

the pioneer

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Mayawati re-elected as BSP president, plays down electoral reverses



'I DO NOT FEEL PRESSURED TO BE SHAKTI KAPOOR'S SON OR SHRADDHA'S BROTHER'



'To debate, audience not coming to theatres is WRONG'



QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

Congratulations to the Congress party and its advocates for securing bail for BRS MLC in the infamous liquor scam. This bail is a win for both BRS and Congress—BRS leader is out on bail & the Congressman gets to Rajya Sabha. Remarkable political acumen by KCR in supporting the candidate, who initially argued for the bail, to be nominated to Rajya Sabha unopposed by the ruling Congress. Congratulations to the partners in crime who wine & dine

- MoS Bandi Sanjay

P4

DON'T MISS...

Rs 3,500 cr investment by...

In a major boost to Sri City's energy sector, AG&P Pratham has begun constructing a comprehensive gas pipeline network. This initiative aims to deliver reliable, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly natural gas to industrial, commercial, and residential areas within Sri City. The inauguration ceremony, attended by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, highlights AG&P Pratham's dedication to advancing sustainable development in both Sri City and Andhra Pradesh. Abhilesh Gupta, Managing Director...

-PAGE: 2

Air pollution increased death...

In Indian districts, air pollution exceeding national standards have been shown to increase death risk across all age groups -- by 86 per cent in newborns, 100-120 per cent in children under five years of age and 13 per cent in adults, according to a study. A team of researchers, including those at the International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, looked at fine particulate matter (PM2.5) pollution levels across over 700 districts. Data for analysis was taken from the National Family and...

-PAGE: 5

200 global players to attend Bharat...

Over 200 global players are likely to showcase cutting-edge battery and charging infra technologies at the Bharat Battery Show in January 2025. Industry body India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA), in a statement, said it is organising the Bharat Battery Show at the second Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025. According to the statement, the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 led by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is set to be held on January 17-22, 2025, across three major venues -- Bharat...

-PAGE: 8

Hopefully, we will break final...

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur remained optimistic that India can grab their maiden global title in the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup, and said conditions in the UAE could work to their advantage. The International Cricket Council has recently shifted the showpiece, to be held between October 3 and 20, to the UAE from Bangladesh owing to the political unrest in the latter nation. "Whenever we play on this kind of stage (World Cup), we always want to do well. We have always done well in the past..."

-SPORTS

AP to be \$2 T economy by 2047: CM

PLANS TO TURN STATE INTO A LOGISTICS HUB FOR EASTERN COAST OF INDIA

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, at a crucial meeting with NITI Aayog representatives, unveiled plans to transform Andhra Pradesh into a \$2 trillion economy by 2047. The focus of the discussions was the AP-2047 vision document, which outlines strategic development goals for the coming decades.

During the meeting, CM Naidu highlighted the need for a holistic approach to policy-making, stressing that efforts would address both macro and micro levels. As part of this strategy, district-specific vision documents are being created to guide growth over the next five years.

The CM assured that measures are in place to ensure access to cutting-edge medical services for all residents, alongside a commitment to environmentally sustainable development. He also reiterated the state's ambition to lead in digital governance and sustainable economic growth. CM Naidu spoke about ongoing efforts to establish Andhra Pradesh as a hub for industrial

• Strategic planning: District-specific vision documents to guide development over the next five years

• Medical and environmental commitment: Ensuring advanced medical services and sustainable development

• Digital and economic ambition: Aspiring to be a leader in digital governance and sustainable growth

• Industrial and tourism development: Focus on industrial growth, renewable energy, and tourism

• Agricultural processing and skills enhancement: Enhancing agricultural processing and youth skills



growth and renewable energy. He outlined plans to develop the state into an international tourist destination and to turn various cities into dynamic growth centres.

Additionally, Chief Minister Naidu underscored Andhra

Pradesh's potential as a key agricultural processing hub and expressed a commitment to enhancing youth skills across industries. He also announced plans to position the state as a major logistics hub for the eastern coast of India.

Energy sector deteriorated under Jagan regime: Gottipati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar criticised the previous Jagan Mohan Reddy government, alleging that the energy sector suffered significant damage during its tenure. The Minister asserted that due to misguided decisions by Jagan's administration, the performance of the Discoms deteriorated sharply, leading to a drastic increase in debt over the past five years. He further claimed that the previous government burdened the public by raising electricity tariffs under the pretext of covering debts. In contrast, the Minister recalled that during Chandrababu Naidu's tenure as Chief Minister, electricity bills were not increased even once in five years. He pointed out that Jagan Mohan



Minister Ravi Kumar stated that despite these tariff increases, the Discoms saw no tangible benefits. Instead, the debts of the Discoms reportedly surged by 79 per cent under the YSRCP regime. He emphasised that the Discoms can only operate effectively if they secure loans

Reddy's government hiked electricity charges nine times in the last five years.

Minister Ravi Kumar stated that despite these tariff increases, the

Discoms saw no tangible benefits. Instead, the debts of the Discoms reportedly surged by 79 per cent under the YSRCP regime.

CBI Court permits Jagan to travel abroad

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The CBI court has granted permission to former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy to travel abroad. YS Jagan, who is accused in the illegal assets case, sought the court's approval to visit the UK from September 3 to 25 for his daughter's birthday. The court has ordered that the complete details of the trip, including the mobile number and email information, be provided to the court and the CBI before his departure. The CBI court also authorised the issuance of a new passport for Jagan, valid for five years.

Lokesh refutes YSRCP charges against Tanuku Anna canteen

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Nara Lokesh, the Minister for Education, Electronics, and IT, has vehemently denied allegations made by the opposition YSRCP regarding the cleanliness and operational practices at the Tanuku Anna Canteen, describing them as "malicious propaganda." He accused the opposition of misleading the public and claimed that these actions were part of a campaign aimed at tarnishing the canteen's reputation.

Minister Lokesh expressed his outrage at the YSRCP for spreading false information concerning

the presence of plates in the sink at the Tanuku Anna Canteen. He alleged that YSRCP supporters had deliberately placed the plates in the sink to create an issue and derive perverse satisfaction.

The Minister emphasised that the canteen prioritises taste, cleanliness, and hygiene. He stated that YSRCP supporters had staged the incident at the handwashing area by placing rice plates and recording a video. Nara Lokesh also accused Jagan of continuing to spread lies about Anna Canteens.

Municipal Administration Minister P.Narayana conducted an inquiry into the hygienic condi-

tions at the Tanuku Anna Canteen. He reported that representatives from Hare Krishna confirmed that the allegations were baseless and that the plates were not being washed under unhygienic conditions. They clarified that the video, which showed plates being removed from a wash basin, was misleading. Officials explained that the plates had been placed in the wash basin, rather than in a dustbin, due to the high number of people present. The representatives assured the Minister that special arrangements are in place at Anna Canteens to maintain high standards of cleanliness.

PAPERLESS DIGITAL MEETS

AP govt to use e-cabinet app from today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Starting August 28, the Andhra Pradesh Council of Ministers will transition from using pen and paper to paperless digital mode using an e-cabinet app developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) for its meetings, an official said on Tuesday.

The first digital cabinet is scheduled at 11 am on Wednesday, the official said.

"As per the directions of the CM (N Chandrababu Naidu), the government has decided to implement e-cabinet to conduct paperless meetings of the coun-

cil of ministers," Political Secretary S Suresh Kumar said in a press release.

The digital cabinet approach is not only aimed at paperless business transactions for operational efficiency but also to move towards eco-friendly practices. The e-cabinet offers secure and real-time access to cabinet documents and deliberations, as well as digitised records, the official said.

It will enable the monitoring and implementation of cabinet decisions effectively, including enabling comprehensive data analytics and reporting capabilities, added Kumar.



Kavitha gets bail

SC questions agencies over fairness of probe

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a relief to BRS leader K Kavitha, the Supreme Court on Tuesday granted her bail in corruption and money laundering cases linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam, while questioning the central agencies over the fairness of their probe and asking if they were free to "pick and choose" an accused.

The apex court said Kavitha's custody was no longer required as both the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) have completed their probe against her.

2



23 girl students fall ill after having contaminated food

PNS ■ KAKINADA

As many as 23 girl students of Gurukul School in Yelawaram fell ill on Tuesday after consuming contaminated food.

Official sources reported that the students from the residential school developed diarrhoea after eating the food served in the school. Several students were admitted to the Government Hospital in Yelawaram for treatment.

Prathipadu MLA Varupula Satya Prabha visited the students in the hospital and consulted with the doctors regarding their condition. Collector Shan Mohan also visited the students and discussed the cause of the incident with the officials.

2

CBI seeks polygraph test of Kolkata police ASI



P5

8 killed in 2 road accidents in Kadapa



PNS ■ KADAPA

Eight people lost their lives in two separate road accidents in YSR Kadapa district on Tuesday. According to police reports, five individuals were killed when a container lorry collided with a car at Guwala Cheruvu village in Ramapuram mandal on the ghat road during the early hours of Tuesday. The car, en route from

Kadapa to Rayachoti, was hit by the lorry coming from the opposite direction. The impact caused the lorry to plunge into a deep gorge. All the occupants of the car - Buddigari Nagaiah (45), Palepu China Venkatamma (50), Nagalakshmi Devi (38), and the driver, Shariff (35) - died instantly. The lorry driver also succumbed to injuries, and his body was later retrieved from the gorge.

2

RIISING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Women's rights groups demand justice

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As a series of rape cases shock the nation, women's rights groups from across the country on Tuesday sought expeditious investigation and action, and demanded an end to sex crimes and gender-based violence. The All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM), All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), All India Mahila Samskritik Sanghatan (AIMSS), All India Progressive Women's Association (AIPWA), Act Now for Harmony and Democracy (ANHAD), All India Feminist Alliance (ALIFA), All India Lawyers' Association for Justice



(AILA) are among the 35 organisations who have made the appeal.

The outcry comes in the wake of shocking incidents of sexual violence

from various parts of the country including Kolkata, Manipur, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh, with the statement saying they are a grim reminder of the ongoing threat to women's safety in India.

The immediate catalyst for this voice of protest is the alleged rape and murder of a 31-year-old medical practitioner at the RG Kar Hospital and Medical College in Kolkata. The case has drawn widespread condemnation, not only for the brutality of the crime but also for the subsequent "cover-up" by the institution and authorities, the statement said, criticising the response of elected representatives and government officials, accusing them of

politicising these tragedies rather than ensuring justice.

"We condemn the actions and inactions of the West Bengal government led by Mamata Banerjee for trying to obfuscate the issue as a suicide case and a political conspiracy, 'transferring' Sandip Ghosh, Principal of the Calcutta National Medical College Hospital, and only rescinding the order under great public pressure," the statement said.

"It also had the temerity to transfer 43 doctors and professors, including some from the RG Kar hospital, in the middle of nationwide protests by healthcare professionals!" the statement said.

2

Will 'buffer zone' operations land Revanth in trouble spot?

The Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Monitoring Agency (HYDRA), recently created under the Revanth Reddy-led Congress government in Telangana, has begun razing in right earnest structures built illegally on full tank level (FTL) or buffer zones of innumerable lakes and tanks across the twin cities and elsewhere. One wonders whether the drive will be taken to its logical conclusion by demolishing all such constructions, regardless of their owners' political affiliations, celebrity status, or any other form of clout.



centuries ago, mainly to meet drinking water needs and for irrigation purposes. Over the years, many brazen encroachments on these water bodies have remained uncleared or even unnoticed because of the big wigs involved. Successive governments have ignored these encroachments on lakes, mainly in pursuit of vote bank politics.

The monsoon period, year after year, sees inundation or submergence of many of the colonies that have sprung up in lake areas, with the official machinery hardly in a position to help them during an emergency. After all, it is the same official machinery that had granted permissions for

Most of the tanks and lakes in question were constructed centuries ago, mainly to meet drinking water needs and for irrigation purposes. Over the years, many brazen encroachments on these water bodies have remained uncleared or even unnoticed because of the big wigs involved.

constructing houses inside the buffer zones! Politics related to caste, religion and region often come into play in these areas with far-reaching consequences.

The aborted razing of the N-Convention centre owned by film star Akkineni Nagarjuna, allegedly built in violation of rules, has sent

shock waves to many influential persons. This daring act of the authorities has unnerved political and other influential circles so much so that the city is now being referred to as 'HYDRAA'bad. The N-Convention had invited the wrath of Telangana statehood protagonists, particularly during 2009-14, in



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

the combined state of Andhra Pradesh. The leader who had then been spearheading the T-stir, BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao, spit fire at Nagarjuna for allegedly encroaching on the tank con-

cerned in the Madhapur area of Hyderabad. Taking advantage of the Andhra roots of Nagarjuna, KCR had declared that the Telangana government to be formed by his party would demolish the N-Convention centre.

Interestingly, Nagarjuna thereafter tried to get his construction regularized under the Building Regulation Scheme (BRS). KCR too remained noticeably silent on the illegal structure, which reportedly fetches Rs 5 lakh per day as rent. Previously, Revant too, as TDP legislator, had organised his daughter's marriage in the same convention centre. KCR perhaps chose to go soft on Nagarjuna, after the actor had declared that T-people should be given chance to

have their own state. After all this, it is now advantage Revanth when it comes to HYDRAA's action on N-convention.

Likewise, many more illegal structures owned by leaders of various political parties can be seen everywhere in Hyderabad. This allegedly includes those owned by leaders of the Majlis-e-Ittehadul-Muslimeen. Sensing danger for his college, MIM floor leader in T-Assembly Akbaruddin Owaisi emotionally asked the government to shoot him, instead of demolishing his college. Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi too expressed his displeasure over the working style of HYDRAA. He advised HYDRAA to remove the Necklace Road as "it is with-

in FTL of the Hussain Sagar lake".

Political mileage apart, HYDRAA's operations might brew dissidence against Revant Reddy within the Congress. Presently, the Revant government is in a comfortable position, having attracted 10 legislators from BRS. Besides, Revant enjoys the confidence of the party's high command. Still, Revant cannot afford to antagonise the Majlis.

If Revant can convince the Congress' high command on the much-needed 'impartiality' in taking HYDRAA's operations further, there will be political mileage for Revant as well as the Congress. Otherwise, HYDRAA's drive could land Revant in trouble spot.

Rs 3,500 cr investment by AG & P Pratham in Sri City

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

In a major boost to Sri City's energy sector, AG&P Pratham has begun constructing a comprehensive gas pipeline network. This initiative aims to deliver reliable, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly natural gas to industrial, commercial, and residential areas within Sri City. The inauguration ceremony, attended by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, highlights AG&P Pratham's dedication to advancing sustainable development in both Sri City and Andhra Pradesh.



Pratham, remarked, "We are excited to partner with Sri City to develop this natural gas infrastructure. Our goal is to provide a dependable energy solution for industries and businesses. This project is a significant step in transforming the energy landscape, with the

pipeline network expected to connect potential customers in the coming months. Industries in Sri City, such as metal, automotive, ceramics, packaging, and dairy, will benefit greatly from this clean energy initiative. Our planned Rs 3,500 crore investment over the next five years will facilitate a transition to natural gas, a more eco-friendly and economical fuel, for customers across Andhra Pradesh."

Gautam Anand, Regional Head, added, "AG&P Pratham is working on city gas distribution networks in seven districts of the state, including Tirupati, Chittoor, SPSR Nellore, YSR Kadapa,

Annamayya, Sri Sathya Sai, and Anantapur. We have already launched 56 CNG stations, including three LCNG stations, and have laid over 3,350 inch-kilometres of pipelines, serving more than 46,000 households." The memorandum of understanding signed in March between AG&P Pratham and Sri City marks a strong partnership aimed at establishing a widespread natural gas pipeline network throughout the business city. This collaboration also offers industries in Sri City the chance to reduce their carbon footprint by switching their vehicles to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).

Unified Pension Scheme from FY 2025-26

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Narendra A. Patil, Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), Vijayawada Division, presided over a press conference on Tuesday to announce the introduction of the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), recently approved by the Union Cabinet. The scheme is set to come into effect from the next financial year, FY 2025-26.

The DRM described the Unified Pension Scheme as a transformative initiative for government employees, offering assured pensions, inflation-indexed dearness relief, and financial security for dependent family members. He noted that the policy was formulated after extensive consultations with trade unions, state governments, and financial experts. The DRM further stated that the UPS would be available to all central govern-



ment employees currently subscribers of the New Pension Scheme (NPS). He emphasised that approximately 23 lakh central government employees would benefit from the newly announced scheme. Specifically, around 14,000 employees working in the Vijayawada Division of South Central Railway (SCR) are

The DRM described the Unified Pension Scheme as a transformative initiative for government employees, offering assured pensions.

expected to benefit, out of the total 18,000 employees in the Division.

Katta Anand, Senior Divisional Personnel Officer, Vijayawada Division, SCR, elaborated on the one-time switch option from NPS to UPS, stating that once this option is exercised, there would be no possibility of reverting to the NPS. He also highlighted that while employee contributions would remain unchanged, the government's contribution increased from 14% to 18.5%. Anand further noted that a lump sum payment and superannuation gratuity are other attractive features of the UPS policy.

The press conference concluded with a vote of thanks from Nusrat M. Mandrupkar, Public Relations Officer (PRO), Vijayawada Division, who expressed gratitude.

8 killed in 2 road accidents...

Continued on Page 1

The accident occurred as the victims were returning to their native village after attending

the last rites of a relative. In a separate incident, three people were killed when their car overturned at Chintakunta village in Duvvuru mandal on

Tuesday night. The victims have been identified as Bhagavat Singh (34), Nagalakshmi (70), and nine-month-old Kiyam Singh. The

family was on their way to the hill shrine of Tirumala for Kiyam's tonsure ceremony when the tragic accident occurred.

TODAY
ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Dashami: Aug 28 01:33 AM to Aug 29 01:19 AM
Ekadashi: Aug 29 01:19 AM to Aug 30 01:37 AM

Nakshatram: Mrigashirsha: Aug 27 03:38 PM to Aug 28 03:53 PM
Ardra: Aug 28 03:53 PM to Aug 29 04:39 PM

Rahukalam: 12:17 PM to 1:50 PM
Yamagandam: 7:38 AM to 9:11 AM
Varjyam: 12:33 AM to 02:12 AM
Gulika: 10:44 AM to 12:17 PM
Amritakalam: 06:59 AM to 08:36 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham: Nil

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Cloudy
Temp: 34°C
Humidity: 63%
Sunrise: 5:54 AM
Sunset: 6:23 PM
Updated: August 27, 2024 5:00 PM

'Sanctity of temples...

Continued on Page 1

underscoring the need to provide darshan in a serene environment. The CM highlighted the importance of maintaining cleanliness, offering quality prasadam, and ensuring a peaceful atmosphere in temples. He recommended that families visiting temples be allowed to stay for one or two days.

During a review meeting with the Endowments Department at the state Secretariat on Tuesday, CM Naidu declared that there would be no forceful conversions. The department is to organise programmes to safeguard the sentiments of devotees. He suggested that non-Hindus should not be permitted in temples to respect devotees' feelings and that officials should pri-

oritise the sentiments of devotees and adherence to Agama Shastra.

The CM proposed developing temple tourism in Andhra Pradesh, citing significant opportunities. A committee comprising Ministers from the Endowments, Forest, and Tourism Departments will be formed to promote religious tourism. If the income exceeds Rs 20 crore, the number of board members will be increased from 15 to 17, with one Brahmin and one Nayeey Brahmin to be included as Trust Board members, as promised during the election.

Additionally, the CM announced a salary increase for purohits from Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000, benefiting 1,683 purohits. The government will allocate Rs 10 crore annually for this pur-

pose. The stipend for Dhupa Deepam will rise from Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000, adding Rs 32 crore to the government's expenditure. Unemployed Vedic scholars will receive Rs 3,000 in assistance, and Nayeey Brahmins' minimum wages will be set at Rs 25,000. CM Naidu also reviewed ongoing projects under the CGF and Srivani Trust, instructing the completion of some works started by the previous government while halting 1,797 temple projects under the TTD Srivani Trust. He proposed reinstating Aarti ceremonies on the Godavari and Krishna Rivers and recommended implementing an online system in every temple to offer services online. Devotees should have the opportunity not only for darsha.

GENERAL ELECTION 2024

YSRCP demands release of booth-wise results

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) has called for the immediate release of polling booth-wise results for the General Election 2024. A delegation from the YSRCP, including former ministers Ambati Rambabu and Merugu Nagarjuna, MLC Lella Appi Reddy, and other leaders, met with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Andhra Pradesh, Vivek Yadav, at the Secretariat on Tuesday, urging the publication of Form 20s, which details polling booth-wise results for the recently concluded election in the state.

The YSRCP pointed out that, according to press notes released by the Election Commission of India (ECI), the polling percentage in Andhra Pradesh was initially recorded at 68.12% as of 8 PM on 13 May 2024, rising to 76.50% by 11:45 PM that night, and later revised to 80.66% on 17 May 2024. However, the



party claimed that the actual number of votes counted on Election Day exceeded these figures, surpassing 82%.

The delegation reminded the CEO of a formal request submitted on 10 June 2024 for information on the voting percentages, to which no response has been received so far. The YSRCP urged the CEO and the Election Commission to take immediate action to publish Form 20s and address the inconsistencies in the reported polling data. The YSRCP has requested a detailed break-

down of the percentage of votes polled in each Assembly and Parliamentary Constituency at various times—up to 8 PM (68.12%) and up to 11:45 PM (76.50%) on 13 May 2024. The party has also sought information on the number of votes polled in each constituency after the official polling hours, which ended at 4 PM, 5 PM, or 6 PM, as per the Election Notification. Additionally, the YSRCP has requested the names and numbers of polling stations where voting was permitted after the official closing

time and clarification on how many voters were still in the queue when polling was extended.

Addressing the media after the meeting at the Secretariat, former minister Ambati Rambabu mentioned that several institutions, including "Vote for Democracy," had raised doubts about the conduct of the elections, fuelling suspicions regarding the election results. He emphasized that it was the responsibility of the Election Commission to dispel these doubts and ensure transparency.

Former minister Merugu Nagarjuna voiced further concerns about the functioning of the Election Commission, noting that despite the reported increase in voter turnout, the Election Commission had yet to provide data for all 175 constituencies. He also highlighted issues related to VVPAT-EVM mismatches and the security of EVM storage.

Energy... Women's rights...

Continued on Page 1

He said that the Discoms can only operate effectively if they secure loans. He noted that the previous government left behind unpaid amounts totalling Rs 34,954 crore, including subsidies and other obligations, and criticised the YSRCP government for repeatedly borrowing to settle these debts. Minister Ravi Kumar assured that the current alliance government is taking steps to restore stability to the system. The Minister also highlighted that the Discoms' ratings, based on central government assessments, plummeted after Jagan Mohan Reddy assumed office.

Continued on Page 1

The groups argue that the focus should be on the effective functioning of criminal investigation, law enforcement, and governance, rather than on rhetoric or draconian measures like the death penalty, which they assert has been proven ineffective in deterring crime.

The groups urged the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), now investigating the Kolkata case, to conduct a fair and unbiased investigation, free from political influence.

The statement also highlights the challenges of securing justice in an environment where the government has

been accused of releasing and even honouring individuals convicted of heinous crimes, such as those involved in the Bilkis Bano case, the Kathua case, and the violence in Manipur.

"We recognise that the demand for fair trial and implementation of the law is even more challenging in these times when the Union Government, while making claims of making more stringent laws to 'protect' women, systematically releases and even felicitates those held guilty of gangrape, and multiple murders such as those convicted in Bilkis Bano's case (Gujarat 2002), Muzaffarnagar (2013), Ariyalur (2016).

Continued on Page 1

The Bharat Rashtriya Samithi (BRS) lawmaker from Telangana has been in jail for over five months. A bench of Justices B R Gava and K V Viswanathan noted since 493 witnesses were to be examined and 50,000 pages of documents were to be considered in the two cases, there was no likelihood of the trial being concluded in the near future. "The appellant (Kavitha) is directed to be released forthwith on bail ... on furnishing bail bonds in the sum of Rs 10 lakh in each of the cases," the bench said, while allowing her appeals against the July 1 verdict of the Delhi High Court.

Five more murder cases against Hasina

PNS ■ DHAKA

Five more murder cases have been filed against Bangladesh's ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina taking the total number of cases filed against the Awami League leader to 71, a media report said on Tuesday.

Four of the new cases were filed in Dhaka and one in Rajshahi against the 76-year-old deposed former prime minister, several former ministers and police officials, The Daily Star newspaper reported.

In the first case, Hasina and 48 others were booked for the death of one Dulal alias Selim in the city's Jatrabari area on August 3 during mass protests. The victim's brother Mostafa Kamal filed the case against the Awami League president and



others with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Saddam Hossain.

Former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan, Awami League general secretary Obaidul Quader, former Awami League lawmakers Shamim Osman and Ramesh

Chandra are among the accused, The Daily Star said.

In the second case, Hasina along with 21 others was booked on the charge of killing one Mansur Miah, a machine operator of Buriganga Filling Station at Basila of Mohammadpur on July 19.

In the third case, Hasina and 91 others were sued for the death of one Miraz Hossain at Sanarpar in the city's Demra area on August 5.

The victim's brother Khorshed Alam filed the case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Belal Hossain.

The fourth case was filed against Hasina and 40 others for the death of 21-year-old Nahidul Islam at Mirpur-10 on July 19.

The victim's brother Md Sabuj filed the case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mehedi Hasan.

Quader, Asaduzzaman, Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, Hasina's sister Sheikh Rehana, son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, Harun Or Rashid and former DMP commissioner are among the accused.

In Rajshahi, SM Salahuddin Ahmed Shamim Sarkar, a member of Bagha upazila Chhatra Dal in Rajshahi, filed a case against Hasina, former state minister for foreign affairs Shahrir Alam and 52 others, said Bagha police station's officer-in-charge Abu Siddique.

The number of cases filed against Hasina has risen to 71 with four new cases filed in Dhaka, the report said.

23 girl students fall ill...

Continued on Page 1

In response to the food contamination, Education Minister Nara Lokesh expressed his concern over the incident. He stated that he had directed the concerned officials to provide the best possible medical treatment to the affected students. He also ordered that all necessary measures be taken to prevent such incidents from occurring in the future.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
TRIBAL WELFARE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

NTI No.44 to 58/2024-25/SE/ITW/IB Date: 28-08-2024
Online tenders are being invited for execution of 15 works in Tribal Welfare Engineering Circle, Visakhapatnam, at a cost of Rs. 805.00 Lakhs. Commencement of tenders schedules: After 4.00 pm on 29-08-2024. For further details, contact www.apecurement.gov.in or call 0891-2783210. Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Tribal Welfare, Visakhapatnam

Fighting drugs: Collector seeks support of voluntary organisations

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana has urged officials and voluntary organisations to increase vigilance on drug consumption and take strict action against those involved in the illegal transportation and sale of ganja and other drugs. She appealed to everyone to participate in suppressing drug abuse as they can ruin the lives of future generations.

Collector Dr Srijana and Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhara Babu convened a meeting with all department officials on the 'Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan' at the Pingali Venkaiah meeting hall on the premises of the collectorate in Vijayawada on Tuesday. During the meeting, she emphasised the implementation of the 100-day plan of action to eradicate drugs in the NTR district.

Addressing the gathering, Srijana said that officials should conduct raids on the areas where ganja and drugs are being consumed, and take stringent action against those who consume drugs. Besides, she stressed the importance of installing CC cameras at the identified hotspots and asked the Education Department to form Anti-Narcotic Clubs at all schools and colleges to educate students about the harmful effects of drugs. She also suggested setting up special de-addiction centres at all government hospitals.

Before taking these measures, officials should identify

Meeting held on 'Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan'



NTR District Collector Dr Srijana addressing a meeting, along with Police Commissioner Rajasekhara Babu, at the collectorate in Vijayawada on Tuesday

the peddlers who are supplying ganja and other drugs to youths and students, and take stern action against them, she added. She emphasised the need for support from voluntary organisations and the people as, despite the actions taken by the district officials, the drug supply and use have not stopped.

Police Commissioner Rajasekhara Babu stated that the Police Department has identified 135 hotspots where ganja and other drugs are being consumed. He highlighted the need for proper lighting, monitoring, and installation of CC cameras in these areas to deter anti-social activities.

He also mentioned that around 1,300 CC cameras are currently working out of the total of 1,900 in the Police Commissioner's purview. He asked the District Collector to take necessary steps to provide internet and electricity facilities for the effective operation of the CC cameras. Furthermore, he discussed the department's efforts in conducting awareness programmes in all schools and colleges on the harmful effects of drugs.

DCPs Gowthami Sali, KM Maheswara Rao, K Chakravarthi, ACP K Venkateswara Rao, DRO V Srinivasa Rao, RDOs Bh

Bhavani Sankar, K Madhavi, A Ravindra Rao, VMC Additional Commissioner Dr. Mahes, and others were present at the meeting.

Online permission mandatory for Ganesh pandals

During the meeting, Collector Dr Srijana and CP Rajasekhara Babu emphasised the importance of obtaining permissions for the Ganesh Chaturthi pandals in the district. They stated that the organisers should obtain prior online permission to install Ganesh idols in the pandals.

Furthermore, they mentioned that a committee was

formed comprising officials from the Police, Fire, Municipal Corporation/Panchayats, and Electricity departments to verify the online applications for Ganesh Chaturthi pandals. They explained that after the committee's verification, permissions will be issued according to the rules and regulations.

They also clarified that if the proposed Ganesh pandal site belongs to private individuals, the organisers should obtain permission from the landowners. If the site belongs to the government, they should get permission from the local body.



NTR District Police Commissioner Rajasekhara Babu and other officials inspecting the arrangements for the upcoming Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities on the Ghat Road atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada

Commissioner inspects steps for Dasara Sarannavaratri

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In preparation for the upcoming Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities, NTR District Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhara Babu, along with officials from Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam, inspected the security arrangements, queue lines, and parking areas. He provided necessary instructions to the temple officials and police.

His visit began at the Vinayaka Temple and continued to Canal Road, Ghat

Road, Kanaka Durga Nagar, and other areas, including the Durga Temple atop Indrakeeladri.

Speaking on the occasion, Rajasekhara Babu mentioned that coordinating with all departments they are working towards a successful and grand celebration. He emphasised ensuring hassle-free darshan for devotees. Adequate security arrangements will be provided in the temple's surrounding areas, queue lines, holding points, bathing ghats, parking areas, and Prasadam

counters, he added. Rajasekhara Babu assured that the devotees will be able to have darshan in a peaceful atmosphere without any trouble, as the Police Department is making all necessary arrangements in coordination with other departments. The inspection was conducted in the presence of Durga Temple Executive Officer KS Rama Rao, EE L Rama Devi, DCPs Gowthami Sali and T Harikrishna, ACP Dr B Ravi Kiran, and others.

Kasu slams harassment of Dalit woman

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former MLA Kasu Mahesh Reddy has expressed deep concern over the recent harassment faced by a Dalit woman, Manisha, in Julekallu village of Pedakurapadu mandal and urged authorities to take immediate action against those responsible.

In a byte released to the media, the former MLA said Manisha had been running her father's ration shop and after the TDP-led alliance came to power, her shop was forcefully taken away, and she was subjected to threats of false cases being filed against her. He stated that Manisha was not only harassed, but also intimidated into paying amounts ranging from Rs 70,000 to Rs 80,000 and it led her to attempt suicide by jumping into a canal.

Reddy condemned the incident as an act of extreme cruelty, particularly towards women, especially those from SC and ST communities.



Minister Kondapalli Srinivas and Principal Secretary Sashibhushan Kumar attending the SERF review meeting at the secretariat at Velagapudi on Tuesday

SERP to develop 10 SHG groups as small and medium enterprises

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for MSME, Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP), and NRI Empowerment and Relations Kondapalli Srinivas has given a target to the SERP officials to develop at least 10 SHG groups as small and medium enterprises. For that, the government will give necessary support for them, he assured.

Minister Srinivas convened a review meeting on the SERP department officials along with Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Principal Secretary Sashibhushan Kumar and SERP Chief Executive Officer (CEO) G Veerapandian at his chamber at the Secretariat on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the Minister directed the SERP officials to take appropriate

steps to get better results in improving self-employment opportunities and increasing the standards of living. He instructed the officials to take the steps to transform the Self-Help Groups into Self-productive Centres.

Further, Minister Srinivas spoke to the officials regarding the 100-day action plan. Also, he asked about the results so far. He said as many as 55 lakh SHG members have Rs.1 lakh additional income as against the total of 90 lakh SHG members in the State.

Meanwhile, he asked the SERP officials to take necessary steps to bring the remaining 35 lakh members to earn Rs.1 lakh income under the Lakshmi Scheme. Further, he said 98 SHG groups are producing more than 144 types of products in the State.

Plea to conduct study by kidney experts



CPM NTR district leaders Babu Rao, Krishna and others representing the issue of kidney disease to Collector Dr Srijana at the collectorate in Vijayawada on Tuesday

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR district leaders of CPM have submitted a representation to District Collector Dr G Srijana, urging her to address the kidney disease at A Konduru, Gampalagudem, Tiruvuru, Vissanapeta and Mylavaram mandals by conducting a study by experts. A delegation of CPM comprising party State secretariat member Ch Babu Rao, NTR district secretary DV Krishna, leaders K Sri Devi, K Kalyan and others met the Collector on Tuesday. They explained the severity of kidney disease in Mylavaram and Tiruvuru Assembly constituencies. The CPM delegation asked the District Collector to estab-

lish a kidney hospital at Tiruvuru and take steps to release the required funds from the government. Also, they asked for safe drinking water for every household which should be supplied from the river Krishna. In the meantime, the district administration should supply drinking water through water tankers.

Further, the CPM leaders asked for a Rs.5,000 pension for every patient who has crossed the creatinine level 2. Also, the government should supply free medicines for all patients in the district, they said. Meanwhile, they urged the collector to enhance the present pension of Rs.20,000 per month to dialysis patients should be increased.



AP intensifies crackdown on ganja trafficking

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a crucial move to address the rampant issue of ganja trafficking, Andhra Pradesh's DIG of Visakhapatnam Range, S Gopinath Jatti, led a virtual review meeting with the Superintendents of Police (SPs) from five key districts. This review, part of an intensive 100-day action plan, sought to evaluate progress, refine strategies, and enhance inter-district collaboration in the fight against the drug menace.

From August 20 to August 26, law enforcement agencies made substantial strides in curbing ganja trafficking. Noteworthy achievements included several high-profile seizures and arrests. At Urumu Junction in G. Madugula, officers seized 160 kilograms of Ganja, valued at Rs 8,00,000, leading to the arrest of two traffickers. In Mothugudem, ASR district, a significant bust netted 350 kilograms of ganja and 100 grams of Hashish oil, resulting in the capture of two interstate traffickers.

12-foot King Cobra found in hospital

PNS ■ PADERU

In an unusual incident, a 12-foot King Cobra entered The Genco Hospital in Motugudem village, located in a dense forest area of Alluri Sitarama Raju district, on the night of Monday.

Hospital officials reported that the large snake was first noticed by patients and staff as it slithered through the premises. The cobra attempted to exit the hospital but was unable to

find a way out. The presence of the formidable snake caused panic among patients, who fled in fear. Forest officials, who arrived with a snake catcher on Tuesday morning, successfully captured the cobra and released it back into the forest.

Patients have expressed concerns over similar incidents in the past and have urged authorities to implement preventive measures to avoid such occurrences in the future.



Illegal sand mining rampant in coastal region

Sea sand extracted, mixed with regular sand

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Illegal sand mining in the coastal regions has escalated to an alarming level, with unscrupulous operators now resorting to extracting sea sand, mixing it with regular sand, and selling it as premium construction material. This illicit activity, thriving under the cover of darkness, is causing significant environmental harm and raising concerns among locals and activists.

Local sources reveal that the illegal extraction is not confined to riverbeds alone; it now targets coastal corridor lands, where vast quantities of sea sand are being extracted with apparent impunity. The mined sand is transported using carts and lorries, stored in gardens, and then sold in locations such as Atchutapuram, Parawada, Elamanchilli, and Rambilli. "The situation is getting out of hand. Sea sand is not suitable for construction, yet it's being mixed and sold as if it were," said a local resident, who wished to remain anonymous. "What's worse, the authorities know about this but seem unwilling to act. It's as if they're in on it."

The government has designated approximately 5,000 acres for the Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor, including areas in DLPuram, Amalapuram, Vempadu, and Rajayyapet villages. However, illegal traders have exploited these lands, digging and transporting sand from these corridors. Despite the responsibility of the Andhra Pradesh

Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC), Mines, and Revenue officials to monitor these activities, their apparent negligence has allowed these illegal operations to thrive. The Nakkapalli police made a significant breakthrough on August 26 by intercepting two lorries transporting sea sand from DLPuram at the Vempadu highway junction. However, in areas like DLPuram, Vempadu, Nelliipudi, Gunipudi, Amalapuram, Patimaeda, and Moolparra, the illegal movement of sand continues unabated. Tractors and lorries can be seen transporting sand at night, while carts ferry sea sand from the shore to storage locations in gardens.

"This is an environmental disaster waiting to happen," warned an environmental activist from the region. "Not only is sea sand being used illegally, but the sheer scale of the operation is damaging our coastal ecosystem. We need immediate intervention from the authorities before it's too late." The community is now calling for urgent action to be taken against these illegal activities. "It's high time the officials wake up and do their job," urged another local. "We can't afford to lose our land, our resources, and our environment to greed and corruption." The persistence of illegal sand mining, particularly involving sea sand, threatens both the integrity of the construction industry and the health of the coastal environment.

Rs 2 lakh loans for artisans under PM Vishwakarma Yojana

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

District Collector Dr BR Ambedkar has announced that under the Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana, loans of up to Rs 2 lakh will be extended to individuals involved in 18 different caste-based professions, handicrafts, and traditional occupations. He emphasised the government's commitment to empowering traditional artisans and craftspeople.

"The Vishwakarma Yojana is a lifeline for our artisans. Those with a government-issued Vishwakarma ID card will first undergo five days of basic training. Post-training, they will receive a Rs 15,000 tool kit as an incentive," Dr Ambedkar explained. He added that these artisans will also be eligible for Rs 1-lakh loan at a five-percent interest rate from the bank as an initial instalment to kickstart their businesses. "This loan must be repaid within 18 months. Once the repayment is complete, beneficiaries will undergo another 15 days of advanced training and then be eligible for a second loan of up to Rs 2 lakh at the same favourable interest rate," he



noted. A district-level committee meeting was convened in the Collector's Chamber on Tuesday to discuss the implementation of the scheme. The meeting focused on scrutinising the applications received from the Vishwakarma portal in the district. "We have received 5,584 applications from various artisans under this scheme, which are currently being processed by the DPO and DRDA at the village level and by the urban MEPMA PD," Dr Ambedkar informed. He stressed the importance of re-verification within the next two days to ensure that applicants are actively engaged in their respective professions and are truly eligible for the loan.

Crucial meet discusses 'Skill Census'



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has taken a significant step towards addressing the State's skill gap with the launch of the Skills Census initiative. A crucial meeting was held on Tuesday under the aegis of the Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC) to discuss the implementation of this ambitious programme.

Gummala Ganesh Kumar, MD & CEO of APSSDC, emphasised the importance of the Skills Census in aligning the State's workforce with industry demands. "This initiative is being carried out under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. Our goal is to identify

the skill gaps both at the individual and industry levels and gather data that will enable a comprehensive assessment of our current workforce," he stated.

The "Skills Census" aims to map the existing skills within the State and understand the demographic distribution of these skills. The government plans to conduct extensive surveys to achieve this objective, ultimately ensuring that the supply of skills meets the demands of various industries. "We are committed to understanding the current workforce dynamics and addressing any gaps that may exist. This census will be a pivotal tool in shaping our future workforce strategies," added Ganesh Kumar. The meeting also served as a

platform for interaction between the government and IT industry representatives. The attendees were urged to actively participate in the Skills Census process to ensure its success. Representatives from various IT giants, including Tech Mahindra, Patra, and WNS, shared their insights and suggestions during the event. Dinesh Kumar, Executive Director of APSSDC, reiterated the importance of industry collaboration. "The success of the Skills Census depends on the active involvement of our industry partners. Their feedback and cooperation are crucial in making this initiative a success," he noted.

Sai Krishna Chaitanya, District Skill Development Officer for Visakhapatnam, also

addressed the gathering, highlighting the district's unique skill needs and how the census will help tailor development programmes to meet those needs. "Visakhapatnam has a diverse workforce, and this census will provide us with the data needed to design targeted skill development programs," he explained.

The event concluded with a positive response from the industry representatives, who expressed their commitment to the initiative. "The Skills Census is a much-needed step in aligning our workforce with industry requirements. We look forward to working closely with the government to make this initiative a success," said a representative from Tech Mahindra.

ACCESS TO SAND REACHES

Allow only vehicles with JC's permission

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Vehicles arriving for sand should be allowed at the booking point only after receiving orders issued by the Joint Collector, and a truck sheet should be provided to them, District Collector P. Prashanthi instructed officials on Tuesday.

During a meeting with officials to review the implementation of the free sand policy, the Collector emphasised that vehicles coming to the sand reaches must be allotted a slot and issued a truck sheet.

She further directed that enforcement teams must conduct thorough inspections of the sand pumping system to ensure no irregularities occur.

Regarding public grievances, the Collector stated that 490 out of the 492 pending



petitions had been examined by the officials. She noted that an application with the director of the housing project had been pending with the Biccavolu mandal surveyor until yesterday. Officials were instructed to regularly check the online PGRS applications and take

necessary remedial actions. Collector Prashanthi highlighted that progress on revenue-related applications is being monitored directly from the state level.

She urged Tahsildar and Revenue Division officials to address RVO and other issues according to the law, adding

that field-level inspections should be conducted by a three-member committee formed at the mandal level.

The Police, Panchayat Raj, Irrigation, Mines, and other departments have the highest number of applications, she noted. It was mentioned that the PGRS will henceforth

conduct weekly audits on pending applications. Similarly, the Joint Collector and District Revenue Officer will also audit various issues. Joint Collector S. Chinna Ramudu and DRO Narasimulu were among those who attended the meeting.

Jagan seeks CM Naidu's nod for five new medical college

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) chief and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has called upon Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu to expedite the approval process for five newly proposed medical colleges, ensuring they can commence classes this academic year. He also urged the immediate release of the remaining funds for the timely completion of ongoing medical college projects.

In a post on the social media platform X, YS Jagan urged CM Naidu to leverage his influence with the central government to secure the necessary permissions without further delay. He criticised Naidu's administration for neglecting the state's public health sector, asserting that CM Naidu is deliberately ignoring crucial medical infrastructure development. YS Jagan stated that the failure to prioritise the commencement of the five new medical colleges, which were scheduled to begin classes this year, is evidence of the inefficiency of the Naidu government.

YS Jagan Mohan Reddy outlined key healthcare reforms introduced during his tenure, including the establishment of village and ward clinics, the family doctor initiative, enhanced services through 108 and 104 ambulances, and



Jagan accused CM of transforming the public healthcare sector into a system that prioritises private interests, ignoring the welfare of the common people. He warned that such policies would result in unaffordable healthcare services for the general public.

Rs. 8,480 crores allocated for constructing 17 medical colleges, one for each parliamentary constituency.

He noted that during the 2023-24 academic year, five medical colleges in Vizianagaram, Rajahmundry, Eluru, Machilipatnam, and Nandyal successfully began classes, adding 750 MBBS seats and benefiting students from underprivileged backgrounds. He further mentioned that classes for five additional colleges in Paderu, Markapuram, Madanapalle, Pulivendula, and Adoni were scheduled to begin in the 2024-25 academic year. He remarked that despite Naidu's alliance with the BJP, which leads the central government, he has been unable to secure the required approvals, leading to the loss of an additional 750 seats. He also highlighted how Naidu had ignored the promise made during the elections to fill all medical seats in new colleges under the convener quota.

YS Jagan also criticised Naidu's preference for privatisation, accusing him of transforming the public healthcare sector into a system that prioritises private interests over the welfare of the common people. He warned that such policies would result in unaffordable healthcare services for the general public.

the expansion of the Aarogyasri scheme to cover 3,257 treatments. He also highlighted the Aarogyasri initiative, which provides financial aid during recovery. Additionally, Rs. 16,880 crores have been invested in hospital infrastructure under the "Nadu-Nedu" programme, and

Developmental programmes should benefit people: Narayana

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister P. Narayana has called for a thorough approach to ensure that the development programmes under the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) truly benefit the public. On Tuesday, he conducted a detailed review of ongoing GVMC development projects alongside GVMC Commissioner P. Sampath Kumar, VMRDA Commissioner K.S. Viswanathan, senior GVMC officials, and Zonal Commissioners at the VMRDA office.

Minister Narayana discussed various issues during the meeting, including building permits, road widening, the protection of GVMC properties, vending and hawkker zones, encroachments, parking regulations, advertisement fees, layout permissions, master plan roads, unauthorised constructions, and GVMC city roads. "It's vital that every development programme not only makes progress but also provides real benefits to our citizens," said Minister Narayana. "We need to address issues like unauthorised constructions and parking regulations directly to make sure our plans meet the city's needs."

Several Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects are currently underway within GVMC, including solar installations, flyover bridges, bus shelters, fuel stations, land monetisation, an amusement park in Mudasarlova, automation of water supply, skywalks at nine locations, a stadium, sports complexes, and electric vehicle charging stations.

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Minister Narayana asked the GVMC Commissioner about these initiatives, stressing the need for transparency and efficiency in carrying out these projects.

The Minister instructed officials to remove advertisement boards from central medians and to enhance greenery in these areas. He also pointed out the delays in building plan approvals and directed the GVMC Commissioner to conduct a thorough review via video conference soon. "We need to sort out these delays quickly to ensure smooth progress in our development programmes," Narayana added.

After the review, discussions were held with Visakhapatnam MP M. Sriharath, legislators Velagapudi Ramakrishna Babu, Vamsi Krishna Srinivas, Panchakarma Ramesh Babu, Ganababu, Bandaru Satyanarayana, Legislative Council Members Duvvurapu Rama Rao, Vepada Chiranjeevi Rao, TDP Leader Pila Srinivas Rao, and GVMC officials. Topics included the master

plan, flyover bridges, open drains, sewage treatment plants, underground drainage, 24/7 drinking water supply, and smart city development projects.

Minister Narayana criticised the previous administration for failing to release matching grants for Swachh Bharat funds, noting that the central government's allocation of 2790 crore rupees had not been disbursed to the state. "The previous government's failure has led to a halt in municipal development works," he said. "In the next four months, we will intensify our efforts to revitalise municipal urban development and improve financial conditions."

The review was attended by GVMC Additional Commissioners S.S. Verma, D.V. Ramanamurthy, Chief Engineer Vinay Kumar, Town Planning Officer Suresh Kumar, DCR Srinivasa Rao, Project Director UGD M.V.D. Phani Ram, Supervising Engineers, Zonal Commissioners, and other officials.

Eluru Mayor, other YSRCP leaders join TDP



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Eluru Mayor Sheikh Noorjahan and other YSR Congress leaders joined Telugu Desam in the presence of IT and Education Minister Lokesh on Tuesday. Led by Eluru TDP MLA Badeti Radhakrishna (Chanti), Eluru Corporation Mayor Sheikh Noorjahan and her husband SMR Pedababu joined TDP. Along with them, the former chairman of EUDA, current president of YSRC Eluru town committee B Srinivas, former chairman

of AMC, Mancham Maibabu and many other YSRCP leaders joined TDP and Minister Lokesh welcomed all the leaders offering them the TDP scarves.

Speaking on this occasion, Minister Lokesh said that YSRCP has not learned the lesson from the defeat in the elections and is constantly spreading bad propaganda against the people's government.

He said that the alliance government would fulfill all the promises made to the people in the elections.

Manohar reviews fertilisers and pesticides sector



People aged 18 and above urged to enrol in voter list: DC

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K. Vetri Selvi has urged officials to ensure that all individuals aged 18 and above enrol their names on the voter list.

During a video conference with the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) and Assistant EROs on Tuesday, Collector Vetri Selvi emphasised the need for polling booth-level officials to conduct door-to-door surveys to update details on deceased and emigrant voters. She instructed that individuals who have reached the age of 18 should submit applications to be added to the voter list.

The Collector stressed that applications received through the voter list amendment programme must be processed within the designated timeframe. She urged the authorities to intensify efforts for thorough verification of the voter list and to organise awareness sessions in colleges to encourage young adults to register as voters.

She also highlighted the importance of ensuring that all members of a family are assigned to the same polling booth and directed officials to arrange programmes to educate the public about voter registration, address changes, updating photographs on voter identity cards, and other related updates for the 2025 voter list amendment. The meeting was attended by DRO D. Pushpamani and ZP CEO K.S.S. Subba Rao, among others.



Civil Supplies Minister Nandendla Manohar addressing a review meeting with fertilisers and pesticides manufacturing companies and dealers at the PDS Commissioner's office in Kanuru, near Vijayawada, on Tuesday.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Minister for Public Distribution System and Consumer Affairs, Nandendla Manohar, reiterated the NDA government's unwavering commitment to supporting farmers and ensuring a farmer-friendly environment. In line with this, he recently held a review meeting with representatives of Fertilisers and Pesticides Manufacturing Companies and Dealers at the PDS Commissioner's office in Kanuru, near Vijayawada.

During the meeting, Minister Manohar instructed company management and dealers to take stringent precautionary measures to guarantee the smooth sale of fertilizers and pesticides, ensuring no deviations in prices or

weights. He cautioned that severe action would be taken against any parties found responsible for discrepancies.

The Minister also underscored the collective responsibility to prevent any issues that might adversely affect farmers or lead to malpractice by dealers. He further addressed the recently implemented Unit Sale Price regulations, which came into effect in January, urging manufacturing companies and dealers to strictly comply with the new rules.

In addition, Weights and Measurements Joint Controller, B. Ram Kumar, delivered a PowerPoint presentation, highlighting that during field-level inspections, 252 cases were registered, with the majority concerning violations of weights and measures.

Files burning case: Scene reconstructed



PNS ■ CHITTOOR

The CID police reconstructed the scene in the Madanapalli Sub-Collector office where revenue files were allegedly burnt by miscreants. A CID team led by Chief Ravi Shankar Ayyannar which is investigating the file burning case conducted inspections in the sub-collector's office from 1 pm on Monday to 3 am on Tuesday.

The CID team reconstructed the scene as part of the investigation and the entire process was video graphed. The CID team also questioned senior Assistant Gowtham Tej in this connection. The CID team called Nimmanapalli VRA Ramanaidh who is one of the witnesses of the files burning case and RDO Hari Prasad to the Sub-collector's office and questioned them. It may be mentioned here that important files pertaining to lands were found burnt in the sub-collector's office and the Government has taken the file burning case very seriously and handed the investigation to the CID.



SP highlights importance of helmets for two-wheeler riders

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Superintendent of Police AR Damodara has stressed the necessity of wearing helmets for all two-wheeler riders to prevent head injuries.

In an awareness campaign, the SP, accompanied by popular Telugu film actor Raghu Babu, promoted helmet use among two-wheeler riders. The SP and the actor rode motorcycles, both wearing helmets, from Kurnool Road junction to the Mini-Stadium. They educated students on the importance of helmets in saving lives and also spoke about the dangers of drug abuse.

Addressing the event, the SP

noted that head injuries are a leading cause of death in road accidents involving two-wheelers. He emphasised that wearing helmets could significantly reduce fatalities. The SP also recommended avoiding triple-riding and speeding on motorcycles and advised against allowing minors to ride bikes. He cautioned students about the risks of drug addiction, warning that having a drug-related record could hinder future employment opportunities. Additional officials present included ASP (Admin) K Nageswara Rao, ASP (Crime) Sridhar Rao, AR ASP Ashok Babu, along with several DSPs, CIs, and SIs.

21 kg ganja seized, three arrested

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The police seized 21 kg of ganja when being transported in an auto rickshaw at Tangatur and arrested three drug peddlers.

Singarayakonda CI Hajarattaiah told the media on Tuesday that on a tip-off a police team conducted a check-

ing of vehicles.

They found 21 kg of ganja in an auto-rickshaw. The police seized the ganja worth Rs 11 lakh and arrested three drug peddlers Nagaraju, Rangappa and Gangu Naidu. SP AR Damodara appreciated CI Hajarattaiah and SI V Nagamalleswara Rao.



BAIL TO KAVITHA

Bandi sees win-win for BRS and Cong

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar sees the bail granted on Tuesday to Bharat Rashtira Samithi MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha in the Delhi liquor scam case as a 'win-win' situation for BRS and the Congress.

Bandi Sanjay said "BRS leader (Kalvakuntla Kavitha) is out on bail and the Congressman (Abhishek Manu Singvi) gets to Rajya Sabha".

On Tuesday, Bandi Sanjay posted on his X account: "Congratulations to the Congress party and its advocates for securing bail for BRS MLC in the infamous liquor scam. Your untiring efforts finally yielded fruits. This bail is a win for both BRS and Cong".

Congress-BRS leader is out on bail & the Congressman gets to Rajya Sabha. Remarkable political acumen by KCR in supporting the candidate, who initially argued for the bail, to be nominated to Rajya Sabha unopposed by the ruling Congress. Congratulations to the partners in crime who wine & dine".

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivnath requested Water Resources Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu to grant funds for the development of Mutyala, Vedadri and Polampalli lift irrigations in Jaggayyapet constituency. The MP on Tuesday invited Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu along with MLA Sriram Rajagopal Tatayya to visit Jaggayyapet and inspect Mutyala, Vedadri and Polampalli lift irrigation.

Irrigation Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu met MP Kesineni Sivnath and Jaggayyapet MLA Sriram Rajagopal Tatayya at the Minister's office in Vijayawada on Tuesday to provide irriga-

tion water to farmers in Jaggayyapet constituency.

The MP brought to the notice of the Minister the funds required for the development of Munneru Polampalli Dam in Jaggayyapet Constituency and Vedadri lift scheme to bring both into use. Also, it was explained that Kanchala and Vedadri schemes are expected to be developed and restarted.

The Minister informed them that they are trying to provide a permanent irrigation solution to Polampally Ayakat. MP Kesineni Sivnath explained to the minister that plans are being prepared to provide safe drinking water to every village in the Jaggayyapeta constituency.

India-Brazil strategic partnership deepened and diversified over years: Jaishankar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India-Brazil strategic partnership has "deepened and diversified" over the years and now spans a very wide range of domains, including defence, space, security, technology and people-to-people relations, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Tuesday.

In his opening remarks at the 9th India-Brazil Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) in Delhi, Jaishankar congratulated the Latin American country for conducting the G20 meetings successfully.

"I would like to reiterate India's full support to the Brazilian G20 presidency and also recall that we got your fullest support during our own presidency. We appreciate various unique initiatives centred on the theme of building a just world and a sustainable planet," he said.

Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira, who arrived here on August 25, said in his opening remarks that

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva will be glad to welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro in November.

Brazil is currently the chair of the influential bloc. The G20 presidency was relayed to Brazil by India last year.

Jaishankar, in his address, welcomed his Brazilian counterpart and the delegation and said he looks forward to a "very productive Joint Commission Meeting".

"Our strategic partnership, which was established in 2006, has deepened and diversified over the years. It now spans a very wide range of domains from defence, space and security, including cyber, to trade and investment, oil and natural gas, biofuels, agriculture, animal husbandry, food processing, health and medicine, traditional medicine, science and technology, culture and people-to-people relations," he said.



Modi-Putin discuss measures to further strengthen ties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin as he shared his "insights" from his recent visit to Ukraine and reiterated India's firm commitment to supporting an early, abiding and peaceful resolution of the conflict with Ukraine.

In a post on X, Modi said the two leaders also discussed measures to further strengthen special and privileged strategic partnership between the two countries.

He said, "Exchanged perspectives on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and my insights from the recent visit to Ukraine. Reiterated India's firm commitment to support



an early, abiding and peaceful resolution of the conflict." The prime minister had on Monday briefed US President Joe Biden on his visit to Ukraine and conveyed India's

full support for early return of peace to the region through dialogue and diplomacy.

The Ministry of External Affairs in a statement later said Modi during his telephone conversation with Putin recalled his "successful visit to Russia" last month to participate in the 22nd India-Russia Bilateral Summit.



ACROSS THE STATES

'Cong-NC alliance for J&K Assembly polls will have no bearing on BJP'

PNS ■ JAMMU

Exuding confidence of the BJP forming the next government in Jammu and Kashmir, Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Tuesday said the pre-poll alliance between the Congress and National Conference for the upcoming assembly elections will have no bearing on his party.

Singh was in Doda district, which is part of his Udhampur parliamentary constituency, to accompany former minister Shakti Raj Parihar and Gajay Singh Rana who filed their nomination papers from the Doda-West and Doda assembly constituencies, respectively.

Tuesday was the last day for filing of nomination papers for 24 assembly segments - 16 in south Kashmir and eight in Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban districts of Jammu region - which are going to polls in the first phase on September 18.

Talking to reporters after the filing of nomination papers by the two BJP candidates, the Union minister said this is not for the first time that a coalition between the Congress and National Conference had happened and it will have no bearing on the prospects of the BJP.

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MEDIC RAPE AND MURDER

CBI seeks polygraph test of Kolkata police ASI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

The CBI has sought permission from a Kolkata court to conduct a polygraph test on city police assistant sub-inspector Anup Dutta who was said to be close to Sanjay Roy, the arrested accused in the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar medical college, officials said Tuesday.

The CBI is exploring if Dutta helped Roy in any cover up of the crime, they said.

According to reports, Dutta was allegedly instrumental in extending various favours to Roy, they said.

The central probe agency is trying to find out if Roy told Dutta about the crime and received any help, they said.

They said the court would decide the application for a polygraph test after seeking Dutta's consent on the issue.

The CBI completed polygraph tests on former principal of the medical college



Sandip Ghosh on Tuesday, the third day of subjecting him to a series of Deception Detection Tests (DDT), they said.

He underwent a Layered Voice Analysis test on Saturday, followed by a polygraph test on Monday. The test on Monday could not be completed, so it was resumed on Tuesday. Layered voice analysis is a new DDT in the forensic experts' arsenal. It detects the speaker's reaction to a lie but does not identify a lie. The technology identified stress, cognitive

processes, and emotional cues in different voice properties.

A polygraph test, also a DDT, can help assess inaccuracies in statements of suspects and witnesses. By monitoring their psychological responses -- heart rate, breathing patterns, sweating, and blood pressure -- investigators can determine if there are discrepancies in their responses.

However, these are not admissible evidence during the trial and can only be used to get further leads in a case.

'I will take sides, won't let 'Miya' Muslims take over Assam'

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Asserting that he would take sides, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said he would not let 'Miya' Muslims 'take over' Assam.

Sarma was speaking in the assembly on the admissibility of adjournment motions moved by the opposition parties to discuss the law and order situation in the state in the wake of the gang-rape of a 14-year-old girl in Nagaon.

He said the crime rate had not increased in the state as was being alleged by the opposition if the population growth was taken into account.

"Not a single case of rape is acceptable. Still, if population increase is taken into consideration along with the number of rape cases in recent years, the crime rate has come down. There has been much improvement in the last 10 years," he said.



Ailing Asaram taken to Pune for treatment

Asaram Bapu, who is serving a life sentence in Jodhpur Central Jail for raping a minor, was on Tuesday sent to Pune for treatment, two weeks after the Rajasthan High Court allowed the self-styled godman to undergo treatment at an Ayurvedic hospital in Maharashtra.

Asaram, 83, who was arrested in September 2013, will undergo treatment for some heart-related ailment at Madhavbaug hospital in Pune for seven days, police said. He departed for Mumbai on an Indigo flight at 2:20 pm and was accompanied by Jodhpur police officers and two attendants. Earlier, there were reports that he would be travelling by air ambulance. SHO (Airport police station) Hanuman Singh said that keeping in view the departure of Asaram, adequate security arrangements were put in place at the airport.



SC to hear Patna HC judge's plea over salary

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear a curious case of Patna High Court judge Justice Rudra Prakash Mishra who is not getting his salary for 10 months as he does not have a General Provident Fund (GPF) account. The top court also issued notices on other petitions relating to pension and pay of serving and former high court judges. A bench, comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, intended to fix the cases for hearing on a later day, but gave an early date after the counsel for the high court judge raised his issue. "Let us hear this on Friday," the CJ said and ordered the de-tagging of his case with the batch of pleas. Senior advocate K Parameswar, who is assisting the bench as an amicus curiae, said that Justice Rudra Prakash Mishra of the high court was not getting the salary as the Bihar government says that it has brought in a new pension scheme.



Jharkhand adds 3.91 L voters ahead of assembly polls

Around 3.91 lakh new voters were enrolled as the final electoral rolls for Jharkhand were published on Tuesday ahead of the assembly elections due later this year, officials said on Tuesday. The state has a total of 2,57,78,149 voters -- 1,30,65,449 males, 1,27,12,266 females and 434 persons of the third gender, according to the latest rolls. Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) K Ravi Kumar said the mammoth second special summary revision of the rolls, published in January, was completed with a focus on accuracy, inclusivity, and purity. There were 10.74 lakh voters in the age group of 18-19, and 3.62 lakh persons with disabilities. The number of people above 85 years was 1.15 lakh, and of them, 1,975 were over 100. "The number of polling stations in the state for the upcoming assembly elections has increased from 29,521 to 29,562," the CEO said.

BJP to draft in CMs, Union ministers to spearhead its membership drive

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union ministers, chief ministers and elected representatives from sarpanch to parliamentarians will spearhead the BJP's nationwide membership drive starting from September 2, an exercise which will serve as the launch pad of the party's internal polls leading to the election of its new president.

The start of the drive will be marked by BJP president J P Nadda renewing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's membership of the party before its senior leaders fan out across the country.

BJP national general secretary Vinod Tawde, who is also the head of the membership drive, appealed to people to join the party in a big way. A strong BJP will lead to the making of a 'Viksit Bharat', he said.

The first phase of the membership drive will go on till September 25 and then a review of the exercise will be carried out before the launch of the second phase on October 1. It will continue till October 15, he said.

Active members, a term for party workers who can contest organisational elections after

making a certain number of new members, will be enrolled between October 16-31.

Sources said there was no plan as of now to appoint a working president before a full-fledged president is elected. They, however, added that the party leadership may take a fresh call depending on organisational needs. Tawde said party workers across the country have been trained for the drive, which relies heavily on the digital medium. The party is relying on its 10 lakh active members to carry out the exercise, he added.

Delhi HC rejects plea seeking live streaming of court proceedings

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has rejected a petition seeking live streaming of court proceedings, saying in view of the phased implementation of the initiative and the ongoing deliberations within the committees concerned, any judicial interference in the matter would be premature and inappropriate.

The petitioner asserted that the live streaming facility, which was initiated last year, should also include recording of court proceedings as it would deter advocates from potentially misleading the courts and enhance judicial transparency.

The high court administration, in response, said a comprehensive implementation of live streaming, which involves substantial development of IT infrastructure, in all courtrooms was unfeasible at this time due to logistical constraints and presently, the facility was available on a case-to-case basis and in two courtrooms only.

'BJP again resorting to 'old tactic' of poaching ruling parties' MLAs'

PNS ■ DUMKA (JHARKHAND)

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Tuesday hit out at the BJP, alleging that it was again resorting to the "old tactic" of poaching legislators of ruling parties.

Soren's remarks came hours after JMM MLA and former

chief minister Champai Soren announced in New Delhi that he would join the BJP.

"The opposition has again started its 'sarkar todo abhiyan' and 'vidhayak todo abhiyan' (break the government and poach the MLAs campaign) as it did during the Lok Sabha elections.

Air pollution increased death risk across age groups: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In Indian districts, air pollution exceeding national standards have been shown to increase death risk across all age groups -- by 86 per cent in newborns, 100-120 per cent in children under five years of age and 13 per cent in adults, according to a study.

A team of researchers, including those at the International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, looked at fine particulate matter (PM2.5) pollution levels across over 700 districts. Data

for analysis was taken from the National Family and Health Survey (fifth round) and the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS).

In households not having a separate kitchen, the study found higher chances of deaths among newborns and adults.

Among newborns and children aged under five, the chances "appeared to be almost two-fold and more than two-fold higher, respectively, in the districts of India where the PM2.5 concentration is up to the NAAQS level," the authors said in the study published in



the journal GeoHealth.

Analysing the interaction between PM2.5 exceeding NAAQS (of 40 micrograms per cubic metre) and household air pollution, the team found that

it substantially increased deaths among newborns by 19 per cent, children by 17 per cent and adults by 13 per cent.

"The results demonstrate that PM2.5 exhibits a stronger

association with mortality across various life stages. Notably, when (household air pollution) is considered in conjunction with ambient pollution, this association is further heightened," the authors wrote.

They said PM2.5 levels are generally high across the Indo-Gangetic Plain, spanning across the northern Indian subcontinent, owing to multiple reasons, including agricultural practices involving the burning of crop residues and emissions from industrial centres and manufacturing hubs.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Step in the right direction

Modi Govt launches assured pension scheme for Central Govt Employees, amid concerns of financial implications

The Modi Government has announced the fixed pension scheme for the central government employees. This must be music to the ears of central employees who were not happy with the ongoing market-linked pension scheme and were demanding its scrapping. In a significant policy shift, the Indian government has approved a new pension scheme guaranteeing central government employees 50% of their base salary as a pension. This move marks a departure from the current National Pension Scheme (NPS), which links payouts to market returns. The newly introduced Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) is set to be implemented from April 1, 2025, and will impact over two million federal employees. The shift towards the UPS stems from growing dissatisfaction with the NPS, which was adopted in 2004 as part of a broader fiscal reform. Under the NPS, employees contribute 10% of their base salary, and the government adds 14%, with the eventual pension amount depending on the market returns from investments, primarily in federal debt. However, as some states began reverting to the older, more fiscally burdensome system of guaranteed pensions, the Modi government faced mounting pressure to reassess the NPS.



The decision to approve the UPS aligns with demands from trade unions and the Opposition parties, who have long advocated for a guaranteed minimum pension. The issue gained political traction during recent general elections, where the lack of pension security under the NPS became a contentious topic. The UPS guarantees that employees who have completed at least 25 years of service will receive 50% of their base salary, calculated over the last 12 months before retirement, as a pension. This assured payout provides a safety for retirees, addressing concerns about the volatility of market-linked pensions. While the UPS offers greater security for employees, it also imposes a significant financial burden on the government. The expected cost to the exchequer for the fiscal year 2024-25 is approximately Rs 62.5 billion. This annual expenditure is likely to fluctuate based on the number of employees retiring each year. However, the shift to the UPS raises several concerns. First, the financial sustainability of the scheme is a critical issue. The guaranteed nature of the pension could strain government finances, especially if economic growth slows or tax revenues decline. Additionally, the UPS may lead to disparities between central and state government employees. Moreover, there is a risk that the shift back to a defined benefit pension system could set a precedent for other sectors, potentially leading to broader demands for similar guarantees. This could exacerbate fiscal challenges, particularly in a country where social welfare spending is already under pressure. As India prepares to implement the UPS in 2025, careful management and ongoing evaluation will be essential to ensure that the benefits of the scheme are balanced against its fiscal impact.

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PICTALK



A painter gives final touches to the Goddess Durga's idol ahead of Durga pooja, in Kolkata

The risk of monetising public education

Commercialisation of these institutions undermines their core mission which is to provide inclusive, affordable high-quality education to all

The Vice-Chancellor of JNU, Prof. C Santhoshree D Pandit recently remarked that the country's top university is facing a financial crunch with little regular income generated from its resources. The VC has decided to repurpose the university's properties with private participation. This culture of looking at public academic institutions as a source of revenue has been rhyming among our policymakers during the past several years.



One reason is the huge prime land area holding maintained by the public sector institutions and another is the change in the shift in societal perception. Today's society evaluates everything based on money. The primary objective of public sector academic institutions is to offer an inclusive and excellent education to all sections of the population. Central to these institutions is the concept of education as a public good—a valuable asset that has advantages for society as a whole, rather than solely for individuals. Education, in this view, is not simply a product that can be purchased and

impact of market ideology in public policy. Consequently, numerous public universities and colleges have resorted to alternate sources of income, such as raising tuition fees, extending online programs, providing executive education courses, renting out spaces and forming alliances with private industry.

Private parties, if allowed to rent out spaces, should work closely with the academic and research community of the university. It should also help in imparting knowledge and transformation to students. In many NITs, the guest house rate has been increased tenfold, as mandated by the policymakers. Unfortunately, people who visit these institutions including academicians and parents of students have to pay more than what is the market rate in that area. Although these initiatives can offer significant financial support, they also pose a potential threat of altering the core purpose of public sector institutions. It can be detrimental to maintaining high academic standards and fostering a wide range of intellectual perspectives.



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

Additionally, it can generate pressures to give higher priority to programs and research areas that provide greater profits, perhaps overlooking subjects that are less financially rewarding but equally crucial for societal progress. It is vital to provide students with a well-rounded education that encourages critical thinking and broad-based knowledge. Public sector academic institutions hold a distinct and crucial role in maintaining the social fabric of the nation. Their objective is not to earn financial gain but rather to generate enlightened minds capable of critical thinking, and contribute to the development of the nation. The great minds working in every field, including the bureaucrats and political leaders are groomed by these public sector institutions. For this to continue, we should not put a price tag on every facility a public sector university offers to the student or society at large.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies; views are personal)

A new standard for global populism

Kamala prioritises the everyday citizen over corporate interests and her message is getting traction not only in the US but across the globe



SHIVAJI SARKAR

The global economic landscape could shift dramatically if the US Democratic Party's presidential nominee, Kamala Harris, succeeds in implementing her bold stance on prices and corporate control. This move could send shockwaves across the world, compelling nations like India to reconsider their current economic models—just as they did during the liberalization era when corporate power surged. It appears the tide is turning, as people worldwide demand freedom from the manipulative tactics that drive up prices. Harris's message is clear: Americans can no longer tolerate skyrocketing costs. Her aggressive, populist economic agenda aims to rein in corporate power and lower the cost of living, potentially setting a new standard for global economic policies.

A 74-year-old Indian blogger after a lavish Indian corporate marriage in July blurted out on X-twitter, "In my 74 years, I have not seen, or even heard of, a more tasteless, egotistical or pretentious wedding than the recent, 24X7 televised extravaganza. The perversity and its real portent lie elsewhere. "It lies in the way money was expended, at a time when the average Indian has never been worse off economically, when inequality and unemployment have reached record heights, when 67 percent of the GST is paid by 50 percent of its poorest citizens, when the top 1 percent control 40 percent of the country's wealth, when 800 million people have to be provided free/subsidized foodgrains to survive."

Not much different is the weekend speech of Harris. She says, "We know that many Americans don't yet feel that progress in their lives. Costs are still too high and it feels too hard to get ahead." No wonder Republican nominee Donald Trump calls her too liberal. It seems so similar to the echoes of severe price rises and joblessness during the June Lok Sabha elections in India amid rows of mutton, muslim, mandir and mujra, mehngai and berojgari. Yes, Indians and Americans need food, a minimum quality of



life and freedom from organised oppression. Indians are certainly more concerned because with whatever rank in the world economy, it is nowhere near the US. If the American economy is not in good shape, Indians can at best be convalescing, post-COVID-19. But the stranglehold of the honchos in India is more gripping than in the US, which has strong anti-trust laws despite the protests from the big. Indian policies suit the big shops more with quite a few trillions being waved off in taxes and other benefits, including tailoring national and stock market policies. Harris instead, despite being the Vice President of the USA, empathising with the American people, says, "The bills add up. Food, rent, gas, back-to-school clothes, prescription medication. After that, for many families, there's not much left at the end of the month. As president, I will take on the high costs that matter most to most Americans."

Those words any Indian voter would love to hear from their leaders. It follows a dozen proposals for improving the lives of Americans. Some like 3 million new housing units to the people seemingly have been picked up from Indian political party manifestos. Like India's PM Avas, she proposes to provide up to \$25,000 in down payment support for a million first-time home buyers.



AMERICANS CAN NO LONGER TOLERATE SKYROCKETING COSTS. HER AGGRESSIVE, POPULIST ECONOMIC AGENDA AIMS TO REIN IN CORPORATE POWER AND LOWER THE COST OF LIVING, POTENTIALLY SETTING A NEW STANDARD FOR GLOBAL ECONOMIC POLICIES

ers. An addition is tax incentives for builders, who build affordable rental housing. It could be a welcome scenario for most Indians. As now being debated in India on capital gains tax indexation or also rentals, Harris is keen on preventing corporate landlords from using algorithmic price-setting tools to increase rents by large margins. It is gradually becoming a problem in areas in the national capital regions of Noida, Gurgaon, Delhi's Dwarka, Bengaluru, and Chennai. India has just started feeling it. Medical costs and health insurance fraud are the worst in the US. Many Indian companies now have emulated it. Medical expenses are increasing in India and the US. Both countries are discussing it intensely and often end up saying the United Kingdom has the best medical facilities. Harris promises to eliminate medical debt for millions of Americans, possibly by using federal funds to buy and forgive outstanding debt from health providers. She wants to limit Americans' annual out-of-pocket spending on prescription drugs to \$2,000. Thousands of kilometres apart the conditions are so similar! The one difference is that India wants to repeat the US insurance follies and they are trying to change it. Though in some cases like PM

JanAushadhi, India is doing better in providing generic medicines at low prices. Harris does not have that option and says would cap the out-of-pocket cost of insulin at \$35 per month for all. As direct benefit pensions are given to kisans in India, Harris would give a child tax credit that would provide \$6,000 per child to families for the first year of a baby's life. Indian budgetary novelties introduced as direct benefits or pensions in various ways have fascinated Harris. Each of Harris's proposals, whether in terms of food, medicine, housing or child care is "populist", involving government intervention against corporate interests on behalf of consumers. Socialism, direct or indirect, despite big companies ruling the roost, is returning to world politics. What Harris does may just create a flutter, but countries like India, who claim to be the next global leaders, have to tread more cautiously to safeguard the poor, farmers and the working class. Harris has borrowed quite a few of it from the Indian budget. Now it is India's turn to ensure how it could check the corporates to serve people's interests. The world is changing and India's populism is winning big one's heart. (The author is a freelance writer and columnist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CELEBRATING KRISHNA'S BIRTH

Madam — Krishna Janmashtami, the birthday of Lord Krishna, is a joyous celebration that embodies the triumph of love and divine joy over evil and negativity. This auspicious occasion marks the arrival of Krishna, the eighth avatar of Lord Vishnu, who brought hope and redemption to a world plagued by darkness and despair. As devotees around the world honor Krishna's birth, they are reminded of his profound teachings in the Bhagavad Gita, which emphasize the importance of spiritual growth, self-realization, and the eternal victory of good over evil. Through vibrant festivities, soulful bhajans, and heartfelt pujas, Krishna Janmashtami celebrates the unconditional love and divine joy that Krishna embodies, inspiring devotees to embrace their own spiritual journey and revel in the bliss of the divine.

Purva Pandya | Ujjain

STALIN'S NEW MOVE

Madam — As against the Sanatana Dharma before the Lok Sabha elections, the DMK has changed its stand now by a mix in the Dravidian model by supporting the individual's faith of choice and wanting to help them in their religious pursuits. By inaugurating the two day Global Muthamizhil Murugan Conference, the Chief Minister of TN M K Stalin is bringing in a new colour other than black and red as he's well aware that this will help him in the forthcoming assembly elections to woo the votes of the Hindus by using the Murugan card to play to DMK's advantage. We welcome this change and are happy if something good for the people happens from the leadership of M K Stalin whom I respect for his flexibility of principle if he finds something worth it. One hopes Stalin's new found alliance with the Lord Murugan may bestow the blessings for the people for the prosperity of the state. A P Thiruvadij Chnnai

Unified pension scheme launched



This refers to the news report, "Unprecedented Unified Pension Scheme by Modi Government" (August 25). Though driven by the huge political pressure after jolts in recently held Lok Sabha polls, the NDA Government's decision to roll out a new guaranteed Unified Pension Scheme for its employees is a step in right direction. In fact, pension is a social welfare measure which is granted to ensure that a retired employee lives with dignity in his

old age. Reversing its 21 year old pension reforms partially, the Government has introduced OPS features like assured pensions, inflation-linked adjustments, family pensions, and a guaranteed minimum pension in the UPS. Employees are still required to contribute 10% of their basic pay and dearness allowance to UPS remains only major difference between the OPS and the UPS. The government will also contribute to the UPS, which will increase from 14% (currently contributed to NPS) to 18.5%. Thus, the UPS will lead to higher burden on the exchequer. Thus, it remains to be seen whether state governments adopt the UPS, which certainly would not augur well for their financial health.

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

PM MODI BROKERS PEACE

Madam — Modi's visit to Kyiv will strengthen India-Ukraine bilateral relationship. Like with Russia in March 24 Modi is likely to have had the message of peace with Zelenskyy about ending the war and restoring peace. The catch is both Russia and Ukraine are not keen in fighting any further but both wanting to end the war on their own terms. Kyiv does not want to compromise on its sovereignty and territorial integrity which could lead to an instability and even a revolution in Ukraine. Kyiv wants to retrieve all the Ukrainian territory occupied by Russia something that Russia is unwilling to do. The US and NATO have rejected Russia's demand to end the war. Under this situation it is extremely unlikely that a peace can be brokered by PM Modi as an one off attempt. Unlike other leaders of the world PM Modi enjoys a special relationship with Putin who in his words has called Modi as his best friend. India also in none of the resolu-

tions passed by the UN has gone against Moscow. While on the same lines has been maintaining good equation with Zelenskyy (post his ire after having a hug with Putin in March 24) through telephone calls and the sidelines meetings in summits. With Modi's Aug 23 personal visit and signing of the trade agreements and India's commitment to be on the side of the PEACE and just a not a neutral country one can expect PM Modi will make attempts for a peace talk between the two warring leaders. Besides, PM Modi's initiative also takes care of the growing Chinese influence in the region and places India at par with it if not above, India must be more proactive in the region to safeguard its own interests. With US already started feeling the heat of recession and a leadership change in the offing one can see the light at the end of the tunnel!

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

LIVE IN THE PRESENT

MOMENT, IT MATTERS MOST

One needs to inculcate habits of equanimity, and remaining calm, whatever the circumstance



RAVI VALLURI

The romance was in the air as India attained freedom from the British yoke. The period was the 1950s as India embarked upon the socialistic pattern to revive the country, which had inherited an impecunious economy. Two bright students from coastal Andhra landed in rain-washed Delhi University to pursue their dreams. To remain connected with their past, they made recurrent trips to the New Delhi Railway Station to receive students arriving in droves from their state and revive those nostalgic moments. When it is repetitively said, "Those good old days!", in one stroke we send a signal to our Universe that the present is not congenial. As Buddha says, "The mind is everything. What you think you become." If we live in the past, we keep fretting and fuming about the missed opportunities and those past impressions create roadblocks in our physical and metaphysical advancement.

On completion of their studies, the more aspiring students stayed back and the less enterprising ones returned home. The person in Delhi aspired to be a civil servant like his more illustrious siblings and their children. But destiny had carved out its plan. His friends and acquaintances qualified for the coveted job, a sinecure that eluded him. So, the mind became envious of his siblings, their children and friends and started implanting his failed mission upon his children, much to their discomfiture. How does one reach that state of 'present moment'? Before dwelling on some techniques, it will be useful to read a fas-



cinating Buddhist parable. One afternoon a Buddhist monk was carrying a bucket filled with water in a dense forest. Suddenly he heard a rustle. It was a tiger, smacking its lips and intently looking at the potential prey. The monk ran for his life, with the tiger in pursuit. The monk reached a precipice and had a choice to make, either be devoured by the ferocious tiger or jump off the cliff. Death stared in his face. The monk jumped and fortuitously clung onto a branch of a strawberry tree. He ate the strawberry—considering it to be his last meal—and thoroughly relished it. The monk had never had such a meal, as was absolutely in the present moment. A simple yet profound technique of sadhana is to be a witness to all the actions and activities that take place. The actor in us becomes the spectator too. This is what is espoused in the esoteric philosophy of Ashtavakra Gita (a classic dialogue between King Janaka—who himself was a Raj Rishi—and the sage Ashtavakra).

Any individual, householder or seeker needs to inculcate habits of equanimity, equilibrium, and equipoise to remain calm, whatever the circumstance or situation, to be contented and remain in the present moment. The protagonist who stayed back in Delhi could fulfil his dreams only partially. His son did qualify for the civil services, but could not join the service of his choice; this was due to excessive pressure applied by family members already in the elite services. Eventually, the son turned into an alcoholic. Perhaps it was because both father and son were not grateful to the Universe and did not adhere to the Law of Gratefulness.

Thus, lives were ruined. Meanwhile, the friend who returned home did not lose his way in the sands of time. He became a trade union leader and politician, living in the present. "Life is one big road with lots of signs. So, when you are riding through the ruts, do not complicate your mind. Flee from hate, mischief, and jealousy," sang Bob Marley.

(The writer is a faculty at Art of Living, views expressed are personal)

Catalyst for cinematic evolution and excellence



CHAITANYA K. PRASAD

The 70th National Film Awards once again celebrated the rich tapestry of Indian cinema, where diverse languages and cultures converged to showcase the best talent

The National Film Awards: A Platform for The Great Leap Forward. At the 70th National Film Awards, India's cinematic excellence once again took centre stage, showcasing vibrant and diverse storytelling from across the nation's many languages. Southern cinema emerged as a dominant force this year, with films and artists from the region sweeping some of the most prestigious honours. The Malayalam film 'Aattam' captured the Swarna Kamal for Best Feature Film, while the Kannada blockbuster 'Kantara' clinched the title of Best Popular Film.

Rishab Shetty, the driving force behind Kantara, took home the Best Actor award, sharing the limelight with Nithya Menon and Manasi Parekh, who shared Best Actresses for the Tamil film 'Thiruchitrambalam' and Gujarati film 'Kutch Express' respectively. Meanwhile, the Haryanvi film 'Fouja' gathered acclaim, earning Pramod Kumar the award for Best Debut Director, while Pavan Raj Malhotra secured Best Supporting Actor. The epic Tamil drama 'Ponniyin Selvan: I' also made its mark, with AR Rahman's power-packed music earning him the Best Music Director (Background Music) award, alongside wins for Best Sound Design by Anand Krishnamoorthi and Best Cinematography by Ravi Varman. In the Hindi cinema category, 'Gulmohar' emerged as the Best Hindi Film, adding another feather to Sharmila Tagore's illustrious cap with her third National Film Award.

This year's awards not only celebrated individual excellence but also highlighted the ever-evolving and dynamic landscape of Indian cinema. The lifeline and longevity of any artist and any film is fuelled by the adrenaline of 4A's "Acknowledgment, Awards, Appreciation, and Applause". Globally, awards are given for excellence in the celluloid space which has opened a new phase of creativity, innovation perspective perspective-building through storytelling and film narration. Since its inception in 1954, the National Film Awards for Excellence in Cinema have symbolised the journey of excellence and creativity. The awards have offered an equal platform to cinemas of various languages, cultures, diversities, themes, and perspectives, where all the creative energies of India converge to speak the unified language of artistic excellence. These awards in the last seventy-odd years have showcased the gold standard of filmmaking across different verticals reinventing and shaping the diverse landscape of cinema in this country.

Each edition of the National Film Awards has strengthened inclusivity and converged the diversity of celluloid space seamlessly. The National Film Awards are unique in terms of their magnitude, canvas, and spectrum. Every award ceremony has been an opportunity to witness the emergence of different forms and categories of cinema that reflect continuity and legacy. The landscape of the National Film Awards is deep and insightful, promoting diversity, storytelling, and narration.

It has truly elevated parallel, regional, and experimental cinema; voiced social concerns; and embraced and adapted to contemporary standards, content, and style



THIS YEAR'S AWARDS NOT ONLY CELEBRATED INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE BUT ALSO HIGHLIGHTED THE EVER-EVOLVING AND DYNAMIC LANDSCAPE OF INDIAN CINEMA

of presentation. Over the years, Indian cinema has witnessed a remarkable evolution, with regional films gaining recognition for their artistic brilliance. It all began in 1954, as the film "Mirza Ghalib" made history as the first recipient of the Best Feature Film award.

This milestone paved the way for a treasure trove of cinematic gems from various regions. Bengali cinema, in particular, has been a shining beacon, with timeless classics like Satyajit Ray's "Pather Panchali", "Aparajita", and "Charulata" earning the prestigious Swarna Kamal. The legendary Soumitra Chatterjee, a revered Bengali actor has been lauded for his performances in classics like "Aparajita" and "Charulata", earning him National Film Awards for his works.

The spotlight has also turned to Southern cinema, which has produced its own set of trailblazers. In 1965, the Malayalam masterpiece "Chemmeen" captivated audiences and critics alike, winning the Best Feature Film award. Kannada cinema made a powerful statement with "Chomana Dudi" in 1976, sweeping the National Awards for Best Feature Film, Best Actor, and Best Story. Tamil cinema joined this illustrious list in 1990 when Marrupakkam became the first Tamil film to clinch the Best Feature Film award.

The northeastern region of India has also produced its share of winners at the National Film Awards, bringing regional tales to the national stage. "Halodhia Chorai Baodhan Khai", the first Assamese film to win the Swarna Kamal for the Best Feature Film in 1987. Rima Das, a director has been recognized for her movies "Village Rockstars" and "Bulbul Can Sing", which capture the essence of life in Assam by portraying simplicity and resilience. At the 60th National Film Awards, Jahnur Barua's Assamese film "Baandhon" won

the Best Feature Film in the category while "Ko:Yad", a Missing film won the Best Feature Film in the non-Eighth Schedule language category. At the 62nd National Film Awards the movie "Phum Shang", from Manipur was honoured with the Best Investigative Film award showcasing the contributions of filmmakers from North East India. Such examples also prove that the National Film Awards serve as a crucible for bringing together a convergence of ideas, creativity, and talent. They offer hope that creativity knows no barriers in India, allowing unknown filmmakers and names to become stars. One of the most coveted awards of the National Film Awards is the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, India's highest award in the field of cinema honouring the artists' lifetime achievement. Named after Shri Dadasaheb Phalke, the visionary often hailed as the father of Indian cinema, this award is a tribute to those whose contributions have indelibly shaped the landscape of Indian filmmaking.

This award was introduced in 1969 and was presented to Devika Rani. Since then this distinguished honour has been awarded to Waheeda Rehman, Satyajit Ray, B.N. Reddy, L.V. Prasad, Bhupen Hazarika, Sivaji Ganesan, B.R. Chopra, Soumitra Chatterjee, Lata Mangeshkar, Raj Kapoor, Shyam Benegal, Amitabh Bachchan and Rajnikant are some of the renowned names who have been recognized for their lasting impact and their outstanding contribution to cinema. The National Film Awards also spotlight the significance of non-feature films by inspiring emerging directors to experiment and push boundaries.

This platform has nurtured talent, with acclaimed works like "Ek Tha Gaon" and "An engineered Dream", the Marathi film "Girni" and the Bengali film "Aamaar Katha: Story of Binodini" winners at the 52nd and the 62nd

National Film Awards. These awards bring attention to themes and innovative storytelling approaches demonstrating that Indian cinema thrives on creativity and embraces diversity beyond commercial considerations. The non-feature segment of awards over the years has acted as a catalyst for young film-makers who have unleashed their creativity across diverse subjects and narratives. This segment has showcased a unique simplicity, aesthetics and deep understanding of filmmaking and creativity. The recent changes to the regulations for the 70th National Film Awards demonstrate an evident wave of evolution. Changes like renaming awards and merging categories reflect an approach to acknowledging excellence in filmmaking.

The National Film Awards of India have witnessed several historic moments that have not only enhanced the country's cinematic excellence but also served as a stepping stone to celluloid success and international acclaim. One such landmark was the recognition of Satyajit Ray's "Pather Panchali" in 1956, which won the Best Feature Film award and subsequently brought Indian cinema to global attention. Another significant milestone was Aamir Khan's "Lagaan" in 2001, which not only won the National Film Award for Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment but also earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Language Film. The National Film Awards have played an instrumental role in shaping the course of Indian cinema. By celebrating a variety of perspectives and pushing boundaries the awards not only recognize exceptional achievements but also inspire upcoming filmmakers and artists.

(The writer is former additional DG, DFF and Festival Director, IFFI; views are personal. Inputs provided by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavi Srinivasan)

How personalised and adaptive technologies are shaping the future of education

The future of education is personal, adaptive, and brimming with possibilities for individual success. It's time to embrace this change

The education system is witnessing a revolutionary shift, one that promises to reshape how we learn, grow, and succeed. At the core of this transformation lies advanced personalized and adaptive learning—a groundbreaking approach set to redefine the educational landscape.

With the global adaptive learning market projected to reach \$5.3 billion by 2025 and the personalized learning market expected to soar to \$19.86 billion by 2030, it's clear that these technologies are more than just a passing trend.

Unpacking Personalized and Adaptive Learning Personalized learning crafts educational experiences that resonate with each student's



VEDANT HAMIRWASIA

unique needs, skills, and interests. It's about creating learning journeys that allow individuals to flourish in their way. Adaptive learning takes this concept further, using AI to adjust content difficulty and style in real time based on student performance.

It's like having a high-tech tutor that ensures learning is always challenging but never overwhelming.

The Power of Data-Driven Insights: One of the most exciting aspects of these systems is their ability to harness data for good. Through sophisticated learning analytics, educators gain unprecedented insights into each student's progress. This foresight allows for timely interventions, ensuring no student falls behind. Predictive analytics even allows these systems to anticipate which students might struggle, enabling proactive support measures.

Customized Learning Paths: Gone are the days of one-size-fits-all education. Advanced personalized learning creates individual learning plans that adapt to each student's unique learning style.

Whether you're a visual learner who thrives on interactive simulations or prefer diving deep into text-based explanations, these systems have you covered. The flexibility extends to pacing as well, allowing students to linger on challenging concepts or race ahead in areas they excel.

Engagement, the Secret Sauce of Success: Engagement is crucial for effective learning, and these technologies serve it up in spades. Interactive content, gamification elements, and multimedia experiences make learning feel less like a chore and more like an adventure.

By catering to diverse learning preferences, these systems ensure that every student finds their groove and stays motivated.



Levelling the Playing Field: Perhaps one of the most profound impacts of these technologies is their potential to promote equity in education.

Assistive features embedded within these systems support students with disabilities, offering tools like

text-to-speech and customized interfaces. This push for inclusivity ensures that quality, personalized education is accessible to all, regardless of individual challenges.

The Benefits and Challenges Ahead: The benefits of advanced personalized and adaptive learning are clear and compelling. Studies consistently show improved learning outcomes, increased student engagement, and the potential to bridge achievement gaps.

However, it's important to acknowledge the challenges that come with this educational revolution. Privacy concerns surrounding student data and the persistent digital divide are hurdles

that must be addressed thoughtfully. Embracing the Future of Education The educational landscape is evolving rapidly, propelled by the transformative potential of advanced personalized and adaptive learning.

By embracing these technologies thoughtfully and addressing the challenges head-on, we can create an educational landscape where every student has the opportunity to thrive, learn, and reach their full potential. The future of education is personal, adaptive, and brimming with possibilities for individual success. It's time to embrace this change and unlock the potential of every learner.

(The author is director, ODA Class; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



ReNew, Microsoft sign clean power sale agreement

ReNew on Tuesday announced the signing of a clean power sale contract of 437.6 megawatt (MW) with Microsoft. The contract is expected to generate over one million units of green electricity attributes annually, contributing to Microsoft's aim to become carbon negative by 2030, ReNew said in a statement. "ReNew today announced the signing of a green attribute sale contract of 437.6 MW with Microsoft," it said. ReNew will direct about USD 15 million of revenue from the contract towards a community fund to support environment-focused initiatives. This work will be delivered in partnership with the ReNew Foundation, the philanthropic arm of ReNew, which works to create sustainable communities through climate action with a focus on women and youth and whose efforts are aligned with Microsoft's Environmental Justice priorities.



Airtel to shut down Wynk Music app, absorb all staff

Bharti Airtel will exit from music vertical and shut down its Wynk Music app, according to sources. The company will absorb all Wynk Music employees. "Airtel is planning to close Wynk Music in the next couple of months. It will absorb all the employees into the company," a source said. When contacted, an Airtel spokesperson confirmed the development. "We can confirm that we will sunset Wynk Music and all Wynk music employees will be absorbed within the Airtel ecosystem. Airtel users will have access to Apple Music. Additionally, Wynk Premium users will receive exclusive offers from Airtel for Apple," the spokesperson said. The company has entered into an agreement with Apple to provide access to Apple Music with special offers to its customers who use iPhone.



CDSL, Citibank N.A. settle regulatory violation cases

Leading depository CDSL and global lender Citibank N.A. on Tuesday settled with Sebi cases pertaining to the alleged violation of regulatory norms after paying settlement charges. CDSL and Citibank N.A. (DDP) paid Rs 1.3 crore and Rs 40.2 lakh, respectively, towards settlement charges, according to separate orders passed by Sebi. The orders came after Central Depository Services (India) Limited or CDSL and Citibank N.A. filed applications with Sebi proposing to settle the instant proceedings initiated against them, "without admitting or denying the findings of facts and conclusions of law" through settlement orders. In view of the acceptance of the settlement terms and the receipt of the settlement amount, the instant adjudication proceedings initiated against CDSL and Citibank N.A. through show cause notices dated November 13, 2023, and February 9, 2024, respectively, are disposed of, Sebi said in its orders.

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING CONCLUDES

Indo-Singapore talks productive

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pay an official visit to Singapore shortly, Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan has announced, after senior ministers of India and Singapore concluded a high-level meeting here to further their strategic ties. A four-member Indian delegation comprising Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw participated in the second India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR) here on Monday to discuss bilateral cooperation and exchange views on issues of mutual interests. Describing the ministers-only meeting as "productive", Balakrishnan said it also sets the stage for an official visit to Singapore by Prime Minister Modi.

"We are also working on all this because very shortly, we will be announcing an Official Visit by Prime Minister Modi to Singapore as well. I cannot give you the specific date, but it will occur shortly," he told reporters here. Balakrishnan said advanced manufacturing and semiconductors, as well as aviation and maritime connectivity, are new areas that Singapore and India have added to the high-level platform for discussing ways to enhance bilateral cooperation. Senior ministers from the two countries held a "productive" round of discussions at the second multi-ministerial roundtable here and explored how the two countries can boost bilateral cooperation in digital, skill development, sustainability, healthcare, connec-



tivity and advanced manufacturing. This was the second time that ministers from Singapore and India met at the India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR) after its inaugural edition was launched in September 2022 by then Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong during a five-day visit to India. Balakrishnan said advanced manufacturing and semiconductors, as well as aviation and maritime connectivity, are the new areas that Singapore and India have added to a high-

level platform for discussing ways to enhance bilateral cooperation. These two additions to the India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable are areas of significant opportunity for both countries, as well as their companies, the Singaporean foreign minister was quoted as saying by The Straits Times newspaper on Tuesday.

On Monday the Indian-origin minister said that both countries want to collaborate on advanced manufacturing and semiconductors -- a sector that India wants to expand significantly, and one where Singapore punches well above its weight. India is also likely to see tremendous growth in aviation in the coming years, having ordered more than 1,000 planes in the past year alone, the Singaporean foreign minister said, adding it represents great opportunities for services such as maintenance and air operations in the coming years -- another niche area where Singapore and its companies are globally competitive. "A country with more than 1.4 billion people is now embarking on a major upgrade of its aviation sector.



Next round of India-Australia comprehensive trade pact talks soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

bringing in clarity and understanding for convergence in the remaining provisions, it added. "The next round of CECA negotiations is likely to be held in November," it said in a statement. The Indian delegation was led by Rajesh Agrawal, the Chief Negotiator and Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce and the Australian delegation was led by Ravi Kewalram, the Chief Negotiator and First Assistant Secretary in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

"The meeting saw intensive discussions and negotiations to narrow down the differences through better understanding of each other's proposals and the way to bring in convergence.

Gold climbs to Rs 74,350 per 10 gm; silver rallies Rs 1,200

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices climbed Rs 550 to Rs 74,350 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday on the back of fresh demand from local jewellers. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 73,800 per 10 grams in the previous session on Friday.

Silver prices also rallied Rs 1,200 to Rs 88,200 per kilogram on Tuesday from Rs 87,000 per kg in the previous close, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also jumped Rs 550 to Rs 74,000 per 10 grams.

Traders attributed the rise in yellow prices due to a pick-up in demand by local jewellers and retailers in the domestic market. The bullion markets were closed in New Delhi on Monday on account of Krishna Janmashtami.



In the Asian trading hours, gold is trading at USD 2,543.90 per ounce, down USD 11.30 per ounce.

"Gold declined marginally on Tuesday, weighed down by better than expected US macro data and an uptick in US Treasury yields," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

According to Manav Modi, Senior Analyst, Commodity Research, MOFSL, gold prices fell but remained in sight of record highs it hit last week as

the prospect of lower US interest rates battered the US dollar and presented a brighter outlook for metal markets. Further, bullion surged to record highs last week, as market participants welcomed dovish comments from the Federal Reserve. Some safe haven demand also buoyed gold as ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas yielded few results, while hostilities in the Middle East persisted, Modi added.

Additionally, silver was quoted lower at USD 30.34 per ounce in the global markets. "Traders will focus on the US consumer confidence data going to be released later on Tuesday which will provide more insights on the direction of the bullion prices," Navneet Damani, Group Senior VP of Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services (MOFSL), said.

NIFTY HITS LIFETIME HIGH Markets settle flat in volatile trade

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended on a flat note after a volatile session on Tuesday due to the emergence of profit-taking near record high levels amid rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and Ukraine. The NSE gauge, however, hit a new lifetime peak of 25,017.

According to traders, profit booking in metal, consumer durable and FMCG shares negated gains in telecom, tech, and IT stocks.

After oscillating between highs and lows, the 30-share BSE Sensex eked out a marginal gain of 13.65 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 81,711.76 - its sixth consecutive session of rise. During the day, it hit a high of 81,919.11 and a low of 81,600.51.

The NSE Nifty ended almost flat, up 7.15 points or 0.03 per cent, at 25,017.75 -- its ninth straight session of gains.

"The domestic market witnessed profit-booking near record highs. While the posi-



tive expectations regarding a potential rate cut by the Fed in September remain, the recent geopolitical tensions and rising crude oil prices have made investors cautious amid high valuations. "Further, the recent shift in Fed stance towards the domestic market and the anticipation that the RBI will align with the Fed's actions are expected to foster a positive outlook in the near term," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

On the Sensex chart, Bajaj Finserv, Maruti, Larsen &

Toubr, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Axis Bank and ICICI Bank were the biggest gainers.

In contrast, Hindustan Unilever, JSW Steel, Titan, NTPC and Tata Motors were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.58 per cent, and smallcap index went up by 0.50 per cent.

Among the indices, telecommunication jumped 1.13 per cent, tech (0.70 per cent), financial services (0.68 per cent) and healthcare (0.44 per cent).

GCCs offering up to 20 pc higher salaries than IT services: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in India are offering up to 20 per cent higher salaries as compared with the IT services, especially at entry and mid levels, a report said on Tuesday.

According to the report by TeamLease Digital, India has over 1,600 GCCs employing over 1.66 million professionals. It is poised to welcome 800 new GCCs in the next 5-6 years, which shows the country's growing prominence as a global tech hub.

GCCs are centralized units established by multinational companies to manage specific business functions or processes, leveraging cost advantages, a skilled work-



force, and favourable business environments in strategic locations worldwide. GCCs play a vital role in driving efficiency and innovation across sectors such as IT, finance, and

research and development.

On the other hand, IT products & services encompass development, production, and management of hardware, software, networks, and ser-

vices that enable organizations in the creation, management and optimization of or access to information and business processes.

"GCCs are rapidly surpassing the IT sector in the talent market, especially at entry and mid levels. They offer salaries that are, on an average, 12-20 per cent higher than those in IT services and non-tech industries," TeamLease Digital CEO Neeti Sharma said quoting the report. This wage premium underscores the growing influence of GCCs as they attract top talent from the IT sector to fuel their expansion, signalling a shift in market dynamics where GCCs are emerging as the dominant force, she added.

Road developers to see slower revenue growth of 5-7 pc: Crisil

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Revenue growth of road engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) companies is expected to moderate to 5-7 per cent next fiscal, as lower national highway awarding weighs on their order books, rating agency Crisil said on Tuesday.

That said, the credit profiles of these companies will remain stable, supported by steady operating profitability and strong balance sheet, it added.

Crisil Ratings senior director Manish Gupta said the revenue growth will be impacted this fiscal and the next -- after a compound annual growth rate of 13 per cent over the past five years.

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) awarded an average of 12,500 km projects between fiscals 2022 and 2023, but the number dropped to 8,581 km last fiscal

and is seen modest at 8,000 km this fiscal. This slowdown is attributed to procedural issues linked to the approval of cost estimates of projects and restrictions under model code of conduct before elections, transition-linked issues as the government explores build-operate-transfer (BOT) toll model for future projects in addition to its currently dominant modes of EPC and the hybrid annuity model (HAM), it said. However, it said there would be some respite as prices of key raw materials -- steel and bitumen -- are down 5-17 per cent from their peaks in fiscal 2023.

"Since most projects are awarded on fixed-price basis, this will keep operating profitability steady at 13-14 per cent even after factoring in increased competitive intensity at the time of awarding of these projects," it said.

EKA Mobility enters into strategic pact with IKEA

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Commercial electric vehicle maker EKA Mobility on Tuesday said it has formed a strategic partnership with Swedish furniture retailer IKEA for supply of electric delivery vans in India.



Under the partnership, Eka has already delivered 10 such vehicles to IKEA, with plans to expand the fleet across multiple regions in the country, EKA Mobility said.

The collaboration is a part of IKEA's plan to electrify its last-mile delivery fleet in the coun-

try, it said. The transition to electric delivery vans is expected to significantly reduce IKEA's carbon footprint, contributing to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly logistics operation, EKA mobility said. "By supplying IKEA with

our advanced electric delivery vans, we are not only contributing to a cleaner environment but also showcasing the potential of electric vehicles in transforming the logistics industry," said Rohit Srivastava, Chief Growth Officer at EKA Mobility.

"As we grow in India with an EV first approach, IKEA India is now more prepared to address the challenges related to it and committed to investing in long-term, innovative solutions," Saiba Suri, Country Customer Fulfillment Manager at IKEA India, said.

200 global players to attend Bharat Battery Show

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 200 global players are likely to showcase cutting-edge battery and charging infra technologies at the Bharat Battery Show in January 2025.

Industry body India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA), in a statement, said it is organising the Bharat Battery Show at the second Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025.

According to the statement, the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 led by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is set to be held on January 17-22, 2025, across three major venues -- Bharat Mandapam, Yashobhoomi (IICC) Dwarka, and India Expo Center & Mart,

Greater Noida.

IESA, as a key industry partner, has been entrusted with the organisation of the Battery Tech Pavilion, Recycling Pavilion, and Charging Infra Pavilion under the umbrella of the Bharat Battery Show.

Bharat Battery Show -- part of the Bharat Mobility -- will be organised at the central Delhi venue Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, from 19 to 21 January 2025.

The Bharat Battery Show (an expo on batteries and charging) will feature cutting-edge technologies in battery storage, battery recycling, and charging infrastructure, reflecting IESAs commitment to driving the adoption of clean energy and



sustainable mobility solutions in India.

IESA said that it is expecting 200+ global players to showcase their cutting-edge battery and charging infra technologies during this event.

Some of the key firms already confirmed include Amara Raja, Replis Engitech, Epsilon Advanced Materials, Advik Hitech, Amphenol FCI, Bry-Air (Asia), Elcom International, EMO Energy,

HENN Indo Pacific, Maestrotech Systems, Neenjas Electric, Polyprotec Chemicals, Huge Hippo Energy, MNE components, Hioki, Glida, Ipower batteries, and Molsynth, among others.

IESA Executive Director Debi Prasad Dash, "The Battery Tech, Recycling, and Charging Infra Pavilions will be a testament to India's advancements in these critical areas and our readiness to lead the global mobility revolution".

At the Bharat Battery Show, 'Battery Tech Pavilion' will showcase manufacturing, supply chain, raw materials, battery components and equipment etc.



JENNIFER LOPEZ FINDS PEACE POST-DIVORCE

Despite not being prepared to end her two-year marriage with Ben Affleck, Jennifer Lopez appears to feel more at ease after officially filing for divorce. Lopez found it hard to accept that her marriage was ending, according to sources. No one has spotted her in public since she officially ended her marriage with Affleck on August 20.

A source of Lopez informed the media, "Those close to her believe it was the best

choice." The source noted that she is encompassed by individuals who back and care for her. The source added that she will be okay because she is strong and always prevails. Lopez shared a sultry selfie from the past on her Instagram story that had been previously shared by a fan account.

The source mentioned, "She was not interested in getting a divorce." She desired to solve the situation. Lopez was unwilling to end her relationship.

Nevertheless, the informant mentioned that she found it unbearable to linger. Therefore, she initiated divorce proceedings on the day of Georgia's second wedding anniversary.

Lopez stayed out of the public eye after her divorce, while Affleck was frequently seen in public. The actor who plays *Batman* was seen spending time with Kicks Kennedy, who is the 36-year-old daughter of Robert F. Kennedy Jr., on multiple occasions.



Kohrra 2 is on cards!

Kohrra is poised to come back for a second season. The initial season of the series, featuring Surinder Vicky and Barun Sobti, received acclaim for its special mix of crime, emotion and exploration of the human mind through outstanding performances, elevating the narrative significantly. This time, Surinder Vicky may not come back; however, actress Mona Singh has joined the cast.

Barun Sobti, who gained recognition for his portrayal of Garundi, a young police officer navigating personal challenges while working on a complex murder case, is back this season. This upcoming season will explore a new murder mystery involving family dynamics, interpersonal secrets, and the backdrop of foggy Punjab.

The direction of the show will be overseen by showrunner, producer and co-creator Sudip Sharma, in collaboration with Faisal Rahman, while Act Three Productions and Film Squad Productions will handle production. Sudip Sharma will make his debut as both producer and director with Act Three Productions. Co-creator and showrunner Sudip Sharma shared, "*Kohrra* has been more than just a show for us—it's a piece of our hearts. We've poured everything we have into this story, and seeing the love it has received is incredibly moving. It's inspired us to come back with something even more powerful. We're committed to telling stories that feel real, that reflect the lives of real people with rawness and authenticity, and that's exactly what you'll see in the new season on Netflix."

The show's story captivated viewers worldwide, garnering praise and more than 20 awards honoring the show and its makers. *Kohrra* recently achieved success by winning the Best Series Award in Melbourne, as well as dominating categories such as Best Web Series, Best Actor, Best Ensemble, Best Editing and Best Cinematography at different award ceremonies.



MALAVIKA MOHANAN TRANSFORMS INTO FIERCE NIKHAT IN YUDHRA

In anticipation of the upcoming release of *Yudhra*, fans have been excited by a series of striking character posters that have set social media abuzz. Following the enthusiastic response to yesterday's poster, the makers have now unveiled additional character posters that capture the film's intense and action-packed essence. Featuring Malavika Mohanan's stunning Hindi debut, starring alongside Siddhant Chaturvedi.

While on Monday, the makers released the striking poster of Siddhant, on Tuesday, the team released the first look poster of its lead actress, Malavika. Sharing her poster on social media, Malavika introduced the fans to her character, Nikhat. Meanwhile, in an interview sharing some deets about her debut, she revealed, "We will just put out the trailer in a few days. In comparison to *Thangalaan*, it is a whole different world. That's also exciting for me. All of these roles are so different from each other that it is nice for an actor to be a part of so many versatile films. I hope more makers see me so that they see how I fit into different roles." The romantic-action thriller *Yudhra* is helmed by Ravi Udyawar and produced by Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar under Excel Entertainment. The movie is scheduled to be released on September 20, 2024, and excitement is growing as fans eagerly await the debut of this dynamic pair in theaters.



Bold exploration of Rohingya refugees with The Diary of West Bengal

The film industry is set to be rocked by the release of *The Diary of West Bengal*, a daring and unflinching portrayal of one of India's most contentious and polarizing issues. Produced by Jitendra Narayan Singh (Waseem Rizvi) and crafted by the fearless Writer and Director Sanoj Mishra, this film promises to be an unmissable event that will ignite discussions and challenge perceptions.

The Diary of West Bengal delves deep into the heart of darkness, presenting a raw and unvarnished look at the plight of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar and the rampant illegal infiltration from Bangladesh. Central to the narrative is the incendiary issue of "love jihad," a topic that has sparked fierce debates and widespread media coverage. This film offers a gripping and provocative exploration of how interfaith relationships can become battlegrounds in a larger socio-political conflict. The formidable cast, including Yajur Marwah, Arshin Mehta, Ramendra Chakravarti, Gauri Shankar, Avadh Ashwini and Ashish Kumar, Neet Mahal, delivers performances that are nothing short of explosive. Each actor imbues their role with a depth and intensity that brings this charged narrative to life, ensuring that audiences are both captivated and challenged. Producer Jitendra Narayan Singh (Waseem Rizvi) asserts, "*The Diary of West Bengal* is a statement. It dares to tell the stories that many shy away from, shining a light on the harsh realities and complex dynamics of our society."

Meanwhile, writer and director Sanoj Mishra adds, "This film is a bold examination of the forces shaping West Bengal today. It is meant to provoke thought, spark debate, and inspire change. We are not here to offer easy answers, but to ask the difficult questions."



COUTURE STORY

With the *SHIVAN & NARRESH Couture Series IV*, it drew continued inspiration from the legendary Hilma af Klint's artistic vision, exploring spiritual and divine influences. The series took the signature bold, graphical approach and married it with a modern textural play of embroideries to create a couture language that is untethered & distinctive in the design landscape.



When Jenna Ortega auditioned for Zendaya's role in Dune

Jenna Ortega, most famous for portraying the lead character in Wednesday, previously tried out for Zendaya's part in Denis Villeneuve's *Dune* movies. During her interview, Jenna remembered the moment she tried out for the part of Chani at the age of 15.

Jenna Ortega, best known for playing the titular role in *Wednesday*, once auditioned for Zendaya's role in *Dune* franchise. When asked what is a role people would be surprised to know she auditioned for, Jenna responded, "I think I auditioned for *Dune* when I was about 15. I remember being a big fan of that film and that franchise and everything like that and being really excited for that interview because Denis is one of my favourite filmmakers."

Jenna, who is now 21 years old, must have tried out for the role in 2018, six years ago. Although not entirely certain, she loosely estimates that she auditioned for the role of Chani, which was ultimately given to Zendaya, who is six years her senior. "I think it was Chani. I think it was Zendaya's. But they weren't saying that. Everything was very secret," Jenna added.

FUN

ARCHIE

VERONICA GAVE ARCHIE A BOOK OF COUPONS, TOO? HARPLY!

SHE GAVE HIM A GOLD CARD!

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GEEZ, I CAN'T BELIEVE I BROKE DAD'S BINOCULARS! HELL BLOW EVERY CAPILLARY IN HIS BODY!

DAD SAID I HAD TO BE VERY, VERY CAREFUL WITH THEM, AND WHAT DO I DO? I GO AND BREAK THEM. HELL, I'LL PLAY ME ALIVE!

HOW DID YOU DO IT, ANYWAY? I JUST DROPPED THEM.

AND THEY BROKE? WELL, I WAS TOSSEING THEM TO MYSELF AT THE TIME, AS I RAN DOWN THE SIDEWALK.

GARFIELD

CHECK THE HEADLINES...

FINISH MY COFFEE...

OKAY, BACK TO WORK

REALITY CHECK

WE WERE GOING TO TAKE OUT THE EARTHINGS, BUT THEN WE NOTICED SOME OF THEM WERE EATING TIDE PODS, SO WE DECIDED WE JUST NEED TO BE PATIENT.

SPEED BUMP

THE THINKER

THE NEVER SHUTS UP-er

CROSSWORD

1	2		3	4	5
			6		
7			8		
	10				
11				12	
		13			15
16				17	
18				19	

NANCY

I THINK NANCY SHOULD JOIN MY ROBOTICS CLUB

SHE HAS THE MAKINGS OF A NATURAL ENGINEER

THAT SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING I WOULD HATE

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

SUDOKU

Yesterday's solution

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

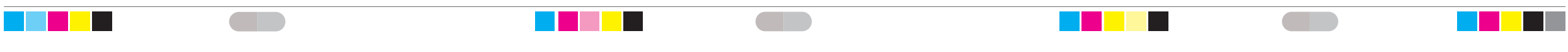
- A sheep's coat
- Hall
- A tangle in your hair
- Get
- Sets fire to
- Courage
- Disappear
- Thought
- Lines
- A bird that is raced for sport
- Watch
- Female tiger
- Tremble with cold
- A bed for a baby
- Cold winter flakes
- Sunrise

DOWN

- Counterfeit
- As much as is needed
- Rip
- Draw with this

SOLUTION

S	U	B	M	A	T	I	N	E
L	I	E	A					
B	A	G	O	N	T	A	K	E
A	T	G	U	E	T			
B	A	R	N	B	R	I	D	G
Y	G	N	E					
S	I	N	G	L	E	H	A	P
T	A	I	K	E	L			
T	R	I	E	D	I	M	A	G
L	E	L	R					
A	S	T	R	O	N	O	M	Y



Unlocking Munjya-verse

The man behind the horrifying yet also humorous world of *Munjya*, Aditya Sarpotdar, gets in touch with *The Pioneer* for an exclusive chat about directing the project, relishing frightening moments and more around the same



SHIKHA DUGGAL

Munjya, a movie from the horror comedy universe that debuted in theatres this year, was out before *Street 2*. *Munjya*, which stars Abhay Verma and Sharvari in the key roles, is currently available on OTT and its popularity seems greater than that of *Street 2*. Isn't now the ideal moment for us to present to you our exclusive interview with *Munjya's* director, who has sparked an online debate between fans of *Street 2* and *Munjya* over which is the finest?

Aditya Sarpotdar, the interviewee, takes us back in time by stating, "Directing *Munjya*, I was determined to create a jumpscare since the film was slated for big-screen release. I'll be honest: yes, I did intend to frighten folks! Hehe. However, I thought it would be a drastic risk to combine it with some comic components and I hoped that it would work. You can tell that we struck the appropriate notes! I was thrilled when the box office results for the film began to roll in shortly after its premiere. Being a part of the genre was enjoyable; however, the main difficulties I could identify were with *Munjya's* writing. With everything, including the CGI character *Munjya*, we couldn't have made a mistake! Furthermore, the only CGI character we had was our protagonist; there were no other references. I started from scratch with everything."

That isn't the case! In *Munjya*, humour did not triumph over horror. The intended audience for the director was never a niche; he was making it for his general audience. He wanted to relish those frightening moments rather than fear people. In light of this, this genre is undoubtedly a little challenging. It came down to timing and writing most of the time. "I really tried to reduce the jump scares to a minimum so that the elderly wouldn't actually have a heart attack. Thus, I counterbalanced it with a good laugh. I also encountered a lot of female viewers who, to be very



honest, weren't initially interested in watching *Munjya* because they thought it might have been really scary. After all this, I learned that my target audiences were women and children," adds this year's wildly popular film's director.

With *Munjya's* popularity, he shares, "I also wanted to introduce another new—you could call it intriguing, whatever—but unique notion. My origins are in the Konkani area! I was aware of this myth when I was younger. You see, people really did buy into the idea. I noticed a lot of explanation videos cropping up on my stream as soon as the trailer was out, which led me to believe that, yes, people are still interested in seeing some folklore-related content. Vlogs were posted online! For a filmmaker, the imagination point is particularly special since it allows us to think beyond the conventional storyboard. Because *Munjya* also included a cultural element, people could relate to it much more." Aditya wanted to share with the readers how his decision to include a folklore aspect made the film even more profitable.

Not only that, but he also offered actors Abhay Verma and Sharvari a fresh start. They're fast becoming the names to keep an eye on! The *Kakuda* fame says, "Because Sharvari Wagh and Abhay Verma had it in them, they were my film's leading duo. When I vanquished these two, I had won half the fight. Even though

Sharvari is a very young woman, I chose her as my leading lady because of a certain confidence in her. Her strong Maharashtrian heritage and her extreme independence in this field were also pluses. I only wanted my main actor to have this: Abhay is from a little town named Panipat and he is still struggling. Abhay didn't have much faith in him before the movie came out, but I have to admit that after it came out, his confidence suddenly skyrocketed. He was so terrified that he wasn't sure if he could handle the film on his shoulders. In order to know what kinds of emotions my actors are going through, I do research on their real-life backgrounds when I am casting. That is really beneficial to me as I cast."

Regarding the breathtaking locales we witnessed in *Munjya*, the director informed us that he has been visiting Konkani for as long as he can remember. He travels to Konkani at least three times a year. *Munjya* is the third of his three films that are set in the Konkani region. He has spent a lot of time there; therefore, he is well-versed in their culture. Actually, this was the first time his cast had visited the Konkani side. "I took them to the quaint towns and they were totally fascinated by them," he informed us. "Additionally, I dislike telling themes that are so universal in real life because I want the public to understand where I stand through the films I make. Not that I create a lot of preachy movies. The first nine minutes of *Munjya* were crucial, in my opinion, because I have previously worked on Marathi films. My

goal was to make it appear as authentic as possible."

Yes, his lead actress did light up the screens when we all watched her flexing her booty in the *Taras* song! In the director's opinion, "I included the song *Taras* only to advertise the movie; I didn't want people to think *Munjya* was a Marathi movie. Our song *Taras* was a reaction to my upbringing in provincial film, where I came from. *Munjya's* public appearance was greatly aided by Sharvari's moves! Viewers start to realise that the movie is blatantly commercial. Sharvari looks amazing and she truly did crack *Taras* on her own! She completed it overnight; buddy, it's not simple. People jumped when they saw *Taras* and realised which movie she belonged in. I'm sure Sharvari was itching to have that one highly-regarded movie in her repertoire. She's been watching films and she's gotten picky. When things didn't work out for *Bunty aur Babli*, she changed. In actuality, not even Abhay signed any other film until the movie was out. Their diligence paid off."

IN ORDER TO KNOW WHAT KINDS OF EMOTIONS MY ACTORS ARE GOING THROUGH, I DO RESEARCH ON THEIR REAL-LIFE BACKGROUNDS WHEN I AM CASTING

'I do not feel pressured to be Shakti Kapoor's son or Shraddha's brother'

TEJAL SINHA

Just as his character in his latest venture, *Chalti Rahe Zindagi*, Siddhant Kapoor is all about fighting against the odds, with the brightest smile on his face. Recognised for his versatility in handling a range of characters and praised for his achievements in both mainstream and award-winning movies, the talented star is currently enjoying the traction he has been receiving for *Chalti Rahe Zindagi*.

With a lot of ups and downs, many rejections back-to-back, and being accepted by filmmakers for his skills, his journey has been all about gaining experience and having a lot of fun along with his hard work. "I had gotten a lot of support from a lot of people; the journey has been very good and the best is yet to come," begins the *Bombairiya* actor in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*. For the uninitiated, Siddhant is the son of the OG Shakti Kapoor and brother of the *Street* star Shraddha Kapoor. However, more than being known by their names, he has created a niche for himself and he couldn't agree with us much as he says, "Yes, I actually do different kinds of cinema compared to dad and Shraddha, sometimes more like low-budget films, but the impact has been there."

Though coming from a filmy background, he had gone through his own struggles: "The rejections have happened and I guess that's what makes you stronger. It's not easy because comparison always happens with the sibling, father, mother, or whoever it is. It always works like that, but I think I'm enjoying it and I'm around good people."

Going ahead as we discuss his experience working on a project like *Chalti Rahe Zindagi*, it was no less than a marvelous one for him.

"It was amazing working with such a beautiful, honest and talented team. But again, a lot of hard work went into it because it was shot during the lockdown with permissions and a lot of rules and regulations. A lot of my scenes were in cycles, so I had to travel a lot. It was quite hectic, but a lot of fun."

Though the shooting could have been a little bit of a challenge, his role wasn't! Rather, the *Shootout* at

Actor Siddhant Kapoor, who is currently basking in the success of his latest venture, *Chalti Rahe Zindagi*, speaks to *The Pioneer* of his beginnings, facing rejections, creating a niche for himself and more.

Wadala actor says his character was much more relatable, mirroring who Siddhant is in real life. "The previous ones that I played have gray shades, but that's not me, unlike in *Chalti Rahe Zindagi*. Many people have said that 'Chalti Rahe Zindagi' will make you stronger. It has been very relatable to me with this character. Like I said, there was a time when I was going through the rejection phase." And he believed, *Chalti Rahe Zindagi*!

But again, hailing from a prominent filmy family, does that certainly pressure him in any way, we ask? And he enthuses, "I do not feel pressured; I just enjoy myself and do good work. That's about it." Staying around showbiz is definitely not his scene. Siddhant is someone who enjoys doing his work and quietly moves on.

Meanwhile, recalling shooting with his darling sister on the sets of *Haseena Parkar*, he recalls, "It was really good and a lot of projects came to me, but the one *Haseena Parkar* did with my sister was special. We did a lot of hard work and had fun together. I was really emotional at times. But it's so much fun to work with your sibling."

Are we going to see the *Papa, Beti and Beta* trio anytime or sometime later? He says, "Why not? If the script comes by with a good set-up, then for sure."

For him, it's all about positivity, good people, travelling, music culture and good spirituality, among many other things that keep him moving.

So what's the criteria that he looks for to check off a project? It's the people, script, director, location and character with a decent release. "Comedy character is what I want to really play," says *The Heist* actor as he goes on to sign off, saying, "I do have some upcoming projects that I'm definitely going to speak about when I can."



JAW CLENCHING DILEMMA OF BRUXISM

You may not be aware of it, but bruxism or tooth grinding is more common than you think. This condition often results from stress and anxiety, which are quite visible in worn-out teeth, aching jaws and morning headaches. It affects anyone; despite the fact that adults remain at risk, most commonly those under chronic stress who have unhealthy lifestyles leading or even people with unaligned teeth due to sleep apnea.

For some people, the tension they feel in their temples gives them away as sufferers while for others its partners who complain of the disturbing sound of grinding at night. Whether it is brought about by stress, anxiety or simply disarranged teeth; this condition can result in life-long dental complications like enamel erosion if not treated. However, there is good news since there are various ways through which you can effectively manage this state so that your grin remains bright and strong.

Stress is one of the main causes of clenching or grinding teeth. While sleeping, there are individuals who unconsciously grind their teeth mostly because of pressure or nervousness.



It is possible for you to cut down on it by using relaxation methods such as meditation, yoga and deep breathing. Incorporating these practices that reduce anxiety into your daily life will reduce overall stress levels and potentially rid you of bruxism.

Stress-related teeth grinding is a particular problem that may be addressed effectively through Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Through CBT it is possible for individuals to identify triggers which cause bruxism and develop healthier coping mechanisms. For instance, if

one is highly anxious then there are strategies which CBT can employ in order to manage this anxiety hence reducing how often and severely one grinds his/her teeth.

For people who clench or grind their teeth during the night dental night guards are often recommended. These devices are tailored to fit an individual person's mouth and act as shields against further wear. While night guards protect your teeth from damage it also relieves symptoms like migraines, jaw pain and tightness in the muscles. A night guard worn during

sleep may help to save teeth from the harmful effects of bruxism. Some cases may require medication for relief of bruxism signs. Jaw muscle tension can be reduced by muscle relaxants while anti-anxiety drugs are used in order to minimise anxiety that causes clenching jaw joint disorder (bruxism).

Teeth grinding may also be caused by malocclusion or malpositioning teeth so that they do not meet properly when one chews or bites food. This misalignment can create pressure points that lead to grinding. In such cases, dental correction such as orthodontic treatment may be necessary. By realigning the teeth, this will reduce pressure and tension resulting in relief from grinding which would in turn relieve symptoms and stop further damage on their dentition.

There are several lifestyle changes that can be useful in managing teeth grinding. For instance, reducing your caffeine and alcohol consumption (especially before going to bed) can decrease the likelihood of sleep bruxism. Also, avoid habits such as biting on pencils or pens. If you smoke, quitting may help as it increases the chances of bruxism occurrence.

SELF-CARE PRACTICES

Apart from these treatments, there are a few things you can do at home to help manage bruxism. These include:

- **Jaw muscles:** Stretching the jaw muscles, and exercises can relieve tension in the jaw muscles specifically associated with teeth grinding. Make sure to consult your dentist or physician before trying any specific mouth workouts.
- **The heat compresses:** Soothing warm compress placed on the jaw muscles helps them relax and reduce muscle tensions that trigger teeth grinding.
- **Eating considerations:** Refrain from hard or chewy foods that put stress on your teeth and also minimize signs of grinding.
- **Sleep hygiene:** Establishing good sleep habits like ensuring sufficient rest, avoiding alcohol and caffeine will help reduce nocturnal bruxism.
- **Regular dental checkups:** By making regular visits to your dentist, the early stage of bruxism can be detected thus saving further damage to your teeth. Additionally, a dentist can evaluate if your treatment strategies are working or require changes.

There is no cure for tooth grinding, but it can be effectively managed through various therapies. There are numerous ways to treat this condition such as stress-reduction techniques, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), dental night guards, medications and dentistry correction among others. Nevertheless, it is crucial to work closely with your healthcare provider or dentist who will advise you on the best treatment option for you. Alternatively, self-care practices e.g., jaw exercises; warm compresses; and maintaining good sleep habits could alleviate bruxism effects in one's life.

(The author, Dr. Sindhu U Muktamath, is the HOD - Dental Science, at Aster Whitefield Hospital.)

HOPEFULLY, WE WILL BREAK FINAL BARRIER IN T20 WC: HARMANPREET

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur remained optimistic that India can grab their maiden global title in the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup, and said conditions in the UAE could work to their advantage. The International Cricket Council has recently shifted the showpiece, to be held between October 3 and 20, to the UAE from Bangladesh owing to the political unrest in the latter nation. "Whenever we play on this kind of stage (World Cup), we always want to do well. We have always done well in the past as well, and hopefully, this time we will break that final barrier and go all the way," Harmanpreet told PTI videos. Harmanpreet was on Tuesday appointed as the captain of the Indian team for the T20 World Cup. The 35-year-old did not read too much into the venue shift, and said the conditions in the UAE are quite similar to India. "We have not played much cricket in the UAE. But the conditions in the UAE are going to be similar to Indian conditions."



"We will see how the conditions play out (there) and try to adjust ourselves to the conditions as soon as possible," said Harmanpreet, who led India to the final of the 2020 T20 World Cup. Irrespective of the playing conditions, she wanted the team to dish out a "positive" game in the World Cup. "As a team, we learn from our defeats and break those barriers that are pushing us back. Hopefully this time we can express ourselves in a more positive way in the World Cup," she said. Harmanpreet also backed the Indian bowlers, who floundered in the recent Asia Cup final against Sri Lanka, to deliver in the World Cup. "The bowlers are working really hard as a team and, hopefully, in this World Cup we tick all the boxes." Harmanpreet, who led Mumbai Indians to WPL victory last year, said the key to winning the World Cup will be to keep themselves in the present. "It is always important for us to play good cricket, keeping ourselves in the present. Whatever the situation is in front of us...we go there and evaluate (it) as soon as possible," she signed off.



Jeev, Jyoti among Indian stars to compete in country's inaugural Legends Tour

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

"Now, you can play golf as a career till 60." Randhawa, also 52, said not only the money, a golfer can also maintain the competitive spirit by continuing to play in the Legends Tour. "It's good for the budding Indian golfers and amateurs. They will now know that a golfer can play another 10 years after retirement," he said. "By playing in the Legends Tour, you are keeping your golfing passion and competitive spirit intact as well as keeping yourself fit." Jeev (twice Asia No. 1 in 2006 and 2008) and Randhawa (once Asia No. 1 in 2002) are well-known names around the world with numerous appearances in Majors too. Jeev has won four times each on the European and Japan Tours, one on the Korean Tour besides six times on the Asian Tour. Randhawa has won eight times on the Asian Tour and once in Japan. Jeev, who has played all four Majors, was the first Indian to tee up at the Masters at the Augusta National in 2007. He was a former captain of Asia in EurAsia Cup (Europe vs Asia team event). He has five top 10 finishes on the Legends Tour since 2022. Besides Jeev and Randhawa, there are other seven Indians in the fray. They are Mukesh Kumar, Digvijay Singh, Harmeet Kahlon, Vijay Kumar, all past winners on the Asian Tour, Amandeep Johl, Vishal Singh and Sanjay Kumar. The 55-year-old Campbell, who has also won 15 other tournaments around the world, said, "I started playing golf when I was 10. My grandmother told me that time when I achieve success, I should remember I have two hands, one for receiving and another for giving back," he said. "Legends Tour is great in that way. You keep playing after retirement and inspire youngsters to take up the game. We have to give back to the game."

US OPEN

Djokovic starts his bid for record 25th Grand Slam title with straight-set win

AP ■ NEW YORK

Novak Djokovic began his bid for a record 25th Grand Slam title and tied Roger Federer with his 89th match win at the U.S. Open by defeating qualifier Radu Albot of Moldova 6-2, 6-2, 6-4. The second-seeded Djokovic, again wearing a gray sleeve over his surgically repaired right knee, was competing for the first time since claiming an Olympic gold medal three weeks ago at the Paris Games, the last significant achievement that was missing from his resume. "It's always challenging to start, particularly when you haven't played on this surface for five, six months,

and coming off an Olympic gold and playing on clay. I haven't had any official matches before the U.S. Open. So I'm expecting to be probably challenged a little bit more in the opening rounds," he said. "Hopefully, I can play better each day." He said his knee, which was operated on in early June, feels fine. Djokovic, a 37-year-old from Serbia, improved to 18-0 in first-round matches at Flushing Meadows and is now 89-13 overall at the hard-court tournament, which he's won four times, including a year ago. He's never lost earlier than the third round at the U.S. Open; Albot never has been past the third round in 30 appearances at majors.



The retired Federer went 89-14 in New York, with five consecutive championships from 2004 to 2008. He's the most recent man to win the U.S. Open at least twice in a row. Among men, only Jimmy Connors, who went 98-17, won more matches than Djokovic and Federer at the event. Djokovic never has lost a Grand Slam match to someone ranked as low as No. 138 Albot. And Albot is now 0-12 against opponents ranked in the top 10. Next up for Djokovic is a countryman, familiar opponent and friend, Laslo Djere, who advanced with a 6-7 (7), 6-1, 6-7 (7), 6-4, 6-2 victory over Jan-Lennard Struff. A year ago, Djokovic

met Djere in the third round at the U.S. Open; Djere took the first two sets before Djokovic came through in five. "It's a guaranteed third round for one of the Serbian guys. Hopefully it's going to be me. But Djere is a guy that really likes playing on a big stage. I think he also loves the conditions here. It's a bit quicker. Ball stays low. He has a very flat backhand particularly and very good serve, great return. He's physically as fit as anybody," Djokovic said. "I remember very well our match. It was a very tough match. I'm going to try to analyze that and hopefully do some things even better than I did last year."

New Champions League format promises more

AP ■ GENEVA

The new Champions League format this season will see more teams playing more games for more prize money. On Thursday, the Union of European Football Associations makes the draw in Monaco for the match schedule of the new single-standings league phase that replaces the traditional group stage. The first new Champions League format since 2003 promises more of almost everything that Europe's wealthiest and most influential clubs wanted from UEFA. There are four more places in a 36-team lineup; at least eight games each instead of six; Champions League games scheduled in January for the first time; a prize money rise of at least 25% to a minimum of 2.5 billion euros (USD 2.8 billion). There also was more evidence, at UEFA's European Championship this summer, that constant expansion of international competitions is leaving players tired and unable to perform at their best year-round. The new league phase in European club soccer's marquee event will have 144 total games compared to 96 in the group stage last season. The "key aims," UEFA said, is to "improve competitive balance and sporting interest and in the process increase the number of meaningful matches - matches with something at stake for both sides - throughout the competition." In the eighth and final round, all 36 teams play on the same January 29 evening to finalize the



standings which will decide which eight teams advance directly to the pre-quarterfinals - and with what seedings in a tennis-like knockout bracket - as well as which 16 go into a new knockout playoff round in February, and which 12 are eliminated. "We simulated that qualification should be possible with an average of 7.6 points, which means two victories and two draws," said UEFA's head of competitions strategy, Stéphane Anselmo.

Why change such a successful competition?

Money, mostly, though that's not the only reason. The Champions League in Europe has for the past 32 years showcased the highest quality play in world soccer. It let UEFA steer billions of euros (dollars) of prize money to clubs that pay the highest transfer fees and salaries. Still, influential officials at the European Club Association

(ECA) got bored of the group stage, saying it was too repetitive and lacked drama. They wanted more games against stronger opponents that would be more valued by broadcasters, viewers and new fans worldwide. Their leverage over UEFA was potentially launching their breakaway competition. The road to agreeing on the format was rocky. A controversial first proposal in 2019, favoring storied clubs, was stopped by a

backlash from mid-ranked clubs and domestic leagues. There was intense turmoil sparked by the failed Super League launch in April 2021 by most of the same club officials who negotiated Champions League reform with UEFA. Final format approval came in May 2022 - when Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus were exiled from the talks and still pursued UEFA in court - and it was broadly what the rebel Super

League clubs had negotiated.

instead of four last season.

What is the new format?

Out goes the group-stage format played for 21 seasons where 32 teams were put into eight groups of four teams from a seeded draw. The top two in each group advanced to the pre-quarterfinals. Groups gave each team six games from September into December, playing each rival once at home and once away. In comes a single-standings league - 36 teams each playing eight games against eight different opponents through January. The top eight in the standings go directly to the pre-quarterfinals in March. Teams ranked ninth to 24th go into the knockout playoffs in February. The bottom 12 teams are eliminated. In the playoffs, teams ranked Nos. 9-16 are seeded in the draw to play second legs at home against unseeded teams Nos. 17-24.

Who gets the four extra places?

Two for countries whose teams collectively had the best record in UEFA club competitions in the previous season. That was Italy and Germany so the fifth-placed teams in Serie A and the Bundesliga qualified: Bologna and Borussia Dortmund. The fifth-ranked national league (based on five years of results in UEFA club competitions) gets a third direct entry. That is currently France and Brest was third in Ligue 1. An extra place goes to the qualifying rounds path for national champions from lower-ranked countries. They now play for five total qualifying places

How will the draw be done?

The 36 teams come out of four seeding pots graded by each team's "UEFA club coefficient" - its ranking by results in five years of European competitions. The top-seeded pot contains recent Champions League winners and beaten finalists, plus Leipzig and Barcelona. When a team's ball is drawn, its slate of eight opponents - two from each seeding pot, one to play at home and one away - will be allocated by a software program and displayed within seconds. Match dates will be confirmed Saturday, to avoid city clashes with Europa League and Conference League games being drawn Friday in Monaco. Those lower-tier competitions also are a 36-team single-standings league. Conference League teams play just six games.

Billion-dollar prize money fund

Winning the Champions League title in 2023 earned Manchester City 135 million euros (USD 151 million) from UEFA. This season's winner can reach 150 million euros (USD 168 million), with total competition revenue boosted by selling 189 total games instead of 125. Commercial strategy is managed by a UEFA-ECA joint venture, and new sponsors for the Champions League include a cryptocurrency trading platform and a betting site. Each of the 36 teams gets a basic 18.6 million euros (USD 20.8 million), then 2.1 million euros (USD 2.4 million) for five total qualifying places

'TO DEBATE, AUDIENCE NOT COMING TO THEATRES IS WRONG'



SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

Nani is currently busy promoting his upcoming film *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram* and has been travelling to different cities. The actor was here in Hyderabad on Tuesday and spoke to the media here before he could jet off to Bengaluru.

"As an actor, I want to complete my responsibility, so I have made sure to promote the film in all the areas," began the *Eega* star, who believes that it is also his responsibility to promote the film and said, "My job is done here and now; it's up to the film to take it to another level."

Vivek Atreya's earlier film *Ante Sundaraniki* with Nani did not go well with the expectations. However, now that Nani has again worked with him on this *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram*, the actor has given the director another chance, as he said, "I don't think this logic is correct. Many of the great directors, actors and producers have all seen flops. If a person doesn't work with a flop director, actor, or producer, only Rajamouli can make films and others would stop making films," said Nani, adding that failure makes a person stronger. "If a director gives two continuous successful films, he may get lazy for the third one, but one failure makes a person stronger and he also works harder to get success."

He further shared that director Vivek Atreya is not demoralised by *Ante Sundaraniki* not doing well at the box office. "He feels that our film didn't collect more than my earlier films. I know his strength and I encouraged him well like a brother when he needed to; I did my job," shared the *Hi Nanna* fame.

Actor Nani's upcoming film, *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram*, is all set to hit theatres on August 29. Ahead of the release, he spoke about the film, working with director Vivek and shared a lot more insights around the film



Talking about this *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram*, he said, "It's an action film; you can see only 20 percent of the action, and the remaining 80 percent, we take you into the action mood. I like all kinds of films, but I enjoyed working on this action film," said Nani. He added that there are no made-up scenes in the film. Rather, Nani, who plays an LIC agent in this film, says, "Everything is organic and the audience will definitely enjoy it." Going ahead, he opines that the debate around the audience not coming to the theaters is incorrect.

"If you look at the scenes before the pandemic, there were only one or two films that had collected Rs 1000 crore, but after Covid, you can see three films that had collected Rs 1000 crore. So, I don't think that the debate about audiences not coming to theaters is right. Earlier, we made six out of ten films with a minimum guarantee; now, only two out of the films have a minimum guarantee. If you make a good film, people will definitely come to theaters to watch it. There is no need to do some magic trick; you have to do all's make a good film," he said about the debate.

Tamil actor SJ Suryah is playing an important role in it. When asked if the makers just took SJ Suryah onboard just to please the Tamil audience, he refutes it. "If you make the *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram* film in Hollywood, I feel SJ Suryah is the perfect choice for Daya's role," clarifies Nani. He added that his Telugu accent also comes out very nicely. "I am sure everyone will just fall for his Telugu accent and want to watch the film a second time," says Nani.

He further shared that in this film he gives responsibilities to others as well. "Generally I play the lead character, but I share more weight on SJ Suryah, Murali Sharma and Priya Mohan. I was there in the front, but they are the driving force in this film," says Nani.

There are some media reports that Janhvi Kapoor is going to pair opposite Nani and that he is also playing a key role in *Kalki 2898AD* part two. "I don't have any idea about all these reports, and they are not true," he said. He added that these days the social media is writing what they want, and he can't deny for each and every report.

Sudheer Babu's *Maa Nanna Superhero* releasing this Dasara

Actor Sudheer Babu is coming up with another variety of subject, and this time he chose an emotional drama titled *Maa Nanna Superhero*. Abhilash Reddy Kankara of *Loser* fame is the director. The makers announced that they had completed the shooting part of the film and now they are in post-production.

Meanwhile, the makers came up with an update on the film's release. They planned for the film to release during the Dasara festival. The makers wanted to cash in on Dasara holidays and they feel the content of the

film will definitely appeal to family audiences, so they thought it was the perfect time to release. They said they will announce the exact release date at a later stage!

The film centers around a father-son drama, which is embarked on a soul-stirring journey, discovering the true meaning of love and connection. Aarna is playing the female lead opposite Sudheer Babu, while Sai Chand, Sayaji Shinde, Aamani and Annie are playing prominent roles. Raju Sundaram, who is playing an important role in the film, is also the choreographer for the film. Sunil Balusu is the producer.



Don't drag me into controversy, again: Raj Tarun

Raj Tarun has been in the news for the last few months, not for his films but about his marriage and the allegations made by his alleged girlfriend. The actor is now concentrating on his upcoming film *Bhale Vinnade* which is releasing on September 7. The trailer for this film was released on Tuesday and he spoke about the film and all other things with the media. The actor says that he is now completely focusing on this film and promoting it.

"I couldn't do proper promotion for my earlier two films," he says. When asked about the controversies surrounding him and how he gets out of it, he shares, "Don't drag me again into controversy by asking the same; I am good now and focusing more on my film." He denies that he deliberately made an issue with his girlfriend Lavanya to get promotion for his earlier films; that's why everything is calm now. "Can anyone do a promotion like that for a film? I can't digest the thought," he said and he never wanted to do that. He added that the film is a clean entertainer and he gave credit to the director, Sivasai Vardhan, for it. Raj Tarun is playing a saree draper in it.

He accepted that his earlier films didn't do well at the box office. "I got good appreciation for *Purushottamudu*, but *Tiragabadara Swamy* is not done well. I would like to know what went wrong with those films and in the future I don't want to make the same mistakes. Still, I feel guilty that I couldn't promote those films," he said.

There are reports that Raj Tarun is going to enter the *Bigg Boss* house, but the director Sivasai denies it completely. "It's totally wrong. He can't sit in a room for a few hours and how can he stay in a house for a few days? Not possible. It is wrong news," said the director. Popular director Maruthi is presenting this film and Kannada actress Manisha is playing the female lead. "She dubbed on her own for her role; she is speaking Telugu very well," further shared the director.

Devara makers officially reveal dual role of NTR

The makers of the much-awaited film *Devara* revealed an important update about the film. Directed by Koratala Siva, the film has Janhvi Kapoor as the female lead and Hindi actor Saif Ali Khan in a negative role. On Tuesday, the makers released a poster with the title 'The Faces of Fear' and showing two faces of Jr NTR. It says that NTR is playing dual roles, which they confirmed. According to a source, Jr NTR can be seen as father and son in the film, in which the story backdrop is sea. The film is releasing on September 27; it's a month away, so the makers are revealing more about the film and story. The film has completed its shooting and is also about to complete the post-production work. The first part of *Devara* is releasing and the second part may release next year. This film is important for one Jr NTR, as his earlier film *RRR* was successful not only in Telugu but in other languages too. The multi-starrer film won accolades at the international level, so Jr NTR wanted to continue the same kind of success with this *Devara*. That's why the makers are planning to release the film in all languages, along with Telugu. Shruti Marathe, who is popular in Marathi and Hindi cinema, is playing a key role in this film. Apart from Saif Ali Khan, there are many actors like Srikanth, Prakash Raj, Malayalam actor Shine Tom Chacko, Ajay and Murali Sharma. Anirudh Ravichander is providing the music, while Sabu Cyril is the production designer.



QG IS RAW AND RUSTIC



Jackie Shroff, Priyamani, Sunny Leone and Sara Arjun are playing lead actors in the movie *QG Gang War*. The Telugu rights were bought by producer Venugopal and he says that he is releasing the film on September 20. "It's a complete commercial entertainer and you can see the raw and rustic scenes in the film," says Venugopal.

The director of this film, Vivek Kumar Kannan, worked with popular Tamil and National Award-winning director Bala for nearly 15 years in the direction department. "He came up with some realistic scenes and he shoots in amazing locations. I am confident audiences like it," says the producer. The trailer for the film was released on Monday at an event in Hyderabad.

The film has some big stars like Jackie Shroff, Sunny Leone and Priyamani, who all appeared in different avatars when compared to their earlier films. Popular producer Damodar Prasad, who attended the trailer release event, says that the trailer gave him a big shock. "It is very good, and they also chose a good cast. This movie is made in a commercial format, which people want these days. I wish Producer Venugopal that this film will be a big success," says Damodar Prasad. NTR Sreenu, who worked earlier with senior NTR, is presenting the film.

FARIA'S FIRST LOOK FROM MATHU VADALARA 2 OUT

Followers of the successful Telugu movie *Mathu Vadalaru* from 2019 can look forward to the sequel releasing on September 13, bringing them a delightful treat. The crime-comedy, helmed by first-time director Ritesh Rana, caught viewers off guard with its original storyline and unforeseen turns. Titled *Mathu Vadalaru 2* the next installment assures a similar exciting journey, continuing the story that had audience members on the edge of their seats.

In this film, Sree Simha and Satya will reprise their roles as Babu and Yesu. Adding to the cast now, Faria Abdullah has joined as the female lead. Increasing the anticipation around the film, the makers had released the first look of Faria and introduced her character as Nidhi.

The poster seemingly introduces her character as a detective agent on a mission. The makers had further also announced that the teaser will be out soon.

