-day lives because it's inevitable and it is a part of being human. However, how many of us have pondered over this philosophical question of life - "What Causes Us PAIN?" or "What is the Cause of Our Negative Emotions?". Our pain might stem from losing a dear one, losing our job, a bad breakup, a fatal accident or undergoing any other kind of trauma or situation. However, when we hide from facing or accepting reality, we create suffering. Therefore, it should be clearly understood that we are the sole creator of good and bad in our lives and hence it's futile to blame others by saying things like - "It's not fair, why Me? this shouldn't have happened with me at least or I can't bear this anymore! etc..."



There is a deep instinct in most of us to fight the pain we experience deep within, however, in most cases it backfires and we end up experiencing double the pain. The reason behind this is our tendency to avoid and, in some cases, hide our pain or pretend that it isn't present. Deep within we might ruminate about our suffering, without doing anything about it because of our stubbornness to accept it openly.

A wise person would instead accept the reality and become light instead of getting heavy on the mind because accepting simply means that you stop trying to deny your reality and you acknowledge it because sometimes accepting the painful emotions can reduce our suffering because we are no longer running from them or pushing them away. It however does not mean that you approve of a situation or that you don't want it to change, it's all about reducing our suffering, so if you have been hurt by someone, it's best to accept that YES you were hurt and then move on with your life rather than pondering over why, how, what... Remember! To forgive or not is each one's prerogative, but acceptance is necessary for moving forward in life or else we would get stuck in a quagmire of wasted thoughts.

Once we accept reality, our anger tends to decrease and the painful situation loses the power it has over us. There is no denying the fact that emotional pain is an intrinsic part of all our lives, however, we create needless suffering when we don't accept reality. When we practice acceptance, we let ourselves move on, we open the door to freedom and we take steps to improve our lives. Most of us may find it hard to accept reality and still prefer to wait for time and situations to change, however in doing so, we forget that time does not heal everything, but acceptance will heal everything.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist views are personal)

Need for rationalising taxes on fertilisers



UTTAM GUPTA

The GST Council, responsible for tax rate decisions has yet to resolve the tax discrepancies despite multiple discussions and recommendations

For over five years now, the fertilizer industry has been facing an 'inverted duty structure'. Inverted duty structure refers to a situation in which raw materials (RMs) are taxed at a higher rate than finished products in whose manufacture these are used. But, there was little that the Budget presented by the Union Finance Minister (UFM) Nirmala Sitharaman on July 23, 2024, could do to address it.

Fertilizers and RMs used in their making are mostly taxed under the GST (Goods and Services Tax) regime. The GST Council - headed by the UFM that includes finance ministers from all States and UTs - has the mandate to fix tax rates besides deciding the procedures for registration, payment of taxes, GST return filing, and other related matters. So, the responsibility for fixing any anomalies in their taxation also lies with the GST Council.

The issue was discussed in the 45th (September 2021) and 47th (June 2022) meetings of the GST Council; but no decision could be taken.

Meanwhile, on August 9, 2023, the Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers recommended that the Union Government propose to the GST Council to reduce tax rates on fertilizers as well as RMs used in their making. In its 53rd meeting held on June 22, 2024, the Council referred the matter to the Group of Ministers (GoM) on rate rationalization to take holistic view.

At the outset, let us look at the present structure of taxing fertilizers.

To make fertilizers affordable to farmers, the government controls their maximum retail price (MRP) at a low level, unrelated to the cost of production and distribution, and reimburses the excess of the cost over MRP as a subsidy to the manufacturers. In the case of urea, the MRP is about one-tenth of the cost, whereas for all other fertilizers, the price is nearly one-third.

When the government spends heavily from its budget to make fertilizers available to farmers at a fraction of their cost, it makes no sense to impose a tax on them. This increases the cost, only to be reimbursed as an additional subsidy, to the manufacturers. It is a typical case of taking from one hand and giving back from the other.

Two major components of the fertilizer supply chain are taxed under two different regimes: one under GST and the other under the pre-GST regime. All finished fertilizers such as Urea, di-ammonium phosphate (DAP), ammonium sulphate etc are taxed under GST at 5 per cent. Most RMs such as sulfuric acid, ammonia, phosphoric acid etc (these are used for making DAP and other complex fertilizers) are also covered under GST. While sulfuric acid and ammonia are levied 18 per cent GST, phosphoric acid attracts 12 per cent tax.

However, natural gas (NG), used for the manufacture of all domestic urea, is taxed under the pre-GST regime. Electricity, a utility intrinsic to the fertilizer-making process, is also kept outside GST.

GST is a single nationwide tax with a provision for set-off tax paid on inputs. It subsumes within it more than a dozen taxes from the pre-GST era, namely cen-



WHEN THE GOVERNMENT SPENDS HEAVILY FROM ITS BUDGET TO MAKE FERTILISERS AVAILABLE TO FARMERS AT A FRACTION OF THEIR COST, IT MAKES NO SENSE TO IMPOSE A TAX ON THEM. THIS INCREASES THE COST, ONLY TO BE REIMBURSED AS AN ADDITIONAL SUBSIDY, TO THE MANUFACTURERS

tral excise duty (CED), service tax, and sales tax/value-added tax (VAT). The Constitutional Amendment Act of 2016 on GST, while providing for the inclusion of NG (besides other petroleum products such as petrol, diesel, ATF etc) under its ambit, kept it 'zero-rated' meaning it continues to be under the pre-GST regime. The GST Council has put fixing the rate for NG (besides ATF) on its agenda umpteen times only to defer it.

Taxing under pre-GST results in a cascading effect on the cost of NG and electricity. Gas companies like Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Limited (OIL) are outside the GST ambit and can't claim credit for the taxes paid on their purchases of inputs, consumables, and equipment, leading to a higher price. Even as NG attracts nil CED on supplies to fertilizer plants, its delivered cost is boosted by VAT, which can be as high as 24.5 per cent in Andhra Pradesh (AP).

Other local taxes, for instance, Gujarat's "purchase tax" on that portion of inputs consumed for making urea that is sold outside the state, also add to the cost. In the case of electricity, power companies don't get any credit for taxes paid on inputs viz., equipment, stores, and so on, used in its generation and distribution, leading to higher costs.

Further, under the Constitution, entry 53 in the State List of the Seventh Schedule empowers states to impose tax (or electricity duty) on the sale and consumption of electricity, except

when it is consumed by the Union Government or the Railways. For electricity duty, too, electricity companies don't get any offset. This further exacerbates the cost of power supplied to fertilizer plants.

Even in areas where the materials are covered under GST hence, no cost cascading effect, the inverted tax structure plays a spoiler. The higher GST levied on ammonia/sulfuric acid/phosphoric acid as against much lower GST on finished fertilizers results in an 'unabsorbed' input tax credit (ITC), as the output tax falls far short of the input tax. The situation gets exacerbated because of the government's control over the MRP of fertilizers at a low level.

Considering that the cost of making fertilizer available to farmers (sans taxes) by itself is substantially higher than the price the Union Government wants them to pay, ideally, it shouldn't levy any tax as the proceeds from such levy will have to be paid back as an additional subsidy. Even if it wants to levy, ideally, all components in the supply chain have to be brought under GST and fertilizers, and all inputs and RMs should be in the lowest tax slab of 5 per cent.

While the tax rate on fertilizers is already 5 per cent, this will require lowering the tax rate on all RMs viz. ammonia/sulfuric acid/phosphoric acid from the current 18/12 per cent to 5 per cent. The tax on micronutrients such as zinc (Zn), boron (B), manganese (Mn), iron (Fe) etc should also be lowered from the

existing 12-18 per cent to 5 per cent in line with the recommendation of the Standing Committee as their importance for plant growth and ensuring balanced nutrient use. NG and power should be brought under GST and taxed at @5 per cent. Lowering tax on RMs by itself won't address the problem of unabsorbed ITC. This is because the MRP of finished fertilizers is substantially lower than the cost, even with the same GST, tax paid on RMs/inputs would still be higher than output tax liability. This can be resolved only when the government gives subsidies to farmers under direct benefit transfer (DBT) and lets manufacturers charge full price from the farmers.

Lowering tax on ammonia/sulfuric acid/phosphoric acid on supplies to fertilizer manufacturers to accommodate their special needs but leaving GST on supplies to other industries such as detergents, paints, dyes, plastics, etc unchanged can lead to large-scale diversion and misuse as it is impossible to track every grain of supply and ensure that it is used for the intended purpose. We have seen this happening in the case of urea where setting its MRP at a low level prompts diversion.

Diversion/misuse is inevitable in any regime of differential taxation/pricing based on the end use of the product. The only way to prevent it and yet meet the intended objective is DBT. Well, this is shaping up!

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

India's abolition of Angel tax: A major boost for startups and investment

The removal of this tax, combined with procedural simplifications, promises to create a more dynamic and supportive environment for startups

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her seventh Budget, has proposed to abolish the Angel Tax, a significant move aimed at bolstering the Indian startup ecosystem. This tax had long been a contentious issue between startups and the Income Tax Department, acting as a major hindrance to growth and investment. The abolition of this tax, if coupled with procedural simplifications, could indeed be a game-changer, fostering a more vibrant and dynamic startup ecosystem that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship. The Angel Tax, essentially a tax on capital raised by unlisted companies through the issue of



B K JHA

shares, was introduced under Section 56(2)(viii) of the Income Tax Act, 1961. It taxed investments above the fair market value of a company as 'Income from other sources', primarily affecting angel investors. The excess realization was considered income and taxed accordingly. This provision, while well-intentioned to curb money laundering, ended up stifling

genuine investments and became a nightmare for startups. The abolition of this tax removes a significant barrier that has long hindered the growth of startups and discouraged investment. Startups can now raise capital without the looming fear of being taxed on perceived excess valuations, which often did not account for the future growth prospects and potential of these young companies. This move aligns with the government's broader agenda of promoting innovation, employment, education, skilling, and research. The abolition of the Angel Tax is expected to boost the entire startup ecosystem by making it easier for startups to attract investments.

This, in turn, will stimulate economic growth and job creation. For instance, the comprehensive digitalization of taxpayer services and the simplification of the GST tax structure are indicative of the government's commitment to digitalization, which will benefit tech startups across various fields such as education, healthcare, and taxation. India has been a global leader in creating successful entrepreneurship opportunities in recent years. The investor community, including high-net-worth individuals (HNIs), foreign funds, venture capitalists, and angel investors, has remained bullish on the growth potential of the Indian startup ecosystem.



However, the Angel Tax had cast a shadow over this optimism, causing significant distress among startups and investors alike. While the government's initiatives such as Startup India, Stand-up India, and Digital India have provided a favourable environment for startups, the Angel Tax was a significant pain point. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) had even

shaken the startup ecosystem by directly deducting income tax under Section 68 from the bank accounts of certain startups on unexplained cash credits. The abolition of the Angel Tax, coupled with the recent notification simplifying compliance procedures, reflects the government's responsiveness to the concerns of the startup community. Startups no longer need to procure a fair market value certificate issued by a merchant banker or seek approval from an inter-ministerial board. Instead, they can request angel tax exemption from the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) with the necessary supporting documents.

The CBDT is mandated to respond to such applications within 45 days, providing much-needed clarity and certainty to startups. While the abolition of the Angel Tax is a significant step forward, its impact will depend on the implementation and further simplifications of procedures. The focus should be on creating a startup-friendly regulatory environment that encourages investment and innovation. The government's emphasis on digital public infrastructure and the digitalization of the economy will also play a crucial role in supporting tech startups and fostering a culture of innovation. Overall, the abolition of the Angel Tax is a welcome move that promis-

es to remove a significant barrier to startup growth and investment. However, for this initiative to truly be a game-changer, it must be accompanied by procedural simplifications and a supportive regulatory environment. The government's continued focus on innovation, digitalization, and economic growth will be crucial in realizing the full potential of this policy change. This could very well mark the beginning of a new era for the Indian startup ecosystem, driving innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth in the years to come.

(The author is a senior journalist and the views expressed are personal)

IN BRIEF



Space start up EtherealX raises US\$ 5 million in seed funding

Space start-up EtherealX on Tuesday announced raising five million dollars in seed funding to develop engines for the world's first fully reusable medium-lift satellite launch vehicle. Founded in 2022 by former ISRO engineer Manu Nair and aerospace engineer Prashant Sharma, EtherealX hopes its rocket would offer absolute reusability to help reduce transportation costs and cut launch timeframes. The funding round was led by YourNest and saw participation from BIG Global Investments JSC, BlueHill Capital, Campus Fund, and Golden Sparrow Ventures, Karan Bhagat and Yatin Shah from IIFL Wealth, Kiran Shetty and Akhilesh Agarwal, a statement from EtherealX said. Unlike SpaceX's Falcon 9, which brings its booster back to Earth after a successful launch, EtherealX launch vehicle Razor Crest Mk-1 will bring back both the upper stage and booster after placing payloads in orbit.



Electric vehicle sales rose 55.2 pc to 1.79 lakh units

Electric vehicle sales registered a 55.2 per cent on-year growth at 1,79,038 units in July driven by a massive 96 per cent jump in e-two-wheeler sales, automobile dealers' body FADA said on Tuesday. The total electric vehicles sales for July 2023 were at 1,16,221 units, according to the monthly sales data from Federation of Automobile Dealers' Association (FADA). The electric two-wheelers sales during the previous month stood at 1,07,016 units, up 95.94 per cent, from 54,616 units sold in July last year, while the electric three-wheeler sales grew 18.18 per cent at 63,667 units, from 58,873 units year earlier, as per FADA. The commercial vehicle sales during the reporting month was also on an upward trajectory, growing two-fold on a year-on-year basis to 816 units, from 364 commercial vehicles sold in July 2023, it stated. Passenger vehicles, however, declined 2.92 per cent at 7,541 units in July, as against 7,768 units in the same month of last year, as per data.



Tata Power net profit up 31% to Rs 1,189 cr in Jun qtr

Tata Power on Tuesday said it has logged 31 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 1,189 crore, compared to the year-ago period, on back of operational efficiency. "At Rs 1,189 crore, growing 31 per cent YoY (year-on-year), the company reported its highest ever and 19th consecutive quarter of PAT growth on the back of strong operational performance and execution excellence across all its businesses of generation, transmission & distribution, and renewables," Tata Power said in a statement. According to the statement, these businesses contributed 84 per cent of the PAT (net profit) in Q1FY25, compared to 72 per cent in the same period in FY24. The statement showed that the consolidated net profit before exceptional items was Rs 906 crore in the quarter ended June 30, 2023. The company's revenue rose 12% YoY to a record high of Rs 16,810 cr (from Rs 15,003 cr in Q1 FY24), and EBITDA grew 11% to Rs 3,350 cr in the reported quarter (from Rs 3,005 cr in Q1 FY24).

Banks write off loans worth Rs 9.90 L cr in last 5 years

As per the RBI guidelines and policy approved by banks' boards, NPAs, including those in respect of which provisioning has been made on completion of four years, are removed from the balance-sheet of the bank concerned by way of write-off, he said. "Banks evaluate/consider the impact of write-offs as part of their regular exercise to clean up their balance-sheet, avail tax benefit and optimise capital, in accordance with the said guidelines and policies of the respective boards," he said in a reply to a question asked by Congress member Randeep Singh Surjewala. Banks have written off loans worth Rs 9.90 lakh crore in the last five financial years, Parliament was informed on Tuesday. During 2023-24, banks loan write off was at Rs 1.70 lakh crore, as against Rs 2.08 lakh crore in the previous fiscal, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha. Write-off was highest at Rs 2.34 lakh crore during 2019-20, which came down to Rs 2.02 lakh crore in the following year and to Rs 1.74 lakh crore in 2021-22.



The decision of the RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das-headed six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will be announced on Thursday

MONETARY POLICY

Will it be a status quo on interest rate?

RBI starts three-day deliberations

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank's rate-setting panel started its three-day deliberations for the next set of bi-monthly monetary policy amid expectations of no change in benchmark interest rate in view of concerns on inflation and economic growth remaining steady.

The decision of the RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das-headed six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will be announced on Thursday.

The MPC may also refrain from rate cut as economic growth is picking up, notwithstanding the elevated interest rate of 6.5 per cent (repo rate), said experts.

Retail inflation based on consumer price index (CPI) increased to a four-month high of 5.08 per cent in June as food items, including vegetables became dearer. The government

will release the data for July later this month.

"RBI is likely to pause as food price movements currently is imparting a positive bias to RBI 4.5 per cent projection...likely prospects of an excess rainfall in August and September could also have a debilitating impact on

"We expect the RBI MPC to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at the Aug 8 meeting at 6.50 per cent, with a 4:2 vote in favour, retain the monetary policy stance of 'withdrawal of accommodation', sound relatively optimistic on growth, and continue to reiterate the commitment to the 4 per cent headline inflation target," it said

food prices," said a SBI research report

It also expects the Reserve Bank to continue with its monetary stance of withdrawal of accommodation.

According to a report of Goldman Sachs, the MPC is likely to keep the policy rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent on August 8.

"We expect the RBI MPC to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at the Aug 8 meeting at 6.50 per cent, with a 4:2 vote

inflation target," it said.

The central bank last hiked the repo rate to 6.5 per cent in February 2023 and since then it has held the rate at same level in its last seven bi-monthly monetary policy reviews. Commenting on the RBI's monetary policy, Radhika Rao, Executive Director and Senior Economist, DBS Bank, said that in light of the firm domestic growth-inflation mix, the RBI MPC is likely to reiterate its cautious view and retain its 'withdrawal of accommodation' stance. "Policymakers will monitor developments in the US Fed policy as markets price in a near-certain rate cut in September and US yields having corrected sharply amidst signs of cooling economic activity," Rao added.

India stands out on growth and external fronts : S&P

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

S&P Global Ratings on Tuesday said India stands out both on growth and external fronts amongst the South Asian countries, and the trajectory of government's fiscal deficit will decide on the direction of sovereign ratings. S&P Director, Sovereign and International Public Finance Ratings (Asia-Pacific), Andrew Wood said the rating agency sees a lot of promise in India's economic growth story even though the global economic growth outlook remains somewhat challenging.

"We could raise the rating if India's fiscal deficit narrows meaningfully such that change in net general government deficit falls below 7 per cent of GDP on a structural basis," Wood said at a webinar on Asia-Pacific.

He said in the geography of South Asia, India stands out both on growth and external fronts. "India is a net external creditor economy which is a core support for its investment grade rating. We see a lot of promise in India's economic growth story even in a somewhat challenging global economic growth outlook," Wood added.

The Budget for 2024-25 has announced targeting a central government fiscal deficit of 4.9 per cent of GDP in the current fiscal, lower than 5.1 per cent targeted earlier.

"This is good news at the margin but combined with local government deficit, general government deficit is likely to remain above 7 per cent of GDP at least for current fiscal. So the trajectory for this metrics over the next few years will remain an important one for the directionality of India's ratings," Wood said.



Stock markets stumble after early gains

Sensex loses 166 pts, Nifty ends below 24,000 mark

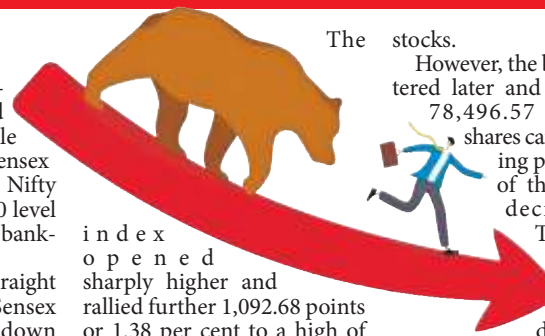
PNS ■ MUMBAI

Stock markets surrendered early gains and settled lower in volatile trade on Tuesday with Sensex losing 166 points and Nifty ending below the 24,000 level due to fag-end selling in banking and telecom stocks.

Falling for the third straight day, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled at 78,593.07, down 166.33 points or 0.21 per cent, as 17 of its constituents declined and 13 gained.

The index opened sharply higher and rallied further 1,092.68 points or 1.38 per cent to a high of 79,852.08 on value-buying by investors driven by a rebound in Japanese and other Asian

stocks. However, the barometer faltered later and hit a low of 78,496.57 as banking shares came under selling pressure ahead of the RBI policy decision on Thursday. Similarly, the NSE Nifty declined 63.05 points or 0.26 per cent to settle below the 24,000 level at 23,992.55.



D-Street investors' wealth erodes by Rs 22 L cr in three days of market crash

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investors' wealth eroded by a whopping Rs 22 lakh crore in three days of market slump with the BSE benchmark Sensex tanking 4 per cent.

In three days, the Sensex tumbled 3,274.48 points or 3.99 per cent. The massive correction came after the benchmark index hit its all-time high of 82,129.49 on August 1.

Market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms tumbled Rs 22,02,996.27 crore to reach Rs 4,39,59,953.56 crore (US\$

5.24 trillion) in three trading days.

On Monday, the Sensex plummeted 2,222.55 points or 2.74 per cent to settle at 78,759.40. During the day, it tanked 2,686.09 points or 3.31 per cent to 78,295.86.

The benchmark ended 166.33 points or 0.21 per cent lower at 78,593.07 on Tuesday even after surging 1,092.68 points or 1.38 per cent in intra-day trade.

"Negative sentiment continued to prevail in the US and European equities which

weighed on local markets as indices fell sharply towards the close on profit-taking in banking, telecom and auto shares. After surging over 1,000 points in early trade, markets steadily erased gains and slipped into the red," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

A sharp plunge in Japanese and other global markets on Monday played havoc at the Dalal Street. Also, weak jobs data caused panic among investors of a possible recession in the US market.

Xiaomi pips Samsung to lead India smartphone market :CMR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi has pipped Samsung to lead the India smartphone market with 19.3 per cent volume share in the second quarter of 2024, a report said on Tuesday.

According to CyberMedia Research's India Mobile Handset Market Review Report for April-June, the India smartphone market declined 4 per cent and the overall mobile phone shipment decreased 3 per cent year-on-year.

"Xiaomi (19.3 per cent), Samsung (18.5 per cent) and Vivo (17 per cent



captured the top three spots in the smartphone leaderboard in the second quarter of 2024, followed by Realme (13 per cent) and OPPO (9 per cent)," the report said.

The CyberMedia Research (CMR) report said Apple captured 5 per cent

share in the smartphone market with Apple iPhone 15 series constituting 58 per cent of its total shipments during the quarter.

In the feature phone segment, Chinese company itel Mobile continued to lead the market with 35



per cent share. Homegrown mobile phone company Lava pipped Nokia to occupy the second spot in the feature segment with 30 per cent share.

Nokia's market share in the feature phone segment declined to 11 per cent from 17 per cent a year ago. According to the report, 5G smartphone shipments' share in the country increased to 79 per cent, marking a notable 56 per cent YoY growth. Vivo led the 5G smartphone market with 21 per cent market share, followed by Samsung at 20 per cent. 5G smartphones in the price band of Rs 10,000-13,000 grew by over 200 per cent YoY.

ALLEGED VIOLATION OF NORMS

Competition Commission seeks Apple's reply

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fair trade watchdog CCI has sought a reply from Apple on the investigation report which has found that the technology major allegedly violated competition norms with respect to its App Store, according to sources.

The sources said the supplementary investigation report

by the regulator's Director General (DG) has concluded that Apple allegedly abused its market dominance in the relevant market, violating various provisions of Section 4 of the competition law.

In December 2021, Competition Commission of India (CCI) ordered a detailed probe against Apple after

prima facie finding that the company abused its market dominance.

The sources said the regulator was not satisfied with the initial report submitted by the DG and sought another probe on specific aspects. The supplementary investigation report was submitted to the CCI in June, they added.

Bangladesh unrest not likely to impact India's overall trade balance: S&P

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is a well diversified exporter and a blip in its exports to Bangladesh is unlikely to have any meaningful impact on India's overall trade position for the full year, S&P Global Ratings said on Tuesday.

Bangladesh is facing its

worst political crisis since independence in 1971, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigning amid massive anti-government protests.

Bangladesh Army Chief General Waqar-uz-Zaman on Monday announced that an interim government would be taking over the responsibilities. S&P Global Ratings,

Director, Sovereign and International Public Finance Ratings (Asia-Pacific), Andrew Wood said that S&P expects domestic demand conditions in Bangladesh in this period of time to be weak and probably going to entail less support for exports from other countries, including India, into Bangladesh.



PNS ■ MUMBAI

Vegetable thali's price increased 11 per cent in July compared to June this year due to higher prices of tomatoes on a monthly basis, according to a report.

Non-veg thali also turned costlier by 6 per cent in July compared to June 2024, the Crisil Market Intelligence and Analysis' monthly 'Roti Rice

Veg thali price rises 11% due to high tomato prices

Rate' report stated. The cost of veg thali, which comprises roti, vegetables (onions, tomatoes and potatoes), rice, dal, curd and salad was at Rs 32.6 per plate in July 2024 against Rs 29.4 per plate in June 2024, according to the report.

"Compared to the previous month of June, the prices of vegetable thali increased 11 per cent in July, mainly due to a surge in tomato prices, which accounted for 7 per cent of the rise," the report said.

Prices of non-veg thali, which comprises the same ingredients but dal gets replaced by chick-

en, rose by 6 per cent to Rs 61.4 per plate in July 2024 compared to Rs 58 per plate in June this year.

However, on a year-over-year basis, prices of veg thali eased by 4 per cent mainly due to a high base impact of tomato prices. Veg thali prices were Rs 34.1 per plate in July 2023.

In July 2024, tomatoes were priced at Rs 66 per kg, which is lower than the Rs 110 per kg in July 2023. The higher price in 2023 was due to flash floods in the northern states and pest infestations in Karnataka.



The July 2024 price is higher than June 2024's Rs 42 per kg, due to high temperatures affecting the summer crop in key states like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, the report explained.

Vedanta hopeful to complete demerger process by fiscal end

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Diversified natural resources company Vedanta Ltd has filed the demerger scheme with the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) after receiving a nod from lenders and is hopeful of completing the process by the end of this fiscal, a senior company official said on Tuesday.

The proposed demerger will create independent companies housing aluminium, oil and gas, power, steel and fer-

rous materials, and base metals businesses. The existing zinc and new incubated businesses will remain under Vedanta Ltd.

Speaking with, Vedanta's CFO Ajay Goel said, "There is a very significant development (on demerger). We have secured all approvals be it secured lenders, BSE, NSE, and SEBI. We have filed the scheme on Monday with NCLT and filing the demerger scheme with NCLT practically is the last step."



what's brewing?

SON OF SARDAAR 2 COMMENCES SHOOTING



After celebrating massive box office success in 2012, the action comedy *Son of Sardaar* is back to deliver twice the comedy, action and entertainment with a much-anticipated sequel. *Son of Sardaar 2* has commenced shooting in the UK.

Ajay Devgn took to social media to announce the muhurat of the film. Helmed by Vijay Kumar Arora, the film has an extensive shoot schedule in the UK, followed by India. Presented by Jio Studios and Devgn Films, a Devgn Films and SOS 2 Limited production, *Son of Sardaar 2* is produced by Ajay Devgn and Jyoti Deshpande. Produced by N R Pachisia and Pravin Talreja and co-produced by Kumar Mangat Pathak.



Merle Dandridge, Rahul Kohli, Michael Trucco join Citadel 2

Priyanka Chopra and Richard Madden are currently occupied with filming *Season 2 of Citadel*. The creators revealed that Merle Dandridge, Rahul Kohli and Michael Trucco will be joining the top actors. The creators of *Citadel 2* revealed that the upcoming season will include Merle Dandridge, Rahul Kohli, Michael Trucco, Jack Reynor, Matt Berry, and Gabriel Leone, in addition to Priyanka, Richard and Stanley Tucci. Angela Russo-Otstot, executive producer and AGBO's Chief Creative Officer, said, "The second season will build on the intense action and complex characters introduced in the first season, promising even more thrilling twists and intrigue. Also, the recently announced *Citadel: Diana* and *Citadel: Honey Bunny*, from Italy and India, respectively, further expand the storytelling and scope born from the world of *Citadel*."

Citadel premiered to global success in its 2023 release, becoming Prime Video's second most-watched new original series outside the U.S. and fourth most-watched worldwide after 24 days. *Citadel* stands as the first in a landmark collection of original series. Executive produced by the Russo Brothers' AGBO, *Citadel* and its subsequent action-espionage original series traverse the globe, evolving the story of spy agency *Citadel* and its powerful enemy syndicate, Manticore.

Season Two of Citadel will begin production this year, with Joe Russo serving as director and Richard Madden and Priyanka Chopra Jonas returning to star alongside Stanley Tucci and Lesley Manville. Jack Reynor also joins for season two.

Rhea Chakraborty announces her clothing brand, 'Chapter 2'



Rhea Chakraborty has recently created waves with her debut Rpodcast, *Chapter 2*. While the actress engaged in an interesting interaction with the diva Sushmita Sen, she indeed embarked on a new journey in life. Now, taking yet another step forward, Rhea has announced her clothing brand Chapter 2 with her brother Showik Chakraborty. While announcing her clothing brand, Rhea took to social media and shared a striking picture of herself and her brother Showik wearing funky black t-shirts.

It's indeed a treat for Rhea's fans to be a part of her new journey with the launch of her clothing brand, Chapter 2. The actress, known for her reflective t-shirts and thought-provoking messages, will surely bring similar positive vibes to her fans through her clothing brand.



Big names dressed in Amit Aggarwal for the Amit Aggarwal show at the India Couture Week 2024, shots out now!

FUN

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20

GINGER MEGGS

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

ACROSS

- 1 A spring flower
- 2 A hot drink
- 3 You might hear this on the radio every hour
- 4 A way to cook eggs
- 5 Actors with small parts to play in a film
- 6 Someone who prepares a sports team for a match
- 7 The planet we live on
- 8 These grow on fingers
- 9 Sweeten food with this
- 10 Part of the foot
- 11 A large sea
- 12 A tame animal
- 13 A snake's poison
- 14 A light, soft type of cake
- 15 A small round piece of medicine
- 16 Freed from captivity

DOWN

- 1 Very unsafe
- 2 Not as many
- 3 A sword fight

SOLUTION

G	C	S	C	C				
L	I	G	H	O	U	S	E	
O	V	A	O	R	N			
A	L	E	T	H	E	I	T	
U	T	E	U					
H	S	U	C	I				
G	R	A	N	D	M	O	T	H
E	A	T	I	S				
R	E	S	T	A	N	T		
S	T	R	E	R				

'Handling weapons and performing stunts on set posed its own risks'

AARTI SREENATH

Kirti Kulhari's journey in the film industry has been marked by her fearless approach to selecting roles and her ability to bring depth to her characters. Her portrayal of strong, independent women has earned her critical acclaim and a dedicated fan base.

Known for her diverse performances and bold character portrayals, Kirti has captivated audiences with roles ranging from Anjana in *Four More Shots Please!*, Parminder in *Khichdi: The Movie*, Tanya Sharma in *Shaistaan*, Falak Ali in *Pink*, Flight Lieutenant Seerat Kaur in *Uri: The Surgical Strike*, to Dr. Saira Sabharwal in *Human*.

The skilled actress will be taking up a new challenge by starring in the highly anticipated series *Shekhar Home*, which is currently generating quite a buzz. In the show, she will play the role of Mumtaz, a character that is both intricate and engaging. Reflecting on this new role over a quick chat with *The Pioneer*, Kirti shared, "Playing Mumtaz was a unique experience. The character has its own set of challenges. However, it was quite fun to explore this new dimension. It's different from anything I've done before."

With *Shekhar Home*, she is all set to add another memorable character to her repertoire. As fans eagerly await the release, Kirti's portrayal of Mumtaz is expected to be a highlight, showcasing her versatility and ability to adapt to different genres and roles.

Kulhari describes Mumtaz as a character enveloped in layers of mystery and depth. "Mumtaz is a figure of profound complexity," she explains. "The more I explore her, the more elusive and intricate she becomes. What you initially see is only the surface; there's a rich, multifaceted personality beneath that gradually reveals itself."

When discussing Mumtaz's character, one of the biggest challenges she faced was the demanding physical nature of the role. "The action sequences required precise choreography and a convincing portrayal of intense moments. Handling weapons and performing stunts on set

Actress Kirti Kulhari will next headline the upcoming series *Shekhar Home*, alongside Kay Kay Menon and Ranvir Sheroy. Soon to be seen in a new and challenging avatar, she speaks to *The Pioneer* about her character, the challenges posed by the character and working alongside the stellar cast

posed their own risks. It was crucial for me to make sure these elements felt authentic and integrated seamlessly into my performance." It was through Sameer Nair that she'd gotten on board for the project, a long-time collaborator that dates back to *Criminal Justice*. "When he approached me with *Shekhar Home*, featuring a stellar cast like Kay Kay Menon, Ranvir Shorey and Rasika Dugal, I was immediately intrigued. The project's potential and the opportunity to work with such a distinguished ensemble were incredibly appealing."

Despite the demands, the *Pink* actress approached the role with a sense of ease and spontaneity. For this role, she now draws much of the reference from real-life experiences or specific inspirations. Rather, "I focused on being present and fully immersing myself in the character. I wanted to enjoy the process and let the script guide me. This project allowed me

to embrace a more relaxed approach, which was refreshing."

On set, the actress found joy in the little things, particularly in her physical transformation for the role. Through her character, she believes that it has added a layer of mystery. "It was both enjoyable and challenging to embody this trait. Additionally, my short hair, which is my own, received a lot of positive feedback. It was gratifying to see how these elements contributed to the character's look and feel." Working alongside esteemed actors like Kay Kay Menon and Ranvir Shorey also left a significant impression on the *Four More Shots Please!* actor. "Kay Kay's effortless performance and his dedication to his craft were truly inspiring. Meanwhile, Ranvir's ability to improvise and bring intelligence to his role was impressive. I learned a great deal from both of them and thoroughly enjoyed the dynamic and collaborative environment on set."

When choosing projects, Kulhari emphasises the importance of fresh and challenging roles. "I'm always on the lookout for characters that offer something new and different," she explains. "Whether it's a small or large role, the script and the opportunity for creative exploration are key factors for me. Working with a strong director and a talented team is crucial. While financial considerations are important, they're secondary to the creative satisfaction of the role."

In the future, she is enthusiastic about her upcoming projects, including *Hisaab Baraabar*, where she will star alongside Madhavan. As this chat comes to a close, she happily logs off, expressing her excitement: "I'm looking forward to exploring new roles and continuing to challenge myself as an actor. The future holds a lot of promise and I'm eager to see where these new opportunities will lead."



Navigating path of pharmaceutical science careers

Pharmaceutical science is a thriving, dynamic sector that includes the study, creation and regulation of pharmaceuticals and healthcare treatments. There is a wide range of job opportunities in pharmaceutical science for those committed to improving healthcare and promoting advances in medical treatment. Let us have a look at different career pathways in pharmaceutical science, what these career pathways entail, and the potential for growth with each.

Pharma Research and Development (R&D)

Role and responsibilities: All things are possible through R&D activities, which are crucial to the creation and progress of new medications. From investigations and data interpretation to the development of new drugs, research and development scientists are at the forefront of new drug development and use cutting-edge techniques to develop high-quality new pharmaceuticals, often in collaboration with other researchers or scientists.

Potential careers:

- **Medicinal Chemist:** highly involved in the process of designing and synthesizing novel pharmaceutical compounds.
 - **Pharmacologist:** interested in studying how drugs have an impact on biological systems.
 - **Clinical Research Scientist:** works on clinical trials to study the safety and effectiveness of new medications.
- Growth potential:** The requirements for new and creative treatment options ensure that R&D routes will remain interested in hiring (they will always be on the lookout for people with that kind of orientation to hiring practices). Career progression can lead to similar situations, like moving from a R&D Staff Scientist to Research and Development Manager, or it could mean moving from a Research and Development Scientist to a Research and Development Scientist, or even just stopping progress, too.

Regulatory affairs

Role and responsibilities: Regulatory affairs specialists must also make certain that they meet all the requirements laid down by the regulatory authorities. They deal with the paperwork such as preparing and submitting the regulatory papers, approval of the products and manage the compliance issues concerning the products during their lifecycle.

Potential careers:

- **Regulatory Affairs Specialist:** Has overall responsibility for preparing regulatory documents, and the coordination of regulatory affairs with the various agencies.
 - **Compliance Officer:** Oversees that all the company practices are in line with the stipulated laws.
 - **Quality Assurance Manager:** Supervise quality assurance programs in order to enhance the quality of products that are manufactured in the market.
- Growth Potential:** It is stated that due to the complexity of regulations expertise in regulatory affairs is needed. One can further their career to managerial positions, where one is promoted to Regulatory affairs director or vice president of compliance positions.

Pharma sales and marketing

Role and responsibilities: Pharma products are marketed by sales and marketing practitioners to healthcare practitioners, pharmacists and the end-users/consumers. They define an organization's marketing goals, conduct research into markets and consumers, and coordinate the workers responsible for selling products.

Potential careers:

- **Pharmaceutical Sales Representative:** Advertising in this platform targets the health care providers and the information given on drug indicates the benefits as well as the usage.
- **Marketing Manager:** Formulates and manages the marketing strategies for the drugs and other related products.
- **Product Manager:** Ensures the management of the entire process of creation of a certain product right from

conceptualisation up to its advertisement. **Growth Potential:** Career advancement in sales and marketing can open higher positions for the employees as Sales Director or Marketing Director, Chief Commercial Officer and so on.

Manufacturing and production
Role and responsibilities: People in the manufacturing and production sector have the task of producing large quantities of pharma products. They make certain that some important processes in the organization are effective and safe for use and meet the legal requirements.

Potential careers:

- **Production Supervisor:** Oversees day to day running of the business in the production of pharmaceutical products.
 - **Process Engineer:** Implements change to manufacturing efforts and refines and improves it.
 - **Quality Control Analyst:** Is an assurance that the pharmaceutical products are adequate in quality.
- Growth Potential:** With increasing expansion of multinational and local pharmaceutical company, there is increasing demand for professional manufacturing personnel. Career promotions are possible in the form of a Production Manager or Plant Manager.

Academia and education

Role and Responsibilities: Those employees who work in the field of academic pharmacy execute researches, give classes and supervise learners. All its members are involved in the creation of new pharmaceutical knowledge through research relevant to the production of papers.

Potential careers:

- **University Professor:** Proponents of pharmaceutical science courses and is involved in research.
 - **Research Scientist:** Engages in academic research in the department of pharmaceutical science.
 - **Educational Coordinator:** Establishes teaching and learning resources for children, college students, graduates, and other people.
- Growth Potential:** There exist chances of getting tenure and other top administrative positions in learning institutions like the Department Chair or the Dean.

Pharmacovigilance and drug safety

Role and Responsibilities: Pharmacovigilance professionals observe and assess the safety of any manageable product that has a pharmaceutical aspect. They gather information on side effects and measures taken to eliminate them and incorporate it into practice.

Potential Careers:

- **Drug Safety Associate:** Adverse Drug Reaction Monitors and Reports.
 - **Pharmacovigilance Specialist:** Responsible for evaluation, review and monitoring of data concerning safety of drugs and safety regulation compliances.
 - **Risk Management Specialist:** Manages risk including the formulation of strategies for putting into practice risk management measures for pharmaceutical products.
- Growth Potential:** Paying attention to the drug safety serves the purpose that there is active requirement of pharmacovigilance professionals. Promotion can see one become a Pharmacovigilance Manager or Director of Drug Safety.

Pharmaceutical science has a variety of job vacancies for professionals who want to promote the welfare of other people and develop the sphere of medicine. From the aspects of research and development, regulatory, sale and marketing, manufacturing, academic, pharmacovigilance, these professions are essential to deliver new treatment to the market and guarantee the security and efficacy of the treatment. The prospects for beginning a career within pharmaceutical science are bright since the medicinal sector is constantly developing with the newest technology and methodologies.

(The author, Govind Narayan Singh, is the secretary at Gopal Narayan Singh University.)



REVIEW

Gyaarah Gyaarah: Mysterious blend of murders, science and thrills

TEJAL SINHA

Karan Johar and Guneet Monga have teamed up for *Gyaarah Gyaarah*, a fantasy thriller that aims to blend different genres. The series presents a stimulating question: with the past as a memory, the future as a dream, and the present as a trap, where does that leave us? To find the answer, head towards Zee5 and watch the series. Well, but before that, let's take a glimpse into the world of *Gyaarah Gyaarah* (11:11).

PLOT

The plot centers on a strange occurrence linking two cops from different time periods via a walkie-talkie that turns on at 11:11 p.m. each night. By aiding one another in solving cases, their lives are changed forever.

While investigating a case from 15 years ago, Yug Arya (played by Raghav Juyal) and Vamika Rawat (Kritika Kamra) uncover a puzzling link to events in the 1990s, heightening the suspense and mystery.

Working collaboratively on resolving every unsolved case, Shaurya Anhtwal (played by Dhairya Karwa) and Yug unknowingly alter the trajectory of history. Vamika is increasingly puzzled by her subordinate's unique perspectives, despite being oblivious to the special connection between Shaurya and Yug. Solving every puzzle brings this odd team closer to the surprising discovery of the officer's vanishing and the core of their unlikely connection. Will they uncover the truth about their mysterious connection as they hurry against time and deal with the outcomes of their decisions, or will the risk of altering their destiny prove too overwhelming?

HIGHLIGHTS

Gyaarah Gyaarah flawlessly combines crime thriller, sci-fi and psychological drama genres, leaving viewers curious about its true nature. It is accurate to state that Raghav Juyal is here to go beyond being simply a funny individual by breaking the ice. His portrayal of Yug in the series has undoubtedly stood out as a notable highlight. Transitioning from a goon in *Kill* to a cop in *Gyaarah Gyaarah*, he has convincingly shown through his character that he



Written by: Puja Banerji and Sunjoy Shekhar
Directed by: Umesh Bist
Produced by: Karan Johar, Apoorva Mehta, Guneet Monga Kapoor and Achin Jain
Starring: Raghav Juyal, Kritika Kamra, Dhairya Karwa, Gautami Kapoor, Harsh Chhaya, Purnendu Bhattacharya, Mukti Mohan and Gaurav Sharma, among others
Streaming on: ZEE5
Rating: 3.5/5

is definitely not a *jootae chaatne wala inspector* just as he's seen saying in one of the scenes.

Kritika Kamra, playing the role of Vamika Rawat, is one of those police officers who goes to great lengths to uncover the essential truth that everyone should know. In contrast to her previous roles, she showcases exceptional skill in portraying her character, making her actions and emotions high-

ly relatable. How she copes with her past, which has been brought up repeatedly, or her mother's concerns about her marriage, can evoke the emotions experienced by all women. Without a doubt, Kritika brings her own unique touch to the thriller. Her character defines how women hold key strategic roles in the series, driven by her own reasons and past experiences, guiding her paths within the plot.

Dhairya Karwa, on the other hand, as Shaurya Atwal, has given a fabulous performance, making him remembered for *Gyaarah Gyaarah* now after *Gehraiyaan*. His bond with Raghav on-screen has been so evitable without even sharing a face-to-face screen presence. Talking of Dhairya back, well, one can just not ignore the charm he brings on-screen, hehe!

With each mystery they solve, this unexpected trio gets closer to revealing a shocking truth about the officer's disappearance and the unique bond they share.

The rest of the cast members, who played a significant role in the series, delivered an amazing performance that elevated the characters with their impressive skills.

Well, thanks to the idea of the timeline and walkie-talkie, it keeps you hooked throughout, making it different from your regular crime series. The walkie-talkie certainly plays a major role and gets activated at 11:11 every day for a brief 60 seconds, highlighting the twists of the series.

DRAWBACKS

The series might appear confusing to those who are not fans of thrillers and crime shows. Certain moments might seem easy to anticipate for audience members skilled at connecting hints, but these are small twines in an overall captivating show.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Every frame is carefully constructed, with the lighting beautifully enhancing the show's mood. The camera work immerses viewers in the essence of Hyderabad, capturing naturalistic shots that enhance the authentic and deep feel. The visual narrative enhances the tension, causing each turn to be tangible. The beginning and ending scenes stand out, surrounding the plot with a visual flair that intensifies the emotional impact and tension of the story.

The heartwarming music at the end beautifully sums up the emotional journey of not just the character but the entire series.

VERDICT

This thrilling enigma will make audiences question their core beliefs regarding the essence of reality, space and time. Undeniably, *Gyaarah Gyaarah* has created a niche in the entertainment world with its concept and genre, making it a must-watch.

INDIA BATTERS IN FOCUS AGAINST LANKA

To avoid 1st series loss to SL in 27 years

AP ■ COLOMBO

The onus will be on Indian batters, particularly the talismanic Virat Kohli, to follow the path laid down by skipper Rohit Sharma and tactfully counter the spin challenge in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday to avoid their first series defeat to Sri Lanka in 27 years.

It's certainly not the start Gautam Gambhir, a stickler for victories, would want in his first ODI assignment as the team's head coach.

India's previous bilateral ODI series defeat against the Islanders came in 1997. The Arjuna Ranatunga-led Lankans then inflicted a 0-3 hammering on Sachin Tendulkar and his men.

Since then, India and Sri Lanka have played 11 bilateral ODI rubbers home and away, with the 'Men in Blue' emerging on the right side of the result in all of them.

India will not be able to win the current three-match series after succumbing to the hosts by 32 runs in the second ODI, and conceding a tie in the first game.

This position of discomfort is brought upon the team by the batsmen, who seemed to have been plagued by indecisiveness on a RPSC pitch that offered plenty of



turn to the spinners. Curiously, none reflected that brittleness more than star batter Kohli. He has made 38 runs in two matches, but more than the volume of runs, the manner of his dismissals evoked

greater concern. Kohli looked subdued in the first match and of six-wicket man Jeffrey Vandersay in the next, before eventually getting consumed by them. He looked a far cry from the

pottered around the leg-spin of Wanindu Hasaranga in the first match and of six-wicket man Jeffrey Vandersay in the next, before eventually getting consumed by them. He looked a far cry from the

dominant batsman who once cracked four hundreds at this very same venue. Perhaps, Kohli should direct his mind to happier times than allowing it to be fettered by the demons of the present.

A flowing Kohli is imperative for India's healthy run in the middle overs, be it while chasing or setting a target. But then his turmoil is a true reflection of the struggle that has gripped the Indian

batting unit. In Shivam Dube, India have a designated spin-basher, but the left-hander could not even pick a regulation leg-break by Vandersay in the second one-dayer, getting trapped in front of the wicket.

Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul too have lorded over spinners in the past, but here their feet and wrists have been unresponsive against the Lankan slow bowlers. They seemed to be going through a temporary memory loss as to how to rotate strike, the most effective weapon to keep spinners in check on tracks such as the ones at the Premadasa.

They just need to watch the batting of Rohit to find a remedy - not so much in his approach but more in the confidence and planning behind his knocks. There is no need to gild the lily while describing Rohit's batting, still his taming of the Lankan bowlers - pace and spin alike - has been exceptional.

Often a 44-ball 64 would contain a few chancy shots, but Rohit's strokes were so well-calculated that they hardly appeared risky. Can his colleagues take a cue?

Parag to get the call? From a combination perspective, the team

management might look at the position of Dube, despite a 24-ball 25 in the first match.

Under the existing conditions, Riyan Parag's spin, either off-spin or leg-spin, might come handier than the honest medium pace of Dube, and the former is an equally good hard-hitter.

From their part, the Indian bowlers too should improve their effort in the business end as they failed to apply finishing touches to Lanka after reducing them to 142 for six and 136 for six.

TEAMS (FROM)
INDIA: Rohit Sharma (C), Shubman Gill (VC), Virat Kohli, KL Rahul (WK), Rishabh Pant (WK), Shreyas Iyer, Shivam Dube, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohd. Siraj, Washington Sundar, Arshdeep Singh, Riyan Parag, Axar Patel, Khaleel Ahmed, Harshit Rana.
SRI LANKA: Charith Asalanka (c), Pathum Nissanka, Avishka Fernando, Kusal Mendis, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Kamindu Mendis, Janith Liyanage, Nishan Madushka, Dunith Wellalage, Chamika Karunaratne, Akila Dananjaya, Mohamed Shiraz, Maheesh Theekshana, Asitha Fernando, Eshan Malinga, Jeffrey Vandersay.

Allman wins second straight Olympic title in discus throw

AP ■ SAINT-DENIS (FRANCE)

Sam Kendrick appreciates the Olympics again. Valarie Allman never stopped.

It's just the healing power that medals have to mend and reinforce feelings.

In a short span Monday night, Allman won her second straight Olympic title in the discus throw, while Kendrick captured silver in a pole vault competition that featured Sweden's Armand "Mondo" Duplantis breaking his own world record.

The medals from Allman and Kendrick, 31, gave the U.S. 11 so far in the meet, including three golds.

Three years ago in Tokyo, Kendrick didn't get the chance to compete. He was placed in isolation because of a positive COVID-19 test and didn't feel supported by Olympic officials.

It led to some pretty hard feelings - feelings that had the Mississippi native wondering if he even wanted to compete in Paris. His love-loathe relationship is back on path to love after he earned a silver medal. It pairs with the bronze he captured at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.

"I was definitely bitter," Kendrick said. "I wasn't going to come to Paris until it was proven to me that it was going to be great and shining into the future."

"It's tough, being turned away from. All of a sudden you're sick, and every doctor throws you to the wolves, and all of a sudden you're stuck in isolation when Team USA is supposed to love you."



It took some soul-searching for him to arrive in Paris for another Olympics.

"Rather than run away from it like I really wanted to, you've got to come back," Kendrick said. "You've got to face that lion."

Kendrick went up against a pole-vaulting beast in Duplantis, the 24-year-old from Louisiana who competes for his mother's native Sweden. Kendrick watched the journey up close of Duplantis blossoming into the world's best. It culminated Monday with Duplantis clearing 6.25 meters (20 feet, 6 inches) to defend his gold medal.

"His story is written in the stars, for sure," said Kendrick, who cleared 5.95 meters (19-6 1/4) to hold off Emmanouil Karalis of Greece. "But I think mine will have a tapestry hanging on my wall one day worthy of reading."

Same with Allman's tale. After winning in Tokyo, the 29-year-old who competed for Stanford realized she needed to dial back on the

discus training. It had become her sole focus in and out of the global pandemic.

"I think I might be the only person in the world that probably had too much discus in their life," Allman joked. "When you want to be as good as you can at something, you slowly start making sacrifices, and you don't realize that it's happening."

To scale back, she bought a house and hung out with friends.

"Such basic things," Allman said. "When I went out to perform, I said that no matter how it played out, I'm so grateful that I get to do what I love. No matter if I get a medal, whatever color it is, if I don't get a medal, this is going to be a night that I'm proud of the fight that I showed. I think there was something freeing in that."

Early on, Allman showed some jitters by fouling on her first attempt.

"I felt the weight of like, Holy crap, this is the Olympics," Allman explained. "It took me a minute to find my groove."

She went 68.74 meters (225-6) on her second throw and 69.50 (228-0) on her fourth. It was enough to beat Feng Bin of China and Sandra Elkasevic of Croatia.

"Pressure is becoming my friend," Allman said. "I think it's one of those things I've learned can bring out the best in you if you embrace it."

"To walk into the ring having one attempt left and knowing I'd already won, it was hard fighting back tears."

American entries cut in half in Paris Olympic beach volleyball tournament

AP ■ PARIS

On the Champ de Mars, where the first mayor of Paris was sent to the guillotine during the Reign of Terror, the American beach volleyball squad got cut in half.

Two U.S. Teams fell on the sand at Eiffel Tower Stadium on Monday, with Taryn Kloth and Kristen Nuss losing to Canada in the women's round of 16 a few hours after Chase Budinger and Miles Evans lost to Norway in the men's.

Only Miles Partain and Andy Benesh advanced on the day, joining Kelly Cheng and Sara Hughes in the elite eight.

"Definitely a little heartbroken," said Nuss, who along with her former LSU teammate formed the No. 2 team in the world rankings.

"We came in wanting to bring home gold back to the United States. That's been our goal for the past four years. So to go out in the round of 16 is obviously an earlier exit than we would have liked."

Brandie Wilkerson and Melissa Humana-Paredes beat Nuss and Kloth 21-19, 21-18, leaving the country that has won four of the last five women's gold medals with just one team in the bracket.

Wilkerson isn't just a giant killer in Olympic beach volleyball: She's an American giant killer. She also eliminated the U.S. Pair of Cheng and Sarah Sponcil in the first round of the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Games.

"That's what she's good at doing," Humana-Paredes said with a laugh.

"But honestly," Wilkerson



said, "they're an amazing team. And it's a whole new tournament. It's a whole new Games, whole new atmosphere. We're all different skill levels from what I was even, four years ago."

"We knew we were going to play this team at some point. They're one of the best teams in the world. We thought it would be later in the tournament, because we both deserve to have a shot at those medals. But when we're put in this situation, we were ready to respond."

In other men's matches on Monday, Qatar beat Chile in straight sets, setting up a quarterfinal matchup with Partain and Benesh. Spain beat Poland, keeping six-time Olympian Pablo Herrera alive in his quest for his first medal since he won silver in Athens, 20 years ago.

On the women's side, Latvia beat Germany, Spain beat the Netherlands and Brazil beat Japan.

Budinger, a former NBA player, and Evans lost in straight sets to Norway, the defending Olympic champions, on Monday afternoon. To start off the night session, first-time Olympians Benesh and Partain knocked out four-time Olympian Paolo Nicolai and his partner, Samuele Cottafava, 21-19, 21-18.

"I am very in awe of how long they've been playing at such a high level. It's definitely difficult to keep pushing your body after you're at such a level of excellence. So I'm really inspired by those guys," said Partain, who at 22 is the youngest person ever to represent the United States in Olympic beach volleyball.

"It's cool that beach volleyball is a lifelong sport that you can play at a really high level till how old they are - and even past," he said. "So I'm really glad to be a part of the sport that can do that encourages that and it's part of its, kind of aura."

Already at Paris, five-time Olympian and Rio de Janeiro gold medalist Laura Ludwig of Germany has been eliminated, and the 42-year-old Herrera has said he will retire.

The defending men's gold medalists from Norway are 27 and 28 and the top-ranked team from Sweden features a pair of 22-year-olds.

Nicolai said he hasn't made a decision on whether to go for a fifth Olympics. He would be 40 for Los Angeles in 2028.

"I'm 36, and I have to be sure that if I started a new Olympic journey, that I'm ready to do it," he said. "Because I know how difficult it is to be focused for four more years."

So, is it a young person's sport?

"I hope so, because that means that we have a great future," Nicolai said. "The Norwegians, Swedish, they are the top two in the rankings. And they are really young. So that's great because they are full of energy. And so maybe after this tournament we can do something more for our sport because we deserve it."

"In all the two weeks, the crowd was always full and always crazy for the beach volleyball," he said. "That's the moment for us, for our sport to grow."

Karthik joins Paarl Royals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former wicketkeeper batter Dinesh Karthik was on Tuesday signed by Paarl Royals for the third season of the SA20, making him the first Indian cricketer to participate in the South African league, starting on January 9.

Karthik, 39, retired from all forms of cricket in June this year and since then he has been roped in as a mentor-coach by IPL side Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

"I have so many fond memories of playing in and visiting South Africa, and when this opportunity came about, I couldn't say no because of how special it would be to come back to playing competitive cricket and win this incredible competition with the Royals," said Karthik, who has played 180 matches for India across all three formats.

His last competitive T20 outing was for RCB in the IPL 2024, for whom he made 326 runs in 14 matches at a strike-rate of 187.36.

Karthik's last match in India colours was against Bangladesh during the T20 World Cup in Australia in 2022.

"I am delighted to be joining the Paarl Royals team which oozes a lot of experience, quality and potential. I am certainly looking forward to joining the group and contributing to what should be an exciting season," Karthik, who was roped in as the league ambassador a day earlier, said.

Spain beat Morocco to reach its second straight Olympics final in men's soccer

AP ■ MARSEILLE (FRANCE)

Juanlu Sanchez came off the bench to fire Spain to a record-equaling fifth Olympic men's soccer final.

Sanchez struck in the 85th minute at Stade de Marseille to seal a 2-1 win over Morocco and set up a final against France at the Paris Games.

"The moment passed so fast that I didn't even realize it, but then when you realized that you scored the goal that puts your team in the final, well, I'm really happy," Sanchez said.

Morocco led 1-0 at halftime after the tournament's leading scorer, Soufiane Rahimi, converted a penalty in the 37th.

Spain evened the score in the 65th when Fermin Lopez showed quick feet in the box and hit a left-footed shot low in the bottom corner. The Barcelona midfielder then provided the assist that set up

Sanchez to sweep his winning goal into the far corner.

"I think that my goal changed a bit the match, and I think it was a great match for the whole team and we deserved it," Lopez said. "And here we are."

Spain, which won gold at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, lost to Brazil in the final at the Tokyo Games three years ago.

It will get the chance to make up for that and add to what has already been a successful year after the men's senior team won the European Championship last month.

"It's basically a World Cup for the under 23s," Spain coach Santi Denia said about playing for the gold medal on Friday at Parc des Princes in Paris.

For Morocco, it was another painful run at a semifinal of a major tournament. It will face Egypt for the bronze medal on Thursday in Nantes. Egypt lost to



France 3-1 hours after Morocco's defeat.

Morocco became the first Arab and African nation to advance to the semifinals of the World Cup in 2022 - eventually taking fourth place.

"We were really motivated today to play in the final. What has happened has happened," Morocco coach Tarik Sektioui said. "And now we must be focused on the next game. There is a medal to be won."

That's not nothing for us. It's very important for us that we return to Morocco from this tournament with a medal. Playing in front of a fervent crowd, largely comprised of Morocco supporters, it threatened another upset at these Games after already beating Argentina in the group stage.

Rahimi had scored five goals going into the game and took his total to six when he coolly fired down the middle to beat Spain

goalkeeper Arnau Tenas from the spot.

Spain came close to leveling in first-half stoppage time when Alex Baena's 25-yard effort was deflected onto the outside of the post.

The equalizer came through Lopez' clinical finish - his fourth goal of the tournament - and his over-exuberant celebrations earned him a yellow card after kicking the corner flag and breaking it in two.

Morocco had come close to a potential late winner before Sanchez sealed the victory for Spain, which has taken silver on three occasions, with its only gold coming in '92.

Brazil is the only other men's team to have played in five finals at the Olympics, including the past three.

Spain's women's team is also into the semifinals - it faces Brazil on Tuesday, also in Marseille.

The *Aasa Kooda* fame Preity Mukhundhan made her breakthrough in the indie music scene with this current trending song. She speaks to *The Pioneer*, discussing her thoughts on the film's success and also speaking of her new big project, *Kannappa*.



'Aasa Kooda opened new career opportunities'

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Preity Mukhundhan made her breakthrough in the indie music scene with the fantastic song *Aasa Kooda*, which quickly went viral. For those of us watching the Telugu actresses shake a leg, there was only a lighthearted, amorous mood when we listened to the foot-stomping party hit. The song's entire spirit was flawlessly encapsulated in the music video. You guys will agree to this, we're positive!

Here's our latest exclusive interview with the danseuse from the highly visible viral music video. "The contagious energy and memorable beats of *Aasa Kooda* truly resonated with everyone," Preity hints. "I think the music video's attention to detail attracted viewers and helped it become a viral hit. I saw an opportunity to demonstrate my dancing abilities because I've studied both classical and western dance forms." When asked about her initial thoughts upon witnessing the song's success, she clarified, saying, "I was contacted by the *Aasa Kooda* team and was captivated by their concept and illustration for the song right away. Witnessing its triumph was incredibly gratifying and a tribute to the diligent efforts of all those engaged." Yes, indeed, it is undoubtedly sweeping the internet as we speak.

You could question, what more? Yes, folks, her Instagram following is skyrocketing! She said of her newfound fame, "Watching my Instagram following grow has been an exciting journey. It has

given me the opportunity to network with well-wishers and open new career opportunities, both of which have been immensely fulfilling. I will always be appreciative of the affection that I have received from *Aasa Kooda*." Not only that, but she had an amazing time working with Sai Abhyankar, who sang the song and the whole crew. The *Star* fame felt that they put their love and imagination into every part of *Aasa Kooda*, which is why it became such a success.

But now for the stunning announcement: Preity will now feature in the eagerly awaited movie *Kannappa*, which features a cast of stars from across India. She shared anecdotes, like "It's truly a privilege to share screen space with such accomplished actors," to understand what it was like to work with industry titans like Prabhas, Akshay Kumar, Mohan Lal, Kajal Aggarwal and Vishnu Manchu. "Every day spent on set is educational and full of inspirational tales and camaraderie that enhance my experience working on *Kannappa*. Character portrayal in mythological stories necessitates a deep comprehension of the cultural setting. I was intrigued by the intricate storytelling and was thrilled to have the chance to play such a complex character." While filming in a variety of New Zealand settings was incredibly difficult for the actress, it was also an amazing experience. The challenging weather and intricate action scenes put her to the test on a mental and physical level. All in all, *Kannappa* has been an adventure as well as a test of her perseverance and resolve.

Siddu Jonnalagadda's *Telusu Kada* regular shoot begins

Star Boy Siddu Jonnalagadda, who is basking in the glory of the blockbuster success of *Tillu Square*, embarks on his next project, *Telusu Kada*. This film marks the directorial debut of renowned stylist Neeraja Kona, who has crafted a script tailored to Siddu's newfound stardom. Produced by People Media Factory, known for its high production standards, *Telusu Kada*'s regular shoot commenced on Tuesday.

The initial schedule is a crucial 30-day stretch, featuring both talkie-talk sequences and musical numbers. Raashi Khanna joined the shoot on day one, alongside Siddu. The film also features Srinidhi Shetty as the other leading lady, with Viva Harsha playing a significant role. The meticulous pre-production hints at the film's grand production standards, with Siddu Jonnalagadda undergoing a stylish transformation for his role.

TG Vishwa Prasad is producing the film on a substantial budget. The project boasts a team of well-regarded technicians: Thaman S is composing the music, Gnana Shekar Baba is handling cinematography, National Award-winning editor Naveen Nooli is on board and Avinash Kolla, a prominent production designer, is contributing to the film. Costume design is managed by Sheetal Sharma.



SREE VISHNU ONBOARDS HERO HEEROINE

In a highly anticipated announcement, it has been revealed that Sree Vishnu will star opposite Divya Khosla in the upcoming Telugu film *Hero Heeraine*. The film, which is set to begin filming in early October, promises to bring a fresh and engaging narrative to the Telugu film industry. Prema Arora, known for her impactful work in cinema, is producing this ambitious project. Her involvement adds significant buzz to the film, suggesting that *Hero Heeraine* will be a noteworthy addition to the industry. The film boasts a remarkable ensemble cast that includes acclaimed actors such as Esha Deol, Soni Razdan, Parsh Rawal, Ishita Chauhan, Tusshar Kapoor and Priyanka Chahar Chaudhary. With such a diverse and talented lineup, the film is expected to offer a rich and dynamic cinematic experience. As the filming is set to commence in early October, anticipation is building among fans and industry watchers alike. The combination of a strong cast and experienced production team indicates that *Hero Heeraine* could become a significant hit, generating considerable excitement in the Telugu film community.



Niharika Konidela expresses pride in launching 15 new artists!

The pre-release event of Niharika Konidela's production, *Committee Kurrollu*, was a vibrant affair filled with anticipation and the promise of a fun-filled movie experience. The event saw the presence of Mega Prince Varun Tej, Supreme Hero Sai Durga Tej, Adivi Sesh and Venky Atluri, who all expressed their excitement for the film. The *Committee Kurrollu* theatrical release is set to be a grand spectacle, meticulously planned by popular distributor Vamsi Nandipati, ensuring a memorable cinematic experience for audiences.

In a video message, Megastar Chiranjeevi praised Niharika's commitment to producing quality films and expressed confidence in the movie's success. He highlighted the fresh concept, the charming setting of Godavari, and the strong performance of the newcomers. He also lauded the director's talent and Anudeep's melodious music.

Varun Tej, meanwhile, shared his experience watching the film, reminis-

cing about his own close friendships and how the movie resonated with him on a personal level. He praised the film's heartwarming story, Anudeep's memorable songs, and the impeccable work of the entire crew. He also emphasised the importance of hard work and discipline for aspiring artists.

Niharika Konidela, the producer, expressed her gratitude to the guests for their support and highlighted the collaborative spirit of the entire team. She stressed the importance of providing opportunities to fresh talent and expressed her pride in launching the careers of 15 new artists.

With its engaging story, talented cast and experienced crew, *Committee Kurrollu* promises to be a refreshing and entertaining experience. The pre-release event generated immense excitement and ensured that the film is on everyone's radar. With a release date set for August 9th, audiences are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to enjoy this fun-filled and promising film.



Mass Ka Das Vishwak Sen's #VS13 announced

Mass Ka Das Vishwak Sen, known for his exciting filmography, has announced his 13th project. The film, tentatively titled *#VS13*, will be produced by Sudhakar Cherukuri of SLV Cinemas, renowned for delivering the massive blockbuster *Dasara*. This film, marked *Production No. 8* on the banner, will be made on a high budget with impressive production standards. Written and directed by debutant Sreedhar Ganta, *#VS13* promises to be a distinctive political action drama set against a village backdrop. In a bent system, Vishwak Sen, as an IPS officer, refuses to break and instead marches to straighten the path. The makers have released a pre-look poster showcasing Vishwak in a tense scene as he makes his entrance as a typical IPS officer. This poster has already generated considerable interest in the film.

With a compelling tagline, *Every Action Fires a Reaction*, *#VS13* will feature a blend of well-known actors and top-class technicians. The cinematography will be handled by Kishore Kumar of Thangalan fame, while the music will be composed by Ajaneesh Loknath, known for his work on *Kantara*. Further details about this eagerly anticipated project will be unveiled in due course.

Mr Bachchan's trailer to bring in more in-depth look



The much-anticipated film *Mr Bachchan* offers a rich blend of all facets of commercial filmmaking. As the film's shoot concludes and the August 15th release date approaches, the promotional effort has been pushed up to increase excitement and expectation. A new romance poster with Ravi Teja and Bhagyashri Borse is an important part of the promotional plan. The poster depicts an intimate scene between the leads, with Bhagyashri sitting on Ravi Teja's lap and Ravi Teja's face veiled while kissing her. This love poster is designed to attract the viewer and generate excitement ahead of the trailer's release.

The trailer, which will be released on August 7th, is designed to provide viewers with a better understanding of the film's plot, which combines love and action components. While the trailer hinted at these characteristics, the trailer is expected to provide a more in-depth look at the tale, highlighting the film's rich period setting and the relationship between the characters.

TG Vishwa Prasad is producing the film on a huge scale under the People Media Factory banner. Ayanka Bose oversaw the cinematography and Mickey J Meyer scored the music.

Brahma Kadali created the production design and Ujwal Kulkarni handled the editing.

Dhanush to enter the Avengers world

Dhanush is marking the enormous triumph of his film *Raayan*, which is his second directorial venture. It has set numerous new records in terms of box office performance. Following that, he will appear in the *Ilayaraja* biopic, with additional projects such as *Kubera* lined up.

According to the latest updates, it is possible that Dhanush could have a part in the highly anticipated *Avengers: Doomsday* film directed by the Russo Brothers. Even though Indian fans are excited, the news has not been confirmed yet. If there is a brief appearance by him, the likelihood of the information leaking before the release is lower, but there is a good possibility that he will have a significant role.

Being featured in an *Avengers* movie could serve as a significant milestone in his professional journey. Before this, Farhan Akhtar worked with Marvel on *Ms. Marvel* and portrayed the character of Waleed. However, no Indian actor has been cast in any *Avengers* film to date. Dhanush has previously starred in the action thriller *The Gray Man* that was also helmed by the Russo Brothers. He gained global acclaim through the film and was referred to as 'sexy Tamil buddy' by Ryan Gosling. It seems like now is the time to introduce the star in *Avengers: Doomsday*.