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Mahesh to lend his voice for *'Mufasa'* in *The Lion* KING TELU

the pioneer The Government got a report that 41,78,892 farmers took loans from bankers which amounts to Rs 31,000 crore. Small and marginal farmers majorly have loans under Rs 2 lakh; so, we decided to clear off those loans first. We are working closely with banks and local authorities to ensure that every farmer who is eligible receives the benefit of the loan waiver.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

- Tummala Nageshwar Rao, Agriculture Minister, Telangana

Viral infections surge among ...

A significant rise in viral infections among children has alarmed pediatricians in the city, with experts attributing the surge to climate change. The most prevalent conditions include exanthema and hand, foot, and mouth disease (HMF), both characterised by painful symptoms and a high rate of transmission. Speaking to *The Pioneer*, Dr S Chandrasekhar, a pediatrician at Government Victoria General Hospital, also known as Gosha Hospital, revealed that this year has seen an unprecedented surge in exanthema cases..

Kerala issues mpox alert amid...

The Kerala Health Department on Wednesday sounded an alert in the state following reports of mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) outbreaks in several countries. The state has gone into high vigilance mode, with surveillance teams in place at all airports to screen passengers arriving from affected nations, as the World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared mpox a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) in view of its prevalence and spread across many parts of Africa. According to...



72% of employers plan to hire...

With gradual improvement in the job market, a report on Wednesday has revealed that 72 per cent of employers interviewed intend to hire freshers in the second half (July-December) of this vear The 72 ner cent hi intent represents a 4 per cent increase from the first half of this year and a 7 per cent rise compared to the second half of 2023, suggesting a gradually improving employment landscape for fresh talent, TeamLease EdTech's 'Career Outlook Report HY2' (July-December... -PAGE: 8

Border Gavaskar Trophy on par...

Australia pace ace Mitchell Starc believes that with the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India becoming a five-Test affair for the first time in over three decades, it would be "right on par" with the esteemed Ashes series for his team. The marquee series between India and Australia set to begin in November, was extended by a match this year for the first time since the 1991-92 season. "Being five matches now it's probably right on par with an Ashes series," Starc told Wide World of Sports...

Explosion claims 17 lives in Atchutapuram SEZ

■ Death toll may rise

Outcry over safety lapses

PNS ATCHUTAPURAM

At least 17 workers died and over 40 others sustained severe injuries after an explosion and subsequent fire in a reactor at the Escientia pharmaceutical unit in Atchutapuram Special Economic Zone (SEZ) on Wednesday. Authorities and medical experts anticipate that the death toll may rise as rescue operations

The explosion, which happened around 2 PM, sent thick black smoke into the sky, obstructing rescue efforts. Hundreds of workers were present at the site when the blast occurred, resulting in numerous injuries, with several individuals in critical condition.

'The situation is dire," stated an official from the Atchutapuram Police Station. "The thick smoke is



access and control the blaze." The scale of the disaster overwhelmed emergency services, and it took

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

making it difficult for our teams to several hours for dozens of fire Krishnan confirmed that the exploengines to bring the flames under nakapalli District Collector Vijaya present.

sion happened during the afternoon shift when hundreds of workers were

LEADERS RALLY FOR IMMEDIATE RELIEF All necessary measures must be taken to save lives: CM

A catastrophic explosion at a chemoccurred on Wednesday, has resultical factory in the Atchutapuram Special Économic Zone has plunged the public into mourning.

The devastating incident, which

ed in numerous fatalities and left many others injured. The scale of empathetic responses from the ed families.

State's top leaders.

Governor S. Abdul Nazeer has mourned the tragedy, offering his the disaster has elicited swift and heartfelt condolences to the affect-

Visible change in policing needed: CM

Function in such a way that punishment is certain if crime is committed

The police setup \(\) should function in such a way punishment is certain if any crime is committed.

◆ The State should have a perfect law and order situation and peace should prevail. The police officials should be firm in taking action against those who resort to violence in the guise of politics.

◆ The criminals who resort to any kind of atrocities against women should feel that if they touch a woman that will be the last day in their

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, on Wednesday, made it clear that there should be a visible change in policing in the State. "The police setup should function in such a way that punishment is certain if any crime is committed," he stated.

Chairing the review meeting of the Home Department, the CM said the police setup should send a strong message to the criminals to think twice before committing a crime. "The State should have a perfect law and order situation and peace should prevail. The police officials should be firm in taking

action against those who resort to violence in the guise of politics," he

The police officials informed Chandrababu that compared to 2014-19, the crime rate has gone up by 46 per cent during 2019-23 while the atrocities against women, too, have increased by 35.91 per cent. The cyber crime rate has gone up so steeply during 2019-23 that the crime rate has increased by 134.43 per cent, the officials said, adding that drug abuse rate has increased by 107.89 per cent while crimes against children have gone up by 151.88 per cent.



Soaring sand prices hit construction sector in Port City

A racket sells sand purchased from government depots at Rs. 1,067 per tonne at inflated prices of up to Rs. 2,000 per tonne

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

The city's construction sector is facing a severe crisis due to the interference of a sand-selling racket. The Aganampudi Depot has emerged as a hotspot for this illegal activity, where sand purchased from government depots at Rs. 1,067 per tonne is being resold at inflated prices of up to Rs. 2,000 per tonne. The steep price hike has sparked concerns among builders and residents, highlighting a growing disparity between supply and demand.

A senior official from the Department of Mines explained,

"The State government initially introduced a free sand policy to ease the financial burden on builders and homeowners. However, due to the current scarciof sand resources in Visakhapatnam, a fee covering only transportation and sanitation has become necessary for sand sourced from Rajahmundry and Srikakulam.'

The crisis at the Aganampudi depot has been exacerbated by the depletion of sand reserves at the Bheemili depot.

"There's approximately 10,000 tonnes of sand left at Bheemili, but it's been contaminated by a nearby dumping yard," explained a local contractor. This contamination has led to a surge in demand at Aganampudi, where operators of tractors, lorries, and tippers are buying sand at the official rate and hoarding it for later resale at higher prices.



Two permanent judges for AP HC

PNS VIJAYAWADA

As per the recommendation made by the Supreme Court (SC) Collegium, the Centre, on Wednesday, notified the appointment of two additional judges of the Andhra Pradesh High Court as permanent

"In exercise of the power conferred by clause (1) of Article 217 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Justice Venkata Jyothirmai Pratapa and Justice Venuthurumalli Gopala Krishna Rao, Additional Judges of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh, to be Judges of that High Court with effect from the date they assume charge of their respec-tive offices," said a notification issued by the Union Ministry of Law and Justice.

Last week, the SC Collegium, headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, recommended the appointment of two additional judges of the Andhra Pradesh High Court as permanent judges.

Continued on Page 2

YSRCP neglected VSP: Kollu

Says critical issues overlooked during previous regime

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Minister for Mines, Geology, and Excise, Kollu Ravindra, has sharply criticised the previous YSRCP government for its alleged neglect of the During a visit to the plant on Wednesday, the Minister expressed serious concerns over the plant's diminished operational capacity, attributing it to minor but critical issues that were overlooked during YSRCP's tenure.

"The YSRCP government has failed to renew even some of the crucial mines that were supposed to be renewed under its tenure," Ravindra stated. He highlighted the administration's lapses that have significantly contributed to the plant's current struggles.

However, the Minister assured that Chief Minister N Chandrababu the plant's future. Naidu is fully committed to protect-

ing VSP and is actively engaging with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy to find viable solutions and secure

Minister Ravindra emphasised

the importance of VSP to the State, saying, "The Visakhapatnam Steel Plant is the pride of Andhra Pradesh.

It came into existence through immense sacrifice, and it is our duty to protect it at all costs."

Brookfield to invest Rs 50,000 cr in AP



Company proposes to invest the amount in 3-5 years, focusing on wind and solar formats

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Investors are keen to invest in the renewable energy sector in Andhra Pradesh. Brookfield, a global owner and operator of real assets, has proposed to invest over Rs 50,000 crore in the State in the next three to five years in renewable energy, focusing on wind and solar formats.

A delegation from the Canadian company and its Indian partners met Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Energy Minister G Ravi Kumar ir Amaravati and proposed to build the renewable energy projects.

"Evren, Brookfield and Axis Energy promoted a clean energy platform and committed to invest in AP, during the meeting on Tuesday with the CM and the



Energy Minister," said a release from the Energy Minister's office. In a post on micro-blogging site X, the CM noted that the Canadian company, Brookfield, which manages global assets worth \$1 trillion expressed keen interest in the southern State's renewable

Continued on Page 2

65 lakh students did not clear class 10, 12 in 2023: MoE

PNS NEW DELHI

More than 65 lakh students did not clear class 10 and 12 boards last year with the failure rate being higher in state boards than national boards, according to Ministry of Education (MoE) sources.

An analysis of class 10 and 12 exam results of 59 school boards, including 56 state boards and three national boards, revealed that more girls appeared in class 12 exams from government-managed schools but it is opposite in private schools and government-aided

However, across school management girls are outperforming boys by a big margin. The pass percentage is also in favour of the girls by

more than six percentage points. "Around 33.5 lakh students of class 10 did not reach next grade. While 5.5 lakh candidates did not appear, 28 lakh failed. This is one of the cause for low retention rate and Gross Enrolment Ration (GER) at higher secondary level," a source said.

Similarly, around 32.4 lakh class 12 students did not complete the grade. While 5.2 lakh did not appear, 27.2 lakh failed.

In class 10, the student failure rate in national boards stood at six per cent while that of state boards was much higher at 16 per cent.

CHANDRAYAAN-3 DATA SUGGESTS

Moon's surface once an ocean of magma

The rover was deployed by the Vikram lander, which

on August 23, 2023. Chandrayaan-3, consisting of

the lander and rover, was launched by the Indian

PNS NEW DELHI

Data from ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 mission supports the theory that the Moon was once covered in an ocean of magma, or a 'magma ocean', an analysis, published in the journal Nature, has suggested. The analysis pertained to measurements of the lunar soil, recorded by the Pragyan rover and taken at multiple points along a 100-metre

track on the surface. The rover was deployed by the Vikram lander, which made a soft landing near the south pole of the Moon on August 23, 2023. Chandrayaan-3, consisting of the lander and rover, was launched by the Indian Space Research

Organisation (ISRO), Bengaluru. The study's authors, including those from the Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, said that previous mis-

Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Bengaluru. sions, such as NASA's Apollo and the Soviet Union's Luna, have mainly relied on samples of soil taken from equitorial and mid-latitude regions of

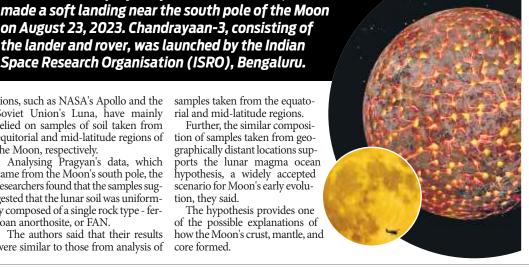
the Moon, respectively. Analysing Pragyan's data, which came from the Moon's south pole, the researchers found that the samples suggested that the lunar soil was uniformcomposed of a single rock type - fer-

roan anorthosite, or FAN. The authors said that their results were similar to those from analysis of

samples taken from the equatorial and mid-latitude regions.

Further, the similar composition of samples taken from geographically distant locations supports the lunar magma ocean hypothesis, a widely accepted scenario for Moon's early evolution, they said.

The hypothesis provides one of the possible explanations of how the Moon's crust, mantle, and core formed.



BLAST IN PHARMA COMPANY

Political leaders mourn and call for action

The explosion at Essentia Pharma Company in the Atchutapuram Special Atchutapuram Special Economic Zone on Wednesday has elicited a wave of condolences and calls for action from political leaders across the spectrum. The tragedy, which resulted in numerous fatalities and injuries, has deeply affected the local community and prompted immediate responses from State offi-

Minister of State for Education and IT, Nara Lokesh, conveyed his profound shock and concern following the incident. "The Chief Minister has directed us to mobilise all available resources to support those injured and undergoing treat-ment in hospitals," Lokesh said. "The government will extend full support to the families of the deceased."

Industries, Commerce, and Food Processing Minister TG most concern is their treat-



"The safety and well-being of our citizens are our top priorities," Bharat stated. "We are closely monitoring the situation and coordinating with local authorities to ensure peace and security in the affected area. Our foremost concern is their treatment and recovery."

Bharat also expressed his distress. "The safety and wellbeing of our citizens are our top priorities," Bharat stated. We are closely monitoring the situation and coordinating with local authorities to ensure peace and security in the affected area. Our fore-

ment and recovery.'

Former chief minister and YSR Congress Party president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy extended his heartfelt condolences to the victims' families. Jagan emphasised the need for immediate medical care for the injured and called for stringent safety regulations in industrial settings.

"The well-being of the injured must be prioritised, and all necessary medical care should be provided without delay," he asserted. "It is imperative that the government implements and enforces strict safety standards to safeguard the lives and well-being of workers." Jagan is set to visit the explo-sion site on August 23, fol-lowing the Chief Minister's visit to avoid discrupting offivisit, to avoid disrupting official operations. His visit comes after consultations with local leaders. Jagan has urged the State government to provide Rs 1 crore in compensation to the families of the deceased, echoing the relief measures provided to victims of the LG Polymers

He also called for free, high-quality medical treatment for the injured and financial support until their full recovery. Additionally, he has demanded a high-level investigation into the explo-

2 permanent... Continued from Page 1

Minister and the Governor of the State of Andhra Pradesh have not been received, the Department of Justice has forwarded the above recommendation by invoking para 14 of the Memorandum of Procedure which provides that if the comments of the State Constitutional authorities are not received within the pre-scribed time-frame, it should be presumed by the Minister of Law and Justice that the Governor and the Chief Minister have nothing

projects and housing schemes, it will be a substantial support for the Amidst these discus-

sions, trade union leaders approached the Minister, urging him to intervene in clearing the plant's pending power bills and other overdue payments. Minister Ravindra

YSRCP

neglected...

Continued from Page 1

rently supporting the plant by facilitating the

supply of sand and other essential raw materials

from Vizianagaram dis-

Suggesting a strategic move to boost the plant's

operations, Ravindra

opined that if the State

government fully utilises the steel manufactured by

VSP for its infrastructure

He pointed out that the State government is cur-

assured them that their concerns will be taken seriously and reiterated his commitment to safeguarding the interests of VSP and its workforce.

The neglect of such a vital asset is unacceptable, and we will take every necessary step to ensure that VSP not only survives but thrives," he concluded. **'ADANI MEGA SCAM'**

Madhu Yaskhi demands JPC probe

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Madhu Yaskhi Goud, an official spokesperson for the All India Congress Committee (AICC) and a former Member of Parliament, has demanded the formation of a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) to investigate the "Adani Mega Scam." Speaking at the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) office in Vijayawada, Goud asserted that this investigation should go beyond the revelations made by the Hindenburg Research report, which raised concerns about the Adani Group's prac-

During his address, Goud alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with his close associate Gautam Adani, has taken significant measures to shield themselves from any consequences related to the scam. He criticized PM Modi for his reluctance to establish a JPC in this case, contrasting it with the Congress-led government's previous willingness to form such committees for similar matters. Goud also accused the Vice President of India and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla of obstructing the investigation in favour of Modi and Adani.

Goud further claimed that the alleged scam, involving Modi, Adani, and the SEBI



AICC Official Spokesperson and former MP from Telangana Madhu Yaskhi Goud addressed a press conference in Vijayawada on Wednesday. Photo: Ch.Vijaya Bhaskar

Chairperson, is damaging India's financial stability. He demanded the resignation of the SEBI Chairperson and urged protection for government organizations from further damage. Goud also declared that the Congress party would bring the matter before the public, stating that the people of India are suffering significant losses due to the

He accused PM Modi of compromising national security by allowing Adani to engage in money laundering and entering into overpriced agreements with foreign companies. Goud specifically mentioned a Rs. 530 crore scam in coal purchases and demanded that ŜEBI disclose details about it. He also criticized the NDA government for allegedly allotting all six major ports in the

country to the Adani Group, ignoring a report from NITI

Goud alleged that the Adani Group controls a significant portion of India's port transportation and cargo handling, leading to unchecked drug trafficking through these ports. He cited the Hindenburg report and criticized SEBI for failing to submit a report to the Supreme Court of India, despite being directed to do so within two months. The delay in the investigation, which has now extended to 18 months, was also highlighted as a seri-

The press conference was attended by other senior Congress leaders, including APCC's former working president Mastan Naraharasetti Narasimha Rao,

transport and that they would not tolerate any complaints that they were sold at a high-

er price. Moreover, he said that

the vehicles booked online for sand should be allocated clear

slots at particular times. Only

vehicles registered for sand should be allowed to enter the

sand reaches, CS clarified that

other vehicles should not be

ous concern.

Jagan congratulates Botsa

PNS VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has congratulated former minister Botsa Satyanarayana, who was unanimously elected MLC in the United Visakhapatnam Local Bodies Election. The meeting took place at the YSRCP camp office in Tadepalli, where Botsa Satyanarayana expressed his gratitude to YS Jagan Mohan Reddy before the swearing-in ceremony. Several leaders attended the

meeting, including MLC Kumbha Ravibabu, MLAs R Matsyalingam, Vishweshwar Visakhapatnam ZP Chairman Jalli Subhadra, former ministers Kurasala Kannababu, Gudivada Amarnath, Budi Mutyala Naidu, Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao, and Karumuri Nageswara Rao.

Also present were former MLAs Karanam Dharmasri, Adeep Raj, Bhagyalakshmi, Kadubandi Srinivasarao, Tippala Nagireddy, Shobha Haimavathi, and Vizianagaram Zilla Parishad Chairman Majji Srinivasa Rao, along with several cenior leaders Uttarandhra region.



BOTSA CHOSEN LEADER OF OPPOSITION

Botsa Satyanarayana has been chosen as the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council as per the direction of Jagan Moĥan Reddy. The announcement was made by MLC Lella Appireddy, who is in

charge of the party's central office. MLC Lella Appireddy extended his congratulations to Botsa Satyanarayana on his victory in the MLC elections, stating that the loyalty and dedication of the ZPTCs, MPTCs, and local body representatives to the party's leadership ensured his success.

Botsa takes oath as MLC



VIJAYAWADA: Former minister Botsa Satyanarayana, who was recently elected unanimously as a member of the Andhra Pradesh State Legislative Council, was administered the oath of office by Legislative Council

Chairman Koyye Moshen Raju at his chamber on Wednesdav. State Legislature Secretary General Prasanna Kumar Suryadevara and Joint

The Collegium of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, in May, unanimously forwarded its recommendation naming Justices Venkata Jyothirmai Pratapa and Venuthurumalli Gopala Krishna Rao. The SC Collegium said it has consulted other judges of the apex court who are conversant with the affairs of the AP High Court in terms of the Memorandum of Procedure. Bearing in mind all aspects, the SC Collegium resolved that these additional judges be appointed as permanent judges in the High Court against

about the Gram Sabhas and the existing vacancies. said in addition to creating "As the views of the Chief awareness among the people about employment guarantee, education, medicine, drinking water, and electricity in the villages, construction of infrastructure such as roads connecting from one village to another village and mandal,

Special officer to be appointed for each Gram Sabha Implementation of new sand policy from Sep 11

State Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad has directed the district collectors to appoint a special officer for each Gram Sabha to successfully conduct them, which will begin August 23. The CS held a video conferencing with the district collectors and SPs from the State secretariat on Wednesday, regarding implementation of the gram sabhas and free sand policy. On the occasion, CS spoke

and management of solid and liquid waste. He said that all the public representatives should participate in Gram Sabhas. Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Principal Secretary Shashi Bhushan Kumar said that the guidelines issued on Gram Sabhas must be followed.

Neerabh Kumar Prasad

announced that the new sand policy will be implemented across the State from September 11. Clear guidelines regarding the implementation of sand policy will be issued immediately and the district

collectors have been ordered to

follow them. He made it clear

that the collectors should con-

firm the prices related to the

allowed. The CS made it clear to the Collectors of 2 districts as well as other collectors that they noticed that the trucks were waiting for hours.

Mukesh Kumar Meena, Principal Secretary, Mines; Finance Secretary KVV Satyanarayana, and Mines Commissioner Praveen Kumar attended the meeting.

Brookfield...

Continued from Page 1

"Met with Managing

Director of Brookfield's

renewable power and tran-

sition group, Nawal Saini

today. A leading investor in

green initiatives, Brookfield

has expressed a keen inter-

est in investing in our state's

renewable energy sector,

particularly in solar, wind,

and rooftop energy," said

chairman, Evren, a joint

venture between Brookfield

and Axis Energy Group,

said that they look to invest

over Rs 50,000 crore in the

next three to five years in the

southern state. Evren aims to

install 1,380 MW of solar

power capacity and 1,640

MW of wind power capaci-

ty by 2026, Reddy said. It

already operates 210 MW of wind power assets in

Andhra Pradesh. Further,

he said that the joint venture envisages adding 828 MW of

K Ravi Kumar Reddy,

CM felicitates Kannayya Naidu

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu felicitated irrigation expert Kannayya Naidu at the State secretariat on Wednesday, presenting him with a shawl and a memento.

The 19th gate of the Tungabhadra Reservoir was recently washed away due to floods. After learning about the matter, the CM called Kannayya Naidu and asked him to address the problem. Naidu, who worked hard to defuse the situation, successfully installed a stop log gate with the cooperation of the AP and Karnataka officials at a time when the flood flow was fierce. With this, about 30 TMC of water was prevented from get-

ting wasted.
Chandrababu thanked



Kannayya Naidu on behalf of the farmers of the State. Water Resources Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu and others were present on the occa-

Visible change in policing needed:...

Continued from Page 1

Through a PowerPoint presentation, the officials explained to the CM that of the 143 drones that the police wing has, only 88 are functioning and many CC cameras are not working. Even the automated fingerprint identification system is not working and the funds for a long time, for the mainteneeded for the repair of these nance of the equipment along units has not been released by with the Rs 11 crore for erectthe previous government, they said. The Police Department is

TODAY

ALMANAC

Tithi: Tritiya:

Nakshatram:

Rahukalam

Varjyam:

Yamagandam:

Amritakalam:

Forecast: Cloudy

Temp: 33°° Humidity: 74% Sunrise: 5:53 AM

Sunset: 6:28 4M

Uttara Bhadrapada:

Chaturthi

Month & Paksham

Krishna Paksha

Aug 21 05:07 PM

Aug 22 01:46 PM

to Aug 22 01:46 PM

to Aug 23 10:39 AM

Aug 22 12:33 AM

to Aug 22 10:05 PM

to Aug 23 07:54 PM

1:52 PM to 3:26 PM

6:04 AM to 7:37 AM

09:00 AM to 10:27 AM

9:11 AM to 10:45 AM

05:47 PM to 07:13 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:54 AM to 12:43 PM

Updated: August 21, 2024 5:00 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Aug 22 10:05 PM

outdated vehicles and at least Rs 281 crore is needed for the purchase of new vehicles.

Later, the CM promised to take all possible steps to bring the police wing back on track. He also announced that Rs 10 crore is being released immediately, which has been pending

ing CC cameras.
The Chief Minister also gave

crore for modernising equipment in the department. Chandrababu is very particular about the police acting sternly in cases with regard to crimes against women. "The criminals who resort to any kind of atrocities against women should feel that if they touch a woman that will be the last day in their life," he said.

The officers also informed the Chief Minister that the previous government had not only

also facing difficulties with the his consent for releasing Rs 61 failed to release the State's share of the 25 per cent funds for Disaster Management, but also diverted the Central funds. Chandrababu Naidu directed the officials to submit necessary reports as soon as any natural calamity hits the State so that the Centre will immediately release the necessary funds.

Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha, Director General of Police Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao and other officials were pre-

Explosion claims 17...

Continued from Page 1

"Our priority is to ensure that all victims receive propduring this tragic time," Krishnan said. The severely injured have been transportto hospitals in Visakhapatnam Anakapalli.

Eyewitnesses described scenes of chaos and fear. "We saw people running in every direction. It was terrifying," one witness recounted. The locals are reeling from the shock, with fears escalating about the adequacy of safety measures in the SEZ.

Union leaders have condemned the incident, attributing it to severe lapses in safety protocols. "This tragedy is a direct consequence of the disregard for essential safety standards,"

declared a union spokesper-

The spokesperson also criticised the lack of regular er treatment and support safety audits and called for a occur next. We demand a comprehensive investigation comprehensive investigation into the factory's operational practices. "Despite numerous incidents at SEZs, the Inspector of Factories, the and the Fire Department have consistently failed to take corrective action."

Company representatives suggested that the timing of and support," she emphathe explosion, during the sised. She also said that the lunch break, might have reduced the number of people present on site. However, this explanation has done lit- assistance will be provided, tle to alleviate the demand for accountability. "The scale of this disaster was monu-

not be saved," another union spokesperson said. "The local community is now gripped by fear over what might and that those accountable face criminal charges.

Home Vangalapudi Anitha, accom-Pollution Control Board, panied by senior police officials, visited the scene to assess the situation. "We are working to ensure that all victims receive adequate care Chief Minister is personally overseeing the situation and has assured that all possible no matter the cost.

This incident marks the third reactor explosion in mental. Workers, caught off Atchutapuram SEZ this year, guard, fled in panic, but raising serious concerns tragically, some lives could about safety protocols.

Leaders rally for...

Continued from Page 1

"This is a deeply sorrowful event, and my thoughts are with the families who have lost their loved ones," Governor Nazeer said. "I hope for the speedy recovery of all those injured in this unfortunate incident."

Chief Minister N Chandra Babu Naidu, visibly shaken by the catastrophe, has pledged the government's full support in the wake of the disaster. "This is a devastating incident, and our hearts go out to the families affected," Naidu declared. He has emphasised the urgency of the response, asserting, "All necessary measures must be taken to save lives." Naidu's comments highlight the State's commitment to addressing the immediate needs of those affected and providing robust support in the aftermath. In a strategic response, the Chief Minister has directed the Health Secretary to urgently travel to the accident site to oversee relief operations. "The situation requires our immediate and focused attention," Naidu stated. He has also mandated that the District Collector ensure that every injured individual receives top-quality medical care. Air ambulances are on standby to facilitate the rapid evacuation of critically injured victims, a measure reflecting the high priority given to swift medical intervention. Naidu is scheduled to visit Atchutapuram on Thursday, where he will inspect the accident site and visit hospitals treating the victims. "Our focus is on full-scale relief and ensuring everyone's safety," Naidu asserted.

Soaring sand...

According to a city builder, "The process to buy sand should be transparent and by submitting proof of residence in Visakhapatnam, such as an Aadhaar card, and you're set." However, allegations have surfaced that lorry operators are exploiting the system by using Visakhapatnam Aadhaar numbers to purchase sand, which is then transported to areas such as Lankelapalem, Paravada,

Residents in neighbourhoods such as Madhurawada, Pendurthi, and Gajuwaka are feeling the impact of the price hike. "Small traders are buying sand at Rs 1,076 per tonne from Aganampudi and reselling it in the city for Rs 2,000. We're being forced to pay these exorbitant prices," lamented a resident from Gajuwaka. The scarcity of sand at ramps in Rajahmundry and Srikakulam, coupled with the need to import sand from Odisha, has further escalated prices.

Continued from Page 1

Atchutapuram, and Anakapalli.

solar power capacity and 204 MW of wind power capacity in 2027. It also plans to install 1,311 MW of solar power capacity and 3,300 MW of wind power capacity beyond 2027 with the ambition to

achieve 8,873 MW of joint

solar and wind capacities in

"These projects will most-

come up in the Rayalaseema region. We have to procure land for wind energy projects. We are very committed," Reddy said, adding that Kurnool and Anantapur could feature in the larger scheme of things. Further, Reddy pointed out that the company has already harvested four years worth of wind data to assess the viability and intensity of wind energy to generate renewable power in the State.

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Perni Nani lashes out at State govt for 'propaganda'

Govt spreading lies through social media, using paid agents

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Perni Venkatramaiah (Nani) has expressed outrage at the TDP Coalition government stating that they were abandoning their promises to the people and resorting to false news and malicious propaganda against YSRCP president and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan



Speaking to the media at the party central office here on Wednesday, the former minister stated that the government, unable to digest the good work done by the previous YSR Congress Party government, is spreading lies through social media, using paid agents to churn out fabricated posts.

Nani specifically condemned the claim circulating about the consumption of egg puffs worth

Rs 3,62,56,700 under YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's government. He challenged the government to prove the claim if it holds any truth, calling it nothing but a

He slammed Minister Nara Lokesh, reminding him of his pre-election promise to support tomato farmers. With farmers now forced to throw away their produce due to lack of market prices, he questioned whether

diversion from real issues.

Lokesh could even see the dire situation they are in, or if it was all just empty talk.

Addressing the scandal around medical seats, Nani pointed out that while TDP accused YS Jagan's government of selling seats. They are now outright privatising entire medical colleges. He asked whether Dalits, BCs, and minorities no longer need medical education under their rule.

Dalit organisations' Bharat Bandh passes off peacefully

The Bharat Bandh called by various Dalit organisations to protest against the Scheduled Caste (SC) classification, was observed peacefully in NTR and Krishna districts on Wednesday. As a precaution, the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) halted many bus services in these districts to prevent any untoward inci-

In Vijayawada, the operation of city buses was intermittent, with services from the Pandit Nehru Bus Station (PNBS) to several destina-

Repalle, Machilipatnam, Gudivada, and Avanigadda being suspended.

This caused significant inconvenience to commuters monitor the situation who relied on public transport. Protests by Dalit leaders were notably visible in Machilipatnam, where demonstrators effectively

stopped bus movements from

the town's bus stand. The activists expressed concerns that the proposed SC classification could harm the unity among Dalit communities. To maintain order, a heavy police presence was stationed around the bus stand. noon.

protest was organised by local unions, prompting District Superintendent of Police Gangadhara Rao to

Additional occurred in Mangalagiri, Guntur district, where Dalit leaders blocked roads, further disrupting bus services, particularly those transporting students to educational insti-

Meanwhile, the APSRTC officials restored the city bus services and long-distance bus services later in the after-

MP promises to develop MBP Stadium

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath alias Chinni has promised that he will work on developing the Makineni Basava Punnaiah (MBP) Municipal Corporation Stadium located at Ajith Singh Nagar, along with Vijayawada Central MLA Bonda Uma Maheswara Rao. The present condition of the stadium is not suitable for practice. Measures will be taken to level the ground, he

The MP visited the MBP Stadium along with MLA Bonda Uma Maheswara Rao on Wednesday. He spoke to the stadium officials and players regarding the condition of the stadium.

Speaking to the media later, he said that MLA Bonda and he were jointly striving for the development of the MBP Municipal



MP Kesineni Chinni, MLA Bonda Uma Maheswara Rao and others inspecting the MBP Stadium at Ajith Singh Nagar in Vijayawada on Wednesday

Corporation Stadium. Increasing the ground level is required as water is stagnating on the playground during

get more infrastructure facilities to help athletes, he

Vijayawada Central constituency Telugu Mahila president D Udaya Sri, 61st Division TDP president D Durga Rao, State organising secretary N Sambasiva Rao

Encouraging ZBNF cultivation in district: DC

PNS VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana has praised the farmers of Chevuturu in G Konduru mandal for serving as an inspiration to others through their practice of Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF). She highlighted that the products from ZBNF are beneficial for maintaining public health and contribute to a healthier environment.

Collector Srijana visited the ZBNF farm fields at Chevuturu of G Konduru mandal in NTR district on Wednesday. She observed the preparation of fertilisers without adding chemicals, called "Jeevamrutham". Also, the chemicals, farmers shared their experiences and spoke about the

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Srijana said that the State is known for Zero Budget

benefits from the ZBNF culti-



NTR District Collector Dr Srijana interacting with ZBNF farmers at Chevuturu on Wednesday

Natural Farming. They are sary steps to supply the ZBNF encouraging farmers to implement ZBNF on a large scale. The ZBNF-cultivated products will help increase the health of the people by using fertilisers or chemicals, she said. She lauded the farmers for getting better yields and good income for the past four consecutive years.

Further, she said her district administration is taking necesproducts to Anganwadis, schools and other government institutions. Also, she said kitchen gardens are encouraged at all anganwadis and government schools. For that, Jeevamrutham will be supplied through DRDA and ZBNF farmers, she added.

Later, Collector Srijana inspected the primary school the teachers regarding the midday meals. She asked the teachers to ensure 100 per cent enrollment in all government schools.

ZBNF Deputy Director DMF Vijaya Kumar, DRDA PD K Srinivasa Rao, G Konduru Special Officer G Mohan Babu, MPDO P Anuradha, Tahsildar Venkateswarlu and others were

Three killed as car collides with lorry

PNS ANANTAPUR

Three persons were killed when the car in which they were travelling collided with a lorry at Vanganuru village in Tadipatri mandal in the wee hours on Wednesday.

Police said that the deceased Pratap Reddy (25), Venkata Lakshmi (45) and Pramila (22) went to Gadag Guttapalli village to attend a function.

When they were going to Pratap Reddy and Pramila on



the spot while Venkata Lakshmi died while undergoing treatment in the GGH in Tadipatri.

The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the collided with a lorry killing the accident the lorry driver fled the scene

TDP govt operates in a sadistic manner: Srikanth Reddy Administration targeting employees who do not align with them

Former MLA Gadikota Srikanth Reddy has stated that the TDP coalition government, under the leadership of CM Chandrababu Naidu, operates in a sadistic manner, emphasising that the administration is cruelly targeting employees who do not align with them and derive pleasure from it.

party's central office here on Wednesday, the former MLA

pointed out a recent incident where an Information & Public Relations officer in Nellore was verbally abused by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu. He mentioned that CM Naidu has always maintained a hostile attitude towards government employees, often speaking ill of them in interviews. In ed that during the tenure of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, the gov-



ernment did everything possible to support government employees, even during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He further criticised Chandrababu Naidu for subjecting employees to extreme pressure since assuming office. He said that CM Naidu's govfocus on which were hallmarks of YSR's

leadership. He also stated that CM Naidu was falsely claiming credit for industrial developments such as Sri City, which, in reality, were initiated during

YSR's regime. Srikanth Reddy expressed concerns over Naidu's mistreatment of employees and officials, including high-rankalso stated that a certain com-

ly left out in the allocation of key posts. He criticised Naidu's use of derogatory terms against employees and condemned the practice of suspending staff without proper cause whenever issues arise. He also questioned the ongoing harassment of officials based on their regional backgrounds, urging Chandrababu Naidu to stop mistreating governdevelopment and welfare, IPS officers. The former MLA this oppressive style of gover-

munity has been intentional-

Expo of photojournalists' association lauded for insights

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

GVMC Commissioner P Sampath Kumar has lauded the Photojournalist Association's photography exhibition for its potential to generate excitement and act as bridge for societal well-being. The Commissioner visited the exhibition on Wednesday, organized at Visakha Museum to commemorate the 185th World Photography Day.

As he toured the exhibition, the Commissioner expressed his admiration for the work of the photojournalists, describing their photographs as "not only visually captivating but also deeply informative, socially impactful, and thought-provoking." He highlighted the emotional resonance of the images, which ranged from capturing the scenic beauty of the city to depicting significant events like Navy Day manoeuvres, vehicular accidents, emergency services, and the vibrant Dimsa dance.

'These photographers invest considerable time and effort into capturing these powerful moments," said Kumar. "Their creativity shines through in each photograph, making this exhibition an inspiring experience for all who visit. The photos serve as a mirror to society, reflecting the realities we face and the beauty that surrounds

Kumar also engaged with the photojournalists to understand the stories behind their images, including those showcasing the massive national flag display, the serene Vanajungi Valley, fishing boats at work, and the unique practice of performing yoga asanas in water. He emphasised that the exhibition offers valuable insights, particularly for students, helping them observe and learn from the diverse subjects portrayed.

In recognition of their achievements,

Commissioner honoured several Visakhapatnam photojournalists who recently won awards in a national photography competition organized by Andhra Pradesh Photojournalist Association. The awardees included PN Murthy, K Murali Krishna, KR Deepak, VP Raju, P Leelamohana Rao, MD Nawaz, N Kanaka, A Sarath Kumar, G Satyanarayana, and freelancer Baliwada Gopikrishna. He congratulated them on their success and encouraged the continuation of such initiatives.

The GVMC Commissioner was presented with a traditional shawl and an eco-friendly Ganesha statue by the Vizag photojournalists. GVMC Additional Commissioner Dr Y Srinivasa Rao, Museum Curator KV Ramana, Vizag Photojournalists Association president PN Murthy, secretary G Tirupathi Rao, treasurer TRaja, and other members were present.

Book written by Dr Thomas released

PNS VIJAYAWADA

GST Commissioner Anand Kumar launched the book Romans, written by Dr Thomas, founder of Dahinchu Agni ministry, at a programme held in Vijayawada on Wednesday. Addressing the gathering, Anand Kumar heaped praise on Dr Thomas for his services. The GST Commissioner

said that in the past, Dr Thomas penned 22 books for Telangana-Andhra Christian community. "Dr Thomas has been serving the society through his spiritual services as well as many community services programmes such as distribution of sewing machines to widows, driving school for the unemployed, free water supply by installing RO plants in villages, and



feeding the poor. Through the ministry, he has been extending financial assistance to differently abled and the

needy people." Dr Thomas said that he has been serving the people for the past 34 years and wishes to do so till his last breath. Local Pastors Anand Sunil, Joseph Alex and Daniel and others were present.

Give priority to road safety: VMC Commissioner

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Corporation Commissioner Dhyanachandra has asked the officials concerned to take the necessary road safety measures without any flaws to reduce road accidents in the city. He inspected the implementation of road accident preventive steps on steps Wednesday.

As part of daily visits to various areas in the city, Commissioner Dhyanachandra visited Visalandhra Road, AS Rama Rao Road, Singh Nagar, Excel Plant Road, Vambay Colony Road, Syamala Devi Road and Paipula Raod junction along with engineering department officials. He made a field inspection of a road



During the inspection of Syamala Devi Road, VMC Commissioner Dhyanachandra discussing talking to engineering officials on Wednesday

proposed by the engineering department. However, he made it clear that officials should not compromise the road safety.

Later, he proceeded to Old Rajiv Nagar and inspected the Community Hall. The

engineering officials have proposed to demolish the old one and construct the new building. He visited the Iconic Park and directed officials to submit a detailed report.

VMC EE Srinivas and oth-

Viral infections surge among children in Port City

Most prevalent conditions include exanthema and hand, foot, and mouth disease

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A significant rise in viral infections among children has alarmed pediatricians in the city, with experts attributing the surge to climate change. The most prevalent conditions include exanthema and hand, foot, and mouth disease (HMF), both characterised by painful symptoms and a high rate of transmission.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Dr S Chandrasekhar, a pediatrician at Government Victoria General Hospital, also

known as Gosha Hospital, revealed that this year has seen an unprecedented surge in exanthema cases. "The virus triggers red rashes and often causes mouth ulcers, making it challenging for children to eat and drink," he noted. "We suspect that the changing climate is a significant factor behind this outbreak." The situation has become especially critical during the monsoon season, with approximately 70 per cent of daily pediatric cases associated with viral infections. Dr. Chandrasekhar



stressed the highly contagious nature of these illnesses and

advised parents to keep symptomatic children isolated to help curb the spread.

HMF, another concerning viral infection, has seen a sharp increase in urban areas. The condition, marked by painful mouth ulcers and red blisters on the hands and feet, can be debilitating for young children.

The similarity between the rashes caused by exanthema and HMF to those of monkeypox has led to understandable anxiety among parents. However, Dr. Chandrasekhar

reassured the public that these are distinct viruses. "While the symptoms may

resemble monkeypox, it's essential to consult a doctor for accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment," he advised.

Medical professionals are urging heightened awareness and prompt medical attention for children exhibiting symptoms of viral infections. Given the overlap in symptoms with other diseases like dengue and chickenpox, early diagno-



'Bharat Bandh' partial, peaceful Somasila reservoir works in coastal districts of AP

PNS GUNTUR

The Bharat bandh call given by various Dalit organizations opposing the classification of Scheduled Castes, evoked mixed response in Guntur, Eluru, Konaseema, Krishna, Tirupati and other districts on Wednesday.

In Guntur, the activists took out rallies in Guntur and Tenali to enforce the bandh. However the response to the bandh was partial as most of the commercial establishments were open in many areas. The RTC buses were off the road for some time but they played as usual. However the activists led by their leaders blocked the roads at some places obstructing the RTC buses. The activists deboarded the passengers and detained the RTC buses on the roads at some places.

Addressing the gathering, the JAC leaders alleged that in a bid to divide the people of Scheduled Castes, the SCs were classified as APCD groups. It is aimed to divide the Mala and Madiga castes people in the state by implementing the classification, they alleged and warned of intensifying agita-tion, unless the classification of

Scheduled Castes repealed.
They accused Manda



In Guntur, the activists took out rallies in Guntur and Tenali to enforce the bandh. However the response to the bandh was partial as most of the commercial establishments were open in many areas. The RTC buses were off the road for some time but they played as usual. However the activists led by their leaders blocked the roads at some places obstructing the RTC buses. The activists deboarded the passengers and detained the RTC buses on the roads at some places.

Krishna Madiga of hatching a conspiracy to divide Mala and Madiga castes people on the behest of Chandrababu Naidu. Since independence, the population of Scheduled Castes has increased considerably and the reservations should be enhanced as per their popula-

tion radio, they demanded. In Tirupati, the bandh was partial and some Dalit leaders obstructed the RTC buses in the bus stand here. They staged a darna at the Ambedkar statue raising slogans opposing the classification of the SCs. They recalled that earlier, the Supreme Court dismissed the petition on the classification of

Scheduled Castes. The Dalit leaders stated that the Mala and Madiga community people have been living like brothers for the last seven decades but suddenly they are being divid-

Amalapuram in Konaseema district, the activists burnt the effigy of Narendra Modi in Mummidivaram. The RTC buses did not come out of depots for a few hours as activists staged darnas in front of the depots. The bandh was partial in Amalapuram, Rajolu, Narasapuram and Mandapeta

The activists enforced the bandh by forcing the shop

owners to down shutters. The banks also remained closed for some time and the education institutions declared a holiday today. YSRCP leaders including former MLA Rapaka Varaparasad and Gollapalli Surya Rao were among those who enforced the bandh.

In Nuzvid the bandh was peaceful but partial. The schools and college going students and office goers were seen going in auto rickshaws as the RTC buses were off the road in the morning hours.

However, an untoward incident took place during the bandh at Bandamcharla village in T Narasapuram as an activist

was stabbed by a hotel owner when bandh was being enforced. The victim suffered bleeding injuries and he was admitted to the GGH at Chintalapudi where his condition is said to be out of danger.

In Machilipatnam, the bandh was peaceful and partial. The commercial establishments in the busy areas remained closed and RTC buses were off the road for a few hours. The activists of various Dalit organizations staged darna at the bus depots obstructing the buses. DSP Abdul Subhan said that no untoward incident took place anywhere in the

will start soon: Anam

Minister for Endowment Anam Ramanarayana Reddy has said that the works of Somasila reservoir project will begin soon and will be completed at the earliest.

Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, the Minister said that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu inspected the Somasila project recently and he was explained about the reservoir works to be carried out by the engineers. The Chief directed the officials to carry out repairs to the apron and crest gates. He assured of releasing required funds for the purpose.
The Chief Minister laid spe-

cial focus on the safety of the Somasila project and discussed the matter with the engineers, he noted, alleging that the erstwhile YSRCP government had neglected the maintenance of major irrigation projects in the state. Since the Annamayy dam washed away in the floods, the heavy flood water gushed into the Somasila project causing damage to the apron of the project, he explained.

"Appeals have been made for the last three years to the government to carry out repairs to the Somasila reservoir and the apron of the project. But the



erstwhile YSRCP government did not regard the cautions of engineers. Now the Naidu led new government has approved to carry out required works," Ramanarayana Reddy acknowledged.

The Minister said that the farmers in the region expressed their concern cautioning that the Somasila project dam might be washed away as like the Annamayya project, unless repairs were carried out at the

Minister Ramnarayana Reddy justified the removal of the name of the Sangam barrage which was given by the previous government. Minister Water Resources Development Nimmala Ramanaidu had inspected the Somasila and Kandaleru reservoirs and the engineers briefed him about the projects' status, the Endowment Minister observed. "The Government has released Rs 5 crore to carry out repairs to the head regulator through which water is released to the Kandaleru project. The Somasila high level canal works have come to halt since the second phase of works were carried out before completing the works of the first phase," the Minister

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu directed the officials to complete the AS High Level canals works, Padamati Naidupalli and Ponguru reservoirs' works expeditiously to provide irrigation water to 20,000 acres, Anam Ramnarayana Reddy informed. MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy was also present.

Constable killed as lorry knocks down bike

PNS ■ GUNTUR

NAVEENA GHANATE

scheme for farmers.

■ HYDEŘABAD

naveena.ghanate@gmail.com

The ruling Congress government in Telangana and the opposition Bharat Rashtra

Samithi (BRS) are headed for a showdown over conflicting claims relating to the implementation of the loan waiver

During a press meet at the

Telangana Bhavan here on

Wednesday, BRS working pres-

ident KT Rama Rao launched a scathing attack on the

Congress government, accusing Chief Minister Revanth Reddy

of misleading the public and

farmers by making grand

promises relating to loan

waivers and not delivering

KTR pointed to significant

A constable was killed when the motorcycle which he was riding was knocked down by a lorry on the Kanakadurga Varadhi near here on Wednesday. Police said that the deceased constable was attached to the sixth battalion of AP special police, Mangalagiri. When he was going to Vijaywada on a motorcycle, a speeding lorry knocked down his bike killing him instantaneously. The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH. The lorry driver is absconding.

Midhun Reddy decries 'propaganda' in Madanapalle files burning case

PNS ■ GUNTUR

YSRCP MP P V Midhun Reddy criticized the TDP Coalition Government and a section of the media for spreading false propaganda and making baseless allegations against him, particularly concerning the Madanapalle files issue.

Speaking to the media at the party's central office at Tadepalli on Wednesday, the MP stated that despite requests for evidence, nobody has come forward with any substantial proof to support the claims of his involvement



in the fire incident at the Madanapalle Sub-Collector

Confirming that legal action has been initiated against those responsible for

the false propaganda, he noted that the campaign against him has only intensified, with more fabricated stories being spread. This malicious targeting, he said, is causing significant mental harassment.

The MP described the Margadarsi Scam as the largest in the country and assured that this issue would be brought to the forefront in Parliament for discussion. He also stated his intention to consult with key political figures, such as Undavalli Arun Kumar, to determine the appropriate course of action regarding this scam.

He further expressed concerns about the deteriorating law and order situation in the state, citing incidents in Punganur and Angallu where public violence was incited, leading to severe consequences, including an incident where a constable lost his eye.

In the Punganur constituency, homes are being demolished, and hundreds of false cases have been filed against individuals, he added. He affirmed that he and his supporters would continue to fight all these injustices legally and ensure that the truth

Dwaraka Tirumala temple hundi collections touch Rs 2.39 crore



PNS ELURU

The hundi collections have fetched a whopping of over Rs 2.39 crore to the famous hill shrine Venkateswra Swamy in Dwaraka Tirumala.

The Dwaraka Tirumala Venkateswara Swamy temple officials took up the hundi col-

sion wire which fell across the

road in Prakasam district last

Meanwhile, Minister for

temple received from the devotees through hundi Rs 2,39,96,220 cash and 145 grams of gold. Temple EO V Trinada Rao said that the temple received 48 numbers of 2000 notes. The temple also received foreign currency notes through the hundi.

One boy electrocuted, another injured seriously

In a shocking incident, a boy was electrocuted and another boy suffered serious injuries when they came into contact with live high tension electric wire which got snatched and fell across the road at Agadi street at Bellamandi area here on

Police said that Tanvir (11) and Aadam (10) were going on a bicycle on the road. A high tension wire got snapped and fell across the road.

The two boys did not notice

with the wire resulting in Tanir electrocuted and died instantaneously. Aadam suffered critical burn injuries and he was admitted to the RIMS hospital where he is battling for life. His condition is said to be very crit-

The bicycle burnt in the mishap. The family members of the deceased alleged that the electricity officials' indifference cast the life of their son. Though the high tension wire fell across the road the officials did not take steps to disconnect power



supply till the incident took

It may be mentioned here burned alive when they came

the death of a boy and critical injuries to another.

that in a similar incident, three

students were electrocuted and

The Minister expressed his anger over the indifference of the electricity officials. The Minister held an emergency review meeting with the officials concerned and inquired about

the incident. The officials told the Minister

responsible for snapping of the high tension wire. When the cable operator was trying to tie a cable wire, he pulled the elec-Energy Gottipati Ravi Kumar expressed shock and grief over tricity wire mistakenly and left without informing the electric-

ity officials. If the local electricity officials had got information, they would have disconnected the power supply and the mishop could have been averted, the officials apprised the minister. The Minister assured of extending all needed help to the bereaved

OFFSHOOT OF RIVAL CLAIMS OVER BENEFITS TO FARMERS

Showdown over loan waiver



discrepancies in the govern-ment's narrative, highlighting that the Chief Minister had declared the "completion of the loan waiver process", while ongoing protests by farmers mirrored a different story altogether. He criticized the reduccommitments," KTR stated. He condemned the government's tion in the originally promised Rs. 40,000 crore funds towards loan waiver to a mere Rs. 7,500 crore, due to which most farmwithout the promised relief.

decision to file non-bailable cases against protesting farmers in Adilabad district, labelers had been left high and dry ing it as an attempt to criminalhout the promised relief. ize the airing of genuine grievance grievances of the farming commuare not matching the ground nity. "The BRS will hold protests reality. Farmers are still protest- in every village and mandal ing because the promised relief until the government fulfils its has not materialized. This is a promises to the farmers. Before clear indication of the governthe protest, we will clean up the ment's failure to honour its Telangana thalli statue and

begin the protest," KTR declared, signaling a new phase of intensified agitation.

Infusing intercessory prayer in the political discourse, for-mer Minister Harish Rao announced that he and other ment. BRS leaders would visit the Yadadri temple to perform special prayers and seek divine intervention for the state's wellbeing and for expiation of the 'sins' of the Chief Minister. "Chief Minister Revanth Reddy

BRS to stage dharna today

Cong avers BRS' protest won't attract support of farmers

Dy CM Bhatti Vikramarka says BRS credited Rs 1 lakh loan waiver in four installments, while Congress implemented Rs2 lakh loan waiver in one go

Tummala concedes that all farmers did not get loan waiver as the government had prioritised small and marginal farmers

KTR accuses Congress of misleading farmers, considering that only a fraction (Rs 7,500 crore) of the promised Rs 40,000 crore has been released

promised to waive all farmers' loans by August 15, but has failed to do so. We will pray that his broken promises do not bring misfortune upon the people of Telangana," Harish Rao expounded. He mentioned that he would participate in a protest rally in Aleru to demand accountability from the govern-

State Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, while addressing the media, sought to clarify the current status of the loan waiver scheme. He acknowledged that there were delays in the implementa-

tion of the scheme, but assured that the government was committed to waiving loans up to Rs. 2 lakh for all eligible farmers. "We got a report that 41,78,892 farmers took loans from bankers which amounts to Rs 31,000 crore. However, small and marginal farmers have loans under Rs2 lakh; so, we decided to clear off the loans. We are working closely with banks and local authorities to ensure that every farmer who is eligible receives the benefit of the loan waiver. Any mistakes or delays will be rectified immediately," Tummala said. He



urged farmers to contact their local agriculture offices if they had not yet received their waiver and assured them that their cases would be addressed promptly.

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, during a meeting in his Madhira constituency, vehemently rejected KTR's allegations. He accused the BRS of spreading propaganda to discredit the Congress' efforts. Contrasting the present govern-

ment's approach with that of the previous government, he claimed that under the BRS regime loans only up to Rs. 1 lakh were repaid in four install-ments over five years, requiring farmers to incur additional interest costs and hindering their ability to secure new loans. "The Congress government implemented the loan waiver within the first year of

other government in the country has dared to do," Bhatti asserted. He criticized the BRS for its "audacity" in questioning a government that had ful-filled its election promises so

uation. We have done what no

early in its term.

Minister Komatireddy
VenkatReddy dismissed the
BRS' proposed dharna, saying
it would fail to garner support.

Congress leaders including

Congress leaders, including Minister Ponnam Prabhakar, sought to reassure farmers, urging them not to be swayed by BRS' "political stunts." Prabhakar emphasized that the Congress government had fulfilled its promise to waive loans for all eligible farmers and that any remaining grievances could be resolved through proper channels. "BRS is trying to mislead farmers with false protests. These are not genuine farmer protests, but political theatrics. Farmers should not participate in these events," Prabhakar observed. The Congress government had made unprecedented contributions to the agricultural sector, including paying crop insurance premiums on behalf of farmers and implementing the Rs. 72,000 crore allocation for agriculture in the state bud-

get, he added.
Prabhakar concluded by assuring that the Congress government was committed to the welfare of farmers and would continue to support them with coming to power, despite the additional initiatives in the state's challenging financial sit- coming days.

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ACROSS THE STATES



Panel on Waqf Bill to hold first meeting today

Parliament's Joint Committee on the Waqf (Amendment)
Bill will hold its first meeting on Thursday and its
members are scheduled to interact with representatives of the ministries of minority affairs, and law and justice. The 31member committee, headed by BJP member Jagdambika Pal, has been tasked by the Lok Sabha to scrutinise the contentious bill, which has drawn protests from the opposition parties and Muslim organisations. The representatives from the minority affairs ministry are expected to brief the committee on the "amendments proposed on the Bill", the Lok Sabha secretariat said. The Bill is the first major initiative from the BJP-led NDA government aimed at reforming the registration process for Waqf properties through a centralised portal. It proposes several reforms, including establishing a Central Waqf Council alongside state Waqf Boards with representation to the Muslim women and non-Muslim representatives.



Woman 'beats up' prosecutor on court premises

case has been registered after a woman allegedly assaulted a special public prosecutor on the court Assaulted a special public procession of Navi Mumbai, police said on Wednesday. No arrest has been made in the case yet. Shalini Veerbhadra Panda (39) allegedly abused and beat up special prosecutor Ravindra Jadhav on Tuesday afternoon. Panda, a resident of Seawoods area, was the complainant in a criminal case, and she was apparently angry with the prosecutor as the court acquitted the accused, said an official of CBD police station. The First Information Report was registered against her on Tuesday evening under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections 132 (assault or use of criminal force to deter a public servant from doing his duty) and 352 (intentional insult to provoke breach of peace). Further probe is underway.



Delhi HC to hear PFI's plea against ban on Sept 11

he Delhi High Court on Wednesday listed for hearing on September 11 a petition filed by the Popular Front of India (PFI) challenging an order of an Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) tribunal confirming the five-year ban imposed on it by the Centre. A bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela asked the counsel for the banned organisation to give a short note to define the "contour" of jurisdiction that can be exercised by the court while examining the UAPA tribunal's order. Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma said the petitioner cannot assail the UAPA tribunal's order on "merits" as it is not permissible, while asserting that the decision was taken after duly considering all the relevant material. The petitioner's lawyer said the tribunal passed the order after considering material in a manner that was "contrary to the known tenets of law".

Give interest on delayed compensation payment to 1984 riots victim: HC

PNS NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday directed the Centre to pay within six weeks the interest on the delayed compensation to a 1984 anti-Sikh riots victim, observing that the appellant and his family suffered first at the hands of the rioters and then due to an "insensitive and callous" administration. The interest will be paid at a yearly rate of 10 per cent for the period between April 8, 2016, when the ex-gratia compensation of Rs 1 lakh was released, and January 16, 2006, when the Rehabilitation Policy was announced.

A bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan also imposed Rs 25,000 as costs on the central government while dealing with the appeal of the victim against a single judge's order which held that he was not

entitled to the interest. The appellant claimed that his house in Shahdara was ransacked and looted following the assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984, and his father had registered an FIR with the police.

The screening committee, after examining the claims of the appellant pursuant to court orders, recommended the payment of ex gratia compensation of Rs 1 lakh in 2015, which was finally paid in April 2016. The bench, also comprising Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, observed that though the policy sanctioning ex gratia compensation did not include any component of interest on delayed payment, the same can be awarded by the court in suitable cases as the policy, which was brought for the rehabilitation of the 1984 riot victims, cannot be rendered meaningless.



Poland visit will add momentum to bilateral friendship:PM

PNS WARSAW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said his maiden visit to Poland will add momentum to the bilateral friendship and benefit the people of the two countries as he arrived here on the first leg of his two-nation visit during which he will also travel to the Ukrainian capital Kyiv.

Modi, who will meet Poland's President Andrzej Sebastian Duda and hold bilateral talks with Prime Minister Donald Tusk, said he was looking forward to the various programmes in the Polish capital here.

"Landed in Poland. Looking forward to the various programmes here. This visit will add momentum to the India-

the people of our nations," Modi said in a post on X soon after his arrival at the Warsaw

members in Poland gave a warm welcome to Prime



military airport here. Prime Minister Modi's visit to Poland is the first trip by an Indian Prime Minister to the country in the past 45 years.

Modi when he arrived at the hotel where Polish and Indian artists performed Gujarati tra-

matic relations. Poland is a key economic partner in Central Europe," Modi said in his departure statement earlier today.

"Our mutual commitment to democracy and pluralism further reinforces our relationship. I look forward to meeting my friend Prime Minister Donald Tusk and President Andrzei Duda to further advance our partnership," he said.

Prime Minister Modi's discussions with the Polish leadership during his two-day visit will allow the two sides to exchange views at the top level on a variety of subjects and it will be a kind of real "useful exchange" of views, Indian Ambassador to Poland Nagma Mohamed Mallick told here.

War of words breaks out between K'taka CM & Union Minister

PNS BENGALURU

A war of words has broken out between Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Union Minister H Kumaraswamy over the Lokayukta's Special

at Ganigera in Koppal district on Wednesday that he has not said anywhere that Kumaraswamy would be arrested in connection with the case.

But the Chief Minister added: "If there is a circum-



Investigation Team (SIT) seeking Governor's sanction to prosecute the latter in an alleged illegal mining lease case. Siddaramaiah told reporters

stance (in connection with the case) to arrest him, we will arrest him without any hesitation. Such a circumstance is not there now

CISF deploys 150 personnel at Kolkata's RG hospital for security

PNS NEW DELHI

Around 150 personnel of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) are being deployed at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital following an order of the Supreme Court, official sources said on Wednesday.

A day after the apex court's order, the Union home ministry wrote to the West Bengal

chief secretary seeking deployment of the CISF at the staterun hospital. Subsequently, a decision has

been taken for the deployment of the CISF, the sources said. Earlier in the morning, a

CISF team, led by a DIG-rank officer, surveyed the hospital complex where a 31-year-old trainee doctor was allegedly raped and murdered earlier



Govts, parties must brainstorm on steps to ensure safety for women: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of the Badlapur sexual assault incident, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi Wednesday said it "forces us to think where are we heading as a society". He also said all governments and parties need to brainstorm on what steps should be taken to provide a safe environment for

in the Badlapur town of Thane district on Tuesday after a large number of people blocked railway tracks and ransacked a school, where two kindergarten girls were sexually abused by an attendant last week.

In a post in Hindi on X, Gandhi said, "After West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and



Bihar, the shameful crimes daughters think where are we heading as a society? After the crime against two innocents in Badlapur, the first step to give them justice was not taken until the public came out on the streets demanding justice."

"Will we now have to protest to even register an FIR? Why has it become so difficult for

victims to even go to the police station?" the former Congress He said that more efforts are

made to hide a crime than to provide justice, and the biggest victims of this are women and people of weaker sections.

"Not filing an FIR not only discourages the victims but also encourages the criminals. All governments, citizens and political parties will have to steps should be taken to provide a safe environment for women in the society," Gandhi

Justice is the right of every citizen and the citizen cannot be made dependent on the "will of the police and administration", the Congress leader

India ready to take advantage of fourth industrial revolution: Murmu

PNS ■ FARIDABAD

President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday said India is ready to face the challenges posed by the fourth industrial revolution and take advantage of the opportunities that arise from it.

At the 5th convocation of the J C Bose University of Science and Technology here, Murmu said technology should be used for proper and sustainable development and

Today the world is in the era of the fourth industrial revolution. India is also ready to face the challenges of this revolution and take advantage of opportunities arising from it,

In achieving this national goal, the role of institutions like J C Bose University of Science



important, she noted.

The president noted that the agreements with many industrial and academic institutions over the past few years. Many multinational companies have also established Centres of Excellence on the university campus to train students.

Today, several avenues of progress have opened up due to the development of technology, she stated. For example, access to the

internet in remote areas has opportunities. But we should remember that technology should be used for proper and sustainable development and public interest. Its wrong use can be disastrous, she said.

The president appreciated the university for playing an important role in making the youth skilled and self-reliant.

Rahul should clear Congress' stand on Article 370: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taking aim at Rahul Gandhi's visit to Jammu and Kashmir, Wednesday asked the Congress leader to clear his party's stand on

the Article 370 and Article 35A. BJP general secretary Tarun Chugh, who is his party's organisational in-charge

for the Union Territory, said Gandhi's visit will introduce him to the "peace and develop-

ment" ushered in the region by the government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He alleged that three fami-

lies, a reference to the Congress, the National Conference and the PDP, over the last several decades stoked embers of separatism and terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir with

their policies before the BJP government at the Centre turned things around since 2014.

Red meat linked with increased diabetes risk: Lancet

Consuming red meat is related to a higher risk of type 2 diabetes, according to an analysis of more than 19 lakh adults from 20 countries across world regions, including southeast Asia, providing the "most comprehensive evidence to date."

Published in The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology journal, the analysis found that a habitual consumption of three types of meat and their daily amounts - 50 grams of processed meat, 100 grams of unprocessed red meat and 100 grams of poultry - was related to 15 per cent, 10 per cent and eight per cent increases in risk of developing type 2 diabetes, respectively.

The international team of researchers from the US, UK, Brazil, Mexico, among others, said that intake of meat exceeds recommended levels in many regions of



the world and has been correlated with non-communicable diseases, including type 2 diabetes.

However, all the existing evidences are largely based on studies from high-income countries, mainly in North America and Europe, they said.

For this study, the researchers included 31 cohorts from the InterConnect project, data for which was compiled from scientific studies and online registries,

including unpublished information. Of the total 19,66,444 participants, more than a lakh developed type 2 diabetes during follow-up, typically lasting 10 years.

The positive associations of unprocessed red meat and processed meat with incident type 2 diabetes were significant in the region of the Americas (13 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively), in the European region (six per cent and 13 per cent), and in the Western Pacific region and east Asia (17 per cent and 15 per cent)," the authors wrote.

They also estimated that replacing 50 grams of daily intake of processed meat with 100 grams of unprocessed red meat owered the risk of type 2 diabetes by seven per cent on an average.

Further, diabetes risk was found to fall by 10 per cent on replacing 50 grams of processed meat daily intake with 100 grams of poultry a day.

Kerala issues mpox alert amid global reports of viral infection

PNS THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Health Department on Wednesday sounded an alert in the state following reports of mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) outbreaks in several countries.

The state has gone into high vigilance mode, with surveillance teams in place at all airports to screen passengers arriving from affected nations, as the World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared mpox a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) in view of its prevalence and spread across many parts of Africa.

According to state Health Minister Veena George, anyone arriving from



countries where mpox has been reported must undergo screening at

If symptoms are detected, they will be isolated and treated according to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) issued by the state government in 2022.

"All government and private hospitals must strictly follow the SOP if anyone with mpox symptoms arrives," George said in a statement

Mpox infections are generally self-limiting, lasting between two and four weeks, and its patients usually recover with supportive medical care and management. It is transmitted through prolonged and close contact with an infected patient.

The health department has assured that necessary precautions

Kerala contains Nipah outbreak: 472 people cleared, Restrictions lifted

PNS THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

tained.

The Kerala Health Department on Wednesday announced that the Nipah outbreak in Malappuram district has been successfully con-

In a statement, it said that the restrictions imposed in the area where the outbreak was reported

are in place to prevent the spread of the disease in the state. The public has been advised to remain vig-

completion of the 42-day double incubation period. According to Health Minister

have been completely lifted after the

Veena George, all 472 people who were placed under observation have been cleared and removed from the contact list. The special control room set up to monitor the situation has been disbanded, she said.

ilant and report any suspicious symptoms to the health department immediately.

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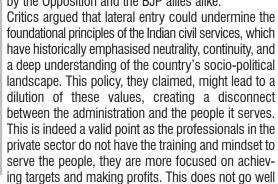
-PAPER WITH PASSION-

The Govt steps back

The Government withdraws lateral entry into bureaucracy amid opposition from its allies

he government has decided to withdraw its initiative on lateral entry into the civil services. This decision comes in the wake of mounting opposition from its political allies, who raised concerns over the potential implications of such a policy shift. However, this withdrawal would put the clock back on the Government's desire to infuse the bureaucracy with fresh talent from the private sector and other domains, aiming to bring specialised skills and perspectives into the administration. Lateral entry, as a concept, was introduced to bridge the gap between the skills required for contemporary governance and the traditional expertise within the civil services. By allowing professionals from various fields—such as finance, technology, and social sciences—to enter the bureaucracy at senior levels, the government aimed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration. This initiative was seen as a way to inject new ideas and innovation into a system often criticised for being slow, rigid, and out of

touch with modern realities. But it was not well taken by the Opposition and the BJP allies alike.



with the public office which has to be more sympathetic to people's aspirations even if the cost is high. Another major concern, and that is more pronounced in the Indian context, was that lateral entry could become a tool for political patronage. It was feared that the process could be manipulated to favour individuals with political connections, thus compromising the meritocratic nature of the civil services. Surely, it could lead to the politicisation of the bureaucracy, further eroding public trust in the system. Besides, bypassing the traditional recruitment process could create resentment among career bureaucrats. The decision to withdraw the lateral entry initiative reflects a pragmatic recognition of the political realities at play. While the government may have been convinced of the merits of the policy, the need to maintain a cohesive and supportive alliance outweighed the potential benefits of pushing forward with a contested reform. For now, the Government's retreat on lateral entry is a reminder of the delicate interplay between policy and politics. While the idea of bringing in fresh talent from outside the civil services is laudable, the concerns raised by political allies cannot be ignored. Moving forward, any attempt to reform the bureaucracy will need to address these concerns head-on, ensuring that innovation does not come at the cost of values.



People perform Shravani Purnima rituals while taking bath in the Ganga river, in Varanasi

J&K gears up for historic elections



For the first time since the revocation of Article 370 and the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019, the region is set to hold its Assembly elections

ammu and Kashmir will have Assembly elections from September 18 to October 1 to elect 90 legislators, the first after the revocation of Article 370 and the state's bifurcation in August 2019. The delay in holding new elections has been a contention for years. However, a recent Supreme Court directive was crucial in setting the timeline. Now that the elections are announced, political parties of all shades welcomed it. Kashmir has been a significant source of conflict for long between India and Pakistan. Both countries claim Kashmir, although they only govern a part of it. Pakistan has even internationalised the issue, which has been brought to the United Nations. In 2019, mixed reactions followed Modi's decision to divide

This decision led to Kashmir losing its flag, criminal code, and constitutional protections. Government job opportunities for Kashmiris decreased and are now open to non-residents. Despite challenges, the state has seen both positive and negative changes. The Prime Minister's initiatives have spurred development, and the growing interest of Gulf countries in investing in Jammu and Kashmir signals a promising future, bringing hope o the residents. The Ministry of Home Affairs reports decreased security force casualties from 80 in 2019 to 33 in 2023 and a drop in civilian deaths from 44 in 2019 to 12 in 2023. The last state elections were in 2014. The high voter turnout in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls has led to Assembly polls. In Kashmir, there was a historic 58.46% voter turnout in the recent parliamentary elections, a 30-point increase from the 2019 general election. The government completed a delimitation exercise after the 2019 revocation of Article 370 and the bifurcation. The assembly seats in Jammu and Kashmir increased from 87 to 114 after the 2022 delimitation, including 24 seats for Pakistanoccupied Kashmir (PoK). This increase in seats could potentially shift the balance of power and influence the strategies of political parties in the upcoming elec-



tions. The BJP claimed that the scrapping of Article 370 and their subsequent policies in Kashmir had developed the region for the better. The recently concluded Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir were a significant victory for Indian democracy. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the NC and PDP saw a

The election allowed them to revitalise their membership and bring long-standing issues to the forefront. Although the Congress did not secure any seats, the NC won two out of three, presenting a strong challenge for the third seat.

Despite the region's history of terrorism and allegations of rigged elections, the polls were widely celebrated for the conduct of free and fair polls. The upcoming election will test the central government's efforts to integrate Jammu and Kashmir more fully into the Indian Union after revoking the region's special status under Article 370.

It is also a test for the Election Commission to conduct polls without any violent incidents, The political parties have started preparing for the upcoming assembly elections, including campaign strategy, alliances, and candidate selection. The People's Conference, Congress,



THE UPCOMING **ELECTION** WILL TEST THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO INTEGRATE

JAMMU AND **KASHMIR** MORE FULLY INTO THE INDIAN UNION REVOKING THE

SPECIAL STATUS

ARTICLE 370

UNDER

Peoples Democratic Party, and National Conference met to plan for the elections. The political parties have started preparing for the upcoming assembly elections, including campaign strategy, alliances, and candidate selection. The People's Conference,

Congress, Peoples Democratic Party, and National Conference have all met at their party level to plan for the elections. If the assembly elections are held as scheduled, the Valley will see a contest between the NC and the PDP. Moreover, the polarisation and separatist narrative that gained traction during the Lok Sabha elections will only intensify and peak during the assembly

elections. The PDP leader and daughter of Mehboobha Mufti echoed the others. Other political parties, including the Congress, the BIP, the CPI(M) and the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP), welcomed the EC's announcement.

Kashmir elections, no party unite, and the INDIA Bloc won a majority. Governor's Rule was imposed for 49 days until PDP's Mehbooba Mufti was appointed chief minister with BJP's support. 2018, the BJP withdrew from the ruling alliance, leading to the Governor's Ruleagain. The

assembly was dissolved in November 2018, and President's Rule was imposed in December 2018 . Since then, the governor's Rule has been in the state.

The government needs to decide whether to intervene in the Kashmir Valley to address soft separatism or consider a reorganisation plan before the elections. During the parliamentary elections, Congress and the NC allied. The NC contested three seats in Kashmir, while Congress contested in Jammu and Udhampur. PDP, part of the INDIA Alliance, was not accommodated and fielded candidates on three seats in Kashmir against the National Conference. For the upcoming Assembly polls, the scene is not explicit. Congress and NC might go together. Omar mentioned that allying with the PDP would be difficult because they ran against each other in the parliament elections. If the regional parties In the 2014 Jammu and want to improve, they must must collaborate The Kashmir elections are crucial, and the entire country will observe a popular government's rise after a decade.

> (The writer is a popular columnist; views are

Raj Kapoor's deep bond with Delhi: A legacy of cinema



Raj Kapoor's relationship with the capital remains an enduring part of his legacy, etched in the memories of cinema halls and the city's cultural fabric

A s fans gear up to celebrate the birth centenary of Bollywood's legendary showman Raj Kapoor on December 14th, it is essential to remember his deep-rooted connection with Delhi—a city that was almost like a second home to him. Kapoor's association with Delhi was profound, and this bond will be celebrated in a grand event in the capital on his birth anniversary.

Raj Kapoor's final days were also tied to Delhi, where he passed away on June 2, 1988. Just a month before his death, on May 2nd, 1988, he was honored with the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award by President then Venkataraman at the Siri Fort auditorium. Unfortunately, his health deteriorated shortly after the ceremony, leading to severe breathing difficulties. He was admitted to AIIMS, where doctors, led by Dr. J.N. Pandey, tried their best to save him, but his condition did not improve, and he passed away due to complications from asthma. Delhi, the city that played such a significant role in his life, also became the place of his final

Kapoor had a special affinity for Delhi's iconic cinema halls, particularly Regal and Moti, where he preferred his films to be premiered. Regal, one of New Delhi's first cinema halls, held a special place in his heart. It was here that some of his most celebrated films, including "Sangam," "Mera Naam Joker," "Satyam Shiyam Sundaram," "Boot Polish," and "Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai," were released

The RK Banner films consistently performed well in the capital, further cementing Kapoor's connection with the city. As Pandit J.P. Sharma 'Trikha,' a close family friend, recalls, even Kapoor's father, Prithviraj Kapoor, had acted in plays at Regal, which showcased both English and Hindi productions in its early days. Sadly, Regal closed its doors

suit shortly after. Shashi Kapoor, Raj Kapoor's younger brother, fondly remembered his visits to Regal with his elder brother.

For Shashi, Regal was more than just a cinema hall; it was a place filled with memories of Raj Kapoor. Raj Kapoor's connection with Delhi was not limited to cinema alone. His tryst with the

city began in 1957 when he

produced the film "Ab Dilli Door Nahin.' The film also marked one of the early appearances of a young Amjad Khan, who would later become famous as Gabbar Singh. "Ab Dilli Door Nahin" captured various iconic locations in Delhi, including the old iron bridge over

the Yamuna, Daryaganj, and

Connaught Place. Kapoor's relationship with Delhi deepened further in 1970 when his eldest daughter, Ritu, married Rajan Nanda, son of H.P. Nanda, the founder chairman of the Escorts Group. Raj Kapoor would often visit his daughter's home in Jor Bagh whenever he was in town, strengthening his bond with Delhi. The Kapoor family's connec-

in 2017, with Moti following tion with Delhi extended beyond Raj Kapoor. His younger brother, Shammi Kapoor, had a different association with the city's cinema culture. In the mid-1960s, Shammi Kapoor became a partner in Plaza Cinema in Connaught Place, along with film producer F.C. Mehra. While he later sold his stake, Shammi Kapoor remains the only member of the Kapoor clan to have held a stake in a cinema hall. Raj Kapoor's fondness for

his younger brother Shashi was evident, with the former often treating the latter as a son. Shashi Kapoor's early film "Householder," directed by James Ivory and produced by Ismail Merchant, was primarily shot in a large house near Times House in Daryaganj. "Householder," written by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, featured two of Delhi's iconic landmarks, Jantar Mantar and Jama Masjid. The Kapoor family's connection with Delhi is deeply rooted, with their memories continuing to be cherished in the city.

(The writer is a journalist and a columnist; views are

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FOR RAPE

Madam — All eyes may be on Supreme Court hearings with respect to the Kolkata case but time shouldn't die down and the government can't be numb further on this issue. The pains undergoing by the parents of the victim as well as the fear in the minds of the medicos when they enter into a hospital for their work need to be realised by the law making authorities. It's time to burn the culprits and not the candles. The time has come for the government to pass a bill for capital punishment for rapists. When currency can be changed overnight, when special session can be called to increase the salary of politicians, when parliament can remain open all night for trust votes, wondering what is delaying to pass a stringent

law against rape.
The State of West Bengal must be taught a lesson by enforcing the President's role till the case gets cracked and culprits taken to task. Only drastic change like this will also become a lesson for other states to adhere caution and to protect the women from this society. The female MPs in the parliament must take this up as a cause of their own and today it may be somebody's and tomorrow this can happen at their own house can't be ruled out. A.P. Thiruvadi | Chennai

Madam— Amid the dance of death and destruction in Wayanad, humanity dawned. Darkness gets a relief when the sun softly touches it at dawn. Our pessimism and doubt in goodness in human beings similarly got a relief. It was when we read the report that some people on their own rushed to the danger zone in Wayanad and saved others at the cost of their lives.

had been blown away after landslides hit Chooramala on July 30. Immediately, he took his parents to a safer place. But he did not stop there. He rescued 18

Saga of champai Soren!

HE EDITOR



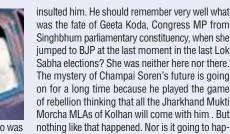
ixty eight year-old Champai Soren, who was the Chief Minister of Jharkhand for a few weeks, is in the headlines of newspapers these days. Some are saying that he will join BJP, some are predicting that he will form a new party, some are assessing that he will join JDU. But three days have passed since this news break but it has not come to fruition yet. He is still silent, yes, his intention has definitely become clear that after four decades, the people of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, with whose help he became famous,

before he went missing. Prajeesh ventured up the hill with his jeep the moment the first landslides hit Mundakkai at the small hours. It was pitch dark as landslides thrashed electricity connections. He made the second trip after rescuing many lives in his first mission. After his successful second trip, rescuing several lives, he was last seen in his jeep, setting off for his third attempt.

They have reiterated the scientific discovery that says all living human beings are relatives and have originated from one woman. Research has shown that fragments of the mitochondrial genome carried by all humans alive today can be traced to a single woman ancestor living an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 years ago. This woman, known as "Mitochondrial Eve", lived in Africa. You and I, irrespective of our religion, race, Sharath saw that the roof of his home class, caste, country, colour, or gender carry the same genome of that mother. The whole humanity is one!

Sujit De | Kolkata

insulted him. He should remember very well what was the fate of Geeta Koda, Congress MP from Singhbhum parliamentary constituency, when she



pen in the future. It is quite possible that he may lose the election from his constituency Saraikela as well. Because in the last assembly elections in the entire Kolhan, BJP was wiped out. Therefore, even though the people here call Champai the 'Tiger of Jharkhand', they will never tolerate rebellion against JMM. Therefore, for the time being, it seems that Champai Soren's political life has come to an end.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

SAFETY AT SCHOOLS

Madam — Schools are noble and honorable places where students learn humility, humanity, compassion, benevolence, respect for others, and how to abandon violence and corruption. They foster unity, peace, and a spirit of togetherness.

Unfortunately, today, schools have become places of fear and distress. Instances of student suicides due to teachers' cruelty, conflicts among students, vandalism on campus, and incidents like the recent Udaipur stabbing have left parents frightened and apprehensive about sending their children to school. Why is this happening? Why aren't government schools especially peaceful anymore?

We heard a lot about shooting in the US schools and wondered why that happens but now it is happening in our own

country. A close look is needed. Jakir Hussain | Kanpur

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FIRST COLUMN

THE DIVINE **JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Aligning with this divine justice system is essential for realising true justice and harmony in life

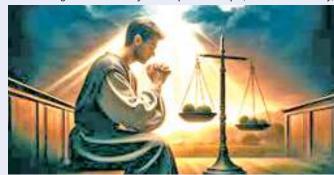


AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

long with the Creation, God has set in place a perfect justice sys-Atem. This is overseen by the Divine Authority under the superintendence of God. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 9.10) The Divine Authority is required to record all our acts by the mind, words and the body 24x7. Obviously, they have access to them. They are required by God to decide awards and punishments according to the guidelines given by Him. God does not interfere in this, and we keep on getting rewards and punishments as deserved life after life according to the 'Karmaphala Principle', which is: "what we sow we reap." Going into details, there are three parts of this.

There is 'prarabdha' (acts done earlier), 'kriyamana' (acts currently being done) and 'svabhava' (nature). What was done earlier including past lives, which has not been acted upon is carried forward till rewarded or punished. This process goes on eternally. The timing of rewards and punishments are decided by the Divine Authority. God knows what is being done, but does not interfere in it.

God gets into the act only if someone, mostly a devotee having God's consciousness, approaches Him for relief/pardon. If the request is found appropriate, God helps those approaching Him in order to deal with their punishments, i.e. makes them tolerable. (18.58) In this connection, it is necessary to point out that nature of all souls are also results of past karmas (deeds), as determined by the Divine Authority. It is very difficult to change one's nature by self-help. For example, if someone is lusty,



he or she will continue to be so during his entire life, unless God intervenes and helps in improving it. Again, we have to pray for it. These are the basics. Now let us see how it turns out practically. Take up a soul as an example. He has past karmas, which are due for rewards and punishments in this life. They manifest at their appointed times.

A man gets into an argument with his brother for his share in the paternal property. He decides to seek legal help. This is stage one of the justice system. Now it is 'Panchayat' at the village level or a court of justice. Such courts deliver justice based on man-made laws. These authorities deliver justice expeditiously, i.e. not taking too much time. But they must do justice, in which "dharma" (highest religious principles) is the basis, wherever they have some latitude. Failing which, they create their faulty destiny; they just act as mediums. Whatever happens to a person has been decided long ago. That is how astrologers can predict what

At every stage of the legal process, rewards and punishments, as destined only, keep coming. If the person concerned is fated to get relief, it will happen in a higher court. Vice versa is also true. God has no preconceived or prejudiced notion towards anyone, except if someone takes His shelter, as mentioned earlier. Like all of us, nations have also destiny. This is a cumulative total of fate of all its residents. Let me take up India for example.

The 21st century is likely to be dominated by India. If it is true and India will become a developed nation by 2047, then, its judicial system has to be functioning smoothly. It must have been streamlined. There will be no delay in the delivery of judgements, i.e. there will be time-bound at every stage. Justice delayed is justice denied will be a thing of the past. There will be adequate judicial infrastructure with sufficient resources. But for this miracle to happen, some people in authority have to become mediums. For this, they will be rewarded personally according to the karmaphala principle. The divine justice system is foolproof. Are people in authority listening? It will be a shame if an opportunity like this is squandered; whatever is destined will surely happen. The question is: who would

become mediums and get credit? This has been left to individuals. (The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

Streamlining Punjab's administrative web



To unlock the State's true potential, there is an urgent need for structural reforms that prioritise smooth operations, accountability and stakeholder engagement

• t's time for the complex web of multiple organisations of the Punjab government to take cues from the Indian Army's well-structured organisational hierarchy, which prioritises efficient command, control, and operational efficiency to maintain readiness. From a Havaldar leading a section, the smallest unit comprising ten soldiers, to the Chief of the Army Staff, the Army meticulously ensures cohesive functioning, distinct roles, and responsibilities, enabling the 14.55 lakh personnel to effectively fulfil defence and security roles. In contrast, the Punjab government's organisational structure (4.15 lakh personnel, including contractual and outsourced) requires an overhaul. In total, 50 parent departments and 163 affiliated organisations, each with its administrative head, aim for seamless result-oriented operations, which are below expectations. In the current government, the Chief Minister, who also oversees the industry sector, plays a pivotal role. However, the current structure, with around 20 administrative secretaries heading 17 departments, corporations, boards, and regulatory authorities, is not conducive to growth. By fostering a culture of collaboration, we can overcome these hurdles and drive efficiency and accountability towards a single goal of industrial growth, which has the potential to exceed the current stagnation of around 3% over the past 20 years in Punjab. Unfortunately, the complexity of multiple departments cannot achieve the single target of developing a fresh entrepreneurial class in the state. Rather, numerous channels breed corruption at various levels, and coercion can easily be gauged as the Punjab government scrapped 1498 mandatory compliances for industries three years ago. Therefore, it is high time to further ease the parent department as a single unique point, focusing on the singular target of developing a fresh entrepreneurial class in the state. It's impractical for any chief secretary to closely monitor 50 parent departments and their 163 affiliated organisations, which around 75 administrative sec-Assigning an Apex officer, preferably at an

additional chief secretary (ACS) level, is crucial to overseeing and synchronising each key sector. This officer will provide guidance, ensure alignment of goals and strategies, and streamline human resources operations effectively. Industries and other key sectors, such as Education, Health, urban development, Rural Development, and Agriculture, also need help navigating the complex web of 15 parent departments and their 69 affiliated organisations, which hampers good governance in Punjab. However, these challenges also present an opportunity for policymakers to reassess and reform, driving efficient and accountable human resources and paving the way for a vibrant Punjab.Industries: In Punjab industries are overseen by over 20 administrative secretaries who manage 17 departments and affiliated organizations. This large organizational structure, instead of collectively achieving the goal of growth, is currently engaged in assessing around 2000 compliances, posing a significant challenge for entrepreneurs. The need for an efficient and accountable administrative setup is urgent to create a conducive thriving business environment.Initially, the Department of Punjab Industries and Commerce and its



IMPRACTICAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO CLOSELY **MONITOR 50 PARENT** DEPARTMENTS AND THEIR 163 AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS, WHICH AROUND 75

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARIES

seven affiliated organisations oversaw the industrial sector. However, three additional depart-

ments were later established - the Department of Investment Promotion, the Department of Employment Generation and Training, and the Department of Technical Education and Industrial Training - along with their ten organisations to fulfil the same objective. To fetch new investment, "Invest Punjab" was established under the Punjab Bureau of Investment Promotion (PBIP) as a single access point to streamline processes. It is claimed that this entity has been empowered to provide over 34 regulatory approvals, clearances, and compliances related to more than 30 organisations. FOR ANY This streamlined approach is crucial for existing industries, as they face challenges in directly dealing with 17 departments- the Punjab Industries & Commerce Department, Pollution Control Board, Chief Electrical Inspector, Commissioner, Department of Factories, Department of Industries, Employment Generation and Training, Skill Development Mission, Punjab Bureau of Investment Promotion and Punjab

State Industrial Development Corporation etc. This complex web of multiple

departments is directionless and unfocused; enormous human resources can be utilised in a single merged service provider entity. In 2012, the idea of merging The Punjab State Industrial Development Corporation (PSIDC) and Punjab Financial Corporation (PFC) into the Punjab Small Industries and Export Corporation (PSIEC) was also

proposed but has yet to materialise. Punjab, with 99.7 per cent of MSMEs, is a promising hub for growth. However, the most significant roadblock for these enterprises is dealing with multiple departments and keeping track of their compliance. Despite the implementation of ten policies since the first industrial policy was formulated in 1978, the need for actionable governance reforms is still pressing. It is necessary to explore various measures to significantly improve services and make Punjab an attractive destination. Policymakers must urgently re-Department of Agriculture. Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries, Department of Horticulture, and Department of Soil & Water Conservation.

Eighteen additional organisations support these departments. Despite the involvement of multiple organisations, the state's agricultural growth has consistently declined, resting at around three per cent from 1990 to 2000 and further declining to less than two cent from onwards.Education: The government greatly emphasises education

and considers it a top priority. There is a critical need to revamp the administrative structure, as there are currently two separate departments, with six organisations and a school education board. The Department of Higher Education and Languages manages organisations in education and languages, while the Department of School Education oversees the six organisations. Despite these efforts,

it is essential to address that Punjab's secondary school dropout rate was 17.2% in 2022, exceeding the national average of 12.6%. The Way Forward: The reforms have the potential to significantly improve the functioning of key sectors in Punjab, creating a more accessible, transparent, efficient, responsive and accountable system to achieve a single goal collectively. Therefore two steps may be taken: First, Empowering Apex Officials: To achieve seamless collaboration among departments, empower at least five to six apex officers who will oversee the overimagine the state. Agriculture: In all administration of their respec-Punjab, agriculture is overseen by tive departments and have to five distinct departments: the report to the chief secretary. Each apex officer should have the sup port of five to six officers as direct

This approach aims to improve responsiveness, ensure transparency in decision-making processes, and hold apex officials accountable for their actions. Second, Stakeholder Engagement: The active participation of stakeholders is not just important, it's integral to the success of the proposed reforms. Encouraging stakeholder participation through feedback mechanisms and regular interactions to understand their needs and concerns is a key part of inclu-

(The Author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika ITL Group, Vice-Chairman(Cabinet minister rank) of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board, Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council and President of Tractor and Mechanization Association(TMA). Views expressed are personal)

A bold leap towards 'Viksit Bharat' with historic push for education and skilling

This budget allocation of Rs 1.48 lakh crore for education and skilling along with digital learning will help build a robust, future-ready workforce

Tnion Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan hailed the 2024-25 budget as a pivotal milestone on India's path to becoming a developed nation by 2047. Prioritising education, skilling, employment generation, research and innovation like never before, #Budget for Viksit Bharat paves the way for strengthening Bharat's credentials"

Minister Education Dharmendra Pradhan posted on X. He noted that these are comprehensive and concrete measures taken up by Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman that will be a win-win for all stakeholders-students, academia, and

industry. The budget allocation for Education, employment, and Autonomous bodies such as



30% to Rs 1.48 lakh crore. India has the largest educational system with 265 million students in schools, 43 million in higher education and more than 10 million learners enrolled in skilling institutions. The Budget Allocation for 2024-25 of Rs 73,498 crores is the highest ever for the Department of School Education & Literacy.

Sangathan and Navodaya al interest subvention of 3%. Vidyalaya Samiti have also received their highest-ever allocations. The Flagship Schemes like Samagra Shiksha, POSHAN and PM-SHRI have got Rs 3,250 crores. The budget includes strengthening the skilling and apprenticeship ecosystem, skill development and internship opportunities for one crore youth by India's top companies, and providing employment-linked incentives to first-time employees across the sector. The government has introduced a revamped 'Model Skill Loans Scheme' from 1.5 lahks to 7.5 lahks to 25000 students annually and education loans up to 10 lahks for pursuing education in higher domestic educational institutions to one lakh stuskilling has been increased by the Kendriya Vidyalaya dents every year with an annu-

The step will certainly promote enrolment in domestic institutions as well as reduce the financial burden on the students. In addition to this, the finance minister also outlined several initiatives for the Skill Development sector.

These include the upgrading of 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in line with the skill requirements of the industry. The internship opportunities for one crore youth in 5 years by the government is a welcoming step, this will provide youths with an engagement and enhance employability and practical skills.

In the scheme 'National Apprenticeship Training Scheme (NATS), an allocation of Rs 600 crore has been made. There has been an over-



all increase of Rs. 3525.15 crore (7.99%) in the budget allocation of the Department of Higher Education in this budget.

Deemed Universities, IITs NITs, IISERs, and IISc have got hefty allocations, considerably high in comparison to the previous budget. In higher education, areas like Digital e-learning, Research and Innovation, teacher training, the Centre of

Excellence in Artificial Intelligence and some specific institutions have received higher allocations. Under Digital e-learning, the government is looking forward to tapping the potential of virtual learning and aligning it with the Academic Bank of Credits with the view of increasing portability and flexible study options.

In the scheme 'National Mission in Education through ICT', an allocation of ?480 crore has been made in 2024-25 and this is ? 80 crore more than the allocation in 2023-24.The increased budget for Research and Innovation is to focus on academic and research collaborations in science, engineering and technical education. To improve the quality of education being

imparted at the school level it requires a revamped pedagogical structure, so, the Teacher Training segment has got its due share. The scheme Establishment of 3 Centres of Excellence (CoEs) in Artificial Intelligence (AI) has got an allocation of? 255 crore in the budget. The Major Schemes For Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) erstwhile known as Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)], the budget has been kept at Rs1814.94 crore An allocation of Rs 1800 crore has been allocated for Institutions of Eminence. In the scheme 'Multi disciplinary Education and Research Improvement in Technical Education EAP (MERITE), an allocation of Rs 200 crore has been made and this is a 100% increase over the

last year's budget. The NEP 2020 says that the aim of the policy must be for India to have an education system by 2040 with equitable access to the highest-quality education for all learners regardless of social or economic background. Recognising the crucial role of education the government has designed an ambitious package for education for it to be growth-oriented, inclusive and progressive. However, the most important aspect is its implementation. The features of the budget meant for education will play a crucial role in guiding India towards becoming a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047 as stated by the Education Minister. (The writer is an educationist and a freelance writer; views expressed are personal)

Shielding India's fiscal stability

from disruptive strategies

n recent years, Hindenburg Research, a

US investment firm focused on activist

short selling, has garnered notoriety for

its disruptive financial strategies. Since its inception in December 2017, Hindenburg

has published around 70 reports targeting

63 companies. Many of its reports contain

allegations that can trigger dramatic declines in stock prices and, in extreme cases, drive

companies to bankruptcy. This pattern rais-

es significant concerns about Hindenburg's practices and their broader implications for

both individual companies and national

A notable instance of Hindenburg's impact occurred in January 2023 when the firm released a controversial report on the Adani Group. The report alleged various

financial malpractices and mismanagement within the Adani Group. The timing and

nature of this report suggested an attempt

to destabilize the Indian economy by target-

ing a significant entity. The

aftermath was severe: the

Adani Group faced substan-

tial financial losses, sparking

debates about the intentions

behind Hindenburg's aggres-

sive stance. Of course, the Adani Group vehemently

refuted the allegations, and

the public and investors too

rallied behind the conglom-

erate. Yet, the substantial

financial losses faced by the

Adani Group due to

Hindenburg's stance, raised

questions about the impact of

such reports on the stability

the Adani group, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) had issued a notice to

of major economies.

economies

VIJAYAWADA | THURSDAY | AUGUST 22, 2024

IN BRIEF



Amul ranked as world's strongest food brand

Mul has been ranked as the world's strongest food brand by consultancy firm Brand Finance, UK. It has also retained the strongest dairy brand of the world title for the fourth consecutive year. "Amul has been ranked as the world's strongest food brand and the strongest dairy brand as per Brand Finance, UK, world's leading brand consultancy, in its annual report titled 'Food & Drink 2024', the company said in a statement. The report lists the most valuable and strongest food, dairy and non-alcoholic drinks brands. As per the report, Amul has risen from second rank in 2023 to become the world's strongest food brand in 2024, with a Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 91.0 out of 100 and an AAA+ rating. "Amul's brand strength is attributed to its strong performance in familiarity, consideration, and recommendation metrics," the statement said.



CCI flags concerns over Viacom 18-Star India deal

he Competition Commission of India (CCI) has flagged possible anti-competitive concerns with respect to the proposed USD 8.5-billion Viacom18-Star India merger and has sought detailed responses from the parties concerned, sources said. In case the regulator is not satisfied with the replies, it can go for public scrutiny of the deal, they added. After the companies filed an application with the CCI for deal approval in May this year, the watchdog had sought various clarifications and additional information from the parties. The sources said the parties have been served show cause notice asking why a detailed scrutiny of the deal should not be carried out as there are anti-competitive concerns in relation to certain business segments, including cricket broadcasting rights. Queries sent to CCI and Disney-Star did not elicit any response.



Exercise power judiciously: FM tells taxmen

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday asked tax officers to use simpler words in notices or letters they sent to taxpayers and exercise power bestowed upon them judiciously. Addressing the 165th Income Tax Day celebrations, Sitharaman said that after adopting the faceless regime, the tax officers must now aspire to be more "fair and friendly" in their dealings with taxpayers. The tax notices should not trigger a "sense of fear" among the taxpavers and instead, it should be simple and straightforward, she added. The notice should make it "crystal clear" to the assessee the reason for which a notice was being sent to him/her, the minister noted. Sitharaman also said there was room for improvement in issuing refunds faster. Asking taxmen to avoid "ham-handed ways" in dealing with taxpayers, the minister said that the action taken should be proportionate to the issue at hand. She also asked taxpayers to use enforcement measures only as a last resort, and the goal of the department should be to encourage voluntary compliance.

'India, Africa must target \$200 bn trade in next 7 years'

There is a huge potential to between India and Africa as both regions can look at doubling two-way trade to USD 200 billion in the next seven years, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Wednesday.

Speaking at CII's India-Africa business conclave, Goyal said the main sectors where businesses of the two sides can collaborate include agriculture, pharmaceuticals, mining, tourism, auto, critical minerals, and renewable ener-

gy.
"I would like to suggest six areas for collaboration and cooperation as a way forward to take this relationship to the next level," he said, adding, "can we look at doubling our trade. So far we have only a few African countries who trade with India".

He said as many as 33 countries do not participate in the duty free tariff preference (DFTP) scheme of India.

"Can we look at getting more and more countries to enjoy the fruits of this partner-ship and set a benchmark to

Equity benchmark indices

Sensex and Nifty closed high-

er on Wednesday, helped by

gains in FMCG, consumer

durables and healthcare stocks

amid strong buying support from domestic institutional

However, foreign capital out-

flows amid a cautious trend in

global equities ahead of the

release of US Fed minutes

restricted the gains in domes-

30-share BSE Sensex gained for

day, it rose 149.97

hit an intra-day high of

The Indian market traded

80,952.83. Rising for the fifth

straight session, the NSE Nifty went up by 71.35 points or 0.29

per cent to end at 24,770.20.

on a tight range with a positive

bias supported by strong DII

The non-banking finance com-

panies' (NBFC) growth in assets

under management will moder-

ate in FY25, and the year will

also witness an uptick in dud

assets, a domestic rating agency

The NBFCs operating across

various segments are estimated

to show assets under manage-

ment (AUM) growth of 13-15

per cent in FY25 from 18 per

cent in FY24, largely impacted

by regulatory measures on restricting bank lending to such

said on Wednesday.

In a range-bound trade, the

tic markets, traders said.

the second day in a row, ris-

ing 102.44 points or 0.13

per cent to close at

80,905.30. During the

PNS MUMBAI

double this trade number from USD 100 billion to USD 200 billion between India and Africa. I think we should

look at doing that in seven years," Goyal said. He added that opportunities are there in increasing collaborations in the IT sector as India can help African nations in infrastructure development, health, and financial inclu-

"There is a potential in the

flows. While defensive sector outperformed due to a contin-

ued shift in portfolio towards

FMCG, consumer, commodi-

"Global markets exhibited a

mildly cautious tone ahead of

the release of the FOMC min-

utes later today. Currently, the

expectation of a rate cut

remains high, given the fall in

Among the Sensex firms, Titan, Asian Paints, ITC,

Hindustan Unilever, Nestle India, Bajaj Finserv and Bharti

Airtel were among the gainers. In contrast, UltraTech

Steel, Power Grid, HDFC Bank,

HCL Technology, State Bank of India and ICICI Bank were the

laggards. Shares of FSN E-

Commerce Ventures, beauty

and personal care brand Nykaa,

bounced 9.42 per cent on

Non-banks' asset growth to

moderate, rise in NPAs likely: Icra

entities and also concerns over

unsecured and top-up loans, Icra

The sector is also expected to

witness a 0.30-0.50 per cent

increase in delinquencies during

the year, and the agency's group head Karthik Srinivasan told

reporters that the "best days on delinquencies are behind us".

(NPAs) will inch up due to fac-

tors like high growth in the last

two years, some borrowers being

over-leveraged and also sloppy

assessment practices in some

entities, the agency said.

The non-performing assets

Wednesday.

Ratings said.

Head of

Research, Geojit

Financial Services,

ties, and pharma.

US inflation and

moderation in

o v e r a l l

growth, Vinod

sion needs.

Markets extend gains

on buying in FMCG

entertainment sector also given our mutual strengths. Sports also, we can increase cooperation," he said, adding that mineral rich Africa can complement India's increasing needs for critical minerals, particularly for the EV sector.

17" CIL-EXIM BANK CONC.

Critical minerals, such as cobalt, copper, lithium, nickel and rare earths, play a crucial role in the production of clean energy technologies, from wind turbines to electric cars. Critical minerals are particularly in demand for the production of batteries for electric

PNS NEW DELHI

said on Wednesday. Union Finance Minister

Nirmala Sitharaman, in her Budget speech last month, had announced that the direct tax law of the country would be reviewed to make it simple and the task would be completed in six

"We have an important task on hand and that is the the Income Tax Act, 1961. This exercise is aimed to reduce litigation and provide tax certainty to taxpayers", Agrawal said during an event held here to mark the 165th Year of Income Tax in

lakh crore in funding for sustain-

ing the credit growth in FY25,

Srinivasan said, adding that

capital is not a constraint but companies will have to look at

sources beyond the mainstay of

bank funding for the liabilities.

Direct lending from banks will come up to Rs 1.8 lakh crore,

while the rest will be from other

routes like securitisations and

issuing non-convertible deben-

tures, among others, the agency

said, adding that banks have an

important role to play in the

other two as well.

to be completed in time: CBDT

C B D T Chairman Ravi Agrawal

Review of IT Act

The task of reviewing the Income Tax Act of 1961 will be completed in the given time-

Hindenburg Research, following established legal procedures. This action was met with heightened hostility from Hindenburg, which retaliated by launching a campaign to malign SEBI Chief Madhabi Puri Buch with its fresh allegations. This has not only intensified to seions but has also prevented. intensified tensions but has also provoked public discourse on the ethical standards of both Hindenburg Research and the regula-

tory frameworks governing financial mar-Hindenburg's tactics have had devastat-

ing effects on other companies too. For example, in June 2020, the firm raised concerns about WINS Finance, a Chinese company, after an extraordinary surge in its share price. This led to the freezing of the company's assets by a Chinese court and a catastrophic collapse in its stock value. In May 2019, Hindenburg targeted Jumia Technologies, alleging inflated order numbers and misrepresentation, causing Jumia's stock price to plummet by over 50% and leading to a series of lawsuits. Nikola, an American electric vehicle manufacturer, was also a focus in September 2020, with Hindenburg accusing it of exaggerating its technological capabilities, leading to a dramatic stock price collapse. Other examples

include SCWorx, Lordstown Motors, Clover Health, HF Foods, and Pharma Cielo, each experiencing severe financial damage or bankruptcy as a result of Hindenburg's

The Financial Services Commission (FSC) of Mauritius has clarified that the funds mentioned in Hindenburg's report, such as the 'IPE Plus Fund' and 'IPE Plus Fund 1', are not registered in Mauritius and fall outside its regulatory jurisdiction. The FSC has emphasized that Mauritius adheres to strict substance requirements under the Financial Services Act and complies with OECD standards, addressing claims linking these funds to Buch and her husband.

Despite the foregoing clarifications, the fresh allegations made by Hindenburg Research have ignited a significant debate about SEBI's integrity and the broader implications for India's financial regulatory. ry framework. The persistent demand for a

thorough investigation underscores the need for transparency and accountability in regulatory prac-

The ongoing controversy has significant implications for India's financial markets. In particular, SEBI's role as a regulatory authority is under intense scrutiny, and any confirmation of the allegations could result in a substantial loss of public trust and potentially disrupt the stability of the financial market. This situation highlights

the importance of maintaining high stan-dards of transparency and accountability in In response to the allegations concerning regulatory oversight.

The Indian judiciary has also played a crucial role, with the Supreme Court reaffirming its confidence in SEBI while directing that the investigation be expedited. This reflects the judiciary's role in ensuring that regulatory bodies operate effectively and uphold principles of fairness and transparency in financial markets.
In conclusion, Hindenburg Research's

actions exemplify a broader issue of financial manipulation and its impact on companies and economies. The firm's aggressive short selling and sensationalized reporting have had devastating consequences for many companies, raising serious ethical concerns. The recent allegations against SEBI Chief Madhabi Puri Buch have complicated the situation, highlighting the intersection of personal investments and professional integrity. As investigations continue, it is crucial for all stakeholders to prioritize ethical governance and transparency to uphold market regulations and investor confidence. The resolution of this situation will significantly influence the future of financial regulation in India and shape public trust in its

> (The writer is former special secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh)

CIL pursuing acquisition of critical minerals in India, abroad: Chairman

PNS NEW DELHI

Coal India on Wednesday said it is actively pursuing acquisition of critical minerals, including lithium, in the domestic market and overseas and stressed that it would continue to take part in the auction of such blocks.

Critical minerals, including lithium, play a crucial role in the production of clean energy technologies, from wind turbines to electric cars. They are particularly in demand for the production of batteries for electric cars.

"With an objective to reduce the import dependence of critical minerals like lithium, cobalt, CIL is actively pursuing acquisition of these mineral assets in India and abroad," Coal India Ltd (CIL) Chairman P M Prasad said during 50th Annual General Meeting of the company.

CIL, he said, will continue to participate in e-auction of critical mineral blocks offered by the mines ministry.



CIL has successfully opened its account in domestic critical mineral asset, emerging as the preferred bidder for Khattali Chotti graphite block in Alirajpur district of Madhya Pradesh, he said.

It would be the company's first ever non-coal mineral mining venture.

'The...feat was achieved under tranche-II forward auction held on July 9 by Ministry of Mines," he stated.

The vision of CIL, Prasad

no shortage of coal in the country and to make it self reliant in terms of the dry fuel. CIL spearheads the nation's

said, is to ensure that there is

coal production, contributing around 80 per cent to the entire coal output. The company, he said, is

committed to increasing the production and supplies of the quality coal to the mandated levels to ensure the country's citizens get power at just

Possible for Indian economy to touch \$55 trillion by 2047

PNS KOLKATA

Executive director at the International Monetary Fund Krishnamurthy Subramanian on Wednesday said that the size of the Indian economy has the potential to touch USD 55 trillion by 2047 if the growth rate in dollar

terms remains at 12 per cent.
Speaking at a CII event here, Subramanian, the former chief economic advisor to the government from 2018 to 2021, said that inflation targetting since 2016 had helped the country average out the rate of



price rise to five per cent. Before 2016, the average rate of inflation was 7.5 per

With a real growth of eight per cent, the nominal growth is expected to be 13 per cent with five per cent inflation rate, the economist said.

"With rate of depreciation of the Indian currency to be less than one per cent vis-a-vis the dollar in the long run, the fundamentals of the economy will start to show up," he said.

this context. Subramanian said that the real growth rate of India will be 12 per cent in dollar terms. According to him, then the size of the economy will double every six years.

72 pc of employers plan to hire freshers: Report

With gradual improvement in

the job market, a report on Wednesday has revealed that 72 per cent of employers interviewed intend to hire freshers in the second half (July-December) of this year.

The 72 per cent hiring intent represents a 4 per cent increase from the first half of this year and a 7 per cent rise compared to the second half of 2023, suggesting a gradually improving employment landscape for fresh talent, TeamLease EdTech's 'Career Outlook Report HY2' (July-December

2024) has revealed. "The increase in hiring intent for freshers is an encouraging



sign. It reflects growing confidence among employers and presents valuable opportunities for fresh talent entering the workforce," TeamLease EdTech founder and CEO Shantanu

Rooj said. The TeamLease EdTech's 'Career Outlook Report HY2'

(July-December 2024) is based on a survey of over 603 companies across India during April and June 2024.

Further, the report highlighted that e-commerce and technology start-ups, engineering and infrastructure, and retail are the top three indus-

freshers in the second half of

Geographically, Bengaluru leads with 74 per cent of employers intending to hire freshers, followed by Mumbai at 60 per cent and Chennai at 54 per cent, it added.

În terms of job roles, the report said full-stack developer, Search Engine Optimisation executive, digital sales associate, and User Interface/User Experience designer have emerged as the most indemand positions for freshers.

Employers are particularly seeking candidates with skills in cybersecurity, cloud computing, data analytics, and search engine optimisation, it

The report also found that 70 per cent of employers suggest enhancing curriculum with experiential learning, while 62 per cent advocate for industry-academia partnerships to better align academic training with industry needs. Manufacturing leads with

25 per cent of employers planning to hire degree apprentices, followed by engineering and infrastructure at 19 per cent, and construction and real estate at 11 per cent, it said.

"Aligning educational programs with industry requirements is crucial. The job market is evolving rapidly, with technology and digital skills taking center stage," Rooj said.



R Rahman releases Le Musk

enowned composer and Oscar-winning music maestro A.R. Rahman has released the highly

anticipated soundtrack of his groundbreaking immersive film, *Le Musk*. The soundtrack with

12 soulful and varied tracks, launched globally yesterday on Believe Music

promises to captivate listeners with a fusion of ethereal compositions that

Le Musk, an innovative sensory cinematic experience directed by A R

Rahman himself, merges music, fragrance and visual storytelling to immerse audiences in a new kind of film and narrative. The

transcend boundaries, much like Rahman's iconic body of work

soundtrack, created to complement the immersive experience,

eclectic elements combined with soulful melodies.

am thrilled to finally share this soundtrack with

the world and offer a glimpse into the

The *Le Musk* soundtrack takes listeners on an evocative journey,

music influences to create an atmospheric soundscape. With

tracks that echo the film's story

promises to be a one-of-a-kind

listening experience for both

long-time Rahman fans and

Collaborating on the 12 varied

including Nora Arnezeder, Sana

Moussa, Linda Lind, Mayssa

Karaa, Hiral Viradia, Simona

Gilbert, the Firdaus Orchestra

and the Budapest Orchestra, the soundtrack of Le Musk also

marks the association with the

award-winning music engineer

tracks with notable names,

of love, memory and sensory

exploration, this album

newcomers.

blending jazz, orchestral and world

world we've created."

features Rahman's signature style—a blend of jazz, orchestra and

Speaking about the soundtrack launch, award-winning composer

A R Rahman said, "Music is the heartbeat of Le Musk. It carries

the soul of the film, guiding the audience through an emotional and sensory journey. The film is a labour of a lot of hard work

and love, where we tried to push the boundaries of how we

use technology to create something truly immersive and I

Vijayawada | Thursday August 22, 2024

what's brewing?

JENNIFER AND BEN OFFICIALLY

ninger-actress Jennifer Lopez and actor Ben Affleck are headed for Splitsville and this time it's confirmed. This comes after two years of marriage. JLo filed for divorce on Tuesday, August 20, in Los Angeles County Superior Court. The official separation date is listed as April 26, as per reports. The couple married in Las Vegas in July 2022 after re-sparking their relationship from two decades prior, which was dubbed "Bennifer" by tabloid publications at the time and was a fixation of their coverage in the early 2000s.

As per reports, the two tied the knot again in a large ceremony in Georgia on August 20, 2022, exactly two years ago. JLo and Affleck made two films together: Martin Brest's largely reviled romantic caper Gigli in 2003 and Kevin Smith's comedy Jersey Girl in 2004. By the time the latter feature hit theaters, Lopez and Affleck had called off their engagement and gone their separate ways.

Marc Anthony and Affleck to Jennifer Garner. Then the two began a public relationship once again, roughly three years ago. JLo provided frequent updates on her engagement and eventual marriage to her fans through her social media presence and newsletter. JLo also explicitly addressed the relationship in her most recent album, This Is Me... Now, a sequel to her 2002 album This Is Me... Then, which also discussed her thenrelationship with Affleck. Affleck appeared in JLo's This Is Me.. Now: A Love Story, a celebrity cameo-studded film centered on music from the new album. Released to Prime Video in February. the film features Affleck in prosthetic make-up playing a jaded

In May, Lopez cancelled her summer This Is Me... Now tour with a statement that read, "Jennifer is taking time off to be with her children, family and close friends.



Arshad accuses Boney Kapoor of paying less than discussed

A jay Devgn's sports-themed film Maidaan performed poorly at the box office when it was released in April. However, that was not the only unpleasant news that producer Boney Kapoor received this year. Prior to the movie's premiere, the director faced legal issues as a vendor supplying equipment for *Maidaan* filed a lawsuit against Boney for outstanding payments. The seller claimed that Boney held off on paying him 1 crore for a period of two years. At last, the court mandated the filmmaker to hand over 96 lakh to the vendor. Once again, the producer is in the spotlight for the same reasons. This time, actor Arshad Warsi has criticised Boney's production company! Now Arshad has alleged that Boney's production company cheated him. The actor disclosed that he was appointed as a choreographer for the 1993 movie Roop Ki Rani Choron Ka Raja, starring Sridevi and Anil Kapoor. Arshad informed the creators that it would require 4 days to finish choreographing the song they desired and he was charging 1 lakh for his services at that moment. They asked him to complete the filming within a 3-day time frame. Despite the difficulty, he put in a lot of effort, finished the filming in 3 day and helped them save money. Nevertheless, upon Arshad's arrival to obtain his payment, he was given only 75,000. Arshad asked the production guy why he received less payment than agreed and was informed that 1 lakh was the agreed-upon fee for 4 days. The man working for the production company informed the actor that he had finished the job one day earlier, resulting in him receiving 25,000 less. Arshad provided more information about how the industry has evolved, mentioning that there are now both managers and lawyers present. Hopefully, creating agreements and contracts on paper will prevent people from experiencing unfair treatment like Arshad did.

Shahid reunites with Vishal Bharadwaj for an action thriller

S hahid Kapoor is prepared to star in a suspenseful action film helmed by Vishal Bharadwaj. The actor-director team has collaborated on three films before, and their partnership is highly respected by both the audience and critics. The most recent movie they did together was Rangoon, which came out in 2017. The upcoming movie is said to begin production in September of this year

According to a source as reported, "Vishal Bhardwaj has developed the first action film of his career, and the maker is planning to mount it on a large scale. It's a mission-based action thriller and Sajid Nadiadwala is excited to bring it to the spectacle in the biggest possible way." It was also mentioned that six large action sequences will be built for the movie, and Shahid has agreed to join for his first action-packed entertainer. The source also mentioned that the actor enjoys collaborating with Bhardwaj, as two of his most acclaimed films, Haider and

Kaminey, were helmed by the director. "Shahid has the utmost respect for Vishal and Sajid and he was on board the film the minute he heard the narration. This would be



Shekhar Kapur gears up for Masoom 2 and Ebony McQueen

scar-nominated and BAFTAwinning filmmaker Shekhar Kapur is set to direct a musical feature film Ebony McQueen, starring Sharon D Clarke, Avantika and Thomas Smith in the lead roles. The music of this semi-autobiographical film will be scored by Oscar-winning composer AR Rahman, while songs are being done by Dave Stewart, who is a co-writer as well as a co-producer on this film, which is set to go on floors in 2025. Drawing inspiration from

Stewart's early life, the Shekhar Kapur directorial revolves around the main character, Charlie McGarvey, who dreams of being a pro footballer, but his hopes are shattered after a devastating injury. The story delves into how he discovers the magic of creating music, which leads him on a journey that awakens the ability to fully pursue what he loves, despite the world falling apart around Shekhar Kapur is currently



working in India as well as internationally, establishing him as the most in-demand filmmaker across the globe. Apart from *Ebony McQueen*, Shekhar Kapur is preparing for his upcoming release, Masoom: The Next Generation, which will mark the debut of his daughter Kaveri Kapur. He was recently appointed as the festival director of the 55th and 56th editions of the International Film Festival of India Goa

ARCHIE









CALVIN AND HOBBES



REALITY CHECK

LYMON WE GET IT

IF IT WALKS LIKE A DUCK AND QUACKS LIKE A DUCK EMBEZZLES LIKE A DUCK LAUNDERS MONEY LIKE A DUCK

BRIBES LIKE A DUCK IF HE

PACKETEERS LIKE A



SPEED BUMP

WE'RE DRIFT WOOD, BOB.

WASHED UP.

WE'RE SUPPOSED TO FEEL



CROSSWORD



GARFIELD

NANCY



HAVE HIGH

STANDARDS FOR MY CLASS









SUDOKU



2	4	6	3	9	7	1	8	5
8	7	1	5	6	2	4	9	3
9	5	3	8	1	4	7	2	6
7	2	5	9	8	6	3	4	1
4	3	9	1	2	5	8	6	7
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5	8	2	7	4	1	6	3	9
6	1	4	2	3	9	5	7	8
200	100		60-201					

3 9 7 6 5 8 2 1 4 Rules

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

ACROSS

- Meat from a sheep
- 3 Talk in a friendly way
- 7 A sewed joint 8 Wound someone
- 10 Envious
- 13 A green gemstone
- 16 Cunning
- 17 Moist
- 18 Border 19 Jail
- DOWN 1 A face disguise

2 Go on a journey

5 Three times four

4 Drag along

6 Ask



9 A region's weather

11 Save from danger

14 A long sharp animal

conditions

12 Forever

tooth

15 Twirl around

GINGER MEGGS







any row or column must equal 45.



ogita Bhayana has been actively involved with the Pari Foundation, standing resilient in the face of challenges. She has not only been advocating for justice for the victims but also pushing the nation's judiciary to wake up to prevent losing another daughter. Initially working in the airline industry as any young girl, deep down in her heart, there was a tiny bug that wanted her to do something around social reforms. While over time, she had worked on different causes, it was not until the Nirbhaya case happened that she took on the cause of helping the victims and their families. Though she did receive and attend a few sexual assault cases, Nirbhaya brought out her in-born anti-rape activism! "Initially, I had attended cases where the girls were raped and helped them,' begins Yogita, taking us through the beginnings of her

had a personal impact on her was the Nirbhaya case. Why? "I was also in the same mall on the same day. I could relate to this much more because I realised that it could have been me too. That feeling came in. I had gone to have dinner while she was there for a movie. When I heard this case the next day, I thought we may have crossed paths, and I must have seen her. Why did she have to suffer this brutality just because she took public transport?" This triggered her even more. Back then, she was assisting government agencies. "We are doing consultation, advocacy and policy intervention, but what is happening on the grounds was something very gruesome, so I decided to protest. Being a part of a body like the National Commission for Women (NCW), I was very active then, so I decided to go for a protest and from the protest, we felt so helpless that water cannons were used on us and lathi charges were done on us. What for? That made me more rebellious about what was happening.'

Being just like a drop in the ocean, among the other protestors, while other protestors thought that Nirbhaya and her family had gotten justice after the arrest of the culprits, she fought and stood by the family until the culprits were hanged to death. But on the other hand, she knew that was not the end. It was rather a beginning. She started receiving many more sexual assault

"The Pari Foundation is not just one initiative. We have gone through so many discussions. We came to the conclusion that there had to be a series of efforts. You can't say that doing this will change the scenario. We do a lot of awareness programs around this, like talking to men as the main focus area and, of course, telling the girls to raise their voice and not suffer. It's sometimes demeaning to tell someone to protect themselves and learn defense. But that's unfortunately what we have to do. At the same time, we are trying to change the mindset of the people, including villages and panchayats. Explaining the girls about their legal rights and how they can approach the police is just one of the other options!"

In fact, she had also begun a campaign called Nari Ke 2 Dinn, which sought to create a special session of parliament on women's safety for a minimum of two days. "Safety or empowerment, they are all linked," she says, adding, "You cannot say a woman can be empowered when she is not safe. We want safety first and for that, we need discussions. We have come across so many cases where this heinous crime has happened to women, where they were raped and killed while they were coming from work.

Working for such a cause was no less than a challenge for her and, to date, the challenge goes on. "Basically, our legal

toughest thing in this country. The processes are so overwhelming that they get really exhausting. How much can we even give moral or financial support to a girl or family who lost their daughter? Not enough is good for them. They do not get much support from the government and hardly, the laws were made, the SOPs were made, but in reality, less has been done and more has been talked about .. '

Apart from this, she shares, "They do not get any kind of counselling or any hand-holding support. "I have myself handled over 5 cases a while back, where the children have also been killed. They don't make it to the news! Even the local politicians just press it aside.'

Through their initiatives, she shares they have been taking baby steps to make men understand and there has been an impact, but there is still a long way to go.

Through the foundation, she's also on a quest to make the government serious about the cause, implement policies and strategies, and certainly act on the cases. She signs off by sharing, "Laws are there, but implementation is poor. Even when the Hyderabad case happened, that was not judicial but was taken up by the cops. The process needs to be followed judicially and every criminal needs to know why they are

Rasika Dugal on navigating nuances of bygone era in Shekhar Home

part for a cause

AARTI SREENATH

t a time where narratives are dominatmodern-day crime dramas, Rasika Dugal's decision to step into the world of the 1990s detective series Shekhar Home seems both nostalgic and refreshingly bold. The series, set against the backdrop of pre-cell phone India, offers a stark contrast to the digital age, where information is a click away and mystery often feels like a relic of the past.

For Rasika, however, this project was an exploration of the genres that shaped her love for storytelling, as well as an opportunity to add a new dimension to her already diverse filmography.

There were a few things that influenced my decision," Rasika begins, reflecting on her first encounter with the script. "One was definitely the genre—a detective drama series was something I hadn't explored before and I've always been intrigued by it. As a child, I watched a lot of it, like Jeremy Brett's Sherlock series on Sundays and later, Benedict Cumberbatch's version became one of my favourites. I've also been a fan of the Feluda series, especially Satyajit Ray's Sonar Kella, which is one of my favourite films. So, the genre was a big draw for me."

Her excitement was further fuelled by the prospect of working alongside some of the finest actors in the industry. "I've been very fortunate to work with actors like Irrfan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Pankaj Tripathi," she notes. "When I heard that Kay Kay Menon was playing Shekhar Home, I was very excited to take on the role of Iravati. I hoped to add his name to the illustrious list of co-actors I've worked with."

The 1990s setting of Shekhar Home is as much of a character as the people within it. "It was a very intelligent decision to place it in the 90s. How can you make a detective series in today's post-cell phone era? It would be very hard to make it visually compelling because everything would be online and it would be very boring to watch. So, there was no option but to place it in a pre-cell phone era, or at least in an era where cell phones were just beginning to invade our lives."

Rasika's connection to the 90s goes beyond mere nostalgia. Growing up in Jamshedpur, a city close to Bengal, she was deeply influenced by the popular culture of the time. "I always feel very nostalgic about the time I grew up in, with all that was happening in popular culture, which was very much a part of my childhood and my memories. So, I was very happy to revisit that time and to be placed in Bengal because, as we know, with the Feluda series and Byomkesh Bakshi, it has a rich history of detectives. Í grew up very close to Bengal and had always wanted to spend time in Shantiniketan but never had the opportunity. So, I'm very happy that with this series, I got to explore the smaller towns of

The portrayal of her character, Iravati, required Rasika to strike a delicate balance between maintaining the character's aura of mystery and ensuring that the suspense remained engaging for the audience. She explains, "As actors, we depend a lot on the director and the script, but of course, we have our creative inputs. I felt that Iravati as a character has a lot of mystique, mystery and an aura about

Bengal and the 90s was an added bonus."

where I felt she was there too much. I spoke to the one representation—there have been good repredirector and the producer and suggested cutting out some scenes to maintain the mystery and aura that the character is known for Fortunately, they agreed with me and they actually cut my scenes." The chemistry between characters in a detective

series often plays a crucial role in keeping the audi-

ence hooked. Rasika's rapport with her co-stars, particularly Kay Kay Menon and Ranvir Shorey, was instrumental in creating the essential on-screen dynamic. "I've worked with Ranvir before and we've known each other for many years, so we already had a rapport. With Kay Kay Menon, he's very easy to work with. Any good actor will always be present for you and Kay Kay, with so many years of experience, was phenomenally present as a coactor. We didn't really have to work towards that chemistry—it was easily achieved. I liked the chemistry between Iravati and Shekhar; there's an understanding from Shekhar's side that she's the only one who can match his wits in this world and she knows that and

plays accordingly." Having traversed various genres in her career. The Mirzapur fame reflects on how her preparation differs when working on a contemporary drama like Mirzapur versus a period piece like Shekhar Home.

"With periods you're unfamiliar with, you need to do a lot of work to study things from that time to get a sense of what life was like. But with an era like the 90s, I was familiar with it because I grew up in that time, so it was easy breezy for this one. I've previously worked on a lot of projects set in India in the 1940s and 1950s. At one point, I felt like I lived in that era because I did 3-4 projects then. I started enjoying what I knew of that period so much that I felt like I was born in the wrong era."

As someone who has portrayed strong and often complicatedwomen, she has gained insights into how women are represented in Indian cinema

her. There were a couple of scenes in episode four and web series. "We can't say that there has been sentations and cardboard cut-out ones as well. But I do think the intention is very right and there's much more to achieve than we already have. I feel that we are moving in the right direction with different roles for women that are not just checking a box for a 'women-centric film,' but are trying to explore the inner lives of women in our country."

With Shekhar Home, she not just found a project that resonates with her love for the detective genre but also allows her to bring a nuanced, layered character to life.

Actress Rasika Dugal, has been keen on getting an opportunity to explore the detective genre with Shekhar Home. She speaks to The Pioneer about her love for the genre, working on

the project and more!

Combating fading vision with diabetic eye care

iabetes is becoming increasingly common around the world, and India is no exception. With around 101 million diabetic patients currently and the number expected to increase to 124 million by 2045. India holds the title "Diabetes capital of the world" due to its staggering economic and medical burden. The prevalence of diabetes in India has been steadily rising, driven by factors such as urbanisation, sedentary lifestyles, dietary changes and genetic predisposition. Diabetes affects various systems and organs in the human body, causing both immediate and long-term complications.

Unseen threats

In India, while keen attention is given to the major health issues, diabetic eye care is significantly neglected. Diabetic retinopathy, a leading cause of blindness in diabetic patients, often goes undiagnosed and untreated. The reasons being, a pervasive lack of awareness among both the general population and healthcare providers about the importance of regular eye examina-tions for diabetic patients and a lack of access to specialized eye care services.

Eye health and diabetes

Diabetes is caused because of inadequate insulin production and secretion in the body, causing excess glucose in the bloodstream. This can damage blood vessels and nerves, including those in the eyes, resulting in a variety of eye problems and in severe cases, leads to loss of eyesight. To avoid this, it's best to recognise different presentations and effects of diabetes on the

Long-standing, uncontrolled diabetes affects the eye in several ways

Diabetic retinopathy

In India, diabetic retinopathy (DR) is one of the most commonly occurring microvascular ocular complications. It occurs when high blood sugar levels damage the blood vessels in the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. Early stages of DR, patients do not have any symptoms and are detected only while routine fundus examinations are performed. However, in the late stages of the disease, it can cause blurred vision, floaters, double visions and eventually lead to vision loss if left untreated.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma accounts for 5.5% of blindness in India and is characterised by damage to the optic nerves secondary to raised intraocular pressure which is either due to impaired drainage of aqueous humor, the fluid in the eye, or due to a blocked trabecular meshwork. Majority of cases do not show any symptoms until vision loss occurs, yet some symptoms include throbbing eve pain, redness, headache, blurry vision, halos around lights. Diabetic patients are at higher risk of developing glaucoma.

Diabetic Macular Edema (DME)

Diabetic macular edema is identified by the swelling in the central part of the retina, called



the macula, which is responsible for the sharp, central vision. This is due to leakage from the abnormal blood vessels, that develop secondary to the damaged retina. It is marked by symptoms like blurry vision or double vision, difficulty in seeing when there is bright light and difficulty in color perception, noticing dark spots, floaters and seeing straight lines as bent or

Cataract is one of the leading causes of blindness in India and is responsible for over 65% of treatable blindness. Cataracts are a common eve complication in diabetic patients. They tend to occur at a much earlier age and progress faster compared to non-diabetic individuals. The lens of the eye, which is normally clear, becomes cloudy due to the buildup of proteins caused by high blood sugar levels and protein breakdown. It is known to manifest through symptoms like cloudy, or blurry vision, faded colors, glare around lights, having double vision and experiencing difficulty seeing at night.

Treatment for diabetic eye disease ranges from prescribing eye drops to lasers, anti-VEGF, eye injections, laser therapy, and in advanced stages, vitrectomy surgery

It is best to have preventive measures in place to overcome the risks of sight loss

- Get regular eye exams for early detection of these conditions.
- Manage diabetes effectively through medica-
- tion, diet, and lifestyle changes. • Ensure to keep blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure in control and take proper med-
- · Maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly and avoiding smoking and alcohol consumption can also help reduce the risk factors associated with these conditions

CONCLUSION

As diabetes numbers rise in India, it can pose significant risks to eye health, but with proactive management and regular eye care, you can protect your vision and reduce the likelihood of complications. Individuals can greatly reduce the impact of such conditions by adopting a healthy lifestyle.

(The author, Dr. M L Sujatha, is a Consultant - Cataract and cornea Refractive Surgeon at SPARSH Hospital.)

BORDER GAVASKAR TROPHY ON PAR WITH ASHES FOR AUSTRALIA: STARC

Australia pace ace Mitchell Starc believes that with the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India becoming a five-Test affair for the first time in over three decades, it would be "right on par" with the esteemed Ashes series for his team.

The marquee series between India and Australia, set to begin in November, was extended by a match this year for the first time since the 1991-92 season.

"Being five matches now it's probably right on par with an Ashes series," Starc told Wide World of Sports.

Since 2014-15, Australia have failed to lay their hands on the Border Gavsakar Trophy, with India winning four consecutive series including the historic triumphs Down Under in 2018-19 and 2020-21.

Starc is not only intent on reversing this trend but also harbours aspirations of a clean sweep, particularly as the series forms a crucial part of the World Test Championship. "We always want to win every

game at home and we know India are a very strong team,"

Currently, India leads the Wold Test Championships table with Australia in second place.

"As we're placed at the minute we're the top two teams on the Test ladder... So a very exciting series coming up for the fans and certainly the players.



Test career for as long as "Hopefully when we're sitting possible. there on the 8th of January we

...Every time I get to wear the have that trophy back on our baggy green cap it feels very special. Hopefully it's five times The 34-year-old is just 11 matches shy of reaching a through the summer with five wins and we can sing that song milestone 100 Tests and has no five times, then we move on plans to quit red-ball cricket. The left-armer said he is from there. scaling back his white-ball commitments to prolong his

"If it does come to a point where I'm lucky enough to get

obviously going to be pretty special as well," he said.

Starc is scheduled to fly to England next month for a white-ball series following which the left-armer intends to play domestic cricket for New South Wales ahead of the

Border Gavaskar Trophy.
"The Tests will always be taking precedence for me," he

said.
"We've got seven Tests on the bounce with five against India and then two in Sri Lanka, so they sit top of the tree with what's coming up."
Alongside, Test and ODI skipper Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood, Starc will shoulder the pace duties across three

the pace duties across three

formats. "Pat is resting for this UK tour... We love playing all three formats but that could look different at different times over 12 months."

"There is certainly no end date on (our bowling careers). That will be an ongoing one. We'll see where (our) bodies are and the want to keep going, but at this stage it's all guns blazing for five Tests against India."

Arya leads South Delhi Superstarz to six-wicket win over Central Delhi Kings

Priyansh Arya's scintillating 82 off 51 balls powered South Delhi Superstarz to a six-wicket win over Central Delhi Kings in the Delhi Premier League here.

Fifties from Dhruv Kaushik (56), and Yash Dhull (52)

Fifties from Dhruv Kaushik (56) and Yash Dhull (52) guided Central Delhi Kings to 176/7 after they were asked to bat on Tuesday.

However, South Delhi Superstarz chased down the target with five balls to spare, courtesy a solid 101-run partnership between Arya and Ayush Badoni (42). After the early loss of Sarthak Ray (0 off 1) in the first over, Badoni and 1) in the first over, Badoni and

Arya approached the run chase with composed batting. By the end of the powerplay, they took the score to 45/1 and went on to consistently score more than 10 runs per over. Arya brought up his fifty in 32 balls, while Badoni contributed a vital 42 off 36 balls before being caught at mid-wicket, thus missing out on his halfcentury.

By the strategic timeout, SDS were firmly in control, thanks to the free-flowing stroke play of Arya and Tejaswi Dahiya.



Arva, who smashed seven sixes and three fours, was dismissed in the 17th over. Tejaswi followed in the next over,

contributing 22 off 14. Despite these quick wickets, the South Delhi Superstarz were still in a commanding position, needing just 17 runs from 16 balls.

Vision Panchal and Dhruv Singh then sealed the victory with two sixes and a four in the 19th over, securing the South Delhi Superstarz' second consecutive win of the tournament.

Earlier in the contest, Hiten Dalal (10 off 9) fell cheaply to

Divij Mehra in the third over. However, skipper Yash Dhull led from the front, keeping the scoreboard ticking alongside Dhruv Kaushik as they stitched together a solid 91-run partnership off 65 balls.

Kaushik was then dismissed in the following over after scoring 56 off 33 balls. **Brief Scores:**

Central Delhi Kings: 176/7 in 20 overs (Dhruv Kaushik 56 off 34, Yash Dhull 52 off 44, Kuldip Yadav 2/37)

South Delhi Superstarz: 177/4 in 19.1 overs (Priyansh Arya 82 off 51, Ayush Badoni 42 off 36,

Conor joins Atletico Madrid from Chelsea as Joao moves in opposite direction

AP ■ MADRID

ngland midfielder Conor Gallagher finally completed his move to Atletico Madrid on Wednesday,

Atletico Madrid on Wednesday, ending a weeks-long saga that required a move by Joao Felix in the opposite direction to facilitate the deal.
Gallagher joined Atletico for a reported 36 million pounds (\$47 million) on a five-year deal. Hours later, Chelsea announced the signing of Felix, the Portugal forward, for a reported 45 million pounds (\$59 million). Chelsea wanted to sell Gallagher, an academy product and the team's vice-captain last season, to help the club meet the Premier League's financial requirements that are being more strictly applied in recent seasons. applied in recent seasons. Chelsea and Atletico reached an

agreement on his transfer but it was in jeopardy last week, reportedly because of

PTI BHUBANESWAR

India hockey captain Harmanpreet Singh on Wednesday said that his side

Wednesday said that his side was unlucky to lose to Germany in the Paris Olympics semifinal despite creating several chances before calling the back-to-back bronze winning performance a "huge achievement".

India repeated their 2021

Tokyo Games performance in



the collapse of a deal that would have seen Atletico striker Samu Omorodion move in the opposite direction.

That meant Gallagher had to return to Chelsea and train alone but a solution was reached, with Felix instead making the switch from Atletico to Chelsea. Felix spent the second half of the 2022-

23 season on loan at Chelsea, having previously become the third most expensive player of all time when Atletico triggered the 126 million euro (around \$140 million) buyout clause in

Unlucky to lose to Germany; back-to-back

bronze a huge achievement: Harmanpreet

But I think the bronze medal

was very important. It was the last match of the

tournament and feeling very

happy after winning the match. Our effort was that we should fulfil our dream (of winning gold) but somehow

we were unlucky.
"But, still, we had the bronze

medal to play for. So, went into the match with that

mindset that we will win. We've won back-to-back

for the first time in 52 years.
The keenly-contested semifinal earlier saw India

going down to reigning world champions Germany 2-3 to

set up a bronze-medal match

"It (semifinal vs Germany)

was a very close match. I think we created a lot of chances but you can say we were not lucky that day and

some chances were off

target," Harmanpreet told PTI Videos during a

with Spain.

his contract in 2019 to sign him from

"I'm really happy to be back at Chelsea and I can't wait to get started," he said. "I can see some familiar faces from the last time I was here, which is always nice.
"I loved my time here before and I told my friends and family that I'd love to

return to the Premier League one day. To do that with Chelsea is a great feeling and I'm excited to be back." Felix was on loan at Barcelona last

Gallagher played for England at the recent European Championship and was one of Chelsea's best players last season. He has played 95 times for a club he joined as a 6-year-old, scoring 10 goals in

It continues a frenzied summer of transfer activity for Chelsea, which continues to overhaul its squad under its

Harmanpreet was left speechless with the reception given to the players, saying the team gets the same effection gives time it some

affection every time it comes

"And, this time, we are

getting all the more affection. Whenever the team comes

here, be it to play in a tournament or after winning

a medal, it always feels nice... We get a lot of respect," added

Harmanpreet also thanked

Lausanne in bid for Diamond League title

to Odisha.

Harmanpreet.

Can see growth, especially in women's table tennis in India: Manika on UTT



PTI CHENNAI

Indian table tennis is headed in the right direction thanks to the advent of the UTT tournament which attracts top players from across the world, feels Manika Batra, who is the most prominent face of the women's game in

the country.

Manika and Sreeja Akula recently made history by becoming the first Indian table tennis players to reach the Olympics singles pre-quarterfinals in

represent Bengaluru Smashers in the eight-team Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) competition, which gets underway here

on Thursday.

"Personally, it has helped me because the players come for UTT from different countries, and we play against them, we play with them," Manika told reporters here on Wednesday.

"It's really fun, and we enjoy this. I can see the growth that's happening, especially in women's table tennis in India, how we all are performing internationally. We have improved a lot from UTT."

Manika lost to Miu Hirano of Japan 0-3

in Paris. In the team event, India, who were represented by Manika, Sreeja and Archana Kamath, lost to Germany 1-3 in the quarterfinals.

In the UTT, one of Manika's most anticipated contests will be against world No. 13, Bernadette Szocs of Romania, who will play for Ahmedabad SG Pipers. The two players also clashed during the pre-quarterfinals of the team event in Paris Olympics, with India winning the

Bernadette said, "I love to play here; I love all the fans who are Next, the 29-year-old Manika will supporters of table tennis. And, of course, always when I come here, everything is perfect with good organisation."

Veteran Sharath Kamal, who will lead Chennai Lions in UTT, feels the performance graph of Indian players is going up gradually.

"This is the first time both Indian teams, men and women, qualified for the

Olympic Games in the team event. The girls went further; they went on to play in the quarterfinals in the team event, and especially Manika and Sreeja got into the last 16 in the individual event," Sharath pointed out.

'So, performances like this have been

been constantly growing in the international arena, and we look forward to more growth."

Nigerian legend Quadri Aruna returns to the tournament, and his clash against Sharath is expected to be one of the highlights of the tournament.

"With huge spending on the sport of table tennis in India, we have seen huge growth. Indian players are already title contenders in most of the tournaments in the world. So, I think table tennis has improved a lot in India," expressed Aruna, who will be representing U Mumba TT.

UTT 2024 SQUADS:

Ahmedabad SG Pipers: Manush Shah,
Bernadette Szocs (Romania), Lilian
Bardet (France), Reeth Tennison, Pritha Vartikar, Jash Modi.

Chennai Lions: Achanta Sharath Kamal, Sakura Mori (Japan), Jules Rolland (France), Poymantee Baisya, Mouma

Das, Abhinandh PB.

Dabang Delhi TTC: Sathiyan G,
Orawan Paranang (Thailand), Diya
Chitale, Andreas Levenko (Austria), Yashansh Malik, Lakshita Narang.

Athlead Goa Challengers: Harmeet

Desai, Yangzi Liu (Australia), Yashaswini Ghorpade, Sudhanshu Grover, Savali Wani, Mihai Bobocica (Italy).

Jaipur Patriots: Cho Seungmin (South Korea), Suthasini Sawettabut (Thailand), Snehit SFR, Ronit Bhanja, Moumita Dutta, Nithyashree Mani.

PBG Bengaluru Smashers: Manika Batra, Alvaro Robles (Spain), Lily Zhang (USA), Jeet Chandra, Taneesha Kotecha,

Amalraj Anthony.

Puneri Paltan Table Tennis: Ayhika Mukherjee, Natalia Bajor (Poland), Joao Monteiro (Portugal), Ankur Bhattacharjee, Anirban Ghosh, Yashini Sivashankar.

U Mumba TT: Manav Thakkar, Sutirtha Mukherjee, Aruna Quadri (Nigeria), Akash Pal, Kavyasree Baskar, Maria Xiao

medals in hockey; it's a very big thing for us," he added. the state government for sponsoring hockey. Paris, defeating Spain to win felicitation ceremony in the women's singles pre-quarterfinals organised by the Odisha constantly coming up, and India has consecutive bronze medals After silver at Olympics, Chopra takes field in

PTI LAUSANNE

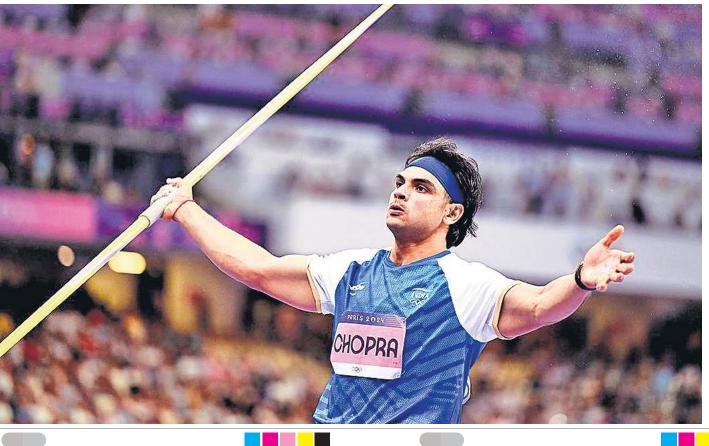
Two weeks after winning his historic silver medal at the Paris Olympics, star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra will resume action at the Lausanne Diamond League meeting on Thursday, seeking to reclaim the DL trophy at the season-ending finale next

Nursing a long-standing groin injury, Chopra claimed a silver in the Paris Olympics on August 8 with a 89.45m throw, having won a historic gold in the Tokyo edition of the Games three years ago. The 26-year-old double Olympic medallist Indian on Saturday

confirmed his participation at the Diamond League meeting in Lausanne, leaving a decision on a possible surgery after the end of the season.

Chopra was the Diamond League champion in 2022 and finished second behind Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic in the winner-takes-all DL final in Eugene, USA,

last year. This season's DL finals will be held in Brussels on September 14. He needs to finish in the top-six of the Diamond League meetings series standings to qualify for the season



There is another DL meeting — in

Zurich on September 5 — which has men's javelin throw event in its

He is currently at fourth spot with seven points he has garnered after finishing second behind Vadlejch in the Doha Diamond League on May

After a busy couple of days post the Olympic final on August 8, Chopra started training in Switzerland and is determined to finish the season on a high despite being restricted by the injury.

"I came to Switzerland for training ahead of the Diamond League. Luckily, I did not aggravate my injury as I took extra care of that. "I thought of continuing my season like most other athletes. There is one month to go until the season ends. I will go to the doctors in my free time," he had said last week.

Chopra will be up against a top-class field in Lausanne with five of the top-six finishers in Paris Olympics final competing. Only Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who stunned the athletics world by winning the gold with an Olympic record throw of 92.97m, is missing. Nadeem had finished fourth in the Paris Diamond League on July 7

with a throw of 84.21m. That was the only DL meeting — as well as the lone event apart from the Olympics — he had taken part this season.

He is currently at sixth spot in the

standings with five points.

Having pushed to the fourth spot with a throw of 88.50m in Paris after winning a silver in Tokyo, Vadlejch would be looking to maintain his form in his bid to defend the DL title.

Two-time world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada, who took the bronze in the Paris Olympics with 88.54m, has been on the ascendancy after a poor last season, and he is capable of pulling off big throws, having already gone

past the 90m mark in his career. Chopra has been the most consistent javelin thrower in the last couple of seasons, before Nadeem pulled off the heist in Paris, and the Îndian will start as favourite in

He has been managing his groin injury since winning the gold in the Budapest World Championships last year. The final treatment will be after

Lausanne on Thursday.

the season ends. I will try to take care of it as much as possible and consult the doctors later," he said. Vijayawada | Thursday August 22, 2024



I have learned a lot from SJ Suryah: Nani

ani is confident that his upcoming film Saripodhaa Sanivaaram is going to be a blockbuster. The actor, in an teraction with the media here, spoke about the film and his In this film, he shared that his character has some anger issues, which he says is just a part of it. "We have shown only the ingredients of the film and you can see the entire recipe on August 29," says Nani. In *Naa Peru Surya Naa IIIu India*, its lead actor Allu Arjun also has the same anger issues, just as his character in this upcoming film. On the similarities, Nani replies that both of them are different. "My film is completely

different and I am sure once my

film is released, one can understand that it is another subject," says Nani. He has been promoting this film like never before, even in other languages like Tamil Nadu and Kerala. "I promoted in those states to share some of the details about my film. It is not releasing in a big way in those states, as it gets a minimal release in Malayalam and Hindi! So, I just went there and said hello to all the people who are eagerly waiting to see my film," he says. Nani also clarified about a film with Balagam fame director Venu. While many reports claimed that the film has been shelved, other reports claimed that Nani has rejected the film. Dismissing the talks, he says, the film is definitely there, but it may start after some time. "I like the film Balagam a lot and I have told it in many events. When I met producer Dil Raju Garu, I told him about the film and also appreciated director Venu. He is an extraordinary director. I told Raju Garu that I would like to work with him. I don't know how the news came out, but it dissemninated. After that, Venu met me and we had a casual chat. I would like to work with him and definitely my film with Venu is there," Nani clarifies.

When asked about when he would start Hit 3 with director Sailesh Kolanu, he says that he is busy with the promotions of this Saripodhaa Sanivaram till the release of this film. He further went on to reveal that after one week, he will announce his next film. Meanwhile, in Saripodhaa Sanivaaram, Priyanka Mohan stars alongside Nani, to which he shares, "She is playing a constable and her role is very important for the story."

The film further has Tamil actor SJ Suryah playing the antagonist. "He is a very good actor and I have learned a lot from him. For every film I am doing I will learn something from co-actors and others,'

He was further praised by the music director Jakes Bijoy for his excellent songs and background score. "I still feel the haunt of those songs in my mind and after the release of this film, I will talk more about Bijoy and his music. People should definitely look out for him once the film releases," said Nani. The pre-release event of this film will be held on August 24.

GAME CHANGER PRODUCER CONFIRMS ITS RELEASE FOR CHRISTMAS

ere comes a major update regarding director Shankar and Ram Charan's film *Game Changer*. The film had kickstarted long-back and has also completed its shooting. Now, the film is in its post-production phase. The film is produced by Dil Raju, who has revealed a major update about the film. For all the people anticipating the release of Pushpa 2. With Dil Raju announcing that his film is comi up on Christmas holidays, it seems the year is going to end on a big note. Shankar was supposed to complete this film long ago. However, he had to finish Kamal Haasan's *Indian* film first, hence the Telugu film was



Mahesh to lend his voice for 'Mufasa' in The Lion King Telugu uperstar Mahesh Babu is going to be a part of the much-awaited film *Mufasa:*The Lion King which is referring

planning to release the film in Telugu in a big way and have roped in Mahesh Babu for the film. This announcement comes as good news for the Telugu audiences. The Telugu trailer will be launched on August 26 at 11:07 am. which will also have the voice of stalwarts like Brahmanandam as 'Pumbaa' and Ali as 'Timon'. Talking about the phenomenal association, Superstar Mahesh Babu shares, "The character of Mufasa appeals to me not only as a loving father guiding his son but as the supreme king of the jungle taking care of his clan. My family means everything to me and this collaboration with Disney is personally very special as it is an experience I will cherish with my children! I am looking forward to when my family as well as my fans will be watching Mufasa: The Lion King in Telugu on the big screen on December 20!"

The Lion King which is releasing on

December 20, this year. The makers are

"Our aim always is to bring a deeper, more personal touch to storytelling and engage with audiences all over the country and for them to enjoy the cinematic experience with their families in a language of their choice. The iconic character of Mufasa has inspired generations, and we are thrilled to have Mahesh Babu Garu bring the voice of Mufasa to life in the Telugu version of Mufasa: The Lion King!" said Bikram Duggal, Head of Studios, Disney Star. The film is directed by Barry Jenkins.



oming September 2, Pawan Kalyan fans have a reason to celebrate. The actor turned politician will be celebrating his birthday for the first time after becoming the Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh! While it's definitely a big reason for his fans to celebrate, here comes another major update on his film front. DVV Danayya, theproducer of his next film OG brings in a latest update. When asked if he is plan-

"Yes, we are planning to release a teaser or a glimpse from the film." Pawan Kalyan is playing the lead actor in this action film directed by Sujith. Priyanka Mohan is the female lead and the film shooting is almost complete except for a few scenes. "We are also planning to shoot the film soon and we want to complete it as soon as possi-

Thaman is the music director of this film and he is very excited to see this film's release. He is giving updates about this film and also talking about the upcoming glimpse of the film, saying that it is going to be a blast video. He says in his social media 'twaralo kaluddam' (we will meet soon).



Allu Arjun congratulates Aay lead pair

Bunny Vas is the producer of the recently released film Aay. Jr. NTR's brother-in-law, Narne Nithiin plays the lead character in it, while Nayan Srika is the female lead. The film the met with the Aay team to celebrate the film's is presented by none other than Allu Aravind. The story set against the backdrop of the Godavari region, the film did remarkably well at the box office. It collected good money and the producer gets profits after the fourth day onwards. Anji K. Maniputhra made his directorial debut with this film, which was released on August 15th.

After its release, Jr. NTR called the Aay team and appreciated everyone who worked for the film. He praises his brother-in-law, Narne success. Narne Nithin, producers Bunny Vas and Vidya Koppineedi, director Anji K Maniputhra, lead actress Nayan Sarika, Ankith Koyya, Rajkumar Kasireddy and others were personally met with Allu Arjun.

The film's shows and screens are increasing consecutively due to strong word-of-mouth. Audiences are leaving theaters feeling satisfied with the film. The film unit is pleased with the support and positive response and movie collections are rising daily.

'Aho! Vikramarka

charismatic performances in several South Indian films, including the blockbuster Magadheera, stars in the pan-India film Aho! Vikramaarka. The movie, produced by Dev Gill Productions, will be released on August 30 in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam. The film's trailer was unveiled on Wednesday. The trailer reveals that the villain, named Asura, controls an area where people must obey him or face death. The police lack the courage to confront him. However, a powerful police officer arrives to challenge this menace. On this occasion, Dev Gill said, "With Aho! Vikramarka, we aim to highlight the bravery and dedication of the Maharashtra Police in a compelling manner. The film will be released pan-India on August 30. The audience, who have previously seen only one facet of my acting, will experience a new side of me on the silver screen.

Going ahead, director Peta Trikoti added, "Through Aho! Vikramarka, we strive to capture the essence of language, culture, heroism and sacrifice. We have meticulously crafted the film to showcase the power of the police and audiences will see a new





SREELEELA LAUNCHES ORI MAYALODA

oung and talented actor Tejus Kancherla, known for his diverse role in *Hushaaru*, is now featured in his diverse role in *Hushaaru*, is now featured in *Uruku Patela*. With the tagline "Get Urikified," the film is directed by Vivek Reddy and produced by Kancherla Bala Bhanu. The previously released teaser and the song *Patnam Pilla* have already received a great response from audiences. The newly released lyrical song *Ori Mayaloda* was launched by star heroine Sreeleela! This song depicts the heroine's heartfelt expression of love for the hero. Praveen
Lakkaraju composed the music and the song is sung by Srinivasa Mouli. The song will surely rule everyone's playlist. Uruku Patela is produced by Kancherla Bala Bhanu under the banner of Lead Edge Pictures.



Demonte Colony 3 is on the cards!

The movie, which came out on August 15, is a sequel of the 2015 film *Demonte Colony*. The movie, helmed by R. Ajay Gnanamuthu, starred actors Arulnithi and Priya Bhavani Shankar in the main roles. During a media interaction prior

The audience had garnered to the premiere, actor Arulnithi staton the third part.

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The audience had garnered to the premiere, actor Arulnithi staton the third part.

The audience had garnered to the premiere, actor Arulnithi staton the premiere, actor Arulnithi ed that this horror film gained a lot of interest from viewers and was very successful. In order to maintain the tradition of the initial section, the subsequent section was

After seeing the first and second

said, "After completion of my next film, I will start working on the third part of *Demonte Colony*." It should be noted that presently, the director is busy with a television series starring actress Pooja Hegde. parts succeed, the director announced plans to begin working announced by the makers.

Kantara Chapter 1 fourth schedule shooting to begin

I ombale Films *Kantara Chapter I* is undoubtedly one of the most anticipated films that everyone is eagerly anticipating. After the release of its amazing first-look teaser featuring Rishab Shetty in an extremely thrilling and intense neverbefore-seen look, the excitement has reached its peak. Amid the rising anticipation, we have learned that the 4th schedule of the film is about to commence in the upcoming week.

According to an independent industry source, "The 4th shooting schedule for *Kantara Chapter 1* is set to begin next week. This schedule will feature a massive action sequence shot on a grand scale, promising to elevate the film's visual and cinematic experience."

Remarkably, Kantara left a mark at 70th National Film Award for the year 2022 by winning the Award for Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment.

Moreover, get ready to enjoy a divine experience like never before with the highly anticipated Kantara





movie Demonte Colony 2.