

Published From: VIJAYAWADA HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN

Era of uninterrupted dialogue with Pakistan is over:
Jaishankar
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GOVT TAKING MEASURES AT POLICY LEVEL TO HELP FINTECH SECTOR: PM
8

Faria turns lyricist, singer and choreographer for Mathu
VADALARA 2
P12

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer
Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy has all the qualities to become the Chief Minister. He will become the CM in future. The high command would have given him the CM's post, he just missed it. I have moles on my tongue and my predictions will come true. I am not merely saying this. I will tell you what will happen in future. We will see Uttam as the CM very soon
— Komatireddy Raj Gopal Reddy, Munugode Congress MLA
P4

DON'T MISS...
Polavaram work to resume in Nov...
Local MP Putta Mahesh Kumar has announced that work on the Polavaram project will recommence in November and expressed confidence that the project will be completed within three years. In a video message on Friday, he stated that the Central Government had allocated Rs 12,000 crore for the Polavaram project, with the Union Cabinet having approved this funding. The MP thanked the Centre for providing the necessary funds. MP Kumar praised Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for his efforts in securing over...
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Centre has adopted 'One Nation, One...
The Indian government has adopted the policy of 'One Nation, One Policy' for organ donation and transplantation and has also started consultation process with the states in the matter, a senior health ministry official said on Friday. "Organ donation needs to become a way of life for us so that we can give a new lease of life to those suffering from organ failure," said L S Changan, Additional Secretary in the Union Health Ministry of Health. Changan made the remarks as he inaugurated a deliberation on...
-PAGE: 5

Singapore Airlines' FDI cleared in AI..
The nearly 10-year-old Vistara will fly into the sunset on November 11 as part of the merger with Tata Group-owned Air India, with the deal moving closer to completion after the Indian government approved Singapore Airlines' Rs 2,058.5-crore foreign direct investment in Air India Group. The merger, announced in November 2022, will see Singapore Airlines snapping up a 25.1 per cent stake in the Air India Group, and will create one of the world's largest airline groups. On Friday, Singapore Airlines...
-PAGE: 8

Abhinav Bindra says training...
Olympic gold medalist Abhinav Bindra on Friday acknowledged training Indian athletes across sports on the aspect of mental health remains a "work in progress", while adding that benefits of the same must reach grassroots level. Bindra said mental health directly influences overall well-being of an athlete and sports administrators also share equal responsibility in it. "It's an area where there is work in progress — we all acknowledge that. We are a sporting ecosystem which is developing...."
-SPORTS

Uproar over hidden cams in girls' hostel washroom

ENGINEERING COLLEGE STUDENTS CONDEMN HEINOUS ACT, DEMAND JUSTICE

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
Students at Gudlavalluru College of Engineering in Krishna district staged a protest after hidden cameras were discovered in the female hostel washroom. The incident has led to widespread outrage among the students who are calling for justice and accountability. The unrest began following allegations that a final-year B.Tech student had been selling footage from the hidden cameras with the assistance of another student. The police intervened, confiscating a laptop and mobile phone from the accused. Protestors alleged that the cameras were secretly installed in the girls' hostel washroom. They expressed their frustration by chanting "We want justice" and using the torchlights from their mobile phones late into the night on Thursday. In response, Krishna district SP R. Gangadhar Rao announced on Friday that a case has been registered and an investigation has commenced. A special investigation team, consisting of female officers, has been formed. The team, led by Gudivada Crime Police Station Circle Inspector E.



- **ALLEGATIONS:** Claims that a final-year student sold footage from the cameras.
- **POLICE ACTION:** Police seize a laptop and mobile phone; an investigation is underway.
- **SPECIAL TEAM:** Female officers appointed to investigate the case.
- **OFFICIAL RESPONSE:** Minister and district officials assure increased security and thorough investigation.
- **PROTEST CALLED OFF:** Demonstration ends after assurances of strict action against culprits.

Ramanamma and including IT Core SI Madhuri and four communication police staff members, will conduct a thorough and transparent investigation. Special Officer, CI Ramanamma,

CM orders probe
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has ordered a thorough inquiry into an incident at Gudlavalluru Engineering College in Krishna district where secret cameras were found installed in the washroom of the women's hostel on the campus. He has been monitoring the progress of the probe by actively seeking updates on the situation. Upon learning of the issue on Friday morning, Chandrababu Naidu promptly instructed the local Minister, Kollu Ravindra, along with the local MLAs and Krishna district officials, to visit the college campus immediately. The Chief Minister has spoken to the district collector and the superintendent of police to assess the situation firsthand.
Continued on Page 2

Low pressure to intensify into depression
PNS ■ GUNTUR
The low pressure area over the West Central and adjoining north-west Bay of Bengal off North Andhra Pradesh and South Odisha has moved west-north-westwards and developed into a well-marked low-pressure area over the same region at 0830 hours on Friday, according to the Meteorological Centre. The daily weather report indicates that this well-marked low-pressure system is expected to continue moving west-north-westwards towards the north Andhra Pradesh and adjoining south Odisha coasts, where it is likely to intensify into a depression over the West Central and adjoining north-west Bay of Bengal within the next 36 hours. The southwest monsoon remains normal in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema.
Continued on Page 2

Sand distribution to be reviewed on daily basis
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
Principal Secretary of the Mines Department, Mukesh Kumar Meena, has said that District Collectors should review the distribution of free sand daily in line with the State government's priorities. He noted that focusing on this issue during the rainy season will improve sand availability in the future. Following instructions from a Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, a video conference was held from the Secretariat on Friday with District Collectors. The meeting covered the current free sand policy and new policies set to take effect from September 11. During the conference, Meena instructed that district-level command control centres should be established, mirroring the state command control centre. He stressed that Collectors should not be subjected to any political pressure, as clearly stated by the Chief Minister. A Government Order (GO) for sand excavation from patta lands will be issued soon, and efforts are underway to implement a uniform price across the State, excluding transportation charges. The online booking system will allow residents to book sand from home and track their vehicle's location via GPS. For those in rural areas unfamiliar with the online system, a trained employee will be available at the Secretariat. Meena also directed Collectors to release a media bulletin about sand availability and prices, with the joint collector respon-

MEENA GETS FULL ADDL CHARGE OF STATE TAXES
VIJAYAWADA: In a fresh administrative reshuffle, Mukesh Kumar Meena, a 1998 batch IAS officer and Principal Secretary to the Government, Revenue (Excise), has been assigned the full additional charge (FAC) as the Chief Commissioner of State Taxes. The appointment follows an order issued by Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad on Friday. Meena will take over the responsibilities of the post from M Girija Shankar, a 1999 batch officer, who is set to retire on August 31 upon reaching the age of superannuation. Meena will hold the position until further orders.

LAND DOCUMENT FORGERY & EXTORTION ROW
Mumbai actress quizzed by NTR police
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
Kadambari Jetwani, a Mumbai-based actress, was questioned by the NTR District police on Friday in connection with allegations of land document forgery and extortion. The actress was summoned to Vijayawada for questioning, where ACP Roy recorded her statement at a hotel as part of the ongoing investigation. An FIR will be filed based on her statements and preliminary findings. Jetwani was later taken to the police commissioner's office, where the commissioner conducted further inquiries in the presence of her lawyer. Sources indicate that the actress was questioned about inci-

VANA MAHOTSAVAM



CM, Dy CM make strong 'green' pitch
Naidu: Drones to be used for planting seed balls and Miyawaki method to be used
Pawan: Govt aims to plant 1 cr saplings and increase green cover from 29% to 50%
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, and Union Minister Pemmasani Chandrasekhar participated in the 'Vana Mahotsavam' programme held at Eco Park, Mangalagiri AIIMS. During the event, Chandrababu Naidu planted saplings and urged everyone to plant at least two saplings each year. He emphasised the significance of Vana Mahotsavam and encouraged students to appreciate the importance of greenery. He also advocated for increasing the green cover in the state to 50 per cent. Naidu expressed his enthusiasm for 'Vana Mahotsavam', recalling how past efforts, such as digging percolation pits or soak tanks, were initially ridiculed but later proven essential for groundwater replenishment. He noted that the Forest and NREGA departments, led by Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, could undertake numerous programmes to support this cause. The Chief Minister remarked, "The forest area is gradually diminishing, and significant environmental changes are occurring."
Continued on Page 2

HC evicts daughter-in-law, son of 80-yr-old woman

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
Emphasising the necessity of safe, dignified and neglect-free living environment for senior citizens, the Delhi High Court has directed the son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren of an 80-year-old woman to vacate the house they were living together in after the octogenarian alleged harassment and ill-treatment at their hands. The petitioner, who invoked the provisions of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, said she was the sole and registered owner of the property and neither her son nor the daughter-in-law provided any care to her or her husband. She claimed that the ongoing marital discord between the son and the daughter-in-law was also a constant source of discomfort and stress, which was like a "slow death". Justice Sanjeev Narula, in the judgement passed on August 27, noted that the residence of a daughter-in-law is not an indefeasible right, and that this right must be considered in conjunction with the protection afforded to senior citizens under the Senior Citizens Act, which permits the eviction of occupants causing distress to them.

AP legislature to go paperless soon

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA
In a move to fully digitise and make the legislative processes paperless, the Legislature of Andhra Pradesh will soon become a part of the "National e-Vidhan Application" (NeVA) administered by the Union Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. A proposal to this effect was recently approved by the Chairman of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. As a follow-up, Umang Narula, Secretary, and Dr Satya Prakash, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Government of India, visited the Andhra Pradesh Legislature on Friday at the invitation of the state's legislative body and interacted with the stakeholders.



During the meeting, Prasanna Kumar Suryadevara, Secretary-General of the Andhra Pradesh Legislature, along with Narula and Dr Satya Prakash, elaborated on the key features of NeVA. "The centrally sponsored NeVA scheme is one of the Mission Mode Projects (MPP) aimed at transitioning all Legislative Bodies of the country to a paperless format, unifying them onto a single platform as 'Digital Legislatures' under NeVA." Dr Satya Prakash made a presentation on NeVA and addressed

the queries of the Officers of the Legislature. To advance this project, it was agreed to enter into a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, the Andhra Pradesh Legislature, and the Department of IT, Government of Andhra Pradesh. Once a Detailed Project Report (DPR) is finalised, based on the template provided by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, work will begin to digitally enable both Houses of the Andhra Pradesh Legislature. Simultaneously, training and orientation programmes will be organised for the benefit of Legislators, Officers and Staff of the Legislature, and other stakeholders from the Executive arm. The Legislature Secretariat will be the executing authority for the project. As with other centrally sponsored schemes, NeVA provides for 60% of the project cost to be contributed by the Centre. M Janaki, Secretary - Expenditure, Dr B Sundar, Special Secretary - ITE&C, Senior Officials of NIC, and Officers and Staff of the Andhra Pradesh Legislature Secretariat participated in the meeting. Later in the day, the visiting officials from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Umang Narula and Dr Satya Prakash, along with Prasanna Kumar Suryadevara, Secretary-General, called on Koyye Moshenu Raju, Chairman of the Legislative Council. They also paid a courtesy visit to Neerabh Kumar Prasad, Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

HYDRAA ops: Will Revanth be reckoned as Arjuna or Abhimanyu?

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy must take immediate action to dispel the narrative that the actions of HYDRAA (Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Monitoring and Protection) are high drama, enacted to divert voters' attention from the Congress government's inability to fulfil its Six guarantees.

A second crucial step for HYDRAA is to publish all identified illegal occupations and constructions on the web portal. This knowledge will help people verify the fairness of HYDRAA's activities and empower innocent buyers to make informed decisions. By avoiding the purchase of homes and office spaces that HYDRAA is targeting to demolish, they can protect their investments.

Third, Revanth Reddy claimed that he was following Lord Krishna's advice to Arjuna and was doing his duty to preserve the city's water bodies. If that is the case, he would be aware that Lord Krishna's advice-encapsulated

as the Bhagavad Gita was delivered to persuade a reluctant Arjuna to take action against his brothers, relatives, friends and gurus who had strayed from dharma. If Revanth fancies himself as Arjuna, he should first act against his own. There have been significant allegations by the public and opposition parties that many Congress party leaders had encroached on public lands or constructed on prohibited lands adjacent to water bodies. HYDRAA should make it a priority to

demolish illegal constructions and reclaim public lands occupied by Congress leaders. It is crucial that HYDRAA not only be apolitical and impartial but also be perceived as such to maintain public support. The recent outcry from people in the Old City through social media has highlighted the alleged occupation of Salakam Lake and the construction of huge buildings by the Owasais of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul-Muslimeen (AIMIM). It is a known fact that every party that came to



KISHORE POREDDY

power, either in combined Andhra Pradesh or today's Telangana, treated the Old City as the personal fiefdom of the Owasais. No government could undertake any program in the Old City without the approval of the Owasais. For instance, a veto by the Owasais stopped the Metro's expansion to the Old City.

The brazenness with which the Owasais allegedly constructed buildings within the lake makes this a litmus test for HYDRAA. The recent statements by the head of HYDRAA that since the illegal constructions host an educational institution, any demolition right now would affect students has already raised doubts among the public that even Revanth Reddy cannot touch the Owasais. If the state government could make alternative arrangements and demolish the Secretariat -- the nerve-centre of the state's administration - then it could undoubtedly raze the buildings and make alternative arrangements for the students.

Fifth, HYDRAA's actions are ostensibly focused on demolishing illegal constructions. However, corrupt government officials had approved many of these illegal constructions. The government has taken no action against these corrupt officials. In addition, the government sourced most of the HYDRAA staff from the same departments that provided these illegal approvals. The government cannot absolve itself of the crime of giving permissions for illegal constructions. Whenever HYDRAA identifies an illegal construction, the first step for the government should be to act against its corrupt officials who abetted the illegality by taking huge bribes. The only logical conclusion if the government does not act against itself (its officers) is that it has run an illegal permit scam as an official policy.

Finally, the most critical step Revanth Reddy needs to take is to differentiate between the wilful lawbreakers and the innocent. Many poor and lower middle-class people bought homes and shops with all permits built in occupied or prohibited areas. The builders or original owners who sold the properties and the corrupt officials who gave the permissions are at fault -- not the innocent buyers. But they are the ones who are losing their homes. Similarly, many poor have constructed homes in prohibited areas and will have nowhere to live when HYDRAA demolishes their dwellings. For the innocent buyers, the government needs to provide compensation, and for the poor, it needs to provide alternative housing. Otherwise, Revanth Reddy, instead of being reckoned as Arjuna, will be seen as Abhimanyu caught up in the Padmavyuham made by the tentacles of Hydra - the multi-headed lake monster in Greek mythology whose breath, blood and even scent were considered deadly.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson.)

Ecosystem-based livelihood enhancement project launched

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a major step towards sustainable development, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) Andhra Pradesh Regional Office has approved a new Tribal Development Project called "Ecosystem-Based Livelihood Enhancement of the Yanadi Tribal Community Dependent on Mangroves in Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh." This ambitious initiative, aimed at benefiting the Yanadi tribes of Koduru and Nagayalanka mandals, was inaugurated by Budithi Rajsekhar, Special Chief Secretary, at Nagayalanka village, located on the picturesque banks of the Krishna River backwaters. The project is being implemented in partnership with Praja Pragathi Seva Sangham (PPSS), Machilipatnam.



Rajsekhar praised the project's innovative approach, highlighting its shift from traditional "Maa Thota" projects focused on orchard development. He noted that the new project's emphasis on fisheries and aquaculture is expected to bring significant benefits to the Yanadi tribal community. He also underlined the importance of investing in the community's future by ensuring that children attend Tribal Residential Schools and

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV), using the increased incomes from the project. During the event, NABARD officials, along with representatives from other banks and departments, distributed the first phase of resources, including 10 boats with nets and iceboxes, as well as gum boots and gloves, to 55 beneficiaries. Gopal, Chief General Manager of NABARD, detailed the project's various components.

He explained that the initiative will support 400 Yanadi tribal families in Koduru and Nagayalanka mandals. The project will provide 30 boats, each equipped with nets and iceboxes, to 150 individuals (five families per boat). It will also set up 30 cage culture units for 180 families (six families per unit) and support the creation of aquaculture ponds for 30 families. Additionally, a pen culture unit will assist 10 families, and the project will include the construction of a feed unit for aquaculture, the establishment of 20 nurseries, and the provision of five community water tanks for safe drinking water. At the event, a coffee table book showcasing the success stories of FPOs, created by the NABARD Andhra Pradesh Regional Office, and a project brochure prepared by PPSS were also launched.

ENGG COLLEGE HIDDEN CAMERA SCANDAL

YSRCP calls it a failure of State govt

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Terming the camera scandal at Gudlavalluru Engineering College as a heinous act, the YSRCP expressed strong disapproval of the incident, calling it a failure of the government. Speaking to the media at the party's central office on Friday, YSRCP spokesperson P. Shiva Shankar stated that the placement of hidden cameras in the girls' hostel washroom was a heinous act.



The government for merely watching while 300 students protested at Gudlavalluru Engineering College since midnight on Thursday.

He mentioned that this has caused significant distress among the students and their parents, adding that the education system in the state has been destroyed since the coalition government came to power. He demanded that the culprits be identified and severely

punished. He criticised the government for merely watching while 300 students protested at Gudlavalluru Engineering College since midnight on Thursday. He questioned why the college management suppressed the issue for a week, even after

the students filed complaints. He also asked why the police were not informed immediately, or why they failed to respond if they were informed. He raised concerns about the lack of basic security in the girls' hostel. He mentioned that the main suspect in the

incident had Jana Sena posters on his Instagram. Shiva Shankar pointed out that while the government claims to be investigating the incident, the police have already stated that they have concluded the case and found no evidence of such an event.

2 MLCs quit...

Continued from Page 1

The two MLCs, Padmasree and Kalyan Chakravarthy have submitted their resignation letters to Legislative Council Chairman Koyye Moshen Raju. Kalyan Chakravarthy was elected as an MLC under the MLA quota, while Padmasree secured her position under the Governor's quota. The YSR Congress Party has been experiencing a series of setbacks in recent days, with the number of public representatives leaving the party steadily increasing. Recently, MLC Potula Sunitha resigned from the party, followed by YSRCP Rajya Sabha members Mopidevi Venkata Ramana and Beeda Mastan Rao, who stepped down from their Rajya Sabha positions on Thursday. It is speculated that they will soon join the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) under the leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. Rumours are circulating within Andhra Pradesh's political circles that several other YSRCP Rajya Sabha members may also leave the party soon.

YSRCP MPs Alla Ayodhya, Pilli Subhash deny defection rumours

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP MPs Alla Ayodhya Rami Reddy and Pilli Subhash Chandra Bose have firmly dismissed recent rumours suggesting that they are leaving the party. Speaking to the media at the party's central office here on Friday, MP Pilli Subhash Chandra Bose clarified that the reports about him leaving the party were false. Asserting that the YSR family has always supported him, he said he was rich in loyalty and dedication to the YSR family, although he may not be wealthy in financial terms. He mentioned that he entered politics because he believed in the vision of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, and his journey in politics will continue with Jagan Mohan Reddy. MP Alla Ayodhya Rami Reddy reiterated his commitment to the YSRCP and



the leadership of Jagan Mohan Reddy. Both MPs condemned the speculation about them and other Rajya Sabha members leaving the party. Subhash Chandra Bose pointed out that, except for a few, all YSRCP Rajya Sabha members are firmly with the party. He expressed disappointment that such baseless rumours continue to circulate despite their unwavering loyalty to the party. Both MPs criticised the decision of some Rajya

Sabha and Legislative Council members to resign from the party, stating that this was a betrayal to the party and its leader at a time when there is no possibility of immediate replacements. They expressed their strong disapproval of such actions, highlighting that they undermine the party's efforts and leadership. They emphasised that winning and losing in politics is not permanent, but it is crucial to uphold values in political life.

Low pressure to...

Continued from Page 1

Under its influence, heavy to very heavy rainfall is anticipated at isolated locations in Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 48 hours. Heavy rain is also expected at isolated places in Rayalaseema during the same period, and in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh on September 1 and 2.

Thunderstorms with lightning and strong surface winds, reaching speeds of 30-40 km/h, are likely to occur at isolated locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next five days and in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next four days.

Strong surface winds, with speeds of 30-40 km/h, are expected to persist at isolated places in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema on September 3. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are anticipated at many places or a few locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next seven days.

Education system 'deteriorating' under TDP govt, says Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP Chief and former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed deep concern over the deteriorating state of the education system under the leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, urging immediate action. He suggested that the government should prioritise the welfare of students and safeguard their future instead of engaging in political games.



YS Jagan highlighted the alarming situation in government residential schools, where hundreds of students have reportedly fallen ill due to contaminated food, with no substantial response from the government.

Taking to the social media platform X, the former Chief Minister pointed out that within just three months of the TDP coalition government taking office, the education system had suffered significant setbacks. He noted the noticeable neglect of government educational institutions and the serious lack of oversight over colleges. He stated that instead of focusing on governance, gov-

ernment officials appeared preoccupied with targeting the opposition and enforcing policies that do not serve the public's interest. YS Jagan highlighted the alarming situation in government residential schools, where hundreds of students have reportedly fallen ill due to contaminated food, with no substantial response from the government. He criticised the government for its indifference, especially given that the Education Minister is the Chief

Minister's son. He also pointed out the deterioration of the midday meal and Gorumudda schemes, which were originally intended to provide nutritious meals to students but have now become ineffective. Furthermore, he raised concerns about serious allegations of hidden cameras being installed in private engineering colleges in Gudlavalluru, emphasising that such incidents could severely impact the lives and futures of students.

Uproar over...

Continued from Page 1

Following the inspection, they met with Minister Kollu Ravindra, the district collector, and other district police officials.

The cell phones and laptops of the suspected students have been seized and are under detailed examination. SP Rao stated that if any incriminating evidence is found, those responsible will face severe penalties. The investigation will also utilise a Non-Linear Junction Detector (NLJD) device. The SP requested patience from the public, urging them to allow the police adequate time and space to conduct a comprehensive investigation.

Following instructions from Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Minister Kollu Ravindra, District Collector DK Balaji, and SP Rao visited Gudlavalluru College of Engineering to address the distressed students. Minister Ravindra assured that heightened police security would be provided at the girls' hostel to ensure their safety. SP Rao informed the students that female constables would be appointed to oversee each floor of the hostel. District Collector Balaji assured the students that the investigation would be conducted impartially. The protest was eventually called off after the minister, collector, and SP assured the students that strict actions would be taken against those responsible.

CM orders...

Continued from Page 1

Chandrababu Naidu has emphasised the need for the inquiry to be conducted transparently. He has directed Kollu Ravindra and district officials to ensure that if the allegations are substantiated, strict action will be taken against those responsible. Additionally, the Chief Minister has asked officials to reassure students and restore their confidence.

The Chief Minister has also ordered an investigation into claims that the college management was negligent in addressing student complaints. He has stated that any proven negligence will be met with action and has encouraged students to directly submit any evidence they have.

Chandrababu Naidu has requested updates on the progress of the inquiry every three hours and expects regular reports on developments.

Mumbai...

Continued from Page 1

The police purportedly informed their relatives about the arrest and claimed to have recovered a document from their residence which Jetwani contends was fabricated by the police themselves.

In February 2024, a cheating and forgery case was filed against the actress and her parents based on a complaint by YSRCP leader Vidyasagar from Krishna district at Ibrahimpatnam police station. Vidyasagar alleged that he had met the actress at an event in Mumbai and that she had fabricated and forged documents for five acres of land, extorting Rs 5 lakh from him.

The ongoing investigation by the AP police is expected to provide further details, with potential implications for the involved IPS officers if their alleged involvement is substantiated.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Trayodashi: Aug 31 02:25 AM to Sep 01 03:41 AM
Chaturdashi: Sep 01 03:41 AM to Sep 02 05:22 AM

Nakshatram:
Pushya: Aug 30 05:55 PM to Aug 31 07:39 PM
Ashlesha: Aug 31 07:39 PM to Sep 01 09:48 PM

Rahukalam: 9:11 AM to 10:43 AM
Yamagandam: 1:48 PM to 3:21 PM
Variyam: 09:36 AM to 11:21 AM
Gulika: 6:05 AM to 7:38 AM
Amritakalam: 12:48 PM to 02:30 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:51 AM to 12:41 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Thunder Showers
Temp: 27°C
Humidity: 93%
Sunrise: 5:54 AM
Sunset: 6:11 PM
Updated: August 30, 2024 5:00 PM



VANA MAHOTSAVAM

Time for social responsibility to enhance green cover: Dy CM

Says native plants are essential for environmental sustainability

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan has called upon the people to view Vana Mahotsavam as a social responsibility and actively participate in the state-wide programme which began on Friday. He emphasised the importance of enhancing the state's greenery, a goal the coalition government is committed to achieving. In a statement released on Vana Mahotsavam, the Deputy Chief Minister highlighted that only 29% of Andhra Pradesh is currently covered in green. The coalition government has set an ambitious target to increase this to 50% by plant-

ing many trees and ensuring proper care. The responsibility for plantation should not be limited to a specific region; everyone should contribute by planting trees in suitable areas and taking responsibility for their growth. Pawan Kalyan advised careful consideration in selecting plant species for the Vana Mahotsavam programme. He stressed the importance of choosing native species that promote biodiversity, preserve soil, and protect both the ecological balance and human health. Planting non-native species, which are not suited to India's geographical conditions, can disrupt the ecological balance. Over the

past decade, exotic plants such as Kono Corpus, Madagascar almond, and Australian acacia have been planted for their rapid growth, suitability for avenue plantations, and low maintenance costs. However, experts warn that these species may do more harm than good to the environment, affecting underground water resources and potentially causing health issues. During this Vana Mahotsavam, which will continue until Kartika Vanasamaradana, Pawan Kalyan encouraged the planting of Indigenous and beneficial species such as Kanuga (Pongamia pinnata), Neem,

Tamarind, Amla, Sandalwood, Banyan, Ashoka, Cassia fistula, Bael, Indian Blackberry, Orchid, Terminalia arjuna, Mango, Kadamb, Spunge, Sita Ashoka, Wood apple, and Custard apple. The Deputy Chief Minister called on everyone to plant trees that provide shade and distribute their produce. He reaffirmed the coalition government's commitment, under the leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, to increasing the state's green cover from 29% to 50%. Pawan Kalyan urged all citizens to voluntarily participate in Vana Mahotsavam and contribute to making Andhra Pradesh a greener state.

Engg college management hushed up hidden cams issue: Students

PNS ■ KRISHNA

Female students of an engineering college here complained to Mines Minister K Ravindra on Friday that the management attempted to hush up the issue of hidden cameras allegedly found in a women's washroom and also went to the extent of threatening students who complained about the matter.

Hundreds of students have been staging protests at S R Gudlavalleru Engineering College in Krishna district since Thursday night over the alleged incident. The students poured out their woes to Ravindra, who reached the college with the district collector and superintendent of police, following instructions from Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

"We (students) don't have faith in the college management as it has been trying to hush up the matter (alleged hidden cameras issue) for the past three days. The college management threatened to act against us if we complained over this issue," said an official statement, quoting the students' complaint to Ravindra. Demanding justice at any cost, the students vowed not to attend classes until then, while the minister said that the truth would come out and the culprits would be punished.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister discussed the issue with the district officials and ordered an inquiry into the allegations of hidden cameras found in the female students' washroom in the college. If the crime of capturing videos through hidden cameras is proven, then the CM directed officials to take stringent action against the culprits, according to an official statement.

In the event of students possessing any evidence regarding the incident, Naidu urged them to share it with him.

A case was registered in connection with the alleged incident. However, the police maintained that there were no such hidden cameras found in the students' washroom.

"No hidden cameras were found in the girls' hostel. No evidence was found. There is no need for the girls to worry over this issue," said an official statement, adding that police checked the laptops, mobile phones and other electronic



gadgets of the suspects in the presence of students and college staff.

Krishna district superintendent of police Gangadhar Rao told PTI that confidence-building measures were taken and a special team was formed to investigate the allegations.

An inspector has been appointed as the special investigation officer, besides a five-member police technical investigation team. The probe team has already begun inquiry in the women's hostel.

Earlier, Human Resource

Development Minister Nara Lokesh also ordered an enquiry into the alleged incident. The incident at SR Gudlavalleru Engineering College came to light on Friday, after videos of students protesting late on Thursday went viral.

"I have ordered an enquiry into hidden cameras allegations. Stringent action will be taken against the culprits and the people responsible. I directed officials to ensure that these kinds of incidents do not recur in colleges," said Lokesh in a post on 'X'.

Police begin probe: Kollu

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

Minister for Mines and Excise Kollu Ravindra has announced that a police team has commenced an investigation into the alleged installation of secret cameras in the girls' hostel washroom of the Gudlavalleru Engineering College.

Speaking to the protesting students at the Gudlavalleru college on Friday, the Minister revealed that Circle Inspector (CI) Ramanamma, Sub-Inspector (SI)



Purna Madhuri, and a Women Welfare Officer, along with 10 female students, had inspected the college's washrooms. He stated that these officials had updated him on the progress of the investigation.

The Minister also mentioned that a special police presence had been established at the college. He reassured the female students, urging them not to be concerned, and confirmed that the government had implemented comprehensive safety measures.

CM's quid pro quo in Margadarsi case exposed: Ambati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Ambati Rambabu highlighted the government's decision to withdraw CID appeals in the Margadarsi Chits case as a clear example of quid pro quo. Speaking to the media at the party central office here on Friday, he emphasised that Chandrababu Naidu's main objective is to protect the Ramoji family's interests and their businesses.

Rambabu described Ramoji Rao as a "white-collar criminal" involved in various financial irregularities. He questioned the legality of the case withdrawal, stating that it was intended to shield Ramoji's empire from legal scrutiny. Rambabu stated that he would pursue legal action against this quid pro quo. He also criticised the TDP government for focusing on the interests of those who supported them in previous elections, rather than fulfilling their promises to the public.

Rambabu alleged that Chandrababu Naidu's entire political career has been marked by "buying and selling political leaders", noting that defections among MPs are not new. Referring to the Kadambari Jethwani case, Rambabu expressed concern over the government's actions, comparing their strategy to "attempting an impossible task with a flawed approach".

Vizag Police streamline pandal permissions with online system

Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha inaugurates the system

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a bid to simplify the process for organisers setting up pandals during the upcoming Vinayaka Chavithi festival, the Visakhapatnam police have launched a new online single window clearance system. Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha officially inaugurated the system at the Circuit House on Friday, highlighting its benefits in streamlining the procedure. "Earlier, pandal organisers had to run around from office to office to get No Objection Certificates (NOCs) from various departments," said Minister Anitha. "This new system allows them to get the NOCs with a single click on their computer."

Anitha explained the user-friendly process for obtaining permissions through the new system. The organisers can simply send a "Hi" message to 7995095800 on WhatsApp or give a missed call to the same number. They will then receive a link to

ganeshtsav.net, which includes guidelines and steps to obtain the NOCs. "On the website, applicants just need to provide their mobile number, details of the puja committee members, and specifics about the



pandal, including the idol's height, puja dates, immersion procession route, and the vehicle to be used," she elaborated. "After submitting this information, they will be assigned a date for a mandatory inspection."

A team of officials from five departments, including fire services and the municipal corporation, will conduct the inspections. "Organisers will need

to pay the required fees at their nearest Mee Seva centre and upload a copy of the payment receipt on the website," explained Anitha. "Once that's done, the NOC with a QR code will be issued immediately." She urged the organisers to prominently display the QR code at their pandals.

Commissioner of Police Dr. Shankrabhara Bagchi and Joint Commissioner of Police K Fakeerappa, who were present at the launch, spoke about how the system will improve the efficiency of police checks during the festival. "Police teams can now simply scan the QR code at the pandals to verify the permissions granted," said Bagchi. "This ensures a smooth and hassle-free process for everyone."

The new online system is expected to significantly reduce the time and effort required by pandal organisers, allowing them to celebrate Vinayaka Chavithi with all the necessary permissions and safety compliances in place.

AP Chambers Business Expo-2024 from Sep 27-29



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation (AP Chambers) is organising AP Chambers Business Expo-2024 at SS Convention, Vijayawada, from September 27 to 29. The Chambers launched the brochure for the Business Expo on Friday.

Andhra Pradesh MSME Minister Kondapalli Srinivas will be the chief guest at the event. The Chambers said it will announce the full list of sponsors during the curtain-raiser event.

"The AP Chambers Business Expo 2024 is a premier event that will attract a diverse audience including industries, MSMEs, industry professionals, innovators, real

estate firms, service providers and consumers from across the region. The expo will feature around 160 plus exhibitors and is estimated to have around 30,000 plus footfalls," the Chambers stated.

The exhibition will provide a unique platform for networking, knowledge exchange, collaboration and business growth. It will have parallel sectoral seminars with respective ministers, bureaucrats and subject matter experts.

Many companies representing sectors such as manufacturing, services, banking, automobiles, infrastructure and real estate, food processing, hospitality and tourism, MSME, and women entrepreneurs will participate as exhibitors and sponsors in the AP Chambers Business

Expo. The State Bank of India is the platinum sponsor and many major financial institutions, various companies and industries are participating as sponsors.

AP Chambers president Potluri Bhaskara Rao, general secretary B Raja Sekhar, AP MSME Industries Association general secretary MS Ramachandra Rao, All India Chillies Exporters Association president Velagapudi Sambasiva Rao, AP Chambers Tourism Committee vice-chairman Tarun Kakani, executive committee member Gurjeet Singh Sahni, banking committee chairman Amirineni Satyanarayana and energy committee vice-chairman B Phani Chandra participated in the press meet.

PM to virtually inaugurate 3 Ekalavya Schools

Institutes to come up in Pedabayalu, Araku Valley, Chintapalli mandals in Alluri Sitharama Raju district

PNS ■ PADERU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate three Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) in Pedabayalu, Araku Valley, and Chintapalli mandals. The virtual inauguration, scheduled to be held between September 5-9, will be part of the PM Janati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (JANMAN) initiative, aimed at empowering tribal communities across the nation.



The Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) Paderu Project Officer, V Abhishek, confirmed the details, stating, "The inauguration of these schools is a landmark event for the tribal community in the region. It reflects the government's commitment to providing quality education to every child, regardless of their geographical location."

The PM-JANMAN programme will be conducted in a virtual mode from Araku Valley mandal. Authorities have chosen Pakanakudi, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) village in Chinlabudu panchayat, as the focal point for the event. During the programme, Prime Minister Modi will interact with villagers through video-conferencing. Abhishek, who inspected

several sites related to the programme on Friday, expressed confidence in the success of the event. "We are leaving no stone unturned to ensure that the programme is a grand success. The inauguration of the EMRS will be a transformative step for our tribal students," he remarked. The Project Officer also visited the Ekalavya Schools at Lakyaputtu in Pedabayalu and Madyavalasa in Araku Valley, both of which

are set to be inaugurated by the Prime Minister. He directed the officials to expedite the completion of any pending works, emphasising the importance of timely preparation.

Reflecting on the significance of the PM-JANMAN programme, Abhishek noted that a similar event was organised in Araku Valley earlier this year in January. "During that programme, 6,600 PVTG tribal people from Paderu received Rs 70,000 each as the first instalment under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)," he stated. In continuation of the Prime Minister's engagement with the tribal community, Swabi Ganga, a PVTG woman from Gadyaguda village in Araku mandal, who interacted with Modi during the January programme, is set to meet him in person in Jharkhand on the same day as the virtual inauguration.

Speaker doubts Forest dept's claims on sapling plantation

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

Speaker of the AP Legislative Assembly, Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu, publicly challenged the Forest department's recent claims of planting 60 lakh saplings in the past five months during 'Vana Mahotsavam' here on Friday.

The Speaker expressed scepticism about the accuracy of these figures, demanding a transparent and verifiable audit to substantiate the department's claims. He stated, "If the Forest department can provide concrete evidence through a social audit, I am willing to resign."

In addition to questioning the sapling planting claims, the Speaker also raised concerns about the department's policies regarding tree cutting. He highlighted the disparity

between the restrictions imposed on farmers and the apparent ease with which roadside trees were removed during the visit by former



chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. The Speaker further alleged irregularities in the saw mills of Anakapalli district, accusing certain Forest department

officials of being involved in illegal activities. He provided evidence to support his claims, including photographs and a list of names of the officials implicated.

"I expect swift and decisive action against those responsible for these alleged irregularities," the Speaker declared. The Speaker's remarks have placed the forest department under intense scrutiny, with calls for accountability and transparency growing louder. His challenge has not only raised questions about the department's credibility but also has broader implications for governance and the protection of natural resources in the region.

Free eye camp in V'wada tomorrow

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A free eye testing and cataract screening camp will be held at Gurudwara Guru Nanak Colony on 1 September (Sunday), organised by Dr Swapna India, Ophthalmologist from Swapna Eye Hospital, Suryaraopet.

Local residents are encouraged to attend the camp, where they can receive complimentary cataract screening and, for eligible patients, free cataract surgery.

Eyeglasses will also be available at affordable prices. Dr Swapna urged the community to take advantage of this opportunity. For more information, contact 9908271243.

Mini-zoo and eco-tourism centre proposed in Nuzvid: Kolusu

PNS ■ ELURU

Minister for Housing, K Parthasarathi, has announced that proposals have been submitted to the government for the establishment of a mini-zoo and an eco-tourism centre in Nuzvid.

The Minister made this statement while participating in the 'Vana Mahotsavam' programme, organised as part of the Vanam-Manam initiative at Battulavari village in Nuzvid mandal on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister revealed that efforts are underway to establish a mini-zoo and develop an eco-tourism centre in Nuzvid, with the necessary proposals already sent to the government.

Highlighting the vast forested areas within the Nuzvid constituency, the Minister noted that the region enjoys pleasant weather. He emphasised the importance of planting more trees to enhance the area's natural beauty and promote eco-tourism. He also appealed to corporate companies to participate in this green



initiative as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and directed officials to discuss the matter with company management.

Minister Parthasarathi expressed regret over the frequent disputes between forest department officials and farmers due to unclear boundaries of forest lands in the Nuzvid constituency. He instructed the officials to immediately determine the exact boundaries and install fences. Additionally, he asked the authorities to grant permission

to concerned farmers for the drilling of bore wells in RIFR lands. The Minister also urged the public to plant and nurture saplings to protect the environment.

Collector K Vetri Selvi announced that the District aims to plant one lakh saplings on Friday alone, as part of the Vanam-Manam programme. She noted that the rainy season is ideal for planting saplings and encouraged the public to plant and care for them until they grow into trees.

Forest Officer Ravindra Dama reported that the forest

area in the district spans 1.40 lakh hectares, with a target of planting 10 lakh trees. He also mentioned the identification of three tigers in the district and stated that the State has requested the Central government to establish a tiger sanctuary in the Papikondalu area.

Minister Parthasarathi, along with the Collector and Unguturu MLA P Dharmaraju, planted saplings on the occasion. RDO Y Bhavani Shankari, Agriculture JD Habeeb Basha, and other officials were also present.

Contain ganja menace with an iron fist: Prakasam SP

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam district SP AR Damodar has instructed police officials to tackle the ganja menace with an iron fist and to take stringent measures against peddlers.

During a crime review meeting held on Friday, the SP assessed various crimes, including pending, long-standing, and unsolved cases. He directed police officials to enhance their investigative skills and utilise scientific methods in crime investigations.

"A particular emphasis must be placed on the illegal transport, sale, and consumption of ganja. Efforts should be made to raise awareness about the harmful effects of drugs. Concrete measures must be implemented to prevent atrocities against women and children in the district," the SP stated.

He urged that UI cases be reduced on a police station-wise basis and that pending cases be resolved promptly. Arrests, charge sheets, summonses, and non-bailable warrants should not be left pending.



DC emphasises importance of tree protection and sapling plantation

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector, Chadalavda Nagarani, has urged the public to protect trees and plant saplings to safeguard the environment.

The Collector participated in the Vana Mahotsavam programme organised at the ZP High School campus in Betapudi village on Friday. During the event, the Collector, along with MLA Pulaparthi Ramanjaneyulu and Joint Collector T Rahul Kumar Reddy, planted saplings on the campus. Speaking on

the occasion, the Collector warned that indiscriminate tree felling would have detrimental effects on the environment and stressed that the responsibility of protecting trees and planting saplings lies with everyone.

MLA Pulaparthi Ramanjaneyulu called for public cooperation in planting thousands of saplings and nurturing them. He suggested that saplings be planted opposite electric poles to prevent them from being felled in the future.

Joint Collector T Rahul Kumar Reddy highlighted that

extreme environmental changes have led to increased temperatures, regardless of the season. He announced that a large-scale sapling plantation drive would be conducted over the next three months in the district.

MLA Ramanjaneyulu also administered a pledge to the students to plant saplings. The Collector and MLAs distributed saplings to the students. Among those who participated in the programme were RDO M Achut Ambarish, Village Sarpanch T Yamini Devi, and District Forest Officer D Asha Kiran.

Free medical testing services at UPHCs underutilised

There is a lack of awareness and misconceptions about quality of services provided at UPHCs

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Despite providing a wide range of advanced medical tests at no cost, the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation's (GVMC) 66 Urban Primary Health Centres (UPHCs) are facing underutilisation. Officials and medical professionals are concerned about this trend and are working to raise awareness about the available services.

The UPHCs offer 72 types of medical tests, including essential diagnostics like haemoglobin levels, Complete Blood Count, Fasting Blood Sugar, and HIV tests. These services, which can cost upwards of Rs 2,600 at private labs, are available free of

cost at UPHCs. However, data shows that many people still prefer private laboratories or the overcrowded King George Hospital (KGH) for their testing needs. This is primarily due to a lack of awareness and misconceptions about the quality of services provided at UPHCs.

K Surya Rao, a concerned citizen from MVP Colony, emphasised the need for greater public awareness. "The government should do more to inform people about the services available at UPHCs," Rao stated. Visakhapatnam District Medical & Health Officer Dr P Jagadeshwara Rao acknowledged the issue and highlighted the lack of awareness as a major factor. "We are actively working

to address this through meetings with our staff and Accredited Social Health Workers (ASHAs)," Dr Rao said. He further noted that people do not need to visit private clinics or the busy KGH for routine tests. "UPHCs offer these services for free, and we encourage people to use these local resources."

The quality of services at UPHCs is recognised on a broader scale. The UPHC at PM Palem has been certified by the Central Quality Supervisory Committee for its performance according to National Quality Assurance Standards. Dr Suzanne Palla, Medical Officer at the PM Palam UPHC, highlighted the benefits of using these facilities.



28 red sanders logs seized; five smugglers arrested

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The task force police seized 28 red sanders and arrested five smugglers in two incidents at Vadamalpet and Putalapati villages.

Task Force SP P Srinivas told the media here on Friday that a task force team led by RI Suresh Kumar Reddy conducted combing in the forest area. They spotted a red sander smuggler's gang in the forest.

On noticing the police team, the smugglers fled into the forest.

However, the police apprehended four of them and seized 26 red sanders logs, one transport vehicle and a car. Three of the arrested persons belong to Tamil Nadu state.

In another incident, a task force team conducted a checking of vehicles on the Chittoor-Kadapa highway. They found two red sanders logs being transported illegally in the car. The police arrested one smuggler and seized the car and the red sanders logs. Task Force SI Rafi registered cases.

Polavaram work to resume in Nov: Eluru MP

PNS ■ ELURU

Local MP Putta Mahesh Kumar has announced that work on the Polavaram project will recommence in November and expressed confidence that the project will be completed within three years.

In a video message on Friday, he stated that the Central Government had allocated ₹12,000 crore for the Polavaram project, with the Union Cabinet having approved this funding. The MP thanked the Centre for providing the necessary funds.

MP Kumar praised Chief Minister N. Chandrababu



Naidu for his efforts in securing over ₹12,000 crore for the project. He noted that Naidu had engaged with Prime Minister Narendra Modi,

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and the Jal Shakti Minister multiple times regarding the project.

The MP expressed optimism that the Polavaram project would be completed under Naidu's administration. He highlighted Naidu's significant contributions to the development of Hyderabad. Kumar also mentioned that the construction of the cofferdam and diaphragm wall would proceed swiftly. Additionally, he revealed that the Centre has assured the imposition of an import tax on oil palm to protect the interests of oil palm farmers.

Minister urges citizens to participate in green initiatives

Calls for large-scale planting as part of employment guarantee scheme

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

Minister of Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development & Fisheries Kinjarapu Atchannaidu has underscored the critical need for environmental protection. Speaking at the Forest Festival held at Government Boys College, Atchannaidu urged citizens to actively participate in green initiatives to enhance the district's greenery. The Forest Festival, organised by the Forest Department, was attended by District Collector Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar, SP KV Maheswara Reddy, District Joint Collector Farman Ahmed Khan, and local legislator

Gondu Shankar. During the event, Atchannaidu expressed his support for Van Mahotsava, a plantation drive aimed at addressing climate change and promoting sustainable development. He emphasised the importance of planting saplings with the community's needs in mind and urged individuals to contribute to green initiatives by planting trees on personal occasions like birthdays and weddings.

To ensure the survival of planted saplings, Atchannaidu suggested using tree guards and encouraged large-scale planting during the festive

season as part of the employment guarantee scheme. He also offered to facilitate plant procurement if notified of the required quantities. Addressing concerns about fertiliser shortages, the Minister assured that there was no supply issues and emphasised the need for everyone to contribute to environmental protection.

District Collector Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar announced a target of planting 30 lakh saplings across the district by November. He highlighted the importance of student participation and the role of the Horticulture Department in providing saplings.

UoH student secures Dinesh Memorial Award

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Dr Arya Agarwal, second year student of the MBA programme in Healthcare and Hospital Management at the School of Management Studies, University of Hyderabad (UoH), received Dr Dinesh Memorial Award for Quality Excellence during the DATACON 2024 conference organised at Hytec City on Friday.

The event was organised in partnership with IADHA, the Society for Emergency

Medicine, India, and Raghava International Institute.

It highlighted innovative approaches to enhancing healthcare through data utilisation.

Dr Agarwal delivered a presentation on the significant topic of "Data-Driven Decision Making in Evidence-Based Practice."

Her presentation was acknowledged for its outstanding contribution to healthcare management, earning her a cash award of Rs 10,000.

Uttam will be CM very soon: Raj Gopal

KOLISHETTY VENKATESHWARLU
venkat.k.warlu@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD

The Munugode Congress MLA, Komatireddy Raj Gopal Reddy, said that Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy has all the qualities to become the Chief Minister.

Speaking to the media on Friday, Raj Gopal predicted that Uttam will become CM one day. The high command would have given him the CM post, but he just missed it, Raj Gopal said.



"I have moles on my tongue and my predictions come true. I am not merely saying this. I am telling you what can happen in the future. We will

address Uttam as CM Gaaru very soon," he said.

However, it is learnt that the Uttam group and the Raj Gopal group are happy with Raj Gopal's comments. But Revanth Reddy's faction is angry over Raj Gopal's comments. Another version going around among political observers is that Raj Gopal made these comments as he is frustrated waiting for a minister post. He has said several times that he had re-joined the Congress after quitting the BJP only to become a minister.

Lokesh promises to improve school infrastructure

Visits Chandrapalem Zilla Parishad High School as part of Badi Bata programme

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Minister for Human Resource Development, Information Technology and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, on Friday visited Chandrapalem Zilla Parishad High School in Visakhapatnam as part of the Badi Bata programme, aimed at improving educational infrastructure and student engagement.

During his visit, Minister Lokesh toured various sections of the school, paying special attention to the needs of Class X students. He took the time to enquire about the challenges they face in their studies. "This school is one of the largest in the State, and many of its alumni have gone on to secure seats in prestigious institutions like the IITs," Lokesh stated, encouraging the students to aim high. He also examined their textbooks, engaging with one student to read a paragraph from an English textbook and explain it in Telugu. Sharing his own experiences, the Minister said, "I struggled with studying in Telugu, just like many of you might, but it's important to understand and overcome these challenges."

Lokesh also quizzed the stu-



dents on their knowledge of world figures, asking them about South Africa and Nelson Mandela. When the students correctly identified South Africa and recognised Mandela's significance, Lokesh explained, "Nelson Mandela, like our Mahatma Gandhi, was a great freedom fighter who fought for justice and equality. It's crucial to learn about such leaders who have shaped our world."

Beyond academics, the Minister expressed concern about the physical condition of the school, particularly the playground, which had issues with water stagnation due to recent rains. "We need to ensure that the students have a prop-

er environment for physical activities. I promise to develop a sports complex here," Lokesh pledged, addressing the students' concerns. He further inspected the science and computer labs, emphasising the importance of technology in education. "It's important that our students are familiar with technology. These labs must be fully functional to support their learning," Lokesh stressed.

One of the most pressing issues brought to Lokesh's attention was the state of the

school's toilet facilities. The Minister personally inspected the toilets and noted the lack of cleanliness and maintenance. Students pointed out that the girls' toilets lacked proper doors, and there were issues with water supply. "These are basic necessities that must be addressed immediately," Lokesh directed the officials.

Regarding the mid-day meal programme, Lokesh enquired about the quality of the food, particularly the curry served with Pulihora.

Minister attends Praja Darbar

Minister for Human Resource Development (HRD), IT, and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, held a Praja Darbar here as part of his four-day visit to the port city. The event, held at the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) office, saw a significant turnout from the public and party cadre.

Numerous grievances were raised during the Darbar, with land encroachments, particularly prevalent in the region over the past five years, being a major concern. One

of the most poignant appeals came from B. Venkata Ramana of Anakapalli, who sought government support after his daughter was allegedly killed under the pretext of a love affair. Another plea came from A Appala Konda, whose son has been arrested by US authorities for unknown reasons. Konda urged the Minister to intervene and bring his son back home.

Representatives from the Hindi Bhasha Prachara

Samiti raised concerns over the current syllabus for Classes IX and X in CBSE schools, requesting a return to the old curriculum. Members of the Dalita Hakkula Sankshema Sangham also presented their case, emphasising the importance of continuing the best schools in Andhra Pradesh as per Government Order No. 61. In response, Lokesh assured the gathering that all grievances would be carefully reviewed and addressed.

ACROSS THE STATES



Indian instructor jailed for molesting during yoga classes

Former Indian national yoga instructor was on Friday sentenced to 23 months in prison and four strokes of the cane for molesting three women while conducting classes with them. Rajpal Singh, 35, who worked at Trust Yoga in Telok Ayer Street at the time of the offences, no longer conducts lessons there. All three victims were members of the classes when he molested them. Before handing down the sentence, District Judge Sharmila Sripathy-Shanaz said Singh had abused the trust placed in him by the three women, whom she referred to as Ms C, Ms V and Ms R, according to a report by The Straits Times newspaper. The judge also said the trio had suffered emotional and psychological harm. The judge said Ms C had been receiving therapy from a counsellor, adding: "(She) testified that she had regarded yoga classes as 'a safe space' and had not expected to have been violated during a yoga class by a teacher who was in a position of authority in the room."



'WB govt protected accused in Kolkata medico's rape-murder'

Union Minister of State for Women and Child Development Savitri Thakur on Friday slammed the West Bengal government over the rape and murder of a trainee woman doctor at a government hospital in Kolkata, accusing it of protecting the accused in the case. Thakur said instead of taking strict action against the accused involved in the incident, the Mamata Banerjee-led government had protected them. "A woman doctor who saved lives was raped and murdered. This incident in Kolkata is unfortunate. Banerjee, as a woman chief minister, should have taken immediate steps, and strict action should have been taken against the accused. But the state government continued to protect them," she claimed. The Union minister further alleged that the West Bengal government was complicit in the incident.



1984 anti-Sikh riots case Book Tytler, says Delhi court

Forty years after the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, a Delhi court on Friday ordered framing of charges for murder and other offences against Congress leader Jagdish Tytler in a case related to the killing of three people in north Delhi's Pul Bangash area during the violence. Citing a witness, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had said in its charge sheet that Tytler came out of a white Ambassador car in front of Gurdwara Pul Bangash on November 1, 1984 and instigated a mob by shouting "kill the Sikhs, they have killed our mother." Three Sikhs were then killed by the mob. Special CBI judge Rakesh Sibal said there was sufficient evidence against Tytler, a former union minister, to put him on trial. "Sufficient ground is there to proceed against the accused person," the judge said. The court ordered framing of charges for several offences, including unlawful assembly, rioting, promoting enmity between different groups, house trespass and theft.

BJP MLAs meet Prez over 'constitutional crisis' in Delhi Demand dismissal of AAP govt

A delegation of BJP MLAs met President Droupadi Murmu on Friday and demanded dismissal of the AAP government in Delhi on alleged "constitutional crisis" in the wake of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's imprisonment. No immediate reaction was available from the ruling AAP over the BJP's charges. The delegation headed by Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta submitted a memorandum to the president and formally appealed her for urgent intervention in the ongoing "constitutional crisis" plaguing Delhi and raised concern over the functioning of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government," Gupta said in a state-

INDIA bloc parties patrons of the corrupt, rapists: BJP

PNS NEW DELHI

The Congress and other INDIA bloc parties have become patrons of corrupts and rapists in the states ruled by them, the BJP said on Friday, launching a fresh attack against the backdrop of alleged scams in Karnataka and rape-and-murder case of a medic in West Bengal.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, party national spokesperson Prem Shukla slammed West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee over her "fire will spread" remarks and said that it is clearly visible that the "tukde-tukde gang" has penetrated deep into the INDIA bloc of the opposition parties.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav had earlier issued a threat to set the



country on fire, he said.

"The Congress and INDI alliance governments have become masters of those who indulge in corruption, immoral acts and rape. Mamata Banerjee threatened common people and students in Bengal. She said this fire will reach Delhi travelling through Odisha, Assam and North East," Shukla said.

He alleged that the INDIA bloc intends to burn the country.

"Rahul Gandhi has already threatened to set the country on fire. Before Lok Sabha elections, Akhilesh Yadav had also threatened to set the country on fire..."

"These INDI alliance leaders are repeatedly talking setting the country on fire to save cor-

rupts and rapists. This clearly shows that the 'tukde-tukde' gang has penetrated deep into them," he added.

Raising the issue of corruption, the BJP spokesperson alleged "scam" in allocation of a five-acre land to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's family in Karnataka and demanded a CBI probe into the matter.



Era of uninterrupted dialogue with Pakistan is over: Jaishankar

PNS NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday said the "era of uninterrupted dialogue" with Pakistan is over even as he noted that India is "not passive" and whether events take a positive or negative direction, either way New Delhi will react.

In his address at a book launch here, Jaishankar also said for any country in the world, neighbours are "always a conundrum", and so are "major powers".

Major powers will be a conundrum because they are major, because of the breadth of their interests. They will always have an agenda, which

will overlap with us, but to differing degrees, also diverge, he said.

In the case of China, you have a "double conundrum", because it's a neighbour and a major power. So, the challenges with China fits this double definition, he added.

The book "Strategic Conundrum: Reshaping India's Foreign Policy" by former diplomat Rajiv Sikri talks about India's relationship with its neighbouring countries and the accompanying challenges.

Jaishankar also said there is debate in the neighbourhood about SAARC and BIMSTEC, and "all of you know the difference".



BJP leaders lock Women's Commission office

PNS KOLKATA

Senior BJP women leaders and members of the party's Mahila morcha on Friday put up the giant-sized model of a lock on the gate of West Bengal State Women's Commission office after prolonged arguments with police.

A five-member delegation,

including BJP MLA Agnimitra Paul, former MP Locket Chatterjee and former union minister Debasree Choudhury, went inside the commission office after prolonged arguments with police.

"We went inside the commission building at Karunamoyee, met commission officials including Chairperson Leena Gangopadhyay to protest its deafening silence following the

rape-murder of the sister doctor within a supposedly safe and secure R G Kar Hospital premises," Paul said. She said, "We put up the cardboard image of a lock on the gate of the state-controlled commission and handed over a 'symbolic death certificate' to the commission chairperson proclaiming the failure of the panel in upholding the right of livelihood and safe movement of women of the state."

Indian national charged for carrying 58 Indian star tortoises

PNS SINGAPORE

An Indian national was on Friday charged for allegedly possessing over 50 Indian star tortoises during his transit at the Changi Airport here.

Abdul Jaffar Haji Ali, 40, was travelling from India to Jakarta when he made a transit halt here on Thursday morning when the authorities found 58 Indian star tortoises concealed -- sealed and not ventilated -- in his personal luggage.

"A court here charged Ali Friday with unlawfully bringing the animals into Singapore -- an offence under the Endangered Species



(Import and Export) Act," The Straits Times reported.

He is accused of transporting them to the city-state without a valid permit or certificate.

Ali was also handed a charge under the Animals and Birds Act for allegedly failing to take reasonable steps in ensuring that the tortoises did not suffer unnecessarily.

Court documents did not disclose the current state of the animals. Ali's case will be mentioned again in court on September 20, according to the report. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has put the Indian star tortoises in 'vulnerable' category.

Delhi Court grants bail to alleged conman Suresh Chandrasekhar in bribery case

PNS NEW DELHI

A Delhi Court on Friday granted bail to alleged conman Suresh Chandrasekhar in a bribery case related to the AIADMK's "two leaves" election symbol. Special Judge Vishal Gogne granted the relief to him on a personal bond of Rs 5 lakh.



File Photo

Chandrasekhar has been accused of acting as a middleman for AIADMK leader T T V Dinakaran and trying to bribe an Election Commission official to secure the party's two leaves symbol for the faction led by V K Sasikala. Chandrasekhar will, however, remain in jail in other pending cases lodged against him.

Somanathan takes over as cabinet secretary

PNS NEW DELHI

TV Somanathan took over as cabinet secretary on Friday following the superannuation of Rajiv Gauba, an official statement said.

Gauba had been cabinet secretary since 2019 and completed an unprecedented five-year term.

Until recently the Union finance secretary, Somanathan was named as the next cabinet secretary on August 10 with a two-year tenure.

A 1987-batch IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre, Somanathan is a qualified chartered accountant, cost accountant and company secretary.

He has held important assignments at the Centre, including as joint secretary and later as additional secretary in the Prime Minister's



Office.

He also served as a joint secretary in the Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs and was deputed as director for corporate affairs at the World Bank in Washington DC.

Somanathan was holding the charge of finance secretary and secretary in the Department of Expenditure when he was named cabinet secretary.

TACKLING WINTER AIR POLLUTION

Delhi govt seeks meeting with Centre for evaluating cloud seeding

PNS NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai has urged the Centre to convene a meeting with stakeholders for evaluating the feasibility of cloud seeding for artificially inducing rain to combat the city's winter air pollution. In a letter to Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, Rai emphasised the critical air quality situation that Delhi faced each November, stating that it was imperative to assess cloud seeding as a potential emergency measure.

"Given the dire conditions, we must explore all available options to provide immediate relief to the residents of Delhi," Rai said. Cloud seeding, a method of artificially inducing rain, has been under consider-



ation by the Delhi government

as part of its broader strategy to tackle the hazardous air quality situation. In 2023, the government considered cloud seeding as an emergency measure during hazardous air quality days and asked IIT-Kanpur to come up with a comprehensive presentation.

However, implementation of the cloud seeding technology

requires clearances from various central government agencies.

In his letter, Rai called for an urgent meeting involving representatives from the Union environment ministry, Delhi government, Central Pollution Control Board, India Meteorological Department and other agencies to discuss the logistical and regulatory challenges.

'Next govt under Hemant Soren's leadership in Jharkhand'

PNS RANCHI

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) on Friday claimed that the next government in the state would be formed under the leadership of Hemant Soren, despite the 'ploy' of the saffron party.

JMM's statement came hours after former chief minister Champai Soren joined the BJP at a function here in Ranchi.

"Despite its ploy, BJP will not succeed in its mission. The next government in Jharkhand will be formed under the leadership of Hemant Soren," said JMM



central spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya at a press conference here.

Assembly elections are due in Jharkhand later this year. He claimed that the people of the state have exuded their confidence in the party, which can protect Jharkhand's identity, dignity and meet the aspirations of tribal and original inhabitants of the state. On Champai's joining BJP, Bhattacharya said it pains when a member leaves a family.

"Champai da has been our leader, who fought for separate Jharkhand movement. The party (JMM) gave him full respect and honour and it had also accepted his leadership. I extend him best wishes where he has gone," he said.

ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION Centre has adopted 'One Nation, One Policy'

PNS NEW DELHI

The Indian government has adopted the policy of 'One Nation, One Policy' for organ donation and transplantation and has also started consultation process with the states in the matter, a senior health ministry official said on Friday.

"Organ donation needs to become a way of life for us so that we can give a new lease of life to those suffering from organ failure," said L S Chhangsan, Additional Secretary in the Union Health Ministry of Health.

Chhangsan made the remarks as she inaugurated a deliberation on 'Reforms required for augmentation of organ and tissue donation and transplantation in terms of Technology, Processes and Legislation in India' here today.



"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has highlighted the importance of organ donation in his Mann Ki Baat pro-

gramme and emphasised on the fact that one person donating organs after death can give a new lease of life to up to eight

patients suffering from various organ failures," she said. She also stressed on the need to promote organ dona-

tion from the deceased persons to meet the huge need for organ donation in the country

Chhangsan said that the ministry's focus is to improve availability of infrastructure and trained manpower for organ transplantation, especially in government institutions.

The Centre has already initiated Organ Donation Public Awareness Campaign under the title 'Angdaan Jan Jagrukta Abhiyaan', actively underway in several states and institutions.

Dr Atul Goel, Director General Health Service (DGHS), said that the NOTTO has taken the lead in the field of organ and tissue transplant in India and the deliberation underway in the national capital provides an opportunity for introspection on putting systems in place.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

The dark side

Sexual exploitation in the Kerala film industry revealed by the Hema Committee report sends shockwaves across the country

It is a “me too” moment of the Kerala film industry. The image of the Kerala film industry has touched the rock bottom after Hema committee has reported rampant sexual abuse, lack of basic amenities for women and more. It is all the more shocking as it is happening in the state which has given the most progressive films to the country. The Kerala film industry, known for producing some of India’s most critically acclaimed and beloved films, is now under the shadow of a severe crisis. A landmark report from the Hema Committee has exposed the deep-rooted gender issues and sexual exploitation that plague this vibrant film hub, revealing a shocking underbelly that contradicts the industry’s artistic achievements. The 290-page report, prepared by a three-member panel headed by retired Kerala High Court Justice K. Hema, offers a scathing indictment of the Malayalam-language film industry. It paints a grim picture of a workplace where sexual harassment is rampant and systemic, and where a “mafia of powerful men” wields control, leaving women vulnerable to exploitation. The Hema Committee was established by the Kerala government in 2017, in the aftermath of a high-profile case that sent shockwaves through the industry. The Hema Committee’s findings have laid bare the systemic problems that have long been ignored or downplayed. The report uncovers a litany of abuses, from the lack of basic amenities like toilets and changing rooms for junior artists to the frequent demands for sexual favors by powerful men in the industry. It describes the harrowing experiences of

women who have been forced to endure long hours without access to toilets, leading to severe health issues. The panel also found that sexual harassment is not only widespread but often goes unchecked and unreported due to the fear of retaliation. As expected, the Kerala film fraternity has vehemently denied all the allegations. Despite the damning findings, the Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA), a prominent industry body, has denied the accusations. The organization’s general secretary, Siddique, dismissed the claims, stating that conditions for women on film sets have improved in recent years and that the industry is not controlled by a small group of powerful men. However, the report’s release has sparked widespread outrage, with activists and opposition leaders demanding immediate action against those implicated. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has vowed to take action if any woman who testified before the committee comes forward to file a complaint. As the industry grapples with these revelations, there is hope that this moment of reckoning will lead to lasting change. The Kerala film industry has long been celebrated for its artistic achievements; now, it must also become a beacon of respect, safety, and dignity for all who work within it.

PICTALK



Aukhra Nimbarika Peeth Mahanta Asthal, a 250-year-old Mutt in East Bardhaman

Automation vs authenticity: Can AI replace the writer’s soul?

Will the essence of storytelling — the reflection of genuine human experience — be lost in the rise of machine-generated content?

Way back in the early 2000s, when I started writing my debut novel, it seemed like a daunting task that would take an entire lifetime to complete. Driven purely by my literary instincts and an eagerness to create something authentic, I took four years to finish the story and become an author. To be an author in those days meant a lot. Not many people ventured to do it given the time and effort that one had invested in the process. Cut to the new times, and becoming an author is as easy as blowing bubbles, thanks to the emergence of AI. Someone I know recently said that they have a target of publishing 10 books this year, and I wasn’t surprised. But can AI-assisted writing be a patch on creative writing that comes from the inner realms of a writer filled with genuine emotions and subjective thought? As a creative writing coach for children, I have often wondered if children will ever need to learn to write in future, and if even readers will stop caring if a piece of writing has come from AI’s backyard or the annals of original human contemplation and creativity.



I have floated this question to people and the responses have been divided. Some believe that in a world that is pressed for time, the source of thought is not as important as the thought itself. If served in an easily digestible manner, it doesn’t matter where it comes from — man or machine. While this view has resulted in the spawning of authors around the world, what remains a cardinal truth is that a story or a piece of writing can be resonant with readers only when it is generated in human consciousness. The chief purpose of art and literature is to be able to strike a chord with readers and not to just disseminate information. The reader is

looking for a part of herself in the stories, a reflection of common human experiences and the books they read to be echo chambers of their own lives in parts or whole. Authentic storytelling brings with it a chunk of the writer’s soul and it seeks to merge with the soul of the readers. Anything that is generated by a vast reservoir of ready-made ideas will be too perfect to evoke responses. Students may be able to produce perfect sentences and passages that will answer a question, but they will not reflect the personality and character of the writer. What makes a genuine piece of writing enduring and endearing is the voice of the writer and their ability to draw on personal experiences, intuition and a strong need to connect with the audience. No matter how the concepts are laid out in an artificial piece of story, they will be less distinctive and more formulaic and impersonal. Maybe, our hustling world needs only quick fixes, and as we discover newer methods to replicate human thought, our spirit will also capitulate and settle for

the synthetic form of writing. It’s again about what the audience chooses that will determine the future of creativity. If AI can satiate the population, then why would original writers spend time and energy on creating something from the core of their hearts? It is a scary outlook to hold, as a writer and creative writing coach. While a part of me still refuses to believe the doomsday scenario, I am still betting on ethical and moral considerations to deter people from going all out and claiming themselves to be authors and writers without much intellectual investment. I am under no illusion that writing will remain sacrosanct as it used to be. It will soon become generic and predictable. Or maybe, going forward, AI will be able to generate stylised texts that mimic the voice of a particular writer and erase the distinction between the real and the unreal. It’s a scary and depressive scenario, but one that we, as authentic writers, must brace ourselves for.

(The author is a columnist and writing coach based in Dubai; views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR

Environment: A casualty of overtourism

The future of India’s tourism sector depends on a delicate balance between ecological integrity and economic growth, but it needs to be addressed now



KOTA SRIRAJ

Recently the Mayor of the picturesque Santorini Island in Greece had to declare an emergency as 17000 tourists descended on the island in one day. The beleaguered residents of the island were advised to stay indoors as swarms of tourists took over the hapless location putting immense stress on infrastructure, accommodation and the local environment including the verdant beaches. This has triggered protests by the locals who took out rallies holding placards that read “no more mass tourism.”

Overtourism is characterised by increased pollution and strain on resources like water and energy in a destination that is overwhelmed by an excessive number of tourists, to a point where it negatively affects the local environment, biodiversity, and infrastructure. The telling impact of overtourism is evident in India too. Every year the popular hill stations of north India such as Kullu, Manali and Mussoorie witness serpentine tourist traffic jams that extend over many kilometres to gain entry to these towns.

Thanks to this excess footfall the average ambient temperatures have gone up in many of the Himalayan tourist hot spots. The rising temperatures in these locations have in turn altered the weather patterns. Over the last two decades, the Indian Himalayan region has experienced a consistent decline in snowfall days, severely affecting destinations such as Gulmarg and Auli, which have seen a decrease in skiing tourists and shorter seasons, resulting in lower revenue and local economic strain. Even far-flung religious destinations such as Joshimath have not been immune to this heavy tourism torture with over 10 crore people visiting this revered Himalayan town every year resulting in ecological issues such as land subsidence and crumbling biodiversity. Down south popular tourist states such as Kerala are experiencing the painful consequences of rampant tourism. The above-normal rainfall combined with indiscriminate human activity in the form of



tourism resulted in a change in land use patterns in the plantation areas across Kerala. The God’s Own Country became a victim of human greed as over-tourism led to increased demand for hotels, restaurants and related businesses. Consequently, indiscriminate building activity on hillsides, exploitation of land and deforestation took place leading to irreversible damage to the environment besides terrain instability issues. The recent tragedy in Wayanad is an unfortunate example that consumed 500 lives and left 400 people injured besides causing immense loss of property. The unfortunate impact of tourism is accurately captured by the findings of the French start-up Murmuration specialising in monitoring the environmental impact of tourism using satellite data. The firm has stated that 80% of tourists visit just 10% of the world’s tourist spots leading to bigger crowds in fewer locations. If this trend continues, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) estimates that by 2030, the number of worldwide tourists, which peaked at 1.5 billion in 2019, will reach 1.8 billion. Furthermore, by 2030 the transport-related carbon emissions from tourism are expected to grow by 25% from 2016 levels. Some countries like Australia have taken



THANKS TO THIS EXCESS FOOTFALL THE AVERAGE AMBIENT TEMPERATURES HAVE GONE UP IN MANY OF THE HIMALAYAN TOURIST HOT SPOTS. THE RISING TEMPERATURES IN THESE LOCATIONS HAVE IN TURN ALTERED THE WEATHER PATTERNS

broad steps to address the issue. The Australian eco-certification programme for instance promotes minimal environmental impact tourism, which helps tourists make responsible travel choices. South Africa on the other hand supports ethical tourism through its fair-trade tourism certification, which ensures fair wages and working conditions in tourism enterprises. Closer home, Bhutan has adopted a “high value, low volume” policy, which serves a dual purpose and involves a daily fee paid by tourists, which helps fund local community services and limits tourist numbers to prevent over-tourism. However, India has unique problems and needs more specific and aggressive measures to rein in the issue of over-tourism. The beginning point can be the tourism supply chain sector comprising travel companies, cruise companies, ticketing firms and package tour providers. These entities must bear a fair share of responsibility for ensuring a balanced tourist traffic flow across the destinations in India. This can be done by abstaining from overselling usual tourist destinations and redirecting travellers to other locations. This will prevent overcrowding of a few traditional tourist hot spots and bring

down environmental stress. The tourism ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of environment working in tandem can employ innovative initiatives to protect the ecology and biodiversity of popular tourist destinations. This partnership can start by first regulating the tour and ticketing companies. This can be ended by registering each tourist operator and weeding out illegal entities. The dual ministry partnership can usher in a new era of environmentally conscious tourism. As a part of this, both the ministries can provide unique and non-transferable registration IDs to tourism companies and then periodic workshops can be held for these bonafide members to sensitise them about ecology, biodiversity and climate change issues. As a part of this partnership, the ministries can also develop algorithm-based software for the tourism sector companies that helps in automatically limiting the tourist flow to popular destinations by limiting hotel and transport availability after a certain quota of tourists are accommodated. This can go a long way in reducing the tourist burden on the environment in these destinations.

(The author is a policy analyst. The views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CAN GENDER JUSTICE BE ENSURED

Madam — With the revelations of the Hema Committee, the masks of many prominent figures in the Malayalam film industry are falling apart. This is a good start. But are such degradations only in Malayalam cinema? Is this not the case in Kollywood and Bollywood? Aren’t ordinary women more or less humiliated in many public places except in the government sector? Isn’t this the reason for the age-old awareness of the society towards gender justice? How do organized religions treat their women? Do women have their own voice? After the Hema Committee’s revelations, will the beleaguered creeps examine the condition of the women around them? It is not rituals and prayers that children should be taught from an early age. Rather, the ability to react like the heroine in Jaya Jaya Jaya jayaha should be developed. Only then will society, the society’s copies and remakes of cinema and its workers, especially actresses, be saved. Which party will take the initiative? Which religion will come forward?

Unnikrishnan Mangalasseril | Malappuram

ARE DOCTORS’ PORTESTS PEACEFUL?

Madam— This is in response to the news report titled “Doctors on strike refuse to listen to Mamata” (August 29). Junior Doctors of government medical colleges of West Bengal, who are on cease-work for around 3 weeks, have not only condemned the violence and mayhem unleashed by a political outfit in the guise of “students” on the 27th day of August in Kolkata; but also gone to the hilarious extent of terming their own “protests” as “peaceful”!

While goons and lumpens are directly tormenting the innocents through muscle-flexing and physical assaults resulting in wounds of the victims; the Doctors are tormenting the innocent vulnerable patients, suffering from “wounds” in heart lungs kidney brain liver stomach eyes through the “non-violent” path of refusal of medical

Let us have eco-friendly festivals



India is a country where festivals are celebrated with immense joy and enthusiasm. However, these celebrations also bring forth significant challenges. Every year, Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated with great fervor, and this year will be no different, with festivities reaching new heights. But alongside the excitement, one of the most pressing challenges we face is environmental health.

Our past experiences have shown that festivals often lead to severe water pollution, particularly due to the disposal of idols and ritual remains. These materials, often containing silicon dioxide and sodium carbonate, are harmful to aquatic life, leading to their deaths and causing significant water contamination. This, in turn, affects the quality of life, disrupts food chains, and threatens the balance of our ecosystems.

To address this issue, people across the country must adopt the practice of making idols from clay and soil. This eco-friendly approach could be a significant asset in preserving environmental health. With many species of flora and fauna already endangered or on the brink of extinction, it is crucial to embrace new, innovative methods to celebrate festivals. By doing so, we can protect life on Earth while maintaining the same energy and enthusiasm in our celebrations.

Sarthakj Sharma | Ujjain

treatment!

Less said about the worst woes of patients, rushing from towns and villages several hundred kilometers away, suffering from cancer or requiring dialysis and operations the better! Yes, unlike the muscle-flexing stone-hurling violent goons, the “protests” by the “sacrosanct” Doctors are “peaceful” indeed

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

BENGAL GOING DOWN THE HILL

Madam — To the one of the kind gesture, recently the Indian Air Force launched the comic book to inspire youngster for joining Air Force. So far, joining the air force is been a sort of privilege for the men and women. But after the case of Agniveer is troled so much politically by the opposition parties and there were rumours of dismantling this particular scheme, one established in the governance, the craze of joining force got a little hurt. Although patriotism is always a biggest inspiration for all the young people to

serve their motherland with utmost honesty and integrity.

But the novel idea of comic book to share the valour and patriotism of our exuberant commanders and officers. The nation is safe on the clutches of brave hands, we hope that more and more valour loving people come from the society to serve the nation’s cause. In conclusion, while the Agniveer scheme has faced political scrutiny, the spirit of patriotism remains a driving force for many young people eager to serve their motherland. By showcasing the courage and dedication of our commanders and officers, this novel approach helps reignite the passion for joining the Air Force. The nation’s safety lies in the hands of these brave individuals, and we hope to see more valiant citizens stepping forward to serve the nation with honor and integrity.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

RELATIONSHIPS AND SPIRITUALITY

We must learn to see others as souls like ourselves, worthy of respect and understanding



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Yes, spirituality can help in maintaining good relationships. I will cite several examples, where solutions are available in spirituality. Beginning with the common fault of seeing fault in others, don't we have faults? Therefore, others must have too. How should we deal with this problem? Lord Krishna guides in the Bhagavad-Geeta, "We should not cause confusion in the minds of ignorant persons, rather should pacify." (3.26) Let us assume that our assessment of other person is right.

Then, accept it and somehow manage the situation. We should be able to do so if we indeed are wise. Another common flaw is to get angry with someone and maintain anger. What benefit is there in doing so? All we will do is to cause harm to ourselves. The Geeta illuminates, "From anger, foolishness results; from foolishness, bewilderment results; from bewilderment, loss of intelligence occurs; and by the loss of intelligence, a person is doomed." (2.63) This sequence is repeated in the lives of all those who harbour anger. How does spirituality help? Forgive and be done with it. What benefit will be derived by harbouring anger?

Rather one can be a happy person. (5.23) Thoughts of illicit acts are another common problem. Who can claim that he or she doesn't get them: The only exceptions are highly advanced devotees like Swami Vivekananda. What is the spiritual solution? Lord Krishna has drawn the line when He stated, "I am passion in beings, according to religious principles." (7.11) Otherwise, get ready to burn as warned in this verse, "By this insatiable fire in the form of lust, which is the eternal enemy of a knowledgeable person knowledge is covered." (3.39) Close relationships



like marriage require special attention. In spiritual terms, we are packages with both good and bad. Our natures are parts of these. When we are born we bring them into our present lives. These are parts of our fate and don't change much in our lifetime, mainly the major factors. This is the solution for marriage partners. We must accept them as they are. Disliking would not help; acceptance will, as long as there is no violation of dharma like maintaining illicit relationships. From the Geeta we learn that even a man of knowledge endeavours according to his nature; persons follow nature. What will repression do? (3.33) God can help if we are determined, but it is a very slow process. Another major deterrent to good relationships is a clash of egos. Everyone is trying to prove his or her superiority, whereas there is only one superior, i.e. God. We are all small, ignorant and quite helpless really.

This is what ego means. Sooner we give up the false sense of superiority and become humble better we will be served. Humility is a great quality to achieve relationships. One will begin appreciating instead, which endears us to one and all. One will have no dearth of friends, which all egoists lack. Just like everyone has faults, everyone has some good qualities also. Look for them and you will find plenty.

Make a habit of thanking whenever some favour is done to us; this habit entitles us to more favours. Lord Krishna has asked us to see all others as souls just like us. (5.18) There must be basic regard for all human beings. We are judgemental, and, unfortunately, suffer due to our very limited knowledge. How much do we know about anything in its totality – the Big Picture? Only God knows. Therefore, our expectations are very high from others and, inevitably, very little from ourselves. If we are not so judgemental our relations with others will be conducive to dealing. We will appreciate that the circumstances of others may not be so favourable to them. We will be better served in dealing with others if we embrace spirituality. We will not step in the three doors to hell, which are lust, anger and greed. And if we can control our hateful tendencies, we will endear ourselves to others greatly.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher, views expressed are personal)

The crisis of residential colonies in Punjab



SUKHDEV SINGH

Despite repeated efforts to curb unauthorised development, the reality remains stark: unauthorised colonies have proliferated, and buyers still face numerous hurdles



In its meeting held on August 14, 2024, the Punjab cabinet decided to remove the requirement of PUDA NOC for the sale of plots in the unapproved residential colonies. But the stated objective "to save the buyers from their struggle for basic civic amenities in these colonies" is the same as used by the successive governments amending the PAPA Act 1995 from time to time while its hollowness is so obvious in the reality on the ground. Every time the law has been amended to make some of its provisions more stringent against the colonizers, it has served them more. For example, the PAPA Act 1995 was amended in 2014 to deal with the promoters or estate agents registered under the act but failing to comply with its provisions.

The amendment changed the punishment of imprisonment from up to three years to a minimum of three years extendable to seven years with a fine from ten thousand to a minimum of Rupees two lac extending to Rupees five lac. But it made the law ineffectual on the offending colonizers in the past. The cycle of stricter punishment and waiver of the offences in the past has been on since 1995 in the name of saving buyers from cheating and deceit. The notifications, issued in the years 2010, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2021, and 2022, amending or adding to the law(s) of PAPA instantiate the continuity in relief to the colonizers in the name of providing relief to the people. The successive governments have been approving the schemes of instituting the need for a 'no objection certificate' NOC by paying some fee as development charges that the individual plot holders are circumstantially compelled to pay but the real estate agents remain immune to it waiting for the next the cut-off date for the waiver. Given the increased demand for housing and the unregulated activities of "some private colonisers" working with the sole "motive of profits" disregarding "the interests and rights of buyers of plots and flats", the stated objective for repealing the Punjab Regulation of



THE PAPA ACT 1995 WAS AMENDED IN 2014 TO DEAL WITH THE PROMOTERS OR ESTATE AGENTS REGISTERED UNDER THE ACT BUT FAILING TO COMPLY WITH ITS PROVISIONS

colonies Act, 1975 and the legislating Punjab Apartment and Property Regulation Act (PAPRA) 1995 was "to check, control and regulate effectively the activities of such private colonisers and protect the interest of the consumers". The situation originated from the unpreparedness of the government to meet the rising need for housing and post-1990 privatisation policy without any regulating mechanisms. In hindsight, the Punjab Apartment and Property Regulation Act 1995 was legislated and the Punjab Urban Planning and Development Authority (PUDA) was established to register private colonizers and issue licenses to develop the housing colonies on the agricultural or other land after seeking change in land use (CLU) and approved plans as per rules in PAPA Act 1995.

With a huge financial burden on salaries and infrastructure PUDA and its subsequent regional authorities were tasked to enforce 'obligations on promoters and estate agents' to create all civic amenities within a specified time-frame requiring them to hand over the colony to the respective urban local body after NOCs from all the concerned departments. The stated objective of the act (PAPA) and the authority (PUDA) since then has been to check the growth of unauthorised colonies and enforce the development in the authorised colonies as per rules.

But unfortunately, it has miserably failed in its two-pronged objective: since 1995 the number of unauthorised colonies has risen to more than 15000 while the number of authorised colonies in comparison is much less.

Yet in the authorised colonies, the enforcement of time-bound assured development is too weak to act for anyone as a motivation to build houses there. The colonisers have sold all the plots in the name of legal colonies plotting a chunk of land on its sidelines without necessary approvals and without developing the approved section to the standards of seeking NOCs from the concerned departments to hand over the colonies to the local body; the irony is that the development authorities prefer not to take any suo moto notice of it. Neither the developer nor any government agency including PUDA undertakes the development responsibility although the rules prescribe stringent action against the coloniser and for PUDA to undertake development by confiscating the mortgaged properties and bank guarantees etc. But PUDA continues to grant extensions year after year while the plot buyer is not able to build the house on the 'legal' plot in a 'legal' colony because the PSPCL does not provide a power supply connection in the absence of NOC.

The officials appointed in PUDA and urban local body (ULB) to enforce and ensure time-bound development in the legal colonies by the licensed private developer finish off by saying that the public facilities in an authorised colony are the responsibility of the colonizer who doesn't give a damn to this responsibility because he understands that the enforcement agencies enforce the law on those who approach the law not on those who violate the law.

The plot buyers feel legally duped. The unauthorised colonies without change in land use or any

approved plan continued to mushroom where the colonisers created very little infrastructure and sold the plots leaving the plot holders to act as the vote bank approaching the political class for relief. Hence the need for NOCs and their waiver becomes a game of politics rather than a policy. Now that the cycle is complete by the Punjab cabinet decision to waive off the need for NOCs in the unauthorised colonies while the cabinet itself had legislated for the NOCs.

It doesn't matter to the common man which cabinet it was or is; what matters to them is a legal and easy-to-build house policy for them.

Therefore while the government notifies the waiver of NOCs in the unauthorised colonies, it should direct PUDA to confiscate mortgaged properties and bank guarantees to develop all more-than-ten-years colonies and ensure time-bound development of electricity LD systems, sewerage, water supply and roads before selling any plot in the authorised colonies to encourage the planned and legal development and strictly control the unauthorised development in future rather than approve policies to legalise the illegal.

The onus for ensured development should be on the regulator rather than on the buyer of a plot. Let the 2024 notification waiving off the condition of NOCs by the buyers be the last one! Let the common man experience the fundamental right to live a respectable life!

(The writer is a retired professor from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar and a Member, of the Governing Council, INTACH; views are personal)

Seizing the opportunity in global defence supply gaps

With its growing defence manufacturing capabilities and strategic partnerships, India has the unique opportunity to address the emerging gaps in global defence supplies

The global defence landscape is rapidly evolving, marked by escalating geopolitical conflicts and the increasingly strategic use of denial tactics to restrict access to critical military hardware and technology. Many nations, including India's key strategic partners, are facing unprecedented challenges as essential defence stockpiles deplete, and sophisticated war machines become obsolete or vulnerable to new forms of subversion.

In response, major defence suppliers, particularly those in first-world countries, are prioritizing the preservation of their stockpiles over external sales. Amid these challenges, a critical opportunity emerges for India. By adopting a strategically designed approach to filling these gaps and enhancing



PADMALOCHAN DASH

its strategic influence and partnerships, India can play a significant role in addressing the emerging deficits in the global defence supply chain.

Vulnerabilities in the Global Defense Supply Chain: The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with ongoing conflicts in regions like Ukraine, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific, has exposed the fragility of global defence supply chains. As India seeks to position

itself as a reliable and diversified supplier of defence equipment, it is imperative to act promptly. Scaling these capabilities and implementing robust, resilient policies rooted in long-term strategic objectives is critical for India to emerge as a prominent player in the global defence marketplace.

Strengthening Strategic Alliances: India has bolstered its defence partnerships with major global powers, including the United States, Russia, France, and Israel. However, these alliances must evolve beyond transactional arrangements into enduring, reciprocal relationships. For India, every transaction or partnership should be leveraged to bolster the country's ability to produce surpluses

and emerge as a key provider for other nations' defence needs. These strategic alliances should not only enhance India's position as a global player but also provide it with a sustainable competitive edge in the global defence market.

Advancing Indigenous Production Capacity: India has made considerable strides in Indigenous defence production, exemplified by achievements such as the Arjun main battle tank, BrahMos missile, and Tejas fighter jet. However, to meet the increasing demands of the global defence market. To strengthen its position as a world-class defence producer, India must expand its production capabilities into areas such as military-class UAVs, advanced missile defence systems,



and cutting-edge cyber defence technologies. Additionally, integrating advanced maritime reconnaissance aircraft, anti-submarine warfare systems, and comprehensive surveillance infrastructure into its production portfolio is essential. India's Indigenous defence production capacity must be enhanced to meet international benchmarks, positioning the country as a dominant

player in filling global defence requirements.

Enhancing Strategic-Critical Manufacturing Projects: India's ambitions to become a leading, self-sufficient defence producer are underscored by initiatives like 'Make in India' and Atmanirbhar Bharat. However, the true measure of success will be how well these products align with international demands and address the expanding gaps in the global defence supply chain. India must swiftly adapt to global requirements, ensuring that its products are compatible with international platforms and standards. To achieve this, the country's policies must prioritize attracting investments in advanced manufacturing infrastructure, supporting defence production

systems, and upgrading critical production expertise. Additionally, enforcing rigorous quality control and fostering an innovation-driven, high-quality production foundation is essential to meeting global defence demands.## Diversification and Global Competitiveness Diversification and transformation within India's defence sector are vital for achieving global competitiveness. A diversified manufacturing base that strategically incorporates public sector units with private enterprises must be developed to create a more adaptable and responsive supply chain. As India aims to become a major defence supplier, success will depend on developing a sustainable innovation ecosystem that produces tangible

outcomes.

Path Forward: India as a Leading Defense Supplier India's ambition to emerge as a leading defence supplier demands decisive action and strategic focus. To realize this vision, India must enhance its export capabilities, target key markets, and align with international standards. Success in this arena depends on establishing a firm policy commitment to consistently deliver high-quality, adaptable, and precise defence products tailored to the needs of diverse conflicts, theatres, and warfare requirements.

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IN BRIEF



Forex kitty swells by \$7 bn to hit record high of \$ 681.69 bn

India's forex reserves jumped by USD 7.023 billion to touch a new high of USD 681.688 billion in the week ended August 23, the RBI said on Friday. The overall reserves had jumped by USD 4.546 billion to USD 674.664 billion in the previous reporting week. The previous all-time high for the overall reserves was recorded at USD 674.919 billion as on August 2. For the week ended August 23, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by USD 5.983 billion to USD 597.552 billion, the data released on Friday showed. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves increased by USD 893 million to USD 60.997 billion during the week, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by USD 118 million to USD 18.459 billion, the apex bank said.



'Before 2017, UP lacked enviros for businesses'

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said Friday Uttar Pradesh lacked the environment to set up businesses before his government came to power in 2017. The previous governments had limited interests and also lacked the vision for the growth of the state, he alleged. "It is true that before 2017, Uttar Pradesh did not have an environment where we could ask an entrepreneur to set up an industry here. The government also did not have a vision," Adityanath said, addressing a function here to distribute cash incentives for industrial units in the state. The chief minister distributed incentives worth Rs 1,333 crore to 32 industrial units and Letters of Comfort to 10 for investments of over Rs 4,500 crore during the programme organised at Lok Bhawan, according to an official statement. Adityanath also claimed that the previous governments were only concerned about staying in power.



Paytm shares surge 13 pc; extend previous day's rally

Shares of fintech firm One97 Communications -- the owner of Paytm brand -- surged nearly 13 per cent on Friday, continuing to rally for the second day in a row. Extending its previous day's rally, the stock jumped 12.15 per cent to settle at Rs 621.80 on the BSE. During the day, it zoomed 13.86 per cent to Rs 631.30. On the NSE, it surged 12.69 per cent to Rs 624.90 apiece. Shares of the fintech firm had ended over 3 per cent higher on Thursday after the company received the government's approval for downstream investment in wholly-owned subsidiary Paytm Payments Services Ltd. The company will reapply for a payment aggregator (PA) licence, a regulatory filing said on Wednesday. "...PPSL has received approval from the government of India, Ministry of Finance, Department of Financial Services, vide its letter dated August 27, 2024, for downstream investment from the company into PPSL. "With this approval in place, PPSL will proceed to resubmit its PA application.



Sensex, Nifty extend gains to scale fresh peaks

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty marched higher to scale fresh lifetime closing peaks on Friday, tracking a largely firm trend in global markets and renewed foreign fund inflows amid the US rate cut hopes gathering momentum. Buying in index majors Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank and Infosys also fuelled the rally in domestic equities. Rallying for the ninth straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 231.16 points or 0.28 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 82,365.77. During the day, it jumped 502.42 points or 0.61 per cent to hit a record intra-day peak of 82,637.03. A total of 2,228 stocks advanced, while 1,701 declined and 116 remained

unchanged on the BSE.

In its best winning streak since its launch in 1996, the NSE Nifty soared 83.95 points or 0.33 per cent to hit a new lifetime closing high of 25,235.90, taking its victorious run to the 12th day in a row. During the day, it surged 116.4 points or 0.46 per cent to hit a new record intra-day peak of 25,268.35.

"Global markets are...resonating with the US Fed's pledges of a rate cut in September. The US and Indian markets have regained the recent highs, reflecting the continuation of this optimism," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,279.56 points or 1.57 per cent, and the Nifty soared 412.75 points or 1.66 per cent.

Govt taking measures at policy level to help fintech sector: PM

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the government is taking various measures at the policy level to promote the fintech sector, which attracted over USD 31 billion investments in the last 10 years, and the abolition of the Angel Tax is also a step towards the growth of the segment.

Addressing the Global Fintech Fest 2024 here, the Prime Minister also asked the regulators to take more measures to stop cyber frauds and further increase digital literacy among people.

"Fintech has played a significant role in democratising financial services," he said, and expressed confidence that it will help in improving the quality of life for Indians.

Modi emphasised that adoption of fintech by Indians is "unmatched in speed and scale" and no such example can be found anywhere else in the world.

He said the transformation brought about by the fintech sector in India is not just limited to technology, but its social impact is far-reaching.



He also stressed that fintech has dented the parallel economy and is bridging the gap between villages and cities on the financial services front.

The Prime Minister also said that in the last 10 years, the fintech space has attracted investments of more than USD 31 billion and fintech startups

have grown by 500 per cent.

He said it is festive season in India, there is also festivity in the economy and markets, in an apparent reference to the robust GDP growth and capital market scaling new highs.

Modi also informed the gathering that loans worth over Rs 27 lakh crore have

been disbursed under the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana, world's largest micro-finance scheme.

Speaking at the event, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said, digital technologies have been instrumental in expanding financial inclusion, improving efficiency and enabling real time services across the country.

"Today, India stands as a global leader in digital payments, a feat achieved by combining proactive policy making with innovation and technological advancements. Collaboration between policy makers, regulators and innovators is the defining element of India's Fintech journey," Das said.

The Reserve Bank's regulatory frameworks have facilitated new and innovative businesses to grow in an orderly manner, he said.

"These regulatory initiatives reflect our commitment to support innovation with prudence. Our collaborative approach is visible in the fact that we have held a large number of interactions over the last one year with the Fintech sector players," he said.

RBI imposes Rs 2.68 cr fine on UCO Bank

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India on Friday said it has imposed a penalty of Rs 2.68 crore on UCO Bank for contravention of certain provisions, including on opening of current accounts, interest rate on deposits and frauds classification.

The RBI has also imposed a penalty of Rs 2.1 lakh on Cent Bank Home Finance Ltd for non-compliance with certain provisions of Know Your Customer (KYC) directions.

In both cases, the central bank said penalties are based on regulatory compliance and are not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the entities with their customers.

SC terms bank recovery agents 'group of goons' for not returning vehicle despite loan settlement

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Terming a recovery agent firm of a bank as a "group of goons" who did not return the vehicle seized from a man despite one time settlement of the loan amount, the Supreme Court has directed the West Bengal Police to file charge sheet against the company within two months.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan, which directed for payment of compensation to one Debasish Bosu Roy Chowdhury who took a loan of Rs 15.15 lakh for purchasing a bus for plying in Kolkata, directed Bank of India to recover the amount from the recovery agent.

"Given the observations made by the high court and the plea taken by the petitioners, we find that respondent No. 4, a recovery agent, in actuality appears to be a group

of goons, who use their muscle power to harass loanees on behalf of the petitioner-bank," the bench said in its recent order.

It noted an FIR was lodged against the recovery agent firm M/s City Investigation and Detective for failing to return the vehicle in proper condition and said, "The Commissioner of Police of the concerned area is directed to ensure that investigation of FIR dated July 5, 2023, registered at Police Station Sodepur in West Bengal, under Sections 406, 420 and 471 of the IPC, is taken to its logical conclusion without any delay, and charge sheet is filed within a period of two months."

The recovery agent firm, however, later returned the vehicle but in a damaged condition, with chassis and engine numbers changed.

Sebi approves IHL's acquisition of Invesco's PMS business

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital market regulator Sebi has granted its approval to Hinduja Group firm IndusInd International Holdings for the acquisition of Invesco AMC's portfolio management services business.

According to sources, Sebi's approval marks the completion of a crucial phase in IndusInd International Holdings Limited's (IIHL) 60 per cent acquisition of Invesco AMC, leaving only one final regulatory approval before the transaction can be completed.

An application seeking the Securities and Exchange Board of India's green signal for grant of sponsor approval to IIHL is in process and upon receipt, IIHL will proceed with consummation of the transaction, sources said.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has already granted its consent to IIHL for



acquiring 60 per cent shareholding in each of InvescoAsset Management (India) Pvt Ltd and Invesco Trustee Pvt Ltd.

IIHL will be holding the investment through its wholly-owned and controlled subsidiary.

The company had earlier bid and emerged successful for the acquisition of Reliance Capital Ltd and its subsidiaries that operate in the life insurance, health and general insurance sectors as well as asset reconstruction, research and securities broking. IIHL's resolution plan

has been approved by the National Company Law Tribunal.

IIHL's ownership will benefit Invesco to expand into more Indian cities and towns due to the presence of a strong domestic partner. Invesco Asset Management began its India operations in 2008 with the acquisition of Lotus India Asset Management Company. Since then, it has grown to serve over 1.6 million retail investor folios and over 39,000 empanelled distributors as of April, with over 70 per cent of its assets under management in the equity and equity-oriented assets.

It is the 5th largest foreign asset manager and the 17th largest domestic asset manager in India with combined onshore and offshore advisory and assets under management of Rs 85,393 crore as of March 31, 2024, and a presence in 40 cities across the country.

Vadhvan Port to generate 12 L jobs for youth, women: Sonowal

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The proposed Vadhvan Port in the Palghar district of Maharashtra will generate 12 lakh jobs for the local youth and women besides creating multiple facilities for the people of the area once it becomes operational, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said on Friday.

Speaking at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the port project at CIDCO ground in Palghar, Sonowal also said that India has earned a name as a maritime nation in the world under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has taken a slew of initiatives for the maritime sector in the last 10 years.

Modi laid the foundation stone for the mega project in the presence of Maharashtra



Governor C P Radhakrishnan, state chief minister Eknath Shinde and deputy chief ministers Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar.

The prime minister during his visit to the state also inaugurated, laid foundation stoned for 218 fisheries projects worth Rs 1,560-crore in Palghar besides addressing the 2024 edition of three-day Global Fintech Fest in Mumbai, which

culminated here on Friday.

To be built as an all-weather, greenfield deep draft port 150 km from Mumbai, which got the Union Cabinet's nod in June this year, the maritime project will see an investment of Rs 76,200 crore, which includes the development of core infrastructure, terminals and other commercial infrastructure in public-private partnership (PPP) mode.

Key infra sectors' growth slows down to 6.1 pc in July

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The growth in production of eight key infrastructure sectors slowed down to 6.1 per cent in July this year due to a decline in the output of crude oil and natural gas, according to official data released on Friday.

The growth rate, however, is up from 5.1 per cent in June. The growth of core sectors -- coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity -- was 8.5 per cent in July 2023.

During April-July this fiscal, the output of core sectors rose by 6.1 per cent against 6.6 per cent in the same period last fiscal. The eight core sectors contribute 40.27 per cent to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) which measures overall industrial growth.

Govt sets Kharif rice procurement target 5% higher at 485 L tonnes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has fixed kharif rice procurement target at 485 lakh tonnes for the 2024-25 marketing year starting October and asked states to focus on increasing purchases of coarse cereals.

In the current 2023-24 marketing year (October-September), the government procured 463 lakh tonnes of kharif rice.

Paddy is grown in both kharif and rabi seasons. State-owned Food Corporation of India (FCI) is the government's nodal agency for procurement and distribution of foodgrains.

Union Food Secretary on Friday chaired a meeting with State Food Secretaries and FCI to "discuss arrangements for procurement of crops in ensuing Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2024-25", an official statement said.

Various factors impacting procurement such as weather forecast, production estimates, and readiness of states for procurement operations were reviewed during the meeting.

"After deliberations, the estimates for paddy procurement (Kharif crop) during ensuing KMS 2024-25 have been fixed at 485 lakh tonnes in terms of rice compared to procurement of 463 lakh tonnes (Kharif crop) during KMS 2023-24," the statement said.

The Centre has also set a target to procure 19 lakh tonnes of kharif coarse grains/ millets (Shree Anna) during the KMS 2024-25. The target is much higher compared to procurement of 6.6 lakh tonnes during KMS 2022-23 (Kharif crop).

"States/UTs were advised to focus on procurement of millets for diversification of crops and enhanced nutrition in dietary patterns," the food ministry said.

VISTARA TO FLY INTO SUNSET ON NOV 11

Singapore Airlines' FDI cleared in AI Group

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The nearly 10-year-old Vistara will fly into the sunset on November 11 as part of the merger with Tata Group-owned Air India, with the deal moving closer to completion after the Indian government approved Singapore Airlines' Rs 2,058.5-crore foreign direct investment in Air India Group.

The merger, announced in November 2022, will see Singapore Airlines snapping up a 25.1 per cent stake in the Air India Group, and will create one of the world's largest airline groups.

On Friday, Singapore Airlines (SIA) said the Indian government has approved its proposed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the enlarged Air India Group as part of the ongoing merger of Air India and Vistara.

The approval marks a significant development towards the completion of the merger, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year, SIA said in a release.

Vistara is a 51:49 joint venture between Tatas and SIA. With regulatory approvals in place, Air India CEO and MD Campbell Wilson told the employees on Friday that



November 12 has been set as the date for the movement of aircraft and crew of Vistara to Air India. Loss-making Vistara, which has a fleet of 70 planes and flies to 50 destinations,

will be operating the last flight under its brand on November 11. It had a domestic market share of 10 per cent in July. "Starting 03 September 2024, customers will, progres-

sively, no longer be able to make bookings with Vistara for travel on or after 12 November 2024," Vistara said in a release.

Thereafter, Vistara aircraft will be operated by Air India and bookings for the routes operated by these planes will be redirected to Air India's website. "Vistara will continue to take bookings and operate flights as usual till 11 November 2024," the release said. The government's approval for SIA's Rs 2,058.5-crore FDI is the last major clearance for the merger that was announced in November 2022.

'Public sector units must prioritise MSMEs when purchasing raw materials'

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Union Minister of State for MSMEs Shobha Karandlaje on Friday emphasised that public sector industries must prioritise MSMEs when purchasing spare parts and raw materials.

"A memorandum to that effect will be submitted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi," said Karandlaje.

The minister inaugurated a two-day conclave on MSME, organised by the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FKCCI) at Palace Grounds in Bengaluru.

Karandlaje said small, micro, and medium sector industries play a vital role in



the industrial development of the country. "These MSMEs create jobs for our youth. The Centre has evolved many schemes to encourage MSMEs," she added.

She also highlighted that there has been an increased allocation for MSMEs in the

Union budget, emphasising that MSMEs are playing a vital role in realizing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a "Viksit Bharat."

According to Karandlaje, there is a need to improve the skill development of youth in MSMEs to better align with the needs of the industry.

"We are taking steps in that direction. MSMEs are contributing significantly to GDP growth. About five lakh applications are received every year to start new MSMEs. We are currently able to provide subsidies to only 90,000 applicants. We have submitted a proposal to the finance minister to enhance this subsidy component," the MSME Minister explained.

Power, deceit & drama collide in Berlin

The stage is set for a high-stakes showdown as ZEE5 unveils the heart-pounding trailer for *Berlin*, a spy thriller that promises to keep viewers glued to their screens. Premiering on September 13, this pulse-racing espionage drama is helmed by the visionary director Atul Sabharwal. It has a powerhouse cast including Aparshakti Khurana, Ishwak Singh, Rahul Bose, Anupriya Goenka and Kabir Bedi. Set in the politically charged atmosphere of 1990s New Delhi, *Berlin* promises to redefine the spy thriller genre for Indian audiences. This high-octane movie, a collaboration between Zee Studios and Yippee Ki Yay Motion Pictures, plunges viewers into a world where trust is a luxury and every decision could be fatal.

Berlin has captivated audiences at several international film festivals, such as MAMI, Stars Asian International Film Festival in Los Angeles and Indian Film Festival of Melbourne,



earning accolades for its compelling narrative and stellar performances across the globe. In a world where secrets are a currency; even the quietest can be the deadliest. *Berlin* will leave you thinking and questioning... can a deaf and mute individual be a spy?

Aparshakti Khurana, who plays the sign language expert, shared his thoughts on the project. He said, "*Berlin* is a film with which I am emotionally connected, as it really brought out the best in me. Atul Sabharwal pulled me out of my comfort zone and threw me into such a challenging world. It's like being the wildcard in a high-stakes poker game where every player holds a secret. Trust me, this isn't your typical binge-watch—it's a mind-bending puzzle that'll have you playing detective from your couch. It's a character and a role I have never explored before... so, get ready for a surprise. *Berlin* is where the laughs stop, and the intensity begins."



Ajay Devgn, Rakul Preet Singh reunite in Punjab for De De Pyaar De 2

Rakul Preet Singh is set to reprise her role in the eagerly awaited sequel *De De Pyaar De 2*, following the success of the first installment. After kick-starting the shoot for *Son of Sardaar 2*, Ajay Devgn will reunite with Rakul for this highly anticipated project. The original film, which also starred Tabu and Jimmy Sheirgill in prominent roles, was a significant commercial success and set the stage for an exciting sequel.

In the first *De De Pyaar De*, Rakul Preet Singh and Ajay Devgn's on-screen pairing was a standout. Rakul's portrayal of the lively Ayesha and Ajay's role as the middle-aged Ashish created fun and engaging chemistry. Their interactions blended romance and comedy, making for a delightful and memorable cinematic experience that resonated with audiences.

As per recent reports, a source close to the production team for *De De Pyaar De 2* has said, "As of now, the production is busy preparing for a 45-50 day schedule in some beautiful and rustic locations in Punjab. While Madhavan, Rakul and the other cast and crew members leave next month for Punjab, Ajay Devgn will be joining after his *Son of Sardaar 2* schedule, which is being filmed in the United Kingdom."

The sequel introduces R Madhavan as Rakul's father, promising an engaging battle of wits between him and Ajay's character, Ashish. Rakul's return to the film is highly anticipated, as her performance in the original was widely praised for bringing charm and adding comedic value to the screen. Fans can look forward to seeing her presence once again in this sequel, as *De De Pyaar De 2* is slated for release in the summer of 2025.

Major reveal on Rajkumar Rao's next out now!

Following the huge success of his previous film, *Street 2*, Bollywood actor Rajkumar Rao has revealed details about his upcoming movie. The film's title will be revealed on August 31, the actor's birthday.

In the poster, Rajkumar is shown with his back to the camera while holding a gun. Kumar Taurani from Tips Films and Jay Shevakramani from Northern Lights Films will finance the movie.

The most recent project Rajkumar Rao worked on was the follow-up to the horror-comedy film, *Street*. The movie was mostly well-received by critics and has earned more than Rs 500 crore worldwide. In *Street 2*, Rajkumar's character Vicky faces off against a new foe named Sarkata (the headless one) and teams up with *Street* to defeat him. Besides Rajkumar Rao, *Street 2* features Shradha Kapoor, Abhishek Banerjee, Aparshakti Khurana and Pankaj Tripathi in important roles, along with appearances by Varun Dhawan, Akshay Kumar and Tamannaah Bhatia.



ANGELINA GETS EIGHT-MINUTE STANDING OVATION, BECOMES SENTIMENTAL



Angelina Jolie got emotional at the Venice Film Festival when her new movie *Maria* received an eight-minute standing ovation. Numerous videos and photos of the actor at the event were shared on social media platforms. Angelina donned a bespoke beige gown by Tamara Ralph along with a fur stole for Thursday evening's event. Following Angelina's emotional moment, she received comfort from Pierfrancesco Favino, her co-star in the film *Maria*. She was spotted briefly leaning her head on his shoulder as well. Director Pablo Larraín assisted her up the stairs in the film and she bowed to the audience.

Angelina Jolie made a subtle reference to Brad Pitt when discussing her new role as Maria Callas in the biographical film *Maria* directed by Pablo Larraín. "There's a lot I won't say in this room that you probably know and assume," Jolie said, as per reports. During the Venice Film Festival interview, the *Original Sin* actress discussed the challenges and significant personal significance of portraying Callas, whose life extraordinarily intertwined talent and tragedy.

When asked whether she sees the role as a potential path to a second Oscar, Jolie emphasised, "For me, the bar in this where I would know if I did good enough are the Maria Callas fans and those who love opera and I would fear to disappoint them."

She added, "So, of course, all other things and in my own business, if there's a response to the work, I'm very grateful. But in my heart, to disappoint the people who love her, who she means a lot to, and her legacy, I came to care for her. I didn't want to do a disservice to this woman." Maria examines the last part of Callas' life in 1977, when the renowned opera singer faced issues with drug addiction, a declining singing ability and noticeable loss of weight. These problems troubled her while she resided in Paris, ultimately resulting in her premature death from a heart attack at 53 years old. Jolie's performance explores this emotional time, depicting the intricacies of a woman who was once highly successful in her field but encountered significant challenges in her later life.

Jurassic World Rebirth to explore new era of dinosaurs

Universal Pictures revealed the title and first-look images for the fourth *Jurassic World* movie. *Jurassic World Rebirth* is the seventh installment in the 31-year-old *Jurassic Park* series. Scheduled for release on July 2, 2025, the science fiction action movie features Scarlett Johansson as Black Widow, Jonathan Bailey as Bridgerton and Mahershala Ali as Moonlight. The fourth *Jurassic World* film is adapted from a screenplay by David Koepp, the same writer of the 1993 *Jurassic Park* movie. Frank Marshall and Patrick Crowley are producing the film, which is being directed by Gareth Edwards, known for his



work on *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* and *The Creator*. *Jurassic World Rebirth* introduces a fresh ensemble cast led by the *Lucy* actress, with no returning actors from previous films. Manuel Garcia-Rulfo (*The Lincoln Lawyer*), Russell Friend (*Hitman: Agent 47*), Luna Blaise (*Manifest*), and David Iacono (*The Summer I Turned Pretty*) are also part of the cast. The film follows events five years after *Jurassic World Dominion*, when "the planet's ecology has proven largely inhospitable to dinosaurs," according to the official summary. "Those remaining exist in

isolated equatorial environments with climates resembling the one in which they once thrived. The three most colossal creatures within that tropical biosphere hold the key to a drug that will bring miraculous life-saving benefits to humankind." Johansson plays the role of Zora Bennett, a Covert Operations expert who leads the team on a gruelling mission to extract DNA from the three largest dinosaur species left alive. However, she ends up stranded on an island alongside a civilian family. Meanwhile, Ali plays the role of Zora's partner, Duncan Kincaid, and Bailey portrays Dr Henry Loomis, a palaeontologist.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



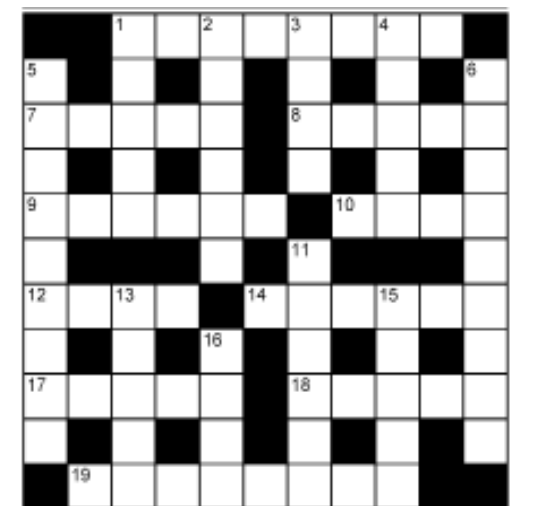
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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8	3				7			
	4					5		
		7					1	8
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Yesterday's solution

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

- 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

- Use these for cutting paper
- A smelly vegetable
- Rest and take it easy
- Stop working because you are too old or ill
- You will find a judge and jury in here
- Swapped
- Machines for lifting things
- A sweetener
- Rest on your knees
- Break in two

DOWN

- Move
- Take no notice of
- Painful to touch
- Measuring stick

SOLUTION

L	A	U	G	H	T	E	R		
A	N	I	E	U					
N	E	K		D	E	A	N		
O	L	I	E	P					
S	P	E	C	K		L	I	T	R
L	N	L	V	C					
I	L	O	O	Y	E	A	T		
F	I	G	H	T	C	E	A		
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Business development officer to Mrs South India 2024

Originally from the city renowned for its long-standing tales, Anantapur, the newly crowned Mrs South India 2024, Varsha Ramesh Reddy attributes her successes to Hyderabad. In a special interview with *The Pioneer*, she warmly expresses her fascination for the city

TEJAL SINHA

Two crowns, one mission—enrapturing hearts has been the motto of the newly crowned Mrs South India 2024, Mrs Varsha Ramesh Reddy. Getting the crown back to the state and the city, for that matter, was no less than an honour for her. Her inclination dates back to over 12 years ago, when she had participated in the Miss South India pageant. Back then, without the separation of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, she had represented Andhra Pradesh as a whole.

Though she couldn't get the crown, she was in the top 6 and also won Miss Congeniality. Nevertheless, this didn't make her lower her confidence; rather, the zeal to win the crown kept growing. Now 12 years later, not Miss South India, but rather she's won the title of Mrs South India. Honoured to have her on board for our special segment of Hyderabad, we rang her a call and she gleefully begins, "The journey from competing at the Miss South India pageant to being crowned as the Mrs South India 2024. Things have changed and a lot has evolved. There were many hurdles, but isn't that what teaches you? It was challenging yet; there was a lot of learning."

Varsha hails from Anantapur, Rayalaseema. Because her father was in the Indian Air Force, they had to relocate to Shillong for his new assignment. She lived in Northern India until she was almost in her 12th grade, then returned to Hyderabad to pursue engineering at Mallareddy University. After obtaining her double master's in Australia, she returned to Hyderabad. Basically, for all the obvious reasons, she and her family, especially after her dad's retirement, had settled in Hyderabad. "Hyderabad is a home," shares Varsha, who was also crowned as Mrs Telangana Global 2024. "Though I had got very good job opportunities in Australia, deep down I knew I had to come back home, to Hyderabad. The people of Hyderabad, I think, make the city so



much different from the rest. They're so warm and welcoming. Hyderabad is a mix of everything: different cultures, different personalities and it gives you that space to grow. It's not too crowded. People can breathe here peacefully. We can enjoy the rich heritage and the beautiful food that it has to offer with the beautiful people. I always have that attachment to the city. I'm in one of the most brilliant cities around the globe. The satisfaction and that peace from within will come only in Hyderabad."

So as we discuss the pageant, she goes on to share a memorable moment she recalls of in the city: "My journey in pageants began 12 years ago, participating in the Miss Hyderabad competition. The true story is that they were holding auditions for girls and invited us to come the following day because they were only auditioning the first 50 girls that day. The numbers were assigned according to our names, with mine starting with 'V' towards the end. The auditions were held for 2 days and I believed I wouldn't have an opportunity. There were approximately 200 to 350 girls present. I participated in the audition and surprisingly, among all the lovely, talented girls, my name was selected and I made it to the top 18. I was chosen for the beauty contest and the large feature article included a photo of me. This memory is so touching and will forever remain etched in my mind."

One thing that comes to mind every time she thinks of Hyderabad is her mom. With immense regards, she enthuses, "Hyderabad, as I said, is my home and again, home to me is my mom. But again, if I really have to think of that one thing, then that would be the people. Hyderabad is known for its Biryani, but I'm not quite a fan of it; rather, I enjoy Pista House's Haleem, which I always enjoy in Ramzan."

In addition to her pageant, she landed her initial position in Hyderabad as a business development manager. Since that time, she claims to have only witnessed expansion. Today, she attributes her position as vice president of operations in 5 companies to the city's strong support.

However, even though she hadn't pursued pageantry as a career, it was a hobby that she was eager to continue. Having won Mrs South India 2024, she is eagerly anticipating what else lies ahead on her journey.

"I've seen the modelling culture in Hyderabad evolve drastically," shares Varsha with great exhilaration as she further continues, "I'm seeing a lot of local pageants coming up. People have been pretty supportive and it's just not the girls; even the older women or the married ones are so enthusiastic about participating. People now understand that it isn't about being pretty and stuff like that but bringing up their talent and making a stand for themselves. Their participation has shown the world what a strong woman she is. The women of Hyderabad have always been strong, independent and welcoming."

While she considers people and food to be the highlights of the city, she believes that Hyderabad's traffic is becoming just as challenging as that of Bangalore.

So now, as we head towards the end of this segment this week, our interviewee signs off with her allure for the city, saying, "Hyderabad is a 'ghar'. Be it from starting my job to making a mark in the pageant world, being crowned now, there's no place like Hyderabad where I could even feel to stay."

THOUGH I HAD GOT VERY GOOD JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA, DEEP DOWN I KNEW I HAD TO COME BACK HOME, TO HYDERABAD. THE PEOPLE OF HYDERABAD MAKE THE CITY DIFFERENT FROM THE REST

Zakir Hussain on personating 'bad person' in the world of *Murshid*

AARTI SREENATH

The latest gangster drama *Murshid* sees actor Zakir Hussain taking on the role of Farid, a complex antagonist driven by conflicting motivations and raw ambition. In an exclusive interaction with *The Pioneer*, the actor discusses portraying an antagonist, working with his co-stars and more

Zakir Hussain, a celebrated actor known for his nuanced performances, steps into the complex world of *Murshid*, a gritty gangster drama set in Mumbai's underworld. He portrays the character Farid, an antagonist, who isn't just a mere villain but a disciple-turned-adversary in a high-stakes game of power, revenge and survival.

In a candid interview, Hussain sheds light on the character of Farid, his approach to the role, and the dynamic interplay between Farid and his mentor, *Murshid* Pathan, played by Kay Kay Menon. He reveals that Farid's character is built around a deep internal conflict. Farid, once nurtured by *Murshid* in the underworld, turns against his mentor, sparking a confrontation that shakes the foundations of their relationship. "There is a conflict, but it's like the 'guru and chela's' conflict," Hussain explains. "*Murshid* was the boss of this premise and his chela Farid, whom *Murshid* nurtures and teaches the underworld business, eventually betrays him."

Farid's betrayal is not a simple act of defiance; it is a calculated move in a world where loyalty is fleeting. As *Murshid* comes out of retirement to protect his family and settle scores, the stage is set for a gripping battle.

"People like *Murshid* never retire from their connections and networks," he notes, adding a layer of suspense to the upcoming face-off. While discussing Farid's aggressive nature and ambition, he emphasises

the challenge of creating a multi-dimensional character. "As an actor, I feel whenever we play a role, we usually see different perspectives—if it's a politician or another character, everyone thinks differently," he reflects. Farid is unique in his approach—fueled by rage and a strict "do or die" business philosophy. Yet, there is an underlying sense of fairness, albeit twisted, that governs his actions. Hussain credits his co-actors, particularly Kay Kay Menon and Tanuj Virwani, for helping him bring out the best in his performance. "It's easier if you know the actor even before acting with them. Kay Kay Menon is a friend of mine and Tanuj Virwani is a new friend. Since we have worked before, it's not that difficult to act with them or face any difficulty," he shares. This familiarity allowed for a more natural flow of emotions and reactions on set, enhancing the authenticity of Farid's character.

In *Murshid*, the two central characters, Farid and *Murshid* Pathan, are positioned as polar opposites in their approach to life and crime. "*Murshid* is a good man in a bad world, but Farid is a bad person in a bad world," the *Ajab Prem Ki Ghazab Kahani* fame describes. While *Murshid* operates with a set of principles that guide his actions, Farid is driven purely by self-interest and survival, unconcerned with the broader consequences. Farid's portrayal challenges the traditional depiction of antagonists in gangster dramas. Unlike *Murshid*, who believes in societal norms to some extent, Farid has his own set of rules but isn't religiously bound by them. "He goes by 'I want to do it by hook or crook; I'll do it.' Farid is money-minded and wants his profit—that's all," the *Darna Zoroori Hai* actor explains, underscoring the stark contrast between the two. One of the unique aspects of filming *Murshid* was the decision to shoot in real locations across Mumbai. While this choice added authenticity, it also presented significant challenges. "In sets and studios, the premises are under our control, but even in real locations, we try to make things in a controlled environment," the *Paan Singh Tomar* actor shares. However, external factors, such as interruptions from onlookers, often disrupted the flow.

"Sometimes, when there's a shot going on, if somebody laughs or

shouts, our concentration breaks, but we can't even be mad at them since they are common people," he adds, highlighting the unpredictable nature of shooting in a bustling city.

Despite being friends off-screen, the on-screen chemistry between Hussain's Farid and Menon's *Murshid* Pathan is electric and intense. "There is no challenge as such, but while doing the scene and reading it, depending on the kind of reactions you get, the rivalry is portrayed," Hussain explains. Their familiarity allowed them to craft a believable narrative of conflict and rivalry. "If I'm doing a South Indian movie and I don't know the artists at all, the trend I don't know, you face more challenges. Here, it was easier," he notes, emphasising how shared history helps in delivering compelling performances.

Hussain, who has previously played refined versions of underworld characters in films like *Sarkar*, sees *Murshid* as a more down-to-earth portrayal of Mumbai's crime world. "This was purely an old gail Mumbai in old times—that is kind of the look," he describes. Unlike the international-level villains of other films, *Murshid* deals with small-time criminals and their localised conflicts. The setting is gritty, with narrow lanes and small factories serving as backdrops to the story. This grounded portrayal of the underworld is what sets *Murshid* apart. "It's like one is a five-star hotel; the other is a two-star hotel. They have their differences. This is a guest house in the dark area," Hussain elaborates, providing insight into the show's unique atmosphere and setting. Hussain draws parallels between Farid's ambition and the real world of power and authority. "The real world of authority and ambition is cutthroat, although we can't see them, but they do exist," he says, pointing out how the hidden power struggles in *Murshid* mirror actual societal dynamics. Farid's character is raw and realistic, embodying the roughness of an "iron, so rustic that you think this is the 1960s or 1970s."

The defining factor for *Murshid* is its exploration of legacy and the inescapable pull of one's past. *Murshid*'s decision to retire from the underworld is rare for a gangster narrative, but the return to his old ways under threat adds depth to his character. "There must have been such people who, while doing bad things, must have realized that this is not okay," Hussain reflects. However, the work they've done and the choices they've made continue to haunt them. On the other hand, Farid's character stands in stark contrast. "Farid is someone who will never retire. This is the only work I know," the *Badlapur* fame emphasises. His refusal to step away from the world of crime, driven by his addiction to power and status, highlights the diverse character arcs within the series. As *Murshid* premieres, audiences are in for an intense journey through the underbelly of Mumbai, filled with nuanced characters, unrelenting ambition, and the eternal conflict between a mentor and his prodigal disciple.



UNDERSTANDING MECHANICAL VS. CHEMICAL EXFOLIATION

Exfoliation is a skincare cornerstone and process of any skincare routine that involves sloughing away dead skin from the surface of the skin to reveal fresher, brighter and a more radiant complexion. Whether you're battling dullness, clogged pores, or looking to smooth out your skin's texture, exfoliation can help—but which method is best for you: mechanical or chemical?

Mechanical exfoliation: Scrub your way to smooth skin

Mechanical exfoliation involves the physical removal of dead skin cells using scrubs or tools like brushes and silicone gloves. Common exfoliating agents include sugar, salt, and apricot shells, which physically buff away the outermost layer of the skin.

Perfect for:

- **Immediate texture improvement:** Scrubs provide instant smoothness and a glowing complexion by clearing the surface of dead skin.
- **Decongesting pores:** Great for removing debris and impurities like blackheads and whiteheads.
- **Tough spots:** Ideal for thicker skin areas like heels, elbows, and knees, where daily use may be beneficial.
- **Ingrown hairs:** Helps prevent and treat ingrown hairs from shaving or waxing.

Watch out for:

- **Sensitivity risks:** Harsh scrubbing can cause micro-tears and irritation, so use gentle pressure and limit to once a week.

Chemical exfoliation: The science of smooth

Chemical exfoliants, including Alpha Hydroxy Acids (AHAs) and Beta Hydroxy Acids (BHAs), dissolve the bonds holding dead skin cells together, allowing them to shed more easily. AHAs like glycolic and lactic acid are water-soluble and work on the skin's surface, making them perfect for addressing dullness and fine lines. BHAs, such as salicylic acid, are oil-soluble, penetrating deeper into pores, making them ideal for oily and acne-prone skin.

Best For:

- **Deep exfoliation:** AHAs and BHAs penetrate deeper into the skin, can promote cell turnover, targeting concerns like aging, tanning, and pigmentation.
- **Oily and acne-prone skin:** BHAs and LHAs (Lipo Hydroxy Acids) are excellent for dissolving sebum and preventing breakouts.
- **Sensitive skin options:** Enzyme exfoliants derived from fruits like papaya offer gentler alternatives.

Latest in exfoliation: Hybrid techniques

Combining mechanical and chemical exfoliants—like a gentle scrub infused with AHAs—offers a two-fold action, boosting effectiveness while being kind to the skin. Additives like Vitamin C brighten and firm, while hydrating agents prevent dryness and support the skin's barrier.

Tips for effective exfoliation

- **Don't overdo it:** Stick to exfoliating 1-2 times per week. Over-exfoliation can lead to sensitivity and irritation.
- **Moisturise immediately:** Exfoliation can strip natural oils, so always follow up with a good moisturizer to restore hydration.
- **Consider professional treatments:** For chemical peels, consult a professional to avoid adverse reactions and get personalized advice.
- **Patch test first:** Especially with chemical exfoliants, always test on a small area to ensure compatibility.
- **Protect your skin:** Use sunscreen daily as exfoliation increases sun sensitivity. This helps prevent further damage and protects your fresh new skin.
- **Avoid eye area:** The skin around your eyes is delicate; stick to products formulated for this sensitive zone.

Exfoliation can dramatically improve your skin's appearance, but the key is finding the right method that suits your specific needs. Whether you're reaching for a mechanical or chemical peel, remember that consistency and care will lead you to that glowing, smooth skin you desire.

(This author, Oscar Pereira, founder and skincare formulator of CodeSkin.)

ABHINAV BINDRA SAYS TRAINING INDIAN ATHLETES ON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES A 'WORK IN PROGRESS'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra on Friday acknowledged training Indian athletes across sports on the aspect of mental health remains a "work in progress", while adding that benefits of the same must reach grassroots level. Bindra said mental health directly influences overall well-being of an athlete and sports administrators also share equal responsibility in it. "It's an area where there is work in progress — we all acknowledge that. We are a sporting ecosystem which is developing. It is slowly maturing," he said during a virtual interaction organised by Mpower to launch AMP: A Sports Psychology Division to Elevate Athlete Performance. "This is an aspect that not just from a shooting athlete's point of view, but across the board, which needs to be prioritised. It is something which has a direct influence on the performance of the athlete. "It has a direct influence on the well-being of an athlete. Sports organisations and everybody involved in governance has to also ensure that our athletes perform well, but their well-being is of equal importance," he added.



Bindra highlighted the presence of a mental health expert with the Indian contingent in Paris Olympics as a step in the right direction. "We've seen progress made even during the Olympics in Paris. It was the first time there was a mental health expert who was with the team. There (also) was somebody for sleep,"

he said. "There are things that are happening. But we need to keep working with intensity to make sure that this perpetuates down to the grassroots level," he added. Bindra rejected the notion that athletes today are "softer" than those in the past. "I completely disagree. If that is

the notion to be believed, then the softer ones are winning more than the tougher ones because that's what our results and our history tell us," he said. Bindra revealed how a meditation course, while planning to quit shooting, helped him find "love for the process" after winning the Olympic gold in 2008.

"When I did win that gold medal at the Olympics, my energy was completely drained in the sense that I was physically, emotionally (and) mentally drained. It also required a period of time to just let go and then to recharge my batteries and that wasn't easy," he said. "I decided to go on a vipassana

meditation course and it was interesting because I was wanting to actually leave the sport and move on to the next calling. That was my primary drive, to find my new calling. "I had to meditate for eight nine hours a day in complete silence for 10 days and all I did in that course was to think back to my sport and think back to how I loved the process of what I was doing," he said. Bindra said he was guilty of not realising his full potential since he judged himself on outcomes of tournaments. "For far too long, perhaps, I too was guilty in putting myself worth to wear my name, equating myself worth to where my name would appear on the ranking list of a sports competition and that was very silly," he said. "I became an Olympic champion, (a) world champion, I won many many championships but I failed in achieving my fullest and truest potential and now that I have a chance to look back I would attribute that failure to this lack of balance that I had in my life as an athlete. "I did not humanise my effort enough and I think that was while it helped me achieve goals it didn't help me get to my very best ability," he added.



Jurgen Klopp joins the crowd at the Paralympics

CHEERING ON LONG TIME FRIEND PLAYING BADMINTON

AP ■ PARIS

Former Liverpool coach Jürgen Klopp is used to being at the center of attention. On Thursday he was more than happy to be on the sidelines, cheering for his longtime friend Wojtek Czynz as he competed in badminton at the Paris Paralympics. "I stood next to Elena, his incredible wife, and we both had tears in our eyes," Klopp said after watching Czynz lose to Britain's Daniel Bethell in the men's singles. "I couldn't be prouder of him. I know sports are all about results, but just seeing him on the court was so touching, and I couldn't get my head around that." Their friendship began about 20 years ago when Czynz, a promising soccer player, suffered a devastating injury in a collision with a goalkeeper that led to the amputation of his lower left leg. During his rehabilitation Czynz met Klopp, who was managing FSV Mainz 05, a second-division German club at the time.

They made an immediate connection that grew deeper over the years. Klopp, who stepped down as Liverpool coach this year after more than eight seasons, often uses Czynz's story as a source of inspiration for others. "Wojtek is constantly doing things I'm not brave enough to do," Klopp said at the La Chapelle Arena in the north of Paris. "Yesterday, he was telling me how easy it is to swim with sharks," he added, referring to Czynz's experience as a licensed diving instructor. Following his injury, Czynz started competing in para athletics, winning gold medals for Germany in the 100 meters, 200 meters and long jump at the 2004 Paralympics. After he quit the sport in 2013 he and his wife Elena Brambilla-Czynz bought a catamaran and sailed around the world, helping amputees living on remote islands to get prosthetics. They arrived in New Zealand in 2019 where Czynz decided to take up badminton. After just a few years, he got so skilled at the sport that he earned a spot at the Paris Paralympics, competing for New Zealand. However, Bethell, the No. 2 seed, proved to be difficult for the 44-year-old Czynz in the SL3 category for players who practice standing and have a disability in one or both legs. Bethell won in straight sets 21-5, 21-2. Still, Czynz said Klopp's support meant a lot. "Jürgen is family to me," Czynz said. "It was great having him in my corner, despite the tough loss today. We need people like Jürgen putting the spotlight on us." It was a special moment also for Bethell who received a thumbs-up and a "Great job, Dan" from Klopp. "That was surreal, seeing him (Klopp) in the stands," Bethell said. Despite the loss, Czynz's journey in Paris is not over. He will face Ukraine's Oleksandr Chyrkov in a decisive second group stage match. Will he invite Klopp to watch again? "Given my performance today, I'll have to think about it," Czynz joked.

Ronaldo included in Portugal's first squad after scoreless Euro 2024

AP ■ LISBON (PORTUGAL)

Portugal coach Roberto Martínez has included Cristiano Ronaldo in his squad list for the first two Nations League matches following the veteran forward's disappointing European Championship. Martínez announced the squad on Friday for its home games against Croatia on Sept. 5 and Scotland on Sept. 8. The 39-year-old Ronaldo holds the record of 130 goals for international men's soccer. But he went scoreless in all five of Portugal's games at Euro 2024 before it was eliminated in a penalty shootout by France in the quarterfinals. Martínez said after Euro 2024 his team is starting "a new cycle for the 2026 World Cup." Ronaldo would be 41 by the time that tournament in North America kicks off. Martínez restored Ronaldo to his place in the starting lineup after predecessor Fernando Santos had stunned his team, and nation, by benching him midway through the 2022 World Cup, where he scored in an opening win over Ghana but then went scoreless over the next four games including a quarterfinal upset loss to Morocco.



Defenders: Rúben Dias (Manchester City), António Silva (Benfica), Renato Veiga (Chelsea), Gonçalo Inácio (Sporting), Tiago Santos (Lille), Diogo Dalot (Manchester United), Nuno Mendes (Paris Saint-Germain), Nélson Semedo (Wolverhampton). **Midfielders:** João Palhinha (Bayern Munich), João Neves (Paris Saint-Germain), Vitinha (Paris Saint-Germain), Bruno Fernandes (Manchester United), Bernardo Silva (Manchester City), Rúben Neves (Al-Hilal), João Félix (Chelsea), Francisco Trincão (Sporting), Pedro Gonçalves (Sporting). **Forwards:** Rafael Leão (AC Milan), Geovany Quenda (Sporting), Pedro Neto (Chelsea), Cristiano Ronaldo (Al Nassr), Diogo Jota (Liverpool).

Nitesh seals semifinal spot; Manasi, Manoj out

PTI ■ PARIS

India's Nitesh Kumar dished out a superlative performance, thrashing China's Yang Jianyuan in straight games in his second men's singles SL3 group A match to qualify for the semifinals in para badminton competition at Paris Paralympics on Friday. A 29-year-old IIT Mandi graduate, Nitesh, who had suffered a permanent damage to his leg due to an accident in 2009, outclassed Yang 21-5 21-11 in a dominating show. With his second consecutive win, Nitesh is assured of a top-2 finish in the four-man group. The top two ranked players from each of the two groups qualify for the semifinals. Nitesh, who hails from Karnal district in Haryana, will next face Thailand's Bunsun Mongkhon in his last group A match. Manasi Joshi and Manoj Sarkar, however, suffered their second successive defeats to end their hopes of making it to the semifinals from their respective groups. Manasi, a 2019 World Champion, faltered at the finishing line to go down narrowly 21-10 15-21 21-23 to Ukraine's Oksana Kozyna in her second women's singles SL3 Group A match. She had lost her opening match to Indonesia's Qonitah Ikhtiar Syakuroh on Thursday. Tokyo bronze medallist Manoj also suffered yet



another loss, this time going down 19-21 8-21 to Bunsun in his second Group A match. He had lost to compatriot Nitesh on Thursday and will meet Yang on Friday. SL3 class is for those players with more severe lower limb disabilities, requiring play on a half-width court. On Thursday night, Nitesh and Thulasimathi Murugesan had lost to Indonesian combination of Ramdani Hikmat and Oktilla Ieani Ratri 15-21 8-21 in their second mixed doubles SL3-SU5 group stage match. Suhas Yathiraj and Palak Kohli also suffered a 15-21 9-21 loss to Francis Lucas Mazur and Faustine Noel in their second group A mixed doubles match. SU5 class includes athletes with upper limb impairments.

Carlos Alcaraz's 15-match Grand Slam win streak ends in loss to Botić van de Zandschulp

AP ■ NEW YORK

After double-faulting to fall behind two sets to none - a deficit he's never overcome - in the second round of the U.S. Open, Carlos Alcaraz slung his equipment bag over a shoulder and trudged toward the locker room. Glancing in the direction of his coach, 2003 French Open champion Juan Carlos Ferrero, Alcaraz pointed his right index finger at his temple, then wagged that finger, as if to say, "I'm not thinking straight." He might have been excused for being confused by what was transpiring under the closed retractable roof at Arthur Ashe Stadium on a chilly evening, and one set later, Alcaraz's 15-match Grand Slam unbeaten streak was over with a sloppy 6-1, 7-5, 6-4 loss to 74th-ranked Botić van de Zandschulp. "It was a fight against myself, in my mind, during the match. In tennis, you are playing against someone that wants the same as you - to win the match - and you have to be as... Calm as you can, just to think better in the match and try to do good things," Alcaraz said. "Today I was playing against the opponent, and I was playing against myself, in my mind. A lot of emotions that I couldn't control." The result eliminated the pre-tournament men's favorite and certainly was hard to predict beforehand, given the No. 3-seeded Alcaraz's standing in the game, his excellence of late and his opponent's far-lesser resume. It followed another exit in Ashe for a past U.S. Open champion,



Naomi Osaka, who was sent home Thursday by Karolina Muchova 6-3, 7-6 (5). That one, though, was not nearly as out-of-nowhere as what happened to Alcaraz. He won the French Open in June and Wimbledon in July to raise his career total to four major championships, including taking the title at Flushing Meadows in 2022. Then, in early August, Alcaraz won a silver medal at the Paris Olympics, losing to Novak Djokovic in the final. Maybe, Alcaraz acknowledged, a tennis schedule he called "so tight" drained him too much. "Probably, I came here with not as much energy as I thought that I was going to (have)," he said. "But, I mean, I don't want to put that as excuse."

What's clear is he never found his footing against van de Zandschulp, a 28-year-old from the Netherlands. Alcaraz was way off, repeatedly missing the sorts of shots he usually makes routinely. The 21-year-old from Spain came in with a 16-2 record at the U.S. Open, where he never lost before the quarterfinals in three previous appearances. This also was Alcaraz's earliest defeat at any major tournament since bowing out in the second round of Wimbledon in 2021 as a teenager; he's never been beaten in the first round at a Slam event. In contrast, van de Zandschulp only once has been to a Grand Slam quarterfinal, getting that far at the U.S. Open in 2021. Otherwise, though, he is not

someone most folks would have expected to pull off this sort of monumental upset. Consider: van de Zandschulp was just 11-18 for the season at the start of this week and hadn't won consecutive matches at a four-level event in 2024 until now. "Actually, I am a little bit at a loss for words," he said. "It's been an incredible evening for me." The key stat probably was that van de Zandschulp won the point on 28 of his 35 trips to the net. The opening set was unbelievably lopsided. With van de Zandschulp's powerful forehands and serves at up to 132 mph finding their marks, Alcaraz never seemed to get comfortable. He did not produce a single

winner in that set and was nearly doubled up in total points, 24-13. The second set was a bit better for him, but not enough so, and a double-fault gift-wrapped a service break that put van de Zandschulp up 6-5. When Alcaraz pushed a forehand wide to end the next game, van de Zandschulp finished off a hold at love that gave him the initial two sets after 1 1/2 hours of action. Didn't take long for Alcaraz to fall behind by a break in the third, too, at 3-2, but he made a stand immediately - well, with some help, because van de Zandschulp's double-fault ceded a break that made it 3-all. Alcaraz then held at love and smiled as he strutted to the changeover.

New track, new colors, new confidence for Ferrari heading into home race at Italian GP

AP ■ MONZA (ITALY)

New track, new colors and renewed confidence for Ferrari as the Formula One team heads into its home race at Monza. Ferrari did better than expected at last weekend's Dutch Grand Prix, with Charles Leclerc earning a second straight podium finish and teammate Carlos Sainz Jr. Surging from 10th on the grid to place fifth. That was a surprise in what was expected to be a weekend of damage limitation before planned car upgrades at the Italian Grand Prix. Although it was a well-timed morale boost for a team which started 2024 fighting for wins but had dropped out of contention, Leclerc was quick to temper expectations. "I don't let the last two races change our expectations," he said. "We are in a difficult moment for the team. We are struggling a little bit with pace at the moment. "I think we understood quite a few things since Zandvoort... it was a good race. In Spa, it was good as well. "Here, it should be a bit more in the direction of Spa, so hopefully we'll be a bit more in the fight for the podium. However, for the win, I don't think we quite have that yet." Indeed, Ferrari has only won one of the past 13 editions of the Italian Grand Prix, with Leclerc delighting the passionate red-clad fans in 2019. Since then, the famed Italian Scuderia's only two podium finishes have been Leclerc's second place in 2022 before he was beaten to third place by Sainz last year. "I wouldn't say the feeling is that we must do better," Leclerc said. "However, there's definitely a huge motivation because it's not only a normal weekend that starts from the Thursday to the Sunday, but it starts already from Monday in Maranello where we have so many tifosi (fans), and that obviously motivates everybody. "It seems and it looks like we've had a pretty strong car with a very low-downforce package even in the last few years where performance was not as good. That's positive because it's our home race and as



much as it's giving exactly the same amount of points as other races, emotionally speaking and for the whole team it's definitely a special one." **NEW LOOKS:** Monza is one of the oldest and most historic circuits on the F1 calendar, but there have been considerable changes to the Temple of Speed this year. Modernisation works cost more than 20 million euros (USD 22 million), and the track has completely resurfaced for the first time since 1922 and will have a much darker appearance. Moreover, some of the iconic kerbs have been modified - much to the dismay of several drivers. "They've changed the kerbs," Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo said on Thursday after inspecting the new look by bicycle. "I went around the track this morning. I can't say I'm that impressed because some elements have lost some of the character of the circuit. "Maybe, it's just as a driver, because we drive it and experience it, but kerbs and things like this make a circuit unique... Part of Monza is that it was old school, and now that's gone. The resurfacing looks great, the asphalt looks really nice, but the kerbs, I'm a bit disappointed in."

FARIA TURNS LYRICIST, SINGER AND CHOREOGRAPHER FOR MATHU VADALARA 2

In the upcoming film *Mathu Vadalaru 2*, actress Faria Abdullah not only sings a song, but also has written the lyrics. In an event, the actress revealed that she has also choreographed the song!

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Actress Faria Abdullah will next be seen playing the leading actress in the upcoming film *Mathu Vadalaru 2*, starring opposite Simha Koduri. The film, directed by Ritesh Rana, is the sequel to the 2019 released film *Mathu Vadalaru*, which was a blockbuster hit. The teaser of the sequel was released on Friday, which hints that the film is going to tickle your funny bones.

Faria, speaking at the event revealed a surprising insight that she would not just be a part of the film as the lead actress, but also a lot more. "The makers of this film had given me an opportunity to not just sing my own song but also to write it," enthused Faria.

Well, not just this! We've all been aware of the preference that she has for dance. Guess what? In this song, which is a rap song, she also shared, "I have also choreographed it." The music for this film is being provided by Kalabhairava.

Going ahead, she reveals, it's a fun film. "This is the best team that I have ever worked and has also been the most entertaining film to date," said the *Jathi Ratnalu* fame. She further went on to express her gratitude to the director and producer for casting her in this film. When asked if she's got to do any action in the film, she revealed that indeed she is doing a few action scenes. She is confident that this film will turn out to be a big hit. She also hopes that *Mathu Vadalaru 2* is going to bring her much-needed success. Meanwhile, she is super excited for the song, which is going to be out soon. The film is going to hit the screens on September 13. Faria made her debut with *Jathi Ratnalu* in 2021, which brought her into the limelight so much that people started to know her by the character 'Chitti' in the film. However, following that, she did a few films, which weren't much successful at the box office.

Priya Atlee ventures into clothing line

Priya Atlee, an acclaimed actress, film producer and entrepreneur, announced the launch of her new designer clothing brand, 'Red Knot', marking her foray into the fashion industry. "Fashion is an extension of one's personality and creativity," said Priya Atlee. "I wanted to create a brand that resonates with modern individuals who are not afraid to stand out and make a statement. Every piece in this collection reflects my passion for design and my belief in celebrating individuality through fashion."

Known for her impeccable style and trendsetting fashion choices, Priya has consistently dazzled with her sophisticated and fashion-forward looks. Drawing from her artistic background, Priya has personally designed every piece in the collection with meticulous attention to detail, reflecting her passion for design and her commitment to a unique expression of contemporary style and elegance.

The launch marks Priya's transition from film to fashion, showcasing her ability to infuse artistry into every aspect of her work.



Balakrishna completes 50 years as an actor!

Nandamuri Balakrishna, aka Balayya, completed his 50 years as an actor. He made his debut into the Telugu cinema with *Tatamma Kala*, directed by his father and legendary actor Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao. The film was released on August 30, 1974 and ran successfully in the theatres for 50 days.

"There are many actors who began their career by playing negative roles and later transitioned into lead actors. In fact, there have been many lead actors who have also portrayed character roles. However, Balakrishna has been the only actor to have played the lead role. It is not easy for an actor to play back-to-back lead characters for five decades straight," said T Prasanna Kumar, Producer and Secretary to the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce.

Interestingly, Balakrishna's first film had landed into controversy. Late NTR had started his own production house, Ramakrishna Cine Studios. The film portrayed a story against government policy back then. The government had implemented a family planning scheme, limiting two children allowed in a family. "Though the film ran for 50 days, the government had actually banned this film initially," said Prasanna Kumar. That's how his debut film was banned for a reason and later released a second time. Later, NTR made a few changes as per the policy and then later released the film on January 8, 1975. "When it was released for the second time, the film ran 50 days. For this film, NTR also won the Nandi Award as a story writer," revealed Prasanna. He further revealed that ever since then, Balakrishna has been continuously playing the lead actor. In this film, NTR played dual roles: as grandfather and also as grandson. The film also starred Balakrishna's elder brother, Hari Krishna.

Mythri Movie Makers discuss their high budget films

Mythri Movie Makers are producing some of the high-budget films, out of which a few will be releasing in the coming days. The first release would be of the Allu Arjun and Sukumar combination *Pushpa 2*. "There have been speculations about the *Pushpa 2* release date, but I want to confirm once again that the film will be releasing on December 6 at any cost," confirmed Ravi Shankar, one of the producers from the production house. He also shared that the first half of the film will be ready by September 2. He further revealed, "The second part will be ready by October 6 and we will be ready with the first copy by November 30."

He added that they are planning to get the censor formalities done by November 25 and as informed, the main output will be out by December 1st week. The premiere show is expected to be on December 5. For the upcoming *Vinayaka Chavithi*, the makers have not been planning to release any film.

Meanwhile, speaking about the negativity around the Allu Arjun-starrer, he said that it would certainly mellow down once the film gets released. A few days back, AP Deputy Chief Minister Pawan

Kalyan stated that in earlier days heroes played characters where they were protecting forests from poachers and smugglers, but nowadays actors are playing the characters of smugglers and destroying forests. When asked if he targeted Allu Arjun with the comments, Ravi Shankar said, "These comments come in a flow and do not target anyone." Pawan Kalyan is a man of dignity and doesn't generally comment, keeping any particular actor in mind. "It is certainly not about Allu Arjun," clarified Ravi Shankar.

Going ahead, speaking of Pawan Kalyan's upcoming film, *Ustad Bhagath Singh*, directed by Harish Shankar. "We will be coming up with an interesting update on September 2 on the occasion of Pawan Kalyan's birthday," he said, adding that the team had met Pawan Kalyan a few days back and the shooting of this film will begin soon. "We are trying to complete it by January," he said.

The next on the list is the Jr NTR and Prashanth Neel film and he shared, "We are planning to begin shooting in October or November and NTR will be joining the shoot from December onwards," he clarified.



Priyadarshi's *Court* starts rolling

Nani is thrilled with the success of his new film, *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram* and is presenting another film called *Court - State vs A Nobody*. On Friday, the film was officially announced by Nani during a pooja ceremony.

Nani had previously produced films like *Awe*, *Hit: The First Case* and *Hit: The Second Case* through his banner, Wall Poster Cinema. Supporting this movie is the cast comprised of Priyadarshi, Sai Kumar and Sivaji. The movie represents Ram Jagadeesh's directorial first and is

produced by Prashanti Tipirneni. The title poster shows Lady Justice standing in the witness box, which effectively captures the film's themes of justice and conflict. The story centers on a legal battle for a boy who is wrongly accused in a case. In this, Priyadarshi will portray the role of a lawyer. The shooting will begin in September, as confirmed by the producers. Sivaji, Sai Kumar, Rohini, Harshavardhan, Harsh Roshan and Sri Devi are among the top actors in the movie.

Chiyaan Vikram on playing three different characters in *Thangalaan*

Thangalaan is a one-of-a-kind phenomenon in the entertainment world. Well-studded with a gripping story, captivating plot, mesmerising canvas and mind-blowing performances, the film started to create waves ever since its release in other languages and has now been released in Hindi. While the film perfectly holds the audience's attention in every scene, it's Chiyaan Vikram's outstanding performance that emerges as the most crucial factor in making *Thangalaan* what it is. The actor has given his heart and soul to perfect his character on the screen as he played three different roles.

In an interview, Chiyaan Vikram talks about his three different characters that he played and had three different looks for the same. He says "One is a great-great-grandfather, his portion is a little lengthy. You have to show travel through time and the different generations of *Thangalaan*. He had to look like me but how different can we make him look? Ranjith was always there to inspire me and give me guidelines of what the person could look like."

Chiyaan Vikram was seen playing three different roles in *Thangalaan*, and he indeed performed his best in all. He portrayed *Thangalaan* Muni, Kaadaiyan, *Thangalaan's*

great-grandfather and Arasan "Aaran" (The protector of Gold). Remarkably, the actor underwent major physical transformations for his roles. For one of the roles, he lost weight and only wore a langot as the character's costume, which is a

very rare thing for any actor to attempt. He also went half-bald for another role. For yet another role, he had to sit for 4 to 5 hours of makeup before reaching the set and starting the shoot. Moreover, to maintain the film's raw and authentic feel, the actors had to drench themselves in mud, making it very difficult to shoot in the real outdoor locations. This indeed speaks volumes about Chiyaan Vikram's dedication and perseverance, which is clearly evident in his fabulous performance in the film.

Directed by Pa. Ranjith, *Thangalaan* starring Chiyaan Vikram and Malavika Mohanan in prominent roles, was released worldwide on August 15, 2024, in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. The film released in Hindi on August 30. The music of the film is composed by G.V. Prakash Kumar.



Pradeep Raparti introduced as Mama

Directed by Viplav, who also takes on the lead role, *Eesaraina* is set against the rural backdrop of a jobless young man preparing for a government job and his journey towards finding love.

On Friday, the makers released the first look poster of actor Pradeep, introducing his character as Mama. The movie includes music by Tej, whose compositions are enhancing the storyline. Sankeerth Konda co-produced the film with Ashwini Ayaluru in the lead role, creating a highly anticipated project that is receiving a lot of attention. Paired with a captivating title, *Eesaraina* is quickly gaining buzz as a highly anticipated indie film.



Nayan Sarika: Allu Arjun sir and NTR sir appreciated my performance in *Aay*

Nayan Sarika is currently basking in the glory of *Aay's* super success. She is thrilled that her role Pallavi has struck a chord with the audience. The actress expressed her gratitude to the Telugu audience for showering love on her. "It's overwhelming to see so much love being poured by the Telugu audience. I am so grateful to them and I cannot ask for a better start in Tollywood. This success is a result of a collaborative effort, it means a lot to me personally. I wanted to thank the prestigious Geetha Arts and director Anji Sir for giving me the opportunity to be part of the film," says Nayan.

Nayan always wanted to become an actress; she was active in dramatics during her school and college. When she was approached for the role in *Aay*, she was excited to fulfil her dream of becoming an actress. "Narne Nithiin and I have done a few workshops and rehearsed before shooting as part of preparation. I have also received training for my

Telugu and my team too had helped me in getting my lines right," the actress said.

Having begun her career very young, Nayan didn't want to compromise on her education. She always prioritised finishing her degrees on time. In fact, she shot for *Aay* while simultaneously giving her final exams. "I used to carry books and study material to film sets. While I was shooting for *Aay* I was giving my final year exams, so I studied in a caravan, it was indeed challenging to balance studies and films," she recalls.

As a part of *Aay's* success, Nayan, along with the film team, met superstars Allu Arjun and Jr NTR. Both the stars congratulated the team on the success, and also complimented her. "Jr NTR sir said that I carried my character with ease, and Allu Arjun sir said that he was surprised to know that I am not a South Indian. Allu Arvind sir also said that I have expressive eyes. Compliments from such big stars is a great validation," says Nayan Sarika.

