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Countless questions waiting for BJP in UP:
Akhilesh



'UNSPOKEN'
BOND SHARED OVER CUP OF IRANI CHAI HAS BECOME REGULAR PART OF MY LIFE'



Ravi Teja undergoes **SURGERY**

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The buildings of leaders like Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Congress MLA Vivek, former MP KVP Ramachandra Rao, former MP Madhu Yashki Goud and Legislative Council Chairman Gutha Sukhender Reddy should be demolished first and then the buildings of commoners should also be demolished.

- KT Rama Rao, BRS working president, TG

DON'T MISS...

TTD cautions devotees not to ...

The TTD has reiterated its appeal for devotees to use only the official website, <https://tdevasthanams.ap.gov.in>, with their Aadhaar card for booking online darshan and other services. They have urged devotees not to trust middlemen for darshan and Seva tickets. It is worth noting that four devotees from Tamil Nadu entered the Vaikuntam with alleged fake tickets for Srivari Kalyanotsavam on Thursday. They were identified and questioned by TTD vigilance officials. Investigations revealed that the fake tickets ...

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President Murmu voices concern ...

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday voiced concern over increasing space debris as a result of numerous satellites being placed in orbit and lauded ISRO for setting itself a target to make future space missions debris free by 2030. Murmu was speaking at the maiden National Space Day celebrations to mark the first anniversary of the landing of India's Chandrayaan-3 project. "Space debris can cause problems for space missions," she said during the event at Bharat Mandapam ...

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India has maximum electrification ...

India is the country with maximum electrification for expansion of tracks, Mukul Saran Mathur, Additional Member, Commercial, Ministry of Railways, said in his inaugural address at the ASSOCHAM National Conference held on Friday in New Delhi. Eminent experts, stakeholders and senior government officials from the Railway ministry deliberated upon a range of issues and transformative technical solutions for 'Modernisation of Railway for Viksit Bharat'. Mathur, while focusing on the ...

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Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa...

World Championship challenger D Gukesh enjoyed an advantageous position against tournament co-leader Alireza Firouzja of France but eventually settled for a draw in the fourth round of the Sinquefeld Cup, here. Gukesh, who is set to play the World championship match against Ding Liren of China next November, proved that he is made of sterner mettle as he made Firouzja's life tough. Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa also drew his game against Anish Giri of Holland and...

-SPORTS

'Grama sabhas' aim growth: Dy CM

Says State's happiness hinges on the happiness of villages



- Pawan Kalyan attends a 'Grama Sabha' in Mysuruvaripalli
- Importance of 'Grama Sabha' programmes for village development highlighted
- Previous YSRCP govt criticised for misusing funds and weakening Panchayat Raj system.
- Dy CM says the current coalition govt aims to strengthen the system.
- Pawan Kalyan says he is committed to working with dedication and learning from experienced leaders like CM Chandrababu.
- People warned against the encroachment of government land.
- Acknowledging the lack of sports facilities in villages, Pawan promises to seek funds for sports grounds.
- The Deputy CM vows to prevent migration from Rayalaseema and establish a skill development university.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan has said that the development of the State will extend beyond politics, and the State's happiness hinges on the happiness of its villages. The Deputy CM attended a Grama Sabha in Mysuruvaripalli of Railway Koduru on Friday and spoke at the event organised under the banner of Swarna Grama Panchayat.

Pawan Kalyan emphasised that Grama Sabha programmes are crucial for determining village development. He highlighted that in the past, funds allocated to villages and panchayats were misused, and the previous YSRCP government had weakened the Panchayat Raj system. He assured that the coalition government is implementing measures to strengthen the system. The Deputy CM stated that by reinforcing the 13,326 panchayats, the state's debts could be resolved.

He pledged that the government would not shirk its responsibilities and would work continuously with dedication. He acknowledged that while there is no magic wand for miraculous results, their commitment to the state's development is unwavering. He reiterated his belief that Andhra Pradesh needs the experience of CM Chandrababu, who he believes is the only one capable of addressing the state's debt issues. He

65 The government can provide pensions to lakhs of people on the first of every month. I am prepared to work diligently for the people and support them in times of struggle

remarked, "The government can provide pensions to lakhs of people on the first of every month. I am open to learning from those with superior ideas and experience, such as Chandrababu. I am prepared to work diligently for the people and support them in times of struggle." Pawan Kalyan asserted that his position is not merely a decoration but a responsibility. He insisted that each panchayat should have its land, and the encroachment of government land will not be tolerated; if necessary, the Goonda Act will be enforced. He noted that panchayats are ineffective without assets and pointed out the lack of sports activities and playgrounds in villages. He pledged to seek funds from donors to establish sports grounds.

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Rural development key to nation's progress: CM

PNS ■ KOTHAPETA/VANAPALLI

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, on Friday, expressed a firm opinion that the nation's development is possible only with the evolution of rural areas and promised to take all gram panchayats in the State towards rapid progress.

Addressing a 'grama sabha' at Vanapalli in the Kothapeta Assembly segment, the CM said that the previous government had almost treated the sarpanches as mere ceremonial idols. "I am of a firm belief that just as an MLA is crucial for an Assembly segment, a sarpanch is equally important for village development," Naidu said.

Promising to provide all basic amenities for every region, every village, and at all doorsteps across the

State, the Chief Minister told the gathering that soon after the TDP-led NDA Government assumed charge, funds amounting to Rs 998 crore were released for the panchayats. "We are soon going to release another Rs 1,100 crore for the village panchayats," he announced.

Chandrababu also assured the people that the work days under the NREGS will be increased from 15 crore to 21.5 crore.

Advising the people to stay away from those who cause harm to society, the CM, in an oblique reference to the former chief minister, Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy, said that the status of the Leader of the Opposition is something given by the people after electing a leader, and not under threats.

Continued on Page 2

PM MODI INVOKES MAHATMA GANDHI IN KYIV

Ukraine, Russia should sit together to end war 'India ready to play active role'

PNS ■ KYIV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday conveyed to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that both Ukraine and Russia should sit together without wasting time to end the ongoing war and that India was ready to play an "active role" to restore peace in the region.

In his talks with Zelenskyy in Kyiv that came a day ahead of Ukraine's Independence Day, the prime minister said India was on the side of peace since the beginning of the conflict and he would even like to contribute personally for a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Modi's nearly nine-hour visit to Ukraine, the first by an Indian prime minister since its independence in 1991, came six weeks after he held summit talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin that triggered anguish in some Western countries.

The prime minister reiterated the need for "sincere and practical" engagement between all stakeholders to develop innovative solutions that will have "broad acceptability" and contribute towards early restoration of peace in Ukraine, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said.

"I have come with a message of



peace..I want to assure you and the entire global community that India is committed to respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity (of states) and it is of utmost importance to us," Modi told Zelenskyy at the talks. The prime minister also asserted India's strong commitment towards respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. "I want to assure you and the entire global community that India is committed towards respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity (of states) and it is of utmost importance to us," he said.

Modi arrived in Kyiv following a nearly 10-hour train journey from Poland in the second leg of his two-nation trip.

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HC grants conditional bail to Pinnelli

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leader and former MLA Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy was on Friday granted bail by the AP High Court in the case related to the destruction of EVMs on May 13 and the assault on police on May 14. Pinnelli, who was arrested by the police on June 26, was given conditional bail by the High Court upon submission of two sureties for Rs 50,000 each.

Continued on Page 2

YET ANOTHER PHARMA PLANT FIRE ROCKS ANAKAPALLI

4 workers critically hurt; CM seeks detailed report

Just days after a vapour cloud explosion at a pharmaceutical plant in the Anakapalli district, another industrial accident occurred, leaving four workers seriously injured. The latest incident happened early Friday morning at Synergene Active Ingredients Pvt Ltd, located in the Jawaharlal Nehru Pharma City (JN Pharma City), Parawada. Three of the injured workers are from Jharkhand, and one is a local.

The fire started around 1 am when chemical vapours ignited due to static electricity. Superintendent of Police M. Deepika Patil described it as a "flash fire," a sudden and intense blaze that engulfed the room where the four workers were present. Fortunately, no lives were



lost, but the injuries were severe. The victims, all in critical condition, were immediately taken to a nearby hospital for emergency treatment. The company has since released a statement assuring that the situation is under control and that safety protocols are being reviewed.

Continued on Page 2



Negligence case filed against Escientia

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Rambilli police in Anakapalli district have filed a negligence case against Escientia Advanced Sciences Private Limited following a deadly explosion at the company's facility in the Andhra Pradesh Special Economic Zone (AP SEZ) in Gurajapalem on August 21. The blast claimed 17 lives and injured 36 others.

The case was registered under sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) based on a complaint by P Bhagyavathi, who cited the company's failure to follow essential safety measures as the cause of the explosion. The powerful blast left the premises engulfed in flames, complicating rescue efforts.

Victims include Pudi Mohan (20) and Ch. Harika (20), among others. The incident has sparked outrage, with victims' families and political groups demanding the arrest of the company's management and swift justice for the negligence that led to the tragedy.

GOLDEN MOMENTS

A dazzling display of devotion at Tirumala



PNS ■ TIRUMALA

In a spectacle that glittered with divine opulence, devotees from Pune graced the sacred precincts of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) on Friday, adorned with an astonishing 25 kg of gold, valued at a whopping Rs 180 crore. The entourage, comprising two men, a woman, and a young boy, turned heads as they paraded through the temple gates draped in a multitude of gold chains, glittering sunglasses, intricate bangles, and a striking gold necklace emblazoned with the number '7'.

Continued on Page 2

IMPROVED RESERVOIR LEVELS ACROSS INDIA: CWC

Southern region shows a more positive trend

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The overall water-storage levels across the country's major reservoirs have improved significantly compared to last year but certain areas, particularly in the northern region, are facing lower-than-normal storage levels, which could impact water availability in the coming months, according to official data.

The Central Water Commission (CWC) has released its latest report on the live storage status of 155 reservoirs across India, revealing that the overall water-storage levels have improved significantly compared to last year.

According to the bulletin released on Friday, the live storage available in these reservoirs is 130,800 billion cubic metres (BCM), which is 72 per cent of the total live storage capacity.



However, the report also notes that certain areas, particularly in the northern region, are facing lower-than-normal storage levels, which could impact water availability in the coming months.

However, the report also notes that certain areas, particularly in the northern region, are facing lower-than-normal storage levels, which could impact water availability in the coming months.

This marks a notable increase

from the 114,657 BCM recorded during the same period last year, indicating that the current storage is 114 per cent of last year's level and 112 per cent of the average storage over the last 10 years.

The report highlights regional

variations in water-storage levels, with some areas experiencing better storage than others. In the northern region, which includes Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan, the storage levels are below normal, with reservoirs holding only 53 per cent of their capacity.

This is a significant drop from the 84 per cent recorded last year.

Conversely, the southern region, covering states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, shows a more positive trend, with reservoirs at 80 per cent capacity, a substantial improvement from the 52 per cent recorded during the corresponding period last year.

The eastern region, comprising states such as Assam, West Bengal and Bihar, also reported an increase in the water-storage levels.

Continued on Page 2

Skill census to create jobs: Lokesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Education, IT and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, stated that the Skill Census Survey must be conducted in a meaningful manner. Minister Lokesh reviewed the conduct of the Skill Census Survey with Skill Development officials at his Undavalli residence on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, Lokesh said that as part of the skill census, the government will prepare a special resumé by collating the education, employment, and skill profiles of the youth, which will be provided with direct access to leading companies. He mentioned that a system for the direct selection of youth possessing the necessary skills for respective companies will be established. Education and skill

Govt to prepare special resumes with education qualifications and skill profiles of youth



updates should be upgraded regularly, the Minister emphasised, and he made it clear that unnecessary

questions should not be posed to the youth.

Continued on Page 2

Lokesh promises to resolve complaints on a war-footing

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Human Resources, IT and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, on Friday assured all those who contacted him with various issues that they would be resolved on a war footing. On the 30th consecutive day of Praja Darbar, people from all corners of the State came forward with various problems, confident that their concerns would be addressed if brought to Lokesh's attention. The Minister assured them that he would initiate urgent measures to resolve their problems.

Sheik Kasimbi of Yerrabalem in the Mangalagiri Assembly segment appealed to Lokesh for employment in Anna Canteen and also for a pension for her husband, who is suffering from a prolonged illness. D Aruna Kumari of China Kakani requested the Minister to sanction a housing



unit for her, as she has been living in rented accommodation for a long time.

A physically challenged A Rama Rao from Undavalli, a graduate, appealed to Lokesh for employment and a housing unit. Lokesh assured all of them that he would take the necessary steps soon to assist them.

Tirangi Lakshmi of

Fazilbaghet in Srikakulam district submitted a memorandum to Lokesh, stating that her land, which has been under her ownership for a long time, has been included in the prohibitory category. She requested that her land be removed from this category and that a No Objection Certificate (NOC) be issued to her. Timescale employees of

the Telugu and Sanskrit Academy sought job security and the continuation of the house rent allowance (HRA) along with the city compensatory allowance (CCA).

Several others also brought their concerns to the notice of the IT and Electronics Minister, who promised to take all possible measures to resolve them at the earliest.

Narayana asks civic bodies to focus on water, roads, drains and parks

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister Ponguru Narayana has issued instructions to the Commissioners of Municipal Corporations to take all possible precautions to prevent water logging on roads during the rainy season. The minister has emphasised the need for regular cleaning and desilting of drains.

Minister Narayana held a review meeting with Commissioners of various Municipal Corporations, including Vijayawada, at the CDMA office on Friday. He directed the commissioners on the precautions to be taken during the rainy season and the development works to be undertaken in their respective corporations. Commissioner Dhyana Chandra was questioned about the heavy water logging on Vijayawada's roads following recent rainfall. In addition to Vijayawada, other corporations have been advised to implement measures to prevent water logging. The minister instructed municipal officials to



RESOLUTIONS AT REVIEW MEET

- Prevention of waterlogging on roads
- Strict action against unauthorised layouts
- No advertisements on central dividers

focus on roads, drinking water, sewers, parks, and street lighting.

The minister stressed that strict action must be taken against unauthorised layouts. Due to insufficient penalties, permissions are not being sought in advance for layouts. He suggested imposing heavy fines on layouts without proper permissions and directed commission-

ers to enforce strict measures regarding layout approvals. The minister also urged officials to complete the survey of tap connections in towns promptly.

Minister Narayana instructed officials to ensure that cattle and pigs are not seen on municipal roads, with a target to eliminate cattle from all municipal and corporate roads within the next 15

days. He also called for actions to ensure municipalities and corporations are free of pigs by September 30. The minister emphasised the need for rapid sterilisation of stray dogs and measures to prevent pet dogs from roaming the streets.

Officials were advised to ensure that commercial advertisement boards are not placed on central road dividers. Minister Narayana provided instructions on solid waste treatment and park management and suggested identifying genuine beneficiaries for the housing scheme for the poor. Municipal Department Director Hari Narayanan, TIDCO MD Saitant Verma, Mepma MD Tej Bharat, Town Planning Department Director Vidyulatha, Public Health Department Engineer-in-Chief Gopala Krishna Reddy, along with Commissioners from Visakhapatnam, Rajahmundry, Vijayawada, Guntur, Kakinada, Nellore, and Tirupati Municipalities, attended the meeting.

Skill census to create jobs...

Continued from Page 1

He further stated that the ultimate goal of the Skill Census Survey is to create jobs for the youth, and industry leaders across the state should engage with job portal administrators and seek suggestions for a more effective skill census.

The Minister noted that following the skill census, steps will be taken to enhance skill development among the youth. He highlighted that while youth claim they are not finding jobs, companies complain they are not finding skilled youth. The solu-

tion to both these issues, according to Lokesh, lies in the skill census. He asserted that skill training tailored to the needs of industries and job creation for the youth are the primary objectives of the skill census and necessary measures should be taken to provide the skills required by industries.

Minister Lokesh directed officials to conduct a skill census survey as a pilot project in Mangalagiri once the comprehensive plan is finalised. Officials demonstrated the app designed for the skill census to Lokesh, who suggested a few changes to

be made.

Principal Secretary of IT, Saurabh Gaur, Chairman in-charge of the Higher Education Department, Rammohan Rao, Skill Development MD, Gummala Ganesh Kumar, and others participated in the review.

Minister Lokesh also directed officials of the higher education department to take steps to fill the vacant teaching posts in various universities across the state without any legal complications. He recommended a planned approach to improving the rankings of the universities.

AP SC panel chief happy with his stint so far

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Marumudi Victor Prasad, the Andhra Pradesh State Scheduled Caste Commission Chairman, has expressed his satisfaction with serving the SC community over the past three years. He stated that he worked diligently to promote the welfare and rights of the people as enshrined in the Constitution. During his tenure, he encountered no obstructions and remained committed to resolving issues

faced by the SC community.

AP State SC Commission Chairman M Victor Prasad took office on August 24, 2021, and has now completed three years of service. In this context, he addressed the media at the Commission's office located at NTR Administrative Bhavan on the PNBS premises in Vijayawada on Friday.

Victor Prasad told the media that he has managed his constitutional role effectively over the past three years.

Jagan, a symbol of lies and deceit: Atchannaidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Agriculture Minister K Atchannaidu has accused former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy of spreading malicious propaganda, despite the government's swift response to the Atchutapuram SEZ accident, where they supported the victims in every possible way. The Minister remarked that Jagan Mohan Reddy has become synonymous with lies and deceit, adding that the people will not forgive him for politicising the compensation for the victims.



Minister Atchannaidu criticised Jagan Mohan Reddy for announcing plans to stage a dharna, despite the government's ongoing efforts to provide compensation and assistance to those affected by the pharma incident. He highlighted the swift action taken

by the government, with ambulances and medical teams arriving at the scene within minutes. He also noted that Jagan's attitude remained unchanged even after the public had expressed their dissatisfaction in the recent elections, where his party was reduced to just 11 seats. Atchannaidu accused Jagan of plotting political conspiracies by creating misconceptions

among the public. Furthermore, the Minister denounced Jagan's false claims that the YSRCP government had supported all victims of the LG Polymers accident in Visakhapatnam by providing compensation. He pointed out that the compensation announced by Jagan Mohan Reddy during that incident was never fully delivered. Atchannaidu recalled that a compensation of Rs 1 lakh was promised for the three deceased within 15 days of the accident. He also criticised the previous Jagan-led government for filing cases against 30 people at Gopalapatnam station who had protested in support of the victims. The Minister added that incidents during the YSRCP regime, where patients were transported to hospitals on two-wheelers, had become a source of controversy.

ISRO releases scientific data for global researchers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The ISRO on Friday threw open its scientific data gathered from the Chandrayaan-3 mission for researchers across the world for analyses to mark the first anniversary of India landing a spacecraft on the Moon.



The space agency has granted access to over 55 gigabytes of data from the five payloads - three on the Vikram lander and two on the Pragyan rover - that created history on August 23 last year by making a soft landing near the unexplored south pole region of the Moon.

"This data is not going to be confined with those scientists who have created those instruments, but it will be made available to all the researchers of the country and the world for furthering the outcome of this," ISRO Chairman S Somanath said at the National Space Day celebrations here.

The Chandrayaan-3 data sets are available on Policy-based Data Retrieval, Analytics, Dissemination and

Notification System (PRADAN) portal of the Indian Space Science Data Centre (ISSDC) - www.pradan.issdc.gov.in.

The Pragyan rover conducted in-situ chemical analyses of the lunar surface, contributing to a better understanding of the Moon's origin and evolution. This information is crucial for future lunar exploration and potential resource utilisation.

Scientists from Ahmedabad's Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) after studying the data from Chandrayaan-3 provided evidence to confirm the Lunar Magma Ocean Hypothesis that the Moon evolved from a giant ocean of magma which later cooled down.

4 workers ...

Continued from Page 1

This incident follows closely on the heels of a devastating vapour cloud explosion at a private pharmaceutical unit in Atchutapuram just two days earlier, which resulted in 17 deaths and left around 40 workers injured. These consecutive accidents have raised serious concerns about industrial safety in the region.

In response to the latest fire, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has demanded a detailed report from officials and instructed them to provide the best possible medical care for the injured. District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad, Anakapalli Joint Collector M. Jahnavi, and Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha visited the victims and assured them of government support. Minister Anitha expressed regret over the incident, stating, "It is unfortunate that such accidents occur, but the government will stand by the victims and their families during this difficult time."

The Collector has also instructed hospital authorities to ensure the best possible treatment for the injured workers and announced plans for a special meeting with industry managers and officials.

Rural development ...

Continued from Page 1

Chandrababu termed it historic to hold 13,326 grama sabhas on a single day and congratulated the Deputy Chief Minister, Pawan Kalyan, for proposing and undertaking this initiative. Regretting that the previous government completely neglected and debilitated panchayats in the State, the Chief Minister said that not even a single road was laid in any village in the State.

The CM made it clear that under Article 243A, the grama sabha's consent is required for any functioning of a sarpanch and asked whether the previous government had conducted even a single grama sabha in any part of the State in five years. People were mobilised under threats by the previous government, and even a common man was not allowed to come out of the house.

Stating that a skill census is being undertaken since educated youth need skill devel-

opment for employment, the CM felt that the youth will earn almost double revenue if they have proper skills. "We will certainly improve the skill of the youth," he added.

Chandrababu announced that a new sand policy will be introduced on September 11 and said that sand will be directly delivered to homes if registered with the secretariat. Necessary funds will be released for all the local issues of Vanapalli, he added.

"Though I have previously called for observing family planning, now I am appealing to the people to increase the population by having more children," Naidu said. Reiterating that Telugu should reach the highest position in the world, the Chief Minister said that every official should properly implement what the local public representatives want. "Ultimately, we all should work for the progress of the people," Naidu added.

A dazzling ...

Continued from Page 1

Their radiant procession was carefully monitored by two security personnel in navy blue khaki suits, accompanied by a police officer, ensuring that the devout could perform their rituals in peace amidst the throngs of visitors. The temple, a beacon of faith, sees a daily footfall of between 75,000 and 90,000 pilgrims.

Syamala Rao, the Executive Officer of Tirumala Tirupati

Devasthanams (TTD), revealed that the world-renowned Sri Venkateswara temple received offerings worth Rs 125 crore through its donation boxes in July alone. During this month, over 22 lakh pilgrims visited the temple, with 8.6 lakh devotees partaking in the traditional ritual of tonsuring. The temple also delighted its visitors with the sale of more than one crore laddus, the consecrated sweets that are as cherished as the temple itself.

Southern region shows a more ...

Continued from Page 1

The reservoirs in this region are currently at 60 per cent capacity, a marked improvement from the 43 per cent recorded last year.

Similarly, the western region, which includes Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa, has seen an increase in the storage levels, with reservoirs now at 74 per cent capacity, up from 69 per cent last year.

In the central region, which includes Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, the reservoirs

are currently holding 76 per cent of their total capacity, reflecting a moderate improvement from the 73 per cent recorded during the same period last year.

This region's storage is also higher than the 10-year average, which stood at 68 per cent.

The CWC report concludes that the overall storage position across the country is better than both last year and the 10-year average, which is a positive sign for water availability in various sectors, including agriculture, hydroelectric power generation and drinking water supply.

Ukraine, Russia should sit ...

Continued from Page 1

Modi's wide-ranging talks with Zelenskyy primarily focused on ways to end the war and boost bilateral cooperation in areas of trade, defence, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, agriculture and education.

"We (India) are not neutral. From the very beginning, we have taken sides. And we have chosen the side of peace. We have come from the land of Buddha where there is no place for war; we have come from the land of Mahatma Gandhi who had given a message of peace to the entire world," Modi said.

The prime minister also apprised Zelenskyy of his message to Putin in Samarkand in September

2022 as well as in Moscow last month.

"Some time back, when I met President Putin in Samarkand, I had told him that this was not the era of war. Last month when I went to Russia, I said in clear words that the solution to any problem is never found on the battlefield," Modi said.

"The solution comes through talks, dialogue and diplomacy and we should move ahead in that direction without wasting time.

Both sides should sit together and find ways to come out of this crisis," Modi said. Following the talks, Zelenskyy said India supports Ukraine's national sovereignty and territorial integrity and it is "critical because everyone in the world must equally respect the UN Charter."

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Panchami: Aug 23 10:39 AM to Aug 24 07:52 AM
Shashthi: Aug 24 07:52 AM to Aug 25 05:31 AM
Saptami: Aug 25 05:31 AM to Aug 26 03:39 AM
Nakshatram: Ashwini: Aug 23 07:54 PM to Aug 24 06:05 PM
Bharani: Aug 24 06:05 PM to Aug 25 04:45 PM
Rahukalam: 9:11 AM to 10:44 AM
Yamagandam: 1:51 PM to 3:25 PM
Varjyam: 03:09 AM to 04:40 AM
Gulika: 6:04 AM to 7:38 AM
Amritakalam: 11:26 AM to 12:55 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:53 AM to 12:43 PM
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Scattered Showers
Temp: 33°C
Humidity: 74%
Sunrise: 5:53 AM
Sunset: 6:26 PM
Updated: August 23, 2024 5:00 PM

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NTR District Collector Srijana addressing the Grama Sabha at Chillikallu of Jaggayyapeta mandal on Friday

Rs 80 cr NREGS funds sanctioned to NTR district, says Collector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Grama sabhas conducted to prepare plans with people's participation for village development

NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana has disclosed that funds worth around Rs. 80 crore were sanctioned under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme (MGNREGA) to the district. As per the instructions from the State government, the district administration conducted Grama Sabhas in all gram panchayats. During these grama sabhas, works will be identified and later the necessary steps will be taken for the development of villages considering people's opinions, she said.

Collector Srijana participated in many Grama Sabhas on Friday. In the Grama Sabha held at Jupudi of Ibrahimpatnam mandal, Mylavaram MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad was also present, while MLA Sriram Rajagopal alias Tataiah attended the programme at Chillikallu of Jaggayyapeta mandal along with the Collector. As part of the Grama Sabhas, the Collector planted saplings and inspected wealth

creation centres. Srijana stated that the State government is conducting the Grama Sabhas for the comprehensive development of villages, taking inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi. The primary aim is 'Swarna Grama Panchayats', she added. Further, she stated that plans have been prepared with people's participation for the villages' development. "However, they are prioritising drinking

water tap connections, individual toilet constructions, CC roads, drainage maintenance systems and other infrastructure facilities. Also, they are creating awareness among the people on the Upadhi scheme, works to be taken under the scheme, social audit and more," she said. MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad said that he will strive to develop all villages in Mylavaram constituency in a phased manner. The State government had sanctioned Rs.22.50 crore to his constituency for the development of villages. If necessary, he can use DMF and CSR funds, he said.

'Varalakshmi Vratam' celebrated grandly

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Varalakshmi Vratam was celebrated with great enthusiasm on the third Friday of Sravana Masam at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada. The event took place on the sixth floor of the Mallikharjuna Maha Mandapam and saw participation of numerous women devotees and couples. The Vratam began with Arjitha Seva at 7.30 am, followed by a free mass Vratam at 10 am. The temple was beautifully adorned with a variety of colourful flowers for the occasion. Devotees flocked to the temple to perform special pujas, with the temple authorities providing puja materials and prasadam free of cost.



After the Vratam, the devotees were given darshan through a special queue line. The arrangements for the event were supervised by the Durga

Temple's Deputy Executive Officer, Leela Kumar. In view of the significance of Shravana month, a large number of devotees visited the

temple, resulting in crowded queue lines. The temple authorities provided butter-milk and drinking water to them.

Minister Narayana inspects city roads

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Municipal Administration & Urban Development, P. Narayana, inspected various areas in Vijayawada city that were affected by water-logging due to heavy rainfall. His visit aimed to assess the situation and understand the extent of the damage in the city. He directed the officials concerned

to take measures to address the waterlogging issues. Following the inspection, Minister Narayana spoke with Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Commissioner HM Dhyanchandra over the phone to enquire about the situation in the city. Many roads were severely affected by waterlogging caused by heavy rain.

AP JUDA calls off strike



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Junior Doctors' Association (AP JUDA) has called off the two-week-long strike and emergency boycott following assurances from the Supreme Court and the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Chandrababu Naidu. The strike began soon after the tragic incident of assault and murder of a young female postgraduate at RG KAR Hospital, West Bengal, on August 8, where the medical fraternity witnessed violence against doctors. The members of AP JUDA, in a release on Friday, stated that their decision to temporarily suspend the strike was made in good faith with the belief that it will lead to meaningful and lasting improvements. The AP JUDA stated, "The first demand has been met: the case has been transferred to the CBI and is now under the purview of the Supreme Court, which has taken it up suo motu. This significant step ensures that a transparent and thorough investigation will be conducted, providing justice for the victim and safeguarding the rights of

healthcare professionals nationwide." They said, "We would like to thank The Federation of All India Medical Associations (FAIMA) for advocating for immediate and robust safety measures in hospitals across the country, which was answered by the Honourable Supreme Court, in a landmark ruling, by directing the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to engage with the Chief Secretaries and Directors General of Police across all states and union territories. This is to ensure the swift implementation of essential safety measures for the protection of healthcare professionals nationwide." Furthermore, they thanked Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Nara Chandrababu Naidu, for understanding their pain and standing with them during this critical time. The Chief Minister has assured them that an amendment regarding the safety of healthcare workers is forthcoming, which will include a stringent punishment for any act of violence against healthcare professionals.



Nunna school girl wins 1st prize in poster presentation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

G. Sandhya, a student of Zilla Parishad High School, Nunna, near Vijayawada, secured first place in the NTR District-Level Poster Presentation held on the First National Space Day, celebrated on 23rd August each year. This day commemorates the successful landing of the Chandrayaan-3 mission and highlights India's achievements in space exploration, as announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year. The district-level poster presentation took place at Bishop Azaraiah Girls' High

School, Vijayawada, organised by the NTR District Education Department and Samagra Shiksha. Around 100 students from various government and private schools participated enthusiastically. NTR District School Education Officer (DSEO) U.V. Subba Rao presented the prizes, congratulating the winners and praising the students and their teachers for their participation. He highlighted the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) achievements in space exploration, noting that ISRO scientists have set a global standard in satellite missions.

Railway officials conduct inspection of Vande Bharat Express, Samalkot station

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vavilapalli Rambabu, Senior DCM, Vijayawada Division, conducted an extensive inspection of the 20707 Secunderabad-Visakhapatnam Vande Bharat Express from Vijayawada to Samalkot on Friday. The inspection aimed to ensure high-quality onboard services and passenger amenities. V Rambabu commenced the inspection on 20707 SC-VSKP Vande Bharat along with his team and checked the quality and quantity of onboard catering services. The Senior DCM and team obtained feedback from passengers, and instructed the catering team to be courteous and attentive to passenger needs. They have also conducted the complete rake and checked for any shortfalls and deficiency of services on board. At Samalkot station,



Rambabu inspected the parcel office, booking office, passenger amenities, waiting halls, and catering stalls. He convened a meeting with supervisors of the goods shed, booking office, and parcel office to discuss ways to improve passenger and freight traffic. He emphasised the importance of prioritising

safety in train operations and redressing passenger grievances. Later, Rambabu conducted a pantry car check on Train No 18463 Bhubaneswar-SMV Bengaluru, inspecting the quality and hygiene of the cooking area. They also checked the expiry dates of ingredients used for cooking. He directed

the catering management to produce a complaint book to the passengers on demand and strictly adhere to the safety and hygiene protocols. Rambabu said that the Vijayawada Division is committed to maintaining good customer service and upkeep of amenities.

YSRCP announces new leaders for 15 party wings

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has appointed new leaders to head 15 of the party's affiliated wings. The key appointments are as follows:

- Varudu Kalyani, MLC, as State president of the YSRCP Women's Wing.
- MVS Nagireddy as State president of the YSRCP Farmers' Wing.
- Vishweswar Raju, MLA, as State president of the YSRCP ST Cell.
- Khader Basha as State president of the YSRCP Minority Cell.
- Vennapusa Ravindra Reddy as State president of the YSRCP Panchayati Raj Wing.
- Repala Srinivas as State president of the YSRCP Municipal Wing.
- Nagarjuna Yadav as State president of the YSRCP Volunteer Wing.
- Gautam Reddy as State president of the YSRCP Trade Union.
- Manohar Reddy as State president of the YSRCP Legal Cell.
- Vangapandu Usha as State president of the YSRCP Cultural Wing.
- Posamreddy Sunil as State president of the YSRCP IT Wing.
- Bandela Kiran Raj as State president of the YSRCP Disabled Wing.
- Narayana Murthy as State president of the YSRCP Grievances Cell.
- Ramachandra Reddy, MLC, as State president for the YSRCP Teachers' Federation (Private Schools).
- Chandrashekar Reddy, MLC, as State president for the YSRCP Teachers' Federation (Government Schools).
- Chinnamma as State president of the YSRCP Anganwadi Wing.

AP students excel in national handwriting competitions



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Students from Andhra Pradesh have showcased their remarkable handwriting skills in national-level competitions, emerging as top performers among over three lakh participants. The State secured two positions each in the senior and junior categories at the national level. A. Arjun, the son of the Visakhapatnam District Collector, was honoured as the National Best Handwriting Captain in the senior category. Ch. Lakshmi Kavya, a student at National High School, Kaikaluru,

Eluru district, clinched first place in the Wonder of Best Handwriting category in the senior division. In the junior category, Abhirama Danvik, a Fifth Class student from NSM Public School in Vijayawada, secured the top position, while Boppana Mukunda Priya, an Eight Class student from Nirmala High School, earned third place. Handwriting expert Sheikh Mahub Hussain highlighted that the competition held online recently, was organised under the joint auspices of the NRI National Handwriting Academy,

Amma Odi Handwriting, and All India Handwriting Trainers. He noted that the National Handwriting Competition is conducted biennially. Hussain further mentioned that Andhra Pradesh students secured four out of the 13 national positions. Among the winners, Arjun, Abhirama Danvik, and Mukunda Priya received training from national handwriting expert Bhuvanchandra. The students who excelled at the national level will soon be felicitated by Andhra Pradesh Governor Abdul Nazir.

Rs 140 cr sanctioned to Krishna for NREGS works

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Mines & Geology and Excise Kollu Ravindra has announced that Rs.40 crore was sanctioned to Krishna district under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and these funds will be used for the development of villages.

Kollu Ravindra, as chief guest, attended the Grama Sabhas held at Bhogireddypalli and Chinnapuram of Machilipatnam mandal on Friday and addressed the villagers. He paid rich tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion. He also paid homage to freedom fighter and former CM Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu on his 152nd birth anniversary.

Andhra Loyola MAGIC and AICUF raise Rs 4 lakh for Wayanad landslide victims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The All India Catholic University Federation (AICUF) and Men and Women Aiming at Greater Initiatives for Change (MAGIC) units of Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada, have successfully raised Rs 4 lakh for the victims of the Wayanad landslide through a week-long fundraising drive. The funds, totalling Rs 4 lakh, will be donated to the Tribal Unity for Development Initiatives (TUDI), a Jesuit organisation dedicated to supporting tribal communities in Kerala. Of the total amount, ₹2,01,482 was collected by stu-



dents from the AICUF and MAGIC units, while the college contributed an additional Rs 1,98,518. The students, led by conveners Komali and Levi Jethro, took the initiative to gather contributions across Vijayawada, including within the college campus. With

the necessary permissions from the Commissioner of Police, they organised collections at various public places such as the Railway Station, 1 Town, Varshralatha, Lenin Centre, Besant Road, Gunadala, Bavajipet, and other suburban areas around Vijayawada.

'Houses of VIPs like Ponguleti in FTL area'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Countering the challenge thrown by Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy that BRS Working President KT Rama Rao can demolish his house if it is in the buffer zone, KTR said that there are satellite maps showing the location of houses. Speaking to the media on Friday, KTR said, "Ponguleti doesn't need that much effort. There are satellite maps showing the position of buildings in the FTL area and buffer zone. Ponguleti need not worry."



KTR suggested that Ponguleti should check and talk to HYDRAA Commissioner AV Ranganath about how ponds were filled up and buildings constructed on them. He asked HYDRAA officials to start demolishing buildings located in the FTL area and buffer zones first. He said that the buildings of leaders like Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Congress MLA Vivek, former MP KVP Ramachandra Rao, former MP Madhu Yashki Goud and Legislative Council Chairman Gutha Sukhender Reddy should be demolished first and then the buildings of commoners should also be demolished.

Ambati plays CM for 'politicising' Atchutapuram SEZ tragedy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Expressing deep regret over the tragic incident at Atchutapuram, former minister Ambati Rambabu criticised the TDP coalition government for its lack of crisis management during the accident and for politicising the issue. He called it a failure on their part and demanded strict action against those responsible. Speaking to the media at the party's central office on Thursday, Ambati Rambabu

questioned why there was no immediate response from the Chief Minister, Home Minister, or top officials who were present at the Secretariat during the incident. He accused Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu of politicising the tragedy and blaming the YSRCP instead of focusing on the victims. He also pointed to similar accidents during Naidu's previous tenure as Chief Minister, questioning the safety measures implemented at that time.

Constitutionally speaking, royalty is not a tax

The payments made to the Government cannot be deemed to be a tax merely because the statute provides for their recovery as arrears. This is a significant judgment which the Supreme Court delivered on July 29, 2024.

How the states need to distribute legislative powers between the Union and the States on the taxation of mineral rights is an important Constitutional aspect. The nine-judge Constitution Bench of Dr. DY Chandrachud, CJI, Hrishikesh Roy, Abhay S Oka, BV Nagarathna, JB Pardiwala, Manoj Misra, Ujjal Bhuyan, Satish Chandra Sharma and Augustine George Masih JJ, has held that royalty paid by mining operators to the Central government is not a tax and that States have the power to levy cesses on mining and mineral-use activities. However, Justice BV Nagarathna gave a dissenting

opinion. This ruling highlighted a point on 'royalty' as tax and States' power to levy cess on mining and mineral-use activities. Except for one judge, the bench held the following: 'Royalty is not a tax. Royalty is a contractual consideration paid by the mining lessee to the lessor for the enjoyment of mineral rights. The liability to pay royalty arises out of the contractual conditions of the mining lease. The payments made to the Government cannot be deemed to be a tax merely because the statute provides for their recovery as arrears.'

Entry 50 of List II: Constitutional points

"Entry 50 of List II does not constitute an exception to the position of law laid down in M. P. V. Sundaramier & Co. v. State of Andhra Pradesh, (1958) 9 STC 298. The legislative power to tax mineral rights vests with the State legislatures.

The Supreme Court noted that the MMDR Act was enacted by Parliament in the exercise of its legislative power derived from Article 246 read with Entry 54 of List I. The Act seeks to provide for the regulation of mines and the development of minerals under the control of the Union. The Court said that the declaration indicates that Parliament intends to take the regulation of mines and development of minerals under the control of the Union to the extent indicated in the statute

"Parliament does not have legislative competence to tax mineral rights under Entry 54 of List I; it is a general entry. Since the power to tax mineral rights is enumerated in Entry 50 of List II, Parliament cannot use its residuary powers to that subject matter.

"Regulation of mines and mineral development is enumerated under both the Union List (Entry 54 of List I) and the State List (Entry 23 of List II) of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution. "The entrustment of the subject to the State legislatures



PROF MADABHUSHI SRIDHAR ACHARYULU
Dean, Mahindra University, Hyderabad

Article 246 of the Constitution.

"The MMDR Act is a comprehensive code for the regulation of mines and development of minerals. Section 9 provides that the holder of a mining lease shall pay royalty in respect of any mineral removed or consumed from the leased area at the specified rates.

In India Cement, (AIR 1990 SC 85), (https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1907642/) a seven-judge Bench of the apex court held that royalty is tax, and the State legislatures lack the competence to levy taxes on mineral rights because the subject matter is covered by the MMDR Act. The Court also held that royalty cannot be used by the State legislature as a measure of tax on mineral-bearing lands under Entry 49 of List II.

Entry 49 of List II: Past judgment

"Later in State of West

Bengal v. Kesoram Industries Ltd, 2004) 10 SCC 201 a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court held that the decision in India Cement stemmed from an inadvertent error and clarified that royalty is not a tax. Thereafter, the State legislatures exercised their legislative powers to impose taxes on mineral-bearing land in pursuance of Entry 49 of List II by applying the mineral value or royalty as the measure of the tax.

Why is this decision? What is the true nature of royalty determined under Section 9 read with Section 15(1) of the MMDR Act? Is royalty in the nature of a tax? Whether Royalty is a tax?

The Supreme Court noted that the MMDR Act was enacted by Parliament in the exercise of its legislative power derived from Article 246 read with Entry 54 of List I. The Act seeks to provide for the regulation of mines and the development of minerals

under the control of the Union. The Court said that the declaration indicates that Parliament intends to take the regulation of mines and development of minerals under the control of the Union to the extent indicated in the statute.

Lease linked with MMBR Act

The rates of royalty were primarily governed by the terms of the lease before the enactment of the MMDR Act. Once a mining lease was entered into between a lessor and lessee, the rates of royalty would remain static during the subsistence of the lease. Section 9 of the MMDR Act has enabled the Central Government to examine the rates of royalty concerning all minerals and modulate them periodically after taking into consideration various factors, including the uniformity of mineral prices.

Rs 233 cr material component for NREGS works in Eluru dist: Kolusu

PNS ■ ELURU

Under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, with a material component of Rs 233 crore, various village development works will be undertaken in the district, according to State Minister for Housing, Information, and Public Relations Kolusu Parthasarathi. The minister participated as the chief guest in the 'gram sabha' held on Friday at Borvanch in the Nuzvidu mandal of Eluru district on Friday.

During the event, the minister mentioned that these village meetings aim to provide financial assurance and sustainable assets to the families of employment guarantee workers. He explained that conducting village meetings simultaneously across 547 village panchayats in the Eluru district will help identify the new works needed for each village and involve the people in



the process.

In addition to the ongoing works under the employment guarantee scheme, plans are being developed to carry out works such as rural road construction, drainage systems, crop canal repairs, fruit orchard

cultivation, and the construction of shelters for livestock, goats, sheep, and chickens, with the approval of the village people by March 31 next year. He emphasised the need to focus on village development beyond political interests.

He assured that the central government allocates funds for the employment guarantee scheme, and efforts will be made to transparently execute more works in the constituency with these funds. He instructed the officials to issue job cards to all eligible persons without any political bias and ensure that work is provided.

Despite fund shortages, the Chief Minister has decided to develop R&B roads with approximately Rs. 2,000 crores. As part of this, Rs. 20 crores will be used for development efforts in the constituency. The government is taking steps to resolve issues in the villages and develop them into model villages.

During the meeting, the state minister inquired about the issues faced by the villagers. He stated that addressing individual concerns would lead to village development. Village elders requested the development of roads, and drains, the establishment of a school, and the provision of a dedicated building for the Anganwadi.

TTD cautions devotees not to approach middlemen

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The TTD has reiterated its appeal for devotees to use only the official website, https://ttdevasthanams.ap.gov.in, with their Aadhaar card for booking online darshan and other services. They have urged devotees not to trust middlemen for darshan and Seva tickets.

It is worth noting that four devotees from Tamil Nadu entered the Vaikuntam with alleged fake tickets for Srivari Kalyanotsavam on Thursday. They were identified and questioned by TTD vigilance officials. Investigations revealed that the fake tickets were procured from a cyber centre in Tirupattur, Vellore district of Tamil Nadu. The cyber centre operator, Annadurai, had booked the tickets by charging large amounts and altering the last two digits in the passport number. TTD vigilance officials have complained to the police against the individual concerned.

The current TTD administration is focused on detecting fake websites and identifying brokers involved in cheating devotees. There have been complaints that some brokers are collecting substantial sums from unsuspecting devotees, promising to book Darshan tickets. The TTD vigilance team routinely rechecks all tickets before allowing devotees to Darshan. If tickets are found to be fake, devotees may face difficulties. In this context, TTD has once again warned that stringent action will be taken against brokers involved in fraudulently issuing fake Darshan and Arjita Seva tickets. Devotees are cautioned to book Darshan and Seva tickets only through the TTD official website.

8 red sanders smugglers held in 2 separate incidents

33 red sanders logs and a car seized

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

In separate incidents, the task force police have arrested eight red sanders smugglers and seized 33 logs and a car in the forest areas of Balapalli in Annamaya district and Chandragiri town in Tirupati district. Acting on orders from the task force in-charge, Tirupati district SP L. Subbarayudu, and under the leadership of Task Force SP K. Srinivas, two teams conducted combing operations on Thursday in the forest areas of Balapalli and Bhakarapet in Annamaya district.

An RSIs team led by K. Alibasha, along with local forest officials, commenced combing from Siddhaleru. On Friday morning, as they approached the area near Rajampet Division Balapalli beat, some individuals were spotted transporting sandalwood logs. As the task force team encircled them, the smugglers attempted to flee by abandoning the logs. However, six of them were apprehended. They were identified as Chandrasekhar (22), Shankar



(29), Venkatesh (34), MGR (46), Lakshmanan (57), and Selvarasu (21) from Kallakuruchi district in Tamil Nadu. Twenty-five sandalwood logs found in the area were seized.

Similarly, another team led by RSI K.S.K. Lingadhar, under the direction of Operations RSI K. Suresh Kumar Reddy, conducted combing in the forest areas around Chandragiri in Tirupati district. They checked entry and exit points from Kalyani Dam. Under the Narsingapuram railway bridge within the Bhakarapet range and Nagapatla section, some individuals were seen loading sandalwood logs into a car. When approached, the identi-

fied smugglers quickly drove away in the car. Lingadhar's team chased them on motor-bikes and intercepted them at the Chandragiri clock tower. Two individuals, including the car driver, were detained. Seven sandalwood logs were found in the car, and one more was discovered under the railway bridge. The arrested individuals were identified as Haristhathil Ravi (30) and Ranjith Chinnapayan (30) from Tiruvannamalai district in Tamil Nadu. The car and eight sandalwood logs have been seized, and two cases have been registered at the Tirupati Task Force Police Station. CI Suresh Kumar is conducting the investigation.

'Gram sabhas' to plan work based on local needs: Eluru Collector

To advance village development, the State government will conduct 'gram sabhas' under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) to identify and plan development work according to local needs, District Collector K. Vetriselvi announced.

Addressing a 'gram sabha' at the Pragadavaram village secretariat in Chintalapudi mandal on Friday, the Collector outlined the planning process for MGNREGS works for Andhra Pradesh's 2024-25 financial year. The meeting was chaired by village Sarpanch Tommandru



Bhupathirao and was overseen by the District Water Management Agency, Eluru. District Collector K. Vetriselvi and Chintalapudi Assembly Constituency MLA Songa Roshan Kumar were the chief guests.

Water to last just 130 days in Tirumala

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The water available in the five prime dams at Tirumala will suffice the requirements for the next 120-130 days only, due to the meagre rainfall received so far.

Every day, nearly 43 lakh gallons of water is consumed in Tirumala, out of which 18Lg is procured from Tirumala dams and the remaining from the Kalyani Dam located in



Tirupati. The total storage capacity of Gogarbham, Akasa Ganga, Papa Vinasanam, Kumaradhara and Paspudhara dams in Tirumala is 14,304 lakh gallons. At present, only around 5,800 lakh

gallons are available in Tirumala.

In the larger interests of the pilgrims visiting Tirumala during the ensuing annual Brahmotsavams, scheduled from October 4 to 12, TTD has appealed to devotees as well as locals to avoid wastage of water. It is contemplating measures for the regulation of water consumption if the situation persists in the coming months.

TTD cancels sevas, special darshans during annual fest

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

TTD has cancelled certain Arjita Sevas and Darshans during the forthcoming Srivari annual Brahmotsavam scheduled from October 4-12, with Ankurarpanam on October 3.

TTD has cancelled all special Darshan including parents with infants, senior citizens and physically challenged darshans besides VIP Break Darshans (only protocol VIPs are allowed) to facilitate a larger number of pilgrims with comfortable and satisfactory Darshans during the nine-day Brahmotsavams.

MP Sribharat inspires youth at Regional Parliament Competition

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam MP M Sribharat attended the 35th Regional Youth Parliament Competition held at Malkapuram Central College on Friday. The event, which brought together students from eight schools, provided a platform for young minds to discuss pressing issues, propose innovative solutions, and delve into the intricacies of parliamentary procedures.

Sribharat, impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication of the participants, praised the students for their active involvement. "It's heartening



to see such energy and commitment from our youth. Their eagerness to understand and engage with the democratic process is truly commendable." Drawing from his own experiences, the MP offered the students a glimpse into the life of a Member of Parliament. "A typical day in Parliament involves rigorous discussions, debates, and decision-making. Understanding these processes

is crucial for anyone aspiring to be a part of our democratic system," he explained, adding that he was deeply moved by the insightful topics raised by the students during the event.

Highlighting the importance of such initiatives, Sribharat stated, "Programmes like these are essential in fostering a deeper understanding of democracy among the youth. They not only educate but also inspire the next generation to become thoughtful and effective leaders."

He emphasised the pivotal role of the youth in shaping the future of the nation. "The

youth are the torchbearers of change. It's vital for them to recognise their responsibilities as citizens and actively participate in democratic processes. Their involvement is key to building a more inclusive and progressive society," he said.

Sribharat underscored the need to nurture leadership qualities among young people. "It's imperative that we provide platforms like this to enhance the leadership skills of our youth and broaden their understanding of the democratic system. This will equip them to take on meaningful roles in the future," he affirmed.

Intl award for Dr Gullapalli

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr. Gullapalli N. Rao, founder-chair of LV Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI), has been honoured with the prestigious ICO Jules François Golden Medal for 2024 by the International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO). The award, which recognises exceptional contributions to ophthalmology, was presented to Dr. Rao at the World Ophthalmology Congress (WOC) in Vancouver, Canada, on August 16, 2024.

This medal, awarded every four years, is named after Dr. Jules François, a renowned Belgian ophthalmologist.



GVMC bans manual sewer cleaning

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In the wake of the tragic death of an Underground Drainage (UGD) supervisor in a manhole accident on BRTS Road at Krishnarayapuram, the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) has enacted a strict ban on manual cleaning of underground sewers and drainage systems. This urgent measure aims to enhance safety and ensure the proper management of the city's sewerage infrastructure.

GVMC Commissioner P Sampath Kumar highlighted the seriousness of the new regulation, stating, "No one is permitted to enter or clean underground sewers or drainage systems without official authorisation.

ACROSS THE STATES



15-year-old boy drowned in waterlogged road in Delhi

A 15-year-old boy drowned in a waterlogged road near The British School in central Delhi's Chanakya Pur area following heavy rain in parts of city on Friday, officials said. The deceased, Sourabh, lived with his family at the Vivekanand Camp in the same area, the police said. According to the police, Sourabh and some of his friends were playing in the rain on the waterlogged road near the British School when he accidentally ventured into deep water and drowned. The victim's friends informed his family members, who immediately reached the spot, pulled him out of the water and rushed him to the hospital, where he was declared dead on arrival, the officials said. The police said the body of the victim has been sent for postmortem and further investigations are underway.



JNU students take out march to Education Ministry office

Members of the JNU students' union on Friday took out a march to the Ministry of Education to press for their demands, including increase in scholarship amounts, but were stopped by police just outside their campus. There is a heavy deployment of police personnel with multiple layers of barricading, trying to stop the students from stepping out of the campus. However, the students marched for half a kilometre outside the campus and were stopped by the police. A clash broke out as students tried to break the barricades. A police official earlier said that no permission was given to the students to march outside the campus. "They will be stopped, if they come out of the university," the official had said earlier. The police have kept buses on stand-by to detain those trying to proceed further.



MP: 5 dead, 40 injured as bus overturns in Pandhurna

Five persons were killed and 40 injured when a private bus carrying them to Hyderabad from Bhopal overturned in Madhya Pradesh's newly-formed Pandhurna district, bordering Maharashtra, police said on Friday. The bus flipped over after hitting a divider at Mohit Ghat around 10 pm on Thursday, Sub-Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Brijesh Bhargava said over the phone. He said three passengers died at the scene, while two succumbed to their injuries at a hospital in Nagpur, about 60 km from the accident spot. After being informed about the accident, police reached the site and sent the injured to hospitals in four ambulances, he said. Citing initial investigation, the official said the bus was travelling at 110 kilometres per hour when the driver lost control of the wheel. The deceased have been identified as Mamta Gupta (32), Vinod Yadav (32), Deepak Kakodiya (26), Babu Khan (54) and B Venkat Narsimha Reddy (49), he added.

Cong for martyr status to farmers killed during farm laws protest

Farmers who died during the protest against the three farm laws would be given martyr status if the Congress wins the Haryana assembly elections, party general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala said on Friday. Hitting out at the BJP-led NDA government, Surjewala said, "They were forced to withdraw the black farm laws. They had assured a legal guarantee for minimum support prices (MSP). They have failed to do it." "As many as 750 farmers died during the agitation (at the Delhi border). A Congress government will be formed with people's blessings after one month (in Haryana). Within 30 days of assuming charge, all 750 (farmers) will be given martyr status and their next of kin a job," Surjewala, a former Haryana minister, said at a gathering in Kaithal district. Farmers -- mostly from Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan -- had protested against the now-repealed three farm laws along Delhi's borders in 2020-2021. On the issue of legal guarantee for MSP, Surjewala said, "Narendra Modi, Manohar Lal Khattar and Nayab Singh Saini did not fulfil that promise. Today, I want to tell you that the day Rahul Gandhi becomes prime minister, the first law in Parliament will be a legal guarantee for MSP." Surjewala also said if the Congress formed the government in Haryana, it would effectively tackle unemployment, which he called a big problem.



Countless questions waiting for BJP in UP: Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav posed around two dozen questions for the BJP on Friday, saying people across Uttar Pradesh are waiting for the ruling party with these queries. Listing questions on topics including stray cattle, unemployment, law and order and farmers' issues in a long post in Hindi on X, Yadav said, "Countless questions are waiting for the BJP's allies on every footpath, panchayat, street corner, market, square and chowk." "Now, the public is impatient to tell the BJP's allies that we will not talk to those who are not with the public," he added. Referring to the poor show of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Lok Sabha polls, Yadav claimed that after the election results, factions in the saffron party have lost faith in each other.

By blaming each other, they will neither be able to win back that trust nor any upcoming election, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said. Pointing towards the 10 Assembly bypolls to be held in Uttar Pradesh in the near future, he said, "Now that the BJP's allies are saying that they will go to the booths and take care of the arrangements, it clearly means that in view of the historic defeat in the Lok Sabha polls, they are assuming that the BJP workers have left the booths out of despair or the power-hungry allies of the BJP, wearing masks, no longer have faith in the BJP workers." "Actually, after the election defeat, the

"Now, the public is impatient to tell the BJP's allies that we will not talk to those who are not with the public," he added

assuming that the BJP workers have left the booths out of despair or the power-hungry allies of the BJP, wearing masks, no longer have faith in the BJP workers." "Actually, after the election defeat, the

BJP factions have lost trust among themselves. Another aspect is that the BJP's allies want to show that they were not the reason for the defeat, they are still powerful, it is the BJP that has become weak," Yadav added. He claimed that in both scenarios, it is proved that the BJP members have accepted defeat and are extremely worried about the future. "But by blaming each other, they will neither be able to win back that trust nor any upcoming election," the SP chief said.

None from NCP (SP) keen on being projected as CM face: Pawar

PNS ■ PUNE

Amid Shiv Sena (UBT)'s push for the opposition MVA to declare its chief ministerial candidate in Maharashtra, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar on Friday insisted no one from his party was interested in getting projected for the top post and instead they were focused on effecting a change of government in the poll-bound state. He informed that seat-sharing talks among Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) constituents for the upcoming assembly polls were delayed due to the August 20 protest in Thane district's Badlapur over alleged sexual abuse of two minor girls in a school, and they will now be held on August 27.



The Shiv Sena (UBT) and the NCP (SP), along with the Congress, are part of the MVA, a state-level alliance of opposition parties. Replying to a question on Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray insisting on the MVA projecting a CM face before the assembly polls, while the Congress taking a different stand on the issue, Pawar maintained as far as his

party was concerned, no one was interested in being projected as the candidate for the top post. "No one is interested (in being projected as CM face) from our party. No one is being projected from our party. We just want to bring a change in the government. We want to give a better administration to the people of the state by remaining on one page (with other MVA allies)," he argued. Before the polls, Pawar asserted focus should be on providing an alternative to the ruling Mahayuti which consists of the BJP, the Shiv Sena and the NCP. As far as I am concerned, I am out of question and that is why there was no need to raise this issue (of CM face) now.



President Murmu voices concern over increasing space debris

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday voiced concern over increasing space debris as a result of numerous satellites being placed in orbit and lauded ISRO for setting itself a target to make future space missions debris free by 2030. Murmu was speaking at the maiden National Space Day celebrations to mark the first anniversary of the landing of India's Chandrayaan-3 project.

"Space debris can cause problems for space missions," she said during the event at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi that was attended by Union minister Jitendra Singh, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman S Somanath, engineers, ISRO scientists and representatives of the country's nascent space industry. The president appreciated

the ISRO System for Safe and Sustainable Operations Management Facility, which ensures continuous progress of space research activities. "I am also happy to note that India is moving forward to make all its space missions debris free by 2030," Murmu said. The president presented awards to winners of the Robotics Challenge and the Bharatiya Antariksh Hackathon on the occasion.

Two women fall unconscious as people throng bank for e-KYC of 'Ladki Bahin' scheme

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Two women fell unconscious in a stampede-like situation outside a nationalised bank, where more than 100 people gathered to submit documents for the Maharashtra government's "Majhi Ladki Bahin" scheme in Nandurbar district, police said on Friday. The incident occurred outside a branch of the State Bank of India in Dhadgaon around 1 pm, an official said. More than 100 people, the majority of them women,



had gathered outside the bank since morning to furnish documents for the e-KYC process for the Majhi Ladki Bahin scheme, he said. A stampede-like situation

ensued in the afternoon, and two women fell unconscious, the official said. The police rushed to the spot, and the women were sent for medical treatment, he said.

Siddaramaiah, Shivakumar in Delhi to discuss MUDA 'scam' with Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar arrived in the national capital on Friday for crucial meetings with top Congress leaders. Sources indicate that the primary focus of these discussions will be to formulate a strategy ahead of next week's high court hearing on the controversial Mysuru Urban



Development Authority (MUDA) 'scam' case. The MUDA 'scam' has been a thorn in Siddaramaiah's side,

with allegations of illegal land dealings involving the chief minister and his wife Parvathi flying thick and fast.

14 people killed, 16 injured as Indian-registered bus plunges into river in Nepal

PNS ■ KATHMANDU

At least 14 people were killed and 16 others injured after an Indian tourist bus veered off the highway and fell 150 metres into the fast-flowing Marsyangdi River in central Nepal on Friday, authorities said. The bus from Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh was heading towards Nepal's capital Kathmandu from the resort town of Pokhara when it drove off the highway in Aaina Pahara in the Tanahun district. There were 43 people, includ-



ing the driver and the co-driver, in the bus with the registration number UP 53 FT 7623. The passengers onboard the bus were part of a group of 104 Indian pilgrims who arrived in

Nepal from Maharashtra in three buses two days ago for a 10-day tour of the Himalayan nation, MyRepublica news portal reported. They came from Bhusal vil-

lage in Jalgaon district. After visiting Pokhara for two days, all three buses left for the capital Kathmandu on Friday morning. Madhav Prasad Paudel, chief of the Armed Police Force (APF), Kurintar, said that most of the passengers travelling in the three buses were families and relatives. "An Indian tourist bus travelling from Pokhara to Kathmandu with around 43 Indians fell 150 metres into Marshyangdi River today," the Embassy of India said in a post on X.

Chouhan praises Modi gov't's efforts for BCs, slams Cong for 'lip service'

PNS ■ PATNA

Senior BJP leader and Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday praised the Narendra Modi government for its efforts to uplift backward classes and accused the Congress-led opposition of merely offering "lip service" to the cause. The Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development was addressing a party function in memory of Ramphal Mandal, a freedom fighter who went to the gallows at the age of 19 for killing three British officials who were blamed for a police firing during the 1942 Quit India movement.

Chouhan, a former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, noted that Mandal was a "dhanuk", a backward class "known for its contribution in nation building, in my home state as well as Bihar". "Our opponents only pay lip service to backward classes who have got their due only under the current BJP regime, with an 'ati pichhda' (extremely backward class) Modi at the helm", said Chouhan. He added, "It is Modi who gave 27 per cent reservation to the OBCs in entrance tests like NEET. It is this government which granted constitutional status to the National OBC Commission.

5TH SEASON OF DELHI THEATRE FESTIVAL

Plays by Shabana Azmi, Naseeruddin Shah on cards

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The fifth edition of Delhi Theatre Festival will return from September 20 with plays by theatre and cinema veterans like Naseeruddin Shah, Ratna Pathak Shah, Shabana Azmi and Lillete Dubey. Organised by Alchemist Live, the shows will be staged at the Siri Fort Auditorium, Kamani Auditorium, and OP Jindal Auditorium in Delhi, and Orana Conventions in Gurugram. The three-day festival will stage a total of seven plays by

some of the most noted names in theatre. On September 20-21, Ratna Pathak and Naseeruddin Shah's "Old World" will be staged at the Siri Fort Auditorium. The play will move to Orana Conventions on September 22. The drama involving the actor couple is revolves around the friendship that develops between an eccentric woman and a reserved doctor after a chance encounter at a health resort. Twinkle Khanna's celebrated play "Salaam Noni Appa", featuring Lillete Dubey, Yateen

Karyekar and Jayati Bhatia will open at Kamani Auditorium on September 21. "Salaam Noni Appa" explores the dynamics between two widow sisters, as one of them finds love in a younger man. Mandira Bedi and Samir Soni's "Anything but Love" will be staged at Kamani Auditorium on September 20. A comedy for adults, "Anything but Love" is a story of two people, recently divorced but maybe still very much in love.



"Broken Images" by Shabana Azmi will be staged at Orana Conventions on September 21. The show features Azmi playing two sisters living under the same roof - one an intellectually brilliant paraplegic, the other a plodding writer - but the arrangement is fraught, because as they respond to life together, and separately, they continually modify the image they have of each other and the world

around. "Delhi Theatre Festival has always held a special place in my heart. Performing for a Delhi audience is always an invigorating experience. Returning to Delhi to perform 'Broken Images' after a couple of years fills me both with excitement and anxiety," Azmi said in a statement. "One on One Dhamaal" by Rajit Kapur, Vrajesh Hirjee, Sumeet Vyas, Sohrab Ardeshtir, Anu Menon, and Shikha Talsania will be staged on September 21 at OP Jindal Auditorium.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Surging ahead

Kamala's socialism resonates with people while personal attacks by Trump diminish his chances in the US elections

As the United States gears up for another contentious election, the spotlight is once again on Vice President Kamala Harris. Her steadfast commitment to secularism has struck a chord with a diverse electorate that values the separation of church and state. In contrast, former President Donald Trump's attacks on Harris, aimed at undermining her credibility, may be backfiring, potentially diminishing his chances in the upcoming elections. As the political climate in the United States continues to evolve, Vice President Kamala Harris has emerged as a prominent advocate for policies rooted in democratic socialism. Her focus on social justice, economic equality, and government intervention to address systemic issues resonates with a growing segment of the American electorate. Meanwhile, former President Donald Trump's attacks on Harris appear to be weakening his appeal, potentially diminishing his chances in the upcoming elections. Kamala Harris's brand of socialism centres on creating a fairer society through progressive taxation expanded healthcare access, and stronger social safety nets. Her policies aim to address the widening wealth gap, ensure affordable education, and promote racial and gender equality. These ideas have gained traction, particularly among younger voters, minorities, and working-class Americans who feel left behind by the current economic system. Harris's commitment to these principles is seen as a response to the pressing needs of a diverse and economically stratified nation. By advocating for policies that prioritize the needs of the many over the interests of the few, Harris is tapping into a widespread desire for systemic change. In contrast, Donald Trump's strategy has often relied on personal attacks, attempting to discredit Harris by questioning her policies and character. However, these comments have not only failed to undermine Harris's growing support but may also be backfiring on Trump himself. Many voters perceive Trump's rhetoric as divisive and out of touch with the issues that matter most to them, such as healthcare, education, and economic justice. Moreover, Trump's focus on personal attacks rather than substantive policy debates could be alienating voters who are looking for solutions to real problems. As the electorate becomes increasingly concerned with issues like income inequality, climate change, and access to healthcare, Trump's attacks may come across as a distraction from the pressing issues at hand. Kamala Harris's approach, rooted in democratic socialism, offers a vision of an America where everyone has a fair shot at success. This vision is resonating with a growing number of voters who are frustrated with the status quo and are seeking leaders who will champion their interests. Meanwhile, Trump's jabs may be costing him the support of those who are tired of political mudslinging and are looking for a leader who can address their needs.



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Violence against women: Unheeded cries

As public outrage grows, the challenge before the authorities is to provide safety and dignity of women across the country



RAJDEEP PATHAK

In a flashback all the past horrendous incidents of violence against women, particularly incidents of rape cross the mind. Here in our country, newspaper pages more than often bring out horrifying accounts of sexual violence – a 65-year-old grandmother assaulted in Kharagpur or a teenage girl, native of Uttar Pradesh, was gang-raped inside a government bus at the Dehradun Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT) in Uttarakhand on August 12, 2024, and the latest from Maharashtra, when on August 20, 2024, two minor girls, aged 4, studying in Nursery, were sexually assaulted by a school sweeper in the washroom of a well-known Adarsh Vidya Mandir in Badlapur school near Mumbai. These incidents happened within days when the entire nation was gripped by the horrors of the R G Kar Medical College and Hospital at Kolkata. And these are not isolated incidents – they are part of a grim reality where a rape is reported every 21 minutes. Yet, despite the horror these crimes evoke, they are quickly forgotten by all except the victims and their families, who are left to fight lonely, often futile battles for justice for years, which sometimes is only the ray of hope for them. India's response to sexual violence remains disturbingly inadequate. More than a decade has passed since the Nirbhaya case – a brutal gang rape that shocked the nation and led to the passage of new sexual assault laws. But the situation has barely improved. Nearly 50 years before Nirbhaya, the fearless, Aruna Shanbaug, a 25-year-old nurse, was viciously assaulted by a hospital cleaner in Mumbai. Sodomized, strangled with a metal chain, and left for dead, she survived – only to remain in a vegetative state for 41 years until her death. Her ordeal led to a landmark judgment on passive euthanasia in India, yet her suffering stands as a testament to the enduring failures of a society that continues to fail its women. The recent brutal rape and murder of a 31-year-old postgraduate trainee doctor in Kolkata serves as a grim reminder that little has changed. Female healthcare workers or



women workers per se, still fear for their safety even in supposed sanctuaries such as hospitals. This ongoing crisis underscores the dire need for real change – a change that goes beyond laws and addresses the deep-seated cultural and institutional failures that allow such atrocities to persist. This incident of R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital has shaken the conscience of West Bengal, and the ripple effects are being felt across the political landscape – and the entire nation. The public's reaction to this crime has been fierce and unforgiving. Protests have erupted across the state, with citizens demanding justice not only for the victim but also calling for broader reforms to ensure such incidents are not repeated. The political and social response to the incident has been equally chaotic. The decision for a swift call for a CBI investigation and capital punishment, alongside the rally for "Khela Hobe Divas," has been met with criticism for its timing and focus. Additionally, state actions, such as the transfer of doctors allegedly involved in protests and the use of social media to counter celebrity critiques (read singers), have further fueled debates about the handling of the case. The political implications of this incident



HIGH-PROFILE CASES OF ASSAULT, TRAFFICKING, AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HIGHLIGHT THE PERSISTENT VULNERABILITIES FACED BY WOMEN

could be far-reaching. But beyond politics, the safety of women and girls in India remains a critical concern, deeply rooted in societal norms, legal frameworks, and institutional practices. Despite advancements in legislation and public awareness, instances of violence and harassment against women are prevalent. High-profile cases of assault, trafficking, and domestic violence highlight the persistent vulnerabilities faced by women and girls. The legal system, while equipped with laws like the 'Protection of Human Rights Act' and the 'Criminal Law Amendment Act', or for that matter, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO of 2012), often struggles with implementation and enforcement. There are systemic delays in justice delivery and shortcomings in police response, which exacerbate the sense of insecurity. Protective measures, including the establishment of fast-track courts and specialized police units, aim to address these issues and provide some ray of light in this dark world for women. Further, societal attitudes towards women play a significant role in undermining these measures. Deep-seated patriarchal views and cultural practices continue to normalize gender-based violence,

making it difficult for protective laws to translate into tangible safety for women. The lack of comprehensive sexual education and community engagement further perpetuates harmful stereotypes and behaviours. Right education for the boys at home is another crucial area for intervention by the government and NGOs. The role of NGOs and grassroots movements has been pivotal in advocating for women's rights and safety. Effective safety measures must involve not only legal reforms but also significant shifts in overall attitudes and community involvement. The challenge before the authorities is not just one of governance but of moral leadership – a test that will define their legacy to guarantee safety to women and girl children. *Aami tomari maaitro konya, janoni bosundhara /Tobe aamar manobojanno keno bonchito kora... (I am no other, but the daughter of yours, O' motherland/Why deprive me of the legacy of my human life...).* Written in the year 1933 by Rabindranath Tagore, these lines echo far and wide and call for collective action. It is time to stand up to see where we stand and where we fail. *(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)*

PICTALK



A mahout bathes an elephant at Elephanti Orphanage in Pinnawala

PTI

Empowering Women: Mandatory self-defence training in schools

This proactive approach could provide women with the skills and confidence to fend off potential attackers, empowering them

The cauldron of public rage is boiling over in the aftermath of the rape and murder of a young resident doctor in Kolkata. It isn't the first time that the nation is witnessing such gruesomeness, and it won't be the last either unless something drastic happens at all levels – societal, legal and psychological. It isn't that there were no horrific instances of sexual assault on women before Nirbhaya. There were, but Nirbhaya's case brought the issue of women's safety (or the lack of it) front and centre, and it resulted in instituting legislation that offered women more protection and legal support. Stringent measures have been implemented, yet incidents keep happening across the country. It nearly feels like no external force can stem this rot, and it is time for women to take their protection into their own hands, literally. In light of the above, I am wondering if it wouldn't be more prudent and practical to arm our girls with self-defence tactics right from the beginning. Crimes against women have become so reg-



ular, that attention must now turn towards finding means to empower women in a way that will give them confidence and security in different realms of their professional and private lives. The violations can probably be attributed to a deep-rooted patriarchal mindset that has been the bane of women (not just in India), but fixing the blame on society or its vagaries does not help us fight critical issues such as this. It's worse when women themselves are held responsible for the abuses they are subjected to. If society wants to pin the responsibility of safety on women, then there must be an action plan to arm women with the necessary armament. In simple words, why not

make martial arts and other self-defence lessons compulsory in the school curriculum? If there can be a sports or PT period, there can be a martial arts period too. The very idea of equipping our girls with the skills to fend off troublemakers makes me jubilant and offers hope that no legislation can offer. Widespread condemnation and demand for punitive action cannot pre-empt future instances. What can curb it is the general knowledge among errant men that the woman they have cornered is capable of packing a punch, a chop or a kick that will neutralise them. Martial arts has been an optional activity for girls in an urban setting, but only when it is introduced as a part of the curriculum from primary grades in every school and they must be genuinely emancipated from the dangers that lurk at every corner of their daily lives. It is encouraging to learn that the government is intent on its aim to ensure the safety of women in the country and hand out the severest punishment to perpetrators,

but these are steps taken post-incident. What is suggested in this piece is a plan to provide a pre-emptive measure, a way to forestall violent attacks against women by their defences. It can deter a good majority of men on the loose with vagrant ideas. Parents who are better informed enrol their daughters in self-defence programmes, but they are few and far between. The real difference will be seen only when every school-going child is taught the techniques to ward off an offender by dint of their physical prowess. If our women can win medals in the boxing and wrestling rings, if they can build enough brawns along with brains in school, if every man who casts a salacious glance on a woman remembers that his prospective victim is not a push-over, then there will be change. Let us empower our girls with the spunk to keep the marauders at bay. *(The author is a columnist, author and writing coach based in Dubai; views are personal)*



ASHA IYER KUMAR

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

VALID CONCERNS ON E-COMMERCE

Madam — Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, has raised valid concerns about the questionable practices of e-commerce companies, particularly regarding predatory pricing, cash burning, successive years of losses, and the use of FDI to cover these losses. His concerns emphasize the need for policymakers to ensure a level playing field for local businesses and industries. More troubling is the destination and intent behind the FDI in these companies. E-commerce companies consistently declare significant losses in their income tax returns, carrying them forward year after year to offset against future profits. This cycle continues with mergers, where the losses of merged companies are also carried forward. In contrast, local traders and entrepreneurs pay regular taxes on their incomes, while e-commerce companies avoid taxes through their accounting strategies. This tax advantage, along with the convenience and wide range of products offered by online trade, gives e-commerce companies a significant edge. Goyal suggests that cash burn by e-commerce companies should not be allowed as a deduction, and the period for carrying forward losses should be limited to a maximum of two years. The impact of e-commerce on local traders is already evident, with potential job losses on the horizon. Another concern is the shift of youth from traditional businesses and agriculture to delivery jobs, leading to their migration from rural areas to metro cities.

Vinod Johri | New Delhi

MODERN SLAVERY

Madam — "I freed a thousand slaves. I could have freed more if only they knew they were slaves". One need not look beyond these thought-provoking words of American abolitionist Harriet Tubman to decipher the evils of slavery. Though Tubman spoke at the end of the 19th century, her words hold true for modern slavery as well. Human trafficking, bonded

Lateral entries rolled back



propos to "The Govt steps back" published on 22nd August, it is my response. Efficient bureaucracy leads to good governance and with this good intention the gov-

ernment wanted to rope in 45 lateral entries into our civil services, which was not the first time, it has been happening since Nehru's days. But such is the compulsion of coalition politics that the government had to give in to the demands of its own allies. Prime Minister Modi had also rolled back critical three farm laws which were in the larger interest of the farmers. So now after this decision, it is going to boost opposition' morale to put Gol on the mat again in future, and it has given Modi's government a negative and weak government's image. Hopefully it will learn its lessons and take opposition and allies on board before rolling out any sensitive changes or policies in future. It is the most democratic thing to do anyway because what is democracy if it is not inclusive and does not reflect people's will.

Bal Govind | Noida

NO LIMITS FOR PARA PLAYERS

Madam — The season of Paralympics is all set to begin with Indian athletic contingent start reaching over there in the Game village of Paris. So far, the closing of Paris Olympics done, with India taking on six medals only, however some sports spectators and aficionados are setting the medal count limit with 12 medals at the Paralympics. India has successfully lifted 19 medals in Paralympics Tokyo edition of 2021, for all those are setting the bar before the real talent actually comes up, it is crucial to appreciate the talent and zeal of our para players. Let's don't set any specific boundary of medals that they have to win for the nation. Why just 12, our players have the capability of winning much more. May their competitive spirit and sportsmanship, let them conquer the sports laurels in a celebrated manner without any pressure.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola



FIRST COLUMN

THE ESSENCE OF BEING: BEYOND BODY AND MIND

The soul is envisioned as pure and tranquil, the mind remains latent and unmanifest.



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

It is now becoming something of a cliché in various circles of modern life—from religion to psychology to holistic medicine—to use the phrase “body-mind-soul” or “body-mind-spirit” when referring to our totality as human beings. So, what do we exactly mean when we ask, What is the body? What is the mind? What is the soul? and What is the spirit? It is often said that the real self is behind the mind or intellect. It is also said that we can experience and know the self when we go beyond the mind, which is like a sheath of the soul.

This is truly said, but it means something different than what is generally understood because to experience or perceive the soul, we do not have to cross the mind which is considered to be a subtle form of matter. No! Instead, we have to calm the ripples of the mind, stop it from being agitated by the outer world, and check its outward tendency. From a spiritual perspective, it should be understood that when the soul is in the soul-world, it is pure, calm, tranquil, and above all bondages or attributes.

There, the mind is unmanifest, and its abilities of volition, action, desire, understanding, ascertainment, etc., are not at play but at rest—not emerged but latent and merged. While in the soul-world, the soul is pinned, so to say, only on one thought, one consciousness, one feeling, one understanding, viz—‘I am a Soul, I am a Soul, I am a Soul’. That is all—nothing more. The turbulence, the vagrancy, the sportiveness of the mind is at rest, or you may say that, in a sense, it is in deep sleep. Therefore, when it is said that “If we want to experience the peace and tranquility



of the soul or have to know the self, we will have to go beyond the intellect and the mind.” it does not mean that we will penetrate, percolate through, tear away, or cross over to a material form as the mind is understood to be. No! It means that to know ourselves, we will have to concentrate our mind on the maxim: “I am a soul, a child of the Supreme Soul.”

We will have to make our intellect and mind one-pointed and disposed to understand the Self alone. We will have to lay all our memories, thoughts, feelings, etc., to rest. This is what would be ‘going beyond’ the mind. For this, there are so many methods that have been advocated, demonstrated, advised, and laid down by various spiritual and religious teachers. However, the all-knowing Almighty has offered His supreme advice that we should control the mind using the intellect. This means that we have to know the Self, the Supreme, etc., and using that, know the Self to calm ourselves. He has sermonized that it can be best done by pinning the mind on the name, form, attributes, and relation of the Supreme with the soul.

His sermon is, “Manmana Bhav,” i.e., concentrate your mind on me, your love, your faith in me. And I assure you that I will bless you with supreme sanctity, peace, and bliss, and you will attain me. I will purge you of all sins, rest assured. If we act as HE says, all our inner conflict will end, and we will work only as His divine instrument. By aligning ourselves with the Supreme, our mind will cease its endless wandering, and we will find ourselves centred and at peace. We will then be able to adjust ourselves easily and quickly in any situation. Having been freed from other psychological memories, except that of the Supreme and our duty, our energy potential will find no resistance and will be free for full performance. We will thus be able to attain excellence and experience peace and tranquillity without putting in much effort. This state of effortless being is what every soul seeks, whether knowingly or unknowingly. The Supreme guides us to this state of fulfillment, away from the darkness of ignorance. Now, it's up to us whether to listen to the Almighty or keep wandering in the darkness of ignorance.

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

Reject calls for extraditing Sheikh Hasina



HIARANMAY KARLEKAR

India must stand firm in its refusal to hand over a leader who has been a steadfast ally, particularly when such demands come from factions with anti-India sentiment

India must not pay the slightest heed to the demand by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party's secretary-general, Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, to extradite Sheikh Hasina to his country. From reports in Indian newspapers, he seems to have cited two grounds, both utterly laughable, for his demand. The first is that she should stand trial for the murder and other charges levelled against her. The question is: will she receive a fair trial under the conditions now prevailing in Bangladesh? The matter is important. Even if the charges levelled against her are true, and she has done terrible things, she has an inalienable right to a fair trial.

This, she will not get with large mobs literally baying for her blood, statues of her father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the architect of the country's emergence from East Pakistan to sovereign Bangladesh, are being pulled down, the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum of 32 Dhanmondi, Dhaka, his erstwhile residence, ransacked and burnt, and the Liberation War Museum at Suhrawardy Udyan Dhaka, razed to the ground.

Clearly, a section of people is trying to take advantage of the situation created by the Anti-Discrimination Students' Movement (ADSM), to target the symbols of Bangladesh's liberation struggle. Undoing the country's independence and its re-unification with Pakistan is, of course, out of the question. But cultivating closer ties with Pakistan, pursuing a stridently hostile policy towards India, which such elements have never ceased hating for playing a decisive role in Bangladesh's independence by routing Pakistan in the 1971 war, and replacing Bangladesh's secular, democratic polity by one practicing fundamentalist Islam, has been a part of the agenda of the country's fundamentalist Islamist groups.

It is no secret that the Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, recently re-incarnated as Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (BJEI), its students' organization, Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir (BICS)—which was Islami Chhatra Sangha (ICS) in 1971—and allied organisations like al-Badr, al-Shams, Razakars, and Shanti Committee, had sided with Pakistan and committed despicable war crimes during the liberation war of 1971. A number of them have been punished, including some who have been executed, by the International Crimes Tribunal set by the Bangladesh Government in 2009 by an amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, to investigate and prosecute personnel of the Pakistan Army and BJEI, Razakars, Al-Badr, Al-Shams, and Shanti Committee, accused of committing genocide during the 1971 liberation war.

The BJEI and the BICS, which have close links with Islamist terrorist organisations like Ansar al-Islam, linked to Al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-continent (AQIS) and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), clearly joined the ADSM to further their own agenda, which is transforming a secular and democratic Bangladesh into an Islamic emirate. To do this, they must eliminate from the political scene not only the Awami League and its leaders, particularly Sheikh Hasina, but all secular, democratic and humanist civil society organisations and leaders.



GIVEN THAT THE AWAMI LEAGUE HAS BEEN REDUCED TO SUCH STRAITS THAT IT COULD NOT EVEN OBSERVE THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE GRENADE ATTACKS ON AUGUST 21, 2004, IT COULD HARDLY BE IN A POSITION TO CONSPIRE TO DEFEAT THE STUDENTS' UPSURGE

Revealingly, circulating in Bangladesh in the wake of Sheikh Hasina's ouster, is a list of intellectuals, scholars, lawyers, academics, human rights social activists, who its shadowy authors want to “see.”

Included in the list of 50 or more were the Professor Abul Barakat (a well-known economist who had exposed the sources of the BJEI's phenomenal wealth), Rana Dasgupta (general secretary of the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council), AAMS Arefin Siddique, (former vice-chancellor, Dhaka University), and Professor Sadeka Halim (vice-chancellor, Jagannath University) and a number of journalists and film personalities. In these circumstances, Sheikh Hasina's life will be in danger if she is extradited to Bangladesh: nor can she be assured of a fair trial, particularly given the fact that judges will either be under tremendous pressure or will be pre-disposed to convict her as they have been appointed by the Interim Government and are hostile to her.

The second ground that, according to the reports, Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has cited for Sheikh Hasina's extradition, is that the Awami League and she were conspiring in New Delhi to falsify (sic) the victory that students and other citizens of Bangladesh have achieved. Nothing could be more ludicrous. Most Awami League leaders are in Bangladesh, busy defending themselves in courts

against charges brought against them, or in hiding. A number of them have been lynched. The homes and business establishments of many of them have been destroyed and set aflame.

In fact, the Awami League has been reduced to such straits that, unlike in the earlier years, it could not stage an event to observe the anniversary of the grenade attack on an Awami League rally in Dhaka on August 21, 2004, to protest against increasing terrorist attacks on its cadres and leaders. Perpetrated by the terrorist outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh (HUJIB), it left at least 24 persons dead and over 300 injured. Among the wounded was Sheikh Hasina, whose hearing has been permanently impaired. Ivy Rahman, secretary of the Awami League's women's affairs wing and wife of its general-secretary, Zillur Rahman, who subsequently became Bangladesh's president, was also seriously hurt. She later died later in hospital.

Given that the Awami League has been reduced to such straits that it could not even observe the anniversary of the grenade attacks on August 21, 2004, it could hardly be in a position to conspire to defeat the students' upsurge. It may well be argued that Sheikh Hasina needs to be present in courts to stand trial and face cross-examination to establish the veracity of the charges levelled against her, or examine the complexity of others involved.

For that, the interim government or its successor must establish that a prima facie case exists against her and then request India to allow an emissary to question her in any facility that New Delhi may provide. Meanwhile, there can be no question of extraditing her. The BNP-BJEL coalition government, in office from 2001 to 2006 with Begum Khaleda Zia as prime minister, made no bones about its hostility to India. Indeed, except those headed by Sheikh Hasina, all governments of Bangladesh since the murder of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, have been hostile to India and pro-Pakistan.

To cite one example, under them, Bangladesh provided sanctuary, assistance and training to north-east India's secessionist rebel groups. On the other hand, Sheikh Hasina not only closed down their sanctuaries but handed over to India some of the leaders of these secessionist terrorist groups. In fact, India-Bangladesh relations were perhaps more cordial under her than even when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman headed the government in Dhaka. Extraditing Sheikh Hasina would send the message round that even the most loyal friends of India cannot depend on it for support in times of distress. That is not something that New Delhi should want.

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

Lateral entry in bureaucracy: A double-edged sword of reform and controversy

The implementation of lateral entry has sparked serious concerns about social justice and the representation of marginalised groups in the Indian bureaucracy

The introduction of lateral appointments in India's bureaucracy has sparked intense debate, particularly due to the absence of reservations for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS). The issue gained traction with a recent UPSC advertisement for 45 senior positions, which did not include the constitutionally mandated quotas, raising concerns about social justice and the representation of disadvantaged groups in high-level government roles. The lateral entry system, introduced by the Modi government in 2018, was intended to enhance transparency and efficiency, addressing the opaque practices of previous adminis-



K S TOMAR

trations. However, the lack of provisions for reservations in this system has led to widespread criticism. Rahul Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition, accused the NDA government of undermining the Constitution by excluding reservations from these appointments. He argued that this move was a direct attack on social justice, sidelining the underprivileged and diluting their representation in the

higher echelons of bureaucracy. In response, Arjun Meghwal pointed out the Congress's past practices, highlighting the appointments of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as Finance Secretary in 1971 and Montek Ahluwalia as Planning Commission Chairman without transparent procedures. Since the inception of the lateral entry system in 2018, the government has received 6,077 applications, resulting in the appointment of 63 individuals to senior positions across various ministries, with approximately 35 from the private sector. While these appointments aim to bring in expertise and fresh perspectives, the exclusion of reservations has overshadowed the intended benefits. The backlog of vacancies

in proportion to these 63 officials can only be addressed if the government creates new posts specifically for candidates from SC, ST, OBC, and EWS categories. The delay in amending recruitment rules has already caused significant harm, as many eligible candidates may have crossed the age limit. The introduction of lateral appointments has been met with mixed reactions within the bureaucracy. While it brings in specialized knowledge and fresh perspectives, it also poses several risks to the traditional bureaucratic structure.

Impact on Bureaucracy: A Mixed Bag: the introduction of lateral appointments has been met with mixed reactions. While it brings in specialized



knowledge and fresh perspectives, it also poses several risks to the traditional bureaucratic structure. **Demoralization of Bureaucrats:** Traditional bureaucrats, who have risen through the ranks, may feel demoralized seeing lateral entrants appointed to senior positions without undergoing the rigorous training and years of service they have endured. This could lead to a perception that meritocracy is being

undermined and create uncertainty regarding career progression.

Integration Challenges: Lateral entrants may struggle to integrate into the established bureaucratic culture, leading to friction with traditional bureaucrats.

3rd. Potential Conflicts of Interest: Lateral entrants from the private sector may face conflicts of interest, where their decisions could be influenced by their previous affiliations.

This raises concerns about policy bias and the potential prioritization of private sector interests over the public good. **Accountability and Transparency Issues:** Unlike career bureaucrats, lateral entrants might not undergo the same level of public scruti-

ny and evaluation, leading to concerns about transparency in decision-making. Their lack of deep institutional knowledge could also affect the quality of their decisions, especially in complex policy areas. **Impact on Administrative Cohesion:** The introduction of lateral entrants at senior levels could fragment authority within the bureaucracy, leading to inefficiencies and delays.

Positive Takeaways: Lateral entry into senior government positions offers several benefits:

Expertise Infusion: Brings specialized knowledge from various sectors, enhancing policy-making. **Diverse Perspectives:** Introduces new viewpoints, fostering innovative solutions.

Increased Efficiency: Private sector professionals bring a focus on performance and efficiency.

Skill Gap Bridging: Addresses deficiencies in areas like technology and finance. **Meritocracy Promotion:** Emphasizes skills over seniority, potentially improving leadership quality.

Governance Flexibility: Allows for quick adaptation to new challenges with experienced professionals.

Public-Private Collaboration: Strengthens ties between government and private sectors. (Writer has been ex chairperson of Standing Committee of All State Public Service Commissions in India and former chairman of HP Public Service Commission; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Bikaji Foods International acquires majority stake in Ariba Foods

S Bikaji Foods International on Friday said it has acquired majority stake in Ujjain-based Ariba Foods, which specialises in snacks and frozen foods. Bikaji Foods International has acquired a 55 per cent equity stake in the company totalling Rs 60.49 crore, which will help Bikaji to enhance its frozen food production capabilities and expand its market presence, according to a joint statement. "This strategic move not only strengthens our capacity for export growth but also supports our entry into the Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) segment. By integrating Ariba's state-of-the-art production capabilities, we aim to enhance our frozen snacks and savouries manufacturing," Managing Director Deepak Agarwal said. In the last few years, consumption of frozen foods has increased and the sector has witnessed rapid growth driven by technological advancements.



Gold prices decline by Rs 350, silver drops Rs 200

G old prices declined by Rs 350 to Rs 73,800 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. In the previous session, gold of 99.9 per cent purity traded at Rs 74,150 per 10 grams. Silver declined by Rs 200 to Rs 87,000 per kg from Rs 87,200 per kg in the previous day. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also dropped by Rs 350 to Rs 73,450 per 10 grams against Rs 73,800 per 10 grams on Thursday. The yellow metal extended losses on Friday, weighed down by rising US Treasury yields and a recovery in the dollar index, market experts said. Prices of precious metal were also influenced by the minutes of the last Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) released by RBI on Thursday. Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das said that the current policy rate of 6.5 per cent is broadly balanced, and any justification for policy easing at this juncture can be misleading, according to the MPC minutes.



Coca-Cola India appoints new market head for India

B everages major Coca-Cola on Friday said Greishma Singh has been appointed as the new market head for India Southwest Asia (INSWA) Operating Unit. Singh will succeed Arnab Roy, who was recently named the Global Category President, Coca-Cola Trademark. Her appointment will be effective September 1, 2024, according to a company statement. Before this, Singh was Vice-President of Customer and Commercial Leadership (C&CL) for the INSWA Operating Unit. She has been with The Coca-Cola Company for over 15 years and held roles of across marketing, strategy and C&CL in Australia and India markets, it added. Singh, an alumnus of the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad and Colorado College, will continue to be based in her new role.

India has maximum electrification for expansion of tracks: Railways

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is the country with maximum electrification for expansion of tracks, Mukul Saran Mathur, Additional Member, Commercial, Ministry of Railways, said in his inaugural address at the ASSOCHAM National Conference held on Friday in New Delhi. Eminent experts, stakeholders and senior government officials from the Railway ministry deliberated upon a range of issues and transformative technical solutions for 'Modernisation of Railway for Viksit Bharat'.

Mathur, while focusing on the achievements of the railways, said the rail network has been increased to 68,000 km currently and more capacity must be created immediately because two crore people travel every day by train in the country.

He added that more than 5,000 special trains have recently been operated to transport migrants. He also mentioned an example for Vande Bharat trains, a major "flagship product" in India.

According to Mathur, Rs 85,000-crore plan was provided for railways expansion in 2023-24.

He said the railways' refund process for tickets has become efficient as it has been reduced by one-two business days.

Deepak Sharma, Senior Member ASSOCHAM and CEO, River Engineering Pvt Ltd, highlighted the modernisation of railways as a key component in India's vision of 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India).



Sharma said the initiative aims to transform the Indian Railways into a world class network that supports economic growth, enhances connectivity, and improves the quality of life for millions of people.

Sanjay Bajpai, Co-chairman, the National Council on Logistics and Warehousing, ASSOCHAM and Executive Director, the Container Corporation of India Ltd talked about how AI and machine learning are useful in terminals for 100 per cent cargo visibility.

"We aim to have the last mile connectivity as we are working on the Gati Shakti plan, he added. Animesh Gupta, a scientist at Goldratt Research

Labs USA, discussed the gaps in railways related to technology and freight.

"We need to reach 40 per cent freight by rail to meet the demands. There's a need to reduce the environmental footprint of railway operations. The railway sector needs to ensure that digital solutions are secure and protected from cyber threats," Gupta said.

Concentrating on transportation dependability, president of ACTO Manish Puri said that in order to satisfy capacity and demand, infrastructure and logistical output are the main areas of concern due to the increase in trade activity. In order to realise the goal of 'Viksit Bharat,' contem-

porary railway transition is essential since it advances the country's economy, society, and technology.

The rail network has been increased to 68,000 km currently and more capacity must be created immediately because two crore people travel every day by train in the country



Sebi asks CAs to be 'extra careful' while auditing listed SMEs

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Sebi's whole-time member Ashwani Bhatia on Friday asked chartered accountants to be more diligent while auditing companies listed on the SME exchange platforms.

Addressing an industry event of CAs, Bhatia said it is important to look at the listed SMEs (Small and medium-sized enterprises) in a more careful way because the same companies will grow to be a part of the main board in the future.

"We have seen some challenges there (SME platform). We request you to be extra careful as far as SME IPOs and fundraising are concerned because these small companies will become much, much bigger going forward," the banker-turned-capital markets regulator said.

Bhatia expressed satisfaction with the progress of the SME platform, stating that Rs 14,000 crore has been raised by such entities, with Rs 6,000 crore being raised in FY24 alone. He compared the CAs to "doctors", and added that they

act as first-level regulators by ensuring orderly conduct of companies.

Bhatia said many Sebi investigations and orders, which take over a year to complete, may not be necessary as all of the CAs had done their work more diligently.

It can be noted that in March this year, Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch had flagged concerns around "price manipulation" in the SME platform listings and trading, and asked investors to be cautious.

Meanwhile, addressing CAs on Friday, Bhatia recalled the conduct of SBI's past chairman R K Talwar and said that the strength of character of the leader helps create "great institutions".

He also said that despite the regulator coming out with regulations to enable delisting, the experience has been the "reverse" with little interest on that front.

The whole-time member hinted that the low interest in delisting is due to high valuations, and added that even foreign companies are looking at listing in India.

India's forex reserves jump by \$4.546 bn

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India's forex reserves jumped by \$4.546 billion to \$674.664 billion during the week ended August 16, the RBI said on Friday.

In the previous week, the forex kitty had dropped by USD 4.8 billion to USD 670.119 billion.

On August 2, the overall reserves hit an all-time high of USD 674.919 billion. In the week ended August 16, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by USD 3.609 billion to USD 591.569 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

No credibility in MapmyIndia claims: Ola founder

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ola Co-Founder Bhavish Aggarwal has rejected claims of copying MapmyIndia, saying the map company was attempting to ride on Ola Electric's listing coat-tails.

The Chairman and Managing Director of Ola brand owner ANI Technologies said that the company has sent legal notice to MapmyIndia but hasn't received any reply from them.

"Empty vessels make more sound. These people woke up suddenly one day. Ola Electric is not even in the maps business. In the run-up to Ola electric IPO they just wanted to ride on its coat-tails. We have also given them legal notice, their reply has not come till date," Aggarwal said.

Ola Electric got listed on the bourses on August 9. The company raised Rs



5,500 crore from its initial public offering.

MapmyIndia had sent them notice on July 23-- three days before the red-herring prospectus was filed by Ola Electric. Homegrown digital navigation firm

MapmyIndia has questioned claims of Ola parent ANI Technologies on developing a navigational map of India and called the announcement a "gimmick".

When contacted MapmyIndia to check the status of their legal notice, the company shared a transcript of its earning call dated August 12 in which its CEO and ED Rohan Verma shared an update on legal notice sent to ANI Technologies.

"In 2015, Ola ANI Technologies got licensed and got access to our map data, which they continued to use. In 2021, Ola Electric licensed our APIs (application programming interface) and SDKs (software development kits) for their navigation in their vehicles and continued to use us. Because we have seen certain breaches of terms and conditions, we have started the legal process," Verma said.



Rupee rises 4 paise to close at 83.89 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee traded in a narrow range and settled higher by 4 paise at 83.89 (provisional) against the American currency on Friday, as traders remained cautious ahead of Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech at the Jackson Hole Symposium.

Forex traders said weak US Dollar, foreign fund inflows and a positive tone in the domestic markets supported the rupee. However, overnight gains in crude oil prices capped sharp gains.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened weak at 83.93 and touched an intraday high of 83.85 against the US dollar. The domestic currency finally settled at 83.89 (provisional), 4 paise higher from its previous close.

On Thursday, the rupee traded in a narrow range and settled lower by 3 paise at 83.93 against the American currency. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias as traders remain cautious ahead of Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech at the Jackson Hole Symposium which could provide some cues on Fed's path to cut interest rates.

M3M India sells properties worth Rs 3,911 crore in Q1; up 37pc annually

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Realty firm M3M India on Friday reported a 37 per cent increase in sales of residential and commercial properties in the June quarter to Rs 3,911 crore on strong demand.

Its sales bookings stood at Rs 2,854 crore in the year-ago period.

Out of total sales bookings in the April-June period of the current fiscal, Rs 2,972 crore pertained to the housing segment and Rs 940 crore to commercial properties, the company said in a statement.

During the first quarter of this fiscal, M3M India said the total sales bookings in Gurugram stood at Rs 2,415 crore, while Noida projects

contributed Rs 402 crore. Sales of residential plots at Panipat in Haryana were Rs 1,094 crore.

Sudeep Bhatt, President, M3M India, said the company has reported "robust growth in our Q1 results for 2024-25, demonstrating our commitment to delivering high-quality real estate solutions".

"With a strong pipeline of ultra-luxury projects lined up for launch in FY25, we are confident of sustaining this momentum and continuing to create value for our stakeholders," Bhatt said.

M3M India has 56 projects spread across retail, residential, offices, service apartments etc.

Mumbai ranks 2nd, Delhi 3rd among 44 cities in annual housing price rise

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mumbai and Delhi are at the second and third positions, respectively, among 44 cities globally in annual price rise of prime residential properties during the June quarter, Knight Frank said in a report.

The annual price growth across the 44 cities globally slowed to 2.6 per cent in the second quarter of the 2024 calendar year, from 4.1 per cent in the preceding quarter, real estate consultant Knight Frank report said.

Manila ranked first with a 26 per cent annual rise during the quarter. Mumbai, with an annual



price rise of 13 per cent in prime residences, ranked second, up from its 6th rank in the year-ago period.

New Delhi, which recorded a rise of 10.6 per cent year-on-year in prime residential property prices, made a stupendous jump in rankings from 26th a year earlier to third during the quarter under review. Bengaluru saw a 3.7 per

cent increase in annual price rise. Its ranking remained same at 15th.

"Being the largest residential markets of the country, the strong price growth in prime residential properties is a strong indicator of the growing wealth and increasingly higher aspirations of the country's affluent population," the consultant said.

Among other global cities, Los Angeles was at the 4th position with an 8.9 per cent growth in prices, followed by Miami (7.1 per cent), Nairobi (6.6 per cent), Madrid (6.4 per cent), Lisbon (4.7 per cent), Seoul (4.6 per cent), and San Francisco (4.5 per cent).

AMID SLUMP IN CHINA

India steel market hit by unfair imports, dumping

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian steel market is hit by "unfair imports and dumping" amid a demand slump in China and the government needs to take action in a time-bound manner, former steel secretary Nagendra Nath Sinha has said.

"If you take flat steel products, imports are certainly an issue. The slump in the Chinese market has really shaken the (domestic) market," Sinha, who superannuated on July 31, said at the 7th edition of BigMint's Indian Iron Ore and Pellet Summit on Friday.

He also warned of the price realisations getting affected due to surging imports impacting the profitability of steel makers.

"To the extent the imports currently happening are unfair and there is dumping going on and the Indian government should certainly respond to them in a timeframe," Sinha said. His statement assumes significance as local steel players have been raising the issue of imports for months from select countries including China. Steelmakers have raised concern that India is becoming a net importer of steel against



the aim to become a global supplier of the commodity. Sinha said "...duty prayers for imposition of the duty are being considered at a longer timeframe for about a year and

a half that is not going help industry at least give them a fair hearing."

On August 16, the government initiated an anti-dumping probe into the import of

hot-rolled steel products from Vietnam following a complaint by a domestic industry.

The commerce ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) is probing the alleged dumping of 'hot rolled flat products of alloy or non-alloy steel'.

According to the DGTR notification, Indian Steel Association has filed an application on behalf of domestic producers - JSW Steel Ltd and ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Ltd - seeking initiation of an anti-dumping investigation on imports from Vietnam.

Stock markets marginally up in volatile trade ahead of US Fed chief speech

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty edged up in volatile trade on Friday following buying in blue-chip stocks such as ICICI Bank and Bharti Airtel amid mixed global trends ahead of the US Fed chair's speech at Jackson Hole Symposium.

Rising for the fourth straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 33.02 points or 0.04 per cent higher at 81,086.21.

In early trade, the benchmark declined 169.93 points or 0.20 per cent to a low of 80,883.26. Later, it bounced back 178.3 points or 0.21 per cent to hit a high of 81,231.49



but gave up gains towards the end.

The NSE Nifty edged up 11.65 points or 0.05 per cent to close at 24,823.15 registering gains for the seventh session in

a row. From the Sensex pack, Tata Motors, Sun Pharmaceutical, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finserv, ICICI Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra and JSW Steel were the gainers.

Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies, Asian Paints, Titan, Infosys, State Bank of India, Tata Consultancy Services and HDFC Bank were the laggards.

"Ahead of the FED chair Powell's speech, the Indian indices oscillated around the flat trajectory and mixed global market sentiments further catalysed this scenario," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

what's brewing?

BORDER 2 BATTALION EXPANDS WITH VARUN DHAWAN ONBOARD

The *Border 2* battalion just got bigger! Varun Dhawan joins Sunny Deol for Anurag Singh's directorial.

"Dushman ki har goli se Jai Hind bol kar takrata hoon, jab dharti maa bulati hai, sab chhod kar aata hoon (I collide with every bullet of the enemy by shouting Jai Hind, when Mother Earth calls, I leave everything and come)," he says in the

video. This addition is set to amplify the excitement surrounding producer Bhushan Kumar and JP Dutta's highly anticipated film.

Gulshan Kumar, T-Series and JP Dutta's J.P. Films are presenting *Border 2*. Produced by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, JP Dutta and Nidhi Dutta, the film is slated for a grand release on January 23, 2026.



AP Dhillon collabs with Gunna

With no signs of slowing down, Punjabi singer-songwriter, rapper and record producer AP Dhillon has dropped a tantalising hint about yet another trailblazing global collaboration that is set to elevate his upcoming EP, *The Brownprint*.

Taking to social media, Dhillon teased the second track, *Losing Myself* from his highly anticipated EP featuring the Atlanta rap icon and four-time Grammy nominee Gunna, igniting a frenzy of excitement among fans worldwide.

The collaboration between Dhillon and Gunna marks a significant intersection of two distinct musical genres, promising a unique global listening experience. Gunna's signature style, characterised by his melodic flow and intro-

spective lyrics, is expected to complement Dhillon's masterful Punjabi vocals and poignant storytelling. The synergy between Dhillon's Punjabi beats and Gunna's distinct rap style hints at an electrifying musical experience that will transcend cultural divides.

The Brownprint releasing on August 30 via Republic Records, is poised to showcase his artistic versatility and continue his ascent as a global music sensation whilst showcasing a remarkable blend of a multitude of genres, blurring the lines between Punjabi music, Afrobeats and hip-hop.

The announcement arrives on the heels of music sensation Ayra Starr announcing Ayra Starr as one of the first collaborators on *Bora Bora* on his upcoming EP.



Nawazuddin in an Adbhut avatar



Boney Kapoor gives back to Arshad Warsi's claim!

Boney Kapoor has opened up on Arshad Warsi's claim of being underpaid Rs 25000 for choreographing a song in the 1993 movie *Roop Ki Rani Choron Ka Raja*. In an interview, Boney mentioned that Arshad Warsi was not considered a celebrity back then, so there was no one willing to pay him a large sum of money. In a previous interview, Arshad mentioned that he charged Rs 1 lakh for choreographing the song and completed it in three days instead of the expected four days.

Boney said, "I read his statement and I laughed. 1992 mein shoot kiya aur yeh abhi baat kar raha hai iske baare mein (The shoot took place in 1992 and he is talking about it now). At that time, he was not a star. Who would have paid him such a

huge amount? It was Pankaj Parashar who directed the full title. It was divided into two parts. It was shot in James Bond style and a part of it was done in Singapore or Hong Kong. There were too many things happening and Tutu Sharma was handling the production."

He added, "We thought that it would take four days but Pankaj (Parashar) finished it in three days. I didn't even remember this episode. He was paid Rs 25,000 per day. Hence, he was paid Rs 75,000 for three days. It was not like (he was promised a certain amount)...We were a part of a TV show together. Malaika Arora and Farah Khan were also a part of it. He never mentioned it and now, suddenly he talks about it. Everybody wants media attention now and I am a soft target."

STANDALONE

In a captivating blend of fantasy and modernity, the iconic Gardens by the Bay in Singapore served as a stunning backdrop for a memorable event as the cast and creators of Prime Video's highly anticipated series, *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power* paid a visit to the iconic landmark. This memorable visit highlighted the intersection of the mythical world of Middle-earth with the contemporary marvel of Singapore's gardens, offering a unique juxtaposition of fantasy and real-world beauty.

Elnaaz Norouzi to star opposite Zachary Levi in *Hotel Tehran*



Elnaaz Norouzi has been making her mark in both Indian and international entertainment. Now, there's growing speculation that Norouzi could be the next star to join the cast of Guy Moshe's action-thriller *Hotel Tehran*. With production set to begin this autumn, sources hint that she might be cast as the female lead, potentially starring opposite Zachary Levi. If true, this role could be a major leap in her career, further establishing her as a rising star on the global stage.

Hotel Tehran, directed by Guy Moshe, is already generating excitement, with big

names like Liam Neeson and Zachary Levi confirmed. Moshe, known for his work on films like *Bunraku* and *Holly*, co-wrote the script with Mark Bacci, basing it on an original idea by Bazzel Baz, a former CIA officer.

Although nothing has been officially confirmed, the prospect of Elnaaz Norouzi securing this role has already sparked significant excitement.

As production gears up for an October start, anticipation is building among fans and industry watchers alike, eager to see if Norouzi will take on this pivotal role in what promises to be a high-stakes thriller.

FUN

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

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9	10	11		
12		13	14	
15			16	
17			18	
19				

GINGER MEGGS

SUDOKU

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8	5	2	7	6				1
3		3	7	6	5			8
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6								
3	8		9	4	6			
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Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

SOLUTION

L	R	D	S	O					
A	F	C	Z	T					
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'UNSPOKEN BOND SHARED OVER CUP OF IRANI CHAI HAS BECOME REGULAR PART OF MY LIFE'

AARTI SREENATH

Anju Jain found a new beginning and a new home in the city of Hyderabad, a city where modernity and tradition coexist. The founder of Just Like That by Anju Jain, her journey took a significant turn when she arrived in this vibrant city. Although her roots were deeply entrenched in Ranchi, where she belongs, Hyderabad became the canvas upon which her dreams began to

take shape. When she first set foot in Hyderabad, she encountered a realm of possibilities tinged with uncertainty. "I remember my initial apprehensions about the language barrier and cultural differences. It felt like stepping into a world where I was both an outsider and an explorer." Yet, the transition was smoother than she had anticipated. The city's warm embrace and its people's welcoming nature made her feel at ease almost immediately. She recalls, "Hyderabad, with its unassuming charm, quickly made me feel at home. The city's warmth melted away my fears, allowing me to immerse myself in its essence."

Living in Hyderabad, she discovered a hidden gem within a well-loved book. As a visitor, one might marvel at the grandeur of landmarks like the Charminar, savour the legendary Hyderabadi biryani, or explore the historical Golconda Fort. However, it is the daily rhythm of city life where the true spirit of Hyderabad reveals itself. "The vibrant bazaars, the age-old artisans and the unspoken bond shared over a cup of Irani chai have all become part of my life here. These are the elements that make Hyderabad more than just a backdrop; they make it a living, breathing part of my story."

Hyderabad's rich cultural and historical mosaics have provided her with endless inspiration. "The city's museums, with their vast collections of antiques and art, offer a window into a past that is both intriguing and influential. Every visit to these museums sparks new ideas for my designs. They provide a glimpse into the city's storied past, which I blend with contemporary flair in my work," she added. These moments of reflection have been pivotal in finding the creative spark that drives her fashion line.

The city's thriving fashion scene has been particularly nurturing for Jain. "Hyderabad's vibrant fashion landscape has allowed me to collaborate with an array of talented models, stylists, and craftsmen," she shares. Hyderabad's energy has infused Jain's work with a sense of dynamism and creativity that feels distinctly tied to the city. "My workshop, nestled in the heart of the city, has become a sanctuary where tradition meets innovation. It's a place where my designs come to life, influenced by the city's unique spirit."

Of course, no story is without its challenges. She acknowledges, "The city's traffic congestion can be quite over-

whelming. Yet, this minor inconvenience is more than compensated for by the city's many gifts, the warmth of its people, the richness of its culinary offerings and the lively cultural scene. Despite occasional frustrations, the positives far outweigh the negatives, making Hyderabad a city she cherishes deeply.

When her friends and family visit, they become part of the city's enchantment. "They relish the simple joys of home-cooked meals and love the opportunity to visit my workshop. It's become a tradition for them to pick out a bespoke piece from my collection as a keepsake of their visit. This personal touch adds a layer of meaning to their experience, making each visit special."

For her, Hyderabad is more than just a place of residence and work; it is an integral part of her identity. "Hyderabad is where my heart finds solace, where my family and business thrive," she concludes. "It's a city that has given me so much and in return, I have woven my dreams into its vibrant fabric." Every corner of Hyderabad holds a piece of her journey, and every stitch of her designs reflects the city's essence.

Hailing from the lands of exquisite handicrafts, Ranchi, to finding her new home in the city of pearls, fashion designer Anju Jain has been enjoying the warmth that she has received here. She speaks to us about her allure for the city



CANVASing his art from thought to reality

TEJAL SINHA

What initially began as a stress buster for Vikas Malani, by drawing during his school days, evolved into a love for colours, patterns and design. Even the simplicity of drawing a line or a dot was full of creativity for him.

As his passion for drawing deepened, it naturally transitioned into tattooing. "I chose tattooing as a way to explore my creativity because it allows my artwork to travel the world on my clients," begins the talented artist in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*. Tattooing is a profound commitment and a form of self-expression. And so, "Our patrons' bodies are our canvas and from this concept, BodyCanvas was born. We transform their intangible thoughts into tangible realities."

It was a small symbol that he drew on his friend's nape, which was his first-ever tattoo work. Though nerve-racking, he says, it was still an exhilarating experience.

Having always been fascinated by the art and culture surrounding tattoos, the ability to permanently adorn one's body with meaningful designs and symbols deeply resonated with Vikas.

B-town's favourite tattoo artist, his habitué includes Arpita Khan, Remo D'Souza, John Abraham, Alok Nath,

Mumbai branch operates at the same level as our London studio. The challenges include standardising processes, consistently upgrading products and continuously learning new skills. Every client presents a unique challenge, pushing us to strive for a better balance in our work."

They have also done the look test and tattoos for many Bollywood projects such as John Abraham for *Pathaan*, Aamir Khan for *Dhoom 3*, Anushka Sharma for *Matru ki Bijlee ka Mandola*, Priyanka Chopra for *Pyaar Impossible*, Fardeen Khan for *All the Best*, Anil Kapoor for *Tashan*, MS Dhoni for Max Oil TVC, Shahrukh Khan for Dish TV advertisement, and Sidharth Malhotra for the movie *Gentleman*. However, in the year 2023, Vikas and his team gained attention for being the creative force behind John Abraham's bold, inked look in the Bollywood blockbuster *Pathaan*, where his sexy, bad-boy role created quite a sensation!

Speaking of this experience, he shared with us that the tattoo symbolised a transformation from someone who once loved their country to someone who now stands against authority or rules they believe to be unjust. "It's a journey from patriotism to rebellion. In our first meet-

ing, we brought numerous references based on the character description provided. We were pleasantly surprised to find that John's team had also prepared a variety of options. Together, we collaborated to finalise a design that was unique and unlike anything seen before in a Bollywood movie."

Working with Bollywood celebrities for him has been a mix of amusing stories and wonderful experiences. "John Abraham is one of the most humble actors I've met; working with him felt like collaborating with a friend. He has a deep respect for artists and creativity. After *Pathaan* crossed 1000 crores, he personally visited the studio to thank the entire team for his tattoo look in the movie. On his first visit for the look test, he was well-spoken and proactive, sharing his ideas and views on the design. He built a strong connection with the team and spent nearly 10 hours at our Bandra studio. How 'awwww'dorable isn't it? Then there was Aditi Rao Hydari, another delightful personality he recalls. "On her birthday, she wanted to gift herself some piercings. Her kindness and hospitality were remarkable; she offered us breakfast at her home and had a warm conversation about her love for art and paintings."

Speaking of his latest work with the celebs, he has worked with the talented Rajkumar Rao and Jaideep Ahlawat on a special tattoo design for an OTT plat-

form project. As we head towards the end of this captivating chat, he highlights the top five tips for getting a tattoo:

Research and planning: Take your time to find a design that resonates with you and ensure it's something you'll love for years to come.

Choose a reputable tattoo artist, tattoo studio and tattoo products (vegan ink): Look for an artist with experience who uses high-quality brands of ink and nee-



dles, has good reviews, and has a portfolio that aligns with your desired style.

Prepare for the process: Understand the time, cost and discomfort involved and plan accordingly.

Aftercare is crucial: Follow your artist's instructions to ensure proper healing and minimise the risk of complications. Take your time and don't fall for offers or discounts. Remember, a tattoo is a permanent mark; make sure you're ready and comfortable with the quality.

Vikas Malani, certainly a favourite tattooist of B-town celebs, speaks exclusively with *The Pioneer* about his passion for art, transitioning into the world of tattoos, creating wonders and more

Rapper Divine, Rhea Chakraborty, Shibani Dandekar, Shweta Tripathi Sharma, former Australian cricket team captain Michael Clarke, former CSK player, S. Badrinath, former Australian cricketer Michael Slater, Director Om Prakash Jha, Tina Ahuja, Nyaasa Devgan, Shaheen Bhatt, Krishna Jackie Shroff, Amruta Khanvilkar, Sneha Ullal, Aarya Babbar, Raghu & Rajiv of the *Roadies* fame, Debolina Bhattacharya aka 'Gopi Bahu', Disha Parmar, Dheeraj Dhoopar and his wife Vinny Arora, Ambika Anand, Instagram influencer Meethika Dwivedi, Ranveer Allahbadia (BEER BICEPS), acid attack survivor Laxmi Agarwal, and *Bigg Boss* fame Shiv Thakare, among many others.

"Working with high-profile people is more of a responsibility than a source of fame," shares the tattooist, adding, "We must consistently maintain high-quality standards, which is a continual process. There's pressure to perform and meet the expectations. Additionally, we adhere to European Union standards to ensure our

ing, we brought numerous references based on the character description provided. We were pleasantly surprised to find that John's team had also prepared a variety of options. Together, we collaborated to finalise a design that was unique and unlike anything seen before in a Bollywood movie."

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CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF KANHA!



Janmashtami, the joyous celebration of Lord Krishna's birth, is a festival filled with devotion, colour, and festivity. Falling on August 26 this year, Janmashtami offers numerous ways to engage in the vibrant cultural and spiritual traditions associated with Krishna. Whether you're a devoted follower or simply wish to partake in the festivities, here are five unique ways to celebrate Janmashtami in 2024.

Experience Mathura and Vrindavan's spiritual vibe

Mathura, the birthplace of Lord Krishna, and Vrindavan, where he spent his childhood, are the epicenters of Janmashtami celebrations. These cities in Uttar Pradesh come alive with grand processions, devotional singing and dramatic reenactments of Krishna's life.

- **Mathura:** Visit the Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple, where thousands gather to offer prayers and witness the special midnight aarti marking Krishna's birth.

- **Vrindavan:** Participate in the vibrant celebrations at famous temples like Banke Bihari and ISKCON. Watch as devotees are showered with flower petals and scented water, and enjoy the sight of children dressed as little Krishnas with flutes in hand.

Join the dahi handi festivities in Maharashtra

Maharashtra, particularly Mumbai, is known for its thrilling Dahi Handi celebrations. Inspired by Krishna's love for butter, men form human pyramids to break a pot filled with curd, butter and milk hanging high above the ground.

Mumbai hotspots: Dadar and Lalbaug host some of the most competitive and lively Dahi Handi events. The atmosphere is electric with music, dance and cheering crowds as teams compete to reach the handi.

Attend Rajadhiraaj: Love Life Leela at NMACC

This year, make your Janmashtami unfor-

gettable by attending the grand musical *Rajadhiraaj: Love Life Leela* at the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre in Mumbai. This project, conceived and brought to fruition by Dhanraj Nathwani and Executive Producer Bhoomi Nathwani, is truly exceptional. This spectacular show, which will end on September 1, written by Praseon Joshi, brings Krishna's stories to life with stunning visuals and over 100 performers.

Directed by Shruti Sharma, with music by Sachin-Jigar, the production features a captivating blend of Indian classical and Western symphony. Omung Kumar's intricate set designs and Neeta Lulla's elaborate costumes will transport you to ancient India, immersing you in Krishna's world.

Engage in local celebrations and community festivities

If you can't travel to the main hubs of celebration, local events can offer equally enriching experiences. Communities across India host various activities, including parades, cultural performances and marketplaces selling traditional sweets and decorations. If you have kids, you can also dress them as Krishna or Radha and participate in local reenactments or dance performances. These events provide a wonderful opportunity to bond with your community and share in the festive spirit.

Transform Your Home with Festive Décor

If you wish to celebrate the festival at home, you can do so by adorning your living spaces and puja room with traditional decorations. Welcome guests with a vibrant rangoli at your entrance, using colorful patterns or simple floral designs. Fresh flowers like fragrant mogra can be used to decorate your home, adding both beauty and a pleasant aroma. Light up your home with diyas and candles for a warm, festive glow. Include a small swing as a nod to Krishna's childhood, placing an idol of Krishna on it, adorned with peacock feathers and fresh flowers. This not only beautifies your home but also creates a devotional ambience.

GUKESH, PRAGGNANANDHAA DRAW AGAIN IN SINQUEFIELD CUP



PTI ■ SAINT LOUIS (USA)

World Championship challenger D Gukesh enjoyed an advantageous position against tournament co-leader Alireza Firouzja of France but eventually settled for a draw in the fourth round of the Sinquefield Cup, here. Gukesh, who is set to play the World championship match against Ding Liren of China next November, proved that he is made of sterner mettle as he made Firouzja's life tough. Grandmaster

Praggnanandhaa also drew his game against Anish Giri of Holland and almost at the half way stage in this 10-player round-robin tournament, the Indians stand at a level fifty percent score. The day when Wesley So of United States won the lone decisive game, the news doing the round through unconfirmed sources was that Firouzja has been offered to play for United States. For Prag things were not difficult as he meticulously handled Anish Giri with black

pieces and even though the Dutchman believed he had some chances, they were thwarted in no time. After three decisive games in round three the fourth round yet again produced just a lone decisive game with Wesley So overcoming Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia. With Wesley winning and Nepomniachtchi on the losing side, the former joined Firouzja in lead on 2.5 points after four rounds and they are now followed by Fabiano Caruana of United States,

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France, Nepomniachtchi, Praggnanandhaa and Gukesh. Abdusattorov and Giri share the ninth spot with 1.5 points each. **Results round 4:** Anish Giri (Ned, 1.5) drew with R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 2); D Gukesh (Ind, 2) drew with Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 2.5); Wesley So (Usa, 2.5) beat Ian Nepomniachtchi (Fide, 2); Ding Liren (Chn, 2) drew with Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 2); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 2) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 1.5).

Sri Lanka-New Zealand opening Test at Galle to have a rest day

PTI ■ DUBAI

Sri Lanka's opening Test against New Zealand at Galle next month will be a six-day affair with the provision of a rest day owing to the presidential election in the island nation. The Test, scheduled to commence on September 18, will have a rest day on September 21, "owing to the Presidential Election of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka", said an ICC release on Friday. It will be the first time in more than two decades that Sri Lanka have been scheduled to



host a Test across six days, with their match against Zimbabwe in Colombo in 2001 also including a rest day due to Poya Day (full moon), said the

ICC. The two-match series is part of the ongoing ICC World Test Championship cycle with the second Test scheduled at the

same venue from September 26-30. Rest days were a common feature in Test cricket in the last century, with several matches in the cricketing world being played across six days with Sunday usually being an off day. More recently, Bangladesh played a Test-series opener against Sri Lanka in December 2008, which was a six-day affair because of a parliamentary election. New Zealand and Sri Lanka are currently placed third and fourth respectively in the World Test Championship standings.

India A bowlers fight back but Australia A's lead surges to 192 on Day 2 of unofficial Test

PTI ■ GOLD COAST (AUSTRALIA)

India A bowlers led a spirited fightback but Australia A tightened grip on the unofficial one-off women's Test, with the hosts' overall lead surging to 192 runs here on the second day on Friday. India A skipper Minnu Mani completed her match haul of 10 wickets but Kate Peterson returned an impactful 12-5-16-5 to hand Australia a slender 28-run lead in the first innings, as the visitors were bowled out for 184 in reply to the host's 212. Resuming at 100/2, India A looked on course to take a substantial lead but fell short as Peterson ran through the middle order. India's set batters Tejal Hasabnis (32) and Shweta Sehrawat (40) were the first to fall as the tourists lost five wickets for 27 runs before Sayali Satghare (21),



Mani (17) and Mannat Kashyap (19) put up 56 runs to deny Australia a huge lead. Mani then swung into action with the ball immediately as Australia A batters' once again struggled against Indian spinners. The off-spinner first removed opener Georgia Vull and her Australian counterpart Charli Knott for ducks in consecutive overs to reduce the hosts to 0/2 at one stage. Mani, who claimed a five-wicket haul in

the first essay, also got rid of Nicole Faltum (16) before she cleaned up Tess Fintoo with an off-break. However, opener Emma de Brouge continued to hold form from one end as she scored 58 runs off 117 balls before falling prey to rookie leg-spinner Priya Mishra. Wicketkeeper Maddy Drake took matters into her own hands by hitting an unbeaten half century (54 not out of 100 deliveries) to lead Australia's recovery further as the hosts reached 164/7 at the end of play. Drake added 54 for the sixth wicket with Maitlan Brown (26 off 45) before the latter became Mani's tenth wicket in the game. **BRIEF SCORES:** Australia A 212 and 164 for 7 (Emma de Brouge 58, Maddy Darke 54 not out; Minnu Mani 5/47) lead India A 184 (Shweta Sehrawat 40, Tejal Hasabnis 32; Kate Peterson 5/16) by 192 runs.

Ilkay returns for unlikely second spell at Man City after just a year at Barcelona



AP ■ MANCHESTER

Ilkay Gundogan is back at Manchester City for a sequel few could have expected. A year after leaving for Barcelona, the former Germany midfielder completed his unlikely return to City on Friday on a free transfer and a season-long deal. The 33-year-old Gundogan, who has the option of a further season at City, was the captain when Pep Guardiola's team captured the Premier League-FA Cup -Champions League treble in the 2022-23 campaign. That confirmed his place in the growing pantheon of City greats, having already been in the conversation most notably after scoring two late goals

against Aston Villa on the final day of the 2021-22 Premier League season to seal a 3-2 win that clinched the title. He was at City for seven years after joining in 2016 as Guardiola's first signing, and was often his manager's go-to player with big performances and significant goals. Bringing in Gundogan is a late call by City in this transfer window. He was one of Xavi Hernandez's favorite players during the coach's sole season with the Catalan club but Barcelona's delicate economic situation appears to have forced the new coach, Hansi Flick of Germany, to part ways with Gundogan. Typically an attacking central midfielder, Gundogan also will be used as a replacement for holding midfielder Rodri

should the Spain star need a break. He is well-versed in Guardiola's style of play so has the benefit of not needing a transitional period, and will compete for a place in the midfield alongside the irreplaceable Rodri with Kevin De Bruyne, Bernardo Silva, Mateo Kovacic and Phil Foden. Gundogan's exit should help Barcelona register new midfielder Dani Olmo, which the team has so far been unable to do because of the Spanish league's financial rules that make clubs balance expenditures on wages and transfers with available assets. In addition to Olmo, Barcelona also has depth in the creative midfield positions with Pedri Gonzalez, Frenkie de Jong, Fermin Lopez and, once he recovers from his serious leg injury, Gavi Páez. Gundogan was Germany's captain at the recent European Championship but he retired from international duty this week. Gundogan's last game for City saw him lift the Champions League trophy after the win over Inter Milan in Istanbul in June last year. His next could be against Ipswich at Etihad Stadium in the Premier League on Saturday.

Aditi and Diksha fight hard on tough opening day at AIG Women's Open



PTI ■ ST. ANDREWS (SCOTLAND)

Indian golfers Diksha Dagar and Aditi Ashok Made crucial birdies on their final holes to keep alive their chances of making the cut after the first round of the AIG Women's Open. Aditi carded a 4-over 76 to be T-79 while Diksha was 5-over 77, sitting at T-100 as play ended late on the opening day which was marred by strong winds. The cut looked likely at 3-over or 4-over after the second round.

For a long time, Diksha's score on the board showed a birdie on Par-5 14th, which was later corrected and it was shown as 5-over. Aditi opened with two pars and then had a bogey on 12th and a double on 13th for 3-over first nine. She dropped further shots on first and second to go 5-over before the birdie on ninth made it 4-over for the day. Diksha, T-21 last year at Walton Heath, was 5-over for her first nine holes, the back nine of the Old Course with bogeys on 10, 11, 13, 16 and 17.

On the second nine, she dropped a shot on third and picked a birdie on the ninth, her final hole. Charley Hull fired a round of 5-under 67 to sit in the outright lead after the first round. The English star went out to tackle the Old Course in the afternoon wave alongside world number one Nelly Korda and defending champion Lilia Vu. Hull rolled in her first birdie of the day on the fifth but made a bogey on the par-3 eighth, however, she was soon under par again with a birdie on the ninth. The three-time LET winner then had a great back nine as she made birdies on 10, 12, 15 and 18 to hold a solo lead on five-under-par in the final major of the year. China's Ruoning Yin and American Korda sit one shot behind the leader after they produced rounds of 68 (-4) on the opening day at the Old Course. Six players are in a share of fourth place with Korean duo Jenny Shin and Mi Hyang Lee, American pair Andrea Lee and Lilia Vu, Thailand's Patty Tavatanakit and Japan's Mao Saigo all on three-under.



Verstappen under pressure in front of home crowd as F1 returns at Dutch Grand Prix

AP ■ ZANDVOORT (NETHERLANDS)

The Dutch Grand Prix has generally been a party for Max Verstappen and his legions of orange-clad fans. This year could be very different. Verstappen has won all three races at the beach-side Zandvoort track since the Dutch Grand Prix returned to the Formula 1 schedule in 2021. For once though, home star Verstappen is under pressure in the standings. He enters the first race after the summer break without a win from any of the previous four - his longest winless run since 2020. "Last year coming here, I was a lot more confident that we had a big chance of winning the race, but that's how the season is already," Verstappen said Thursday. "It's a lot more competitive and from our side, I think we're still trying to improve, trying to find a better car balance."

It will be Verstappen's 200th race and the 26-year-old Dutch driver, who has a contract with Red Bull through 2028, said he believes he's closer to the end of his F1 career than the start. McLaren and Mercedes are both closing in on Verstappen and his Red Bull team, which started the year in such a dominant style. Beating Verstappen at his home race would be a real statement of intent. Perez under pressure Verstappen's 78-point lead over McLaren's Lando Norris in the drivers' standings gives him some room for error. But, teammate Sergio Perez's poor performances mean Red Bull's 42-point lead over McLaren in the constructors' championship could be vulnerable. In normal circumstances, a driver who signed a contract extension two months ago

Neeraj finishes second in Lausanne Diamond League with season's best 89.49m

PTI ■ LAUSANNE

Star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra finished second in the Diamond League here after producing a season's best effort of 89.49m from his last attempt in a gritty performance despite lingering fitness concerns. The 26-year-old was at the fourth spot till the fourth round before sending his spear to 85.58m in his fifth attempt. He saved the best for the last and his final attempt measured 89.49m on Thursday, a marginal improvement on the 89.45m achieved in the Paris Olympics a few days ago. He was in danger of missing the sixth throw but his fifth round effort of 85.58m saved him. Only the top three after five rounds get their respective final attempts. Two-time world champion and Paris Olympics bronze medalist Anderson Peters of Grenada won the event

with a monster throw of 90.61m in the second round while Julian Weber of Germany took the third spot with 87.08m. "The feeling wasn't great at first, but I am happy with my throw, especially the second (career) best throw on my last attempt. It was a tough start, but the comeback was really nice and I enjoyed the fighting spirit I showed," Chopra said after the event. "Even though my early throws were around 80-83m, I pushed hard in the last two attempts finishing strong. Competing at this high level, it's important to stay mentally tough and fight through." Peters, who had struggled to find form last year, led the competition here from beginning to end and he stamped his class with the 90m-plus throw in the last round. He has a personal best of 93.07m achieved in 2022. With seven points from Thursday's second-place finish, Chopra is joint



third alongside Weber in Diamond League standings with 15 points. Peters jumped to top spot with 21 points. Czech Republic's Jakub Vadlejch, who finished seventh (82.03m) on Thursday, is

in second spot with 16 points. Nursing a long-standing groin injury, Chopra claimed a silver in the Paris Olympics on August 8 adding to his historic gold in the Tokyo edition

of the Games three years ago. Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem had beaten Chopra for the gold in Paris with an Olympic record throw of 92.97m. Nadeem was missing from the field

here. On Saturday, Chopra had confirmed his participation here, postponing a decision on a possible surgery till the end of the season. Chopra had won the Lausanne leg in 2022 and 2023 and finished second behind Vadlejch in the winner-takes-all Diamond League 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 series standings to qualify for the finale. There is another DL meeting - in Zurich on September 5 - which has a men's javelin throw event on its roster. Chopra is yet to win a DL meeting this year. He finished second behind Vadlejch in Doha on May 10. The Indian has been managing his groin injury since winning the gold in the Budapest World Championships last year.

wouldn't face questions about his future. Perez's prolonged slump - no podium since April, no finish higher than seventh since May - hasn't quietened the speculation. Red Bull's broader F1 operation also seems to have five drivers for four seats across its main team and its second team, RB. Red Bull adviser Helmut Marko told Austrian newspaper Kleine Zeitung that New Zealander Liam Lawson, who drove five races for RB (then called AlphaTauri) last year, would "definitely be in one of our cars next year," in comments published Thursday. Yuki Tsunoda has a contract with RB for 2025, but his teammate Daniel Ricciardo's status is less clear. Another race seat for 2025 was confirmed Friday as Alpine promoted reserve driver Jack Doohan to partner Pierre Gasly next year. **RUSSELL SEEKS TO BOUNCE BACK:** George Russell thought he'd won the last race in Belgium, only to be disqualified when his car was found to be underweight. That passed the win to his teammate Lewis Hamilton. Russell has had nearly a month to reflect on what happened and said he had "zero hard feelings" toward Mercedes and that "in my mind, that is still a win." Despite Mercedes' strong recent form, Russell said he thought McLaren's Lando Norris was the only driver still with a shot of catching Verstappen in the standings, and that even that was unlikely. "Personally, I don't see anybody catching up with Max and Red Bull in normal circumstances," Russell said Thursday. "They have an exceptional lead. It's just we've been used to crazy dominance in the last few years."



REVU IS AN INTENSE DRAMA WITH PREDICTABLE AND SLOW NARRATION

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
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Lately, small films like *Committee Kurrollu* and *Aay* that have introduced new talent have created wonders at the box office. Now adding to the list is *Revu*, which has a Godavari backdrop film. The film directed by Harinath Puli has Vamsi Ram Pendyala, Ajay Nidadavolu and Swathi Bhemireddy as the main leads. The film's promotional videos are interesting and they create some buzz.

STORY

The story has the backdrop of a village near Godavari. Ankalu (played by Vamsi Ram Pendyala) and Gangaiah (played by Ajay) have been childhood friends but have their differences of opinion. They journey on small boats into the river to fish. They are the best fishermen in the area, supplying fish to a company in a nearby town. The arrival of Nageshu (played by Yepuri Hari) caused their once smooth life to become turbulent. The rich person in the village buys a big boat with an engine, making it easy for him to catch the fish. Soon, the company comes to an agreement with Nageshu. The Ankalu and Gangaiah's team unfortunately couldn't compete with Nageshu, and thereafter their lives became miserable

with no work. Meanwhile, Ankalu's wife, Samrajyam (played by Swathi Bhemireddy), is pregnant and is worried about Ankalu, thinking of when he will be able to get a boat with an engine. It's not just them, but also their friends who suffer with no work.

In a turn of events, an incident takes place in the village, which ends in a massacre. How Ankalu and Gangaiah compete with Nageshu and his sons is the crux of the remaining story.

ANALYSIS

There are a few films made in Telugu on the lives of fishermen and the Godavari backdrop. This film *Revu* focuses more on the lives of fishermen and how they suffer, while a rivalry starts within them. Director Harinath Puli takes his own time to introduce all the characters in the first half, making the narration slow-paced. He also takes quite a while to explain the happenings. Speaking of the story, it is easily predictable, making the audience quickly figure out what's going to happen next.

The second half of the story gets intense, and that's when the real story begins. The director is banking more on violence in the second half by introducing Nageshu's sons into the picture. The after-noon intermission is narrated more like a revenge drama.

One thing to appreciate in this film is how the director brings out the intense performances from all the actors, though they are all fresh faces.

He completely sticks to the local flavor. The dialogues are well written with the local Godavari slang, and the artists pronounce it well. John K. Joseph's music and Visakh Muraleedaran's background score are good; they give the emotional scenes a high. Revanth Sagar's cinematography captures the village and Godavari scenes in a beautiful manner.

PERFORMANCES

Except for LB Sriram, who played a cameo in the film, most of the actors are new to the silver screen. Vamsi Ram Pendyala is playing the main lead, and he did a fantastic job delivering a good performance. Ajay can be seen in another lead, and he too gave a commendable performance. Swathi Bhemireddy plays a typical village girl, and she lived in it. She is good at her diction and surprises everyone with her acting. Yepuri Hari plays the negative role very well, but the highlight of the film is Sumesh Madhavan and Leela Venkatesh Kommuri's performances. They show cruelty in their faces, and they definitely scare with their performance. Both did a fantastic job, and they were definitely the talking points of the film. The remaining

actors supported each other each other well.

VERDICT

Revu is an intense drama set against a rustic Godavari backdrop, with good performances from the actors. The first half has a completely slow narration, but the second half is somehow good with intense scenes. If the director concentrated more on the story and less on violence, the film could have been a better one. Because of the violence, the family audience may distance themselves from this film, but one should encourage it as you can see the fresh faces.

Cast: Vamsiram Pendyala, Hemanth Udbhav, Swathi Bhemireddy, Ajay Nidadavolu, Sumesh Madhavan and Leela Venkatesh Kommuri
Director: Harinath Puli
Producer: Murali Ginpallli, Naveen Parupalli
Music: John K. Joseph
Cinematographer: Revanth Sagar
Background score: Vishak Muraleedharan
Rating: 2.5/5

MAA revokes suspension on Hema

Lately, there have been reports stating that the Movie Artists Association (MAA) revoked the suspension of actress Hema.

According to the latest update by the association, MAA has lifted the suspension from the actress.

"The Executive Committee of the Movie Artists Association (MAA) convened to discuss your (Hema) suspension. After careful deliberation, President Vishnu Manchu proposed that your suspension be lifted and the committee unanimously

agreed to proceed with his recommendation. I am glad to inform you that, effective immediately, your suspension is hereby revoked," read the statement by the association.

Bengaluru police had arrested Hema at a rave party on the outskirts of Bengaluru. Following this, Hema was banned from the Movie Artists Association due to allegations of drug consumption. But the actress denied taking drugs and urged the association not to take any decision considering the media reports. She did meet MAA president Manchu Vishnu and give a letter to cancel her suspension from MAA. She had also stated getting her tests done in Hyderabad's highest-quality laboratories and is ready to take the test again if anyone suggests any laboratory.

Ravi Teja undergoes surgery

Actor Ravi Teja had a successful surgery on his right hand and has been advised by doctors to rest for a minimum of six weeks, according to his PR team.

On Thursday, the actor underwent a successful surgery at Yashoda Hospital.

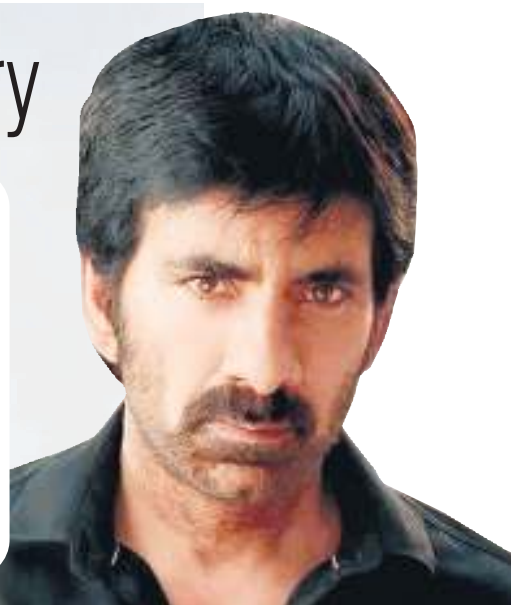
According to his team, the actor sustained a muscle tear in his right hand during the filming of *#RT75*. Despite the injury, he continued to shoot, which unfortunately led to further aggravation.

The actor's latest film, *Mr.*

Bachchan directed by Harish Shankar, failed to attract audiences in theaters.

Now, the actor is working on his 75th film, and the tentative title is *Kohinoor*. Director Bhanu Bhogavarapu, while Sreeleela is the female lead. The film is scheduled for a 2025 Sankranti release.

However, now that Ravi Teja has taken six weeks' rest, the release may be delayed a bit, according to a source. Irrespective of his film's fate at the box office, Ravi Teja is the one actor who continuously does films and has a few releases every year.



Kiran Abbavaram enters wedlock with Rahasya

Young actor Kiran Abbavaram and Rahasya Gorak tied the knot in a ceremony held in Coorg on Thursday evening, which was attended by their close family and friends. Both Kiran and Rahasya shared screen space in their first film *Raja Vaaru Rani Gaaru* and then fell in love with that film. They have been dating since the film; however, the couple never accepted their relationship until their engagement, which was held on

March 14. On the film front, after her debut film *Raja Vaaru Rani Gaaru*, Rahasya stopped acting in films. The debut film is a small film but a big hit for the couple. Later Kiran Abbavaram acted in films like *SR Kalyana Mandapam*, *Sammathame*, *Nenu Meeku Bagaa Kavalsinavadini*, *Meter*, *Vinara Bhagyamu Vishnu Katha*. His upcoming film *Ka* is slated for a release.



Megha Akash gets engaged to Saai Vishnu

Megha Akash is a well-known actress in Telugu and Tamil cinema. She made her film debut with the Telugu film *Lie* opposite Nithiin in 2017. The actress went on to act in several other Telugu and Tamil films. Well, the actress has now

announced her engagement to her long-time boyfriend, Saai Vishnu. The actress shared their engagement photos on her social media accounts and says her wish came true.

"My wish came true. To love, laughter, and our happily ever after engagement to the love of my life," she says on her Instagram, sharing some of her photos from the ceremony. Though there were initially reports about her relationship with a businessman, she never confirmed it or commented anything on it. However, she has now finally announced her engagement to her boyfriend. The wedding may take place sometime soon. The actress is currently working on some projects both in Telugu and Tamil. She wants to complete these projects first and, later, decide whether she wants to continue in films or not. Meanwhile, on the work front, she is playing the female lead in a film titled *Sahakutumbanam*, which also stars senior actors Rajendra Prasad, Tulasi, Rajshri Nair, and Brahmanandam. She earlier played the female lead in some of the films like *Chal Mohan Ranga*, *Raja Raja Chora*, *Dear Megha*, *Manu Charitra* and *Ravanasura*.



Teja Sajja's Mirai poster unveiled on his birthday



After the fantasy film *Hanuman*, Teja Sajja has become the talk of the industry. The film which released in January, became a huge hit not only in Telugu but in other

languages too. Now, everyone is curious about Teja's next film titled *Mirai*. This is also a fantasy film and directed by Karthik Ghattamaneni.

The young actor celebrated his birthday on Friday. On the occasion, the makers of *Mirai* released a poster of Teja. In this film, he will be seen portraying the role of a Super Yodha and it is also touted to be an action-adventure film. TG Vishwa Prasad is producing this one under his banner of People Media Factory. In the poster, Teja Sajja is shown keeping himself from falling by gripping a sizzling iron rod, while items drop from above. The poster certainly hints that he is once again to play a superhero.

He has been taking time to come up with this film after the success of *Hanuman*, as he wanted to deliver quality with this one. He is working hard and putting in his best efforts for this one, say the makers. The film also stars Manoj Manchu is playing an important and crucial role in this one. When his poster was released sometime back, it got good responses from all over and generated interest in this film. The film is releasing in 8 languages on April 18, 2025 in 2D and 3D versions.

Avram Manchu's first look from Kannappa out on Janmashtami

The makers of *Kannappa* are following a promotional strategy of releasing first-look posters of prominent characters from the movie on Monday. This release is particularly special as it coincides with Krishna Janmashtami.

On this auspicious occasion, the first look of Vishnu Manchu's son, Avram Manchu, will be unveiled. Avram, who plays a significant role, is making his film debut with this movie. The film is more than just a cinematic venture; it represents the

convergence of three generations of the Manchu family's cinematic journey, featuring Mohan Babu, Vishnu Manchu and Avram Manchu. We need to wait for 3 more days to know about Avram's character and witness his appearance in the movie. *Kannappa* is the most ambitious project for Vishnu Manchu, who will be seen in the titular role. The expectations have skyrocketed after the stupendous response for the teaser. The movie will have a pan-India release in December.

