



PM Modi to lead BJP's election campaign in poll-bound J-K

RBI TO LAUNCH

ULI FOR FLOW OF CREDIT TO SMALL, RURAL BORROWERS



I'd love to work with Prabhas again: Sridevi

VIJAYKUMAR



QUOTE OF THE DAY

*My college provides free education to 40,000 students. Shoot me, but don't destroy my college. The skills I am imparting to our students are making others envious. If someone has enmity with me, come and finish me. But don't try to stop the good work I am doing. Although I am now requesting, it doesn't mean that I don't have the strength to fight my enemies. I have been attacked and have wounds on my front side. Akbaruddin Owaisi is not a person who will show his back to enemies.*



- Akbaruddin Owaisi, AIMIM MLA

DON'T MISS... Take receipts for all articles purchased...

Central GST Commissioner (Audit Wing) P Anand Kumar has asked the consumers to demand the receipt from the traders after purchasing goods. Commissioner (Auditing Wing) P Anand Kumar on Monday inaugurated the newly established Commissioner's Chamber in the office of the Assistant Commissioner of Central Tax Audit Circle on ICICI Bank's Madras stand in the city. Talking to the media on the occasion, Commissioner Anand Kumar said that he took charge as the Auditing Wing Commissioner on August 12 and took steps to...

-PAGE: 4

'443-km India-Bangla border...

The Border Security Force (BSF) on Monday said the 443-km India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya is fully secure and denied claims of illegal entry by Bangladeshi nationals. The paramilitary force issued a statement after the media in the neighbouring country reported that Awami League leader Ishak Ali Khan Panna died of heart attack while climbing a hill in Meghalaya's Dawki in an attempt to flee his country. Dawki, in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills, is located close to Bangladesh. A BSF spokesperson...

-PAGE: 5

Vedanta readies Rs 30,000-cr...

Anil Agarwal-led Vedanta Ltd has prepared a war chest of Rs 30,000 crore with recent funds raised through a qualified institutional placement (QIP), offer for sale (OFS) and dividend to pursue further deleveraging and growth, sources said. Proceeds from the Rs 8,500-crore QIP of Vedanta Ltd, HZL's OFS of Rs 3,200 crore, and Rs 5,100 crore from the second interim dividend, coupled with existing cash reserves of Rs 13,000 crore, will lead to the creation of a Rs 30,000-crore war chest after the...

-PAGE: 8

Focus on Suryakumar...

India dasher Suryakumar Yadav will turn up for Mumbai in their Buchi Babu contest against TNCA XI, beginning here on Tuesday, with an aim to get his Test career back on track. Shreyas Iyer, also part of Mumbai's squad, too will be looking to make a statement in the pre-season event, having last played a Test in February. The star-studded Mumbai side will be captained by Sarfaraz Khan, who too will be jostling find space in a full strength Test squad when the home season begins next month despite a promising...

-SPORTS

Rs 1,000 cr TDR bonds scam during YSRCP rule: Narayana

Panel to probe irregularities and resolve the issue by Sept-end

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister Ponguru Narayana has revealed that a sum of Rs 1,000 crore has been diverted due to irregularities in Transferable Development Rights (TDR) bonds. Speaking to the media in Tirupati, the Minister stated that a committee has been established to investigate these irregularities and assured that the issues would be resolved by the end of September.

Minister Narayana criticised the previous YSRCP government, alleging that corruption has escalated under its regime. He accused municipal department employees of being misused for personal tasks and pledged to address the problems in the municipal department within six months.

Highlighting the economic challenges of Andhra Pradesh, the Minister stressed the need for industrial development across the state to improve its financial condition and create employment opportunities for the youth. He praised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's efforts to attract industries and investors to the state.

**Minister Narayana has alleged that corruption has escalated under YSRCP regime. He accused Municipal department employees of being misused for personal tasks and vowed to solve all the problems in the department within 6 months**

- ◆ Narayana emphasises the need for industrial growth to improve Andhra Pradesh's financial condition and create jobs. Praised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's efforts to attract industries and investors.
- ◆ Notes the rapid establishment of Anna canteens, with 100 canteens launched recently and another 75 set to open by September 13.
- ◆ The Minister flays the previous government's poor decisions, excessive expenditure on TUDA salaries, and fund mismanagement. Expressed confidence in Chief Minister Naidu's financial management skills.



Minister Narayana also mentioned the rapid progress in establishing Anna canteens, with 100 canteens launched within two months and another 75 set to open on 13th September, with preparations underway on a war footing. During a review meeting at the

TUDA office in Tirupati, the Minister criticised the previous YSRCP government for making poor decisions that allegedly destroyed systems and depleted funds across all departments, particularly citing excessive expenditure on TUDA salaries. He expressed

confidence in CM Chandrababu Naidu's experience in managing state finances and collecting necessary funds.

The meeting was attended by Municipal Commissioner Maurya, TUDA Vice Chairman Venkatanarayana, and other officials.

Revenue meets soon to address complaints on record tampering

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Transport Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy has announced that revenue conferences will be organised across the state starting from 1st September. The minister stated that officials will address complaints from victims at the village level regarding online tampering and manipulation of records within the revenue department. He emphasised that people have faced numerous issues related to revenue over the past five years. Village-level officials and the district collector will participate in these revenue conferences.

The minister held a public darbar at the TDP central office, where he received requests from attendees. He assured that every issue raised would be brought to the notice of the local authorities and resolved. On this occasion, the minister extended financial support to disabled individuals. B Rupashree, a disabled woman from Vijayawada, who secured an 82,391 rank in the ICET exam for pursuing an MBA at Siddhartha College, Vijayawada, was one such beneficiary. Her father, a driver, was unable to afford her fees, prompting the minister to extend



financial support of Rs 20,000.

The issue of agricultural land belonging to Gudimetla Kotaiah of Thuru Vipparru Village, Iravaram Mandal, West Godavari District, which had been blocked by the Endowments Department, was also brought to the minister's attention. Responding swiftly, the Transport Minister contacted the Endowments Commissioner and instructed immediate action to resolve the matter.

C Rajeshwari of BK Palli Village, Madanapalli Mandal, informed the minister that a local YSRCP leader had allegedly grabbed her 3.47 acres of land using fake documents, and she requested assistance in reclaiming her land. The concerned revenue officials were advised to address the issue and ensure justice for the victims.

PHARMA PLANT FIRE

2 more injured workers die

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The toll rose to three in the flash fire at a pharma company in Anakapalli district as two persons succumbed to burn injuries, an official said on Monday.

A chemist and three workers from Jharkhand sustained serious injuries in the accident on August 23 at Synergene Active Ingredients Pvt Ltd, located at Jawaharlal Nehru Pharma City (JN Pharma City) in Parawada.

"Two more injured persons died. One person died yesterday night and another person died today (Monday) morning," Anakapalli Superintendent of Police M Deepika Patil said. The lone survivor, Oybon Khora (23) is in a critical condition, she said.

Lal Singh Poorthy (22) succumbed to the injuries on Sunday night and the chemist K Suryanarayana (35) died on Monday morning, she said.

Before the two deaths, Roy Angira (21), also from Jharkhand, died on Saturday. The flash fire occurred around 12:30 am on August 23 when a chemical powder and a chemical liquid were being mixed without following standard operating procedures, generating fumes and static electricity igniting the blast.

Headquartered at Jubilee Hills in Hyderabad, Synergene Active Ingredients runs two units and Jaahavee Life Sciences in JN Pharma City, employing around 600 people.

Running J-K from Delhi does not make any sense: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday said running Jammu and Kashmir from Delhi does not make any sense, and reiterated the demand for the restoration of its statehood.

His remarks came during an interaction with Kashmiri women during his visit to Jammu and Kashmir last week, a video of which was released by the party on Monday.

"My problem with the PM (Narendra Modi) is that he does not listen to anyone. I have a problem with someone who from the beginning believes that they are right. Even if he sees something that is showing him that he is wrong, he will not accept it. So then that type



a person will always create some problem or the other," Gandhi tells the Kashmiri women students.

"It comes from insecurity, it does not come from strength. It comes from weakness," he adds.

In the video, Gandhi also talks

about the upcoming elections in Jammu and Kashmir and tells the students that it is the first time in Indian history that statehood has been taken away from a state.

2

Elephants trample elderly man to death

PNS ■ VANNAM PARVATHIPURAM DIST

A 74-year-old man was trampled to death by a herd of elephants here on Monday after he ventured close to them, ignoring the warnings of the Forest department.

According to Parvatipuram-Manyamam district forest officer (DFO) GAP Prasuna, Sivu Naidu went to pluck coconuts though forest officials warned him against it as the jumbos were found in a



banana plantation.

"Naidu got close to the elephants though the Forest department had warned him against it. He was trampled to death around 3 pm

on Monday," Prasuna said, adding that the jumbos were apprehensive of anybody coming near their herd which included a newly born calf.

Incidentally, the Forest department had been warning the locals over the past three days about the presence of the herd of six elephants camping on the banana plantation.

Meanwhile, the DFO observed that a compensation of Rs 10 lakh would be extended over Naidu's death.

'Have outlasted marriage pressure for 20-30 years'

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had to yet again address that one big question -- when will he get married? The place this time was Srinagar and the keen questioners were Kashmiri women students.

In his interaction, shared on his YouTube channel on Monday, Gandhi is seen asking them about the pressure to get married and they in turn question him right back. "I have outlasted that pressure for 20-30 years," the 54-year-old leader responds smilingly. Gandhi, whose wedding plans or the lack thereof have been the subject of endless speculation, was in Jammu and Kashmir last week. In the free-wheeling chat, the discussion veers towards marriage.

Asked if he plans to get married, Gandhi says, "I don't plan it but if it happens..." "Please do invite us," the women tell him almost in a chorus. "I will," he replies to much laughter around him. The issue had come up during a rally in Rae Bareilly parliamentary constituency for the first time after his nomination in May this year. Priyanka Gandhi, who was there at the gathering, had then told him to answer the question somebody from the crowd had asked. He asked what the question was. "Shaadi kab karoge (When will you marry)?" Rahul Gandhi assured it would have to be soon now. "Ab jaldi karni padegi," he had said in Hindi.



Rajath: Indian diaspora 'living bridge' between US & India

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Defence Minister Rajath Singh met with the Indian community in the US state of Tennessee, during which he called them a "living bridge" between the two countries, appreciating their contribution to society, science and the economy.

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

He interacted with the Indian community at the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis on Sunday -- the last day of his visit.

Singh described the Indian community as a "living bridge" between India and the US, fostering close relations and goodwill, a press release by the Ministry of Defence said. He underlined India's growth story in the last decade and the immense potential with a promising future.

He also acknowledged the Indian community's efforts in establishing an exhibit of Mahatma Gandhi and placing two honorary 'Gandhi Way' street signals near the National Civil

Rights Museum on Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary in 2019.

The museum has a bust of Gandhi, acknowledging his inspiration for non-violent struggle, the press release said. "Had a wonderful interaction with the Indian community at Memphis. Their contribution to society, science and economy has been exemplary," Singh said in a post on X after his meeting.

Earlier in the day, Singh also visited the William B Morgan Large Cavitation Channel (LCC) in the Naval Surface Warfare Centre (NSWC) in Memphis -- one of the world's largest and most technically advanced water tunnel facilities for testing submarines and other naval weapons in the US.

His visit to the water tunnel facility came amidst a proposal for the establishment of a similar facility for indigenous design and development in India.

Singh also visited the Naval Surface Warfare Centre at Carderock, Maryland and said he witnessed "pathbreaking" experiments at the facility.

MPOX PREPAREDNESS

AP govt sets up 6-bed isolation ward at V'wada GGH

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In response to the global rise in Mpx cases, the Andhra Pradesh state government has implemented proactive measures to enhance preparedness. The Department of Medical and Health, well ahead of any reported monkeypox cases in the country, has initiated a series of precautionary steps, including the establishment of isolation wards and heightened surveillance across key locations.

A milestone in these efforts is the creation of a dedicated six-bed Mpx isolation ward at the Government General Hospital



(GGH) in Vijayawada. This facility, equipped with the necessary medical infrastructure, is set to become operational from August 27 (Tuesday), according to Dr Venkateswara Rao, the hospital's Superintendent. Dr Rao also noted that the capacity could be expanded if required, based on directives

The isolation ward will be under constant monitoring by a team of specialists from General Medicine, Dermatology, and Pulmonology, ensuring round-the-clock care in the event of any reported cases.

Continued on Page 2

**EMPOWERING 5,000 YOUTH**

# APSSDC enters into MoU with Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



In a move towards youth empowerment, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB) has announced a strategic partnership with the Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC) to equip 5,000 young talents with skills in sales and marketing across seven districts in Andhra Pradesh. The collaboration, formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding, aims to provide comprehensive training and development opportunities for aspiring professionals in Vizianagaram, Srikakulam, Anantapur, Kurnool, Kadapa, Guntur, and Chittoor.

The programme will feature a well-rounded curricu-

lum covering various aspects of sales and marketing, including digital marketing, product knowledge, sales techniques, market research, analysis, sales forecasting techniques, communication skills, personal branding, professional development, and career guidance.

This initiative is designed to arm young individuals with the

necessary skills and knowledge to excel in the competitive job market, particularly within the sales and marketing domain.

Himanshu Priyadarshi, Chief Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability Officer, stated, "Andhra Pradesh has continued to strengthen its position as a growth corridor for India. Through this part-

nership, we are excited to join forces with APSSDC to invest in the state's youth, nurture a skilled workforce, and help accelerate its economic progress. We believe that empowering the next generation of professionals will contribute substantially to the state's overall advancement and reinforce its role in India's growth story."

"This partnership with HCCB is a testament to our shared vision of equipping young individuals with the skills they need to succeed. We are confident that this programme will empower a new generation of professionals and create a lasting positive impact on the economy of Andhra Pradesh," said G. Ganesh Kumar, Managing Director & CEO of APSSDC.

# Home Minister Anitha is incompetent, says YSRCP Women's Wing chief

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Varudu Kalyani, the president of the YSRCP Women's Wing and Member of the Legislative Council (MLC), has launched a scathing attack on Home Minister V. N. Chandrababu Naidu, labelling her as an incompetent minister who has neglected her duties and engaged in baseless and inappropriate criticism.

Addressing the media in Visakhapatnam on Monday, Kalyani accused Anitha of being more focused on criticising the YSRCP and former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy as part of her political agenda. She highlighted that the law and order situation had deteriorated under Anitha's tenure, citing frequent incidents of murder, attempted murder, and vio-

**That the law and order situation had deteriorated under Anitha's tenure, citing frequent incidents of murder, attempted murder, and violence. Despite these alarming issues, Kalyani noted that the Home Minister had failed to take necessary action. She also criticised Anitha for not even visiting the family of a young girl who was assaulted in Muchumari.**



lence. Despite these alarming issues, Kalyani noted that the Home Minister had failed to take necessary action. She also criticised Anitha for not even visiting the family of a young girl who was assaulted in Muchumari.

Kalyani further lambasted Anitha's lack of response to the Atchutapuram SEZ blast, accusing her of spreading falsehoods and failing to support the victims or hold the responsible company accountable. She contrasted this with the swift response following a fire accident at the Madanapalle

Sub-Collector Office, where officials were promptly dispatched by helicopter, questioning why similar urgency was not demonstrated in the case of the SEZ blast.

In addition, Kalyani condemned Anitha's language and behaviour, describing her remarks about former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy as disrespectful and shameful. She pointed out that no previous female Home Minister had conducted themselves in such an undignified manner. Kalyani urged the Home Minister to act responsibly and refrain from making inappropriate comments.

# VMC Commissioner Dhyanaachandra inspects a major outfall drain at RR Peta

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Commissioner HM Dhyanaachandra inspected the major Outfall drain that flows from One-Town to the Budameru drain via Raja Rajeswaripeta along with the officials at RR Pet in Vijayawada on Monday.

He instructed the officials to clear the drain from time to time for the free-flowing of the drainage water without any obstructions. For that, he asked the officials to remove the silt in the drain. If necessary construct other drains to address the drainage water issue, he said. During the visit to RR Peta, officials explained the major outfall drain route map to Commissioner Dhyanaachandra. Meanwhile, he identified the poor sanitation at RR Pet and directed the Public Health Department to ensure proper sanitation.

# Van illegally transporting cattle seized, two held

PNS ■ ASIFABAD

Rebena police on Monday seized a vehicle illegally transporting 24 head of cattle from Rajnandgoan in Chhattisgarh to Kolar in Karnataka, according to Circle Inspector of Police Chittibabu. Of the 24 head of cattle, 21 were cows and nine oxen. However, 9 of the cows were found dead.

A Blue Colts constable noticed the van parked near the Takkallapalli bus stand and alerted the Rebena sub inceptor Chandrasekhar who took steps to provide shelter to 15 head of cattle at the local cowshed. He shifted the carcasses of cows to veterinary hospital for post-mortem. The Van was seized and a case was registered against the driver Tamirasan and another individual. Later, Sirpur MLA Palvai Harish Babu visited the spot near Takkallapalli railway gate where the van illegally transporting cattle was seized.

# UTF urges govt to implement OPS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

**They recalled that the previous YSRCP government had introduced the Guaranteed Pension Scheme (GPS) to replace the CPS on April 25 2022, a move that was met with strong opposition from the UTF and other teachers' unions.**

The Andhra Pradesh United Teachers Federation (AP UTF) has expressed strong opposition to the government's proposal to introduce the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) instead of reinstating the Old Pension Scheme (OPS). The UTF has demanded that the State government abolish the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) altogether. UTF president S. Venkateswarulu and general secretary K S S Prasad, addressing the media, announced that in protest against the central government's decision, the UTF has resolved to organise demonstrations at all taluk offices on August 30. They urged employees and teachers to

participate in large numbers to ensure the success of these protests.

The UTF leaders stated that it is highly objectionable for the central government to propose the UPS amidst ongoing agitations in various states calling for the cancellation of the CPS and the restoration of the OPS. They criticised the UPS as merely a rebranding of the CPS, offering no significant improvements. The leaders asserted that nothing short of

the old pension scheme, which provides comprehensive benefits irrespective of the contributions made by employees and teachers, would be acceptable.

They recalled that the previous YSRCP government had introduced the Guaranteed Pension Scheme (GPS) to replace the CPS on April 25 2022, a move that was met with strong opposition from the UTF and other teachers' unions. They noted

that the current government, facing intense pressure from the UTF, has temporarily put the GPS on hold. The UTF leaders reiterated that pensions are a right of the employees, as affirmed by the Apex Court, and that the CPS and UPS only serve the interests of corporates and the stock markets. They called for the immediate restoration of the old pension scheme.

State Governor K. Srinivasa Rao, State Co-Presidents A. N. Kusuma Kumari and K. Suresh Kumar, Treasurer B. Gopi Murthy, and State Secretaries B. Lakshmiraja, N. Arunakumari, N. Navakoteswara Rao, T. Anna Ramu, S. S. Naidu, V. Koteswarappa, K. A. Umamaheswara Rao, and others were present at the meeting.

# Celkon CMD donates Rs 26.25L for Anna Canteens

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Several people are coming forward to donate to Anna Canteens run by the State government.

Businessman and Celkon CMD Y Guruswamy Naidu has donated Rs 26.25 lakh to Anna Canteens while meeting Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at his residence in Hyderabad. He urged the Chief Minister to spend the amount for the cost of meals in 100 Anna Canteens across the State on his birthday on August 31. Guruswamy Naidu said that he was participating in this initiative which aims to satisfy the hunger of the poor people.

The CM said it is appreciable that people from different walks of life have come forward to participate in the management of the Anna

Canteens, which were opened with the good intention of providing food to the poor at Rs 5 a meal. CM Chandrababu lauded Guruswamy Naidu for

donating the cost of one day's meals in Anna Canteens. He said that anyone can donate as much as they want to participate in this programme.

# AP govt sets...

Continued from Page 1

This kit, India's first indigenously developed testing solution for Mpox, underscores the nation's readiness to manage any potential outbreak of the virus.

At the national level, the Union Government has already issued guidelines for screening at international airports to prevent the entry of the virus into the country. If necessary, isolation arrangements will be extended to hospitals near these airports, ensuring a swift response to any emerging threat.

The situation remains particularly concerning in Africa, where the virus has the potential to spread across the continent and beyond. As of 2022, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has reported 99,176 Mpox cases and 208 deaths across 116 countries. In India, 30 cases have been detected since the 2022 declaration. Mpox, caused by the monkeypox virus, presents as a painful rash, swollen lymph nodes, and fever, and is transmitted through close contact with infected individuals or animals, including via skin lesions and direct skin-to-skin contact.



# CVSO inspects four Mada Streets

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The Chief Vigilance and Security Officer (CVSO) of TTD inspected the four Mada Streets on Monday, to assess the movement of Vahana Sevas during the upcoming annual Brahmotsavams, along with other officials.

During the inspection, the CVSO examined the starting point at Vahana Mandapam, reviewed the arrangements for rope parties, and inspected the entry and exit

points, particularly in preparation for the Garuda Seva. He also provided valuable suggestions to the concerned officials on related matters.

Executive Engineers Subramanyam and Sudhakar, Deputy Executive Officer for Health Asha Jyothi, Health Officer Madhusudhan Prasad, Vigilance and Security Officers Nandakishore, Surendra, and Ramkumar, as well as Temple Assistant Vigilance and Security Officer Manohar, were also in attendance.

# Running J-K from...

Continued from Page 1

"We are clear, the way it was done, we did not like. But, now for us the principle is to get the statehood back and that includes representation to people of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh. This status of running Kashmir, running Jammu from Delhi does not make any sense," Gandhi says. In a message accompanying the video he posted on his YouTube channel, Gandhi said that during his recent visit to Jammu and Kashmir, he had the opportunity to meet several Kashmiri students in Srinagar.

"These girls are enrolled in various colleges, studying subjects like law, physics, journalism, and political science - I understood their expectations and challenges deeply. We spoke about the Kolkata incident and its broader

implications, particularly regarding the harassment of women," Gandhi said in his post. The students shared their concerns about how such incidents reflect systemic issues that need addressing and how they impact women's safety and dignity across regions, he said.

"In the conversation, we also discussed the upcoming J&K elections and their impact on real representation. I explained our position -- to ensure that statehood is restored in J&K and the rights and representation of the people there are maintained," the former Congress chief said.

"They also emphasised on the importance of freedom of the press," he said. The women of Kashmir have strength, resilience, wisdom, and a lot to say, Gandhi said, and wondered whether they are being given a chance for their voices to be heard.

# CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF DR. PVG RAJU

# A tribute to a visionary leader

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

State Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu underscored the significance of understanding the life history of remarkable individuals like former MP Dr. PVG Raju, asserting that such knowledge is vital to inspire both present and future generations. Addressing the gathering at the centenary celebrations of Dr. PVG Raju, organized by the Mansas Trust at S Kota, Patrudu emphasized the selflessness of Dr. PVG Raju, who devoted his entire wealth to societal welfare. "Dr. PVG Raju was a beacon of selflessness, donating his castle at a young age to further the education of future generations," said Patrudu. "He chose to leave behind royal indulgences, opting instead to live as a common man in politics. His contributions as a humanist were profound, especially his role in establishing the Korukonda Sainik School, which stands as a testament to his commitment to education."

Union Minister K. Ramamohan Naidu also paid tribute to Dr. PVG Raju, highlighting his belief in education as a tool to eradicate backwardness. "Dr. PVG Raju demon-



strated that through education, we can uplift our communities and eliminate backwardness. It is imperative that today's leaders draw inspiration from his vision and work towards expanding educational opportunities in Uttar Andhra," Naidu stated. He further acknowledged the lasting influence of leaders like Ashok Gajapathiraju, noting, "Despite holding high political positions, Mr. Gajapathiraju remains a man of the people, just as Dr. PVG Raju was." Minister Kinjarapu Achchennaidu commended Ashok Gajapathiraju for continuing the legacy of Dr. PVG Raju, particularly in the field of education. "The impact of Dr. PVG Raju's efforts on education in Vizianagaram is undeniable, and Mr. Gajapathiraju is faithfully carrying forward these aspira-

tions," said Achchennaidu. Former Speaker Pratibha Bharti echoed these sentiments, adding, "No matter how many positions he held in public life, Dr. PVG Raju was, at heart, a true king—a leader who put the welfare of his people above all else."

The event featured speeches from other notable figures, including Ministers Gummadi Sandhyarani, Kondapalli Srinivas, Anakapalli MP CM Ramesh, Visakhapatnam MP Shribharat, and Telugu Desam State President Palla Srinivasa Rao, who all paid tribute to Dr. PVG Raju's enduring legacy. In a significant gesture of support for education, scholarships totaling Rs. 15 lakhs were awarded to 300 students from welfare hostels across North Andhra and East Godavari districts, with

each student receiving Rs. 5,000. Geeta Ramaswamy, President of Hyderabad Book Trust, the publisher of the book on Dr. PVG Raju, was felicitated during the event. Contributors such as Jaideep and senior journalist Elishetty Suresh Kumar were also honored for their efforts.

Mansas Trust Chairman Ashok Gajapathiraju expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the dignitaries who attended the event. He announced that the Dr. PVG Raju Centenary Celebrations would continue to support students across Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, and East Godavari districts through scholarships. "Our mission is to uphold the values and vision of Dr. PVG Raju by investing in the future of our children," Gajapathiraju affirmed.

# Indians gaze both on sexual body parts and face, says IITH study

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A study funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST)'s Cognitive Science Research Initiative and presented at the Cognitive Science Society (CSS) conference 2024 in Rotterdam in July has shown how women experience objectification even in non-sexualised attire. The study titled, "Objectifying Gaze: An Empirical Study With Non-

Sexualised Images," authored by Ayushi Agrawal, Srija Bhupathiraju under the guidance of Prof. Kavita Vemuri of the Cognitive Science Lab at IITH, examines visual gaze with eye tracking technology using the well-known cognitive science theories.

As per the researchers, while revealing attire is often held accountable for sexual objectification (SO) and harassment, gaze objectification extends to women in

even non-sexualised attire. "Regardless of attire, a woman is subjected to a very intrusive gaze in a public or any other space for that matter," says Kavita, adding that they started on that premise and wanted to test it out. "It could be any outfit that reveals a lot of skin such as swim wear and they found that the gaze is on the sexual body parts rather than on the face," she added.

The IITH team on the other hand experimented

with images of men and women dressed in a pair of jeans and a shirt. "We did toy with the idea of using salwar-kurtas and/or saris but since the most casual attire that is commonplace these days is the pant-shirt combo, we went ahead with the latter," explains Ayushi.

Participants who self-identified as male or female were shown a series of images of both men and women, and their visual gaze was tracked using heat maps.

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# Joyous celebrations mark Sri Krishna Janmashtami



Kanaka Durga Temple EO Rama Rao performing puja at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Monday



Minister Kolu Parthasarathy participating in the Sri Krishna Janmashtami celebrations at Durgapuram in Vijayawada on Monday

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Sri Krishna Janmashtami, celebration of the birth of Lord Krishna, was joyfully observed across the NTR and Krishna districts on Monday. People gathered at temples, public spaces, and homes to join in the festivities.

In the evening, the main event was the 'Utti' programme, featuring a pot filled with jaggery and flattened rice, which added to the merriment. Many people enthusiastically took part in this programme.

Key temples in Vijayawada, Machilipatnam, and other towns and villages in these districts were adorned to mark the occasion. Children dressed as little Krishna and Radha, and songs praising Lord Krishna were sung. Special pujas were performed in all temples across the NTR and Krishna districts.

Atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada, Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam conducted Gau Puja and Sri Krishna Puja. Executive Officer (EO) KS Rama Rao, Sthanacharya Vishunubhotla Siva Prasad Sarma, and others participated in the rituals and conducted the 'Utti' breaking ritual near the temple's Rajagopuram.

## Celebrations end at ISKCON temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The second and final day of Janmashtami celebrations at ISKCON Vijayawada, Sri Jagannath Mandir, commenced with the morning rituals, including Mangala Aarti and Darshan Aarti. On Monday, thousands of devotees thronged the temple throughout the day, offering their prayers with unwavering devotion and reverence.

Continuing from the previous day, the Utti competitions saw enthusiastic participation from many devotees. The Krishna Fancy Costume Competition also drew hundreds of children, accompanied by their eager parents. Member of Parliament



Keshineni Sivanath (Chinni) graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and distributed prizes to the winners.

The Brindavan replica Swing Festival (Julan Seva) was a major attraction, drawing large crowds. The deities were honoured with a grand Mahabhishekam using Pancharitras, and their divine glory was celebrated through ecstatic kirtans and enlightening discourses.

Thousands of visitors explored the various stalls set up on the ISKCON grounds, culminating in the distribution of prasadam to all the devotees. The temple president expressed his heartfelt gratitude to all the devotees who participated in the event and to the donors who contributed to the various services.

Minister Kolu Parthasarathy took part in the Sri Krishna Janmashtami celebrations organised in various areas of Vijayawada, including at the Sri Krishna Temple at Durgapuram, where he performed special pujas. Vedic scholars blessed the Minister during the celebrations.

Parthasarathy expressed his hope for Lord Sri Krishna to bring overall development to the State under the leadership of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan.

He assured the public of government support for the

construction of Sri Krishna temples, regardless of political affiliations.

In Machilipatnam, Minister for Mines & Geology and Excise Kollu Ravindra, and Machilipatnam MP Vallabhaneni Bala Shourya joined the Sri Krishna Janmashtami celebrations.

# Kondapalli, Nandigama municipal chairperson polls to be held soon

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

MP Kesineni Sivanath, also known as Chinni, has announced that chairperson elections for the Kondapalli and Nandigama municipalities will be held soon. He emphasised the urgency of these elections, noting that the development of these municipalities is contingent upon the passing of necessary resolutions, which will be facilitated by electing new chairpersons.

MP Kesineni Chinni visited the office of Nandigama MLA Tangirala Sowmya, along with TDP NTR district president Nettem Raghuram and Jaggayyapeta MLA Sriram Rajagopal, also known as Tataiah, at Nandigama on Monday. He talked to the party's local leaders and cadres regarding their problems and received petitions from them.

Addressing the media, MP Kesineni Sivanath said that as chairperson election has not been conducted for the

## MP Kesineni Sivanath to hold talks with SEC



MP Kesineni Chinni addressing the media at Nandigama MLA office on Monday

Kondapalli municipality, the development of Kondapalli and Ibrahimpatnam is stalled. Also, the Nandigama Municipal Chairperson post is lying vacant, he said.

He plans to discuss the matter with the State Election Commissioner (SEC). The

candidate selection will be conducted in the presence of the respective MLAs, he added.

Meanwhile, he stated that institutionally, TDP is strong and as per the party directions, all leaders and cadres should work together. He assured the leaders that the TDP will offer

nominated posts to those who worked hard for the development of the party.

He mentioned the drinking water problem in Nandigama, and for that, the Vedadri Lift Irrigation Scheme will be made available. Alongside MLAs Tangirala Sowmya and Sriram Rajagopal, he will visit the Vedadri scheme soon, he added.

Later, MP Chinni said that the State government is set to conduct the National Games in the coming days. The government is keen on providing proper coaching to talented athletes to prepare them for international events. Similarly, he vowed for the development of cricket in the State.

TDP Kanchikacherla mandal president Koganti Babu, party leaders Kota Veera Babu, Yechuri Ramu, Veeranki Veera Swamy, and others were present.

## 300 robotic surgeries performed at Manipal Hospital

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A rare milestone of completion of 300 robotic surgeries marking a significant achievement at the Manipal Hospital, Vijayawada, is a commitment to advanced healthcare. This milestone underscores the hospital's dedication to providing cutting-edge medical solutions, ensuring better patient outcomes, and setting new benchmarks in the region.

Robotic surgeries at Manipal Hospitals are performed using the state-of-the-art Intuitive - Da Vinci Xi robotic system.



# Collector asks industrialists to prioritise worker safety

### Week-long safety audit to rectify deficiencies



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In the wake of the recent accident at Escientia Advanced Sciences, District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad has called for a significant overhaul of safety standards across all industries in the district. During a meeting with officials and industrialists, the Collector announced a week-long safety audit to identify and rectify deficiencies. "We must place the safety of our workers at the forefront," the Collector emphasised. "A comprehensive safety audit will be conducted, and any shortcomings must be addressed immediately."

Prasad highlighted the importance of raising awareness

about potential hazards, mandating mock drills at all industrial sites by September 30. "These drills are crucial to prepare both workers and nearby residents for emergencies," he said. The Collector also announced plans for frequent inspections of the 57 industrial units in the district.

A joint inspection team will verify compliance with safety audits, mock drills, and basic facilities.

He urged industries to provide first aid kits, appoint paramedical staff, and designate a safety in-charge. "Training workers on self-protection and emergency response is paramount," the Collector stressed. To enhance

communication, the Collector announced the creation of a portal for stakeholders to share safety measures. "This portal will allow everyone to stay informed and contribute to maintaining high safety standards."

The Collector advised industrialists to focus on workers' welfare rather than solely pursuing profits. "The well-being of our workers is integral to the success of our industries," he stated. He also directed industries to comply with NGT standards for waste management. "Regular medical camps should be conducted, and all necessary facilities must be in place by the end of October," the Collector urged.

# 'Hyderabad ka Raja' to be 70 feet high this year

B SRINIVAS REDDY  
srinivasreddy84@gmail.com  
■ HYDERABAD

For the first time ever, the popular 'Hyderabad ka Raja' and also known as Khairatabad Ganesh idol, will be 70 feet in height this year and will be made of clay and eco-friendly materials.

To mark the 70th year of the Sri Ganesh Utsav Committee, Khairatabad (SGUC), this year the Ganesh idol will be 70 feet high. The installation of the first Ganesh idol here was in 1954.

Last year, the SGUC set a new record with a 63-foot tall clay idol weighing 45 to 50 tonnes. This year, Ganesh Chaturthi falls on September 7.

Ahead of Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations, the iconic Khairatabad clay Ganesh idol is set to steal the show with its grandeur.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Sandeep Raj, Secretary of the Khairatabad Ganesh Utsav Committee, said, "This year's centerpiece will be Sri Saptamukha Maha Shakti Ganapathi, featuring seven faces, seven snakes and 14 hands."

"The construction of the eco-friendly idol is expected to cost Rs 90 lakh, with over 100 artists from Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Telangana, Maharashtra



and Andhra Pradesh working on the project. "We're about to start painting works within 2-3 days," Raj said.

"To make it more attractive, Sri Srinivasa Kalyanam idols and Sri Shiva Parvathula Kalyanam idols will be built besides the tallest Ganesh idol," Sandeep added.

The Khairatabad Ganesh is also known for its jumbo-sized laddu, offered as prasadam. Till 2009, the Ganesh Utsav committee used to place a 50 kg laddu at the pandal. Starting from 2010 until 2015, the laddu was offered by PVVS Mallikarjun Rao, from Tapeswaram, a village located in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. But this time the committee members ordered a 25kg laddu from Tapeswaram.

# Atchannaidu launches Anna Canteens, new RTC buses

## State Govt mulls introduction of free bus travel facility for women

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

Minister for Agriculture, Marketing and Fisheries Kinjarapu Atchannaidu has emphasised the commitment of the administration under Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's leadership to align with the aspirations of the people. On Monday, Achchennaidu inaugurated Anna Canteens in Tekkali and Kotabommali, while also flagging off three newly acquired RTC buses in Tekkali.

The Minister personally served meals at the Anna Canteens and took a short ride on the newly launched RTC buses. "These Anna Canteens are a step towards ensuring food security for the needy. It gives me immense pleasure to launch this initiative on the auspicious occasion of Sri Krishnashtami," said Atchannaidu.

The canteens, which provide lunch to 400 people in Kotabommali and 300 people in Tekkali daily at a nominal cost of Rs. 5, will soon offer breakfast and dinner as well.

Addressing the gathering, Atchannaidu shared that the State government is exploring the introduction of free



bus travel facilities for women, similar to those implemented in Karnataka and Telangana. "Our team has closely studied these initiatives, and I assure you that we will soon provide similar free bus travel facilities to women in our State," he announced.

The Minister also took the opportunity to highlight the challenges inherited from the previous administration. "The former government left us with a staggering debt of Rs13 lakh crore, and despite the limited resources, we are determined to implement every promise we made.

Initiatives such as increasing pensions and launching Anna Canteens are just the

beginning," Atchannaidu stated. He also reassured the public that transparency would be the hallmark of his administration. "Transfers within the district will be conducted transparently. I urge everyone not to resort to brokers. Justice will be delivered to all."

Atchannaidu also outlined his plans to engage directly with the people. "I am committed to personally visiting the villages in my constituency, taking requests from the people, and addressing their issues by going to every street. We are here to serve, and we will ensure that the people's voices are heard," he affirmed.

# National Sports Day programmes begin with 'Fit India Pledge'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

To celebrate National Sports Day on August 29, the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand, the NTR District Sports Authority (DSA) organised the 'Fit India Pledge' programme at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation (IGMC) Stadium in Vijayawada on Monday. District Sports Development Officer (DSDO) SA Azeez administered the pledge to the players.

The Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) has instructed to conduct National

Sports Day programmes in all districts from August 26 to 31. Following these instructions, NTR DSA organised the Fit India Pledge. DSDO Azeez emphasised the importance of daily physical activity for at least 30 minutes to maintain good health. NTR District Boxing Coach P Isaq, Kabaddi Coach Jagadesh, Basketball Coach Santosh, Weightlifting Coach Swamy, Volleyball Coach Sk Riyaz, Yoga Coach Ramanjaneyulu, Table Tennis Coach Sk Muntaz, Football Coach P Ravi Kumar, and others took part in the event.

# Certificate programme for DRDO scientists

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Indian Institute of Management Visakhapatnam (IIM-V), on Monday, inaugurated a specialised Certificate Programme in Research and Development (R&D) Management exclusively for the scientists of the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO). The programme aims to equip DRDO scientists with the essential managerial tools and strategies required for effective R&D leadership in today's rapidly evolving technological landscape.

Thirty-nine officers from 36

DRDO laboratories across India participated in the inaugural ceremony, marking the commencement of an intensive training program. Prof B Sri Rangacharyulu, the Programme Director, welcomed the participants and provided an overview of the curriculum, which includes modules on R&D Management Concepts, Project Management, Simulation, Organisational Behaviour & Human Relations Management, R&D Processes, Technology Management, and Risk Management.

Dr Y Sreenivas Rao, Director General of Naval Systems &



Materials (NS&M), was the chief guest. In his inaugural address, Dr Rao emphasised the importance of fostering strong professional networks among DRDO

scientists. He highlighted the critical role of collaboration and knowledge sharing in addressing complex challenges in research and development. Additionally,

Dr Rao underscored the need for effective conflict management within teams, especially in high-stakes environments like DRDO.

Dr Shailesh Kumar Singh, Director of the Directorate of Human Resource Development (DHRD), DRDO Headquarters, and professors from IIM Visakhapatnam were also present at the event. Prof Deepika Gupta, the Programme Director, delivered a vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to Dr Y Sreenivas Rao for his inspiring address and to DRDO for partnering with IIM-V for this significant initiative. She emphasised the importance of this collaboration between academia and defense research in contributing to the professional development of DRDO's esteemed scientists.

# Take receipts for all articles purchased: GST Commissioner

PNS ■ NELLORE

Central GST Commissioner (Audit Wing) P Anand Kumar has asked the consumers to demand the receipt from the traders after purchasing goods.

Commissioner (Auditing Wing) P Anand Kumar on Monday inaugurated the newly established Commissioner's Chamber in the office of the Assistant Commissioner of Central Tax Audit Circle on ICICI Bank's Madras stand in the city. Talking to the media on the occasion, Commissioner Anand Kumar said that he took charge as the Auditing Wing Commissioner on August 12 and took steps to strengthen their Auditing Wing in the state after visiting the field.

He said that the Central GST Auditing Wing has offices in Kakinada, Visakhapatnam, Guntur, Nellore and Tirupati and offices will soon be set up in Anantapur and Kurnool.

He stated that they are conducting auditing in all the offices under their jurisdiction this year. They have to complete GST auditing in more than 500 officers. He made it clear that if it is found in their



auditing that taxes have been evaded or taxes have been underpaid due to wrong calculations, no matter who they ignore, the traders who have collected taxes from the people must pay the government, and there is no need to compromise on this.

He maintained that the Government of India introduced a uniform Goods and Services Tax (GST) system across the country in 2017 intending to provide better services to the people. He said that before the introduction of the GST system, there were only 70 lakh taxpayers in the

country, but now that number has doubled to 1.40 crores as a result of the GST system.

He further said that due to the increase in the number of taxpayers through the GST system, the amount of tax payments has decreased. The GST will play a vital role in making India the third largest economy in the world which is coming up as the target of Viksit Bharat 2047.

The Commissioner stated that his department is working to increase the number of taxpayers and participate in the development of the country by making more traders and

companies pay taxes more easily through the GST system.

He explained that the amount paid by the people through GST plays a major role in the implementation of welfare schemes that improve the economic status of the people such as roads, bridges, ports, airports and other infrastructure needed by the people.

He recalled that huge sums of money were allocated to the state government in the budget for development and to implement welfare schemes and the money was mobilized through the GST.

# Officials directed to expedite e-Crop process

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

District Collector P. Prashanthi has instructed the concerned officials to expedite the e-cropping process in the district.

During a teleconference held on Monday with officials from the district, division, and mandal levels, Collector Prashanthi emphasised the importance of registering the crop area and completing the joint land property mapping process for the current Kharif season. She urged division and mandal officials to ensure effective monitoring at the



village level.

The Collector noted that 60 percent of the crop registration process has been com-

pleted in the district thus far. "There is time only until 15th September to complete the crop registration. Village Revenue Officers and Village Agriculture Officers must authenticate the registrations," she added.

She pointed out that Sitanagaram, Rajanagaram, Devarapalli, Korukonda, Nallajerla, and Kadiyam mandals have completed less than 60 percent of the crop registration, and reiterated that the state government has set 15th September as the cutoff date.

The Collector also high-

lighted the necessity for certification by the farmers alongside the Village Revenue Officers and Village Revenue Assistants. Currently, only 7.8 percent of the farmers have completed this certification, and she urged officials to take steps to meet the goals promptly.

Collector Prashanthi underscored that personal supervision by division and mandal level officials is mandatory. Joint Collector S. Chinna Ramudu, along with RDO and horticulture officials, were present at the video conference.

# 3 minors among 11 arrested in ganja cases

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On Monday, the NTR District Police Commissionerate Anti-Narcotic Cell and Law & Order Police teams arrested 11 people including three minors in connection with ganja cases. They seized Rs.2.60 lakh worth of 23.50 kg ganja from their possession, besides two motorcycles and cloths.

According to DCP T Harikrishna, eight persons were arrested in a case registered at the Kothapet Police Station, of them three were minors. Also, the remaining three were arrested in a case registered at Patamata Police Station. The accused were identified as Konda Ramesh alias Chinna, 25 a resident of Kothapet, G Nagaraju, 20, of Nuzvid, P Venkatesh, 24, of Chudimilla, Nelaturu Praveen, 22, of Ajith Singh Nagar, Subam B, 28, a resident of Koraput village, Odisha, Sagar Jena, 31, of Koraput village, Odisha, and Pathan Ziya Khan, 20, of Ganguru, DCP Harikrishna said.

The DCP Harikrishna said that the accused sold ganja in various areas in Vijayawada targeting youth. Out of a total of 11 accused, five continued the sale of ganja though they were released from jail in connection with the ganja case. They purchased ganja from tribal people in the agency area and sold them earning huge profits, he added. Meanwhile, he said the ganja peddlers targeted minors. Also, these accused were involved in various theft cases in the police commissionerate purview, he said. As part of the 100-day action plan for a drugs-free state, special teams have been formed under the direction of DGP Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao and supervision of CP SV Rajasekhra Babu, he said.

# State's first CBRN Medical Management Centre at VIMS

Central-State to visit VIMS this week to assess feasibility

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a move to enhance the State's disaster preparedness, a joint Central-State team will visit the Visakha Institute of Medical Sciences (VIMS) in Visakhapatnam this week to assess the feasibility of establishing a secondary-level Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) medical management centre. This initiative comes as part of the Union government's strategic plan to set up such centres in 10 States, with Andhra Pradesh being one of the chosen locations.

The proposed CBRN medical management centre at VIMS will be the first of its kind in the state, marking a critical step forward in bolstering the region's ability to respond to industrial accidents and other emergencies. The facility is expected to include ICU and isolation beds, decontamination treatment areas, a decontamination shower facility, and specialised pre- and post-operative rooms to treat victims of CBRN incidents.

Speaking about the importance of this project, Dr K Rambabu, Director of VIMS, emphasised the life-saving potential of such a centre. "Had a CBRN centre been operational during the recent industrial accidents, the chances of rapid



victim transfer and timely medical intervention would have been significantly higher," he said. "The centre, equipped with the necessary infrastructure and expertise in handling chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear emergencies, would ensure that patients receive timely and appropriate treatment."

Visakhapatnam, recognised as Andhra Pradesh's major industrial hub, has witnessed a concerning rise in industrial accidents in recent years. The establishment of the CBRN centre at VIMS is seen as a crucial development that could mitigate the impact of such incidents. Dr. Rambabu noted, "The centre will not only address regular chemical incidents but will also be equipped to handle biological crises, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. The

Union government will recruit expert medical personnel to deliver advanced care at the centre. People of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh will greatly benefit from this facility."

The inspection team, which will play a key role in determining the viability of this project, will include representatives from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), the Central Design Bureau, and the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Nodal Officer, among others. The Union government, under its 'Health Sector Disaster Preparedness and Response Scheme' and the Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission, will provide funding and staffing for the centre. Meanwhile, VIMS will allocate land and additional infrastructure, supported by the State government.



# Eluru Mayor Noorjahan quits YSRCP, to join TDP

PNS ■ ELURU

Mayor Sheik Noorjahan has quit the YSRCP. She said that she has decided to resign from the party posts of YSRCP.

Sources said that the Mayor would join the TDP on Tuesday in the presence of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

Some municipal Corporators would also quit the YSRCP and join the TDP along with the Mayor.

# Five arrested for stealing copper wire in transformers



PNS ■ ELURU

The police arrested five persons in connection with the stealing of copper wire in the electric transformers.

SP Pratap Kishore told the media here on Monday that a police team held three people moving suspiciously on a motorcycle at Marrigudem in Buttayagudem mandal. On the information provided by them, the police arrested another two accused.

The police recovered copper wire weighing 400 KGs worth Rs 2.40 lakh.

In another case, the police arrested two offenders in connection with the attempted theft in the ATM Axis Bank using advanced technology. The police said that they arrested Ramakrishna and Lakshminarayan who are siblings. Ramakrishna was addicted to online betting and to earn money he committed a theft in the Axis Bank ATM in

Mudinepalli on the night of August 15. The duo cut the wires of the ATM and vandalized the ATM. However, the alert alarm started blowing and the two accused panicked and fled.

The police arrested the duo and recovered a hammer, cutting players and an iron rod which they used to commit the crime. The SP appreciated SI Venkata Kumar, constable B Nagababu and Kaikaluru Kaikaluru DSP for achieving a breakthrough in the case.

# Prof. Dhanamjaya Rao is AU's new Registrar

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra University formally appointed Prof. EN Dhanamjaya Rao as its new Registrar on Monday, marking a significant milestone in the institution's administrative leadership. The appointment ceremony took place on the university campus, where Prof. Dhanamjaya Rao succeeded Prof. N. Kishore Babu.

A distinguished senior professor of Geology with a renowned international academic reputation, Prof. Dhanamjaya Rao is poised to lead the university into a new era of growth and development. His appointment was

formally announced by Vice-Chancellor Prof. G. Sasibhushana Rao, who expressed confidence in the new Registrar's ability to strengthen the university's position both nationally and globally.

In his address, Prof. G. Sasibhushana Rao emphasised Prof. Dhanamjaya Rao's wealth of experience and proven track record in academic leadership and international engagement. He highlighted the new Registrar's dynamic vision and dedication, which will undoubtedly contribute to the university's pursuit of academic excellence and global reach. Prof. Dhanamjaya Rao



brings a wealth of experience to his new role, having previously served as the Registrar and In-Charge Vice-Chancellor

of Adikavi Nannaya University. His tenure as Dean of International Affairs at AU is particularly noteworthy, having

significantly increased the number of international students from 100 to 1,200 and attracting students from over 60 countries.

Upon assuming his new role, Prof. Dhanamjaya Rao expressed his enthusiasm for the opportunity to lead the university. He stated, "I am honoured to take on the responsibilities of Registrar at Andhra University, an institution with a rich legacy and immense potential. My focus will be on fostering international collaborations, enhancing academic programmes, and ensuring that our university remains at the forefront of higher education in India."



# Notorious rowdy sheeter murdered

PNS ■ NELLORE

A notorious rowdy sheeter was brutally murdered by miscreants at Ramalingapuram Bridge.

Police said that the deceased Ganji Ravi (40) was involved in many criminal cases. He was freed on bail recently.

Miscreants waylaid and attacked him with swords and stabbed him indiscriminately killing him on the spot.

Balaji Nagar police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for post-mortem. Previous enmity is said to be the reason for his brutal murder.

# 5 held with huge quantity of ganja

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

The police seized a huge quantity of 912 kg of ganja while being transported in a lorry at Gullepalli village of Sabbavaram mandal.

SP Deepika told the media here on Monday that on a tip that a huge quantity of ganja was being transported in a lorry; a police team conducted a checking of vehicles.

The police found 456 packets in the lorry, containing 912 kg

of ganja, while being brought from Odisha state. The ganja packets were concealed in a specially-made cabin in the lorry. The ganja is worth over Rs 55 lakh. The police arrested two persons in this connection. The accused belong to Odisha and Telangana states. Five more persons are to be arrested in this case, the SP said. The SP said that a special task force especially to curb the ganja transport and consumption would be set up soon.



# Minister pays homage to departed former MLA

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Minister for Social Welfare Dola Bala Veeranjaneyulu paid homage to the departed former MLA David Raju on Monday. The minister went to the house of former MLA David Raju and paid tributes to the

mortal remains.

Recalling the services of David Raju, the Minister said that David Raju had risen from MPP-level leader to the MLA. He had striven as a ZP chairman for the development of rural areas and earned a reputation among the masses.

# Steps taken to check PDS rice diversion: JC

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Joint Collector Rahul Meena made it clear that strict vigil was kept at the entrance of the Anchorage port and the two checkpoints have been fortified to curb the illegal exports of PDS rice.

Informing to the media persons here on Monday, Joint Collector Rahul Meena and trainee Collector Bhavanna said no lenience would be shown against those negligent in their duties, and shift system working would be strictly adhered to.

The joint collector further said that these two check posts at Bombay Kata and Shakti gate were acting as deterrents to smugglers.

The scrutiny of the number of lorries entering, the nature of the cargo allowing passage into the port through gate pass and later after unloading by out pass through BOC gate is strictly followed. The joint collector added. District supply officer M V Prasad and other civil supplies personnel accompanied the Joint Collector during the inspection.

ACROSS THE STATES



Actress asked to furnish proof of being Hindu at temple

Actress Namitha on Monday complained that she was asked to furnish proof of being a Hindu during her visit to the renowned Sri Meenakshi Sundareswar temple here, and expressed disappointment over the alleged rude behaviour of temple officials. The actress, who is a BJP state executive member, alleged that a temple official prevented her from having darshan and demanded proof of being a Hindu. "They asked for a certificate to prove that I am a Hindu and also my caste certificate. I never underwent such an ordeal in any temple that I visited in the country," she told reporters later. Namitha said it was a known fact that she was born a Hindu and that her marriage was solemnised in Tirupati and her son was named after Lord Krishna. "This being the case they spoke rudely and arrogantly and demanded a certificate to prove my caste and my faith," she said.



Refused money for alcohol, man kills mother

A man allegedly killed his 70-year-old mother here for refusing to give him money to purchase liquor, police said on Monday. The accused was identified as Ravinder (35), a native of Noorpur village, they said. Ravinder's sister, Kabool told the police that her brother is an alcoholic and handicapped. He was undergoing treatment at a de-addiction centre and recently returned home, an officer said. After killing his mother, Rosni Devi, with a sharp-edged weapon, Ravinder called Kabool and informed her about the incident. "He told me that my mother refused to give him money to buy liquor," Kabool told the police. The complainant further told police that she, along with her son, returned from her in-laws and found her mother dead in the courtyard, an officer said.



Indian Navy's frontline warship 'Mumbai' docks in Sri Lanka

Indian Navy's frontline warship INS 'Mumbai' on Monday docked at the port of Colombo, on a day when three Chinese Navy vessels berthed at the same harbour in Sri Lanka. Indian Naval Ship 'Mumbai' is on a three-day visit to the island nation, the Sri Lanka Navy said in a press release. The 163-metre-long Destroyer, which is manned by a crew of 410 members, was welcomed by the Sri Lanka Navy in compliance with naval traditions. This is the ship's first visit to any port in Sri Lanka and will be the eighth port call by Indian ships this year, the Indian High Commission said in a press release on Sunday. Meanwhile, three Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy warships -- 'HE FEI', 'WUZHISHAN' and 'QILIANSHAN' -- also arrived at the port of Colombo on a formal visit on Monday morning, the Sri Lanka Navy said.

Congress slams BJP over Kangana's remarks, demands her expulsion

As the BJP expressed disagreement with its MP Kangana Ranaut's controversial remarks on farmers' protest, the Congress on Monday said if the ruling party disagrees with her comments then it should expel her from the party. Congress's social media head and spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said the government should also clarify on the actor-politician's claim that the US and China were conspiring to create instability within the country. The BJP on Monday expressed disagreement with Lok Sabha MP Ranaut's controversial remarks on the farmers' protest and said she has been directed to not make such remarks in future. This came after Ranaut stoked a controversy by suggesting that the farmers' protests could have led to a Bangladesh-like situation in the country if the top leadership was not strong enough. She also claimed that China and the US are working together to harm the country. In a video shared by the Mandi MP on X, she alleged that "bodies hanging and rapes were taking place" during the farmers' protest against the now-repealed three farm laws. Shrinete said at a press conference here, "No leader till date has used the words Kangana Ranaut has used against the farmers."



India, Singapore commit to further enhance co-operation

India and Singapore on Monday pledged to further enhance co-operation in the emerging and futuristic areas. The Indian delegation led by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman deliberated upon six pillars identified under ISMR, which include Digitalisation, Skill Development, Sustainability, Healthcare & Medicine, and Advanced Manufacturing and Connectivity, the finance ministry said in post on X. "During the meeting, the leaders emphasised on ways of further enhancing co-operation between India and Singapore in emerging and futuristic areas. Both sides deliberated upon six pillars identified under ISMR, which include Digitalisation, Skill Development, Sustainability, Healthcare & Medicine, and Advanced Manufacturing and Connectivity," the finance ministry said in post on X. The leaders also discussed plans for commemorating the 60th Anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Singapore, alongside regional and global cooperation, including ASEAN & G20 developments, it said. The leaders noted that the discussions in the first round of ISMR have resulted in the successful conclusion of MoUs on healthcare, education & skill development, digital cooperation and semiconductor ecosystem cooperation, it said. Along with Sitharaman, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw were present for the meeting. ISMR is a unique mechanism established to set a new agenda for India-Singapore bilateral relations.

PM Modi to lead BJP's election campaign in poll-bound J-K

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the BJP's campaign in the upcoming assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, the first such democratic exercise after the erstwhile state was downgraded to Union Territory in August 2019. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, BJP national president J P Nadda and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were also included in the list of 40 star campaigners submitted by the party to the Election Commission for the first phase of assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Union ministers Nitin Gadkari, Manohar Lal Khattar, G Kishan Reddy, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Jitendra Singh and former union ministers are other prominent faces who will visit Jammu and Kashmir during the campaigning. The three-phased assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir are scheduled for September 18, 25 and October 1. The counting of votes will be taken up on October 4. In a letter addressed to the Election Commission, BJP national general secretary and in-charge headquarters Arun Singh said the list of the 40 star campaigners of the party may be treated as valid for the remaining phases "unless we forward an amended list" within the prescribed time limit.

Truck runs over pavement dwellers in northeast Delhi, three dead

Three died after a canter truck ran over five men sleeping on a footpath in the Shastri Park area of northeast Delhi in the early hours of Monday, police said. They said the incident occurred at the Tarbuz market near the Shastri Park metro station around 4:30 am, and added that the victims were homeless. An officer said the medium goods vehicle was approaching the Iron Bridge from Seelampur when it climbed the central verge and ran over the five men sleeping on the footpath. The trucker abandoned the vehicle and fled the spot after the incident. The victims were taken to the Jag Pravech Chandra Hospital, where three were declared dead. One of them was identified as Mohammad Jakir (35) of Bihar's Katihar who worked here as a labourer. He would often sleep on the same footpath, according to the local residents. The two injured -- Mushtaq (35) and Kamlesh (36) -- were taken to the GTB Hospital, the officer added. Police said there were rickshaw pullers and labourers among the victims.



35-foot statue of Shivaji Maharaj collapses in Sindhudurg

Oppn slams govt for poor quality of work

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A statue of Maratha King Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a fort in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district, collapsed on Monday, an official said. Following the incident, the opposition parties have slammed the state government, alleging it had paid little attention to the quality of work. A 35-foot statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj collapsed around 1 pm at Rajkot Fort in Malvan, the official said. Experts will ascertain the exact cause of the collapse, but the district has witnessed heavy rains and gusty winds in the last two to three days, he said. Senior officials of the police and district administration reached the site to take stock of the situation, and the damage is being examined, he said. PM Modi unveiled the statue on December 4 last year on the occasion of Navy Day. He also participated in the celebrations at the fort.

Ex-Union minister Yashwant Sinha likely to float political party

Former Union finance minister Yashwant Sinha is likely to launch a new political party ahead of the Jharkhand assembly elections later this year. Proposal to float the new party was discussed during a meeting at Atal Sewa Kendra in Hazaribag with his supporters on Sunday evening. Before leaving for Delhi on Monday, Sinha told reporters, "A final decision on forming the Atal Vichar Manch (AVM) will be made soon after consulting various sections of society." Sunday's meeting was presided over by Surendra Kumar Sinha, a former BJP executive member and representative of ex-BJP MP Jayant Sinha, and was attended by supporters of both Jayant and Yashwant Sinha.

Malayalam film industry in turmoil

Four prominent actors face fresh sexual abuse charges

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The fallout from the Justice K Hema Committee report on harassment and abuse in Malayalam cinema industry intensified on Monday as more female actors stepped forward with disturbing accounts of mistreatment at the hands of their male counterparts, further inflaming Kerala's political and cultural landscape. While actress Minu Muneer, who has appeared in a handful of movies, levelled sexual abuse allegations against actor-turned MLA M Mukesh, Jayasooriya, Maniyanpilla Raju, and Idavela Babu, another well-known actress came forward with allegations of misconduct by a noted filmmaker from years ago. A 1990s movie actress, who accused the filmmaker of misconduct, has expressed her willingness to provide a statement to the police investigating the case. The filmmaker has denied the charges. "I am writing to report a series of incidents of physical and verbal abuse I suffered at the hands of 1, Mukesh 2, Maniyanpilla Raju, 3 Idavela Babu, 4 Jayasooriya, 5, adv Chandrasekaran, 6, production controller noble and vichu, in the Malayalam film industry," Minu Muneer alleged in a Facebook post. "In 2013, I was subjected to physical and verbal abuse by these individuals while working on a project. I tried to cooperate and continue working, but the abuse became unbearable," the actress, who signed as Minu Kurian in her Facebook post, further charged. With the exception of Maniyanpilla Raju, none of the actors accused by Minu Muneer have responded to her allegations. On the same day, a junior artist accused actor Baburaj, known for his villainous movie roles, of sexual assault. Rejecting the allegations, Baburaj, an office bearer in the Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (A.M.M.A), suspected that vested interests in the film industry were behind it. He claimed that the allegation was an attempt to prevent him from becoming the general secretary of AMMA, replacing Siddique, who had resigned on Sunday amid similar charges.

BIRD FLU

Odisha govt culls over 11,700 chicken, health dept issues alert

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government has culled over 11,700 chickens in Puri district's Pipili, following the detection of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza, an official said on Monday. After mass deaths of chickens at a local poultry farm in Pipili, culling began on Saturday and was completed on Monday evening. Additional culling in homes and nearby villages will take place on Tuesday, the official added. Jagannath Nanda, additional director of disease control, said 13 rapid response teams are handling the culling, with some poultry farm owners conducting culling independently. No other unusual chicken deaths have been reported elsewhere in the state, he added. In response to the outbreak, the state health department has heightened surveillance and issued an alert. Brijay Mohapatra, director of health services, emphasised that while bird flu is not new to Odisha, the department is working with stakeholders to manage the situation. He assured that sufficient medicines are available and urged poultry workers to maintain hygiene and wear masks.

'443-km India-Bangla border in Meghalaya is fully secure'

PNS ■ SHILLONG

The Border Security Force (BSF) on Monday said the 443-km India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya is fully secure and denied claims of illegal entry by Bangladeshi nationals. The paramilitary force issued a statement after the media in the neighbouring country reported that Awami League leader Ishak Ali Khan Panna died of heart attack while climbing a hill in Meghalaya's Dawki in an attempt to flee his country. Dawki, in Meghalaya East Khasi Hills, is located close to Bangladesh. A BSF spokesperson said, "There is no illegal entry of Bangladesh nationals in the area of responsibility of the Meghalaya Frontier BSF along the Indo-Bangla border. The story of Panna's death being circulated is entirely fabricated. Any attempt at illegal infiltration or activities that compromise the security of our nation will be dealt with firmly." The BSF increased vigil along the border following the August 5 violence in Bangladesh, successfully thwarting several illegal entry attempts and arresting those involved. The BSF has contacted the assistant high commission of Bangladesh in Assam regarding the matter. "The assistant high commission of Bangladesh has confirmed that they have not received any official information concerning Panna's death near the border area as of now," the BSF spokesperson added. Local sources in Dawki, including villagers, have denied the claims of Panna's death while climbing a hill in Meghalaya. An elder from Dawki said, "If a Bangladeshi tried to enter India, our relatives from across the border would have informed us, and we would relay the information to the BSF and police. There is no such incident, and several attempts by Bangladeshi nationals to cross the border have been thwarted."



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Give peace a chance

The Cairo talks represent a glimmer of hope for war ravaged Gaza in an otherwise bleak situation

As fighting continues unabated in Gaza, negotiators gathered in Cairo this weekend for crucial discussions aimed at securing a ceasefire. The talks come at a pivotal moment, with the conflict between Hamas and Israel now in its tenth month. Despite the ongoing hostilities, there is hope that a breakthrough might be within reach, though significant hurdles remain. The war has left Gaza in ruins and triggered a humanitarian crisis of immense proportions. The conflict has displaced nearly all of Gaza's population at least once, and efforts to broker a ceasefire have so far failed to bring lasting peace. The international community, led by the United States, Egypt, and Qatar, has been engaged in persistent but ultimately inconclusive negotiations to end the violence. The Cairo talks, held under the shadow of ongoing violence, are seen as a critical step towards ending the conflict. However, the talks are complicated by the fact that Hamas, while sending a delegation to Cairo, has stated that it will not participate directly in the negotiations. Instead, the Hamas delegation is expected to meet with senior Egyptian officials to receive updates on the progress of the talks. Hamas continues to insist on a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, including from the Philadelphi Corridor along the Gaza-Egypt border, a key sticking point in the discussions. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has his own reservations and is unwilling to withdraw troops from border.



The framework for the current talks is based on a plan outlined by U.S. President Joe Biden on May 31, which has been endorsed by the United Nations Security Council. The plan envisions a three-phase process,

beginning with a full and complete ceasefire, during which hostages would be exchanged for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. Despite initial agreement on the plan by Hamas leadership, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has expressed reservations, particularly regarding the continued presence of Israeli troops along the Gaza-Egypt border, which he argues is necessary to prevent Hamas from rearming. The United States is exploring new proposals to bridge the gap between Israel and Hamas. The success of talks likely hinging on whether the U.S. can pressure Netanyahu into accepting a compromise. Meanwhile the war rages on in Gaza. Israeli airstrikes and artillery fire have devastated the territory, with reports of dozens of civilian casualties in recent days. The United Nations has reported large-scale evacuations from areas such as Deir el-Balah and Khan Yunis, as Israeli military operations intensify. The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains dire, with displaced families forced to flee daily in search of safety. Both Israelis and Gazans are increasingly desperate for an end to the bloodshed. Protests have erupted across Israel, with thousands calling for a deal to secure the release of the remaining hostages. The path to peace remains fraught with challenges, and the coming days will be crucial in determining whether a lasting ceasefire can be achieved.

## PICTALK



A farmer harvests grapes, at Repora Lar area in Ganderbal, Kashmir

## Gender reform in 19th-century Bengal



RAJDEEP PATHAK

In the 19th century, a complex interplay of reformist and colonial influences emerged, particularly concerning the status of women

In the 19th century, as British colonialism reshaped the Indian socio-cultural landscape, intellectuals like Captain N. Augustus Willard and Indian reformers grappled with the status of women in India. Willard, like many British officials, viewed Indian women with a mixture of pity and a sense of moral duty, perceiving them as victims of ignorance, reflected in their preference for songs that were considered passionate and sensual. At the same time, English-educated Bengali elites, inspired by both Western ideas and traditional Hindu values, sought to reform women's education while retaining patriarchal norms. It is pertinent to mention the role played by the renowned social reformer Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, a key figure among the Bengali bhadralok, who championed the cause of widow remarriage and women's education. Influenced by Western education, yet deeply rooted in his cultural heritage, Vidyasagar sought to balance these dual influences. He established numerous schools for girls, believing that education was essential for their empowerment and societal upliftment. Another key figure in India's renaissance movement, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, a luminary in Indian literature, is celebrated for his seminal contributions to both educational reforms and the Indian freedom struggle. His multifaceted legacy extends beyond his literary genius, encapsulating his role as an intellectual force in the socio-political landscape of 19th-century India. Bankim Chandra was a pioneering figure in the sphere of educational reforms in India. His vision for education was grounded in the belief that a modern, enlightened society could only emerge through an educated populace. Chatterjee advocated for the modernization of the education system, emphasizing the need to integrate Western scientific knowledge with traditional Indian learning. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's engagement with educational reforms is evident in his writings



and his role as a Deputy Magistrate – the first in-charge (Sub-divisional magistrate) of the Arambag subdivision in West Bengal. He used his position to influence educational policies and advocate for the establishment of institutions that could impart contemporary education. Author of India's National Song Vande Mataram became a clarion call during India's Independence movement, Bankim Chandra's novels, often interwoven with themes of social and educational upliftment, served as a medium to propagate his ideas to a broader audience. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's novels often depicted strong, complex female characters, who played crucial roles in the narrative, challenging the traditional views of women in society. "Vande Mataram" depicted in Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's novel "Anandamath" serves as the manifesto of the Sanyasi group, celebrating a land abundant with rice, lush greenery, vibrant flowers, and sparkling rivers. The song idolizes the country as a goddess incarnate. While historically and politically significant, "Anandamath" unfolds through semiotic, discursive, and aesthetic dimen-



BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTOPADHYAY'S NOVELS OFTEN DEPICTED STRONG, COMPLEX FEMALE CHARACTERS, WHO PLAYED CRUCIAL ROLES IN THE NARRATIVE, CHALLENGING THE TRADITIONAL VIEWS OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

sions. The narrative, through characters like Mohendra, Kalyani, and Sukumari, intertwines with India's traditional and cultural contexts. The Santan of the Math, led by guru Satyananda and his disciples, embody qualities of truth, knowledge, emotion, patience, and being. "Vande Mataram" transcends patriotism, embodying philosophical renderings of existential and metaphysical human attributes, with women depicted as equals, exemplified by Shanti's bravery and sacrifice. Bankim Chandra's portrayal of women was significant as it challenged the prevailing societal norms and provided a progressive vision of women's roles in society. In "Devi Chaudhurani" (1884) the protagonist Prafulla transforms from a submissive girl into the powerful Devi Chaudhurani, a leader of a band of rebels. Her character embodies the potential for women's empowerment and the possibility of their active participation in societal change. By depicting women as strong, capable, and essential to the nation's progress, his novels contributed to the broader discourse on women's rights and empowerment in pre-independent India, which, however, is debatable.

Novels like "Kapalkundala," "Debi Chaudhurani," and "Durgeshnandini" feature characters such as Kapalkundala, Prafulla, and Ayesha, who exhibit depth and complexity. "Brisabriksha" (The Poison Tree) and "Krishnakanta Uil" addresses social issues like widow remarriage and polygamy through the stories of Suryamukhi, Kundanandini, and Rohini. In "Sitaram," the tragic effects of polygamy are highlighted, while "Anandamath" contrasts the nation's depiction as Mother, while the exclusion of women from the fight for its cause is also depicted. It can be said that Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's depiction of strong, independent female characters – despite their complexities – challenged existing gender norms and inspired a rethinking of women's potential and place in society. By showcasing women as central figures in the fight against oppression and as leaders in their own right, Bankim Chandra's works resonated with the growing movements for social and political reform. (The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## SANCTITY OF OATH

Madam — We all expect aspirants who desire to make a career in public service must be clean in their thoughts and acts. All MPs, MLAs take oath and swear on this but the reality is different. For those of whom read this information don't be confused and conclude yourself that this is the tally of medals in the recently concluded Paris Olympics 2024. Anybody would have been shocked and put their head in shame to feel pity for the people who have voted for the respective candidates from their constituency by the fond hope that they will deliver well for them. The update is that there are as many as 151 sitting MPs and MLAs declared cases related to crimes against women in their election affidavits, with West Bengal having the highest number of lawmakers facing such cases, according to a recent report by a poll rights body.

West Bengal tops the list with 25 sitting MPs and MLAs facing charges related to crimes against women, followed by Andhra Pradesh with 21 and Odisha with 17, according to the report that comes under the ongoing nationwide protests. BJP tops the list with 54 MPs and MLAs facing charges of crime against women, and Congress follows with 23. It would be more appropriate if the law takes its course to prove or clear those of charges by putting them before the fast track so that people's trust on them can be delivered on its own merits.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

## YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Madam—Today, we are facing a serious threat in the form of youth unemployment, which is hindering India's long-term development and growth. It stresses the need to tackle this problem for sustainable economic development. A few announcements have been made in the recent budget to address the issue of the job crisis in India. The key factors responsible for the employment cri-

## Chalk vs cheese!



This relates to your edit "Surging Ahead" (Aug.24). Words, they say, are the dress of thoughts. And it is by their words that Americans are today judging Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. Trump's utterances are akin to Modi's in the last lap of the 2024 elections when he neither had issues nor proper words to bash the Opposition with. He spoke like one cornered and defeated, rather than one who was optimistic of winning the election. In the end, his 'mutton,

mughal and mangalsutra" rants did not resonate even with those aligned with the BJP. In the fight for the US' presidency, Trump is not coming out trumps with his all too palpable lies, slanderous remarks at Kamala and his fist-pumping which is not helping him or his party to take the battle into the 'enemy' lines. Poor leadership is on full display, with Trump seemingly tilting at the windmills. In contrast, Kamala has shown much grace, sense and sensibility as she speaks about issues rather than engaging with Trump in a shouting match. Trump already has the baggage of making the USA a laughing stock of the world with his open calls for violence and questioning institutions that constitute America's bedrock of democracy. As the hour of reckoning approaches, it is becoming increasingly clear that it's going to be chalk Vs cheese, and that there are no fence-sitters this time.

Avinash Godbole | Dewas

There should be important laws and regulations for the protection of lands. Such laws need to be framed and strictly enforced. Special ordinances should also be framed to protect temple lands. People's cooperation is very important for the protection of temple lands. Conservation of lands is possible if temples, their administrators and local people work together. All necessary measures regarding protection of lands can be taken by deputing specially trained personnel to protect temple lands. By recording land status and other details in digital form, illegal encroachments can be detected quickly. It is good for conservation of lands.

Protection of temple lands means protection of spiritual, cultural and social rights. Hence, it is imperative that the government, local institutions, and people work together.

Appanna Gonapa | Visakhapatnam

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Life's dilemmas: Lessons from everyday conflicts

We should recognise the value of pausing and reflecting, to determine whether our reactions to perceived insults are genuinely justified



SANJAY CHANDRA

We face conflicts and dilemmas many times in our lives. We resolve a few of those, avoiding others to avoid confrontation. We went through some fascinating times recently. We cast our votes to elect the next central government. The excitement of the crowd at the polling booth was palpable even early in the morning. There was another major event, which was at our society level. We also had elections for the governing body of our residents' welfare association. I realised that the two elections mirrored each other. New alliances were formed, and old ones were discarded. Sworn foes smiled at each other with a warmth not unlike the hot Delhi summers. There were many heartbreaks too if friends vied for the same position. Two of the prospective candidates for a position went about venting their frustration when told by well-meaning friends about the intent of the other. I suggested a mutual tete-a-tete. The conflict was resolved. I faced a dilemma as an



adolescent half a century back. One afternoon, I had an argument with a friend, which went a little overboard, and I punched him. He was taller than me and did not take kindly to my aggression. He punched me back. It did not erupt into a full-blown fist fight only because I had already rationalised his punch a little before it had connected with my soft abdomen. After all, I had started the battle; he was entitled to retaliate. Many of us hesitate to ask for personal favour, apprehensive of facing rejection. It is also a dilemma, albeit in our minds. I had no say in the allotment of the zonal

railways after the completion of our railway probation training. I did get an opportunity to express my heart's desire, when my senior asked me if I had any preference for the place of posting. I was diffident and I gave a convoluted reply, "Anywhere, though my preference would be Mughalsarai." This was a small town in my native state. He took the first part of my statement at face value. I was posted at Sealdah, the other end, and a long way from my hometown - physically, linguistically, and culturally. I understood much later in life the importance of plain speaking, however unpalatable it might be. It may cause initial bitterness, but the relationship would be stronger eventually. The self-realisation still did not give me the courage to upbraid a junior colleague for his tardiness. I chose to walk away from confrontation by not allocating him any responsibilities. I envy those who have mastered sugar-coating the bitter pill. It softens the blow, yet hits the person equally

hard. But it might even convey a wrong meaning. During a recent conversation, my wife and her friend contemplated conveying a rather difficult sentiment to another friend through a message. A small phrase was added to be polite. I felt that this changed the intent to something entirely different. They did not agree and chose not to send the message. Yet, the friend had not hesitated to upbraid another friend a few days earlier over a trivial issue. I saw conflict in the two situations, she did not. Conflicts have been a part of our lives since ages. I would not like to be the Arjun who faced the biggest challenge of his life. I am a mere mortal. I have my follies. It is not for me to preach to be perfect. I would look at the words of author Jo Coudert to give me strength, "Every life is a dilemma that must be solved by the person living it."

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



## FIRST COLUMN ALL WORK AND NO SPORTS MAKES YOU DULL

Sports are essential for achieving physical and mental balance to have wholesome life



SAKSHI SETHI

The question of whether India is overly focused on work and less on sports is a valid concern, especially in a country where academic and professional success is often prioritized over physical activities. In many Indian families, there is a strong emphasis on academics and securing stable, well-paying jobs. However, this focus often overshadows the importance of sports, which sometimes are viewed as extracurricular activities rather than potential career paths. Despite living in the 21st century, the competitive nature of academic exams, such as the IIT-JEE, NEET, IIFT and various public service exams, place enormous pressure on students to excel in academics and as a result, sports often end up taking a backseat during the crucial educational years.

There is no denying the fact that sports teach valuable life skills such as teamwork, leadership, discipline and resilience, which are beneficial in both personal as well as professional life. Today, if we look back, India's journey in the Olympics has been marked by significant achievements, challenges and a growing presence in various sports disciplines be it archery, weightlifting, badminton, athletics and the list goes on and on. Increasing media coverage of a diverse range of sports beyond cricket has helped in promoting other sports. Moreover, sports have proved to be a powerful tool for promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. They bridge divides, foster understanding, and create opportunities for personal and collective growth as can be seen in the 2024 Olympics being held in Paris. Enhancing sports in India



requires a multi-faceted approach that involves government support, private-sector investment, grassroots development and public engagement.

By addressing these areas, India can unlock its vast potential in sports, leading to greater national pride, improved public health and economic benefits which even include initiatives to encourage female participation thereby providing equal opportunities, safety assurance and challenging societal norms that restrict women's involvement in sports. Moreover, sports can be adapted for individuals of all abilities thereby promoting inclusivity for people with disabilities. This will help not only in breaking down barriers but ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate.

Sports can be a tool for conflict resolution, providing a neutral ground where individuals or groups in conflict can engage constructively. It even teaches important life skills such as leadership, resilience and teamwork. These skills are transferable to other areas of life, contributing to personal development and societal harmony. Programs that use sports for peacebuilding have been successful in areas of conflict around the world. International sports events such as the Olympics often serve as platforms for diplomacy and dialogue between nations, helping to ease tensions and promote global peace. While there has traditionally been a strong focus on academics and work in India, there is a growing recognition of the importance of sports.

However, for sports to gain equal footing, there needs to be a cultural shift, increased investment and better integration of sports into daily life. By promoting a balanced approach that values both work and sports, India can and will foster a healthier, more active and well-rounded society. Achieving this balance involves effective time management, prioritization and a shift in mindset that values both mental and physical well-being.

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

# How feasible is the goal of \$5 trillion economy by 2025



B K JHA

Can India truly sustain such high growth rates, or do these figures oversimplify the complex realities of its socio-political landscape?



In any discussion involving economists, a common saying goes, "When six economists gather and deliberate, there will be seven views." This adage humorously reflects the diversity of opinions that often arises in economic discourse. While economists are inclined to project growth through metrics like GDP, inflation, and depreciation rates, these projections sometimes oversimplify the complexities of real-world politics and societal dynamics. Indeed, even the most well-reasoned economic forecasts can falter when confronted with the unpredictable nature of political realities and the broader socio-economic context. Economists from the Reserve Bank of India, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, other big financial institutions, and even our government-serving prominent experts arrive at different projections of India's growth story. Going by the latest two projections, Krishnamurthy Venkata Subramanian, the former Chief Economic Adviser to the Narendra Modi government and current Executive Director for India at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) says India will be reaching a \$55 trillion economy by 2047. Subramanian's projection of a \$55 trillion economy appears optimistic, especially when juxtaposed with Ernst & Young's prediction of \$26 trillion by 2047. At this point, it is difficult to say whose projection is realistic given the very dynamic nature of the Indian economy where several socio-economic and political forces are at work simultaneously. Subramanian has made a bold claim in his new book, *India @100: Envisioning Tomorrow's Economic Powerhouse*. Released recently by Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal at a Special Session organized by ASSOCHAM in New Delhi, the book envisions India reaching a \$55 trillion economy by 2047. Subramanian's proposition, while ambitious, is grounded in a comprehensive analysis of India's economic trajectory and the policies required to sustain high growth rates. It is not difficult to find the economic rationale behind such an ambitious projection, considering India's historical inflation rates, currency depre-

“SINCE 2014, NEW FIRM CREATION IN INDIA HAS SURGED, ESTABLISHING THE COUNTRY AS THE THIRD-LARGEST ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM GLOBALLY. ENTREPRENEURSHIP NOT ONLY DRIVES PRODUCTIVITY IN NEW FIRMS BUT ALSO COMPELS INCUMBENT FIRMS TO INNOVATE”

ciation, and recent economic policies. He rightly emphasizes that achieving this target hinges on maintaining a real growth rate of 8% and an inflation rate of around 5%.

Historically, the depreciation of the Indian rupee against the dollar has averaged between 3% and 3.5%, primarily due to India's higher inflation rates. Subramanian notes that before the adoption of inflation targeting in 2016, India's inflation averaged above 7%, necessitating higher depreciation rates. However, with inflation targeting and subsequent economic stability, India's inflation rate has moderated to around 5%, even amid global economic shocks like COVID-19 and the Ukraine war. The rule of 72—a simple formula to estimate the doubling time of an investment—to project India's economic growth may have some limitations. Subramanian posits that if India's real growth rate remains at 7% and inflation at 5%, the nominal growth rate in rupee terms would be 12%. Accounting for a historical depreciation rate of 3%, the dollar-denominated growth rate would be around 9%, doubling the economy every eight years. This would place India's GDP at \$26 trillion by 2047. However, Subramanian argues that with improved inflation targeting, resulting in lower inflation and depreciation rates, India could achieve a nominal growth rate of 13% in rupee terms and 12% in dollar terms. This would lead to the economy doubling every six years, reaching the \$55 trillion mark by 2047.

To many economists and experts, these projections seem unreasonable as it is very difficult to predict 20 years of macroeconomic environment and political realities. Political stability would be a growth driver certainly but if India's current stable coalition

government loses its strength the entire economic journey would face a difficult path. Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal may disagree as while releasing the book launch, he also emphasized that the target appears realistic due to the current political stability in India. He noted that even in a coalition government, the ability to make bold decisions has been a key factor in driving economic reforms. Goyal highlighted that political stability, particularly with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) maintaining a dominant position, provides a conducive environment for long-term economic planning. He pointed out that most seats the BJP lost in the last general elections were by margins of less than 30,000 votes, suggesting a strong underlying support base. This political backdrop, according to Goyal, is essential for sustaining bold economic reforms over the next two decades and beyond. It is widely admitted that achieving these ambitious targets requires sound economic policies, particularly those that promote formalization, innovation, and entrepreneurship. India's informal sector, which constitutes a significant portion of the economy, is far less productive than the formal sector. Enhancing formalization through digital infrastructure and regulatory reforms could substantially boost productivity.

Additionally, the importance of entrepreneurship and innovation. Since 2014, new firm creation in India has surged, establishing the country as the third-largest entrepreneurial ecosystem globally. Entrepreneurship not only drives productivity in new firms but also compels incumbent firms to innovate, leading to overall economic growth. A key pillar of Subramanian's vision is ethical wealth creation, which he believes

is essential for fostering a large, prosperous middle class. He refutes the notion that wealth creation and employment are opposing forces, citing examples from his personal experiences and the broader economy. Wealth creators, he argues, generate significant employment and pay higher wages, contributing to overall economic welfare. Emphasis on ethical wealth creation stems from past instances of crony capitalism, which stifled economic growth and led to systemic inefficiencies. By promoting a transparent and fair business environment, India can ensure that wealth creation benefits a broader spectrum of society, thereby enhancing social and economic inclusion. The claim of a \$55 trillion economy may be viewed by some economists as hypothetical, given the complexities of global and domestic economic landscapes.

Nevertheless, India's inherent economic strengths and resilience could indeed support the realization of the India@100 vision. Despite the slowing pace of globalization, geo-political tensions, and other unseen negative forces could pose significant threats to India's growth trajectory. Nonetheless, with the right policies, particularly those that encourage domestic investment and exports, India can navigate these challenges and sustain high growth rates, controlled inflation, prudent currency management, and robust economic policies that foster innovation, formalization, and ethical wealth creation. As India stands on the cusp of a new economic era, these pillars will be crucial in shaping its journey toward becoming a global economic powerhouse.

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

## Building the foundation for the future: The struggles of adolescent girls in slums

Despite government initiatives, the young girls are often deprived of education facilities as they have to work and shoulder domestic responsibilities

In narrow lanes of Baba Ramdev Nagar, a slum in Jaipur, 12-year-old Pooja (name changed) cradles her three-year-old brother while her mother Sharda cooks nearby. Pooja obediently runs back and forth fetching water and other necessities as her mother instructs.



HARSHALI NEELKANTH ZALKE

In contrast, her 8-year-old brother plays undisturbed. The scene takes a poignant turn when a friend of Pooja's, returning from school, stops by. Pooja's eyes light up as they discuss school, revealing her longing for education. But when asked why Pooja isn't attending school, Sharda interjects, "If she goes to school, who will look after the children?" Pooja's dreams seem to slip further from her grasp.

Sharda and her husband, daily wage labourers, are among the many families in Baba Ramdev Nagar, a slum of over 500 people. Predominantly inhabited by Scheduled Castes and Tribes, including Lohars (blacksmiths), Jogis, Kalbeliyas, and daily labourers, these families have migrated from remote rural areas of Rajasthan, driven by the hope of better employment opportunities in

the city. While some families have settled permanently, others migrate seasonally, depending on the availability of work.

However, the migration process and the economic hardships it brings take the greatest toll on the education of children, particularly girls. The struggle to make ends meet often forces families to prioritize immediate survival over long-term investments like education.

In these situations, girls bear the brunt of the burden. The economic strain on the household disproportionately affects girls compared to boys, stunting not only their education but also their physical and mental development. Another story echoes Pooja's in this slum—14-year-old

Asha (name changed), the eldest of four siblings. With her parents working as scrap dealers, Asha is left to care for her siblings and manage the household. On days when her mother cannot work, Asha steps in. Despite her strong desire to learn, Asha hasn't seen the inside of a classroom since fifth grade.

Her education, like that of many girls in the slum, halted as she took on responsibilities at home. An elderly resident, Kanti, questions, "If the girl goes to school, who will take care of the house and the younger siblings?" Yet, she remains silent on why these responsibilities aren't placed on the boys. Akhilesh Mishra, a social worker who has been active in the slum for eight years, points out, "There is



still a lack of awareness about educating girls in urban slums like Baba Ramdev Nagar. Economic challenges and a lack of social consciousness about the importance of education lead parents to prioritize income over

schooling, often dragging their children into child labor." He adds that although the government has launched programs to promote girls' education, the distance girls in Baba Ramdev Nagar maintain from school prevents

them from benefiting. IndiaSpend's report highlights a concerning trend: while primary school dropout rates for girls in 2021-22 were 1.35%, this figure jumped to 12.25% at the secondary level. The report underscores the urgent need for not just policy implementation but also grassroots awareness. Societal awareness is critical to ensuring girls' education is valued as highly as boys'. The struggle for education is most pronounced for adolescent girls, particularly in urban poverty-stricken areas like Baba Ramdev Nagar. Though some urban areas are beginning to reduce barriers to education, the girls in this slum continue to fight for their right to learn.

In Baba Ramdev Nagar, the pursuit of education for girls like Pooja and Asha faces formidable obstacles. Economic hardships and entrenched societal norms prioritize immediate survival over long-term education, leaving many girls out of school. Despite government initiatives, the gap in educational attainment remains wide due to factors such as child labor and domestic responsibilities disproportionately shouldered by girls. Addressing these challenges is crucial for breaking the cycle of poverty and securing a brighter future for these young girls.

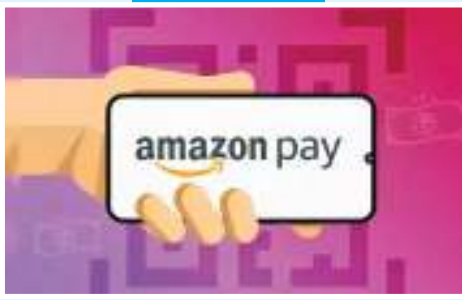
The writer is a grassroots worker from Jodhpur, Rajasthan. Charkha Features

IN BRIEF



Alembic Pharma gets USFDA nod for generic drug

Alembic Pharmaceuticals on Monday said it has received approval from the US health regulator to market a generic medication used to treat moderate-to-severe psoriasis of the scalp.



Amazon Pay's UPI offering crosses 100-mn mark

Amazon Pay on Monday said its UPI offering is witnessing widespread adoption across the country with over 100 million customers using the service.



Aurobindo, Glenmark, FDC recall products in US market

Drug makers Aurobindo Pharma, Glenmark and FDC are recalling products in the US due to manufacturing issues, as per the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA).

Taxpayers without valid bank a/c to be barred from filing GSTR-1

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

GST taxpayers who do not furnish bank account details to GST authorities will be barred from filing outward supply return GSTR-1 from September 1, GST Network (GSTN) has said in an advisory.



As per GST Rule 10A, a taxpayer is required to furnish details of a valid bank account within a period of 30 days from the date of grant of registration, or before furnishing the details of outward supplies of goods or services or both in Form GSTR-1.

The GST Council in its meeting in July last year, had approved amendment to Rule 10A to strengthen the registration process and to effectively deal with the menace of fake and fraudulent registrations in goods and services tax (GST).

As per the amendment, a registered taxpayer was required to furnish the details of bank account having his name and PAN within 30 days of grant of registration or before filing of statement of outward supplies in Form GSTR-1/IFF (invoice furnishing facility), whichever is earlier.

In the advisory, the GSTN asked all the taxpayers who have not yet furnished the details of a valid bank account to add their bank account information in their registration details by visiting the GST portal.

"...in absence of a valid bank account details in GST registration, you will not be able to file GSTR-1 or IFF as the case may be, from August 2024 return period," the GSTN advisory added

RBI to launch ULI for flow of credit to small, rural borrowers

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Buoyed by the success of digitalisation of financial services, the Reserve Bank will be launching Unified Lending Interface (ULI), a platform to ensure frictionless flow of credit, especially for smaller and rural borrowers.

Last year, the Reserve Bank had launched a pilot of a technology platform which enables frictionless credit in two states.

"From now on, we propose to call it (platform) the Unified Lending Interface (ULI). This platform facilitates seamless and consent-based flow of digital information, including even land records of various states, from multiple data service providers to lenders," said RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das at the RBI@90 Global Conference on 'Digital Public Infrastructure and Emerging Technologies' here.

He emphasised that the 'new trinity' of JAM-UPI-ULI will be a revolutionary step forward in India's digital infrastructure

banks under the guidance of the Reserve Bank.

While initial participants on the UPI platform were



time taken for credit appraisal, especially for smaller and rural borrowers. The ULI architecture has common and standardised APIs, designed for a 'plug and play' approach to ensure digital access to information from diverse sources.

This reduces the complexity of multiple technical integrations and enables borrowers to get the benefit of seamless delivery of credit, quicker turnaround time without requiring extensive documentation, he said.

Das said by

banks, non-bank third party app providers and use of QR codes have all combined in popularising UPI. It has since emerged as a robust, cost-effective and portable retail payment system and is attracting active interest across the globe, Das said.

He said the ULI will cut the digitising access to the customer's financial and non-financial data that otherwise resided in disparate silos, ULI is expected to cater to large unmet demand for credit across various sectors, particularly for agricultural and MSME borrowers.

SENSEX RALLIES 600 PTS

Markets extend winning momentum on rate cut hopes

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty surged nearly 1 per cent on Monday, propelled by intense buying in metal, IT and consumer durable stocks amid hopes that the US Federal Reserve will start cutting interest rates soon.

Renewed Foreign fund inflows and buying in frontline stocks HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries further bolstered investor sentiment, traders said.

Rising for the fifth straight day, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 611.90 points or 0.75 per cent to settle at 81,698.11. During the day, it surged 738.06 points or 0.91 per cent to 81,824.27.

A total of 2,189 stocks advanced, while 1,860 declined and 148 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The NSE Nifty soared



187.45 points or 0.76 per cent to 25,010.60, registering gains for the eighth session in a row.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, HCL Technologies, NTPC, Bajaj Finserv, Tech Mahindra, JSW Steel, Titan, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Steel, Larsen & Toubro and Tata Consultancy Services were the biggest gainers.

On the other hand, Kotak Mahindra Bank, IndusInd Bank, Maruti and Hindustan Unilever were among the lag-

gards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.66 per cent and the smallcap index soared 0.20 per cent.

"US Fed has signalled a rate cut in September, reflecting in the decline in US treasury yields and the dollar index, which has led to a rally in global markets despite there being no indication of the size of cuts. Indian markets hit a new high led by a change in FII stance to positive from negative, along

with continued strong DII inflows.

"Although the overall trend was positive, large caps outperformed on account of healthy earnings and relatively fair valuation compared to broader markets. IT, Realty, FMCG and Consumption gained on account of improved outlook," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Among the indices, metal surged 2.03 per cent, realty (1.69 per cent), consumer durables (1.43 per cent), IT (1.37 per cent), tech (1.11 per cent) and commodities (0.91 per cent).

Telecommunication and services were the laggards.

In Asian markets, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory while Seoul and Tokyo ended lower.

European markets were trading mostly lower. The US markets ended with significant gains on Friday.

India's economic trajectory fantastic: Infosys CEO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India offers a "huge opportunity" for Infosys, CEO Salil Parekh said, noting that the country's "fantastic" economic trajectory has set it apart from the rest of the world.

The Bengaluru-headquartered IT company has clocked "strong growth" in its India business in the first quarter of this fiscal year, although revenue from the market is relatively small.

"India is a huge opportunity... The growth that we are seeing for different types of work across Indian environment is massive, and we are very much part of making sure that we engage both with private sector companies and with government agencies where we can support, for example, the government's vision on digital

India... "So, we are helping build some of the building blocks for that digital India going ahead," Parekh said.

Stating that the company had been deeply engaged with government projects, he said, "Some of the work we have done on income tax system (tax filing portal developed for Income Tax Department) is extremely well received."

Infosys beat expectations with its Q1 report card this time as it reported 7 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 6,368 crore and raised its growth outlook for the full financial year. In the year-ago period, the company had clocked a profit of Rs 5,945 crore. For the current fiscal year, the company raised revenue growth guidance to 3-4 per cent from 1-3 per cent projected earlier.



Capitalmind gets Sebi's nod to launch mutual fund

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investment management company Capitalmind Financial Services on Monday said it has received in-principle approval from market regulator Sebi to launch a mutual fund business.

As a portfolio manager, Capitalmind currently manages over Rs 2,200 crore in assets under management (AUM) for more than 1,150 clients, boasting a strong annual client retention rate of 98 per cent.

Since its inception, the Bengaluru-based company has doubled its AUM every financial year, driven by robust portfolio performance and steady inflows. This growth has resulted in wealth creation exceeding Rs

1,000 crore for clients in less than seven years.

"Receiving Sebi's in-principle approval for a mutual fund is both an honour and a privilege. We are grateful for this opportunity and remain committed to building long-term wealth while maintaining the highest standards of regulatory compliance," Deepak Shenoy, CEO of Capitalmind, said.

"We look forward to establishing Capitalmind Asset Management Company to meet Sebi's final approval requirements," he added.

As of March 31, 2024, India has 74.6 crore PAN card holders, while unique mutual fund investors number just 4.5 crore, indicating significant untapped potential.

Tata Group to employ 4,000 women from Uttarakhand

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Tata Group will give jobs to 4,000 women from Uttarakhand at its plants in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

Its Chief Human Resource Officer Ranjan Bandopadhyay has written a letter to this effect to the state planning department, an official release said here on Monday.

The recruitment process will begin soon, it said.

Tata Electronics Pvt Ltd will appoint 4,000 women candidates from Uttarakhand at its plants in Hosur in Tamil Nadu and Kolar in Karnataka under the NPS and NATS programmes, the release said.

GDP growth to decline to 7.1 pc for June qtr: SBI economists

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Economists at the country's largest lender SBI on Monday joined other watchers forecasting a slip in the economic growth and estimated India's real GDP growth to come at 7.1 per cent for the June quarter.

The economists said the growth in gross value added (GVA) will fall below 7 per cent to 6.7-6.8 per cent for the April-June period this fiscal when compared to the year-ago period.

"As per our 'Nowcasting Model', the forecasted GDP growth for Q1 FY25 would be 7.0-7.1 per cent, and GVA is at 6.7-6.8 per cent with a downward bias," the economists said.

It can be noted that the real GDP growth had come at 7.8 per cent in the June quarter last year and the preceding March quarter. A slew of analysts have been pointing to a moderation in economic activity in the quarter.

The economists said the growth in gross value added (GVA) will fall below 7 per cent to 6.7-6.8 per cent for the April-June period this fiscal when compared to the year-ago period.

The report also said that given the uncertain global growth outlook and the soften-

ing inflation, there is a space for monetary policy easing.

The SBI economists said its growth estimates are based on 41 lead indicators, and pointed to a moderation in sales growth and an inching up in staffing costs for manufacturing companies.

"Against this backdrop, profit margins have declined, and this will pull down manufacturing growth," it added.

If one were to exclude the banking, finance and insurance companies, corporates reported only 5 per cent revenue growth and a degrowth of 1 per cent in operating profits in Q1 FY25, it said. SBI economists have, however, retained their 7.5 per cent growth estimate for the fiscal year 2024-25, which is higher than the 7.2 per cent made by the RBI.



Call, messaging apps must comply with rules: COAI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom operators expect internet calling and messaging apps like WhatsApp, Google Meet, and Telegram to comply with rules in the same manner as all service providers do, industry body COAI said on Monday.

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) -- whose members include Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, among others -- said it is misleading to demand to exclude over-the-top (OTT) communication apps from the Telecommunications Act

2023 as they are subject to other regulations because various non-sectoral rules apply on telecom operators as well. "COAI would like to state that the 'Security of the Country' is of utmost importance and in this regard, all communication ser-



vice providers, including OTT-based communication services, should adhere to the requisite directives of the

country as done by the Telecom Service Providers," COAI General Secretary Kochhar said. He said that telecom operators have invested heavily in setting up the infrastructure for lawful interception and monitoring. "However, despite these investments, the unregulated application-based communications services completely bypass this apparatus, which is a big security threat to the nation," Kochhar said.

TO BOOST DELEVERAGING, GROWTH Vedanta readies Rs 30,000-cr war chest

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Anil Agarwal-led Vedanta Ltd has prepared a war chest of Rs 30,000 crore with recent funds raised through a qualified institutional placement (QIP), offer for sale (OFS) and dividend to pursue further deleveraging and growth, sources said.

Proceeds from the Rs 8,500-crore QIP of Vedanta Ltd, HZL's OFS of Rs 3,200 crore, and Rs 5,100 crore from the second interim dividend, coupled with existing cash reserves of Rs 13,000 crore, will lead to the creation of a Rs 30,000-crore war chest

after the company receives all the funds, sources said.

Vedanta may deploy this war chest for accelerated deleveraging of its balance sheet, improving capital structure, development of its transformational projects paving the way for its near-term USD 10-billion dollar EBITDA target and pursuing inorganic opportunities, an analyst said.

Vedanta continued to deliver strong quarterly numbers. For the first quarter, profit after tax grew 54 per cent year-on-year (YoY) and more than doubled on a quarter-on-quarter basis to Rs 5,095 crore.



The company recorded highest-ever alumina production at Lanjigarh and mined metal product at the Zinc India unit. It brought down the overall cost of production

by 20 per cent YoY due to structural changes and other initiatives. The mining major's debt stood at Rs 6,130 crore as of June 30. The proceeds generated

from the private placement of non-convertible debentures as well as promoter stake sale between February and June (cumulatively 4.4 per cent) will also contribute to the debt reduction at the group-level in the near-term.

A combination of strategic stake sale, debt reduction and optimizing operational efficiencies indicates Vedanta's move towards deleveraging and generating free cash flows is on track, sources added.

Two major events -- the proposed demerger and a series of transformational projects -- is expected to help the company continue this trend.





## Yudhra teases with Siddhant's haunting, blood-stained look

Excel Entertainment's upcoming action thriller *Yudhra* has already been making headlines and now the excitement has reached new heights with the release of striking new posters featuring Siddhant Chaturvedi and Malavika Mohanan. The newly unveiled posters have left fans buzzing with anticipation, eager to see what the film has in store. The solo poster showcases Siddhant in an intense, never-before-seen-before action film, covered in blood, exuding raw energy and determination. His fierce expression hints at the high-octane action that *Yudhra* promises. The second poster adds to the intrigue, featuring the fresh pairing of Siddhant and Malavika Mohanan, both looking intense and ready for action. The chemistry between the two is palpable, leaving audiences craving more. Being the next directorial by Ravi Udaywar after *MOM*, *Yudhra* marks a significant milestone in Siddhant's career as he takes on a role like never before. The actor underwent rigorous training in mixed martial arts (MMA), kickboxing and jiu-jitsu to prepare for his action-heavy role. This dedication is evident in the posters, where Siddhant's transformation into a formidable action hero is on full display. The film marks

Malavika's foray into Hindi cinema. Produced by Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar under the banner of Excel Entertainment, *Yudhra* introducing Malavika Mohanan, whose presence in the film is already making waves. Directed by Ravi Udaywar, the film is scheduled to release on September 20th, 2024 and touted to be one of the most anticipated action thrillers of the year.



Bhumi Pednekar, Bhushan Kumar, Shaheer Sheikh, Jimmy Shergill, Jackky Bhagnani, Rakul Preet Singh, Tahira Kashyap, Rhea Chakraborty and more attended the success bash of *Phir Aayi Hasseen Dilruba* hosted by writer-producer Kanika Dhillon at her residence.

## Kritika Kamra has 'no regrets' rejecting a big project

Kritika Kamra, known for her role in *Gyaraah Gyaraah*, is gaining attention in the online world with her upcoming project *Matka King*. Nevertheless, despite making her feature film debut in 2018 with *Mitron*, Kamra has only been seen in one more film, *Bheed* (2023). She clarifies that she carefully selects her film roles, preferring theatrical releases that provide significant and purposeful roles. The actor then revealed how she turned down a movie with a famous actor that ended up being a huge success. Kamra reveals, "Yes, it has happened a couple of times and one time the film went on to become a big hit. I don't know what it did for the actress who played the part I was in talks for." "I don't regret it all," she shares. She further adds, "It was a few years back and it was something opposite a mainstream actor and I thought that the part didn't have much to do with it. I could have thought of it as a bad decision, but I don't look at it that way. I wouldn't have been proud of it."

## Amy Jackson and Ed Westwick exchange vows

Amy Jackson tied the knot with *Gossip Girl* star Ed Westwick in a romantic wedding on the Amalfi Coast of Italy. The couple posted about their wedding ceremony and numerous pictures and videos from their big day have gone viral on social media. The couple enjoyed a romantic first dance as husband and wife, and we couldn't help but express our joy and admiration. Discussing the same, a fan page dedicated to the couple posted some romantic photos and videos of them, focusing on their initial dance. Ed Westwick wore a formal white shirt, tuxedo, black bowtie, and pants, while Amy Jackson stunned in a white gown with an open back. The couple can be observed gazing intently into each other's eyes as they dance together following their wedding. At a certain moment, Ed gently embraces his wife and gives her a kiss, causing the onlookers to cheer for them. Certain viewers also noticed that the wedding scene of Ed in *Gossip Girl* with Blair, played by Leighton Meester, had a resemblance. In a different video, the newlywed couple appear very much in love as they dance together.



## FUN

### ARCHIE

### CALVIN AND HOBBS

### GARFIELD

### REALITY CHECK

### SPEED BUMP

### CROSSWORD

#### JUNIOR CROSSWORD 831

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

### GINGER MEGGS

### SUDOKU

Yesterday's solution

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

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

### ACROSS

- Underwater transport
- A breakfast meat
- Steals
- A large farm building
- Cross a river on this
- Not married
- A stringed instrument
- Attempted
- Reflection in a mirror
- Scientific study of the stars and planets

### DOWN

- A sore in your mouth
- To look after something for someone
- Go back to a place
- With no clothes on else's children
- Church spire
- An unpowered aeroplane
- These grow on fingers
- A warning sound
- A potter's oven



## HARMONIOUS BLEND OF LOVE AND LOYALTY WITH HEY KANHA HEY GOPALA

TEJAL SINHA

It is the season when Hindu devotees immerse themselves in devotion to the divine deities once more! On Monday, we all observed Krishna Janmashtami and to add to the festivities, the famous singer and Padma Shri awardee Kailash Kher launched his new devotional song *Hey Kanha Hey Gopala*. However, don't expect it to be a typical release; this one is filled with spirituality, innovation and a hint of Kailash's distinct charm.

"*Hey Kanha Hey Gopala* was composed during our trip to Mathura and Vrindavan, during which our band Kailasa travelled for a concert," begins the *Teri Deewani* singer. During their visit to the temples and ashrams, a huge crowd eagerly anticipated meeting the crew.

*Hey Kanha Hey Gopala* is a deep musical tribute that transports listeners into the peaceful and holy worlds of worship. The soothing and spiritually uplifting soundscape created by Kailash Kher's emotive vocals, combined with a delicate mix of keys, flute and synthesiser, creates a complex auditory experience. The piece elegantly builds up to a grand

climax, capturing the profound journey of love and dedication, and ultimately leaves the audience feeling spiritually fulfilled. "The emotions we experienced back then are reflected in this song. How can we humanise the splendour of God? How can we humanise his wondrous shape? And then, how can we humanise the meadow, the trail, the immaculate physique—everything that has been inscribed within us? Just as the lyrics read, *Jamuna teere sameer, Thodi mand mand chale, Brij ki raj mein bhi sugandh, Mere govind ki mile.*" Overwhelmed during his visit to meet Kanha, the *Chand Sifarish* singer further recalls, "We were surrounded by a large crowd as we had gone to worship Kanha! I was so overwhelmed. I was all smiles. I felt God's presence in the form of my fans." He believes that, be it at Janmashtami or any other festival, people generally sing for the divine with a wish to be fulfilled. "*Bhai maangte hi rahoge kya?*" (Will you just keep asking?) he asserts. *Hey Kanha Hey Gopala*, he says, is a gratitude song. "We need to not always plead to God but rather thank God that we live a beautiful life. You are alive on earth; that is a great blessing. Your life is the biggest blessing. So we always compose songs for gratitude, for God and to describe their beauty."

An ardent devotional Kailash goes on to explain that just as the divine plants a thought in our hearts, he also provides us with a melody for that thought. Throughout the procedure, we also educate ourselves on sound

waves. "I don't have formal training, nor do I listen to any music. I simply focus on my music and strive to get better. I enjoy listening to classical and folk music. Listening repeatedly has made us grow up and that's why the music is shaped so perfectly. It's not about the music sounding like others, but keeping its distinctiveness." As the chat nears its conclusion, he signs off with great enthusiasm, stating, "Every time I feel inspired to create a song, either for God or any other topic, it is God who provides them with the inner inspiration and the words. This is how

all singers and composers aim to incorporate new elements into their songs." As Krishna Janmashtami dawns, let *Hey Kanha Hey Gopala* by Kailash Kher become the song that uplifts your spiritual path, connecting you to the eternal love and devotion of Lord Krishna.

Making Janmashtami even more devotional, Padma Shri Kailash Kher has released his devotional track *Hey Kanha Hey Gopala*. *The Pioneer* got an opportunity to speak to the ardent devotee as he took us on a devotional ride



## Of beauty, purpose and power of representation

AARTI SREENATH

Arshi Ghosh, who was at the Miss International Queen 2024 pageant, representing India, speaks to *The Pioneer* about her humble beginnings, representing India globally and more around it

Arshi Ghosh, the dazzling Miss Transqueen India 2023, represented India at the Miss International Queen 2024 pageant. Held annually in Pattaya, Thailand, this prestigious event is the world's largest and most esteemed pageant for transgender women, offering a global platform for beauty, talent, and advocacy.

For Arshi, this opportunity was not just a dream fulfilled but a testament to her unwavering determination and the resilience that has defined her journey.

Her ascent to this pinnacle began earlier this year in New Delhi, where she secured the coveted Miss Transqueen India title. Reflecting on her victory, she describes it as "the world to me," capturing the magnitude of what it means to represent her country on such a prominent stage. The national pageant, powered by the Pride Plaza group of hotels, was a fierce competition, with contestants from across India vying for the crown. Ella Dev Verma and Victoria Taying, who secured the first and second runner-up positions, respectively, were also standout contenders and the event was judged by a panel of seven distinguished experts.

Arshi's journey to this moment has been one of

profound self-discovery and purpose. As a child, she was captivated by the world of beauty, but it was only as she grew older that she recognised the deeper significance of pageantry. "As a child, it was all about beauty. But as I grew up, I realised there's a lot more to it," she recalls. This realisation spurred her to follow pageant stories even before her transition, finding inspiration and motivation to stay focused on becoming the best version of herself.

Her path to Miss International Queen 2024 has not been without its obstacles. She speaks candidly about the financial challenges she has faced in pursuing her pageantry dreams. "People don't realise that pageantry is expensive," she explains, shedding light on the difficulties of arranging funds for both national and international competitions. Despite these challenges, she remains deeply grateful to the generous individuals who have supported her, enabling her to chase her dreams and represent her country on a global platform.

For her, participating in Miss International Queen 2024 was about more than just personal achievement—it's about breaking barriers and challenging stereotypes. "Just by standing on this platform, I inspire and give wings to thousands of dreams," she says, recognising the powerful impact of her presence. Her mission is clear: to bring the transgender community into the mainstream through education. She is committed to empowering her community while also sensitising society to be more understanding and accepting.

As she stepped onto the international stage, she felt a profound sense of fulfillment. The pressure of representing her country initially weighed heavily on her, but after arriving in Thailand and beginning the rounds, she feels like she is "living the dream life." This experience is not just about her—it's about paving the way for thousands of other trans girls in India and around the world who see in her the possibility of their own dreams coming true.

Navigating the stress of such a high-stakes competition is no small feat, but she maintains her mental well-being by focusing on the joy of each moment. "There will be many rounds and you might not be good at some," she acknowledges. However, she believes it's essential to move on and embrace each experience fully. Her approach to the competition is not just about winning—it's about enjoying the journey and growing through it.

She is also keenly aware of society's often flawed perceptions of beauty. Reflecting on her own experiences, she notes how dramatically perceptions can shift—from being labelled an "ugly" boy to being celebrated as a "beautiful queen." Yet, for her, true beauty transcends physical appearance. "Beauty isn't only about how you look," she asserts. "It's the light you bring to the world, the love that you share and how you make others feel."



Top skin and hair care concerns to keep an eye on!

Clear skin and luscious hair is the ultimate beauty dream but the onset of monsoon literally pours water down those dreams. Although all age groups, whether it's millennials or Gen Zs, are actively putting in an increased amount of thought into their personal grooming needs, the high ambient humidity and excessive sweat brought on by monsoon presents new skin and hair care problems. With the skin and hair becoming more oily, people become vulnerable to hyperpigmentation, increased acne, excessive hair loss and frizz-riddled hair, among the other ones.

That said, there are innumerable treatments and products available in the market that are specially formulated to target all these concerns. But the problem is, individuals actively experiment with different products without even understanding the seasonal changes and the associated concerns it presents. Against this backdrop, Clinikally conducted a survey to uncover the top skin and hair problems faced by Gen Zs and millennials during monsoon.

Talking about the survey, Dr. Anindita Sarkar, chief medical officer (Clinikally and AAYNA Clinics) said, "With the influx of beauty products, individuals continue to use 'one-size-fits-all' products, often forgetting about the uniqueness of their skin and hair."

Oily skin, pigmentation, and acne are some of the common skincare challenges in monsoon. The onset of monsoon brings forth a sense of relief from scorching summer heat but the surging humidity in the atmosphere makes the skin more oily, making it even more challenging for individuals with oily, acne-prone skin to maintain skin health.

Out of 10,500 total responses collected, 30.18% users reported witnessing an increase in pigmentation issues. This is primarily because people often neglect the importance of SPF during the monsoon, but the reality is the sun rays may hide behind the clouds but its effect on your skin is still potent. At the same time, pigmentation also leads to high frustration levels due to the unavailability of right products. The solution is simple, consult dermatologists who can recommend the right product, preferably

something that is infused with vitamin C, or niacinamide.

Acne breakouts and scars continue to remain a common concern amidst the heavy rains. This is indicated by 12.97% votes. Despite the advancements in skincare products, acne breakouts plague a lot of people, primarily because majority of the products fail to take into account its root cause, ranging from hormonal imbalance, diet, stress, to environmental triggers. As a result, it becomes imperative to understand these triggers before jumping onto the solution.

Damaged and sensitive skin is another prevalent issue, with 10.63% individuals reporting their skin to be irritated and itchy. These common complaints of redness and irritation are typically associated with sensitivity issues as individuals are often prone to severe reactions either because of the wet weather or certain products. In tandem, there is an urgent demand for hypoallergenic and gentle formulations that minimise the damaged skin barrier by rejuvenating the skin altogether.

Monsoon means higher sebum production and oily scalp which translates into dandruff and hair loss.

If you consider your hair as the epitome of your beauty, it is safe to assume that hair concerns significantly affect you. You're not alone in this journey, as 12.39% individuals have noted a drastic increase in hair fall and loss, especially as we move towards the wetter months. Whether caused by increased humidity, genetics, pollutants, or other factors, hair loss is a common challenge and can be addressed by using the right products recommended by expert dermatologists.

Apart from hair loss, 6.41% individuals have also complained about itchy and irritated scalp and 4.63% about dandruff respectively. The humid weather conditions worsen issues associated with dandruff and itchiness, as the scalp becomes riddled with excessive buildup of product, dirt, and oil. It is best to adopt a balanced approach to target both these symptoms and effects. In addition, 2.44% respondents also highlighted their discomfort over damaged and frizzy hair, underlying the need to curb the usage of heat styling tools and chemical treatments.

Despite the advancements in skincare products, acne breakouts plague a lot of people, primarily because majority of the products fail to take into account its root cause.

# Focus on Suryakumar, Shreyas and Sarfaraz in Buchi Babu meet

PTI ■ COIMBATORE

India dasher Suryakumar Yadav will turn up for Mumbai in their Buchi Babu contest against TNCA XI, beginning here on Tuesday, with an aim to get his Test career back on track. Shreyas Iyer, also part of Mumbai's squad, too will be looking to make a statement in the pre-season event, having last played a Test in February. The star-studded Mumbai side will be captained by Sarfaraz Khan, who too will be jostling for space in a full strength Test squad when the home season begins next month despite a promising beginning against England earlier this year.

The likes of Virat Kohli, K L Rahul and Rishabh Pant, who were not available for different reasons over course of the five games against England, are expected to be available for the two Test series against Bangladesh beginning September 19 in Chennai. The centre of attention in the round three of the Buchi Babu match undoubtedly will be Suryakumar, who recently led India to victory in his first series as T20 skipper. Not in the team's ODI plans for the



moment, the 33-year-old remains determined to play in all three formats. His sole Test appearance came against Australia in February 2023. Since then, he has continued to flourish in white-ball cricket before taking up the T20 International captaincy duties for the Men in Blue. Effectively, the Buchi Babu

outing will be a mere warm-up for Suryakumar and others in the mix, given they all will be part of the Duleep Trophy beginning September 5. Suryakumar's last competitive outing in First-Class cricket came during the Duleep Trophy last year. Playing for West Zone, Suryakumar managed only 71

runs in four innings at an average of just 17.75, with a top score of 52, while his side, led by Priyank Panchal, lost the final to South Zone by 75 runs. Besides Surya, Sarfaraz and Shreyas will also be among the attractions in the Mumbai squad. Sarfaraz, who made his Test debut earlier this year against

England, has been promising with the bat, managing 200 runs in five innings at an average of 50.00, including three half-centuries. As for Iyer, he is yet to leave a mark in the longest format after 14 Tests, while since January 2023, he has only managed 187 runs in 12 innings at an average of only

17.00, with a top score of only 35. Therefore, while there is no headache for Sarfaraz heading into this Buchi Babu meet, the upcoming domestic season holds more significance for Iyer, who will be leading Team D in the Duleep Trophy. Mumbai's opponents TNCA XI will be led by R Sai Kishore, who was the leading wicket-taker in Ranji Trophy last season.

**TEAMS (FROM)**  
**TNCA XI:** R Sai Kishore (c), Pradosh Ranjan Paul (vc), Mokit RS Hariharan, G Ajitesh, Indrajith Baba, Boopathi Vaishna Kumar, S Lokeshwar (wk), SR Athish (wk), R Sonu Yadav, P Vidyuth, S Lakshya Jain, S Ajith Ram, G Govinth, CV Achyuth, H Trilok Nag and V Yudheeswaran.  
**MUMBAI:** Sarfaraz Khan (c), Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Akhil Herwadkar, Divyansh Saxena, Musheer Khan, Vedant Murkar, Siddhanth Adhathrao, Suryansh Shedje, Shams Mulani, Tanush Kotian, Himanshu Singh, Atharva Ankoekar, Roystan Dias, Mohit Avasthi, Sylvester Dsouza and Junaid Khan.



# Australia name fit again Darcie Brown in T20 World Cup squad, Jonassen misses out

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Pacer Darcie Brown, who has recovered from her foot injury, was on Monday named in Australia's 15-member squad for the T20 World Cup even as the defending champions left out experienced spinner Jess Jonassen. Brown, who pulled out of the tour of Bangladesh in March due to a foot injury, is now fully fit and will be joined by fellow pacer Tayla Vlaeminck. "The pace duo of Tayla and Darcie is one we've been wanting to unleash for a while and is a real point of difference for us," selection chief Shawn Flegler said. The team, which will be vying for a fourth consecutive T20 title, will be led by Alyssa Healy while Tahlia McGrath will be her deputy in the tournament beginning in the UAE on October 3.

"This is the first time in a long time we've had our entire contract list available for selection ahead of a World Cup and it's resulted in a really stable and balanced squad," Flegler said. "It's the first time Alyssa will have the reins at a World Cup and we've already seen what her and Tahlia bring from a leadership perspective, so it's exciting for them to have this opportunity to lead their country on the biggest stage," Flegler added. Left-arm spinner Sophie Molineux and Grace Harris have also recovered from their injuries. Molineux was forced to pull out of The Hundred having

suffered an acute rib fracture after being struck by a ball while batting in the off season while Harris also missed the English franchise league due to a calf injury. However, left-arm spinner Jonassen has been left out of the squad again despite being the joint highest wicket-taker for Delhi Capitals in the Women's Premier League and the third-highest wicket-taker in The Hundred earlier this month. "Jess Jonassen is again unlucky to miss out but we've been impressed with the way she's bounced back and we'll continue to monitor her form ahead of the home summer," Flegler said. She will miss a T20 World Cup for the first time since her debut in 2012, having featured in five tournament wins since then. Rising star Phoebe Litchfield will play in her first World Cup and Flegler said she will be "a real x-factor" within an experienced squad. Australia will play three T20Is against New Zealand next month in the run up to the T20 World Cup. All-rounder Heather Graham, who won't travel to the UAE, will be the only addition to the squad for the series against New Zealand.

**SQUAD:**  
 Alyssa Healy (c), Tahlia McGrath (vc), Darcie Brown, Ashleigh Gardner, Kim Garth, Grace Harris, Alana King, Phoebe Litchfield, Sophie Molineux, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland, Georgia Wareham, Tayla Vlaeminck.

# US Open 2024: Even players aren't sure who will be at their best on New York's hard courts

AP ■ NEW YORK

Tennis fans unable to decide who has the best shot at doing well at the U.S. Open have company as the year's last Grand Slam tournament is set to begin Monday. Even the players themselves aren't sure what to expect. "We've seen people, all the time, surprise us every single week, every single tournament, every Slam. Sometimes there's no rhyme or reason why someone maybe does well," said Jessica Pegula, a six-time major quarterfinalist. "Sometimes it doesn't make any sense." There is the usual uncertainty that comes in New York, thanks to the vagaries of injuries and the grind of a long season. One additional factor this time could be all of the surface-switching: Tennis at the Summer Olympics was played on courts at Roland Garros, also the French Open site. So players went from clay in

Paris to grass at Wimbledon, then back to clay, before shifting to hard courts before the U.S. Open. "It's a strange year," British player Dan Evans said. "That's for sure." Pegula, for one, handled that last transition just fine, going from the Olympics to a title at Toronto and a runner-up showing at Cincinnati. Her doubles partner in Paris, 2023 U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff, played in three Olympics events, exiting early in each, then lost her second match in Toronto and her first in Cincinnati. "Changing surfaces, it's tough, not just on your body, but mentally. ... But it's part of the job, and we'll adjust," said Tommy Paul, who won a bronze medal in doubles with Taylor Fritz for the U.S. In Paris and had a 1-2 record in Montreal and Cincinnati. "Maybe there's one player or two players that are burned out from the (Olympic) experience. But other than that, for



Sabalenka, a two-time champion at the Australian Open and runner-up to Gauff at last year's U.S. Open, "but at the end of the day, it's all about how hard are you ready to fight for it - especially on those days when you don't feel your best." Another player not at the Olympics, Frances Tiafoe, reached the Cincinnati Open title match before losing to No. 1 Jannik Sinner, whose two positive steroids tests in March came to light less than a week ago. Tiafoe, a 26-year-old from Maryland, finds the home crowds and high attention of the U.S. Open bring out his best, so he wanted to concentrate on getting ready for the site of his first Grand Slam semifinal in 2022. "It's open for a lot of guys this year, for sure. ... It's always different in a Slam. The lights are a little brighter," he said. "We'll see what ends up happening. Personally, I just like where I'm at." Then there are those such as defending U.S. Open champion Novak Djokovic, who won a gold medal at the Paris Games but didn't play a single hard-court tuneup event, or Carlos Alcaraz, the silver medalist whose only recent match on a hard court was a loss in Cincinnati.



# Lydia Ko completes Cinderella-like story by winning British Open

AP ■ ST ANDREWS (SCOTLAND)

Lydia Ko covered her face with her hands and cried tears of joy. An Olympic gold medal. Entry into the Hall of Fame. And now another major championship title - at the home of golf, no less. Summers don't come much better than that.

Ko completed what she described as a "Cinderella-like story" by breaking free from a logjam of world-class talent to win the Women's British Open by two strokes at St. Andrews on Sunday, securing a third major title - and a first in eight years. Just two weeks ago, the 27-year-old New Zealander took gold at the Olympic Games in Paris. "This is almost too good to be true," Ko said. She rolled in a left-to-right birdie putt at the storied 18th hole on the Old Course to shoot 3-under 69 - for 7 under overall - and then had to wait to finish ahead of top-ranked Nelly Korda, defending champion Lilia Vu and two-time champion Jiyai Shin. That quartet of past or present No. 1s shared the lead at one point down the stretch of an engrossing final round played mostly in cold, blustery and wet conditions before ending in sunshine. Ko was waiting on the practice putting green not far from the 18th green, doing stretches while wearing ear muffs, when Vu lined up a 20-foot putt for birdie that needed to go in to force a playoff. It came up short, and Vu

ultimately made bogey to shoot 73 and drop to 5 under alongside Korda (72), Shin (74) and also Ruoning Yin (70) in a four-way tie for second place. Ko wept in the embrace of her caddie. Ko qualified for the Hall of Fame by winning the gold medal in Paris on Aug. 10 and now has what many believe to be the ultimate prize in the sport - a major championship title at the home of golf. Ko was asked what feels better: an Olympic gold medal, her first two majors, or winning a third at St. Andrews. "It's kind of like saying, 'Do you like your mother better or your father better?'" she said, eliciting laughter from the crowd around the 18th green. "They are all special in their own way." Her last major came at the Chevron Championship in 2016. A year earlier, she won the Evian Championship as an 18-year-old prodigy. Now, she's like a veteran - and still winning trophies. Korda, seeking a second major title of a dominant 2024 containing six victories for the American, started the final round two shots back from Shin, the champion from 2008 and '12 and the overnight leader on 7 under. By her 10th hole, Korda was in the outright lead after three birdies in a four-hole stretch around the turn and before long she was two strokes clear as Shin and Vu toiled at the start of the back nine in miserable weather.

AP ■ CASTLE ROCK (US)

Adam Scott is playing in the 11th straight time, the most of any player from the International team. That wasn't much of a surprise. Neither were the six players for the American team. The BMW Championship was the final tournament for six automatic qualifiers for the U.S. And International teams who will compete Sept. 27-30 at Royal Montreal. The leading six players remained unchanged. Scottie Scheffler, Xander Schauffele, Wyndham Clark, Collin Morikawa, Patrick Cantlay and newcomer Sahithi Theegala qualified for the Americans. Sam Burns also grabbed the sixth spot only if he had won. He finished one shot behind Keegan Bradley. The six qualifiers for the International team were Hideki Matsuyama, Tom Kim, Sungjae Im, Jason Day, Scott

# Presidents Cup teams get six automatic qualifiers with half teams still to be picked

and Byeong Hun An. Corey Connors of Canada had a chance with a big finish at Castle Pines, but he closed with a 73 and tied for 22nd. The International team is based on the world ranking. Jim Furyk and Mike Weir of Canada will announce their six captain's picks after the Tour Championship, and that's where the intrigue lies. "I hope I didn't throw a huge wrench in everybody's plans," Bradley said, whose victory moved him to No. 10 in the U.S. Standings. Bradley, 38, already is the youngest Ryder Cup captain since Arnold Palmer (34) was playing captain in 1963. He also has PGA Tour titles in each of the last three years, and his win at the BMW



Championship moved him to No. 11 in the world ranking. Burns moved to No. 7, followed by Tony Finau, Russell Henley, Bradley, Brian

Harman and Max Homa. Henley has never played in the Ryder Cup or Presidents Cup team. My hope is that I get to Atlanta and I prove that I belong." Weir would like to have Canadians on his side for the

home crowd. None qualified. Connors was at No. 7, followed by Cam Davis and Min Woo Lee of Australia, Christiaan Bezuidenhouit, and three Canadians - Taylor Pendrith, Nick Taylor and Adam Hadwin. Pendrith played in the last Presidents Cup. He held it together on the back nine to assure a spot at the Tour Championship next week. "I want to be at East Lake. I want to be on the Presidents Cup badly. But I've had a great season, and if I didn't play great these last two weeks, I'd be OK with it," he said. "It would sting a little bit for sure, but to come out here and do it and perform under the pressure, it feels incredible. I can't wait to keep going." Scott has played on every Presidents Cup team since 2003 - one year after Tom Kim was born - but has never been on a winning team. The 2003 matches ended in a tie in South Africa, and the Americans have won nine in a row.

# Kvaratskhelia inspires Napoli to 1st win of Conte era with 3-0 victory over Bologna

AP ■ MILAN

Antonio Conte has Khvicha Kvaratskhelia back to his brilliant best and Napoli back to winning ways. Kvaratskhelia set up one goal and scored the second as Napoli beat Bologna 3-0 on Sunday for the first Serie A win of the Conte era - and the team's first league victory since April 7. Conte became Napoli's fifth coach in little more than a year when he was hired in June but his new team crumbled 3-0 at Hellas Verona in his first match back in Serie A. "The punch in the face we got in Verona made us immediately understand that if we want to forget the past we have to stay in the center

of the ring, you give punches and you get them, but you have to keep standing," Conte said. "I have a lot of faith in this group ... it was a tough week but we united even more, you won't get anywhere individually. These are my first three points with Napoli and I have great emotion. It is these feelings that push you to go further." Napoli also lost Kvaratskhelia to a minor head injury in Verona but the Georgia winger was back on Sunday - despite also having recently returned from his home country after his wife gave birth to their first child this week. It was a different team right from the start in Naples and Giacomo Raspadori almost scored in the opening



minute. Kvaratskhelia hit the crossbar shortly before halftime with a looping header from the tightest of angles but Napoli didn't have to wait much longer for the first goal under Conte. Giovanni Di Lorenzo started the move in first-half stoppages, cutting inside from the right before passing to Kvaratskhelia, who played him a superb ball back, dinking it over the Bologna defense for Di Lorenzo to sweep into the far side of the net. And Kvaratskhelia got on the scoresheet himself in the 75th, racing downfield

from just inside the Bologna half and firing into the bottom left corner from the edge of the area, with the help of a slight deflection. Kvaratskhelia celebrated by sucking his thumb in an apparent dedication to his newborn son. Kvaratskhelia also had a hand in the third, in stoppage time. As he threaded the ball through to new signing David Neres, who rolled it across for Giovanni Simeone to slot past Lukas Skorupski. **SURPRISE DEFEATS:** Atalanta and Roma both fell to shock defeats. Atalanta, which was one of only four sides to win on the opening weekend, had a penalty saved and hit the woodwork twice in a 2-1 loss at Torino.

Summer signing Mateo Retegui headed Atalanta into the lead in the 26th minute but Che Adams set up Ivan Ilic for the equalizer five minutes later and scored himself at the start of the second half. Retegui and Charles De Ketelaere saw efforts come off the bar and Atalanta had an even better chance to level in stoppage time when it was awarded a penalty for a foul by Valentino Lazaro on Atalanta teenager Federico Cassa. Mario Pasalic stepped up but saw his spot kick saved by Torino goalkeeper Vanya Milinkovic-Savic. Roma lost 2-1 at home to Empoli. Fiorentina was jeered off the field after a drab 0-0 draw at home to newly promoted Venezia.

# I'D LOVE TO WORK WITH PRABHAS AGAIN: SRIDEVI VIJAYKUMAR

Sridevi Vijaykumar made her Telugu debut with *Rukmini* and played the female lead opposite Prabhas in his debut film *Eeswar*. However, after that, she did quite a few Telugu and Tamil films and almost quit after her marriage. Her last Telugu film was released more than a decade ago, but now she is coming back as a lead actress with the film *Sundarakanda* opposite Nara Rohit. "I feel happy that I am coming back with a feel-good film," says Sridevi at the promotional event for her Telugu film. She further went on to share, "I should thank the director of this film, Venkatesh, as he designed my character so well. The title is a good one and gives so much positivity. It's a fresh film and a family entertainer and I am

sure that the audience will definitely enjoy watching this film. I am happy to come back again after a long gap as the lead actress."

"I was excited when I heard this story, and I am sure that my role is portrayed very well. Though I told my director that I would take some more time, he insisted on me and gave me confidence, so I agreed to do it. Though I missed the big screen, I never missed cameras," she said. For the unaware, Sridevi had earlier appeared on the small screen for a few television shows.

"I was keen to do this film and I feel this one is new for me. The entire credit goes to the director, because he has come up with a different story. He doesn't look like he is a debut director, as he worked

as an experienced one and handled everyone very well. The way he presented me in this film, I am confident that everyone will like it," says Sridevi. Coincidentally, her film *Eeswar* is re-releasing on October 23 on the occasion of Prabhas' birthday. When asked about that film and Prabhas, she says, "Prabhas is a darling and everyone calls him like that from his debut film. How he was at the time of *Eeswar*, he is the same person to date. Definitely, I would love to work with Prabhas. I am very excited because *Eeswar* is releasing on Prabhas' birthday. I am looking forward to it," says Sridevi.

She is now keen to continue working in Telugu cinema and play different roles in the near future. "I want to do good films and portray different roles," she says.

**Sridevi Vijaykumar is all set to make her comeback in Telugu after more than a decade. She spoke about her comeback and also about Prabhas, where she acted as the female lead in his debut film *Eeswar***



## I didn't like couple of films that I'd done few years ago: Nara Rohit



Nara Rohit is all set to make his comeback with the film *Sundarakanda*. Venkatesh is the director and the film started its first promotional event on Monday in Hyderabad. Though his film *Prathinidhi 2* released a few months ahead of the elections, it didn't do well. "Actually I wanted to come back with *Sundarakanda*, but I did *Prathinidhi 2*. The film didn't fare well at the box-office," Nara Rohit tells about his film.

Rohit took nearly six years to come back and he took a long break. "There are quite a few reasons for my break. Before Covid I did a couple of films, which

I don't like. If I do the typical commercial films, I feel that they may work out at the box office, but they didn't do well. So I decided to take a break initially, but because of some family issues, the delay prolonged for some more years," said Nara Rohit about his comeback. He said that it's just a co-incident that he is doing films when his uncle (*pedanna*) Nara Chandrababu Naidu became the Chief Minister. He added that he is not worrying about his existence because he is doing a film after a long time. "Even if you are continuously doing films, the actor's fate is decided by every Friday. So, I am not worrying about the break, there

are so many Fridays and I am looking forward to my film's release," he said. About his entry into politics in the near future, he said he is presently concentrating on films. "I don't know, but if everything permits I may enter in 2029, let's see how things are going on, there is a lot of time for that," he said.

These days' audiences come to theaters to watch only star films, the small films they prefer to see in OTT. "I don't think it is right. The best example is Hindi film *Street 2* which is doing very well in theaters. You name any biggest Bollywood Star, but this film is doing better than those star films. If the con-

tent is good, definitely audiences come to theaters," said a confident Rohit. He added that the impact of OTT is not there. "Yes, after three weeks the film is streaming on OTT, but audiences wanted to see it first in the theater," he said. Talking about *Sundarakanda* he says that he has been travelling with director Venky from the last five years. "He wrote a peculiar love story and I loved it. This role is perfectly suited for me now," he says. "When I was 24 I did my debut film *Banam*. I played a role which was above my age. Now, I am playing a role in this *Sundarakanda* that suits me perfectly," he added.



## Balayya@50 is going to be a big extravaganza

On the occasion of Nandamuri Balakrishna's 50 years of entering the film industry is going to be celebrated like never before and the Telugu Film Industry is planning a very big memorable event on September 1 at Hitex Novotel, Hyderabad. On this occasion some of the industry people met Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and invited for this event. The Chief Minister responded positively and is likely to attend.

According to a source, the event is going to be a three-hour long duration with loads of entertainment programmes. Also many political, business and film personalities from all other industries may attend in

a big way. Apart from AP Chief Minister, the Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is also likely to attend this event. Few days back the industry people invited Mega Star Chiranjeevi and he too agreed to come to this event.

Tamil film industry actors like Vijay Sethupathi, Karthi may attend and the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, MK Stalin may not attend as he is going to the USA for some work. "So, his son Udayanidhi Stalin, actor and Minister in Tamil Nadu Government, may attend this Balayya event," says a source. Some of the bigwigs from the Malayalam industry will also be present for this event.

From the Kannada film

industry Dr Shiva Rajkumar and few other actors are going to attend, added the source. Many film personalities are likely to attend. The TFI is also planning to invite some of the Bollywood personalities, added the source.

Apart from these people, there are some entertaining programmes that include dances from Balayya film songs and also a few skits from many actors. "This event is going to be a memorable one for Balakrishna," added the source. Apart from this event, there may be another event in Amaravathi on September 15. "It's going to be organized by Balakrishna's fans and Pawan Kalyan and Nara Lokesh may attend for that event," says a source.

## Tejus pinning hopes on *Uruku Patela*

Young actor Tejus Kancherla will next be seen in *Uruku Patela*. His last good film was *Husharu* released in 2018 followed by *RDX Love* in 2019. After a hiatus, he is now pinning hopes on this upcoming film *Uruku Patela*. The film is directed by Vivek Reddy and produced by Kancharla Bala Bhanu.

The film's promotional videos including songs have already garnered interest on social media and the internet. The trailer was released on Monday and it creates interest about this film. In this trailer, the story reveals that the protagonist, who is disheartened by his inability to find a bride despite being of marriageable age. Although he has not pursued education, he dreams of marrying an educated woman.

According to the makers, the story gets interesting when a beautiful girl falls for him, raising questions about why she would choose someone who is overlooked by many educated girls. Here comes the twist as they reveal the other side of this beautiful girl and from here the film turns into another interesting narration and the makers hope that audiences like it. The film is releasing on September 7. Khushbhoo Chowdary is playing the female lead opposite Tejus.



## Introducing Avram Baktha Manchu as 'Thinnadu' in *Kannappa*



The Manchu family's third generation is now into films. On the occasion of Janmashtami, the makers of *Kannappa* released the look of young Kannappa played by Manchu Avram Baktha, son of Manchu Vishnu. After Mohan Babu, it was Lakshmi, Vishnu and Manoj taking his legacy and now his grandson Avram is also making his debut on the big screen.

Continuing their promotional strategy of unveiling first-look posters of key characters from *Kannappa*, the makers introduced Avram Baktha Manchu as 'Thinnadu'. It is Mohan Babu who launched the first look of his grandson Avram and says "Here is my Avram. Happy Janmashtami! Proud to launch my Avram's look in *Kannappa*. Excited beyond words for the world to see him as an actor" (sic) wrote Vishnu Manchu who shared another poster of Avram.

Avram Baktha Manchu makes a striking impression as Thinnadu, a character representing the childhood version of Vishnu Manchu's role. His portrayal exudes a fierce intensity, capturing the essence of the character with remarkable authenticity. From the intricacy of his costumes to his commanding posture, every detail contributes to a compelling depiction. The poster sees Kaali Maa statue in the background. Manchu Vishnu is proud to see his son on the big screen. "Happy Janmashtami! Proud to launch my Avram's look in *Kannappa*. Excited beyond words for the world to see him as an actor" (sic) wrote Vishnu Manchu who shared another poster of Avram. *Kannappa* is more than just a cinematic venture. It represents the convergence of three generations of the Manchu family's cinematic journey, featuring Mohan Babu, Vishnu Manchu and Avram Manchu. Avram impresses big time with his appearance in the first look poster. *Kannappa* is scheduled for a Pan India release in December.

## Shefali Shah expresses desire to work in Telugu cinema

Shefali Shah, one of the most versatile actresses in Bollywood, has consistently left a distinct mark on the screen with her compelling performances. Always eager to explore more in her craft, she is open to exploring opportunities in Telugu cinema.

Recently Shefali was part of a moderated chat with Arundhati Bhattacharya, the CEO of Salesforce, in Hyderabad. The event was attended by over 400 women in person and more than 3,000 online.

During the conversation, Shefali expressed her admiration for Telugu cinema, saying, "I truly admire Telugu cinema. I think they perfectly blend grandeur with the art of storytelling. Look at their films, whether it's the *Baahubali* franchise, *RRR*, *Kalki* or *Sita Ramam*—they are truly magical. I would love to work with them if given a chance."



## KALINGA TO HIT SCREENS ON SEP 13

Dhruva Vaayu, who got recognition with *Kerosene*, is now coming up with another film *Kalinga*. He took two responsibilities for this film which he played as lead actor and also director of the film. Deepthi Kondaveeti and Pruthvi Yadav are the producers. At an event on Monday, the makers announced that they are planning to release the film on September 13. "The teaser of my film gets curiosity among both the industry and also the audience. With that the film's business done in all areas since the

content has been well-received," says Dhruva Vaayu. He added that this film is not a regular one. "The film has all ingredients such as emotions, love, comedy, horror and thriller," says Dhruva. The actor and director are very confident that the content of the film and screenplay are going to be highlights of the film.

Producer Deepthi Kondaveeti is also confident about the film. *Kalinga* is Dhruva Vaayu's idea and we just supported him, she said. Pragna Nayan is playing the female lead in this film.



## STANDALONE

Megastar Chiranjeevi once again demonstrated the deep bond he shares with his fans. This year, he was particularly moved by the dedication of Eshwarayya, a long-time admirer who undertook a pilgrimage from Tirupati to Tirumala hill to pay homage to the legendary actor. Deeply touched by this act of devotion, Chiranjeevi invited Eshwarayya and his family to his home in Hyderabad for a memorable and emotional meeting. The megastar warmly welcomed the family, honoring them with gifts of pattu clothing and offering his unwavering support, further showcasing his well-known generosity and humility.