

# the pioneer

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India, US look forward to working together:  
**Rajnath**

**INFOSYS**  
SCOUTING FOR ACQUISITIONS, SAYS CEO PAREKH



'Baahubali's concept is from Rajinikanth-starrer  
**BAASHHA**

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
The pioneer

As elected public representatives we should not neglect nature. That is the reason why the government started protecting lakes from encroachments through HYDRAA. The government undertook this programme to provide better lives for future generations. We will not give in to pressure and will take strong action against encroachers. Our government stands for righteousness in the spirit of Lord Krishna's teachings.

— A. Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister, Telangana

P4

**DON'T MISS...**

**Injection proves fatal for teenage...**

In a tragic incident, a 15-year-old girl allegedly died after being administered an injection at the Government General Hospital (GGH) in Akividu. The deceased, Nidamolu Durga Lahari, had been suffering from a viral fever and was taken to the Akividu GGH by her parents for treatment. According to the family, a doctor administered an injection to the girl, following which she immediately fell ill, experiencing vomiting and diarrhoea. As her condition worsened, the doctors arranged for her to transfer to the Government General...

—PAGE: 4

**Rallies continue to rock...**

Rallies and demonstrations were held in different parts of West Bengal on Sunday, protesting the rape and murder of the doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. In state capital Kolkata, civil society members marched from Ramfala Maidan in Moulali to Metro Channel in Esplanade, demanding justice for the victim of the crime that shook the conscience of the nation. Slogans such as "Hatrass theke RG Kar, dharsaner biruddhe othao swar (From Hatrass to RG Kar, raise voice against..."

—PAGE: 5

**ONGC opens well in KG field to raise...**

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) on Sunday said it has opened another well on its flagship deep-sea project in the Krishna Godavari basin in the Bay of Bengal, which will help augment production of crude oil and natural gas. In January this year, ONGC started producing oil, converted into fuels like petrol and diesel in refineries, from the KG-DWN-98/2 or KG-D5 block. "On August 24, 2024, ONGC marked a significant milestone by starting production from its fifth oil well in the Block KG-DWN-98/2..."

—PAGE: 8

**Meet 13-year-old badminton...**

Thirteen-year-old Tanvi Patri from Odisha has cemented her status as one of India's most promising badminton prodigies by clinching the girls' singles title at the U-15 Badminton Asia U-17 & U-15 Junior Championships in Chengdu, China, the country where she first honed her skills in the sport. Patri capped off a phenomenal week with a superlative performance, defeating Vietnam's second seed Thi Thu Huyen Nguyen 22-20, 21-11 in a 34-minute final, offering a glimmer of hope after Indian...

—SPORTS

## India to join 'developed' list: PM

ADVOCATES SIMPLE, EASY, AND ACCESSIBLE JUSTICE

PNS ■ JODHPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the guarantee of simple and accessible justice to all is important as the country moves towards the dream of a developed India.

Speaking at the concluding ceremony of Platinum Jubilee celebrations of the Rajasthan High Court here, Modi also referred to his Independence Day remark on 'secular civil code' and said that the judiciary has been advocating this for decades.

"As we move forward with the dream of a developed India, there should be a guarantee of simple, easy and accessible justice for everyone. This is very important," he said.

Modi said that justice is always simple and clear, but sometimes the process makes it difficult.

"It is our collective responsibility to make justice as simple and clear as possible. I am satisfied that the country has taken many historic and decisive steps in this direction," he said.

The prime minister also said that today the people's dreams, their aspirations are bigger, "so it is important that our systems are modernized."

"Innovation and modernisation of the system is equally important for providing justice for all," he added.

Modi said that the Indian judiciary

- PM refers to milestone judicial decisions such as the abrogation of Article 370 and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) to illustrate the judiciary's role in national issues
- Modi reiterates his Independence Day call for a secular civil code, noting that the judiciary has long supported this stance.
- The govt has replaced outdated colonial laws with the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, reflecting a move away from colonial mindsets.
- The e-courts project and other IT initiatives have revolutionised the justice system, linking over 18,000 courts and more than 26 crore cases through a centralised online platform.



- Modi praises alternative dispute resolution mechanisms as a means to provide quicker and less expensive justice.
- The government aims to integrate police, forensic services, and court systems to enhance efficiency and access to justice.
- The use of technology, including translations of legal documents into 18 languages, is seen as a key to empowering the poor and improving justice delivery.
- India's innovations in areas such as Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and UPI are cited as global models, with similar approaches to be implemented in the justice system.

ary has continuously played the responsibility of being vigilant and active on national issues.

"The example of the 'constitutional integration' of the country by abrogating Article 370 from Kashmir is before us. The example of humanitarian law like CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) is before us. What natural justice says in the national interest on such

issues has been completely clear from the decisions of the courts," he said.

The prime minister said that from the high courts to the Supreme Court, the judiciary has strengthened the resolution of Nation First on such issues many times.

"On this 15th August, I talked about a secular civil code from the Red Fort. Although this is the first

time that a government has become so vocal on this issue, our judiciary has been advocating it for decades. This clear stance of the judiciary on the issue of national unity will further increase the trust of the citizens in the judiciary," he said.

Modi said that the government has repealed hundreds of colonial laws that became completely irrelevant.

Continued on Page 2

## Noose tightens around mining officials of YSRCP regime

Key records from several offices seized by ACB sleuths

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Allegations of corruption have surfaced against officials across various departments, reportedly in favour of the previous YSRCP government. Over the past five years, accusations have emerged implicating YSRCP leaders and officials in widespread corruption. In response, the coalition government led by TDP Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has been taking measures to address these issues since assuming office.

The government has particularly focused on the mining sector, which is of significant importance. Plans appear to be underway to address the corruption within the mining department. Consequently, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has been activated to investigate and take action against the implicated officials.

Recently, the ACB has targeted former Managing Director Venkata Reddy of the Andhra Pradesh Mineral Development Corporation (APMDC). The bureau

is currently reviewing records from all mining offices across the State. Since Saturday afternoon, ACB officials have been scrutinising documents, continuing their examination into Sunday. Key records from several offices have been seized

for detailed inspection, while others have been taken away for further review. The ACB is focusing on documents dating back to 2021, with particular attention on contracts, mining operations, and payments associated with JP Ventures. Notices have been issued to some officials, instructing them to report to the ACB office on Monday.

The ACB's scrutiny has been directed towards officials affiliated with the YSRCP who allegedly followed the directives of Venkata Reddy. Inspections are ongoing in numerous offices statewide. Meanwhile, efforts to apprehend Venkata Reddy, who remains at large, are intensifying. The ACB is also investigating the involvement of some individuals who served as ministers during the YSRCP administration.

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## Concern & curiosity grip Vizag as sea recedes by 100 m

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A rare and surprising event occurred at RK Beach in Visakhapatnam, where the sea unexpectedly receded by up to 100 metres on Sunday. This unusual occurrence left stones that are normally submerged exposed, causing a mix of panic and curiosity among locals and tourists.

The sudden drop in sea level offered a unique chance for visitors to explore areas usually covered by water. Tourists, such as Ram Naidu from Srikakulam, took advantage of the low tide. "We have visited several times before, but we could never climb the stones," Naidu remarked. "This was a unique experience for us."

However, this unusual sight also raised concerns among residents, who feared it could be a sign of a potential tsunami. Historically, significant drops in sea level have been linked to natural disasters, which heightened fears among coastal communities.

To address these concerns, Dr BSR Reddy, a retired oceanography

professor from Andhra University, offered some reassurance. Speaking to The Pioneer, Dr Reddy explained that such events are often due to natural, seasonal changes. "Tides are the periodic rise and fall of sea levels caused by the gravitational forces of the moon and sun," Dr Reddy said. "During low tide, the sea level appears to retreat, which is a normal occurrence. This usually returns to normal within a day or two."

Dr Reddy also mentioned that extreme weather events, such as cyclones, can affect sea levels. "Storm surges from cyclones, even those affecting nearby regions like Odisha, can temporarily alter sea levels," he added. "Additionally, changes in ocean temperatures can cause variations in sea levels. Warmer waters expand and increase sea levels, while cooler waters contract and lead to a temporary drop."

While the unusual sight attracted curious tourists and provided a chance for exploration, experts advise the public to stay informed and cautious. According to Dr Reddy, such occurrences are generally part of natural tidal patterns.

## Guv greets people on Krishnastami

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor of Andhra Pradesh, S Abdul Nazeer, conveyed his warm greetings and best wishes to the people on the auspicious occasion of Sri Krishnastami. In his message, the Governor stated, "The festival of Sri Krishnastami reminds us of the eternal message of Lord Sri Krishna delivered through the Bhagavad Gita, which lays the foundation for building a harmonious society."

He further expressed his hope that this auspicious occasion would usher in peace, progress, and prosperity while strengthening the bonds of brotherhood, amity, and harmony among the people of the State.

## NRI Telugu doctor Ramesh Babu shot dead in US

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr Peramsetty Ramesh Babu (64), a doctor originally from Tirupati and settled in the United States, was reportedly shot dead in Tuscaloosa, US, on Friday. He is believed to have succumbed to gunshot injuries, though the exact details of the incident remain unclear. He is survived by his wife, two sons, and two daughters, all of whom reside in the US.

Dr Ramesh was a co-founder and medical director of the Crimson Network, a local group of medical professionals. He was highly regarded for his contributions to healthcare and practised as a physician in

Tuscaloosa. He had earned a notable reputation in the region, with a street named in his honour in recognition of his services. Dr Ramesh also frequently hosted political figures from India at his residence.

One of the most significant honours bestowed upon Dr Ramesh was the renaming of a stretch of 18th Avenue East after him by the Tuscaloosa City Council in April. This gesture was a tribute to his extensive contributions to the city. The Crimson Care Network Team announced on Facebook that they would provide further statements in the coming days.

Continued on Page 2

## Eight IAS probationers given posting orders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has issued posting orders for the IAS probationers of the 2022 batch following the completion of their Phase II training on Sunday. Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad released Government Order No. TS 1468, appointing eight probationers to various Sub-Divisions.

B. Sahadith Venkat Trivina has been appointed as Sub-Collector of

Markapuram Sub-Division in Prakasam district. In a minor reshuffle of IAS officers across the State, eight officers have been transferred, with C. Yaswanth Kumar Reddy now serving as Sub-Collector of Palakonda Sub-Division in Parvathipuram Manyam district.

Kalpashree K.R. will take up the role of Sub-Collector in Narsipatnam Sub-Division, Anakapalle District. Mantri Mourya Bharadwaj has been assigned as Sub-Collector of Penukonda Sub-

Division in Sri Sathya Sai District. Raghvendra Meena has been appointed as Sub-Collector of Gudur Sub-Division in Tirupati district. Saurya Man Patel will serve as Sub-Collector of the Paderu Sub-Division in Alluri Sitarama Raju District. Tirumani Pooja has been assigned to Kandukur Sub-Division in SPSR Nellore district, and V. Sanjana Simha will take up the role of Sub-Collector in Tenali Sub-Division, Guntur district.



## Ex-MLA Palaparthi David Raju dead

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Former MLA Palaparthi David Raju passed away on Sunday while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Hyderabad.

David Raju had been ill for the past few days and was receiving care at a private hospital in Hyderabad.

Continued on Page 2

## Minor reshuffle

VIJAYAWADA: State Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad announced transfers and postings of IAS officers through GO Rt No 1469 on Sunday. As per the revised order, Abhishek (2019), will remain as Project Officer, ITDA, Paderu. Additionally, Gobbila Vidyadhari, (2021), has been appointed as Joint Collector and Additional District Magistrate of Chittoor. Prakhari Jain, (2021), has been designated as Joint Collector and Additional District Magistrate of Bapatla, succeeding B Subba Rao, upon his superannuation.



## Two crest gates of NSP lifted again following heavy inflows

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Due to the heavy inflows at the Nagarjuna Sagar Project (NSP), two crest gates were lifted on Sunday to release water downstream to the Pulichintala Project.

Sources indicate that the NSP has once again started receiving substantial inflow from the Srisailem Project.

With the reservoir at full capac-

ity, officials lifted two crest gates to a height of six feet on Sunday morning, discharging 19,880 cusecs of water downstream. The NSP is currently receiving an inflow of 66,329 cusecs.

The water level at the NSP stood at 590 feet, matching its full capacity. The reservoir now holds 312.50 TMC of water. Additionally, hydropower generation is ongoing at the project.

## Pawan highlights space science awareness

RUSSIAN COSMONAUT, SPACE KIDZ INDIA TEAM MEET DEPUTY CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of Forests, Environment, Science, and Technology, K Pawan Kalyan, has said that the country could achieve significant progress if the outcomes of space research are effectively utilised. He highlighted the importance of cultivating awareness about space science from an early age among students and reiterated the government's commitment to providing the necessary support to students aspiring to become scientists.

Russian cosmonaut Sergey Korsakov and representatives from Space Kidz India met with Pawan Kalyan on Sunday at the Deputy Chief Minister's residence in Hyderabad. During the meeting, they discussed the research conducted and the satellites developed



by their team. The visitors also demonstrated the functioning of a recently developed miniature satellite deployer.

Dr. Keshan, Founder and CEO of Space Kidz India, proposed the establishment of a space park in the State to

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spark students' interest in space science. He noted that such parks currently exist only at NASA and are absent in India.

Dr. Keshan suggested that creating a space park in Andhra Pradesh could significantly enhance students' awareness and involvement in the space sector. Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan responded positively to the suggestion.

On this occasion, Pawan Kalyan honoured astronaut Sergey Korsakov by presenting him with a prototype of the Chandrayaan-3 rocket. Sergey, who spent six months in space, briefed the Deputy Chief Minister on the research conducted during his mission and the strategies employed to endure such an extended period in space. He was also invited to sample Russian dishes specially prepared for him. The meeting was attended by representatives of Space Kidz India, including Yajnaseni, S.B. Arjun, Sai Tanya, and others.



# Monday Mirchi

## REVIVAL OF SUB COLLECTOR POSTING ENTHUSES ROOKIES

Telangana's latest move to revert to the previous process of training young IAS officers seems to have enthused the latest crop of rookies in the state. The Revanth Reddy-led government has recently posted certain 2022 batch IAS officers as Sub Collectors. In February 2020, ostensibly as part of administrative reforms, the then K Chandrasekhar Rao government had abolished Joint Collector posts in the district collectorates and introduced Additional Collector posts. Thereafter, each district came to have a Collector and two Additional Collectors. Of the two Additional Collectors, one was specially deployed to govern the local bodies. The idea was to ensure that the Additional Collectors as 'specialists' will play a key role in the functioning of local bodies. Thus, the previous government had made a rather controversial decision to halt the posting of fresh IAS entrants as Sub Collectors. Grapevine has it that the last batch to hold such positions was in 2015. Apparently, the reasoning was that officers posted to state-level offices, upon being assigned to sub-divisions as Revenue Divisional Officers, were seen as pliable and easier to manage. For nearly a decade, Telangana had stood out as an exception across the country with no Sub Collectors in place - only IAS officers designated as such were posted to these subdivisions. This move had raised eyebrows among many, especially since the experience of serving as a Sub Collector is considered essential for budding IAS officers to grasp the fundamentals of revenue administration. Now, the Congress government has decided to revive this system. A retired bureaucrat, who could not resist sharing his two cents, called it a 'welcome step' and emphasized that this experience is crucial for new IAS entrants to truly learn the ropes at the field level. The reversal of a system touted as 'part of reforms' has now raised questions of what else is in store on the administrative front.

## THE MAGIC OF GIVING A FREE HAND TO NO-NONSENSE BABUS

Given a free hand and left to their own devices, babus committed to their tasks can bask in their own glory, leave alone reflected glory as officials who loyally implement political *diktats*. In Telangana, certain no-nonsense senior bureaucrats are in the limelight now for doing their job in a visibly captivating manner. Coming as it does in just eight months of the Congress rule, at least three significant initiatives have emerged as game-changers, garnering widespread public support. The buzz in political circles is hard to miss: the diligent inspections by the Commissioner of Food Safety in Telangana, the high-profile Anti-Corruption Bureau raids, and the hair-raising razing operations of HYDRABAD have become the talking points, more so among Congress leaders and cadre. With celebrat-

ed officers leading the charge -Ranganath (illegal structures), CV Anand (corrupt officials), and RV Karnan (food safety), the talk in official circles is that this trifecta of authorities with a free hand is helping the government shore up its image. The subtext is that IPS officers outnumber IAS officials when it comes to the areas of operations that are changing the status quo. Congressmen are quick to point out that these initiatives have struck a chord with the public. VC Sajjanar, who was at the wheel when the Mahalakshmi scheme (free bus ride for women) was launched, perhaps set the tone for showcasing administrative capabilities predicated on the maxim 'Where there is a will, there is a way'. All told, these officers have proved that administration, if let unhindered, can work wonders. Kudos to the government of the day will then be a natural consequence.

## SEASONED BUREAUCRATS' DEAFENING SILENCE

Presently the air in the corridors of power in Telangana is thick with speculations as to why several seasoned bureaucrats, who had wielded significant influence during the erstwhile K Chandrasekhar Rao regime, including those who had served as his trusted advisors, have chosen to keep a low profile. Regime change may have dislodged them from the centre-stage of administration; yet, officials at lower rungs of the administration and the people at large still look up to them for their two cents. No one expects *maun vrat* from them, much less self-imposed distance from the media. One can understand if in-service senior officials opt to be *mauni babus*, but what hurts opinion-seekers is that even the retired ones are incommunicado. What happens to their wealth of experience and insider knowledge? They seem to be content while remaining in the shadows, but the larger question is: What or who might be keeping them so disquietingly quiet.

## SECOND THOUGHTS, BUT TOO LATE?

Regime change is bound to be followed by a shake-up of the administration. That doesn't mean officials who know they are not in the good books of so and so should become paranoid and seek voluntary retirement from service. In Andhra Pradesh, senior IAS officer Praveen Prakash, who had had run-ins with political bosses, did seek VRS (though he has more than seven years of service left) as soon as the TPD-led NDA came to power. With the date of his VRS just weeks away (September 30), he is now having second thoughts. A little bird told us that Praveen Prakash has approached the Chief Secretary to keep aside his papers and allow him to continue in service till his superannuation. He attributed his 'hasty decision' to 'psychological pressure'. It appears that nothing positive has come his way from the government so far.

--Yours truly

## Call to revamp Revenue Dept at village, mandal levels

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In an assessment of the current state of the Revenue Department, retired officials who previously served as tahsildars, RDOs, and special deputy collectors (SDC) have highlighted the urgent need for systemic reforms at the village and mandal levels. Despite the introduction of computerisation and online services, they believe that persistent flaws continue to undermine the department's efficiency and integrity.

The retired officials, who prefer to remain anonymous, pointed out that Village Revenue Officers (VROs) are often stationed in their native villages and mandals for extended periods, leading to local pressures and the potential tampering of records. "VROs should be posted to locations outside their native mandals to prevent undue influence and ensure impartiality in record-keeping."

# Minister, MP & MLAs flag Off Vande Bharat Express at Eluru

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Secunderabad-Vishakhapatnam-Secunderabad Vande Bharat Express has been provided with an additional stoppage at Eluru Railway Station starting from Sunday, Sunday, Putta Mahesh Kumar, Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha), Eluru, and Kolusu Parthasarathy, Minister for Housing & I&PK, along with others, inaugurated the new stoppage and flagged off the 20708 - Visakhapatnam-Secunderabad Vande Bharat train at Eluru Railway Station.

The event saw the presence of Badeti Radha Krishnaya, MLA Eluru; Chintamani Prabhakar, MLA Denduluru; Songa Roshan Kumar, MLA Chintalapudi; and Ganne Veeranjanyulu, TDP District President, Eluru, among other dignitaries and a large gathering of people.

At the outset, P.E. Edwin, Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Infrastructure), and a



team of railway officials welcomed the Minister, MP, MLAs, and other political dignitaries.

Interacting with the media, MP Putta Mahesh Kumar expressed his gratitude to the Railway Ministry for providing the additional stoppage at Eluru. He stated that Train No. 20708/07 Vande Bharat Express, which was virtually flagged off by the Prime Minister on 12 March 2024, has been a significant success, particu-

larly among tech professionals working in Hyderabad, due to its premium onboard services and reduced travel time. The train has seen a patronage of 146%, with a substantial waiting list. MP Putta Mahesh Kumar further mentioned that, based on their representation and popular demand, the Railway Ministry decided to extend Vande Bharat services to Eluru District, thereby enhancing connectivity to the Telangana

State capital and Vishakhapatnam.

Kolusu Parthasarathy, Hon'ble Minister, expressed his immense happiness over the provision of the additional stoppage.

In his interaction with the media, the Minister noted that this new stoppage would greatly benefit the public of Eluru District and that more railway development projects are in the pipeline.

Following the media interaction, the Vande Bharat Express was warmly welcomed by a massive crowd and media personnel with a rousing reception. The train was flagged off by the public representatives amidst the chants of "Jai Vande Bharat" from a crowd of around 1,000 people. After the ceremony, MP Putta Mahesh Kumar and MLA Songa Roshan Kumar boarded the Vande Bharat and travelled from Eluru to Vijayawada, engaging with passengers and gathering feedback. They also distributed sweets to railway staff and passengers onboard.

## Now, 24/7 water supply in Guntur city

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Guntur Municipal Commissioner Puli Srinivasulu announced that Guntur city will receive a continuous water supply from the Krishna River. The Commissioner directed engineering officials to keep the Undavalli Raw Water Plant operational 24 hours a day, ensuring sufficient motors and staff are in place to provide drinking water to the residents of Guntur city.

GMC Commissioner Srinivasulu on Sunday inspected the raw water supply plant and reservoirs in Undavalli, located on the banks of the Krishna River adjacent to the Prakasham Barrage.

He issued appropriate instructions to the engineering officials. The commissioner first inquired about the capacity of the motors in the plant, details of the water being pumped to Guntur city daily, the water levels in the Prakasham Barrage, and the staff on duty. Commissioner



Srinivasulu instructed that the pumping centre should operate 24 hours a day, with an additional motor kept on standby. He further directed that the staff should remain vigilant and informed about the water storage in the barrage and that CCTV cameras should be installed in the vicinity of the plant. The

Superintending Engineer (SE) was also instructed to construct a compound around the plant area.

SE Shyam Sundar, Executive Engineer (EE) Srinivas, Deputy Executive Engineer (DEE) Sridhar, and Guntur City Rate Payers Association President Narayana Reddy participated in the programme.

## BJP lauds Lokesh for skill census initiative

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP Andhra Pradesh spokesperson Lanka Dinakar has congratulated the state's Education and IT Minister, Nara Lokesh, for initiating the Skill Census, aimed at assessing the current skills of the youth in Andhra Pradesh. The initiative seeks to upgrade these skills to provide better employment and business opportunities, contributing to a more prosperous and developed Andhra Pradesh and, ultimately, a stronger India.

In a statement released on Sunday, Dinakar commended Lokesh for making Andhra Pradesh the first state in the country to implement a Skill Census in a meaningful and impactful manner. He emphasised that the initiative will yield positive results for the entire workforce, particularly benefiting young students by providing them with the right opportunities.

He added that this programme could serve as an ideal and exemplary

model for other states to follow.

Dinakar highlighted the importance of a good education combined with relevant skills, noting that this combination can greatly enhance job and business prospects for youth. He pointed out that many graduates and postgraduates struggle to find suitable opportunities and are often forced to settle for less. Continuous skill upgradation has thus become essential.

At this critical juncture, Nara Lokesh has aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of youth skill development to build India as a global leader.

He further noted that the Union Government has allocated Rs 2 lakh crore in the 2024-25 Budget for skill development, aimed at creating employment and skilling opportunities for 4.1 crore youth across the country over the next five years. Minister Lokesh appears to be positioning Andhra Pradesh to be at the forefront in taking advantage of this opportunity.

## Unified Pension Scheme to put additional burden of Rs 6,250 cr on exchequer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), which is going to provide assured pension to 23 lakh eligible central government employees, will put an additional burden of Rs 6,250 crore on the exchequer per year.

UPS, effective from April 1, 2025 envisages government contribution rising from current level of 14 per cent to 18.5 per cent. This 4.5 per cent increase in government contribution is estimated to cost Rs 6,250 crore to the government, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has said.

Although the government is increasing its contribution under UPS, employees' contribution remains unchanged at 10 per cent of the basic salary.



In addition, there will be an arrear of Rs 800 crore that has to be paid under the National Pension System (NPS) to employees retiring before March 31, 2025. If these retirees opt for UPS, they will receive the arrears. The NPS, in effect from January 1, 2004, is a contributory scheme while pension scheme prior to this was defined where the government promised to pay 50 per cent of the last-drawn basic pay, irrespective of

the corpus. However, UPS envisages to provide assured pension depending on the length of the service as in this case the pension payout is linked to the corpus accumulated.

The scheme approved by the Union Cabinet on Saturday is a sort of fulfilling long-pending demands of government employees ahead of the assembly elections in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir.

The UPS can be opted by employees under NPS. Choice once exercised will have no option of switching back.

Employees opting for UPS will be eligible for an assured pension of 50 per cent of the average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months before the superannuation for a minimum qualifying service of 25 years.

## Implement caste census now or you will see next PM do it: Rahul to Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fulfil the nation's demand for a caste census immediately otherwise he would see the next PM do it. No power can stop a nationwide caste census, the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha said on X in Hindi, tagging a post by the Congress on a "mood of the nation poll" by a media group which said 74 per cent people in August said a caste census must be conducted, up from the 59 per cent in February this year.

"Modi ji, if you are thinking of stopping the caste census, you are dreaming - no power can stop it now! India's order has arrived - soon 90 per cent Indians will support and demand caste census," Gandhi



said on X. "Implement the order now, or you will see the next Prime Minister do this," the Congress leader said.

His remarks came a day after he pressed the demand for a nationwide "caste census" and said 90 per cent people of the country are sitting out of the system and the step should be taken in their interest.

He had also said that the Congress, the "caste census" is the foundation and a tool for policy making.

Addressing the "Samvidhan Samman Sammelan" in Prayagraj, Gandhi had said,

## 'Unified Pension Scheme is a step towards financial security for govt teachers'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Akhil Bharatiya Rashtriya Shaikshik Mahasangh (ABRSM), a prominent teachers' organisation, has commended the Union government's approval of the Unified Pension Scheme for government employees. In a statement released on Sunday, Prof Y.V. Rami Reddy, President of ABRSM Andhra Pradesh, emphasised that this landmark decision will ensure a dignified and secure future for lakhs of government teachers following their dedicated service.

Prof Reddy highlighted that the Unified Pension Scheme addresses the uncertainties faced by teachers and other employees under the National Pension Scheme (NPS). The new scheme guarantees a pen-



sion to employees who have completed a minimum of 25 years of service, ensuring they receive 50% of their average basic salary from the last 12 months prior to retirement. For those with service tenure between 10 and 25 years, a proportionate pension will be provided.

He further noted that the scheme ensures financial security for families in case an employee passes away during service; their family will receive

60% of the pension as a family pension. Additionally, the government will contribute 18.5% of the employee's basic salary towards their pension. The scheme also provides an assured minimum pension of Rs 10,000 per month for retirees with at least 10 years of service. Moreover, the assured pension, family pension, and minimum pension will be adjusted according to inflation, offering protection for pensioners against the rising cost of living.

Prof Reddy praised the scheme as a significant step towards securing the economic well-being and dignity of government employees. On behalf of ABRSM, he expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his administration for this crucial decision.

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha

Tithi: Ashtami: Aug 26 03:39 AM to Aug 27 02:20 AM

Navami: Aug 27 02:20 AM to Aug 28 01:33 AM

**Nakshatram:**

Krithika: Aug 25 04:45 PM to Aug 26 03:55 PM

Rohini: Aug 26 03:55 PM to Aug 27 03:38 PM

**Rahukalam:** 7:38 AM to 9:11 AM

**Yamagandam:** 10:44 AM to 12:17 PM

**Varjyam:** 07:43 AM to 09:18 AM

**Gulika:** 1:50 PM to 3:24 PM

**Amritakalam:** 01:36 PM to 03:09 PM

**Abhijit Muhurtham:** 11:52 AM to 12:42 PM

**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**

Forecast: Mostly Cloudy

Temp: 34°C

Humidity: 64%

Sunrise: 5:53 AM

Sunset: 6:25 PM

Updated: August 25, 2024 5:00 PM

## Illicit drug trade global issue: Shah Ex-MLA... Says India can fight it if we pursue with determination

PNS ■ RAIPUR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said the illegal narcotics trade is not only a challenge for India but also a global issue, stressing that the country can combat the menace if it pursues with determination and strategy.

The money generated through the illicit narcotics trade is also used for anti-national activities like spreading terrorism and Naxalism and weakening the country's economy, he said.

Addressing a meeting at a hotel in Nava Raipur on the scenario of narcotics substances in Chhattisgarh, Shah emphasised the need to adopt four formulas of drug detection, network destruction,



culprit detention and addict rehabilitation in achieving success. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has pledged to make the country drug-free in 2047 when the 100th year of the country's independence will be celebrated and gradually the resolution has become the resolution of the 130 crore population. I believe that the resolution of a drug-free India is very important in making a pros-

perous, safe and glorious India, Shah said.

The illicit drug trade is not only a challenge for India but also a global issue, he said, pitching for the need to raise awareness of this menace.

"This battle is at such a juncture that if we pursue with determination and strategy, we can win this fight," he said, cautioning, "several countries have lost their fight against it"

## India to join 'developed'...

Continued from Page 1

He succumbed to his illness today. He was elected to the Assembly from the Santanulapadu and Yerragondapalem constituencies in Prakasham district. He also served as the Zilla Parishad (ZP) chairman.

Ministers for Social Welfare Dola Bala Veeranjany Swamy, Gottipati Ravi Kumar, and former Minister Sidda Raghava Rao have expressed their condolences over the death of former MLA David Raju and extended their sympathies to the bereaved family.

## NRI Telugu...

Continued from Page 1

"After so many decades of Independence, overcoming the mentality of slavery, the country has adopted the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita in place of the Indian Penal Code...justice instead of punishment. This is also the basis of Indian contemplation," he said, adding that the new laws liberate Indian democracy from the colonial mindset. Talking about the use of information technology, he said that the e-courts project is the biggest example of how big a change can be brought about by the IT revolution.

"Today more than 18,000 courts in the country have been computerized. I have been told that information of more than 26 crore cases has been linked to a centralized online platform through National Judicial Data Grid. More than 3,000 court complexes and more than 1,200

jails of the country have been linked through video conference," he said. Modi said alternative dispute resolution mechanism is becoming an important way for less expensive and quick decisions in the country. "This system will promote ease of living as well as ease of justice in the country," he said.

Terming 'integration' the most significant word in terms of taking the country ahead in the 21st century, Modi said that it is the vision of the government that the police, forensic, process service mechanism, and from district courts to the Supreme Court, all work in integration. "The use of technology is becoming a tried and tested formula for empowerment of the poor in today's India," he said. He also said that India's work in many areas, from Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to UPI, has emerged as a global model.

According to his WebMD profile, Dr Peramsetty graduated from the Medical College of Wisconsin and Sri Venkateswara Medical College in 1986, with 38 years of experience. He practised in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, as well as four other locations, specialising in Emergency Medicine and Family Medicine.

He was also affiliated with the Diploma in Child Health (DCH) Regional Medical Center. Local reports highlight that a street in Tuscaloosa was named in his honour due to his significant contributions to the medical field. Dr Ramesh was also recognised for his extensive work during the Covid-19 pandemic and received awards for his efforts

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# Drinking water project at A Kondur progressing well

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

District Collector Dr G Srijana announced on Sunday, in a release, that the project to provide safe Krishna water to the villages affected by kidney diseases in A Kondur mandal is progressing at a swift pace, as per the state government's instructions.

The project aims to supply Krishna water to 38 villages affected by kidney disease permanently, with a budget allocation of ₹49.94 crore. The initial target for completion was set for 30 June 2025. However, due to the concerted efforts of the authorities, the work is advancing rapidly and is likely to be completed well ahead of the scheduled target, with an action plan formulated by the Rural Water Supply department.



The District Collector stated that Krishna water is currently reaching the Mylavaram CPWC scheme in NTR district, from where it is being transported to the Kudapa sump. Until the project's completion, water is being supplied from this sump to various villages in A Kondur mandal, which are affected by kidney diseases, through tankers. Recently, a DMF grant of ₹1.60 crore has also been allocated for this purpose.

As part of this project, an overhead tank is being constructed on a hill near the Kudapa sump. The Krishna water is treated at the sump and then pumped to this overhead reservoir. From here, water will be supplied to the 38 affected villages in A Kondur mandal via pipelines. Of the 200 km of pipeline work, 30 km has already been completed, with 70 km in the final stage.

## CREDAI - SouthCon 2024 concludes

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

MLA Bode Prasad and shutter Saina Nehwal were part of the closing ceremony of the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI), South Con 2024. The high-level event was graced by esteemed dignitaries from various parts of the country. Approximately 700 developers from across South India gathered to explore the future of the real estate sector.

The two-day event was marked by significant discussions on the real estate sector's progress along with dialogues on growth of the sector. The South Con 2024 also hosted a series of enlightening and motivating sessions. The sessions delved into new financing opportunities through Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and Small and Medium-sized REITs (SM REITs).

## No decision yet on Central Tribal University's construction

### Delay in establishing permanent infrastructure hampering varsity's growth

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The fate of the Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh (CTUAP) remains uncertain as the State government is yet to finalise plans for its construction and site selection. The delay in establishing permanent infrastructure is hampering the university's growth, depriving students of essential facilities such as laboratories, hostels, classrooms, and libraries.

Sources within the university reveal that the absence of hostel facilities has led many out-of-State students to cancel their admissions. Currently operating from the old Andhra University campus, CTUAP's total student body stands at a mere 620—a figure limited by inadequate infrastructure.

In 2014, the then TDP government selected Relli village in Kothavalasa mandal as the site for the university and allocated 526.24 acres of land in accordance with the A.P. Reorganisation Act. However, the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government, which took office in 2019, moved the location to Mentada and Dattiraju mandals, claiming it was more accessible for tribal students from neighbouring States like Odisha and Chhattisgarh. The Union government approved the new site and allocated Rs 15 crore, with an anticipated total investment of around Rs 300 crore.

S. Kota MLA Kolla Lalitakumari has urged Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu to reconsider the original site at

Relli village. "The State government has not officially responded to her request," a source close to the university said. "The State government should allow construction at Mentada and Dattiraju mandals as securing Central approvals and funding for Relli village will be a herculean task."

Additionally, only 20 percent of the land at Relli is suitable for construction," the source added. The delay in construction has sparked frustration among stakeholders. "Political decisions should not obstruct a project that was sanctioned a decade ago. Many top educational institutions across various States have seen progress due to collective efforts of public representatives. We need similar cooperation here," the source added.

## Heavy rush of devotees at Durga temple



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Devotees thronged Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri on Sunday to have a darshan of goddess Kanaka Durga. The devotees started coming in large numbers from 9 am.

Due to Sunday rush EO KS Rama Rao had assigned special duties to the temple staff well in advance. He personally visited many areas and checked the

queue lines and counters, regulating the rush and stopping the unauthorised darshans. The EO also took steps to facilitate darshan of the devotees as soon as possible. All the staff of the temple took up special duties. The EO and the temple authorities were monitoring the arrangements from time to time.

In view of the rush of devotees, all protocol darshans in the devasthanam from 11 am to 1.30 am were stopped, said the EO.

## ATM security in Vizag under lens

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A recent surge in ATM thefts has prompted heightened scrutiny of security measures in Visakhapatnam. Despite initial robust security protocols, a combination of cost-cutting measures and increased reliance on digital banking has left many ATMs vulnerable to criminal activity. While the city boasts over 500 ATMs, the initial security measures, including private security guards and CCTV surveillance, have gradually diminished. The decline in ATM usage due to the rise of online banking and UPI transactions has led banks to reduce operational costs, resulting in fewer security personnel and neglected maintenance of surveillance equipment.

"The focus has shifted from security to cost-cutting, leaving many ATMs in a vulnerable state," commented a bank

official on condition of anonymity. This vulnerability has been exploited by criminals who have employed advanced techniques, such as gas cutters, to breach ATM cash containers. In response to the escalating situation, Commissioner of Police



Sankhabrata Bagchi has prioritised ATM security. "The recent incidents have underscored the urgent need to strengthen ATM security," stated Bagchi. "We are taking immediate steps to address this issue and prevent further crimes."

The Commissioner has initiated discussions with representatives from banks operating ATMs and cash replenishment agencies.

Notices have been issued to both parties, emphasising the necessity of stringent security measures, including the mandatory deployment of security guards, functional CCTV cameras, and improved surveillance. "Ensuring the safety of ATM users is paramount," emphasised Bagchi. "By implementing these measures, we aim to restore public confidence and deter criminal activities."

Additionally, the Commissioner has suggested the introduction of new protocols, such as displaying emergency contact numbers at ATMs, to facilitate swift communication between bank officials and law enforcement in case of suspicious activity.



## Addl EO inspects Mada streets

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

TTD Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdhary, on Sunday, inspected four Mada streets and laddu counters along with DyEO Sri Lokanatham and other officials.

He checked the exit and entry points during the ensuing annual Brahmotsavams,

especially on the day of Garuda seva.

He also inspected the Laddu Prasadam Complex to ensure the distribution of laddus in a congenial environment to the pilgrims when the rush is heavy, and gave instructions to the officers concerned.

VGO Security Surendra and AVSO Manohar were also present.

## Students marvel at Space Photo Exhibition in Gudur

### Expo attracted students from over 50 schools and colleges

PNS ■ GUDURWELLORE

A three-day photo exhibition of space features, organised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, concluded on a grand note on Sunday. The event, held at Duvvuru Ramanamma Mahila College, showcased India's achievements in space exploration and emphasised environmental protection.

The three-day exhibition was inaugurated by Dr Pasim Sunil Kumar, MLA, Gudur, on August 23, National Space Day. The exhibition attracted students from over 50 schools and colleges. Daily competitions and prize distributions encouraged student participation.

A selfie counter with Modi in space was a special attraction,



with students eager to take photos. Stalls set up by various government departments informed children about the Government of India's programmes.

The Space Week awareness rally on the second day featured photographs of scientists,

highlighting India's victory in space exploration. Dignitaries, including MLAs and the Municipal Commissioner, appreciated the organisers for raising scientific awareness among students. The speakers emphasised the importance of protecting the environment

alongside celebrating Chandrayaan's success. The "Plant for Mother" selfie booth and sapling plantation drive on the final day reinforced this message.

According to Paravastu Nagasai Suri, Field Publicity Officer, Government of India,

the exhibition aimed to inspire students and increase awareness about scientific aspects. Students shared their positive experiences, appreciating the comprehensive information on India's space achievements and the emphasis on environmental protection.

## TTD setting up special aid centres



PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) medical wing is setting up eight new first-aid centres around Tirumala to address emergencies in view of the annual Brahmotsavams scheduled from October 4-12.

The TTD is already operating six permanent dispensaries at Tirumala and Tirupati for providing medical aid to devotees, employees and locals. In addition to two centres at

Narayangiri Garden and one each at Rambagicha Rest House, Matusree Tarigonda Vengamamba Anna Prasadam Complex Silatoranam, Bata Gangamma Temple, Papavinasanam, and 7th Mile will be set up for the convenience of the devotees during annual Brahmotsavams.

As per the direction of the TTD medical department, senior doctors, paramedics, medicines and ambulances with advanced medical equipment are being rolled out.

## Dokka demands suspension of YSRCP MLC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former MLA Dokka Manikya Varaprasad has launched a scathing attack on YSRCP MLC Ananth Babu, accusing him of misconduct that has severely tarnished his reputation, following the circulation of a viral video on social media platforms. Dokka has demanded Ananth Babu's suspension from the YSRCP and called for an end to his political career. Varaprasad's criticism extended to the former Chief Minister and YSRCP President, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, for failing to take action against Ananth Babu. He further alleged that Ananth Babu had been involved in training YSRCP workers in harmful practices, including violence against Dalits and harassment of women.

## SRM VC stresses role of alumni in institution's progress

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

SRM University-AP conducted its second virtual alumni meet the other day, coinciding with the birthday celebration of the Founder Chancellor of SRM Group, Dr TR Paarivendhar. As part of the celebration, the varsity organised Prerna Vanam, a plantation drive dedicated to cultivating a greener, cleaner, and more sustainable future. The initiative reaffirms the university's commitment to a sustainable tomorrow and its founder's noble vision.

The virtual meet attracted a diverse group of alumni, including South Indian film actress and former SRM student Iswarya Menon, who served as the chief guest. Vice-Chancellor Prof Manoj K Arora addressed the alumni with a compelling message about their role in shaping the future. He emphasised the importance of alumni involvement, stating, "Your contributions are crucial as we work towards becoming a developed



nation by 2047."

Prof. Arora explained how the alumni's active participation in building an alumni corpus and supporting the university will play a key role in driving the institution's progress and fostering future generations of leaders.

He further noted that the alumni's continued engagement not only benefits the university, but also strengthens the support network available to current and future students, ensuring the sustained success of the varsity's mission of excellence.

Iswarya Menon expressed

her heartfelt gratitude to the institution. "The guidance and support I received from SRM have been pivotal in my career development. I am truly grateful for the foundation laid here, which has significantly shaped my professional journey."

The group of former students communicated their profound appreciation for the varsity, emphasising the significant impact it has had on their lives. They reaffirmed their commitment to actively support the university's various initiatives and to aid in its continued growth and success.

## Employees retiring in a year exempted from transfers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has issued guidelines for transfer of government employees for 2024, as per the guidelines the employees who are retiring on or before March 31,

2025 shall not be transferred except in public interest. To this effect, Principal Secretary Peeyush Kumar has issued GO Ms No 76. The move aims to promote work-life balance, while ensuring efficient and effective service

delivery to the citizens.

The newly formed TDP-led NDA government has opened the process of regular transfers of employees in the State from August 19 to 31. Transfers are affected to employees in all the other

departments except the Excise Department, and guidelines have already been released.

However, there have been demands to exclude the employees who are retiring within a year from this

process. The employees unions have brought to the notice of the government that it is not appropriate to transfer employees who are retiring within a year. The government responded positively to this.

## Andhra varsity launches inquiry into TDR Hub

### Probe into claims that PhD admissions were improperly granted to those with disabilities

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra University's In-charge Vice-Chancellor Prof. G Sasibhushan Rao has launched a comprehensive investigation into the Transdisciplinary Research Hub (TDR) following serious allegations of irregularities over the past five years. The inquiry is primarily focused on claims that PhD admissions were improperly granted to individuals with disabilities.

"Given the gravity of the allegations concerning PhD admissions, it is imperative that we conduct a thorough and impartial investigation,"

stated Prof G Sasibhushan Rao. "We need to ensure that all processes within the TDR Hub are transparent and adhere to the highest standards of integrity."

A special committee has been appointed to oversee the investigation, led by Prof Mallikarjuna Rao, who has replaced Prof. James Stephen as the TDR Hub Dean. The committee comprises Srikakulam District Ambedkar University Registrar Prof. P. Sujatha, Vizianagaram JNTU Prof K Sreekumar, AU Atmospheric and Ocean Studies Head Prof. Sunitha, and Electrical Engineering



Department Prof. Gopichand Naik.

Prof Mallikarjuna Rao elaborated on the committee's role. "Our task is to scrutinise the PhD admissions and ensure that the TDR Hub's operations comply with established regu-

lations. We will also examine the qualifications of approximately 400 individuals who have been appointed as guides, as well as the criteria for their selection."

Currently, Andhra University has 600 researchers,

some of whom were admitted through the ARSET process and others through an executive quota. The committee will review these admissions and the overall adherence to rules in order to provide a detailed report.

In light of the ongoing investigation, the university has suspended PhD admissions for the academic year 2024-25. "Although the RSET convener proposed 172 PhD seats for the TDR Hub, we have decided to delay admissions until the investigation is complete and a comprehensive report is submitted." VC Prof G Sasibhushan Rao confirmed.



# Vision 2047: Path-breaking era in Andhra Pradesh

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail  
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

The foregoing golden words of the American philosopher speak a lot about how a leader should be and his actions. A leader may lead a few people, but a visionary rules the world with his forward-thinking and farsightedness. In independent India, there has been no dearth of netas but there is woeful lack of leaders who have vision, a sense of time, and the rare ability to see things far ahead of their time. The second coming to power of Chandrababu Naidu in the bifurcated Andhra Pradesh has heralded a hope for development, a hope for the future, fruitful and sustained living. Three decades ago as the chief minister of combined Andhra Pradesh, Chandrababu Naidu

had visualised Vision 2020 and accordingly took many steps as the head of the government to make undivided Andhra Pradesh stand in the forefront of development. And after 30 years, the same leader took the reins of power and heralded Vision 47, aiming to make the state a developed one on the lines of Viksit Bharat, with simple government, effective governance, and people-centric administration as its pillars.

From demographic management to effective utilisation of the available human resources and providing basic infrastructure that caters to the needs and requirements of the state are all part of the Vision 47 document, which, if faithfully taken forward, will surely make the state of Andhra Pradesh as stately on the path of comprehensive development and progress.

**From demographic management to effective utilisation of the available human resources and providing basic infrastructure that caters to the needs and requirements of the state are all part of the Vision 47 document, which, if faithfully taken forward, will surely make the state of Andhra Pradesh as stately on the path of comprehensive development and progress.**

Development does not come in isolation; it needs the necessary wherewithal to make it happen. This is what is taking place in Andhra Pradesh where everything is required to be taken care of from the beginning. From energy conservation to effective utilisation of available resources, the government has embarked on a path of welfare-oriented

development, which includes providing employment to the educated and ensuring the provision of necessary facilities for good and proper education and providing the much-needed infrastructure to make the state industry-friendly.

After all, Chandrababu was the man who had laid a strong foundation for the development of Hyderabad of today.



**BUDDHAVARAPU RAJESWARA PRASAD**  
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Nothing happens out of nothing, it is visionary thinking that matters finally. Janmabhoomi, Clean and Green, and HI-TEC City all speak of a leader in Naidu whose hunger for development is obvious. All the efforts have given fruits of development to the people of

Telangana wherein the per capita income is among the best in the nation. Naidu saw a golden opportunity for Andhra Pradesh even during the period of economic reforms brought by then prime minister PV Narasimha Rao. He initiated the much-needed steps for the then Andhra Pradesh and went ahead with his plan of action.

After the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, his urge to make the state developed became stronger, which led to the formulation of Sunrise Vision 2029 in 2014 during his regime as the first Chief Minister in 2014. He continued the same spirit of leadership by gathering everything to make the state stand on its own despite the loss of capital. It is continuity that matters for everything to fructify. Andhra Pradesh did not have continuity of his leadership

from 2019 to 2025 and as a result everything went topsy-turvy. The people of Andhra Pradesh have realised the need for a leader of his level of thinking and gave the alliance a thumping majority. This heralded a second stint for Naidu as the Chief Minister of divided Andhra Pradesh.

The new government has taken steps, starting from ensuring accountability in the administration to proper implementation of the schemes intended to benefit the people. A hundred-day plan for the Administration is intended to make the bureaucracy realise its responsibility and accountability. A government is not at all a government if it fails to fulfill its responsibilities toward the people. Taking this as the foundational accountability of the government, Naidu's administration has taken

steps in a way that never fails to deliver the desired benefits to the people.

One of the targets of the government is to take steps to enhance the per capita income of people on par with those of people in far more developed states. If people are involved in the development process and their active participation is ensured, nothing can stop the state on the path of development. Australia, New Zealand, and Sweden are some of the nations which have active people participation in the administrative process.

It is really a dawn of development for Andhra Pradesh and there is a government that is both accountable and responsible under a leader who never sleeps and never allows others to sleep as far as the progress of the state is concerned.

## '100-bed GGH will be ready soon'

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Minister for Water Resources Development Nimmala Ramanaidu has announced that the 100-bed Government General Hospital in Palakollu will be made available to the public soon.

The Minister on Sunday visited the GGH in Palakollu and interacted with the patients. He inspected the hospital premises and went around the GGH. He directed the hospital superintendent to plant saplings around the hospital and keep the vicinity pleasant.

Later, talking to the media, Minister Ramanaidu said that he had directed the officials concerned to complete the 100-bed GGH expeditiously. He also ordered them to provide four wards to provide medical services in the new government hospital.

The Minister recalled that in 1998, the then Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu upgraded the 30-bed Palakollu GGH to a 50-bed hospital. Moreover, the then Chief Minister



Chandrababu Naidu announced the upgradation of the 50-bed Palakollu GGH as a 100-bed hospital in 2019. The then government had sanctioned Rs 12.60 crore funds of NABARD for the upgradation of the GGH. Unfortunately, the erstwhile YSRC regime neglected the

development of Palakollu GGH. "The upgradation process of Palakollu GGH as a 100-bed hospital would have been completed in one year if the then YSRC regime had focused on it. But their laxity led to no development of the GGH," he lamented.

Minister Ramanaidu also recalled that he used to meet the then Principal Secretary of the medical and health department Punam Malakondaiah often to seek funds to upgrade the Palakollu GGH as a 100-bed hospital but his attempts had gone in vain.

"I have explained the pending Palakollu GGH upgrade issue to the notice of current Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and he responded favourably and released the required funds," Ramanaidu observed.

He stated that he was reviewing the GGH development works with the officials and efforts are being made to make the GGH available to provide medical services to the people. He highlighted that he is trying to set up a dialysis ward in the Palakollu GGH for the sack of patients in surrounding areas. He promised to inaugurate the 100 Palakollu GGH soon.

At the same time, the Minister instructed the officials to ensure that quality is maintained in the constructions and pleasant atmosphere should prevail in the GGH premises with greenery.

AP Medical Corporation EE BV Giri, DEM Srinivasa Reddy, GGH Superintendent Dr.O Ravikumar and a host of doctors and leaders of TDP, JSP and BJP were among those who were present.

## Injection proves fatal for teen



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

In a tragic incident, a 15-year-old girl allegedly died after being administered an injection at the Government General Hospital (GGH) in Akividu.

The deceased, Nidamolu Durga Lahari, had been suffering from a viral fever and was taken to the Akividu GGH by her parents for treatment. According to the family, a doctor administered an injection to the girl, following which she

immediately fell ill, experiencing vomiting and diarrhoea.

As her condition worsened, the doctors arranged for her to transfer to the Government General Hospital in Eluru. Tragically, she passed away en route to the hospital.

The parents of the deceased have accused the hospital staff of negligence, claiming that their daughter's condition deteriorated rapidly after the injection was administered. They expressed concerns over the nature of the

infusion, alleging that it may have been improperly administered. The grieving parents have accused the hospital of fatal negligence, stating, "Instead of treating our daughter for viral fever, they killed her with an injection." A large number of villagers gathered at the girl's home, echoing the family's accusations and holding the hospital responsible for the tragic death. They have called on the government to launch an inquiry into the incident.

## Ambedkar, Jagjivan statues vandalised

PNS ■ AMALAPURAM

Unidentified miscreants vandalised the statues of BR Ambedkar and Jagjivan Ram in Reddypalli village, Konaseema district, on the night of Saturday.

The statues of Dr BR Ambedkar and Jag Jeevan Ram had been recently



installed by activists affiliated with a Dalit organisation. The miscreants removed the statues from their pedestals.

In response, activists staged a protest in the village, raising slogans condemning the vandalism. A police picket has been established in the village to maintain law and order.

## Boat service likely from Pottilanka to Kadiyapulanka



PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

In a bid to promote eco-tourism in the East Godavari district, officials are considering a proposal to operate a boat service from Pottilanka to Kadiyapulanka along the irrigation canal to attract tourists.

District Collector P. Prashanthi, accompanied by tourism and other officials, inspected the proposed route on Sunday. The officials believe that a boat trip along the canal, from Pottilanka village to Kadiyapulanka village, would significantly boost eco-tourism

in the area.

Collector Prashanthi and the team assessed the feasibility of operating this boat service for tourists. She highlighted that efforts are underway to develop certain areas in the district into tourist destinations by leveraging local resources. The Collector instructed officials to submit detailed proposals to make the boat trip a reality.

Tourism Minister K. Durgesh recently addressed representatives of nurseries in Kadiyam, emphasising the need to launch boat tourism between Pottilanka and Kadiyapulanka.

The Minister directed officials to prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the initiative.

He also urged the officials to pursue the tourism projects under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. Following the Minister's directions, the official machinery has begun working on the project to commence boat trips between the two villages along the major irrigation canal. The District Collector was accompanied by Tourism Department Regional Joint Director V. Swamy Naidu and District Tourism Officer P. Venkatechalam.

## Ganja racket busted; four peddlers held

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

The police busted a cannabis racket by arresting three peddlers, including two women, and seized 10 kg of ganja.

DSP K Nageswara Rao told the media here on Sunday that on a tip-off a police team conducted a raid at Swargapuri road and arrested three drug peddlers including two women and seized 10 kg of ganja, two mobile phones and

Rs 62,000 cash. The police gave the names of arrested drug peddlers as M Venkateswari, V Sultan Bee and G Subba Rao. They brought huge quantities of ganja from the Visakhapatnam district and were sold in the Two Town police station limits. He said that an investigation has begun on the ganja racket and some more peddlers including their kingpin to be arrested.



## CM: Govt will not allow encroachment on lakes



CM Revanth Reddy and IT Minister D Sridhar Babu at foundation stone laying for Hare Krishna Heritage Tower in Hyderabad on Sunday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said the Congress government will fight against the encroachment of lakes inspired by Lord Krishna's message to Arjuna delivered during the Kurukshetra battle. This is not a political programme, the CM clarified.

He said the Nizam developed Hyderabad as a lake city a century ago. However, some farmhouses have come up near lakes and ponds which quenched the thirst of people. Waste water from farmhouses is being discharged into the Gandipet Lake and Himayat Sagar which have been providing drinking water to the city, he said.

"As elected public representatives we should not neglect nature. That is the reason why the government started protecting lakes from encroachments through HYDRAA. The government undertook this programme to provide better lives for future generations. We will not give in to pressure and will take strong action against

encroachers. Our government stands for righteousness in the spirit of Lord Krishna's teachings," the CM said.

The CM was speaking after laying the foundation stone for the Hare Krishna Heritage Tower in Hyderabad on Sunday. He said such a rare opportunity comes only once in a lifetime.

"I am fortunate to attend a big event like this as the chief guest. The heritage tower will provide spiritual teachings in a concrete jungle. The tower which will have a height of 430 feet is also the pride of Telangana. The construction of this tower will be completed in 36 to 40 months and the building will also be inaugurated by me. It is a great occasion in history," the CM said.

The CM said the government accords top priority to education and healthcare and requested the Hare Krishna Foundation to provide food in Osmania, Gandhi, NIMS and Cancer Hospitals. The government will provide the necessary facilities for this great cause, he added.



The Director General, State Disaster Response and Fire Services Department, Madireddy Pratap, interacting with the media

## Escientia blast: Critical design flaws identified

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A comprehensive investigation into the tragic explosion at Escientia Advanced Sciences Pvt Ltd. in Atchutapuram has identified critical design flaws that may have contributed to the incident. The blast, which occurred on August 21, resulted in the loss of 17 lives and injuries to 35.

A key flaw identified during the investigation was the positioning of an electric switch panel board (MCC) directly below the reactor, the facility's most volatile component. The Director General of the State Disaster Response and Fire Services Department, Madireddy Pratap, described the situation in stark terms. "It is like lighting a fire under a fuel tank, as reactors contain and process highly-volatile and combustible solvents and chemicals."

## Navigated explosion, darkness, fumes to save life, says pharma unit disaster survivor

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

P Mohan Satish (30), who survived the recent pharma unit industrial disaster at Atchutapuram in Anakapalli district in Andhra Pradesh said on Sunday that he gave up hope at one time but managed to navigate a deafening explosion, toxic fumes, darkness and other dangers to save his life.

Married recently and employed with Escientia Advanced Sciences Pvt Ltd in the quality control (QC) department, Satish had just finished his lunch and returned to the department on that fateful day, August 21, when a powerful vapour cloud explosion ripped

through the three-floor building. Discharging duties in the A shift from 6 am to 2 pm, he was waiting to hand over work to his B shift replacement.

"I finished my lunch and entered the QC department by 2.10 pm to hand over the shift. Then, immediately we heard a deafening blast and there was a power cut. We rushed to the ground floor to escape but the entrance there collapsed and got blocked. There was no way to exit," Satish said.

Satish and colleagues rushed to the second floor but the explosion blew it away, compelling them to escape to the third floor, where it was okay for the initial five minutes but the

toxic fumes started to envelop later.

They managed to break a glass window and shouted for help from there. Two hours later they were rescued using ladder vehicles. A National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team was also involved in saving their lives.

Authorities shifted 11 survivors from the third floor to a nearby hospital. Satish received an injection and an X-ray examination as part of his treatment.

Meanwhile, Satish's pregnant wife fainted after learning about the disaster on television, prompting him to get discharged prematurely to be by her side. However, because of this, he

lost out on the Rs 25 lakh ex gratia announced by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for injured persons.

"I was informed that I would not get the ex gratia as I had been discharged from the hospital prematurely.

Five colleagues received the compensation and I also deserve it. I got prematurely discharged from the hospital to save my pregnant wife," Satish reasoned, appealing to government authorities.

As he inhaled a lot of toxic fumes, Satish said his throat burned and he also feared he would face any health-related consequences in the future. He visited another hospital later for

a checkup. He said the majority of the 17 people who died in the disaster were employees, and they included process development department head Rami Reddy and a young 22-year engineer C Harika.

Besides the 17 deaths, over 33 people were injured.

Escientia Advanced Sciences commenced production in April 2019 with an investment of Rs 200 crore. It makes intermediate chemicals and active pharmaceutical ingredients (API).

It is located on a 40-acre campus in the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation's multi-product SEZ at the Atchutapuram cluster.



ACROSS THE STATES



Chirag re-elected LJP chief, pitches for caste census

Union minister Chirag Paswan was on Sunday re-elected as Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) president for five years at its national executive meeting here. The decision was taken unanimously at the meeting, Paswan said. "The national executive, in its meeting here, has re-elected me for the next five years," he said. Paswan, the Minister of Food Processing Industries, said the upcoming assembly elections in Haryana, Jammu Kashmir and Jharkhand were also discussed in the meeting. In Jharkhand, the party may contest the polls either with national alliance partner BJP or on its own, he said. "We have taken suggestions from the state units whether they want to contest the elections in alliance or alone in states where our organisation is strong... At the national level, we have an alliance with the BJP and we are a strong coalition partner of the NDA."



41 village panchayats in Thane declared TB-free

A total of 41 village panchayats in Maharashtra's Thane district have been declared tuberculosis-free, officials said on Sunday. Among these villages, 13 are from Shahapur taluka, 9 from Murbad, 7 from Kalyan, and 6 each from Bhiwandi and Ambernath. They were declared TB-free under the Tuberculosis-Free Village Panchayat initiative. Speaking at a function to mark this achievement, District Collector Ashok Shingare emphasised the district's ambitious goal of becoming tuberculosis-free by March 31, 2025. "We made a strong start but only 10 per cent of the target has been achieved. We must maintain vigilance to prevent tuberculosis from returning to these villages," he stated.



Authorities demolish house of rape accused in MP

The local administration demolished the house of a man accused of raping a woman in Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara district, citing that the structure was constructed illegally on government land, an official said on Sunday. The house of the accused, Mohammed Nafees, was demolished on Saturday, said Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Avdhesh Pratap Singh. The accused, a resident of Meghdana village under Chand police station limits, was arrested for allegedly raping a 34-year-old woman on August 11, he said. Singh said the accused had also allegedly circulated objectionable pictures of the victim on social media and threatened her. Chourai's sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) Prabhat Mishra said they had received a complaint that the accused's house was on government land.

'Do not demean the debate on serious issue'

BJP on Rahul's 'no OBC in Miss India list' remarks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday flayed Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi over his "no Dalit, Adivasi or OBC in Miss India list" remarks and asked him not to demean the discussion on the empowerment of marginalised sections. The ruling party's reaction came a day after Gandhi, while pressing for a nationwide caste census at an event in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj, said he checked the list of former Miss India pageant winners but found no Dalit, tribal, or OBC among them. "Rahul Gandhi, you are the Leader of Opposition. You talk about the OBCs. It's good. It's your right. But how far

lower will you take this debate?" senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad said, adding it was a serious issue and the sanctity of discussion should be maintained.



"Mr Rahul Gandhi, I don't question your right to raise any issue. But if you are talking of empowering the OBCs, don't you think you need to maintain some sanctity in the debate," Prasad said at a press conference at the BJP head-



Crimes against women unpardonable sin: PM

Asserts guilty should not be spared

PNS ■ JALGAON (MAHARASHTRA)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday termed crimes against women an unpardonable sin, adding the guilty should not be spared.

Modi's strong remarks follow protests against the brutal rape and murder of a 31-year-old trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Hospital and the sexual abuse of two four-year-old school girls in Badlapur near Mumbai.

Speaking at the 'Lakshpati Didi Sammelan' in north Maharashtra's Jalgaon, Modi said the safety of women should be a priority.

"The safety of mothers, sisters, and daughters is the country's priority. I have repeatedly raised this issue from the Red Fort. Be it any state of the country, I understand the pain and anger of my sisters and daughters," he said.

Modi said that he would tell every political party and state government that crime against



women is an unpardonable sin. Whoever is guilty should not be spared, he added. "Those helping the perpetrators of crimes against women should not be spared. Be it a hospital, school, government or police station, at whatever level negligence occurs, everyone should be held accountable. "The message should go from top to bottom. This sin is unpardonable. Governments will come and go, but protecting life and women's dignity is a big responsibility of all of us, both as a society and as a government," Modi said.

Modi said his government has done more for women in the last ten years than all the previous regimes since Independence.

"Till 2014, less than Rs 25,000 crore loans were given to women self-help groups but in the last 10 years, Rs 9 lakh crore help was given," Modi said, referring to the government's 'Sakhi Mandal' programme.

Modi, who interacted with Lakshpati Didi in Jalgaon, released the Rs 2,500 crore revolving fund benefiting 48 lakh members of 4.3 lakh self-help groups.

EXCISE POLICY 'SCAM'

SC to hear Vijay Nair's bail plea tomorrow

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on August 27 the bail plea of former Aam Aadmi Party communication in-charge Vijay Nair in a money laundering case related to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam.

A bench of justices



Hrishikesh Roy and SVN Bhatti issued a notice to the Enforcement Directorate on August 12 on the plea of Nair

while noting that he has been in custody for two years.

Appearing for Nair, senior advocates Abhishek Singhvi and Vikram Chaudhary submitted before the court on August 12 that he was arrested on November 13, 2022, and he has challenged the trial court's July 29 order dismissing his default bail plea.

India, Indonesia resolve to boost anti-terror cooperation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Indonesia have condemned the use of terrorist proxies for cross-border terrorism amid Pakistan's support to terror groups carrying out terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

The issue of cross-border terrorism figured at the sixth meeting of the India-Indonesia joint working group on counter-terrorism that was held in Jakarta on Friday.

The two sides focused on ways to effectively combat terrorism, including how to stop the use of new and emerging technologies by terrorists, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).



The MEA said the two sides also condemned the "use of terrorist proxies for cross-border terrorism." "The two sides exchanged views on the domestic, regional and global terrorism threat assessment," it said

ing international cooperation to combat terrorism in a comprehensive and sustained manner," it said in a statement on

India and Indonesia strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and emphasised the need for strengthen-

Sunday. The MEA said the two sides also condemned the "use of terrorist proxies for cross-border terrorism."



India, US look forward to working together: Rajnath

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

India and the US look forward to working together and benefiting from each other's experiences, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has said, as he visited a top American naval surface warfare facility in Maryland.

Singh is in the US on a four-day official visit to further boost the comprehensive global strategic partnership between the US and India. "Visited the Naval Surface

Warfare Centre at Carderock and witnessed the path-breaking experiments at the facility," Singh said in a post on X.

"India and the US look forward to work together and benefit from each other's experiences," he wrote after he visited the top American naval facility on Saturday.

Earlier during the visit, Singh met the US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin.

Austin praised the momentum behind the US-India relationship during the meeting with Singh.

He noted the countries' increased cooperation on a range of defence issues, including efforts to strengthen critical supply chains and interoperability between their militaries.

"We share a vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific, and our defence cooperation continues to grow stronger and stronger," Austin said.

'U' in UPS stands for Modi govt's U-turns

Cong's dig after Unified Pension Scheme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday took a jibe at the Centre over its announcement of the Unified Pension Scheme, saying the 'U' in UPS stands for the Modi government's "U-turns".

The opposition party also alleged that the UPS appears to be an attack on Dalits, tribals and backward classes.

Taking a dig at the government, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "The 'U' in UPS stands for Modi Govt's U turns! Post June 4, the power of the people has prevailed over the arrogance of power of the Prime Minister."

"Rollback in the budget regarding Long Term Capital Gain/Indexation. Sending Waqf Bill to JPC. Rollback of



Broadcast Bill. Rollback of Lateral Entry," he said in a post on X.

"We will keep ensuring accountability and protect 140 crore Indians from this despotic government," the Congress chief said.

The Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera alleged that the

UPS appears to be an attack on Dalits, tribals and backward classes.

"In many states, the upper age limit for government jobs for reserved category is 40 years. In UPS, this limit is 37 years. Under the unified pension scheme, it is mandatory to render 25 years of service to get a full pension," Khera said.

In such a situation, how will Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Classes employees avail this facility, he asked.

"Now the government should tell whether it wants to end the upper age limit facility available to the underprivileged or wants to deprive them of full pension?" Khera said on X.

However, Professionals' Congress chairman Praveen Chakravarty appeared to strike a divergent note from his party and said the introduction of the scheme was "welcome and prudent".

"Pension for govt staff in India is inherently a tax on the majority poor to pay the elite minority. So, OPS was reformed to NPS in 2013.

ATROCITIES AGAINST WOMEN IN MOVIE INDUSTRY

Kerala govt forms 7-member police team

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

In the wake of many women actors narrating their horrific sexual assault experiences in the cinema industry, the Kerala government on Sunday formed a special team to probe the atrocities faced by them.

The government on Sunday formed a seven-member team after a high-level meeting of senior police officials was called by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

The chief minister's office said the special team will be headed by IG Sparjan Kumar and will include four senior women IPS officers of the state.

Crime Branch ADGP H Venkatesh will oversee the functioning of the team," the CMO said in a statement.

Apart from Kumar, the team will include DIG S Ajeetha Begum, Crime Branch HQ SP Merin Joseph, Coastal Police AIG Poonkuzhali, Kerala Police Academy Assistant Director Aishwarya Dongre, AIG Ajith V and Crime Branch SP S

Madhusoodhan. The report by the Justice Hema Committee, constituted by the Kerala government post the 2017 actress assault case, has revealed instances of harassment and exploitation of women in the Malayalam film industry, prompting calls for action against the guilty.

Rocked by the Justice K Hema Committee's explosive findings of harassment and abuse of women professionals, the Malayalam film industry on Sunday witnessed two high-profile resignations related to the issues.

Director Ranjith stepped down as chairman of state-run film academy Kerala Chalchitra Academy and actor Siddique resigned as general secretary of A.M.M.A (Association of Malayalam Movie Artists).

Even as political pressure was building against Ranjith, actor Siddique resigned from A.M.M.A. amid voices from within his fraternity seeking his resignation.

Ban on Jamaat-e-Islami should be revoked: Mufti

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

People's Democratic Party (PDP) said on Sunday banned Jamaat-e-Islami's (JeI) willingness to contest the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir is a good step, but the ban on the organisation should be revoked.

"It is a good thing. I want

the Government of India to revoke ban on the JeI because if you are not banning communal organisations which are spreading venom in this country,

I do not want to name them, those who take out rallies, pelt stones on mosques, lynch Muslims, then why is there a ban on the

JeI which has contributed a lot in the education sector, helped people in floods of 2014 and COVID?" Mufti told reporters here.

According to some media reports, former leaders of the JeI are mulling to contest the Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir as independent candidates.

RAPE-MURDER OF DOCTOR

Rallies continue to rock West Bengal

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Rallies and demonstrations were held in different parts of West Bengal on Sunday, protesting the rape and murder of the doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

In state capital Kolkata, civil society members marched from Ramlila Maidan in

Moulali to Metro Channel in Esplanade, demanding justice for the victim of the crime that shook the conscience of the nation.

Slogans such as "Hathras theke RG Kar, dharsaner birudhe othao swar (From Hathras to RG Kar, raise voice against rapes)" rented the air.

"While we demand the chief



minister's statement on the issue of women's safety in the state, we also seek punish-

ment of all the rapists -- whether the crime took place in Hatras or Kolkata. There has to be zero tolerance to such horrific attacks on women," said rights activist Satabdi Das, one of the organisers of the march. Celebrated dancer Mamata Shankar led a rally of her students in the southern part of the city, demanding jus-

tice over the incident. "All we are asking now is to track all those involved in this ghastly crime and ensure prompt justice so that the perpetrators get exemplary punishment. Hang them to death," she said.

Former students of state-run Jadavpur Vidyapith also held a rally in south Kolkata.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Peace mission

Prime Minister Modi's Visit to Ukraine is as much about peace as it is to establish India as a neutral country

On August 20, 2024, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a historic visit to Ukraine, marking a significant moment in the diplomatic relations between the two nations. This visit came amid ongoing conflict in the region. India and Ukraine have historically maintained cordial relations, with ties largely focused on economic cooperation, technical assistance, and cultural exchange. However, the backdrop of Modi's visit is the prolonged conflict between Ukraine and Russia, which has led to a significant humanitarian and geopolitical crisis. India has traditionally adhered to a neutral stance, emphasising dialogue and diplomacy. Modi's visit underscores a nuanced shift in India's approach, highlighting a deeper engagement with Ukraine amidst the ongoing conflict. Only a month before PM Modi had visited Russia much to the chargin of Kyiv. But his Ukraine visit in a way establishes India's neutral stance, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has offered to help bring peace to Ukraine in a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. He also asked the Ukrainian President to sit down and talk to end the conflict. This is first ever visit of an Indian prime minister to Ukraine after two countries established diplomatic relations in 1992.



The primary objectives of Modi's visit were multifaceted. Modi aimed to bolster economic and strategic ties with Ukraine. Both countries have been exploring opportunities for collaboration in sectors such as technology, defense, and infrastructure. India has expressed support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Modi's visit included discussions on increasing humanitarian aid and rebuilding efforts in conflict-affected areas. Modi's presence in Ukraine served as a diplomatic gesture, reinforcing India's commitment to supporting peace and stability in Eastern Europe. This visit was also seen as a way to engage more actively in global diplomatic forums concerning the Ukraine crisis. During his visit, discussions focused on several key areas. Agreements were reached to enhance trade and investment, with India offering to share expertise in technology and infrastructure development. India pledged additional support for humanitarian efforts, including medical aid and assistance for displaced persons. Both nations agreed to increase strategic dialogues to address mutual concerns and foster closer cooperation in various international platforms. Modi's visit to Ukraine is a clear indicator of India's evolving foreign policy strategy. While maintaining its traditional stance of non-interference, India is positioning itself as a more proactive player in global diplomacy, particularly in regions affected by conflict. This visit also reflects India's broader ambition to balance its relations between major global powers and regional conflicts. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit reflects a deeper engagement of India in global affairs, an attempt to counter China's growing influence.

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### PICTALK



Workers load heaps of straw on an autorickshaw, in Bardhaman, PTI

# The US military inc: Profiting from war



SANTHOSH MATHEW

The American military-industrial complex, coined by President Eisenhower in 1961, has shaped US foreign policy and military strategy while perpetuating global conflicts

The American military-industrial complex, a term popularized by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in his farewell address in 1961, refers to the synergistic relationship between a nation's armed forces, its defence industry, and its political establishment. This complex has played a pivotal role in shaping U.S. foreign policy and military strategy, leading to extensive global influence and numerous conflicts over the past century. While wars undoubtedly bring immense destruction and suffering, they have also generated substantial profits for certain American entities, fueling a cycle of conflict and economic gain. The roots of the American military-industrial complex can be traced back to World War II. The massive mobilization of resources for the war effort transformed the U.S. into a leading military power, with a robust defence industry emerging to meet the demands of the global conflict. Companies like Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and General Dynamics became integral to the war effort, producing aircraft, ships, and weapons on an unprecedented scale. Post-World War II, the geopolitical landscape underwent significant changes. The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union necessitated a perpetual state of military readiness, leading to sustained government investment in defence. This period saw the establishment of a permanent arms industry and the proliferation of defence contractors, further entrenching the military-industrial complex in the American economy and politics. The U.S. emerged as a superpower with global responsibilities and interests, often justified by the need to contain communism. This new role required maintaining and expanding military bases worldwide, ensuring a constant state of preparedness. The Korean War (1950-1953) was one of the first significant conflicts of the Cold War era, where the U.S. engaged militarily to curb the spread of communism in Asia. This war marked the beginning



of a pattern where military engagements, often initiated under the guise of ideological battles, served to bolster the defence industry. The Vietnam War (1955-1975) further exemplified this, as it became one of the most prolonged and controversial conflicts in American history. The war generated vast profits for defence contractors but at the cost of immense human suffering and domestic turmoil. The Cold War Era: Sustained Conflict and Profiteering. Throughout the Cold War, the U.S. participated in numerous proxy wars and military interventions, from Latin America to the Middle East. The Cuban Missile Crisis, the Bay of Pigs invasion, and the support for anti-communist regimes across the globe underscored America's commitment to combating Soviet influence. Each conflict provided a pretext for increased military spending and innovation in weapons technology, ensuring continued profits for the defence industry. One of the most significant developments during this period was the arms race, characterized by the rapid development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. The doctrine of mutually assured destruction (MAD) necessitated a continuous enhancement of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, benefiting companies involved

in nuclear weapons production. This period also saw advancements in missile technology, stealth aircraft, and other sophisticated weaponry, all funded by the American taxpayer. The end of the Cold War did not diminish the influence of the military-industrial complex. Instead, new threats emerged, and the complex adapted accordingly. The Gulf War (1990-1991) showcased America's technological military prowess and reaffirmed the country's commitment to protecting its interests in the oil-rich Middle East. Defence contractors reaped substantial profits from the war, supplying everything from precision-guided munitions to advanced combat systems. The attacks on September 11, 2001, marked the beginning of the War on Terror, a prolonged conflict that further solidified the military-industrial complex's grip on American foreign policy. The invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq resulted in a dramatic surge in defence spending, with companies like Halliburton and Blackwater (now Academi) securing lucrative contracts for reconstruction and security services. In recent years, the military-industrial complex has continued to thrive, driven by ongo-

ing conflicts in the Middle East, rising tensions with Russia and China, and the global war on terrorism. The U.S. defence budget remains the largest in the world, with substantial funds allocated to developing next-generation weapons systems and maintaining a vast network of military bases. The recent assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, former Prime Minister of Palestine and head of Hamas, by Israel in Iran, with American support, underscores the enduring influence of the military-industrial complex. This act, and the subsequent American military buildup in the region, exemplifies how geopolitical manoeuvres often serve dual purposes: advancing strategic interests and ensuring continued profits for the defence industry. As Eisenhower warned, "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex." This cautionary message remains as relevant today as it was over six decades ago, reminding us of the intricate and often perilous relationship between war, politics, and profit. (The writer is an assistant professor at Pondicherry University; views are personal)

## Uniform Civil Code: A step towards a secular legal system



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

PM Modi, reignites the debate on the Uniform Civil Code calling for a law that would apply equally to all citizens, regardless of religion

The BJP-led NDA government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, did not implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) during its previous tenure. The UCC is a proposed law that would apply uniformly to all religious communities on personal matters like marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption. After major ideological milestones such as the abolition of Article 370 and the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, the UCC became viewed as the final step in the BJP and the Sangh's agenda leading up to the 2024 general elections. On Independence Day, from the Red Fort, PM Modi emphasized the need for a secular civil code, arguing that laws dividing the country along religious lines should be abolished. He called the current legal framework a "communal civil code" and highlighted the importance of transitioning to a more inclusive and secular version that aligns with modern societal values. Addressing the nation, he called on the citizens of India to engage in debate, insisting



that communal and discriminatory laws have no place in the country. From the outset, party and government sources have indicated that the BJP aimed to keep the UCC in public discourse. This sentiment was echoed during a Bhopal rally on June 23, 2023, where PM Modi suggested that the implementation of the UCC might be on the horizon. Top officials, however, emphasized that the law would require extensive research and consultation. The Sangh Parivar believes that states can take the initiative to implement the UCC. Several BJP-ruled states, including Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat, have begun exploring this. Assam's Chief

Minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, confirmed plans to introduce laws targeting child marriage and polygamy. He added that Assam would adopt and modify the Uttarakhand model according to local needs. The political landscape surrounding the UCC has been contentious, and it has already been implemented in Uttarakhand as of March this year, likely influencing subsequent elections. Nevertheless, BJP sources acknowledge the complexities surrounding the UCC. Tribal marital practices, diverse inheritance laws, and regional variations are significant hurdles. Modi reiterated from the Red Fort that the Supreme Court has repeatedly discussed the need for a UCC, which many believe would address the communal nature of the current civil code. According to government sources, however, the UCC presents far greater challenges than issues like Article 370 or triple talaq, as it affects various social and cultural groups across India. The process of drafting the UCC would require far-reaching consultations and deep research.

One BJP functionary noted that codifying the UCC, unlike the Indian Penal Code, would be difficult due to the cultural diversity among tribal groups across regions. The UCC debate is viewed as a positive step toward creating a more uniform legal system, especially concerning women's rights. The Sangh Parivar, too, has expressed concerns, with the RSS-affiliated Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram advocating for the exclusion of tribal groups from the UCC. Meanwhile, the BJP has encouraged these communities to submit their concerns to the Law Commission, urging them not to be swayed by social media debates. The essence of the UCC, as explained by PM Modi, is to have a single law applicable to all citizens of India, regardless of religion, caste, or gender, in matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. This is outlined in Article 44 of the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution, which tasks the government with the responsibility of implementing such a code. (The writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### DON'T MAKE PATIENTS SUFFER

Madam — I support the movement against the criminal or criminals who killed the trainee doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, but I cannot support the cease-work by the doctors. I fail to understand why innocent patients are made to suffer to the extreme. The pictures of untreated patients in pain have raised many questions. Why should they bear the burnt of the strike? What is their fault? Earlier, while passing directions to the CBI and the State of West Bengal, the Supreme Court only appealed to the striking doctors to resume work. But it cut no ice. On Thursday, the apex court again nudged the striking doctors to resume work for the sake of the patients. But the status quo is still being maintained. Are the poor patients simply pawns in the tussle? The doctors can continue their protests even after resuming work. The Supreme Court says that no coercive action shall be taken against the doctors as long as the protests are peaceful. Given the patients are made to suffer from violence within, the protests can no longer be termed as peaceful. Sujit De | Kolkata

#### START PREPARING FOR NEXT OLYMPICS

Madam — All other nations have started preparation for the next Olympics, international sports events with renewed vigour. India is still in blame-game, scapegoat, harm, negative network, interference, discouraging, devilish activities. Issuing discouraging statements in the media on how many crores spent on Paris Olympics-2024 preparation for months. Sports win depends on "luck of the day" is well known. First and foremost, India must shed its third world mind set. Replace negative devilish qualities - discouraging - harmful tendencies with encouragement, scientific happy development management and latest technology usage (for

#### Urban flooding must be checked



propos article, 'Monsoon mayhem: Tackling urban flooding', published on August 23, this is my response. The global surge in urban flooding has brought a daunting challenge for cities worldwide, necessitating urgent attention to tackle this issue through meticulous urban planning and innovative infrastructure design. It is not only the event of flooding, but the secondary effects of exposure to infection that have a toll on human life, livelihood, and property. The impact of urban flooding is wide-

spread, including temporary relocation of people, damage to civic amenities, deterioration of water quality, and risk of epidemics. It was mostly stated that the areas lying in the flood plains are prone to floods, but urban floods have changed this notion.

Urban flooding disrupts the normal working of the city by damaging water supply, sewerage, power transmission lines, communication, transportation and infrastructure. Sustainable solutions, such as green infrastructure, geospatial technology, flood governance, stormwater management, and collaboration and awareness, are needed to tackle the menace of urban flooding. A thorough knowledge and understanding of the causes and effects of flood impacts and the adoption and development of measures to mitigate these impacts must be part of a comprehensive urban development plan.

Ranganathan sivakumar | Chennai

sports coaching and preparation). Also, focus on many sports, not just cricket. Will it help to give more comfort to athletes - players by having more (%) of women coaches - staff - administrators - boards for women players and men - staff coaches etc. for male players? Medical and sports experts must decide so.

Last but not the least, there must be no political interference in the sports. This is one reason Indian sportspersons are unable to perform their best. Besides biased selection of sportspersons for mega events is often controversial which hampers the growth of healthy competition amongst the sportspersons and inculcates a wrong culture of nepotism and favouritism. If we can manage that, India can shine in Olympics PV Srinivas Sreelekha | Secunderabad

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF STAMPING

Madam — The Indian Stamp Act, 1899 deals with stamping of various agreements/ documents in India. Stamping of agreements and documents is desir-

able as it ensures legality and validity, enforceability and admissibility in court since such agreements can be registered under the Indian Registration Act, 1908. Now the question is, what is effect on enforceability of a document in the court, if it is either unstamped or is under-stamped. This involves three Act viz. Indian Contract Act, Indian Stamp Act and Indian Registration Act. As per Indian Contract Act, while making an agreement on a non-stamp paper, there are certain legal aspects that need to be complied with. Section 10 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872, outlines the essential elements that make an agreement a legally enforceable contract. It is to be remembered that proper stamping ensures the validity and enforceability of documents in legal proceedings. The correct information regarding this must be given to the public so everyone can comply. Jayanthi Subramanian | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com





## FIRST COLUMN LIVE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT, IT MATTERS MOST

Understanding and managing stress effectively is essential for a healthier life



RADHANATH SWAMI MAHARAJ

God is often perceived as invisible, impartial & incomprehensible. Some imagine Him as a distant figure, high in the clouds, old & angry, hurling thunderbolts at us for our oversight in following His commandments. While many view God merely as a cosmic order supplier, providing for our sustenance & working out our desires behind the screens. Cultural understandings about God create a vivid but confused picture, leading many in the current generation to turn to spirituality without engaging in traditional religion.

The term "religion" itself, derived from the Latin "re-ligare," means reconnection with the Supreme Lord. However, common conceptions of God—as an empty vacuum, an outburst of floodlight, or an angry old man—do not suggest any possibility of a relationship with God.

The ancient wisdom of yoga forms the basis of spiritual science—the Bhagavad Gita as recorded 120 million years back imparted by the Supreme Lord Krsna to the sun deity—Vivasvan (BG 4.01). Therein Lord emphatically states his position ("aham sarvaysa prabhava") He is omnipresent, ("mayadyaksena prakriti") the entire universe functions under his supervision, ("Upadrsta anumanta ca") He is manifest as the guardian spirit in everyone's heart—as the Paramatma, ("brmhano hi pratistaham") He is the source of the spiritual fulfillment, ("tani aham veda sarvani") He is omniscient, as he reiterates the same message to Arjuna 5000 years back, that he imparted to Vivasvan 120 million years ago. Furthermore, Krsna informs Arjuna about the secret of his appearance ("janma karma ca me divyam") from the spiritual world to reclaim



the seekers & whoever learns about it & strives to perfect their lives. Such profound wisdom makes us aware of God's greatness not merely as a concept or an infirm old man retired from the scene of creation. Rather a God who works diligently in the background & also frequently tours to his creation beaoning every individual to rekindle spiritual wisdom. To instil faith in his devotees, Lord Krishna descended on Janmashtami in the prison cell of His uncle Kamsa. Kamsa imprisoned his sister Devaki & brother-in-law Vasudeva due to an ominous mystical prediction that declared that the 8th son of Devaki would end his evil attitude. Thus fearful of his death, Kamsa instantly arrested his newlywed sister & brother-in-law. Kamsa represents the atheistic mindset that abuses power to dominate & replace Godliness in society.

One of the central purposes of Krsna's descent is to discipline such atheists who have removed God from the equation (BG 4.07). He disciplined Kamsa and subsequently helped Arjuna neutralize the egomaniac prince Duryodhan, who had usurped the kingdom from the righteous Pandavas. Lord Krishna's greatness is revealed in His purpose to bring order to society by establishing the virtues of Godliness. The ancient 'yoga of bhakti' reveals the sweetest & most refined means to connect with God i.e. through love.

Vrindavan is where He manifests His eternal pastimes—beckoning every seeker—an invitation to the spiritual world. The same Lord Krsna who revealed his Virat-rupa the gigantic universal form to Arjuna enacted as a helpless child (in Vrindavan) tearful & fearful when mother Yasoda chased & bound him by the rope due to His childhood mischief. The same Lord Krsna who lifted Govardhan hill with the tip of His finger, (in Vrindavan) failed to defeat his friends in the tug-of-war games. By Celebrating Janmashtami, devotees reaffirm their faith, deepen their spiritual connection, and draw inspiration from the life and teachings of Lord Krishna. It is a reminder of the presence of divinity in our lives and the eternal principles of dharma that guide us towards righteousness and spiritual fulfillment. Let us celebrate Janmashtami not just as a ritual, but as an opportunity to connect to the supreme Lord Krishna spiritually.

(The author is the Spiritual Guru of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness; views expressed are personal)

# Securing the women dignity on the internet



RENNIE JOY

With threats ranging from deepfake exploitation to harassment on gaming platforms there is urgent need to safeguard women's rights online



Protecting Women's Rights in the Digital Age—Dr Rennie Joy, Founder of Aalekh Foundation. In the digital age, the internet has become an indispensable tool for communication, education, and empowerment. However, for many women, it has also become a dangerous space with cyber harassment and online abuse rife. In India, the proliferation of digital platforms has led to a worrying increase in gender-based violence online, with recent trends revealing more insidious forms of harassment that demand urgent attention. India's legal system has made some progress in addressing cyber harassment, but there is still a long way to go.

The Information Technology Act, of 2000, alongside the Indian Penal Code (IPC), provides the legal foundation for prosecuting cybercrimes, including harassment. However, the enforcement of these laws is often inconsistent, and the existing provisions do not fully address the nuances of newer forms of cyber harassment, such as deepfakes and abuse on gaming platforms. Moreover, the process of reporting and prosecuting these crimes remains cumbersome.

Victims often face significant hurdles, including a lack of awareness about their rights, societal stigma, and unresponsive law enforcement agencies. The borderless nature of the internet further complicates matters, as perpetrators can easily evade legal consequences by operating from different jurisdictions.

**The expanding tentacles of cyber harassment:** Cyber harassment in India has taken on new dimensions, with perpetrators using increasingly sophisticated methods to target women. Traditional forms of online abuse—such as stalking, trolling, and doxing—remain prevalent. However, the advent of new technologies has introduced more dangerous threats, including the use of deepfake technology. Deepfakes are hyper-realistic, digitally manipulated videos or images that can make it appear as though a person is saying or doing something they never did. In recent times, this technology has been weaponized against women, with perpetrators creating and sharing deepfake

pornography without the victims' consent. This form of cyber harassment is particularly devastating, as it not only violates the victim's privacy but also damages their reputation, leading to severe emotional and psychological trauma. In 2020, India saw a surge in deepfake-related crimes, with several women finding themselves targeted by fake explicit videos circulated on social media. The difficulty in proving the falsity of these videos adds another layer of complexity, leaving victims with limited avenues for legal recourse. Although Sections 66E and 67A of the Information Technology Act, of 2000 cover the transmission of obscene material and violations of privacy, the law is still catching up with the rapid advancements in deepfake technology, and enforcement remains a significant challenge.

**Harassment on online gaming platforms:** Another concerning trend is the rise of cyber harassment on online gaming platforms. These platforms, often perceived as spaces for entertainment and community, have increasingly become hotbeds for toxic behavior and online abuse. In many instances, female gamers are subjected to sexual harassment, including rape threats and abusive language, often from anonymous players. In India, while the gaming community is growing rapidly, there is a lack of specific laws addressing online harassment within these platforms. This gap in regulation means that many women are left vulnerable to abuse, with little recourse for protection or justice.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has acknowledged the issue, but more comprehensive policies and industry standards are needed to tackle this emerging threat. Role of tech companies and gaming platforms Tech

companies, including social media platforms and gaming companies, bear a significant responsibility in protecting users from online abuse. While major social media platforms have implemented policies against harassment, their enforcement is often inconsistent, allowing harmful content to proliferate. The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, introduced by the Indian government, aims to hold these platforms more accountable by urging them to remove unlawful content and safeguard user privacy. However, the efficacy of these guidelines is still in question, as the sheer volume of content and the evolving nature of cyber threats present significant challenges. Online gaming platforms, in particular, need to adopt stricter community guidelines and reporting mechanisms to prevent harassment and abuse. Developers and platform operators must prioritise user safety, implementing robust systems to detect and respond to incidents of online harassment effectively.

Empowering women digitally Empowering women to protect themselves online is crucial in combating cyber harassment. Digital literacy programs that teach women how to safeguard their privacy, recognise and report abuse, and navigate online spaces safely are essential.

**Initiatives like Cyber Saathi and She:** The People are making strides in this area, providing resources and education to women across India. Support networks and helplines also play a critical role. The National Commission for Women (NCW) has launched several initiatives, including a 24/7 helpline, to assist women facing online abuse. However, ensuring these resources are accessible to all women, including those in rural

and remote areas, remains a challenge.

**Global collaboration and community initiatives:** Addressing cyber harassment requires international collaboration, as online abuse often transcends national borders. India's participation in global dialogues on cybercrime is crucial, but more robust cooperation with other countries and international organisations is needed to effectively combat cross-border cyber harassment.

Community-based initiatives are also vital. Movements like #MeToo and #GirlsAtDhabas have demonstrated the power of collective action in raising awareness and advocating for change. Localised efforts, such as workshops, community discussions, and advocacy campaigns, can help create safer digital spaces for women.

**Looking ahead:** The digital age offers immense opportunities for women, but it also presents significant risks. Protecting women's rights online requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders—governments, tech companies, civil society, and individuals.

By addressing the evolving threats of cyber harassment, including deepfakes and online abuse on gaming platforms, we can create a safer, more inclusive digital environment that empowers women to fully participate in all aspects of society. Balancing the protection of women's rights with the preservation of free speech will be a key challenge in the years to come. However, by taking a comprehensive approach that includes legal reforms, tech accountability, education, and community support, we can make significant strides in protecting women's rights in the digital age.

(The writer is Founder Aalekh Foundation; views expressed are personal)



THE DIGITAL AGE OFFERS IMMENSE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN, BUT IT ALSO PRESENTS SIGNIFICANT RISKS. PROTECTING WOMEN'S RIGHTS ONLINE REQUIRES A CONCERTED EFFORT FROM ALL STAKEHOLDERS

# Space-tech to improve logistics and supply chain management in indian scenario

As the country makes strides in space exploration, these technologies will play a critical role in economic growth writes Prof Manoj K Tiwari and Dr Rofin T M

Logistics and supply chain management are crucial foundations of the Indian economy, guaranteeing the effective movement of products, services, and individuals throughout the nation. The Indian government has effectively reduced the logistics GDP from 14% to around 7.8% to 8.9% through the implementation of programs such as Bharat Mala, Sagarmala, and PM Gati Shakti schemes.

The recent triumph of Chandrayan-3 holds the potential to greatly augment the capabilities of Indian space technology. The successful mission has enhanced the existing capabilities of space technology, such as satellite navigation systems, remote

sensing, satellite communication, and web geographic information systems (GIS). The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a satellite-based radio navigation system used to communicate worldwide geographic location data. The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) has created its own regional satellite navigation system called NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation). NavIC is designed to offer accurate location data for both domestic and regional purposes. The constellation of seven satellites provides dependable positioning services not just within India but also to a substantial area spanning 1500 km outside its borders. GPS technology can be used to

trace recent wars between global countries or state boundaries that involve rivers, mountain ranges, and oceans. Surveyors employ the accuracy of absolute positions to create maps and establish property borders. It is possible to determine the optimal locations for facilities, allocate resources, establish warehouses, and identify suitable sites for multi-modal logistic parks and special economic zones. Telematics is a technology that combines GPS technology with computers and mobile communications networks to provide improved automobile navigation systems. The Wide Area Augmentation System (WAAS) can be utilized to monitor the movement of ves-

sels and containers, providing information on their velocity, speed, direction, and position. This technology will significantly benefit the port and logistics industries. The subject of focus for worldwide governments in recent years is intelligent transportation systems for urban traffic management. The extensive utilization of GPS technology in automobiles presents a tremendous prospect to transform traffic management. Thousands of vehicles are sending real-time data from urban roads, including latitude, longitude, speed, and other pertinent metrics. The dynamic information can be utilized to facilitate various research and applications in Intelligent Transportation Systems, resulting in improved



traffic flow, reduced congestion, and strengthened safety procedures. Satellite-derived data can be used to exchange information between airport planners and managers and their counterparts at other agencies to expedite infrastructure development and urban planning activities in their respective regions. Remote sensing can be applied to evaluate the impact of landscape patterns, land use types, and increasing urban temper-

atures on urban thermal environments. This technology can assist army and police departments in tracking and tracing activities. Incorporate Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) into satellite systems for operations that go beyond the visual line of sight (BVLOS), such as covering terrestrial range and providing assistance in areas affected by natural disasters or prone to interruptions. Space Internet is a telecommunications service that utilizes satellites positioned in geostationary orbit, namely at a height of 35,786 kilometers above the Earth's surface. Unlike the constraints imposed by fiber-optic cables or wireless networks, these satellites in space possess the

capacity to surmount obstacles. Developed nations are utilizing space-based internet to acquire airborne laser scanning (ALS) data for the purpose of reconstructing railway overhead lines, hence providing reliable and secure transportation services. The implementation of satellite-based internet is essential for providing connectivity to remote places characterized by difficult topography, such as the Himalayas and isolated regions in the north-east. The integration of space technology into logistics and supply chain management offers India a pathway to achieving its vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. By leveraging advancements in satellite navigation, remote sensing, satellite communica-

tion, and space internet, India can increase the efficiency, reliability, and resilience of its logistics networks. Space technology, including satellite communication, GPS and remote sensing, revolutionizes logistics by enhancing real-time tracking, optimizing routes, forecasting the weather to mitigate risks, and improving inventory management. Additionally, space tech enables global communication networks for seamless coordination and facilitates advanced geospatial analysis for supply chain management, enhancing adeptness and reducing costs across industries.

(Prof Tiwari is Director, IIM Mumbai and Dr Rofin is faculty IIM Mumbai, views are personal)



**IN BRIEF**



**REC to provide Rs 45,000 cr finance to JNPA**

State-owned REC Ltd on Sunday said it has inked an initial pact to provide up to Rs 45,000 crore financing to various Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) projects. REC Ltd, under the Ministry of Power and a leading non-banking financial company (NBFC), signed an MoU with Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) for financing up to Rs 45,000 crore for various upcoming JNPA projects, including development of Vadnavan Port, a company statement said. REC Executive Director Rahul Dwivedi signed the MoU with JNPA Chairman Unmesh Shrivastava. The MoU was signed in the presence of Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal. This MoU is to establish a framework for cooperation between JNPA and REC, whereby JNPA implements projects in the infrastructure sector of its expertise and REC shall provide the required funds, the statement said.



**IndiGo to introduce 'Mx' option for passengers**

IndiGo will be soon introducing the gender-neutral option of honorific 'Mx' for passengers at the time of booking tickets, as part of larger efforts to boost inclusivity. Besides, the country's largest carrier, which has a domestic market share of 62 per cent, aims to increase by two-fold the number of individuals with disabilities employed by it. The airline will be introducing the 'Mx' option at the time of booking for passengers and that will provide a choice for transgenders who do not want to identify themselves. Sukhjit S Pasricha, Group Chief Human Resources Officer at IndiGo, told PTI. Currently, 'male' and 'female' are the options available on the airline's website during the booking process. Air India Express and Vistara already offer the 'Mx' option for passengers at the time of booking tickets. Pasricha said IndiGo has implemented various initiatives for the LGBTQ+ community, including employee referral programmes specifically designed to encourage hiring of LGBTQ+ individuals. "This has strengthened candidate mobilisation through internal resources and fostered a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ employees... we partner with agencies specializing in LGBTQ+ recruitment," he said.



**Suraksha Group puts Rs 250 cr in Jaypee Infratech**

Suraksha Group has infused Rs 250 crore in Jaypee Infratech after acquiring it through insolvency process and has also arranged a Rs 3,000 crore loan facility, as it gears up to complete around 20,000 unfinished flats in Delhi NCR. Around Rs 1,000 crore cash is lying in the balance sheet of the Jaypee Infratech Ltd, which the bankrupt company has accumulated from real estate business and toll income of Yamuna Expressway that connects Greater Noida and Agra. According to sources, Suraksha Group has infused Rs 250 crore in Jaypee Infratech Ltd (JIL) as equity and debt after taking control of the latter in early June. JIL currently has Rs 1,250 crore fund, including Rs 1,000 crore internal cash and Rs 250 crore infusion from Suraksha group. That apart, Suraksha Group has also arranged a credit line of Rs 3,000 crore to ensure that there is no paucity of funds for completion of all stalled projects, they added. Sources said the Suraksha Group will require Rs 6,500-7,000 crore investment to complete nearly 160 residential towers across various projects. Out of these towers, the construction work was going on in only 62 towers before the takeover of Suraksha Group, while activities on the remaining 97 towers were completely stalled.

**India-Australia trade pact talks in Nov**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior officials of India and Australia are expected to hold their next round of talks for a comprehensive free trade agreement in November here, the commerce ministry said on Sunday. The two countries implemented an interim trade agreement in December 2022 and are now under negotiations to expand its scope. It said that the tenth round of India-Australia CECA (comprehensive economic cooperation agreement) negotiations was held from 19-22 August in Sydney in the areas of goods, services, digital trade, government procurement, rules of origin and agri-tech.



Intense discussions were held on each of these tracks bringing in clarity and understanding for convergence in the remaining provisions, it added. "The next round of CECA negotiations is likely to be held in November," it said in a statement. The Indian delegation was led by Rajesh Agrawal, the Chief Negotiator and Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce and the Australian delegation was led by Ravi Kewalram, the Chief Negotiator and First Assistant Secretary in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. "The meeting saw intensive discussions and negotiations to narrow down the differences through better understanding of each other's proposals and the way to bring in convergence. Efforts were made by both the sides keeping in mind the domestic sensitivities for reaching a balanced outcome," the ministry said. Further the ministry said that the Australian side proposed to hold the first meeting of the India-Australia Agri Tech Forum (IAATF), a newly constituted forum by Australia, in New Delhi on September 23, with the Indian agricultural stakeholders including industry, research institutions and government.

The objective of the meet is to build on mutually beneficial relationships by exploring opportunities for focused activity around technology transfer and knowledge sharing in agriculture and horticulture sectors. Australia is an important trading partner of India in the Oceania region, with merchandise trade between India and Australia reaching around USD 24 billion in 2023-24. India's exports to Australia last fiscal stood at USD 7.94 billion, while imports were USD 16.15 billion. The trade between the two countries has been hovering at around USD 25 billion mark since 2021-22.

**Infosys scouting for acquisitions, says CEO Parekh**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After two acquisitions this year, India's second-largest IT services company Infosys is on the lookout to scoop-up more firms and says the acquisition matching scale of recent in-tech buy is certainly a possibility. In an interview to PTI, Infosys CEO Salil Parekh said the company is keen on acquisitions in areas like data analytics, SAAS, and may look at some geographies within Europe, and the US.



could do a few of those." Back in January, Infosys announced a definitive agreement to acquire 100 per cent of the equity share capital in InSemi Technology Services, a semiconductor design services company headquartered in India, for a consideration (including earn-outs, and management incentives and retention bonuses) totalling up to Rs 280 crore.

Asked if more acquisitions could be of the scale matching in-tech, which came with a price-tag of 450 million euros, Parekh said, "Absolutely, I think those would be the size that we will look at in terms of scale, and given our structure we

**Four Union ministers to participate in India-Singapore Dialogue**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Four union ministers - Nirmala Sitharaman, Piyush Goyal, S Jaishankar and Ashwini Vaishnav, will attend the India-Singapore ministerial meet on Monday with a view to further strengthen trade and economic ties between the two countries. The commerce and industry ministry on Sunday said the India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR) is scheduled to take place in Singapore on August 26. Goyal will engage with leading global business figures in Singapore, including DBS Bank, Temasek Holdings, OMERS, Keppel Infrastructure, and the Owners Forum. The minister will explore strategies to bolster bilateral trade and investment, capitalising on India's burgeoning market opportunities and its



dynamic growth trajectory, it said. "Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will participate in the second ISMR along with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Minister for Railways, Information and Broadcasting, and Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnav," it said.

During their visit, the ministers will interact with their Singaporean counterparts and leadership, it added. ISMR is a unique mechanism established to set a new agenda for India-Singapore bilateral relations. Its inaugural meeting was held in New Delhi in September 2022. "This second meeting will enable both sides to review various aspects of their strategic

partnership and identify new avenues to further elevate and broaden it," it said. Singapore has been a major source of FDI (foreign direct investment) for India. In 2023-24, Singapore was the largest source of these inflows with USD 11.77 billion investments into Indian markets. The cumulative inflow of FDI from Singapore from April 2000 to March 2024 was USD 159.94 billion. In bilateral trade, Singapore was the sixth largest global trade partner of India in 2023-24 with a total trade of USD 35.61 billion which accounts approximately 29 per cent of India's total trade with ASEAN (Association for Southeast Asian nations). India's exports stood at USD 14.41 billion, while imports were USD 21.2 billion. The trade gap is in the favour of Singapore.

**India aims to lead next industrial revolution: DBT**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is positioning itself at the forefront of the next industrial revolution with its new bio-manufacturing policy designed to tackle food, energy and climate challenges, officials said on Sunday. High-performance biomanufacturing involves the production of products ranging from medicine to materials, tackling farming and food challenges, and promoting the manufacturing of bio-based products through the integration of advanced biotechnological processes. "India aims to lead the next industrial revolution. Unlike the semiconductor industry, which arrived in India 15-20 years later, we must seize this opportunity now.

**Macro data, global cues to chart market direction**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Release of key macroeconomic numbers, monthly derivatives expiry, and global cues are likely to drive stock market movement this week, according to analysts. Markets will also be reacting to remarks made by the US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, they said. "This week, we expect the market to witness a gradual up-move with stock-specific action. The focus will shift to monthly F&O expiry as well as global cues. Markets on Monday would react to commentaries of the US Fed Chair at the Jackson Hole Symposium," Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said. US Fed Chair Jerome Powell on Friday signalled that the

central bank would cut its interest rate in the September meeting. Powell made a crucial speech that laid the groundwork for future interest rate reductions. Powell said, "The time has come for policy to adjust." "The market has been expecting an interest rate cut during the next Federal Reserve meeting in September. There are indications that the rate cuts could happen at a faster pace, especially with the weakening of jobs data. However, Powell believes that the chances of the US economy entering a recession in the near term are very low. This implies that rate cuts would likely align with consensus expectations, and the possibility of higher rate cuts may be lower," Chief Investment Officer at Axis Securities PMS Naveen Kulkarni said.

**Anil Ambani reviewing SEBI order, to take appropriate steps**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Businessman Anil Ambani is reviewing a Sebi order imposing a fine and banning him from capital markets for five years in an alleged fund diversion case and will take appropriate next steps as legally advised, his spokesperson said in a statement on Sunday. Ambani, the spokesperson in a statement said, had resigned from the board of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd and Reliance Power Ltd, pursuant to Sebi's interim order dated February 11, 2022 in the matter pertaining to Reliance Home Finance Ltd. He is in compliance with the said interim order (of February 11, 2022) for the last two and half years, the statement said. On the August 22 order that banned him and 24 others from the securities market for five



years on charges of diversion of funds, the spokesperson said, "Mr Ambani is reviewing the final order dated August 22, 2024 passed by Sebi in the said matter, and will take appropriate next steps as legally advised." The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) had also imposed a fine of Rs 25 crore on Ambani, saying he orchestrated a scheme to "siphon off" funds from Reliance Home Finance, a listed subsidiary of conglomerate Reliance Group of which he

is chairman. The ban means that he and the other 24 will not be able to access the securities market and are prohibited from buying, selling or otherwise dealing in securities, directly or indirectly. In a separate statement, Mumbai-listed Reliance Infrastructure Ltd said it "was not a noticee or party to the proceedings before Sebi in which the order is passed. No directions are given in the order against Reliance Infrastructure Ltd pursuant to the interim order dated February 11, 2022 passed by Sebi in the same proceedings. Therefore, the order dated August 22, 2024 passed by Sebi has no bearing whatsoever on the business and affairs of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd," it said.

**FPIs inject Rs 11,366 cr in debt market; inflow tally crosses Rs 1 lakh cr**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors infused Rs 11,366 crore in the Indian debt market so far this month, pushing the net inflow tally in the debt segment to over the Rs 1-lakh-crore mark. Foreign investors' strong buying interest in the Indian debt market can be attributed to India's inclusion in JP Morgan's Emerging Market government bond indices in June this year. According to data with the depositories, Foreign Portfolio



Investors (FPIs) injected Rs 11,366 crore in the debt market this month (till August 24). This inflow came following a net investment of Rs 22,363 crore into the Indian debt

market in July, Rs 14,955 crore in June and Rs 8,760 crore in May. Before that, they pulled out Rs 10,949 crore in April. With the latest flow, FPIs net investment in debt has reached Rs 1.02 lakh crore in 2024 so far. Market analysts said that ever since the announcement of India's inclusion came in October 2023 year, FPIs have been front-loading their investments in Indian debt markets in anticipation of the inclusion in global bond indices.



**Foxconn: Women should take up lead positions in tech space**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

iPhone contract manufacturer Foxconn wants women employees in India to take up lead positions in design and other technology-related positions, a top company official has said. Foxconn has 48,000 employees across India and 25 per cent of its new hires are married women. "We see not only the assembly work for women but also some design, technology-related positions. Lot of our current employees are highly educated. We would like to give them more opportunity to advance their position, not just limited to assembly work," Foxconn Chairman Young Liu told PTI. The Foxconn factory has

about 70 per cent women and 30 per cent men. The company recently inaugurated a women-only residential complex built by the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu (SIPCOT) in Sriperumbudur near Chennai that can house over 18,000 women employees working with Foxconn. Liu had then said there is an upward trend in all types of hiring by the Taiwanese electronics manufacturing major in India and the company hires regardless of gender. The company is also setting up its second largest mobile manufacturing plant outside China in Karnataka with a planned investment of Rs 25,000 crore that will create 40,000 jobs.

**ONGC opens well in KG field to raise oil production**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) on Sunday said it has opened another well on its flagship deep-sea project in the Krishna Godavari basin in the Bay of Bengal, which will help augment production of crude oil and natural gas. In January this year, ONGC started producing oil, converted into fuels like petrol and

diesel in refineries, from the KG-DWN-98/2 or KG-D5 block. "On August 24, 2024, ONGC marked a significant milestone by starting production from its fifth oil well in the Block KG-DWN-98/2 Cluster-2 asset," the firm said in a stock exchange filing on Sunday. "Leveraging the floating production, storage, and offloading (FPSO) vessel, ONGC has begun transporting and sale of



associated gas, all the while underscoring its commitment to achieving zero gas flaring." It, however, did not state how much the new well was producing. With this, ONGC also successfully commissioned its gas export line from the offshore-to-onshore terminal. "Earlier in January, oil production commenced from the same asset, with 4 of 13 wells already flowing. Gas production is also advancing, with 3 of 7

wells online," it added. The block, which sits next to Reliance Industries' KG-D6 block in the KG basin, has a number of discoveries that have been clubbed into clusters. Located 35 kilometres off the coast of Andhra Pradesh in water depths ranging from 300-3,200 metres, the discoveries in the block are divided into Cluster-1, 2 and 3. Cluster 2 is being put to production first.







## Blending arts and athleticism

The recent partnership between the JSW Foundation and the Chanakya School of Craft for the Paris 2024 Olympics demonstrates that the connections between craft and sport are more profound than one may think. *The Pioneer* has the chairperson of the foundation onboard, as she exclusively speaks to us about working on these projects

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Few events in human history have captured people's attention and hearts as deeply as the Olympic Games, which are a worldwide platform that honour the pinnacle of physical bravery. An important turning point in Indian sportsmanship history occurred when the country sent its first Olympic squad of three athletes to the 1920 Summer Olympics in Antwerp, Belgium, aboard the SS Mantua. The JSW Group has worked with two very different groups to commission artworks in honour of India's 100th year in the Olympics, in a spectacular commemoration of the country's legacy in the games!

The most sophisticated kind of partnership has united the domains of sports and art under the name Citius—Altius—Fortius (stronger, higher, faster, together). It includes three multidisciplinary artworks that are painstakingly made utilising com-



plex hand embroidery techniques. By fusing traditional craftsmanship with modern artistic expressions, the cooperation combines the dynamic energy of sports with the delicate delicacy of craft, reflecting the spirit of human tenacity and excellence. These artworks commemorate significant milestones in Indian sports history.

Sangita Jindal, the chairman of the JSW Foundation, revealed something in an exclusive interview with us: "Handcrafted by skilled artisans, this series of artworks honours the journey and achievements of two of India's most prominent sports figures, Sakshi Malik and Neeraj Chopra. This extraordinary tribute to the accomplishments of these extraordinary athletes, created on such a large

scale, unites the domains of sports and art and conveys pride in the collective potential of our country." The group chose to work with Sujata Bajaj, the Chanakya School of Craft and Karishma Swali on these particular projects. To answer our question, the chairperson stated that the Chanakya School of Craft has as its mission the preservation of Indian craftsmanship, particularly the arts of needlework.

JSW and Chanakya both aim to preserve, elevate and spread these cultural practices. They also want to see these modern methods showcased on a worldwide scale. Sujata Bajaj is a multidisciplinary artist who works in India and Paris. It felt appropriate to approach her for a commission with a "India and the Olympics" subject given her aesthetic and artistic beliefs, which stress the cultural and creative connections between France and India.

"India's Ashoka Chakra emerges from one of the Olympic circles in response to the well-known French Republic slogan and a peek at the medals' subtle suggestion of gold, silver and bronze suggests the sporting events. On the flags of both countries, there is a clear play on colours, with orange, green, blue, white and red taking center stage. The fill of the circles, where the fluidity of the colours resembles globe maps as viewed from far-off space, reflects the universality of the Olympic message." The chairperson gives us a brief explanation of the



"Citius—Altius—Fortius" theme's inspiration.

She actively encourages and supports the communities and craftspeople who preserve and enhance the customs of her country. The Foundation has restored a number of historically and culturally significant locations over the years, including the Krishna and Chandramouleshwara temples in Hampi, Karnataka; the David Sassoon Library and Reading Room in Mumbai, Maharashtra and most lately, Shalimar Bagh in Kashmir. One of the biggest art residencies in India, Hampi Art Labs, is dedicated to supporting emerging artists and conserving regional craft cultures and customs in northern Karnataka!

There's more, too: "The JSW Foundation fosters mutually beneficial connections between traditional artisan communities and female entrepreneurs. Through initiatives such as The Charkha Project, projects with Applique Artisans, or the recently founded Handloom School Bunkai in Vijayanagar, Karnataka, the foundation helps thousands of women craftspeople by providing them with a steady source of income and by carrying out significant interventions to modernise their crafts." She firmly believes in collaborating with local communities. She is restoring the pavilion ceilings to their former splendour in collaboration with regional paper mache and craftspeople! India's indigenous arts and handicrafts must be preserved through a contemporary interpretation of tradition and artistic expression. In order to survive and grow, craftsmen and craft clusters must adapt to the changing demands of the market and produce new designs.



## PROTECTING YOUR CANINE-MATES' SMILE!

As we celebrate International Dog Day, it's an ideal moment to reflect on an often-overlooked aspect of our canine companions' health: dental care. Just as with humans, maintaining good dental hygiene is crucial for dogs to ensure their overall well-being. With statistics showing that up to 80% of dogs over the age of three suffer from some form of dental disease, it's clear this is a widespread issue deserving of our attention. Dental issues can affect more than just a dog's smile; they can have far-reaching impacts on their health and quality of life.

### Importance of dental health

Dental health goes beyond maintaining a fresh breath and a pretty smile. According to the American Veterinary Dental College, periodontal disease is one of the most common health issues affecting dogs. This condition starts with the accumulation of plaque and tartar on the teeth, which can lead to inflammation of the gums (gingivitis). If left untreated, gingivitis can progress to periodontitis, a more severe condition that can cause tooth loss and lead to infections affecting other organs, including the heart and kidneys.

Recent studies emphasise that poor dental health in dogs can contribute to significant behavioural changes and a reduced quality of life. Dogs suffering from dental pain might become irritable, have difficulty eating, or show changes in their behaviour. Addressing dental care proactively can prevent these issues, enhancing not just oral health but overall well-being.

### Daily dental care routine

Incorporating dental care into your dog's daily routine is essential. Regular brushing is one of the most effective ways to prevent plaque buildup. Use a toothbrush and toothpaste specifically designed for dogs, as human toothpaste can be harmful due to fluoride and other ingredients.

Start by introducing your dog to the toothbrush gradually. Begin with a finger brush or a small amount of toothpaste, rewarding your dog for positive behaviour. Over time, increase the brushing duration as your dog becomes more accustomed to the process. Aim to brush your dog's teeth at least three times a week, though daily brushing is ideal.

### Diet and dental health

Diet plays a crucial role in maintaining dental health. Some pet foods are specifically formulated to reduce plaque and tartar buildup, often featuring a kibble texture that promotes mechanical cleaning. Incorporating such foods into your dog's diet can complement their dental care routine.

Additionally, foods with ingredients known to support oral health, such as omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants, can contribute to healthier gums and reduced inflammation. Including these nutrients in your dog's diet supports their overall oral hygiene and contributes to a healthier mouth.

### Dental chews and toys

Dental chews and toys play a vital role in maintaining your dog's dental health. According to the Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC), dental chews with the VOHC seal have been proven to help reduce plaque and tartar. These chews not only aid in cleaning teeth but also provide mental stimulation and satisfy your dog's natural chewing instincts. Ensure that the chews are appropriate for your dog's size and chewing strength to avoid any choking hazards.

Dental toys, made from durable materials like rubber, can also help clean your dog's teeth as they chew. These toys are particularly useful for dogs that are reluctant to have their teeth brushed.

### Regular vet check-ups

The American Veterinary Dental College recommends annual dental examinations to detect and address issues early. Regular veterinary check-ups are essential for maintaining dental health. During these exams, your vet can assess your dog's teeth and gums, identifying any potential problems before they escalate. Professional dental cleanings performed by a veterinarian are also crucial. These cleanings, conducted under anesthesia, allow for a thorough cleaning below the gum line where brushing alone cannot reach.

### Recognising dental issues

Being proactive about your dog's dental health involves recognising potential signs of dental problems. Common symptoms include:

- Bad breath
- Red or swollen gums
- Difficulty eating or chewing
- Loose or missing teeth
- Excessive drooling

If you notice any of these signs, consult your veterinarian for a thorough examination and appropriate treatment.

### Connection between dental health and overall well-being

Maintaining good dental hygiene is not only about preventing oral issues but also about supporting your dog's overall health. Poor dental health has been linked to systemic conditions such as heart disease and kidney problems. Investing time and effort into your dog's dental care also supports their long-term well-being and longevity.

Protecting your dog's smile is a key component of responsible pet ownership and a gesture of love that pays off in their long-term health and happiness. Celebrate this International Dog Day by reflecting on your dog's dental health and making a commitment to maintaining it. Your dog's bright, healthy smile is not just a testament to their good health but also a symbol of the care and attention you provide.

(The author, J.S. Rama Krishna, is a Business Head at Growel Pet Nutrition.)

## Danish Sood had his 'moment of pride' garbing OG uniform

TEJAL SINHA

With acting being his passion and singing being his love, Danish Sood has garnered immense love for both as a multi-faceted artist.

"I guess the music validation came in much sooner than acting, even though I did start the latter before," begins Danish with great excitement in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*. "I mean, it doesn't get bigger than this. Getting known for both of my passions. So feeling really happy and grateful for the kid who followed his dream of believing in himself and doing what he loves."

Following both his love and passion with equal hard work and devotion, the CAT fame is currently in talks for his portrayal of Gurbaz Singh Kahlon in the latest series *Naam Namak Nishaan*.

Gurbaz, to him, was a tricky yet amusing character to portray. "I've always wanted to take on a role that would allow me to tap into my comedic side and Gurbaz provided that opportunity," affirms Danish as he goes on. "He's the kind of guy you could always rely on—someone without barriers who just follows his instincts. I really enjoyed that aspect of him, being so free-spirited and fluid in both his nature and physicality."

Exploring these traits was incredibly intriguing for him, while at the same time, delving into his layers of conflict and the traumas he faced was challenging but fascinating. He's the dependable friend who would show up for you even while grappling with his own issues.

So, what were the preparations like? We ask the *Jugaadistan* fame and he takes us through: "As a national skeet rifle champion, Gurbaz had to be incredibly athletic. Sports training, including swimming, boxing and basketball, became a regular part of our routine before shooting began. We also did extensive drill training at the OTA, which was a lot of fun."

Having always been active in sports, with football being his main passion, he was eager to dive in and learn as much as he could for the role.

The feeling of wearing an army uniform could be as special and at the same time, equally responsible.

"It's hard to put the actual feeling into words—it was unreal," shares Danish with a sense of gratitude. "The army was closely involved with the project and they even had brand new uniforms specially stitched for us. I vividly remember the first time I put on the OG uniform (the dark green one, in civilian terms) with the beret. It felt surreal, like I became more of "Gurbaz" once I wore it. There's an overwhelming sense of pride and respect that comes with wearing the uniform, not just for yourself but for the soldiers who protect our country at the borders every day. That feeling is all-consuming. The uniform demands respect and it feels like something you have to earn." As he describes, we get his emotions captured pretty well.

Beyond a doubt, the lives of Army personnel and their families have been different from those of civilians. And this was something that he already had a better understanding of, with one of his closest friends' dads serving in the Army. However, being on the set was a whole different experience. For example, "We interacted with many cadets at the OTA and that was an eye-opener. I gained valuable insights into what a cadet endures while training to become an officer—the immense mental, physical and emotional challenges they face individually. However, the most remarkable aspect was the unity and camaraderie among the cadets. It was clear that

they survive by relying on each other, which was a beautiful thing to witness."

The character of Gurbaz demanded that he be athletic, which was pretty crucial. And so, Danish had dedicated a lot of time to training and building a physique that could convincingly carry and handle rifles with ease. Talking us through the behind-the-scenes training scenes, he shares, "We even underwent rifle training in Pune to prepare. Rifle shooting was particularly fascinating, as it's a sport that many people never get the chance to try. Along with that, we had daily basketball and boxing classes. I loved boxing, but basketball was quite challenging for me."

However, it was no less than an arduous task and with football being his main sport, his hand-eye coordination wasn't as strong. Nevertheless, he shares that he would love to dive deeper into learning basketball.

Going ahead, as we certainly see a brotherhood between Danish and Varun, how was the camaraderie off-screen? We ask, to which, with great regards, he says, "It felt like we already had the "Sood" connection in us and once we met, everything just clicked. It was like meeting a brother on set and we shared the best time together. There's something special about working with your people and even though we didn't know each other personally before *Naam Namak and Nishaan*, the experience was a delightful surprise. He's a wonderful soul and sharing the screen with him was seamless."

The 'Soods' became so in sync that they'd end up cracking up during some of the more intense scenes. In fact, "He made every scene feel effortless and gave me the freedom to explore my character fully. Plus, I have to mention the free basketball lessons I got from him! Honestly, I'm really lucky to have worked with him in such a meaningful way."

The project certainly turned out to be a great experience for him and for that matter, *Naam Namak Nishaan* was filled with memorable moments. But his experience playing a soldier stands out the most. "My dad always wanted to join the army and although it didn't work out for him, that

became a hidden motivation for me. The entire experience of portraying a soldier was something truly special and different. Before the show was released, we had the opportunity to showcase the first two episodes at the OTA. The interaction with the cadets and officers afterward is something I'll never forget. It meant a lot to us to know that they liked it. Finding a brother on set was another unforgettable experience. It was a first for me and it's something I'll always cherish," he shares with immense warmth.

Heading towards the end of this startling chat, Danish hints us about some exciting new beginnings coming up. "I'll be working on more independent songs, contributing to shows and films and there's some upcoming work that should be out soon," concludes the adroit star on a brighter note.

Well, we can't wait to see more of Danish Sood enrapturing hearts with his multitudinous prowess.

Actor Danish Sood, whose latest portrayal of Gurbaz Singh Kahlon has created quite a buzz, speaks to *The Pioneer* about getting into the skin of an Army cadet, the emotions associated with the experience, camaraderie with Varun Sood and more





# Paralympic social media accounts front traditional media with edgy take

AP ■ PARIS

The message is clear: Paralympians are not participating. They are competing. A number of athletes preparing for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games have proclaimed that on their social feeds over the past few days, reminding the world that Olympians are not the only athletes coming to Paris looking for gold. The games will be underway next week with the opening ceremony on Wednesday. Athletes and the games' own social and creative teams have been taking a more aggressive approach to their messaging, leaning into disabilities and being willing to risk discomfiting their audience to introduce athletes and their personalities, not just their



disabilities. The International Paralympic Committee has released several YouTube videos to show the edgier side of its competitors, including: "Paris 2024: What Really Matters" and "Paris 2024: 100 Days to Go - Welcome to the Paralympics." The tagline for

both: "This is the Paralympics... they're not playing games." A Guy With No Arms "If you didn't know the characters, the 'What Really Matters' series opens on a jarring note. A genial 5-foot-6-inch man grasps a car's steering wheel

with his foot. He leans over to his passenger and says with a sideways smile, "Is this your first time riding in a car with a guy without arms?" The guy with no arms is Paralympic silver medalist Matt Stutzman, who has built up a brand as the "Armless

Archer." He maneuvers the car with his feet: left foot on the pedals, right foot on the steering wheel. Stutzman's passenger is Chuck Aoki, a wheelchair rugby player joining Stutzman on Team USA. In the YouTube series, Stutzman hosts Aoki and para track and field athlete Scout Bassett telling their stories from a different point of view with humor thrown in. "There's that connection; it's like an unspoken bond," said Stutzman, who earned a silver medal in the men's individual compound open at the London games in 2012. "I might not know who Bassett is, but we both know that we both had to go through something specific to even get to the level where we're in sport." Edgy takes The IPC has received criticism for leaning into the disabilities of their

athletes, but spokesman Craig Spence said the irreverent approach was necessary. "If you speak to Paralympians, they've got a great sense of humor. They're not wrapped up in cotton wool and protected from society," Spence said in an interview earlier this year. "They like to laugh about themselves," he said. "Like we all do, and that's why we've tried to be really edgy on the Paralympic TikTok account." Spence said the criticism the IPC had received came mostly from people outside the community of people with disabilities, and the comments often ask who the admin is on the account - implying it's someone making fun of disabilities. But according to Spence, the "admin" is 2008 Paralympian Richard Fox from Britain.



## Nacer, voice of Olympic boxing, now targets Paralympic glory as judoka

AP ■ PARIS

Nacer Zorgani has had a busy summer. In July at the Paris Games, his captivating baritone voice gained him fans as the announcer at the Olympic boxing. Zorgani will compete on Sept. 7 in the men's 90-kilogram, J2 classification for visually impaired athletes. For him, the sport is far more than just a competition; it is the embodiment of his lifelong commitment to the "way of the bushi," with the traditional Japanese martial art philosophy of bushido shaping his journey. Before finding his calling in judo, Zorgani dabbled in various sports, including boxing and Brazilian jiu-jitsu. "It's all one thing for me," he said. "I follow the way of the bushi... Resilience, discipline, and an unwavering focus. Whether it's in the ring, on the mat, or in life, the principles are the same." His transition to judo was a natural progression. The sport's emphasis on balance,

and mental strength resonated with Zorgani, who found in judo not just a way to compete but a path to mastering his own limitations. Zorgani was declared legally blind at 17 after a doctor diagnosed progressive deterioration of both retinas. By 20, he had lost most of his vision and could only see blurry shapes in very bright environments. This did not deter him; instead, it fueled his determination to excel. "I've lived through very dark moments, when I felt beat down by my disability," Zorgani said. "But combat sports really, really helped me." In judo, the tactile nature of the sport can be useful for athletes like Zorgani. From the moment he comes to grips with his opponent, he uses touch to sense their movements, balance, and intentions. The lack of sight can sharpen his other senses, allowing him to anticipate and react with split-second precision. "Judo is about feeling your opponent's energy, your center of gravity, and their intentions," he said. "In that sense, my visual impairment has taught me to trust my instincts and my training even more."

## Lakshya heads to Austria for physical assessment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Aiming to be in the best shape for the upcoming tournaments in the BWF circuit, India's Lakshya Sen on Sunday left for Austria for a detailed evaluation of his body. The 22-year-old from Almora, who had come close to winning an Olympic medal in Paris before finishing fourth, will undergo a series of tests at the Red Bull Athlete Performance Centre in Salzburg to get a detailed evaluation to rev up his fitness and game. "Lakshya is going to Austria to do some physical assessment. There is a good sports institute there, where he wants to do some physical exercise. He left today and will be back after a week," Vimal told PTI. Lakshya is accompanied by his trainer, Gaurav and a 15-year-old junior shuttler Nishchal Chand from Uttarakhand to help him keep abreast with the game during the week. "The tests will focus basically on specific strength aspects. Many of the elite athletes go and get themselves tested there. We had consulted Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala for all his niggles and injuries. "Right now, he is fine but before he really starts going full-fledged, it is important for him to get the right physical training, and unless the strength and conditioning program is really spot on, he can get injuries. So we have to find the right things to do." Lakshya is likely to play the Hong Kong Super 500 and China Open Super 1000 next in late September this year. Badminton is a physically demanding game and Vimal feels Lakshya has to keep working on his overall fitness, especially considering the kind of game that he possesses. "He needs to definitely get better on fitness aspects, especially the speed, endurance and other things he needs to work on.

## Bangladesh registers historic 10-wicket win after Pakistan collapse to 146 all out in 1st test

AP ■ RAWALPINDI (PAKISTAN)

Bangladesh shrugged off political unrest back home to notch a historic 10-wicket win after Pakistan collapsed to 146 all out on a dramatic final day of the first test on Sunday. Off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz and left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan, who was a lawmaker in the government of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, shared seven wickets after the pace bowlers mopped up the top order to give Bangladesh its maiden win in 14 test matches against Pakistan. Openers Zakir Hasan and Shadman Islam were unbeaten

on 15 and 9, respectively, as Bangladesh reached 30-0 at the stroke of the tea interval for only its seventh away test win and the first since beating New Zealand at Mount Maunganui in January 2022. Pakistan, which conceded a 117-run first innings lead despite declaring at 448-6, was bowled out by a disciplined pace and spin attack after it resumed on 23-1 and still 94 runs behind. Mohammad Rizwan followed his career-best unbeaten 171 to top-score with 51 but most of his teammates were guilty of falling to rash shots coupled with some aggressive field placings by Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto.



Mehidy picked up 4-21 and Shakib 3-44 while the three fast bowlers Shoriful Islam, Hasan Mahmud and Nahid Rana snared one wicket each.

Earlier, in a dramatic first session Bangladesh set up its victory as Pakistan limped to 108-6 and lost five wickets. Captain Shan Masood (14) was dismissed in the second over of the day when Hasan found a faint edge and had the Pakistan skipper caught behind. Masood argued with onfield umpire Richard Kettleborough for the second time in the test match after he was also caught behind in a controversial manner in the first innings, but the television replays clearly suggested the left-hander had a tinkle on the ball after Bangladesh went for a successful television referral.

Hasan should have had Babar Azam out for a pair of ducks in the game, but wicketkeeper Litton Das spilled a simple catch off the first ball Babar faced. Babar tried to break the shackles and hit three boundaries before he was out to fast bowler Rana (1-30) when on 22. Pakistan's middle-order batters were guilty of throwing away their wickets against the two spinners, Shakib and Mehidy. First innings century-maker Saud Shakeel needlessly tried to play an extravagant shot against Shakib and got stumped for zero for the first time in his short test career.

## Meet 13-year-old badminton prodigy Tanvi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Thirteen-year-old Tanvi Patri from Odisha has cemented her status as one of India's most promising badminton prodigies by clinching the girls' singles title at the U-15 Badminton Asia U-17 & U-15 Junior Championships in Chengdu, China, the country where she first honed her skills in the sport. Patri capped off a phenomenal week with a superlative performance, defeating Vietnam's second seed Thi Thu Huyen Nguyen 22-20, 21-11 in a 34-minute final, offering a glimmer of hope after Indian badminton's recent struggles at the Paris Olympics. "I'm feeling good after winning the title," Patri told PTI from Chengdu. "I had expected to win, and I'm happy I could do that. I've been training at the Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy (PPBA) in Bangalore for the last two years." Patri displayed remarkable resilience, fighting back from 11-17 down in the opening game to win the title without dropping a game throughout the tournament.



Her parents, Rabinarayan Patri and Sailabala Panda, are software professionals who previously worked in China, where she first took up badminton. The family returned to India in 2020 following the COVID-19 pandemic. Vimal Kumar, Director of PPBA, sees great promise in Tanvi, even drawing comparisons to the early days of P V Sindhu, one of India's most celebrated badminton players. "She was about eight or nine when she moved to India and joined the academy in 2022," said Vimal. "She reminds me of Sindhu

when she was young. The ability to win matches at a young age is a good sign. She has a long way to go, and with her temperament, she has great potential." Rabinarayan, a software engineer who works from home, accompanies Patri to the academy. In November 2022, he drove 1,400 km from Bengaluru to Balangir for Patri's participation in the state sub-junior badminton tournament. "She is ahead of her age group," Vimal noted. "In the last six months, she has won U-17 tournaments and defeated several senior players, including the

current national championship finalist, Tanvi Sharma. "If she improves her strength and continues to develop, she could be a strong contender for the 2028 or 2032 Olympics." Patri, who also enjoys skating, began her badminton training under Chinese coach Jiang Yong Yi and won nine titles in China between 2017 and 2020. After returning to India, she was spotted by PPBA during a camp and joined the academy in March 2022. She went on to claim both the U-15 and U-17 girls' singles titles in the All India sub-junior ranking tournaments in Hyderabad in June and Mapusa, Goa, in May this year. Tanvi also won the gold medal in the 35th Sub-Junior National Championships in Balangir, Odisha, last November and became the first shuttler from Odisha to win the girls' singles title in the 34th Sub-Junior (U-13) National Championships in Lucknow in 2022. A class eight student, Patri had reached the quarterfinals at the German Junior International in Berlin in March.

## Shubhankar Sharma tied 11th in Dutch Golf

PTI ■ AARHUS (DENMARK)

Shubhankar Sharma landed two eagles in his third round but also gave away a double bogey as he closed the day at 2-under 69 to be tied-11th at the Danish Golf Championship. Sharma, who had also shot 69s in his first two rounds, is currently 6-under and six strokes behind leader Lucas Bjerregaard, who after a slow start, shot 5-under 66 that had four birdies between the 10th and the 14th. The Indian star, who had won the second of his two DP World Tour titles in 2018, opened with an eagle and followed it up with a birdie. Pars followed and, on the back nine, he had another eagle on the 10th at which point he was 5-under. He even held a share of the lead briefly. Sharma then gave away too many shots, including a double and two bogeys against just one more birdie on the 17th. It was the third straight round in which he had a double bogey. Bjerregaard will go in search of his first DP World Tour title



for nearly six years as he takes a two-stroke lead into the final round of the championship. The 33-year-old Dane, who won the Portugal Masters in 2017, started his third round with a birdie on the first hole and remained patient on the front nine with eight consecutive pars, before making four gains in five holes after the turn. He then parred his way home to sign for a five under-par 66 and a 12-under total. He is two strokes ahead of Romain Langasque, who is bidding for his second DP World Tour title to follow up on his 2020 ISPS Handa Wales Open success. The Frenchman carded six birdies and a bogey as he signed for a second consecutive round of 66 and a 10-under total.

## Mayweather goes distance against John in Mexico City

AP ■ MEXICO CITY

Former world champion Floyd Mayweather went the distance against John Gotti III in an exhibition fight on Saturday night in Mexico City. The 47-year-old Mayweather fought Gotti in an eight-round bout with no judges in Arena Ciudad de Mexico. It was a rematch of a fight that ended in a massive brawl in Florida last June. Mayweather, who retired from boxing in 2017 with an unbeaten record in 50 bouts, dominated the fight from the second round, when the fighter nicknamed "Money" asked for a change of referee. At the end of the fight, Mayweather and Gotti III embraced in the ring as Mexicans fans loudly boomed. Mayweather is considered one of the greatest boxers in history. During a career that spanned 21 years, he won world titles in five different divisions and beat rivals including Manny Pacquiao, Oscar De la Hoya, Shane Mosley and Saul "Canelo" Alvarez.

## Bowlers, Dhruv-Lakshay power Central Delhi Kings to 10-wicket win over West Delhi Lions

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Dhruv Kaushik scored an unbeaten half century after bowlers produced a disciplined effort to help Central Delhi Kings inflict a 10-wicket defeat on West Delhi Lions in the Delhi Premier League here. Chasing a modest target of 124, Central Delhi Kings openers Dhruv (68 off 52 balls) and Lakshay Thareja (46 off 37 balls) came out all guns blazing on Saturday. Right from the start, both openers were aggressive in their approach and found the boundaries comfortably as they chased down the target in 14.5 overs. Dhruv's unbeaten innings included six boundaries and two sixes, while Lakshay smashed three fours and a six. Earlier, West Delhi Lions didn't get the start they

would have wished for after they were sent in to bat. Central Delhi Kings' Sumit Kumar dismissed both their openers cheaply. With the openers back in the pavilion, the responsibility came on Yugal Saini and Krish Yadav. With Central Delhi Kings bowlers sticking to their line and length, West Delhi Lions struggled to keep the scoreboard ticking. Yugal was then dismissed by Yogesh Sharma for 7 runs. At the end of the powerplay, West Delhi Lions were struggling at 33/3. Krish Yadav along with Ayush Doseja then slowly started rotating the strike and kept the score ticking. At the halfway stage of their innings, West Delhi Lions were 53/3. However, the 38-run partnership from 43 balls

between Krish and Ayush was broken as the latter was stumped by Lakshay (21) off Prince Choudhary's bowling. With pressure mounting, West Delhi Lions captain Hrithik Shokeen (4) came to the crease. However, his stint was cut short by Yogesh. With wicket falling at regular intervals, West Delhi Lions struggled to find the boundaries. Towards the end of the innings, Tishant Pawan Dabla and Aryan Dalal contributed 27 and 22 runs respectively. West Delhi Lions made 123/8 in their allotted 20 overs. For Central Delhi Kings, Prince Choudhary, Sumit Kumar and Yogesh Sharma picked up two wickets each, while Money Grewal got one.

## Keegan takes 1-shot lead over Adam Scott at BMW Championship

AP ■ CASTLE ROCK (COLORADO)

Keegan Bradley is still getting used to his new title as U.S. Ryder Cup captain. He still feels like a player who should be competing to win and thinking about playing in the matches. He certainly looked the part Saturday in the BMW Championship, all while hearing the occasional "U-S-A! U-S-A!" cheer as he made his way across windswept Castle Pines for a wild round of 2-under 70 that gave him a one-shot lead over Adam Scott. "To be named Ryder Cup captain and still be a full-time player is strange, said Bradley, at 38 the youngest U.S. Captain since Arnold Palmer in 1963. "I don't know anyone who knows how to handle this situation, so I'm doing the best I can. The only thing I can keep doing is playing my best golf and maybe play my way



on to some of these teams." A victory would make him the first captain to win on the PGA Tour since David Love III was 51 when he won the 2015 Wyndham Championship. It also would move Bradley to No. 11 in the world ranking. One round, but that can feel like a long way off considering the developments Saturday. Bradley had eight birdies and still only shot 70, a round that featured three straight birdies on the front, three straight

bogeys on the back and four birdies over his last five holes (the exception was a bogey on the par-3 16th). He was at 12-under 204. It was like that for just about everybody. Adam Scott hit one tee shot out-of-bounds and another in the water after just three holes and had to rally at the end to limit the damage to a 74, leaving him only one shot behind. "I kind of felt like I made a meal of that, and I didn't feel

like I did that much wrong - a couple of drives were just not quite right, and a three-putt, and all of a sudden I'm kind of chasing," Scott said. "I'm in a good spot in the end of it to be one back." Ludvig Aberg began his day with a nose bleed in high altitude. He wiped off the blood and drained a 50-foot birdie putt at the start. The super Swede went from a four-shot deficit to a three-shot lead after just five holes. And then he made two straight bogeys, hit a tee shot in the water on the par-3 11th for a double bogey, and three holes later had an eagle. He shot 71 and two shots behind. Aberg was tied with fellow Swede Alex Noren, who was six shots behind at one point and closed with three straight birdies, the last one from 35 feet across the 18th green for a 70. Most telling about this wind-blown day in mile-high air was Xander Schauffele. When told

Friday how unusual it was not to see his or Scottie Scheffler's name among the top 20 on the leaderboard, Schauffele smiled and said, "Give it another day. One of us will be there." It turned out to be him. He started the weekend 11 shots behind. He had a 67 - despite a double bogey on his card - and goes into Sunday four shots behind. So was Denver native and former U.S. Open champion Wyndham Clark, who had a late eagle for a 69. Still not secure for Bradley, Scott and Noren is a trip to East Lake next week for the Tour Championship. The top 30 advance to the FedEx Cup finale with at least some chance at the \$25 million prize. Those three were all outside the top 40 going to Castle Pines. Bradley was the last man to get in the 50-man field for the BMW Championship. A victory would put him at No. 4. But if falls too far behind, he could be out of the top 30.



# 'Baahubali's concept is from Rajinikanth-starrer Baashha'



S.J. Surya's remarks about Telugu movies are gaining popularity on social media. He claims that the majority of film ideas are inspired by Rajinikanth's movie *Baashha*. All the films like Rajamouli's *Baahubali*, Chiranjeevi's *Indra*, Balakrishna's movie and even *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram* are inspired by the *Baashha* concept.

S.J. Surya is playing an important role in the upcoming film *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram* which stars Nani as the lead actor. The film directed by Vivek Athreya, has Priyanka Arul Mohan as the female lead, will be released on August 29.

Ahead of the film's release, the makers had arranged a pre-release event in Hyderabad, during which the Tamil actor, in his speech, said that many of the films have been made, based on Manikam Baashha's story.

For the unaware, Manikam Baashha is one of Rajinikanth's much-loved characters from the film *Baashha*. The Rajinikanth starrer film was directed by Suresh Krishna and was released in 1995, which was a sensational hit.

The Raayan actor speaking at the event revealed that the upcoming film *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram* also has the same storyline, but with a different kind of action.

The director, Vivek had travelled to Chennai and narrated the story of *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram*. Pleased with it, the actor immediately agreed to do the role. "This film comes with the *Manikham Baashha* concept. Even the *Baahubali*, Balakrishna's film and *Indra* also have the same storyline as the *Manikam Baashha* concept," says S.J. Surya.

This statement by the actor has gone viral on social media. There have been reports claiming that the Amitabh Bachchan starrer 1991 Hindi film *Hum*!

It has been common in an industry that a film, where filmmakers follow the same kind of subjects and these films turn out to become a sensational hit; many filmmakers follow the same kind of subjects for a few years. But S.J. Surya says that *Baashha* concept is going in every film, with few changes which is he indirectly saying that filmmakers have no other choice, except to take the same kind of stories.

Meanwhile, in the upcoming film, the Mark Antony actor will be seen donning a police officer role. Going ahead, he revealed that Nani's character in the film has some anger issues. Basically, his mother asks him to keep that anger only on Saturday and the remaining Monday to Friday he should be normal. "He is like Basha on Saturday and the remaining days are like Manikham," says S.J. Surya once again as he compared *Baashha's* film to *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram*.

He further goes on to praise Priyanka's performance as simple and breezy, who plays a pretty constable, who eventually settles beside Surya's character. Going further, he speaks about Nani saying, "He is a good human being and a very good actor with great vision and passion about movies". He added that it's a co-incidence his birthday, Nani's and Sai Kumar, who portrays as Nani's father in this film, birthday falls on Saturday this year.



## TG Vishwa Prasad refutes differences with Harish Shankar

The film *Mr Bachchan*, which starred Ravi Teja as the lead actor failed miserably at the box-office. Directed by Harish Shankar and produced by TG Vishwa Prasad, the film was released on August 15.

With *Mr Bachchan*, the producer TG Vishwa Prasad blames everything on director Harish Shankar for it, claimed a few reports. The latest buzz state that Vishwa Prasad is not satisfied with Harish Shankar's attitude and the way he conducted the controversial media interviews before the release. So, the producer attributed the failure of *Mr Bachchan* to director Harish Shankar, says the reports.

Before the film's release,

Harish Shankar had spoken to a few websites and now, those interviews have been going viral. In these interviews, he didn't speak much about his film in those interactions. The producer irked with the director's controversial interviews and feels it damages the film at the box-office, says the reports.

Now, with social media going gaga over their differences, the producer took to his social media and denied that he didn't say anything wrong about director Harish Shankar.

"Harish Shankar is a friend first and then we collaborated for the movie. There may be some learnings, however in my recent interview to the media I shared some learnings and

clearly told success attributes many positives and if there is limited success there will be lots of feedback and we need to take it. This is no way I commented on Harish and we are happy to work with him again and he has extraordinary abilities in film making" (sic), says Vishwa Prasad.

The producer said that the director is ready to compensate any losses to the distributors from his remuneration. He requested the media to be kind and not interpreted between lines. Director Harish Shankar responds in a positive way to the producer's tweet and says that he is looking forward to getting back on sets with him and making more successful films.

## MORE TROUBLE FOR ALLU ARJUN AND MEGA FAMILY RELATIONS

Allu Arjun and Mega Family differences are still making news. A few days ago, Allu Arjun attended as the chief guest for the pre-release of a film and commented that he would do anything for his friends and also for people he liked most. He indirectly defended his Nandhyal visit at the time of the Andhra Pradesh elections in May this year.



Later, Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan made comments about the film actors regarding the forest environment. "Yesteryear heroes used to save forests in their films, but nowadays the heroes are playing as sandalwood smugglers

and spoiling forests," says Pawan Kalyan a few weeks back at an event in Karnataka. Many wrote that Pawan Kalyan targeted Allu Arjun and made these comments. It also indicated that the Mega Family still wants to ignore Allu Arjun and they are in no mood to pacify their differences.

Now, Allu Arjun's father-in-law, K. Chandrasekhar Reddy, takes Pawan Kalyan's comments as offensive. Reddy gave interviews to a few media channels and asked Pawan Kalyan to clarify his comments on Allu Arjun. "Allu Arjun just played a smuggler in a film; he is not a real-life smuggler," says Reddy. He added that if Pawan Kalyan aims at Allu Arjun, he should openly condemn it. "It is his NDA government that gave away the Best Actor Award to Allu Arjun for his role in *Pushpa*. If Pawan Kalyan comments are aimed at Allu Arjun, then Pawan finds fault with the government, who gave the award," says Reddy in his interview to a media channel.

Reddy's comments on Pawan Kalyan create more stir between Allu Arjun and Mega Family relations. It added salt to a wound, says a person from the film industry. According to a source, it was Mega Star Chiranjeevi who asked Allu Arjun not to go to Nandhyal when he planned that trip. But Allu Arjun ignored Mega Star's request and went on with his tour. "That irks mainly Chiranjeevi and his family members," says a source. It seems this issue is not going to end soon, as both Allu Arjun and Mega Family stick to their stands.

## Indraganti needs a break horribly

Indraganti Mohan Krishna is a talented director, but in recent times, he couldn't deliver a good film. After a two-year gap, the director is coming now with a film that stars Priyadarshi as the lead actor.

Mohan Krishna is known for his films like *Grahanam*, *Ashta Chemma*, *Golconda High School*, *Anthaku Mundu Aa Tharuvatha*, *Gentleman* and *Sammohanam*. But off late, the director has been off the track.

*Sammohanam* is the film which got appreciated by everyone and it was released in 2018. After that he made two films, but both were dis-



asters at the box-office.

Now, he has collaborated for the third time with the production house Sridevi Movies after

*Gentleman* and *Sammohanam*. On Sunday, celebrating Priyadarshi's birthday, the film's title was revealed as *Sarangapani Jathakam*.

Talking about the film, Indraganti Mohan Krishna said it is the story of the average middle-class man with a lot of humour. He reveals more about the film and says that the story is narrated more in a humorous way. "Faith gives strength to a man. But superstition renders even a wise person weak. Was the protagonist perennially torn between his irrational beliefs and his love interest, ending up a failure? Or, did he successfully bail himself out?" the director reveals, adding that the plot is told with a heart-pounding sense of humour. Priyadarshi is playing the lead, while *Mr Pregnant* fame Roopa Kaduvayur is playing the female lead.

The producer says that the film is going to be a classic *Jandhyala-style* entertaining movie that will make you laugh from start to finish.



## Ruhani Sharma upset about the leak of *Agra* film

Ruhani Sharma made her Telugu debut with *Chi La Sow* and got good appreciation for her performance from everyone. Later she acted in films like *Hit: The First Case*, *Dirty Hari*, *Saindhav* and *Sreeranga Neethulu*. She also acted in few Tamil, Malayalam and Hindi films and got recognition everywhere.

Ruhani Sharma is in the news because she did a Hindi film titled *Agra* that was screened at the Cannes Film Festival last year and also got good acclaim there and at many other film festivals. A few days ago, an intense and intimate romantic scene from the film that involved Ruhani Sharma was leaked and went viral on social media.

The actress says that she was upset seeing the leak from her film *Agra*. Some people started making negative comments after seeing the video clip. With all this, the actress took to her Instagram and made a big note about the film's leakage and how much hard work was done to complete the film.

"To say I am disappointed is an understatement. It's heartbreaking to see our months' worth of hard work, dedication and passion being disregarded in this way. Creating an art film is an intense journey filled with countless challenges, sleepless nights, and unwavering commitment," she says, expressing her displeasure about the leaked video on her social media. The actress went on to talk about the film *Agra* and how it won accolades and awards at many film festivals. The film also got international recognition, which makes her happy as an artist. She appeals to "celebrate the diversity of cinema instead of tearing down the hard work of artists". Ruhani Sharma is acting in a Tamil film and also in a Hindi film at present.

## Stop negative trolls and comments: Gautam Krishna

*Bigg Boss* fame Gautam Krishna will now be seen playing a lead role in the film titled *Solo Boy*, directed by Naveen Kumar. The makers released a song from the film.

The film unit met on Saturday and announced that the film has come out very well. The title song is choreographed by Aata Sandeep and he praises actor Gautam for his dance moments. "Gautam promised me to do this song when he was in the *Bigg Boss* house and he fulfilled his promise. Gautam is a good dancer and in the near future, he is going to be a good actor," says Sandeep. Anitha Chowdary plays Gautam's mother in this film, and she praises Sandeep for his performance in the film.

Lead actor Gautam Krishna says that it is Sandeep Master who encourages me to do better dance. "He always encourages me and asks me to work hard to become a good dancer. Because of him, I can come up with a good dance number for this title song," says Gautam. He added that Kakarla Sam has written the song, while Rahul Sipligunj has sung it. He is confident that this film is going to give him a break. For the negative trolls, he sends a message. "Please concentrate on your career and stop negative trolls



and comments. I am telling you as a friend," he says. Swetha Avasti is the female lead, while Ramya Pasupuleti is playing another female lead. Seven Hills Satish Kumar is the producer.

## Akash Jagannadh to support a small film

Director Puri Jagannadh's son Akash Jagannadh attended as chief guest for a small film *Sitaram Sitralu* trailer launch and spoke encouraging words. He said if the Telugu audience likes the film, they will carry it on their shoulders towards its success. "Everyone is looking at the Telugu film industry now and the Telugu audience always encourages good films," said Akash Jagannadh. He wished the team good luck.

Lakshmana Murthy and Bramarambika are playing as lead pair in this film, while D Naga Sasidhar Reddy is the director. The film is releasing on August 30. The director Naga Sasidhar Reddy thanked some of the celebrities who supported his film, like director Maruthi, actors Vishwak Sen and Sundeep Kishan. The director says that he got inspired by directors Jandhyala, EVV Satyanarayana and Relangi Narasimha Rao, whose films are full of comedy and stress busters. "My film *Sitaram Sitralu* is also such a stress relieving one", he says.



## STANDALONE

Ammiraju Kanumalli emerged as the General Secretary of the Industry Employees Federation of the Telugu Film 24 Craft. On Sunday, Ammiraju secured victory in the secretary election by a 35-vote margin.

