

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
The pioneer

*If someone says my relatives have constructed illegal buildings let them submit proof. I went to KTR's farmhouse with evidence of its illegal status. If KTR has the guts he should bring evidence of illegal buildings owned by my family or me. I will get them demolished.*

- Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister

P4

**DON'T MISS...**

**Child trafficking rackets prey...**

Child trafficking rackets are targeting vulnerable couples in Andhra Pradesh, offering false hope of parenthood in exchange for exorbitant fees. These criminal networks are operating in various districts, exploiting the emotional and financial vulnerabilities of childless families. These sophisticated operations involve teams of individuals who work together to acquire infants and sell them...

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**'Night patrol, access...**

Security audit of district hospitals, night patrolling, and regulated access at large health facilities were among the measures the Centre asked states to implement on Wednesday to prevent violence against medics. The directions came days after the Supreme Court, while hearing the rape-murder case of a junior doctor in Kolkata, ordered the Union health secretary to ensure states have basic measures in place to assuage doctors'...

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**Sebi cautions against...**

Amid certain SME companies resorting to share price manipulation by projecting an unrealistic picture of their operations, Sebi on Wednesday cautioned investors against putting their money in scrips of such firms. Sebi, in a statement, said it has come to its notice that post-listing, some of the SME companies or their promoters have been making public announcements that create a positive picture of their operations...

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**Kohli, Jaiswal move up...**

Senior India batter Virat Kohli moved up two runs to eighth place while his captain Rohit Sharma dropped a spot to sixth in the latest ICC Test rankings released here on Wednesday. Joining Kohli and Sharma in the top 10 is young Yashasvi Jaiswal, who has moved up a spot to seventh. Veteran England batter Joe Root maintained his place as the top ranked Test batter in the world following their success in the opening Test against Sri Lanka in Manchester. But Root's teammate Harry...

-SPORTS

# Big push to Polavaram

**CENTRE AGREES TO SANCTION RS 12,127 CRORE FOR THE PROJECT: CM SAYS CENTRE CLEARS TWO NOTES RELATED TO PROJECT**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu has said that the Centre has cleared two notes related to the Polavaram project and industries in Andhra Pradesh. Speaking at a media conference organised at the Secretariat on Wednesday, the CM said that the Centre has agreed to sanction Rs 12,127 crore for Polavaram and the project is scheduled to be completed by March 2027.

The Chief Minister thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for agreeing to release funds for the Polavaram project, which is the lifeline of Andhra Pradesh. He further demanded that the Centre should release the pending funds. The Polavaram works were never stopped because the Centre has always released funds on time, he said.

"In 2019, soon after the YSRCP government formed the government in the State, bad times started for the Polavaram project," said the CM. The Polavaram works were crippled in the name of reverse tendering. The works should have been completed by 2021. During the YSRCP regime,



the Centre released Rs 8,000 crore along with a PPP letter. Purushothapatnam and Pattiseema lifts have not been used for five years, the CM pointed out.

"With the support of Prime Minister Modi and the Union Ministers, the Polavaram project works are put back on track. We can say confidently that the project will be completed," he added.

The CM hailed the Centre for taking a historic decision and said Polavaram is a very sensitive project that needs to be taken care off. Experts concluded that it is bet-

ter to construct a new diaphragm wall. "We will construct a new diaphragm wall with Rs 992 crore. Our aim is to complete the first phase of the project with a height of 41.15 m by 2027."

A total of 12 industrial corridors are being constructed in the country, while there are three corridors in AP. It has been decided to spend a total of Rs 28,000 crore on these. Industrial hubs are coming up in Kopparthi of Kadapa district and Orvakal of Kurnool district. Krishnapatnam was also given permission.

## Be cautious, CM tells Ministers

Ministers to get progress reports on 100 days' performance

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has instructed the ministers not to harm the good name and reputation of the government and TDP. The CM asked the ministers to be careful and guide the MLAs and leaders of their respective districts.



Sources say after the Cabinet meeting at the secretariat on

Wednesday, the CM discussed internal political issues with the

ministers on the reverse tendering system.

According to sources, the CM said that he would give a progress report to the ministers on their performance of 100 days based on their activities. The report of the Jana Sena ministers will be handed over to Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan.

Continued on - Page 2

## 'Paperless' Cabinet meeting held

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

With the implementation of the e-Cabinet application, a paperless meeting of the Andhra Pradesh Cabinet was held on Wednesday. The meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, was conducted through the e-Cabinet application developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), Delhi. I-pads, loaded and configured with the e-Cabinet application, were provided to all the ministers.

A day before the meeting, all OSDs/PS to the ministers were also given training by the Information Technology, Electronic and Communications (ITE & C) Department and the NIC team on the technical aspects, usage, and

benefits of the e-Cabinet application, so as to enable them to use the application seamlessly. Before the commencement of the meeting of the Council of Ministers, a demonstration on the use of I-pads and the e-Cabinet application was given to the ministers.

CM Chandrababu appreciated the use of the e-Cabinet app and directed all ministers to make use of the latest technology which would help in taking informed decisions fast, leading to good governance. CM Naidu also directed the ITE & C Department to improve the IT infrastructure, develop new applications to enable real-time governance, integrating all technologies like mobile, CCTV cameras, drones, fibernet etc.

2

## MP Mopidevi to quit YSRCP?

Sources say that Mopidevi will join Telugu Desam Party

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSR Congress Party led by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is likely to suffer a big jolt as senior party leader and MP (Rajya Sabha) Mopidevi Venkata Ramana is likely to quit the party on Thursday, according to reports. Sources say that Mopidevi will join the ruling Telugu Desam Party.



MP Mopidevi Venkata Ramana is the YSRCP president of Bapatla

## YSRCP MLC Pothula Sunitha resigns

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress MLC Pothula Sunitha has resigned from the party. She has sent a letter to party chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy that she is resigning from the party as well as the post of MLC. According to sources,



Sunitha is trying to join one of the NDA parties in Andhra Pradesh. Sunitha had joined YSRCP, quitting the Telugu Desam Party.

district. He was a senior Congress leader during YS Rajasekhara Reddy's regime and served as the Minister for Infrastructure Development. After the death of Dr YSR, he stood by Jagan

Mohan Reddy and later joined YSRCP. It is not immediately clear what has prompted Mopidevi to consider resigning from the party and joining TDP.

## Pensions to be distributed on Aug 31

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has decided to distribute NTR Bharosa pensions to the beneficiaries, one day before the scheduled day (1st of the month). The government has decided to distribute pensions on August 31 as September 1 is a holiday (Sunday). The announcement was released on Wednesday. For the pensioners who do not receive social security pensions on August 31 due to any reason, the government has made arrangements to provide them on September 2.

Continued on - Page 2

## Expedite projects under Jal Jeevan Mission: PM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday, reviewed the development schemes like drinking water, Jal Jeevan Mission, sanitation, national highways, gas pipeline construction, railway projects and Amrit-2.0 with the chief secretaries of various State governments from Delhi on Wednesday.

The PM said that under the Jal Jeevan Mission, the plans and projects to provide safe drinking water to every household should be expedited. Similarly, sanitation management projects should be completed at the earliest. Prime Minister Modi directed



the CSs to take steps to complete railway and road projects, new pipelines and construction projects on time. Under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation 2.0 (Amrit 2.0), Modi

directed the secretaries to complete projects related to provision of safe drinking water facilities to every household in cities, sewage treatment projects and development of parks around drinking water sources.

State Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad, Municipal Administration Department Special Chief Secretary Anil Kumar Singhal, TR&DB Principal Secretary Kantilal Dande, Finance Additional Secretary J Niwas, Swachh Andhra Corporation MD Gandham Chandrudu, Municipal Administration Department Director Harinarayana and others were present.

## HYDRA-like system needed in Vizag

Rapid urban expansion has significantly reduced size and capacity of city's ponds and dams



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Vizakhapatnam is facing a severe crisis as its vital water bodies are being rapidly encroached due to unchecked urbanisation. This situation has highlighted the need for a robust enforcement system akin to Hyderabad's GHMC Enforcement Vigilance and Disaster Management (HYDRA).

Rapid urban expansion has significantly reduced the size and capacity of the city's ponds and dams, as revealed by a comparison of satellite images from 1980 to the present. "We must act now to reclaim these critical resources," urged a senior official from the Greater Vizakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC).

2

## Centre okays industrial smart cities for Orvakal, Kopparthi

**KOPPARTHI WILL COME UNDER VISAKHA-CHENNAI CORRIDOR**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Union Minister Rammohan Naidu has said that the Centre has sanctioned industrial smart cities for Orvakal and Kopparthi. Addressing a media conference in Delhi on Wednesday, the Union Minister said that the NDA at the Centre is committed to the development of Andhra Pradesh. He said that apart from sanctioning industrial smart cities for Orvakal and Kopparthi, the Centre will develop Hyderabad-Bengaluru and Visakha-Chennai corridors.



It has been revealed that 2,596 acres will be developed under the industrial hub in Kopparthi of

Kadapa district. Kopparthi will come under the Visakha-Chennai corridor, for which the Central gov-

ernment will spend Rs 2,137 crore. He said that 54,500 people will get employment with this hub. It has

been revealed that Kopparthi has focused more on the production sector. He said that an industrial

corridor will be established on 2,621 acres in Orvakal of Kurnool district. Rs 2,786 crore will be spent for this purpose. About 45,000 people will get employment through this, and Rayalaseema will also benefit. The Union Cabinet has approved these two smart cities in AP. He said that the Centre and the State are moving forward together in terms of development of the State. The Union Finance Minister is paying special attention to AP. "The Centre will soon give a green signal to release Rs 12,000 crore for the Polavaram project. These funds will be released before Polavaram works resume in November.



## The government will purchase entire cotton produce

Ministers meet millers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Handlooms and Textiles S Savitha informed that the government will develop new seed varieties of cotton for increasing yield which ensures more economical stability and income to the

farmers. The Minister along with Agriculture Minister K Atchannaidu organized a meeting at the Secretariat on Wednesday with the management of spinning and ginning millers, representatives of CCI.

2



# Sub-classification of castes: Naidu's legacy revived by SC

Telugu Desam Party president and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu is not widely known for consciously engaging in social engineering, though it is often done in a predictable manner by political parties seeking to bolster their vote banks. However, one of Naidu's significant initiatives stands out for its potential to make a substantial impact on the social structure: the bold move he made, more than two decades back, to sub-categorise Scheduled Castes so that the benefits of reservation could be distributed more evenly than ever before among all sub-castes.

The campaign for reservation sub-classification gained momentum in combined Andhra Pradesh in the late 1990s. Manda Krishna, a former Naxalite, spearheaded a movement under the banner of the Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi (MRPS). In the combined Andhra Pradesh, 59 sub-castes were classified under the Scheduled Castes, with the Malas and Madigas comprising almost 90% of the SC population. The movement for reservation sub-classification began when the Madigas, a major Scheduled Caste community, demanded action against what they perceived as the inequitable distribution of

**The campaign for reservation sub-classification gained momentum in combined Andhra Pradesh in the late 1990s. Manda Krishna, a former Naxalite, spearheaded a movement under the banner of the Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi (MRPS).**

quota benefits in favour of the Malas. Although the Madigas slightly outnumbered the Malas in the combined Andhra Pradesh, they lagged behind the latter in educational, social, economic, and political parameters. Often described as 'Dalits among the Dalits', the Madigas could not compete with the Malas in availing themselves of the reservations.

A Commission of Inquiry constituted by the state government found that while the Malas and Madigas formed 41% and 47% of the SC population, respectively; 62% of all reserved state government jobs were secured by the Malas, with the Madigas receiving only 31%. This disparity was also reflected in educational opportunities.



**RAMESH KANDULA**  
Chief Editor Swatantra TV and author

Under the leadership of Manda Krishna, the MRPS led the agitation for the sub-categorisation of SC reservations to ensure that the Madigas received their fair share of education, employment, and other government-provided benefits. At the height of the movement, Chandrababu Naidu, then Chief Minister, faced both support and opposition. While various sections of soci-

ety, including the media, progressives, and leftist intellectuals, backed the movement, while the Malas vehemently opposed it, claiming that the advances made by their community were based on merit and invoking Dalit unity against any further subdivision of the quota system. Despite political risks and strong objections from the Malas, Naidu did not budge. His government established a judicial commission of inquiry, the Ramachandra Raju Commission, on 10 September 1996 to investigate allegations that certain Scheduled Castes were securing disproportionate benefits from reservations to the detriment of others. The Commission submitted its report in May 1997, largely agreeing with the Madigas' complaints. Acting swiftly, the Naidu government issued a Government Order (GO) on 6

June 1997, subdividing the 15% reservation quota for Scheduled Castes into four categories. The GO was challenged in court, leading to a protracted legal battle. Despite facing significant opposition, Naidu persisted in his efforts, ultimately pursuing the matter through legislative means. The issue eventually reached the Supreme Court, which, in the landmark case of E V Chinnaiah vs. State of AP, ruled the Act unconstitutional. The court's decision kept the issue entangled in legal disputes for years. Naidu's efforts, however, did not garner widespread recognition or support, particularly among the Madigas. Even during the height of the Madiga movement, critics accused Naidu of seeking to drive a wedge between Dalit communities for political gains.

However, some prominent figures, like noted human rights activist K. Balagopal, argued that such accusations were unfounded. Despite these efforts, the Madigas did not support Naidu in the 2004 elections, contributing to his defeat. It is a different matter that Naidu's other comparable initiatives, such as promoting Dalit leaders to significant positions (as in the case of Balayogi as Lok Sabha Speaker and Pratibha Bharati as Andhra Pradesh Assembly Speaker), did not resonate widely with the public in the Telugu states, though minor gestures by YS Rajasekhara Reddy or his son YS Jagan Mohan Reddy towards certain communities have since been highlighted-a recognition that has eluded Naidu despite his significant contributions.

## Police integrity declined under Naidu's rule: Merugu Nagarjuna

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Merugu Nagarjuna has expressed concern over the 'deteriorating state' of the police system in Andhra Pradesh. He alleged that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's governance has led to the police officials losing respect and morale. Speaking to the media at the party central office here on Wednesday, the former minister mentioned a recent event where police officers participated in the birthday celebration of the wife of the Chilikaluripet MLA. He also referred to an incident in Anantapur district where a Circle Inspector (CI) was forced to apologise after speaking out honestly. He stated that

these events are a reflection of how the police system is weakening under the TDP coalition government. Merugu Nagarjuna raised concerns over the government's actions, including the 'sidelining' of 16 honest IPS officers. These actions are sending a message that officials must follow political directions or face consequences. Nagarjuna highlighted incidents of violence against YSRCP supporters, including a recent case in Seetharamapuram, Nandyal, where YSRCP leader Subbarayudu received no police assistance despite being in danger. He said that the police failed to act because of the influence of TDP leaders and the Chief Minister.

## Officials clarify reports students falling ill

### Only 200 students have viral fever: Nuzvid Campus Director

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

There seems to be a discrepancy between the reported number of students suffering from viral fever at Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge and Technology (RGUKT), also known as the Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) Nuzvid campus, and the official statements from the campus director and the Eluru District Medical and Health Officer. Reports indicate that over 800 students are suffering from viral fever, vomiting, and diarrhoea. Around 200 students visit the campus dispensary daily. The number of affected students has been gradually increasing, with an average of 150 to 200 students receiving outpatient treatment. This information came to light on Wednesday. Nearly 1,000 students have been absent from classes, confined to the dormitories. One

case of diarrhoea was reported from the RGUKT Nuzvid campus, in addition to students experiencing cold, sore throat, and body pain. On August 25, around 35 students fell ill due to diarrhoea, but recovered after receiving treatment at the dispensary. According to sources, 90 out of 193 students tested positive for viral fever on August 26. On August 27, 101 out of 263 students, and on August 28, 18 out of 70 students tested positive for viral fever. Parents have voiced concerns and accused RGUKT officials of neglecting the students. Campus Director Chandrasekhar has downplayed reports of sickness among the students. He stated that less than five students are dealing with severe fever, and 150 to 200 students are receiving treatment at the campus dispensary. He refuted social media reports and assured parents that no more than five

**Campus Director Chandrasekhar has downplayed reports of sickness among the students. He stated that less than five students are dealing with severe fever, and 150 to 200 students are receiving treatment at the campus dispensary. He refuted social media reports and assured parents that no more than five students are undergoing treatment.**

students are undergoing treatment. He also denied the reports that around 800 students fell ill on the campus. He said 200 students were taken to rest at the dormitories after receiving treatment at the dispensary. Besides, District Medical and Health Officer Dr Sharmista reassured that the situation on the Nuzvid campus does not pose a significant health risk, although there are

cases of viral fever being managed. The Eluru district health officials continued conducting tests for the students and stated that no dangerous situation was prevailing on the RGUKT campus. The State is witnessing a spike in viral fevers, however, the severity is less than two per cent on the Nuzvid campus, she said. Meanwhile, Minister for Human Resources, IT, Electronic & Communication,

and Real-Time Governance Nara Lokesh has instructed officials to ensure that the affected students receive better treatment. He also cautioned them to prioritise the students' health and take measures to prevent such incidents from occurring in the future. Lokesh expressed concern about a large number of students falling ill on the Nuzvid IIIT campus over the past three days. He emphasised the need for immediate action and better treatment for the affected students and stressed it is the responsibility of the authorities to be vigilant and prevent similar incidents from happening again. Nuzvid MLA and Minister for Housing and Information & Public Relations Kolu Parthasarathy discussed the matter with the RGUKT officials and directed them to take prompt action to provide improved healthcare for the students.

## Cross-examination of Lokesh today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

IT Minister Nara Lokesh will attend the cross-examination in a defamation case at the 12th Additional District Court in Visakhapatnam on Thursday. On October 22, 2019, a fabricated story was published in Sakshi with the heading 'Chinababu Chiruthindi 25 lakh'. TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh sent a notice to Sakshi through his lawyers stating that the story was meant to tarnish his image. As there was no response from the vernacular to the notices, Lokesh filed a defamation suit. It is stated in the petition that the article was fabricated to damage his reputation. He said he was not in Vizag on the dates published in the vernacular. He clarified that even though he has been to Visakhapatnam several times as a minister.

## No Jagan photos on..

Continued on Page 1

The Cabinet approved release of Rs 11.51 crore for purchasing these machines. The Cabinet approved to revise salaries of personal assistants (PAs) from the existing Rs 18,000 to Rs 36,000 and the personal secretaries (PSs) salaries to Rs 50,000. Briefing media persons on the decisions taken by the Cabinet, the Minister for Information and Public Relations, Kolu Parthasarathy, said that Wednesday's Cabinet meet was held with the technology provided by the National Informatics Centre in New Delhi. "All the subjects, including the agenda and Cabinet notes, are available online," the Minister said, adding that the e-Cabinet concept improves the operational efficiency which totally reflects the

ground reality resulting in increasing the monitoring efficiency with an environment-friendly approach. Parthasarathy also said that the entire system helps ministers oversee the implementation of the Cabinet decisions more effectively. Information related to the subjects can easily be accessed online from anywhere anytime besides keeping the information confidential. This apart, the latest technology also helps effective monitoring and assessment of the status of implementation of the Cabinet decisions from time to time, he added. The Minister also felt that besides comprehensive data analysis and reporting capability, there is every possibility to prevent unauthorised access to the information and provide total security to it. The features also include interlinking of virtual Cabinet meetings with

the e-office and using the Artificial Intelligence (AI), he said. "On top of it all, this helps maintain law and order in a more perfect way since supervision is easy with the CC cameras installed in private lands and buildings can be linked with the 14,000 CC cameras installed in public places," the Minister observed. Thus, the Chief Minister indicated that steps need to be taken with a perfect action plan for its maintenance. Adding technology to real-time governance and incident monitoring systems besides alert management can be used to directly monitor incidents in all parts of the State and take appropriate action, the Minister maintained. Using drones, potholes can be identified on roads, mosquitoes can be controlled, infections can be prevented and pesticides.

## HYDRA-like...

Continued on Page 1

A senior urban planner emphasised the importance of understanding the full extent of the damage to plan for comprehensive restoration. Despite government changes and the appointment of new officials, encroachments continue, fuelled by allegations against local political leaders, real estate developers, and Irrigation Department officials. These encroachments not only violate the law but also worsen water stagnation during the rainy season. "It's a well-organised racket," revealed a GVMC insider, adding that the illegal encroachments contribute to frequent water-logging problems. The impact of these encroachments is increasingly evident. Rainwater, which once flowed naturally into the

sea, now causes frequent water-logging due to disrupted drainage systems. "Encroachments have severely affected this process," explained a retired civil engineer. Encroachments are not limited to small structures; large-scale developments, including houses and commercial complexes, have replaced many of the city's water bodies. "It's shocking how much of the city has been built on what was once Gedda land," remarked a local resident, citing the lack of political will to halt the encroachments. GVMC's efforts to remove encroachments often face resistance from local leaders, with teams being obstructed or even threatened. Suburbs like Anandapuram, Bheemili, and Sabbavaram are also grappling with similar issues as ponds are encroached.

## 'Paperless' ...

Continued on Page 1

and using them for decision-making. Paperless Cabinet meetings were also held between 2014 and 2019 when Naidu was the Chief Minister. However, this time a comprehensive application with multiple features with end-to-end workflow has been developed with the technical support of NIC. Officials said conducting meetings using the e-Cabinet application enhances operational efficiency and aligns with eco-friendly practices. This facilitates online access to information, anywhere and anytime, and authorises role-based information access to ensure confidentiality. Standardisation of formats and procedures, easy-to-use interface, secure and real-time access to Cabinet documents.

## Govt to develop new seed varieties of cotton

### Cultivation and yield of cotton decreasing drastically

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Handlooms and Textiles S Savitha has said that the government will develop new seed varieties of cotton for increasing yield, which ensures more economical stability and income to the farmers. The Minister, along with Agriculture Minister K Atchannaidu, organised a meeting at the Secretariat on Wednesday with the management of spinning and ginning millers, representatives of CCI. Addressing the meeting, Minister Savitha said that the cultivation and yield of the

cotton have been decreasing drastically for the past few years, adding that the cotton produce was about 20.50 lakh bales in 2017-18 and in 2023-24 it is just about 11.58 lakh bales. She asked the farmers not to use plastic bags for packing, which can affect the quality of the cotton. She further directed the officials concerned to bring awareness among the farmers. The Minister assured that they would write a letter to the Central government asking to buy all the cotton harvest which is produced across Andhra Pradesh.

## Be cautious, CM tells...

Continued on Page 1

He expressed anger over the controversial behaviour of some ministers and MLAs. He said that the government is getting a bad name because of the mistakes made by some people. Regarding interference of family members of some ministers and legislators, Chandrababu stated that Ministers and MLAs are responsible for ensuring that the behaviour of family members is not excessive. Chandrababu commented that due to the mistakes made by one or two, all the good things done by the government are lost and the leaders are being highlighted. Important information about their government is being leaked. He was amazed that the information in the White Papers, details of vote-

on-account and other important decisions were leaked. The issue of YSRC's presence in government departments was widely discussed in the Cabinet meeting and instructed the minister to look into it. Minister Payyavula Keshav said that the Centre has given a lot of funds to AP within 100 days, and the benefit is far better compared to Jagan's visits in five years. The release of funds to Polavaram and the contribution of funds to Amaravati are very useful things for AP. He claimed that Jagan goes to Delhi for cases and Chandrababu makes trips to Delhi for funds. Payyavula Keshav commented that people could make out the difference between Jagan's visits to Delhi and Chandrababu's visits to Delhi. The report of the Jana

Sena ministers will be handed over to Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan. He expressed anger over the controversial behaviour of some ministers and MLAs. He said that the government is getting a bad name because of the mistakes made by some people. Regarding interference of family members of some ministers and legislators, Chandrababu stated that Ministers and MLAs are responsible for ensuring that the behaviour of family members is not excessive. Chandrababu commented that due to the mistakes made by one or two, all the good things done by the government are lost and the leaders are being highlighted. Important information about their government is being leaked. He was amazed that the information in the White Papers, details of vote-

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## The...

Continued on Page 1

While addressing the meeting Minister for Handlooms Savitha informed that the cultivation and yield of the cotton have been decreasing drastically for the past few years adding that the cotton produce was about 20.50 lakh bales in 2017-18 and in 2023-24 it is just about 11.58 lakh bales. She asked the farmers not to use plastic bags for cotton packing which can affect the quality of the cotton. She further directed officials concerned to bring awareness among the farmers over this. The Minister assured that they would write a letter to the Central government asking to buy all the cotton harvest which is produced across Andhra Pradesh. Minister for Agriculture K Atchannaidu suggested the farmers registering.

## MP Mopidevi..

Continued on Page 1

Sources say he has been under pressure from his followers in Bapatla, as YSRC has virtually been wiped out in the district. The MP will tender resignation from his Rajya Sabha membership and hold a meeting with his followers at Repalle in a couple of days, and then join TDP along with his supporters. Meanwhile, replying to queries from the media, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said that the leaders will be welcomed based on their nature.

## YSRCP MLC...

Continued on Page 1

So, there are chances of her return to the ruling party, the sources added. They further said that there is another option of joining BJP as the saffron party is an alliance party in the government in AP. It is learnt that Sunitha will clear air on her political future in a day or two after consultations with her supporters.

**TODAY**  
**ALMANAC**  
Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha  
Tithi: Ekadashi: Aug 29 01:19 AM to Aug 30 01:37 AM  
Dwadashi: Aug 30 01:37 AM to Aug 31 02:25 AM  
Nakshatram: Ardra: Aug 28 03:53 PM to Aug 29 04:39 PM  
Punarvasu: Aug 29 04:39 PM to Aug 30 05:55 PM  
Rahukalam: 1:49 PM to 3:22 PM  
Yamagandam: 6:05 AM to 7:38 AM  
Varjyam: 05:17 AM to 06:58 AM  
Gulika: 9:11 AM to 10:44 AM  
Amritakalam: 06:20 AM to 07:59 AM  
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:52 AM to 12:41 PM  
**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**  
Forecast: Scattered Showers  
Temp: 31°C  
Humidity: 76%  
Sunrise: 5:54 AM  
Sunset: 6:23 PM  
Updated: August 28, 2024 5:00 PM

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH PANCHAYAT RAJ DEPARTMENT**  
**E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE**  
No.01/2024-25 Date: 27-08-2024  
The Executive Engineer, PIU (PR) division of Ongole is inviting bids through e-procurement platform for execution of 131 works, divided into 38 packages, in Ongole division limits with Rs. 1062.82 lakh SDRS funds. Tender documents can be had from 5.00 PM onwards on 04-09-2024. For details, contact the portal <http://www.eprocurement.gov.in> Sd/- Executive Engineer, PIU (PR) Division, Ongole

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# Child trafficking rackets prey on desperate couples

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Child trafficking rackets are targeting vulnerable couples in Andhra Pradesh, offering false hope of parenthood in exchange for exorbitant fees. These criminal networks are operating in various districts, exploiting the emotional and financial vulnerabilities of childless families. These sophisticated operations involve teams of individuals who work together to acquire infants and sell them to desperate couples. Many of those involved have connections within private hospitals and scanning centers, facilitating their illegal trade. "This is a deeply disturbing trend," said an official from the Child Welfare Department.

The problem is not confined to Visakhapatnam alone. Reports suggest that this illegal trade is prevalent in other parts of the State, with some Rural Medical Practitioners

Operate through intermediaries who identify couples that seek medical help to conceive

(RMPs) and Private Medical Practitioners (PMPs) in rural areas playing a significant role. These practitioners are exploiting financially disadvantaged families, often brokering agreements in rural scanning centres. "These gangs are ruthless in their approach," said a senior police official. "They exploit the emotional and financial vulnerabilities of childless couples, offering them false hope in exchange for exorbitant fees, sometimes starting at Rs. 10 lakh."

The modus operandi of these gangs is chilling. They typically operate through trusted intermediaries who identify couples that have spent months or years seeking medical help to conceive. Once doc-

uments confirm that natural conception is unlikely, these intermediaries offer to arrange for a newborn through illicit means.

Pregnant women are identified, and their family and financial situations are carefully assessed. The gang offers monetary incentives, promising to take care of the women until the child is born. After the birth, the remaining payment is made, and the child is taken away. Often, women with no family ties or those unwilling to keep the child for various reasons are targeted. In some shocking instances, infants are stolen from hospitals and labour rooms and sold to desperate couples.

"This is not just a violation

of the law; it's a violation of human dignity," stated the Child Welfare Department official. "No child should be treated as a commodity. We are committed to cracking down on these trafficking rings and bringing those responsible to justice."

Authorities have urged childless couples to seek legal adoption through official channels. "There is a legal and ethical way to adopt a child," the official added. "Both the Central and State governments offer official adoption services through a website called CARA, where couples can register and legally adopt a child. Engaging in illegal child purchases can lead to severe legal consequences."



# TDP for probe into escalation of VMC building works costs

Members demand thorough investigation by a fact-finding committee

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) council has initiated an investigation into the rising costs of constructing a new office building at its headquarters. TDP Floor Leader Nellikonda Balaswamy criticised the project's quality and called for a thorough review of the budget increases. Other members supported Balaswamy's demand and requested closer scrutiny in this regard.

The VMC Council meeting was held in the council hall and chaired by Mayor Rayana Bhagya Lakshmi on Wednesday. During the meeting, TDP floor leader Balaswamy raised the issue of increasing the values for some works in the VMC's new office building. TDP members expressed concerns about the recent allocation of works relat-

ed to the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation's (VMC) new building.

They have demanded a thorough investigation by forming a fact-finding committee, citing discrepancies in the cost estimations. According to the TDP, the enhanced values given to the contracting agencies are significantly higher than the original estimates, which were reportedly three times less. During Wednesday's meeting, which covered around 120 issues, discussions moved slowly, leaving key civic matters unresolved. The VMC council meeting, which was initially set to address 120 agenda items, ended up discussing only a few, likely due to the new political developments and the focus on unnecessary matters.

One significant topic was YSRCP Corporator Bandi Punyaseela's proposal to relo-

cate the Kedareshwara Peta fruit market to Nunna Mango Market. Punyaseela's suggestion received mixed reactions, with some corporators opposing the move due to traffic congestion and pollution concerns.

The council also revisited the issue of stray dogs, with members from all parties expressing frustration over ineffective sterilization drives. The lack of progress in controlling the stray population remains a public safety concern.

Additionally, the council addressed a sharp decline in VMC's advertisement revenues, which dropped from Rs.26 crores in 2019-20 to Rs.16 crores in 2023-24. Corporators accused advertisers of evading payments, prompting the council to take legal action to recover the dues.

Meanwhile, members expressed their concern over the shortage of sanitation workers in their respective divisions. Though the government has given consent to appoint additional sanitation workers, Public Health Department officials have neglected this for several years, members alleged. They demanded immediate steps to recruit additional staff for their divisions to maintain sanitation. TDP member Mummamani Prasad urged the council not to allow the Dandamudi Rajagopala Rao Municipal Corporation Indoor Stadium to go private, as the stadium's income was gradually reducing. He urged the council to bring the overall control of VMC.

VMC Commissioner HM Dhyanchandra and other officials attended the council meeting.

# Minister Parthasarathy visits IIIT



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Kolusu Parthasarathy, Minister for Housing, Information and Public Relations, visited IIIT-Nuzvid on Wednesday late evening after the Cabinet meeting. He enquired about the health condition of the students.

The Minister directed the IIIT officials to provide better medical assistance to the students. He instructed the IIIT officials to be careful and ensure that such inci-

dents do not recur.

The Minister has warned that stern action will be taken against those who are negligent. He was angry that no steps were taken to provide proper medical treatment to the students and no information was given to the district authorities. The District Medical and Health Officer has already checked the IIIT premises and based on the report, action will be taken against those responsible, Parthasarathy said.

# High Court Judge visits Durga temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh High Court Judge, Justice V. Jyothirmayi, visited the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam in Vijayawada with her family members. They performed special pujas and had darshan of goddess Durga Devi.

The temple authorities welcomed Judge Jyothirmayi and her family. They also participated in the Amnavari Pancha Haratulu.

During the visit, vedic scholars blessed the Judge's family, and the temple authorities presented them with Laddu Prasadam, Sessa Vastram, and a portrait.

In addition, the Endowment Department Principal Secretary and Commissioner, S. Satyanarayana, inspected the proposed plans for the subway and tansuring centre at the Durga Ghat. He discussed the plans with Chief Engineer Sekhar, Regional Joint Commissioner (Estates) Chandrasekhar Azad, Deputy EO Leela Kumar, and EE Gangaiah. Temple EEs KVS Koteswara Rao, L Rama Devi, and others also participated in the discussions.



# Increase stem cell donations to combat blood cancer: MP

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

MP M Sribharat has urged the youth to join the fight against blood cancer and other life-threatening diseases by becoming stem cell donors. Addressing a stem cell donor-recipient meet organised by DATRI Blood Stem Cell Donors Registry at GITAM Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (GIMSIR) Hospital, the MP emphasised the critical need to expand the pool of registered donors in India.

"Each one of us has the potential to save a life," Sribharat stated. "By registering as a stem cell donor, you can offer hope to patients battling severe blood disorders. It is our collective responsibility to step up and contribute to this noble cause."

Leading by example, Sribharat himself registered as a stem cell donor with DATRI. He also felicitated a local stem cell donor at the event, highlighting the life-changing impact of such con-

DATRI Blood Stem Cell Donors Registry organises stem cell donor-recipient meet

tributions. Aby Sam John, National Operations Head of DATRI, provided a sobering overview of the global donor landscape. While there are over 33 million registered stem cell donors worldwide, India accounts for a mere 0.5 million. The demand for compatible donors in India far exceeds the supply, leaving thousands of patients in critical need of life-saving transplants.

John shared that DATRI has facilitated over 1,424 blood stem cell donations in India, drawn from its database of over 5.6 lakh registered donors. He stressed the need for more people, especially young and healthy individuals, to join the registry. "The more diverse our donor pool, the better the chances of finding a match for those in need," he added.

# Drive launched to tackle crime, enhance safety at city beaches

Police move in response to reports of hooliganism and criminal activities, particularly at night

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Commissioner of Police Dr Sankhabrata Bagchi has launched a comprehensive programme aimed at addressing rising concerns over anti-social activities and crimes. This initiative involves a thorough evaluation of police security and lighting facilities across the city's beach locations.

Covering 10 key beach areas from Appikonda to Bheemili, the City Police Commissionerate has responded to troubling reports of hooliganism and criminal activities, particularly at night. Many visitors, who come to swim or relax, have fallen victim to harassment, theft, and assaults due to inadequate lighting and police presence. "Recent reports of criminal activities and anti-social behaviour on our beaches are deeply concerning," stated Commissioner Bagchi. "Our primary goal is to restore safety and ensure that these public spaces are secure for all visitors," he said.

Inspections conducted by CP Bagchi at Appikonda Beach, a suburb of Gajuwaka, revealed a significant lack of police patrol and insufficient lighting.

"During my midnight visit, it was clear that both the lighting and police presence were



inadequate," Bagchi noted. "We have issued instructions to the steel plant station officials to enhance night patrols and have urged GVMC officials to install better lighting to eliminate dark spots."

Further scrutiny of the beach road and YMCA area revealed that while there was some police presence on the road, the beach areas themselves remained poorly monitored. "Although there is some patrol on the beach road, the absence of surveillance on the beach itself is troubling," Bagchi observed. "We are addressing these gaps with immediate effect."

To combat issues such as theft and harassment, visitors and youths found in dark areas have been directed to counselling. Additionally, measures are being implemented to curb bike racing by setting up check posts along the beach road.



# Capitalise on Mudra loan scheme: Collector

Mudra Yojana is a valuable resource for small-scale businesses

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

District Collector Dr BR Ambedkar has encouraged small-scale businesses to take advantage of the Mudra loan scheme, which offers loans without requiring any guarantees. Speaking at a District Level Coordination Committee (DCC) and District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meeting, Dr. Ambedkar highlighted the scheme's significance in supporting local entrepreneurship. "The Mudra Yojana is a valuable resource for small-scale businesses," he said. He emphasised the various loan categories available under the

scheme and urged beneficiaries to make full use of this opportunity.

During the meeting, the Collector reviewed the progress of various self-employment schemes, loan disbursement, and the performance of banks and government departments. He also launched the annual loan plan and RBI quiz competitions. The Collector directed officials to expedite the process of granting loans under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) and mandated that government departments approve loan applications within eight days. He also

emphasised the importance of crop loans and directed the immediate distribution of identity cards to tenant farmers.

The meeting also saw a detailed review of the progress made under PM Swanidhi, Crop Loans, TIDCO Loans, PMFME, and other schemes. Dr. Ambedkar underscored the importance of these government schemes in improving livelihoods and emphasised the need for collective efforts to enhance the district's GDP.

Dr Ambedkar also invited bankers to participate in the district-wide forest festival on August 30.

# DC reviews developmental projects in Paderu

PNS ■ PADERU

District Collector S. Dinesh Kumar visited Paderu mandal on Wednesday to assess the progress of various developmental projects. Accompanied by local legislator Matsyarsa Visveswara Raju, the Collector inspected school buildings, midday meal schemes, and Amrit Sarovar initiatives. During his visit, Kumar inaugurated the newly renovated primary school building in Kotla Garuvu village, emphasizing the government's commitment to education. "Our students deserve the highest quality of training," he said.

At Allivaram Primary School, Kumar inspected the midday meal scheme and ensured proper hygiene practices were being followed. "Nutrition is crucial for our children's development," he stated, while sharing a meal with the students. The



Collector also reviewed the progress of the Amrit Sarovar initiative, inspecting the Nilagedda pond and tank in Tumpada village. He assured the local sarpanch that efforts will be made to increase the pond's capacity.

At the Dallapally viewpoint, Kumar discussed plans to further develop the Dallapally tourist center. He inspected

the ongoing road widening project and emphasised the need for safety improvements. "We must ensure that the road meets safety standards," he said. The Collector encouraged the development of homestays and adventure activities in the area. "Tourism is a vital part of our local economy," he stated. He also proposed the formation of a team

to guide tourism development. In addition to these initiatives, the Collector reviewed the conversion of a 9.50 km stretch of road from Vantadipalli to Burugu Chatta and Sappiputtu to Naringapadu into a BT road. "This road will significantly benefit 1,200 residents of PVTG villages."

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Ambati Rambabu has come down heavily on Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for spreading false propaganda and making baseless allegations against former chief ministers YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and the late Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy regarding the Polavaram project.

Speaking to the media in Guntur here on Wednesday, the former minister stated that Jagan Mohan Reddy had worked tirelessly to secure Rs 12,157 crore from the Central government for the completion of the first phase of the Polavaram project, which involves water storage at 41.15 m. He reminded that this approval was granted after several discussions with the Prime Minister and the then Minister of Jal Shakti by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, and slammed CM Naidu for trying to take credit for it.

Rambabu asserted that the setbacks and financial losses

# Ambati Rambabu decries 'propaganda' on Polavaram



incurred by the project are due to Chandrababu's hasty and ill-conceived decisions and it was clearly outlined in an international expert committee's report. He pointed out that Chandrababu's intentions were to profit from the project by handing contracts to preferred contractors. He

flayed the CM for blaming YS Rajasekhara Reddy for delays in the Polavaram project, noting that 90 per cent of the right canal was completed during YSR's tenure, which was later utilised as part of the Pattiseema project.

He added that it was Chandrababu, who agreed to outdated rates for the project in 2016, which ultimately benefited contractors rather than the people. He also questioned why Chandrababu accepted the lower rate of Rs 15,668 crore from the Centre, despite the project being valued at Rs 20,398 crore, of which the State had already spent Rs 4,730.71 crore. He mentioned that after Jagan Reddy became Chief Minister, the government

sought Rs 55,656 crore for Polavaram from the Centre. The Central government approved Rs 47,725 crore, with the first stage estimated at Rs. 31,625 crore, later revised to Rs 30,436 crore. Chandrababu allegedly blocked this process.

Referring to the cancellation of the reverse tendering process, Ambati Rambabu stated that Jagan introduced reverse tendering for transparency, saving Rs 850 crore in the Polavaram project alone.

He criticised Chandrababu Naidu's government for cancelling this system, reopening the doors to corruption, and promoting the misuse of public funds through questionable policies.



# Equipping AP with twin engines of infra and industry

Unyielding nature of leadership and unwavering commitment to clearly identified goals are essential for any aspirational state having diverse problems. The state of Andhra Pradesh is now in such a state and its present rulers need to pay immediate attention to every conceivable issue as far as comprehensive development is concerned. Fortunately for Andhra Pradesh, the state presently has strong leadership that apparently bows to none and a government that is committed and well aware of the needs of people.

Whether it is from the standpoint of a state or the nation, infrastructure is pivotal in spurring progress and setting the stage for its future development possibilities. Ensuring proper infrastructure development is very crucial to achieve intended devel-

opmental targets. The state of Andhra Pradesh, under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, is undertaking ambitious infrastructure projects to make the state business- and industry-friendly. Providing proper infrastructure is something as key as laying a strong foundation for the construction of any structure. So, it is very basic for various industries to come to Andhra Pradesh to establish their units.

The state government's Industrial Policy being formulated focuses on infrastructural needs as well as various schemes and proactive policies. The state has lost a lot in the wake of bifurcation and the resolution of many issues is still pending.

Although, in his initial stint as chief minister of residual Andhra Pradesh, Naidu had

**It is imperative for the state to reach and stay on the path of speedy progress. The government is planning to form a task force with prominent industrialists and experts. Development should be in accordance with the emerging needs and necessities of the state's industrial progress. The proposed task force will hopefully help the state recoup the ground it had lost in recent years.**

initiated many proactive and industry-friendly steps; unfortunately, most of them had lost their steam due to a lack of continuity. As a result, the state suffered immensely on account of the migration of many industries and big businesses to other states.

Today, it is imperative for the state to reach and stay on the path of speedy progress.

The government is planning to form a task force with prominent industrialists and experts.

Development should be in accordance with the emerging needs and necessities of the state's industrial progress. The proposed task force will hopefully help the state recoup the ground it had lost in recent years. Apart from bringing



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back industries that had exited the state due to various reasons, it is incumbent upon the government to attract as many new industries as possible. This goal must be supported by the provision of flawless basic facilities, from proper drainage to water and uninterrupted supply of quality

power. Besides, the policies of the government should also act as a stimulus for long-term growth.

Andhra Pradesh is endowed with all basic facilities for the coming of IT, food processing, automobile and renewable energy sectors. While unveiling his ambitious plan of action for the holistic development of the state, Chief Minister Naidu has elucidated the available resources in the state and given assurance to industrialists and businessmen that they need not harbour any fears as far as provision of essential facilities are concerned.

The most pressing need for the state is enhancement of job opportunities for the youth. Apart from big firms, it is the MSME sector that has immense potential for massive employment. The govern-

ment's ambition to create 20 lakh jobs for the youth over the next five years can be redeemed with proper, flawless, and time-bound implementation of the related schemes and policies. The Chief Minister, whose refrain of late is 'You will see Chandrababu Naidu of 1995', has shown firm commitment in this regard. Now it is for the industrialists and businessmen to heed his call and proactively play an active role in the comprehensive development of Andhra Pradesh, which is endowed with abundant natural resources as well.

The Chief Minister's Independence Day speech reflects his priorities for building a progressive state. Team Naidu previously brought many renowned industries to the state. Tirupati was made the electronic hub. There was enormous strug-

gle of Naidu behind the establishment of Kia Motors in Anantapur district. Now he is working with an enhanced spirit of commitment to put the state's development on a new trajectory. That Visakhapatnam has been standing tall on the path of development is due to the strain and pain of Naidu. His second stint will be more of a Herculean task, for which he appears to be ready for reckoning with anything that the state may need for its onward developmental journey. He is working to ensure that all the districts in the state have something of its own to contribute for the overall progress of Andhra Pradesh. No district should lag behind in the motto of the present government, for which Naidu will leave no stone unturned. (The writer is a senior journalist)

## Security measures should be augmented in industries: DC

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi has asked the management of industries to augment security measures to avert mishaps in industries.

The Collector held a District Crisis Group (DCG) meeting with the representative of industries and officials here on Wednesday and reviewed the steps taken by the management for the safety of workers and to avert mishaps.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Vetri Selvi said that if the internal audit is completed, the respective industries would be inspected by the district level officials by expert committees and all measures will be taken to ensure safety as per the prescribed standards.

She recalled that the Chief Minister is giving the highest priority for the industry's security. All the industries in the district should take full safety measures and conduct mock drills on safety measures to create awareness on how to deal with any incidents and accidents.

"Small negligence in factories can lead to big accidents.



The officials of Industries, Labour, Factories, Pollution Control and Fire Departments should work in coordination. Standard operation and protocol to be undertaken for safety and prevention of accidents in industries under red categories should be strictly followed," the Collector told the officials.

Vetri Selvi said that security has to be strengthened in all the industries in the district in the background of recent accidents in different parts of the state, adding that the workers and the public should be made aware of accidents prevention and emergency measures

to be taken during accidents by conducting mock drills frequently.

"The fire prevention equipment installed in the industries should be checked from time to time so that it works properly. Steps should be taken to establish a safety officer in every industry in the district and ensure that they get the training given by the district fire prevention officer," the Collector ordered the officials.

The Collector asked the management of industries to obtain NOC from the District Fire Officer. All applicable legal provisions as per Act

1948 and AP Factory Rules 1950 are to be implemented in the factory. The Hazardous Chemicals Rules Act, 1989 should be implemented in relation to manufacturing, storage and import aspects. Phone numbers of nearby hospitals, police and other emergency services departments should be kept available for contact in case of accidents, she stated.

SP K P Siva Kishore said that every industry should have a clear contingency plan on how to respond immediately and what steps to take in case of any accident or disaster. Special attention should also be given to the entry ways of vehicles in the industries, he said, adding that an alarm system should be set up to alert the workers in the industries and the people of the surrounding villages when accidents occur.

Deputy Inspector of Factories R Trinath Rao, District Industries GM Adishesu and deputy commissioner of labour P Srinivas and pollution control board EE Najeena Begam were among those who attended the meeting.

## Velugu animators stage dharna opposing victimization

PNS ■ KAKINADA

The Velugu animators, under the aegis of the CITY led AP Velugu VOA employees association, staged a dharna in front of the DRDA office here on Wednesday to register their protest against victimisation and political interference.

They raised slogans demanding putting an end to the removal of animators under political grounds and also arranging payment of six months wage arrears without further delay. They warned that if their demands were not settled, they would take up an agitational path by staging Dharnas district-wise from September 2.

Association district president Ganga Bhavani, while addressing the demonstrators, alleged that animators were removed unilaterally, branding them as YSRCP followers and the alliance workers selling the animators posts. The animators later called on the DRDA superintendent and presented a memorandum listing out their demands.



## Rice millers asked to purchase paddy from farmers

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

District Collector P Prashanthi asked the rice millers to purchase paddy from the farmers and directed the civil supplies and revenue departments to monitor the process.

The Collector held a meeting with rice millers' association representatives here on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that with the aim of providing the minimum support price to the farmers, targets would be set to the rice mills on the purchase of paddy from the farmers.

Collector P Prashanthi said that following the guidelines of the state government, the details of rice mill-will collection of grain will be informed in advance to the representa-

tives of the association, adding that targets will be given according to the capacity of the respective mills. The Civil Supplies Department as well as the Revenue Department have also been ordered to participate in the procurement of paddy produced by the rice millers from the farmers, she made it clear.

Mandal Development Officers should also take responsibility and Mandal Special Officers should inspect at the field level and actually identify and confirm the ganney bags in the grain buying centres, she directed the officials.

The Collector clarified that the primary responsibility of the government is to provide a minimum support price to the farmers. The rice millers claim to provide bank guaran-

tees. The transport authorities should take steps to ensure that the paddy transport vehicles have the GPS tracking facility. Required number of hamalies should be kept ready for unloading the paddy from vehicles, the Collector told the officials.

Joint Collector S Chinna Ramudu ordered the officials concerned to take steps to ensure that e-crop booking and the registration of the crop should be completed by October 1st. The officials should examine the necessary infrastructure in the purchasing centers under the coordination of other concerned departments, he told them. Sub-collector S Chinna Ramudu, Ashutosh Srivatsava, RDO KL Shiva Jyothi were among those who attended the meeting.

## Low-pressure area likely to move west-northwestwards north AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The southwest monsoon has been normal in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema. Under its influence, heavy to very heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh on August 30, 31 and in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh on August 30.



A cyclonic circulation lies over East central Bay of Bengal and extends up to 5.8 km above mean sea level tilting southward with height. Under its influence, a fresh low-pressure area is likely to form over east central & adjoining North Bay of Bengal on Thursday, Meteorological Centre said on Wednesday.

In a daily weather report here, it said that the low-pressure area is likely to move west-

northwestwards close to North Andhra Pradesh Coasts during the next 2 days. Heavy rain is likely to occur in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh on August 29, and September 1 and in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh on August 31.

Thunderstorms accompanied with lightning and strong surface winds with speed ranging from 30-40 Kmph are likely to occur at isolated places in

North Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next five days and in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema from August 30 to September 1.

Strong surface winds with speed ranging from 30-40 Kmph are likely to occur at isolated places in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next 48 hours.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at many places or at a few places or at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next seven days. Rain occurred at one or two places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and at a few places in Rayalaseema during the last 24 hours, the report added.



## Mahila Police create awareness among women, girls on safety

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

On the direction of SP L Subba Rayudu, the Mahila Rakshak police personnel created awareness among women and school and college going girls on their safety. The problems faced by women in the society are explained on how to avoid them and especially the women who go alone are advised to be careful of unexpected dangers during the

interaction with women and girls.

Tirupati West Mahila Rakshak Police met the students of Sri Padmavati Mahila University and discussed new criminal laws, cyber crime, loan apps, suspicious links, women related crimes, ragging, social media scams and child marriages. The students were made aware and made aware of the subjects.

The girl students were

asked to inform the police if they faced any problem. The Mahila police personnel also cautioned the girl students not to go anywhere alone. The Mahila police also created awareness to the pilgrims on losing bags, mobile phones and theft of valuable articles and precautions to be taken. Tirupati West Mahila Rakshak and Tirupati East Mahila Rakshak police personnel participated in the programme.

## PUBLIC INTEREST IS PARAMOUNT No going back on HYDRAA: CM

Demands KTR must be disqualified for not mentioning farmhouse lease in affidavit



**NAVEENA GHANATE**  
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■ HYDERABAD

As the political heat intensifies over HYDRAA demolitions in Hyderabad, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy declared that there is no question of HYDRAA backing down.

He emphasised that his top priority is to protect lakes and that his actions are not influenced by any political party. "HYDRAA will continue its job without hesitation," he clarified and added, "Whether it's Old City or any other city, we won't step back."

HYDRAA, which is currently focused on Hyderabad, will prioritise the demolitions of buildings in the Full Tank Level (FTL) area and buffer zones of lakes and canals and removing encroachments.

Referring to the demolition of an encroachment by AIMIM Bahadurpura MLA Md. Mubeen and Mirza Rahmat Baig MLC, Revanth said, "You can find out whose side the demolition happened." The houses are in Shastripuram where Akbaruddin Owaisi stays.

On demolishing Akbaruddin's college, Revanth said that they have the interests of students in mind and added,

"We will always stick to rules." He said that public representatives should be role models and not encroachers. He said the government has not yet assessed the extent of encroachment in lakes and that it will be done.

"I know the pressure on HYDRAA but public interest is paramount. If you are doing something in the larger interest you have to face the music," he said.

HYDRAA will be given police station status like TGNAB.

"Buildings that do not comply with regulations will be demolished," Revanth stated, pointing out that the first demolition order of the HYDRAA was against Congress leader Pallam Raju.

"In the name of education, no one will be allowed to grab lakes. If that's allowed a floating college will come up on Tank Bund," he said.

"Let's do a joint inspection on encroachments by politicians. The BRS should suspend Malla Reddy, Marri Rajashekar Reddy and Palla Rajeshwar Reddy for violating norms. Harish Rao is a former Irrigation minister and let him head a fact-finding committee on encroachments of lakes," the CM said.

## Lovers end life by jumping before running train

PNS ■ KURNOOL



A young man and woman, suspected to be lovers, committed suicide by jumping before a running train at Maddikera railway station on Wednesday.

Police said that the bodies of Meena and Thomas were found on the railway track. The lovers also left a suicide note at the railway track which the police seize. The deceased Menna and Thomas were residents of Kasapuram road in Guntakal.

The police initially suspected that the deceased were lovers but they have ascertained it. The bodies were shifted to the GGH for postmortem.

On the direction of SP L Subba Rayudu, the Mahila Rakshak police personnel created awareness among women and school and college going girls on their safety. The problems faced by women in the society are explained on how to avoid them and especially the women who go alone are advised to be careful of unexpected dangers during the

## Srisaillam dam receives heavy inflow, 3 gates lifted

PNS ■ KURNOOL

The Srisaillam project is receiving heavy inflow again forcing the engineers to lift three crest gates to release 84,000 cusecs of water to the downstream NS project on Wednesday. Sources said that three crest gates of Srisaillam project were lifted to 10 feet height to discharge flood water. The 44 crest gates of Jurala projects, located in Mahabubnagar in

Telangana state, were lifted to discharge 2.53 lakh heavy flood water to the Srisaillam project. Moreover, 25,000 cusecs of water is being released at Jurala project to generate hydro power. The Srisaillam project, one of the major irrigation projects in the state, is already brimful. The project engineers lifted the crest gates of Srisaillam projects more than three times during the month of August. The hydro power is

being generated on the left and right power stations at the project for which 68,700 cusecs of water are being released.

Meanwhile, the 16 crest gates of Nagarjuna Sagar project were lifted to discharge 1,78,983 cusecs of water. The NSP is receiving over 1.79 lakh cusecs of water and the same is being discharged to the downstream Pulichintala project. The water level of NSP stood at 312 feet.



ACROSS THE STATES



**Pawar apologises to people for Shivaji statue collapse**

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Wednesday apologised to people of Maharashtra for the collapse of the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at Malvan fort in coastal Konkan region. "Be it officials or contractors, action will be taken against those guilty," Ajit Pawar said at a public meeting during his Jan Sanman Yatra in Latur district. "Shivaji Maharaj is our deity. I apologise to the 13 crore people of Maharashtra for the collapse of his statue," Pawar said. The collapse of the statue within a year (of installation) is shocking, he added. An FIR has been registered against the contractor of the statue work after it collapsed on Monday just eight months after it was unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 4 last year. The FIR follows a complaint by the Public Works Department, which claims the statue's construction was of poor quality, and the nuts and bolts used in the structure were found to be rusted.



**Rs 908 cr penalty in FEMA case against DMK MP: ED**

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday said a penalty of Rs 908 crore has been slapped in a case related to the alleged violation of foreign exchange rules against DMK MP S Jagathrathakan and his family members. The federal agency issued a statement which said that properties worth Rs 89.19 crore, seized in September 2020, have been confiscated following an adjudication order issued on August 26 under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). Jagathrathakan, 76, represents the Arakkonam Lok Sabha seat in Tamil Nadu. He has earlier served as a minister of state for Information and Broadcasting in the Union government. The agency said a FEMA violation probe was initiated against the MP, a businessman from Tamil Nadu, his family members and a related Indian entity.

**Video shows cows being pushed into MP river in spate**

A video showing more than a dozen cows being pushed into a swollen river in Madhya Pradesh's Satna district went viral following which three men were arrested and a minor was detained, police said on Wednesday. As per the initial reports, about 15 cows were pushed off the bank of the Satna river at a spot under Nagod police station limits on Tuesday afternoon and some of them apparently drowned, said an official, adding that the exact numbers were yet to be ascertained. "A video showing cows being pushed by some people into the Satna river under the railway bridge near Bamhor surfaced on Tuesday evening. A police team was sent to the spot and a case was registered," Nagod police station in-charge Ashok Pandey said. Beta Bagri, Ravi Bagri and Rampal Choudhary were arrested under the Madhya Pradesh Gauvansh Vadh Pratishedh Adhinyam, a law that prohibits killing of cows in the state, and also under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), he said.



**PUNE CREDIT SOCIETY SCAM  
IPS officer Bhagyashree booked for forgery**

The Pune Police have registered a case on the charges of forgery and criminal conspiracy against IPS officer Bhagyashree Navtke who had headed the investigation into an alleged Rs 1,200 crore scam involving a credit cooperative society, an officer said on Wednesday. The case was registered against Navtke, based on a CID report that flagged procedural lapses in the scam investigation, and other unidentified persons, on directions from the Maharashtra Home Department. Navtke headed the Special Investigation Team as DCP (economic offence wing) in 2021-21 to probe cases relat-



ed to the alleged scam involving Bhaichand Hirachand Raisoni Credit Society in Pune district. "The CID (Crime Investigation Department) conducted a probe into the investigation related to the alleged Bhaichand Hirachand Raisoni (BHR) scam.

**Be fearless, stand with truth**

President Droupadi Murmu urges media



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday asked the media to do fearless reporting and stand with the truth as she saw the fourth estate playing a big role in shaping the country and society. The president, who met PTI editors at Rashtrapati Bhavan on the occasion of the 77th anniversary of the founding of the news agency, said everyone has a responsibility in taking the country forward and it was impor-

tant how the country is presented. "Media ko nirbhikta se kam karna chahiye (media should work fearlessly)," she commented. "Kabhi satya se hatna nahi chahiye (It should never deviate from the truth)." Murmu has also penned an exclusive article for PTI on the recent incidents of sexual and physical assaults on women, which have led to widespread agitations. "You are a journalist but you are also a citizen. I too

am a citizen. What you are concerned about, I am equally concerned about," she remarked on writing the article. "The media can play a crucial role in improving the country and society," the president said. "I am sometimes anguished because on the one hand we worship women as goddesses but that does not get reflected in day to day behaviour," Murmu said, recalling Rabindranath Tagore's famous poem

"Where The Mind Is Without Fear". She stated that the image of the media should not be tarnished. "Apni chhavi bhi kharab na ho (the image of media shouldnt get blemished). Logon ka vishwas jeetna chahiye (you have to win the confidence of the people)." In her message to PTI on its 77th foundation day, the president said the Press Trust of India was established barely a few days after India won independence.

**Railways, defence should be above politics: Min**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Facing political heat over railway accidents, Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Wednesday said the national transporter should not be a subject of political blame game as it is the lifeline of the nation. Vaishnaw said some disturbing trends have emerged in some incidents and the railways was carrying out a detailed inquiry in each and every incident.

blame game," the minister said in an interaction with reporters after the cabinet meeting. Vaishnaw said the railways was the lifeline of the country and if anything negative happens, every effort should be made to ensure that trains run in a very efficient manner. Responding to a separate question, the minister said the railways have added 5,300 km of railway lines to the existing network during the last one year.



He was responding to questions on incidents of derailment of trains due to placing of boulders and rods on the railway tracks. "There are some disturbing trends in some incidents, which should be taken seriously," Vaishnaw said. "Railways and defence are organizations which should be above politics. I don't believe that railways should be a subject of political

"Ten years ago, the average construction pace in Railways was four km per day. Today, it is 14.5 km per day," Vaishnaw said, adding all the sanctioned railway projects will be completed in the next five years. On recruitment in the railways, the minister said the government has prepared a recruitment calendar for filling up vacancies in the national transporter.

**Mamata wants laws changed to include death penalty for rapists**

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Asserting that her government has zero tolerance for incidents of rape, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said an amendment to existing laws will be passed in the state Assembly next week to ensure capital punishment to convicted rapists. Speaking at the Trinamool Congress Chhatra Parishad's foundation day rally here, Banerjee said she would sit for dharna outside Raj Bhavan here if the governor delays in giving assent to the amended



Bill or forwards it to the President for ratification. Banerjee also urged the

agitating junior doctors of Bengal, who are on cease-work for 20 days now to protest the alleged rape-murder of the RG Kar hospital medic, to urgently consider returning to duty and said she doesn't want to lodge FIRs against the striking doctors in consideration of their future careers. The TMC supremo dedicated the foundation day to the memory of the medic who was allegedly raped and murdered inside state-run R G Kar Medical College and Hospital earlier this month, triggering a nationwide outcry.

**Road accidents have claimed more lives than wars, militancy, Naxalism: Gadkari**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More people have lost their lives in India in road accidents than wars, militancy and Naxalism, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Wednesday. Addressing the sixth Edition of FICCI Road Safety Awards and Conclave 2024, Gadkari further said the number of blackspots is increasing because of bad detailed project reports (DPRs) of road projects. "More people have lost lives in road crashes than wars, militancy and Naxalism," he said. According to Gadkari, India accounts for 5 lakh accidents and 1.5 lakh deaths annually, while 3 lakh people are injured.



"This caused a 3 per cent loss to the country's GDP. Like a sacrificial lamb, a driver is blamed for every accident. Let me tell you, and I observe minutely -- often, the road engineering is at fault," he said. The minister emphasised on the need to conduct safety audit of all highways.

He also noted that to reduce number of accidents, "we need to follow lane discipline." Gadkari added that the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is readying codes for ambulance and its drivers, to train them in using sophisticated machinery like cutters to rescue road accident victims quickly.

**Assam opposition parties file FIR against CM for 'promoting enmity'**

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Opposition parties of Assam on Wednesday filed a first information report (FIR) against Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, accusing him of 'promoting enmity' based on religion and race. They accused Sarma of attempting to incite communal tension by targeting a specific community, potentially leading to riot-like situations in the state. The FIR was filed by Lurinjyoti Gogoi, general secretary of the United Opposition Forum Assam (UOFA), at Dispur police station. Gogoi was accompanied by leaders of other parties of the Forum.

**The FIR was filed by Lurinjyoti Gogoi, general secretary of the United Opposition Forum Assam (UOFA), at Dispur police station. Gogoi was accompanied by leaders of other parties of the Forum**

**PM Modi using UPA govt schemes, busy advertising them**

Kharge's dig over Jan Dhan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday took a swipe at the Centre as the Jan Dhan Yojana completed 10 years, saying Prime Minister Narendra Modi is using schemes launched by the UPA government and "busy advertising" them. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, launched on this day in 2014, is a national mission encompassing an integrated approach to bring about comprehensive financial inclusion of all the households in the country. In a post in Hindi on X, Kharge said, "Modi Government has made banks a tool for looting public money! Our three questions: Is it not true that more than 10 crore Jan Dhan bank accounts have been closed, out of which about 50% bank accounts belong to women?" There were deposits of Rs 12,779 crore in them till December 2023, he said. Who is responsible for the closure of 20 per cent of the total Jan Dhan accounts, Kharge further asked. "Is it not true that the average balance in Jan Dhan accounts in the last 9 years is less than Rs 5,000, i.e. only Rs 4,352? How can a poor person survive with this little money, amidst the BJP's back-breaking inflation?" the Congress chief said.



**'Night patrol, access control'**

Centre suggests measures to states

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Security audit of district hospitals, night patrolling, and regulated access at large health facilities were among the measures the Centre asked states to implement on Wednesday to prevent violence against medics. The directions came days after the Supreme Court, while hearing the rapemurder case of a junior doctor in Kolkata, ordered the Union health secretary to ensure states have basic measures in place to assuage doctors' concern over safety at workplaces till the court-appointed National Task Force (NTF) formulates a protocol. The NTF, under the chairmanship of the cabinet secretary, held its first meeting on Tuesday. In a virtual meeting on

Wednesday, co-chaired by secretaries of the Union home and health ministries and attended by chief secretaries and director generals of police

professionals. According to a statement, Union Health Secretary Apurva Chandra and Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan urged others to also enact such a law. In a letter on August 23 to chief secretaries and DGPs, Chandra said taking suo-moto cognisance of the Kolkata incident, the Supreme Court delivered orders on August 20 and 22. In its August 22 order, the court inter-alia directed that the health secretary to engage with chief secretaries and DGPs to ensure that states and UTs put into place "certain basic minimum requirements pending the receipt of the report of the NTF to assuage the concerns of the doctors over their safety at their workplaces", he had said.

**According to a statement, Union Health Secretary Apurva Chandra and Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan urged others to also enact such a law**

**Data error robs Meghalaya villagers of PDS entitlement**

PNS ■ SHILLONG

A village with over 50 households in Meghalaya's South West Khasi Hills district has not received foodgrains under the public distribution system for over 13 years, local MLA Renikton Tongkhar told the Assembly on Wednesday. Tongkhar raised the issue during a call attention motion, referencing a newspaper report that highlighted how the villagers of Domtynrong have been deprived of food grains for more than a decade and have also been excluded from government schemes for over 20 years. In response, Food and Civil Supplies Minister Comingone



Ymbon acknowledged the issue, explaining that

Domtynrong was inadvertently excluded from the state's

public distribution system due to an error in the Socio

Economic and Caste Census (SECC) of 2011. "In 2011, Domtynrong village was mistakenly classified as uninhabited leading to its exclusion from the NFSA beneficiary list," Ymbon said. The SECC 2011 data serves as the Centre's database for identifying fixed beneficiaries of the NFSA allotted for Meghalaya - 77.79 per cent for rural and 50.87 per cent for urban areas, he said. According to the Minister, attempts were made to rectify this error but the government of India maintains that any discrepancies in the database will only be resolved in the next SECC which is overdue since 2021.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Best of luck!

### India sends largest ever contingent of 84 para-athletes for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games

The 2024 Paralympic Games opened in Paris yesterday where differently abled athletes from 164 countries would be participating. India has sent its largest-ever contingent of 84 athletes this year. This year's event is a testament to the unyielding spirit of athletes who continue to inspire the world with their incredible stories of perseverance and triumph over adversity. India's participation in the 2024 Paris Paralympics is a landmark moment for the nation. With 84 athletes across various disciplines, India is fielding its largest and most diverse contingent ever. This reflects the growing recognition and support for para-sports in India, as well as the increasing number of athletes who are challenging stereotypes and redefining excellence. The Paralympic Games have a rich history, dating back to 1948, when Sir Ludwig Guttmann organized a sports competition for World War II veterans with spinal cord injuries in Stoke Mandeville, England. This event is widely regarded as the precursor to the modern Paralympic Games. Over the decades, the Paralympics have grown exponentially, becoming a global platform for athletes with disabilities to showcase their extraordinary talents and push the boundaries of what is possible.



Among the Indian athletes, one name that stands out is that of Sheetal Devi, a young archer who has defied all odds to compete at the highest level despite being born without hands. Sheetal's journey is nothing short of extraordinary. Using her feet to handle the bow and arrow, she has developed a unique technique that has made her one of the most promising archers in the world. Her story is a powerful reminder that limitations are often only in the mind, and with determination and innovation, they can be overcome. Sheetal Devi's participation in the 2024 Paralympics is more than just a personal achievement; it symbolizes hope and resilience for millions of people around the world. Her ability to turn her perceived limitations into strengths has captivated audiences and earned her recognition as a true champion of the human spirit. The 2024 Paris Paralympics continue the tradition of celebrating the incredible capabilities of athletes with disabilities. The Games are not just about winning medals; they are about breaking barriers, challenging societal perceptions, and inspiring future generations. The inclusion of more sports and the increasing participation of countries like India signify a broader acceptance and encouragement of para-sports worldwide. As the athletes compete in Paris, their stories of courage, like that of Sheetal Devi, remind us of the power of sport to transcend physical limitations and bring people together in a shared pursuit of excellence. The Paralympic Games serve as a global stage where athletes demonstrate that with perseverance, anything is possible. India's largest-ever contingent and the inspiring story of Sheetal Devi exemplify the spirit of the Paralympic movement. As these athletes compete, they continue to inspire millions, proving that no obstacle is insurmountable when met with determination and heart.

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# The rise of Sunita Kejriwal

## As Arvind Kejriwal remains behind bars, Sunita Kejriwal steps up to bridge the gap between her husband and the party, taking on the mantle of leadership in his absence



KALYANI SHANKAR

Whoever thought the low-profile Sunita, wife of Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal, would emerge as an acceptable leader in the Aam Admi Party? Her increasing involvement is particularly significant after her husband has been jailed for a liquor scam since March. She has become a crucial link between her husband and the Party.

The recent Lok Sabha and Assembly elections provided her an opportunity to demonstrate her potential. It is still unclear whether she will continue working for the Party after Kejriwal is released on bail.

Women from political families often enter politics as substitutes for their relatives. One successful example is Sonia Gandhi. She was the power behind the throne. Rabri Devi, the wife of former Bihar chief minister Lalu Prasad Yadav, served as the Chief Minister of Bihar from 2000 to 2005. Lalu had to resign due to his alleged involvement in a scam. Rabri was merely a rubber stamp while her husband was the de facto chief minister.

She may be a novice in politics, but Sunita brings a wealth of experience and a solid professional background. Her 22-year tenure in the income tax department, ending as I-T commissioner at the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT), showcases her competence.

Sunita supported her husband, Kejriwal, keeping a low profile, even during India Against Corruption, when he became a political leader and activist. Kejriwal projected himself as a family man and campaigned with Sunita during the polls.

Sunita's increasing involvement in the Aam Admi Party, particularly after Kejriwal's imprisonment, demonstrates her commitment and determination. Kejriwal is the only incumbent chief minister in Indian history who refused to resign his chief ministership even after his arrest. Speculations about her possibly succeeding Kejriwal if he resigns have been doing the rounds. Secondly, Sunita's leadership is



crucial. She has arrived at a time when the Aam Admi Party grapples with a crisis. The Assembly elections in Haryana will be held next month, and Delhi polls are due in January 2025. Many senior leaders are facing allegations of corruption charges. The recent arrest of Kejriwal has added to the Party's challenges. The Centre gave him a long rope and did not dismiss his government based on a constitutional breakdown.

Manish Sisodia, Kejriwal's deputy, says Sunita's role in the Party will end when Kejriwal is out of jail. Sisodia was also arrested last year in connection with an excise policy case. AAP MP Sanjay Singh claims Sunita's role as Kejriwal's messenger is growing. Still, Kejriwal says Sunita has no interest in politics.

While Sunita may be seen as a stop-gap replacement, her growing influence in the Party makes it challenging to sideline her. Sunita's role in the Party will remain significant even if Kejriwal returns.

Fourthly, the Party faces a crisis of leadership. With the upcoming Haryana and Delhi polls, AAP needs a credible leader and a good campaigner. Sunita's role as a morale



SUNITA HAS LAUNCHED HER CAMPAIGN WITH FIVE "KEJRIWAL'S GUARANTEES" FOR THE UPCOMING HARYANA ASSEMBLY POLLS

booster is to fill the gap and give pep talk.

Fifthly, the AAP members have accepted Sunita as the link, though Sunita holds no official position in AAP. She has campaigned during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and has just begun campaigning in Haryana. She has been hard-hitting on the Modi government and the BJP. Her line of defence was that some political forces were involved in discrediting her husband.

The opposition coalition INDIA has acknowledged Sunita's increasing involvement and acceptability. She was seated in a prominent position alongside Sonia Gandhi at a recent rally in Ramlila Maidan.

Sunita has launched her campaign with five "Kejriwal's Guarantees" for the upcoming Haryana Assembly polls. They include free electricity, medical treatment, education, \$1,000 monthly aid for women, and youth employment. She lauded the AAP government for its initiatives and urged people to vote for AAP. Sunita has some downsides. Despite Kejriwal's political success, she is untested. Whether she can keep the Party intact is still being determined. Her limit-

ed purpose is to convey Kejriwal's message from prison and campaign for the upcoming elections.

Sunita is in talks with other parties like the Nationalist Congress Party and has gained access to top opposition leaders. Her strategy for selecting candidates and forming coalitions depends on the Aam Admi Party's future alliances. Overcoming anti-incumbency as AAP seeks a third term in Delhi is challenging.

When Kejriwal returns, he must ensure that the Party is under control. And that his image in public is not tarnished. He must also keep an eye on Punjab, where AAP is ruling. He must ensure a chain of command between the Party and the government. He must develop a second line of leadership, as he has not allowed any leader to emerge. He needs to keep his team united and realistically evaluate his promises of benefits. The results of the upcoming elections in Haryana and Delhi could significantly shape Delhi's future political landscape. The results will show whether Sunita succeeds.

(The writer is a popular columnist; views expressed are personal)

### PICTALK



A beautifully painted bus at display in the Heritage Transport Museum, in Gurugram

PANKAJ KUMAR

## Dealing with the eternal conflicts

Conflicts have been an inevitable part of human experience throughout history.

Each of us faces them in our own unique way at different points in life

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



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

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

hard. But it might even convey a wrong meaning. During a recent conversation, my wife and her friend contemplated conveying a rather difficult sentiment to another friend through a message. A small phrase was added to be polite. I felt that this changed the intent to something entirely different. They did not agree and chose not to send the message. Yet, the friend had not hesitated to upbraid another friend a few days earlier over a trivial issue. I saw conflict in the two situations, she did not.

Conflicts have been a part of our lives since ages. I would not like to be the Arjun who faced the biggest challenge of his life. I am a mere mortal. I have my follies. It is not for me to preach to be perfect. I would look at the words of author Jo Coudert to give me strength, "Every life is a dilemma that must be solved by the person living it."

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



SANJAY CHANDRA

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### WORLD NEEDS STATESMEN

Madam — The editorial, 'Give peace a chance' (27-8-24) is timely. But war is an essential factor to keep the economy of a few nations alive. Weapon trading being a flourishing trade the countries engaged in manufacturing weapons long for wars somewhere between some countries.

With these countries craving for wars the world is longing for a leader who can play a genuinely mediating role and ensure peace. The US and the members of NATO want war between Ukraine and Russia to go on for long to make Ukraine a good market for their weapons. Countries like India may not have weapons to sell but finds war between Ukraine and Russia a good opportunity to buy oil at a lesser cost to benefit a few Indian monopolists if not the public.

With such vested interest in the ongoing war India cannot play any mediation to bring peace. Similarly the war in the Gulf having religion as its base has no scope to ensure peace there till either of the group loses in the war. Institutions like the UNO stand abjectly exposed for their emptiness, and helplessness. Besides religion the rich resource of oil makes this region more vulnerable for undue exploitation and war. We have witnessed an unnecessary war that destroyed nations like Iraq, Libya.

In the present global economic order everything is a commodity including Peace. But peace is proved to be such a costlier product there is no means to buy it. The world needs a charismatic selfless statesman who can interfere with confidence and boldness to establish peace anywhere. But still one should reach this problem with an open mind and positive attitude to find a solution.

A.G.Rajmohan | Anantpur

### SAFETY FIRST

Madam — The cargo ship was routed from Kolkata to Port Blair when it reportedly sank due to rough seas

## Remember the Hippocratic Oath!



Kudos to Mr. Sujit De for the letter titled "Don't make patients suffer" (August 26). Based upon professional fraternity (not human fraternity), the Doctors of the government hospitals are in strike in West Bengal! May it be asked what is the fault of the poorest of poor patients who have no option but to visit government hospitals during medical emergency! Why are they being denied medical treatment prolonging their suffering! Is providing treatment to patients and protesting against the murder mutually exclusive to each

other! Can't the two coexist together! What compensation would the Doctors provide to a family if their member passes away due to lack of treatment! How can the hypocrite Doctors make a cruel mockery of the Hippocratic oath! Hasn't any Doctor indulged in sexual atrocities in India previously!

What about that horrific incident (almost a decade ago) revolving around the poor mentally-retarded innocent Korpan Shah who was lynched to death by the trainee Doctors right within the campus of NRS Hospital Kolkata just on the baseless apprehension of stealing a cell phone! Will today's "revolutionary" Doctors dare to have a look at the mirror and indulge in a bit of self introspection! Of course Doctors must enjoy rights as entitled to human beings; but perhaps the last person in the queue like Korpan Shah was also entitled to the same human rights!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

about 90 nautical miles south of Sagar Island. With an immediate response, the Maritime Search & Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) in Chennai received a distress signal late on August 25.

The ICG immediately dispatched two of its ships, Sarang and Amogh, and also a Dornier aircraft outfitted with enhanced night-capable sensors, to locate and rescue the stranded crew. The Dornier aircraft was crucial in spotting drifting life rafts and identifying the crew's survival red flares. The aircraft guided the ICG ships to the coordinates where two life rafts had been found tied together, sheltering the survivors.

Dimple Wadhawan | Kanpur

### MIDDLE PATH ON PENSION

Madam — Government seems to have adopted the mid way approach amid the growing demand for the rollback of the OPS, the government has filled the gap between market returns and a 50% assured pension. Under the Unified Pension Scheme government contribu-

tion will increase from 14% to 18.5%. And it will take a stock of the situation after three years whether to increase this or not. What is really beneficial for the government employees who joined after 1st January 2004 is that UPS will provide them assured pension, inflation indexation and family pension.

At the moment it looks like that employees will be content with the new rolled out scheme but they may come on to the streets to demand the difference between OPS and UPS. With life expectancy going higher and higher, how the government will be able to fund these expenses for such long durations would be a million dollar question. Employees should not forget that NPS has the unique advantage of having the equity exposure over a long period of time and invariably it will fetch far better returns over any other product or Pension scheme.

Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com





## FIRST COLUMN

## CHOOSE DIALOGUE NOT DEBATE

By fostering a mindset of dialogue over argument, we contribute to a more harmonious society



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI

There is a famous saying: "Two wrongs don't make a right," meaning it is not right to do something bad to someone just because they did something bad to you. In our day-to-day life, we end up doing many things that are wrong, but we still justify them as right by arguing well. Argument has always been a very powerful self-defense tool for people since ages. But one must know an important fact: behind every argument that we engage in, lies our ignorance towards truth and sometimes deceiving ourselves by knowing the truth. Hence, the best way to sort things out is through dialogues and healthy discussions. The beautiful part of a dialogue is that it's a mutual exploration for reaching an amicable resolution with an open exchange of views, as compared to an argument, which leads to a battle of opinions. In dialogue, there is much more listening than talking, and in an argument, there is war! A dialogue is possible only when two parties collaborate to uncover deeper wisdom and co-create a new understanding with a positive attitude.

We all argue in our day-to-day life because we have an opinion on almost everything, based on our beliefs. More so, when we see the beliefs of others as a personal threat, we either start defending or attacking, creating an environment of fear and aggression. There are many who are always armed with their opinions, prepared to defend their beliefs, and ready to do battle. The best way to avoid an argument with such people is first to support their beliefs positively to make them feel happy



from inside, and then after some time, make them realize their mistake with utmost love and care.

Many of us have experienced that if we do not have an opinion about important issues, then we are considered to be weak and conciliatory. But we must not forget that if our opinion is in defense of a position or against someone else's opinion, then it might result in a huge conflict that could lead to a war-like situation. History has shown that, at the root of the majority of wars fought were differences of opinion and clash of beliefs. Hence, it takes a lot of courage to have a point of view and yet be receptive to others' to the extent that you are prepared to shift your contention. This shows that you are flexible and acknowledge there are many other ways of looking at a situation. It also demonstrates that you have the humility to learn from others' points of view. However, to possess such courage, one needs to be enlightened with spiritual powers, for it is an enlightened soul that moves from an argument to a discussion to a dialogue, a process that is driven not just by the need, but by genuine curiosity and the intention to understand others to create a peaceful and harmonious environment.

In today's fast-paced world, arguments often arise from misunderstandings, impatience, and a lack of willingness to understand the other side. Technology, while connecting us globally, has also distanced us from face-to-face interactions where emotions and intentions are better understood. This digital age has made it easy to voice opinions without accountability, often leading to heated debates rather than constructive discussions. Moreover, the culture of instant gratification has diminished our capacity for patience, making us less tolerant of differing viewpoints. We must realize that true progress, both personally and collectively, comes from understanding and empathy. When we take the time to engage in dialogues rather than arguments, we open doors to new perspectives and solutions that we might not have considered otherwise. In doing so, we not only resolve conflicts but also build stronger, more meaningful relationships. Therefore, it is essential to cultivate the habit of active listening, where we fully engage with the speaker, seeking to understand before being understood. This approach can transform potential conflicts into opportunities for growth and learning.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist, views are personal)

## A saga of violence and betrayal in Afghanistan



NILANTHA LLANGAMUWA

Kabul has long stood as a symbol of Afghanistan's resilience but conduct of many of its leaders like Hafizullah Amin remains shrouded in mystery and contention

Kabul, situated over a mile above sea level, is complemented by the Paghman Hills to the west, traditionally a retreat for Kabul's elite. Paghman, known for its pleasant climate and historical significance, was also the site of significant events, including King Amanullah's struggle for independence and the 1920 asylum of the Amir of Bukhara. The town symbolises Afghanistan's resistance to foreign dominance.

Hafizullah Amin, born in Paghman in 1929, rose to prominence as a staunch opponent of superpower influence. His brief tenure as leader, lasting only 104 days, ended with his assassination in 1979, marking a pivotal moment in Afghan politics. Amin's early education in Kabul and further studies at Columbia University, interrupted by political turmoil, solidified his political engagement. His relationship with Nour Mohammad Taraki and his subsequent return to Afghanistan via Moscow shaped his radical stance and political trajectory.

However, the accusation that Amin was a CIA agent, levied with equal fervour from the left, has been eagerly embraced by Babrak Karmal as a means to legitimise his own rule. Despite Karmal's claims of having known about Amin's alleged CIA ties since the 1950s and his assertion of possessing documentary proof, he has yet to present any credible evidence. Some foreign socialists privately dismiss this claim, suggesting that the new regime's intent was to tarnish Amin's reputation, particularly among the unassuming Afghan peasantry, by branding him as an American agent. A more nuanced explanation from a Karmal sympathiser posits that the Afghan populace, repelled by Amin's policies which they viewed as detrimental to the revolution, resorted to the CIA agent narrative as a simplistic justification. Although the USSR propagated this narrative domestically in an early 1980 film on Afghanistan, it has been notably cautious in its international communications.

An article on CIA interference in the Third World, published in International Affairs, notably omits any reference to Amin. As one commentator noted, "The uncomfortable reality for both Russians and Americans is that Amin resisted manipulation from either side." If Amin's portrayal as a genocidal dictator, a Soviet puppet, or a CIA operative is unsupported by evidence, what then is the truth? What was Amin's actual role in the Afghan revolution, and why did the Soviet Union deem it so crucial to eliminate him?

In August 1978, Nour Mohammad Taraki addressed the Islamic protest movement with a defiant stance, denouncing capitalist and reactionary forces for using religion to undermine his progressive agenda. He believed these tactics, driven by imperialistic ambitions, were outdated and doomed to fail. Despite his confidence, Taraki faced significant internal strife, particularly with Hafizullah Amin, whose ambitions threatened his leadership. Taraki's reliance on Soviet support proved insufficient as his political blindness and failure to address social realities created



opportunities for extremist groups.

Taraki's plan to correct his previous mistakes and form a new government with Babrak was thwarted by Amin's swift action. Despite Taraki's efforts to arrest Amin and align with Babrak for national reconciliation, the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan necessitated external military intervention. Amin's quick consolidation of power and Taraki's subsequent political struggles illustrate the volatile and precarious nature of Afghan politics during this tumultuous period.

Hafizullah Amin was widely suspected of using Marxism as a political tool rather than adhering to its principles, while publicly presenting himself as a strict religious person. Despite his significant position as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, he faced substantial opposition, particularly from the Parcham faction. This internal discord delayed his rise to a full member of the PDPA's political committee. Amin's ability to navigate these challenges and become a prominent figure in Afghan politics, including his role in the Moscow friendship treaty, marked his personal success amidst a turbulent environment.

In September 1979, Taraki's visit to Cuba and subsequent meeting with his rival Babrak Karmal in Moscow remains enigmatic. There is speculation that Taraki sought to reconcile with Babrak to remove Amin and redistribute power, though Soviet influence likely played a crucial role in these negotiations. The depth of the animosity between Taraki and Babrak suggests that Soviet intervention was necessary to facilitate

any form of political reconciliation, particularly given Taraki's longstanding hatred for Babrak and Amin's role as a significant obstacle to his power.

The political instability within the Khalq and Parcham factions weakened Afghanistan's administration, making it vulnerable to extremist support. With the security situation deteriorating and the Afghan army struggling, Taraki saw the need for Soviet intervention to restore order. Despite plans to arrest Amin and form a new government with Babrak, Taraki's efforts faltered, and Amin swiftly resolved his political predicament. The complexities of this period highlight the challenging dynamics of Afghan politics and external influences shaping its trajectory.

In early December 1979, Yuri Andropov alerted Leonid Brezhnev to Amin's covert activities, his pro-Western inclinations, and the potential end of communist rule in Afghanistan, which could threaten Soviet influence. Andropov emphasized the need for military aid to support Babrak Karmal and his allies, though he did not explicitly propose a full-scale Soviet invasion. However, Andropov's primary goal was to finalize plans for the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

Following this, key figures including Andropov, Dmitriy Ustinov, Andrei Gromyko, and Boris Ponomarev, convened with Brezhnev and secured approval for Soviet military action. The Politburo authorized these officials to manage the invasion's execution in utmost secrecy. The documents related to the plan were handwritten by Politburo mem-

bers, and even typists were excluded from the process. Marshal Akhromeyev and the General Staff Operations Group established their base near the Afghan border, while KGB operatives traveled to Kabul to oversee Amin's removal, marking the commencement of Operation Agate.

The KGB's secrecy surrounding the assassination plan was intense. A covert team, including a chef planted in Amin's palace, was tasked with administering poison. The same toxicology laboratory that had been involved in previous assassinations, like that of Georgi Markov, handled the preparation of the poison. Talebov, an Azerbaijani operative, infiltrated Amin's kitchen and poisoned the food, ensuring the execution of the assassination plan without arousing suspicion.

On December 13, 1979, Babrak Karmal and key members of his future government secretly flew from Moscow to Bagram Air Base, positioning themselves to take control of Afghanistan immediately after Amin's removal. Meanwhile, on December 17, Asadullah Amin, Hafizullah Amin's son-in-law and head of the security service, fell gravely ill from food poisoning and was rushed to Moscow for treatment. The meal that led to his illness had been prepared for Hafizullah Amin, indicating that the poisoning attempt, orchestrated by Talebov, had not gone as planned. Despite Talebov's efforts, Amin's cautious behavior, including frequent changes in his food and drink, thwarted the poisoning plot.

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



HAFIZULLAH AMIN WAS WIDELY SUSPECTED OF USING MARXISM AS A POLITICAL TOOL RATHER THAN ADHERING TO ITS PRINCIPLES, WHILE PUBLICLY PRESENTING HIMSELF AS A STRICT RELIGIOUS PERSON

## The impact of CHETNA: Saving lives and empowering communities

'CHETNA@40-Nurturing Dreams, Empowering Destinies,' chronicles four decades of transformative work in women's health and community empowerment across India

When Julkiben, a dai or a traditional birth attendant (TBA), received a call from a pregnant woman, she immediately swung into action. First, she dialled 108, the number of the state government emergency ambulance. After she reached the pregnant woman's house, she cut a clean cloth into pieces to be used at the hospital and kept an empty Iota (water container) ready to fetch and store water. But when the woman's labour pains increased and it became impossible for her to climb down the hillock to reach the ambulance, Julkiben summoned young men from the neighbourhood to make a sling from a bed sheet and carry the pregnant woman to the ambulance. They had bare-



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

ly reached the hospital labour room when the woman delivered. Julkiben's presence of mind and timely action helped to save the lives of mother and child.

It was not just TBAs like Julkiben but women, their families and community members in 60 villages in Vansada and Chikhali, two tribal blocks of Gujarat's Navsari district, who learnt that maternal deaths could be

prevented by accessing the public health system's maternal healthcare services. In fact, the three-year initiative in these two blocks by the Centre for Health Education Training Nutrition and Adolescents (CHETNA), the Ahmedabad-based not-for-profit working to empower women, adolescents and children, led to remarkable changes. There was an increase in institutional deliveries from 58% to 82% in Vansada block. More importantly, of the 776 deliveries that took place during the last phase of the intervention, not a single maternal death was registered in the area.

How was this achieved? What was done differently that brought about behavioural change? Could this success be replicated in other districts

with poor health indicators for women?

Answers to all these questions and more have been given in the recently published coffee table book to mark their milestone of turning forty. Titled 'CHETNA@40-Nurturing Destinies', the book chronicles the organization's four decades of collective efforts, its distinctive approaches and the impact made by its innovative communication strategies that transformed countless lives and communities in 78 districts, 124 blocks and 439 villages in seven states.

One of the biggest reasons behind its ability to make a difference has been its focus on incorporating a gender lens to all its work, says Pallavi Patel, co-founder and Director,



CHETNA. Being the country's first all-women health initiative helped make CHETNA a trendsetter in women's health, nutrition and gender. Its pioneering approaches and impactful communications material gave it an edge over others. The popularity of their resources can be gauged by the fact that in 2022-2023 alone, over 2,77,981 copies of CHETNA's materials were sought by various government and NGOs based in 11 states.

The book unpacks their hands on, people-centred strategies to tackle not just the challenges in dealing with child birth complications in remote tribal areas with minimal health facilities in Rajasthan and Gujarat, but widespread nutritional anaemia in Gujarat, Rajasthan and MP. It also reveals how CHETNA fostered a change in behaviour in getting 70 schools certified tobacco free in Ahmedabad as well as in mindsets especially in Mehsana, Gujarat, one of the districts with the worst child sex ratio (CSR) in the eighties and nineties. The deeply entrenched son preference psyche and practice of placing the blame on the woman when a girl was born was addressed through saas-bahu meetings, engaging with caste panchayat leaders

and innovative dal-chawal games to explain the role of the X and Y chromosomes in determining the sex of the child.

At the centre of these efforts has been CHETNA's ability to be adaptable, flexible and, creative. Besides out of the box thinking, health messages have been tweaked according to local needs, traditions and practices. Their innovative anaemia kit has undergone several adaptations as has their unique and highly popular cloth aprons with several flaps that are worn by male and female trainees to show the reproductive organs in the two sexes. Songs, games and animation films have been created to share knowledge on child care, nutrition, puberty, menstruation, adolescent

health, anaemia and contraception.

The book details how CHETNA, which works under the symbiotic umbrella of the Nehru Foundation for Development set up in 1966 by the eminent scientist Vikram Sarabhai, strategically used their scientific and inventive health communications to make a lasting impact. Whether it has been to break the silence on menstruation, or creating an enabling environment for girls, CHETNA has shown that the dream it began with 40 years ago, of making women the mistress of their own destinies, was not an impossible one.

(The writer is a journalist writing on development and gender. The views expressed are personal)



IN BRIEF



Gold prices remain steady; silver declines Rs 400

Gold prices remained flat at Rs 74,350 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday in scattered deals even as it weakened in the overseas markets. Silver prices, however, declined Rs 400 to Rs 87,800 per kilogram. It had ended at Rs 88,200 per kg in the previous session on Tuesday. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also ruled flat at Rs 74,000 per 10 grams. Traders attributed the fall in silver price due to poor offtake by industrial units and global influences. In the international markets, comex gold is trading at USD 2,542.20 per ounce, down USD 10.70 per ounce or 0.42 per cent. "Gold prices were slightly lower during European trading hours on Wednesday, due to a rebound in the US dollar," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. According to Kaynat Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research, Kotak Securities, comex gold is trading above USD 2,500 per ounce, supported by the FOMC meeting minutes, which reinforced expectations of a September rate cut.



MoRTH: Single bid for highway projects will be acceptable

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) on Wednesday said that even a single bid for national highways work will be considered if it is reasonable. As per the circular, the bidding process will not be cancelled if there is only one bidder for a highway project. "Even when only one bid is submitted, the process should be considered valid, provided the procurement was satisfactory advertised and sufficient time was given for submission of bids, the qualification criteria were not restrictive and prices are reasonable in comparison to market value," it said. Regarding reasonableness of the prices, the circular said the evaluation committee may examine the rates taking into consideration the comparison with the similar contracts awarded elsewhere. The purchase price of similar contracts may be updated taking into consideration inflation during the interim period, geographical conditions etc, it added.



GQG Partners hikes stake in GMR Airports to 5.17 pc

Private equity player GQG Partners has hiked its stake in GMR Airports Infrastructure to 5.17 per cent by snapping up additional shares worth over Rs 433 crore through open market transactions. GQG Partners, also a key investor in Adani Group, purchased 0.43 per cent stake in GMR Airports Infrastructure on August 23, according to a regulatory filing on Wednesday. Prior to the transactions, GQG Partners held a 4.74 per cent shareholding in the company. Through its affiliates, Fort Lauderdale-based asset management firm GQG Partners acquired an additional 0.43 per cent or over 4.52 crore shares. At the closing price of Rs 95.85 apiece on August 23, the shares are worth more than Rs 433 crore. Earlier, GQG Partners held 7.66 per cent stake in the company but due to corporate actions, the shareholding reduced below 5 per cent, as per the filing. "On August 23, 2024, the acquirer and PACs (Persons Acting in Concert) acquired further shares of the company, resulting in their shareholding crossing 5 per cent of the share capital of the company," the filing said.

Cabinet approves expansion of scope of AIF scheme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday expanded the scope of Rs 1 lakh crore-Agricultural Infrastructure Fund (AIF) scheme to make it more attractive, as part of its objective to strengthen farm-related infrastructure facilities in the country.

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the "progressive expansion in central sector scheme of financing facility under the AIF to make it more attractive, impactful and inclusive", an official statement said.



enhance and strengthen the agricultural infrastructure in the country and support the farming community, the government has announced a series of measures to expand the scope of the AIF scheme.

"These initiatives aim at expanding the scope of eligible projects and integrate additional supportive measures to foster a robust agricultural infrastructure ecosystem," it added.

The government has allowed all eligible beneficiaries of the scheme for creation of infrastructure covered under 'viable projects for building community farming assets'.



RBI focusses on making UPI, RuPay 'truly global': Das

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday said efforts are on to make UPI and RuPay "truly global", as he outlined focus areas of the central bank going forward.

Speaking at the Global Fintech Fest 2024, the governor said the Reserve Bank's focus is on financial inclusion, deepening digital public infrastructure (DPI), consumer protection and cyber security, sustainable finance and global integration of financial services.

India is engaged actively in international fora and bilateral agreements to foster economic cooperation with many countries going forward, and strengthening financial infrastructure, including cross-border payment systems, will be the RBI's key focus areas, he added.

Das said India, with its tech talent and evolved financial fintech ecosystem, holds the potential to serve as a global hub for digital innovation and fintech startups, building and strengthening



The Governor said the RBI's focus is on financial inclusion, deepening digital public infrastructure (DPI), consumer protection and cyber security

strategic partnerships, reinforcing commitment to international cooperation, and developing institutions of excellence.

"We are now focusing on making the UPI and the RuPay truly global," Governor Das said.

He further said that notable progress in this

UPI network. These endeavours, he said, underscore collaborative efforts for the adoption of India's initiatives across the globe.

Referring to the fintech sector, he said the segment attracted about USD 6 billion in investments in the last two years.

Addressing the gathering, Das said India is now a fast-growing economic powerhouse and stressed that financial institutions and fintech must swiftly adopt a robust framework to capitalise on new opportunities and mitigate risks.

The governor further said digital financial inclusion has unique advantages of scalability and cost-effectiveness.

New trinity of JAM-UPI-ULI will be a revolutionary step forward in India's digital infrastructure journey, he added.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is an instant real-time payment system to facilitate inter-bank transactions through mobile phones, while RuPay is domestically designed global card payment network

SBI raises Rs 7,500 cr via tier-II bonds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country's biggest lender State Bank of India (SBI) on Wednesday announced raising of Rs 7,500 crore through its first Basel III-compliant tier-2 bond issuance for the current financial year. The bonds with a coupon rate of 7.42 per cent are issued for a tenor of 15 years, with call option after 10 years and each anniversary dates thereafter, SBI said in a statement. The issue attracted overwhelming response from investors with bids in excess of Rs 8,800 crore against the base issue size of Rs 5,000 crore, it said. The total number of bids received was 70 indicating wider participation with heterogeneity of bids, it said, adding that the investors were across provident funds, pension funds, mutual funds, banks, etc. SBI Chairman C S Setty said wider participation and heterogeneity of bids demonstrated the trust investors place in the country's largest bank.

C S Setty takes over as SBI chairman

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Challa Sreenivasulu Setty on Wednesday assumed charge as Chairman of the country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI).

He succeeds Dinesh Khara, who superannuated after 37 years of service at the bank at the closing of business hours on Tuesday, SBI said in a regulatory filing.



Prior to becoming chairman, Setty was the senior-most managing director of the bank.

As per the convention, the chairman is appointed from a pool of serving managing directors of SBI. Usually, the senior-most managing director becomes chairman of the bank.

Setty, who also headed various task forces/committees formed by the Government of India, had earlier looked after

the bank's retail and digital banking portfolio.

A Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and a Certified Associate of the Indian Institute of Bankers, Setty began his career with SBI in 1988 as a Probationary Officer.

Across a career spanning over three decades, he has rich experience in corporate credit, retail, digital and international banking and banking in developed markets.

Setty has held key assignments in State Bank of India, including Deputy Managing Director - Stressed Assets Resolution Group, Chief General Manager and General Manager in Corporate Accounts Group, Deputy General Manager in Commercial Branch, Indore and VP & Head (Syndications) in SBI, New York Branch.

SHARP GAINS IN IT SHARES

Nifty rises marginally to hit new lifetime high

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Nifty rose marginally to hit a fresh lifetime high of 25,052, and Sensex gained over 70 points on Wednesday, helped by buying in IT, tech and healthcare stocks amid a largely positive global market.

Foreign capital inflows and lower global crude oil prices kept the investor sentiment optimistic, traders said.

"However, valuation remains a near-term deterrent, which will be further tested based on the upcoming India Q1 FY25 GDP data this week. On the other hand, investors are giving more emphasis to defensive bets, which is evident with the outperformance in IT and pharma stocks," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Rising for the tenth straight session, the NSE Nifty went up



by 34.60 points or 0.14 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 25,052.35. The benchmark surged 111.85 points or 0.44 per cent to hit a fresh intra-day all-time peak of 25,129.60.

Extending its winning run to the seventh day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 73.80 points or 0.09 per cent to settle at 81,785.56. During the day, it jumped 327.5 points or 0.40 per cent to 82,039.26.

"Nifty failed to sustain midday gains and closed near the flatline for the day. However, it managed to touch a new all-time

of 25,129.60, making 25,000 a crucial support level now. Nifty IT index was the biggest gainer on the sectoral front, rising 1.64 per cent. "The IT index has now gained for three consecutive sessions on the back of Fed's interest rate cut comments. With India VIX gaining 2 per cent, broader markets midcap and small-caps closed in the red. Going ahead, US and Indian GDP data and tomorrow's monthly F&O expiry will be key to monitor," Vikram Kasat, Head - Advisory, PL Capital - Prabhudas Lilladher, said.

LNG under new pacts to flow from 2026: GAIL

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd will start importing LNG under two new contracts from 2026 and has added one more ship to transport the fuel, its Chairman Sandeep Kumar Gupta said on Wednesday.

The company had in January this year signed back-to-back deals to import liquefied natural gas (LNG). It first signed deal to import 1 million tonnes of LNG from Dutch energy trader Vitol for 10 years and then another agreement to buy 0.5 million tonne per annum of LNG from UAE's ADNOC-Gas.

"As a leading natural gas player, your company recognises the importance of



ensuring supply security. In this direction, we have signed two 10-year LNG supply agreements, starting in 2026: 1 million tonnes from Vitol Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore and 0.5 million tonnes from ADNOC Gas, UAE," he said at the company's annual general meeting.

LNG is natural gas, extracted from below the surface, that has been cooled down to liquid form for

ease and safety of non-pressurised storage or transport.

GAIL will import LNG in cryogenic ships and turn it back into its gaseous state before piping it to users that may include power plants for generating electricity, fertiliser units for producing crop nutrients or city gas operators for selling to automobiles as CNG or piping to household kitchens for cooking.

Amitabh's family office buys stake in Swiggy: Reports

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan's family office is believed to have picked up a minor stake in IPO-bound food-delivery and quick-commerce platform Swiggy. The stake has been picked up through the purchase of shares from the company's employees and early investors, according to media reports. When contacted, Swiggy declined to comment.

Meanwhile, Bachchan could not be reached for comment.

In April this year, Swiggy received shareholders' approval for an initial public offering to raise Rs 10,414 crore fund through the issue of fresh equity shares and an offer for sale.



UPI transaction volume expected to rise to 439 bn : report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The total transaction volume on UPI is expected to increase to 439 billion by 2028-29 from about 131 billion in the last financial year and account for 91 per cent of overall retail digital payments, said a PwC India Report.

The report titled "The Indian Payments Handbook - 2024-29" also said India's digital payments landscape has witnessed remarkable growth over the past eight years and the industry is projected to expand more than three times in volume, from 159 billion transactions in 2023-24 to 481 billion by 2028-29.

In terms of value of payment transactions, the market growth is expected to double, from Rs 265 lakh crore to Rs 593 lakh crore over the same

period. The PwC India report said UPI continues its remarkable growth trajectory with a year-on-year growth in transaction volume of 57 per cent, it said.

"In FY 2023-24, the total transaction volume was slightly over 131 billion and is expected to grow to 439 billion by 2028-29. UPI now accounts for over 80 per cent of the overall retail digital payments in India and is expected to contribute to 91 per cent by 2028-29," the report said. It further said credit cards have witnessed a formidable growth in 2023-24 with the industry adding more than 16 million new ones. With the addition of new cards, the industry has also seen 22 per cent and 28 per cent surge in transactional volume and value, respectively.

Shipping ministry approves wage structure revision for workers of major ports

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has approved wage structure revision for workers at major ports, an official statement said on Wednesday.

According to the statement, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the Bipartite Wage Negotiation Committee (BWNC) and the Indian Port Association (IPA), averting an indefinite strike that was set to disrupt operations across 12 major ports in India.



revision of the wage structure and addresses other service conditions, including pensionary benefits, it added.

It was also agreed that the fitment benefit of 8.5 per cent on the aggregate amount of basic pay as of December 31, 2021, plus 30 per cent VDA

(variable dearness allowance) as of January 1, 2022, will be granted.

"The periodicity of the settlement is set for five years, from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2026.

"The new pay scales, effective from January 1, 2022, will be formulated according to existing practices," the statement said.

Both parties agreed to consider aligning the periodicity of future wage revisions for both officers and employees, starting from January 1, 2027, to avoid any potential anomalies, the ministry said.

Sebi cautions against investing in shares of SME cos

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid certain SME companies resorting to share price manipulation by projecting an unrealistic picture of their operations, Sebi on Wednesday cautioned investors against putting their money in scrips of such firms.

Sebi, in a statement, said it has come to its notice that post-listing, some of the SME companies or their promoters have been making public announcements that create a positive picture of their operations. Such announcements are followed by various corporate actions like bonus issues, stock splits and preferential allotments.

The actions create a positive sentiment amongst investors, which induces

them to purchase such securities. Simultaneously, this also presents an easy opportunity to the promoters to offload their holdings in such companies at elevated prices.

"Sebi urges investors to be careful and watchful of the aforesaid patterns and exercise caution while investing in such securities. Further, investors are advised to not rely on unverified social media posts and not to invest based on tips/rumours," the statement noted.

Sebi, in the recent past, has passed orders against such entities. It can be

seen that the modus operandi of these entities follows a pattern that is by and large similar to what has been mentioned above.

The small and medium enterprises (SME) platform of the stock exchanges was operationalised in 2012 to serve as an alternative source of raising funds for emerging businesses. Ever since, there has been an increase in the number of SME issues as also investor participation in such offerings. During the last decade, more than Rs 14,000 crore has been raised

through this platform, of which around Rs 6,000 crore was raised during FY24.

More recently, a Rs 12 crore initial public offering (IPO) of Resourceful Automobile, a Delhi-based company with just two outlets and a workforce of eight, received bids worth close to Rs 4,800 crore. The company's IPO, which was open for subscription from August 22-26, saw an overwhelming response, with bids for 40.76 crore shares against the 9.76 lakh shares on offer translating into a subscription of 419 times on the third day of the bidding process.

This frenzy occurred despite regulators raising concerns about the risks associated with investments in SMEs.

PRICE MANIPULATION

Sebi cautions against investing in shares of SME cos





# LISA MISHRA'S 'DREAM COME TRUE' WITH DEBUT IN CALL ME BAE

Lisa Mishra, the multi-talented singer and now soon to be an actress, is set to make her much-anticipated acting debut in the upcoming series *Call Me Bae*, produced by Dharma Productions under their arm Dharmatic Entertainment, set to premiere on Amazon Prime. Known for her powerful voice and soulful renditions, Lisa's transition to acting has been a long-awaited journey, one that has left both her and the series' creators pleasantly surprised.

Reflecting on her casting, Lisa shared, "It was a surprise to the direction team when my audition came up because they've only known me as a singer before. But acting has always been a dream and I've been working on it quietly for years. It took me so long to get here and to crack this. It hasn't been easy to break away from the mould. Of course singing is my first love, but I did want to scratch this itch of acting and here it finally goes, after a lot of patience."

The excitement surrounding her debut is definitely something to look out for, as Lisa recently took to social media and even expressed her emotions about the milestone. She wrote, "I cannot wait for you all to see me in my debut series. *Call Me Bae* was a dream come true, and to land a gig like this, that too launching with Dharma and Amazon Prime, is truly unbelievable to me even today. I have been auditioning with Panchmi Ghavri since 2018, refining my language skills and screen presence for years waiting for this very moment. One day we will put up a reel of all of those failed first, but what this journey has taught me more than anything is resilience. Hang in there—what's meant to be will be. These things don't happen overnight. Hoping I have done my mentors proud and that you enjoy my first ever acting performance. Send me luck."



# what's brewing?



## Rapper Lil Baby apprehended for carrying concealed weapons

American rapper Lil Baby had a brush with the law as he was arrested after being accused of carrying a concealed weapon without a permit in Las Vegas.

Court records state that the rapper, whose real name is Dominique Armani Jones, was carrying a concealed weapon without a permit, as per reports.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police confirmed to 'People' that he was arrested on August 26 around 5:00 am after an incident occurred on the 3100 block of South Las Vegas Boulevard. Additional details were not disclosed.

As per reports, court records show he was booked into the Clark County Detention Center and posted bond. He is due back in court on October 1. His attorneys, Drew Findling and David Chesnoff, gave a joint statement to 'The Los Angeles Times' and said that Lil Baby has "a valid Georgia Carrying a Concealed Weapon (CCW) Permit".

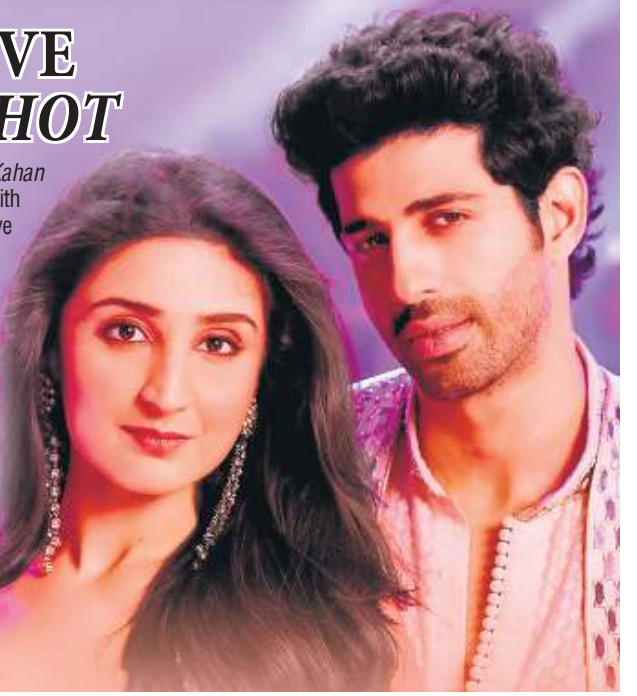
"On his behalf, we are actively investigating the facts and circumstances surrounding his arrest in Las Vegas," their statement added. According to the Attorney General of Georgia's website, Nevada does not recognise concealed weapons permits from Georgia. "Georgia weapons license holders should familiarise themselves with the individual requirements and limitations on Georgia weapons licenses in any of the states where they may wish to exercise their rights," the website advises. "Weapons laws vary from state to state and there may be municipal or county ordinances regulating weapons in other states." Lil Baby released his last album, *It's Only Me*, in 2022. He's actively been teasing his follow-up project on social media, with his last Instagram post before his arrest stating, "Album 80% Done."

## HERALD INTO THE FESTIVE SEASON WITH ISHQ DE SHOT

With all eyes on Dhvani Bhanushali's big Bollywood debut, the much-awaited film *Kahan Shuru Kahan Khatam*, the excitement has hit a new high as the makers are out with the first track, *Ishq De Shot*. The upbeat party anthem is perfect for ringing in the festive season and promises to be a favorite at weddings.

With vibrant vocals by Dhvani Bhanushali and IP Singh, lyrics by IP Singh and composition by Akshay and IP, *Ishq De Shot* brings a high-energy dance vibe that's impossible to resist. Set against the backdrop of a wedding cocktail party, the peppy track is choreographed and directed by Piyush Shazia, capturing the fun and lively mood. Dhvani Bhanushali and Aashim Gulati light up the screen with their energetic performances, ensuring the track is brimming with joy and excitement.

Whether it's a wedding, party, or festive celebration, *Ishq De Shot* is your perfect companion. Celebrate the season with a shot of love, as the song is now available on all streaming platforms and exclusively on Saregama Music's YouTube channel. Laxman Utekar's *Kahan Shuru Kahan Khatam*, starring Dhvani Bhanushali and Aashim Gulati and directed by Saurabh Dasgupta, is all set to release theatrically on September 20, 2024. A Bhanushali Studios Limited & Kathputli Creations production, the young musical family entertainer is produced by Vinod Bhanushali, Laxman Utekar, Karishma Sharma and Kamlesh Bhanushali.



## Nicole Kidman admits *Babygirl* 'is too erotic'



Nicole Kidman is nervous about the idea of her new film being accessible for everyone to watch. During the filming of her new erotic thriller *Babygirl*, the Australian actor experienced a strong sense of vulnerability. During an interview, Nicole discussed the upcoming film before its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival, mentioning that she has worked on many revealing films but none as intense as this one.

Nicole said, "It left me ragged. At some point I was like, I don't want to be touched. I don't want to do this anymore, but at the same time, I was compelled to do it. Halina would hold me and I would hold her because it was just very confronting to me. It's like, Golly, I'm doing this and it's actually now going to be seen by the world. That's a very weird feeling. This is something you do and hide in your home videos. It is not a thing that normally is going to be seen by the world."

In *Babygirl*, Nicole portrays a thriving businesswoman who appears to have a content personal life alongside her spouse, Antonio Bandaras. Problems begin when a new intern (Harris Dickinson) is hired at her company and she engages in a romantic relationship with him.

Nicole added, "I felt very exposed as an actor, as a woman, as a human being. I had to go in and go out, like, I need to put my protection back on. What have I just done? Where did I go? What did I do?"

## Swara Bhasker voices out on Justice Hema Committee report

Showbiz has always been a patriarchal power set-up where if a woman speaks up, she is labelled as a troublemaker, said actor Swara Bhasker, as the findings of the Justice Hema Committee report on sexual exploitation in the Malayalam film industry lead to an uproar with more and more people coming forward to share their experiences. The actor, the first one from the Hindi film industry to publicly speak up on what is being described as Kerala's #MeToo movement, shared a lengthy note on Instagram after reading the 233-page report by the government-appointed panel.

"Are other language industries in India even talking about such things? Until we

don't face the uncomfortable truths we all know exist all around us, the brunt of existing abuses of power will continue to be borne by those who are vulnerable... It has been heartbreaking to read the findings of the committee. More heartbreaking because it is familiar. Maybe not every detail and not every nitty gritty but the larger picture of what the women have testified to is all too familiar," she wrote.

Swara, known for her outspoken views on topical issues, expressed solidarity with the women who spoke up and those who belong to the Women in Cinema Collective who demanded an expert committee from the Kerala government to examine the working conditions in their industry.

"Showbiz is and always has been a male-centric industry, a patriarchal power set-up. It's also deeply perception-sensitive and risk-averse. Every day of production-shoot days but also pre and post-production days are days when the meter is running and money is being spent. No one likes a disruption. Even if the disruptor has raised her voice for what is ethically correct. It's so much more convenient and financially practical to just carry on," she wrote in the post shared on Tuesday night.

Though the expansive report was released on August 19, a Kerala government-appointed panel to study issues of sexual harassment and gender inequality was constituted after the 2017 actress

assault case involving actor Dileep.

Silence is the convention and is appreciated, practical and rewarded in the film industry, added the 36-year-old.

"Showbiz is not just patriarchal, it's also feudal in character. Successful actors, directors and producers are elevated to the status of demi-gods and anything they do goes. If they do something unsavoury, the norm for everyone around is to look away. If someone makes too much noise and doesn't let an issue drop, label them 'trouble makers' and let them bear the brunt of their over-enthusiastic conscience."

Bhasker, known for films such as the *Tanu Weds Manu* franchise, *Nil Battey Sannata* and *Veere Di Wedding*, said the

prevalence of sexual harassment in showbiz around the world is "normalised" by silence.

"This happens everywhere in the world. This is how sexual harassment in showbiz is normalised and this is how a predatory atmosphere becomes 'the way things are,' she added.

The actor gave a shout-out to the members of the WCC, women who testified and those who provided solace to each other and to all those women who have suffered sexual harassment and violence in the industry.

"You are heroes and you are doing the work that people in positions of greater power ought to have done already: Respect and solidarity with you!"



### FUN

#### ARCHIE



#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### GARFIELD



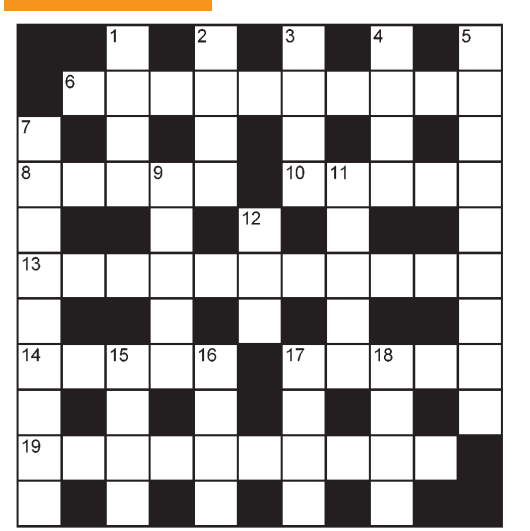
#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



#### CROSSWORD



#### NANCY



#### SUDOKU



**Yesterday's solution**

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

**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 thing with wheels that is fun to ride on
- A word for rabbit
- A large bird of prey
- See-through
- Time of darkness
- Sickness with a high temperature
- On a trip
- Stubborn
- Follows eighth
- Think the same way as someone else
- A large hairy animal
- An animal with horns
- Large plant
- Use this in a camera
- Grape plant

**DOWN**

- The body's covering
- Don't go
- A woodwind instrument
- The sound of an explosion
- An unusual or exciting experience

**SOLUTION 832**

F	L	E	E	C	E	S	T	O	P
A	N	O	E	E					
K	I	O	T	O	B	A	I	N	
E	U	T	O	S	R	C			
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P	I	G	E	O	N				



# Vijayawada

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August 29, 2024

## SATVIC REVOLUTION: REVITALISING WELLNESS THROUGH ANCIENT WISDOM

AARTI SREENATH

**F**ounded in August 2017, the Satvic Movement, led by Subah Saraf and Harshvardhan Saraf, is at the forefront of holistic health education. This organisation merges ancient wisdom with contemporary wellness practices to promote a transformative lifestyle.

Subah Saraf's health journey started with major hurdles after a personal encounter. Despite receiving conventional treatments, she faced difficulties after being diagnosed with a thyroid disorder and later PCOD. She dealt with severe health issues for a period of seven years. Conventional medicine, however, did not work, which further led to her becoming overweight.

Her life came to a change in 2016 with the adoption of the Satvic lifestyle, emphasising reconnecting with nature and dietary changes. In just four months of following a Satvic diet and lifestyle, her blood tests normalised. It was a complete turnaround for her.

Motivated by her success, she learned from Indian masters and various international institutions, such as the Hippocrates Health Institute, to pursue a career as a health educator.

Later in 2019, Subah met Harshvardhan Saraf, who had also transformed his health through the Satvic lifestyle, reversing his psoriasis and sinusitis.

Meeting Harsh and collaborating was a game-changer for her. Together, they began sharing their health insights through online platforms. Their goal was to make holistic health accessible and relatable; their efforts quickly resonated with millions, leading to the formation of the *Satvic Movement*.

The *Satvic Movement* now boasts a substantial global presence. Their online workshops have impacted over 100,000 participants. In Hyderabad, an event showcased the movement's effectiveness and appeal. They launched their book, "The Satvic



**The Pioneer brings to you about the Satvic movement, which aims to transform the lives of millions of people through the Satvic way of life**

Revolution," which outlines habits for a holistic lifestyle, including maintaining good gut health, plant-based eating, proper sleep routines, having a purpose, nourishing relationships, incorporating movement and waking up early. The event featured engaging activities, including dancing and kirtan, evoking deep emotions. "The audience in Hyderabad was incredibly enthusiastic and quick to respond. The energy during the event, especial-

ly when music was involved, was electrifying," Harsh observed. The movement draws its principles from ancient Vedic texts, such as the Bhagavad Gita. Regarding the inspiration behind the movement, Harshvardhan said, "Our conviction comes from our own experiences, but the ongoing inspiration is from our ancient texts and Vedic wisdom. Nothing we share is made up; it's deeply rooted in our scriptures. We're just presenting it in a way that resonates with the youth, making it cool rather than boring. The food philosophy, for example, comes from the Bhagavad Gita."

This approach includes dietary changes, emotional and spiritual health, and practices like reconnecting with nature. The movement faces challenges in convincing older generations to embrace these changes. He noted, "With older audiences, the challenge is that they are used to their established ways. Subtle changes seem significant, and they question how to integrate these into their social lives. Younger audiences are more willing to adapt, finding it easier to make shifts. The challenge lies in overcoming the fixation on traditional ways. If enough people adopt these changes, it becomes easier for others to follow suit. Our goal is to create a tipping point

where it becomes a norm." He added, "These events are about fun and learning, allowing people to forget their problems and reconnect with their inner child. It's an emotional roller coaster—laughter, tears, surprises, passion and inspiration. Our nationwide tours help us connect with our community, which is usually only seen online. Meeting people in person and hearing their stories, like reversing diseases and becoming healthier because of us, inspires us to continue. The *Satvic Movement* belongs to everyone, and we're helping people realise their dreams by showing them the way. We're also planning to create Satvic World." The *Satvic Movement's* nationwide tour aims to foster direct connections with their community. Harsh shared, "These events help us engage with our audience beyond the digital realm. We get to hear their personal stories of transformation, which is incredibly motivating."

The *Satvic Movement* continues to champion a holistic lifestyle, blending ancient wisdom with modern wellness. Their efforts not only promote a healthier way of living but also strengthen the sense of community among their followers. On the key messages of their book, he reflects, "The seven habits discussed in the book are the essence of our philosophy. It's about the pillars of good health, not just physical health but also emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. This is where our source of happiness comes from."

### Clearing the smoke! Does nicotine cause cancer?

**I**n a world of information overload, especially with the proliferation of social media, the authenticity of information is often questionable. One such misconception is that nicotine is a carcinogen and the main cause of cancer. According to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), nicotine is not the primary cause of cancer or for that matter lung disease. Tobacco-related cancer is caused by toxins released from the combustion of cigarettes.

Even the UK's National Health System (NHS) has stated that although nicotine is addictive, it is relatively harmless to health. However, it is the toxic chemicals contained in tobacco smoke that cause almost all the harm from smoking. Nicotine itself does not cause cancer, lung disease, heart disease or stroke and has been used safely for many years in medicines to help people stop smoking.

It is often concluded that nicotine is only found in tobacco and leads to cancer. But is it true? It is a natural ingredient found in several plants. Various vegetables such as eggplant, tomatoes, potatoes, among others, also contain nicotine in trace amounts.

There are more than 7,000 chemicals in cigarette smoke. Of these, at least 250 are known to be harmful to health, such as hydrogen cyanide, carbon monoxide and ammonia. Some are natural components of the tobacco plant itself, but most harmful substances are only formed on combustion of tobacco and not by nicotine itself.

Products containing nicotine are often used to reduce anxiety, stress, or depression. A survey in the 'Human-Centric Approach to Tobacco Control' report highlights that stress and anxiety motivate tobacco consumption for 62% males and 40% females in tier 1 cities.

Nicotine from cigarettes is absorbed into the lungs through inhalation of smoke. When nicotine enters the body, it enters the circulatory system and reaches the brain within 20 seconds, causing nerve stimulation, resulting in feelings of euphoria.

The burden of cancer and tobacco related diseases is immense. A recent report by WHO suggests that new cancer cases are likely to rise to at least thirty-five million in 2050, a 77% rise over the cases diagnosed in 2022. In India, an estimated 1.4 million cancer cases were recorded in the same year, while one in nine citizens could develop cancer in their lifetime.

Generally, lower doses of nicotine are used in safer tobacco alternatives like nicotine gums, patches, lozenges & other technologies like heat-not-burn (HnB), minimising their exposure to carcinogens and other harmful substances in cigarette smoke. In fact, it is important to consider that if nicotine were causing cancer, then why would experts and professionals promote Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) as a cessation aid. Nicotine alternatives eliminate combustion and consequently reduce the levels of harmful compounds. They are a crucial factor in one's journey to quit & should be the cornerstone for tobacco control policies to improve public health.

### Documenting tales of painful healing

SHIKHA DUGGAL

**G**iven the number of crimes against women that occur in the nation, including rape, the documentary *Pink Belt* about Aparna Rajawat may serve as an inspiration to a great deal of people.

Aparna has spent the last few years teaching self-defense, giving motivational lectures and educating women about their legal rights. In an exclusive interview, John McCrite, the documentary's director, divulges information on the same. For instance, introducing the statement with, "To ensure that India was portrayed authentically and respectfully, I hired Aditya Patwardhan, who is from Jaipur, as a producer. We also employed one of the camera operators, the incredible Haley L. Watson, who is a self-produced documentary filmmaker. Haley took a lot of the pictures of the young ladies and girls in the movie. Through her photography lens, she gave *Pink Belt* an intimate depth and strength. I collaborated with our director of photography, Jon Lile, on a narrative film, and we have a wonderful working rapport. Allowing Aparna to narrate her tale was the major thing I accomplished. As we pursued her, India's narrative unfolded naturally. Aparna trained industrial workers, who then informed us about rape that occurs within marriages. She trained survivors at Sheru's Cafe and we learned about acid attacks from them."

Aparna was the tour manager for John when she was on vacation in India. As the tour bus approached Delhi, Aparna informed him that we were required to open the curtains according to legislation implemented following the Nirbhaya case. She continued by telling him about how she founded the *Pink Belt Mission* to instruct women in self-defense. She travelled to the United States for a vacation a few months later and John requested if he might record her narrating the stories she had told him on the bus. In that interview, Aparna declared that to raise awareness for her cause, she would smash the record for the most women trained in self-defense. John realised at that point that he had to follow her in her quest to break the record. He could follow everything through to the very end in real time!

"The women shared their individual tales. And they are violent stories, as you say and quite severe. However, the atmosphere in the room changed when Aparna entered and began teaching these ladies how to defend themselves. Aparna is a bright light who makes others laugh



**John McCrite, the visionary filmmaker behind the *Pink Belt* documentary, takes *The Pioneer* through the behind-the-scenes of the project and also shares some insights into its chronicles**

and feel hopeful. Not only does Aparna not fear the truth, but she also spreads happiness. Because that is Aparna's true self, that is the reason the movie has that vibe. Aparna empowers young girls by instilling in them the belief that they are capable of shaping their own future and by teaching them the importance of self-defense," adds *Little Boy Blues* fame. He goes on, "We always had two cameras following Aparna everywhere she went. However, the crowd for the world record event was so large that we needed to use seven cameras, including a drone. In order to walk onto the stage with Aparna for the world record event, we employed a gimble, a moving camera. The scene in the movie *Bohemian Rhapsody* where Freddie Mercury takes the stage for the *Live Aid* performance is where I got the concept. The most beautiful scene in the movie is when Aparna, seen by the camera from her point of view, climbs the stairs and onto the stage to greet the women participating in the world record event. The moment is also aided by the music's swell. Additionally, David Norland's thunderous orchestral composition effectively conveys the rage that lies behind the violent narrative."

Because of the brutality Aparna experienced in her own family, martial arts play a crucial role in the narrative. John was certain that she won the title of sixteen-time Indian martial champion not just because she was passionate about the sport but also because it equipped her with the defensive abilities her family had taught her. She turned to martial

arts because she felt compelled to defend herself. It is also encouraging to see the satisfaction she derives from mentoring young girls to avoid experiencing violent actions and from training women who have endured violent acts. In the movie, Aparna's tale and the stories of all the girls she coaches find solace and transformation in the martial arts.

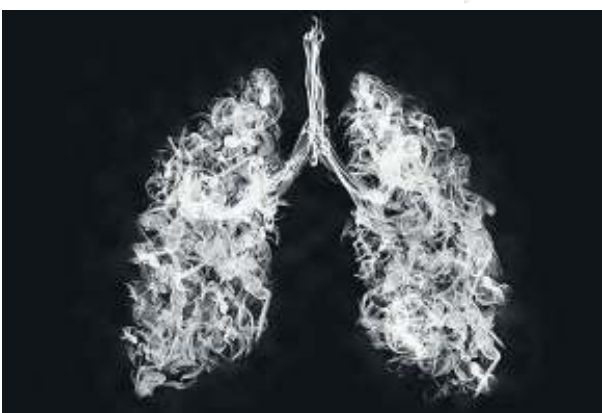
John did a fantastic job of portraying this documentary without overdoing it. He told us, "We put the CNN footage of Nirbhaya at the opening of the movie in an earlier cut of the *Pink Belt*. We chose to remove the CNN footage and let Aparna's personal account of her experiences with violence speak for itself, even though it is undoubtedly one of the reasons she founded *Pink Belt*. I was inspired to relate Aparna's narrative to Nirbhaya's." He preserved everything about Aparna's life that demonstrated her ability to overcome hardship. Every one of the women's tales he displayed involved overcoming adversity. Aparna's struggles throughout the World Record Event demonstrate her perseverance and ability to overcome obstacles. She uses teaching women self-defense as a means of getting over her painful history and finding healing. The most difficult task was narrating historical events without becoming tedious. Using family images, he made Aparna's photos browse through the book of family photos. It was more interesting to watch her sisters' reactions to the pictures than it was to show them.

The *Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* Adjacent star recalls, "The young women in the colleges seeing self-defense moves for the first time always gets me," when discussing one of the unexpected reactions he witnessed while filming *Pink Belt*. "When Aparna overcomes her male sparring partner, everyone gasps in shock before erupting into cheers. It is evident in real time how she is altering their perspective on safety. When she finishes, they react as though they have seen a rock star. She tells them the rape statistics and they listen intent-

ly to everything she says."

His American audience in Palm Springs was recently sold out. They wept, they laughed and they applauded when Aparna entered the stage for the world record event. They gave it a standing ovation when the film ended. He was told personal accounts of rape and molestation by numerous women and men in the crowd. Violence and rape are issues that extend beyond India. It's an international issue. He discovered in Palm Springs that the movie has a therapeutic effect. It initiated the discussion. Additionally, Aparna's tale encourages others to support her *Pink Belt Mission* by getting involved. The world record attempt was brilliantly documented in the documentary. The footage gave the impression that it was a live occurrence that happened instantly, like flying without a net. He is, however, presently writing a book about Aparna's life. "We are able to go into way more details than a documentary that lasts 78 minutes can cover," he says. He also intends to adapt the book and documentary into a narrative feature film.

"We can utilise this movie as a teaching tool. We'll be able to design instructional activities that include post-event takebacks. It will assist *Pink Belt Mission* and Aparna in reaching a global audience. My biggest lesson was that strength lies in numbers. Young girls learn to advocate for one another when they attend one of *Pink Belt's* events. They foster community, which is the source of healing, knowledge and prevention. I was reminded to never give up by Aparna's narrative. There were numerous obstacles to overcome throughout the five years I spent working on the movie, but Aparna's and the women's tales encouraged me to keep going. I believe that the next time I make a narrative movie, I'll adopt the documentary's more direct camera technique. Following a character is thrilling because it gives the impression that the drama is unfolding right before your eyes," and with that, global documentarian John McCrite ends the interview.





# KOHLI, JAISWAL MOVE UP IN TEST RANKINGS, ROHIT DROPS TO 6TH



**PTI ■ DUBAI**  
Senior India batter Virat Kohli moved up two rungs to eighth place while his captain Rohit Sharma dropped a spot to sixth in the latest ICC Test rankings released here on Wednesday. Joining Kohli and Sharma in the top 10 is young Yashasvi Jaiswal, who has moved up a spot to seventh. Veteran England batter Joe Root maintained his place as the top ranked Test batter in the world following their success in the opening Test

against Sri Lanka in Manchester. But Root's teammate Harry Brook has made a massive jump on the back of scores of 56 and 32 during that Old Trafford contest. The 25-year-old has risen three places to fourth overall, leaping past Pakistan's Babar Azam, Australia's Steve Smith and Rohit. Babar has dropped a whopping six places to fall from shared third to ninth following a rare failure in the first innings of Pakistan's Test against Bangladesh in

Rawalpindi. But teammate Mohammad Rizwan gained seven spots, achieving a new career-high rating by moving inside the top 10 at a shared 10th following his century in the same match. Bangladesh's Mushfiqur Rahim has achieved a career-high rating as he climbed seven spots to move to 17th. Seasoned India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin continues to hold the top spot among bowlers while pacer Jasprit Bumrah and left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja have maintained their third and

seventh spots respectively. England seamer Chris Woakes, who is up four rungs to 16th, and Sri Lanka's Asitha Fernando (up 10 spots to 17th) have gained some ground while Pakistan's right-arm pacer Naseem Shah (up four spots to 33rd) and England's Gus Atkinson (up four places to 42nd) have attained career-best ratings following good returns from their recent appearances. Among all-rounders, Jadeja and Ashwin continue to occupy the top two spots while Axar Patel is ranked sixth.

# LLC returns with Season 3 Takes legendary cricketers to Kashmir after nearly 40 years

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

The Legends League Cricket, featuring retired swashbucklers like Shikhar Dawan and Dinesh Karthik among others, will return for a third season on September 20, criss-crossing Jodhpur, Surat, and Jammu before finally bringing the high-profile cricketers to Srinagar after close to 40 years. The league will kick off at the Barkatullah Khan Stadium in Jodhpur on September 20. A total of 25 matches will be played among six teams and the last two sides standing will play the final on October 16. The franchise-based tournament, which features a pool of over 200 players, will have its final at the Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar. "Legends League Cricket is back for another season and we are very excited to also be playing in Kashmir this season. This is a huge opportunity for the people of Kashmir to come to the stadium and



watch live cricketing action for the first time in almost 40 years," said Raman Raheja, Co-Founder, Legends League Cricket. "It also presents a unique opportunity for the cricketers to experience the beauty of Kashmir and enjoy the hospitality and

love of the wonderful people of Srinagar." The organisers stated that the league attracted a massive audience of 180 million across India during the previous season, spanning 19 matches. "With an extended schedule and a star-studded lineup, including the recently retired Dhawan and Karthik, the upcoming season is poised to surpass previous records," the organisers stated. In the previous edition held in India, former international stalwarts such as Suresh Raina, Aaron Finch, Martin Guptill, current India head coach Gautam Gambhir, Chris Gayle, Hashim Amla, Ross Taylor, and many others played alongside 110 other legendary cricketers. The league will kick off in Jodhpur and then make its way to the Lalbhai Contractor Stadium in Surat. The third leg will be played at the Maulana Azad Stadium, Jammu. The players' auction for the event will be held here on Thursday.

# Dawid Malan, former top-ranked T20 batter, retires from England cricket

**AP ■ LONDON**

Dawid Malan, the former top-ranked T20 batter who scored centuries for England in all formats, has announced his retirement from the international arena. The 36-year-old Malan told British newspaper The Times of London that he exceeded expectations with his success in the white-ball game but was disappointed that he couldn't

handle the intensity of Test cricket. Malan, a top-order batter, played 22 Tests as well as 30 ODIs and 62 T20 internationals. It was in the T20 game where he excelled, becoming No. 1 in the batting rankings in 2020 and winning the T20 World Cup in 2022. Malan was left out of the squad for the upcoming white-ball series against Australia and hasn't played for England in any format since the 50-over



World Cup last year. It was his inability to forge a career as a Test batter that leaves him with most regrets. "I took all three formats extremely seriously but the intensity of test cricket was something else - five days plus the days building up," Malan told the Times. "I'm a big trainer; I love hitting lots of balls and I'd train hard in the build-up, and then the days were long and intense. You can't switch off. "I found it very mentally draining, especially the long test series that I played, where my performances dropped off from the third or fourth test onwards.

# Impact Player rule gives little more value for strategy and makes game fairer: Ashwin



**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Shahbaz Ahmed against Rajasthan Royals at this year's IPL. Ahmed went on to become the player of the match, claiming three wickets including Ashwin's. "Sunrisers brought in Shahbaz Ahmed as an Impact Player (after hitting 175 for 9 batting first). He went on to become a match-winner. Ashwin argued that the rule can play a significant role in balancing matches when there is dew. "When dew has the potential to make games one-sided, teams bowling second get an extra option as a counter. If you're batting second, you can tactically make a substitution by off-loading the extra bowler for a batter," he said. "Games are tighter, an extra player is getting to play. Barring Kolkata or Mumbai, where scores skyrocketed, they haven't been a drastic change elsewhere. Like at Punjab Kings' home venue (Mullanpur), they were all 160-170 games." On the other hand, the rule has helped several players advance in their careers, even earning spots in the national team, reckoned Ashwin. "Shahbaz Ahmed, Shivam Dube most importantly, Dhruv Jurel... If not for the Impact Player rule, he may have never gotten the chance. So the emergence of a lot of players has happened. I'm not saying that's the only way for players to emerge, but it's not so bad," he said.

Seasoned India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin feels that the IPL's Impact Player rule has made the game fairer and added "value for strategy" in the event. Senior India players like Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma have been critical of the rule as they feel it holds back development of Indian all-rounders and upsets the balance between bat and ball. However, Ashwin feels the rule, introduced in the 2023 season which allows all IPL teams to substitute a player -- batter or bowler -- during their respective innings as per the demands of the match, makes the game fairer. "Why I think the Impact Player rule is not so bad is because it gives a little more value for

strategy," 'ESPNcricinfo' quoted Ashwin as saying on former India captain Krishnamachari Srikkanth's YouTube show, which is in Tamil. "The other side of that argument is it doesn't encourage all-rounders. But no one is stopping them. In this generation, they don't do it (batters bowling and vice-versa). "It's not like they're discouraged because of the Impact Player rule. Look at Venkatesh Iyer, he's currently rocking for Lancashire. There's an opportunity for innovation and it makes the game fairer," Ashwin added. The 37-year-old backed his stance by citing the Qualifier 2 match in which Sunrisers Hyderabad replaced opener Travis Head with spinner

# Five-wicket burst from Aayush secures Purani Dilli 6's win over North Delhi Strikers

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Pacer Aayush Thakur's five-wicket haul powered Purani Dilli 6 to a 20-run win over North Delhi Strikers at the Delhi Premier League here. Aayush (5/27) wreaked havoc, blowing away NDS's top-order as they were restricted for 172/7 in their chase of 193. Aayush struck in his first over dismissing opener Sarthak Ranjan for a duck. He returned to get rid of Yash Dabas in the third over followed by Kshitiz Sharma in the fifth over. Opener Vaibhav Kandpal (57) and Yajas Sharma (41) stitched a 55-run partnership for the fourth wicket and looked on course to chase the target but the latter was run out.



Kandpal along with Vaibhav Rawal then took on the responsibility of chasing the target. The duo started finding boundaries at regular intervals keeping the run rate in their control.

However, Purani Dilli 6 got back in the game as Rawal was run out at a crucial time leaving NDS needing 58 runs off 32 balls. But Aayush swung into action get the key wicket of Kandpal. Aayush completed his five-wicket haul, dismissing Pranshu for a duck. Earlier, Purani Dilli 6 captain Arpit Rana (42) and Sanat Sangwan (47) put up a 94-run opening stand. With Rana back in the pavilion, Sangwan was next to take the long walk back as he was dismissed by Manan Bhardwaj. Arnav Bugga (39) and Lalit Yadav (9) stitched a 38-run partnership before Mayank Gusain helped away to 40 off just 12 balls with the blaze of one boundary and five sixes to provide the final flourish.



# Zaheer Khan set to join LSG as team mentor

**PTI ■ KOLKATA**

Lucknow Super Giants are set to appoint former India speedster Zaheer Khan as their mentor ahead of the IPL mega auction. The appointment marks the return of the 45-year-old left-arm pacer to the IPL fold after two years, having been associated with five-time champions Mumbai Indians from 2018-2022. A formal unveiling is scheduled at the RPSG Group Headquarters here on Wednesday. "Zaheer has been appointed as team mentor and the unveiling will happen later today," sources told PTI. Zaheer will thus take up the role left vacant by Gautam Gambhir last year when he went to join his former franchise Kolkata Knight Riders and guided them to the IPL title in 2024. Gambhir is now the Indian head coach. At Mumbai Indians, Zaheer first served as the director of cricket before taking on the role of head of global development. LSG currently do not have a bowling coach after the departure of South African speedster Morne Morkel, who has joined Gambhir's coaching staff. It is learnt that Zaheer will also be involved in scouting and player-development programme during the off season. Before his coaching career, Zaheer played for three IPL teams -- Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore, and Delhi Daredevils. Over 10 seasons, Zaheer appeared in 100 matches for these teams, claiming 102 wickets with an economy rate of 7.58. His final appearance in the IPL was in 2017 when he captained the Delhi Daredevils, after which he retired from all forms of cricket. LSG have Justin Langer as head coach with the Australian replacing Andy Flower before the last IPL as he is set to continue with his deputies Lance Klusener and Adam Voges.

# Will ensure Test cricket remains priority as it forms bedrock of game: ICC chairman Jay Shah

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Newly-elected ICC Chairman Jay Shah says he will look to ensure that Test cricket forms the "bedrock" of the game in his tenure during which he will also try to "dismantle barriers that have hindered cricket's progress". The 35-year-old will relinquish his current position of BCCI secretary to succeed incumbent Greg Barclay on December 1 as the youngest ICC Chairman for a term of two years. "While the T20 is a naturally exciting format, it is equally important that Test cricket

remains a priority for everyone as it forms the bedrock of our game," Shah said in a statement issued by the BCCI on Tuesday. "We must see to it that cricketers are driven to longer format and our efforts will be channelised towards this goal," he added. Shah said he would also like to work towards setting up a separate program for talent search. He emphasised on lifting the standard of the game across the globe. "I want to assure you that I will do everything possible to elevate the standard of our game across the globe. As I



step into this pivotal role, I am resolutely committed to meeting your high expectations and dedicating myself to the beautiful game of cricket," he said. Shah, who is the son of union home minister Amit Shah, will

relinquish his position as the BCCI secretary at the board's Annual General Meeting likely to be held towards the end of next month or in October. Shah became the fifth Indian after the late Jagmohan Dalmiya, Sharad Pawar, N Srinivasan and Shashank Manohar to be elected for the high-profile job. "With cricket poised to make its historic debut at the Olympics in 2028, we stand at the precipice of a transformative era. This juncture is not merely a milestone, it's a clarion call for all of us involved in this magnificent sport.

# West Indies beat South Africa by 8 wickets in 3rd T20, sweep series 3-0

**AP ■ TAROUBA (TRINIDAD)**

Nicholas Pooran blasted 35 runs from 13 balls to lead the West Indies to an eight-wicket win over South Africa in the rain-shortened third Twenty20 cricket international, securing a 3-0 series sweep. Rain delayed the start of play by an hour and returned in the fifth over of the South Africa innings, reducing the match to 13 overs per innings. South Africa was 23-0 when the rain started and Tristan Stubbs dashed 40 from 15 balls to help the visitors post 108-4 after a slow start. Stubbs hit five fours and three sixes for 38 runs from boundaries. He finished the series with 144 runs at a strike-rate of 178. Pooran almost matched him, hitting two fours and four sixes. The West Indies was 60-2 when Pooran was out to the fifth ball of the fourth over and coasted to victory with 22 balls remaining.

Shai Hope made an unbeaten 42 from 24 balls and Shimron Hetmeyer scored 31 from 17 deliveries in an unbroken partnership of 56 for the third wicket. "Obviously coming out on top is what we wanted. We wanted to win the series 3-0," West Indies captain Roston Chase said in a television interview. "Before the match, at the team meeting after everyone had spoken, I just asked the boys to give me the victory because you want to start well and I just want to thank the guys for the support and the way they played with their heart today." No overs were lost when rain delayed the toss. The West Indies eventually won the toss and chose to bowl, with an eye on the threat of further rain. South Africa began cautiously in humid conditions and the first boundary of its innings didn't come until the fourth over, hit by Ryan Rickelton from the bowling of Matthew Forde. The first six of the innings came from the next



ball. The rain returned and forced the players from the field for 70 minutes, leaving South Africa on the back foot when it resumed. Reeza Hendricks was out three balls after the resumption, but that brought Stubbs to the crease and he did his best to blast South Africa to a competitive total. Stubbs hit 6, 4, 6 from consecutive balls in the 11th over bowled by Obed McCoy and 4, 6, 4 in the final over bowled by Forde. He was out with two balls left in the innings. Pooran then blasted the West Indies into an winning

position with his brilliant 13-ball cameo. He finished with a strike rate of 269. Hope hit four sixes in his innings and Hetmeyer hit four fours and a six as the West Indies completed a comprehensive win. The West Indies beat South Africa 3-0 in a Twenty20 series prior to this year's T20 World Cup, which it co-hosted with the United States, and now has swept South Africa again. But in between, South Africa eliminated the West Indies from the World Cup. "It was a tough one today. Obviously it was stop-start with the rain which hurt us quite a bit," South Africa captain Aiden Markram said. "Conditions changed quite a bit throughout the game as well. "I think we got the tougher of the conditions. That being said I think there are several areas we can improve on as a team to play better cricket in tough conditions.



# SHOWING DEV GILL IN A LEAD ROLE IS A BIG CHALLENGE: TRIKOTI

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Director Peta Trikoti journey goes back to working with ace director SS Rajamouli in many of the films, including films like *Magadheera* and the latest Oscar-winning film *RRR*. Though he made his debut as a director with *Dikkulu Choodaku Ramayya*, he was on hiatus for a few years. The director is now back with the upcoming film *Aho Vikramaarka*, starring Dev Gill in the lead role.

Ahead of the film's release, the director shares some insights around the making of the film.

"Dev Gill played the role of a villain in *Magadheera* that I previously worked in. Back then, I used to teach him the Telugu dialogues and also assist him for that film. Since then, we share a close bond and have constantly been in touch, be it over the phone or sometimes even meet, if time permits," says director Trikoti about his association with Dev Gill.

After *RRR* finished, Dev Gill called Trikoti and asked him to direct a film for him. "He asked me to come to Pune and it was then that we discussed the project.

Ahead of the upcoming release, *Aho Vikramaarka*, director Peta Trikoti speaks to the media here, sharing insights around the making of this film and working with Dev Gill

He wanted to do a low-budget film that would go well with the Marathi and Telugu audiences," recalls the director. He feels that it's never a cakewalk to write a story for an actor who has mostly portrayed the character of an antagonist. Therefore, he shares, "I decided to do a commercial film with a powerful character. It was then that I decided to write a story with a police backdrop. That's how *Aho Vikramaarka* started." Dev Gill, as we are all aware, plays the lead role. However, the director reveals that in the initial part of the film, he will be shown as a villain, but later turns out to be a hero due to a few circumstances.

"While shooting the film, I was scared due to how the audience would receive his (Dev) character because he is



known for his villain looks. I am presenting him as the lead actor. It's a big challenge for me," said Trikoti. He added that the story has not changed much, but Dev Gill shared a few real incidents that happened in Pune that have been included in the story.

In order to make the film appealing to all audiences, the police officers are transferred from Andhra to Pune. "I know there are hundreds of films in Telugu and other languages; my film is no different one, but it's a typical commercial

film," he said and added that the story has a mother sentiment. The film stars Chitra Shukla as the female lead, who plays a lecturer in the film. The director shares that they wanted to rope in a Telugu girl for the female lead.

His debut film, *Dikkulu Choodaku Ramayya*, released in 2014. He recalls, "It was a good film, and I got a good name, but it didn't do well at the box office. People to date remember me as the director of my debut film," said Trikoti. Later, his second film, *Juvva* released in 2018, which was also a flop. "Both films were made by popular producers, so I am not worried about the budget or release of those films. But now this *Aho Vikramaarka* I come to know how difficult it is to make a film," he added.

For the music, the team had many people in mind to get onboard, including MM Keeravani. However, Keeravani was busy with other films, so Dev Gill requested Kannada music director Ravu Basur to do this film, revealed the director. "He saw the film and then decided to give music and background score. He is simply superb," says Ravi.

Coming to the title, Trikoti wanted one that was pretty successful. When he worked with Rajamouli, he did *Vikramaarka* with Ravi Teja as a powerful police officer. "Now, I would like to take the same name, so I put *Aho Vikramaarka* for this one," he said about the title. Though Trikoti was scared in the beginning, once he completed the film, he showed a few people who liked and complimented him. "Now, I am happy and the film is releasing in Telugu, Marathi, Hindi and Kannada also."

After *RRR*, Rajamouli will next be directing a film directing Mahesh Babu. Trikoti, too, is joining Rajamouli for that project too.

## Popular dialogue writer Nadiminti Narasinga Rao is no more

Nadiminti Narasinga Rao, who worked for successful films like Krishna Vamsi's *Gulabi* and Ram Gopal Varma's *Anaganaga Oka Roju*, passed away on Wednesday at a private hospital. He was not well for the past few days and was admitted at the Yashoda Hospital in Somajiguda; on Wednesday he breathed his last. He was 72 and is survived by his wife and daughter.

Narasinga was in a coma for a few days and on Wednesday morning passed away.

As a dialogue writer, he was very popular because of the two above-mentioned films. To date, the craze around his dialogues has been just as it was in the beginning. Narasinga Rao also worked for a few more films like *Patha Basti*, *Ooriki Monagadu* and *Kuchi Kuchi Koonamma*. Since he wasn't keeping well, the family members immediately joined him at Yashoda Hospital, where he went into a coma for a few days and on Wednesday morning he was no more.

Before entering into films, Narasinga Rao worked as a theater artist and gained popularity with the play *Bommalata*. He also wrote dialogues for the popular serial *Tenali Ramakrishna* that was screened on Doordarshan decades ago. He had also worked on popular serials like *Wonder Boy*, *Lady Detective* and *Antharangaalu*, which were screened on ETV. The Tamil Film Writers Association paid tribute to Narasinga Rao. In a statement, the president of the writers association, Paruchuri Gopalakrishna, says it's a big loss to the Telugu cinema and praises Narasinga Rao for his work.



## NAGA CHAITANYA TALKS ABOUT HIS DESTINATION WEDDING!

The Akkineni family is in the news, buzzing and how. A few days ago, actor Akkineni Nagarjuna's N Convention Center was demolished by HYDRA, as it was reported to be an illegal construction. Later, Nagarjuna opened up about the center not being illegal and appealed to his fans that the land and his center built in a Patta-documented land are not encroached. He even showed the court order on his social media.

Nagarjuna's elder son Naga Chaitanya is also in the news now, as he is busy shooting for the film *Thandel* and just a few days back got engaged to actress Sobhita Dulipala. If the buzz is to be believed, he is planning a destination marriage in Rajasthan. He said that he wanted to celebrate his wedding ceremony with family and close friends.

Now, the *Bangaraju* actor has inaugurated a flagship store in Himayatnagar. While interacting with the media, he refrained himself from speaking about anything around demolition. However, when asked about his marriage, he said, "I haven't decided yet about the venue, but I definitely inform all of you in advance of all the details about my marriage," said Naga Chaitanya.

Chay had previously married actress Samantha in 2017, which was a love marriage. However, the couple parted ways in 2021. For the past few years, Naga Chaitanya and Sobhita Dulipala have been seen together in quite a few places; however, they never confirmed their relationship until their engagement got official!



## Manju Warrier kickstarts dubbing for Vettaiyan

Actress Manju Warrier has commenced the dubbing process for her upcoming Tamil movie *Vettaiyan*. The creators of the movie revealed the news via social media on Wednesday. The movie is scheduled for release on October 10, as confirmed by the producers.

Manju Warrier, who appeared in the Malayalam movie *Footage*, will co-star with Rajinikanth in their upcoming film *Vettaiyan*. The producers revealed that Manju Warrier has started recording her lines for her role on Wednesday. *Vettaiyan* is scheduled to hit theaters on October 10th. The movie featuring Rajinikanth will be available in Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Kannada. *Vettaiyan* is both written and directed by TJ Gnanavel, who previously directed the highly praised movie *Jai Bhim*.

## Shriya to make special appearance in Suriya 44



Suriya and Karthik Subbaraj's upcoming film *Suriya 44* is currently in the production, with filming moving forward at a rapid pace. While the producers are occupied with filming, the latest updates indicate that actress Shriya Saran will have a cameo in the movie starring Suriya.

Sources have reported that Shriya Saran will join Suriya in a lively dance song created by Santhosh Narayanan. According to reports, the actress has finished filming her scenes in Ooty and will act alongside the Tamil star in this movie directed by Karthik Subbaraj.

The production of *Suriya 44* has been moving fast, with the crew recently finishing filming in Ooty following multiple weeks. The filming has now shifted to Kerala for a short period. Close to 70% of the movie has been filmed and it is anticipated that the whole production will be finished by October.

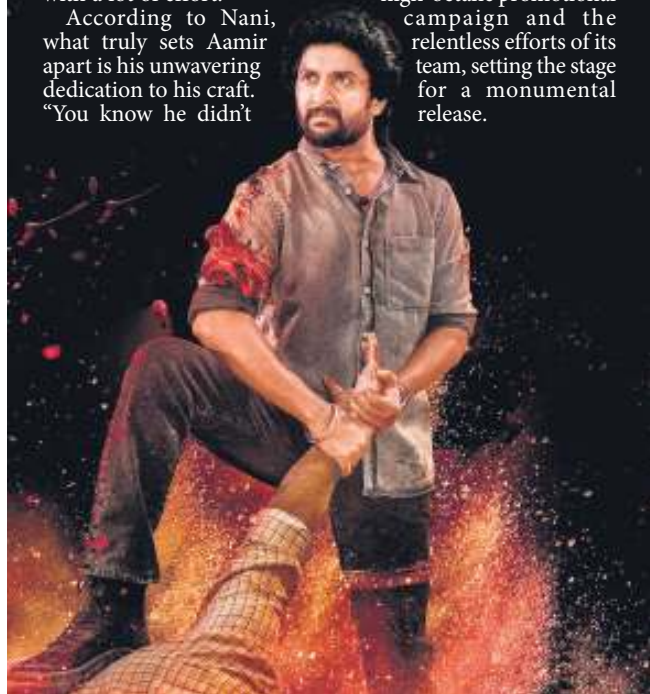
## NANI COMMENDS AAMIR KHAN

Nani, the natural star of Telugu cinema, shared his thoughts on Aamir Khan in a recent conversation, discussing the profound impact the Bollywood icon has had on Indian cinema. Reflecting on Aamir's golden period, Nani recalled, "Aamir sir at one point in time; *Dil Chahta Hai*, *Rang De Basanti*, *Lagaan*; films came back to back and with each film, he delivered some original experience at that particular time. Emotional experience, and with a lot of effort."

According to Nani, what truly sets Aamir apart is his unwavering dedication to his craft. "You know he didn't

take one single film or one single shot for granted. You know he gave his best. And that's what matters and that's what inspires you," Nani added, emphasising how Aamir's approach continues to inspire actors across the industry.

Meanwhile, the entire film industry is brimming with anticipation for a blockbuster success in the latter half of 2024 and all eyes are now on Nani's *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram*. This film has been making waves with its high-octane promotional campaign and the relentless efforts of its team, setting the stage for a monumental release.



## Some positive news for Allu Arjun

Allu Arjun has been in the news for the last few days for the wrong reasons. He had attended a pre-release event as a chief guest and indirectly defended his Nandhyal visit. He also said that he has a big army of fans. His comments at that function went viral again.

On Tuesday, the Jana Sena MLA Bolisetty Srinivas criticised Allu Arjun for his comments and said Allu Arjun doesn't have a single fan; all the fans are from the Mega family and they are called Mega Fans only. The MLA lambasted Allu Arjun that he earlier campaigned for his father, Allu Aravind, but couldn't succeed. "We have won 21 MLAs, so you should be within your limits and don't talk too much," says an angry MLA. The differences started between Mega Family and Allu Arjun after the actor went for a campaign for his friend and YSRCP candidate in Nandyal at the election time.

This widened the relationship between the Mega and Allu families more. Now, there is some positive news when it concerns Allu Arjun. The actor's upcoming film *Pushpa 2* is all set to release on December 6. There are reports that the film may postpone further to next year. But to put a stop to all rumours, the production house posted on its social media a picture of *Pushpa 2* and said, "Witness his rule in 100 days! With this, the production house wanted to confirm that the film is releasing on December 6 as scheduled and there is no postponement. This is a good news for Allu Arjun, as he is trolling very badly for all his comments.

## Soubin Shahir onboards Rajinikanth's Coolie

Superstar Rajinikanth will next be seen in the soon-to-be-released movie *Coolie*. Touted to be an action thriller, the movie was both written and directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj. Now, adding to the cast is Malayalam actor Soubin Shahir to portray the character Dayal in the film and his first-look has stunned the audience.

It appears that Soubin Shahir is portraying a mysterious character and the way his appearance is revealed piques curiosity about the movie. Sathyaraj, Upendra, Shruthi Haasan, Mahendran and others have already been cast in key roles by the filmmakers, and the addition of Soubin has increased the excitement to the next level.

The movie is set against the background of gold smuggling. The movie crew is currently occupied filming in Vijayawada. The movie was filmed in Hyderabad, Chennai and various regions of Tamilnadu at an earlier time. Anirudh Ravichander is responsible for the music in the film. The cinematographer for the film is Girish Gangadharan. Philomin Raj holds the position of editor.

