

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
 Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's government is enacting high-drama in the name of HYDRAA. Why is the government demolishing constructed houses? Revanth Reddy is giving the impression that he is acting stiffly towards illegal constructions. We have the list of Revanth as to what he is doing. Revanth is like a cat having milk closing his eyes. Revanth Reddy...don't think that you are sincere. It is good for Revanth Reddy.  
 - Eatala Rajender, BJP MP TG

**Mamata leads protest rally in Kolkata, demands justice**

**FROM AKOLA'S QUIET STREETS TO HYDERABAD'S ARCHITECTURAL HEIGHTS**

**Hari Hara Veera Mallu team begins shooting epic WAR SCENE**

**DON'T MISS...**  
 V'wada-Mumbai IndiGo service ...

Vijayawada MP and Vice Chairman of the Airports Authority, Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni) announced that efforts are underway to open a new terminal at Vijayawada Airport, which serves as the hub of the capital region, by the coming summer. An IndiGo service from Vijayawada to Mumbai commenced at Vijayawada Airport on Friday night. This service was inaugurated by MP Vallabhaneni Balashowry, in his capacity as Chairman of the Airports Authority, and MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni), in his capacity as Vice Chairman of the ...

**US Deputy Secretary of ...**

Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Richard R. Verma will visit India from August 17 to advance and support a prosperous, secure, and resilient future for both countries, the US state department has announced. Verma, a top Indian-American diplomat, will lead a US delegation to India between August 17 and 22 to meet senior government officials, climate leaders, aerospace academics and industry representatives to advance the US-Indian partnership on a full range of ...

**B'luru Airport to receive ACI's ...**

Kempegowda International Airport operated by Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) has marked a significant milestone by becoming the first airport in Asia to receive Airports Council International's (ACI) the highest Level five accreditation, officials said on Friday. Bangalore Airport has made a remarkable 95.6 per cent reduction in Scope 1 and 2 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, attaining the highest emission elimination by an Indian airport, achieved seven years ahead of the initial target of 2030 ...

**Horse riding, Bharatnatyam ...**

Her shooting hand recoils by repeated pistol recoils during unrelenting training, Manu Bhaker will take a well deserved three month break. But it will be no vacation. The double Olympic medalist will continue her other routines including yoga and waking up at 6 am — which she hates. And oh yes. She also plans to catch up on her hobbies — horse riding, skating, Bharatnatyam and violin practice to name a few. The 22-year-old, who won bronze medals in the 10m air pistol and ...

**Spl task force to advise AP govt on development**

**TATA Group chairman holds discussions with CM Naidu**



Government has announced the formation of a Special Task Force to advise on industrial development and the realisation of Swarna Andhra Pradesh.

**CM Naidu embarks on Delhi tour**

- Meets Jal Sakthi Minister, seeks 12,500 cr for Polavaram
- To meet PM Modi, HM Shah, & FM Sitharaman today

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has made a strong appeal to the Union government for the immediate release of Rs 12,500 crore needed for the first phase of the Polavaram project. Emphasising the importance of these funds, the CM stated that their timely release is essential to accelerate the ongoing work on the national project. CM Naidu travelled to New Delhi on Friday night to meet with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and other key Central ministers. During his visit, the CM will focus on discussing major issues, including the Polavaram project and the construction of the Amaravati capital. He is scheduled to meet with Prime Minister Modi on Saturday, where he will reiterate the urgency of funding for Polavaram, along with other pending matters like special packages for backward districts and unresolved issues related to the state's bifurcation. The Chief Minister received a warm reception at the airport upon departing from Undavalli on Friday.

**AP Cabinet meet on August 27**

The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, is set to convene on August 27 at the State Secretariat in Velagapudi, Amaravati. Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad issued an urgent circular announcing the meeting, which will be held on Tuesday. Sources indicate that the cabinet will focus on the implementation of the 2024 'Super Six' joint manifesto and review the progress of key poll promises. Among the topics likely to be discussed is the relaunch of Anna Canteens, a flagship welfare initiative, as well as the pending proposal for free travel for women in RTC buses.

**'We fulfilled promises within 100 days'**



Minister for Education, Information Technology (IT), and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, announced that the TDP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in Andhra Pradesh has fulfilled its promises within the first 100 days of taking office. Speaking on Friday at the relaunch of Anna Canteens in Nulakapeta and the old bus stand in Mangalagiri, Lokesh criticized the YSRCP MLA for mocking the poor and expressed concern over the previous government's closure of these canteens. Lokesh also joined those in attendance for breakfast. Lokesh recalled that when he raised the issue of the canteens' closure in the Legislative Council, the then Minister for Municipal Administration promised to reopen them but failed to take any action. Despite being in the Opposition at the time, Lokesh personally funded and operated four Anna Canteens in the Mangalagiri Assembly segment, providing meals for just ₹2 each at locations in Mangalagiri town, Nulakapeta in Tadepalli, Railpet in Duggirala, and Revendrapadu. In addition to running these canteens, Lokesh implemented 29 welfare schemes in the Mangalagiri segment using his funds.

**FRUSTRATED OVER BEING ON 'WAITING LIST' ...**

**Sr IPS officers go on mass leave**

In a significant development, 16 senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officers, reportedly frustrated by the current state of affairs under the TDP-led NDA government, have applied for mass leave. These officers, who have been left without official postings since the new government took power, are said to be displeased with recent directives from Director General of Police (DGP) Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao. The DGP recently issued a memo instructing the officers to report to police headquarters daily at 10 a.m., sign the attendance register, and wait in the officers' lounge without any assigned duties. This order has sparked concern and unease within the IPS community, leading to widespread discussions.

Sources suggest that these officers, who remain without postings, are still perceived to have affiliations with the previous YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government. Allegedly, some officials have been attempting to undermine ongoing investigations, prompting the directive requiring them to sign in daily at the DGP's office. However, many within the IPS community believe that withholding postings and relegating these officers to mere attendance duties may send a negative message across the police force. "If the Chief Minister intends to reprimand them for their actions during the YSRCP regime, he could assign them less significant roles."

**The officers currently on the waiting list include PSR Anjaneyulu (DG), PV Sunilkumar (DG), N Sanjay (Additional DG), Kanti Rana Tatha (IG), G Palaraaj (IG), Kollu Raghuram Reddy (IG), RN Ammireddy (DIG), CH Vijay Rao (DIG), Vishal Gunny (DIG), KKN Anburajan (SP), Y Ravishankar Reddy (SP), Y Rishan Reddy (SP), K Raghuvuera Reddy (SP), P Parameswar Reddy (SP), P Joshua (SP), and Krishnakant Patel (SP)**

**10 IPS officers shifted in AP**

In a minor reshuffle of IPS officers, the Andhra Pradesh government has transferred and reassigned 10 senior police officials across the State. The transfers were ordered on Friday by Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad. Senior IPS officer Satya Yesu Babu, who was serving as Superintendent of Police and intelligence, has been transferred and directed to report to the police headquarters. Garud Sumit Sunil, who was awaiting a new posting, has been appointed as Group Commander, of Greyhounds. Jagadeesh P, another officer who was awaiting a posting, has been assigned as Superintendent of Police, Ananthapuram. KV Murali Krishna, previously transferred, has now been appointed as Commandant of the 16th Battalion, APSP, in Visakhapatnam. In other key changes, KM Maheswara Raju, who was serving as Superintendent of Police, the Special Enforcement Bureau, has been transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) in Vijayawada. Suneel Sheoran, previously DSP of Parvathipuram, has also been appointed as Group Commander, Greyhounds. Rahul Meena, who was Assistant Superintendent of Police in Chinturu, has been transferred and posted as SRP, Guntakal in Ananthapuram district. Shelke Nachiket Vishwanath, formerly Assistant Superintendent of Police, East Guntur, has been transferred and appointed as Superintendent of Police, Intelligence. Additional transfers include Pankaj Kumar Meena, previously an Assault Commander with Greyhounds, who has been assigned as Assistant Superintendent of Police in Chinturu, and Surana Ankita Mahavir, also an Assault Commander with Greyhounds, who has been posted as SDPO, Parvathipuram.

**3-phase JK polls from Sep 18-Oct 1, Haryana in single phase on Oct 1**

Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be held in three phases from September 18 while Haryana will go to polls in a single phase on October 1, the Election Commission announced on Friday. Voting will take place for 90 seats in Jammu and Kashmir on September 18, September 25 and October 1, the EC said. Votes will be counted on October 4 for both the assemblies, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar told a press conference. The last assembly elections were held in Jammu and Kashmir in November-December 2014 and these will be the first assembly elections in the erstwhile state since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

**COUNTER TO PM'S REMARKS ON UCC**

**BJP neither secular nor civil: Kapil Sibal**

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's strong pitch for a "secular civil code", Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Friday alleged that the BJP has been neither secular nor civil in the last 10 years. A "secular and civil country is the need of the hour", the Independent Rajya Sabha MP and former Union minister said in a post on X. Modi said in his Independence Day address that a "secular civil code" is the need of the hour for the country. He also described the existing set of laws as a "communal civil code" and termed them discriminatory. Referring to Modi's remarks, Sibal posted on X, "PM: 'Need of the hour...a Secular Civil Code in this country... spent 75 years under the Communal Civil Code'. My take: Need of the hour: A secular and civil country. In the last 10 years, the BJP has neither been 'secular' nor 'civil'."

**Devineni Avinash stopped at Hyd airport**

Devineni Avinash, a prominent YSRCP leader from Vijayawada, was stopped by authorities at Shamshabad Airport in Hyderabad on Thursday night as he attempted to board a flight to Dubai. Airport officials, acting on instructions from the Andhra Pradesh police in Mangalagiri, prevented Avinash from leaving the country due to pending legal cases against him. The Andhra Pradesh police had issued lookout notices and shared information with airports regarding persons allegedly involved in the 2021 attack on the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) central office in Mangalagiri, Guntur district. Avinash's name is listed in the FIR filed in connection with the attack, along with several other YSRCP leaders. The police have taken preventive measures to ensure that those involved in the case do not evade justice by fleeing the country.

**ISRO successfully launches SSLV-D3-EOS-08 from Sriharikota**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully launched the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV-D3), carrying the EOS-08 Earth observation satellite, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. The SSLV-D3 mission marks the final developmental flight of ISRO's smallest rocket, which is now fully operational for future missions. This mission is expected to boost NewSpace India Ltd's commercial satellite launch operations. It follows the successful SSLV-D2-EOS-07 mission in February 2023 and is ISRO's third mission of 2024. The SSLV-D3 will help enhance collaboration between ISRO, the Indian industry, and NewSpace India Limited (NSIL). The SSLV, ISRO's smallest rocket,



**It follows the successful SSLV-D2-EOS-07 mission in February 2023 and is ISRO's third mission of 2024. The SSLV-D3 will help enhance collaboration between ISRO, the Indian industry, and NewSpace India Limited (NSIL).**

stands at 34 metres tall and is capable of carrying payloads of up to 500 kg into low Earth orbit. The primary goals of the SSLV-D3-EOS-08 mission include the design and development of a microsatellite, the creation of payload instruments, and the integration of new technologies for future operational satellites. The EOS-08 satellite carries three payloads: the Electro-Optical Infrared Payload (EOIR) for satellite-based surveillance and environmental monitoring, the Global Navigation Satellite System-Reflectometry payload (GNSS-R) for ocean surface wind analysis and flood detection, and the SiC UV Dosimeter for monitoring UV irradiance, crucial for India's Gaganyaan Mission. The satellite, with a mass of 175.5 kg and a mission life of one year, is built on the Microsat/IMS-1 bus and generates around 420 W of power. This mission will further support NSIL's commercial satellite launch capabilities, expanding India's role in the global space industry.

**AP Gov, CM, Dy CM congratulate ISRO**

Andhra Pradesh Governor S Abdul Nazeer, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan here on Friday congratulated ISRO for successfully placing EOS-08 satellite into orbit with SSLV D3 flight. In a message here, Governor S Abdul Nazeer said ISRO has added another feather to its cap and wished them many more successful missions in the future. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu congratulated ISRO stating, "A moment of glory for India's space prowess. Congratulations to ISRO on the successful launch of SSLV-D3-EOS-08 from Sriharikota. This milestone achievement strengthens India's small satellite capabilities and empowers NewSpace India Ltd for future commercial launches. I extend my best wishes to Team ISRO for their future endeavours. Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan said that the successful placing of the EOS-08 satellite into orbit is a matter of pride for the country. "Our space experts are working hard to design satellites and put them into orbit for the benefit of the country. This satellite monitoring of the environment, natural calamities and volcanoes is of great benefit to society. I heartily congratulate the scientists who made this experiment a success," Pawan Kalyan said.

**Medic rape-murder: IMA announces 24-hour closure of non-emergency services**

The Indian Medical Association has announced a 24-hour nationwide withdrawal of non-emergency services from 6 am on August 17 to protest against the alleged rape and murder of a trainee woman doctor at the state-run R G Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata and the subsequent vandalism at the facility.

'Seculars': the enemies of women's equality

Secularism implies the principle of separation of the state from religious institutions. In the context of typical western polity, secularism means the separation of Church and State, with Church subsuming religion or religious institutions. Thus, the government of a secular state does not have a religion of its own and does not concern itself with the religion of its citizens when dealing with them.

The Partition in 1947 created a theocratic Pakistan and a secular India. Former PM Indira Gandhi even amended the Constitution to include 'secular' in the Preamble to emphasise this. Laws are the rules that governments use in their dealings with their citizens. Every law must conform to the Constitution, which defines the fundamental law of the land. Yet, our Civil and Criminal laws, 74 years after adopting the secular Constitution, have denied equal rights to our Muslim sisters.

The real issue is not that our laws discriminate between Muslim men and women but that they discriminate between Muslim women and women of other religions. While the state protects Hindu and Christian women against polygamy, it does not treat Muslim women as their equals and denies protection to Muslim women. Marriage is not an exception. The same unequal treatment pervades divorce and post-divorce maintenance.

strive to, and if necessary, include positive discrimination to achieve broad equality between men and women. While the marriage laws protect women of every religion against polygamy, which they consider a social evil, they do not extend the same protection to Muslim women. The real issue is not that our laws discriminate between Muslim men and women but that they discriminate between Muslim women and women of other religions. While it protects, for example, Hindu and

Christian women against polygamy, it does not treat Muslim women as their equals and denies protection to Muslim women. Marriage is not an exception. The same unequal treatment extends in cases of divorce and post-divorce maintenance - while the might of the State protects a Hindu woman's interests through its courts, the laws deny the same to Muslim women. As the Shah Bano case proves, the Indian state does not just deny but actively acts to keep this discrimination in



KISHORE POREDDY

place. What boggles the mind even more than our secular state denying equal rights to all women irrespective of their religion is that even those who claim to be champions of secularism expend every effort not to end the discrimination but to continue it. These self-certified champions of secularism are

also the same ones who make loud claims of fighting patriarchy, religious dogma, regressive social practices and more, yet the same ones who call themselves feminists, rationalists, leftists, and communists unabashedly oppose those who fight for equal rights for Muslim women. The irony is that those who fight to continue discrimination based on religion call themselves secularists and brand those who fight to eliminate this discrimination as communalists. Those who talk of intersectionality and intersectional or multiple forms of discrimination, such as the same person being the victim of racism and sexism, are also the ones who quote the Sachar Committee Report to claim Muslims are socially disadvantaged. Yet, for some mysterious reasons, they never apply the same intersectional discrimination logic to

Muslim women and fight for their equal rights. Another significant demographic that had fought for women's rights had been the Western-educated elite of Indian society that also fought for our Independence from the British. While the Hindu elite of this category was pushing for reforms and the abolition of discriminatory practices like Sati, child marriage, Devadasi system, temple entry, the abolition and criminalisation of dowry, polygamy and other such practices that discriminate against their women; the highly educated, especially Western-educated Muslim elite, unfortunately, went the other way. From yesterday's Jinnah to today's Asaduddin Owaisi, both Barristers-at-Law have fought to preserve the discrimination rather than eliminate it. While Jinnah fought to create an Islamic theocracy, Asaduddin Owaisi

fought against legislation aimed at providing reservations for women in our legislative bodies and eliminating the practice of instant triple talaq. While it is true that the entire ecosystem of leftists, communists, progressives, feminists and religious fundamentalists have ganged up to treat Muslim women unequally to their sisters from other religions, the real seculars and progressives in our society need to take steps and end this inequality. The Prime Minister's Independence Day speech regarding the need to revamp and replace our communal civil laws with secular and uniform laws is a ray of hope. No woman, solely based on her faith, should be denied equality and the equal protection of our secular State.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson.)

Bar Council of India team calls on Naidu



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA A delegation of Bar Council of India (BCI) led by senior advocate and Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra called on Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in the Secretariat in Amaravati here on Friday.

The Chief Minister said a delegation of Bar Council of India led by its chairman Manan Kumar Mishra met him making a significant step towards further elevating legal education in India, the BCI Trust PEARL FIRST has proposed to establish a new premier university in Andhra

Pradesh on the lines of NLSIU, Bangalore and IUCLER Goa. This new institution would also have a world-class arbitration centre and foster international collaborations, thus bolstering higher education and skill development in the field of law and allied areas, the Chief Minister added.

'We fulfilled promises...

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These initiatives included supplying water through tankers, providing medical services, distributing sewing machines to women under the Shree Sakthi scheme, and various other welfare programs. The Minister also reminisced about the TDP founder, the late N.T. Rama Rao, who launched the first Anna Danam (free food supply) program. He mentioned that ₹1,800 crore is currently available as fixed deposits with the Anna Danam Trust. Lokesh emphasised the urgent need to strengthen

government schools and colleges to boost enrollment and ensure that teachers focus solely on their profession. "I am confident that government educational institutions will be developed to a level where they can compete with private institutions," he stated. The Minister also warned of stringent action against those who deliberately violate norms to cause harm to innocent people. Referring to the case of the former minister Jogi Ramesh's son, who allegedly purchased Agrigold lands using fake documents, Lokesh questioned, "Should we not take action against such individuals?"

Medic rape-murder: ...

Continued from Page 1

Essential services will be maintained and casualty wards operational, the medical body said in a statement issued late on Thursday night. Out-patient departments (OPD) will not function and elective surgeries will not be conducted. The withdrawal is across all sectors wherever modern medicine doctors are providing services, the IMA said. "Subsequent to the brutal crime in R G Kar Medical College, Kolkata, and the hoolliganism unleashed on the protesting students on the eve of Independence Day (Wednesday night), the Indian Medical Association declares nationwide withdrawal of services by doctors of modern medicine from 6 am on Saturday 17.08.2024 to 6 am Sunday 18.08.2024 for 24 hours," the statement said. "Doctors, especially women, are vulnerable to violence because of the nature of the profession. It is for authorities to provide for the safety of doctors inside hospitals and campuses. Both physical assaults and crimes are a result of indifference and insensitivity of the authorities concerned to the needs of doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers," it said. The call for the nationwide withdrawal of non-emergency medical services was taken after a meeting with state branches of the IMA. The IMA on Thursday condemned the vandalism at the Kolkata hospital where doctors have been protesting since August 9 evening following the alleged rape and murder of the woman medic.

TODAY ALMANAC, Forecast: Mostly Cloudy, Temp: 36°C, Humidity: 68%, Sunrise: 5:52 AM, Sunset: 6:31 PM, Updated: August 16, 2024 5:00 PM

Sr IPS ... Continued from Page 1 But it is not appropriate to humiliate All India Service officers, who are obligated to serve under the party in power," remarked a senior IPS officer. The officers currently on the waiting list include PSR Anjaneyulu (DG), PV Sunilkumar (DG), N Sanjay (Additional DG), Kanti Rana (IG), G Palaraju (IG), K. Kolli Raghuram Reddy (IG), RN Ammireddy (DIG), CH Vijay Rao (DIG), Vishal Gunny (DIG), KKN Anburajan (SP), Y Ravishankar Reddy (SP), Y Rishan Reddy (SP), K Raghuvra Reddy (SP), P Paramaswar Reddy (SP), P Joshua (SP), and Krishnakant Patel (SP).

AIIMS-M students suspend services

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA Students of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Mangalagiri, have suspended all non-emergency services from Friday, protesting the rape and murder of a fellow medico in Kolkata recently. A post-graduate student of RG Kar Medical College in Kolkata was raped and murdered in the wee hours of August 9. Non-emergency services

were suspended from 8:30 am today as part of an indefinite strike, however, all emergency services such as ICU, labour room and others will continue as usual. "The resident doctors (senior and junior residents) along with the interns and undergraduate students of AIIMS, Mangalagiri have unanimously decided to initiate an indefinite halt of all non-emergency services," NVS Krishna Reddy, a medico from the college said.

Further, he said students from three colleges- AIIMS, Government Siddhartha Medical College and Pinnamaneni Siddhartha Medical College- will take out a rally today in Vijayawada. A few local doctors are also expected to join the rally, said Reddy. The Resident Doctors Association of AIIMS noted that it is deeply anguished by the recent violent incidents at RG Kar Medical College and

the subsequent alleged mob attack on protesting students there. "We demand an unbiased and prompt investigation with maximum punishment to the guilty, implementation of the Central Protection Act and appropriate compensation to the victim's family," said Reddy. Meanwhile, the Andhra Pradesh Government Doctors Association, representing 10,000 doctors, condemned the Kolkata incident and decid-

ed to boycott duties for one hour from 9 am to 10 am on Saturday at their respective workplaces. The association has also decided to support the ongoing protests by Andhra Pradesh Junior Doctors Association (APJUDA) and sport black badges. The Andhra Pradesh chapter of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) expected to suspend services for 24 hours from Saturday.

National SC panel issues notice to govt

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) has taken serious note of a complaint lodged by leaders of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) regarding the recent attack on the Ambedkar statue in Vijayawada. The Commission has directed the Andhra Pradesh government to submit a detailed Action Taken Report (ATR) within a week, outlining the measures implemented in response to the incident. In a joint letter addressed to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police (DGP) of Andhra Pradesh, the NCSC has cautioned that failure to submit the report within the specified timeframe will prompt the Commission to

ATTACK ON AMBEDKAR STATUE



take further action under its statutory authority. It is noteworthy that a delegation of YSRCP leaders met with the NCSC in Delhi on August 14. The delegation, which included MP M. Gurumurthy, former ministers Merugu Nagarjuna and Adimulapu Suresh, former MP Nandigam Suresh, and former MLA Kaile Anil Kumar, submitted a formal complaint to NCSC Chairman Kishore

Makwana regarding the vandalism of the Dr B.R. Ambedkar statue in Vijayawada.

Approximately a week ago, unidentified individuals damaged the plaque of the 125-foot Dr. Ambedkar statue, a prominent symbol of social justice. The act has triggered protests from various Dalit organizations. Of particular note, the name of Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy was reportedly removed from the plaque. The statue, inaugurated by Jagan Reddy and opened to the public in January this year, stands as a significant emblem of social justice. The YSRCP has accused the current government, led by Chandrababu Naidu, of targeting the statue out of political vendetta.

Spl task force to advise AP govt on ...

Continued from Page 1 TATA Group Chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran held extensive discussions with Chief Minister Naidu at the State Secretariat on Friday, focusing primarily on investment opportunities in the State. The talks also centred on industrial development and the broader goal of building Swarna Andhra Pradesh under the Vision-2047 initiative. Following the successful discussions, the State Government has established a Special Task Force to provide strategic recommendations on advancing these initiatives. The Chief Minister will chair the Task Force, with Chandrasekaran serving as the Co-Chairman. It will also include prominent industrialists and experts from relevant sectors. To position Andhra Pradesh as the leading state in India by 2027, aligned with Vision-2047, the Task Force will focus on the critical steps required to achieve this target. Additionally, the State Government plans to establish the Centre for Global Leadership in Amaravati, in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), with TATA playing a key role as a partner. Furthermore, a TATA Consultancy Services (TCS) Development Centre is set to be established in Visakhapatnam. The Chief Minister and the TATA Group Chairman also discussed the potential expansion of Air India and Vistara Airlines within the state. Other topics of discussion included the establishment of solar energy projects, telecommunications, and food processing units in Andhra Pradesh.

Devineni Avinash stopped at ...

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Avinash had previously sought anticipatory bail in this case from the High Court. According to Mangalagiri Circle Inspector Srinivas, upon Avinash's arrival at the airport, immigration officials detained him and promptly notified the Mangalagiri police. In response, the police instructed the airport authorities to bar Avinash from travelling abroad, resulting in his return from the airport. The case has already seen charges filed against 117 individuals, and three police officers have been suspended for allegedly obstructing the investigation. In response to the incident, Avinash released a video on social media condemning the allegations that he was attempting to "flee the country." He asserted that there was no reason for him to escape and stated that he was prepared to face court proceedings if his involvement in the attack was proven.

BJP neither secular...

Continued from Page 1

Addressing a press conference later in the morning, Sibal said the prime minister in his speech from the Red Fort spoke of a Uniform Civil Code but did not specify which laws he was talking about. India's Constitution says it is a secular country and the BJP must embrace secularism not just in its speeches but also in actions, he noted. The UCC is not an issue without which the country cannot progress, Sibal said and added that the nation will progress when one takes everyone along. "The sad thing is that if you look at prime ministers over the years, no PM has given such controversial speeches as he (Modi) has. You would remember that in the past (he has spoken about) 'shamshan-kabristan', love jihad, 'ghuspetiy'e' etc. His CM in Assam talks about 'flood jihad'," Sibal said. "They talk of security of Hindus...we all want it. But the Assam CM does not allow our Hindu brothers, who want to crossover from Bangladesh as the circumstances are adverse for them, to do so," the senior advocate and former Congress leader added. It is not in the country's interest to do this kind of politics, Sibal said, slamming the BJP and adding that it first needs to understand the

CM Naidu embarks on ...

Continued from Page 1

Union Ministers Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, Bhupatiraju Srinivasa Varma, Pemmasani Chandrasekhar, and Andhra Pradesh Minister for Water Resources Nimmala Rama Naidu were among those present. Later that evening, CM Naidu met with Union Jal Shakti Minister Chandrakant Raghunath Patil, accompanied by other union ministers, the AP minister, and MPs. During the meeting, CM Naidu provided a detailed update on the Polavaram project and urged the Union Minister to approve the pending proposals, including the construction of a new diaphragm wall. The CM Naidu will meet with PM Modi, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday. The discussions will focus on securing the necessary funds for Polavaram, resolving long-standing issues, and advancing the development of the new capital, Amaravati, with the Central government's support.

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# 'Anna Canteens' aim to satisfy hunger of poor: Parthasarathy

Govt intention is to provide a full meal to people for just Rs 5

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Kolusu Parthasarathy, Minister of Housing, I&PR, has said that the purpose of setting up 'Anna Canteens' is to satisfy the hunger of the people. The Minister inaugurated the Anna Canteen at RR Peta in Nuzvid town on Friday and served breakfast to the people.



On the occasion, Minister Parthasarathy said that hundreds of workers and others come to the town and spend hundreds of rupees on breakfast and lunch. The government's intention is to provide a full meal to such people for just Rs 5. The Minister said that it is the responsibility of the coalition government to provide good governance according to the aspirations of the people to make them happy. He said that Chandrababu Naidu had signed five major promises after taking charge as Chief Minister. NTR Bharosa pensions are being provided to 65 lakh people across the State on the 1st of every month at 6 am. It has been increased from Rs

3,000 to 4,000 for senior citizens and widows and Rs 7,000 has been paid at once along with three months' arrears. The pension has been increased from Rs 3,000 to Rs 6,000 for the disabled and from Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 for the chronically ill. A notification has been released for Mega DSC to fill 16,700 posts. He said that there is a demand for skilled profession-

als in the industrial sector and training centres are being set up for skill development for the youth. Anna Canteens are being set up across the State from August 15. He said that the previous government had diverted the funds of the local bodies without their knowledge. "It is the responsibility of the leaders of the alliance to inform the people about the economic

destruction done by the previous government and the damage done to the State. The Chief Minister is working hard to put the State back on track," Minister Parthasarathy said.

Municipal Commissioner Venkatarami Reddy, DE Lakshminarayana, Ward Councillor Ch Durga Prasad, local public representatives and officials of various departments were present.



## Jagan congratulates ISRO

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former chief minister and YSR Congress Party president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has extended his heartfelt congratulations to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for the successful launch of the EOS-08 Earth Observation Satellite. The satellite was launched aboard the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)-D3 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.

The YSRCP chief commended ISRO scientists and engineers for their unwavering dedication and relentless pursuit of excellence, which has once again placed India on the global stage of space exploration. He praised the organisation's consistent efforts in achieving new milestones that contribute to national development and global scientific advancements.

# 121 hotels, lodges raided in Vizag; several arrests made

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a major operation, the City Police on Friday conducted simultaneous raids on hotels and lodges across the city. Over 400 personnel, divided into 80 teams, were deployed for the extensive drive. The intensive crackdown led to multiple arrests and the registration of several cases.

valid permits and licenses, and verify compliance with regulations such as NOC, GST, TRADE, and FSSAI."



mending further measures to the relevant authorities." Hotels and lodges within the Commissionerate's jurisdiction are now mandated to adhere

Police Commissioner Dr Shankhabrata Bagchi stated, "Our goal was to significantly enhance the city's security standards and directly tackle unsocial activities and criminal behaviour. The raids, conducted from 6:30 am to 11:30 am, were designed to identify and apprehend criminals, including fugitives from other states, individuals with outstanding warrants, missing persons, and foreigners with irregular visa statuses. Additionally, the operation aimed to uncover any involvement in prostitution, ensure that hotels and lodges held

During the operation, 121 lodges were inspected, resulting in the filing of four cases under the NDPS Act for ganja possession, one excise case, and the seizure of 10.50 kg of ganja and nine bottles of beer. The raids uncovered numerous violations, including the absence of permits for small lodges, inadequate visitor screening, improper room allocation without ID verification, poorly maintained CCTV systems, and lapses in safety measures related to fire and electricity protocols.

"We discovered a range of violations, including missing permits and poorly maintained visitor records," Commissioner Bagchi noted. "We took immediate action by registering numerous cases and recom-

strictly to all legal regulations, including installing CCTV cameras with a 30-day backup. Any violations will be met with legal consequences. The public and hotel management are encouraged to report any suspicious activities or concerns to CP Garu at 7995095799, with assurances that all information will be kept confidential and prompt action will be taken.

In this operation, each team used body-worn or mobile cameras and included a woman police constable or home guard to ensure thorough inspections of hotel and lodge rooms. This initiative underscores a robust effort to uphold law and order and enhance safety standards throughout the city.

## Renaming Gannavaram Airport after NTR-Ramoji proposed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Editors Guild of South India has proposed renaming of Gannavaram Airport as 'NTR-Ramoji International Airport' in tribute to the late N.T. Rama Rao (NTR) for his pivotal role in establishing the airport and to honour the significant contributions of the late media magnate Ramoji Rao to the nation. In a letter to CM N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday, the Editors Guild of South India also highlighted the pressing concerns of journalists, particularly the lack of housing for those

who dedicate their lives to their work, often facing significant risks.

Many journalists have tragically lost their lives in the line of duty, leaving their families vulnerable and without security. Despite previous governmental assurances of providing housing entitlements, these promises have yet to be fulfilled, the letter said.

The Editors Guild expressed optimism that under Chief Minister Naidu's capable leadership, these commitments would soon become a reality and urged the government to take necessary steps to address these concerns.

## MLA donates one-month salary for Anna Canteens

PNS ■ ELURU

Eluru MLA Badeti Chanti has donated his one-month salary of Rs 1.25 lakh for the maintenance of Anna Canteen.

MLA Badeti Chanti, flanked by Jana Sena party constituency in-charge Reddy Appala Naidu, inaugurated the Anna Canteen at Tangellamudi here on Friday.

He donated his one-month salary of Rs 1.25 which he received as a Legislature, handed over to the Collector. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Badeti Chanti said that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is committed to reopening the Anna canteens across the state to fulfil the hunger of



the poor. The MLA criticized the erstwhile YSRCP regime for closing the Anna Canteen depriving the poor of food at an affordable price.

Collector Vetri Selvi, Municipal Corporation

Commissioner Chandrasekhar, former deputy Mayor Chode Venkataratnam and other leaders were present. After inaugurating the Anna Canteen they had food in the canteen.

## Delegation of CII calls on CM



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A delegation of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) headed by its Director General called on Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at the Secretariat in Amaravati near here on Friday.

Naidu said on social media "X": "I had a productive meeting with a delegation from the Confederation of Indian Industry headed by its Director General Chandrajit Banerjee. We discussed the establishment of a Centre for Global

Leadership on Competitiveness (GLC) in Amaravati by the CII. "The Government of Andhra Pradesh and CII are planning to establish a GoAP-CII industry forum to implement the recommendations of the Taskforce on Economic Development."

The Chief Minister further said: "Additionally, we will focus on enhancing the skills and employability of the youth of Andhra Pradesh through initiatives like the CII Multi Skill Training Institute (MSTI) and CII Model Career Centre (MCC)."

## Public health is priority: MP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Malaria cases have decreased due to mosquito control measures taken in the state, said MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni). The MP emphasised that the health of the people would be the priority in the TDP-led NDA government.

On Friday, MP Sivanath inspected an anti-larvae operation being conducted by VMC near Budameru Bridge in Ayodhyanager, Central Constituency, alongside MLA Bonda Umamaheswara Rao.

On this occasion, MP Sivanath stated that they were spraying chemicals using drones to detect mosquito larvae in sewers and prevent their breeding. He said that the state government had initiated a mosquito prevention drive across the state for the past two months to prevent the outbreak of malaria and viral fevers transmitted by mosquitoes.

Medical Officer Ratnavali, Biologist Surya, Zonal Commissioner K Prabhudas, and corporation staff participated in the programme.

## Rly officials conduct inspection of Eluru Station, pantry cars



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Md Ali Khan, Divisional Commercial Manager, Vijayawada, along with a team of Inspectors, conducted an extensive inspection of Eluru Station and pantry cars of Express trains on Friday. The inspection aimed to ensure the quality of passenger amenities, promote digital ticketing, and maintain high standards of hygiene and customer service.

During the inspection at the Eluru Station, Ali Khan and his team examined amenities for passengers, booking counters, display of QR codes, parcel office, catering, and water vending stalls. He instructed

the staff to promote digital transactions and ensure proper working of the ATMs.

Later, the team inspected the pantry car of Konark Express, focusing on expiry dates of ingredients, food items, hygiene and cleanliness of wash area. The staff also verified the authenticity of ID cards of vendors, medical certificates and proper gear. The team counselled the vendors to wear proper gear, be courteous towards passengers, maintain personal hygiene, and wear uniforms and ID cards. Ali Khan instructed the pantry car manager to strictly adhere to the guidelines and safety protocols issued by the Railway Board.

## 7 red sanders logs seized; 6 smugglers arrested



PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Task Force police team seized seven red sanders logs and arrested six smugglers at the ST colony at Ustikayapendavilla village in Yerravaripalem mandal on Friday.

Police said that on the direction of SP L Subba Rayudu, a task force police team led by RI (Operations) Suresh Kumar Reddy conducted combing. They saw seven red sander smugglers loading the logs into a car.

The police arrested them

and seized seven red sanders logs. The police also seized a car and a motorcycle. The arrested persons were the residents of Tirupattur in Tamil Nadu. The police also seized a car and two motorcycles. CI Srinivasulu registered a case.

## Vijayawada-Mumbai IndiGo service begins

New terminal at Gannavaram to open by next summer

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada MP and Vice Chairman of the Airports Authority, Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni) announced that efforts are underway to open a new terminal at Vijayawada Airport, which serves as the hub of the capital region, by the coming summer. An IndiGo service from Vijayawada to Mumbai commenced at Vijayawada Airport on Friday night. This service was inaugurated by MP Vallabhaneni Balashowry, in his capacity as Chairman of the Airports Authority, and MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni), in his capacity as Vice Chairman of the Airports Authority, along with MLA Yarlagadda Venkata

Rao and MLA Kolikapudi Srinivasa Rao of Thiruvuru. On this occasion, MPs Chinni and Balashowry, along with Airport Director M. Lakshminath Reddy, lit the Jyothi at the domestic terminal of the airport to mark the start of the Mumbai service and boarding passes were distributed to the passengers.

Vijayawada MP Sivanath stated that two months ago, Air India commenced flight service to Mumbai, and now IndiGo has made the Mumbai flight service available. He mentioned that considering the needs of passengers in the capital region, he, along with MP Balashowry, met Union Civil Aviation Minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu to request connectivity flights to

various parts of the country. MP Chinni announced that IndiGo's flight service from Vijayawada to Delhi will commence on 14th September. He also mentioned that efforts are being made to develop the cargo terminal at Gannavaram Airport. He expressed his gratitude to Union Minister Ram Mohan Naidu and IndiGo for recognising the needs of traders in the capital region and assisting in the initiation of these services.

MP Balashowry remarked that under the NDA government, the development work at Vijayawada Airport is progressing rapidly. He added that once the terminal is completed, flight services to various countries will be initiated.

## SC Judge advocates mediation as tool to resolve disputes

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Justice Jitendra Kumar Maheshwari of the Supreme Court has emphasised the profound impact of mediation on dispute resolution, during his address at Dr. BR Ambedkar Law College of Andhra University on Friday. In his lecture on 'Mediation as an Alternative Dispute Settlement Process', Justice Maheshwari underscored the historical and philosophical significance of mediation, illustrating its enduring relevance. "Mediation has been a crucial tool since ancient times," Justice Maheshwari declared. He drew upon historical precedents to highlight the long-standing importance of mediation in resolving conflicts. "Even Buddhism acknowledges mediation as a wise approach to resolving conflicts," he added.

Reflecting on his extensive career, Justice Maheshwari observed a notable surge in family dispute cases. "What was once a rarity in courtrooms has now increased into thousands of cases," he noted, pointing to the escalating demand for effective resolution methods. He advocated for mediation's transformative potential, stressing its efficiency in addressing disputes and delivering timely outcomes. Delving into the Mediation



Act of 2023, Justice Maheshwari explained its core principles: confidentiality, rigorous training, and expedited resolution. "Mediation is not just a process but a transformative practice that can resolve disputes effectively when both parties actively participate," he asserted. He shared an example of a family dispute, unresolved for 55 years, that found resolution through mediation.

Justice Maheshwari reassured that mediation complements, rather than competes with, the legal profession. "Mediation will not disrupt the legal profession; rather, it enhances our ability to serve justice," he clarified. Quoting Abraham Lincoln and Mahatma Gandhi, he advocated for a shift in mindset towards embracing mediation. "To resolve cases effectively through mediation, we must

first change our approach," he advised future lawyers, stressing the importance of continual learning and critical thinking.

AU Vice-Chancellor Prof G. Sasibhushana Rao reviewed the history and impact of AU Law College, founded in 1945, while Principal Prof K. Seethamanikam introduced Justice Maheshwari, acknowledging his distinguished career. Justice Maheshwari was honoured with a memento and planted a tree on the Law College grounds, symbolizing growth and renewal.

Visakhapatnam District Court Principal District and Sessions Judge Alapati Giridhar, State Bar Council vice-president Krishnamohan, DSNLU Vice-Chancellor Prof D. Surya Prakash Rao, and numerous judges, former vice-chancellors, professors, researchers, and students were present.

# Anna Canteen opened by Collector, MLAs

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector C Nagarani, along with MLAs, inaugurated the 'Anna Canteen', near the old bus stand here on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Nagarani said that eight Anna Canteens were opened in the district of which three canteens were set up in Bhimavaram town which were inaugurated today.

As per the aspirations of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, the Anna Canteens would function to satiate the hunger of the poor. The Anna Canteen would be more useful to the people who come to the town neighbouring towns and villages for various works, Collector Nagarani said.

She directed the officials to provide delicious and nutritious food at the Anna canteens



and maintain hygienic conditions. She called upon people to avail the opportunity.

MLA Pulavarti Ramanjaneyulu said that three Anna canteens were relaunched today at the new bus station, old bus station,

Juvvalapalem road where tasty food is provided at an affordable price of Rs 5. Efforts are being made to open 203 Anna Canteens across the state by the end of September, the MLA informed.

MLA Anjibabu, ex-PM

Sitamahalakshmi, municipal Commissioner M Shyamala and TDP district president Mantena Ramaraju were also present. The Collector, MLAs and other leaders had breakfast in the Anna canteen after the inauguration.

# RWS officials directed to complete Jal Jeevan works

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector A Thameem Ansariya has directed the officials of Rural Water Supply (RWS) to take steps to complete the Jal Jeevan works expeditiously.

The Collector held meetings with the RWS officials and reviewed the progress of the works mandal-wise. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector told the officials that steps should be taken to complete the pending works undertaken through the Jal Jeevan Mission scheme in the district.

The RWS engineer explained to the Collector through a PowerPoint presentation that out of 2,424 works proposed for Rs 654.67 crores, 1721 works have been sanc-



tioned and 1304 works have been completed so far. Another 185 works are in progress and 232 works have not yet started.

The district Collector told the officials to ensure that the works are carried out expeditiously and complete soon. He asked them to set daily targets to be achieved to complete the work soon. The mapping process should be carried out

habitat-wise so that people would face difficulty drinking water. Collector Thameem Ansariya directed the officials that there is a need to pay special attention to the tribal villages to tackle the driver water shortage. As directed by the government, water testing should be done regularly and the details should be entered online, she ordered the RWS officials.

The Collector directed the RWS engineering officers to coordinate with the concerned MPDOs and take steps to complete the work quickly. The Collector ordered the officials to take steps to start the works which have not started yet. RWS SE Mardhan Ali and other officials and engineers were present.

# Rahul Kumar Reddy assumes charge as JC



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

T Rahul Kumar Reddy here on Friday took charge as Joint Collector of West Godavari district. He worked as Assistant Collector in the combined West Godavari district. When he was working as a Sub-collector in Tekkali, he was promoted to Joint Collector and transferred to the Nandyal district. He also worked as ITDA project director in Sitampet in Srikakulam district.

Talking to the media, the Joint Collector said that he would give priority to keeping the agriculture sector and its allied sectors at the top in a planner manner. Steps would be taken to procure paddy produce from the farmers in a hassle-free manner. He asked the farmers to register their crops in e-crop as it is mandatory and it enables them to extend financial assistance in case of crop loss duty and natural calamities.

The focus would be laid on resolving the grievances received in the PGRS. Special focus should also be laid on resolving the land disputes, Joint Collector Rahul Kumar Reddy added. DRO J Uday Bhaskar Rao, Narasapuram RDO M Acyut Ambarish and other officials congratulated the Joint Collector.

# Women SHGs receive Rs 41 cr bank linkage

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Municipal Commissioner Bhavana Vasista said that under the bank linkage, women's self-help groups in the city received over Rs. 41.41 crores by August, thus surpassing the target.

She held a meeting with the officials and reviewed the sanctioning of loans to women's self-help groups and also to street vendors and small traders under the PM Swanidhi scheme. She asked the MPMA officials to achieve the stipulated targets.

While reviewing the women's self-help groups loans for the financial year 2024-2025, she was happy to note the target was already achieved one month in advance. As against the target of Rs. 40 crore bank linkage to 1,000 women self-help groups, by August itself, 362 groups received Rs. 41.41 crores' she added.

The commissioner appreciated the efforts of MPMA city mission manager D. Venkatraju for the achievement. MPMA head officer administrative officer Prasad in charge TPRO Sathish was among those who attended.

# Global Education Conclave today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Oaks Overseas, one of the leading abroad education consultants in Vijayawada, is organising the Global Education Conclave-2024 at Hotel DV Manor on Saturday. Over 40 university representatives from different countries will attend the conclave.

Representatives from the

USA, UK, CANADA, FRANCE, GERMANY, and other European countries will come together and talk about the courses, fees, entry requirements, scholarships, and part-time work opportunities in their universities, as well as job opportunities and wages, when they complete their degree.

Oaks Overseas, which has over 16 years of experience in

the field, will provide eligible children and their parents with a thorough understanding of the application process, admissions, funds, loans, visa process, as well as Canadian immigration, job search visas, dependent visas etc. The students and their parents are advised to attend the event and to have detailed information about overseas education.

## CLEANSING THE RIVULET



A drone sprays chemicals to clean the Budameru rivulet in Vijayawada on Friday. Pic by Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar

# Eight people arrested with 620 gms heroin seized

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Madhapur Special Operation Team (SOT) and Raidurgam Police of Cyberabad Commissionate nabbed three drug suppliers and five consumers and recovered Rs 4.65 crore worth of 620 grams of heroin paste, one four-wheeler and seven smartphones. The arrested consumers are Nithin Gurjar, Prakash Choudary, Jaivatram Vasnam Dewasi, Prakash

Choudary and Banaram Choudary. Sub-suppliers are Mangalaram Choudary, Dinesh Chowdary and Ganesh Chowdary, but the main drug supplier Rajasthan resident Savar Jhat is absconding. Dinesh Chowdary and Mangalaram ordered heroin paste from Savar Jhat for Rs 48,000. Savar Jhat came to Hyderabad by his car on August 7 and handed over 620 grams of paste to them. They decided to set up

a team to dispose of the drug to consumers. Later, Dinesh, Ganesh, Prakash and Mangalaram proceeded to Gachibowli Light Store which belongs to Prakash Choudary to hide the drugs in a car. On credible information Cyberabad Police apprehended the drug peddlers along with their car and recovered 620 grams of heroin paste from the vehicle. Later, on their confessions, five consumers are apprehended.

# 'Swabhiman' initiative to empower disabled community

## Plea to establish a school for the blind and a home for the disabled in Srikakulam

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

District Collector Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar, along with Joint Collector Farman Mohammad Khan, launched the Swabhiman programme at the Collectorate's Grievance Hall on Friday. This new initiative is specifically designed to address the needs and concerns of individuals with disabilities, ensuring they have a direct platform to voice their issues.

To symbolise this commitment, a newly constructed ramp was also unveiled at the Collectorate, enabling easier access for people with disabilities. However, while the ramp is a welcome step, the challenges faced by the disabled community are far from over. Mattanilam Yadav, a representative from Srikakulam mandal, appealed for a school for the blind and a home for the disabled in the



district. "Our district is lacking essential facilities for the blind and disabled," Yadav said.

Echoing similar concerns, Mallareddy Bhaskara Rao, district secretary of the Disability Struggle Committee, pointed out the continued inaccessibility of certain areas within the Collectorate. "The absence of a lift remains a major obstacle,"

Rao emphasised, urging immediate action from the district administration. Ratnala Srinivasa Rao, president of the Disabled Community, underscored the need for justice and support for those with disabilities. "We hope the administration will continue to stand by us," he said.

To address the pressing needs of the disabled community,

the district administration held a special grievance redressal session as part of the 'Swabhiman' programme. A total of 46 petitions were received from individuals across various mandals. Collector Pundkar assured that each petition will undergo careful scrutiny and prompt action.

Announcing the programme, Collector Pundkar said, "We are committed to creating a more inclusive society for the disabled. The 'Swabhiman' initiative is a step in that direction. We will hold a grievance redressal session every third Friday of the month and are working towards improving accessibility, including better public transport options."

The event saw the participation of several prominent officials and numerous members of the disabled, deaf, and blind communities.

# Pavitra Samarpana fete held



PNS ■ TIRUMALA

On the second day of the ongoing annual Pavitrotsavam at Srivari temple on Friday, Pavitra Samarpana ritual was grandly performed, in the presence of TTD EO J Syamala Rao.

As part of the festivities, Yagasala Snapanam Tirumanjanam was performed at the Sampangi Prakaram and thereafter amidst Vedic chants and Mangala Vaidyams, Pavitra Malas were decked to all the main idols and utsava idols inside temple, and Dwaja



Stambham, Bali Peetham, Varaha Swamy and Bedi Anjaneya outside the temple. Later in the evening, Malayappa Swami, along with his consorts, will bless the devotees along the Mada streets.

In view of the festivities, TTD has cancelled Arijta Sevas like Kalyanotsavam, Unjal Seva, Arijta Brahmotsavam and Sahasra Deepalankara Sevas. Tirumala pontiffs, Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdhary, temple DyEO Lokanatham and others were present.

# Accurate, detailed reporting crucial in housing scheme: Sisodia

## Stresses significance of clear grasp of land utilisation, compensation, and available land

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

In a bid to ensure transparency and accountability in the housing scheme for the underprivileged, Special Chief Secretary of the Revenue Department, RP Sisodia, has instituted a stringent reporting system for land allocation. During a review meeting with Revenue officials on Friday, Sisodia stressed the need for meticulous data on land utilised for the housing initiative. "Accurate and detailed reporting is paramount for the successful implementation of the housing scheme," Sisodia declared. He underlined the significance of a clear grasp of land utilisation, compensation, and available land to uphold transparency and accountability.

Sisodia has mandated all tehsildars to submit comprehensive reports encompassing total land allocated, its categorisation (government, D



patta, purchased), compensation details, and remaining land suitable for housing. The reports must include beneficiary eligibility information in the prescribed format for forthcoming revenue conferences. The meeting also delved into lands notified under Section 22A in the past five years. Sisodia scrutinised mandal-wise reports from webland mutation services

and addressed re-survey related issues. He underscored the necessity of verifying freehold lands dating back 20 years and instructed tehsildars to generate separate reports for lands allocated to farmers and those earmarked for housing.

Post the review meeting, Sisodia conducted on-ground assessments in Bhogapuram, S. Kota, and Vepada mandals.

The inspection, aimed at rectifying land record discrepancies, unveiled substantial variations in land classification across different government departments. At the district centre, Sisodia met with key officials including RDOs, tehsildars, and sub-registrars. He issued directives on critical matters, stating, "Accurate maintenance and registration of land records with both the tehsildar and registrars is imperative." He further emphasised the resolution of issues pertaining to 22A category lands, freehold land registration, and the impact of land re-surveying on existing records.

During his visit, Sisodia and his team examined village revenue records at Mandal Parishad Primary School and engaged with local farmers to gather crucial insights on land sales and current land use patterns. In Basavapalem, he interacted directly with vil-

lagers to discuss the land survey, enquiring about lessee passports and land title document receipt. "Understanding the villagers' direct experiences aids us in addressing their concerns more effectively," Sisodia remarked.

Prioritising security, Sisodia mandated robust measures for district revenue offices, including CCTV installation and night watchmen deployment to prevent fire hazards and other threats. "We must prioritise the safety of our revenue offices," Sisodia asserted. "Swift action must be taken to address electrical faults and report suspicious activity to the police."

The review meeting was attended by District Collector Dr BR Ambedkar, JC Sethu Madhavan, DRO Anita, RDOs Surya Kala and Shanti, Sai Sri, District Registrar AV Kumari, and mandal tehsildars.

# Eatala opposes HYDRAA, but Konda welcomes it

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Though the BJP did not express its stand on Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Monitoring and Protection (HYDRAA) officially, the party's two MPs have expressed contradictory opinions on it. Malkajgiri MP Eatala Rajender opposed HYDRAA but Chevella MP Konda Vishveshwar Reddy welcomed it and showered praise on it. Rajender alleged that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's government is enacting high-drama in the name of HYDRA. Why is the government demolishing the constructed houses? The government should give alternative lands to the people who have patta lands in FTL.

The government should make arrangements to see that water should not come into the FTL area. He asked the government to see that the constructions should not take place in the FTL area, if it is sincere.



Eatala said, "CM Revanth Reddy is giving an impression that he is acting stiffly towards illegal constructions. We have the list of Revanth Reddy as to what he is doing. Revanth Reddy is like a cat having milk closing eyes. It is good for Revanth Reddy stopped enacting dramas."

However, Chevella MP Konda Vishveshwar Reddy welcomed HYDRAA and showered praise on it. He expressed this opinion on HYDRAA on his Twitter handle. Konda said, "If the ruling



party does something good, appreciate it. If they do something wrong, criticise and protest. Good to see the BJP leader appreciating the TG Congress gov's demolition of illegal constructions, to save the lakes. At the same time, protesting against the false promises of the Congress, I appreciate HYDRAA's action in demolishing the illegal construction to save the lakes. I hope they continue to do the same. @BJP4Telangana@INCTelangan"

ACROSS THE STATES



Man clammers up two floors, films woman taking bath

The Navi Mumbai police have registered a case against a man for allegedly filming a woman while she was taking a bath, an official said on Friday. Accused Varprasad Ratnaraj Katikadla, who lives in Morbe in Panvel taluka, allegedly committed the crime on August 7 but the woman learnt about it only on Thursday. She then filed a police complaint, he said. According to the FIR, the accused climbed through a duct and took a video of the woman bathing in her second-floor home. Katikadla has been booked under Section 77 (voyeurism) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, said the station house officer of Panvel taluka police station.



Downpour in Rajasthan, Bundi's Hindoli records 220 mm rain

Heavy rain lashed parts of Rajasthan, including Hindoli in the Bundi district where the rainfall levels exceeded the 200-mm mark. Some places in Jaipur, Dausa, Baran, Nagaur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Pali and Sawai Madhopur districts witnessed heavy rainfall. Meanwhile, extremely heavy rain was recorded at some places in Ajmer and Bundi districts during the last 24 hours. The highest rainfall in eastern Rajasthan has been recorded in Hindoli in Bundi district at 220 mm and in Bikaner's Kolayat in the western region saw 172 mm of rain from yesterday till 8.30 am today. During this period, several areas recorded light to moderate rainfall, according to the Met department. Light to moderate rainfall lashed some places in Alwar, Sikar, Karauli, Kota, Bhilwara, Tonk, Jaisalmer and Barmer districts of the state. "The circulation system formed over north-eastern Rajasthan is now slowly moving towards the western region."



13 more Indian fishermen arrested by S L Navy repatriated to India

Thirteen more Indian fishermen, arrested by the Sri Lanka Navy for allegedly fishing in the island nation's waters, were on Friday repatriated to their homes, the Indian mission here said, days after 17 were sent back to India. "13 Indian fishermen are on their way home after being successfully repatriated from Sri Lanka," the Indian mission in Sri Lanka said in a post on X. The latest development comes after 17 Indian fishermen, arrested by the Sri Lanka Navy for allegedly poaching in the island nation's waters, were repatriated to their homes in India on Wednesday, the Indian High Commission said in a post on X. On Wednesday, the Indian mission repatriated 17 fishermen arrested by the Sri Lanka Navy to their homes in India. Twenty-one Indian fishermen arrested by the Sri Lanka Navy were also repatriated to Chennai from Colombo earlier this month.

Sisodia got justice by breaking 'shackles of dictatorship': Mann

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann met senior AAP leader and former deputy chief minister of Delhi Manish Sisodia here on Friday and said he has got justice by "breaking the shackles of dictatorship". This was Mann's first meeting with Sisodia after the Aam Aadmi Party leader was released on bail by the Supreme Court last week. Sisodia was arrested in connection with the excise policy case on February 26 last year, and was granted bail by the apex court on August 9. "Today I met the leader and the person who brought a revolution of education. He came out of the jail after one-and-a-half years by breaking the shackles of dictatorship. When nothing was found against him, we got justice from the court," Mann told reporters after the meeting. He said he prays for Sisodia's health and hoped he will again assume the role of improving the future of children. Mann said on the occasion of Arvind Kejriwal's birthday today, he met the Delhi chief minister's wife Sunita Kejriwal. "Today is his birthday, so I met his wife. I hope the way Sanjay Singh and Manish Sisodia got bail by breaking the walls of dictatorship and won the battle of truth, our leader will also come out soon," he added. Alleging that the investigative agencies have nothing against the party's leaders and only have false papers, he said, adding that efforts were made to break the party by scaring leaders or enticing them.



MVA MEET ON UNSEATING THE BJP-LED MAHAYUTI COALITION IN THE STATE

Uddhav Thackeray insists on freezing CM candidate first

Pawar, Patole bat for change in govt

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Friday insisted that MVA decide its chief ministerial face first rather than going by the logic of which party wins most seats, asserting that he would back any candidate announced by the Congress and NCP (SP). His Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies Sharad Pawar, who heads NCP(SP), and Congress pitched for focussing on unseating the BJP-led Mahayuti coalition in the state. Addressing party workers of the opposition bloc MVA here, Thackeray said if the Lok Sabha polls were to protect democracy and the Constitution, then the assembly polls are a fight to preserve Maharashtra's self-respect. Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly are likely to be held in October or November. Pawar stressed the need for a single-point agenda to change the government in Maharashtra if the situation

had to improve in the state. He told the MVA cadres that the three partners will take along the Left outfits, Peasants and Workers Party of India (PWP) and the Samajwadi Party by giving them due respect, and present a united face before the people of the state. The Sena (UBT) chief insisted that the chief ministerial candidate must be decided first, rather than by the logic of the party that wins the most seats in the elections. Thackeray said the experience he had during his alliance with the BJP was that whoever

had the numbers would get the CM's post. But this policy was detrimental as this would lead to one party trying to defeat the other's candidate to maintain an upper hand in the alliance, he said. "First, decide (the CM's face) and then go ahead but do not go by this policy (those having the most seats will get the CM's post). Uddhav Thackeray will back any candidate announced by Congress and NCP (SP) as the CM face of MVA. I don't have the feeling that I am fighting for myself but it is for the rights of Maharashtra," he said.

Tried to be as transparent as possible: CP

Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal on Friday asserted that the force was not trying to shield anyone and it tried to be as transparent as possible in the probe into the alleged rape and murder of a doctor at a state-run hospital here. Addressing a press conference, Goyal also admitted that despite "sufficient security presence", the police did not expect the protesting crowd to turn violent outside RG Kar Hospital premises in the early hours of August 15, and were initially caught off-guard when a deputy commissioner-ranked officer got injured.

Almost clear Marathas won't get quota: Jarange

It is "almost clear now" the Maharashtra government will not give reservations to the Maratha community as it is only listening to the OBC groups, activist Manoj Jarange alleged on Friday. Speaking to reporters in

native Antarwali Sarati in Jalna, some 60 kilometres from here, he said the Eknath Shinde government is disrespecting the Maratha community. "The state government is listening to and giving time to only Other Backward Classes leaders.

The Maratha community is disrespected. It is almost clear now the Maratha community will not be given reservation by the Maharashtra government. Therefore, we need to remove them (government)," Jarange claimed.

BJP stages statewide protests; seeks Mamata's resignation

The BJP staged rallies and sits across West Bengal on Friday, demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee following the recent murder of a woman doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital here. Party workers, carrying posters demanding Banerjee's resignation and raising slogans against the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government, described the state's condition as worse than failed democra-

cies like Pakistan and Afghanistan, accusing the administration of failing to resolve the crisis. The party alleged that their planned rally at Shyambazar Five Point Crossing in Kolkata was thwarted by police. A stage set up for the rally was dismantled, and several BJP workers were detained and taken to the central lock-up at Lalbazar police headquarters. The party condemned these actions, labeling them as attempts to stifle public dissent.

'Wherever strong message on women's safety needed, efforts made to save accused'

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra Friday said atrocities against women in West Bengal, Bihar, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh have shaken the country, and asserted that repeated leniency in cases, political protection to accused and granting of bail or parole to convicts let down women. When government statistics show 86 rapes taking place

every day, from whom should women expect protection? she posed in a post in Hindi on X. "Atrocities against women in Kolkata, Bihar, Uttarakhand and UP have shaken the entire country. At this time, women across the country are in grief and anger," Priyanka Gandhi said on X. The Congress general secretary's remarks come amid nationwide outrage over the rape and murder of a woman



trainee doctor in the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata last week.

KARNATAKA GOVT'S DECISION TO SNAP DEALINGS WITH SBI, PNB 'Arbitrary and suspicious': BJP MP

BJP Rajya Sabha member Lahar Singh Siroya on Friday said the Karnataka government's decision to close its accounts with the State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank looked "arbitrary and suspicious" in view of a Rs 187 crore scam in a state-owned corporation through the Union Bank of India. He sought to know why

the two nationalised banks were targeted when all the banks are governed by the Reserve Bank of India guidelines. Quoting media reports, Siroya said all the departments have been directed to close accounts and withdraw deposits from these two banks. The reports also said no further deposits or investments will be allowed in these banks.

The decision had apparently been taken over misappropriation of funds, he said. Karnataka government ordered all its departments, boards, corporations, public sector units and universities to withdraw all their deposits and investments in the State Bank of India and the Punjab National Bank and stop any business with these institutions on August 12. The order was reported on August 14.

Udaipur city on edge after Hindu classmate stabbed by Muslim boy

Communal tension gripped Madhuban area of Udaipur district after a class 10 student stabbed a mate of his at a government school on Thursday, police said. The injured student, a Hindu, is under observation in an ICU, District Collector Arvind Poswal said. Shortly after the inci-

dent, members of Hindu right wing outfits gathered in the Madhuban area of the city and set fire to at least three cars parked in a garage and indulged in stone pelting. "Additional policemen have been deployed in the area to maintain law and order. The accused has been detained," Superintendent of Police Yogesh Goyal said.

VIOLENCE AGAINST MINORITIES IN BANGLADESH Bansuri Swaraj, JNU VC attend protest march held in Delhi

BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj and JNU VC Santishree D Pandit were part of a march held here on Friday to protest alleged atrocities committed against minorities in Bangladesh. Hundreds of women took part in the march organised by RSS-linked Nari Shakti Forum, which began from Mandi House and will end at Jantar Mantar. Suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma was also part of the march. Protesters, carrying religious flags and placards, demanded that violence against minorities in Bangladesh be stopped.



Most protesters tied black bands on their arms while some covered their mouths with black bands. Bangladesh saw a spike in violence against members of Hindu community following the fall of the government led by Sheikh Hasina, who resigned and fled to India on August 5 following massive protests against her government over a controversial quota system in jobs.

HC Vandalism in RG Kar Hospital absolute failure of state machinery

Observing that the mob violence in R G Kar Medical College and Hospital was an absolute failure of state machinery, the Calcutta High Court on Friday directed the police and the hospital authority to file affidavits on the situation there. A division bench presided by Chief Justice T S Sivagnanam said it was hard to believe that the police intelligence did not have information about the gathering of 7,000 people, when the state's lawyer told the court that a mob of such a number



had assembled at the hospital in the early hours of Thursday. After knowing that there was some renovation work on one floor of the hospital after the body of a woman doctor, who was allegedly raped and murdered, was found, the Chief Justice said the court can order closing down the medical establishment. The bench directed the police and the administrator of the hospital to file separate affidavits narrating the "true state of affairs" at the hospital and all connected matters on August 21 when the matter will be heard again.

Mamata leads protest rally in Kolkata, demands justice



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday led a protest rally from Moulali to Dorina crossing in Kolkata, demanding justice for a woman doctor, who was allegedly raped and murdered at a state-run hospital last week. TMC activists, who accompanied Banerjee, shouted slogans for capital punishment for the accused, a demand that the chief minister has already made. The woman post-graduate trainee doctor was allegedly raped and murdered in the seminar room of the RG Kar

Medical College and Hospital on August 9. A civic volunteer has been arrested in connection with the crime the next day. A group of around 40 people entered the hospital and vandalised the emergency department, nursing unit and medicine store in the early hours of Thursday. The mob also damaged CCTV cameras at the state-run health facility and ransacked a stage where junior doctors had been demonstrating against the alleged rape and murder of the woman doctor there and demanding security at their workplace.

US Deputy Secretary of State Verma to visit India today

Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Richard R. Verma will visit India from August 17 to advance and support a prosperous, secure, and resilient future for both countries, the US state department has announced. Verma, a top Indian-American diplomat, will lead a US delegation to India between August 17 and 22 to meet senior government officials, climate leaders, aerospace academics and industry representatives to advance the US-Indian partnership on a full range of issues, including economic development, clean energy and climate action, and STEM education, the statement said. Verma will be joined in

India by Senior Advisor to the President for International Climate Policy John Podesta and Deputy Secretary of the US Department of Energy David Turk, it said. Verma is currently visiting Nepal where a new government led by Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli was installed last month. Verma, 55, a former US Ambassador to India, is the highest-ranking Indian-American ever in the State Department. On Thursday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken named Verma as the US Special Representative for Ukraine's Economic Recovery, in addition to his current position, which is the number two position in the State Department.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## PM roots for women safety

PM calls for strictest punishment for crimes against women amidst protests over rape and murder of resident doctor

The streets of Kolkata have erupted in widespread protests following the heinous rape and murder of a young resident doctor, a crime that has left the entire nation in shock and sorrow. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has expressed his firm stance on the issue, calling for the strictest possible punishment for those involved in crimes against women. The victim, a 28-year-old resident doctor at a prominent Kolkata hospital, was found murdered under gruesome circumstances after being raped. The brutal crime has triggered widespread anger, as doctors, students, and activists have taken to the streets to demand swift and severe action against the perpetrators. Placards reading "Justice for our sister" and "Stop violence against women" are being carried by hundreds of protesters across the city, while candlelight vigils continue to spread across the nation. The medical community, in particular, has expressed its fury, with many health professionals going on strike, calling for stronger protection and justice for female healthcare workers, who often face threats and harassment in the course of their duties.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in response to the national outrage, has unequivocally condemned the horrific crime. In his address to the nation on Independence Day, he emphasised the government's commitment to ensuring the safety of women in the country. Modi reiterated his stance that there must be zero tolerance for crimes against women, and perpetrators should face the most stringent punishment under the law. But it is not that we do not have strict laws for crime against women but the problem is their execution. The new amendments to criminal laws have additional features to expedite such cases. The new provisions include the death penalty for rape, video recording of crime scenes, and a witness protection program, etc. all of which could prove to help resolve such cases. However, only time will reveal how effectively these measures will be implemented on the ground and the guilty punished speedily. Women's safety has been a recurring concern in India, and incidents like this continue to raise questions about the effectiveness of existing laws and preventive measures. The Prime Minister's call for the strictest punishment has been widely welcomed, but it remains to be seen how these words will translate into concrete legal reforms. However, having laws is one thing and reforming the society is quite another. The attitude of society towards women must change. Most cases go unreported as the victims are often blamed by society; questions like 'why were you there?', 'what were you wearing?' and so on are posed to her to hold her responsible. The process becomes punishment and the victim has to live with the stigma for the rest of her life. The nation now awaits justice—not just for one young doctor, but for all the women who have suffered in silence.

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### PICTALK



Artists perform at Sawai Mansingh Stadium on Independence Day in Jaipur

# Terrorism resurges amid shifts in strategy



SUDHIR HINDWAN

With militants shifting their focus to Jammu and adopting more aggressive strategies, concerns over national security are once again at the forefront

The recent terrorist attack on Army Captain Deepak Singh, tragically killed a day before India's 78th Independence Day, must be condemned unequivocally. This act of violence, along with the discovery that at least three terrorists were hiding in the Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), underscores the persistence of militant activities in the region. Unfortunately, this incident is not an isolated one but a continuation of the long-standing saga of terrorism in J&K. Recent attacks in Jammu indicate a significant shift in terrorist activities due to several factors.

Firstly, terrorists want to send a message that despite the abrogation of Article 370 and the central government's commendable efforts, the situation in J&K remains unstable. Secondly, Jammu's vast forest areas provide an ideal base for militants to launch guerrilla attacks and evade security forces. Thirdly, the improved law and order situation in Kashmir has led to a shift in insurgent focus toward Jammu. Lastly, while terrorism in the region had been suppressed for a time, it has not been eradicated, and militants are now re-emerging with increased vigor. J&K has long been a target of insurgents. Over the years, numerous terrorist attacks in areas like Sopore, Budgam, and Dooru Shahbad have raised serious concerns for security agencies. What is particularly alarming about the recent upsurge is the shift in strategy. Terrorists are no longer just targeting the military and police but are also attacking civilians, indicating their desperation to gain attention. Additionally, there has been no respite between these attacks, as militants seem relentless in their mission of destruction. Unlike in the past, Jammu has now become the epicenter of this terror onslaught due to its proximity to the border. Religion has once again resurfaced as a significant motivating factor for terrorists. The primary goal of these terrorists is to destabilize the region and create a vulnerable atmosphere. The involvement of a neighboring country with a hidden agen-



da cannot be ruled out. For many militants, terrorism provides a livelihood, with individuals willing to sacrifice their lives for monetary compensation. Ajmal Kasab, the infamous terrorist involved in the 2008 Mumbai attacks, is one such example of someone misled into committing heinous acts in exchange for money. Despite efforts by the central government to address the issue through dialogues with Pakistan and engaging with separatists, insurgent activities continue unabated. Policymakers must recognize that terrorism directly impacts the nation's well-being. Anti-terrorism policies must be flexible and responsive to changing threats, utilizing the latest recommendations and technologies to ensure security. Today's terrorists are far more organized and professional than those from a decade ago. Although new security measures have been implemented, the threat remains unpredictable. The region's geography provides an ideal base for guerrilla activities, and the militants have become more sophisticated in their strategies, acquiring advanced weapons from across the border. Their use of automatic weapons, grenades, and low-intensity bombs demonstrates meticulous planning and execution. This modern breed of terrorists no longer hides in the



THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF TERRORISM IS PSYCHOLOGICAL. TERRORISTS SEEK TO ALTER BEHAVIOR AND BRING ABOUT SOCIETAL OR GOVERNMENTAL CHANGES THROUGH FEAR

shadows. They openly attack, targeting financial hubs and other vital locations, as seen in recent global terror incidents. Terrorists exploit advancements in transportation and weaponry to expand their networks. Suicide squads, in particular, have shocked the security apparatus with their boldness and brutality. Terrorists meticulously plan their attacks, aiming to inspire fear and manipulate the public to achieve their objectives. In his famous work, "Why Men Rebel," Ted Robert Gurr argues that people driven by intense motivation toward a goal often resort to violence. This is evident in modern terrorism, where militants see their acts as justified sacrifices for a cause. William Henry also noted that some politically motivated acts of terrorism are so deeply rooted in commitment that no sanctions can deter them. International experts like Professor Yonah Alexander have analyzed the evolution of terrorism. Modern terrorists differ from their predecessors in their use of technology and tactics. Small, sophisticated groups now employ increasingly violent methods to create a psychological impact, aiming to instill fear in the public and force governments to react. The ultimate goal of terrorism is psychological, not practical. Terrorists seek to alter behavior and bring about societal or

governmental changes through fear. There is an urgent need for preventive measures to address the grievances fueling terrorism, improved security strategies, and an understanding of the social and cultural factors driving people to insurgency. Effective counter-terrorism efforts require not just government action but also community involvement. Citizens can play a critical role in improving security by cooperating with law enforcement agencies. Beyond strict anti-terrorism laws, programs aimed at addressing the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty and lack of education, are essential. Several nations have taken steps to combat state-sponsored terrorism, including economic sanctions, but consensus remains elusive at both the national and international levels. The nexus between drug smuggling and terrorism further complicates matters. To address this, judicial procedures must be streamlined to ensure speedy trials for those involved in drug trafficking and terrorism. India, in particular, can learn valuable lessons from the counter-terrorism efforts of other nations, such as the United States, which has effectively prevented major terrorist attacks since 9/11. (The author, a recipient of the Bharat Gaurav award, is a professor and expert on strategic affairs; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TUNGABHADRA DAM BREACHED

Madam — Tungabhadra dam crest gate has swept away in the water after its chain link snapped. The ancient name of the river Tungabhadra was Pampa. In the epic Ramayana also, this river was called by name Pampa. Construction of the dam started in 1949 and completed in 1953 is said to be irrigating 12 lakh acres of land. It is more than 70 years since the dam was dedicated to the nation. The fall of 19th crest gate has led to the release of over 1 lakh cusecs of water into the river. By the time the new gate is fixed, much more water will be lost to the river. It is said that the water level has to be brought down to 60 cmft for installing new gate.

This incident must open the eyes of all the riparian states to inspect the dams which have been built decades ago. It goes without saying that like any other national asset, the dams have also their own life. Dams always face water pressure and it would be too high during the rainy season when the rivers carry unprecedented quantity of water. Any laxity shown in the proper maintenance of dams reduces the life of dams. It is said that the crest gate swept away during midnight. Had it happened during day time, there would have been the possibility of people and animals falling victims to the sudden gushing of water. Former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has blamed the state government for ignoring the recommendations of the dam committee that came from centre. If it is true that the state government has not taken seriously the recommendations of the committee, the state government must accept the blame.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

### DISAPPOINTING VERDICT

Madam — It is both sad and disappointing that the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has dismissed Vinesh Phogat's appeal to be declared a joint silver medalist, despite her convincing vic-

### Independence Day pledge



The editorial, 'Happy independence day' (15-8-24) presents a positive note and it is welcome. India has marched ahead from a scrap level to the level of this day. Right from the day the country got freedom a lot of committed efforts have been put in by successive governments. There is no scope for any individual or a particular party to claim credit. However, independence day is a day to identify the important tasks and

commit to achieve them with all sincerity and nationalist spirit. The crucial task before the country is not owning a space station but providing employment to the educated youth who are longing for a job, providing a viable livelihood for the 81.35 crore poor who are depending on free rations, provide easy access to the poor quality education and healthcare. If these tasks are attended to the rest of the developments will happen on their own.

The development we are trying to glorify now is creating billionaires on one hand and forcing the poor mass and the middle class sections to keep on tightening their belts. Continuing this trend carries the potential of landing the country in a social and economic crisis. On this day we should also take pledge to improve the country's ranking in global indexes like hunger index, malnutrition, freedom of expression etc.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

ories. After winning three bouts against top athletes from Ukraine, Japan, and Cuba, Phogat's weight increased slightly after taking refreshments to recover. Despite her efforts to reduce her weight through exercise and even trimming her hair, she missed the limit by just 100 grams.

According to Rule 11 of the United World Wrestling (UWW), athletes must weigh in daily, and failure to meet the weight results in disqualification and forfeiture of previous wins. This rule, however, contradicts the Olympic Charter, which encourages the support of women athletes (Bylaws 2.8 and 2.10) and promotes their health and well-being (Bylaw 2.18). The back-to-back scheduling of bouts, without adequate recovery time, led to Phogat's physical exhaustion, violating these principles.

If the UWW rule were consistent with the Olympic Charter, her disqualification would not have occurred. Phogat's plea to be recognized as a joint silver medalist is justified, given her previous

performance and the fact that her disqualification was a result of an unfair rule.

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

### RESPECT THE NATIONAL FLAG

Madam — On August 15, all Indians celebrate by singing patriotic songs, posting quotations on social media, and staging emotional plays to instill patriotism in young minds. However, the enthusiasm often wanes the next day. Selling flags made of paper and plastic, only to have them treated disrespectfully, is wrong. This disrespect must cease. Our focus should shift to the country's needs beyond just one-day celebrations and songs. Though an individual can't change the entire system, collective efforts can. After so many sacrifices by our great leaders, we must question if we're truly an independent nation or only in name.

Md Imadaullah | Muzaffarpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## How to make disaster relief truly effective

While people across the nation have come together to help, challenge remains in ensuring that assistance truly reaches those in need

The jury is still out on whether the recent landslides in Wayanad is a result of human callousness or nature's own waywardness. Two weeks after the deluge, there is still no confirmed count of lives lost. Survivors and search teams are continuing to sift through the debris to find remains of those swept away. With everything lost, scores are staring at the challenge of finding some means to take life forward. Monsoon doesn't evoke tender sentiments of love and romance any longer. It now denotes death and destruction. It shows how hapless man is before fate and it also bears testimony to human resilience in the face of catastrophe.



Like it happened once in 2018, when the whole of Kerala stood up and held hands to rescue and rebuild those caught in the floods, people came together in the aftermath of the recent landslides too. Helping hands were extended from far and wide and relief materials dispatched at short notice. And from hordes of donors came loads of unwanted things too: from used clothes

to perishables that cannot be used optimally. A social media post showed volunteers grappling with heaps of material that reflected collective compassion and magnanimity, but also underlined the difficulty of harnessing people's largesse effectively. An appeal was made to the public to avoid sending vegetables and bread, and chiefly clothes, and instead dispatch other essentials. It was misconstrued by a segment of people and sent wrong signals that the hundreds who had taken shelter in relief camps did not need help anymore as much of it was languishing in the collection centres. Nothing could be further from the

truth. Whether in the tragic instances of natural calamity or in war-ravaged parts of the world where people have had to flee and seek refuge in makeshift camps, there is a colossal need for human kindness and generosity. But we often make mistakes in the way we express and extend this willingness to help and save people from aftermaths of misfortunes. The first thing that comes to our common mind when we talk of aid is heaps of clothes that we dump in collection centres. Although the amount of second-hand wear that people dispose in the name of charity has decreased with awareness campaigns, there still is a huge dearth of information and knowledge regarding the kind of assistance people in relief camps need - be it after a natural calamity or in strife-ridden communities. There is also scepticism with regard to monetary help: trust is lacking and not many believe that the funds are allocated rightly and to the needy because there are no means to trace the money

trail. That a lot of cash gets siphoned off is the public perception. Given this, how do good-natured people who are willing to lend a helping hand to the afflicted make a contribution? What is a trusted channel? It is hard to say with certainty, but the only choice we have is to trust the people who take up such endeavours or be part of volunteer groups that initiates such action. It is indeed a shame that some devious minds take advantage of this opportunity to make a quick buck and instances of wrongdoing are not unheard of. But at the end of the day, it is one person's misery meeting another person's magnanimity. Creating safe and guaranteed channels of help and support will make more people come forward to restore the lives of those affected. The onus of winning public trust through transparency lies with community leaders, politicians and philanthropists. Even the kindest thoughts and action can go to waste if they are not done with discretion. (The author is a Dubai-based columnist writing coach; views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR



## FIRST COLUMN

## THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD OF ARROGANCE

Arrogance can lead to both greatness and self-destruction. The key lies in mastering it



RAVI VALLURI

Our mythology (particularly The Ramayana and The Mahabharata) is brimming with several well-stocked illustrations in respect of characters plagued with hubris, hurtling them down to their nemesis. We are aware of the conceited Ravana and the unbridled ambitions of Duryodhana. An angry and arrogant mind gets blurred and smudges the vision of an individual. Consequently, he behaves in a groundless manner, which has calamitous and baleful consequences for the person and those in his companionship. Is it possible to associate with such individuals who are prone to flibustering and arrogance?

The answer is an emphatic NO since there is no dialogue, only a monologue or a harangue by the self-conceited person. This drains our energy levels, a situation we would like to circumvent to save ourselves and our minds. The human mind assumes unnatural patterns and behaves in a volatile manner. A volcano of anger and arrogance erupts unexpectedly. Such individuals are veritable prisoners of their image, which is conceited and egotist. Mike Tyson, who earned epithets like Iron Mike, the Baddest Man on the Planet and Kid Dynamite outside the Ring, was convicted of rape and consuming marijuana and suffered from bipolar disorder.

He has had several brushes with the law. Tyson strongly felt that he was stigmatised by American society and that US society has not been constructed on the principles of justice, but on rape, grime, slavery, and injustice. He married thrice, besides various dalliances and philandering. He underwent reformation. He was proselytised and sought refuge in 'Allah'.



He converted the raw energy of anger and arrogance in the boxing ring where he was extremely successful. The mythological figures mentioned earlier, who were victims of anger and arrogance, bore bruised egos resulting from bruised feelings and emotions, alongside a deep sense of hurt and resentment. Ravana lusted after Sita and felt slighted that his sister Surpanakha was cold-shouldered and disfigured by Lakshmana. All his life Karna bore the cross of being called a shudra, his many talents, and abilities notwithstanding. Duryodhana remained perpetually infantile, given to juvenile behaviour.

Besides, he was under the delusion that the powers that be of Hastinapur would have never agreed to his accession after his father Dhritarashtra abdicated the throne. The feelings of hurt, playing a victim, jealousy, and injury, get metamorphosed in such personalities into deep-seated vexation and anger, leading to false bravado and arrogance.

The anger and arrogance get vitiated into negative thoughts, leading to self-destruction under the strain of self-delusion. However strange it may appear, there is a flip side at the end of the spectrum, where individuals have deployed emotions of anger and arrogance to become achievers. "Anybody can become angry—that is easy, but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose and in the right way—that is not within everybody's power and is not easy," wrote Aristotle.

Who does not miss the swagger of Vivian Richards, and the ferocity of the pace of Dennis Lillee and Thomson? Several politicians, industrialists, writers, artists, kings and monarchs could channelise this energy of anger and arrogance to become highly victorious and triumphant. "To be a tennis champion, you must be inflexible, you must be stubborn, you must be arrogant, and you must be selfish and self-absorbed. Kind of tunnel vision almost," says Chris Evert. Therefore, arrogance is a double-edged sword. Often it subsumes the personalities to self-destruction as they lack the power of self-discrimination and self-examination, thus becoming victims of guilt and persecution complex.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

## Afghanistan's struggle after the US withdrawal



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

As Afghanistan observes the third anniversary of the contentious US withdrawal, the country continues to face upheaval, struggling with a severe humanitarian crisis under Taliban

Experts from the United Nations have issued a statement regarding the situation in Afghanistan, commemorating three years since the United States and its allies' shameless and disgraceful withdrawal, betraying the Afghan people. Based on historical patterns, this represents yet another instance of a nation being abandoned, leaving its people in a dire state while the US and its proxies maintain indirect control. The irony is striking: the very group once branded as terrorists by the West is now, paradoxically, expected to govern, despite having been considered freedom fighters not long ago. The UN experts express grave concern over ongoing human rights violations under the Taliban regime, highlighting systemic discrimination, segregation, and severe marginalisation of women and girls.

As we confront three years of this precarious status quo, it is evident that isolationism is inadequate. The international community must seek effective engagement strategies to address the complex realities in Afghanistan, moving beyond mere diplomatic or punitive measures. In this context, it is crucial to reassess Afghanistan's historical trajectory, where the land has been used as an instrument by powerful actors, often at the expense of one of the most vibrant and resilient human communities. In the aftermath of the September 2001 attacks, the world bore a heavy cost as the United States' 'war on terror' led to the deaths of over a million unarmed civilians in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, ostensibly in pursuit of justice for the three thousand lost lives. This tragic toll exposes the brutal reality of US foreign policy, which relies on organised violence against perceived threats to its dominance, highlighting the need for a significant realignment. The disgraceful withdrawal from Afghanistan, marked by the abandonment of billions of dollars worth of weapons, exemplifies the catastrophic failure of this approach.

Meanwhile, a recent UNICEF report reveals the severe mental health crisis afflicting Afghan children, with over 24 per cent suffering from anxiety—ten times the global average—and 15 per cent battling depression, underscoring the profound psychological trauma inflicted by the ongoing conflict. Western civilisation often positions itself as the pinnacle of human development, a hubris that has led to immense destruction. The US's quest for global dominance sowed the seeds of terrorism; groups now labelled as terrorists, such as the Afghan Mujahideen, were initially supported by the US through covert operations like Operation Cyclone, with British intelligence aiding in what became one of the most costly US operations. During the Cold War, the US, in its zeal to counter Soviet influence, allied with any force against the USSR, turning a blind eye to human rights and legal norms. While seeking to replicate the Soviet Union's Vietnam misstep, the US supported the Mujahideen in Afghanistan via Pakistan. In 1987, President Reagan praised Mujahideen's progress and promised ongoing support for a free Afghanistan.

Yet, subsequent US actions revealed stark hypocrisy and a readiness to use ruthless tactics for political advantage. The Afghan crisis offers crucial insights into global power dynamics. Understanding the Soviet invasion requires recognising its complex



DURING THE COLD WAR, THE US, IN ITS ZEAL TO COUNTER SOVIET INFLUENCE, ALLIED WITH ANY FORCE AGAINST THE USSR, TURNING A BLIND EYE TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND LEGAL NORMS

background and the rise and fall of Afghanistan's communist regime from 1978 to 1989. The communist ideology, as practised under Stalin, evolved into a form of tribal feudalism, which some in Afghanistan found more appealing than Western market economies. This alignment facilitated political power for those who exploited socialism for their ends, illustrating how political ideologies can be distorted to serve specific interests, ultimately leading to their downfall. The introduction of communism into Afghanistan profoundly impacted its social structure. Afghanistan, a fragmented region with diverse tribal groups and a mountainous terrain, was ill-suited for a unitary political system. Federalism might have been more effective, but this reality was often overlooked, leading to ongoing violence that the Taliban would inherit. In the 20th century, reformist movements emerged, bringing communist ideologies to Afghanistan. Abdulrahman Mahmudi, an early communist figure, founded the newspaper Nida'-yi-Khalq (Voice of the People) and the Hezb-e Khalq (People's Party) in the late 1940s. Although imprisoned and later dying in 1963, Mahmudi's legacy continued through his family until the 1970s, eventually evolving into a Maoist movement. Prominent leftists like Mir Muhammad Siddique Farhan and Noor Muhammad Taraki also played significant roles, with Taraki becoming a key communist leader after returning from India. The Afghan monarchy, led by Mohammad Zahir Shah, was overthrown in a coup by his cousin General Mohammad Dawood Khan on July 17, 1973. Dawood established the Republic of

Afghanistan but was ousted in 1978 by leftist leaders Noor Mohammad Taraki, Babrak Karmal, and Hafizullah Amin, following the assassination of Mir Akbar Khyber. Taraki's presidency and Amin's prime ministership attempted significant social reforms, but their rapid implementation in a culturally resistant society led to widespread protests. The political struggle culminated in a coup by Amin, who ousted Taraki, later reported as dying of an "unknown illness" but suffocated by guards. Key figures in pre-Taliban Afghan politics included Mohammad Zahir Shah, Mohammad Dawood Khan, Mir Akbar Khyber, Noor Mohammad Taraki, and Hafizullah Amin. Mohammad Zahir Shah, king of Afghanistan from 1933 to 1973, oversaw significant social reforms and modernisation efforts. Educated in Kabul and France, Zahir Shah returned to Afghanistan at age 19 and took on various roles within the monarchy. By the early 1960s, he was a respected ruler who embraced democratic principles and established a new parliament, working to modernise Afghanistan and improve living standards. Many nostalgic images of pre-Taliban Afghanistan reflect the successes of his administration. In 1973, while Zahir Shah was in Italy for eye surgery, his cousin Mohammad Dawood Khan overthrew the government and established a new regime. Zahir Shah spent decades in Italy, during which Afghanistan's progress towards democracy was undone. Dawood's regime, followed by the leadership of Noor Mohammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, marked a shift towards Cold War-era conflicts. The assassination of Mir Akbar Khyber, whose killer remains debat-

ed, facilitated Taraki and Amin's rise to power. Taraki's government, which came to power in April 1978, was seen as a new dawn but soon became mired in violence and discord. The administration's failure to address the needs of Afghan refugees and internal dissent led to widespread dissatisfaction. Taraki's efforts to implement rapid social reforms, aimed at expediting the revolution, only intensified internal strife and fuelled extremist opposition, further destabilising the country. In August 1978, Noor Mohammad Taraki, addressing the growing Islamic protest movement, remarked: "From the moment our party assumed power, capitalist and reactionary forces have sought to undermine us using religion as a weapon against our progressive agenda. This tactic is outdated and flawed. These forces, driven by imperialistic agendas, aim to overthrow our government, believing they can succeed swiftly. But we are resilient, and their conspiracies are merely remnants of failed efforts against progressive movements." Taraki's statement reflects the early resistance he faced, which he struggled to address effectively.

Internal strife within his party, particularly with Hafizullah Amin, compounded his challenges. Taraki, who once praised Amin's ambition, soon discovered Amin's dangerous intentions. Despite Taraki's belief that Soviet support would safeguard his power, his political naivety and disregard for social realities created a fertile ground for extremist groups nurtured by Pakistan. This eventually led to Amin's rise and the Soviet intervention. To be continued

(The writer is a journalist and author. Views expressed are personal)

## Brutality against female doctors raises questions on safety in govt hospitals

The brutal assault on a resident doctor in Kolkata has sent shockwaves across the nation raising questions about systemic negligence

In 1973, Aruna Shanbaug, a 25-year-old nurse at Mumbai's KEM Hospital, was brutally assaulted—raped and strangled with a metal dog chain—which left her in a vegetative state for the next 43 years. Five decades later, history has repeated itself with the horrific rape and murder of a 31-year-old resident doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College. Both crimes occurred within hospital premises, underscoring the vulnerability of female medical staff in supposedly secure environments. The question is inevitable: has the state failed these women—and society—yet again?



RAHUL KAMBLE

disrupted medical services, as they demand justice and action. While a "civic volunteer" was arrested, there is growing suspicion that more individuals were involved in this gruesome crime. What's particularly alarming is that the assailant may have been a regular visitor to the hospital, raising the likelihood that he had prior interactions with the victim. The nature of her injuries, as revealed by the

post-mortem report, suggests that this was not only an act of sexual violence but also one of intense personal vengeance. Crimes of this brutality—especially those involving rape—are not isolated incidents in India. In 2022, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported an average of 90 rapes per day. However, authorities acknowledge that the actual number could be much higher, as many rapes go unreported due to societal taboos. Unofficial estimates suggest that over 100 rapes occur daily in India, with a staggering 80% of them classified as brutal. Despite the shocking frequency of such attacks, society and the state have failed to address the root causes effectively. The 1973 case of Aruna

Shanbaug was a grim precursor to today's epidemic of violence against women. After being raped and left for dead by a ward boy, she remained in a coma for 43 years, lovingly cared for by her colleagues. Her assailant, however, served only seven years in jail. Aruna's case remained in the media spotlight for decades, yet no sweeping reforms were made to improve the safety of female medical staff. Hospitals like RG Kar Medical College continue to lack basic security protocols, leaving women vulnerable to heinous acts of violence. Despite the public outcry that followed Aruna's case, and the more recent protests in Kolkata, most state-run hospitals have not implemented adequate safety measures. The issue of relying on "civic



volunteers" instead of trained security personnel has long been a problem in government-run hospitals. These volunteers are often paid meager wages and supplement their income through unofficial means. Many have political affiliations, which give them a degree of immunity from disciplinary action. Year after year, issues related to hospital safety—such as malfunctioning CCTV cameras, poorly lit areas, and inadequate

security staff—are flagged but seldom addressed. These failures have made doctors, especially women, increasingly vulnerable to attacks. The horrific gang rape of a young woman in Delhi in 2012 led to promises of reforms, yet most of these remain unfulfilled. The Nirbhaya Fund, created in the aftermath of that tragedy to improve women's safety, remains largely underutilized. Between 2013 and 2022, less than half of its allocation was spent. The gap between intention and outcome remains wide, and women continue to pay the price for this failure. The implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act of 2013 has been half-hearted at best. Women in the

medical profession are especially vulnerable—not only to sexual assault but also to intimidation and violence from patients, hospital staff, colleagues, and even senior faculty. In many government hospitals, security is virtually nonexistent in certain sections, leaving female staff, including doctors and nurses, at the mercy of anyone who wishes them harm. There is a pressing need for the government to regulate security protocols in medical institutions across the country. Promises on paper are insufficient; action must follow. Hospitals must invest in safe lodging for female doctors, and legislation protecting doctors from violence must be passed without delay. The Supreme Court of India, in May 2023,

criticized authorities for failing to ensure a secure workplace for women. Such failures are not just administrative oversights—they are a direct threat to the lives of women in the medical profession. The case in Kolkata, where the city ironically ranked as the safest in India in 2024 according to NCRB data, exposes a troubling disconnect between official statistics and the grim reality on the ground. The tragic deaths of women like Aruna Shanbaug and the young doctor in Kolkata serve as stark reminders that much remains to be done to protect women in India. Their stories should not just be a cause for temporary outrage but a call to action for systemic change. (The author is a freelance writer; views are personal)

**IN BRIEF**



**India's forex reserves drop USD 4.8 bn to USD 670.11 bn**

India's forex reserves dropped by USD 4.8 billion to USD 670.11 billion for the week ended August 9, the Reserve Bank of India said on Friday. In the previous reporting week, the kitty jumped by USD 7.533 billion to an all-time high of USD 674.919 billion. For the week ended August 9, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by USD 4.079 billion to USD 587.96 billion, the data released on Friday showed. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves declined by USD 860 million to USD 59.239 billion during the week, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by USD 121 million to USD 18.282 billion, the apex bank said.



**Ashok Leyland sees high enquiry from fleet operators**

Commercial vehicle maker Ashok Leyland has seen a high number of enquiries from fleet operators amid the segment going through a consolidation phase, the company has said. The company is also expecting the medium and heavy commercial vehicle (MHCV) segment to grow in a single-digit this fiscal as against earlier estimates of a flat growth. Sanjeev Kumar, President for MHCV, Ashok Leyland said on Friday here. Ashok Leyland is hosting a two-day 'Mini Expo' in Navi Mumbai, showcasing its diverse line-up of vehicles, including trucks and buses, in its MHCV portfolio as well as products. Mumbai is among the 11 exclusive locations across India selected for this expo. The MHCV segment comprises multi-axle rigid trucks, haulage trucks, tippers and trailers. Prior to Covid, the mix between the fleet and retail customers would be in the 40:60 ratio, which has been changing now, said Prasad.



**RBI tightens norms for P2P lending platforms**

The Reserve Bank on Friday tightened norms for Non-Banking Financial Company - Peer to Peer Lending Platforms (NBFC-P2P Lending Platform) to improve transparency and compliance. As per the revised master direction issued by the RBI, a P2P platform should not promote peer-to-peer lending as an investment product with features like tenure-linked assured minimum returns, liquidity options, etc. Non-Banking Financial Company - Peer to Peer Lending Platform (NBFC-P2P Lending Platform) should not cross-sell any insurance product also, which is in the nature of credit enhancement or credit guarantee, it said. No loan should be disbursed unless the lenders and the borrowers have been matched/mapped as per the board-approved policy framed, it added. The RBI issued guidelines for P2P lending in 2017. Such a platform acts as an intermediary providing an online marketplace/platform to the participants involved in peer-to-peer lending.

**FDI in food processing sector down 30% to Rs 5,037 cr in '24**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in India's food processing sector declined 30 per cent in the last fiscal to Rs 5,037.06 crore, according to official data.

The FDI in the food processing sector stood at Rs 7,194.13 crore in 2022-23.

According to the data presented by the Food Processing Industries Ministry in Lok Sabha, the FDI in food processing sector stood at Rs 5,290.27 crore in 2021-22 and Rs 2934.12 crore in 2020-21.

FDI was Rs 6,414.67 crore in 2019-20; Rs 4430.44 crore in 2018-19; Rs 5,835.62 crore in 2017-18; Rs 4,865.85 crore in 2016-17; and Rs 3,312 crore in 2015-16 in the food processing sector.

In order to enhance foreign investment in the food processing sector, the ministry has taken various measures, including 100 per cent FDI permitted through automatic route for the food processing sector subject to sectoral regulations.

It has allowed 100 per cent FDI, under the government approval route, for trading including through e-commerce, in respect of food products manufactured or produced in India. The government has exempted all processed food items from the purview of licensing under the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951.

There is a lower GST for raw and processed products. More than 71.7 per cent of food



products under various chapter heads/sub-heads are covered in lower tax slabs of 0 per cent and 5 per cent. The export of processed foods declined 17 per cent to USD 10,881.81 million in 2023-24 from USD 13,078.3 million in the preceding fiscal.

For the development of this sector, the ministry is implementing the Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana (PMKSY) and Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI) and Prime Minister

Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) schemes.

All these three schemes are demand-driven and implemented across the country.

These schemes are aimed at creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet, and to help in providing better returns to farmers, creation of employment opportunities, reducing wastage, increasing the processing level and enhancing the export of processed foods.

**The export of processed foods declined 17 per cent to USD 10,881.81 million in 2023-24 from USD 13,078.3 million in the preceding fiscal**

**DEE Development Engineers posts Rs 3.19 cr profit**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

DEE Development Engineers Ltd on Friday reported profit after tax at Rs 3.19 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2024.

However, the company had posted a loss of Rs 4.58 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal, DEE Development Engineers Ltd (DEEL) said in a statement. The total income of the company in the first quarter rose to Rs 188.17 crore over Rs 159.46 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal.

The total order book of the company as on June 30, 2024, stands at Rs 803 crore.

**IFIN reports cumulative loss of Rs 5,654 cr**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IL&FS Financial Services (IFIN), a group company of debt-ridden IL&FS Ltd, has incurred a cumulative loss of Rs 5,654 crore for the five-consecutive fiscals -- from FY14 to FY18, according to the revised balance sheet of the firm undergoing resolution process.

However, as per the original balance sheet, the company had earned a total profit of Rs 1,015 crore during the five-year period.

Following the recast, the company is exploring the option of seeking a refund of income tax paid from the Income Tax for these years. In June this year, the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) asked the The restated account reflected that the company had actually reported

a loss of Rs 3,322 crore in the financial year ended March 2018. However, the previous management had reported a profit of Rs 100 crore in the said financial year. Similarly, it had booked a loss of Rs 1,315 crore during FY17 against a profit of Rs 209 crore recorded originally. On January 1, 2019, the NCLT passed an order permitting reopening and recasting of the financial accounts of three IL&FS group companies -- IL&FS Transportation, IL&FS Financial Services and IL&FS Engineering.

The order was passed over an application moved by the central government, which had suspended the board of debt-ridden Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) and appointed a six-member panel. IL&FS is settling its over Rs 90,000-

crore debt through asset resolution.

So far, IL&FS has discharged a total debt of Rs 35,650 crore as on September 30, 2023, and maintains an overall debt resolution target of Rs 61,000 crore.

It is resolving debts through monetisation and termination/settlement of payments by its group entities from concessioning authorities and counterparty to the relevant contract.

On October 1, 2018, NCLAT superseded the existing board of IL&FS on the recommendation of the Centre after the mega-crisis in IL&FS, which shook the finance industry.

A new board for IL&FS, which had a debt burden of Rs 94,000 crore, was appointed to take charge of the affairs and NCLAT conceived a framework for resolution of the crisis-hit group.

**Rupee settles flat at 83.94 against US dollar**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee stayed in a narrow range and settled flat at 83.94 (provisional) against the American currency on Friday, as the support from a rally in domestic equities and weak greenback was negated by foreign fund outflows amid geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 83.93 and touched the intraday low of 83.96 against the greenback during the session. The local unit finally settled flat at 83.94 (provisional)

against the dollar. On Wednesday, the rupee settled 3 paise higher at 83.94 against the US dollar.

Forex markets were closed on Thursday on account of Independence Day.

Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said the positive tone in the domestic markets supported the rupee at lower levels.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on...geopolitical tension in the Middle East between Israel and Iran. Traders may take cues from



US consumer confidence and housing data today. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.75 to Rs 84.25," he added.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower by 0.14 per cent at 102.66.

**New South Wales eyes double digit growth in footfalls from India**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

With more direct air connectivity between Sydney and India and seamless visa approval through e-visa application process, New South Wales (NSW) is eyeing double digit growth in tourist arrivals from India this calendar year.

"We are witnessing a steady growth in international tourist arrivals. In the calendar year 2023, we welcomed 1,81,600 tourists from India. Looking at the current trend coupled with more direct flights connecting India with Sydney, rise in disposable income, and easy e-visa application process, we are expecting to boost our tourism and the footfalls are likely to

grow in double digit," Destination NSW Country Manager Samar Chokshi said.

NSW welcomed 3.4 million international visitors, a 104 per cent increase compared to 2019, which is pre-Covid time, he noted. Quoting data from International Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia, Chokshi said, in 2023 Indian visitors stayed a total of 7 million nights in NSW, contributing AUD 482.2 million to the state's economy, marking a 109 per cent increase in expenditure compared to 2019.

"On average, Indian visitors spent AUD 69 per night and AUD 2,655 per visitor, with an average length of stay of 38.3 nights.



**CHECKING BACKGROUND OF THOSE AVAILING PMMY LOAN**

**NITI Aayog calls for guidelines, E-KYC**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

requires more staffing and employees.

The government think tank NITI Aayog has pitched for a set of guidelines for assessing the creditworthiness and background verification for those availing loans under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY).

The Aayog in a report titled 'Impact Assessment of PMMY' suggested encouraging E-KYC authentication for loan underwriting. This will enhance the effectiveness of assessment checks.

"A set of guidelines for assessing the creditworthiness and background verification must be enlisted to provide a security net to the banks, considering the loans are collateral free and a proper risk check and assessment has a critical role to play in the sustainability of results and success of the scheme," it said in the report posted on its website.

The majority of borrowers under PMMY are small entrepreneurs who have very limited documents and this makes it difficult for the banks to run verification checks as it

The Aayog also suggested that a proper reward mechanism is needed for different banks based on their scale of operation and performance.

It noted that a portal enabling real-time upload of beneficiary data will help streamline the beneficiary data collection.

PMMY, since its inception in 2015 has provided credit support of Rs 18.39 lakh crore to 34.93 crore accounts.

According to the report, compared to the pre-pandemic, the credit disbursements to MSMEs have doubled across segments indicating support for the increasing credit demand by the industry, while the number of NPA accounts and the amount have been increasing year after year with a CAGR of 22.51 per cent and 36.61 per cent respectively from FY 2017.

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector plays a defining role for entrepreneurs and is a key driver of socio-economic development in India.



**NCRTC invites bids for co-branding rights for its five stations**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The national capital region transport corporation (NCRTC) has invited bids for exclusive semi-naming and co-branding rights for its five stations on the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor, a statement said on Friday.

The five stations for which the semi-naming/co-branding rights are available are Duhai, Murad Nagar, Modi Nagar South, Modi Nagar North and Meerut South, it said.

This initiative aims to enhance passenger experience and convenience while generating Non-Fare Box Revenue to support the operational costs of the RRTS Corridor.

Brands awarded these rights will have the opportunity to prefix or suffix their names to station names, incorporate their brand colours on station walls, hoardings and entry/exit points, and utilise both bare and built-up retail spaces, the statement said.

**FIRST IN ASIA**

**B'loru Airport to receive ACI's level five accreditation**

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Kempegowda International Airport operated by Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) has marked a significant milestone by becoming the first airport in Asia to receive Airports Council International's (ACI) the highest Level five accreditation, officials said on Friday.

Bangalore Airport has made a remarkable 95.6 per cent reduction in Scope 1 and 2 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, attaining the highest emission elimination by an Indian airport, achieved seven

years ahead of the initial target of 2030, they said.

The accreditation comes into effect from May 5, 2024.

"BLR Airport has made significant strides in its decarbonisation journey and set new benchmarks by transitioning to 100 per cent renewable electricity and implementing initiatives focusing on sustainable mobility and green infrastructure.

To offset its residual emissions, BLR Airport has procured Airports Council International (ACI) approved carbon units from verified carbon removal projects. Looking



This accomplishment not only sets a new benchmark for us but also reinforces our dedication to creating a greener future for all," Hari Marar, Managing Director and CEO of BIAL said.

ahead towards 2030, BLR Airport has committed to offsetting residual emissions through in-house green land-

scape projects, further demonstrating its dedication to build a sustainable future," BIAL said in a statement.

"We are delighted to be the first airport in Asia to attain ACI's Level five accreditation and to lead the way with the highest emission elimination by an Indian airport. Achieving Net Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions seven years ahead of our target is a testament to BLR Airport's unwavering commitment to sustainability.

This accomplishment not only sets a new benchmark for us but also reinforces our dedication to creating a greener future for all," Hari Marar, Managing Director and CEO of BIAL said.

**Sensex, Nifty jump nearly 2% to hit over two-week highs on rally**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex spurred by 1,330 points to close at a more than two-week high while Nifty rallied 397 points to settle above the 24,500 level following buying in IT shares and Reliance Industries and a sharp global stocks rally.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,330.96 points or 1.68 per cent to settle at 80,436.84, marking its best single-day gains in more than two months. During the day, it zoomed 1,412.33 points or 1.78 per cent to 80,518.21. The NSE Nifty surged

397.40 points or 1.65 per cent to close at a two-week high of 24,541.15.

From Sensex firms, Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors, UltraTech Cement, Tata

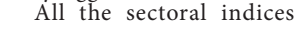
Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies, ICICI Bank and Tata Steel were the biggest gainers.

Sun Pharma emerged as the only laggard. All the sectoral indices

closed in green. BSE Midcap spurred 1.8 per cent while Smallcap index rose by 1.7 per cent.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled significantly higher. European markets were trading mostly in the green. The US markets ended with sharp gains on Thursday.

"The stability of the JPY has been instrumental in driving a global market recovery. Besides that, the strong US retail sales and a decline in weekly jobless claims have helped alleviate fears of a US recession."





FOLLOW KAR LO YAAR BRINGS UNFILTERED UORFI



Prime Video, released the captivating trailer for its unscripted Original series, Follow Kar Lo Yaar. The nine-episode series is an unfiltered and unabashed peek into the vibrant, amusing, and at times scandalous life of India's biggest viral sensation, Uorfi Javed. Produced by Sol Productions' Fazila Allana and Kamna Menezes and directed by Sandeep Kukreja, Follow Kar Lo Yaar is set to premiere exclusively on Prime Video in Hindi with subtitles in English. Follow Kar Lo Yaar goes beyond the surface in capturing Uorfi's struggles, celebrating her triumphs and showing the raw and unfiltered reality of her life beyond social media and paparazzi videos. Setting the stage for a thrilling ride, the trailer is an unabashed glimpse into the intriguing life and enigmatic world of Uorfi Javed. Juggling fame, family and her relentless pursuit of success, the trailer dives into the dramatic yet exhilarating life of Uorfi as she reveals her grand plans, which include her start-up reaching unicorn status, her dreams of celebrityhood and the controversies that keep her in the spotlight. From over-the-top shouting matches to catty fights with sisters, from salvaging botched brand collaborations to reviving a non-existent romantic life, the audience will get to witness the life behind the lens in this radically unapologetic reality-show series. "I've always dreamed big, even when people said I couldn't make it. Becoming famous? Shaking up the glamour world? That's been my game plan from day one. Trust me, it hasn't been easy. I've had more downs than ups, moments that would've crushed anyone else. But I bounced back every single time, stronger and more determined," said Uorfi Javed. "People have only seen one side of my story, but my life off social media is even crazier, it's pure drama! I've done reality TV before, but having my own show has been a dream come true, for which I'm grateful to Prime Video. Follow Kar Lo Yaar is raw, real and 100% me - unfiltered and unapologetic. You think you know Uorfi? Well, get ready to see the real deal. It's going to be a wild ride, and I can't wait for you all to join me!"

Shilpa Shetty irked over paps recording flag hoisting ceremony!

Shilpa Shetty was irritated by a photographer who attempted to photograph her Independence Day flag hoisting ceremony at her residence. While getting ready for the national flag raising on August 15, 2024, the actor became aware of being filmed. She cautioned the person filming not to record the video incorrectly. While Shilpa and her sister, Shamita Shetty, were preparing to begin the ceremony, Shilpa noticed a photographer filming the event. Shilpa went up to him and requested that he film it correctly. She said, "Please brother, don't make a joke out of this. Show this properly or shut it off." The paparazzo could be heard saying, "Thank you so much ma'am." Since being trolled on

Independence Day last year in 2023 for raising the National Flag while wearing shoes, the actress has asked for privacy. Shilpa responded on her Instagram handle and wrote, "I am aware of the 'Rules' of conduct while hoisting the flag, the RESPECT for my country and THE FLAG stems from my heart and not up for questioning. I am a proud Indian. Today's post was to share and celebrate that emotion. To all the trolls (that I ignore usually) DO NOT appreciate YOU airing your ignorance and spreading negativity on this Day. So get your facts right and please BACK OFF (folded hands emoji)"



Sonnalli Seygall announces pregnancy

Sonnalli Seygall and Ashesh L Sajani are eagerly anticipating the arrival of their baby, as they prepare to embark on a new chapter in life. The actress announced her pregnancy on Friday, expressing her extreme happiness. Sonnalli, most famous for her part in Pyaar Ka Punchnama, used Instagram to announce her pregnancy by posting photos of herself showing off her baby bump. In the initial photo, Sonnalli displays her pregnant belly while snacking on chips, while her spouse, Ashesh, is drinking from a beer bottle and playfully gazing at the baby's milk bottle. In addition, their pet dog

is also included in the picture. In the next image, Sonnalli is portrayed reading a book named Ayurveda Mama, with her dog Shamsher sitting beside a book called 'How to be a Big Brother!' In the third photo, there is a book called The Daily Dad placed beside a vase of flowers and a coffee cup. "From beer bottles to baby bottles... Ashesh's life is about to change! As for me, some things stay the same... Was eating for 1... now eating for 2! Meanwhile Shamsher is taking notes on how to be a good big brother," she wrote as caption, adding, "Overjoyed & Grateful... Keep us in your prayers". The actor also revealed that she will deliver the baby at the end of this year, writing, "December 2024 (baby emoji) coming."



Huma Qureshi's Bayaan selected for BIFF

Actress Huma Qureshi has added another feather to her cap with the selection of her upcoming film, Bayaan, for the prestigious Asian Project Market at the 2024 Busan International Film Festival in Korea. The film, currently in production, is set to captivate audiences worldwide. At the helm of Bayaan is the talented director Bikas Ranjan Mishra, whose vision is brought to life by producers Shiladitya Bora (Platoon One Films), Madhu Sharma (Summit Studios), Kunal Kumar and Anshuman Singh. The project has garnered significant support, including backing from the Hubert Bals Fund and has undergone meticulous development at the LA Residency as part of Film Independent's Global Media Makers program. During her time at the LA Residency, director Mishra had the unique opportunity to collaborate with industry luminary Craig Mazin (HBO's Chernobyl) and receive invaluable insights from writer Jeff Stockwell and story editor Ruth Atkinson. This mentorship has undoubtedly enriched the film's narrative and creative direction. The film's appeal lies in its ability to blend the nuances of a deeply local story with universal themes that resonate across cultures. By capturing the essence of its cultural roots, Bayaan offers a story that speaks to broader human experiences, making it both relatable and compelling for a global audience. The careful balance between the local and the universal ensures that the story honours its origins but also reaches out to a wider, diverse viewership.



Investigators lay out key findings in Matthew Perry's death

When Friends star Matthew Perry was discovered deceased in a hot tub at his Los Angeles residence last year, it appeared to potentially be a mere accident. He had been managing his depression through ketamine infusion treatment, showed no signs of drug use or foul play, and seemed to have died from drowning. After years battling with addiction, the actor declared he was now sober. While the global community grieved the loss of the actor famous for his role as Chandler Bing on Friends, a medical examiner discovered an interesting detail: his blood contained elevated levels of ketamine, typically utilised for anesthesia in surgical procedures. US prosecutors claim that after a nearly year-long investigation, they discovered a large underground network involved in dealing ketamine, as well as attempts to conceal the activities and an additional fatality. This resulted in the arrest of five

individuals, including doctors, Perry's assistant and a suspected dealer known in the area as the "Ketamine Queen". Kenneth Iwamasa, who lived with him, admitted to conspiring to distribute ketamine resulting in death, while Eric Fleming and Dr Mark Chavez also admitted to unlawfully conspiring to distribute drugs. Dr Salvador Plasencia, who allegedly provided ketamine to Perry, faces charges for altering documents. Accused suspect

Jasveen Sangha is charged with nine offenses, including conspiracy to sell ketamine and distributing ketamine that led to a death. Both individuals entered a plea of not guilty during their court appearance. The investigation repeatedly mentions Sangha's name. Officials accuse the "Ketamine Queen" of providing the drugs that resulted in Perry's death on 28 October 2023. Prosecutors describe the 41-year-old as a drug trafficker who

allegedly sold 50 vials of ketamine to him for around \$11,000 (£8,550) and was aware of the potentially lethal consequences of distributing the drug. According to the US attorney for California's Central District, Martin Estrada, her residence in North Hollywood functioned as a hub for selling drugs. Authorities said that as Perry's addiction progressed, his desire for ketamine grew, causing him to search for cheaper sources from both street dealers and higher-end suppliers. Estrada said that the individuals involved in the situation exploited him. Following Perry's death, those accused of supplying him with the drugs attempted to hide their actions, investigators say. Authorities say Sangha sent a message to another suspect telling him to "delete all our messages". Fleming is alleged to have messaged Ms Sangha: "Please call... Got more info and want to bounce ideas off you. I'm 90% sure everyone is protected. I never dealt with [Perry] only his assistant. So the assistant was the enabler."



STANDALONE The 15th edition of the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) opened in spectacular fashion Thursday night with the premiere of the anthology film My Melbourne.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



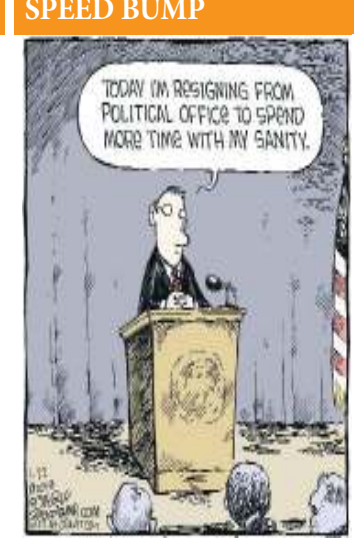
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU

Sudoku grid with numbers and empty cells.

ACROSS

- 6 An old record-player
8 Set fire to
10 Has a conversation
13 A very rich person
14 Someone who cares for the sick and injured
17 Part of a flower
19 Not willing to be friends

DOWN

- 1 Boast
2 Leave out
3 Small mark
4 This covers a sheep
5 Find these on a beach
7 A light metal
9 Raised land smaller than mountains

SOLUTION crossword puzzle grid with words filled in.

## FROM AKOLA'S QUIET STREETS TO HYDERABAD'S ARCHITECTURAL HEIGHTS

AARTI SREENATH

Hyderabad, a symphony of ancient echoes and modern rhythms, found its architect-poet in Shreya Rathi. She is a seasoned design professional with over 18 years of experience shaping Hyderabad's skyline.

A graduate of architecture from Maharashtra University in 2007, she has cultivated a thriving practice specialising in luxury villas, apartments, farmhouses and high-end commercial spaces.

Her journey with Hyderabad began in 2005, when she married Vivek Rathi. At the age of 21, she moved to this city, which she had known only as India's IT hub, largely shaped by the vision of the then Chief Minister Chandra Babu Naidu. Leaving behind her hometown of Akola, a small town near Amravati Maharashtra, she stepped into a bustling metropolis that was rapidly becoming one of India's most significant urban centers.

"I had never visited Hyderabad before my marriage," she shares. "But I knew I was coming to a city already on the global map, known for its cleanliness, safety and high literacy rate." This initial impression was soon overshadowed by a deeper connection as she began to build her life and career in this dynamic environment. The transition from a small town to a large city was challenging; her determination helped her navigate this new chapter successfully.

Hyderabad has been instrumental in shaping her career and personal growth. The city provided her with a platform to achieve recognition and fame. She started her career here, establishing herself in a male-dominated industry. "Architecture, especially in the realm of exteriors and interiors, has always been challenging for women, but Hyderabad has been the perfect stage for me to showcase my skills and break barriers."

With her firm, based in Sonajiguda, she has built a reputation for delivering

high-end, bespoke designs for luxury villas, apartments, commercial spaces and retail showrooms. Her client list includes some of the most influential figures in Hyderabad. She explains, "Each project is an opportunity to learn and evolve and that continuous learning drives me to push boundaries and achieve greater heights in my career."

Over nearly two decades, she has witnessed Hyderabad's remarkable transformation. When she first arrived in 2005, the city was already on an upward trajectory. Today, it exceeds even her highest expectations. "The city has expanded beyond 50 kilometers in diameter and it's amazing to see people from every corner of the country living here." Despite its rapid growth, Hyderabad has maintained its cleanliness and charm. "Hyderabad remains one of the least polluted metropolises in India," she states.

The Outer Ring Road (ORR), a 144-kilometer stretch connecting the city's outer regions, exemplifies Hyderabad's visionary urban planning. "It's a perfect example of how Hyderabad has balanced growth with accessibility, ensuring the city remains connected yet spacious."

The contrast between her hometown of Akola and Hyderabad is stark. While small-town life is simple and close to nature, city life in Hyderabad offers its own set of challenges and opportunities.

"In a city like Hyderabad, everything is more assembled and elevated," she explains. "State-of-the-art facilities and services make daily living easier and more enjoyable." She particularly appreciates the city's infrastructure, including the ORR. "The ORR is a perfect example of Hyderabad's visionary approach to urban planning," she says.

Among her many memories in Hyderabad, one that stands out especially to Shreya is the birth of her daughter, Shravi, in 2012. "It was a moment of pure joy," she recalls. "And the city of Hyderabad will always be intertwined with that happiness. This city has given me so much, both professionally and per-

sonally, and I feel a deep sense of gratitude for everything it has offered me."

Professionally, Hyderabad has been a dream come true for her. "The city has given me the platform to showcase my talents and earn the recognition I have always aspired for," she says. "I believe in constantly learning and evolving. This continuous learning is what drives me to push boundaries and achieve greater heights in my career." She has witnessed Hyderabad's commitment to maintaining a healthy environment.

"Hyderabad is the cleanest metropolis in India," she states. "Despite its massive expansion, it has managed to maintain a high standard of living for its residents." The city's health infrastructure is robust, with well-maintained parks, clean water, efficient drainage systems and excellent roads that make commuting a breeze.

However, she feels that to keep up with global standards, the city needs to continue enhancing its facilities.

When asked about what she loves most about Hyderabad, she is enthusiastic. "I love everything about this city—the climate, the people, the infrastructure and the overall vibe," she says.

"Hyderabad is a place where you can live comfortably without any language barriers, and the peaceful attitude of the people here is something I truly appreciate. The city is green, clean and well-maintained, with no littering on the roads, thanks to the government initiatives."

However, she feels that traffic sense needs improvement. "The driving sense among the people of Hyderabad is something that needs serious attention," she points out. "Traffic sense is lacking, and it's something that needs to be taught to every individual. People don't seem to value the beautiful roads and infrastructure we have, and this needs to change."

She enjoys hosting friends and family from out of town, showing them around Hyderabad based on their interests. "Whether it's a trendy restaurant, a shopping mall, or a temple, Hyderabad has something for everyone," she says. "The city is also one of the most reasonably priced metros in India, whether it's in terms of living space, food, or shopping." For her, sharing the beauty of Hyderabad with her loved ones is a way of celebrating the city that has given her so much. "Hyderabad is a city that leaves

a lasting impression on anyone who visits. It's a place where modernity meets tradition and there's a unique charm in the way the city balances the two."

Reflecting on her journey, she sums up her feelings for Hyderabad succinctly: "Hyderabad, for me, is a dream come true."

This city has been the backdrop to my life's most significant moments, both personal and professional. It's where my dreams have come to life and for that, I am forever grateful." In Hyderabad, Shreya discovered more than just a place to live; she found a space to visualise her aspirations. With each new undertaking, she puts her distinctive mark on the city's constantly changing narrative, making a lasting impact on the community that has provided her with so much.

Hailing from Amravati, Maharashtra, Shreya Rathi found her calling in Hyderabad, creating her mark in the architectural scene. She speaks of her formative journey and her allure for the city, exclusively for our special segment.



## Bridging classical grace and pop innovation

TEJAL SINHA

Sneha Astunkar, mentored by ghazal legend Talat Aziz, has risen to fame in the music world by blending classic musical genres with modern influences.

After captivating the audience with her mesmerising voice and poetic imagination with songs like *Rehna Tu Kareeb*, *Meherbaan* and *Bas Yun Hi*, Mumbai-based musician Sneha Astunkar has released her latest monsoon special, *Mohabbat Baaki*.

With lyrics by Priya Saraiya and composed by Hriday Gattani, it was no less than a rewarding experience. Being a collab, Sneha shares, *Mohabbat Baaki* allowed her to learn, discover and experience different styles of composing something soulful while at the same time being modern and contemporary. "Working with Hriday and Priya has enhanced my understanding of looking at a common expression of a song from a unique perspective," she begins in a chat with *The Pioneer*. "Mohabbat Baaki is

all about love that's never complete. Even if it's in your life as a whole, something always remains incomplete about love. The song speaks about two people trying to tell each other how much it would mean to complete it in some way if they reconnect with each other."

A lot of emotions have influenced the lyrics of the song. She's one of those who tries to give meaning to things and situations. "I try to make sense out of a lot of things that happen around me because I

early childhood and gifted me the opportunity to choose to learn and grow with music from an early age. I could do my academic masters in Hindustani classical music and learn music full-time," shares the talented singer, as she began doing shows while learning and eventually travelled to Mumbai, where she found her way towards independent music."

Having always admired, respected and loved the grace that Indian classical music carries, her natural musical language had become that. Having said that, "I have also loved the pop culture that evolved in the 90's in the music industry and I started listening to more of it. That is when I discovered that I am inclined towards playback and playback is more about how experimental your sound can be. That's when I started trying to blend my natural taste in music with pop."

Just like any music lover who enjoys the good old-era songs, Sneha finds her musical influences in Shobha Gurtu, Shobha Mudgal, Begum Akhtar, Mehdi Hassan, Ghulam Ali, Talat Aziz, Hariharan and Shreya Ghosal and she enthuses, "When I used to be a kid and sing in an orchestra, I used to sing Kishore Kumar, Mohammad Rafi and Manna Dey Ji's songs solo. I used to prefer singing Mohammed Rafi Ji's songs over Lata Ji's songs." In the future, she will perform a lovely song created by the highly skilled music composer and producer Sagar Dhote, with whom she started her solo music career. She has also recorded a lovely ghazal written by Talat Aziz, which will be released soon and is also involved in some exciting music projects for certain production companies.

believe that there's always a reason for every single thing that happens to you or around you. The emotions around this particular song are a collective feeling of thoughts that revolve around love, people and situations."

Explaining the precise reasoning behind the phrase *Mohabbat Baaki* proved to be difficult for her. In order to conquer the issue, Sneha began by clarifying her thoughts and creating a clear expectation of the result.

Though not from a 'musical family' background, she comes from a family with music lovers, thus bringing the best of the support. "My parents gauged my inclination towards music in my

Creating a niche for herself in the musical world, Sneha Astunkar has been blending classical music with modern influences. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, she speaks about her latest *Mohabbat Baaki* track and her musical influences



## Through lens of humanity

PNSJ HYDERABAD

On August 15, 2024, the State Gallery of Art in Hyderabad became a stage for the revealing of "Everyday India," an evocative photography exhibition by Ramesh Babu. Marking Independence Day, this exhibition offered a poignant exploration of the ordinary moments that defined the nation. The show will remain open to the public until World Photography Day on August 19, 2024.

As evening approached, the gallery was abuzz with anticipation. The preview event was attended by a distinguished assembly of guests, including human rights activist Prof. Haragopal, Telangana Jana Samithi President Prof. M. Kodandaram and the chief guest, Brigadier (Retd.) Pogula Ganesham, President of Palle Srujana. Guests of honour included Leela Laxma Reddy, President of the Council for Green Revolution and Sri Allu Govinda Reddy, Chairman of Greenspace. The master of ceremonies was Sri Appi Reddy, Chairman of MIC TV and serial entrepreneur.

Brigadier Ganesham reflected on the significance of the exhibition. "This is an extraordinary event that provokes thought regardless of one's background," he said. "What we see here is not just normal situations, but normal people. Ramesh Babu's photography offers a unique perspective that makes

us humble. His static images, devoid of audio or video, speak volumes. Every one of us, including ordinary people, should experience these photographs. They could even be displayed in assemblies and parliaments to remind those in power of the reality outside their offices."

Prof. Haragopal shared his admiration for his work. "Ramesh Babu's photographs are an incredible experience," he stated. "Each image communicates with a language of its own. For example, one powerful photo -



graph contrasts children from affluent backgrounds with child laborers, starkly highlighting the disparity. The scale, colours and angles from which these photos are taken create a unique and profound experience."

Artist Hema Nalini, a long-time admirer of his work, added her insights. "I've known Ramesh for five years and his dedication to his art is truly inspiring. As a hobbyist photographer myself, I am deeply moved by his professional approach. His gallery,

Samanyashastram, is dedicated to portraying the lives of common people with both simplicity and depth. His work captures the struggles and joys of everyday life with exceptional dedication." When asked about the central theme of his show, Ramesh Babu offered a reflective insight. "We often view India as something we revere from a distance," he explained. "But in reality, it's not about grandeur; it's about us, the people. We tend to look

outward when discussing nationality rather than looking inward. My work brings focus to what truly makes a country—its soil and its people. My first picture is of soil, and my last is of a man. The country is not defined by religion or politics but by the land and its people. This is the core of my work. Even after 87 years of independence, many still struggle with basic necessities, revealing a suffering India. 'Everyday India' is not a celebration of political achievements but a humanitarian reflection. Through my pictures, despite vibrant colors, the underlying despair and misery are evident, reflecting the inescapable reality of life for many." The inauguration and subsequent viewing of his well-captured photographs offered a profound portrayal of real Indian life, showcasing poverty, misery and the essence of Indian soil. The event unfolded with a sense of purpose and connection, leaving a lasting impression on all who attended.

EVENT COVERAGE

# Horse riding, bharatnatyam and skating on Manu's mind during break from shooting

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Her shooting hand bruised by repeated pistol recoils during unrelenting training, Manu Bhaker will take a well deserved three month break. But it will be no vacation. The double Olympic medalist will continue her other routines including yoga and waking up at 6 am — which she hates. And oh yes. She also plans to catch up on her hobbies — horse riding, skating, Bharatnatyam and violin practice to name a few. The 22-year-old, who won bronze medals in the 10m air pistol and 10m air pistol mixed team (partnering Sarabjot Singh), was at PTI headquarters on Friday along with her coach and shooting great Jaspal Rana for a freewheeling interaction with its editors. Proudly flaunting her medals, the vivacious youngster from Haryana's Jhajjar spoke about

her Paris preparations, how the Tokyo setback was nothing more than a distant memory now, and also her plans to indulge in everything that she put on hold for her Olympic dreams. "Now, I have some time off and I can probably do that (martial arts) again," said Bhaker, a karate kid in her teens before a change of heart led her to shooting. "I was not able to get that kind of time to invest myself into that (martial arts). Finally, I can take time off for my hobbies, and I have many, many hobbies. Horse riding... Personally, I love horse riding, skating, I can still manage on the roads, then fitness, I really enjoy working out. "Then, I have dance (as a hobby) also, I am learning Bharatnatyam. I love the dance forms. I was training in France, I wasn't able to get time, not able to cope up with the (Bharatnatyam) classes," said Bhaker, whose trainer is from

Tamil Nadu. "She takes my classes personally and then I have violin also," she added. As she revealed her bucket list for the "holiday", Rana had a faint smile on his face and he also made it a point to shake his head in disapproval at the very mention of horse riding. "...Then she has to come back in one piece," Rana said, drawing a laugh from Bhaker. "Skating and horse riding are something she should not be doing and she'll be responsible for whatever happens. Who rides a horse thinking that they will fall?" he wondered aloud. A bemused Bhaker was not going to back down easily, their banter also being a reflection of the easy equation between one of the most talked about coach-player combinations in Indian sports right now. "I have been learning horse riding for sometime now," she retorted immediately, asserting that she would be responsible



if anything goes haywire. "I was waiting that after the Olympic, I will do horse riding. And so many other things I want to do like skydiving, scuba diving. I've waited for so long," she said, inviting another shake of the head from Rana. On his part, Rana was clear that the youngster's shooting hand gets back to full fitness. "This (pointing to her injured hand) is the reason we are making her rest for three months. Because this (injury) has been for the last eight months and it has not healed till now," Rana said. "So rest is mandatory for the hand, and we had decided much before the World Cup (Final was awarded to New Delhi)... Our decision to stop for three months was before that," he added. "It will not be very easy but this break is required. It's not something we'll enjoy. It's only the shooting part which will

not be there but her mental (training) waking up in the morning for yoga, everything will be as per what we were doing. Because that's the lifestyle she has to follow." Bhaker will not compete in the season-ending prestigious ISSF World Cup Final for elite shooters from across the world in October in Delhi, and also likely skip the national championships and the camps that will follow to tend to her injured hand. Bhaker had done a rendition of the national anthem on a violin, gifted to her by her brother, and a video of it went viral after her Paris performance. "Yes, I was able to manage something on the violin, but I'm only on the basics," said the champion shooter. "Indian classical is my preference, but I'm only like beginning to learn it, so I'm not at the advanced level. I'm just one month into it... Just the basics."



## Have to prepare mentally to transition from player to coach: Sreejesh

PTI ■ KOCHI

Indian hockey's goalkeeping stalwart P R Sreejesh, who was given a grand welcome on his arrival at the international airport here, said he will be spending the next 2-3 months to mentally prepare himself to transition from a player to a coach. With regard to the enthusiastic welcome given to him, including a roadshow from the airport to Palairavattom here, he said it was like the "cherry on top of the cake". "Working hard for the country, sacrificing a lot and then winning a medal, it is not just for me, but for the country. So, to be a part of this happiness, the welcome organised by everyone, is like the cherry on top of the cake. The pleasure is doubled," he said, speaking to reporters outside the airport. Regarding the next step of his career, Sreejesh said that he knows what he has to do as a player.

"But, as a coach, what all I should do or the transition from a player to a coach, I have to mentally prepare for that. So, I will spend the next 2-3 months on that," he said. A big crowd, including several MLAs, welcomed Sreejesh at the airport. People holding up placards with his photo cheered him on as he came out of the airport. Thereafter, the hockey player held a roadshow from the airport in an open-top jeep. Along the route of his roadshow, people waved and cheered him on, some handed him flowers and bouquets and others walked up to his vehicle to shake his hand and congratulate him, according to visuals shown on TV channels. Sreejesh bid adieu to the game following his starring role in the country's second consecutive Olympic bronze at the just-concluded Paris Games. He is now going to be the team coach of the junior Indian hockey team.

## Australia's Minjee Lee leads rain-delayed Women's Scottish Open with opening 67

AP ■ IRVINE (SCOTLAND)

Two-time major champion Minjee Lee of Australia managed a strong wind and caught a break with rare sunshine in a wet Scottish summer with a 5-under 67 for a one-shot lead in the ISPS Handa Women's Scottish Open before play was stopped for the day. Lydia Ko, coming off her Olympic gold medal that put her into the LPGA Hall of Fame, faced the worst of the weather at Dundonald Links and made five birdies in her round of 69. Former U.S. Women's Open champion A Lim Kim and American Megan Khang were at 68. The opening round was suspended by bad weather and a water-logged course. Lily May Humphreys of England was at 4 under with six holes to play. Play was



halted at the start for about an hour because of rain, and there was another weather delay of 2 hours, 20 minutes. Lee is coming off a disappointing Olympics outside Paris when she was never in the hunt and wound up finishing in a tie for 22nd. She played bogey-free on a tough course, picking up birdies on both

par 5s on the back nine. "Always a happy girl after a bogey-free round," Lee said. "I feel like I played smart golf. I'd say, I gave myself a lot of opportunities for birdie. I feel like when I was in trouble, I kind of missed it in the right spots and could get up-and-down, so that was good." Lee figures she caught a break not having to deal with the brunt of the rain, although there was no escaping the fierce wind. Ko got the worst of both, describing the weather as so chaotic that she was too busy dealing with it to get overly stressed. "If it's just windy, it's fine. But it was windy and rain," Ko said. "It's hard when you have to hold the umbrella sideways and not up. I'm pretty sure it was built for you to hold it like vertically. So it's just very difficult out there."



## Smith eyes IPL comeback after stellar show in MLC

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Boostered by his strong show at the Major League Cricket, veteran Australian batter Steve Smith is hopeful of making a return in the Indian Premier League next year. The 35-year-old, who was ignored for the T20 World Cup and the upcoming tour of Scotland and England, guided the Washington Freedom to their maiden MLC title, finishing the T20 tournament as the franchise's equal leading run-scorer with 336 runs at a strike rate of 148.67. Smith made a 52-ball 88 against a bowling attack that featured Australian captain Pat Cummins and Pakistan quick Haris Rauf in the final against the San Francisco Unicorns and was adjudged the player-of-the-match. "I'd certainly love another opportunity at IPL. I'll be throwing my name in the hat, and we'll see how we go," Smith was quoted as saying by FOX Cricket. "I feel like in every opportunity I've had in T20 cricket recently and franchise stuff, I've played

quite nicely. So hopefully I just keep putting my name up there and enjoying it." Smith has not featured in the IPL since 2021, having gone unsold in the previous two auctions. With the national selectors preferring youngsters, the veteran also opened up on his axing and said he would go about his business trying to get better. "In terms of international T20s, I don't know what's going on there," Smith said. "They've obviously got some people they want to bring in, and that's fine. "I understood the way that they wanted to stack up for the World Cup, with all the strong guys that smack it miles. I understood that. "I'm not that fussed. I'll just go about my business, keep trying to improve and get better." Asked about giving a shot at winning gold at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028, Smith said: "That's still a while away as well, so we'll wait and see. Never say never. "I did watch quite a bit (of the Paris Olympics). I quite enjoyed it."

## Grand chess tour: Nothing changes for Praggnanandhaa, Firouzja leads

PTI ■ SAINT LOUIS (USA)

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa could not really change his fortunes for the better and remained in last spot going into the final day of the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz chess tournament here. Before that, he won a couple of games in the blitz section. Praggnanandhaa scored two wins at the expense of present favourites Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia and Hikaru Nakamura of Russia besides a lone draw with tournament leader Alireza Firouzja of France but lost the remaining six games in the first leg of blitz that kept him on the



bottom of the tables with only nine rounds remaining in the blitz section. Alireza Firouzja made most of his opportunities count to shoot into sole lead on 17.5 points and now enjoys 1.5 points lead over Wesley So of United States, who happened to score the most (7/9) in the blitz section, and Nepomniachtchi. The other leader Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France slipped to fourth spot on 15.5 point, a half point clear of wild card Armenian-turned-American Levon Aronian. Nakamura, who started off as a favourite in the blitz section, is in sixth spot on 13.5 points, ahead of tour leader and

compatriot Fabiano Caruana who has 13 points. American Lenier Dominguez on 12 points is eighth at this point ahead of Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan who has 10 points in all. Praggnanandhaa remains a distant last on 6.5 points, looking for a change in fortunes on the final day. Wesley So was the surprising star of the day winning six, drawing two and losing just one game against Firouzja in nine rounds of blitz. The result propelled the American to joint second spot. However, Firouzja still remains set to win the crown given his 1.5 points lead and if that happens he can even overtake Caruana as the leader of the tour with just one event remaining in form of Sinquefeld cup set to begin from August 18.

## Increased participation should be our goal in new Olympic cycle: Chef de Mission Narang

PTI ■ PARIS

Chef de Mission Gagan Narang hailed India's performance in the just-concluded Paris Olympics and said it's time to chalk out a strategic roadmap ahead of the new Olympic cycle to increase the participation in the 2028 Games in Los Angeles. A total of 117 Indian athletes participated across 16 disciplines at the Paris Games and India ended their campaign with six medals - one silver and five bronze. "Firstly, I congratulate the medal winners. A total of 6 medals (1 Silver, 5 Bronze) is a commendable effort," said Narang ahead of his return from the French capital. "Though, personally, I feel we could have finished with a few more medals, it is worth mentioning the near-misses. There were at least six 4th place finishes and quite a few of our athletes finished in the finals of their respective events. "This is encouraging, and we should take heart from these results, introspect on the fine margins and how we can better these performances," he added. Narang, who had won a bronze in shooting at the London Olympics, said the National Sports Federations (NSFs) should chart out a roadmap to



increase participation in the next Games. "We must find ways to build a strong sports culture and increase the number of participations from India. That should be our goal for this new Olympic cycle," he said. "Also, most importantly I feel whilst we are teaching our athletes how to win, we must also teach them how to accept defeat and come back with a bang." There were six fourth place finishes in Paris and Narang said it is important to take lessons from the near misses and move ahead. "There are many learnings and

take aways from these performances in Paris. From what I saw at this Olympics, it's only the small margins that we need to close in now to elevate this performance," he said. "I will be submitting my observations in an extensive report to the IOA and Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. While India has come a long way in the past decade, and we had a fully equipped medical team at the village with Dinshaw Pardiwala as CMO. "We will grow from strength to strength to compete with the USA and China in the

future in sport science backup as well." "NEED TO CREATE A PATHWAY FOR ATHLETES": Narang said collective efforts must be made to chart an athlete's career trajectory, which also includes long-term financial literacy and utilising the athlete's experience by absorbing them into the system. "To further the growth, collective efforts are being made and should be strengthened further to chart our athlete's career. We need to plan life after sport for an athlete so that their approach is long term," he said. "Financial literacy, absorbing them into the system and utilizing their knowledge and experience, creating job opportunities in district, state and national sports organizations as administrators and coaches should be a priority." Narang said such steps will help athletes to pursue their events with confidence. "Only then will parents and the athletes feel secure to pursue sport professionally and invest their time and efforts in it. We must also focus on athlete's mental well-being, this is extremely critical for athletes to feel assured and that they are cared for," he noted.

## SA20 season three player auction to be held on October 1

PTI ■ DURBAN

The player auction ahead of the third season of the SA20 will take place in Cape Town on October 1 with a total of 13 slots left to be filled, announced Graeme Smith, the league commissioner. The upcoming edition of the SA20 is scheduled to be held from January 9 to February 8 next year. Following the conclusion of the pre-signing and retention window, the teams will have to pick up 13 more players from the auction. Retired India wicketkeeper batter Dinesh Karthik recently joined Paarl Royals, becoming the first player from the country to join the South African league. In addition to this, each franchise will also need to select their 'Season 3 Rookie', while three of the franchises still have a wildcard to announce before December 30. Apart from Karthik, international stars like Ben Stokes, Kane Williamson, Joe Root, Trent Boult, Johnny Bairstow, Devon Conway, Zak Crawley, Rashid Khan and Rahmanullah Gurbaz will also be seen in action in the league. "To have the calibre of international players joining local heroes like Aiden Markram, KG (Kagiso Rabada) and Heinrich (Klaasen) sets up an explosive season," Smith stated in a release.



"We are also incredibly proud of all the domestic players who have been retained by the teams, including the majority of the rookies who have been incorporated as fully-contracted players for Season 3," he added. "SQUADS AS THEY STAND AHEAD OF SEASON 3 AUCTION: DURBAN'S SUPER GIANTS: Brandon King, Quinton De Kock, Naveen Ul Haq, Kane Williamson, Chris Woakes, Preenelan Subrayen, Dwaine Pretorius, Keshav Maharaj, Noor Ahmed, Heinrich Klaasen, Jon-Jon Smuts, Wiaan Mulder, Junior Dala, Bryce Parsons, Matthew Breetzke, Jason Smith, Marcus Stoinis. JOBURG SUPER KINGS: Faf Du Plessis, Moeen Ali, Jonny Bairstow, Maheesh Theekshana, Devon Conway, Gerald Coetzee, David Wiese, Leus Du

Plooy, Lizaad Williams, Nandre Burger, Donavon Ferreira, Imran Tahir, Sibonelo Makhanya, Tabraiz Shamsi. MI CAPE TOWN: Rashid Khan, Ben Stokes, Kagiso Rabada, Trent Boult, Azmatullah Omarzai, Dewald Brevis, Ryan Rickelton, George Linde, Nuwan Thushara, Connor Esterhuizen, Delano Potgieter, Rassie Van Der Dussen, Thomas Kaber, Chris Benjamin. PRETORIA CAPITALS: Anrich Nortje, Jimmy Neesham, Will Jacks, Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Will Smeed, Migael Pretorius, Rilee Rossouw, Eathan Bosch, Wayne Parnell, Senuran Muthusamy, Kyle Verreynne, Daryn Dupavillon, Steve Stolk, Tiaan van Vuuren. PAARL ROYALS: David Miller, Mujeeb Ur-Rahman, Sam Hain, Joe Root, Dinesh Karthik, Kwena Maphaka, Lhuan-dre Pretorius, Bjorn Fortuin, Lungi Ngidi, Mitchell Van Buuren, Keith Dudgeon, Nqaba Peter, Andile Phehlukwayo, Codi Yusuf, John Tander, Dayaana Galim, Jacob Bethell. SUNRISERS EASTERN CAPE: Aiden Markram, Zak Crawley, Roelof van der Merwe, Liam Dawson, Otniel Baartman, Marco Jansen, Beyers Swanepoel, Caleb Seleka, Tristan Stubbs, Jordan Hermann, Patrick Kruger, Craig Overton, Tom Abell, Simon Harmer, Andile Simelane, David Bedingham.

# HARISH SHANKAR: THERE'S NEVER A DAY I DON'T LISTEN TO MUSIC

K. RAMYA SREE

Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja and mass director Harish Shankar's highly anticipated film *Mr. Bachchan* is creating a huge buzz with all its commercial elements. Produced by T.G. Vishwaprasad under People Media Factory banner, the movie features Bhagyashree Borse alongside Ravi Teja. *Mr. Bachchan* hit the theatres on Thursday. Although the film didn't perform up to the audiences' expectations, Harish Shankar shared, "In the lives of honest individuals, there is fun, romance and love. The authenticity in his love and his fight scenes are central to the film. Everything comes from the point of authenticity. 'Ride' was a bit serious, with the first and second halves sharing a single backdrop, which might stress the audience. We

**Filmmaker and scriptwriter Harish Shankar, whose latest release *Mr. Bachchan* has opened to rave reviews, shares insights about bringing authenticity with the film, *Big B's* influence on him and more**

avoided that in this film." Even when we did a 'Dil Se' interview with the director earlier, he stressed on the influence he had of Amitabh Bachchan on him and even now, sharing about the influence on him to follow this kind of a commercial film template, he said, "My father is a big Amitabh Bachchan fan. When I was in intermediate school, he realised I had a passion for films. From a young age, I have loved Telugu and Hindi literature and movies. I was very influenced by the dialogues in films by *Jandhyala, Babu* and *Ramana*. I was also attracted to the films of E.V.V. Satyanarayana." Continuing about his love for literature, he shared, "I have loved literature since childhood. There might be days I don't watch movies, but there's never a day I don't listen to music. There's no inspiration like a good line. Music is a therapy for me.

I am accustomed to listening to lyrics carefully and getting inspired. I aim to create songs that are memorable for their lyrics. Kasarla Shyam, Vanamali, Bhaskara Bhatla and Sahithi have written beautiful lyrics for this film. This story is set in the days of cassette recording centers. Back then, posters were put up in a grand manner for cassette records. To remind us of that time, we included posters of Amitabh Bachchan and Chiranjeevi in the lyrical video." Lastly, heaping praises for his producer, he said, "Without Vishwaprasad, this film wouldn't have come out so grandly or been released on the 15th. He gave more than we asked for, regardless of market and financial equations. When Kalyan was busy with elections during *Ustaad Bhagat Singh*, we set a target to finish the film by the time results came in. With a hero like Ravi



## Hari Hara Veera Mallu team begins shooting epic war scene

Power Star Pawan Kalyan's upcoming epic action saga, *Hari Hara Veera Mallu*, has resumed updates after a necessary hiatus due to unforeseen circumstances. The team is thrilled to announce a major development for fans and movie enthusiasts. Regular shooting for *Hari Hara Veera Mallu Part-1* officially commenced on August 14. On Friday, they began filming a grand war sequence, choreographed by renowned action director Stunt Silva. This massive battle scene features over 400-500 fighters and junior artists. Pawan Kalyan will join the shoot for this sequence shortly, as he is currently occupied with his political responsibilities. The production house has meticulously planned an extravagant schedule to capture this war scene, which will showcase Pawan Kalyan in a dynamic and unprecedented avatar. Portraying a historical warrior outlaw for the first time in his career, Pawan Kalyan is set to deliver an exhilarating performance with *Hari Hara Veera Mallu Part-1: Sword vs Spirit*.

The teaser, following director Jyothi Krishna's takeover of the project, has generated immense excitement among fans and movie-goers. This prestigious action saga features Bollywood sensation Bobby Deol, legendary actor Anupam Kher and a talented ensemble cast. Manoj Paramahansa is handling cinematography, while legendary production designer Thotha Tharani is responsible for art direction. MM Keeravani, an Oscar-winning composer, is creating the film's music. Presented on a grand scale by legendary producer AM Rathnam under his Mega Surya Productions banner, the film is produced by A Dayakar Rao. *Hari Hara Veera Mallu Part-1: Sword vs Spirit*.

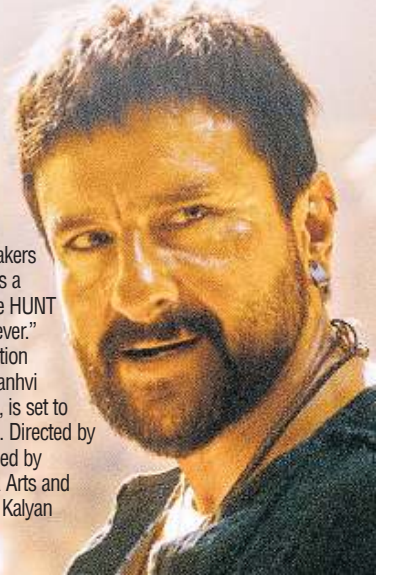


*Sword vs Spirit*, starring Pawan Kalyan, is set for a worldwide release soon in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil and Malayalam.

## Saif brings celebration of havoc as 'Bhaira' in *Devara*

To celebrate actor Saif Ali Khan's birthday, the makers of *Devara* released a thrilling glimpse of his character, Bhaira. The 52-second action-packed video showcases the actor in two intense avatars. From a packed wrestling arena to a relentless chase through dense forests, Saif's portrayal is raw and commanding. Fans, eagerly awaiting a peek into Saif's role, were not disappointed. This new video offers a glimpse of a side to the actor we've never seen before - fierce, ruthless and

undeniably captivating. Sharing the video, the makers declared, "His Presence is a Celebration of Havoc. The HUNT will be more brutal than ever." *Devara*, a high-octane action thriller starring Jr NTR, Janhvi Kapoor and Saif Ali Khan, is set to release on September 27. Directed by Koratala Siva and produced by Yuvasudha Arts and NTR Arts and presented by Nandamuri Kalyan Ram.



## Horror thriller *Demonte Colony 2* to release on August 23

The highly anticipated sequel *Demonte Colony 2* is set for its grand Telugu release on August

23rd. This follow-up to the successful *Demonte Colony* stars Arunithi and Priya Bhavani Shankar, with key roles played by Antti Jaskelainen, Tsering Dorjee and Arun Pandian. Produced by Raj Varma Entertainment, Shree Balaji Films, Gnanamuthu Pattarai and White Knights Entertainment, the film is directed by Ajay R Gnanamuthu, with Vijaya Subrahmaniam and RC Rajkumar serving as producers. *Demonte Colony 2* premiered in Tamil on August 15 and has received positive feedback, even holding its own against major releases like *Thangalaan*. As it prepares for its Telugu release, the film's popularity is expected to grow further. The Telugu trailer has already sparked significant interest, and the team is hopeful for a strong response from local audiences who enjoy horror thrillers.



## 'Working with Vikram is an experience I will cherish forever,' exclaims Malavika

Malavika Mohanan has created a buzz with the release of her upcoming Tamil film, *Thangalaan*. In her role as Aarathi, she has captivated audiences with her compelling performance. The film has garnered a warm

reception from both viewers and critics and fans are eagerly anticipating its release in Hindi. Reflecting on the Tamil release, Malavika shared her excitement and anticipation for the film's Hindi debut on August 30. She said, "Today is incredibly special for me. *Thangalaan* (Tamil) has been released and I'm eagerly looking forward to the Hindi audience experiencing it. Working with Vikram and the entire *Thangalaan* team has been a remarkable journey, one I will always cherish. I feel fortunate to work alongside such a talented co-star like Vikram, whom I have long admired. Portraying a unique and powerful character in this exceptional story has been thrilling. I can't wait for everyone to see the dedication and passion that went into making this film." With *Thangalaan* now out in Tamil, it is set to win the hearts of Hindi-speaking audiences when it releases soon.



## Brahmanandam's first look from *Brahma Anandam* is here

Hasya Brahma and Padma Shri Brahmanandam, along with his son Raja Goutham, will be featured as a grandfather and grandson in the upcoming entertainer *Brahma Anandam*. Directed by debutant RVS Swadharm Entertainment, with Smt. Savithri and Sri Umesh Yadav presenting, the film promises to be a delightful experience. The timeless joy of Brahmanandam is beautifully captured in his first look from *Brahma Anandam*. The actor makes a charming appearance in traditional attire, radiating a warm and engaging smile. The first look poster has already created a positive buzz and the film's initial glimpse is set to be unveiled on August 19, as confirmed by the makers.

Given the success of previous films from the banner, such as *Malli Rava*, *Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya*, and *Masooda*, expectations for *Brahma Anandam* are high. The story revolves around Brahma, a self-centered and sarcastic grandson who exploits everyone around him, and Anand Ram Murthy, a kind-hearted grandfather who tries to be benevolent to all. Despite their contrasting personalities, the duo embarks on a journey together, leading to a narrative filled with humour, joy, challenges, and new beginnings. Priya Vadlamani and Aishwarya Holakkal star as the female leads, while Vennela Kishore takes on a significant role. Sampath and Rajeev Kanakala also feature prominently. Sandilya Pisapati is responsible for the music, Mitesh Parvathani handles the cinematography and Prasanna is the editor.



# Cinematic excellence crowned: Aattam, Kantara and Ponniyin Selvan lead charge!

AARTI SREENATH

The 70th National Film Awards, held at the illustrious National Media Center in New Delhi, unfolded as a night to remember, a grand tribute to the brilliance and diversity of Indian cinema in 2022. Amidst the glittering lights and a tapestry of cinematic artistry, the Malayalam-language drama *Aattam* ascended to the pinnacle, clinching the coveted Best Feature Film award, a reflection onto the power of storytelling that transcends language. In a symphony of accolades, the name of Oscar-winner A.R. Rahman resonated like a timeless melody. The maestro once again for the seventh time enchanted the nation, winning the National Film Award for Best Music Director (Background Score) for his work in Mani Ratnam's epic *Ponniyin Selvan: Part 1*. This Tamil masterpiece not only captivated audiences but also claimed four prestigious awards, leading the night's honors and etching its name into the annals of cinematic history. Vikram, reflecting on the film's triumph, poignantly wrote, "Blessed that *PS1* is crowned with national recognition, propelled by the love of the audience. Tamil history, literature, culture and cinema marching triumphantly

together from the past to the present!! Congratulations Mani Sir, @LycraProductions, @arrahman, and @dop\_ravivarma #Nationalawards." The Telugu industry witnessed a triumphant surprise with *Karthikeya 2*, a mystery action-adventure with devotional undertones, helmed by Chandoo Mondeti. Emerging as a sleeper hit, the film's success transcended linguistic boundaries, resonating deeply even in the Hindi belt. This cinematic gem, featuring Nikhil, Anupama Parameswaran, and Anupam Kher, was honored with the National Award for Best Regional Film (Telugu). An elated Nikhil expressed, "I'm thrilled that *Karthikeya 2* won the national award," his words echoing

the joy of a journey fulfilled. In the realm of Kannada cinema, Rishab Shetty stood tall, winning the Best Actor award for his spellbinding performance in *Kantara*. Overwhelmed and deeply moved, Shetty dedicated the honor to his roots, saying, "I am truly overwhelmed by the honor of this National Award for *Kantara*. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has been part of this journey—the incredible team of artists, technicians, and especially Hombale Films. The audiences have made this film what it is, and their support fills me with a deep sense of responsibility. I am committed to working even harder to bring an even better film to our viewers. With utmost respect, I dedicate this award to our Kannada audience, the Daiva Nartakas, and Appu sir. I thank the divine as we have reached this moment through the blessings of the Daivas."

The night shimmered with shared glories as the Best Actress award was jointly bestowed upon Nithya Menen for *Thiruchitrambalam* and Manasi Parekh for *The Kutch Express*, celebrating the dynamic range and depth of female performances in Indian cinema. Sooraj Barjaya's directorial triumph, *Uunchai*, earned him the Best Director award, a fitting tribute to his heartwarming narrative that touched the soul of the nation. *Kantara* did not just win hearts but also accolades, as it was named the Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment. Hombale Films, the powerhouse behind *Kantara* and *KGF Chapter 2*, basked in the glory of four awards, cementing their legacy in the annals of Kannada cinema. Prashanth Neel, the visionary behind *KGF Chapter 2*, expressed his gratitude, saying, "I am truly honored by this National Award for *KGF Chapter 2*. My deepest gratitude

goes to Yash for his extraordinary performance and to the entire team and crew for their relentless dedication. A heartfelt thank you to our audience for their unwavering support and to the media for their vital role in this journey. Congratulations to Rishab Shetty and Hombale Films for their well-deserved recognition with *Kantara*. This achievement is a shining moment for Kannada cinema, and I'm grateful to everyone who made this possible." The cinematic tapestry of the night was further enriched by Ayun Mukerji's *Brahmastra: Part One - Shiva*, which dazzled with three National Film Awards. Mukerji, brimming with gratitude, shared, "It's a special day for us. I am deeply grateful for the recognition *Brahmastra: Part One - Shiva* has received at the National Awards. The music of the film holds a special place in all our hearts. Pritam Da's compositions, coupled with Amitabh's lyrics and Arijit's voice, are

something I feel so proud and grateful for. From the music to the visual effects, we poured a lot of love into making this film, and I thank the entire team for this fantastic collaborative effort, which continues to give us so much love." As the night drew to a close, the National Film Awards stood as a testament to the rich and diverse landscape of Indian cinema. Films like *Saudi Velakka CC.225/2009*, awarded Best Malayalam Film and *Karthikeya 2*, honored as Best Telugu Film, highlighted the vast spectrum of stories that continue to captivate and inspire audiences across the nation. Each award, each speech, was a reminder of the profound impact that cinema has on our collective imagination, a symbol of creativity that will continue to shine brightly in the years to come.

