



the pioneer

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QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

"In the US, every State has a motto. So far, I have been to New York, New Jersey, Washington DC and Texas and now we are here in California. The New York State's motto is Out Of Many, One. Texas is known as the Lone Star State. California's motto is Eureka. In India, we don't have a motto for a state. But I will now like to give my state - Telangana - a motto. My state Telangana can be called 'The Future State'," the statement quoted him as saying.

- A. Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister P4

Panel to monitor situation along Indo-Bangla border:
Shah

AVIATION
MINISTER VOWS TO TACKLE RISING AIRFARE, STRIKE A BALANCE

Seerat signs a film for People Media
FACTORY?



DON'T MISS...

1,500 new buses will be inducted into...

Minister for Excise and Mines Kollu Ravindra has said that 1500 new buses are being inducted into the APSRTC soon. The Minister flagged off five new services of RTC buses in the RTC depot here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Kollu Ravindra said that the government aimed to induct 1500 new buses into the fleet of RTC buses and so far 200 new buses have been inducted. The Machilipatnam depot was allocated five new buses, he added. More RTC bus services would be introduced on the demand of people...

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Emotions run high as survivors join...

Mohan's face turned pale as he disembarked at Chooralmala. He is a part of a group of survivors confronting the devastation of their landslide-ravaged hamlet in Kerala's Wayanad district. Mohan and the other survivors were visiting their birthplace for the first time since the devastating landslide that razed everything in the Mundakkai area and left them homeless and grappling with the fact that they may never again see some loved ones who went missing in the landslides. "I am in search of my brothers..."

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Walkaroo ropes in Varun Dhawan...

Leading footwear brand Walkaroo has roped in Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan as its brand ambassador and will launch an integrated marketing campaign showcasing Walkaroo's extensive product portfolio, the company said on Friday. The appointment of Dhawan as brand ambassador reinforces Walkaroo's brand presence and appeal to the younger generation and fashion-conscious consumers across the country, the company said. "We are very happy to have Varun Dhawan join us in..."

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Legendary athlete on field, a...

Neeraj Chopra is all about greatness without pretensions. A fierce competitor, a superstar of Indian sports, a humble human being who would make no bones about his limitations or desires, the double Olympic medalist from India, is all rolled into one. He may want the top prize for himself but would not be envious if the rival pips him. He would tell himself to accept what he got, and work harder to achieve what he desires. He would not pretend that he does not care for brand endorsement. He certainly wants...

-SPORTS

Tribals' uplift my priority: CM

CHAITANYAM 2.0 PROGRAMME TO BE LAUNCHED SOON
PADERU MEDICAL COLLEGE TO GET RS 500 CR FUNDING

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a significant address during the World Adivasi Day celebrations at Tummalapalli Kalakshetram in Vijayawada, Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu declared poverty eradication among tribals as a top priority of his administration. Speaking to a large gathering, Naidu outlined a comprehensive plan aimed at transforming the lives of tribal communities across the state.

The Chief Minister announced a series of initiatives, including the introduction of the Chaitanyam 2.0 Programme, which is set to enhance tribal development. Key components of the plan include improving road connectivity to 2,191 tribal villages, ensuring clean drinking water access to every tribal household with a Rs 2,373 crore allocation, and establishing study circles for tribal students in Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, and Tirupati.

Naidu expressed his concern over the continued use of makeshift stretchers (Doli) in tribal areas while the world advances with technologies like Artificial Intelligence.

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- Road connectivity will be improved for 2,191 tribal villages.
- Clean drinking water to be provided to every tribal household with Rs 2,373 cr.
- Study circles for tribal students to be set up in Vizag, V'wada, and Tirupati.
- A museum for freedom fighters to be set up at Lambasingi.
- Organic products and Araku coffee to be promoted more effectively.
- Funds misappropriated by previous administrations to be recovered for welfare programmes.



- Free coaching to be offered for Adivasi candidates in DSC exams.
- Anna Canteens to be established in tribal areas.
- CM says Land Titling Act revoked to prevent illegal land grabs.

CM to hoist Tricolour at IGMC Stadium

VIJAYAWADA: Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu will hoist the National Flag during the Independence Day celebrations at Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium, Vijayawada, on August 15. Ministers will hoist the Tricolour in their respective districts. Orders to this effect were issued by S.

Suresh Kumar, Principal Secretary (FAC) of the General Administration (Protocol). The Andhra Pradesh government has decided to celebrate Independence Day 2024 with grandeur. The state's main Independence Day event will take place at IGMC Stadium, featuring a ceremonial parade at 9:00

AM on Thursday, August 15, 2024. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu will hoist the national flag and take the salute. The orders also specify that the Deputy Chief Minister and other ministers will hoist the National Flag and take the salute during the guard of honour in their respective districts on the occasion of the Independence Day celebrations.

All crest gates of Nagarjuna Sagar lifted

PNS ■ GUNTUR

After a gap of more than two years, all 26 crest gates of the Nagarjuna Sagar Project (NSP) were lifted on Friday to release floodwaters downstream to the Pulichintala Project. The decision to lift the gates was prompted by the heavy inflow of 2,74,065 cusecs of water from upstream. In addition to discharging the floodwaters, hydroelectric power generation has also commenced at the right and left canals of the NSP. The lifting of all 26 crest gates at Nagarjuna Sagar is a rare event, drawing thousands of tourists from



Hyderabad and other regions who gathered to witness the spectacular sight of water gushing through the gates. [Continued on Page 2](#)

Build confidence among public over govt schools: Nara Lokesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Education and IT Minister, Nara Lokesh, emphasised the importance of enhancing public confidence in government schools by providing quality education. The minister conducted a review of the Supporting Andhra Learning Transformation (SALT) project, implemented in collaboration with the World Bank, alongside school education officials and representatives from relevant agencies at his Undavalli residence on Friday.

During the review, Lokesh enquired about the delays in implementing the SALT project under the previous government. He questioned the spending of thousands of crores on initiatives like Nadu-Nedu and SALT by the previous administration. The minister urged officials to conduct a thorough analysis and work diligently to achieve improved results by focusing on delivering

high-quality education. Lokesh highlighted the need for strategic planning over the next five years to elevate government schools to the standards of private institutions. He instructed officials to make internet access mandatory in all government schools. Additionally, he advised representatives from the Pratham organization to revise their designs to ensure more scientific assessment methods at the primary school level. The Educational Initiatives Organization was directed to enhance the effectiveness of digital assessments and ensure they are seamlessly connected online.

The minister announced that all public representatives, from the Chief Minister to local MLAs, would participate in Model Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) to understand the sentiments of parents and actively involve mothers in improving the performance of government schools. [Continued on Page 2](#)

Man dies by suicide during selfie video

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

A heart-wrenching incident has shaken the people of Illam Naidu Valasa village. Ghantasala Satyadhar, a local resident, died after consuming a poisonous substance while recording a selfie video. His family found him in critical condition and rushed him to hospital, but he succumbed to the poison.

Police investigations reveal Satyadhar was grappling with severe emotional distress due to his wife leaving him with their children. The incident has sparked calls for increased mental health support in rural areas.

VIZAG MLC BYPOLL
Suspense over NDA candidate

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The suspense surrounding the selection of the TDP-led NDA alliance candidate for the MLC by-election of the erstwhile Visakhapatnam local bodies continues to mount. After consulting key party leaders, TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu has formed a six-member committee to assess the political landscape for the Vizag local bodies' MLC elections.

The committee comprises Palla Srinivasa Rao, Vangalapati Anita, Ganta Srinivasa Rao, Bandaru Satyanarayana Murthy, Panchakarla Ramesh (Janasena), and Vishnukumar Raju (BJP). Their task is to study voter sentiments at the grassroots level. Naidu has instructed the committee members to provide a comprehensive

report on voting patterns in both urban and rural areas. The leaders have informed the CM that several local body representatives have already expressed their support for the alliance following the election results. However, they also noted that some MPTCs and ZPTCs have been moved to camps by the YSRCP. During discussions, the strengths of the parties in the district's local body elections were analysed. The leaders have placed the decision-making responsibility on Naidu, expressing confidence that whichever candidate he selects will secure victory. Naidu has assured the committee that he will handle the candidate selection and has urged them to continuously monitor and report on field-level conditions.

Grievances pour in against anarchy of previous govt



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A large number of people flocked to the TDP central office in Mangalagiri on Friday to voice their grievances. Many alleged that under the previous YSRCP government, they faced illegal charges and attacks for speaking out over the past five years.

State Water Resources Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu, MLC Duvarapu Rama Rao, and TNSF president Pranav Gopal were present at the TDP office to receive the public's complaints. The majority of the grievances were directed against alleged irregularities by YSRCP leaders. TDP workers who claimed to have suffered under the previous government shared their experiences with the minister.

Among the complaints, Dhanarajupalli Kotayya, a TDP supporter, claimed that his 3-acre plot in Yadlapalli village, Palnada district, was purchased by Gopinath, a relative of former minister Vidadala Rajani, for Rs 25 lakh. [Continued on Page 2](#)



Free bus travel for women on RTC buses soon

Transport Minister Mandipalli vows to turn AP into an accident-free State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Transport Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy has announced that free bus travel for women on RTC buses will soon be implemented. Speaking to the media after a review meeting with senior officials on Friday, the minister mentioned

that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu will reassess the RTC and transport departments on August 12, with a focus on the rollout of this new initiative.

Minister Ramprasad Reddy highlighted the government's efforts to transform Andhra Pradesh into an 'Accident-Free State' by reducing road accidents within the public transport sector. [Continued on Page 2](#)

Face-off between Dhankhar and Jaya in RS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar and actor-politician Jaya Bachchan were involved in a face-off on Friday after Bachchan raised objection to his "tone" while giving her floor to speak and the former asserting that even a celebrity like her needs to follow decorum.

Opposition parties also staged a walkout following the exchanges between Dhankhar and Bachchan, a Samajwadi Party MP.

Later, while talking to reporters in the parliament complex, Bachchan said she was upset with the tone of the Chairman, and also the way the mic of Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge was switched off when he stood up to speak in the House.

The trouble started when the SP member wanted to make a point on



Opposition parties also staged a walkout following the exchanges between Dhankhar and Jaya, a Samajwadi Party MP.

an ongoing heated discussion between Opposition parties and the Chairman in the Rajya Sabha over certain remarks made by BJP MP Ghanshyam Tiwari on Kharge a few days ago. Dhankhar allowed her saying,

"Jaya Amitabh Bachchan" make your point.

Bachchan rose to say: "I Jaya Amitabh Bachchan want to say, I am an artist. I understand body language and expressions. Forgive me but your tone is not acceptable. We are col-

leagues, Sir. You may be sitting in the Chair, and I remember when I went to school..."

"On this, a visibly angry Dhankhar interrupted, saying "Enough of it".

"You may be anybody, you may be a celebrity, you have to understand the decorum, no, nothing doing...Never carry an impression that only you build reputations...we live up to reputations, nothing doing," he said.

When an Opposition party member raised an objection to how Dhankhar could call Bachchan a celebrity when she was a senior Member of Parliament, the Chairman retorted: "(Does) a senior member of Parliament has a licence to run down the reputation of the Chair... to question the tone and tenor?"

The Chairman further said he has the highest respect for all members

as Kharge tried to make a point. Dhankhar further said he cannot be a party to the House being converted into an "epicentre of disturbance".

Talking to reporters in the parliament complex, the SP leader said she "objected" to the tone used by the Chair.

"We are not school children, some of us are senior citizens. I was upset with the tone and specially when Leader of Opposition stood up to speak he had switched off the mic. How can you do this? This is against the tradition. You have to allow the leader," she said.

She also alleged that members sitting in the Treasury benches use unparliamentary words.

"You are a nuisance, 'Budhiheen' (stupid), all these words are also spoken by Treasury benches," she alleged.

Amaravati: Giving proper shape to reflect dreams of people

How does a city, including the one designated as the capital of a State, evolve and develop? What are the key parameters that ensure its continuous and constant progress and development? From providing the basic amenities to fulfilling the aspirational goals of people, several aspects need to be addressed in the process. Nothing should be lacking if it is to be called a progressive and evolving capital city.

In modern days, building a new capital city is a Herculean task. It requires a holistic vision and thinking that is comprehensive enough to encompass everything that is important

from the standpoint of growth now as well as in the future. We haven't seen any capital city being built before our very eyes. All the capital cities of states and the national capital region of Delhi are ones that have been in existence for long and which over time got modernised with the advent of technology, following migration of people from various parts of the nation. As renowned poet Gurugada Apparao said, "Nation means people, not mere physical structures". Whenever we talk of any city, we also envision the culture and traditions of the people and the facilities available there for ease of living and

Whenever we talk of any city, we also envision the culture and traditions of the people and the facilities available there for ease of living and chances of easier ways of finding employment opportunities.

chances of easier ways of finding employment opportunities. So, it means it is people's vigorous participation from wider sections of society that makes any city, including the capital city, attractive with all-encompassing infrastructure and endowments. As wants are

insatiable, development needs to be continuous process with nourishing influences. One should go on doing it as and when needs and requirements arise while accommodating new ideas and initiating innovations wherever and whenever possible.



BUDDHARAPU RAJESWARA PRASAD
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With all the modern technology and human expertise at hand and with the availability

of requisite material in abundance, building a new capital city that reflects the aspirations, hopes, as well as dreams of people and provides for future developmental needs requires dogged pursuit and unyielding political will and persistence.

In this context, the prestigious capital of Andhra Pradesh, Amaravati, has the potential to become an aspirational city though it has to be built from a scratch. For, the state now has leadership with the required political will and support of people who want it to be a world-class one. Just as entering a house already built is different from entering a

customized house that satisfies our requirements, hopes, and aspirations; Amaravati has everything so that it can be built as a city that reflects modernity without compromising on its traditional diversity.

From New York to Hyderabad and from Mumbai to Delhi, development has been possible with the migration of people. That happens only when every facility is provided for ease of living and business. Then only the city becomes an economic force. Although it may take time for Amaravati to be such a city, it need not be a distant dream as development is intuition-

based and it can happen naturally as the government of the day goes on providing facilities and facilitates people's wider participation. It needs to be chiselled as the capital city that reflects and resonates with the hopes of the people of the state.

After taking over the reins of the state, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has started giving definite shape to Andhra Pradesh's capital in a way that it reflects the changing moods and desires of the people.

The hectic activity going on in Amaravati indicates that the dream is about to come true soon.

30L hectares of wasteland to be under cultivation in 5 yrs

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Agriculture Department, in coordination with the Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF), plans to bring 30 lakh hectares of wasteland under cultivation across Andhra Pradesh within the next five years. Budithi Rajasekhar, Special Principal Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, announced that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has directed the expansion of natural agriculture methods to all villages in the state. Additionally, 10,000 acres in each parliamentary constituency are to be converted to natural agriculture.

A two-day workshop on natural farming began on Friday at the Panchayat Raj, Rural Development Department Commissioner's office in Tadepalli, chaired by



Agriculture Director S. Dilli Rao, District Agriculture Officers and APCNF District Project Managers from across the state attended the workshop. Rajasekhar highlighted the economic challenges faced by farmers due to chemical usage and emphasized the need to utilise 30 lakh hectares

of fallow land for cultivation over the next five years. Rajasekhar also noted that global interest in natural agriculture is rising and underscored its importance in addressing extreme climate changes. He urged stakeholders to understand the science behind natural agriculture,

which he described as the most viable solution for sustainable farming.

T. Vijay Kumar, Executive Vice Chairman of Rythu Sadhikara Sanstha, stressed that natural agriculture not only enhances farmers' income and well-being but also contributes to public health and environmental protection. He highlighted the potential for farmers to achieve up to five times the income through natural farming and encouraged them to adopt these practices.

B. Rama Rao, Chief Executive Officer of Rythu Sadhikara Sanstha, reported that delegations from 45 countries have visited the state to study its natural agriculture programmes. He also announced that community resource persons from Andhra Pradesh will soon travel to four countries to establish natural agriculture practices there.

NABARD facilitating financial support for shrimp sector: CGM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The stakeholders meeting on shrimp production, processing, and export was successfully held on Friday by NABARD in Vijayawada, bringing together industry leaders, shrimp farmers, processors, Research Institutes, Fisheries Department and representatives from various banks. The event focused on strategising the future of shrimp farming, processing, and export in India.

In his address, MR Gopal, Chief General Manager, NABARD, Andhra Pradesh Regional Office, highlighted the significant role of NABARD in facilitating financial support for the shrimp sector. He emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to enhance shrimp production and export, in line with the Union Budget which stressed the need for financial support for the establishment of



Nucleus Breeding Centres for Shrimp Broodstocks.

A Babu, Secretary (Horticulture, Aquaculture & Fisheries) GoAP emphasised the critical role that Andhra Pradesh plays in the shrimp industry, both domestically and globally. He acknowledged the state's leadership position in shrimp production and highlighted the government's commitment to supporting the sector through various initiatives aimed at promoting

sustainable aquaculture practices.

He underscored the importance of maintaining the quality and traceability of shrimp products to meet international standards, which is vital for ensuring the continued growth of shrimp exports from India. He also spoke about the need for closer collaboration between the government, financial institutions like NABARD, and the shrimp farming community to over-

come challenges such as disease management, broodstock availability, and environmental sustainability.

GS Rawat, Deputy Managing Director (DMD) of NABARD, delivered a keynote address that focused on the strategic importance of the shrimp industry within India's broader agricultural and export economy. He highlighted the role of NABARD in driving the growth of the sector through targeted financial interventions, capacity building, and infrastructure development.

Dola Shankar, Commissioner, Department of Fisheries, GoAP emphasized the need for better disease management and the improvement of broodstock quality to enhance shrimp production. He encouraged ongoing cooperation between the government, farmers, and financial institutions to ensure the long-term success of the shrimp sector in Andhra Pradesh.

YSRCP opposes amendments to Waqf Act

PNS ■ KADAPA

Former Deputy Chief Minister and YSRCP Leader S B Amzath Basha has strongly condemned the NDA government's proposed amendments to the Waqf Act expressed the party's firm opposition to these changes and called for the central government to immediately withdraw its decision.

He said those amendments infringe upon the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution and added that the NDA government is attempting to undermine minority rights and religious freedom. Basha emphasized that once a property is donated to Waqf, it should remain under Waqf's control permanently, and any amendments to this law are unjust.

He further stated that the NDA government is treating minorities as adversaries, pointing out that there are 9 lakh acres of land under Waqf across the country, and these amendments are a clear attempt to seize these properties.

Jagan consoles kin of attack victim in Nandyal

PNS ■ SEETHARAMPURAM (Nandyal district)

Former chief minister and YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has demanded justice for Pasupuleti Subbarayudu, who was brutally murdered last Saturday night by alleged TDP supporters in Seetharampuram village. He said that not only the direct perpetrators but also those who orchestrated the crime should be held accountable.



Speaking to the media after consoling Subbarayudu's family in Seetharampuram on Friday, Jagan criticised the TDP-led government for its failing law and order situation. He specifically called out Minister Nara Lokesh and Chief Minister Chandrababu

Naidu, suggesting they should be named as co-accused in this case to address the breakdown of law and order in the state. Jagan highlighted that Subbarayudu was killed in his own home while police, including an SI and constables,

reportedly stood by and did nothing. Despite prior warnings about the potential for violence, no additional police forces were deployed, and the attackers managed to escape. The YSRCP president announced that his party would approach the High

Court and, if necessary, the Supreme Court to seek justice for Subbarayudu's family and to ensure the safety of party workers and their families. He vowed to continue fighting until those responsible, including those who orchestrated the attacks, are brought to justice and imprisoned.

He also urged the media to focus not only on the perpetrators but also on those supporting and enabling such crimes. Specifically, he mentioned the need to hold Nara Lokesh and Chandrababu Naidu accountable. Jagan accused the TDP-led government of betraying the people by failing to meet pre-election promises and creating an atmosphere of fear where dissent is met with violence and intimidation.

Vizag turns hub of artistic roller skating

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The 'City of Destiny' Visakhapatnam is known for its majestic beaches and as being one of India's largest steel manufacturers. Now it becomes the destination for the gems in artistic roller skating. In the recent Asian Games, two of the girl skaters from Visakhapatnam represent India in Artistic Roller Skating.

Availability of infrastructure, dedicated coaches and interest among parents are the major factors for the city's fast turning into a skaters' den. One of the gems of this artistic skating is Bollapragada Sri Sahithi, An Indian Book of Record Holder for her outstanding achievement of gaining 94 medals in skating at the tender age of 13 years. Sri Sahithi has been a national champion for the last 6 years. She has been playing for Team India since 2013. She is considered to be one of the best artistic skaters in India.

Sahithi's journey started at a summer camp in the year 2016. I started my skating journey at the age of four years. My father fuelled my



interest and got my admission in one of the skating academies in Vizag," says Sahithi in a conversation with The Pioneer.

The Skills that others took one or two years to learn, Sahithi could do in months. She won a gold medal from the district in her age group in the same year. It was simply a passion that drove the 13-year-old to attain success slowly in this sport. Now she has coach Pawan Kumar, the National Champion back in 1999, by her side.

"I became a part of the Indian skating team in 2023 when I was in the 8th Class. I

got three medals which included one silver, two bronze and finishing fourth in the World Skate Organized event.

This experience gave me exposure, and I understood how much it needs to be successful on an international stage. In 2024, I won my first Gold medal in an International event held in Taiwan. At the same tournament - one bronze medal and finishing fourth.

Besides excelling in skating, Sri Sahithi, a Student of the Narayana Olympiad, Visakhapatnam, is also balancing her education and securing first rank from the last 4.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha

Tithi: Shashthi: Aug 10 03:14 AM to Aug 11 05:45 AM

Saptami: Aug 11 05:45 AM to Aug 12 07:55 AM

Nakshatram:

Chitra: Aug 10 02:44 AM to Aug 11 05:48 AM

Swati: Aug 11 05:48 AM to Aug 12 08:33 AM

Rahukalam: 9:11 AM to 10:46 AM

Yamagandam: 1:56 PM to 3:31 PM

Varjyam: 12:03 PM to 01:50 PM

Gulika: 6:01 AM to 7:36 AM

Amritkalam: 10:35 PM to 12:24 AM

Ambhiji Muhurtham: 11:56 AM to 12:46 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Cloudy

Temp: 34°C

Humidity: 73%

Sunrise: 5:50 AM

Sunset: 6:35 PM

Updated: August 9, 2024 5:00 PM

Tribals uplift my...

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He vowed to address these disparities and transform the living conditions of tribal communities.

The Chief Minister actively engaged with the tribal community by participating in the Dhimsa dance and presenting a saree to the deity honored by the tribes. He reiterated his commitment to eradicating poverty and emphasized that no section of society would face discrimination under his government. In addition to these measures, Naidu revealed plans for the completion of the Paderu Medical College with an investment of Rs 500 crore and the establishment of a museum at Lambasingi to honor freedom fighters. He also promised to promote organic products and support the Araku coffee industry. Addressing concerns about past government inefficiencies, Naidu pledged to recover misappropriated public funds from previous administrations and redirect them towards welfare programs. The Chief Minister also announced that free coaching would be provided for Adivasi candidates in the upcoming District Selection Committee (DSC) exams, with a total of 16,347 vacant posts to be filled.

Naidu criticized the previous government for withdrawing welfare schemes and affirmed that these programs would be reinstated and improved. He also highlighted the revocation of the Land Titling Act to prevent illegal land grabs and announced the forthcoming establishment of Anna Canteens in tribal areas to support local communities. The Chief Minister concluded by underscoring his commitment to changing the impoverished conditions that have persisted among Adivasi communities and ensuring equitable development across the state.

All crest gates of ...

Continued from Page 1

Simultaneously, the Srisailem Dam also experienced a significant inflow on Friday, leading to the lifting of 10 crest gates to release 3.09 lakh cusecs of water downstream to the Nagarjuna Sagar Project. Srisailem Dam is currently receiving 3.98 lakh cusecs of water, with the water level standing at 882.80 feet. The reservoir holds 203.42 TMC (thousand million cubic feet) of water against its full capacity of 215.80 TMC. Additionally, 65,410 cusecs of water are being released to generate hydroelectric power at the left and right canals. Further downstream, the Pulichintala Project is also experiencing heavy inflow, receiving 2.42 lakh cusecs of water. Project engineers have lifted 11 crest gates to release 2.30 lakh cusecs of water to the Prakasam Barrage. Currently, 32 TMC of water is impounded at the Pulichintala Project, against its full capacity of 45.77 TMC.

Grievances pour in against anarchy...

Continued from Page 1

However, he alleges that the payment has yet to be made. Vadde Pawan Kumar, a TDP member from Dagadarthi village in Kavali Constituency, Nellore district, reported that his family has been harassed by YSRCP leaders through the filing of illegal cases and is now seeking justice. Two women, Vijaya Nirmala and Mary, pleaded for protection, alleging that YSRCP activists Potlapati Haribabu, Kothapalli Mosebu, and Gangadevara Venkateswarlu have trespassed on land they have been cultivating for 40 years in Ramapuram village, Bollapally mandal, Palnadu district. They are seeking justice for this encroachment. In Jaggayyapet town, NTR district, a disabled TDP supporter named Koppu Pedeswara Rao claimed that the previous administration had intentionally halted his pension and cancelled his white ration card. He is seeking the restoration of both. The family of Chella Nagadurga, from Namburu village in Pedda Kakani mandal, Guntur district, reported that their home was destroyed in a short circuit in 2020.

Build confidence...

Continued from Page 1

Lokesh also instructed authorities to introduce curriculum changes in the next academic year to foster respect for women among students.

The review was attended by Principal Secretary of School Education Kona Sasidhar, Director Vijayaramaraju, Director of Intermediate Education Kritika Shukla, Samagra Siksha Project Director B Srinivasa Rao, and representatives from PWC, Pratham, and other organizations, including Suchindra Kumar, Sonal Sivagunde, Sunitha, K Suresh Babu, Dattatreya, Majeed, Vaibhav Pandey, Naga Saikrishna, and Siddesh Sharma.

Free bus travel for...

Continued from Page 1

Plans include expanding the APSRTC fleet with new buses and increasing the number of bus drivers, conductors, mechanics, and other necessary staff to enhance service quality. The minister also shared that during the review, the performance of the public transport corporation was evaluated, addressing any issues and ensuring high service standards before the introduction of free bus travel for women.

Additionally, Minister Ramprasad Reddy confirmed that the State Government will settle overdue payments to APSRTC employees, which have been pending for the past five years. He also announced the introduction of more 'Amaravati' brand AC bus services across the state. Issues concerning RTC employees' health, medical allowances, and compassionate appointments will also be discussed with Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu during the review meeting on August 12.

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Satellite launching, a fascinating process: ex-director of Chandrayaan-1

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In honour of National Space Day, VFSTR hosted a special lecture by Padma Shri recipient Dr. MYS Prasad, former director of the Chandrayaan-1 mission. The event, held at the Vignan University's campus, attracted many students, faculty, and dignitaries.

Dr Prasad, serving as the chief guest, delivered an insightful lecture on "Satellite Launching," sharing his extensive experience with the audience. He detailed the procedures and methodologies used in PSLV and GSLV satellite launches, emphasising the critical precautions necessary to ensure that satellites reach their designated orbits. He also discussed the various components of satellites, their weights, and the specific objectives they are designed to achieve.

Beyond the technical aspects of satellite launches, Dr Prasad explored the application of various engineering disciplines in space missions. He provided a comprehensive overview of space exploration, covering the operations of the International Space Station (ISS), the history of space stations, and the activities of their crews. The lecture also included insights into environment control and life support systems on the ISS, the design and function of space suits, crew training on Earth, and the research conducted in space.

The event was graced by the presence of Dr Lavu Rathaiah, Chairman of Vignans Educational Institutions, Vice-Chancellor Professor P. Nagabhushan, Registrar Dr. MS Raghunathan, along with deans, department heads, faculty members, and students.

Attack on Ambedkar statue: YSRCP seeks strict action

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP has strongly condemned the incident of damaging the statue of Bhim Rao Ambedkar at Ambedkar Smritivanam and demanded that strict action be taken against those responsible.

Speaking to the media at the camp office here on Friday, former minister Merugu Nagarjuna expressed deep anguish over the destruction of the plaque and statue of Dr BR Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, who is revered as a guiding light for future generations of India. He criticised the incident as a brutal act, reflecting a grave disrespect towards the values and principles upheld by Dr Ambedkar.

Merugu Nagarjuna highlighted that during Chandrababu Naidu's time as chief minister, there was opposition to installing Ambedkar's statue, with legal cases filed against those trying to honour him, and noted that a similar attack on the statue has happened again under Naidu's current leadership, which is highly condemnable.

He also pointed out the significant efforts made by the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's government in installing the



grand 125-foot statue of Dr Ambedkar in Vijayawada, which now stands as a monumental landmark. He stressed that the incident is carried out with the backing of

the government. Former MP Nandigam Suresh also condemned the incident, stating that the attack on Ambedkar's statue reveals the true nature of

Chandrababu Naidu and the TDP leadership. He accused TDP of resorting to violence, atrocities, and lawlessness in the wake of election results. Suresh warned that the government must take decisive action in this case, failing which they would pursue legal recourse.

On Friday, YSRCP leaders visited Ambedkar Smriti Vanam, former minister Merugu Nagarjuna, YSRCP leader Lella Appireddy, former MLA Malladi Vishnu, Devineni Avinash, Pothini Venkata Mahesh, Rayana Bhagyalakshmi and others.



Education key to progress of tribal communities: Minister

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

Minister for MSME, SERP, and NRI Affairs, Kondapalli Srinivas, emphasised the transformative power of education in uplifting tribal communities, during the World Adivasi Day celebrations at the Collectorate Auditorium on Friday. The Minister highlighted education as a cornerstone for breaking the cycle of poverty and fostering growth within tribal societies. "Education is not merely an acquisition of knowledge, but a catalyst for unlocking opportunities and empowering our tribal communities to thrive in the contemporary world," Srinivas stated. He urged tribal members to pursue higher education, aiming for at least a degree to broaden their horizons and improve their families' livelihoods.



The event showcased the rich cultural heritage of tribal communities through vibrant traditional dance and art performances by students from various tribal colleges and schools. Minister Srinivas underscored the critical role that tribal communities play in nature conservation and reiterated the government's commitment to their welfare through the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA). "Our tribal communities have always been the guardians of nature, and it is our duty to ensure they have access to education and healthcare. The government is dedicated to supporting you through various initiatives, including the provision of medical care to the DK parthi tribal village via feeder ambulances."

He also highlighted the opportunities available for tribals to establish small industries with the support of ITDA. "We are here to support you in setting up small industries, which can help you become self-reliant and economically empowered," he said. Additionally, Minister Srinivas also reiterated the government's resolve to complete the Tribal University soon and pledged support for the establishment of schools in tribal villages. District Collector Dr. BR Ambedkar acknowledged the challenges faced by tribal communities and reaffirmed the administration's dedication to providing essential amenities. He emphasised the preservation of tribal culture while

QR code ticketing introduced at 66 Waltair Division stations

QR codes will also be integrated at parking facilities and food stalls within stations

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a pioneering move that aligns with the Prime Minister's Digital India initiative, the Waltair Division of East Coast Railway has taken a significant leap forward by introducing QR code ticketing across 66 stations. This bold step towards digitisation marks a transformative shift in how passengers interact with the Indian Railways, offering them unparalleled convenience and efficiency.

Speaking on the launch of this initiative, Saurabh Prasad, Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of Waltair Division, said, "Indian Railways is committed to embracing the future with cutting-edge technology.

The implementation of QR code-based payments is a testament to our dedication to providing passengers with modern, seamless solutions. Now, with just a simple scan on their mobile phones, passengers can make payments swiftly and securely at our stations." The QR code payment system, now available at ticket counters across the division, allows passengers to use popular UPI apps such as Google Pay, PhonePe, and others for their transactions. "This isn't just about reducing queues," Prasad emphasised. "It's about redefining the entire passenger experience. With QR codes, buying tickets becomes faster,



more efficient, and completely paperless." The benefits extend beyond just ticket purchasing. According to senior officials from the Commercial Department, QR codes will

also be integrated at parking facilities and food stalls within the stations. "We are creating a holistic digital ecosystem," they explained. "Whether it's paying for parking or grabbing a bite, passengers can complete transactions effortlessly by scanning a QR code." One of the most innovative aspects of this initiative is its impact on handling fines for passengers traveling without valid tickets. "No more cash transactions or delays," Prasad noted. "Our railway staff are equipped with handheld terminal machines featuring QR code scanners. Passengers can instantly settle fines online by simply scanning the code with their device."

The rollout of the QR code ticketing system is part of a broader strategy by the East Coast Railway to lead the way in digitisation. The Universal Ticketing System (UTS) app, which has already garnered widespread use, continues to be a crucial component of this digital transformation, enabling passengers to book unreserved tickets online without the hassle of standing in queues. "This is just the beginning," Prasad concluded. "As we continue to innovate and expand these digital services, we are not just keeping pace with the digital age—we are setting the standard for it. The future of railway travel is here, and it's digital."

Varalakshmi Vratam at Tiruchanoor temple on Aug 16

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

TTD is organising the grand Varalakshmi Vratam festival at Sri Padmavathi Temple, Tiruchanoor, on August 16 with many cultural programs besides Abhishekam to Utsava idols and the presiding deity in the morning. The officials are making all arrangements for conducting the Varalakshmi Vratam at the Asthana Mandapam of the temple between 10 am

and 12 noon. Grihastha participating in the vratam will be presented one uttarriyam, one blouse, one laddu and vada as Prasadam. In the evening, Ammavaru will ride on Swarna Ratham on the Mada streets to bless devotees. In view of the grand fete, TTD has cancelled Arjita Sevaks like Abhishekam, Abhishek anantara Darshanam, Lakshmi Puja,

Kumkum-archana, Vedashirvachanam break Darshan, Sahasra Deepalankara seva. The darshan of Sri Padmavati in Varalakshmi Alankaram and rituals held as per Pancharatra Agama Shastra ensures prosperity, health and happiness to all devotees. After day long pujas and Abhishekam, archakas recite the holy Vrata Mahatmya Katha in the finale.

Eluru MP explains Polavaram evacuees' issue to PM

PNS ■ ELURU

Eluru MP Putta Mahesh Kumar called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi and explained to him the issues of Polavaram evacuees, oil palm farmers and the Kolleru lake. The MP met the Prime Minister on Friday and presented him with a figurine of Lord Venkateswara Swamy. He submitted a representation to the Prime Minister on the issues of Polavaram evacuees, oil palm farmers and Kolleru Lake. The Prime Minister assured



to take steps to resolve the issues, the MP claimed. The development would take place in a big way in the Eluru constituency, he said.

Neglect casts shadow on World Adivasi Day in Alluri Sitaramaraju dist

Severe lack of road access forces tribal communities to endure gruelling journeys on foot or carry the sick on doli

PNS ■ PADERU

As the world commemorates World Adivasi Day, the celebrations ring hollow for the nearly 950,000 tribal residents of Alluri Sitaramaraju district, carved out of Visakhapatnam and East Godavari districts. Despite the day's significance, a closer examination of this region reveals a distressing reality of systemic neglect, where the basic needs of the people have been consistently overlooked. In Alluri Sitaramaraju district, navigating the rugged terrain is a daily struggle. The district's severe lack of road access forces tribal communities to endure gruelling journeys on foot or carrying the sick on makeshift stretchers known as doli. "The conditions here are nothing short of medieval," says a resident of Munchangiputtu, one of the remote mandals where horse transport is still a necessity. This dire situation highlights the urgent need for road

improvements. The district's healthcare system is in a state of disarray, leaving the tribal population vulnerable. Despite the presence of 36 primary health centres and a 200-bed district hospital in Paderu, medical services are grossly inadequate. The district has been without an Additional District Medical Officer for over a year, resulting in a significant gap in oversight and management. "The absence of a functional ASHA cadre has made matters worse, with many tribal people left without basic healthcare," lamented a local healthcare worker. The neglect extends to basic amenities, with tribal villages grappling with crumbling roads, inadequate drinking water facilities, and unreliable electricity. The chronic shortage of clean drinking water has led to frequent disease outbreaks, exacerbated by clogged boreholes and unstable water sources. "We are constantly battling for survival," says a vil-

lage elder from Pedabayalu, reflecting the sentiment of many. Efforts to improve water access have been insufficient, leaving communities to fend for themselves amidst these challenges. The state of education in the district is equally alarming. Schools lack proper infrastructure, and the quality of education is abysmally poor. "There is a severe lack of accountability," criticises a local teacher, pointing to the numerous key positions in the District Education Office (DEO) that remain vacant. In the agricultural sector, tribal farmers, who make up the majority of the district's population, receive minimal support. "The government talks about technological advancements, but here we are, left in the dark ages," says a frustrated farmer from Chintapalli. Opportunities for self-employment and small-scale industries are nearly non-existent, stalling tribal development.

Heavy rain likely in coastal AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and strong surface winds with speeds ranging from 30-40 Kmph are likely to occur at isolated places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next three days, the Meteorological Centre said on Friday.

In a daily weather report here, it said that the same situation is likely to prevail in Rayalaseema during the next 48 hours. Strong Surface winds with speeds ranging from 30-40 Kmph are likely to prevail at isolated places in

Coastal Andhra Pradesh on August 12, and 13 and in Rayalaseema from August 11 to 13. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at a few places or at one or two places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam and Rayalaseema during the next seven days. The southwest monsoon has been weak in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and normal in Rayalaseema. Rain occurred at a few places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the last 24 hours, the report added.

Funds enhanced to panchayats to organise I Day, R Day progs

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Funds for village panchayats to organise Independence Day and Republic Day programmes have been enhanced to Rs 10,000 and Rs 25,000 to the minor panchayats and major panchayats respectively. In a release here on Friday, Panchayat Raj Minister K Pawan Kalyan said that previously minor panchayats used to be extended Rs 100 and Major Panchayat Rs 250 to organise the Independence Day programmes. "Now, the government has decided to enhance the amount to Rs

10,000 to the minor Panchayat and Rs 25,000 to the major Panchayat," Pawan Kalyan said. He asked all village panchayats to organize the Independence Day programmes grandly. He said that according to the 2011 census, the panchayats with a below 5,000 population would be given Rs 10,000 and the panchayats with a population above 10,000 would be given Rs 25,000 to organise the Independence Day and the Republic Day programmes in a grandeur manner on August 15 and January 26 respectively. Recently, some village

sarpanches met Panchayat Raj Minister Pawan Kalyan and expressed their difficulty to organise the Independence Day and Republic Day programmes grandly due to lack of funds. The officials told the Minister that during the last 34 years, the Panchayats have been given a paltry Rs 250 to hold Independence Day programmes. The village sarpanches expressed their inability to organise Independence Day and Republic Day programmes with the paltry amount. Responding to their plights, the Panchayat Raj Minister had decided to enhance the amount.

Mega multispeciality camp held at Burrripalem

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A mega multispeciality camp was organised at Burrripalem by Andhra Hospitals on the occasion of actor G Mahesh Babu's birthday on Friday. The camp was organised by Mahesh Babu in association with Andhra Hospitals. All specialties including General Medicine, General Surgery, Orthopaedic, Paediatrics, Cardiology, and ENT were covered. An awareness session was also conducted on common health problems.



All specialty consultations, investigations were done, medicine distributed

to all patients. Dr PV Rama Rao, chief of Children's Services and director, Andhra Hospitals, said this was the 41st camp so far in this village. A total of 155 adults and children attended the camp. Dr Rama Rao expressed delight that Andhra Hospitals was a part of it. They aim to develop the village as a model health village. He complimented Dr Syed Mudassir, Dr Sai Prasad, Dr Pavan, Dr Amar and Dr Ramesh, paramedics, lab technicians and pharmacists who were part of the camp.

Farmers block NH demanding payment for procured paddy

PNS ■ ELURU

The tenant farmers blocked the national highway demanding that the government disburse money for their paddy produce in Narasapuram on Friday.

A large number of tenant farmers under the aegis of AP Koulu Rythu Sangham staged a dharna on the national highway. They squatted across the highway blocking the vehicular traffic on the busy highway. The tenant farmers raised slogans denouncing the lackadaisical attitude of the government officials in disbursing their money for their paddy produce which was purchased by the government.

Narasapuram DSP and CI rushed to the place and tried to mollify the agitating tenant farmers.

AP Tenant Farmers Association district secretary M Ramanjaneyulu and AP Rythu Sangham vice-president K Peddiraju made it clear to the police that the officials should



tell them when the money would be disbursed to them for their paddy produce. Narasapuram RDO Achyut Ambarish reached the place and negotiated with the agitating farmers.

As the tenant farmers did not relent, the RDO spoke to Civil Department district

Manager Shivaram Prasad and apprised him about the tenant farmers' agitation demanding payment for their paddy produce.

He assured the farmers of disbursement of their money for their paddy produce on Monday. With the assurance from the Civil supplies

Manager, the tenant farmers mollified and called off their rasta roko stir. Talking to the media, Tenant Farmers Association district secretary M Ramanjaneyulu said that the government purchased paddy from the tenant farmers three months ago but did not pay money to them.

DC TO TRIBAL STUDENTS

Education key to success

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K. Vetri Selvi emphasized the importance of education as a means to achieve success in life during a program held to celebrate World Adivasi Day on Friday.

Collector Vetri Selvi highlighted that education is the cornerstone of personal and societal development. Drawing from her own experience of rising from a modest background to becoming an IAS officer through educational excellence, she urged parents to support their children in pursuing higher education. She encouraged the Adivasi community to reach out if they encounter any challenges in accessing higher education for their children. The Collector announced the introduction of a "Parisara Veda" program on the first of every month to address and resolve

grievances faced by the tribal population. Additionally, she assured that officials from various departments would actively engage with the community to address their issues. MLA Chirri Balaraju assured that tribal areas would see significant development in the next two years, including improvements to roads

leading to their villages. He also promised enhancements in potable water supply, education, and healthcare services in these regions, reaffirming the government's commitment to tribal welfare.

Joint Collector P. Dhatri Reddy encouraged tribal girls to draw inspiration from President

Droupadi Murmu, who also hails from a tribal community.

Other attendees included ITDA PA G. Srinu Kumar, ZP CEO K. Subba Rao, and several other officials. During the event, the MLA honored Collector Vetri Selvi, and she participated in a dance with Adivasi girls as part of the celebrations.



Collector advocates ISRO-designed transponders for fishermen

They are designed to transmit information on weather conditions and fishing zones

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad has emphasized the crucial need for installing ISRO-designed transponders on fishing boats, highlighting it as a significant advancement in utilising space technology for enhancing public safety. This initiative was announced during a seminar named 'Application of Space Technology in the Fisheries Sector', held by the Fisheries Survey of India and the Andhra Pradesh Fisheries Department at the Indian Fisheries Research Institute office on Friday.

Collector Prasad, in his address, underscored the critical role these transponders will play in safeguarding fishermen. "These devices are not merely tools but lifelines," he emphasised. "They are designed to transmit vital information on



weather conditions and fishing zones. During emergencies, such as storm warnings, the internal buzzer of the transponders will act as a crucial alert mechanism, potentially saving countless lives."

He lauded the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) for its commitment to societal welfare, highlighting the broader impact of technological innovation. Drawing a parallel with the successful development of

the COVID-19 vaccine by Indian scientists, Prasad said, "Scientific innovation is essential for the advancement of society. Just as the vaccine has transformed public health, these transponders will offer the power to transform maritime safety."

The Collector called upon all owners of motorised and mechanised boats to equip their vessels with these transponders, which are being provided free of charge by the

Government of India. "Embrace this technology," he urged. "It is designed to protect you and your livelihoods."

Fisheries Survey of India Head D Bamireddy supported the initiative, praising the local fisheries museum and advocating for its expanded accessibility. He also announced plans to educate boat owners on the use of the transponders leading up to the National Space Day on August 23, ensuring that the technology is well-understood and widely adopted. Joint Director of Fisheries G. Vijaya highlighted the critical support these transponders will offer. "We are equipping the district's 350 motorised and 760 mechanised boats with these devices, free of charge," Vijaya stated. "I urge every boat owner to take advantage of this opportunity for enhanced safety."

PHONE-TAPPING CASE

Court denies bail to accused

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Nampally court had rejected the bail petitions of former DSP Praneeth Rao and former DCP (Task Force) Radhakishan Rao on Friday.

This was the first bail petition after filing the chargesheet in the phone-tapping case. During the bail petition arguments, both the counsels cited various superior court judgements. The counsel for the State said that the police are on the way to get the red corner notice from Interpol agency through the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). However, other two accused are absconding and the case is at a crucial stage.

1,500 new buses will be inducted into RTC: Kollu

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

Minister for Excise and Mines Kollu Ravindra has said that 1500 new buses are being inducted into the APSRTC soon.

The Minister flagged off five new services of RTC buses in the RTC depot here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Kollu Ravindra said that the government aimed to induct 1500 new buses into the fleet of RTC buses and so far 200 new buses have been inducted. The Machilipatnam depot was allocated five new buses, he added. More RTC bus services would be introduced on the demand of people, he assured.

He slammed that the previous YSRCP regime crippled the APSRTC and put the organization in the debt-trap. The Chandrababu Naidu-headed government is taking



all steps to bolster the organization.

"The government will soon implement free bus travel for women in the state. Making all efforts to improve the passenger facilities in the Machilipatnam bus station," he made it clear. Minister Kollu Ravindra said that efforts are being made to resolve the sewerage problem

in the town permanently in a planner manner.

Machilipatnam RTC depot manager Peddiraju said that out of the five buses which were flagged off today, two buses would run as BHEL service to Hyderabad while three buses would run as non-stop service between Machilipatnam and Vijayawada.

27,568 liquor bottles destroyed

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The police destroyed a huge quantity of liquor bottles, which were seized while being brought from neighbouring states at various places, by crushing them with a bulldozer on Friday.

As many as 27,568 liquor bottles, including quarter, half and full bottles, were destroyed by crushing with a bulldozer by the SEB and Excise officials. The liquor bottles which were destroyed today were worth over Rs 36 lakh.

SP L Subba Rayudu told the media that importing liquor bottles from neighbouring states is an offence under Excise Act. The SEB and excise officials seized 27,568 liquor bottles, weighing 5,017.12 litres worth over Rs 36 lakh, during the raids at belt shops and during checking of vehicles at various places that were



destroyed on Friday.

He warned of invoking the PD Act against those who resort to bringing liquor bottles from neighbouring states repeatedly. The SP said that a huge quantity of liquor was seized while being brought from neighbouring states during the elections. Cases were registered against 300 persons for selling liquor without permission, he stated. To earn money easily, some persons with greed had brought liquor bottles from other states to sell here, he said.

The SP appreciated the police officials of the district for seizing huge quantities of liquor bottles. He directed the officials to intensify checking of vehicles at the border areas. The RTC buses coming from Karnataka and Tamil Nadu should also be checked thoroughly to prevent liquor smuggling, he told the police officials.

TG's tagline now 'The future State'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has boldly declared Telangana as 'The Future State' during an AI business roundtable with CEOs of leading tech unicorns at Palo Alto in California, US.

Addressing the gathering on Thursday, the Chief Minister said that he wanted Telangana to be recognised globally for its forward-thinking initiatives and cutting-edge developments.

"In the US, every State has a motto. So far, I have been to New York, New Jersey, Washington DC and Texas and now we are here in California. The New York State's motto is Out Of Many, One. Texas is known as the Lone Star State. California's motto is Eureka. In India, we don't have a motto for a state. But I will now like to give my state - Telangana - a motto. My state Telangana can be called 'The Future State', the statement quoted him as saying. "I invite you to Telangana. I invite you to the future. Together, let us make the future," he said.

The meeting, hosted by the Indian Consulate General in California, served as



a platform for Revanth Reddy to showcase Telangana's potential as a top investment destination.

The Minister for Industries, Commerce and IT, D. Sridhar Babu, who accompanied the Chief Minister, presented key highlights of Telangana's policies and the inherent strengths that make it attractive for global investors, particularly in the tech sector.

Continuing his outreach, Revanth Reddy, along with Sridhar Babu, addressed the IT Serve Alliance in Dallas, Texas and urged the Indian tech diaspora to invest

in Hyderabad and Telangana.

The IT Serve Alliance, the largest association of IT services organisations in the US, extended an invitation to their annual flagship event in Las Vegas later this year.

During his speech, Revanth Reddy emphasised the importance of the Indian tech diaspora in the state's development.

"We have built Hyderabad, Secunderabad and Cyberabad over the years. Now, let us all join in making a world-class fourth city, the Future City. When you invest in Hyderabad now, you are investing in the future," he said.

Alla Nani resigns as YSRCP dist president

PNS ■ ELURU

YSRCP suffered another blow on Friday as its senior leader, former deputy chief minister and Health Minister Alla Kalikrishna Srinivas Nani resigned as district party president.

Alla Nani also resigned from the post of Assembly constituency in charge. In his resignation letter to the YSRCP president Jagan Mohan Reddy, Alla Nani said that due to personal reasons, he wanted to stay away from active politics. He contested the Assembly unsuccessfully in the 2024 elections.

Alla Nani entered politics in 1990 through the Youth Congress and was considered a close associate of YS Rajasekhara Reddy. He contested unsuccessfully as a Congress candidate in 1999



from the Eluru Assembly constituency. However, he was elected from the same constituency as Congress candidate in 2004 and 2009. He quit the Congress and joined the YSRCP in 2014. He was elected to the Assembly in the 2019 elections Eluru constituency and he was given the Deputy Chief Minister Post by Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Alla Nani has been swaying away from active politics for the last few months.

'MEMU SAITHAM'

Collector launches blood donation drive

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector A Shyam Prasad, on Friday, launched a crucial blood donation campaign titled 'Memu Saitham' to address the persistent blood shortage in the district. The initiative was inaugurated on World Adivasi Day at the Collector's office. "This campaign is a significant step towards establishing a regular blood donor network and ensuring adequate blood supply for our district," said the Collector. "We aim to raise awareness about the importance of blood donation and encourage more people to come forward and save lives."

The campaign kicked off with a successful blood donation drive, witnessing enthusiastic participation from 65 individuals, including Panchayat Raj Engineering Department employees. "The



overwhelming response is inspiring," said Dr. MVR. Krishnaji, District Panchayat Raj Engineering Officer. "We need to sustain this momentum and mobilise more donors."

A series of blood donation camps will be organised across all mandals, with the first phase slated to be completed within 50 days. Each camp will last from one week to 10 days. "There is an urgent need to address blood shortages, particularly during emergencies such as births and accidents," Prasad added. "This initiative will help ensure a steady supply of blood and improve our emergency response capa-

bilities."

Joint Collector SS Shobika revealed that a web portal will be established for blood donor registration. "Our target is to collect at least 50 units of blood at each camp," she said.

"Mandal Parishad Development Officers (MPDOs) will be appointed as nodal officers to coordinate the camps effectively."

The first phase of the campaign will cover Gummalakshimpuram (August 12), Palakonda (August 15), Jiyammavalasa (August 22), Kurupam and Bhamini (August 26), Pachipenta (August 28), Balijipeta (September 2), Makkuva (September 10), and Garugubilli (September 24). Several key officials, including Parvathipuram ITDA Project Officer S Sethu Madhavan, have extended their support to the campaign.

CREDAI PROPERTY SHOW

Hyd's rapid transformation into a global hub emphasised

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The second phase of the CREDAI Property Show was inaugurated at Shree Convention Centre, Kompally, on Friday. Organised by the Confederation of Real Estate Developers Associations of India (CREDAI), this event follows the success of first property show at Hitex. The Kompally event, running from August 9 to 11, 2024, showcases a wide range of properties, including apartments, villas, plots, and commercial spaces in areas like Balanagar, Kompally, Shamirpet, Medchal, Alwal and Patancheru.

President of CREDAI Hyderabad, V Rajashekar Reddy highlighted Hyderabad's booming real estate market, with a 29%

annual growth in unit sales value from H1-CY19 to H1-CY24. The city saw a 257% increase in the value of units sold and a 148% rise in housing unit sales in H1-CY24 compared to H1-CY19. He emphasised the city's rapid transformation into a global hub, driven by infrastructure projects like new roads, expanded metro and MMTS networks, and the Musi Riverfront initiative.

Reddy also noted that proactive government policies have encouraged balanced growth across Hyderabad, particularly in the north, known for its e-commerce warehouses, Medical Devices Park, and Genome Valley. The CREDAIAbility-themed property show aims to spotlight this region's real estate potential.

ACROSS THE STATES



Mizoram, Assam hold border talks after 20 months

Mizoram and Assam discussed the border issues on Friday, twenty months after the two northeastern neighbours held a meeting to find an amicable solution to the inter-state boundary dispute, an official said. The meeting between delegations of both states is being held in Aizawl. The two states held the last round of talks in November 2022 in Guwahati. During Friday's meeting, the Assam delegation is led by Border Protection and Development Minister Atul Bora while the Mizoram side is headed by Home Minister K Sapdanga, the official said. This is the fourth ministerial-level talks between the two neighbouring states since August 2021 and the first meeting after the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) came to power in December last year. Three Mizoram districts - Aizawl, Kolashib and Mamit - share a 164.6 km border with Assam's Cachar, Karmganj and Hailankandi districts. The dispute mainly stemmed from two colonial demarcations - 1875 and 1933.



Odisha plans to set up university for visually challenged persons

The Odisha government is planning to set up a dedicated international university for visually challenged persons, making it the first such initiative in the country, a senior official said. Bishnupada Sethi, Principal Secretary to the Department of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) on Thursday said the Odisha government has discussed the matter with a Japanese delegation that visited the state for the meeting. SSEPD Deputy Secretary Sanyasi Behera, who is himself a visually challenged person, said, "The university will cater to the needs of visually challenged persons in education and training." Sethi said Odisha is contemplating opening a campus for imparting education to visually challenged students from India and abroad. He said the institute will provide a vocational course on policy research, and technical courses on acupuncture and physiotherapy.



Students strip-searched in Indore school for mobile phone

The Madhya Pradesh High Court on Friday issued a notice to the state government in connection with an incident in a school in Indore where some students were allegedly strip-searched by a teacher to find out who among them brought a mobile phone to class. Justices Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari and Duppala Venkata Ramana of the Indore bench of MP HC issued notice to the state government on a PIL filed by social activist Chinmoy Mishra. The notice sought a report within a week from the state government on the steps taken in connection with the alleged incident. During the hearing, Mishra's lawyer Abhinav Dhanodkar claimed Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act provisions have not been complied with in the case as yet, though parents filed a police complaint on August 2. The PIL sought that compliance of POCSO Act be ensured in the case as well as appropriate directions be issued for quick action in such incidents.



??diversity and inclusiveness of students. So that all students can sit together and eat their meals irrespective of their food preferences, the focus is on providing an environment in which everyone feels comfortable. "This was only a request," a senior school official said.

Backlash in school after parents asked not to pack non-veg for lunch

A private school in Noida sent a message to parents asking not to pack non-vegetarian food for their children's lunch. The school management said it was only a "request" after a row broke out. The school in Sector-132 here had on Wednesday sent the message to parents on WhatsApp. When non-vegetarian food is cooked in the morning for lunch, there is a possibility of it getting spoiled. It can be harmful to health, said the message that asked parents not to pack non-vegetarian food for their children's lunch. It also said the school values



Panel to monitor situation along Indo-Bangla border: Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Narendra Modi government on Friday constituted a high-level committee, headed by a top Border Security Force (BSF) official, to monitor the situation along the Indo-Bangladesh border in wake of the ongoing state of affairs in the neighbouring country, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said.

Shah said the committee would be in touch with counterpart authorities in Bangladesh to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals, Hindus and other minority communities living there.

"In the wake of the ongoing situation in Bangladesh, the Modi government has consti-



tuted a committee to monitor the current situation on the Indo-Bangladesh Border (IBB). The committee will maintain communication channels with their counterpart authorities in Bangladesh to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals, Hindus, and other minority communities living there. The committee will be

headed by the ADG (Additional Director General), Border Security Force, Eastern Command," Shah said in a post on X.

Apart from the BSF ADG, the four other members of the committee are the BSF's Inspector General of Police (IGP) for the South Bengal frontier, the IGP for the

Tripura frontier, member (planning and development) of the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI), and secretary of the LPAI.

While extending greetings to Muhammad Yunus, who took oath as the head of an interim government in Bangladesh on Thursday, Prime Minister Modi express hope for early return of normalcy and sought safety of Hindus and other minority communities in that country.

Bangladesh witnessed deadly unrest in recent weeks. More than 500 people, including police personnel, were killed in the anti-government demonstration that started with an anti-reservation protest by students.

BSF foils Bangladeshi infiltration bid at Bengal's Cooch Behar border

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Tension prevailed at the Sitalkuchi fenced land border area of Cooch Behar district in West Bengal on Friday morning after panicked Bangladeshi nationals, numbering over a hundred, assembled on the other side of the fence in their bid to cross over to India.

The attempt was, however, foiled by the BSF which maintained a strict vigil at the border. The Bangladeshis were later taken away from the spot by the Border Guards Bangladesh personnel, the Border Security Force confirmed.

The crowd, allegedly comprising mostly Bangladeshi Hindus, assembled some 400 metres away from the fence alongside a water body at the Genduguri and Doikhawa villages in the Lalmonirhat district of Bangladesh.

Heavy deployment of the 157 Battalion of the BSF at the Pathantuli village, maintaining vigil on automobiles and on foot, made the infiltration bid of the foreigners impossible.



'Indian govt should take steps to protect minorities in Bangladesh'

PNS ■ JAIPUR

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has urged the government of India to take every possible step to protect Hindus and other minority communities in Bangladesh.

India cannot turn a blind eye to what is happening to Hindus in Bangladesh, VHP regional secretary Suresh Upadhyay said.

He said that it is the responsibility of the global community to take effective action to protect the minority communities

in Bangladesh and their rights.

Several Hindu temples, households and businesses have been vandalised in violence in Bangladesh since Monday when prime minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to India, leaving the country in turmoil following deadly protests against her government over a controversial quota system in jobs.

Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus took oath as the head of the interim government of Bangladesh on Thursday, replacing Hasina.

Gujarat govt school teacher remains on payroll despite settling in US in 2016

PNS ■ PALANPUR

The Gujarat government has ordered a probe against a government school teacher who allegedly continues to be on the payroll despite settling in the US and remaining absent from duty for nearly eight years, an official said on Friday.

The in-charge principal of a primary school in Panchha village in Banaskantha district claimed the teacher, Bhavna Patel, has been on the school's payroll despite reporting to duty only for a month every year and going on unauthorised leave as she lives in the US.

On learning about the principal's allegations, Gujarat Education Minister Kuber Dindor ordered a probe.



Talking to reporters, Dindor said, "I have ordered an inquiry and sought a report from district officials. We do not allow such practice. If found guilty of unauthorised absence, we will

punish the teacher and recover the salary she was paid."

Minister of State for Education Praful Pansheriya asserted that the teacher had not been paid since January.

"She is one of 11 teachers in Danta taluka of Banaskantha. As per a primary report submitted by officials, she has been taking leaves at regular intervals. However, the report clearly stated that she has not been paid a single rupee since January. We will take action if she is found guilty of availing any other benefits despite living abroad," Pansheriya said.

Govt issues clarification on documents needed for citizenship under CAA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has expanded the ambit of the rules issued under the citizenship law CAA through which Indian nationality will be given to persecuted minorities coming from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan.

The Union home ministry announced that "any document" issued by the central or state governments or quasi-judicial body in India proving that either of the parents, grandparents or great-grandparents is or had been a citizen of one of the three countries will be acceptable.

The clarification of the home ministry came after many applicants seeking



Indian nationality under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 were reported to be facing difficulties due to a particular clause of the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024.

"Any document that shows that either of the parents or

grandparents or great-grandparents of the applicant is or had been a citizen of one of the three countries i.e. of Afghanistan or Bangladesh or Pakistan," the earlier clause of the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024 says.

Lok Sabha adjourned sine die

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die on Friday, one sitting ahead of the scheduled end of the session. The current session of the Parliament was scheduled to end on August 12 but Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla adjourned the House sine die (for an indefinite period).

The Rajya Sabha was also adjourned sine die on Friday. Birla said the productivity of the House was above 130 per cent.

During this session, the House passed several key pieces of legislation, including the Finance Bill, 2024, and the

Appropriation Bill, 2024 -- both crucial for the Union budget.

Additionally, the Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation Bill, 2024, and the Indian Aircraft Bill, 2024, were among the four Bills passed.

The session also witnessed the introduction of a Bill to amend the Wakf Act, 1995, which was subsequently referred to a joint committee of Parliament amid protests from opposition members over its provisions.

Birla highlighted the accomplishments of the session, noting that the Lok Sabha held 15 sittings over a total of 115 hours.

'Illogical, unethical': Theatre groups criticise new rules to perform in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A new set of rules by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, which requires performing art groups to go through a lengthy paper trail in addition to a licensing fee of Rs 1,000 for each performance, has directors and performers rattled for the entailing financial and procedural burden.

The recently launched unified online portal for eating, lodging and boarding establishments in the national

capital also asks event organisers for dance, theatre and music to submit clearance from municipal corporations, Delhi fire service, Delhi Pollution Control Committee, and Delhi Police, apart from the licensing fees of Rs 1,000.

Faced with this new financial burden, theatre directors and groups called out the MCD for the "illogical" and "unethical" rules and demanded that these expenses should be borne by auditoriums.



BSF provides IELTS coaching to Punjab youngsters To keep them away from drugs

PNS ■ JALANDHAR

The BSF is providing IELTS coaching to youngsters in Punjab as part of its community effort to wean them off drugs, a senior officer of the force said on Friday.

International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is one of the most sought after English language proficiency tests for study, migration or work abroad. An estimated 30 lakh people take

the test every year and is accepted by thousands of employers, universities, schools and immigration bodies around the globe.

The Border Security Force's (BSF) Punjab frontier Inspector General Atul Fulzele said the force utilised funds provided by the Union government for civic action works to hire two "good English speaking" teachers who were providing this training to youngsters at Amarkot in the state's Tarn Taran district.

POST LANDSLIDE AGONING

Emotions run high as survivors join search team for the first time

PNS ■ WAYANAD (KERALA)

Mohanan's face turned pale as he disembarked at Chooralmala. He is a part of a group of survivors confronting the devastation of their landslide-ravaged hamlet in Kerala's Wayanad district.

Mohanan and the other survivors were visiting their birthplace for the first time since the devastating landslide that razed everything in the Mundakkka area and left them homeless and grappling with the fact that they may never again see some loved ones who went missing in the landslides.

"I am in search of my brothers, hoping to get at least a



body part of our dear ones. Many of our relatives and

friends are still missing," Mohanan said, his voice break-



ing often. Mohanan and the other sur-

vivors joined the rescue teams on Friday for a joint search operation.

They demanded this from the government authorities, telling them that they wanted the searches to be conducted in places they knew well.

These people, who were fortunate enough to survive the onslaught of the slush mixed with boulders and trees during the landslide, have seen people getting trapped, their loved ones disappearing in the slush, and even some getting crushed under the boulders. "We helplessly watched our people crying out for help and getting washed away.

SC stays Mumbai college circular banning 'hijab, burqa, cap and naqab'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday stayed a Mumbai college's decision banning 'hijab, burqa, cap and naqab' on the campus and said girl students must have the freedom to choose what they wear.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar came down heavily on the Chembur Trombay Education Society, which runs the 'N G Acharya and D K Marathe College' for issuing such a circular and asked whether it would ban 'bindi' and 'tilak' also.

During the hearing, Justice Kumar asked senior advocate Madhavi Divan, appearing for the society, how was the col-



lege empowering the girl students by issuing such a circular.

"How are you empowering the women by telling them what to wear? I think it's less said the better. Where is the freedom of choice for the women? Where is freedom of choice of what to wear to the girl students? Educational institutions should not force their decisions on the girl students on what to wear," said Justice Kumar.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Reaching out

PM Modi congratulates Muhammad Yunus, expresses concerns over the plight of minorities in Bangladesh

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reached out to Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel Laureate from Bangladesh, to congratulate him on heading the interim government of Bangladesh. PM Modi took to X, to express concerns over the situation of Hindus and other Minorities in Bangladesh amidst the ongoing political turmoil. Muhammad Yunus, on his part has emphasised his commitment to restore law and order. Meanwhile, the Indian government, through various channels has reiterated its concerns about the situation of minorities for regional stability. Hundreds of people trying to cross over to India but have been sent back by the Border Security Force. The situation in Bangladesh is rather fluid as the students, the initial protesters have been overshadowed by the rogue elements who are taking advantage of the situation and indulging in looting and arson while attacking minorities to garner popular support. Slowly but surely the political tension has also exacerbated communal tensions within Bangladesh. The Hindu minority,



which makes up about 8-10% of the population are worst hit. Recent reports have indicated a surge in attacks on Hindu temples, businesses, and homes, triggering fear and insecurity within the community. Prime Minister Modi's outreach to Yunus can be seen as a calculated move to engage with a respected figure in Bangladesh who has international credibility and influence. By engaging with Yunus, Modi may be signalling India's support for democratic values and human rights in Bangladesh, while also voicing concerns about the security and well-being of the Hindu community. India is at the moment in a quandary. It has all along supported Sheikh Hasina and continues to do so but

things have changed drastically. Sheikh Hasina is now unpopular while her opponents are all powerful. She may be called to join the investigation against her which may put India in dilemma. The silver lining is that Yunus is now in command, and he is widely regarded as an honorable man with an impeccable track record, even though he is an outsider in the corridors of power. He is India's best bet as China and Pakistan who have allegedly supported the movement to oust Hasina would like to subvert Indo Bangladesh relationship. He could be persuaded to be neutral. The political instability and potential for communal violence could lead to a refugee crisis, with many Hindus and other minorities seeking asylum in India. This could complicate India's domestic political landscape, especially in the bordering states of West Bengal and Assam. Meanwhile, the trade with Bangladesh has already nose-dived and the refugee crisis is growing. Bangladesh is a key partner in maintaining security in the Bay of Bengal region. This is a time for serious diplomacy. Prime Minister Modi would do well to engage with Muhammad Yunus at the earliest opportunity. While Twitter diplomacy is a good starting point, it needs to be followed up with direct engagement. A lot is at stake for India in Bangladesh's future direction.

PICTALK



Military aircrafts during the multinational air exercise 'Tarang Shakti 2024', in Sullur

Gender rights and reality: Bridging the gap



GURDEEP KAOUR

Gender equality in India remains a distant dream, as deep-rooted gender norms continue to impede the nation's progress towards women emancipation

Gender equality is not just a fundamental human right but a crucial component of a peaceful, cohesive, and sustainable world. It demands equal opportunities, treatment, and access to resources for all individuals, regardless of gender. Historically, women have faced discrimination on multiple fronts, from limited educational opportunities to restricted participation in decision-making processes. However, after years of struggle, women today have made significant strides, becoming prominent members of the workforce and key decision-makers in various fields. This progress aligns with the goals set by 193 countries that signed the Beijing Platform for Action, the most comprehensive global plan to eliminate systemic barriers and achieve women's human rights across social, economic, political, and environmental domains. Since the adoption of the Beijing Platform, much has been achieved. Women now serve as heads of state, entrepreneurs, educators, scientists, judges, and administrators, excelling in many unconventional careers. This paints a promising picture of the progress toward gender equality. However, a closer examination of statistics from government reports, non-governmental organizations, and local surveys reveals a grim reality: significant challenges remain. This is particularly true in India, a country where women have historically been revered as goddesses and have played crucial roles as scholars, rulers, and warriors. Despite this rich history, modern India continues to struggle with deeply entrenched gender inequalities. India, in the 21st century, is a country with progressive laws and robust institutions rooted in its Constitution. The Indian Constitution, one of the world's finest legal documents, guarantees equal rights for men and women. Rights such as personal liberty, freedom of speech and expression, free movement and association, and the freedom to choose one's residence and occupation all imply that Indian women, like



men, have the right to make decisions about their personal and professional lives. However, these constitutional rights do not always translate into practice, especially in rural areas, where customary and religious laws often override legal protections. In rural India, where a significant percentage of the population resides, gender equality remains elusive. Here, rigid customary practices contribute to a skewed sex ratio, early marriages, and limited educational opportunities for women. Women are often married off at a young age, without receiving proper education or being informed about their rights. Even when they are aware of their rights, they frequently lack access to opportunities for personal and professional growth. Legislation like the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PNBT) Act has helped improve the sex ratio in India, but the harsh reality remains that many women face discrimination in basic survival needs. In many families, women and girls eat last and least, while boys and men are given nutritionally rich diets. Women who cook for their families often do not cook for themselves, and from a young age, they are conditioned to prioritize the needs and preferences of men. The average age at which an Indian woman



ONE OF THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF PERSONAL FREEDOM IS THE ABILITY TO EXERCISE CONTROL OVER ONE'S BODY AND SEXUALITY. SADLY, THE RIGHT TO MAKE CHOICES ABOUT INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS, WHETHER OR WHEN TO HAVE A CHILD, AND THE USE OF CONTRACEPTION IS STILL DENIED TO MANY WOMEN IN INDIA

has her first child is 22 years, but in rural areas, this age is often much lower, with many girls married off before they turn 18. These young women are not physically or mentally prepared to handle the responsibilities of marriage and family life, making them vulnerable to physical, sexual, and verbal abuse for perceived failures in their duties. In urban households, gender stereotypes are beginning to shift, with men taking on more household chores. However, they are not held to the same standards of diligence and regularity as women. Most women, regardless of age, class, caste, or community, remain vulnerable to domestic violence for reasons as trivial as poorly prepared meals or wearing a dress of their choice—issues that men rarely face. One of the most fundamental aspects of personal freedom is the ability to exercise control over one's body and sexuality. Sadly, the right to make choices about intimate relationships, whether or when to have a child, and the use of contraception is still denied to many women in India. According to a survey, a significant percentage of women aged 18-49 have experienced forced sex or sexual abuse at least once in their lives. This gendered expression of power has severe consequences for the mental

and emotional well-being of women, who are often reluctant to share their ordeals. Despite advancements in healthcare, many Indian women do not enjoy the right to health. In conservative settings, cultural norms discourage men from addressing the health needs of their female family members, and women themselves often do not recognize or report health issues. The presence of male doctors in rural areas further restricts women from undergoing necessary examinations and checkups. The literacy gap between men and women in India remains significant, particularly in rural areas where deeply entrenched gender norms discourage girls from pursuing education. Girls are often pushed into work at a much earlier age than boys, with little or no control over their earnings. Even in urban settings, working women are often not financially independent, either bearing the burden of family expenses or having no say in how their money is spent. Achieving gender equality in India requires a fundamental shift in attitudes among both men and women. Only through such changes can the goal of true gender equality be realized. (The writer is assistant professor at Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, DU; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A COURT IS A COURT

Madam — The special feature of Indian judiciary is the relative non-interference in its functioning from either the executive or the legislature. Also, the hierarchical system of judiciary has ensured that no litigant goes unsatisfied with a particular court's verdict. The Supreme Court has time and again reiterated that no court in the country is above another. Besides, the SC has made it clear that although its judgments are binding on every court in India under Article 141 of the Constitution, the High Courts are in no way inferior to it because the former's administrative control is independent of the top court. SC has consistently refused to direct High Courts to clear cases in a time bound manner for the same reason. Justice Abhay Oka of the SC, during the course of a hearing, had succinctly remarked that "a court is a court". Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, in 2022, had decried the tendency to refer to the district courts as subordinate judiciary because there was no definition of the word "subordinate" although the world is frequently used in the Constitution.

Ganpathi Bhat | Kola

VINESH PHOGAT HAS BEEN WRONGED

Madam — In an unfortunate turn of events, Vinesh was disqualified from a crucial Olympic match due to a minor weight discrepancy, sparking outrage and disappointment across the nation. This incident, which resulted in the loss of a potential medal for India, raises serious questions about the handling and management of the situation by the coaches and officials. Vinesh Phogat, who had successfully won three bouts in a single day, found herself disqualified just 24 hours after her semi-final victory. The controversy stems from the fact that it is highly improbable for an experienced athlete like Vinesh to gain 100 grams of weight in such a short period, leading many to suspect foul play. This suspicion casts a shadow over the transparency and fairness of the Olympic Games, prompting Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Economics should not be politicised



This refers to the editorial "Finance Minister yields" (Aug 8). Facing a backlash from the people, Members within NDA and the Opposition over changes to the property transaction taxation, the Finance Minister has given some concession to home owners, by way of two options. The tax payers can now choose to calculate their tax on long term capital gains either at 12.5% without indexation under the new scheme or at 20% with indexation under the old scheme. This is akin to income tax options. She

also stated in her speech on reduction in the income tax on annual income of Rs. 15 lakh. But the budget is not only taxes, it deals with development of the people as well as the country. People are burdened with high GST rates and fuel prices, no relief in them as they have cascading effect on overall inflation, which affects the poor most. On one hand government provides free ration & electricity to poor, on the other hand they are burdened with high taxes which nullify the former. FM did not mention about decreasing the fiscal deficit, decreasing the borrowings, increasing foreign investment in the country, boosting employment generation, rationalizing the subsidies & subsidies that are affecting economy etc. which are equally important components of a budget. Development of the country should be the high priority in the budget and it should not be compromised by keeping people happy.

Dr O Prasad Rao | Hyderabad

to urge the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President, P.T. Usha, to explore every possible avenue to ensure that justice is served for Vinesh. There is also a need to investigate whether Vinesh was unknowingly given a weight-gain substance during the 24 hours between the semi-final and the final weigh-in, as a similar incident reportedly happened to another wrestler from a different country. These concerns raise serious questions about the integrity and transparency of the Olympic Games' management. While human error is possible in such a vast sporting event, the circumstances surrounding Vinesh Phogat's disqualification do not appear to fall into the category of innocent mistakes. If it is determined that Vinesh was wronged, India should strongly consider appealing the decision

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

BANGLADESH: A WARNING FOR INDIA

Madam — Bangladesh, which had seemed politically stable for the past 15 years under Sheikh Hasina's leadership, is now showing signs of distress. Hasina's extended

tenure, while initially successful, has led to growing concerns about her increasingly autocratic behavior. This shift has resulted in the imprisonment of political opponents and numerous legal battles against figures like Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, who gained significant popularity for his work with Grameen Bank. Could similar public discontent emerge in India? The government's actions, particularly over the past two terms, have shown tendencies toward authoritarianism. This has been evident in the public backlash against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), prolonged farmer protests against agricultural reforms, and discontent among youth over the Agriworker recruitment scheme. Rising inflation, unemployment, and corruption, coupled with selective legal actions against opposition members, contribute to a growing sense of frustration.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The role of technology in driving financial literacy

With the power to democratise financial literacy, it can bring people from every stratum of society onto a level playing field



YUVRAJ A THAKKAR

Financial literacy is no longer just a useful skill. It is now essential knowledge required to traverse the modern economic landscape. Studies have shown financially literate individuals can use their money wisely to plan for a secure future.

Today, technology is an important enabler of access to resources required to cultivate financial literacy, democratise the sector, and empower people to improve their lives. However, despite the increasing penetration of the Internet and technology, a 2021 survey found only 27% of Indians are financially literate. Furthermore, only 16.7% of students have a general understanding of finances. With India projected to become one of, if not the leading, global economies by 2030, our society must be educated on the best practices for handling funds and making smart financial decisions.

Online platforms such as YouTube, Skillshare, Udemy, and others are invaluable tools in the pursuit of



knowledge. YouTube has tutorials and explanations for practically every subject under the sun. Not only does it boast a vast catalogue, but everything on the site is free to access. This is a critical requirement in India where the common man is looking to save as much money as possible. Channels such as Khan Academy are great starting points for everyone's financial literacy journey. It's not just about breaking down complex information. While the concepts should be easy to understand, the modules must also be presented engagingly to retain the person's interest. No one enjoys being lectured with a barrage of informa-

tion in a boring manner. Social media and digital channels have also made it easier for educators and financial experts to share information. Instagram, TikTok, and X are now filled with financial gurus offering their opinions on the latest economic trends, up-and-coming investment opportunities, and the state of the global economy. Keep in mind that advice from such channels shouldn't be taken at face value. But they do offer a macro perspective of the economy and break down complex information into easily digestible pieces. Advancing technology also allows financial institutions such as banks and NBFCs to offer financial literacy directly to their customers. Bank apps can utilize push notifications, pop-ups, bank representatives, and even AI avatars to offer pertinent and timely advice. NBFCs can leverage subscription services to reach out to their customers via messengers to advise them on how to manage funds effectively. Artificial intelligence is going to significant-

ly improve access to and delivery of financial literacy. With just a smartphone, one can access tools such as ChatGPT to help answer common questions regarding finances. While it should not be used to gain investment advice, the current models of AI tools can offer practical knowledge regarding financial literacy and point the curious reader towards additional sources to gain more knowledge. It's no wonder that AI in BFSI is expected to hit a whopping \$100 billion by 2032. Technology is a powerful tool in the hands of those with an understanding of how to use it. With the power to democratise financial literacy, it can bring people from every stratum of society onto a level playing field. However, as technology evolves, so must we to enjoy the benefits of its advancement. This is a crucial step not just for society but also for our personal and financial well-being. (The writer is a MD at StoxBox; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

DO NOT LET SKY BE YOUR LIMIT

Stay resilient in the face of adversity, and you'll find that there's no limit to what you can achieve



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

In the realm of corporate success, there is a fundamental truth: the sky is not your limit, but merely the starting point. With a powerful drive and unwavering determination, ambition propels you to surpass all perceived boundaries. Just like a high-performance engine, achieving your dreams requires proper focus and direction. Today, we all have unique goals and dreams, both in our personal lives and careers. Nevertheless, the journey from having a vision to making it a reality can be challenging and draining. It calls for unwavering dedication, relentless effort, and occasionally, the need to ignore those who doubt you. In our business environment, having a strong drive and steadfast determination is not just a cliché, but a crucial factor in setting ambitious goals and relentlessly striving for excellence. We must connect these grand aspirations to careful planning, unwavering commitment, and consistent hard work. Only then will the aspiration reveal its magic. Many times, the biggest obstacles we face are a result of the actions of others.

There will always be those who view our dreams as unattainable or doubt our abilities. It's crucial to remember that our potentials are not defined by external voices. Throughout history, countless individuals have faced ridicule and scepticism, only to prove their doubters wrong ultimately. The proper environment can truly make a difference in our pursuit of success. It is an environment that fosters growth by providing opportunities to use our skills and allow-



ing for energetic and unwelcome ambition, which drives change and advancement. Surround yourself with mentors and peers who share your vision and are there to support you on your journey. Embrace growth opportunities and always value the feedback of others to refine your approach. Equally crucial is the art of expressing our goals. Make sure to communicate your goals and progress with both supervisors and colleagues. It's important to keep everyone in the loop and stay motivated.

When you openly express your aspirations and the steps you're taking to achieve them, not only do you attract valuable encouragement, but you also establish a sense of personal responsibility. However, the true basis of ambition stems from the constant trust within oneself. It is important to have a strong belief in your abilities and to acknowledge the unique qualities that you bring to the table. Recognising and celebrating the small victories along your journey to greater success is crucial. Embrace challenges as chances to grow and learn.

Stay resilient in the face of setbacks. Ambition is a potent force. When properly harnessed, it has the potential to unlock remarkable outcomes. Despite facing obstacles and encountering negativity, you will always choose to embrace a positive mindset. And getting encouragement from prominent individuals will help you hugely achieve your goals.

After all, everyone deserves a chance to shine. So set the bar high, work, and let the ambition catapult you to new heights. The sky is not the limit in the corporate world; it is just the beginning of your journey toward success.

(The author is a freelance writer and a motivator; views are personal)

Bangladesh: Uncertainty and chaos grip the nation



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

As the nation grapples with a rising wave of Islamist extremism and escalating violence, the future of its democracy and regional stability hangs in the balance



The turmoil in Bangladesh, which led to Sheikh Hasina's resignation as prime minister and departure to India, raises two questions. Why could she not prevent it? What lies ahead for Bangladesh and India? She should have reached out to the students-trying to win over the bulk of them who are moderates, and isolating the Islamist fundamentalist extremists—before their Anti-Discrimination Students' Movement (ADSM), had snowballed. She could have argued that her government did away with 30 per cent reservation for the descendants of the freedom fighters of the 1971 liberation war in 2018, which was their demand to start with. Bangladesh's High Court restored it following a petition by several descendants. Indeed, her government had appealed to the Supreme Court against the High Court's order.

In fact, the appellate division of the Supreme Court had, on July 21, 2024, ordered the allocation of 93% of government jobs on the basis of merit, reserving five per cent for freedom fighters and their descendants, and one per cent each for tribes, the differentially abled and sexual minorities. There could have been two reasons for the agitation continuing even after that. First, the rancour created by the government's harsh response to the agitation, which had led to a large number of deaths of students and others, was too great for the students to call a halt. They now wanted Sheikh Hasina's resignation. Second, Islamist terrorist organisations like Ansar al-Islam, linked to Al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-continent (AQIS) and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), as well as the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (BJeI) and its students' wing, Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir (BICS), closely tied to them, had joined the movement and tried to steer it to serve their own agenda—ousting Hasina and the Awami League Government, and installing a fundamentalist Islamist and pathologically anti-India dispensation in its place.

Sheikh Hasina knew all this, and should also have known the convulsive impact students' movement has in Bangladesh on at least four occasions. The first was the language



STUDENTS ALSO PLAYED A PROMINENT ROLE IN THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE AGAINST PAKISTAN'S COLONIAL RULE, WHICH EXPLAINS THE PAKISTAN ARMY'S SAVAGE ATTACKS ON THE CAMPUS AND HOSTELS OF DHAKA AND OTHER UNIVERSITIES ON THE NIGHT OF ITS NOTORIOUS CRACKDOWN

movement which demanded that Bengali along with Urdu, and not the latter alone, should become Pakistan's official language, and not Urdu alone, which Pakistan's ruling establishment, based in West Pakistan, wanted. Defying police repression, the movement peaked on February, 21, 1952, when there was a country-wide general strike. Police firing led to the deaths of four students, whose names—Rafiq, Barkat, Jabbar and Salam—shine prominently in Bangladesh's martyrs' pantheon. The movement continued to swell and compelled Pakistan's acceptance of both Bengali and Urdu as the country's official language. Again, students were at the forefront of the movement against General Ayub Khan's coup in 1958 and establishment of a military dictatorship, whose character could not be disguised by the fraudulent representative government introduced on March 23, 1962.

Students also played a prominent role in the liberation struggle against Pakistan's colonial rule, which explains the Pakistan Army's savage attacks on the campus and hostels of Dhaka and other universities on the night of its notorious crackdown, codenamed Operation Searchlight, killing hundreds of students, on the night of March 25, 1971. Finally, there was the massive Shahbag Square movement in Dhaka (February-May 2013) demanding death penalty to the war criminals of 1971. The government agreed to move the International Crimes Tribunal, set up by an amendment in 2009 to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, to investigate and prosecute personnel of the Pakistan Army and Razakars, Al-Badr and Al-Shams, accused of committing genocide during the 1971 liberation war.

Given all this, Hasina should have

tried to diffuse the latest movement at the beginning. Be that as it may, what now in Bangladesh? What should India do now? Things do not look good. Hindu temples, including the emblematic Dhakeshwari temple, from which Dhaka derives its name, have been attacked and vandalised. Hindus shops, business establishments and homes, have been attacked, a Hindu municipal councillor aligned with the Awami League, has been killed. Many have been injured. Women have been assaulted.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's statues have been pulled down and/or vandalised. Awami League ministers, leaders and activists are under attack, as are many of their homes and establishments. In Khulna, three persons, including an Awami League functionary, Mohsin Reza, have been lynched. Film producer Selim Khan, who made a movie on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's life, has been murdered along with his son, Shanto Khan. A hotel owned by an Awami League politician was set ablaze, causing 24 deaths, in Jashore. The house of Mashrafe Mortaza, Awami League MP and former Bangladesh test cricketer, has been destroyed.

These are just a few instances indicating the kind of open season that has been declared on the minorities, supporters of the Awami League and civil society elements opposed to Islamist fundamentalists. The question is whether things will improve or become worse. Much would depend on whether the interim government, headed by Nobel laureate, Muhammad Yunus, is able to establish order, or whether supporters of the BJeI, BICS and Ansar al-Islam, who are behind the current violence along with sections of Begum Khaleda Zia-led Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), are contained or allowed to escalate their campaign of vio-

lence and terror.

Yunus is neither a fundamentalist nor known for his pathological hatred for India. The backgrounds of some of his colleagues, however, raise questions. The Army's role is of critical importance. The report that it is being purged of those perceived to be pro-Sheikh Hasina, should worry those who want a peaceful, democratic and tolerant Bangladesh. Looking beyond the interim government, of critical importance is how free and fair are the parliamentary elections, that would have to be held now that Bangladesh's national parliament has been dissolved. New Delhi is rightly watchful. The BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government ruling Bangladesh from 2001 to 2006, was pathologically hostile to India and actively sheltered and armed the secessionist groups active in the north-eastern parts of this country. A hostile Bangladesh, engaged in a repeat performance, is not what New Delhi wants.

Meanwhile, External Affairs' Minister, S. Jaishankar, has said that he does not rule out the machinations of a foreign hand behind the Bangladesh developments. Given his official position, he has to be circumspect with his words. But it is prima facie clear that Pakistan's ISI, and perhaps even China, have been involved.

Pakistan, which is having serious problems with the Taliban which it had once wet-nursed, and China, which has its troubles with Islamists, should remember William S. Baring-Gould's limerick, "There was a young lady of Riga/ Who went for a ride on a tiger/ They returned from the ride/ With the lady inside/ And a smile on the face of the tiger."

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

Integrative health approaches for mental wellbeing

The road to mental well being doesn't have to be paved with pills alone; sometimes, it is as simple as finding our breath and practicing Yoga

There is enough scientific evidence to validate that the mind, body, and soul are interconnected on a subtle level. This connection influences our thoughts and emotions, hence, our physical reality and our physical state impact our mental health and processes.



ISHAN SHIVANAND

True health is signified by a harmonious balance between mind and body. Even a minor imbalance can lead to a range of issues, from physical illnesses and mental health challenges to a sense of unfulfillment with oneself and life. As per the WHO, nearly 80% of mental health cases arise in low- and middle-income countries. Conditions like depression and anxiety affect approximately 9% of the world's pop-

ulation and account for over 10% of years lived with disabilities.

The Drawbacks of Traditional Approaches Pharmaceutical treatments have long been a cornerstone of mental healthcare, aiding in the management of severe cases and stabilisation. These targeted therapies address specific disease mechanisms based on biomarkers, leading to more personalised treat-

ment. Medical technology advancements enhance the efficacy of these treatments and improve patient outcomes. However, the reliance on medication alone often overlooks the holistic nature of mental well-being.

Embracing Integrative Health Approaches

Integrative health approaches, particularly those rooted in Indian Knowledge Systems such as yogic modalities, offer a promising complement to traditional pharmaceutical treatments.

A combination of breathwork and meditative protocols helps individuals penetrate a heightened state of non-judgemental awareness. They enable a physiological state of rest and digestion or relaxation, which is opposite to the flight-or-flight

stress response. This interruption in the stress response helps foster a sense of balance and union between the mind and body.

Yogic practices are also underpinned by a few principles: The human body is a holistic entity comprising various interrelated dimensions inseparable from one another. The health or illness of any one dimension affects the others. Secondly, every individual's needs are unique and must be approached with tailored practices that acknowledge this individuality.

Yogic modalities empower individuals: to be their healers, actively engaging in their journey toward health, and fostering autonomy. Also, the quality and state of an individual's mind are crucial to heal-



ing. A positive mind-state accelerates healing, while a negative mind-state can prolong it.

The Science Behind the Practice: A consistent yogic practice has been shown to alleviate depression, leading to significant increases in serotonin levels and decreases in monoamine oxidase, an enzyme that breaks down neurotransmitters and cortisol. Yoga-based interventions also

help manage depressive disorders, stress, and anxiety by inhibiting the sympathetic area of the hypothalamus. This inhibition optimizes the body's responses to stressful stimuli and restores autonomic regulatory reflex mechanisms associated with stress. Moreover, yogic practices inhibit areas responsible for fear, aggressiveness, and rage, while stimulating the pleasure centres in the brain, resulting in a state of bliss and reduced anxiety. Regular practitioners of yoga and meditation experience lower heart rates, respiratory rates, blood pressure, and cardiac output.

Broader Health Benefits: Beyond mental well-being, yogic protocols improve cardiorespiratory performance, psychological profiles, and

plasma melatonin levels. It significantly reduces systolic and diastolic blood pressure, mean arterial pressure, and orthostatic tolerance. Yoga also enhances cardiovascular efficiency and homeostatic control, leading to better autonomic balance, respiratory performance, and overall well-being. Studies have shown that yoga-based lifestyle modifications can even aid in the regression of coronary lesions and improve myocardial perfusion in patients with coronary artery disease (CAD).

Integrating Yoga into Modern Healthcare: An integrated approach to mental health care leverages insights from traditional Indian knowledge systems, combining pharmaceutical treatments with non-pharmaceutical medita-

tive practices. This synergy not only addresses the immediate symptoms but also promotes long-term recovery and well-being. As we navigate the complexities of modern life, it's crucial to embrace the wisdom of ancient practices. By integrating yoga and other non-invasive approaches into our mental health toolkit, we can achieve a balanced state where the mind and body work in harmony. The road to mental well-being doesn't have to be paved with pills alone; sometimes, it's as simple as finding our breath and grounding ourselves in practices that connect us to our core.

(The writer is mental health researcher and the founder of Yoga of Immortals (YOI) meditative program; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS



Inox Wind reports Rs 50 crore PAT in Q1

Inox Wind Limited (IWL) on Friday posted a Rs 50 crore profit after tax during the June quarter on account of a surge in income. It had reported a loss of Rs 65 crore in the April-June quarter of the preceding financial year, the company said in an exchange filing. The company's total revenue surged 85 per cent to Rs 651 crore from Rs 352 crore in the year-ago period. Devansh Jain, Executive Director, INOXGFL Group, said "The hard work of last several years has started to yield results. Also, IWL's parent, IWEL has infused Rs 900 crore recently, making the company net cash positive and strengthening the balance sheet to capitalise on the multidecadal opportunity in the Indian wind sector." The company has an orderbook of around 2.9 gigawatt. IWL CEO Kailash Tarachandani said adding the company won orders of 611 MW in the ongoing FY25. Part of USD 9 billion INOXGFL Group, Inox Wind Limited (IWL) is India's leading wind energy solutions provider servicing IPPs (independent power producers), utilities, PSUs (public sector units) and corporate investors

Aviation Minister vows to tackle rising airfare, strike a balance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu outlined the government's commitment to making air travel more affordable and accessible, highlighting the need for a balanced approach that protected both passengers and airlines.

Moving the Bhartiya Vayuan Vidheyak Bill, 2024, for passage in the Lok Sabha, Naidu explained that airfare was influenced by a variety of factors, including market demand, that were beyond the airlines merely setting their own prices.

"We must ensure that the airlines are not under so much pressure that they cannot operate. So a balanced approach is needed," he said.

The minister emphasised the importance of a regulatory environment that prevented exploitation while ensuring that the airlines remained financially viable.

He assured the Lower House that making airfare affordable was a top priority for the gov-

ernment.

"One of my top priorities is to make airfare affordable for the common man," he said, drawing attention to the significant shift in India's civil aviation sector since 2014.

He contrasted the situation before and after 2014, saying, "Until 2014, civil aviation was like 'civilised aviation' but after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it is considered 'civilian aviation', which reflects our commitment."

"We are considering setting up an online grievance mechanism to handle grievances, with a dedicated team to ensure passengers are not exploited by unnecessary airfare hikes," he said.

This initiative is part of the ministry's proactive stance on ensuring fair pricing

and timely resolution of passenger issues, he added.

Beyond the issue of airfare, the minister also spoke about the success and future of the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS), which has launched in more than 500 routes.

He expressed the government's intent to extend and enhance the programme but acknowledged challenges, such as airlines withdrawing from certain routes after three years.

"We will address this and we may re-bid the route and restart the scheme," he said, indicating that the government was exploring options to maintain the momentum generated by RCS.

Naidu also highlighted the critical role of airport infrastructure in the development of states and emphasised the need for immediate action.

"If we don't address the problem today, it will become a huge problem in the future," he warned, discussing the collaborative approach between the central and state governments in land acquisition for airport development.

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Sebi focuses on improving quality of info given to investors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi is looking to set up two new institutions -- Performance Validation Agency and Data Benchmarking Institution -- to improve the quality of information provided to investors in the securities market.

The first institution, Performance Validation Agency, will validate the claims of performance related to services offered by Investment Advisors (IAs), Research Analysts (RAs) and Algo providers.

Data Benchmarking Institution will provide a central repository of standardised and comparable data related to various asset classes.

Both institutions are aimed at improving the quality of information provided to investors in the securities market, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in its annual report for 2023-24.

Additionally, the regulator has proposed to create a closed



ecosystem for fee collection by registered IAs and RAs through a separate mechanism to help investors ensure that their payments are reaching only registered IAs and RAs and help them identify, isolate and avoid unregistered entities, who would be unable to access this closed ecosystem.

For the year 2024-25, Sebi said that one of its focus areas is capital formation for real estate and infrastructure sectors, and regulations may need to be customised to facilitate the growth of infrastructure and real estate in our country.

Air India, Vistara get DGCA nod

Integrating aircraft line maintenance ops

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aviation regulator DGCA has approved integrating the aircraft line maintenance operations of Air India and Vistara as the two airlines move close to their merger.

In a release on Friday, Air India said the integration will help in optimising resources to enhance operational performance and reduce aircraft turnaround times to bolster on-time performance.

"With a unified maintenance team and resources, Air India will be better positioned to service a mixed fleet of wide body and narrow body aircraft, enhancing schedule integrity and reliability of operations," it added. The two airlines, part of



the Tata Group, have secured the CAR (Civil Aviation Requirement) 145 approval from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to integrate their aircraft line maintenance operations.

Vistara is a joint venture between Tata and Singapore Airlines. So far, Air India has

in-house line maintenance at 12 stations in the country.

"Enhanced synergy of the combined resources will also ensure real-time availability of records of all activities for fast diagnosis and troubleshooting of technical issues by tracing and correcting of the systems involved.

Air India suspends Tel Aviv flights till further notice

PNS ■ PANAJI

Air India on Friday announced suspension of flights to and from Tel Aviv till further notice amid escalating tensions between Israel and Iran. The Tata Group-owned carrier had suspended services from the national capital to Tel Aviv till August 8.

passengers with confirmed bookings for travel to and from Tel Aviv. Tensions continue to remain high in the Middle East amid conflict between Israel and various terror groups, including Hamas. Earlier this year also, Air India had briefly suspended flights to Tel Aviv at different points of time due to the Middle East tensions. After nearly five months, the carrier had recommenced the services to the Israeli city on March 3. Air India had suspended flights to and from Tel Aviv starting on October 7, 2023, after the Hamas group's attack on the Israeli city.

Goa CM reviews working of skill development centre

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Friday visited the head office of the state's directorate of skill development and entrepreneurship during which he interacted with staffers, an official said. Sawant also directed the authorities at the directorate to bring about requisite changes to increase its efficiency and to strengthen ground level working, the CMO official told PTI. "The CM is in the process of taking ground level review of various departments to strengthen their working to ensure better service delivery to the people," the official said.



Tata Chemicals plans to raise Rs 1,700 cr through NCDs

Tata Chemicals plans to raise Rs 1,700 crore through the issue of non-convertible debentures to investors on a private placement basis. In a regulatory filing, the company informed that an internal committee, constituted by the board of directors, has, at its meeting held on Friday, finalised the terms of the issue of NCDs (non-convertible debentures). The company proposes to issue 1,70,000 NCDs of face value Rs 1 lakh each, aggregating to Rs 1,700 crore, on a private placement basis to eligible investors. The NCDs are proposed to be listed on the debt segment of the NSE. The company proposes to make allotment on August 20, 2024, while the date of maturity is 3 years from the date of allotment.

Bartronics partners with Augmont to enhance gold and silver accessibility

PNS ■ MUMBAI

In a significant move to boost the Indian precious metals market, Bartronics India Limited, a leading IT services and business solutions provider, has announced a strategic partnership with Augmont Goldtech.

This five-year collaboration aims to enhance the accessibility and distribution of gold and silver across the country, leveraging Bartronics' extensive financial inclusion networks and broad distribution channels across India.

This partnership will allow Bartronics to market Augmont's gold and silver bullion and jewellery through its vast network, including the use of the Bartronics Portal, which will provide consumers with direct access to Augmont's premium products. The collaboration promises mutual benefits, enabling Bartronics to diversify its product offerings while ensuring that Augmont's products reach a larger customer base. Both companies are opti-

mistic about the growth potential of this partnership.

Vidhya Sagar Reddy, Managing Director of Bartronics India, said, "We are excited to partner with Augmont Goldtech to bring high-quality gold and silver products through our network and distribution channels to customers across India. This agreement aligns with our strategic vision to diversify our product offerings and leverage our robust distribution channels. We believe this collaboration will not only enhance our market presence but also provide customers with greater access to trusted precious metal products."

Consumers are expected to benefit significantly from this partnership, as the Bartronics portal will offer a convenient and reliable way to purchase Augmont's products, potentially at more competitive prices and with better availability than ever before. The initiative will further enhance the purchasing experience for a wide range of customers across India.

Sensex bounces back on global stocks rally

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded 1 per cent each on Friday following buying in blue-chips such as Reliance and Infosys amid a rally in global equity markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex bounced back 819.69 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 79,705.91 with 28 of its constituents closing in green and two in red. The index opened higher amid gains in Asian markets and later surged 1,098.02 points or 1.39 per cent to hit a high of 79,984.24.

The NSE Nifty soared 250.50 points or 1.04 per cent



to 24,367.50. During the day, it rallied 302.75 points or 1.25 per cent to 24,419.75.

"Positive US jobless claims data eased the fears of recession and provided a favourable broader market reaction," Vinod Nair, Head of Research,

Geojit Financial Services said.

Most of the Sensex firms settled in the positive territory. Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors, Tech Mahindra, JSW Steel, State Bank of India, HCL Technologies, Reliance Industries and Infosys were the

biggest gainers.

Kotak Mahindra Bank and Maruti were the laggards. "The markets started strong, gaining over a per cent, buoyed by positive global cues," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.21 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.79 per cent.

All the indices ended in the positive territory, with IT surging 1.59 per cent, consumer discretionary by 1.57 per cent, realty by 1.56 per cent, auto by 1.51 per cent, tech by 1.41 per cent and capital goods by 1.37 per cent.

Walkaroo ropes in Varun Dhawan as Brand Ambassador

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Leading footwear brand Walkaroo has roped in Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan as its brand ambassador and will launch an integrated marketing campaign showcasing Walkaroo's extensive product portfolio, the company said on Friday.

The appointment of Dhawan as brand ambassador reinforces Walkaroo's brand presence and appeal to the younger generation and fashion-conscious consumers across the country, the company said.

"We are very happy to have Varun Dhawan join us in our commitment towards promoting a healthier and active lifestyle through walking. His youthful energy and stylish persona resonate perfectly with our brand image," Walkaroo International Pvt Ltd Managing Director V Noushad said.

"Varun's strong appeal among the younger generation and his ability to connect with a diverse audience will enable us to broaden our reach and achieve new milestones," he said in a release on Friday.

"This brand resonates with individuals across all age groups and is a renowned household name. With its campaign, 'Walk, Walk, Walk; Walk with Walkaroo', the brand encourages people to adopt walking as a simple remedy to stay active and healthy," Dhawan said on his appointment.

In FY2023-24, Walkaroo achieved a turnover of Rs 2,140 crore. It has 700 dealer network and has more than one lakh retail outlets country-wide.



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Govt committed to reduce logistics constraints

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday said it is committed to reduce logistics constraints that obstruct efficient coal transportation.

The coal ministry is working closely with the Ministry of Railways, states and various agencies to address and resolve issues that affect the timely progress of infrastructure projects. To increase the country's evacuation infrastructure, the coal ministry has announced a comprehensive strategy aimed at fast-tracking the development of critical logistics projects, the coal ministry said in a statement. This initiative is in alignment with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for 'integrated planning and synchronised time-bound implementation', which is pivotal to achieving the ambitious goal of Viksit Bharat 2047, the statement added.

The government is dedicated to transforming the country's coal sector through strategic planning and execution.

STOCKS REBOUND

Investors' wealth swells by Rs 4.46 lakh cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Market investors became richer by Rs 4.46 lakh crore on Friday as stocks made a smart comeback after the previous day's decline, driven by a rally in global peers.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 819.69 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 79,705.91. The benchmark surged



1,098.02 points or 1.39 per cent to hit the day's high of 79,984.24.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms went up by Rs 4,46,308.99 crore to Rs 4,50,21,816.11 crore (USD 5.37 trillion).

"Strong global market cues provided a major impetus to local shares as Sensex surged more than 1,000 points in

intra-day trade on all-round buying support. Despite volatility in foreign fund flows this year, capital infusion by domestic institutions have been robust over the past year or so, which is giving local markets a major succour in times of volatile phase," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research) at Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

Ali Fazal reveals truth behind viral photoshoot with Baz, Blake & Hugh!



Ali Fazal is always up and about making his mark internationally. From essaying titular leads to working with Oscar-nominated directors and also working with the biggest actors in the west, Ali has truly made a mark for himself in the west. Ali has finally unveiled the truth about the viral photo of him at the Blake Lively shoot, where he shot with the legendary Baz Luhrmann and Hugh Jackman. Ali got a call while he was shooting in LA for a "secret project" and couldn't say no because when Baz calls, one goes. He revealed in a social media post, "Ok, let me put it to rest—yes, that is me all secretly dressed up as royalty crashing Baz Luhrmann's Hitchcockian Whodunnit Casino scene. Hehe. And for the rest of this beautiful ensemble piece, WHAT CAN I SAY Anything for Baz @bazluhrmann. I was filming a project in LA when i got the call. And I have truly been blessed that this was the 3rd time Anna Wintour who I can never thank enough, has had me out and about for my American Vogue outing. So, we jump on a plane and we play. It was one shot and the best part about Baz comin in was he shot the whole thing like scenes so, there's my dreams of workin with him coming true. Well, not fully - what? Almost.. what???. And Blake @blakelively you're a rockstar, I do hope our paths cross again in good time..Mr Jackman - Aye aye. @thehughjackman I wana thank @michael_philouze for putting up with my suggestions on styling. Am dressed in a @sabyasachiofficial royal sherwani bandh gala".



Naam Namak Nishan trailer out now

Amazon MiniTV is set to celebrate the spirit of friendship and brotherhood with its upcoming series, titled *Naam Namak Nishan*. The streaming service today unveiled the captivating trailer, offering a glimpse into the inspiring journey of young cadets set against the backdrop of the Officers Training Academy (OTA). The series follows these young cadets who transcend the divides of class, sect and a lot more, along with their personal differences, to achieve their goal of becoming Indian soldiers. This drama looks to capture the essence of honour, valour and unshakeable brotherhood. Produced by Juggernaut Studios and featuring Varun Sood, Danish Sood, Helly Shah and Roshni Walia in pivotal

roles, *Naam Namak Nishan* will premiere on Amazon MiniTV on August 14th for free. The uplifting trailer takes us into the heart of the OTA, where cadets from different corners of India come together with a shared dream: to serve and protect their motherland. As India gears up to celebrate its 77th year of independence, *Naam Namak Nishan* captures the essence of unity in diversity and the unbreakable spirit of the Indian Armed Forces. The trailer gives a glimpse into the journey of Yuvraj and Gurbaaz, two young cadets from contrasting worlds who initially clash over their differing views on duty and honour. However, through their journey, they find common ground, discovering that true strength lies in

unity and brotherhood. Varun Sood, who essays the role of Yuvraj in the series, shared his excitement: "Being a part of *Naam Namak Nishan* has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. This series is a deep dive into the emotional and physical trials faced by cadets as they prepare to serve their nation. It's not just about the intense training or the conflicts; it's about the journey of discovering what it truly means to be a soldier. I hope my character inspires viewers and evokes a sense of pride and respect for those who dedicate their lives to protecting our country." Witness the inspiring journey of cadets at the OTA as they transform into the next generation of Indian soldiers in *Naam Namak Nishan*.

Sunny Kaushal disputes having dated Sharvari Wagh!



Rumour has it that actor Sunny Kaushal and Sharvari Wagh have been together for a while. Sunny, though, has refuted the rumours, saying that the two are "very good friends." Sunny Kaushal declared on Raunaq Rajani's Relationship Advice, "I am single." In response to a direct question concerning his friendship with Sharvari Wagh, he called her a "very good friend." Vikrant Massey, Taapsee Pannu and the crowd all laughed at his response. Sunny Kaushal previously told News18 Showsha, in response to the relationship rumors, "I told my parents a while ago not to see me as the next in line. When news about my personal life surfaces, it doesn't worry me. Our relationship is unaffected by it since, in the end, they are simply news stories. It would be silly of us to allow them to impact us and take them too serious-

ly." Meanwhile, Sunny will be seen in the Netflix film *Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba* alongside Taapsee Pannu and Vikrant Massey.

Amazon MGM unveils first look photos for *Unstoppable*

Amazon MGM Studios unveiled first-look photos for *Unstoppable*, its wrestling drama based on the true story of Anthony Robles, which stars Jharrel Jerome (*Moonlight*), Jennifer Lopez (*Hustlers*) and more. Set to make its world premiere at this year's Toronto Film Festival, the film will then debut in select theaters across the U.S. and UK this December. An adaptation

of the book *Unstoppable: From Underdog to Undefeated: How I Became a Champion* by Robles and Austin Murphy, the movie chronicles the former's athletic journey. Despite being born without a right leg and growing up in an abusive household, Robles rose to become an NCAA Division I champion wrestler, ultimately winning a national championship against the school that rejected him,

national powerhouse Iowa. This film marks the directorial debut of William Goldenberg, the veteran editor who won an Oscar for his work on *Argo*—the Best Picture winner from Ben Affleck, whose Artist Equity is *Unstoppable's* producer. Scripted by Eric Champnella, Alex Harris and John Hindman, the drama also stars Bobby Cannavale, Michael Peña and Don Cheadle.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



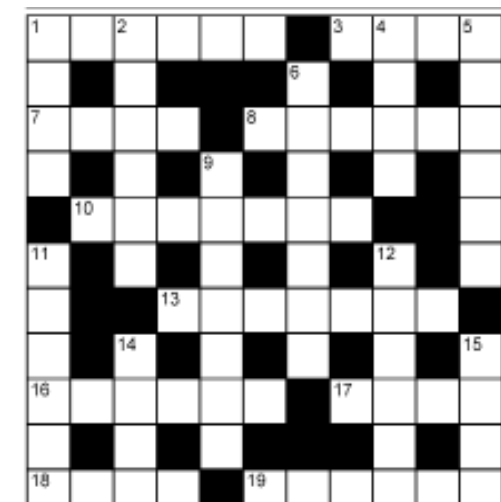
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

ACROSS

- A clasp on a belt
- Hint
- A foot covering
- Small glass ball
- Very angry
- Borrow books here
- A large shed for an aeroplane
- Leg joint
- Decays
- Dislike very strongly
- A month
- Alike
- A writer of books
- Medal for third place
- Rope tangle
- Departed

DOWN

- Finest
- A prickly plant
- Part of the ear
- Cricket team number



GINGER MEGGS



Healing 'city of pearls'

TEJAL SINHA

Healthcare facilities are essential for a city's development, guaranteeing its inhabitants' well-being and efficiency. Hyderabad, a vibrant city renowned for its cultural past and swift progress, is no exception. With the city's growth, there is an increasing need for top-notch healthcare services.

Among the top health professionals, we have Dr. Rupa Banerjee, a senior consultant gastroenterologist in the department of Gastroenterology and the director of the Inflammatory Bowel Diseases (IBD) center at the Asian Institute of Gastroenterology, Hyderabad, India. She is also director of research with the Asian Healthcare Foundation, Hyderabad and a member of the

International Organisation of IBD (IOIBD). Dr. Rupa established the first dedicated IBD center of excellence in India in 2004. Her primary focus has been optimal and affordable multidisciplinary care for IBD. Dr. Rupa is actively involved in research on inflammatory bowel disease in the Asian region, focusing on the epidemiology, microbiota and genetic profile of this population. The center today has a 10,000-patient database and biorepository, as well as a dedicated microbiome lab.

So what better than having the healthcare provider on board for our special segment of Hyderabad, taking us through her association with 'The City of Nizams', which dates back over two decades now?

A Hyderabadi now but a Bengali by blood, she has been all over the country, be it for her education or practices, as well as in the US and the UK. "I came to Hyderabad and joined the AIG Hospitals," shares the medical healthcare professional on an exclusive note for our special segment. "Ever since I have been here in Hyderabad, I have seen rapid development in healthcare, and professionally, I am over-

Back with another alluring tale for Hyderabad, The Pioneer connects with Dr. Rupa Banerjee, a senior consultant gastroenterologist at AIG Hospitals from the city, for our special segment of Hyderabad.



whelmed to see the city providing world-class facilities. I have been to so many places and Hyderabad has been par excellence."

Ever since she has been here in Hyderabad, she shares that she has come across patients, who come from all across Asia. Not just this, "There are also trainees coming up from different places and countries coming up and doing their training here. We have so many of them doing their training in endoscopy and gastroenterology at our hospital. This shows a truly different level of healthcare."

This brings in a different level of satisfaction, she says, about how they utilise the time and aim at providing quick healthcare services. "In many countries, getting an appointment with a gastroenterologist has been a task,



which is not the same case here. I would say the Indian medical healthcare system is very good and Hyderabad, to be specific, is such a progressive, growing city."

Hyderabad, she says, is a perfect balance of various things, including rights from the different bazaars, museums, palace and its history. Hyderabad, beyond any doubt, is a T-hub, so that really gives a perfect blend. "Hyderabad, now, if you see, we have technology, 5-star hotels, and one of the best airports in the country and it's becoming cosmopolitan because of being a tech-hub. And trust me, I've never felt like I'm a non-local here."

One thing she's very proud of about being here in Hyderabad is that the city has been making the country proud with its developments. "The number of healthcare sectors and pharmacies in Hyderabad has been growing. I am very proud of what we did during COVID with the vaccines. We had provided 3-4 types of vaccines. There was a major pharma shift here."

The entire healthcare system here is becoming world-class. The biotechnology industry here has also grown. I personally feel that Hyderabad, slow and studious, is making India proud," shares Dr. Rupa, adding, "Well, one can just not forget about the cuisine."

As we ask her about what she actually dislikes about Hyderabad, we are sure many of you would agree—the traffic. She humorously says, "I hope we do not become another Bangalore. My primary dislike is getting stuck in the traffic during the downpours; especially for us as doctors, it makes a lot of difference."

The overall Hyderabad, she believes, is more like a family, a compact place where people are aware of the happenings of the localities.

As we head towards the end of the chat, she shares with great enthusiasm, "Hyderabad is my *Karmabhoomi*. I have worked here and I'm grateful for all that the city has provided. I have friends here; my daughter has grown up here and now it's a home for me."



Snacks that damage your teeth

Ever wondered how food choices might be affecting our oral health? The truth is, if we are staunch on taking care of our teeth, regular brushing and flossing alone cannot help. What we eat also largely matters. Every time we indulge in our favourite candy, cookies, or even that favourite soda, we are exposing our teeth to harm. While it may satisfy our cravings, it may also invite dental decay and cavities.



like white bread, white rice, and certain starchy foods, such as potato chips, may harm our oral health. The bacteria in our mouth can quickly turn the sugars in these foods into acid, which can erode enamel and damage our teeth. Even though these snacks don't taste sweet, their refined sugar content can be just as damaging as sugary treats and are among the foods that cause cavities.

To keep teeth healthy, it is good to limit the consumption of starchy snacks. Additionally, pay extra attention while flossing to remove any food particles that may get stuck between the teeth causing plaque buildup.

H2: Sugary and Sticky Snacks: The sweet danger

Among the top foods that cause tooth decay are sugary and sticky snacks. Candies, canned fruit juices, or chocolates can often be tempting to eat, but it is important to understand why they pose a threat. While they are tasty, here is why they are harmful. Sugary and sticky snacks may stay stuck to teeth for a long time, providing a perfect breeding ground for the bacteria in our mouths. These bacteria causes cavities and tooth decay by feeding on sugars and, in turn, produce acids that can attack tooth enamel.

H2: Acidic Foods: A threat to enamel

Enjoying a glass of lemonade or a tangy tomato salad might be refreshing, but these foods are acidic and can cause harm to our tooth enamel. Prolonged consumption of acidic foods leads to the wearing down of the enamel layer and exposes the teeth to problems like tooth sensitivity to hot or cold food and tooth decay. While these foods that cause cavities can offer nutritional benefits, their acidic nature can be taken into careful consideration if we are serious about oral health.

Citrus fruits and juices are also known to irritate mouth sores, if having any. What can be done is to add acidic foods to meals rather than eating them alone throughout the day. Also, make sure to drink plenty of water after consuming them.

H2: Carbonated Beverages: Skip the soda

For many of us, carbonated beverages like soda are a go-to refreshment. However, these drinks can have adverse effects on our overall health. When it comes to dental health, drinking carbonated drinks can often raise concerns. Firstly, sodas contain sugar, which feeds bacteria in our mouth, leading to plaque formation and, eventually, tooth decay. Secondly, sodas are acidic, which means they can demineralize or wear down tooth enamel over time.

The best choice is to replace carbonated drinks with plain water.

H2: All dried fruits are not tooth-friendly

While many pick dried fruits as a healthy snack, it may not be a good choice for our oral health. Dried fruits like raisins, prunes, and figs are gummy. They can damage our teeth since they tend to stay stuck on our teeth longer than other types of food. Since they are also concentrated forms of natural sugar, they are one of the foods that cause tooth decay.

If craving for fruits, grab fresh fruits like apples or a handful of grapes instead of dried fruits, as they contain water and fibre that help cleanse teeth. However, if consuming dried fruits, make sure to rinse the mouth with water afterwards and brush and floss carefully.

H2: Starchy Snacks: Beware of refined sugars

Feeling sleepy, and the first thing we grab is a bag of potato chips! However, snacking on refined carbs

Centered on crafting opulent experiences!

AARTI SREENATH

Manoj Adlakhia is a visionary leader whose journey through the business world spans over three decades of transformative impact. With a foundation as a Chartered Accountant and a BCom Honors degree from SRCC, he sharpened his leadership instincts at Duke University's Executive Leadership Program. His career is a tapestry woven with strategic brilliance, where he has consistently turned challenges into opportunities and ideas into thriving realities. From his early days in the industry, his innovative spirit and customer-first philosophy have set him apart, driving success in every role he has undertaken. Now, as the founder and CEO of RedBeryl, he channels his wealth of experience into creating unparalleled luxury experiences and steering the company towards new horizons.

In a candid conversation, the founder shared insights from his extensive career in financial services, including stints at American Express, Yes Bank and Visa and his transition into the luxury lifestyle sector. Reflecting on his early days at American Express, he expressed his gratitude for the opportunities to work across various business lines. "I've been fortunate to work in three or four different lines of business, gaining insights into financial services. American Express taught me a lot about customer ethos, which was foundational in shaping my approach," he said. His time at Visa was equally formative, where he focused on the corporate card business. Manoj highlighted the importance of scale, a lesson he carried with him throughout his career. "Visa taught me the significance of scale. If you don't build scale, you lose relevance," he noted. This understanding became central to his strategy when he returned to American Express, where he led efforts to double the corporate card business's scale in just a few years. During his leadership, the number of merchants accepting American Express cards in India grew from 100,000 to 1.5 million. This expansion was achieved through strategic partnerships and a focus on scaling operations. His tenure at American Express culminated in his role as CEO for India from 2014 to 2022. During this period, he was instrumental in launching premium products, including the highly aspirational Centurion Card. "The luxury market is vast and our success was a testament to understanding customer needs, delivering consistent service, and building the right team," he shared. The kind of luxury market India had in store attracted him deeply and



Manoj Adlakhia, the founder and CEO of RedBeryl, discusses his incredible career path—which included holding executive positions at American Express, Visa and Yes Bank and founding the premium lifestyle industry—in an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer* at Park Hyatt. Manoj describes how his commitment and strategic vision have shaped his career and are currently leading RedBeryl's creative path.

compelled him to start RedBeryl. After a successful eight-year stint as CEO, he felt it was time for a new challenge. The decision to pivot to the luxury lifestyle sector was driven by his recognition of the growing market in India. "In 2023, the luxury market in India was worth \$30 billion, with projections to reach \$100 trillion in the next few years. This growth, coupled with the increasing number of billionaires in India, made it clear that there was a significant opportunity to address this market with world-class service," he explained. Manoj embarked on a new venture by founding RedBeryl, a luxury lifestyle company. This move was inspired by the burgeoning luxury market in India, which is projected to grow significantly in the coming years. Thus, RedBeryl was born. Launched on August 5, 2023, with just a small team in Delhi, it has grown rapidly, now operating in seven to eight cities across India. His vision goes beyond traditional concierge services. "We're not just a concierge company; we're offering unique, innovative products and services. Whether it's securing a rare 1965 Mustang for a customer within 72 hours or arranging a Michelin-starred meal in Paris, we're all about creating unforgettable experiences," he said.

He emphasised the importance of building strong networks and alliances to scale the business.

"Scale is built through partnerships. We've collaborated with brands like Rolls Royce and Ferrari and we pride ourselves on delivering authentic, high-quality service," he noted. Despite the rapid growth, he remains committed to maintaining a high level of personalisation for each client. "For HNIs and ultra HNIs, personalisation is key. If there's no level of customisation, you lose the customer. We thrive on constructive feedback and we're always looking to improve," he said. When asked about his decision to transition from financial services to a luxury lifestyle, he explained that it was a logical next step given the market's potential.

"The luxury market in India is poised for tremendous growth and I saw an opportunity to offer something unique. By focusing on providing world-class service and building strong customer relationships, we're creating a brand that resonates with our target audience," he said.

In terms of unwinding and staying energised, he is an early riser who enjoys sports and music. "I'm up by 4 a.m. and I start my day with a to-do list. I also love interacting with customers and creating value for them, which keeps me excited about my work," he shared. Manoj's passion for music is evident in his love for Bruce Springsteen, whom he recently saw perform in London

and his admiration for bands like The Police. He also likes listening to retro Bollywood and is an ardent admirer of Kishore Kumar. Travel is another aspect of Manoj's life that he cherishes. While his professional trips are often short, he enjoys spending time in the Maldives, London, and Goa. "Goa is a favourite getaway for my wife and me. We visit every three months, even if it's just for a short break," he said. Most of his trips are short due to his work, yet he chooses to spend time with family and his sons, who are in the US. Another favourite pastime of his is spending time with his dogs and "If someone were to write a book about me, I imagine the title would reflect my essence as a relentless dreamer and an unyielding optimist. As an Aquarian, dreaming is second nature to me and I truly believe that nothing is impossible. *Sab kuch ho sakta hai* (everything is achievable if you put your heart, energy and dedication into it)."

"I'm drawn to people with passion, high energy and a hunger to do more. These are the traits I value, whether in my own team or in any organisation. Loyalty, too, is non-negotiable, just as we expect loyalty from our friends, customers, and employees. I don't believe in rigid hierarchies; I expect transparency and involvement at every level and I love rolling up my sleeves and getting

my hands dirty." People with zeal and optimism who learn from their mistakes and move on from them quickly are people they would want to be surrounded by.

"When it comes to leadership, I see myself as approachable, adaptable, and authentic. Integrity is crucial to me and I have zero tolerance for dishonesty or misconduct. I don't mind if someone has a bad day, but anything that goes against our values is unacceptable. I believe in rewarding performance, not tenure. If someone is performing well, they should move forward, regardless of how long they've been in a role. It's about potential backed by performance, which is key to retaining talent and avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy." He advocates transparency and hands-on involvement, often rolling up his sleeves to work alongside his team. His leadership philosophy values performance and potential over hierarchy, fostering an environment where talent is recognized and rewarded based on merit. Reflecting on his career, Manoj acknowledges the challenges he faced, particularly during the early stages of his entrepreneurial journey. One notable challenge was a failed business venture where he invested his life savings and trusted the wrong people. This experience taught him valuable lessons about business models, risk management, and the importance of having a backup plan. "I started my own company, investing all my life savings into it. Unfortunately, I trusted people I shouldn't have, and the business model didn't take off. I learned the hard way about the importance of having a backup plan, but I made sure to settle all my dues because I didn't want any burden on my conscience. This experience taught me about the true nature of people, the importance of learning from mistakes, and the value of resilience." This experience taught him valuable lessons about business models, risk management and the importance of having a backup plan. My advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is to always have a robust business model and never chase valuations blindly. You become accountable to everyone in your organisation, and you mustn't play with people's careers. Surround yourself with achievers, ambitious people and dreamers. Always think big but be prepared with plans B and C."

His vision for the future includes a desire to contribute to social causes, such as improving living conditions for the underprivileged and ensuring access to education for all children. His determination to make a positive impact extends beyond his professional endeavours, and he believes in making this world a better place.

LEGENDARY ATHLETE ON FIELD, A SUPERSTAR SANS PRETENSIONS

PTI ■ PARIS

Neeraj Chopra is all about greatness without pretensions. A fierce competitor, a superstar of Indian sports, a humble human being who would make no bones about his limitations or desires, the double Olympic medalist from India, is all rolled into one. He may want the top prize for himself but would not be envious if the rival pips him. He would tell himself to accept what he got, and work harder to achieve what he desires. He would not pretend that he does not care for brand endorsement. He certainly wants it, money matters, but would not compromise on his training for that. The 17-minute interaction with the Indian media after winning a silver medal in the Paris Olympics was more than just a routine question-answer session. "Your first throw was foul then in the second..." the scribe had not even completed his question before Chopra quipped, "Saari throw fouls hi thi sir sirf doosri hi theek thi (All throws were foul, except the second one)," he said, chuckling, and the 50-strong group joined him in laughter.

It was not a great deal for him to say he fouled five of his six attempts. The long Q and A session was largely in Hindi with Indian and Pakistani journalists asking questions, but when the volunteer requested an answer in English for the benefit of few foreign scribes, Chopra laid bare his simplicity. "Now I need to motivate myself to speak in English, the way I motivate myself for competition," he said with a smile, as the gathered group burst out in laughter. "Can you describe the competition between you and Nadeem, India and Pakistan," the foreign scribe asked again, requesting the answer in English. Well, he explained pretty well, effortlessly. "It was a really great competition. Maybe one of the greatest competitions in history. Arshad threw really well. I was also in good shape. But I don't know. My runway was not that good today," he responded quickly, without having to think much. It was inevitable that he would be asked about the missed competitions in the 2024 season, leading up to the Paris Games. It led to speculations whether he was carrying injury into the Paris Games.



NEERAJ CHOPRA

He had skipped the Paris Diamond League in July, just before the Games, though he later clarified that the event was not part of his competition calendar. He revealed how difficult it becomes for him to say no to the organisers despite fitness concerns. With a wide grin, he said, "Of course I need to play more but then I send those carefully drafted messages that I have suffered a strain and I won't compete. "In few competitions I have played just for the sake of organisers so that they don't feel bad. I keep thinking that I have entered the competition and if I don't go, they will say I am making excuses. Personally I love to compete as much as possible. "I make plans but then you tell your team, let's draft a good message, saying sorry for pulling out," he said, laughing, but the pain of missing the event was writ large. "No happiness is greater than playing. You work hard to compete only. Whatever strength God has given me I do." Then came a tricky one. He was asked about the pressure of sponsors in the Olympic cycle. How he finds that balance

between brand endorsements, obligations and training? Again, he came up with an honest answer. "I put my game on top priority after Tokyo and after Tokyo Games only I got the opportunity to get associated with brands. It is difficult for us that brands come after you, and if you get it, why will you leave that opportunity. Just do it," he said, with all honesty. "It also opens the way for kids (next generation), 'nahi to shreer hi tootega khel khel key, last mein kuch nah rahega.' How many athletes say that so openly? "So I balance it. Priority is sport. This was an Olympic year, so whatever commitments I had, I fulfilled in the first half. "You have seen I have been training outside since Tokyo." He could be upset inside for not being able to defend his title but accepted that Thursday was Nadeem's day. Lastly, volunteers did their best to push him out of the mixed zone but he would keep coming back either to sign autographs or honour the request for selfies. After all, he knows how to find a balance between different things and saying no is the most difficult thing for him.

Sreejesh to join Bhaker as India's flag-bearer in closing ceremony

PTI ■ PARIS

Celebrated hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh will join star shooter Manu Bhaker as the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent in the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games here on Sunday, a fitting honour and recognition for his contributions to the team. Before homing in on Sreejesh, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) chief PT Usha spoke with Neeraj Chopra, and she said even the superstar javelin thrower wanted to see the retiring legend as flag-bearer. Chopra claimed a silver here to become the first Indian track and field athlete to win two Olympic medals. He won a historic gold in the Tokyo edition three years ago.



"I spoke with Neeraj Chopra and appreciate the spontaneity and grace with which he agreed that Sreejesh should be the flag-bearer at the Closing Ceremony," Usha said in a statement. "He told me 'Ma'am, even if you had not asked me, I would have suggested

Sree bhai's name'. It is reflective of the immense respect Neeraj has for Sreejesh and his contribution to Indian sport," she revealed. Usha said Sreejesh was "both an emotional and popular choice" within the IOA leadership, including Chef-de-Mission Gagan Narang, and the entire Indian contingent. The legendary Sreejesh retired from the game after India's bronze medal-winning feat at the ongoing Games, bringing to an end a glorious career spanning 18 years. "The Indian Olympic Association is delighted to announce the nomination of hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh as the joint flag-bearer with pistol shooter Manu Bhaker at the Closing Ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games," the IOA said in a

statement. The 2-1 triumph over Spain, in the bronze medal playoff match here on Thursday, was a fitting farewell for the 36-year-old custodian who has served the team with distinction for so long. "Sreejesh has served Indian hockey in particular and Indian sport in general admirably through more than two decades," Usha said. Sreejesh was also the flag-bearer in the closing ceremony of the Hangzhou Asian Games last year. The IOA had earlier named Bhaker as the female flag-bearer after she became the first Indian athlete post Independence to win multiple medals in a single Olympic Games. She won bronze medals in the women's 10m air pistol and the 10m air pistol mixed team (with Sarabjot Singh).



AP ■ PARIS

Algerian boxer Imane Khelif is one victory away from wrapping up her tumultuous Paris Olympics with a gold medal around her neck - a potential prize that she has called the best response to a cascade of online abuse she has endured over misconceptions about her sex. Khelif fights Yang Liu of China on Friday night in the final of the women's welterweight division at Roland Garros. Khelif has yet to lose one round on a judge's scorecard in her first three fights in Paris, going on the most dominant run of her boxing career while facing an extraordinary amount of scrutiny. It stems from Khelif and fellow two-time Olympian Li Yu-ting of Taiwan getting disqualified from last year's world championships by the Russian-dominated International Boxing Association, which claims both fighters failed a murky eligibility test for women's competition. The International Olympic Committee took the unprecedented step last year of permanently banning the IBA from the Olympics following

Boxer Imane fights for Gold to cap Olympics filled with misinformed scrutiny

years of concerns about its governance, competitive fairness and financial transparency. The IOC has called the arbitrary sex tests that the sport's governing body imposed on the two boxers irretrievably flawed. The IBA did nothing to help its argument this week at a shambolic news conference in which its leadership contradicted itself about the tests and declined to answer basic questions about them, citing privacy concerns from the Olympic committees of Algeria and Taiwan. The IOC repeatedly reaffirmed the two boxers' right to compete in Paris, with President Thomas Bach personally defending Khelif and Lin while calling the criticism "hate speech." "We have two boxers who are born as women, who have been raised as women, who have a passport as a woman and have competed for many



but cheers during their bouts. A huge contingent of flag-waving Algeria fans greeted and serenaded Khelif throughout her semifinal victory Tuesday night, and she's become a hometown hero in her North African country. Khelif has already secured Algeria's first Olympic medal in women's boxing. She will attempt to become only her country's second boxing gold medalist, joining Hocine Soltani (1996). The gold medal fight is the culmination of Khelif's nine-day run through an Olympic tournament that began with a bizarre event. Khelif's first opponent, Angela Carini of Italy, abandoned their bout after just 46 seconds, saying she was in too much pain from Khelif's punches. An already brewing story suddenly became major international news, with the likes of former US President Donald Trump and "Harry Potter" author JK Rowling

weighing in with criticism and false speculation about men competing with women in sports. Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni personally visited with Carini to share her condolences and to cast doubt on Khelif's eligibility. Carini later said she regretted her actions and wished to apologize to Khelif. The Italian newspaper La Stampa detailed Carini's mindset in the days leading up to the bout, describing pressure from both inside and outside her team to avoid the fight amid the growing speculation over Khelif's status. The IBA later offered to pay winner's bonuses to Carini and the Italian Boxing Federation despite Carini's abandonment of the bout. The Italian federation and Carini rejected the money from the IBA, which volunteered the payments to all Paris winners and their teams despite having nothing to do with the Olympics. Lin also fights for a gold medal on Saturday on the final card of the Olympics. She takes on Julia Szeremeta of Poland with a chance to win Taiwan's first boxing gold.

COVID-hit Lyles misses out on a double

AP ■ PARIS

Sprinter Noah Lyles revealed he had COVID-19 after missing out on another gold medal for the United States at the Paris Olympics. Elsewhere, French basketball star Victor Wembanyama moved closer to his dream of a first gold after helping Les Bleus beat Germany to set up a dream final against the U.S. Team after the Americans edged Serbia 95-91. On the same Stade de France track where he won the historically close 100 meters by five thousandths of a second, Lyles was third behind gold medalist Letsile Tebogo of Botswana and U.S. Teammate Kenneth Bednarek. Medics tended to a tired-looking Lyles and took him off in a wheelchair. Wearing a mask as he spoke with reporters, Lyles later said he had COVID. "It definitely affected my

performance," said Lyles, adding that he tested positive early Tuesday morning but was cleared to compete. The U.S. Track federation said it and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee adhered to all Olympic and Centers for Disease Control guidelines. Over at Bercy Arena, with former NBA stars Dirk Nowitzki and Tony Parker watching their respective countrymen, France held on to win 73-69. Wembanyama, the NBA rookie of the year, clenched his fists at the buzzer and teammate Evan Fournier jubilantly threw the ball into the crowd. The 20-year-old star didn't play three years ago in Tokyo, when the French lost the final to the U.S. They meet again Saturday, when Wembanyama hopes to give France its first Olympic gold in men's or women's basketball.

Letsile makes a case for African sprinters with thrilling victory in 200 metres

AP ■ PARIS

Letsile Tebogo is from Botswana in southern Africa, a continent with a rich history of producing world-class runners. Just not like the kind Tebogo does for a living. He's brought 20 seconds of greatness - check 19.46 seconds of greatness - might change that. The 21-year-old pulled off a stunner (sort of) in the men's 200 meters at the Paris Olympics on Thursday night, producing the first-ever Olympic gold by an African runner in the distance. American Kenneth Bednarek got out to an early lead, but Tebogo said he was confident he had more than enough to track him down. By the middle of the stretch, Tebogo was in front and waited for a challenge from American star Noah Lyles that never came - perhaps in

part because Lyles is dealing with COVID-19 - to win going away. "When I saw Kenny fade I knew Noah was far, far, far away behind us," Tebogo said. "So, that means I'm the Olympic champion." One who is also a three-time world champion. Lost amid the chaos of Lyles collapsing briefly on the track in the aftermath and his revelation that he tested positive for COVID-19 on Tuesday was this: Tebogo's time was the fastest by anyone in the world this year. Lyles included. Heady territory for an athlete who gets himself amped up before a race by playing traditional songs he learned growing up in Kanye, Botswana, not far from the landlocked nation's border with South Africa. The ritual allows Tebogo to relax, drawing a stark contrast between him and the relentlessly amped

Lyles. While Lyles roared onto the purple track at Stade de France preening, Tebogo was one lane to Lyles' right mentally preparing for the race of his life. And when Tebogo ran it, he draped the blue, white and black flag of his country over his shoulders, hung his orange cleats around his neck presented his right shoe to a nearby camera to reveal a tribute to his mother, Elizabeth Seratiwa, who died in May. "She always dreamed of making it to here," Tebogo said. So did his younger sister, who was somewhere in the sea of seats that roared during the race, a roar that grew louder when it became obvious Lyles wasn't going to track Tebogo down the way he had to just about everyone since Tokyo in his signature event.



Not this time. While there may not be an official rivalry between Tebogo and Lyles, the seeds may have been planted somewhere between Lyles' preening and Tebogo's decisive victory. Asked afterwards if he envisions himself becoming one of the standard bearers in sprinting, Tebogo threw a dash of shade in his answer. "I can't be the face of athletics because I'm not an arrogant or a loud person like Noah (Lyles)," he said. Maybe. Tebogo's biography in the official Olympics media program quotes him as saying he wants "to be remembered as one of the best athletes who ever lived." He's probably already there back home, a largely rural country of 2.63 million roughly the size of France that serves as a popular destination

for tourists going on African safaris. The pace of life in Kanye isn't typically hectic. Maybe that makes Tebogo's triumph of a young man in a hurry ironic in a way. Tebogo fought off a balking hamstring to win bronze in the 200 behind Lyles and his US teammate Erriyon Knighton in the 2023 athletics world championship. He finished ahead of Lyles in their 200 semifinal on Wednesday. Lyles' camp said he Lyles was fine afterwards, indicating he was saving himself for the final. Perhaps he was. Yet when Tebogo took off, Lyles saw only the bib on the back of Tebogo's race shirt. Lyles never saw the bib on the front. Not until the end anyway, when Tebogo unpinched it, grabbed each end and presented it for all the world to see. The people of Africa most of all.

REEL READS

MIND AND WILDERNESS COLLIDE IN *SIMBAA*

AARTI SREENATH

Plot: *Simbaa* embarks on a gripping journey that intertwines the seemingly ordinary lives of three individuals—a respected teacher, a dedicated investigative journalist and a compassionate environmentalist. Their peaceful routines are abruptly shattered when they inexplicably begin committing brutal murders, each victim linked by a mysterious thread. As the narrative unfolds, the bewildered characters, now detained by the authorities, struggle to comprehend their horrifying actions.

Highlights: For those who thrive on fast-paced thrillers, *Simbaa* delivers a roller-coaster of suspense. The film is a unique blend of environmental advocacy and complex medical concepts, making it both an intellectually stimulating and emotionally charged experience. It delves into the psychological and medical conditions that could ensnare even the most upright individuals, offering a chilling exploration of the human mind.

Jagapathi Babu, as expected, delivers an intense and compelling performance. His portrayal of an environmental activist is not just fierce but also layered with a subtle innocence that adds depth to his character. Anasuya Bharadwaj shines in her multifaceted role, balancing the strength of a complex personality with moments of vulnerability. Srinath Maganti's natural performance, especially in the action sequences, brings a sense of realism to the screen. Even the smaller roles, though brief, are executed with precision and contribute significantly to the overall narrative.

Directed by: Murali Manohar Reddy
Produced by: MS Kumar, Sampath Nandi, Rajender Reddy
Cinematography: Krishna Prasad
Music Director: Krishna Saurabh
Cast: Anasuya Bharadwaj, Divi Vadithya, Jagapathi Babu, Vashishtha N. Simha, Ramesh Konbhatha, Kabir Gulshan Singh, Gautami
Rating: 2.5/5

What sets this movie apart?

Simbaa isn't just another revenge drama; it's a wild, untamed tale of retribution, enriched with the fascinating concept of cellular and biological memory. The film's environmental message—emphasising the critical importance of planting trees—adds a profound layer to the story. The narrative captivates the audience, especially as it delves into the question of why good people commit heinous acts, a question that is answered in a truly unexpected manner.

Anasuya's role is one of the film's standout elements! Her portrayal of a dedicated teacher who transforms into a relentless force is both convincing and exhilarating. The supporting cast, including Divi, Aneesh Kuruvilla, Gautami, and Kasturi, all deliver strong performances



that bolster the film's emotional and narrative core.

The true genius of the film emerges in its second half, where a psychological twist unravels the enigma behind these killings, leading to a revelation that not only justifies the movie's title but also leaves the audience in awe.

Drawbacks: Despite its intriguing premise, *Simbaa* has its flaws. The film's pacing is uneven, with some scenes dragging, particularly in the first half. The revenge story, while compelling, sometimes feels bogged down by conventional treatment and a lack of innovative character develop-

ment. The transformation of the characters could have been portrayed with greater depth and conviction, making their motivations clearer and more impactful. Additionally, while the environmental message is laudable, its delivery sometimes borders on being preachy, which may detract from the film's emotional intensity. The flashback sequences, although crucial to the plot, feel overly extended and at times, illogical, diluting the film's overall impact.

Technical aspects: Cinematographer Krishna Prasad's work stands out, partic-

ularly in the way he uses manual techniques to enhance the film's gritty realism. Each frame is meticulously crafted, paying attention to the smallest details. However, while the lighting remains consistent, it lacks the mood-enhancing qualities that could have elevated certain scenes. Some of the more challenging shots, especially those filmed from above or within dense forests, showcase the cinematographer's skill but also highlight areas where the film could have benefited from a more polished execution. The visual storytelling, especially in the opening and closing sequences, effectively heightens the suspense and emotional stakes. However, the narrative flow occasionally falters, with abrupt shifts in the storyline that might confuse the audience. The editing is competent but could have been tighter to maintain the film's pace and intensity.

Verdict: *Simbaa—The Forest Man* offers a fresh take on the revenge drama genre, blending intense action, medical intrigue and environmental advocacy into a compelling narrative. Director Murali Manohar Reddy's ambitious attempt to weave together diverse genres—drama, thriller, crime and social commentary—results in a film that is as thought-provoking as it is emotionally resonant. The exploration of biological memory as a driver for revenge, coupled with the urgent environmental message, adds layers of complexity to the story. However, the film's slow pacing, conventional narrative choices and occasional lapses in logic prevent it from reaching its full potential. Despite these shortcomings, *Simbaa* offers a rich viewing experience that is both engaging and enlightening.

'Pagal Vs Kaadal' connects with all lovers'

Actor Vijay Shankar, known for his roles in films like *Devarakonda lo Vijay Prema Katha* and *Focus*, is back in the spotlight with his new film *Pagal Vs Kaadal*. Vishika stars as the heroine, while the film is produced by Manmath Rao under the Shivathri Films banner and directed by Rajesh Mudunuri. The romantic comedy entertainer hit theaters on August 9.



Reflecting on the movie, Vijay Shankar shared his thoughts, revealing that when director Rajesh Mudunuri first presented the story of *Pagal Vs Kaadal*, it struck him as unique. "It's a subject that resonates with every common audience," Vijay explained. "The film gives the feeling that we have seen such situations and characters in our own lives. In *Pagal Vs Kaadal*, I play Karthik, a software employee who falls in love with a girl of a different personality. The evolution of their relationship, given their contrasting personalities, will be both entertaining and romantically engaging."

Vijay also believes that the movie's story will deeply connect with modern lovers. "It will evoke a sense that they have encountered similar situations in their own lives," he said. "We chose the title *Pagal Vs Kaadal* because it perfectly captures the essence of our story. The film features situational comedy that adds to its charm."

The film also highlights the contributions of Brahmaji and Shakalaka Shankar, who play crucial roles. Vijay praised their involvement, noting, "Brahmaji and Shakalaka Shankar narrate the story from start to finish. Despite his fame, Brahmaji was incredibly supportive and friendly throughout the project."

Regarding his co-star, Vishika, Vijay expressed confidence that she would receive considerable praise for her performance. "Vishika, who plays my love interest, has delivered an impressive portrayal that will make viewers question whether she is acting or genuinely real," he said, adding, "Director Rajesh Mudunuri has crafted *Pagal Vs Kaadal* into an engaging entertainer and I am confident he will gain a strong reputation

as a talented director."

On the technical front, Vijay assured that the film boasts high-quality production. "The editing by Shyam Kumar, cinematography by Navadeer, and music by Praveen Sangadala all contribute to the film's appeal. The production values from Shivathri Films complement the story well," he noted.

Vijay also spoke about his admiration for Mega Power Star Ram Charan and the support for young talent in Tollywood. Hailing from Srikakulam, Vijay recounted his journey into the industry. "I entered the industry without any support, initially thinking I would complete one film offer and then leave," he admitted, further sharing, "However, opportunities kept coming my way and I continue to work on films. My movies are being released in theaters and are also available on OTT platforms. This is highly encouraging for me as a young hero. The opportunities I receive are due to the trust placed in me by producers and directors."

Looking ahead, Vijay shared his satisfaction with his career progress. "I am content with how things are going," he said. "I've completed 9 films, including a big-budget project titled *Raajakikam*, which is being made with a budget of around 10 crores. My goal is to earn the appreciation of Telugu audiences and make my parents and my people proud."

Seerat signs a film for People Media Factory?

Seerat Kapoor, a rising star in Tollywood, has been making headlines with her recent successes, including *Manamey*, *BhamaKalapam 2* and *Save The Tigers 2*. Known for her versatility, Kapoor continues to captivate audiences with her diverse roles.

Recently, Kapoor was seen outside the offices of the leading production house, People Media Production. Having previously collaborated with them on *Manamey* under Sriram Aditya's direction, there's now speculation that she is set to star in another major project.

A source close to the production team has confirmed that "Seerat is signed on for a mass pan-Indian film. The details are finalised and the first schedule of the film is ready to commence. It will be a comedy-drama." This news has generated considerable excitement in the industry, marking a significant milestone in Kapoor's career. As anticipation grows, fans and industry insiders alike are eagerly awaiting the official announcement from People Media Production, which promises to usher in an exciting new phase for Seerat Kapoor.



Jr NTR, Prashanth Neel's *NTR31* set for January 2026 release

Jr NTR and director Prashanth Neel, who announced their collaboration in 2022, have unveiled an exciting update about their much-anticipated film. On August 9, it was confirmed that their project, tentatively titled *NTR31*, is scheduled to hit theatres on January 9, 2026.

The official X handle of Mythri Movie Makers, the film's production house, announced the release date along with a new poster. The post read, "This time, the earth will tremble under his reign! #NTRNeel

will step onto the soil on January 9th, 2026. MAN OF MASSES @tarak9999 #PrashanthNeel @MythriOfficial @NTRArtsOfficial (sic)."

Originally announced several years ago, the film faced delays due to the busy schedules of Jr NTR and Prashanth Neel. Full-fledged shooting for *NTR31* is expected to commence in September 2024. Jr NTR, currently occupied with his project *Devara*, is anticipated to join the set a bit later. Further details about the

cast, crew and shooting schedules will be revealed on the film's launch day.

Speculation suggests that the film might be titled *Dragon*. With pre-production work ongoing for several months, the film is expected to be a high-octane commercial entertainer.

In the meantime, Jr NTR's upcoming film *Devara: Part One*, directed by Koratala Siva and co-starring Janhvi Kapoor, is set to release in September.



Thangalaan is more than just a historical drama: Director Pa Ranjith

PNS HYDERABAD

At a recent event, director Pa Ranjith shed light on the making of his highly anticipated pan-India film *Thangalaan*, revealing that the film's climax had to be reshoot after the initial completion. Ranjith explained that although the actors had moved on to their subsequent projects, they were called back to reshoot the climax because he was dissatisfied with the original footage.

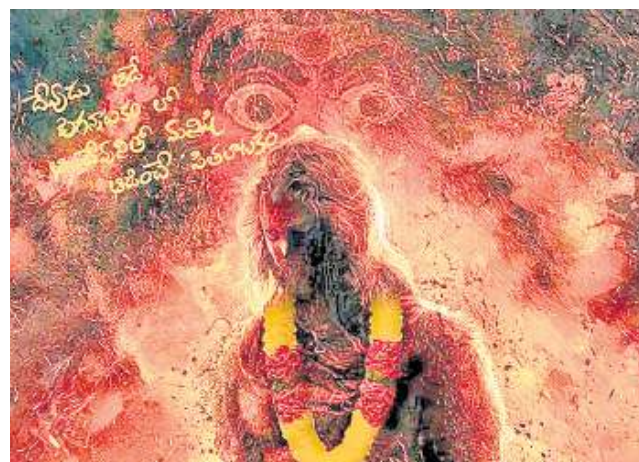
During the event, Ranjith addressed actor Vikram's challenging experience on set, particularly with the numerous fight sequences. Vikram sustained severe rib injuries that required surgery and Ranjith acknowledged his own role in the demanding conditions on set. "I was so focused on capturing the essence of the scene that I neglected to check on the actors' well-being," Ranjith admitted. "I viewed them purely as their characters—Vikram as Thangalaan and Daniel Caltagirone as Lord Clement. My intense focus led me to be more demanding and at times, outright harsh."

Ranjith expressed his gratitude to those who support his cinematic vision, emphasising the social themes

explored in *Thangalaan*. "I am thankful to everyone who supports my ideas and perspectives expressed through cinema," he said, adding, "Oppression and inequality still persist in our country, lingering in our society for many years. I chose film as a medium to address these issues. I am pleased to be in Hyderabad for the *Thangalaan* event, as the Telugu audience has always embraced my films. I hope you will appreciate this movie as well."

He elaborated on the film's significance, noting that *Thangalaan* is more than just a historical drama. "This story is not just about a quest for gold but a struggle for freedom and rights," Ranjith explained. "These struggles continue in society today. Through cinema, I have expressed my views. Vikram has deeply understood the story, the character and the emotions of *Thangalaan*. We are fortunate to have an actor like Vikram. Gnanavel Raja supported this film with great faith and commitment. He was impressed by *Thangalaan*, and we are confident it will be a success."

Ranjith also highlighted the film's role in the broader landscape of South Indian cinema. *Thangalaan* is set to continue the trend of bringing unique and compelling stories to the audience. "We are witnessing a trend where good movies are gaining popularity nationwide," he said. "We hope *Thangalaan* will be well-received as well." *Thangalaan*, directed by Pa. Ranjith and starring Chiyaan Vikram and Malavika Mohanan in prominent roles, is scheduled for a worldwide release on August 15, 2024. The film will be available in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. The music for the film is composed by G.V. Prakash Kumar.



Sathish Babu's *Jathara* promises fresh take amidst formulaic trends

As audiences grow weary of conventional, formulaic films, there is a growing demand for movies with innovative storylines. In this evolving landscape, Sathish Babu introduces a distinctive film titled *Jathara*. Not only does Sathish Babu write and direct the movie, but he also takes on the lead role.

Presented by Galla Manjunath and produced by Radhakrishna Reddy and Siva Shankar Reddy under Radhakrishna Production Company in association with Movieteck LLC, *Jathara* has launched its promotional campaign with the release of its first look poster. The poster showcases Sathish Babu in a dramatic and intense pose, wielding a sword with a menacing expression. His long hair and piercing eyes contribute to a fierce and captivating presence, designed to draw atten-

tion and stir excitement for the film.

Set in the drought-stricken district of Chittoor, *Jathara* revolves around a black stone revered as the goddess Paleti Gangamma, which offers hope to the local villagers. The story unfolds with the construction of a temple and the celebration of a grand festival led by landlord Venkatareddy. However, the plot takes a dramatic turn following his death, underscoring themes of faith and resilience in the face of adversity.

The film stars Deeya Raj as the leading lady, with R.K. Pinnapala, Gopal Reddy, Mahaboob Basha and Sai Vikranth in supporting roles. K.V. Prasad handles cinematography and Sreejith Edavana provides the music. A glimpse of the film will be released soon to further pique curiosity and anticipation.

Top technicians roped in for YVS Chowdary's film with NTR



Nandamuri Taraka Ramarao, the great-grandson of the legendary NTR, grandson of the esteemed Hari Krishna, and son of the late Janaki Ram, is set to make a significant impact in Telugu cinema. This new film marks a notable addition to the Nandamuri family's illustrious legacy. Directed by the acclaimed YVS Chowdary and produced by Yalamanchili Geetha under the banner "New Talent Roars @," the project promises to be a major cinematic event. Ramesh Attili will serve as the Executive Producer.

YVS Chowdary has unveiled an exciting array of talent for the film. Veenah Rao, an enchanting Kuchipudi dancer and Telugu actress, will star as the lead heroine alongside Nandamuri Taraka Ramarao.

The film boasts a stellar musical team, with music composed by Oscar-winning MM Keeravani and

lyrics penned by the celebrated Oscar-winning lyricist Chandrabose. Additionally, Sai Madhav Burra, known for his impactful dialogue writing on numerous high-profile projects, will craft the dialogues for this much-anticipated film.

To prepare for his debut, Nandamuri Taraka Ramarao has undergone extensive training to hone his skills for the lead role. YVS Chowdary, renowned for launching numerous stars throughout his distinguished career, is entrusted with the task of introducing Nandamuri Taraka Ramarao in this compelling project.

Crafted by YVS Chowdary, the film's story and screenplay are designed to showcase Nandamuri Taraka Ramarao's versatile abilities, promising a captivating experience for Telugu film enthusiasts. Further details about the film's genre and key elements will be revealed soon.