



India will work with Malaysia for prosperous Indo-Pacific:
Prez



INDIA & LANKA SIGN PACT FOR POWER GENERATION



'My character in Maruthi Nagar Subramanyam is meant to tickle your funny
BONES'

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

KTR has been speaking about the Telangana Thalli statue now. It was not installed even though KTR had been in power for 10 years. We will take the responsibility of installing the Telangana Thalli statue on December 9 inside the Secretariat. There is no need to doubt the sincerity of us. Social boycott will take place if we speak meaninglessly. There is no place for dacoits and boozers at the Secretariat.

- A. Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister of Telangana

DON'T MISS...

Veligonda project works expedited...

Minister for Water Resources Development, Nimmala Ramanaidu, announced that the coalition government has expedited the Veligonda project works, attributing the previous slow progress to the negligence of the former YSRCP government. Speaking to the media at the Secretariat on Tuesday, the Minister stated that the government accelerated the Veligonda project immediately after coming to power. He highlighted that Rs 4,000 crore is required to complete the project. During the last term of the...

-PAGE: 4

India's reservoir storage levels...

The Central Water Commission (CWC) has reported a significant improvement in the live storage levels of India's reservoirs this year, with the current storage exceeding the ten-year average by 14 per cent. According to the latest Reservoir Storage Bulletin, the live storage available in 150 major reservoirs across the country is 124.016 billion cubic metres (BCM), which is 69 per cent of the total live storage capacity of these reservoirs. This marks a substantial increase from the corresponding period...

-PAGE: 5

Serum Institute says working to...

Serum Institute of India on Tuesday said it is currently working to develop a vaccine for Monkeypox, with positive outcomes expected in a year's time. The World Health Organisation on August 14 declared the Mpox outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. The move came after a sudden increase in cases was recorded in parts of Africa. In India, around 30 Mpox cases have been detected since 2022. The most recent case in the country was reported...

-PAGE: 8

Nagal, Gaston to feature in 6th...

Ace Indian player Sumit Nagal and France's Hugo Gaston will be the main attractions in the men's category of the sixth Tennis Premier League to be held here from December 3-8. Poland's Magda Linette, who is ranked 41st in the world, and Armenia's world No 52 Elna Avanesyan, will headline the women's category in the tournament which will be held at the Cricket Club of India. The tournament will be played in a 25-point format in which each franchise will play a total of five matches to make...

-SPORTS

CM vows push to rural sector

Janmabhoomi 2.0 to be launched in January 2025

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has emphasised the importance of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development for the advancement of rural areas and pledged to strengthen these sectors.

Addressing a review meeting, the Chief Minister noted that while various programmes had transformed villages between 2014 and 2019, the previous government had undermined these systems. He assured that the Panchayat Raj Department would be directed to enhance infrastructure in villages, including provisions for electricity, gas, toilets, and drinking water. Additionally, he highlighted the need for street lights, drainage canals, cement roads, drinking water supply, and solid waste management centres in every village. Establishing roads and marketplaces to connect nearby areas was also emphasised. The Chief Minister suggested that the Panchayat Raj department should implement a comprehensive plan to meet these minimum requirements shortly.

Naidu also announced that the Janmabhoomi 2.0 programme would resume in January 2025, focusing on development projects in villages with local participation. The Chief Minister conducted a



- Plan to strengthen infrastructure in villages
- Rs 500 crore to be released for the Jal Jeevan Mission
- 25 lakh LED lights require maintenance, with Rs 482 crore in overdue payments; solar power is suggested as a solution.
- Plan to reopen waste management centres and discussions on NREGA works are on the anvil.

review of the Panchayat Raj, Rural Development, Environment, and Forest Departments at the Secretariat on Tuesday, with Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and officials from the respective departments in attendance.

The Chief Minister criticised the previous government's diversion of funds meant for village infrastructure, leading to subpar conditions. Currently, Rs 990 crore allocated to the Panchayat Raj Department is being released from the Finance Department. He also noted that the

previous administration had neglected the Jal Jeevan Mission, which aims to provide drinking water to every household, causing the State to fall to 19th position in the mission's rankings.

To address this, Naidu announced an immediate release of Rs 500 crore from the finance department for the Jal Jeevan Mission and set a target to construct 17,500 km of cement roads and 10,000 km of drainage canals over the next five years.

Rs 1,452 cr to speed up works in villages

VIJAYAWADA: Finance Minister P Keshav on Tuesday said the government will release Rs 1,452 crore as funds to local bodies in the State to speed up works at the village and ward levels. According to directions from Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, it has been decided to release Rs 998 crore to gram (village) panchayats and Rs 454 crore to urban local bodies, he said. "Chandrababu Naidu directed that these funds be used to speed up works at the village and ward levels. The release of these funds will financially strengthen the local bodies," said the Finance Minister in a press release. Alleging that the erstwhile YSRCP government had weakened local bodies, Keshav asserted that the TDP-led government would work for the strengthening of local bodies. Further, he claimed that the YSRCP government had diverted the 15th Finance Commission funds.



DOC'S RAPE AND MURDER

SC terms it as horrific, blasts Bengal govt

- Forms 10-member Task Force
- Asks Mamata not to unleash the power of state on protesters.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid spiraling nationwide protests over the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, the Supreme Court on Tuesday constituted a 10-member National Task Force (NTF) to formulate a protocol for ensuring the safety and security of doctors and other healthcare professionals.

Terming the incident as "horrific", the apex court excoriated the state government over the delay in filing the FIR and allowing thou-

sands of miscreants to vandalise the state-run facility.

It also asked the West Bengal government to not unleash the "power of the State" on peaceful protesters and to deal with them with "great sensitivity in this moment of national catharsis".

The 10-member task force headed by Vice Admiral Arti Sarin has been asked to submit its interim report within three weeks.

The Supreme Court, which directed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to submit a status report on the progress made in its investigation into the killing, also asked the state government to submit a report on the action it has taken against the vandals.

APPLICATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS

Single window system for permissions

MA & UD Minister Narayana asks officials to upgrade software to address TDR bonds illegalities

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA & UD) Minister Ponguru Narayana has instructed the officials of his department to coordinate with the Registration Department to prevent illegalities in the issue of TDR Bonds.

The minister ordered the authorities to grant speedy permits to those applying for building



construction. During a review meeting at the CDMA State office on Tuesday, Minister Narayana said that those applying for building construction must apply sep-

Jagan, Vijayasai seek CBI permission to go abroad

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former chief minister and YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and MP Vijayasai Reddy have filed separate petitions in the CBI court seeking permission to travel abroad. Arguments pertaining to Vijayasai Reddy's petition have been completed, and the verdict has been reserved for August 30.

The hearing in former CM Jagan's petition was adjourned to Wednesday as the CBI sought time to file a counter on Jagan's petition. YS Jagan moved the CBI court seeking permission to visit the UK in September, while Vijayasai Reddy sought permission to visit Europe during September and October.

decrease in cultivation area is due to excessive rainfall combined with extended dry spells. The meeting discussed the rainfall recorded so far in the Rayalaseema districts, the area cultivated with various crops, and the selection of suitable alternative crops for the remaining uncultivated land. Agricultural officials from the Rayalaseema districts briefed the Minister on the current conditions of agricultural fields, providing details on actual crops cultivated and rainfall data from June last year to the present.

HCL to create 15,000 jobs in AP

Representatives of software major discuss expansion plans with IT Minister Lokesh

- The expansion includes an initial 5,500 jobs, with 10,000 more in a second phase.
- HCL already employs 4,500 people at its existing AP facility.
- Current government aims to create 2 million jobs and will support HCL's expansion.
- Lokesh promises to release withheld subsidies in instalments to aid HCL's growth.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

HCL, a leading software company, is set to significantly expand its operations in Andhra Pradesh, aiming to generate at least 15,000 new jobs. A delegation from HCL, led by Corporate Vice-President Siva Sankar and Associate Vice-President Siva Prasad, met with Minister for HRD, IT, and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, at his residence in Undavalli on Tuesday to discuss these ambitious plans.

Following the meeting, HCL representatives shared with the media that the company's expansion in the state will create employment for 5,500 young people in the initial phase. In the second phase, a new multi-storey building will be constructed, providing jobs for an additional 10,000 individuals.

Continued on Page 2

Atchan announces 80% subsidy on seeds

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Agriculture Minister K. Atchannaaidu has directed officials to implement special measures to ensure that farmers' incomes in the Rayalaseema districts do not decrease. In a video conference with agricultural officials from eight Rayalaseema districts on Tuesday, the Minister instructed that seeds should be provided at an 80% subsidy to encourage cultivation on vacant agricultural lands, thereby benefiting the farmers.



The Minister emphasised the importance of making realistic estimates for alternative crops to ensure farmers' incomes do not decline under normal cultivation practices. He suggested that necessary steps be taken to maintain

the yield of crops already under cultivation. Despite above-average rainfall, the area under cultivation has decreased, prompting the Minister to encourage the cultivation of short-term yielding crops. Officials reported that the

Viksit AP @2047 vision plan launch on Oct 2

Target is to achieve 15% annual growth rate and \$2 trillion economy by 2047: CS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad announced that the Viksit Andhra Pradesh @2047 Vision Document is set to be launched on October 2. Speaking during a virtual conference from the Secretariat on Tuesday, the Chief Secretary discussed the formulation of the Viksit Andhra Pradesh @2047 plan with Special Chief Secretaries, Principal Secretaries, and Heads of Departments (HoDs). The Chief Secretary stated that the Viksit AP @2047 vision plan is being developed with the ambitious goal of achieving a 15% annual growth rate. The plan aims to transform Andhra Pradesh into a \$2 trillion



economy with a per capita income of \$45,000 by 2047. The Viksit AP @2047 vision document is scheduled to be presented to the State Council of Ministers on August 28. From September 1 to 15, the state will seek suggestions, advice, and opinions from the public. The Chief Secretary directed the relevant departmental heads to raise awareness

among district and field-level officials from August 21 to 31. A video conference with district collectors is scheduled for August 27. Additionally, mandal, municipal, and village-level awareness meetings will be held from September 10 to 15. Competitions for high school students are planned from September 10 to 14, with prizes to be awarded on September 15.

The final draft of the AP Vision @2047 will be completed by September 25. The Chief Secretary noted that preparations are underway to launch the Viksit AP @2047 vision document on October 2, in coordination with NITI Aayog, with the event possibly involving both the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister.

Neerabh Kumar Prasad also stated that as part of Viksit AP @2047, five-year action plans will be prepared for each district, aligned with government priorities. The focus areas include eradicating poverty, infrastructure development, demographic management, and improving the ease of living, with department-specific plans to be created accordingly.

AMID POLITICAL ROW

UPSC drops latest lateral-entry recruitment drive

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The UPSC on Tuesday cancelled its latest advertisement to fill key posts in government departments through lateral entry, amid a political row over the lack of a reservation provision for those positions.

The move came after Union Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh wrote to Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Chairperson Preeti Sudan to cancel the advertisement, so that marginalised communities get their rightful representation in government services. The commission had, on August 17, issued a notification for the



recruitment of 45 posts -- 10 of joint secretaries and 35 of directors or deputy secretaries -- through lateral entry, which is referred to as the appointment of specialists (including those from the private sector) in government departments. It was one of the biggest tranches of lateral recruitment announced by the commission.



Extradite Hasina to face trial in Bangla

BNP asks India

PNS ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh Nationalist Party's Secretary-General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir on Tuesday asked India to extradite deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina to face trial as he accused her of plotting to thwart the country's revolution.

Continued on Page 2

Selections for Rajya Sabha seats reflect political expedience!

The criteria followed of late by the principal political players at national level for selection of candidates to fill vacant seats in the Rajya Sabha -- which is the upper House of Parliament and supposed to comprise venerable leaders of various political parties -- reflect political expedience rather than traditional, time-honoured parameters. At the individual level, almost every aspirant looks at the saal befkhar factor of the position. A responsible political party will choose its RS candidates after wide-ranging in-house consultations and upon fair assessment of his or her image among the public. When it comes to the Lok Sabha, political parties go by the aspirant's popularity among the constituents. The Congress has just picked its former MP and noted lawyer Abhishek Manu

Singhvi as its candidate for RS bypolls from Telangana. No doubt he has had a long career in the party and perhaps deserves the ticket. But the larger question is: Has the Congress' leadership garnered opinions from its local leaders and cadre? As the Congress needs a strong voice in the Rajya Sabha, it has preferred Singhvi, ignoring his demerits. Singhvi had invited the wrath of the Congress' leadership following his professional decision to side with lottery agencies in Kerala. The then Congress government in Kerala had banned lotteries as they weaken people economically and are nothing but a kind of gambling. Yet, Singhvi, in his individual and professional capacity, backed lottery agencies to the hilt in the Kerala High Court, causing embarrassment to the Congress. The

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party later relieved him of his responsibilities as official spokesperson of the party. In the undivided Andhra Pradesh state also, the Congress had broken self-imposed rules regarding the process of selection of candidates for filling vacant Rajya Sabha seats. In 2002, when the Congress was in the Opposition in AP, it had imposed rules for aspirants stating that losers in the 1999 elections would not be considered. By virtue of its strength in

the AP Assembly, the Congress had a chance to get two out of six seats. The undivided AP had 18 RS seats, with six of them being filled through biennial elections. There were nearly a dozen aspirants in AP Congress, including Dr. KVP Ramachandra Rao, an aide of Dr.YS Rajasekhara Reddy. Yet, those two seats were filled with two leaders who had lost their Lok Sabha seats in 1999. The party had picked Nandi Yellaiah (Siddipet-SC) and T.



Subbarami Reddy (Visakhapatnam). As the Congress had selected a candidate from the Madiga community, it changed plans of the ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP) headed by then chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. He then zeroed in on former chairman of APSRTC Akarapu

Sudarshan from Nalgonda district. He was considered by the party cadre as the lucky one as he had lost his Assembly seat (Suryapet-SC) to Dosapati Gopal (Congress) in 1999. Dr. KVP Ramachandra Rao was on the list of aspirants for four biennial elections -- 2000,2002,2004,2006 -- for the Rajya Sabha. But he found no place in the final list, despite backing from YSR. At last, KVP got an opportunity in 2008. The party okayed renewal of his membership in 2014. Surprisingly, he was the beneficiary of the Congress party in the undivided AP, though the party disappeared from the AP political scenario following the state's bifurcation. Later, in disregard of political and social equations, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu selected two leaders from his own Kamma community Y. V. Satyanarayana (Sujana) Chowdary and K. Ravindra

Kumar prior to the 2019 General Elections. In this case too, the party's political needs had played a decisive role. The erstwhile YSR Congress Party regime headed by former chief minister Y Jaganmohan Reddy too ignored the feelings and sentiments of party leaders and cadre. Jagan created a flutter in political circles as well as among the public by giving his nod for the candidature of Parimal Natwani, associate of Chairman of Reliance Industries Mukhesh Ambani. Natwani is in no way concerned about AP, much less acquainted with its affairs. Perhaps the idea of establishing a good rapport with Mukesh Ambani outweighed other considerations with Prime Minister Narendra Modi too in the picture. In 2004, Rashid Alwi, former aide of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader Mayawati joined the Congress after he

had been shown the door by the party leadership. He was given RS ticket from Andhra Pradesh by the Congress' leadership. With a view to weaken Mayawati, the Congress took him in its fold for political brownie points. At times, parties backed candidates cutting across all barriers. The Communist Party of India (CPI) was allotted one RS seat by the Congress since both were alliance partners in undivided AP. CPI (AP state council) proposed Ajiz Pasha, who was heading the Hyderabad city council of CPI. It appears that these days RS seats are filled solely for political expedience, regardless of the candidate's credentials and the situation at the ground level. Political parties do make and break rules they themselves frame. Who cares for the party leaders and the cadre, much less for the public?

Caste census is need of the hour: BSP AP coordinator

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Retired DGP and State coordinator of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Dr. Poornachandra Rao, has highlighted the ongoing social and political injustices faced by the Backward Classes in Andhra Pradesh, even after 77 years of independence. He pointed out that until 1983, the State was predominantly ruled by a single caste, the Reddys. Since then, power has alternated between two dominant castes, the Reddys and Kammas, leaving Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Backward Classes (BCs), minorities, and other marginalised communities politically underrepresented. Speaking at the state-level BC Assembly Round Table Conference held in Vijayawada on Tuesday, Dr Rao stressed the urgent need for a comprehensive caste census. He noted that among the 242 sub-castes in the state, over 50% belong to the BCs. SCs make up about 20% of the population, and STs around 7%. However, despite Reddys constituting just 6% and Kammas 5% of the popu-



lation, seat allocation for Parliament, the Assembly, and local bodies has never reflected these proportions. Furthermore, the representation of SCs, STs, and BCs in key positions--such as Vice Chancellors, Heads of Departments, and notably, judges in the judiciary--remains minimal. Dr. Rao also highlighted the disparity in the number of MLAs from different communities, despite their similar population sizes. He revealed that in the last 16 elections, there have been 658 Reddy MLAs and 549 Kamma MLAs, while the Yadavs had only 46, and the Goudas

(including Shetti Balija) just 68. This means that nearly 40% of the population remains unrepresented in legislative bodies. He argued that a comprehensive caste census is essential to address this imbalance. Recently, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu announced a 33% reservation for BCs in legislative bodies and 34% in local bodies. However, Dr Rao dismissed this as another diversionary tactic, criticising the lack of sincere efforts to implement these promises. He insisted that a caste census is necessary to determine the exact number of seats to be allocated to the 131 sub-castes

within the BCs. He also condemned the introduction of a "skill census" by the TDP-led government, labelling it as a farcical attempt to distract from the need for a caste census and to appease the upper castes within the party. The event was attended by BSP State President Paramjyothi, Vice President Gautam Kumar, State General Secretary Pushparaj, State Spokesperson L. Vandana Kumar, prominent High Court advocate V. Koteswara Rao, OBC Association national president Kiran Kumar Goud, and Gouda Sangam President K. Shankar Rao.

Extradite Hasina to...

Continued from Page 1

Hasina, 76, resigned and fled to India on August 5 following massive protests by students and others against her government over a controversial quota system in government jobs. "It is our call to you that you should hand her over to the government of Bangladesh in a legal way. The people of this country have given the decision for her trial. Let her face that trial," Fakhrul was quoted as saying by the Daily Star newspaper. Talking to reporters after placing a wreath at the grave of former president and BNP founder Zia-ur Rahman in the city, Fakhrul said India is seemingly not keeping its commitment towards democracy by providing shelter to her.

SC terms it as...

Continued from Page 1

The court also expressed its deep concern over the name of the victim, her photographs and video clips showing her lifeless body having been splashed all over the media. Taking a serious note of mob violence in the hospital and the allegation that the Kolkata police fled the scene, the top court ordered deployment of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) at the hospital to enable doctors to resume work. "In the aftermath of the brutal incident and the demonstrations which followed, the State Government was expected to ensure the deployment of the state machinery to prevent a breach of law and order. "It was all the more necessary to do so since investigation of the crime which took place in the precincts of the hospital was under way. We are unable to comprehend how the State was not prepared to deal with the incident of vandalism of the premises of the hospital," the top court said. The bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud criticised the ex-principal of RG Kar Medical College Dr Sandip Ghosh for trying to pass off the case as that of suicide and not letting the parents of the deceased see her body for several hours. "What was the principal doing? Why was this inaction to first pass this as suicide and not registering an FIR? The body is handed to the parents for cremation late in the night.

The next day, the doctors protest and a mob assembles at the hospital. "The hospital is invaded and critical facilities are damaged. What was the police doing? A serious offense occurred, and the crime scene is within the hospital. The police should have protected the crime scene. How can the police allow vandals to enter the hospital? After the principal resigns, he is sent to another hospital. When his conduct was under scrutiny, how was he appointed to another college immediately," the bench, also comprising JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, observed? The bench said what has taken place in Kolkata is not just a horrific murder but an incident that has raised systemic issues about the safety of doctors. "We are deeply concerned that there is a virtual absence of safe work conditions across the country, particularly in public hospitals. Most of the young doctors have to put in 36 hours of work. "We find that there are no duty rooms available, or separate restrooms for men and women doctors and nursing staff. We must evolve a national consensus that there must be a national standard protocol so that safe work conditions are provided," the bench said. If women cannot go to their place of work safely, then we are denying them equality, the apex court said. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the West Bengal government, refuted the observations and submitted that Kolkata police took all necessary action.

CM vows push to rural...

Continued from Page 1

Officials reported that the YSRCP government had left 25 lakh LED lights across the state without maintenance, resulting in only 60 per cent of the lights functioning in villages. Payment of Rs 482 crore is due for this, and the lack of funds over the past five years has halted new

installations and maintenance. The Chief Minister proposed generating solar power through panchayat buildings across the state. Naidu also called for the reopening of solid waste management centres that were discontinued under the previous government. He noted that gram sabhas would be held on 23 August to discuss NREGA works,

with efforts underway to restart all garbage-to-wealth creation centres by 2 October. Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan briefed the Chief Minister on recent decisions and reforms within the Panchayat Raj Department and confirmed that gram sabhas on NREGA works would be held across the state on 23 August.

MEIL deploys state-of-the-art drilling rig for ONGC in Rajahmundry

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Limited (MEIL), a Hyderabad-based global conglomerate, has deployed its advanced, fully automated, and hydraulic 2000 HP capacity oil drilling rig (C3BRI NG 2000-5) at ONGC Asset, Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh. Previously, MEIL has deployed two 2000 HP capacity land drilling rigs in the same asset. This marks the third rig to be established under the Rajahmundry asset of ONGC. The inauguration ceremony of the oil drilling rig deployment was attended by representatives from MEIL and Drillmec, namely Manoj Varma, VP of Contracts; Marco Tozzi, Deputy CEO (Drillmec); Michele Bruzzi, COO (Drillmec); Sabir Hussain, VP of Installation & Commissioning (Drillmec); and

ONGC officials. The new generation of fully automated oil drilling rigs is made under the 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiatives, as part of the Rs. 6,000 crore value of oil drilling rigs ordered by ONGC. MEIL is the first private company in India to manufacture and use oil and gas extraction rigs with indigenous technology. MEIL has received an order for 47 rigs from ONGC through global competitive bidding. Of the 27 land drilling rigs, two are mobile hydraulic rigs with a capacity of 1,500 HP, and 17 are AC VFD rigs with a 1,500 HP capacity. Six others are AC VFD rigs with a capacity of 2,000 HP, and two others are HT VFD rigs of 2,000 HP. Out of these, 20 are workerover rigs, and 27 are land drilling rigs. The 27 workerover rigs include 12 of 50-MT capacity, four rigs of 100 MT, and the remaining four have a capacity of 150 MT each. The 2,000 HP rigs can drill up to 6,000 metres. MEIL is manufacturing and supplying the remaining rigs to ONGC assets in Assam (Sibsagar, Jorahat), Andhra Pradesh (Rajahmundry), Gujarat (Ahmedabad, Ankleshwar,



Mehsana, and Cambay), Tripura (Agartala), and Tamil Nadu (Karaikal). These state-of-the-art oil rigs will have the world's best and most advanced hydraulic technology features. As energy prices soar, the advanced rigs are crucial for the Indian energy sector to drill oil and gas wells faster and increase oil and gas production for domestic use, according to MEIL sources. According to MEIL, this rig is equipped with a blowout preventer that can operate under high pressure and high temperatures. The rig can bring down the temperature from 220 degrees Celsius underground to the surface area. Since it is equipped with a blowout preventer with a 5,000 PSI capacity, which is used for the first time in India, it helps in reducing the temperature.

No accommodation to donors during Brahmotsavams

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

To provide more accommodation to the common pilgrims, who through Tirumala during the ensuing Srivari annual Brahmotsavams from October 4 to 12, no accommodation will be provided to donors during that period. The accommodation during Srivari Salakatta Brahmotsavams 2024 remains blocked for the donors of various Trusts and Schemes. Except on the days of Dhvajrohanam on October 4 and Chakra Snaman on October 12, the donors will be allowed for Darshan as per their available privileges. The Donors are requested to make note of this and cooperate with TTD.

CBI's jurisdiction in AP extended

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The AP government has extended the jurisdiction of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to investigate offences in the State under specific conditions. The announcement, made through a gazette notification issued by the Home Department, was published on Tuesday. According to the notification, the extension of CBI's jurisdiction is granted under Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946 (Act No. 25 of 1946). This extension allows the CBI to investigate offences committed by employees of the Central Government, Central Public Sector Undertakings, and private persons (acting alone or in collaboration with Central Government employees) within the state of Andhra Pradesh. These offences must fall under the purview of Section 3 of the

DSPE Act, which lists the specific offences the CBI is authorised to investigate. However, the extension comes with certain conditions. No CBI investigation will be conducted in cases pertaining to public servants controlled by the Andhra Pradesh State government without prior approval from the state authorities. The notification specifies that this permission is mandatory for each case, ensuring the state's oversight over such investigations. The notification is effective retroactively from 1 July 2024, providing a legal framework for any investigations that may have commenced since that date. The gazette, signed by Kumar Vishwajeet, Principal Secretary to the Government, confirms that all previous general consents for other offences remain valid unless expressly revoked or altered by subsequent notifications.

YSRCP condemns barrage renaming

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Kakani Govardhan Reddy has strongly objected to the renaming of the Sangam Barrage, originally named after Mekapati Goutham Reddy, and the Nellore Barrage, named after Nallapureddy Srinivasula Reddy. He stated that these changes were unnecessary, did not serve the public interest, and demanded the immediate restoration of the original names. Speaking to the media at the party office in Nellore on Tuesday, the former minister criticised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for claiming credit for the Somasila Project. He reminded that Naidu, who served as Chief Minister from 1995 to 2004, never prioritised the Somasila Project during his tenure.

HCL to create 15,000...

Continued from Page 1

HCL already employs 4,500 people at its existing facility in Andhra Pradesh. "We are planning to generate large-scale employment by leveraging the latest technologies in line with global trends. Additionally, we will collaborate with the State Government on the upcoming skill census and skill development initiatives," stated Siva Sankar and Siva Prasad. Responding to the delegation's proposals, Nara Lokesh reminded about the previous Telugu Desam Party (TDP) government, during which he met with HCL Chairperson Shiv Nadar and convinced him to establish a unit in Gannavaram, despite competition from several other states. "It was a remarkable experience to facilitate the approval of permissions and allocation of land in Gannavaram in record time, allowing HCL to

commence its activities promptly," Lokesh recalled. Lokesh expressed his satisfaction with the progress made in Gannavaram, where 4,500 jobs were created. However, he lamented that the company's further expansion was hindered by the inefficiency of the subsequent government, which failed to provide the necessary permissions and subsidies. "The company, poised to create 20,000 jobs, was stalled at 4,500 due to these delays," he added. With the current government in place, Lokesh affirmed that the primary goal is to create 2 million jobs, and the State Government will offer full support to HCL in its expansion efforts. He assured that the subsidies withheld by the previous administration would be released in instalments and urged HCL to focus on creating an additional 15,000 jobs in the region.

Single window...

Continued from Page 1

He mentioned that the government has focused on the issuance of TDR bonds, where hundreds of crores of illegality occurred during the previous government's tenure. He further said that he had discussed this issue once with Revenue Minister Anagani Satyaprasad. Minister Narayana advised the officers to take precautions while issuing bonds and suggested that changes should be made in the software so that ECs related to land are automatically available online at the time of issuance of bonds. IG of the Stamps and Registration Department, Seshagiri Babu, stated that steps will be taken to ensure that ownership documents are also available online. He further mentioned that technical steps will be taken to integrate all necessary aspects for the issuance of TDR bonds to the Town Planning Department within the week.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
PANCHAYATI RAJ ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
NIT No.21 to 30/TO/2024-25. Date: 16-08-2024
Online tenders are invited for 1 Road work, 8 Bridge works & 1 Building work with an Estimated Cost of Rs. 5003.80 Lakhs under various grants in Krishna District. Bid upload & download starting date: 22.08.2024 onwards. Further details visit: www.tender.apeprocurement.gov.in. Ph: 63056 93265.
Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Panchayat Raj, Machilipatnam, Krishna Dist.
R.O.No: 1913/CLAD/NT/2024-25, Dt: 20.08.2024

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Govt to complete 1.25 lakh houses by year-end: Kolusu

Housing Minister says target is to complete 7 lakh houses by August next year

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Minister for Housing, Information & Public Relations, Kolusu Parthasarathy, has revealed that his government is targeting to complete 1.25 lakh houses by the end of this year. "However, the government aims to complete around seven lakh houses by August next year," he said. Also, he pledged to strive to complete the houses sanctioned earlier.

Minister Parthasarathy made a sudden inspection of the housing material godown at the marketing yard at Kankipadu in Krishna district, along with Krishna District Collector DK Balaji, Penamaluru MLA Bode Prasad and State-level Housing officials, on Tuesday.

He verified the stock registers, distribution receipts, material stocks, and other records. Also, he spoke to the Housing officials regarding cement bags, steel, doors and other materials arriving at the stock point and their distribution. Later, officials explained the housing material distribution to the beneficiaries.

Speaking to the media later, Minister Parthasarathy said that the TDP-led NDA government aims to construct houses for all poor people who have no houses by 2029. Also, he asked the beneficiaries to complete their houses by March next year. Otherwise, they may not get any financial support from the government, he warned.

He alleged that the previous YSRCP government deliberately did not allot AP TIDCO



Housing Minister K Parthasarathy participating in the NTR district-level housing review meeting at the collectorate in Vijayawada on Tuesday (Photo: Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar)

houses to beneficiaries, even though they were completed before 2019. He claimed that if the houses had been allocated, Chandrababu Naidu would have earned the credit and so, YSRCP withheld the allotment out of political malice. He assured that his government will complete the TIDCO houses this year.

Complete houses as per 100-day action plan

Meanwhile, Parthasarathy participated in the NTR district-level housing review meeting held at the Pingali Venkaiah meeting hall. Collector Dr G Srijana gave details about the housing scheme in the district through a PowerPoint presentation.

She said that under PMAY (BLC), 1,08,836 houses were allotted of which 18,820 have been completed so far. As many as 40,536 houses are in different stages of construction. Also, under PMAY-Gramin, 2,127 of the 6,567 sanctioned houses have been completed. She explained the NREGA compo-

nents, material stock, and infrastructure facilities in all housing layouts, besides the construction of the houses under option 3.

Later, the Minister instructed the officials concerned to take the steps to complete the housing target as part of the 100-day action plan. He made it clear that quality standards should be followed during construction. He directed the Housing Department to complete the 9,000 houses sanctioned to NTR district under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) Urban (BLC) and Gramin on a war-footing.

Minister Parthasarathy said that his government is giving utmost priority to the housing scheme for the poor. In the recently held collectors' conference, the Chief Minister said the government is giving priority to this scheme. Everyone should follow the guidelines. If anybody violates the rules, stringent action will be taken against those officials, he warned.

Focus on completing houses

Further, he stated that many housing layouts have electricity, drinking water, and internal roads. So, the officials should focus on completing the housing construction in the district. As part of this, the officials were advised to encourage beneficiaries to complete their houses. Besides the Special Officers, Housing, DRDA, MEMPA, Municipal, DWAMA, Lead Bank, Mandal and Constituency officials should work in coordination, he directed.

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath alias Chinni, Mylavaram MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad, Tiruvuru MLA Kolikapudi Srinivasa Rao, Housing Chief Engineer GV Prasad, NTR District PD Rajani Kumari, RDOs Bh Bhavani Sankar, A Ravindra Rao, K Madhavi, KRCC Special Deputy Collector E Kirnamayi, DRDA PD K Srinivasa Rao, DWAMA PD J Sunitha, Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Additional Commissioner KV Satyavathi and others were present.

Rs 200 cr allocation sought for Vedavathi Lift Irrigation Scheme



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The CPI State secretary, K Ramakrishna, has urged Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu to allocate Rs.200 crore in the State budget to complete the Vedavathi Lift Irrigation Scheme within three years, highlighting its importance as a lifeline for the drought-prone Kurnool Western region. He emphasised that once completed, the project will bring 80,000 acres under cultivation and provide drinking water to 10 lakh people across 253 villages and two municipalities.

In a letter written to the Chief Minister on Tuesday, Ramakrishna reminded that Chandrababu had originally designed the Vedavathi Lift Irrigation Scheme in 2019. According to the plan, the project included constructing a reservoir to store 4.25 TMC of water between Halaharvi and Aluru, and another reservoir to store 4 TMC at Molagapalli. The previous government had also assigned the project work to a contracting agency after calling for tenders.

Ramakrishna noted that in the event of a shortage of water in Vedavathi, the government had proposed to supplement it with water from the Handri-Neeva project, and arranged a pipeline for that. He recalled that Chandrababu Naidu had identified it as one of 54 priority projects.



Ban on outside food in hostels

Move to ensure safety of students in government residential homes, child protection homes, and voluntary organisation-managed hostels

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

Following a tragic incident where four children died of suspected food poisoning at a hostel in Kailasapatnam village, District Collector Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar has implemented a strict ban on external food in all hostels across the district.

The decision, announced at a meeting at the Collectorate meeting hall on Tuesday, is aimed at ensuring the safety of students in government residential homes, child protection homes, and voluntary organisation-managed hostels. "Fortified food is essential for the health and development of our students," emphasised Collector Pundkar. "By enforcing this ban, we are taking a significant step toward safeguarding their well-being."

District Education Officer (DEO) Krishna Chaitanya supported the directive, noting that students currently receive meals from Akshayapatra, a provider renowned for its

nutritious offerings. He also highlighted the need for proper hydration, urging the installation of R.O. plants in hostels to ensure safe drinking water. "It's crucial that stored drinking water is avoided and fruits and vegetables are properly inspected," Chaitanya advised. He further recommended that larger hostels have a designated officer to oversee operations, while smaller hostels should have a lower-level officer to manage daily activities effectively.

Welfare Officer Anuradha underscored the importance of ensuring that colleges operate only if they have an attached hostel, which should be accurately identified by mandals. She called for regular health inspections, urging the District Medical and Health Officer (DMHO) to assign PHC doctors to monitor student health closely. The Food Inspector raised concerns about food contamination, stressing that expired items must be disposed of immediately and water tanks should be regular-

ly cleaned. "External food poses a risk of contamination, particularly from colouring spices," the inspector warned.

Food Safety Officer G. Sriramulu supported these measures, stating, "Expired food must be promptly discarded to prevent health risks," while Assistant Safety Controller Venkataratnam informed that violations can be reported through a dedicated helpline at 9704009989. In a follow-up meeting, Shanthi Sri, Project Director of the Women and Child Welfare Department, reiterated the ban on external food and called for a review of safety measures. "Standardising and teaching the menu within hostels will ensure consistency and quality," she said.

Officials including Municipal Corporation Commissioner Challa Obulesu, Social Welfare Deputy Director Vishwamohan Reddy, and Child Welfare Committee Chairman Shri Lakshmi attended the meeting.

ISF's initiative to strengthen rural start-up ecosystem

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Rural Ankura Start-up Bus Yatra, spearheaded by the International Start-up Foundation (ISF), is more than just a journey; it's a celebration of the entrepreneurial potential nestled within the heart of rural Andhra Pradesh. By uniting global CXOs, mentors, investors, researchers, and educators, this statewide yatra aims to strengthen the rural start-up ecosystem, ultimately catalysing job creation and

fostering economic growth in underserved regions. The start-up pitch contest, a key component of the yatra, will serve as a platform for rural innovators to showcase their ideas and solutions for regional problems. This initiative aligns seamlessly with SRM University-AP's mission to drive innovation and entrepreneurship across the country. Vice-Chancellor of SRM University-AP, Prof Manoj K Arora, expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership, stating, "At

SRM University-AP, we are deeply committed to fostering social entrepreneurship. Partnering with ISF for the Rural Ankura Yatra allows us to extend our mission beyond urban centres, empowering rural innovators to drive meaningful change within their communities." The regional semi-finals at SRM University-AP are scheduled for 11 September 2024. The event is expected to draw over 500 participants from various districts, with the top 20 teams—

10 from each category—advancing to the final demo day. These teams will have the opportunity to exhibit their ideas and solutions at SRM University-AP, vying for the support and investment needed to bring their ventures to life. A distinguished panel of high-profile delegates, including professors from SRM University-AP and leaders from ISF, will serve as the jury, selecting the most promising ventures for the finals. Notably, five offers from

venture capitalists associated with ISF will be extended to the top ventures. Prof Sidharth Tripathy, Director of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at SRM, added, "The Rural Ankura Yatra is a remarkable initiative that aligns with our vision of holistic development. By handholding entrepreneurial talent in rural areas, we are not only fuelling economic growth but also promoting sustainable development across Andhra Pradesh."

Walk-in interview for Civil Asst Surgeon posts

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

TTD is organising walk-in interviews on August 29 for five contract-based posts of Civil Assistant Surgeons (BC-B(W)-1, ST(W)-1, BC-B-1, SC-1, BC-D(W)-1) for MBBS qualified candidates to serve at TTD hospitals and dispensaries.

Interested candidates should attend the interviews from 11am onwards at the Central Hospital TTD administrative building complex, along with their certificates (both original and xerox copies) of qualifications and experience.

For more details, please log onto the website www.tirumala.org or call the hospital office during working hours at 0877-2264371.

Vizag Railway Zone to become reality soon

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Railway Minister says groundwork is officially underway



all obstacles have now been cleared.

The Railway Minister highlighted the pivotal role played by the newly formed NDA government in Andhra Pradesh, which includes the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Jana Sena Party. "The current TDP-led government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, has been actively negotiating with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to accelerate various developmental projects in the State. The construction of the Visakhapatnam Railway

Zone has been one of the top priorities," Vaishnav added.

The South Coast Railway zone was initially announced in 2019 by then-Railway Minister Piyush Goyal. It was proposed to encompass regions of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, and parts of Tamil Nadu. The new zone is set to include the existing Guntur and Vijayawada divisions, with the Waltair division being divided—partly incorporated into the new zone and the remainder being converted into a new division. Chief Minister N

Chandrababu Naidu, whose efforts were instrumental in overcoming land allocation challenges that had stalled the project during the previous YSRCP regime, expressed satisfaction over the progress. "We have resolved the land allocation issue and have requested the Central government to expedite the process as this project has been delayed for far too long," Naidu mentioned during a recent meeting with CPI leaders.

With all hurdles now cleared, the Visakhapatnam Railway Zone is poised to emerge as a major railway hub, promising enhanced connectivity and economic growth for the region.

"We are confident that the South Coast Railway Zone project, with Visakhapatnam as its headquarters, will soon see the light of day," concluded Vaishnav.

Tribal protest at Ramannadorapalem over land patta omission

Kondhu tribe has been cultivating cashew nuts and paddy on the land for over four decades

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

A group of 30 tribal families from Ramannadorapalem village in Kotnabilli panchayat staged a protest on Tuesday, demanding the restoration of their land pattas. The Kondhu tribe, classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), has been cultivating cashew nuts and paddy on this land for over four decades. The villagers claim that while they were issued land pattas between 1978 and 1988, with their names duly registered in Webland records, the recent land resurvey conducted by the previous YSRCP government omitted these crucial details

from the Record of Rights (ROR).

"We have been cultivating this land for generations, and now, without our pattas, we are in a helpless situation," said a distressed tribal villager. Despite submitting all required documents, including pattadar passbooks, Aadhaar cards, and photographs, their pattas were excluded from the resurvey records. The absence of pattas has severely impacted the villagers, many of whom had taken loans against their land. They now face immense pressure from banks to repay loans or provide IB records, a situation that has pushed them into a financial crisis. They are also



Tribal people staging a protest at Ramannadorapalem in Anakapalli district on Wednesday

unable to secure new loans or benefit from government schemes like e-crop registra-

tion. The villagers had previously appealed to Andhra Pradesh

ST Commission Chairman Sankara Rao in February, who directed the Anakapalli

Collector to investigate the matter. A subsequent survey by the Anakapalli Tahsildar in March confirmed their claims and recommended patta restoration.

However, five months later, there has been no action, leading to growing frustration among the villagers. "Why have our pattas not been restored even after the report clearly stated that the land belongs to us?" said a villager. A.P. Girijan Sangham Fifth Schedule Sadhana Committee honorary president K. Govinda Rao joined the villagers, including Appili Demudu, N. Chinnammalu, and N. Narasamma, in the protest.

Major ganja trafficking racket busted in Vizianagaram

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

The local police, on Tuesday, arrested three individuals allegedly involved in a major ganja smuggling operation. The accused, identified as Mohammad Wasim from Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, Alam Khurshid, and the Delhi-based kingpin Kabir, were apprehended at a Vasantha Vihar Villa in Dharmapuri in Vizianagaram.

According to District Superintendent of Police (SP) Vakul Jindal, the arrested individuals were part of a well-established network that had been supplying cannabis to Delhi for the past year. "Mohammad Wasim procurs ganja from Vishwanatham in Araku Valley, which was subsequently trans-

ported to Delhi by Alam Khurshid," SP Jindal revealed. The kingpin of the operation, identified as Kabir, was based in Delhi and oversaw the financial transactions of the drug racket. "Kabir played a crucial role in managing the financial aspects of the operation," the SP added.

The police have launched a manhunt for five other individuals connected to the syndicate. "They were using rented houses in different parts of Vizianagaram to evade detection," said SP Jindal. "This arrest is a significant step in dismantling their network."

Tension in Tadipatri as YSRCP, TDP activists clash

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

Tension prevailed in Tadipatri town on Tuesday as some Telugu Desam Party (TDP) activists allegedly pelted stones at the house of YSRCP leader and former MLA Kethireddy Pedda Reddy.

Police said that Kethireddy Pedda Reddy returned to his house on Tuesday. Some TDP activists, opposing his presence in Tadipatri, went to his house and hurled stones, resulting in injuries to YSRCP activist Rafi. Upon learning of the TDP activists' attack, a large number of Pedda Reddy's followers rushed to the scene and confronted the TDP activists. They engaged in stone-pelting, escalating the tension.

As a precautionary measure, the police evacuated Kethireddy Pedda Reddy from Tadipatri. Pedda Reddy had returned to the town after a gap of two months. YSRCP leaders informed



the media that the TDP activists also attacked the house of YSRCP leader Kandigopula Murali Prasad Reddy in the town, damaging vehicles and ransacking furniture.

According to sources, Murali Prasad Reddy emerged from his house with a double-

barrel gun, but the police managed to calm him down. Additional police personnel have been deployed to Tadipatri to maintain law and order.

Meanwhile, TDP leader and former MLA JC Prabhakar Reddy alleged that YSRCP

leader Murali Prasad Reddy tried to intimidate the TDP workers with a gun. He stoked the TDP workers by showing a gun which forced the TDP workers to respond violently. The TDP leader appealed to the TDP activists to maintain restraint.

Garbage transfer stations in V'wada inspected

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Commissioner HM Dhyanchandra conducted inspections at the garbage transfer stations in Jakkampudi and Ajith Singh Nagar on Tuesday.

During his visit to the Jakkampudi station, he instructed officials to restore the facility by levelling the waste. To enhance monitoring, he emphasised the need to install CCTV cameras and take necessary measures to prevent unauthorised garbage dumping.

Dhyanchandra then visited the Ajith Singh Nagar garbage transfer station and the Excel Plant, where he inspected the garbage and directed Sanitary Inspectors to ensure proper segregation of waste.

VMC Additional Commissioner (Projects) KV Satyavati, Chief Medical Officer Dr P Ratnavali, SE (Projects) Rammohan, EE ASN Prasad, and other officials were present.

Educational institutions directed to instal CCTV cameras

PNS ■ ELURU

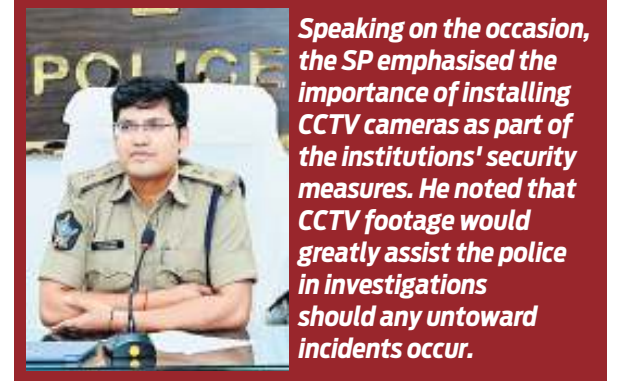
The managements of educational institutions in Eluru has been directed to install CCTV cameras on their premises.

Superintendent of Police KPS Kishore held a meeting on Tuesday with the management of various educational institutions to discuss the security measures provided to students on campus.

Speaking on the occasion, the SP emphasised the importance of installing CCTV cameras as part of the institutions' security measures. He noted that CCTV footage would greatly assist the police in investigations should any untoward incidents occur.

The SP also urged educational institutions to enforce the use of helmets by both students and faculty when riding two-wheelers. He recommended placing "No Helmet, No Entry" signs at campus entrances and educating students on the life-saving benefits of wearing helmets.

In addition, the SP issued a



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stern warning against eve-teasing, cautioning that involvement in such activities could jeopardise a student's future. He stressed the need for both students and parents to be aware of the issue, and for management to take proactive measures to eradicate this menace on campus. A complaint box will be placed at every educational institution to receive students' concerns, the SP noted.

The SP further warned that incidents of crimes against

women could tarnish the reputation of educational institutions. He announced the launch of a new programme, "Cyber Sync," aimed at raising awareness about malicious acts and frauds committed through social media.

"In an effort to harness the technical skills of engineering students, a Google-based tool is being developed to combat cybercrimes," he stated.

DSP Srevan Kumar and other police officials were also present at the meeting.

Rajiv Gandhi revolutionised telecom sector: Moshen Raju

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Legislative Council Chairman K Moshen Raju has recalled that the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had brought revolutionary changes in the Telecom sector in India. Congress leaders including Moshen Raju, former MP K Bapiraju and MLA Pulaarti Ramanjaneyulu (Anjibabu) paid tributes to Rajiv Gandhi by garlanding the statue which was reinstalled at Gunupudi near here on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Legislative Council Chairman recalled that Rajiv Gandhi sacrificed his life for the integrity of the country. He exhorted all to draw inspiration from Rajiv Gandhi. The statue of Rajiv Gandhi is not for paying tributes by garlanding it but it is to create inspiration to the next generations, he asserted.

Reinstalling the statue of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is great, he said. India is leading in the telecommu-



nication sector now because of the foundation laid by the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Moshen Raju observed.

Because of Rajiv Gandhi's foresightedness and his vision led to the mobile phone revolution in the country, he lauded Rajiv Gandhi. Ex-MP Kanumuri

Bapiraju, JSP district president Kotikalapudi Govinda Rao and Congress party city in-charge A Sitaram also spoke. It may be mentioned here that the Rajiv Gandhi statue was installed here in 1992 which became dilapidated forcing the Congress leaders to reinstall a new statue.

Electricity consumers asked to instal solar rooftops

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani has stressed the need to promote solar power and asked power consumers to install solar panels on the rooftops to generate solar power to save electricity.

The Collector inspected the arrangements for installing solar panels on the rooftops here on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that installing solar power is the right way to save electricity, which is very profitable. She observed that under the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana scheme, a large amount of subsidy is also available for constructing solar rooftops, making installation easy.

Collector Nagarani said that the Central Government has come up with an excellent scheme to resolve this problem so that the common and middle-class people are burdened by the ever-increasing electricity bills. Apart from getting free electricity by installing solar panels on the roof of the house, the surplus electricity can also be sold to earn



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The Collector revealed that the electricity department introduced an easy online system for efficiently paying electricity bills. The applications can be made through PMSURYAGHAR through WWW.pmsuryaghar.gov.in/APEPDCL website for setting up solar rooftop, she informed. Electricity EE P Ahmad Khan and DEE Rajagopala Chowdary were among those who were present.



Minister inaugurates eye hospital

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Minister for Tourism and Culture Kandula Durgesh inaugurated the Dr Agarwal's Eye Hospital in Kakinada on Tuesday. The Minister said that in the wake of the rise in issues like dry eye and myopia that affect people of all ages, especially schoolchildren, this modern facility is crucial. "I would like to point out that Andhra Pradesh's eye care infrastructure is among the best in India, with government hospitals introducing advanced technologies and treatments. The government is also rolling out programmes to enhance eye care services. Hospitals like Dr. Agarwal's align with our goals of expanding and

improving eye care, and we must work together to increase awareness and accessibility, particularly in rural and underserved areas," he said.

Rahul Agarwal, COO of Dr Agarwal's Eye Hospital said, "Our dedication to introducing advanced eye care techniques in Andhra Pradesh is unwavering. We already have a strong presence in Guntur, Madanapalle, Nellore, Rajahmundry, Tirupati, Vijayawada, and Visakhapatnam. Our latest hospital in Kakinada represents a significant step in our mission to enhance accessibility, efficiency, and precision in eye care for the people of this region. We are offering a free comprehensive eye check-up to everyone till August 31."

70 liquor bottles seized, one arrested

PNS ■ NELLORE

The police seized 70 liquor bottles while being brought from Tamil Nadu at Chemididipadu crossroads in Kandukur mandal on Tuesday.

Police said that on a tip-off, a police team conducted checking of vehicles. The accused Anil, was bringing 70 liquor bottles illegally from Thettu in Tamil Nadu. The police seized the bottles and arrested him.

15 litres of illicit liquor seized

PNS ■ KADAPA

The police seized 15 litres of country-made liquor and arrested one person at Basinikonda village in Madanapalle mandal in Annamayya district on Tuesday.

media that on a tip-off a police team conducted a raid at Basinikonda village and found a huge quantity of 15 litres of country-made liquor in the house D Chinnayya. He had been selling country-made liquor for the last few years. The police arrested Chinnayya. CI Ramesh Reddy told the

'Touch the statue if you have guts'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Criticising BRS Working President KT Rama Rao's comments that the BRS will remove the statue of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi now in front of the Secretariat, Chief Minister Revanth said the BRS leader's arrogance has not declined even after losing power.

Revanth said that KTR wants to install his father K. Chandrasekhar Rao's statue in front of the Secretariat.

Addressing the gathering at the Rajiv Gandhi statue in Somajiguda on Tuesday after paying floral tributes to the statue on the occasion of Rajiv Gandhi's 80th birth anniversary, the CM said the statue of



those who looted Telangana in the guise of the movement should not be in front of the Secretariat.

CM said that KTR has been saying that he will remove Rajiv Gandhi's statue if he comes to power.

Touch the statue if anyone has guts. KTR will say that he

will remove Rajiv Gandhi's statue for his father's statue. The CM made it clear that the BRS will get power again and getting power will be a dream. KCR's family would confine to Chintamadak village only now, he said.

"KTR has been speaking about Telangana. The Thalli statue was not installed even though KTR was in power for 10 years. We will take the responsibility of installing the Telangana Talli statue on December 9 inside the Secretariat. There is no need to doubt our sincerity. Social boycott will take place if anyone speaks meaninglessly. There is no place for dacoits and boozers in front of the Secretariat," he said.

Centre has taken 'torching' of Polavaram files seriously: Varma

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Union Minister for State for Steel and Heavy Industries Bhupathi Raju Srinivasa Varma has revealed that the Central Government has also taken the burning of Polavaram project files seriously.

Talking to the media here on Tuesday, he expressed concern over the burning of files on the Polavaram Left canal and R & R package at a dump yard in Rajahmundry. "The Centre has taken the dumping of the Polavaram files in a dumping yard and burning



them very seriously. The facts behind the burning of files will be brought to light," he announced.

Commenting on the delay in establishing a railway zone in Visakhapatnam, the Union Minister said that the erst-

while government did not allocate the required lands for the establishment of the railway zone which caused delay.

The process of establishing a railway zone is taken forward expeditiously.

'Child rehab centres should follow rules'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (APSCPCR) Chairman, Kesali Appa Rao, issued strict orders on Tuesday, mandating that all necessary rules and regulations be followed in organising Child Protection and Rehabilitation Centres in the State. He expressed concern over many voluntary organisations violating government regulations while running these centres.

Appa Rao directed district-level officials to take stern action against the organisations that are not complying with the rules. He highlighted that some of them falsely present children from poor families and those with health issues as orphans, for illegal fundraising from national and international donors.

He noted that these centres often fail to provide essential amenities such as food, shel-

Some centres falsely present children from poor families and those with health issues as orphans



ter, education, healthcare, protection, and security, leading to severe consequences, including illness and death among the children.

He further pointed out alarming issues such as the provision of contaminated food, incidents of sexual harassment, and human traf-

ficking. Additionally, there are allegations of organ trafficking, with some children reportedly dying due to these abuses, he said.

Appa Rao emphasised the need for a field-level supervision mechanism. He instructed district officials to identify both government-approved and illegal organisations through Gram Sachivalayam, Mandal Level Officers, and women protection officers by the end of August.

He stressed the critical roles of departments such as Education, Welfare, Police, Women and Child Welfare, Health, and Sachivalayam in ensuring that these institutions comply with government regulations. Any organisation found to be violating these rules will face strict action, he warned.

Veligonda project works expedited: Nimmala

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Minister for Water Resources Development, Nimmala Ramanaidu, announced that the coalition government has expedited the Veligonda project works, attributing the previous slow progress to the negligence of the former YSRCP government.

Speaking to the media at the Secretariat on Tuesday, the Minister stated that the government accelerated the Veligonda project immediately after coming to power. He highlighted that Rs 4,000 crore is required to complete the project.

During the last term of the TDP regime, Rs 68,000 crore was spent on irrigation projects, whereas the YSRCP had only allocated Rs 19 crore. The Chandrababu Naidu-led gov-



ernment is prioritising the Veligonda project, with a commitment to complete it as soon as possible.

"The government plans to spend Rs 4,000 crore on Veligonda head regular works, first and second tunnel lining works, feeder canal structure lining work, and the implementation of the R&R Package for project evacuees," the Minister

noted. He specified that Rs 1,422 crore will be spent under stage 1 and Rs 2,157 crore under stage 2, with an additional Rs 400 crore allocated for feeder canal structuring and lining works. He confirmed that all works will be carried out on a war footing.

The Minister criticised former Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, stating that Reddy failed to understand that it is impossible to release the required quantity of water without completing the lining works.

Ramanaidu also pointed out that 11 villages will be submerged due to the Nalamala Sagar reservoir, requiring Rs 1,100 crore to be paid to the residents under the R&R package. However, the previous government did not disburse even Rs 1 crore to them, he alleged.

Pavitrotsavam festivities conclude on a grand note

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The three-day-long annual Pavitrotsavam festivities, which began at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam (SDMSD) atop Indrakeeladi on Saturday, concluded on a grand note on Tuesday. Vedic Scholars and Priests performed Mandapa Aradhana, Moola Mantra Japam, Mantra Havanam, Saptashati Chandhi Homam and Sarvaprayaschitha Vidithathat Santhika Homam. Later, Executive Officer (EO) KS Rama Rao performed the 'Poonahuthi' marking the end of the festivities. Speaking on the occasion, EO Rao said that many devotees thronged the temple and had darshan of goddess Durga Devi.

ACROSS THE STATES



Tigers found dead in TN's Nilgiris district

A tigress and her cub were found dead under mysterious circumstances at an estate near Gudalur in Nilgiris district, a senior forest official said on Tuesday. The carcasses of the wild cats which had "external bleeding injuries" were found at some distance from each other, he said. "A team from the forest department, upon being informed, rushed to the estate pathway and found a sub-adult tiger dead. They also found a tigress, which might be the mother of the dead sub-adult tiger at an aerial distance of about 75 m in a marsh within the estate," the official said. Both had external injuries and raised suspicion about the nature of their deaths, he said. It has been planned to conduct a post-mortem by a Veterinary assistant surgeon from the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) in the presence of non-governmental organisations as per a protocol of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).



SC permits Teesta Setalvad to travel to Malaysia

The Supreme Court on Tuesday permitted activist Teesta Setalvad to travel to Malaysia from August 31 to September 10 for a conference and asked her to file an undertaking that she will return to India as scheduled. The apex court had in July last year granted her regular bail in a case of alleged fabrication of documents to frame innocent people in the 2002 post-Godhra riot cases. During the hearing on Tuesday, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Setalvad, told a bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan that she has filed an application seeking permission to travel abroad as the apex court had in July last year said that her passport shall continue to be in the custody of the sessions court. "I (Setalvad) am seeking your lordships permission to go to Malaysia for an anti-racism conference from August 31 to September 10," he told the bench.



Underground terrorist hideout busted in J-K's Rajouri

Security forces on Tuesday busted an underground terrorist hideout in the Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The well-built hideout was unearthed during a cordon and search operation by a joint party of police, Army and CRPF at Sagrawat forest in the Darhal area of the border district, the officials said. They said a large quantity of daily use items including cooking gas, blankets and utensils were recovered from the hideout. However, no one was arrested during the operation as the terrorists using the hideout managed to escape before the start of the search operation, the officials said. They said security forces also busted a cave-type hideout in the Balotha area of Basantgarh in Udhampur district during an ongoing anti-terrorist operation. Some food items were recovered from the abandoned hideout, the officials said.

Effects of women empowerment on children weight, height

Study provides evidence

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

When women are empowered, children are less likely to be underweight, researchers who studied several households in Odisha have claimed.

The study gathered data from more than 1,900 farming households from 12 districts in Odisha, home to some of India's most vulnerable tribal groups.

The research was conducted by the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Italy, which sought to gather field evidence of how women



empowerment affects food security, and quality of diet and childhood. The findings were published in the journal PLoS ONE. The researchers scored the



India will work with Malaysia for prosperous Indo-Pacific: Prez

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India will continue to work with Malaysia and extend all cooperation in the pursuit of shared objectives of a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, President Droupadi Murmu said on Tuesday.

Welcoming Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here, Murmu said the common cherished values of democracy, multiculturalism, pluralism and mutual respect have been the guiding force for India-Malaysia relations.

This is Ibrahim's first India visit as the prime minister of

his country.

Murmu noted that both sides have decided to further intensify India-Malaysia relation across various sectors of cooperation.

The President said that India sees Malaysia as a strong partner in the Act East Policy and in the Indo-Pacific vision, she said.

Malaysia is also a key partner for India in the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and an important country in the Act East Policy and in the Indo-Pacific vision, she said

ties by upgrading the ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership, and are working towards an action-oriented roadmap for its implementa-

tion across various sectors of cooperation. The President said that India sees Malaysia as a strong partner in the Act East Policy and in the Indo-Pacific vision, she said.

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Murmu extended best wishes for Malaysia's assumption of the Chair of ASEAN in 2025, reiterating that India will continue to work with Malaysia and extend all cooperation in the pursuit of "our shared objectives of a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region", according to a statement issued by the President's office.

Through Prime Minister Ibrahim, the President also conveyed her felicitations to the King of Malaysia, His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, on his recent coronation, it added.



Probe agencies have nothing on Kejriwal: Mann

PNS ■ CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday said the central investigating agencies have nothing against his Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal, and other Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders, who are facing charges in the alleged excise policy scam.

Talking to reporters at Nanded airport, Mann said AAP leaders Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh have been released from jail, and Kejriwal too will soon come out of prison. Mann arrived in Maharashtra's Nanded during the day to attend a programme at Takhat Sachkhand Sri Hazur Sahib Gurdwara.

He said the investigating agencies have nothing on Kejriwal, who is in jail in a corruption case registered by the CBI in the alleged excise scam.

"I will pray for him (Kejriwal). AAP leaders Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh have come out. They (investigating agencies) have nothing, and they are just buying time to keep our leaders in jail," he said.

K'taka Guv can't "pick and choose", be "selective"

Says CM on prosecution sanction against him

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday said Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot should function like a representative of the President of India and not the central government.

He said the Governor should not 'pick and choose' and be selective in the matter of granting sanction for prosecution. "Governor is a constitutional post and we respect it. He should work as a representative of the President of India and not the central government," Siddaramaiah told reporters here.



Gehlot on August 16 granted sanction for prosecution against Siddaramaiah under 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act and Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, in connection with the Mysuru Urban Development Authority site allotment 'scam.'

"Governor is a constitutional post and we respect it. He should work as a representative of the President of India and not the central government," Siddaramaiah told reporters here

The Chief Minister recalled that the Karnataka Lokayukta



had sought the Governor's approval to prosecute Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H D Kumaraswamy on November 23, 2023 in connection with Sri Sai Venkateshwara Minerals case but till now no permission has been granted.

The state ombudsman on Monday again submitted a

proposal to the Governor seeking his permission to file a chargesheet against Kumaraswamy, who had allegedly granted mining lease to the private firm when he was the Chief Minister in 2007 in violation of law.

Siddaramaiah also pointed out that the Governor did not give permission to the Lokayukta to prosecute former BJP Ministers Shashikala Jolle, Murugesh Nirani and G Janardhana Reddy.

On the other hand, T J Abraham lodged a (private) complaint against me with the Governor on July 26 at 11 am and 10 hours.

Kerala CM affirms support for victims

Says govt seriously considering Hema panel report

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday said the state government was seriously considering the various recommendations, including setting up a tribunal and framing a comprehensive Cinema Law, given by the Justice Hema Committee.

Vijayan also said that the action recommended by the committee against the various crimes against women in the film industry was already being looked into by the agencies responsible for ensuring law and order in the state. The CM announced while speaking at a press conference here.

Despite receiving the report, his remarks come in the wake of severe criticism of the Left government by opposition parties for its silence and inaction over the past four years.

The Congress-led UDF alleged that the Pinarayi Vijayan government was siding with the 'hunters' rather than



the hapless victims.

The BJP charged the government had failed to take any legal action against the accused despite receiving information about the crimes committed by them. Refuting the allegations, Vijayan affirmed the government's support for the victims and said it was not with the alleged offenders against whom action under the law would be taken.

Allegations of harassment against prominent actor

The daughter of legendary Malayalam actor late Thilakan on Tuesday made a shocking disclosure that one of the prominent actors in the film industry had misbehaved with her after the demise of her father. Sonia Thilakan said the actor had called her to his room saying he wanted to apologise for what he had

done to her father and later sent her objectionable messages years ago. Addressing reporters here, the woman was, however, reluctant to divulge the name of the actor. She said there is a "power group" that has been controlling the Malayalam film industry and AMMA, the actor's outfit, for a long time.



SEXUAL ASSAULT OF 4-YR-OLD GIRLS

Protesters storm school building, block rly tracks

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Thousands of protesters on Tuesday blocked railway tracks at Badlapur station in Thane district and stormed a local school building after the alleged sexual assault of two four-year-old girls by the school sweeper in the wash-room.

Police cane-charged the protesters, who occupied the

railway tracks, pelting stones at policemen. Hundreds of protesters, many of them angry parents, vandalised the school building to express their disgust over the sexual assault.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said he has ordered the formation of a special investigation team headed by senior IPS officer Arti Singh.

India's reservoir storage levels surpass 10-yr average

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Water Commission (CWC) has reported a significant improvement in the live storage levels of India's reservoirs this year, with the current storage exceeding the ten-year average by 14 per cent.

According to the latest Reservoir Storage Bulletin, the live storage available in 150 major reservoirs across the country is 124.016 billion cubic metres (BCM), which is 69 per cent of the total live storage



capacity of these reservoirs. This marks a substantial

increase from the corresponding period last year, when the

storage was 111.85 BCM.

The current storage also exceeds the ten-year average, known as 'normal storage', which stood at 108.79 BCM.

Regionally, the storage levels vary across different parts of the country. In the northern region, which includes Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Rajasthan, the storage is at 51 per cent of the total capacity, a decrease from last year's 88 per cent and below the normal storage level of 71 per cent. Conversely, the eastern

region, comprising Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Tripura, Nagaland, and Bihar, has shown improvement, with storage at 53 per cent of capacity, up from 38 per cent last year and better than the normal level of 50 per cent.

The western region, including Gujarat and Maharashtra, also recorded a positive trend, with 72 per cent of total capacity being filled, compared to 68 per cent during the same period last year and 61 per cent of normal storage.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Take no chances!

Mpox is becoming a global concern. While there is no need to push the panic button yet, it is important to remain watchful

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world is now facing another significant health challenge: Mpox, previously known as monkeypox. This viral disease, which has traditionally been confined to certain regions of Africa, has seen a disturbing rise in cases across the globe, prompting widespread concern and action from health authorities. Mpox is caused by the monkeypox virus, a member of the Orthopoxvirus genus, which also includes the smallpox virus. The good news is that it is not fatal in most cases and is curable. There is no specific treatment for mpox but most people recover in a few weeks. Supportive care and pain control can help people with good immune systems while those with low immunity can recover with medical treatment. While it is less deadly than smallpox, Mpox can still cause severe illness, especially in those with compromised immune systems. The virus is primarily transmitted to humans from animals, but human-to-human transmission can also occur, particularly through direct contact, bodily fluids, respiratory droplets, or contaminated materials like bedding. Mpox's symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, chills, and a distinctive rash that often starts on the face and spreads to other parts of the body.



As they say, once bitten twice shy, we have just wriggled out of corona pandemic and cannot afford to have another pandemic. It is not an epidemic but can become one if preventive measures are not taken. After a surge in Mpox cases globally Indian airports have ramped up surveillance and precautionary measures to mitigate the spread of the virus. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued a nationwide advisory, urging airports to intensify screening processes and ensure that protocols for identifying and isolating potential cases are strictly followed. The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported an uptick in Mpox cases across several regions, with particular concern in areas where the virus had previously been under control. Travellers exhibiting symptoms such as fever, rash, or swollen lymph nodes are being referred for further medical evaluation. Major international airports in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru are at the forefront of these preventive measures. Special medical teams have been stationed at these hubs to conduct rapid assessments and ensure that any suspected cases of Mpox are swiftly isolated and treated. The focus is not just on inbound passengers; outbound travellers are also being advised to take precautions, particularly if they are heading to regions experiencing outbreaks. While India has not yet reported a significant number of Mpox cases, the proactive measures being implemented at airports are part of a broader strategy to prevent the virus from gaining a foothold in the country. Health experts emphasise that early detection and isolation are key to controlling the spread of Mpox, particularly in a densely populated country like India, where an outbreak could have severe consequences.

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PICTALK



Flowers in full bloom in Amrit Udyan at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi

RANJAN DIMRI

Cyber security: Reducing attack surfaces in the digital age

As cyber threats become more sophisticated, cybersecurity requires a proactive approach. Advancing security practices through Zero Trust principles is key

As cyber threats continue to evolve, it's important to remember cybersecurity is not a one-time task but an ongoing process. Advancing cybersecurity and Zero Trust maturity starts by focusing on three core practice areas: reducing the attack surface, detecting and responding to cyber threats and recovering from a cyberattack throughout the infrastructure, including edge, core and cloud. The attack surface refers to all potential areas in an environment that a cyber attacker can target or exploit. These points can include software vulnerabilities, misconfigurations, weak authentication mechanisms, unpatched systems, excessive user privileges, open network ports, poor physical security and more. This is achieved by minimizing the potential vulnerabilities and entry points that attackers can exploit to compromise a system, network or organization across various domains including the edge, the core or the cloud.



concept centred on the belief that organizations should not automatically trust anything inside or outside their perimeters and instead must verify everything trying to connect to their systems before granting access. Organizations can achieve a Zero Trust model by incorporating solutions like micro-segmentation, identity and access management (IAM), multi-factor authentication (MFA) and security analytics, to name a few.

Patch and update regularly: Keeping operating systems, software and applications up to date with the latest security patches helps address known vulnerabilities and minimize the risk of exploitation. **Ensure secure configuration:** Systems, networks and

devices need to be correctly configured with security best practices, such as disabling unnecessary services, using strong passwords and enforcing access controls, to reduce the potential attack surface. **Apply the principle of least privilege:** Limit user and system accounts to only have the minimum access rights necessary to perform their tasks.

Use network segmentation: Dividing a network into segments or zones with different security levels helps contain an attack and prevents lateral movement of a cyber threat by isolating critical assets and limiting access between different parts of the network. **Ensure application security:** Implementing secure coding practices, conducting regular security testing and code reviews and using web application firewalls (WAFs) help protect against common application-level attacks and reduce the attack surface of web applications. **Utilize AI/ML:** According to the Dell Technologies 2024 Innovation Catalyst report, 58% of Indian businesses feel GenAI will provide automation to help

with the efficiency and scale needed to deal with the influx of threats. We can leverage AI capabilities to help proactively identify and patch vulnerabilities, significantly reducing the attack surface. **Work with suppliers who maintain a secure supply chain:** Ensure a trusted foundation with devices and infrastructure that are designed, manufactured and delivered with security in mind. Suppliers that provide a secure supply chain, secure development lifecycle and rigorous threat modeling keep you a step ahead of threat actors. **Educate users and promote awareness:** By proactively implementing these measures, organizations can effectively reduce the attack surface, helping to mitigate risks and making it more challenging for adversaries to exploit vulnerabilities, enhancing the overall defence posture against new and emerging threats.

(The writer is Director and General Manager, Data Protection Solutions, Dell Technologies India; views are personal)



RIPU BAJWA

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Another surprise regime change in neighbourhood



ASHOK K MEHTA

Amid economic distress and a coup, India's once strong alliance with Bangladesh teeters on uncertainty, as anti-India sentiment rises and strategic interests hang in the balance

Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned in his Independence Day speech that India is worried about developments in Bangladesh, especially about the safety of Hindus and other minorities there. Promptly Professor Yunus head of Caretaker Administration called Modi to reassure him of their safety. The soft coup in Dhaka, the fourth in 53 years is almost wholly student-driven following Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina losing touch with her people and mounting economic distress. The killing of 200 and more protestors, many students, was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. COAS Gen Waqur Uz Zaman was left with only one choice: order Hasina to flee giving her 45 minutes.

The General must have foreseen this contingency as "the day after" scenario. Otherwise, the speed and orderly nature of the transition could not have been possible. The sentiment on the street is anti-Hasina with the Sheikh Mujib legacy she nurtured of freedom from Pakistan through a liberation war aided by India would not have been so bitterly desecrated. Anti-India feelings largely stem not only from India's blind support for Hasina despite the loss of democratic credentials but also some grievances that Bangladesh has nursed mainly like BSF firing on the border, not sharing Teesta waters and disallowing use of the Siliguri corridor.

Most of all, they were peeved by Home Minister Amit Shah calling Bangladeshis 'insects' and loud advocacy of CAA/NRC. Giving refuge to Hasina indefinitely could increase the anger against India. Critical strategic interests are at stake. Much has been written about the events of July and August in Bangladesh. Astonishing is the importance attached to conspiracy theories: naming the US, and CIA covertly St Martin Island which is also claimed by Myanmar and other usual suspects, Pakistani, ISI and China. While some of these players will certainly fish in troubled water, it is the role of Islamists and jihadi organisations India must



fear. Even though a Nobel laureate, liberal democrat and regionalist, Mohammad Yunus is to lead the caretaker administration has said he will be guided by the students and their leaders Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud. The mystery in this drama is the extent to which Gen Zaman, a relative of Sheikh Hasina, was involved in the coup. No regime change has occurred in Bangladesh without the Army either facilitating or executing it. Sheikh Hasina's greatest achievement was transforming Bangladesh once a basket case into the fastest-growing economy in South Asia with human development indices surpassing all regional countries except Sri Lanka. Its garment industry was world-class till periodic protests and strikes over wages and COVID began to wreck it. Bangladesh grew at a steady 6.5 per cent for two decades with a per capita income of USD 2600, much higher than India's. But its growth story ended after it sought IMF assistance of USD 4.76 bn and inflation crossed 10 per cent. Trade with India had grown phenomenally to nearly USD 18 bn. An FTA in the works for a long, had it materialised, Bangladesh's exports would have risen 182 per cent. The largest tourist population comes from Bangladesh giving

INDIA IS FACED WITH A CHALLENGING CONUNDRUM IN THE COUNTRY IT HELPED IN ITS BIRTH. THE GOLDEN PERIOD IN BILATERAL RELATIONS WHEN INDIA'S INTERESTS WERE BEING SUITABLY ADDRESSED IS BOUND TO CHANGE

a fillip to medical tourism. Defence relations have enhanced miraculously: it is a story of turning foe into friend. This is quite extraordinary, given that Bangladesh used to portray India as an enemy in its war games. India has granted a \$500bn LoC for defence purchases but in Bangladesh's layered defence procurement system controlled by Armed Forces Division once led by Gen Zaman, India is at the lowest level for consideration for hardware with China topping the list at A level. Aircraft, submarines, tanks, artillery and other equipment are mainly of Chinese origin. Bangladesh is a nation in disarray being led by student leaders whose wishes are being promulgated by the Caretaker Administration. India is faced with a challenging conundrum in the country it helped in its birth. The golden period in bilateral relations when India's interests were being suitably addressed is bound to change given the fact that the new regime is targeting Sheikh Hasina and everyone associated with her or the Awami League. That the Bangladesh Army will become the conduit for a near-normal relationship is what India must hope for. Geography and economic logic also suggest that for Bangladesh to meet the chal-

lenge of its economic distress India's assistance will be necessary. Dhaka will not forget how New Delhi bailed out Colombo after its default in 2022 and the student protest movement which could not transform Sri Lanka's polity. Former only Hindu Chief Justice of Bangladesh Surendra Kumar Sinha who was sacked by Hasina said last week that everything that has happened in Bangladesh in the last few days has been unconstitutional and he cited the various changes brought about by the Caretaker Administration. In a revolution or a coup the constitution is one of several casualties. The Administration has said that institutional reforms will include reviewing the constitution before any election can take place. All this will take time. It is the early days of regime change with the future clouded with uncertainty. India's new geo-political challenge is shaping and it must now begin engaging relevant stakeholders. What it will do about Sheikh Hasina and Awami League will be one of many challenges.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CHANKYA OF INDIAN POLITICS

Madam — As a doyen of literature and a great administrator, no one can come close to him for having used "Anna Arivalayaam" as a treasure of knowledge center which paved the way for his glorious political career. The gesture from the Centre will be a welcoming one for the DMK to feel warmth that a commemorative coin of Rs.100 has been released by the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at Chennai to mark the Birth Centenary of Kalaaignar Dr. M. Karunanidhi.

As a prominent writer and politician, he served as the CM for over two decades. His tenure as CM was the longest in the State's history by the count of 6863 days. Whatever one can see as the light and shade in TN in state's progress, Karunanidhi was instrumental for the same. He has recorded 13 times unbeaten in all the contested assembly elections. He reaped what he sowed and the tall leader deserves the coin as an honor for his contributions.

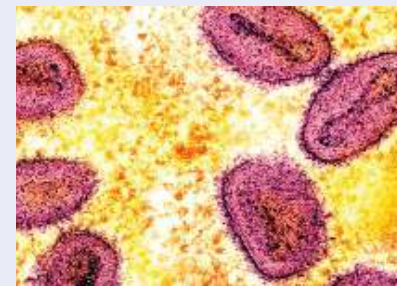
AP Thirvadi | Chennai

DOCTORS' SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT

Madam — I strongly condemn the recent horrific incident in West Bengal involving the heinous crime against an innocent 31 year old junior trainee female doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata. My heartfelt condolences go to the victim's family. As a matter of fact, it is not for the first time that such horrific incidents take place in one corner or the other across the country.

We have not forgotten the Nirbhaya case of Delhi. The other day, police have booked three persons, including two women, and detained two of them after a female doctor was allegedly assaulted at civic-run Sion hospital in the early hours of Sunday. Under the circumstances, resignations are not the solution and those who ask for resignation of the Chief Minister of West Bengal, will they ask for the resignation of the

M-pox is turning into a global threat



The risk of M-pox is turning as a global health emergency after its cases took a surge spike in the African continent particularly. The disease had reached western continent as well, recently Sweden too confirmed it's first ever Mpox infected case along with the USA. So far more than 1 lakh cases been reported from around 116 countries in total, however the ministry of health

and family welfare confirmed it's possible chances as low for India. But we just can't underestimate the risk from M-pox virus. Taking precautions from one's own self is the utmost way to avoid any disease coming to our body. Although there is no such designated cure and vaccine for it right now, but precautions like smallpox and cow pox can be adhered to as well. The zoonotic diseases had turned common after their frequent transmission from the animals to the mankind, it is unfortunate that we our own self is responsible for creating this imbalance between our and animals habitat. Man is itself responsible for the tragic over exploitation of everything, the consequences are in front of us.

The virus disease from squirrel and monkeys are now entered in human now, risk prevention and mitigation had to be implemented on early basis, to avoid another pandemic for the world.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Maharashtra Chief Minister for this incident or in Uttarakhand where two days back a similar incident had happened? Instead of asking resignations, the grim situation warrants the urgent need for enhanced safety measures for health-care workers throughout the hospitals in the country.

S K Khosla | Chandigarh

LATERAL ENTRY

Madam — The issue of lateral entry (Pioneer, 19th Aug. Pg.4) in the Government services politically assailed as deprivation to the reserved classes and through RSS instead of UPSC needs closer examination from administrative angle and technology gaps in the government services cadre. It is not a political issue. Neither it forfeits the interests of reserved classes in the services nor it encroaches their recruitment in the civil or subordinate services. Already several government controlled services relating to digitisation, advanced technological projects etc. have been outsourced to the

companies and entities having desired skills and resources. The patterns of recruitment of civil and subordinate services in the Central and State governments lacks appointment and engagement of specialised and skilled cadres. Presently all government services are being operated digitally through applications and online mechanisms. The traditional government services are red taped and have colonial essence which are not public oriented. In fact, UPSC must reform its recruitment systems for various services to facilitate appointments of a strong and robust cadre of technocrats highly specialised in latest technologies like cyber security, fintechs, block chain, metaverse, cloud, artificial intelligence etc. who can provide services to all government departments instead of lateral entries which will always be despised and envied within the government cadres.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

THE HIGH COST OF FAST FASHION

Sustainable clothing that is produced ethically should be our responsible fashion choice



SHAINY SHARMA

Fast fashion, which refers to the rapid production of inexpensive clothing based on the latest trends, has transformed the global fashion industry. Brands like Zara, H&M, and Forever 21 have led this movement, providing trendy, affordable clothing at an unprecedented speed. By turning runway designs into store-ready garments in just weeks, fast fashion has made the latest styles accessible to a wide audience, particularly young consumers. While this has democratized fashion, it comes with serious environmental, social, and economic consequences. The fast fashion model thrives on its ability to meet consumer demand for low-cost, trendy clothing. The business strategy relies on efficient supply chains that quickly replicate popular styles, keeping consumers constantly engaged with new products. This approach fuels the desire for inexpensive, fashion-forward clothing, allowing consumers to experiment with various trends without spending much. For younger consumers, who often use fashion as a means of self-expression, this is particularly appealing. However, the lower quality and shorter lifespan of these clothes contribute to a cycle of overconsumption, waste, and environmental harm.

One of the biggest drawbacks of fast fashion is its environmental impact. The industry is energy-intensive, relying heavily on fossil fuels for textile production and transportation. It is estimated that the fashion industry is responsible for about 10% of global carbon emissions, surpassing the emissions from all international flights and maritime shipping combined. This is due to the widespread use of synthetic fibers, which are



derived from fossil fuels, and the energy required for manufacturing and global distribution. Furthermore, the production process consumes vast amounts of water, especially in the case of cotton, a commonly used fabric that requires thousands of liters to produce just one kilogram. Additionally, textile dyeing and finishing processes contribute significantly to water pollution. Fast fashion's environmental footprint extends beyond carbon emissions and water consumption.

Workers in fast fashion supply chains often endure poor working conditions and low wages. In many cases, these exploitative labor practices are linked to environmental degradation, as manufacturers in low-regulation regions cut costs by disregarding environmental standards. Thus, the social and environmental issues of fast fashion are intertwined. Despite these concerns, fast fashion remains popular due to its affordability and the constant influx of new styles. Many consumers, particularly those on tight budgets, are unaware of or choose to overlook the ethical and environmental implications of their purchases. However, there is a growing movement toward sustainable fashion, driven by increasing awareness of these issues. Sustainable fashion prioritizes quality over quantity, using eco-friendly materials and ethical production practices. Some brands are adopting circular economy principles, focusing on recycling, upcycling, and designing products for durability.

Consumers must be educated about the environmental consequences of their choices, and governments should implement stricter regulations on textile production and promote recycling initiatives. Encouraging sustainable practices and fostering demand for eco-friendly products can push the industry toward more responsible production methods. The shift from fast fashion to sustainable alternatives is critical for reducing the industry's environmental and social toll.

In conclusion, while fast fashion has made high-fashion trends more accessible, its environmental and social costs are significant. Addressing these challenges will require concerted efforts from consumers, industry leaders, and policymakers to move toward more ethical and sustainable fashion practices.

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

Gas pricing: Reforms turn into a control regime



UTTAM GUPTA

Government's decision to grant a 20 per cent premium on natural gas from the state owned new wells has added complexity to the gas pricing regime



The decision of the Union Government to grant a 20 per cent premium over the APM price (a jargon for administered or controlled price) for any natural gas (NG) that state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Limited (OIL) will produce from the 'new wells or well interventions' from their nominated fields has made the NG pricing more complicated. It is an outcome of a thought process that focuses on unshackling the oil and gas industry from price controls to start with but ends up exercising more controls.

Every year, India consumes 59.5 billion cubic metres (bcm) of NG. Of this, nearly 54 per cent or 32.13 bcm is produced domestically, and the balance is met from imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Of the domestic gas, around two-thirds is from blocks given on nomination to ONGC and OIL and from fields given under the New Exploration and Licensing Policy (NELP) (launched in 1999) as well as those given to private firms before the NELP. NG supplies from the aforementioned fields (known in common parlance as 'legacy fields') are governed by a particular pricing regime.

Before April 2023, under the pricing guidelines effective since November 2014, supplies from these fields used to be a weighted average (WA) of prices of NG at four international locations: Henry Hub (the USA), Alberta Gas (Canada), NBP (National Balancing Point) (the UK), and Russian Gas. The prices used for arriving at the WA were over twelve months. It was revised every six months in a financial year (FY).

The four global hubs have fairly mature gas markets and the prices obtained there are pretty reasonable. Moreover, considering that the prices for twelve consecutive months were used for arriving at the WA, it smoothened out the month-to-month variations thereby ensuring that the price to the consumers was 'stable'. From April 1, 2023, the government changed the above system based on the recommendations of the Kirit Parikh committee (2022). Under the new formula, for any given month, the price expressed per million

British thermal units (Btu) (energy units used globally for setting NG prices) is arrived at by taking 10 per cent of the monthly average of the basket of Indian crude oil in the preceding month. The price thus calculated is subject to a price band of US\$4 - 6.50 per Btu. The shift to link the price of NG with the crude oil price is flawed as natural gas is not a replacement for crude oil. The pricing of NG has to be on its own, especially when nearly half of the gas is used for urea production and power generation. Given the intimate connection of these sectors to food security and the need for affordable electricity (especially, for farmers and poor household consumers) and heavy subsidies are involved, the gas price has to be 'reasonable' and 'stable'. While the earlier formula met both these requirements, the new one effective from April 2023 doesn't as the volatility in crude prices and monthly revisions in NG price linked to crude can create uncertainty for both sectors. To avoid this, the government has put a price band.



EVERY YEAR, INDIA CONSUMES 59.5 BILLION CUBIC METRES (BCM) OF NG. OF THIS, NEARLY 54 PER CENT OR 32.13 BCM IS PRODUCED DOMESTICALLY, AND THE BALANCE IS MET FROM IMPORTS OF LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS

What this means is even when the price determined based on crude linkage turns out to be higher (at the current Indian basket price of USD 77 per barrel, the NG price comes to US\$ 7.7 per Btu) than the ceiling of US\$ 6.50 per Btu, the price will be set at US\$ 6.50 per mBtu. Given the movement in crude price since April 2023 and considering that in the near term, it will continue to rule well above US\$ 75 per barrel, the formula-based price will always be much more than US\$ 6.50 per Btu. So, the ceiling price will be the price to consumers thus rendering the formula redundant. Effectively, thus there is control on the gas price for two-thirds of domestic production and that too at a level,

the government wants. One wonders whether a premium of 20 per cent allowed on gas supplied from the so-called 'new wells' or 'well interventions' in the nomination fields of ONGC and OIL will make any difference to the situation on the ground.

Applying a 20 per cent premium to the formula-determined price of US\$ 7.7 per mBtu (77x0.1), we get US\$ 9.24 per mBtu. But, then there is a cap of US\$ 6.50 per mBtu. So, the price remains at US\$ 6.50 per Btu. The purpose of giving premiums is defeated. On the other hand, if the government intends to build a 20 per cent premium on the ceiling price and give US\$ 7.8 per mBtu then, it makes no sense to put a cap in the first place. The moot point is: if anyway ONGC and OIL are to be given a good price, let this be driven solely by the formula and putting a cap is unwarranted.

At least, there is an element of 'predictability'; firms on their own can calculate as to what price they will be getting. But, here we have an APM price namely US\$ 6.50 per mBtu (call it base price) that is arrived solely at the discretion of the bureaucrat. And, yet another price for supplies from the so-called 'new wells' or 'well interventions' which is arrived at by adding 20 per cent to this. This too is at the discretion of the bureaucrat. Moreover, which fields get the benefit of interventions will also be at his discretion.

Even the pricing of the remaining one-third of domestic NG supplied from the so-called deep/ultra-deep and high-pressure/high-temperature fields (KG-D6 operated by Reliance Industries and neighbouring KG-DWN-98/2 operated by ONGC in Krishna-Godavari basin off the Andhra Pradesh coast fall in this category) isn't free from 'discretion' and 'arbitrariness'.

Technically though, the firms can go for competitive bidding to determine the price for such supplies (referred to as a 'premium' price), this too is subject to a ceiling linked to the prices of alternate fuels including fuel oil, naphtha, and LNG. On taking charge in 2014, the Modi - government started the process of reforming gas pricing by introducing formula-based pricing for legacy gas and thereafter in 2016 by permitting market-based pricing for supplies from deep/ultra-deep and high-pressure/high-temperature fields. But, it has ended up exercising control of both. Meanwhile, the Kirit Parikh committee had recommended the de-regulation of difficult gas fields' prices by January 1, 2026, and the de-regulation of APM prices for gas supplies from the legacy fields by January 1, 2027. But, the government is silent on these recommendations. In fact, by adding more categories (read: 'new wells' and 'well interventions'), it has given a signal that the administered/controlled pricing regime for NG and attendant bureaucratic red tape is here to stay.

Delivering the 75th Independence Day address on August 15, 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi set the country a target to achieve self-reliance in energy production by boosting the gas-based economy (besides giving a push to electric mobility and hydrogen production). He wanted the share of NG in the total energy mix to go up from the current around 6 per cent to 15 per cent. But, in the absence of a 'stable' and 'predictable' policy environment particularly when it comes to the most crucial aspect of pricing of gas, this won't be possible.

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

Healthcare under siege: Rising violence, gender disparity, and the fight for justice

The silent struggles of healthcare workers, often overlooked, reveal a disturbing reality of increasing violence in hospitals and clinics

During Independence Day address, the Chief Justice of Telangana proudly announced that he had recommended a Protection of Advocates Act to the state government. The applause that followed made me think of the resident doctors marching through the rain in Delhi, gathering their courage to demand a law that protects healthcare professionals from the increasing violence in spaces that are supposed to be the safest.

In 2019, the draft Healthcare Service Personnel & Clinical Establishments Bill was introduced, seeking to penalise those who assault healthcare workers. However, the Home Ministry opposed it, stating that no separate law was nec-



SATENDRA SINGH

essary for doctors. A Right to Information (RTI) response from the Health Ministry later revealed that the draft Bill had been withdrawn. On July 26, 2024, the Health Minister further rejected the idea of a central law, asserting in the Lok Sabha that the newly enacted BNS and BNSS laws provided adequate protection for medical professionals. Despite this, healthcare professionals' anger is justified. Why

doesn't the public show the same solidarity as they did during the Nirbhaya case, where the horrific rape and murder of a physiotherapy student led to nationwide outrage? Even amid a national strike by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) over the rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata, another tragedy was overlooked—the brutal killing of a nurse, a single mother, who went missing from a hospital in Rudrapur, Uttarakhand. Her body was found in Uttar Pradesh after she had been strangled and bludgeoned to death.

Similarly, in Gujarat in 2020, an Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) worker was raped while on duty. According to a study published in the *Journal of Global

Health Reports*, 32% of ASHA workers face sexual violence, while 88% experience emotional and economic abuse. Disturbingly, 12% report sexual violence from their husbands, and 64% from beneficiaries and their families. These incidents highlight the pervasive threat healthcare workers face. Last year, a doctor allegedly raped a nurse at a clinic in northeast Delhi. In another case, a Bhopal doctor was accused of confining and raping a 19-year-old patient. Just recently, at the same medical college in Bhopal, a resident doctor was suspended for inappropriate behavior with a cancer patient. Violence against healthcare workers also extends beyond sexual violence. Last month in Manipur, armed assailants



attacked a children's hospital, and two weeks later, a patient was shot dead at Delhi's GTB Hospital due to mistaken identity.

These violent acts, whether committed against doctors, nurses, paramedics, or patients, must be addressed with the same urgency and seriousness. However, the IMA has yet to make a statement regarding the rape and murder of the nurse in Rudrapur.

Have they suspended the membership of the Principal of RG Kar Medical College, implicated in the Kolkata case? Has the Indian Orthopaedic Association (IOA) taken action against its accused member?

A journalist recently tweeted during a doctors' protest, asking where the female doctors were in leadership positions. This raises a crucial point. According to a study published in PLOS Global Public Health, out of 46 professional medical associations in India, only 9 (less than 20%) are headed by women. Neither the Academy of Hospital Administration (AHA) nor the IOA has ever had a female president. This is despite women demonstrating remarkable leadership in healthcare—both my hospital

and medical college are currently led by women doctors, and more than 50% of the heads of departments are women. Clearly, women are capable of leading in healthcare, but they remain under-represented in top positions. Of the 64 individuals currently serving as presidents and secretaries of the 32 state chapters of the IMA, only three are women.

It's time to move beyond token representation. Women doctors must be given more leadership opportunities. One of the most balanced and comprehensive statements on the issue of healthcare violence has come from Women in Global Health India. Their statement calls for an end to sexual violence in all healthcare settings, and it emphasizes that

anyone—whether doctor, nurse, paramedic, or even political party member—who commits such violence must face severe consequences.

Eleanor Roosevelt, who played a key role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, once famously said that human rights begin in small, often overlooked places.

In the context of today's healthcare system, that means the seminar room of RG Kar Medical College or the private hospital in Rudrapur—spaces where violence has occurred, but which remain untouched by reforms.

(The writer is director-professor at the University College of Medical Sciences and a disability justice advocate. Views are personal)

IN BRIEF



BIS launches hackathon to boost awareness

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) on Tuesday announced a new hackathon initiative to develop an online platform to promote awareness of Indian standards through interactive activities and games. The competition is open to students from institutions that have existing memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with BIS. Participants can access guidelines and submit applications through the official hackathon portal by August 23. BIS, in a statement, stated that the primary goal is to foster interest and enhance knowledge about Indian Standards among the general public and stakeholders. "The awareness of quality and standards is very important in the infrastructural and social development of the country," BIS said. The proposed platform is expected to feature various BIS-related activities, including time-bound and ongoing games.



Paddy, pulses sowing area up 6 pc so far

Paddy acreage has increased by six per cent to 369.05 lakh hectare so far in the ongoing 2024-25 kharif (summer) season, the agriculture ministry said on Tuesday. In the year-ago period, the area under paddy was 349.49 lakh hectare. Sowing of paddy, the main kharif crop, begins with the onset of southwest monsoon in June, and harvesting takes place from September. Additionally, the area sown to pulses increased to 120.18 lakh hectare till August 20 of the ongoing season, from 113.69 lakh hectare in the same period last year, the ministry said in a statement. There was a rise in coverage of 'arhar' to 45.78 lakh hectare from 40.74 lakh hectare. Area sown to 'urad' was 28.33 lakh hectare against 29.52 lakh hectare. The area under coarse cereals and 'Shree Anna' (millets) increased to 181.11 lakh hectare from 176 lakh hectare in the year-ago period.



IDBI Bank hikes FD rate to 7.85 pc for 444-day tenure

With an aim to garner more deposits, IDBI Bank on Tuesday increased its fixed deposit rate to 7.85 per cent for 444-day tenure for a limited period. The bank now offers a peak rate of 7.85 per cent and 7.75 per cent per annum on tenures of 444 days and 375 days, respectively, IDBI Bank said in a statement. This enhancement makes the Utsav Fixed Deposit an even more compelling option for customers seeking higher yields, it said. This offer is valid till September 30, 2024, it said, adding, customers can open an Utsav Fixed Deposit conveniently through the bank's website or mobile banking application or at any branch of the bank. Besides this, IDBI Bank continues to offer competitive rates on other special tenures under the Utsav Fixed Deposit scheme. The 700-day tenure offers a peak rate of 7.70 per cent, while the 300-day tenure provides 7.55 per cent, it said. Both Finance Minister and RBI Governor have expressed concern over slow pace in deposit growth as compared to credit growth.

'Abandoning RBI's inflation target regime could be risky'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) inflation targeting regime has worked well and need not be abandoned in favour of a more discretionary regime that could be risky and counterproductive, a new research paper has said. The paper titled 'Inflation Targeting In India: A Further Assessment' said the weight of food-price inflation in the CPI inflation basket should be reduced to better reflect the circumstances of Indian households.

"The RBI's inflation targeting regime has worked well. Given this record, radical changes such as broadening its mandate or abandoning the target in favour of a more discretionary regime would be risky and counterproductive," it said.

The paper is authored by economists Barry Eichengreen (University of California, Berkeley) and Poonam Gupta (NCAER). In contrast, the paper noted that the 4 per cent point

target, +/-2 per centage point tolerance band and focus on headline inflation remain broadly appropriate.

"That said, the regime can be tweaked to improve performance," it suggested.

The government and the RBI signed an inflation-targeting agreement in February 2015 and amended the RBI Act in May 2016.

The inflation target was set by the government in consultation with the RBI with the possibility of revisiting it after five years.

Accordingly, the government announced, via the Official Gazette, 4 per cent Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation as the target from August 5, 2016, with an upper tolerance limit of 6 per cent and a lower limit of 2 per cent.

For most part, the paper pointed out that targets set under the inflation-targeting agreement have been met; and on almost all counts, it has performed as envisaged.



India & Lanka sign pact for power generation

PNS ■ COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan government and a state-run Indian firm on Tuesday signed an agreement to develop infrastructure for storage, regasification and LNG supply for a combined cycle power plant in the island nation, according to the power and energy ministry here. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Sri Lanka's LTL Holdings Limited and India's Petronet LNG Limited for the infrastructure development of the Sobadhanavi Combined Cycle Power Plant at Kerawalapitiya, north Colombo.

The Sri Lankan Minister of Power and Energy, Kanachana Wijesekera, and the Deputy High Commissioner of India, Satyanjal Pandey, signed the MoU at a ceremony here.

Wijesekera said the power generation could be as low as fifty per cent less here than generation through fuel usage.

"MOU for the development of Storage facilities, Regasification unit in Kerawalapitiya and the supply of LNG for the Yugadhanavi,



Sobadhanavi & other LNG power plants in Sri Lanka was signed today," Wijesekera said in a post on X.

He said the initiative will "reduce the cost of energy from thermal power generation to the consumer from 2026, contribute towards the clean energy transformation, stabilise the grid for renewable energy integration, create a domestic market for LNG, facilitate LNG bunkering in the future & domestic other LNG requirements."

"MOU between LTL Holdings Ltd Sri Lanka &

Petro Net LNG of India aims to invest in development and implement the 18-month programme from the signing of the MOU to facilitate the LNG requirements through ISO container from Petro Net LNG Kochi Terminal to Port of Colombo and Kerawalapitiya to 1000 MWs of LNG power plants," he said. The 350 MW LNG-based Combined Cycle Power Plant 'Sobadhanavi' is a landmark power project currently underway in Sri Lanka, according to the adaderana.lk news portal.

Antfin Singapore Holding sells 2.1 per cent stake in Zomato for Rs 4,771 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Antfin Singapore Holding on Tuesday divested a little over 2 per cent stake in online food delivery firm Zomato for Rs 4,771 crore through open market transactions.

Antfin Singapore Holding Pte is an arm of Ant Financial Group, while the latter is a part of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba.

According to the bulk deal data available on the BSE, Antfin Singapore Holding sold 18,54,40,550 shares in two tranches, amounting to a 2.1 per cent stake in Gurugram-based Zomato.

The shares were disposed of in the price range of Rs 257.17-257.46 apiece, taking the transaction value to Rs 4,771.66 crore.

After the share sale, Antfin Singapore Holding's stake has been reduced to 2.14 per cent from 4.24 per cent.

Details of buyers of Zomato's shares could not be ascertained. Shares of Zomato rose 0.27 per cent to close at Rs 263 apiece on the BSE. In March this year, Antfin Singapore Holding parted a 2 per cent stake in Zomato for Rs 2,827 crore.

MINING COMPANIES

'SC ruling on royalties and taxes will affect profitability'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Moody's Ratings has said the Supreme Court ruling on royalties and taxes will be credit negative for mining companies like Tata Steel, UltraTech Cement, and Vedanta Resources Ltd, as it will dent their cash flows and affect their profitability.

The Supreme Court in its order on August 14 allowed mineral rich states to seek dues from April 1, 2005 on royalty and tax on mineral rights and mineral-bearing land from the Centre in a staggered period of 12 years. "The retrospective taxes are credit negative for companies with mining operations in India such as Tata Steel Ltd (Baa3 stable), UltraTech Cement Ltd (Baa3 stable), JSW Steel Ltd (Ba1 stable) and Vedanta Resources Ltd (Caa3



negative) because the instalment payments will dent their cash flows," Moody's Ratings said in a statement.

"These companies will have to pay state taxes going forward that will hurt their profitability," it said. "While the companies' retrospective taxes could be significant, the effect on their cash flows will be eased because owed taxes will be paid in installments over 12 years beginning 1 April 2026," Moody's Ratings said. Companies' ability to pass on

higher costs to customers could also mitigate the effect on their profitability, as per the statement. However, the new taxes as well as denting cash flows, could prompt them to recalibrate their capital spending plans, it said.

During the hearing on July 31, the Centre and mining companies have opposed the demand of states for refund of royalty collected since 1989.

The July 25 verdict had overruled a 1989 judgement and subsequent decisions of the apex court, which held that only the Centre has power to impose royalty on minerals and mineral-bearing land.

Some opposition-ruled mineral rich states then sought refund of royalty levied by the Centre and taxes from the mining companies since the 1989 verdict.

SILVER JUMPS RS 3,150

Gold rallies Rs 1,400 to Rs 74,150 per 10 grams

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices saw the sharpest gain in the past one month and rallied by Rs 1,400 to touch Rs 74,150 per 10 grams in the local market on Tuesday, amid strong global cues.

The precious metal had closed at Rs 72,750 per 10 grams in the previous session on Friday.

Silver price also climbed by Rs 3,150 to Rs 87,150 per kilogram from Rs 84,000 per kg in the previous close.

Gold prices recorded a steady fall after Union Finance Minister announced import duty cut on the metal in the annual budget for FY25. On July 23, the yellow metal had crashed Rs 3,350 to



touch Rs 72,300 per 10 grams. Meanwhile on Tuesday, gold of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity increased by Rs 1,400 each to Rs 74,150 and Rs 73,800 per 10 grams, respectively.

Traders attributed the rise in gold prices to increased demand from local jewellers as well as global trends.

On the global front, gold is trading higher at USD 2,560.10 per ounce, up USD 18.80 per ounce.

"Gold extended its gains on Tuesday, buoyed by expectations of aggressive US Federal Reserve (Fed) interest rate cuts," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

According to Kaynat Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research, Kotak Securities, Comex gold prices started the week with modest gains, peaking at a record high of USD 2,549.90 before settling at USD 2,541.

"The uptick was driven by safe-haven demand and a weaker dollar amid concerns over the resilience of the US economy, geopolitical tensions, and recent comments from the Chicago Fed President that reignited recession fears.

Indian cos to spend USD 45-50 bn in capex: Moody's

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Moody's Ratings on Tuesday said rated Indian companies will spend USD 45-50 billion annually over the next 1-2 years towards capex as companies boost capacity, with the country's most valued firm Reliance Industries alone accounting for 30 per cent of the spendings.

Investments to increase vertical integration and achieve net zero targets will also keep spending high, Moody's Ratings said in a report on corporates in India and Indonesia.

"Rated Indian companies' capex will remain elevated at around USD 45-50 billion annually over the next one to two years. With an annual capex budget of around USD 15 billion spread across its different business segments, Reliance Industries alone will account for around 30 per cent of the port-

folio capex," Moody's Ratings said.

The oil and gas sector and Reliance Industries will collectively account for over 60 per cent of the rated Indian portfolio's spending over the next couple of years.

Moody's said the seven rated oil and gas companies in India will also account for around 30 per cent of rated Indian companies' capex.

These companies will spend around USD 15 billion annually to expand existing capacity and make green energy investments to reduce carbon transition risk.

For instance, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (Baa3 stable) and Indian Oil will spend USD 6 billion and USD 4 billion, respectively, in each of the next two years on reserves addition, downstream integration and energy transition, Moody's added.

Sensex rebounds 370 points; bank stocks spurt

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty found firmer ground on Tuesday, propelled by robust buying in banking, financial and auto stocks amid a largely firm trend in global equities.

Besides, easing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and falling global crude oil prices further bolstered sentiment, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rebounded 378.18 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at 80,802.86. During the day, the benchmark soared 518.28 points or 0.64 per cent to 80,942.96.

Rising for the fourth consecutive day, the NSE Nifty surged 126.20 points or 0.51 per cent to 24,698.85.

"The domestic market started the session with a strong surge, buoyed by positive global sentiment amidst Israel-



Hamas ceasefire talks and diminishing US recession fears due to recent favourable data.

"Concurrently, easing geopolitical risks and weak China demand have led to a decline in crude prices, benefiting the domestic economy," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Bajaj Finserv, IndusInd Bank, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Axis Bank, NTPC, and Sun Pharma

were the major gainers.

On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, ITC, Adani Ports, JSW Steel and Tata Motors were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.98 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.52 per cent.

Among the indices, financial services jumped 1.19 per cent, utilities (1.07 per cent), power (0.80 per cent), IT (0.76 per cent) and auto (0.75 per cent).

Capital Goods and FMCG

were the laggards. "Meanwhile, inflationary pressure in Japan and the appreciating Yen cautioned the rally. This week's Japan inflation data and FOMC minutes will provide insights into future interest rate trajectories and market trends," Nair said.

In Asian markets, Seoul and Tokyo settled higher, while Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower.

European markets were trading with gains. The US markets ended in positive territory on Monday.

"Much of the strength and rally in Dalal Street is in the backdrop of steady SIP flows by retail investors. Global factors will be keenly watched as local investors would be eyeing the July FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) meeting minutes to be released on Wednesday," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

Building materials biz expected to log big growth: Birla

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aditya Birla Group Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla on Tuesday said the conglomerate's building materials business is expected to see significant growth over the next several years with cement and decorative paints poised to be a key segment on the back of housing and infrastructure boom in India.

Moreover, the outlook of the Indian economy remains "positive" supported by strengthening of macroeconomic fundamentals, a robust financial and corporate sector, and a resilient external sector.

The government's continued thrust on capex while pur-

suing fiscal consolidation, and consumer and business optimism augur well for investment and consumption demand, he said.

Birla was addressing the AGM of the group's holding firm Grasim, which controls the group's flagship firms including UltraTech, Aditya Birla Finance and other investments in textiles, chemicals and paints.

Grasim has invested Rs 50,000 crore in capex over the past five years, of which 77 per cent is dedicated to growth initiatives, he said adding this would position it for sustained growth and value creation.

"Remarkably, 40 per cent of this amount—nearly Rs 20,000



The government's continued thrust on capex while pursuing fiscal consolidation, and consumer and business optimism augur well for investment and consumption demand, he said

crore was spent in FY 2023-24 alone, marking the largest-ever capital expenditure in our history," he added.

According to Birla, its cement and decorative paints are poised to be a key segment of this expansion, with "robust

demand" projected across the nation.

"With our cement business, UltraTech, our decorative paints business, Birla Opus, and our B2B e-commerce platform for building materials, Birla Pivot, we are well-

equipped to lead the charge in meeting the rising needs of India's construction," said Birla.

Cement maker UltraTech is rapidly scaling its capacity through acquisitions and brownfield expansions. It had last month announced acquisition of Tamil Nadu-based India Cements Ltd (ICL). Its Rs 3,142 crore open offer for acquiring 26 per cent stake in ICL would open on September 19.

In FY24, it increased its cement production capacity by 13.8 MTPA through expansion projects and crossed 150 MTPA production capacity. It is now the third-largest cement company in the world, excluding China.

Serum Institute: Working to develop Monkeypox vaccine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Serum Institute of India on Tuesday said it is currently working to develop a vaccine for Monkeypox, with positive outcomes expected in a year's time.

The World Health Organisation on August 14 declared the Mpox outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. The move came after a sudden increase in cases was recorded in parts of Africa.

In India, around 30 Mpox cases have been detected since 2022. The most recent case in the country was reported in



March 2024.

"In view of the global health emergency declared due to Mpox outbreak, Serum Institute of India is currently working on developing a vaccine for this disease to cater to millions of lives that might be at risk," Serum Institute of India CEO Adar

Poonawalla said in a statement.

Hopefully, with the ongoing progress, the Pune-based vaccine major will have more updates and positive news to share within a year's time, he added. The Union Health ministry has issued advisories highlighting that scrutiny at airports and seaports, especially at international entry points will increase.

The government has declared three hospitals -- Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, Safdarjung Hospital, and Lady Harding Medical College -- as nodal centres for the isolation, management and treatment of patients.

Sachin-Jigar's tribute to Lord Krishna



The dynamic music duo Sachin-Jigar, known for their chart-busters across genres, have once again taken their artistry to divine heights by composing music for Lord Krishna for the musical theatre show *Raajadhiraaj*. This grand theatre show, which portrays the life journey of Lord Krishna through a musical narrative, promises to be a treat for both the eyes and ears.

Taking their passion for creating something extraordinary, Sachin-Jigar recorded the music in Budapest, collaborating with an orchestra that brings a mesmerising blend of global and traditional sounds. Imagine this as an international orchestra's strings and brass sections harmonising perfectly with Indian folk instruments like the tabla, dholak and other rhythm elements. This fusion is as grand as it gets—an unprecedented blend that's set to leave audiences spellbound.

Speaking about the composition, Sachin-Jigar shared, "Every song will leave you with a thought. We wanted that crossover between an international-sounding musical soundscape and the Indian folk core that is so deeply embedded in the story of Lord Krishna. For them, they were reading the notations and playing, but even they couldn't believe that this blend had been used with an Indian ensemble featuring tabla, dholak and rhythm, alongside their strings and brass section. This kind of fusion is a first of its kind, but I wish and pray that people like it so we can do more of this in the future."



Bhushan Kumar, Ravi Bhagchandka announce film based on Yuvraj Singh's life

In a groundbreaking announcement, Bhushan Kumar, along with Ravi Bhagchandka, is set to bring Yuvraj Singh's extraordinary life to the big screen with a biopic that honors the legendary cricketer and his remarkable achievements. This film promises to be a grand celebration of his unparalleled journey and contributions to cricket, capturing the essence of his legendary career, unforgettable six-sixes in the 2007 T20 World Cup and his courageous off-field battles.

Celebrated for his flamboyant style and unwavering resilience, Singh has left an indelible mark on cricket. Since his international debut in 2000, Yuvraj has won fans over with his aggressive left-handed batting and electrifying fielding. As the architect of India's 2011 World Cup victory, his all-round brilliance was crucial to India's most celebrated victory. His dominance continued in the IPL, where his exceptional T20 performances further solidified his reputation as a powerhouse.

However, Yuvraj's story extends beyond his cricketing feats. In 2011, he faced a formidable opponent off the field. His courageous battle and subsequent return to cricket in 2012 demonstrated remarkable resilience and

inspired millions globally—a comeback that the world remembers to this day. Bhushan Kumar stated, "Yuvraj Singh's life is a compelling narrative of resilience, triumph and passion. His journey from a promising cricketer to a cricketing hero and then to a hero in real life, is truly inspiring. I am thrilled to bring a story that needs to be told and heard through the big screen and to celebrate his extraordinary achievements."

Yuvraj added, "I am deeply honoured that my story will be showcased to millions of my fans across the globe by Bhushan Ji and Ravi. Cricket has been my greatest love and source of strength through all the highs and lows. I hope this film inspires others to overcome their own challenges and pursue their dreams with unwavering passion."

The film is co-produced by Ravi Bhagchandka and marks the second time he is bringing a cricketer's story to the big screen, after *Sachin: A Billion Dreams*. Reflecting on his connection with Yuvraj Singh, Ravi shared, "Yuvraj has been a dear friend for many years. I'm honored that he trusted us to translate his incredible cricketing journey into a cinematic experience. Yuvraj is not just a world champion but a true legend in every sense of the word."

MICHAELA COEL TEAMS UP WITH HBO, BBC FOR FIRST DAY ON EARTH

British star Michaela Coel is teaming up once again with HBO and BBC, four years after collaborating with them for her critically acclaimed limited series *May Destroy You*.

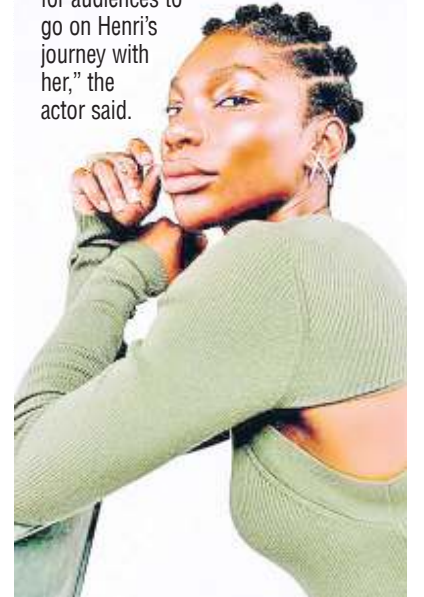
Coel has created and stars in *First Day on Earth*, a ten-episode drama series co-produced by HBO and the BBC, a press release stated.

In the new show, the 36-year-old actor plays the role of British novelist Henri, who feels stuck as work has dried up and her relationship is going nowhere.

"When she's offered a job on a film in Ghana, West Africa—her parents' homeland, where her estranged father lives—she can't resist the chance to reconnect with him and the country of her heritage. But when she arrives, neither the job nor her father turn out the way she expected and soon Henri has to deal with danger and hypocrisy, form new friendships, lose her illusions, and create a new sense of identity—one that might leave her stronger but could also break her," reads the official ploline.

Coel, also known for starring in films such as *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* and *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, has executive produced the new show alongside Jesse Armstrong, Phil Clarke and Roberto Troni for Various Artists Limited, in association with A24.

"*First Day on Earth* is another very personal story for me, which I hope will engage viewers from all over the world, and I can't wait for audiences to go on Henri's journey with her," the actor said.



Sanjeev Kapoor reveals reason for Akshay's exit from MasterChef 3

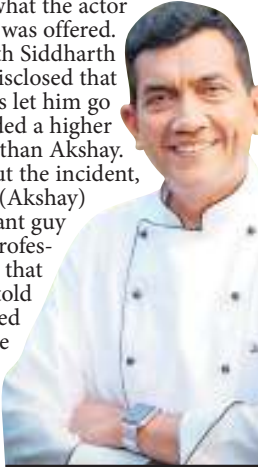
Renowned chef Sanjeev Kapoor revealed that he was replaced from judging the initial season of *Masterchef India* due to Akshay Kumar. Sanjeev, a highly acclaimed Indian chef, mentioned that he was asked to be a co-judge on the TV cooking competition show with Akshay. However, he missed the chance because he requested a fee that was just one rupee higher than what the show was offering.

In an interview with Siddharth Kannan, Sanjeev disclosed that the show's creators let him go because he demanded a higher fee than Akshay.

Talking about the incident, Sanjeev shared, "He's (Akshay) a dear friend, a brilliant guy and a great professional." He shared that when the makers told him that they wanted him to co-judge the show with Akshay, he told them about his condition to appear on the show. He said, "Very good. I am very happy, but I have only one condition. Whatever you are paying him, I will charge Re 1 more."

Sanjeev stated that his request confused the producers of *Masterchef India* and they eliminated him. Nevertheless, following Akshay's role in judging the initial two seasons with Kunal Kapur and Ajay Chopra, the producers decided to approach Sanjeev again to join the team for the third season.

"They decided to replace Akshay Kumar. I signed the show on my terms," Kapoor revealed. "So I signed the show and I did a few seasons, but time to effort to return, that ratio did not match," concluded Kapoor.



When SRK gifted John a bike, post-Pathaan's success

John Abraham has been showering Shah Rukh Khan with a lot of love and admiration lately during their work together on *Pathaan*. On the television program *Aapka Apna Zakir*, the actor shared that Shah Rukh gave him a bike as a gift following the huge success of their movie the previous year. "My last film, *Pathaan*, was with him. I remember there was a success party after the film's release, and Shah Rukh was like, 'Come on, John, let's party! Our film is doing well. It's got a good opening. I said no: I've got to sleep. 'What, you've got to sleep?' 'Yes, I've

got to sleep.' So he asked me, 'What do you want?' I said, 'Just gift me a motorcycle. So he gifted me one. I went home happy,' recalled John.

Previously, appearing on *The Ranveer Show*, John had said about working with Shah Rukh, "When my career started, Shah Rukh was my judge (in a modelling competition) and now during *Pathaan*, I was working with him. There was a lot of respect and love. He is an extremely smart and intelligent man, but he is also very caring and cute. We really got along!"



Shiloh Jolie officially drops PITT from her name

Shiloh Jolie, the daughter of Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, has been approved to legally change her surname. The incomplete background check caused a delay in her request to remove her father's surname.

Angelina and Brad have a total of six children; Maddox (22), Zahara (19), Shiloh (18), Pax (20), Knox (15), and Vivienne (15).

Shiloh Nouvel Jolie-Pitt will now be known legally as Shiloh Jolie after her request to remove her father's sur-

name was granted. Upon reaching the age of 18 in May, she initially submitted the petition. The request was authorised on Monday, August 19, following a thorough background check that required rescheduling. Shiloh's lawyer, Peter

Levine, at that time, informed us, "Everyone undergoing a name-change request needs to have a background check conducted by the court clerk, and because of clerical error, Shiloh's hearing has been continued to a new date."

FUN

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

NANCY

GINGER MEGGS

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

4		9	7	8				
8	7		2					3
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4								7
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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

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

ACROSS

- Dirty and unhealthy air or water
- More than is needed
- Water covering land that is usually dry
- A female relation
- A symbol on playing cards
- A passenger needs this
- Run after trying to catch
- Sooner than expected
- Squashed
- Stretchy stuff in clothes
- Wreck completely
- Choose
- Move along on hands and knees
- The number in a trio
- At this place

DOWN

- Frequently
- Jump over
- A chewed sweet
- Bad smell

SOLUTION 825

B	P	N	I	S	D			
A	R	O	W	C	R	I	C	
L	O	E	H	A	L			
E	L	P	D					
R	U	B	B	E	A	T	E	
I	A	I	O	E	E			
N	A	K	E	D	P	L	A	S
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'Everybody is desperate and so am I for followers'

TEJAL SINHA

Hated by many, while also loved by many—never ignored by any—is Uorfi. Despite starting on TV shows like *Bade Bhaiyya Ki Dulhania*, *Chandra Nandini* and *Meri Durga*, among others, it was her appearance on the first season of *Bigg Boss OTT* that really pushed her into the spotlight. Since then, she has become a sensation, garnering a large following and generating controversies along the way, with no regrets.

But what if you get to see her unfiltered life? Well, you actually can, with Prime Video's upcoming nine-episode series *Follow Kar Lo Yaar* bringing to you a revelation of the mystery of her life, streaming on August 23.

The fierce person that she is on social media is how she's been in her personal life too. Beyond the glitz and glamour, filters on the gram and bizarre social posts and stories, the unscripted show reveals the authentic, unfiltered reality of her life beyond social media. "It feels amazing, like surreal," begins Uorfi, who was over the moon with "How did this happen? Is it happening? Am I dreaming? Is it a dream or a reality?"

The digital star, famous for her daring and one-of-a-kind style, has achieved a new accomplishment in her amazing adventure. She was literally looked down upon by people in the fashion industry. But just by being herself, the same Uorfi strutted down the runway for top designers! She believes she did not really shake up the fashion industry but rather, "I was just trying to be myself. See,

it's not like the fashion industry, *mai meri bahut respect hai*. Whatever I've been trying to do is not fashion-wise. I'm just trying to grab eyeballs; that's it."

In the trailer, we encounter a few well-known individuals, such as another internet sensation, Orry and Munawar Faruqi, who won *Bigg Boss 17*. The engaging trailer covers everything from Uorfi's voiceover about her passion and fame to the family conflicts.

Meanwhile, in the trailer, she's heard saying, 'Duniya ko pagal karke jaungi'. Beyond a doubt, she's made everyone go crazy. However, she feels, "Honestly, *abhi tak kuch itna kiya nahi hai lekin mujhe lagta hai*. I have to do more and I do want to get that level of fame where people would actually go crazy."

Just imagine: being around the cameras 24/7 isn't a cakewalk, making one go conscious at times. With the cameras rolling in day and night, there wasn't much of a process behind filming the series. The cameras followed for two whole months straight. So was she apprehensive? Well, not at all. But she humorously says, "Yehi toh dikkat hai. I should have been apprehensive. But now that I am not, let's see what happens."

This eventually makes it clear that Uorfi is someone who "listens to all but does her own" and she couldn't agree much to it. She, however, highlighted, "You know honestly, after a day, you do not even know that there's a camera. You just forget. You get so used to it that you don't even remember that cameras are there."

Just like her name, she has certainly proved that yes, Uorfi means famous. But what if the fame goes? "I will die," she says. "I can't be alive without this." Well, she's been a synonym for controversy. You see her saying in the trailer too,

"Bahut dimm se kuch controversy nahi hui." So would she try out to bring out one? We ask, and she says, "You never know, maybe!"

Being tagged as 'desperate' for fame and we see Munawar asking the same in the trailer too, she tells us in this interview, "Everybody is desperate to get followers, attention and money. So, yes, I am desperate."

With the trailer, comments and reports somewhere relating the Javed sisters to the Kardashians, she exclusively tells us, "I don't like it! We are not the Kardashians. It's very different. I hope we maintain our authenticity even after this show and I don't think we are anything like them."

Comments on the trailer had things like 'people like Uorfi and Dhinchak Pooja getting famous with no talents'. As savage as she is, she brings in a fun reply to it: "Dhinchak Pooja is more talented than me, yaar c'mon; you can't compare her to me. I cannot sing. She's like, *Selfie maine leli aaj*, I can't do that. I'm not as good as her. That's an insult comparing her to me! I can be good, but I can't be as great as her. I cannot come up like *Dilon Ka shooter hai mera scooter*. How can you even think of it? What a catchy line! I just love it." But again, some comments do get disturbing. Though she hasn't read them as of now, she does share that if she'd read those comments, it would certainly affect her undeniably.

With *Follow Kar Lo Yaar*, she says, "I have revealed some dark and dirty secrets about myself." So can one anticipate season after season? Heading towards the end of this chat, she says, "You have to ask Prime for that!" And I hope yes. But before that, *Follow Kar Lo Yaar*."

THE UNAPOLOGETIC LIFE OF UORFI IS HERE WITH PRIME VIDEO'S FOLLOW KAR LO YAAR. KNOWN FOR HER SAVAGE PERSONALITY, WE HAVE THE STAR OF THE SHOW FOR AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT WITH THE PIONEER VIA A ZOOM CALL AND IT'S AN UNFILTERED CHAT!



Jayprad Desai's sensational spin on Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba

AARTI SREENATH

When Jayprad Desai stepped into the world of *Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba*, he wasn't merely crafting a sequel but diving into a universe already sketched out by the visionary Kanika Dhillon. The story of *Haseen Dillruba* had already left an indelible mark and now, with the sequel, he found himself tasked with amplifying the chaos, the drama and the sheer pulpiness of the tale.

He admits that this was a different beast altogether! *Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba* wasn't just a continuation; it was an expansion, a world that was larger, bolder and more daring than its predecessor. "The story was already written when it came to me," he shared, acknowledging the challenge of taking something familiar and pushing it to new, flamboyant heights. "I wanted to make the ride more exciting this time. The last one had a taste of pulp, but this time we were pushing the envelope."

The director's vision was clear: he wanted to make the audience suspend their disbelief, to pull them



Jayprad Desai, the talented filmmaker, basking on the success of his latest project, Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba, discusses with The Pioneer about the sequel not being just a continuation of Haseen Dillruba and a lot more behind the making of it



into a world almost hysterical in its believability yet so artfully crafted that they couldn't help but be swept along. He envisioned a film that would make viewers fasten their seatbelts and prepare for a flamboyant, reckless ride, one that was unapologetically bold in its presentation. For him, the film's distinct visual style was crucial in achieving this.

He collaborated closely with the production designer, the director of photography (DOP) and the costume designer to create a cinematic language that would milk the pulp aesthetic for all it was worth.

The use of colour was particularly significant. He detailed how each character's arc was visually represented through a specific colour palette—Rani, for instance, was almost always clad in red, a hue that captured her fiery and passionate nature. Rishu, on the other hand, was bathed in blue, symbolising his more calm and introspective personality. Abhimanyu, whose character evolved dramatically throughout the film, started with a palette of innocence that slowly shifted to green, reflecting his descent into envy and darker emotions.

"All these subtle details were designed to help the audience buy into the larger-than-life story," he explained. The use of motifs like rain, the Taj Mahal and the real locations of Agra further grounded the film in a sense of reality, even as the narrative spiraled into the realms of the fantastical.

But it wasn't just about the visuals. He was determined to ensure that beneath all the flamboyance and madness, the humanity and innocence of the characters remained intact. This was a story that, despite its outrageous twists and turns, had to resonate on an emotional level. "No amount of technical finesse can replace the need to touch the audience emotionally," he noted. "That's what keeps the audience rooting for these characters, despite their flaws."

The process of developing these complex, layered characters was as

intricate as the story itself. He inherited the characters of Rani and Rishu from the first film, but as the new story unfolded, they were thrust into even greater crises, revealing facets of their personalities that had previously been hidden. "Like in real life, we evolve when confronted with new challenges," he observed. These characters were no different—they grew, they faltered, and they became more colourful and edgy, but he was careful never to lose their inherent humanity.

One of the most challenging aspects of the film was balancing the various genres it straddled—romance, drama and thriller—all while maintaining the high-pitched, passionate tone that the story demanded. Filming on real locations, such as a railway bridge over the Yamuna River, added an extra layer of difficulty. He recalled a particularly memorable moment involving a 16-foot animatronic crocodile that they had built for a scene.

"Shooting on a real bridge with a real train on a real river was challenging yet amusing," he shares. As they were preparing, a train passed by, and the passengers, unaware that the crocodile was fake, began snapping pictures, convinced they were witnessing a wild creature being captured. "Those kids on the train will probably tell their children one day about the time they saw a giant crocodile being pulled from the river."

With *Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba*, he understood that the key to making such a larger-than-life narrative work was to embrace its implausibility and lean into it fully. "The thing about pulp is that you cannot take away its larger-than-life experience," he reflected. "You have to make the audience drown in it, to tend to their disbelief and then excite them with the twists and turns."

This film marked a significant step in his growth as a director. Having previously worked on projects in vastly different genres, such as the sports biopic *Kaun Pravin Tambe* and the web series *Mukhbir*, Desai has shown a remarkable ability to adapt and innovate. With *Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba*, he not only milked the pulp to perfection but also infused it with a distinct cinematic language that made the story more than just a series of sensational twists.

As for his future projects, he hinted at a diverse lineup, a con film inspired by real-life events, a pure romance, and other genres yet to be explored. His advice to aspiring filmmakers is simple yet profound: "Be yourself. Don't lose your identity in trying to cater to what you think the audience wants. Maintain your style, find your voice, and let your passion shine through. It's infectious."

Navigating through Cyanotic and Acyanotic heart defects

There has been a concerning rise in the incidence of congenital heart defects (CHDs) in children in recent years. CHDs are structural abnormalities of the heart that are present at birth and can range from mild to severe. These conditions can significantly impact a child's health and require prompt diagnosis and treatment. CHDs can be broadly categorized into two types based on the presence or absence of cyanosis, a bluish tint to the skin caused by low oxygen levels in the blood. CHDs affect 8 to 9 out of every 1,000 live births, with approximately 25% considered critical congenital heart defects (CCHDs). The incidence of CHDs increases to 2-6% for children with Down syndrome. While the exact causes are not fully understood, genetic factors, maternal health conditions like diabetes, and exposure to certain medications or infections during pregnancy may increase the risk. Early detection through prenatal screening and prompt treatment are crucial for managing CHDs and improving outcomes for affected children.

Cyanotic congenital heart diseases (Cyanotic CHDs)

Cyanotic CHDs lead to insufficient oxygenation of the blood, causing the "blue baby" phenomenon. Common examples include:

• Tetralogy of Fallot (TOF)

TOF consists of four heart defects: ventricular septal defect (VSD), pulmonary stenosis, right ventricular hypertrophy, and an overriding aorta. These defects reduce blood flow to the lungs and mix oxygenated and deoxygenated blood, resulting in low oxygen levels throughout the body. Symptoms include difficulty breathing, fatigue, and a characteristic blue tint to the skin.

• Transposition of the Great Arteries (TGA)

In TGA, the positions of the pulmonary artery and the aorta are switched, creating two parallel circulations. Oxygenated blood cycles within the lungs, while deoxygenated blood cycles within the body. This condition is life-threatening and requires immediate surgical correction to re-establish normal blood flow and oxygenation.

• Tricuspid Atresia

Tricuspid atresia involves the absence of the tricuspid valve, preventing blood flow from the right atrium to the right ventricle. Blood must bypass the blockage through an atrial septal defect (ASD) or a VSD to reach the lungs. This condition leads to significant oxygen deficiency and requires surgical intervention to ensure adequate blood flow and oxygenation.

• Total Anomalous Pulmonary Venous Return (TAPVR)

In TAPVR, the pulmonary veins incorrectly drain into the right atrium or systemic veins instead of the left atrium, mixing oxygenated and deoxygenated blood. This defect

necessitates surgical correction to redirect the pulmonary veins to the left atrium, ensuring proper oxygenation.

• Acyanotic Congenital Heart Diseases (Acyanotic CHDs)

Acyanotic CHDs do not typically cause cyanosis but can lead to heart failure and other complications if untreated. Common examples include:

• Atrial Septal Defect (ASD)

An ASD is an opening in the septum between the right and left atria, allowing oxygenated blood to flow from the left atrium to the right atrium. This increases pulmonary blood flow and can lead to complications such as atrial arrhythmias and pulmonary hypertension. Treatment may include surgical or catheter-based closure.

• Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD)

A VSD is an opening in the septum between the right and left ventricles, allowing oxygenated blood to flow from the left ventricle to the right ventricle. This increases pulmonary blood flow and can cause heart failure if significant. Smaller VSDs may close on their own, while larger ones may require surgical repair.

• Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA)

PDA is the persistence of the ductus arteriosus, a fetal blood vessel, after birth. This allows blood to flow from the aorta to the pulmonary artery, increasing pulmonary blood flow and potentially leading to heart failure and pulmonary hypertension. Treatment options include medication, catheter-based procedures, or surgery to close the ductus arteriosus.

• Coarctation of the aorta

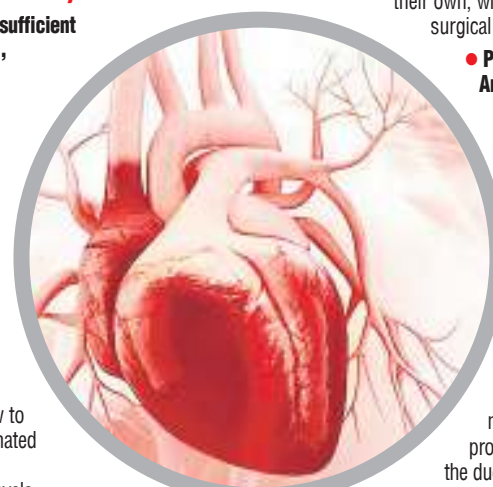
Coarctation of the aorta is a narrowing of a portion of the aorta, increasing pressure before the narrowing and reducing blood flow to the lower body. This can cause hypertension and heart failure if untreated. Treatment typically involves surgical or catheter-based interventions to widen the narrowed segment.

• Diagnosis and treatment

Understanding and diagnosing these conditions involve clinical examination, echocardiography, and sometimes advanced imaging techniques such as MRI or CT scans. Treatment options vary depending on the specific defect and its severity, ranging from medical management to interventional procedures and surgery.

Early diagnosis and intervention are crucial for improving outcomes and quality of life for children with congenital heart defects. By recognizing the signs and symptoms of both cyanotic and acyanotic CHDs, healthcare providers can ensure timely and appropriate treatment, helping these children thrive and lead healthy lives.

(The author, Dr. Ved Prakash, is a Senior Consultant-Cardiothoracic & Vascular Surgery at Sarvodaya Hospital.)



Samoan batter Visser sets new T20I record with 39-run over



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Samoan middle-order batter Darius Visser on Tuesday set a new world record for most runs in an over in T20Is, accumulating 39 against Vanuatu in the World Cup East Asia-Pacific Region Qualifier in the capital city of Apia. Visser hammered pacer Nalin

Nipiko for six sixes in an over that also included three no balls. The 28-year-old right-handed batter, who learned the ropes in Sydney grade cricket, was playing in only his third T20I, and comes with the reputation of being a genuine power-hitter, who once topped the shot-speed session by Hype Cricket Academy in

New South Wales, clocking a shade over 160 kmph. His big-hitting ability was evident in his knock against Vanuatu -- 132 off 62 balls with five fours and 14 sixes. "It was clean hitting (by Visser). We did not know it was a world record, and later it was mentioned during the innings break. "But happy for him, and

happy that we managed a win. Looking forward to the next match," Samoa skipper Jasmat Caleb replied to a PTI query. Samoa will face bitter rivals Fiji in their next EAP Qualifier match on Wednesday. Previously, there were five occasions when a bowler conceded 36 runs in an over and they were Stuart Broad

(2007), Akila Dananjaya (2021), Karim Jannat (2024), Kamran Khan (2024) and Azmatullah Omarzai (2024). Broad conceded six sixes in as many balls against Yuvraj Singh of India in the 2007 T20 World Cup, while Windies batsman Kieron Pollard achieved the feat against Dananjaya during a bilateral T20I at Coolidge, Antigua.

Nepal's Dipendra Singh Airee creamed sixes off Qatar's Kamran Khan in the ACC Premier Cup, while Windies' Nicholas Pooran hit Afghanistan pacer Azmatullah Omarzai for six sixes during the T20 World Cup this June at Gros Islet. Rohit Sharma and Rinku Singh combined to take 36 runs off Afghanistan pacer Karim Janat at Bengaluru during a bilateral T20I that India won in the first-ever second Super Over. Along with joining these big names, Visser, who also dabbles in coaching in Australia when he does not have international commitments, made another piece of history as his century was the first by a Samoan batter in T20Is. The knock guided the side to a competitive 174 all out. The next highest score in Samoa innings was 16 by Jasmat, and it underlined the value of his knock. In reply, Vanuatu gave a strong chase but ended up at 164 for nine, losing the match by 10 runs. Opener Nipiko nearly amended his waywardness with the ball with a 73 off 52 balls with six fours and three sixes. He had good support from skipper Joshua Rasu (23 off 14 balls) and Tim Cutler (21 off 11 balls) but Vanuatu fell short.



Bhushan's T-Series announces a biopic on Indian cricketer Yuvraj

PTI ■ MUMBAI

An upcoming biographical movie will chronicle the inspiring journey of former Indian cricketer Yuvraj Singh, the makers announced Tuesday. The yet-to-be-titled biopic will be produced by Bhushan Kumar's T-Series and co-produced by Ravi Bhagchandka, known for "Sachin: A Billion Dreams" and the upcoming Aamir Khan-starrer "Sitaare Zameen Par". The film is touted as a "grand celebration of Singh's unparalleled journey and contributions to cricket, capturing the essence of his career, unforgettable six sixes in the 2007 T20 World Cup, his courageous off-field battles and his subsequent return to cricket in 2012", a press release said. Singh, who began his career at the age of 13, said he is hoping his life story will inspire people to overcome challenges. "I'm deeply honoured that my story will be showcased to millions of my fans across the globe

by Bhushan and Ravi. Cricket has been my greatest love and source of strength through all the highs and lows. I hope this film inspires others to overcome their own challenges and pursue their dreams with unwavering passion," the former India all-rounder said. Kumar, known for backing blockbuster films such as "Drishyam 2", "Animal", "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2", "Kabir Singh" and "Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior", said he is excited to bring out the inspiring journey of Singh on the big screen. "Yuvraj Singh's life is a compelling narrative of resilience, triumph, and passion. His journey from a promising cricketer to a cricketing hero, and then to a hero in real life, is truly inspiring. "I'm thrilled to bring a story that needs to be told and heard through the big screen and to celebrate his extraordinary achievements," he said. The makers are yet to announce the key details about the film, including the director and cast.



Debutants grab goals for Juventus

AP ■ LECCO (ITALY)

It was a good day for debutants in Italy's Serie A as new faces at Juventus and Atalanta gave their teams a winning start to the league season. New Juventus coach Thiago Motta surprised fans by handing a debut to youth academy graduate Samuel Mbangula on Monday and the 20-year-old winger responded by scoring the opening goal in a 3-0 win over Como. Mbangula cut in from the left in the 23rd minute and slotted a low drive into the far corner to give Juventus the lead. US international Timothy Weah scored the second for the Turin club when he smashed a shot in off the underside of the bar just before halftime. It was the American's first league goal for the club. Andrea Cambiaso added a third in injury time to pad the scoreboard in Cesc Fàbregas' first league game in charge of Como since taking over as head coach this offseason.

Atalanta routs Lecce

New signings Mateo Retegui and Marco Brescianini both scored twice as Atalanta routed Lecce 4-0 in a blistering start to its campaign. Brescianini joined last season's Europa League winners from Frosinone just three days ago and Retegui was signed last week from Genoa. Brescianini got the opener when the midfielder pounced on a parried save by goalkeeper Wladimiro Falcone after 35 minutes and then Retegui doubled Atalanta's lead with a powerful header on the stroke of halftime. Retegui got the third from the penalty spot 12 minutes into the second period and then Brescianini took advantage of gaping holes in the Lecce defence to make it four after 65 minutes. The result means the Bergamo club sits top of the Serie A table on goal difference after one round.

Nagal, Gaston to feature in 6th Tennis Premier League in Mumbai from Dec 3-8

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Ac Indian player Sumit Nagal and France's Hugo Gaston will be the main attractions in the men's category of the sixth Tennis Premier League to be held here from December 3-8. Poland's Magda Linette, who is ranked 41st in the world, and Armenia's world No 52 Elina Avanesyan, will headline the women's category in the tournament which will be held at the

Cricket Club of India. The tournament will be played in a 25-point format in which each franchise will play a total of five matches to make the semifinals. The matches between two franchises will include men's singles, women's singles, mixed doubles and men's doubles as there will be a total of 100 points at stake with each category carrying 25 points. "Each team will play a total of 500 points (100 points x 5



matches) at the league stage and the top four teams in the points table to qualify for the semi-finals," the organisers

said in a release on Tuesday. A total of seven franchises, PBG Pune Jaguars, Bengal Wizards, Punjab Patriots, Hyderabad Strikers, Gujarat Panthers, Mumbai Leon Army and defending champions Bengaluru SG Pipers will vie for top honours. In order to discover and monitor young players, the organisers said TPL has tied up with Gujarat State Tennis Association (GSTA), Delhi Lawn Tennis Association

(DLTA) and Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association (MSLTA) for conducting district ranking tournaments apart from introducing their own mobile app. "Over 100 academies have been affiliated with TPL app from various regions of India. It connects the tennis community across India and allows them to compete with each other and helps the tennis players to track their progress," it added.

Injured Messi out of Argentina's squad for World Cup qualifiers against Chile, Colombia

AP ■ BUENOS AIRES (ARGENTINA)

Lionel Messi will not play in Argentina's next two World Cup qualifiers because of injury. Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni announced his 28-man squad on Monday for the matches against Chile on September 5 and Colombia five days later. Messi is still recovering from a right ankle injury. The 36-year-old Angel Di Maria, who retired from the national team after winning the recent Copa America, is not on the list either. World Cup champion Argentina leads South American qualifying with 15 points after six matches.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Walter Benítez (PSV Eindhoven), Gerónimo Rulli (Olympique Marseille), Juan Musso (Atalanta), Emiliano Martínez (Aston Villa).

Defenders: Gonzalo Montiel (Sevilla), Nahuel Molina



(Atletico Madrid), Cristian Romero (Tottenham), Germán Pezzella (River Plate), Leonardo Balerdi (Olympique Marseille), Nicolás Otamendi (Benfica), Lisandro Martínez (Manchester United), Nicolás Tagliafico (Olympique Lyon), Valentín Barco (Brighton).

Midfielders: Leandro Paredes (Roma), Guido Rodríguez (West Ham), Alexis Mac Allister (Liverpool), Enzo Fernández

(Chelsea), Giovanni Lo Celso (Tottenham), Ezequiel Fernández (Al Qadisiya), Rodrigo de Paul (Atletico Madrid), Nico González (Fiorentina).

Forwards: Alejandro Garnacho (Manchester United), Matías Soulé (Roma), Giuliano Simeone, Julián Álvarez both (Atletico Madrid), Valentín Carboni (Olympique Marseille), Lautaro Martínez (Inter Milan) and Valentín Castellanos (Lazio).

Top-ranked Jannik and women's number 2 Aryna win titles in Cincinnati

AP ■ MASON (US)

Top-ranked Jannik Sinner and women's No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka earned straight-set victories in the finals of the Cincinnati Open, the first titles at the tournament for both players. Sabalenka on Monday defeated Jessica Pegula 6-3 7-5 for her first title since the Australian Open in January. Sinner, who turned 23 on Friday, beat American Frances Tiafoe 7-6(4) 6-2 to become the youngest Cincinnati champion since 21-year-old Andy Murray won in 2008. "I'm very happy to be in the position where I am," Sinner said. "I'm just trying to keep going this way mentally. It's important to recover to be ready for New York. That's the most important thing." The US Open begins on August 26 in New York. Sinner and Tiafoe were both playing in their first Cincinnati finals with their previous best results being the third round. Tiafoe forced a tiebreak in the first set, but three straight



errors led to a 7-6 defeat. Sinner had a 5-1 lead in the second before Tiafoe saved three match points to make it 5-2 before Sinner was able to serve out for the win. Tiafoe had a less conventional path to the final. He won the first set in the quarterfinals on Saturday before Hubert Hurkacz retired with a calf injury then saved two match points to defeat Holger Rune in three sets in the semis. An American man hasn't won the title in Cincinnati since Andy Roddick in 2006. Sabalenka moved up a spot to No. 2 in the rankings before the match, then didn't lose a set en

route to her 15th WTA title. She had never gotten past the semifinals at Cincinnati, losing three times in that round. The 26-year-old Sabalenka can now be considered a favorite at the US Open. The Belarusian missed Wimbledon with a shoulder injury, then returned to the tour at Washington two weeks ago. "I would say that I'm really playing great tennis," Sabalenka said. "Probably not the best tennis I can play but I'm definitely getting there. Hopefully at the US Open I can reach even higher levels." Against Pegula, Sabalenka took 17 minutes to build a 4-1 lead in the first set. Pegula, who double-faulted five times, broke serve for the first time to tie the second set at 5-all, but Sabalenka won the next two games to finish off the 1-hour, 14-minute match. "She was playing at a high level and never really came down," Pegula said. "When she's serving really well, it's tough, especially on these fast courts." The sixth-ranked Pegula had a challenging road to the final. After defending her title at Toronto, the American played two matches on Friday because of weather-related postponements and had three matches go three sets. Her time on the court exceeded Sabalenka's by more than two hours entering the final. "I'm proving to myself that I can play a lot of matches and overcome a lot of challenges," Pegula said. "I'm looking forward to not doing anything for a few days." Sabalenka joined top-ranked Iga Swiatek as the only players with 10 or more WTA titles since 2020.

Vardy scores on PL return as Leicester holds Tottenham to 1-1 draw

PTI ■ LEICESTER (ENGLAND)

Jamie Vardy still knows how to score in the Premier League. The 37-year-old striker rescued a point for Leicester in its return to the Premier League on Monday by heading home a second-half equaliser in a 1-1 draw against Tottenham, which had largely dominated the first half. Tottenham had plenty of opportunities to build a bigger lead but new signing Dominic Solanke was among those guilty of missing chances. Instead it was Spanish defender Pedro Porro who made

Tottenham's early superiority count after 29 minutes when he got between two Leicester defenders to head James Maddison's cross into the net at the far post. But Vardy, who was key to Leicester's stunning Premier League title win in 2016 and has remained with the club since then, was left unmarked to head home an equaliser. A corner count of 9-0 gave some indication of Spurs' dominance in the first half but Vardy's goal changed the game completely. Steve Cooper's team suddenly looked a lot livelier and both



teams had chances to win in a busy last half hour. "Tottenham are a really good team but we gave them too much respect, and we started getting after them and it changed the momentum," Vardy told Sky Sports. Vardy spurned a good chance in the 70th minute when he was able to run clear on goal but his low shot was saved by Guglielmo Vicario. At the other end, Richarlison sent a header wide deep into injury time with the last chance of the match. "It is a disappointing night for us," Tottenham manager Ange

Postecoglou said. "We need to be more ruthless in front of goal. We were that dominant, we should have been well away from the opposition. To be that wasteful tonight when we had so much of the ball and territory, it is disappointing." The game was halted for eight minutes late in the second half after Tottenham midfielder Rodrigo Bentancur sustained a head injury. The Uruguayan received oxygen and taken off on a stretcher, but Postecoglou said he was "conscious" and communicating.

'My character in *Maruthi Nagar Subramanyam* is meant to tickle your funny bones'

PNS| HYDERABAD

In the upcoming comedy-drama *Maruthi Nagar Subramanyam*, set to release on August 23, Ramya Pasupuleti is all set to light up the screen with her performance, promising audiences plenty of laughs. The film, directed by Lakshman Karya and

produced by Bujji Rayudu Pentyla and Mohan Karya under the banners of PBR Cinemas and Lokamaatre Cinematics, features seasoned actors Rao Ramesh and Indrajith in the lead roles, with Ramya and Ankit Koyya taking on pivotal roles. This project also marks the debut presentation by Tabitha Sukumar, with Mythri Movie Makers overseeing its release in Telugu.

Ramya Pasupuleti shares insights into her journey, her role in the film and her experiences working alongside both veterans and her peers. Her journey in front of the camera began at an early age—just four years old. "I had also worked as a child artist in Anushka's *Panchakshari* and later, I had a small role in Mahesh Babu's *Spyder*." However, life had other plans as she took a hiatus to complete her bachelor's degree before the acting bug bit her once more. "Instagram played a huge role in my comeback. It helped me reach a wider audience and ultimately led me back to acting."

The opportunity to star in *Maruthi Nagar Subramanyam* came her way thanks to her vibrant online presence. Discovered by director Lakshman Karya on Instagram, she quickly caught the attention of the team, leading to an audition that would set the course for her role in the film. From that moment on, her journey with the film has been nothing short of remarkable.

What intrigued her most about the

project was the challenge of making people laugh. Comedy, as she notes, is no easy feat, as she acknowledges the difficulty of the genre. However, the role offered her the perfect opportunity to embrace this challenge. Her character is designed to tickle everyone's funny bone, and she is confident that audiences will appreciate the humour they've crafted. "My character is meant to tickle everyone's funny bone and I'm confident that audiences will enjoy what we've created," she adds.

In *Maruthi Nagar Subramanyam*, the actress, also known for her role in *Gaami*, takes on the character of an 18-year-old, whom she describes as dynamic and multi-faceted. "If you watch the *Madam Sir Madam* song, you'll see me in various avatars," she reveals, hinting at the character's complexity. The love story between the lead pair is both cute and cringy, adding an extra layer of fun to the film. She finds the character's versatility particularly engaging, as it allows her to explore different facets of her acting abilities.

Her admiration for her co-star, Ankit Koyya, shines through as she speaks about their on-screen partnership. She praises Ankit not only for his acting skills but also for his helpful nature on set. "Ankit is not just an amazing actor but also a genuinely helpful person," she says. Their chemistry on set was palpable, and she believes their scenes together turned out exceptionally

well, contributing to the film's overall appeal. The catchy tune of *Madam Sir Madam* has struck a chord with audiences, something she had an inkling would happen from the start. "I had a feeling it would resonate," she admits. When director Lakshman Karya first played the tune for her, she was immediately hooked. Learning that Sid Sriram would be singing it only solidified her confidence in the song's success.

Working alongside industry veterans like Rao Ramesh and Indrajith initially left her feeling a bit nervous. "I was quite nervous at first," she confesses, but any apprehensions quickly dissipated thanks to the warm and welcoming nature of her co-stars. While she didn't share much screen time with Indrajith, she describes her as being as lovely in person as she is on screen. "Indrajith garu—she's as lovely in person as she is on screen," she says. As for Rao Ramesh, she's in awe of his talent, remarking, "And Rao Ramesh garu—what a tremendous actor he is. A treat to work with! His presence alone made the experience so enriching."

As the release date for *Maruthi Nagar Subramanyam* approaches, the *Husharu* fame is eager for audiences to meet her character and enjoy the film's blend of humor and heart. With a promising career ahead, this young actress is one to watch.

All excited for her upcoming release, *Maruthi Nagar Subramanyam*, actress Ramya Pasupuleti speaks to the media sharing her inclination towards acting and also some insights about her latest yet-to-be released film



Dulquer Salmaan's *Lucky Baskhar* to brighten up Diwali 2024!

Get ready to celebrate Diwali with a cinematic extravaganza as *Lucky Baskhar* gears up for its grand release on October 31st, 2024. The film, featuring the incredibly versatile Dulquer Salmaan in the lead role, is poised to be the highlight of the festive season, offering a rich and immersive experience for movie enthusiasts.

Malayalam superstar Dulquer Salmaan is now concentrating more on Telugu cinema. After *Mahanati* and *Sita Ramam*, he is doing a Telugu film titled *Lucky Baskhar*. Venky Atluri is the director while Sithara Entertainments is producing this film. This film is supposed to be released on September 7, but now the makers announced the release date is postponed!

They announced that the film is hitting on October 31, to cash in on the Diwali holidays. The makers said that they need more time for the post-production work for this film, thus they postponed its release. Apart from Telugu, the film is also releasing in other languages like Malayalam and Tamil. *Lucky Baskhar* is a period drama that happened in the late 80s and early 90s in Mumbai. Production designer Banglan worked on the sets and recreated Mumbai at that time, says the makers.

Meenakshi Chaudhary is the female lead, while National Award-winning composer GV Prakash Kumar provided the music. A few songs from the film were released a few days back.



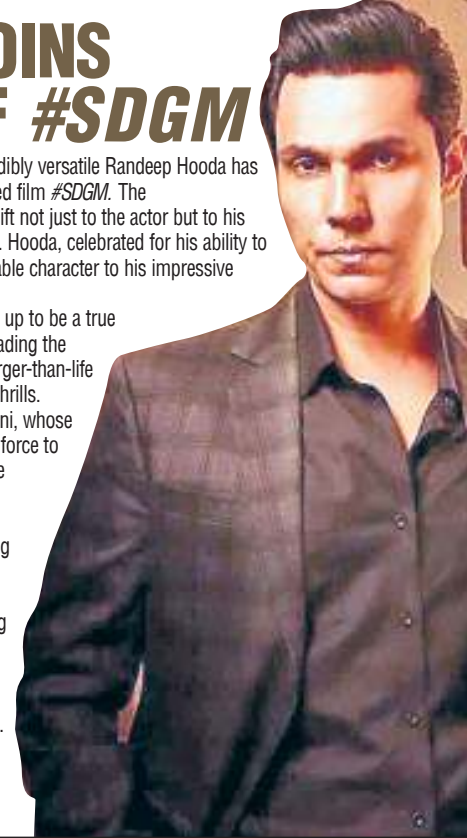
RANDEEP HOODA JOINS STELLAR CAST OF #SDGM

In a cinematic twist worthy of a blockbuster reveal, the incredibly versatile Randeep Hooda has been officially welcomed into the fold of the much-anticipated film *#SDGM*. The announcement, perfectly timed with Hooda's birthday, is a gift not just to the actor but to his legion of fans who eagerly await his every move on screen. Hooda, celebrated for his ability to dive deep into diverse roles, is set to add another memorable character to his impressive repertoire with this new venture.

But the excitement doesn't stop there. *#SDGM* is shaping up to be a true feast for the senses, with action superstar Sunny Deol leading the charge. Known for his powerhouse performances and larger-than-life persona, Deol's presence guarantees a film packed with thrills. Steering this cinematic ship is director Gopichand Malineni, whose knack for crafting high-octane narratives has made him a force to be reckoned with in the industry. And with the powerhouse production duo of Mythri Movie Makers and People Media Factory backing the project, expectations are sky-high.

The film's ensemble cast is nothing short of spectacular. Joining Hooda are the ever-talented Regina Cassandra and the dynamic Saiyami Kher, both of whom bring their unique flair to the screen. And let's not forget the musical maestro Thaman S, whose electrifying score is set to amplify the film's energy to a whole new level. Visually, *#SDGM* is in expert hands with Rishi Punjabi behind the camera, ensuring that every frame is a visual treat. Meanwhile, Kolla Avinash's art direction and Navin Nooli's sharp editing are set to weave the film's narrative with precision and style.

With Max Media also lending its expertise to the production, *#SDGM* is gearing up to be a cinematic tour de force. This star-studded, action-packed spectacle promises to deliver the "mass feast" that audiences crave, with every element meticulously crafted to leave a lasting impact.



SANJAY SARA AND DASARATHI IGNITE VIDAA MUYARCHI

The anticipation for *Vidaa Muryarchi* is reaching fever pitch as the film gears up for its release and the latest reveal of actors Sanjay Sara and Dasarathi has fans buzzing with excitement. In their new looks, these talented actors are set to bring a powerful intensity to the screen, hinting at a dramatic showdown that promises to captivate audiences. Sanjay Sara and Dasarathi are showcased in striking new visuals that capture the essence of their characters. The intense expressions and dynamic poses suggest a narrative filled with high-stakes drama and emotional depth. As *Vidaa Muryarchi* unfolds, viewers can expect a riveting confrontation that underscores the film's central theme of perseverance and relentless effort.

Directed by the visionary Magizh Thirumeni and produced by the renowned Lyca Productions, *Vidaa Muryarchi* boasts an impressive lineup both in front of and behind the camera. With Ajith Kumar leading the cast and a musical score by Anirudh Ravichander, the film is shaping up to be a cinematic powerhouse. The ensemble cast also includes Regina Cassandra, Aravind Swamy and Nikhil Nair, each bringing their unique flair to the project. The film's high production values are evident in the meticulous attention to detail by the technical team, including cinematographer Supremesundar and art director Anand Kumar.

Vidaa Muryarchi is set to explore themes of struggle and triumph, encapsulated in the powerful tagline, "Efforts Never Fail". As the film's release date approaches, the buzz around it is palpable, with major promotional support from Sony Music South, Sun TV and Netflix India South.

Allu Arjun *Pushpa 2* shooting is going on silently

From the last few months onwards actor Allu Arjun and his film *Pushpa 2* is in the news for different reasons. The film was supposed to be released on August 15, but postponed to December 6. The shooting of this film was also supposed to continue in June, but was stopped due to some unknown reasons.

The star actor was also a target of trolls during the election campaign to his YSRCP friend at Nandyal Assembly Constituency. According to a source, the Mega Family kept him at a distance after he campaigned for the YSRCP candidate and has still been in a distance with the Mega Family.

Going by the whispers and sources, he is quietly filming his film *Pushpa 2*. Director Sukumar is canning some important scenes on lead actor Allu Arjun and the shooting is going on at RFC in Hyderabad, added the source. This is a sequel to the earlier one and Rashmika Mandanna is the female lead, while Malayalam star Fahadh Faasil is playing the negative role.

The interesting point about this shooting is that Allu Arjun trimmed his beard a few days back as he is getting angry that the film shoot is not happening properly. Still the beard is not as they expected, the actor now has to do some make-up for the beard which is annoying him and the unit, added the source.

"In this film he appears with a thick beard, but he trimmed it a few days back, so now the team is doing

some make-up for him, which the actor and the director is not happy," shared the source. But the shooting is going on with a make-up beard as they want to complete it as soon as possible.

After this they have to shoot a major part of shooting with Malayalam star Fahadh Faasil, added the source. They are planning it in October, so there is some rumour that the film may not release even on December 10, added the source.



Narne Nithin enters into Dussehra race with *Sri Sri Sri Rajavaru*

Narne Nithin is speeding ahead with hit youthful entertainer films like *Mad* and *Ayy*. Entering the film industry as the brother-in-law of NTR, Narne Nithin is now looking for a hat trick with his streak of hits. Directed by national award-winning director Satish Vegesna, known for *Shatamanam Bhavati*, he is starring in the film *Sri Sri Sri Rajavaru*. The film features Sampada as the female lead and is produced by Chintapalli Rama Rao under the Sri Vedakshara Movies banner. This action entertainer, packed with all commercial elements, is set to release as a Dussehra gift to the audience!

Producer Chintapalli Rama Rao shared that their hero, Narne Nithin, has recently been delivering feel-good, youthful entertainer movies with consistent success. However, their movie will be different, being a full-fledged commercial film with a large star cast, directed by Satish Vegesna, who selected this story with NTR's approval. The director has ensured that the film meets all expectations, without any compromises. They strongly believe that this Dussehra, Narne Nithin will achieve a hat trick hit.

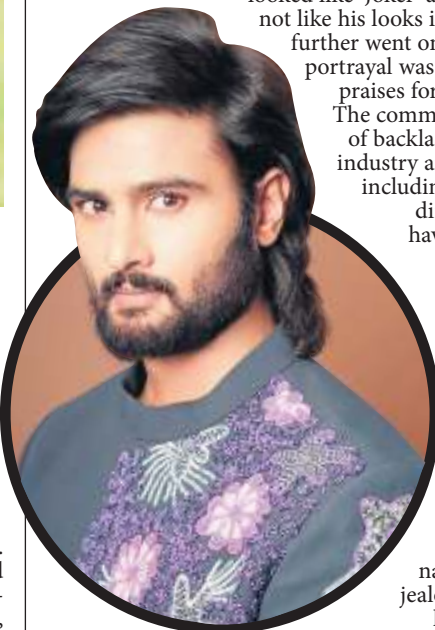
Sudheer Babu slams Arshad Warsi for his comments on Prabhas!

Actor Arshad Warsi had not long ago commented about Prabhas role in *Kalki 2898AD*. The Prabhas-starrer film had released on June 26 and according to the reports, the film has grossed more than Rs 1000 crore.

During an interview, the *Jolly LLB* fame felt that Prabhas looked like 'Joker' and stated that he did not like his looks in the film. While, he further went on to say that Prabhas' portrayal was the worst, he was all praises for Amitabh Bachchan. The comment has sparked a lot of backlash in the Telugu film industry and several celebrities including Sudheer Babu and director Ajay Bhupathi have come forward and spoken up about the comment.

Filmmaker Ajay Bhupathi has opened up saying, "Prabhas is the man who has given everything & will do anything to take Indian Cinema to the world audience, a pride of our nation. We can see the jealousy on that film, on him in your eyes just because you've faded out & no one gives an eye to you. There's a limit & a way to express our opinion. It seems like you're the joker that you've said about him."

Meanwhile, actor Sudheer Babu calls out Arshad Warsi, saying, "It's okay to criticise constructively but it's never okay to bad-mouth. Never expected the absence of professionalism from Arshad Warsi. Prabhas's stature is too big for comments coming from small minds," says Sudheer Babu on his social media.



Re-release of films in Tollywood is achieving bigger success than regular films. The beginning was marked by Mahesh Babu's *Pokiri* two years ago, followed by star films like Pawan Kalyan's *Jalsa* and *Gabbar Singh*. Ram Charan's *Orange*, Jr NTR's *Simhadri* and Allu Arjun's *Desamuduru* were released again at a later date.

Going on with the trend, celebrating Chiranjeevi's birthday, his blockbuster film *Indra* will be re-releasing on August 22! The film was an industry hit when it was released in the year 2002. Now, after 22 years, Chiranjeevi and the makers of

the film are confident that the film is going to be a super success second time. "It is one of the best commercial films in my career, with everyone worked hard towards the success of the film," says Chiranjeevi about the re-release. He added that he always remembers this film as one of the best in his career. "Whenever I heard the name Indrasena Reddy, I get goosebumps. The main success for this film is its story and director B Gopal handled it well," says Chiranjeevi about the re-release. His another blockbuster film *s* is also re-releasing on his birthday.

CHIRU'S B'DAY TREAT: RE-RELEASES BECOMING A HUGE HIT

