



# the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

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

### QUOTE OF THE DAY



What has the Telangana Congress government achieved to celebrate? Is it for failing to disburse the promised Rythu Bharosa money during Rabi and Kharif seasons? Is it for deceiving farmers by placing restrictions on farm loan waiver? Is it for leaving farmers in distress by not providing them compensation for crop losses? Is this farm loan waiver drama a trick to gain the upper hand in 'local body' elections?

- Bandi Sanjay, MoS Home Affairs P4

Quota bill in next Cabinet meet to clear doubts: **K'taka CM**

**'I TOOK MY OWN TIME TO EXPERIENCE POLISH CULTURE & FOOD'**

Ashwin Babu discusses the depths of **SHIVAM BHAJE**

### DON'T MISS...

#### Low pressure to bring heavy rains...

Heavy to very heavy rainfall, accompanied by extremely heavy falls, is expected in isolated areas of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 48 hours. According to the Meteorological Centre, a low-pressure area has formed over the central and adjoining North Bay of Bengal. This system is likely to bring heavy to very heavy rainfall across north and south coastal AP in the next 48 hours. Thunderstorms, accompanied by lightning and strong surface winds ranging from 30-40 Kmph, may occur at isolated...

-PAGE: 3

#### Irregular sleep for a week can lead...

Weeklong irregular sleep can increase the risk of type 2 diabetes in middle-aged and older people by 34 per cent, a new study has found. Even as researchers acknowledged assessing sleep duration over seven days may not capture long-term sleep patterns, they said changing this lifestyle factor can help lower the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. According to the study published in the journal Diabetes Care, the link was "more pronounced" among those sleeping for longer durations and...

-PAGE: 5

#### Two South Eastern Coalfields blocks...

Gevra and Kusmunda blocks of state-owned South Eastern Coalfields have secured second and fourth spots, respectively, in the list of the world's 10 largest coal mines in terms of production volume released by WorldAtlas.com. Located in the Korba district of Chhattisgarh, the two mines produce more than 100 million tonnes (MT) of coal annually accounting for about 10 per cent of India's total coal production. South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL) said in a statement on...

-PAGE: 8

#### India begin Women's Asia...

The Women's Asia Cup is set for a blockbuster start when defending champions India take on arch-foes Pakistan in a prime-time clash here on Friday, with the eight competing teams hoping to firm up their combinations ahead of the T20 World Cup in October. Harmanpreet Kaur's India are the team to beat going into this iteration of the Asia Cup, having won the competition three out of four times in the T20 version and each of the four times in 50-overs format. Additionally, India are also the most successful...

-SPORTS

### AP ASSEMBLY SESSION FROM JULY 22

## 3 white papers in House

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has announced plans to release the remaining three white papers during the upcoming Assembly session, which is scheduled to commence on July 22. The white papers will cover the Law & Order, Finance, and Excise departments, providing detailed insights into these critical areas.

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, the State government has already released four white papers addressing various key issues: the Polavaram project, the Amaravati capital development, the Power sector, and Land Grabbing, Illegal Sand mining, and Forest resources exploitation. These documents have aimed to shed light on the challenges and destruction attributed to the previous YSRCP government.

Since taking office, CM Naidu has been actively working to accelerate the progress of pending projects such as Polavaram and the Amaravati capital. In his efforts to present a clear picture of the state's current condition to the people of Andhra Pradesh, the Chief Minister has conducted site visits to the Polavaram project and toured the Amaravati capital region.

Continued on Page 2

### Govt to set record straight on Law & Order, Finance and Excise depts



Since taking office, CM Naidu has been actively working to accelerate the progress of pending projects such as Polavaram and the Amaravati capital. In his efforts to present a clear picture of the state's current condition to the people of Andhra Pradesh, the Chief Minister has conducted site visits to the Polavaram project and toured the Amaravati capital region. Through these assessments, he has highlighted the adverse impacts of the former administration's policies and actions.

- 4 white papers on the Polavaram project, Amaravati capital, the Power sector, Land Grabbing, Illegal Sand mining, and Forest resources exploitation have already been released.
- CM Chandrababu Naidu aims to highlight the destruction caused by the previous YSRCP government.
- Naidu has visited key project sites to assess and expedite pending developments.
- The release of these white papers is part of a seven-part series to inform the public and ensure governance accountability.



### Watery grave for 2 students from AP in Aus

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Two students from Andhra Pradesh have lost their lives in a swimming incident at Millaa Millaa Falls, a popular waterfall near Cairns in Far North Queensland, Australia. The victims were identified as Indian students Chaitanya Mupparaju and Surya Teja Bobba. Chaitanya hailed from Bapatla district, while Surya Teja was from Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh.

According to reports from ABC, the incident occurred just before 9 am while the duo was swimming with another person. Inspector Jason Smith reported that the men entered the water from the shore and encountered difficulties. Despite efforts to assist one another, both men tragically perished.

The third person present witnessed the events unfold from the rocks nearby.

Continued on Page 2



## Steps apace to check ganja smuggling: CS

Amit Shah launches National De-Addiction Helpline Centre No. 14446

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad has announced that stringent measures are being implemented to control the peddling and consumption of ganja and other drugs in the State. This announcement came during the 7th Apex Level Meeting of the Narco-Coordination Center (NCORD), chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday. The meeting was attended virtually by Chief Secretaries, Directors General of Police, and other officials from all states. During the meeting, Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the National De-Addiction Helpline Center with the number 14446 for drug-related issues.



Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad highlighted that under Operation Parivartan in Andhra Pradesh, rigorous steps are being taken to curb the use and cultivation of ganja and other narcotics, especially along the Andhra-Odisha border.

Continued on Page 2

## SC: Declare centre-wise results of NEET-UG

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the National Testing Agency (NTA) to declare by 12 noon of July 20 the centre and city-wise results of NEET-UG 2024 while masking the identities of aspirants.

As it strove to address the allegations of malpractices in the conduct of the examination, a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud said any order for conducting it afresh has to be on concrete conclusion that the sanctity of the entire process was affected. The top court will resume hearing the arguments on July 22 on a batch of pleas seeking cancellation, re-test and a court-monitored probe into the allegations of large-scale malpractices in the prestigious test held on May 5.

During the day-long hearing, the bench asked the counsel for the aspirants to establish their claim about extensive irregularities in holding the examination, including leak of question paper, warranting cancellation and a re-test. The court said it prima facie appeared that the question paper



During the day-long hearing, the bench asked the counsel for the aspirants to establish their claim about extensive irregularities in holding the examination, including leak of question paper, warranting cancellation and a re-test.

leak was limited to Patna and Hazaribagh, and nothing of this sort can be said to have happened in Godhra in Gujarat.

In Patna and Hazaribagh, the question papers allegedly got leaked, while in Godhra there were claims that a person involved in holding the test took money for filling up the OMR sheets of certain candidates.

Questioning the claims about leak of question paper on social media platform 'Telegram', the bench said, "You have to bear in mind that the idea of somebody doing this was not to make a national charade. People did it for money. So, it was not to bring disrepute to the exam and somebody was doing it to make money which is evading. Mass leakage requires contacts also at that level so that you connect to all such key contacts in different cities."

The bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, which commenced the crucial hearing on a batch of petitions related to the controversy-ridden medical entrance exam, said it has "social ramifications".

Continued on Page 2



### Gadkari worships at Tirumala

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday offered prayers at Sri Venkateswara temple here at around 4 am.

In a post on 'X', Gadkari said, "Blessed with the darshan (visit) of Sri Venkateswara Swamy ji temple in Tirumala, Tirupati today."

On arrival, the temple officials accorded a grand reception to the Union Road Transport and Highways Minister, followed by priests escorting him into the sanctum sanctorum.

"After darshan, Gadkari was offered vedasirvachanam (blessings) by Vedic pundits at Ranganayakula Mandapam. Later, the joint executive officer (Veerabrahmam) presented Theertha prasadam (consecrated food), a photo of Srivara (deity) to the dignitary," said Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) in a release.

TTD is the official custodian of the temple.

## TDP, YSRCP spar over youth's murder

No political connection to Vinukonda incident, says SP

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

The ruling TDP and opposition YSRCP on Thursday accused each other over the party affiliation of the person who murdered a 25-year-old man in this district.

According to police, Sheik Jilani (25), hacked Sheik Rashid to death in the middle of a road at Mundlamuru bus station at Vinukonda in Palnadu district around 9 pm on Wednesday.

However, the local police noted that there 'was nothing political' in this incident but only personal enmity between the two.

"There was no political issue. There were only personal issues between the two persons (Rashid and Jilani). Rumours are being circulated and some people are projecting it as a political murder," a police official said on Thursday.

Palnadu SP K Srinivas Rao noted that the crime scene will be reconstructed today, followed by the arrest of Jilani under Section 103 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Reacting to the murder, former Andhra Pradesh chief minister and YSRCP chief Y Jagan Mohan Reddy alleged that a 'demonic reign' is prevailing in the southern state, bereft of law and order.

"My deepest condolences to the family of Rashid, who was murdered by TDP cadres in Vinukonda," said Reddy, adding that there is no safety to people's lives under the TDP government. According to the oppo-

### Anita warns anti-social elements

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Home Minister Vangalapati Anita has issued a stern warning to anti-social elements attempting to disrupt law and order in the state, stating that such individuals will face severe consequences. She emphasized that strict measures will be enforced to maintain law and order without any political bias.

In light of several reported attacks, Minister Anita urged leaders of the Telugu Desam Party and YSR Congress Party to promote peace and abide by the law. She assured that the police would diligently punish the culprits.

The Minister also called on the public, representatives, and



activists to exercise restraint and respect the law. She emphasized the importance of police protecting the lives of ordinary citizens while avoiding taking the law into their own hands.

2

sition leader, Andhra Pradesh has turned into a den for murders, rapes, political vendetta and attacks in just 45 days of the new government assuming power.

Terming the Vinukonda murder as a shame to the TDP-led government, Reddy alleged that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and other persons are perpetrating these atrocities. Rebutting Reddy, the TDP claimed that Jilani was a follower of the YSRCP chief and called on the former CM to 'supporting' the murderer. It asserted that Palnadu's super-

intendent of police had 'denied any political connection to the cold-blooded murder' that took place in Vinukonda.

"The killing is purely on personal issues and no political party is involved in the murder," said the TDP in a release, quoting Srinivasa Rao.

According to the ruling party, prohibitory orders were clamped down in Vinukonda, while the SP warned of serious action against anyone resorting to law and order violations in the town.

## AP govt appoints in-charge V-Cs for 17 varsities

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The AP government has appointed in-charge Vice-Chancellors for 17 universities across the State. The decision was made official through GO Rt No 122 issued on Thursday by Saurabh Gaur, Secretary to the Government.

The appointments follow the acceptance of resignations from the current Vice-Chancellors and were executed under the authority conferred by various Acts, including the AP Universities Act, 1991, and specific university legislations.

The Vice-Chancellors appointed include Prof Chippada Appa Rao for Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati; Prof B Anitha for Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Ananthapur; Prof Gottapu Sasibhushan Rao for Andhra University, Visakhapatnam; Prof Kancharla Gangadhar for Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur; Prof

H Sudarshan Rao for JNTU, Anantapur; Prof V Uma for Sri Padmavati Mahila Viswavidyalayam, Tirupati; Prof D Rajyalakshmi for JNTU-GV, Gurajada, Vizianagaram; Prof KVSG Murali Krishna for JNTU, Kakinada; Prof Y Srinivas Rao for Adikavi Nannaya University, Rajamahendravaram; Prof Sarangam Vijaya Bhaskar Rao for Vikrama Simhapuri University, Nellore; Prof R Srinivas Rao for Krishna University, Machilipatnam; Prof NTK Naik for Rayalaseema University, Kurnool; Prof M Doraswamy for Dravidian University, Kuppam; Prof G Viswanadha Kumar for Dr YSR Architecture and Fine Arts University, Kadapa; Prof DVR Murthy for Andhra Kesari University, Ongole; Dr Patan Shaik Shavalli Khan for Dr Abdul Haq Urdu University, Kurnool; and Prof Dr K Krishna Reddy for Yogi Vemana University, Kadapa.

## Anna Canteens set for Aug-15 relaunch

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government will restart Anna Canteens from August 15, announced Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development, Ponguru Narayana.

Speaking to media personnel at the Secretariat in Velagapudi on Thursday, Narayana confirmed that the government has allocated Rs 50 crore for desilting drains in 106 municipalities across the state. He instructed Municipal Commissioners to complete the desilting within the next ten days.

Minister Narayana conducted a virtual conference with commissioners of 106 municipalities and 17 municipal corporations, urging them to take strong measures to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. He highlighted that more cases of diarrhoea have been record-



MA & UD Minister P Narayana addressing a press conference at the Secretariat in Velagapudi on Thursday.

ed in Lenin Nagar and Maruti Nagar in Piduguralla Municipality due to residents consuming contaminated water from RO plants and bore wells. He noted that addressing these issues by stopping the use of

contaminated sources has reduced the incidence of diarrhoea. The problem stemmed from leakages in the underground pipes of seven motor wells supplying drinking water in the municipality, necessitat-

ing temporary cessation of the water supply for repairs. Residents have been advised to drink only boiled water during this period. The minister announced that Anna Canteens will provide quali-

ty food to the poor at very low rates in a pleasant environment starting August 15. During the previous TDP government, 203 Anna Canteens were planned, with 183 operational, serving about 2.25 lakh people daily. Of the remaining 20 canteens, 18 buildings are completed, and 2 are still in the preliminary stage. Minister Narayana criticized the previous YSR Congress government for closing all Anna Canteens, repurposing some as ward secretariats offices and others as storage rooms.

Narayana also mentioned that Akshaya Patra Sansthan, known for supplying high-quality food, will once again be providing food, with tenders accepted at the same rates as before, and operations set to begin on July 22.

2



# The true colour of the new 'criminal' law

For the record, the *Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita* (BNS), the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the *Bhartiya Sakshya Adhiniyam* (BSA) replaced the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, respectively.

Before the new criminal laws were enacted, police custody was permitted for a maximum period of 15 days; further, it could be sought only in the first 15 days following the arrest. Thereafter, BNSS allows the police to make requests for custody beyond 15 days. On the face of it, it appears sweeping enough for extending the powers of the police to request custody up to the initial 60

days, after the arrest.

**8. Dangerous police remand.** The so-called new reforms of criminal law 2023-24 made such provisions extending police remand. It is a very dangerous provision. For, the limit of police custody within the first 15 days from the time of arrest is removed, permitting the magistrate to order police custody for a period of 15 days anytime during the initial 40-60 days of custody, which means police lock-up. "The earlier bar on seeking police custody once the remanding magistrate grants judicial custody is now lifted."

**9. Shifting to judicial custody:** Based on the mag-

**Before the new criminal laws were enacted, police custody was permitted for a maximum period of 15 days; further, it could be sought only in the first 15 days following the arrest. Thereafter, BNSS allows the police to make requests for custody beyond 15 days. On the face of it, it appears sweeping enough for extending the powers of the police to request custody up to the initial 60 days, after the arrest.**

istrate's order, any accused person can be shifted from judicial custody back to police custody at any time beyond the first 15 days of arrest, even if he has been granted judicial custody. The police can use this order conveniently.

**10. Hitting the custodial jurisdiction:** The new law seriously hits the jurisdiction around custodial power in our country, where the police have not been trusted to ensure the safety of people in their custody. It is against the morality and spirit of



**PROF MADABHUSHI SRIDHAR ACHARYULU**  
Professor of Law, Mahindra University, Hyderabad

the Indian Constitution. **11. The mighty power of the police and influencing**

people makes the suspected person suffer because he is even called 'accused', and exposed to torture intimidation, and all possible other dangers.

**12. Justice instead of punishment!** The Home Minister claimed that the new laws would ensure "justice, instead of punishment" and "speedy trial, instead of delays", and that justice would be delivered "up to the level of Supreme Court" within three years of an FIR being registered. It is very beautifully said, but the reality is different.

**13. Is it practically possible that a modern justice system:** Shah said,

"Justice can be received up to the level of the Supreme Court within three years of the registration of the FIR. The new laws bring in a modern justice system, incorporating provisions such as Zero FIR, online registration of police complaints, summons through electronic modes such as SMS, and mandatory videography of crime scenes for all heinous crimes." With the implementation of the new laws, India would have the most modern criminal justice system in the world, the Government claimed.

**14. Hope against Hope:** 99.9 per cent conviction, do we have conviction? "The

new laws have made forensic investigation mandatory in offences punishable by seven years or more, which will help speed up justice and take the conviction rate up to 90 per cent. 99.9 per cent of police stations across the country have been computerized and the process of generating e-records started in 2019. The new laws also set a deadline for the completion of all procedures, full implementation of the laws will end the endless wait for justice," the Home Minister said. Let us all hope for the best.

(Concluded)

## AP village in limelight, thanks to Usha Chilukuri

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Usha Chilukuri Vance is the talk of the town in the US ahead of the presidential elections, but she hails from a non-descript Andhra Pradesh village Vadduru village near Tanuku town. A distant relative in Vizag wants her to remember her Godavari roots and contribute to India in whatever possible way.

Wife of JD Vance, Donald Trump's vice presidential running mate for the forthcoming 2024 US presidential elections, her origins are from a village in Andhra Pradesh's West Godavari district, her relative said.

C Shantamma, a 96-year-old Vizag-based physics professor, who never met or spoke to Usha is hogging the limelight by being a distant relative.

"I am related to Usha through my husband (C Subramanya Sastry). She is the granddaughter of my



brother-in-law who worked as an IIT professor," Shantamma told a vernacular news channel on Wednesday.

Subramanya Sastry's oldest brother, C Rama Sastry, is Usha's grandfather. Her parents, C Radhakrishna and Lakshmi immigrated to the US around 1980.

According to the nonagenarian, who still teaches physics as an emeritus professor at a private varsity in Vizianagaram, Usha's family

grand aunt, noting JD Vance's contribution and efforts in enabling her success.

Calling Vance a helpful husband, she said the former would have helped Usha a lot in her career with a conducive atmosphere.

Further, she called on Usha to remember her Godavari roots and always chip in for India in whichever way possible from her end.

Vance, 39, was formally accepted the Republican vice-presidential nomination on the third day of the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee in the US on Wednesday, making him among the youngest Americans to ever fill that role. Trump and his running mate Vance will challenge President Joe Biden and his Vice-President Kamala Harris from the Democratic Party in the November 5 presidential election.

## Anita warns...

Continued from Page 1

Addressing the issue of minor girls' rape, Minister Anita revealed that these incidents are often perpetrated by close relatives. She announced the formation of a committee for a special drive in coordination with the women and child welfare, education, and police departments. Awareness conferences will be organized for students and parents on the causes of rape.

Meanwhile, the District Superintendent of Police (SP) of Palnada, K Srinivasa Rao, clarified that the recent coldblooded murder in Vinukonda was not politically motivated. Speaking to the media, SP Srinivasa Rao explained that Rashid was brutally murdered by Jilani due to personal enmity.

"The killing is purely due to personal issues and no political party is involved," he stated. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPC have been imposed in Vinukonda. Jilani has been taken into custody. The SP warned of serious consequences for anyone violating law and order in the town and stated that any recurrence of such incidents would be met with stringent legal action.

## Search intensified for missing Narasapuram MPDO

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Krishna district police have ramped up search operations for M Venkata Ramana, the missing MPDO (Mandal Parishad Development Officer) from Narasapuram, who was last seen on July 15. The search is being led by Krishna District Superintendent of Police (SP) R. Gangadhara Rao and involves 150 police personnel, including 4 DSPs, 4 Inspectors, and 15 Sub Inspectors.

According to preliminary information, Venkata Ramana went missing on July 15 between the Krishna and NTR districts. His family, who reside in Mahadevapuram Colony in Kanuru of Penamaluru mandal, reported his disappearance to the Penamaluru Police Station on July 16.

The investigation began after the family received a concerning WhatsApp message from Venkata Ramana.



Acting swiftly, police teams were dispatched to Machilipatnam Railway Station, where surveillance footage showed Venkata Ramana purchasing a ticket to Vijayawada.

The investigation team monitored CCTV footage and analysed call records and Google Maps data. They discovered that Venkata Ramana disembarked at Madhuranagar Railway Station.

His phone last showed activity near the Eluru canal, leading police to suspect he

may have contemplated suicide.

Search operations in the Eluru canal are being conducted under the supervision of Penamaluru and Hanuman Junction Inspectors. Preliminary police findings indicate that Venkata Ramana was under severe financial pressure due to Rs. 55 lakh in dues related to a ferry service at Madhavayapalem.

Eluru Range Inspector General of Police GVG Ashok Kumar is overseeing the search efforts, coordinating with SPs from Krishna, Eluru, and West Godavari, as well as the NTR District Police Commissioner.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu contacted Venkata Ramana's family to express his concern and assure them of government support. He instructed West Godavari district collector C Naga Rani to provide continuous updates on the case.

## Steps apace to check ganja...

Continued from Page 1

Measures include preventing tribal communities from cultivating ganja and setting up a special task force and numerous check posts to control the drug's distribution. Additionally, heightened vigilance is being maintained on school and college premises to deter drug consumption among students, and behavioral change programs are being implemented.

In remote tribal areas, the government is promoting alternative livelihood crops such as coffee, ragi, orange, and sweet lemon instead of ganja on ROFR patta lands. State and district-level NCORD committees, led by the Chief Secretary at the state level and District Collectors at the district level, are actively monitoring and controlling the situation. Large-scale awareness programs are being conducted in

schools and colleges to educate the public on the health risks associated with ganja and other intoxicants. Union Home Minister Amit Shah emphasized the need for significant personal transformation among students in schools, colleges, and hostels to steer clear of drugs. He urged continuous monitoring by state-level CSS, DGPs, and district-level Collectors and SPs to control the supply of ganja and other narcotics, and called for the involvement of various associations and organizations in these efforts.

The meeting also saw participation from Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Special Chief Secretary Medical & Health MT Krishna Babu, PCCF Chiranjeevi Chawdary, CID Additional DGP Ravi Shankar Ayyannar, Principal Secretary Home Department Kumar Vishwajit, SEB DIG M Ravi Prakash, DME Dr. Narsimham, and other officers.

## TDP govt targeting Oppn party leaders: RK Roja

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister RK Roja made serious allegations against TDP chief and Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday. Roja expressed her anger, stating that the people of Andhra Pradesh gave the alliance party a mandate for welfare, not to target opposition party leaders and their followers. She strongly condemned the public killing of YSRCP follower Rashid in Vinukonda on Wednesday night.

Roja took to Twitter to respond to the violence occurring under the coalition government in the state. In her tweet, she said, "It is brutal that our party follower Rashid was brutally hacked to death on the road yesterday in Vinukonda. The people gave a mandate to the TDP-led Chandrababu government to do welfare for the people, not to kill opposition party followers."

She also highlighted the rise in violence since the coalition government took charge last month. Citing data in her post, Roja revealed that 31 people have been murdered across Andhra Pradesh since the NDA alliance government came to power. Additionally, she reported 300 assassination attempts and 1,050 attacks and atrocities.

## Rising violence plunged AP into chaos: Amarnath

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Former state minister Gudivada Amarnath has issued a stark warning about the spiralling violence and collapse of law and order in the state, squarely blaming the turmoil on the contentious implementation of the Red Book Constitution. Speaking to the media on Thursday, Amarnath lambasted allied forces for intensifying assaults on YSRCP workers and leaders, severely restricting public movement throughout the region.

Amarnath presented chilling statistics, laying bare a surge in appalling crimes including atrocities, murders, and rapes. Shockingly, in just the past 45 days, the state has been rocked by over 1000 violent incidents, claiming 31 lives, pushing 35 individuals to suicide, and leaving over 300 others fighting for survival after attempted murders.

The aftermath has left both public and private properties scarred and ravaged, painting a stark portrait of unchecked lawlessness.

The former minister spared no words in condemning the recent savage killing of a minority youth leader in Vinukonda, a crime marked by grotesque mutilation. He also vehemently denounced the brutal assault on MP Midhun Reddy at the residence of for-



Shifting gears to pressing environmental concerns in Visakhapatnam, Amarnath underscored the critical imperative to safeguard the Erra Matti Dibbalu, or red sand dunes, a geological marvel steeped in profound historical and archaeological significance.

mer Chittoor MP N Reddeppa, decrying these acts as brazen violations of constitutional norms. Amarnath pointedly accused the perpetrators of prioritizing allegiance to the Red Book Constitution over the established legal framework of India.

Amarnath sharply criticized Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, insisting on complete transparency by promptly issuing a detailed white paper on the current security crisis before initiating any peace efforts.

Urgently, he appealed to the central government to intervene, advocating for an unbiased investigation to restore public safety swiftly.

Shifting gears to pressing environmental concerns in Visakhapatnam, Amarnath

underscored the critical imperative to safeguard the Erra Matti Dibbalu, or red sand dunes, a geological marvel steeped in profound historical and archaeological significance.

He forcefully demanded an immediate cessation of illegal construction activities and land developments that brazenly flout Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) regulations.

Expressing deep consternation over the persistent disregard for environmental standards despite leadership changes, Amarnath reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to leveraging legal avenues to shield these culturally and ecologically rich landscapes from further despoliation.

## IAF rescues 5 people from floodwater

PNS ■ ELURU

The Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel rescued five people when their car got stuck in flood water near Narayanapuram Kadda Maisamma temple in Velerupadu mandal on Thursday.

The five individuals were traveling in a car which became stranded in the swirling flood waters and began to be washed away. Eluru MP Putta Mahesh Kumar was informed about the incident and promptly contacted the relevant officials.

An IAF helicopter was dispatched to the location. The IAF personnel successfully rescued five people, including Gaddam Sai Kumar, Jagadish, Kundan Kumar, Tingavarapu



Jyothi, and the car driver Rama Rao, from the flood waters.

Sources reported that breaches developed in the Peddavagu stream at Gummadavelli village in Aswarapaveti mandal, Telangana. The flood water

inundated several villages, including Alluri Nagar, Madhavaram, Reddygudem, Vontibanda, and Kammargude. Officials are currently making arrangements to evacuate the villagers to safer locations.

## Anna Canteens...

Continued from Page 1

Regarding the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) project, Minister Narayana noted that the deadline expired at the end of June, but at the state government's request, it has been extended by another month, with a further extension of two years. The AIIB had allocated Rs 5,350 crores for this project, but the previous government utilized only Rs 240 crores, leaving the rest of the funds unused without allocating the state's share. Narayana opined that completing this project would have alleviated drinking water problems for at least 50 percent of municipalities.

Minister Narayana also addressed the incomplete works under the AMRUT-I & II schemes, requesting the central government to reconcile these schemes and allow their re-implementation in the state.

## Watery grave...

Continued from Page 1

Although there were others in the vicinity, few witnessed the incident directly as it occurred. Search efforts concluded after the bodies were recovered, and a rescue helicopter had been dispatched earlier in response. The falls were temporarily closed to the public during the recovery operation.

Millaa Millaa Falls, situated in the southern Atherton Tablelands, is renowned for its scenic beauty and is a popular stop on the local waterfall circuit, just outside the township of the same name.

## SC: Declare centre-wise...

Continued from Page 1

The top court adjourned the cases listed ahead of the NEET-UG pleas, saying "We will open the case today. Lakhs of young students are waiting for this, let us hear and decide." The bench asked the petitioners to show that the paper leak was "systemic" and affected the entire examination, warranting cancellation. "Re-examination has to be on concrete footing that the sanctity of the entire test was affected," the CJ said.

On the issue of the ongoing probe, the bench said, "The CBI probe is on. If what the CBI has

told us is revealed, it will affect the investigation and people will become wise." The bench is hearing more than 40 pleas, including those filed by the NTA, which conducts NEET-UG, seeking transfer of cases pending against it in various high courts over alleged irregularities to the Supreme Court to avoid multiple litigations.

On July 11, the top court had adjourned till July 18 the hearing of the pleas, including those seeking cancellation of NEET-UG 2024, re-test and a probe into alleged malpractices, as the responses of the Centre and the NTA were yet to be received by some parties.

## 3 white papers...

Continued from Page 1

Through these assessments, he has highlighted the adverse impacts of the former administration's policies and actions.

The release of the upcoming white papers will complete the planned series of seven documents, each addressing specific areas where the state has faced significant challenges under the previous government. The white papers serve as a transparent effort by CM Naidu's administration to inform the public and ensure accountability in governance.



# Kollu Ravindra promises 1 lakh jobs for Machilipatnam youth

## Says many industrialists keen to establish units in city

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Kollu Ravindra, Minister for Mines & Geology and Excise, has announced that one lakh unemployed youths will be getting employment opportunities in Machilipatnam as scores of industries are coming to the city soon. Many prominent industrialists are showing interest in establishing industries in Machilipatnam. Besides, BPCL oil refinery with an investment of Rs. 60,000-70,000 crore will also come up in Machilipatnam, he added. While addressing the media at the R&B Guest House in Machilipatnam, Minister Ravindra said that the State government is giving utmost importance to the port city Machilipatnam. Besides the BPCL oil refinery, Chief Minister N Chandrababu

Naidu is taking steps to set up energy and battery storage industries in the city, he said. The government has vowed to work with a motto of people's welfare and for that, people should cooperate with the government, he added.

Further, he said that in the future, good days will come for Machilipatnam people and educated youths to get suitable jobs. Also, Machilipatnam will get back its previous glory, he hoped. The State government is interested in establishing industries in Machilipatnam with the support of the Central government. He assured the educated youths that they need not worry about their future as more employment opportunities will come to the city through the new industries.

Minister Ravindra also referred to the Land Titling



Minister Kollu Ravindra addressing the media at the R&B Guest House in Machilipatnam on Thursday

Act. The original legal heir will have to suffer great loss as a result of the Act that was introduced by the previous YSRCP

government. So, his government cancelled the Act to benefit the legal heirs. People of the State have lauded Chief

Minister Naidu and the State government for this, the Minister said.

Later, he expressed unhappiness over the condition of the drainage system in Machilipatnam's urban and rural areas. A special programme will be chalked out to remove silt and garbage piled up in the drains. He will concentrate on improving the sanitation situation in Machilipatnam, he added.

He said the government will take steps to repair all R&B roads and internal roads. Under the Amrith Scheme, Machilipatnam will be developed spending Rs.58 crore. Also, he assured the people that he will strive to bring MP LADS, besides the Central government funds, to the city to develop Machilipatnam, he said.

# Low pressure to bring heavy rains in AP over next 48 hrs

PNS ■ GUNTUR

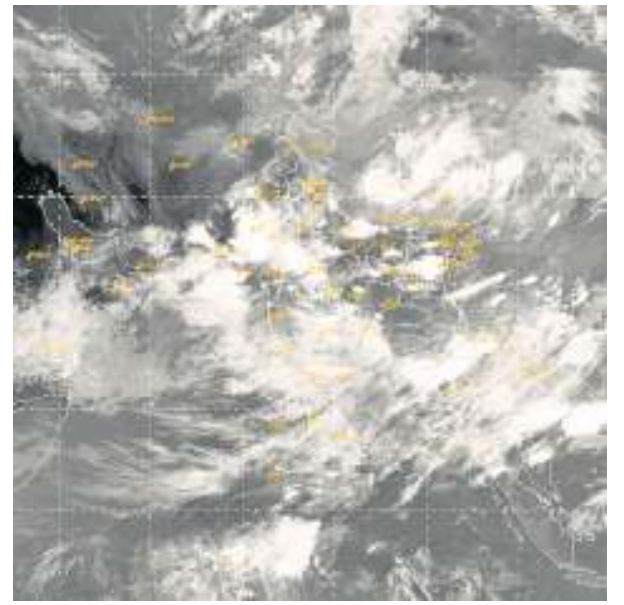
Heavy to very heavy rainfall, accompanied by extremely heavy falls, is expected in isolated areas of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 48 hours.

According to the Meteorological Centre, a low-pressure area has formed over the central and adjoining North Bay of Bengal. This system is likely to bring heavy to very heavy rainfall across north and south coastal AP in the next 48 hours.

Thunderstorms, accompanied by lightning and strong surface winds ranging from 30-40 Kmph, may occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next five days.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are expected at most places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next seven days.

The southwest monsoon



has been normal over Coastal Andhra Pradesh and weak in Rayalaseema. Rainfall was reported at many places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and a few places in Rayalaseema during the last 24 hours.

In today's weather update, it was noted that the associ-

ated cyclonic circulation extends up to mid-tropospheric levels, tilting south-westwards with height. This system is expected to intensify further and move north-westwards towards the Odisha coast over the next two days.

# CM allocates Rs 3 cr to tide over water crisis in tribal villages

PNS ■ PARVATIPURAM

In an eye-opening revelation, Minister for Women and Child Welfare and Tribal Welfare, Gummidi Sandhyarani, has brought to light the dire conditions faced by tribal communities in remote villages. During her election campaign, she highlighted a severe water shortage that has plagued these areas, urging immediate intervention. Her powerful disclosures during a recent cabinet meeting prompted swift action from the Chief Minister, who promptly allocated three crores for a 31 gravity-fed water scheme to address the water crisis on a war footing.

Minister Sandhyarani's visit also uncovered the shocking neglect faced by children in the Tribal Welfare Ashram School. The institution had been deprived of essential equipment for five years under the previous government, leaving children without basic necessities. In stark contrast, the new administration has moved swiftly to rectify these issues. The Chief Minister directed the immediate provision of plates, glasses, blankets, rugs, and boxes to children in welfare hostels, ensuring their basic needs are met.

Further emphasizing the challenges inherited from the previous regime, Minister



Sandhyarani revealed that the Tribal Welfare Department is weighed down by a Rs 254-crore debt. The failure of the

former administration to hold general meetings under the nine Integrated Tribal Development Agencies

(ITDAs) for five years left many issues unaddressed. In a decisive move, the new Chief Minister organized a general meeting of ITDA to streamline and tackle the pressing concerns in tribal welfare.

Minister Sandhyarani also criticized the lackluster performance of Saluru Municipal Officers, urging them to change their work style or face regular training measures. "Officials have become accustomed to the previous government's way of working. Development projects are not carried out, and funds are returned unspent. If you are unwilling to work, you should leave," she asserted, emphasizing

the need for accountability and proactive measures within the administration.

Minister Sandhyarani's relentless efforts and the swift actions of the new government mark a significant step towards improving the living conditions and welfare of the tribal communities in remote villages. This commitment to addressing critical issues reflects a new era of governance, focused on delivering tangible results and fostering sustainable development. As the new administration takes bold steps to rectify the long-standing issues, the tribal communities in remote villages can hope for a brighter and more sustainable future.

## HEAVY RAINS & FLOODS

# Prevent loss of life, property, officials told



PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi directed the officials to take all needed precautionary measures to avoid loss of life and property due to heavy rains and floods. She also asked the people of the district to be alert during the next few days in the wake of the heavy rain forecast.

The Collector visited the Tammileru canal low bridge accompanied by irrigation, revenue, police and municipal corporation officials.

She directed the officials to take all measures to ensure that there would be no loss of life and property due to heavy rains. She told them that precautions should be taken keeping in mind the inflows during the last floods to the Tammileru drain. She instructed the irrigation officials to know from

time to time the inflows to the Tammileru reservoir and be alert.

The Collector also ordered the officials to monitor 24 hours at three points of the Tammileru Canal. She also asked them to be aware of the people living in the low-lying areas near the Tammileru drain. The officials were directed to review the situation at Indiramma Colony, Sainagar Colony and YSR Colony.

Collector Vetri Selvi inquired about the Tammileru canal returning wall, and traffic regulations at the low bridge and at the bund area. RDO NSK Khajavali, Irrigation officials EE Deva Prakash, DE Arjun and municipal Commissioner S Venkata Krishna were among those who accompanied the Collector.

# Pharma industry under fire for safety lapses



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

An escalating wave of criticism has engulfed the district's pharmaceutical industry as safety standards fall dangerously short, leading to frequent and often fatal accidents. Critics accuse company owners of neglecting employee safety, resulting in significant loss of life. Allegations suggest that the district administration routinely forms inquiry committees after these tragedies, but their reports remain unpublished, fueling further outrage.

The district, home to over 130 pharmaceutical companies within the Atchutapuram SEZ and Paravada Mandal SEZ, employs thousands of workers from various states. However, non-compliance with safety standards has turned these workplaces into potential death traps. Incidents involving chemical leaks, gas refinery fires, tanker explosions, and reactor blasts have become distressingly common, resulting in numerous casualties and injuries. The rampant use of hazardous chemicals, often handled by subcontractors employing unskilled labor to cut costs, exacerbates the risk. Employees who voice concerns about safety and unskilled labor are frequently dismissed, perpetuating a cycle of danger and negligence.

The district, home to over 130 pharmaceutical companies within the Atchutapuram SEZ and Paravada Mandal SEZ, employs thousands of workers from various states.

40 lives and injuring over 120 people. Among the most tragic incidents, a fire at a leading pharma company in Paravada Mandal claimed five lives less than two years ago. Additionally, a reactor explosion at GMFC Labs in Atchutapuram SEZ resulted in one death and four injuries less than a year ago. Further incidents at Sainath Chemicals Company, Smilex Company, and multiple gas leaks in the seeds section of Atchutapuram SEZ in 2022 underscore the persistent and widespread safety issues.

A senior official from the Inspector of Factories, speaking on the condition of anonymity, stated that the responsibility for ensuring safety in these companies lies with officials from the factories, pollution control board, labor, and fire departments. However, he noted allegations of negligence and inadequate inspections, which must occur at least four times a year to provide safety guidelines.

Safety engineers emphasize the need to properly monitor high-temperature liquids boiled in uncontrolled reactors to prevent explosions and fires. However, the absence of skilled employees leaves these facilities vulnerable. Additionally, proper monitoring of pipelines for waste chemicals and ensuring their correct treatment are critical measures that are often neglected, leading to preventable accidents.

# Rally marks road safety awareness drive in Vizag

## People urged to strictly adhere to traffic rules

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Principal Judge-cum-District Legal Services Authority Chairman Alapati Giridhar has underscored the paramount importance of road safety, urging strict adherence to traffic rules, during the 'One-K-Walk Chaitanya Rally' organised by the District Legal Services Authority.

The rally, directed by the High Court, aimed to promote an accident-free city by motivating the youth and drivers. Leading by example, Royal Enfield staff and police officers donned helmets, leading a spirited two-wheeler rally from the Kali Mata Temple to Police Mess on Beach Road.

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad emphasised the severe dangers of driving without a helmet and urged everyone to use helmets consistently. He rejected the notion of inconvenience as an excuse, stressing that all two-wheeler riders must wear helmets and car occupants must use seat belts to act responsibly. He cautioned against excessive speed and carelessness, particu-



larly among urban youth, highlighting the programme's objective to raise public awareness as mandated by the State's highest court.

Police Commissioner Shankhabrata Bagchi pledged strict enforcement of all traffic laws to prevent accidents and position Visakhapatnam as an exemplary city. He outlined his focus on ten critical areas, including over-speeding, triple riding, driving under the influence of alcohol, one-way travel, using vehicles without num-

ber plates, and using cell phones while driving. The goal is to ensure safe travel throughout Visakhapatnam. He appealed to everyone to act responsibly, aiming to achieve a road accident-free city.

District Judicial Service Organisation secretary MV Seshamma, Bar Association president Bevara Satyanarayana, Joint Commissioner of Police Fakkirappa, and officials from various departments attended the programme.

# TTD to limit Srivani quota from July 22

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

In view of the increasing pilgrim crowd to Tirumala, the TTD has decided to reduce the SRIVANI Trust tickets, which come into effect from Monday onwards.

The online quota of Srivani tickets remains the same at 500 while among the daily quota of 1000 tickets offline, 100 will be issued at Tirupati airport and 900 at Gokulam Rest House in Tirumala.

The devotees are requested to make note of this and co-operate with TTD.

# NTPC Simhadri wins global recognition for environment-friendly practices

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

NTPC Simhadri, a flagship power station operated by NTPC Limited, has been conferred the coveted Global EHS Award in Environment Protection: Best Practices. Presented by Greentech Foundation, this recognition underscores NTPC Simhadri's unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability through its pioneering initia-

tives. The award ceremony, held in Bangkok, Thailand, served as a testament to NTPC Simhadri's resolute dedication to environmental progress. The Greentech Foundation's jury commended the power station's proactive environmental practices, bestowing upon them a distinguished shield and merit certificate. These efforts have established a benchmark for environmental stewardship within the industry.

Sanjay Kumar Sinha, Project Head of NTPC Simhadri, expressed his profound appreciation for the recognition. He emphasised that the award serves to solidify their unwavering commitment to environmental responsibility. NTPC Simhadri prioritises the implementation of sustainable practices that not only reduce their environmental footprint but also enhance operational efficiency.

# MP unveils vision to create one lakh jobs in Visakhapatnam

## Sribharat underscores port city's potential in solar manufacturing, biotechnology, and data centres

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Member of Parliament Mathukumilli Sribharat has unveiled plans to generate one lakh new jobs within Visakhapatnam. This ambitious initiative aligns seamlessly with the broader State government agenda to create 20 lakh jobs across Andhra Pradesh. The announcement came during an interactive session on Ease of Doing Business, hosted by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Visakhapatnam chapter. Addressing industry leaders and stakeholders, Sribharat underscored the city's potential in burgeoning sectors such as solar manufacturing, biotechnology, and

data centres. Sribharat emphasised strategic project selection and execution as vital to creating a business-friendly environment, aimed at attracting investors and enhancing Andhra Pradesh's economic stature.

Highlighting the collaborative spirit essential for success, Grandhi Rajesh, Chairman of CII Visakhapatnam, identified automotive and electronics R&D, general manufacturing, and port-led industrial development as pivotal areas ripe for investment. The discussion also emphasised overcoming infrastructure challenges, including upgrades to highway connectivity and the expedited completion of key projects by the National



Highlighting the collaborative spirit essential for success, Grandhi Rajesh, Chairman of CII Visakhapatnam, identified automotive and electronics R&D, general manufacturing, and port-led industrial development as pivotal areas ripe for investment. The discussion also emphasised overcoming infrastructure challenges, including upgrades to highway connectivity and the expedited completion of key projects by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

Environmental sustainability was a key focus, with proposals from CII including innovative solutions for handling cargo and coal conveyors to minimise environmental impact. Ensuring reliable utilities and a skilled workforce were identified as crucial factors in sustaining economic growth. Stakeholders stressed the urgent need for efficient water, power, and road networks, alongside the establishment of Skill Development Centres to meet industry demands.

The CII put forward proposals to expedite drug approvals through a zonal office of the Central Drugs

Control Organisation (CDSCO) and suggested infrastructure enhancements such as a dedicated convention centre in Auto Nagar and district-specific parks for women entrepreneurs.

D Tirupathi Raju, former chairman of CII Andhra Pradesh, emphasised the potential for enhanced food processing infrastructure and proactive measures to boost global exports, emphasising a commitment to collaborative solutions for sustained economic growth. With participation from over 50 industry leaders, the CII session marks a significant step towards fostering a collaborative approach to regional development.



# Jagan to visit slain YSRCP activist's family today

PNS ■ VINUKONDA

YSRCP chief Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy is expected to visit the family of a party worker who was murdered here, on Friday and express solidarity with the bereaved.

According to police, Sheik Jilani (25) hacked Rashid (25) to death at Mundlamuru bus station in Vinukonda around 9 pm on Wednesday.

In the wake of the murder, a video of which has gone viral, YSRCP claimed that Jilani was a rival TDP cadre.

Against this backdrop, the opposition party stated that Reddy will travel to Vinukonda on Friday.

Reddy cut short his Bengaluru visit and returned to Tadepalli at 4 pm on Thursday. Interestingly, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu deferred a scheduled white paper release on the state of 'law and order' in the southern state during the YSRCP government between 2019 and 2024.

However, government sources said the deferment had nothing to do with the murder and added that the CM is keen on releasing the remaining three white papers during the forthcoming assembly session.

The ruling TDP and opposition YSRCP traded charges over the party affiliation of the man who murdered the YSRCP activist. However, the police claimed that there was nothing political in this incident, but only personal enmity between the two. "There was no political issue. There were only personal issues between the two persons (Rashid and Jilani). Rumours are being circulated and some people are projecting it as a political murder," an official said.



The accused was arrested today under Section 103 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Palnadu district Superintendent of Police K Srinivas Rao noted that the crime scene will also be reconstructed.

Earlier, reacting to the crime, Reddy alleged that a "demonic reign" is prevailing in the southern state, bereft of law and order.

"My deepest condolences to the family of Rashid, who was murdered by TDP cadres in Vinukonda," said Reddy, adding that there is no safety to people's lives under the TDP government.

The opposition party said Rashid was a party activist and a few YSRCP leaders also visited his family members today to comfort them.

According to Reddy, Andhra Pradesh has turned into a den of crime within just 45 days of the new government assuming power.

Terming the Vinukonda murder as a 'blot' on the TDP-led government, Reddy alleged that Naidu and others are perpetrating these atrocities.

Refuting the allegations, the TDP said Jilani was a supporter of the YSRCP chief and called on the former CM to 'stop supporting' the murderer.

## Ex-CM writes to PM Modi about 'alarming' state of affairs in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has urgently appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding the alarming state of affairs in Andhra Pradesh, citing a severe deterioration in law and order. In his letter, Jagan highlighted the failure of constitutional institutions and paralysis in administration, leading to widespread fear and insecurity among the state's populace.

Jagan expressed grave concern over the brutal targeting of individuals and properties allegedly by supporters of the newly elected TDP-led coalition government. He cited incidents of intimidation, physical assaults, and even deaths among sympathizers of his party, with allegations of targeted destruction of public and private assets.

The letter pointed out recent egregious incidents, including the tragic killing of YSRCP activist Rashid in Vinukonda, occurring amidst public view and close to law enforcement personnel.

It asserted that Palnadu's superintendent of police had denied any political connection to the cold-blooded murder that took place in Vinukonda.

"The killing is purely over personal issues and no political party is involved in the

murder," said the TDP in a release, quoting Srinivasa Rao. According to the ruling party, prohibitory orders were clamped down in Vinukonda, while the SP warned of serious action on anyone resorting to law and order violations in the town.

Additionally, he condemned the attempted assault on YSRCP's Lok Sabha leader MP PV Midhun Reddy in Punganur, Chittoor district, which reportedly took place in the presence of police. Jagan criticized what he termed as the "apathetic attitude" of the police towards maintaining law and order, accusing them of emboldening perpetrators of violence and vandalism under the current administration. He lamented the transformation of Andhra Pradesh from a symbol of progress in education, healthcare, and women's empowerment under his tenure to a state marred by rampant violence, political vendettas, and societal unrest.

The letter concluded with alarming statistics of recent violence and property damage, painting a grim picture of the state's governance under the new regime. Jagan urged Prime Minister Modi to intervene urgently to restore order and protect the rights and safety of Andhra Pradesh's citizens.

# Fallen soldier laid to rest in S'kulam

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

In a poignant ceremony marked by deep respect and solemnity, officials from the Indian Army, Navy, District Administration, Police Department, and NCC came together to pay their final respects to the late Naik (OFC) Dokkari Rajesh. The brave soldier, who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty, was laid to rest with full military honours in his native village of Chetlatandra, Santhabommali mandal, Srikakulam District.

Family members, a large gathering of locals, and a Guard of Honour from the Army Air Defence College Gopalpur, Odisha and the Police Department were present to honor Naik Rajesh's valiant service to the nation. The atmosphere was filled with a deep sense of loss and gratitude as the community bid farewell to their hero. Earlier in the day, a wreath-



laying ceremony was held at INHS Kalyani in Visakhapatnam. Rear Admiral M Murali Mohan Raju, Chief Staff Officer (P&A) HQENC, led the tributes to Naik Rajesh, laying a wreath in honour of his bravery and dedication.

Representatives from Station Headquarters (Army), district officials, and city police also participated in the ceremony, placing wreaths and paying their respects.

Naik (OFC) Dokkari Rajesh's sacrifice serves as a stark reminder of the courage

and dedication of the armed forces personnel who stand guard over the nation's security. His legacy will be remembered with pride and honour, inspiring future generations to serve with the same commitment and valour.

## Cop hurt in attack by mentally sick man

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

A head constable sustained severe injuries after being attacked with a log by a mentally unsound man in Gudur town on Thursday.

According to police reports, Laluthu Kalindi, originally from West Bengal, assaulted Head Constable Das as he entered a local hotel for a break. The attack, captured on CCTV, showed Kalindi striking the constable from behind, causing him to collapse instantly. The injured constable was rushed to GGH (name of hospital), where he remains in critical condition. Kalindi, who reportedly has a history of targeting police personnel in uniform, was swiftly apprehended by fellow constables and members of the public at the scene.

## Shift people from dilapidated houses, low-lying areas: DC

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector C Nagaraj has directed the officials to evacuate people living in dilapidated houses, sheds, huts and low-lying areas to safer places in view of heavy rains during the next few days.

She told the municipal commissioner and Panchayat Raj officials to visit at the field level to take steps to ensure that there would be no inhibition to the flow of flood water in the irrigation canals.

She also directed them to take measures to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. The sanitation in the rain and flood-affected areas should be efficient, she told the officials.

Stating that the incessant rain will continue for another two days, steps should be taken to provide drinking water to the low-lying areas. The municipal and RWVs officials should work in coordination, she said to



them. The officials should go door to door to create awareness among the people to prevent diarrhoea, Dengue and typhoid, she ordered the health officials concerned.

She instructed the irrigation officials to take steps to remove wild plants and creepers from the canals and drains to ensure that the flood water flows without any inhibition. The officials should examine the bunds and embankments and identify the places where there is a scope for breaches, she told the officials.

## Girl allegedly raped by rowdy sheeter in Tirupati

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The atrocities on women and girls continue unabated in Andhra Pradesh as an Intermediate student was raped by a rowdy sheeter on Thursday. The victim attempted suicide.

Police said that when she was returning from her college, rowdy sheeter Vinay threatened her at knife-point. He dragged her into an auto rickshaw, took her to the outskirts and raped her.

Unable to digest the incident, the rape victim consumed a chemical which is used as a hair dye.

She was admitted to the GGH and undergoing treatment. The police registered a case and the rape accused is at large.

## TDP, YSRCP cadres clash as MP Mithun visits Punganur

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

Tension prevailed in Punganur when the TDP activists protested against the visit of Rajampet YSRCP MP PV Mithun Reddy on Thursday.

The MP went to the house of former MP Reddappa Reddy in Punganur. Knowing this, a large number of TDP activists rushed there and started raising slogans like Mithun Reddy go back. When the YSRCP activists resisted the TDP activists' protest, stones were hurled at them. In retaliation, the YSRCP activists also pelted stones.

An SUV was set on fire and the windscreens of several cars were damaged in the clash. MP Mithun Reddy did not come out of the house due to a violent incident. DSP Krishna Raghuvver rushed to the place along with additional forces and dispersed the clashing activists by resorting to a mild lathi charge.

Meanwhile, MP PV Mithun Reddy condemned the incident, accusing the ruling TDP government of inciting attacks against him.

He alleged that violent attacks on YSRCP activists in Punganur have begun since the TDP came to power. "They are preventing me from visiting the constituency. It is unfortunate that the police, who should provide security, remained mute spectators. I will bring these attacks to the notice of the Lok Sabha Speaker," Mithun Reddy told the media.

## Plea to fix MSP for all crops by adding 50 pc to production cost



Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sanghala Samanvaya Samiti delegation, led by convener and former minister Vadde Sobhanadreeswara Rao, submitting a representation to Vijayawada MP Kesineni Chinmi at his office on Thursday

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A delegation from the Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sanghala Samanvaya Samiti has requested MP Kesineni Sivanath alias Chinmi to take steps to implement the Prof Swaminathan Committee recommendations for all agricultural products. The delegation also urged MP Chinmi to take into consideration the production cost and adding 50 per cent, he said.

Similarly, the Kisan Morcha urged to suspend the move to install smart metres to agriculture pumps, he said. The Morcha also urged the Central government to waive off GST on fertilisers, pesticides, seeds, power supply, petrol products, tractors and spare parts. Also, while implementing the Land Acquisition Act-2013, the government should take into consideration land prices every year, he said.

Furthermore, they sought loan redemption for farmers

and agriculture workers for once. They also demanded a memorial for the 736 farmers who sacrificed their lives during the agitation. In addition to these demands, they urged the withdrawal of all illegal cases against farmers. However, none of the demands has been resolved so far, he said.

MP Kesineni Chinmi assured them that he will raise all these demands in Parliament. He will strive to solve all genuine demands, he said.

Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sanghala Samanvaya Samiti leaders Y Kesava Rao, Water Users Associations' Federation president Alla Venkata Gopala Krishna Rao, K Narendra, S Jhansi, M Yalamanda Rao, M Prasad Babu, PV Anjaneyulu, Ch Vijaya, Dadala Subba Rao, G Uma Vara Prasad and others met MP Kesineni Chinmi.

that the Central government did not implement many assurances that were given at the time of farmers' agitations against three Agricultural Acts. When the agitation was called off, the Central government had assured of stalling all three Acts and fixing MSP for all crops by taking into consideration the production cost and adding 50 per cent, he said.

Similarly, the Kisan Morcha urged to suspend the move to install smart metres to agriculture pumps, he said. The Morcha also urged the Central government to waive off GST on fertilisers, pesticides, seeds, power supply, petrol products, tractors and spare parts. Also, while implementing the Land Acquisition Act-2013, the government should take into consideration land prices every year, he said.

Furthermore, they sought loan redemption for farmers

## Loan waiver scheme is drama for local body elections, alleges Bandi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that the farm loan waiver scheme is intended for making political gains in the forthcoming local body elections, the Union Minister of the State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, asked Congress workers to explain what they had achieved to organise celebrations across the state.

"Is the celebrations meant for evading Rythu Bharosa in the Rabi and Kharif seasons? Or is it because the farmers were cheated for reducing the loan waiver amount? Or is it for troubling farmers by not giving ex-gratia? Why didn't the government give Rs 15,000 to farmers and tenant farmers and Rs 12,000 for farm labourers in the last Rabi and Kharif seasons," Sanjay said.

He asked the TG government whether it is correct on the part of the Congress government to trouble farmers in the name of Rythu Bharosa Sadassulu. He said the government has to pay more than Rs 20,000 as Rythu Bharosa funds to farmers in the Rabi and Kharif seasons. However, the government diverted Rythu Bharosa funds to fund the farm loan waiver scheme and is giving the impression that the Congress government did something for farmers.



"Is the celebrations meant for evading Rythu Bharosa in the Rabi and Kharif seasons? Or is it because the farmers were cheated for reducing the loan waiver amount? Or is it for troubling farmers by not giving ex-gratia? Why didn't the government give Rs 15,000 to farmers and tenant farmers and Rs 12,000 for farm labourers in the last Rabi and Kharif seasons," Sanjay said.

He said that farmers have become defaulters due to the BRS government's foolishness and that the government has the responsibility to make banks give a no dues certificate to farmers by paying all dues owed by farmers who took Rs 2 lakh as loan.

He asked the Congress government to prove its sincerity by making banks give new loans to farmers as it assured during elections.



Krishna Zilla Parishad ex-chairperson Gadde Anuradha inaugurating the Indian Silk Galleries at A-Convention in Vijayawada on Thursday

## Five-day Indian Silk Gallery kicks off

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna Zilla Parishad former chairperson Gadde Anuradha inaugurated the Indian Silk Galleries at the A-Convention Hall in Vijayawada on Thursday. The exhibition, to be conducted for five days, offers a 20 per cent discount on all products.

Several handloom items

from 14 States are available at the expo. Silk handloom, Banaras, Chandori, Kanchipuram, Bengali, Crush, Uppada, Zindals, Kutampalli Ikkar sarees, and Gadwal, Narayanpet, West Bengal embroidery sarees are on display.

Indian Silk Gallery organiser Y Srinivasa Rao and others were present.

## JSP membership campaign launched in Vijayawada



Minister Nandendra Manohar launching the Jana Sena Party's membership registration campaign in Vijayawada on Thursday

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Public Distribution System, Consumer Affairs, Nandendra Manohar, who is also the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) of the Jana Sena Party, launched the membership registration campaign at One Town in the Vijayawada West Assembly Constituency in the NTR district on Thursday. He handed over the membership receipts to the party members.

Speaking on the occasion, Nandendra Manohar said that his party has been implementing the insurance scheme for the members since its inception. If a member died in an accident, the party would facilitate Rs.5

lakh insurance to the family, he said. No other party in the country is implementing this type of an insurance scheme, he added.

Further, he appealed to the party leaders and workers to be involved in the membership campaign. Party chief and Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan is a dedicated political leader and he always supports the party leaders and cadres, he added. After that, Manohar handed over cheques of Rs.5 lakh each to the kin of two deceased JSP cadres.

JSP leaders Ammiseti Vasu, Mandali Rajesh, Kalyanam Srinivasa Rao, Tirupati Anusha and others were present.

## A unique temple that beckons people from all faiths

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

In a serene corner of rural Andhra Pradesh, within the verdant landscapes of Madanapalle, a grand temple dedicated to Adinath Sri Guru Babaji was sanctified on Thursday by spiritual master M. The beautifully designed, spacious temple, adorned with elegant pillars, stands as a testament to spiritual unity, welcoming followers from diverse faiths.

The inauguration ceremony,

graced by Minister of Road, Transport, and Highways Nitin Gadkari, marked the public opening of the temple. Spiritual Master Sri M conducted a poignant Prana Pratishtha ceremony, invoking the presence of Babaji within a natural rock cave, symbolising deep contemplation and spiritual resonance.

Guru Babaji, revered as a manifestation of the Supreme Being by the Nath Sampradaya, embodies the teachings of Kriya Yoga—a path to spiritu-



al liberation, which he passed on to disciples like Maheshwarath Babaji, who in turn mentored Sri M. The temple, spanning 4,000 square feet, is the largest of its kind dedicated to Guru Babaji worldwide, a testament to Sri M's dedication to spiritual enlightenment and inclusivity.

Addressing the gathering, M emphasised, "This temple of Babaji is open to all, transcending barriers of caste, creed, and religion. The Babaji who resides in your heart is the

same as the one whose presence we sanctify here today, Hari Om Tat Sat."

The inauguration drew over 2,000 devotees from India and abroad, including dignitaries such as retired Justice Sunil Shukre, local MLA, the District Collector, and the Additional District Collector. The ceremony concluded with a communal lunch (Annadanam) and the distribution of blessed Prasad, fostering a spirit of community and spiritual nourishment.



INDIA CORNER

### Indian crew member of capsized oil tanker dies: Officials

An Indian crew member of a Comoros-flagged oil tanker that capsized off the Oman coast has died, officials said on Thursday. Last night, the Indian Navy said eight Indians and a Sri Lankan national were rescued by Indian warship INS Teg while carrying out a rescue operation to trace the crew members of the cargo ship. The vessel had capsized about 25 nautical miles southeast of Ras Madrakah in Oman on July 15 and search and rescue efforts are underway, the officials said. Minister of state for external affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh said the body of the Indian has been retrieved. The tanker MT Falcon Prestige has a 16-member crew including 13 Indians and three Sri Lankans, according to Oman's Maritime Security Centre (MSC). "Spoke to our Ambassador in Oman, Amit Narang, to get an update on the capsized vessel MV Prestige Falcon."



### BJP MPs getting houses of poor demolished: AAP

AAP on Thursday alleged the BJP MPs are making the poor homeless by getting their houses demolished through the departments under them. Addressing a press conference, AAP leader and MLA Durgesh Pathak said houses were "demolished illegally" in Civil Lines, and the people living there since independence were made "homeless". "Now the railways has given a notice to demolish the slums of Brar Square on July 22, the BJP MP from New Delhi Bansuri Swaraj has not gone there to meet the people," he said. Hitting back, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that the Aam Aadmi Party and its leaders now understand well that Delhi residents, especially the economically weaker sections living in unauthorised colonies, slums, and rehabilitation settlements, have decided to reject AAP and will choose BJP and development in the January 2025 Assembly elections.



### Delhi HC seeks Centre stand on woman's plea seeking LPG subsidy

The Delhi High Court Thursday sought the Centre's stand on a petition by a woman, a ration card holder belonging to "extremely poor" background, against non-grant of LPG subsidy to her under the Ujjwala Yojana because she already had a prior gas connection. Justice Sanjeev Narula issued a notice and asked the government to file its response to the petition which asserted that the subsidy should be extended to her as well. According to the petitioner, in spite of fulfilling the requisite criteria, she cannot get enrolled and become a beneficiary of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) which mandates that the scheme would only apply to those without a gas connection. "Discrimination between two categories of people i.e. PMUY beneficiaries viz-a-viz non-PMUY beneficiaries for the purpose of grant of subsidy is discriminatory, arbitrary and in violation of Article 14 of the Constitution of India," the petition said.



## Quota bill in next Cabinet meet to clear doubts: K'taka CM

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said his government has decided to withhold the bill mandating job reservation for Kannadigas in private sector due to "certain confusion." He said the bill will be taken up for discussion in the next cabinet meeting to clear the doubts. "On Monday, complete discussion (on the topic) could not take place in the cabinet meeting. By then reports had appeared in the media," he told the Karnataka assembly. "There was some confusion. We will clear those confusions in the next cabinet meeting. Let's have a detailed discussion." The CM was replying to Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka's demand to clarify the state government's stand on the bill.



He said the Chief Minister changed his message on 'X' thrice. Ashoka recalled that Siddaramaiah in his first post said that the cabinet has decided 100 per cent reservation for Kannadigas in the private sector and then deleted it. The Chief Minister then posted another message saying that there will be 50 per cent reservation in the management category and 70 per cent

in non-management category for Kannadigas. "Finally, you announced putting the bill on hold. There appears to be a Tughlaq government in Karnataka," he said. In his reply, the Chief Minister said, "There is no Tughlaq government, but Siddaramaiah government. We will take up the bill in the next cabinet meeting." The state cabinet had on Monday cleared the Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates in the Industries, Factories and Other Establishments Bill, 2024, which makes it compulsory for private firms to reserve jobs for Kannadigas. "Any industry, factory or other establishments shall appoint fifty per cent of local candidates in management categories and seventy per cent in non-management categories," the bill read.

### 'Infosys to comply with regulations'

Infosys will comply with whatever regulations and guidelines Karnataka comes up with, a top company official said on Thursday on the proposed reservations for locals in private firms in the state. Infosys employs over 3.15 lakh people at present across the globe. "We are planning to work with all the regulations of the state and central governments. We will work on, we support whatever regulations and guidelines will come. We'll wait and see what they look like as time develops, but our approach in general is to make sure we are aligned to the new laws and regulations that come out," Infosys CEO Salil Parekh said.

### Remarks inciting violence often used against PM Modi: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday accused the Opposition of often using remarks, which incite violence, against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said words like 'maut' and 'hinsa' should not be used in speeches to target political rivals. Information and Broad casting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the Opposition should maintain decorum and seriousness in its political discourse as the use of such inciteful words have a psychological impact in society, promoting violence and raising unnecessary tensions. "The choice of words is very important. The kind of comments used by the Opposition for PM is a matter of grave concern," he said. The minister and BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi cited a write-up of a former IPS officer to highlight that rhetoric used for short-term political benefits at times incites violence.

### VIOLENT PROTESTS

## India asks its citizens in Bangladesh to avoid travel

PNS ■ DHAKA

India on Thursday advised its citizens residing in Bangladesh to avoid travel and minimise their movement after ongoing protests demanding reforms in the quota system in government jobs turned violent and left at least six people dead across the country. The violence prompted the government to close all public and private universities along-side schools and colleges across Bangladesh for an indefinite period on late Tuesday asking residential students to leave dormitories. "In view of the ongoing situation in Bangladesh, the Indian community members and members of the Indian students residing in Bangladesh are advised to avoid travel and minimise their movement outside their living premises," the Indian High Commission here



said in a statement. The mission also provided multiple 24-hour Emergency numbers for any assistance. There were approximately 7,000 Indians in Bangladesh, according to the high commission's website. The clashes erupted on Monday as activists of ruling Awami League's student front confronted the protesters who insist the existing quota system was largely debarring the enrolment of meritorious students in government services. Demonstrators accused the ruling party's student wing, Bangladesh Chhatra League of attacking their "peaceful protests" with backing from police. Student protesters have decided to enforce a complete nationwide shutdown on Thursday.

## SC attains full strength as 2 judges take oath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir High Court, Justice N Kottiswar Singh on Thursday took oath of office and became the first judge to have been elevated to the Supreme Court from Manipur. Acting Chief Justice of Madras High Court R Mahadevan was also sworn in as judge of the apex court. Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud administered the oath of office to both judges at a function in the apex court premises here. With the swearing-in, the top court has attained its full strength of 34 judges, including the Chief Justice of India. The Supreme Court will function with 34 judges until Justice Hima Kohli retires on September 1, 2024, followed by CJI Chandrachud, who superannuates on November 10 this year. Two posts have fallen vacant after the retirement of Justice AS Bopanna and Aniruddha Bose. The Centre has cleared the recommendation of the Supreme Court collegium on July 16. On July 11, the five-member collegium presided over by the CJI had recommended to the Centre the names of Singh and Mahadevan for elevation to the apex court. "His appointment as a judge of the Supreme Court will provide representation to the North-East, and in particular he will be the first judge from the state of Manipur to be appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court," the SC Collegium said on July 11 while recommending Justice Singh's name along with that of Justice Mahadevan. Justice Singh was appointed as a judge of the Gauhati High Court in October 2011. Following the formation of the Manipur High Court, he was transferred there. In February 2023, he was appointed as chief justice of the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court and will demit office in February 2028 on attaining the age of 65 years. While recommending Justice Mahadevan's name for elevation, the collegium had noted that he belongs to a backward community from Tamil Nadu and his appointment will bring diversity to the (SC) Bench.



Justice Singh was appointed as a judge of the Gauhati High Court in October 2011. Following the formation of the Manipur High Court, he was transferred there. In February 2023, he was appointed as chief justice of the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court and will demit office in February 2028 on attaining the age of 65 years. While recommending Justice Mahadevan's name for elevation, the collegium had noted that he belongs to a backward community from Tamil Nadu and his appointment will bring diversity to the (SC) Bench.

## EC allows Shiv Sena (UBT) to accept public contributions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Thursday authorised the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) to accept voluntary contributions from public, days after it accepted a similar demand of NCP-Sharad Pawar. In a communication issued on Thursday, the poll authority authorised the party to "accept any amount of contribution voluntarily offered to it by any person or company other than a government company" as per provisions of the Representation of the People Act which governs the contribution to all political parties. The party had requested the Commission to issue a communication or certificate recording the status of the party for the purpose of accepting voluntary contributions from public. A delegation of Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) led by its general secretary Subhash Desai also met the Commission here Thursday. Earlier, it had allowed the NCP-Sharad Pawar to accept public contributions. In February last year, the Election Commission had recognised the Eknath Shinde-led faction as the real Shiv Sena and ordered allocation of the "bow and arrow".

## No end to human ambition, people should work for mankind: RSS

PNS ■ GUMLA (JHARKHAND)

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday asserted that people should work relentlessly for the welfare of mankind, since there is no end to the pursuit of development and human ambition. In the course of self-development, a man may want to become 'superman', then 'Devta' and 'Bhagwan' and aspire for 'vishwaroop', but nobody is certain what lies ahead, Bhagwat said. Addressing a village-level workers meeting, organised by a non-profit organisation Vikas Bharti here, he also said that some people, despite being human, lacked human qualities and they should inculcate it first. "After achieving human qualities, man aspires to become superman with supernatural powers and then attain the status of 'Devta' and 'Bhagwan'. He then aspires for vishwaroop (the supreme power's all-pervading form). What is beyond that, no one is certain," Bhagwat said. There is no end to the development of the inner and outer self and one should work relentlessly for humanity, he said adding that a worker should never be satisfied with his or her work, he said. "Work should continue, one

should strive to work constantly in areas of environment, education and health...There is no end to it and constant work in different areas is the only solution...We should strive to make this world a beautiful place as is the nature of India," the RSS chief said. He said the nature of India is imbued from fields and jungles and 'Sanatan Dharma' came from it. "The Sanatan Sanskriti and Dharma did not come from royal palaces but from Ashrams and forests. With changing times, our clothes may change but our nature will never change," said the RSS head.

should strive to work constantly in areas of environment, education and health...There is no end to it and constant work in different areas is the only solution...We should strive to make this world a beautiful place as is the nature of India," the RSS chief said. He said the nature of India is imbued from fields and jungles and 'Sanatan Dharma' came from it. "The Sanatan Sanskriti and Dharma did not come from royal palaces but from Ashrams and forests. With changing times, our clothes may change but our nature will never change," said the RSS head.

## NGT suggests steps to prevent throwing of offerings in Ganga, Yamuna

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To prevent the throwing of religious offerings in rivers Ganga and Yamuna, the National Green Tribunal has suggested additional steps, including developing dedicated places for holding ceremonies, rituals and immersion of idols. The tribunal also directed the district magistrates of Garhmukteshwar, Kanpur, Bithur, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Agra and Mathura to mark and monitor the spots, which were prone to throwing or immersion of such offerings. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) was hearing a matter where it had taken suo motu (on its own) cognisance of a newspaper report regarding the throwing of worship offerings of flowers and garlands, which were packed in polythene bags in rivers Yamuna and Ganga. In a recent order, a bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava said the problem of pollution because of throwing worship materials

and garlands had persisted despite the tribunal's earlier directions and various decisions of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) and the high-level committee formed to deal with Yamuna pollution. The bench also comprising judicial member Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi and expert member A Senthil Vel noted the DPCC's report dated June 26, according to which, by May 31 this year, the committee had issued 3,916 challans for dumping of construction waste and illegal parking on Yamuna floodplain and around Rs 1.06 was recovered as fine. It said that some additional steps could be taken for proper implementation of the tribunal's earlier orders to prevent pollution in rivers Yamuna and Ganga. These included the installation of display boards mentioning not to throw religious offerings and about the imposition of fines for violating the direction.



## Irregular sleep for a week can lead to diabetes risk

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Weeklong irregular sleep can increase the risk of type 2 diabetes, a research fellow at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in the US and lead author of the study, said. The researchers followed more than 84,000 participants from the UK Biobank dataset who were aged 62 years on average and did not have diabetes to begin with. Over seven years, they monitored the development of the metabolic disease through medical records. The authors wanted to find out if irregular sleep lengths could promote diabetes by disrupting the body's biological clock. They also wanted to examine the effects of irregular sleep in people with a low genetic risk of the disease. The team found that the individuals with a sleep duration changing by more than 60 minutes had a 34 per cent higher diabetes risk, compared to those whose sleep lengths changed by less than 60 minutes. However, after adjusting for lifestyle, health conditions, environmental factors and body fat, the risk among these individuals was found to drop to 11 per cent. The researchers said they were interested in exploring the biological reasons why sleep irregularity increases the risk of diabetes. They also plan to study participants from younger age groups and with diverse racial backgrounds.

Weeklong irregular sleep can increase the risk of type 2 diabetes, a research fellow at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in the US and lead author of the study, said. The researchers followed more than 84,000 participants from the UK Biobank dataset who were aged 62 years on average and did not have diabetes to begin with. Over seven years, they monitored the development of the metabolic disease through medical records. The authors wanted to find out if irregular sleep lengths could promote diabetes by disrupting the body's biological clock. They also wanted to examine the effects of irregular sleep in people with a low genetic risk of the disease. The team found that the individuals with a sleep duration changing by more than 60 minutes had a 34 per cent higher diabetes risk, compared to those whose sleep lengths changed by less than 60 minutes. However, after adjusting for lifestyle, health conditions, environmental factors and body fat, the risk among these individuals was found to drop to 11 per cent. The researchers said they were interested in exploring the biological reasons why sleep irregularity increases the risk of diabetes. They also plan to study participants from younger age groups and with diverse racial backgrounds.



According to the study published in the journal Diabetes Care, the link was "more pronounced" among those sleeping for longer durations and having a lower genetic risk of diabetes.

## AAP to go solo in Haryana, will contest all 90 assembly seats

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday said it will contest all 90 assembly seats in Haryana, where people want "badlav" (change) and are looking at it with great hope. The AAP said it will announce party national convener Arvind Kejriwal's guarantees on July 20. The Haryana Assembly elections are due later this year. Addressing the media here, Sanjay Singh said the AAP will fight the Haryana Assembly polls strongly. "The AAP will contest all 90

seats," said the Rajya Sabha MP, who was flanked by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, senior AAP leaders Sandeep Pathak and Anurag Dhanda, and party state unit president Sushil Gupta. Though the AAP has contested multiple elections in Haryana, it has yet to taste electoral success. The AAP had contested the recent Lok Sabha elections in alliance with its INDIA bloc partner Congress. While the Congress won five of the nine Lok Sabha seats it contested, the AAP unsuccessfully contested the Kurukshetra seat.

Haryana Congress leaders, including Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Uday Bhan, have hinted that the party might go solo in the assembly polls, with both saying that it is capable of contesting all 90 seats on its own. Singh targeted the BJP government in Haryana over the issues of unemployment, law and order, and the Agnipath scheme. "Today, there is an industry of extortion in Haryana. We saw how farmers were crushed during their agitation. Unemployment is also a big problem in Haryana," he said.





www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

## Bill of woes

Karnataka Govt puts local job quota bill on hold after the State's IT industry reacts strongly

The Karnataka government has put on hold a bill requiring reservations for locals in the private sector following significant backlash from the industry. The Government will reconsider the bill before presenting it to the state Assembly. This decision came just hours after the state cabinet approved the bill, which proposed reserving 50 per cent of management positions and 75 per cent of non-management positions for Kannadigas in the private sector. The Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates in the Industries, Factories, and Other Establishments Bill, 2024, was to be presented in the Assembly on Thursday. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, along with his ministers, praised the bill, emphasising their "pro-Kannada" stance and stating that their main priority is to "ensure the welfare of Kannadigas." However, the bill met with tough resistance from the IT industry that criticised the bill, arguing that it would hinder the growth of the tech sector in Bengaluru and negatively affect the IT industry in Karnataka. The rationale behind the bill was to address the high unemployment rates among the state's residents and to ensure that local talent is given priority in job opportunities within Karnataka.



But industry leaders felt that a quota system for locals would hinder the ability of companies to hire the best talent available, potentially compromising their competitiveness and productivity. Besides, if implemented this bill would have legal and constitutional issues. The bill could violate the right to equality and freedom of movement, as enshrined in the Indian Constitution and could face significant hurdles in courts, leading to prolonged legal battles. Furthermore, the proposed

bill raised concerns about increasing regionalism and social tensions. It was feared that such a policy could create divisions between locals and non-locals, leading to a less cohesive society and potential conflicts. According to a report by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce (FICC), Karnataka's overall unemployment rate is 2.7%, which is lower than the national average of 4.2%. But these figures hide the low employability of the local populace. But to correct it with populist measures is not the best solution. Instead of mandating job reservations, the Government should focus on improving education and skill development programs for locals. Enhancing the quality of education and providing better vocational training could empower local youth to compete effectively in the job market. Now that the bill has been withdrawn it could come back later in a different form. The decision to put the bill on hold has significant political implications. The Karnataka Government has averted a standoff with the IT industry and other businesses but it may disappoint its support base which was expecting job opportunities. Nonetheless, suspending the bill will likely reassure businesses and investors. But the Government will have to focus on providing employable skills to locals, so that they could get employment in Karnataka's IT industry.

bill raised concerns about increasing regionalism and social tensions. It was feared that such a policy could create divisions between locals and non-locals, leading to a less cohesive society and potential conflicts. According to a report by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce (FICC), Karnataka's overall unemployment rate is 2.7%, which is lower than the national average of 4.2%. But these figures hide the low employability of the local populace. But to correct it with populist measures is not the best solution. Instead of mandating job reservations, the Government should focus on improving education and skill development programs for locals. Enhancing the quality of education and providing better vocational training could empower local youth to compete effectively in the job market. Now that the bill has been withdrawn it could come back later in a different form. The decision to put the bill on hold has significant political implications. The Karnataka Government has averted a standoff with the IT industry and other businesses but it may disappoint its support base which was expecting job opportunities. Nonetheless, suspending the bill will likely reassure businesses and investors. But the Government will have to focus on providing employable skills to locals, so that they could get employment in Karnataka's IT industry.

## PICTALK



Shia Muslim mourners participate in an Ashura (10th Muharram) procession, in Mirzapur

## Religion and politics in modern India



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Today, as memories of Partition fade with each passing generation, the intertwining of religion and politics continues to shape the nation's discourse

A community is also known for the issues it raises and seeks to debate. The national narrative over the last 100 years or more has been severely overloaded with religious contention. India is probably the only country in the world that got its independence with conditions in which the imperial power worked assiduously to debate/impose decisions in areas that were subjected to be tackled with the investiture of independence. The open threat and use of bloodshed in many parts of the sub-continent while sorting out such issues in the days preceding independence made the matter particularly gory. It was in many ways reminiscent of a civil war instigated for various reasons. Perhaps it will take still more time to coolly reflect on what happened, where and how, and indeed if it was at all avoidable. Interpersonal relationships, intertwined with religious overtones spilt over the streets and private homes in a matter which still makes one wonder how a noble cause of independence could so inextricably get mixed up with pre-disposed religious zeal and interpretation. Experience showed that partition did not solve the problem but only split the problem into two pieces. The two independent states of India and Pakistan are still to rise beyond the echoes of what happened. The price paid at the human level cannot be comprehended through the aid of books, cinematography, or visuals. As the generation that experiences it gradually passes away, the tremors of partition remain. This cannot be done well as a method of problem-solving for contentious issues. One wonders if the realization is sufficiently around to the effect that 'enough is enough'. The hatchet needs to be buried before the agony continues to reign with many real forms of misery. The subject is not just one of emotions, but how it has affected the very concept of nation-building in many ways, big and small. This cannot be the place to hope



for some permanent therapies or solutions. That may well prove to be more than a lifetime and generational effort. However, what can be done is to create certain awareness, which helps to restore a greater sense of balance and strengthen sanity all around. Election after election and contention after contention somehow veers around to undertones of communal issues. This is avoidable if a consensus can be built up not to go public with statements and actions on issues that are essentially communal. Many countries of the Third World broke away from the yoke of imperialism through the 20th century and beyond. In many cases, there was an undertone of violence that persisted. There was violence over race, there was violence over ideology, there was violence over the protagonist of the Cold War, but nowhere in the world was the post-independence issue so intertwined as an undercurrent with communalism as in the case of the sub-continent. Even a casual look at much of the media and listening to much of the media's drumming up of concerns shows how much of communication time is spent on overtones of communal concern. This is



A LEGITIMATE QUESTION THAT NEEDS TO BE UNDERSTOOD IS WHETHER ANYONE GAINING BY BRINGING RELIGION SO WIDELY INTO THE POLITICAL PROCESSES. IS IT POSSIBLE TO HAVE RELIGION BE A MATTER OF FAITH AND POLITICS A MATTER OF CONTROL OVER GOVERNANCE?

avoidable because it does not help development and it does not strengthen equity. Indians are known to be bright, intelligent, and have long traditions of intellectual excellence, which many parts of the world have not only recognized but gained strength from. To put it simply, a broad question can be asked: is it possible to freeze all talk from communal concerns as a public issue and let the concerns embedded in it be tackled only at the inter-community level? This needs to be done without blowing it up as a regional or national issue which begs support from communities that may not have even understood what was being debated. Whether Faizabad election results were determined by the nature and quantum of compensation to the communities is something on which the jury is still out. This issue needs to be understood in greater depth. However, one can avoid converting these concerns into fanning communally backed political support. In other words, can one simply delink religion from politics so that religion remains a matter of faith and politics deals with the struggle for control of the decision-making process? A legitimate question that needs to be understood is whether anyone gaining by bringing religion so widely into the political processes. Is it possible to have religion be a matter of faith and politics a matter of control over governance? All political talk needs to avoid reference to religion, if for nothing better than avoiding emotiveness and irrelevant dissipation of energy. Political discourse can deal with economics, sociology, even history, and more, anthropology can be brought in, and so can industrialization and agriculture, but avoid drawing in religious loyalties, and emotions. Attempts to draw upon eschewed fervour with self-defeating orientation need to be stopped. An attempt to eliminate communalized political narratives and contentions may be an option worth considering. Some nations have successfully achieved this, and while they may be experiencing various forms of violence, violence stemming from religious loyalties is not their failing. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## A CALL FOR ACTION

Madam — It is disheartening to note that four army personnel sacrificed their lives fighting terrorists in Doda district, Jammu. This cowardly attack must be condemned in the strongest terms. Our intelligence sources seem unable to effectively address the challenges in Jammu & Kashmir, leading to repeated attacks on our army. Despite the brave efforts of the army in counterinsurgency operations, the situation is worsening, with increasing casualties. This raises serious questions about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's abrogation of Article 370, which was intended to bring peace to the valley.

There is a clear lack of coordination between the State and Central governments, and a trust deficit between local people and the army, contributing to these escalating attacks. It is high time for Prime Minister Modi to act decisively rather than relying on empty assurances, as ground realities are more precarious than they appear. This failure is not only an intelligence issue but also deeply demoralizing for our armed forces, who are currently engaged in counterinsurgency operations while also keeping vigil over Ladakh's sovereignty. The increasing attacks are eroding the morale of the troops and causing immense grief to their families. The government must prioritize tangible actions over rhetoric to ensure the safety and security of our soldiers and restore faith among the local population.

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Jalpaiguri

## DO NOT IGNORE ENGLISH

Madam — Encouraging the use of one's mother tongue and regional languages is important, but it's equally crucial to ensure that English education is not neglected from childhood. English provides citizens, regardless of age, gender, or profession, with global opportunities in education, employment, business, and services. No state should impose any regional language on

## Age-defying sportspersons



If technology is rapidly transforming our lives, can we overlook the role of competitive sports? Uncertainty is the only constant in world-class sporting events. Recent years have shown that age is no barrier to success.

Athletes like Serena Williams, Novak Djokovic, MS Dhoni, Tiger Woods, Rohan Bopanna, James Anderson, and recently, Lionel Messi, continue to outperform younger competitors. Their success can be attributed to advancements in medical science, financial support, rest, temperament, a balanced diet, exercise, a positive attitude, and a relentless passion for their sport.

Lionel Messi, despite participating in four major tournaments including the 2016 Copa America without victory, finally triumphed in this year's final, proving his skill and defying age. He has recreated the magic that Diego Maradona brought to soccer. We hope he continues to adapt and maintain his enthusiasm and spirit.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

## SC'S BENCH FOR MONEY BILLS

Madam — It's good that the Supreme Court has accepted to form a constitutional bench to look into the controversial issue of money bills in parliament. The money bills do not need to get approval of Rajya Sabha as they may be connected to urgent financial affairs of the country. Of late, it has become a practice for the Government which doesn't have majority in Rajya Sabha to introduce and get passed some bills as financial bills in parliament in order to bypass the close vetting by Rajya Sabha. The Aadhaar Act and Prevention of Money Laundering Act have been passed in that manner, attracting criticism from many. Now the highest judiciary would step in to clear the air in this regard. The executive should respect the constitutionally mandated role of the legislature in true spirit. This move is essential for maintaining the delicate balance of power.

DVG Sankara Rao | Vizianagaram

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## The harsh reality of child labour in rural Bihar

Despite Government efforts, the economic realities force families to make children work, often resulting in their exploitation

Baiju (name changed), an 11-year-old boy from Telia village in Kudhni block, 22 km from Muzaffarpur in Bihar, wakes up every morning like other children. However, instead of going to school, he heads off to work as a labourer, a burden he has borne for the past three years. Baiju, who belongs to the Mahadalit community, used to attend school. Life changed after his father's death, as he was forced to drop out of school and start working to support his family. He explains that his mother's meagre income is not enough to sustain the six members of their family. Consequently, he had to give up his education and begin working. She does not have enough money to educate her children, forcing her to send Baiju to work.



Child labour is a grave issue affecting millions of children worldwide, and in our country, it has reached alarming proportions. According to a UNICEF report based on the 2011 census, there are approximately 10.1 million child labourers in India, including 5.6 million boys and 4.5 million girls. Most child labourers

alone, forcing her to send her children to work. Social worker Phuldev Patel points out that children from the most economically vulnerable Dalit and Mahadalit communities are predominantly involved in child labour. The dire economic conditions of their households compel them to abandon their education and start working. He asserts that the actual number of child labourers is significantly higher than what official statistics reveal.

The government provides free books, notebooks, uniforms, and mid-day meals under the Right to Free and Compulsory Education to encourage children to attend school. However, the harsh economic realities overshadow these provisions, pushing children into labour. He further notes that human traffickers exploit this vulnerability, selling children as labourers in other states. Local journalist Amritanjan observes that, like Telia village, there are numerous remote rural areas in Muzaffarpur where children work as labourers. He notes that the government may not have official statistics

on this issue because it is carried out in a highly systematic manner. Although the strict child labour laws and the vigilance of the local administration have reduced the rate of child labourers in recent years, it has not been entirely eradicated. Even today, children can be seen working in brick kilns, tea shops, grocery stores, construction sites, and as domestic helpers. As in previous years, this year too, the World Day Against Child Labor was observed on June 12 in India and around the world. When children in a society begin working as labourers at a young age instead of attending school, it prompts deep introspection within that nation and its society. They must confront why a child is forced to abandon books for labour. When a child's right to childhood, is denied, and they are thrust into labour, they endure physical, mental, and social exploitation, transforming their childhood into one marred by labour—an ordeal known as child labour.

(The author is a grassroots writer from Bihar. Views expressed are personal. Charkha Features)



NISHA SAHANI







## FIRST COLUMN FALLOUT OF TRUMP'S ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

It could have far reaching implications for the US presidential elections and the US politics



KUMARDEEP BANARJEE

A week is a long time on the volatile chessboard of global affairs, however, the recent assassination attempt of former United States of America President Donald Trump would leave a deep impact on future courses of action. While several European leaders and some in the Middle East have been subjected to violent life-threatening attempts in the recent past, the bullet grazing past former president Trump's ears has left a shrill range of questions for world leaders. It may be too early to predict whether the assassination attempt would translate into a landslide victory for Donald Trump who is facing a rematch with current President Joe Biden in the November polls.

The Democrats in the US are a divided lot, with many leaders, internally questioning President Joe Biden's pitch for a second shot to the Oval Office, given his several public gaffes related to his age. Most of the public debates in the US and several other think tank zones across the world, have been debating President Biden's mental alertness and, if elected for a second time he would be able to complete his full four-year term. Any midway change due to a severe illness, which is being anticipated, would be a dampener for the US President's bid for a second run. Much like in every significant democracy, including India, the electorate in the US is a divided lot, with a deep gorge running right through the middle of the supporters of Trump and Joe Biden. The Democrat's attack on Trump and his supporters has been on the lines similar to what the opposition parties in India rallied around, during the recently concluded parliamentary elections.

The key message to their voters is to save the country from dictatorial forces (Trump/PM Modi), who will upend the constitution under their larger-than-life cult status leaders. This created a rift in the electorate, in an already ruptured society, constantly fed with an ocean of information primarily on social media, sending conflicting versions of the same events. Politics and rhetoric apart, it would be an interesting prism to watch the social messaging playing out with Trump coming back to the battlefield (election campaigns), after, he left the stage in Pennsylvania, with an iconic raised fist, and the US flag flying in the background. The pic-



ture is likely to define the resilience of the US democracy for a long time to come. Mr Trump in his few interviews, seems to have humbled down from the life-altering event, where he almost ended up being in the coffin rather than the Oval Office. It would be worthwhile to watch out if the former President sobers down on some of his key manifesto items such as immigration and freedom to choose (including the right to possess firearms for self-protection).

Immigration would be a closely watched topic from a global perspective, including India, where the largest chunk of immigrants land on US shores through legal or illegal routes. Donald Trump's Vice President choice JD Vance has a spouse who is a PIO. His wife's parents are immigrants from Andhra Pradesh and in a way, the choice defines the pluralistic nature of American Society. It would be a long shot to assume that if Trump gets a second term, his views and policies on immigration would be sobered due to his VP. Similarly, a Trump comeback could have a far-reaching impact on bilateral trade relations especially with India. One may argue that India has bipartisan support in Washington DC on several defence and technology partnerships, carefully nurtured over a decade by PM Modi. PM Modi is perhaps the only PM, who has worked with three US Presidents in the last decade and is likely to see one of his former friends either Trump or Biden coming back in November. It may be uncertain times, however, the past relationships and promise for securing the future of the Indo-Pacific should be a super glue to hold India's US relationship under a new regime.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

# Rising political violence and struggles in the US



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

The attack on Donald Trump underscores the nation's turbulent political climate raising concerns about the stability of American democracy and society.

Is the United States hurtling towards an internal civil war? Alex Garland's recent film 'Civil War,' which premiered earlier this year, depicts a fictional yet chillingly plausible scenario of such a conflict. This leads us to consider whether the repercussions of US-initiated wars in recent decades, aimed at maintaining supremacy, now echo ominously at home, haunted by the spectres of those who perished globally. That is the inexorable wheel of karma. The shocking assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, thrusts this issue into stark relief. In the aftermath, numerous conspiracy theories swirled around the incident, casting a spotlight on secret agencies whose heads have publicly voiced criticism against Trump. A police sniper had photographed the shooter, Thomas Matthew Crooks, just half an hour before the 20-year-old opened fire on Trump during the rally, suggesting multiple missed opportunities to prevent the attempted assassination, as reported. Despite the attack, Trump's political stature has only strengthened, evidenced by his selection of Republican Senator JD Vance as his running mate for the 2024 presidential election. Once a vocal critic of Trump, Vance now stands as a staunch ally, vigorously defending him and endorsing his policies.

The incident, which reshaped Trump's political narrative—where a bullet grazed his ear—left him wounded but resolute. This assault, though shocking, accentuates a longstanding history of political violence in the United States, a phenomenon entrenched since the nation's inception. Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president, was the first to be assassinated, shot by John Wilkes Booth in 1865. Lincoln's support for Black rights during the Civil War, marked by the Emancipation Proclamation, has been cited as a motive for his assassination. Subsequent presidents, including James Garfield, William McKinley, and John F. Kennedy, also fell victim to such violence, with Garfield being shot in 1881, McKinley in 1901, and Kennedy in 1963.

Each of these assassinations profoundly impacted the nation and its political structure. Political violence has not been confined to presidents alone. Presidential candidates like Robert F. Kennedy and George C. Wallace were also targeted, with Kennedy being killed in 1968 and Wallace being left paralyzed in 1972. Presidents like Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan survived assassination attempts, highlighting the persistent threat of violence in American politics. The United States today exemplifies how a state structure can deteriorate when policymakers focus more on external affairs, neglecting internal issues. For instance, the fentanyl crisis devastates U.S. communities, with toddlers and infants increasingly falling victim to the potent opioid, which is 50 times stronger than heroin, according to public health experts. While adults account for the majority of fentanyl-related deaths, more children under 5 are either dying or ending up in emergency rooms after testing positive for the drug, due to accidental ingestion or exposure at home. The number of child overdoses has surged even as overall drug overdose rates in the country have declined recently. California leads in total fentanyl deaths, with 6,473 reported in 2022, while West Virginia has



the highest death rate per capita. This is a prime example to understand how the internal structure is falling apart. This cannot be stopped by exporting ammunition stocks and advanced weaponry to Ukraine and Israel through front channels while to other proxy wars in Africa and elsewhere through back channels. In societies, the root issue often isn't just institutions but the erosion of core values. Without a cohesive value system, managing politics becomes daunting.



THE ATTEMPT ON TRUMP'S LIFE DEMANDS A REEVALUATION OF RHETORIC AND POLICIES THAT NORMALISE POLITICAL VIOLENCE. THE INCIDENT CALLS FOR A REEVALUATION OF GUN LAWS AND THE BROADER SOCIETAL ACCEPTANCE OF VIOLENCE AS A MEANS TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS

This dilemma arises: while progress demands new values, preserving core societal values is crucial for stability and harmony. Neglecting this balance risks societal chaos and moral crisis. The inevitable decline, akin to the setting sun, cannot be halted by force alone. The political climate in the United States reflects the consequences of its global actions, suggesting a looming downfall through unpredictable events. Trump is a product of long-standing policies that have often ignored domestic ramifications. He represents a symptom, not the cause, of the systemic issues within American politics, stemming from a history of exploiting other nations at the expense of the American public. Needless to say, engaging in political violence is fundamentally misguided and counterproductive. What Americans are slowly leading into what American decision-makers have executed throughout the world in recent history at the expense of unarmed civilians. Taking someone's life, regardless of their role or perceived wrongs, is morally indefensible. Whether it's a political adversary, a troublesome neighbour who's pushed you to the edge, a stranger evoking fear, or anyone else who has crossed your path, resorting to violence only perpetuates harm and suffering without resolution. However, the Trump assassination attempt raises numerous unanswered questions. There is no indication that gunshot detectors were in use at the rally, although

such detectors can rapidly triangulate and locate a shooter. The shooter, Thomas Matthew Crooks, used a gun that was legally purchased by his father, which he had access to at a gun range the previous Friday. Questions arise about whether the gun was bought specifically for him, as Pennsylvania law allows 20-year-olds to buy guns. Reports state the shooter was identified by DNA, suggesting family members provided samples. Additionally, the reports suggested that no effort was made to obscure the gun's serial number, and the shooter had recently purchased 50 rounds of 5.56mm ammunition.

Preliminary acoustic evidence suggests the potential involvement of multiple shooters in the incident aimed at Trump. Initial gunfire originated from the shooter's position, with subsequent bursts detected from unidentified sources, as reported by news sources. Despite Secret Service snipers reportedly firing a single shot to neutralise the threat, discrepancies with acoustic evidence persist, necessitating further scrutiny of ballistic recordings for clarity. Questions arise over security failures allowing a 20-year-old to breach measures and reach a rooftop near Trump, firing multiple shots. Thomas Matthew Crooks, identified as the primary shooter, raises speculation about a potential second shooter. Described as a loner without a social media presence, Crooks' unexpected role and the presence of explosives in his vehicle suggest possible exploitation.

Criticism of rally security focuses on inadequate building coverage, allowing the shooter an unimpeded view of Trump, and exposing significant security vulnerabilities. These shortcomings emphasise systemic flaws in pre-event security protocols and the need for rigorous reforms. Political violence, however, has rarely solved the issues it aims to address, often creating a climate of fear and leading to further crackdowns on dissent. Historically, such violence

has only resulted in cycles of disaster, undermining the causes it purported to support. What we can see is that nihilism pervades American culture, dealing a fatal blow to its cultural and spiritual development. This decline in values undermines democracy itself. Democracy, while liberating individuals from traditional constraints, necessitates self-judgement—a task hindered by the erosion of traditional Western values. Without a genuine guiding societal value system, the state structures of any nation inevitably falter in fulfilling their role in shaping individual decisions.

The collapse of collective ideas correlates closely with societal institutions and behaviours. As Wang Huning, a leading Chinese political theorist, argued in his book "America Against America," "The American spirit confronts profound challenges, compounded by the younger generation's unfamiliarity with traditional Western values. This spiritual shift raises critical questions about its impact on societal development and governance." The viability of any social system hinges not solely on legal frameworks but on collective belief in fundamental values guiding behaviour. If these values falter, the sustainability of the social order is called into question. The attempt on Trump's life demands a reevaluation of rhetoric and policies that normalise political violence. The incident calls for a reevaluation of gun laws and the broader societal acceptance of violence as a means to resolve conflicts. All sides of the political divide must recognise the danger of escalating violent rhetoric and its potential to incite further violence. This incident serves as a wake-up call to address the deeper issues within American society and politics, emphasizing the need for a shift towards reasoned discourse and humane policies. Ironically, America has been compelled to a point where it can't afford to lose Trump.

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

## RTI implementation faces challenges as the CIC is short of staff

Despite the formation of a new government, vacancies remain unfilled, exacerbating delays and overwhelming the few remaining commissioners

On September 13 last year, the Central Information Commission (CIC) admitted a second appeal from this columnist under Section 19(3) of the RTI Act, 2005. The appeal, apart from seeking imposition of penalty on the CPIO, for denial of information, also contained a few relevant suggestions for better implementation of the Act. However, on November 6, Ms Saroj Punhani, the Information Commissioner who dealt with cases for that particular ministry retired at the end of her tenure. On the same day Uday Mahurkar, another Information Commissioner retired, whereas their colleague Suresh Chandra had retired two days earlier. Several other



PRIYADARSHI DATTA

Information Commissioners like Ms. Vanjana N. Sarna, Neeraj Kumar Gupta and Dr. Amita Pandove had retired earlier last year at the end of their respective tenures. Y. K. Sinha, the Chief Information Commissioner, retired on October 3 whereupon Heeralal Samariya, the Information Commissioner was elevated to the position of Chief Information Commissioner. The total strength of the

Commission plummeted to a mere three by the end of 2023, from the maximum permissible ten at the beginning of the year. Even after the formation of the new government last month, little interest has been shown in filling up the vacancies that exist.

The reduction in the strength of the Commission has led to a proportionate overload of second appeals and complaints at CIC Bhawan. The second appeal of this columnist, already pending for ten months, is likely to see an indefinite waiting period. The outcome could hardly be compared with a long wait in the judiciary. Information is fragile, and prone to obsolesce faster than justice. This is where this columnist's suggestions would have helped. In his

limited experience as an RTI activist since 2010, he has found the CPIOs (Central Public Information Officers) generally share the information dutifully. However, where they do not, the Appellate Authority, who are generally their senior officers in the department/ministry is of little help.

They collude with their juniors to suppress the information, apparently in exchange for favours/obligations in office politics. Uday Mahurkar, as Information Commissioner, reportedly disposed of 5056 RTI appeals in 2021-22, the highest since the year of enactment of the RTI Act, 2005. However, it is equally a reflection of the utter non-performance of the Appellate Authority. Had those cases

been satisfactorily disposed at the stage of the first appeal, within the department itself, there was little need for approaching CIC with a second appeal. Information could be suppressed for a variety of reasons. In rare cases, it could be that the CPIO has committed some action in his substantive capacity (as Section Officer or Under Secretary) which he wants to be probed. In the instant case, a person has been blacklisted, on trumped-up charges, despite not having any financial dealing with the ministry. The blacklisting order was signed, though with approval of competent authority, by the CPIO in his substantive capacity as Under Secretary. When asked to provide the file notes, complaints if any, rules posi-

tion violated he deflected the matter saying the file was under submission (there is no such ground for denying information under the RTI Act, 2005 even if the file is submitted with the PMO or Rashtrapati Bhawan). This columnist requested the same information after the lapse of a year (thanks to the appeal pending for months in CIC) only to find that the file was still "under submission"! The conclusions are obvious. On both occasions, the First Appellate Authority, who is an IAS officer, helped the cause of suppression rather than transparency. Under Section 20(1) of the RTI Act, 2005 there is a provision for a penalty on the CPIO not exceeding Rs.25,000 for unjustified denial of information to the applicant. There

is, however, no penalty for the First Appellate Authority recognizably failing in his duty or acting in a mala fide manner. Endowing a member of the executive with quasi-judicial power without any scope of disciplinary proceedings is bait for misuse of power. The CIC notice for hearing of appeal is sent only to the CPIO and not the First Appellate Authority. The fear of dressing down by the Information Commissioner, in front of the CPIO, who is a junior officer, will ensure the integrity of action on the part of the First Appellate Authority.

Disciplining the First Appellate Authority is the key to reducing the load of pendency at the Central Information Commission's desk. The gov-

ernment has recently decided to commemorate June 25 as "Samvidhan Hatya Divas", a queer-sounding name, in memory declaration of Emergency in 1975.

Whereas the Emergency might have been anti-democratic, it was in itself not unconstitutional being declared under Article 352. If the government is interested in deepening democracy in the 21st century then rhetoric like "Samvidhan Hatya Divas" or even "India Mother of Democracy" will not work if the CIC's strength is curtailed. The RTI Act, of 2005 was a major tool for transparency, accountability and governance. (The writer is an author, independent researcher and RTI activist based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)



**MONEY MATTERS**

## Indian FinTech industry projected to reach \$420 bn by 2029

The Indian fintech industry is estimated to be around USD 110 billion in 2024 and its projected to reach about USD 420 billion by 2029, Ajay Kumar Choudhary, Non-Executive Chairman and Independent Director, National Payments Corporation of India, said. The sector, he said, is expected to continue to grow due to factors like favourable policies of the government. The government's push towards a digital economy, coupled with a young and tech-savvy population, is likely to propel the fintech sector to new heights, he added. "As of 2024, Indian FinTech Industry is estimated to be around USD 110 billion and by 2029, it is projected to reach an impressive number of around 420 billion at a cumulative annual growth rate of 31 per cent," industry chamber ASSOCHAM said in a statement, quoting Choudhary. It said the advent of the fintech ecosystem, driven by technology-linked innovation, has revolutionised traditional financial services and led to improvement.



## Rupee falls 6 paise to close at all-time low of 83.64 against US\$

Rupee depreciated 6 paise and settled at its all-time low of 83.64 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, as the strength of the American currency in the overseas market and overnight surge in crude oil prices weighed on investor sentiments. Forex traders expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on strong US dollar and weak Asian as well as European currencies. The US dollar strengthened, while the pound weakened amid disappointing labour market data from the UK. However, positive domestic markets and foreign fund inflows cushioned the downside in the domestic unit to a certain extent. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.57, and touched an intraday high of 83.55 and a low of 83.66 against the dollar during the trading session. It finally settled at 83.64 (provisional) against the American currency.



## Sebi disposes of case against Prudent Broking Services

Markets regulator Sebi on Thursday disposed of a case against stock broker Prudent Broking Services citing "lack of evidence" in the matter of Alpesh Furiya and connected entities trading ahead of recommendations made during market shows on a television channel. In its order, Sebi noted that Alpesh Furiya is an authorised person (AP) of Prudent Broking Services and carried out alleged fraudulent trades in the accounts of Alpesh Group entities. Further, the regulator noted that Prudent Broking Service was responsible for the alleged role of its AP -- Alpesh Furiya -- pertaining to the trading accounts of Alpesh Group. Disposing of the case, Sebi said that the investigation report has not provided the role played by Prudent Broking Services for the fraudulent trades of the AP as held by the regulator in its order passed in June 2024.



## Revival in rural spending pushing demand conditions: RBI Bulletin

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The second quarter of 2024-25 has begun with signs of quickening momentum in the economy and the revival of rural spending has turned out to be a bright spot in the evolution of demand conditions, the Reserve Bank said in its Bulletin on Thursday. Global economic activity appears to be strengthening across advanced economies (AEs) and emerging market economies (EMEs) and global trade in goods and services is gathering momentum, said an article on 'State of Economy' published in the RBI's Bulletin. It further said monetary policy divergence is setting the tone for global economic developments.



**The improvement in the outlook for agriculture and the revival of rural spending have turned out to be the bright spots in the evolution of demand conditions, it added**

"In India, the second quarter of 2024-25 has begun with signs of quickening momentum in the economy," said the article. The improvement in the outlook for agriculture and the revival of rural spending have turned out to be the bright spots in the evolution of demand conditions, it added. The article also noted that consumer price inflation ticked up in June 2024 after three consecutive months of moderation as a broad flare-up in vegetable prices halted the overall disinflation that had been underway. The central bank, however, said the views expressed in the Bulletin article are of the authors and do not represent the views of the Reserve Bank of India.

## Lupin ties up with Huons to market eye drug in Mexico

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug maker Lupin on Thursday said it has tied up with South Korea-based Huons Co Ltd to market dry eye treatment medication in Mexico. The company has signed a license and supply agreement with Huons for the registration and marketing of Cyclosporine Ophthalmic Nanoemulsion (0.4mL single-use vial) in Mexico, the Mumbai-based drug maker said in a statement. Cyclosporine Ophthalmic Nanoemulsion is a preservative-free Nanoemulsion that has been approved in South Korea, Peru and several countries in the Middle East for the treatment.

## Sensex breaches 81,000 level, Nifty closes at record 24,800

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Stock markets remained on record-smashing course for the fourth straight day on Thursday with benchmark Sensex breaching the 81,000 mark for the first time and Nifty scaling the record 24,800 level driven by buying in IT, oil&gas and FMCG shares. Rebounding from its early lows, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 626.91 points or 0.78 per cent to settle at a fresh closing high of 81,343.46. The index opened on a weak note and hit a low of 80,390.37 points in early trade. However buying in IT shares TCS, Infosys and Tech Mahindra and index heavy-weight Reliance Industries helped the index pare losses in the afternoon session. The barometer surged 806 points or



0.99 per cent to hit a new record intra-day peak of 81,522.55. The broader Nifty also pared early losses and climbed 187.85 points or 0.76 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,800.85. During the day, it zoomed 224.75 points or 0.91 per cent to hit a fresh lifetime high of 24,837.75.

"The frontline indices firmed up in the second half, reaching fresh highs driven by renewed buying in IT stocks. Investor optimism for the sector grew after strong performance reports from the country's leading IT firms in the June quarter, coupled with a weakening rupee," Vinod Nair, Head of Research.

## MSME sector for doubling loan limit under MUDRA to Rs 20 L

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi, Jul 18 (PTI) The finance ministry in the forthcoming Union Budget needs to double the loan limit to Rs 20 lakh under the MUDRA Yojana, and expand the credit guarantee cover for unsecured loans for MSMEs from Rs 2 crore to Rs 5 crore. MSMEs also want incentives from the government to help them sell products globally. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Union Budget for the current fiscal on July 23 in the Lok Sabha. On expectations from the Budget, Navin Saini, chief business officer (Retail & MSME), Arka Fincap said the government will continue its agenda to provide a strong



foundation for MSMEs, bolstering their growth. "To achieve this, they should consider increasing the loan limit of the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) scheme from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh and expanding the credit guarantee cover for

unsecured loans for MSMEs from Rs 2 crore to Rs 5 crore. "These measures will provide MSMEs with greater access to necessary financial resources, enabling them to thrive and contribute significantly to the economy," Saini said.

## Easy customs norms, robust payment settlement to boost e-comm exports: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Measures such as easing customs procedures, robust payment settlement mechanisms and relaxing FDI norms for e-commerce entities will help promote the country's exports through online medium, a report said on Thursday. It also asked to allow FDI-funded e-commerce entities to hold inventories for sale in international marketplaces to facilitate global sales of Indian MSME products. The Indian government aims to achieve USD 200-300 billion in e-commerce exports as part of its USD 1 trillion

overall merchandise export target by 2030, which requires a 50-60 fold increase in current export levels, it said. Complex customs procedures, payment repatriation challenges, and restrictive policies are significant barriers, the EY-ASSOCHAM report said, adding that policy changes are needed in payments, customs, and logistics to help MSMEs access export markets and achieve the goal. It has suggested reduction in the cost burden of payment reconciliation, enhancing payment realisation timelines.

## Gold zooms for sixth day in a row, rallies Rs 700 on buying support

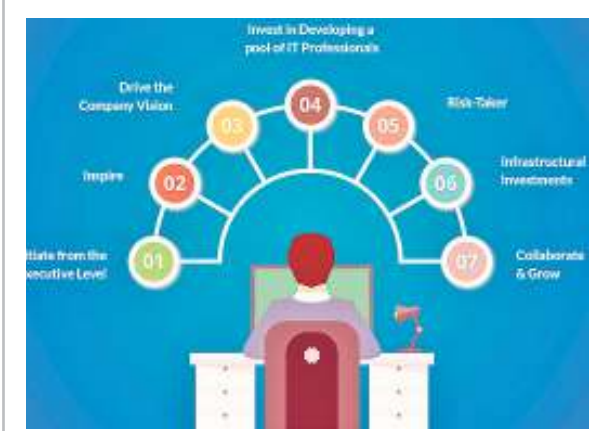
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price surged by Rs 700 to Rs 76,400 per 10 grams in the local market here on Thursday on fresh domestic demand as well as depreciation in rupee. According to All India Sarafa Association, the yellow metal prices had closed at Rs 75,700 per 10 grams in the previous session. Extending its gains for the sixth straight session, the precious metal jumped by Rs 700 to Rs 76,400 per 10 grams in the national capital. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity zoomed by Rs 750 to Rs 76,100 per 10 grams. However, silver prices declined by Rs 400 to Rs 94,000 per kg from Rs 94,400



per kg in the previous session. Gold prices rose on account of sustained buying by local jewellers, the association said, adding weakness in the rupee also aided the rally in the yellow metal. The rupee depreciated by 6 paise to settle at its all-time

low of 83.64 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday. Commodity markets were closed on Wednesday on the occasion of Muharram. In the overseas market, Comex gold was trading at USD 2,466.80 per ounce.



## 'Tech transforming CIO roles into CDIOs; over 33 % rise in hiring'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

There has been a 33 per cent increase in the hiring and the creation of posts of chief digital and information officers (CDIOs) in the recent past following rapid advancements in technology, according to a study. The spike has been triggered by the transformation of the roles of chief information officers (CIOs) into those of

CDIOs, it said. The study is based on WalkWater's analysis drawn from a survey among profiles of 310 CIOs and CDIOs across 272 companies. In the landscape of modern business, the role of CIOs has undergone a profound evolution, transforming into what is now widely recognised as the CDIO, a study by executive search firms WalkWater Talent Advisors has revealed.

"One in three companies studied has recently established or filled the CDIO role, underscoring its growing importance in today's business landscape," the study added. It noted that the emergence of CDIOs signifies a shift towards not just managing technology but strategically leveraging it to drive business outcomes. This transition has been accelerated by the imperative for digital innovation,

propelled further by advancements in cloud computing, Software as a Service (SaaS), and AI-driven decision making. "Our study highlights the demand for CDIOs with global experience and diverse educational backgrounds, showing their vital role in shaping forward looking, tech savvy organizations," WalkWater Talent Advisors Co-Founder and Director Rahul Shah said.

## Two South Eastern Coalfields blocks among world's 10 largest coal mines



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gevra and Kusmunda blocks of state-owned South Eastern Coalfields have secured second and fourth spots, respectively, in the list of the world's 10 largest coal mines in terms of production volume released by WorldAtlas.com. Located in the Korba district of Chhattisgarh, the two mines produce more than 100 million tonnes (MT) of coal annually accounting for about 10 per cent of India's total coal production, South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL) said in a statement on Thursday. "Gevra and Kusmunda coal mines have secured the 2nd and 4th spot in the list of the world's 10 largest coal mines released by WorldAtlas.com," it said. Gevra mine has an annual production capacity of 70 MT. The mine produced 59 MT of coal in FY24. While

Kusmunda produced over 50 MT of coal. Both are open-cast mine projects, the state-owned firm said. SECL Chairman and Managing Director Prem Sagar Mishra said, "It is a proud moment that two of the world's five largest coal mines are in Chhattisgarh." As per the list, Black Thunder Mine and North Antelope Rochelle Mine in the US bagged the first and third spot, respectively, with an estimated production of 62.68 MT of coal and 56.25 MT of coal in 2023. With coal production of 41.34 MT last year, Northern Shaanxi Mine in China secured the fifth spot in the list. Based in Bilaspur, SECL with 59 blocks is among the top three coal-producing subsidiaries of Coal India Ltd (CIL), under the Ministry of Coal. In FY24, CIL's output was 773 MT.

## Shoppers Stop posts net loss of Rs 22.72 cr in Q1

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Retail chain Shoppers Stop Ltd on Thursday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 22.72 crore in the June 2024 quarter, hit by subdued consumption due to prolonged heat waves, elections and inflation. The company posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 14.49 crore in the corresponding period last fiscal, Shoppers Stop said in a regulatory filing. Consolidated revenue from operations in the quarter under review stood at Rs 1,069.31 crore as against Rs 993.61 crore in the year-ago period, it added. Total expenses were higher at Rs 1,104.51 crore in the first quarter compared.

## NHAI to charge double toll from vehicles

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To deter National Highway users from deliberately not fixing FASTag on the windshield of the vehicle, NHAI has issued guidelines to collect double user fee from such users entering the toll lane with non-affixed FASTag on the front windshield from the inside, an official release said on Thursday. NHAI said deliberate non-affixation of FASTag on the windscreen leads to unnecessary delays at the toll plazas causing inconvenience to fellow National Highway users. "Detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) has been issued to all User Fee Collection Agencies and Concessionaires to charge double user fee in case of non-affixation of FASTag on the front



**NHAI said deliberate non-affixation of FASTag on the windscreen leads to unnecessary delays at the toll plazas causing inconvenience to fellow National Highway users**

windshield," it said.

According to the statement,

the information will also be prominently displayed at all User Fee plazas, informing highway users about the penalties for non-compliance of entering a toll lane without a fixed FASTag on front windshield. In addition, the statement said CCTV footage with Vehicle Registration Number (VRN) at the fee plaza shall be recorded of the non-affixed FASTag cases. This will help in maintaining proper record regarding the fee charged and presence of the vehicle in the toll lane. In accordance with already established rules, the statement said NHAI aims to enforce the standard procedural guidelines for affixation of FASTag on the front windshield of the assigned vehicle from inside. The statement said any FASTag that is not affixed on the assigned vehicle

as per standard process is not entitled to carry out Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) transaction at a User Fee Plaza and will have to pay double toll fee as well as can be duly blacklisted. Issuer banks have also been directed to ensure fixation of the FASTag to the assigned vehicle on the front windshield at the time of issuance from various Point-of-Sale (POS), it added. NHAI collects user fee on National Highways as per the National Highway Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008. At present, user fee is collected for approximately 45,000 km of National Highways and Expressways at around 1,000 Toll Plazas on National Highways across the country. With a penetration rate of around 98 per cent and over 8 crore users.





## Janhvi, Ishaan reunite after 6 years!

After making their Bollywood debut in Shashank Khaitan's *Dhadak* six years prior, Janhvi Kapoor and Ishaan Khatter are returning to the big screen. Dharma Productions, led by National Award-winning director Neeraj Ghaywan, is responsible for arranging this reunion. The film is reportedly in pre-production and is scheduled to start shooting in Bhopal in October, according to reports. Vishal Jethwa, who starred in *Tiger 3* before, will also feature in the movie.

The report describes this upcoming project as an "emotional human drama." The film promises a fresh take for both Kapoor and Khatter. "It's a well-written, ensemble-cast drama that Neeraj Ghaywan has been working on for the past two years," a source close to the development shared. "Both Janhvi and Ishaan have enormous admiration for the director's work and quickly came aboard the film as it offers them roles that are a complete departure from what they played in *Dhadak*. They had been itching to collaborate once more since their first movie and are thrilled to have found the perfect reunion recipe in Neeraj's film."

*Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari*, *Mr. and Mrs. Mahi*, *Dhadak*, *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl* and this will be Janhvi Kapoor's fifth production with Dharma Productions. *Dostana 2*, though, might have been the sixth addition prior to its cancellation. On the other hand, this is Ishaan Khatter's second project with Dharma; he has only collaborated on *Dhadak*. Vishal Jethwa, a television actor best recognized for his antagonistic roles in Yash Raj Films' *Mardaani 2* and *Tiger 3*, also makes a significant transition in this movie. His first endeavour with Dharma Productions will be this one.

## RUSSO BROTHERS TO DIRECT NEXT TWO AVENGERS FILMS

Anthony and Joe Russo, better known as the Russo Brothers, may be heading back to the Marvel Cinematic Universe to direct the next two *Avengers* movies.

Sources told that the duo, who have directed four of Marvel Studios' biggest and best-reviewed movies, are in early negotiations to oversee the fifth and sixth films in the popular franchise.

Multiple names were in contention, including *Deadpool & Wolverine* director Shawn Levy, who was offered the gig, according to insiders.

The Russos, who catapulted to big-screen spectacle cinema after making a mark for themselves through the TV comedies *Arrested Development* and *Community*, started their Marvel career in 2014 with *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*.

They went on to direct *Captain America: Civil War* and two phase-defining superhero films, *Avengers: Infinity War* and *Avengers: Endgame*.



In the last five years, the filmmaker shifted gears to back projects through their AGBO banner, whose credits include best picture Oscar winner *Everything Everywhere All at Once* and col-

laborations with streamers *Citadel* series and *Extraction* movies with Amazon and Netflix, respectively.

For OTT, they have directed *Cherry* for Apple and *The Gray Man* at Netflix, which is also backing their upcoming movie *The Electric State*.

The fifth *Avengers* movie was titled *Avengers: The Kang Dynasty* and was to star Jonathan Majors as time-travelling villain Kang. After Majors' conviction in an assault and harassment case, the studio severed ties with the actor.

The project had suffered a hit even before the verdict was out in the Majors case when Destin Cretton left the project as director.

The movie is expected to get a new name and a new focus. It is set to hit screens on May 1, 2026.

The sixth *Avengers* film is *Secret Wars*, which is eyeing a May 7, 2027 release.



## ALIYA BASU GAYAB HAI RELEASES IN CINEMAS ON AUGUST 9

In the last two years, romantic dramas and action-packed films have dominated the screens, leaving thriller enthusiasts craving more edge-of-the-seat experiences. It seems now the wait is finally over. Rehab Pictures on Thursday delighted the fans with a major announcement, unveiling the first look poster for *Aliya Basu Gayab Hai*. Featuring a stellar cast including Vinay Pathak, Raima Sen and Salim Dhanani, this film is poised to be Indian cinema's most twisted and gripping thriller, set for release on August 9, 2024.

The first-look poster showcases the lead cast and promises a riveting thriller that delves into flawed characters and their selfish desires.

Director Preeti Singh, who previously directed the short film *The Lovers*, expressed her enthusiasm, adding, "*Aliya Basu Gayab Hai* is my first feature film, which makes it a very special project for me. As a director, I've always dreamed of creating a film like this for big-screen audiences.

Thanks to the incredible team and lead cast, we're finally bringing you the most thrilling film of the season. What sets this film apart is its writing, which truly makes it 'the most thrilling film' of the year. I am confident audiences will enjoy watching it as much as we enjoyed making it."

Produced by Dr. Sattar Diwan, Jonu Rana and DJ Zavar and directed by Preeti Singh, *Aliya Basu Gayab Hai* will hit theatres worldwide on August 9, 2024.

## Shogun and The Bear receive over 20 nominations



With 23 nominations, *The Bear* broke the record for most nominations for a comedy series at the most recent Emmy Awards; in another category, *Shogun* proved to be the strongest with 25 nods.

The second season of *The Bear*, which centers on a motley crew of sandwich makers trying to establish a posh restaurant, is up for nomination.

Jeremy Allen for Best Actor in a Comedy Series, Ayo Edebiri for Best Actress and Best Comedy Series are just a few of the noteworthy nominees.

The likelihood of *The Bear* was increased by numerous guest acting nominations, which included Olivia Colman and Jamie Lee Curtis.

*Shogun* benefited greatly from the absence of the top three Emmy nominees from the previous year, which were *Succession*, *The White Lotus* and *The Last of Us*. The *Shogun* made full use of this opportunity.

*Shogun* took first place in the drama category and contributed 93 nominations to FX overall. HBO,

which had 91 nominations even in an "off" year, faces fierce opposition from FX.

*Shogun* was nominated for Best Drama Series, Best Actor for Hiroyuki Sanada, and Best Actress in a Drama Series for Anna Sawai.

*True Detective: Night Country*, HBO's saviour, showed promise and was nominated for 19 Emmys.

HBO's *Succession* is bouncing between seasons of *The White Lotus* and *The Last of Us*, having lost the race to retirement.



## RICHA AND ALI WELCOME THEIR BABY GIRL

The baby has finally arrived! Actress Richa Chaddha and actor Ali Fazal have embraced parenthood. The couple has announced giving birth to a baby girl.

Their fans and loved ones cannot stop pouring in the good news ever since the couple had announced the baby's arrival. She shared a photo on Instagram on Sunday, July 14,

expressing her excitement about becoming a mother. According to the official statement, the baby was born on July 16.

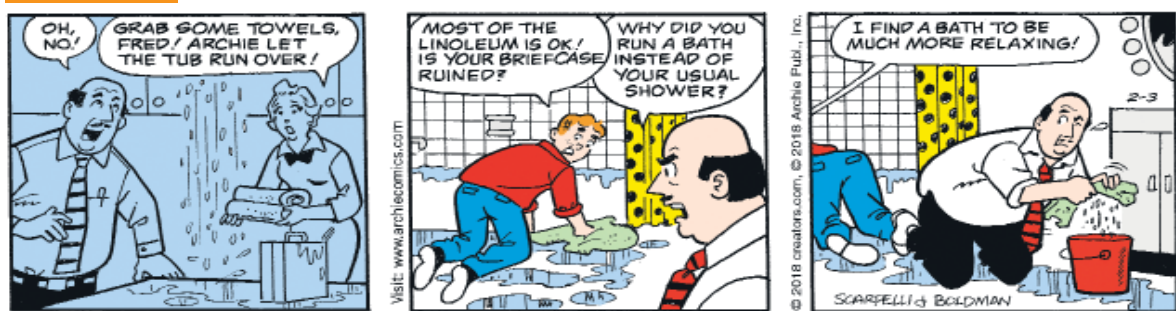
Making the announcement official, the couple shared, "We are tickled pink with joy to announce the arrival of a healthy baby girl on 16.07.24."

Amidst the pandemic in 2020, Richa Chaddha and Ali Fazal exchanged vows in a secret ceremony. Later in 2022, they celebrated with friends and family with an extravagant party. The pair happily revealed on Instagram earlier this year that they were expecting their first child together.



## FUN

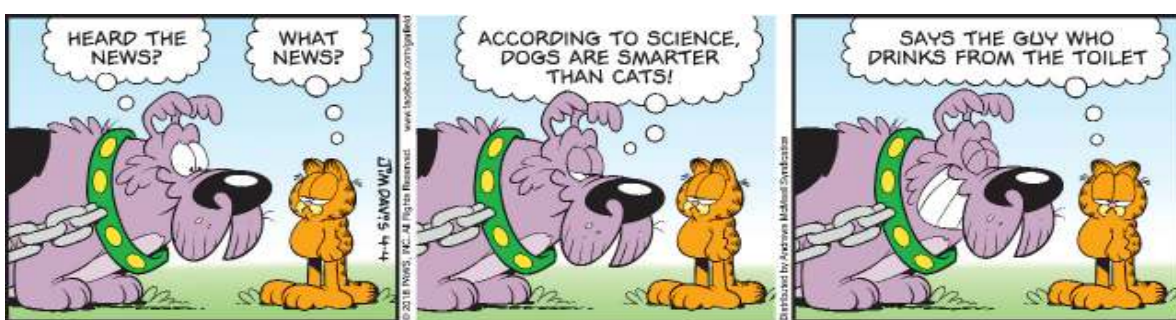
### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



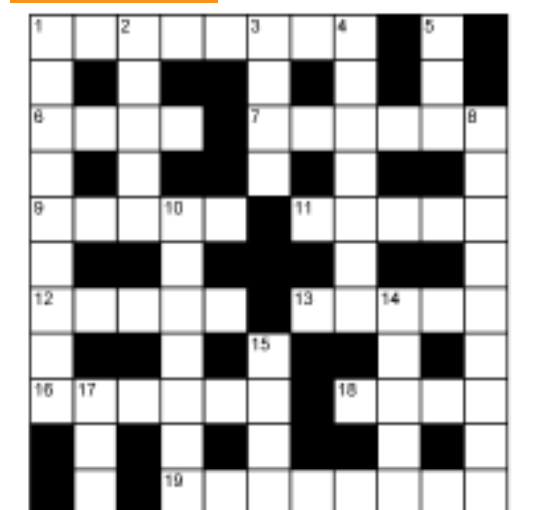
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

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

### ACROSS

- A large extinct animal
- Do this in water
- Me
- A friendly word for a cat
- Feathered creatures
- The same in value
- This animal has no legs
- Turned over and over on the ground
- A group of players on one side in a game
- All the bones in your body

### DOWN

- Vanish
- Hit these in with a hammer
- A large number of soldiers





## 'I TOOK MY OWN TIME TO EXPERIENCE POLISH CULTURE & FOOD'

TEJAL SINHA

Just a week ago, beauty queens from different countries were seen competing at the Miss Supranational 2024 pageant in Nowy Sacz, Malopolska, Poland. Making India proud was Sonal Kukreja, who sashayed her way into the top 12.

After our exclusive interaction with the LIVA Miss Diva Supranational 2023 ahead of the pageant, we once again have her on board for our weekly segment of Travelogue, as we speak to her about her travel experience around the scenic natural landscapes, captivating historic sites and cultural artifacts.

Adding to her excitement about representing the nation, travelling was something she was exhilarated for. Sonal, in a telephonic interaction with *The Pioneer* begins, "I love travelling. It is something that helps you to get to know yourself better. It brings a fresh perspective on life and brings different experiences because you are stepping away from your daily routine. You give yourself an opportunity to get into new experiences. It also refreshes your mind."

Even when not travelling, her lessons from her past itinerant are something she keeps thinking of to have a fresh perspective. She got to experience Poland for a whole month and she has had great fun, especially travelling to abroad after quite a long time. Travelling to Poland, she says, was a 'once in a lifetime experience'.

"Before my trip to Poland, I have been on many work trips," she recalls, adding, "I went to Kerala for a show. And I had gone to this beautiful place called Wayanad. It's a land of paddy fields and as you go there, you feel the fresh air. It is so refreshing. The landscape is so beautiful in Kerala and it's called 'God's own country'. The atmosphere, breeze are just so amazing. I went there to support the local tribes and I walked along with some of the tribal women. The raw involvement I got to experience in Kerala was amazing. I am lucky to be there and just imagine that it was a work trip. It was making the best of both worlds."

Sonal, however, makes sure that every time that she's on a work trip, she focuses and prioritises her work. "I like to be present. When you are on a trip and taking a car, or in Poland, I was walking around."

Poland has beautiful picturesque landscapes and buildings. It also has a beautiful European culture. People there like to enjoy and have fun. I did make the most of that and took my own time to experience the Polish culture and their food. Even the pageant had planned for us to travel. I had a really good time there."

"I am a daredevil when it comes to travelling solo," shares Kukreja, if she experiences something frightening while travelling.

India, she says, has so much and it's difficult to choose one place that is unique. "India is so diverse and beautiful. Even if you ask me about Mumbai, I will have ten places to name and talking of India, there are so many. We have so much richness, culture and tradition. There's so much that's special. Every city brings something beautiful. For example, I am from the Pink City and I love the streets, the tradition and the architecture of the city. For somebody to experience that, one has to come and stay in India for a while to even cover a portion of it."

*The Pioneer* is guided through Sonal Kukreja's journey and her passion for travel. Sonal represented India at the Miss Supranational 2024 pageant, which was held in Poland



TRAVELOGUE



### PERIPHERAL ARTERY DISEASE (PAD)

## When leg pain signals something serious!

Experiencing aching pain in the legs upon walking which causes you to stop for sometime can be pretty uncomfortable in everyday life. There could be several possible causes of pain in the legs, but one should be familiar with the most common: peripheral artery disease. PAD is one of the common problems of the circulatory system, in which narrowed arteries reduce blood flow to your limbs. So, in general, PAD is caused by the buildup of fatty deposits in the lining of your artery, also called atherosclerosis. This restricts blood and oxygen flow to the legs and feet. This condition mostly remains undiagnosed because it has symptoms that may sometimes be so subtle and simple, like leg pain; however, it is a serious health condition that requires immediate medical attention.

#### How is acute leg pain related to PAD?

Intermittent claudication is one of the significant symptoms of PAD. It is cramping or pain in leg or arm muscles associated with exercise or activity and relieved by rest. This happens when there is not enough blood flow to the muscles and, therefore, they cannot meet the oxygen requirement during exercise.

#### Causes:

**The most frequent cause of PAD is a condition in which plaque builds up in the walls of arteries, or atherosclerosis, which is a result of:**

- **Smoking:** Damage is caused to the inner lining of arteries by smoking, allowing plaque to accumulate and stimulating the arteries to go into spasm or constrict.
- **Diabetes:** Elevated sugar levels in the blood can cause damage to blood vessels and further expand the plaque buildup.
- **High cholesterol:** If you have too much cholesterol in your blood, it deposits into the inner walls of the arteries, causing atherosclerosis.
- **Hypertension:** Over the years, this condition weakens the arteries enough to make them prone to atherosclerosis.
- **Obesity:** It increases the person's risk of developing conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, increasing the chance of PAD.
- **Age:** The risk of PAD increases with age; the most common is above 50 years.
- **Family history:** A family history of vascular disease raises your risk of having a condition.

#### Symptoms:

The symptoms of PAD vary, but common ones include:

- **Leg pain:** This includes pain in the calf, thigh or buttocks after walking for sometime.
- **Coolness in the lower leg or foot:** This proportionally is more than in the other leg.
- **Sores or wounds:** Poorly healing sores or wounds on the toes, feet, or legs.
- **Colour changes:** The colour changes in the legs; this is often a sign of reduced blood flow, specially black tissues, known as gangrene.
- **Hair loss or slower hair growth on the feet and legs**
- **Weak pulse in the legs or feet.**

#### Prevention:

The only way to prevent PAD is to control or reduce the risk factors that lead to atherosclerosis. Quitting smoking, managing diabetes, controlling cholesterol and blood pressure, maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly and having a heart-healthy diet that is low in saturated fats, cholesterol and sodium may help prevent the disease.

#### Peripheral artery disease treatment:

**Angioplasty and stenting:** A small balloon is taken in the artery through a puncture and inflated. The balloon compresses the blockage and opens up the artery. The balloon is then removed, following which, a stent may be placed that keeps the artery open.

**Bypass surgery:** Using a vessel from another area of the body or the synthetic vessel, a graft bypass is created to take blood around the blocked artery.

**Atherectomy:** A catheter with a sharp blade at the end is inserted into the affected artery and the plaque is shaved off as a result.

**Treatment for acute pain in legs:** For patients suffering from acute leg pain with coldness, colour changes or loss of power, the cause may be sudden formation of clots. These should be removed immediately by surgery, to prevent loss of limbs or amputations.

PAD is a serious situation; if left untreated, it causes very painful sensations in the legs or other complications that might arise. It is very important to know the risk factors, symptoms, prevention strategies, and treatment options available for managing PAD. If one has leg pain while walking, or non-healing wounds with pain, it would be very important to see a doctor to rule out PAD as an underlying cause and determine appropriate treatment measures.

(The author, Dr. Tapish Sahu, is the HOD of Vascular And Endovascular Surgery, at Manipal Hospital.)

## Local to International: Spreading his rhythm of 'Bol' across globe

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Tanmay Bichu, a frequent performer at Indian classical and world music performances, wowed the audiences at four prestigious concerts in the US and India. He began the year with a fully booked solo Kathak performance, where he accompanied the internationally renowned Kathak dancer Shambhavi Dandekar. Since then, he has performed with Pt. Raghunandan Panthikar, at an Ustaad Ali Akbar Khan tribute concert in San Francisco and at a three-day Indian classical music festival called *Ashavari Festival 2024* in California.

The extremely skilled tabla musician then gave us an exclusive interview in which he told us, "I think my maternal side of the family, with a rich Indian classical music heritage going back multiple generations, is where I get my musical genes from. Growing up, I was surrounded by music all the time, whether it was from my mother's singing classes or practice or from my uncle's tabla sessions. During my early years, I used to accompany my maternal uncle Shree Vinayak Naik to all of his tabla sessions, where I would sit on his lap while he played the tablas and instructed his students." Even when he was two years old, when he was able to sit up straight and reach up to the Tablas, which was taller than him, the sounds of the Tablas must have struck a chord with him the most! When his parents and uncle witnessed him playing the rhythms to hit songs on the radio, they discovered he had a natural aptitude for the tabla and rhythms. "I would use my entire palm to recreate the rhythms on the tabla, even though my fingers were too little. After we relocated to various places, I would spend all of my summer breaks at my maternal uncle's house, where I would attend all of his academy lessons and study tabla for more than eight to ten hours every day," the well-known tabla player continues.

He has his master, Pandit Ramdas Palsule, as an ideal model. Tanmay informed us that his guru, an engineer, operated a successful business out of his home office. Tanmay saw firsthand the extraordinary discipline he possessed in handling his work and his demanding practice regimen since Tanmay

Renowned tabla performer Tanmay Bichu dazzled the crowd at his most recent US and Indian gigs. In a special interview with *The Pioneer*, he talks about his family's musical history, his early preference for tabla and leaving a lasting impression on the world

used to spend a lot of time at his house learning from him during his undergraduate years. Tanmay has been influenced by him all of his life and tries to emulate him. We learned about the distinctive method through studying with a number of distinguished tabla masters from various *gharanas*: "My training in India came from the *Farukhabad Gharana*, which is the well-known tabla style in Maharashtra. Given that *Farukhabad* features a number of compositions that are primarily finger-based, I believe it helped me increase my finger strength and dexterity." Tanmay began studying under Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri, the leader of the *Lucknow Gharana*, after relocating to the United States. He has been studying carnatic rhythms for over 8 years and he has done a great job incorporating them into his repertoire. By adding a lot of dynamics to his performance, it enables him to demonstrate quite different playing styles (powerful and subtle) within the same performance when he is performing a tabla solo. Ustaad Zakir Hussain, unquestionably one of the most important Indian musicians of the time, has also been a teacher to him. He told us more, like, "Every performance is very dear to me and there is so much to learn every time I perform," making this chat so much more engaging. "Based on the recent shows, the *Ashavari Festival* is clearly unique. When renowned Tabla musicians like Pandit Samar Saha and Pandit Ashish Sengupta came to speak with me in person and bestowed upon me their heartfelt congratulations for my musical endeavours, I was ecstatic." Curious about his thoughts on conceptualising his excellent

collaborations, he said, "Preparing for a performance, especially when with other musicians, is a very abstract idea; as you know, Indian classical music is nearly totally improvised on stage. I consider it to be a lifelong process of preparation for every performance. When I was a child, cassette or CD recordings of Indian classical music were constantly playing in our home. Every time I came home, my dad insisted on having music playing in our home. That, I believe, had a significant impact on my musical journey." With a recent performance called the "Melodic Science" concert that left us speechless, he demonstrated the other side of music to us. He says, "Indian classical music is viewed as being very spiritual, but there has also been a strong scientific basis to this music. We decided to highlight this aspect and inform the audience about the science underlying Indian music because the connection with science is rarely discussed. Furthermore, we believed that the BMM Convention, which was taking place in Silicon Valley, would be the ideal audience for discussing this subject. We conducted extensive research on this subject and covered a wide range of subjects, including how the brain processes music, the reasons behind an octave's seven notes, the effects of



posture on music, the definition of perfect pitch and the effects of music on our mental states, including the chemical and neural reactions in our brains." He attempts to enter a meditative state during practice and strengthen his bond with his tablas because he devotes a lot more time to his *riyaaz* than to performing on stage. However, he shared an extremely fascinating narrative that drew our attention: "When I perform in the USA, I frequently encounter audiences who are seeing tabla for the first time or who are even attending an Indian classical music concert for the first time. And that's where having an education helps."

In a kind message to our readers, Tanmay says that when you consider how much time has been invested in the development of this music to its current state, you will realise that a great deal of thought must have gone into creating it and that only ideas and concepts that were genuinely timeless could have endured over the years. Tanmay, therefore, thinks that traditional wisdom is crucial. The aim is to instill in the student a deep appreciation for music and foster an internal comprehension of musical aesthetics. This will ultimately empower the student to improvise and generate visually appealing ideas. He still listens to the works of the past maestros every day in order to be inspired by their timeless knowledge. "Traditional transmission is critical to the survival of our culture because it is the only way it can endure. However, I don't think I've yet reached the point where I feel completely prepared to teach. It is challenging to find time for teaching when you have a full-time engineering job in addition to a demanding practice and performance schedule for music. I currently dedicate all of my time to assimilating my Gurus' teachings, learning the subtleties of the many *Gharanas* and developing a solid theoretical and practical understanding of our music," he concludes.



# INDIA BEGIN WOMEN'S ASIA CUP DEFENCE WITH CLASH AGAINST PAK

PTI ■ DAMBULLA

The Women's Asia Cup is set for a blockbuster start when defending champions India take on arch-foes Pakistan in a prime-time clash here on Friday, with the eight competing teams hoping to firm up their combinations ahead of the T20 World Cup in October.

Harmanpreet Kaur's India are the team to beat going into this iteration of the Asia Cup, having won the competition three out of four times in the T20 version and each of the four times in 50-overs format. Additionally, India are also the most successful team in the Women's Asia Cup T20 with 17 wins in 20 matches. They beat Bangladesh in the final of the last edition in 2022.

India's record against Pakistan has also been stellar in the shortest format with 11 wins against three defeats in 14 matches so far and Kaur's team will lean on it in addition to the rich form shown in recent outings to clinch the Group A clash here. While India are coming off a 1-1 draw against South Africa earlier this month with the second of the three T20s being washed out, Pakistan will be short on game-time as well as confidence since their last outing was in England in



May when the hosts blanked them 3-0. Smriti Mandhana's rich form with the bat will be India's greatest weapon at the top of the order but the biggest gain from recent all-format outings has been the way their bowling has shaped up, with pacers and spinners putting on a combined show. India pacer Pooja Vastrakar's eight wickets across three outings against South Africa indicate her form but additionally, Radha Yadav's successful return to the mix of

spinners has been encouraging. The spin attack also includes Deepti Sharma, Sajeevan Sajana and the sprightly Shreyanka Patil. Even though Pakistan retained Nida Dar as skipper for the Asia Cup, the squad has undergone significant overhaul since the debacle in England. Three players, Iram Javed, Omaira Sohail, Syeda Aroob Shah, who have not played any matches so far this year, were included with the uncapped Tasmia Rubab

while six others were dropped.

## Nepal, UAE look to make their mark

Also placed in Group A are Nepal and the United Arab Emirates who will face off here earlier in the day at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium. The top two teams from the group will play in the semifinals. While Nepal are returning to the competition for the first time since 2016, UAE are set

for their second consecutive appearance and will be high on confidence having won more than half of their matches this year. The lack of game-time will be a concern for Nepal whose last outing was in mid February when they lost to Malaysia in the Asian Cricket Council's Women's Premier Cup. UAE were last seen in action in May when they lost in the T20 World Cup Qualifier semifinal to Sri Lanka. Teams (from):

**India:** Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wk), Uma Chetry (wk), Pooja Vastrakar, Deepti Sharma, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh, D Hemalatha, Asha Sobhana, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil, Sajeevan Sajana. **Pakistan:** Nida Dar (c), Aliya Riaz, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Gull Feroza, Iram Javed, Muneeba Ali, Najiha Alvi (wk), Nashra Sandhu, Omaira Sohail, Sadia Iqbal, Sidra Amin, Syeda Aroob Shah, Tasmia Rubab, Tuba Hassan.

## Match starts at 7pm (IST)

**Nepal:** Indu Barma (capt), Sita Rana Magar, Rajmati Airee, Rubina Chhetry, Dolly Bhatta, Mamta Chaudhary, Kabita Joshi, Kabita Kunwar, Kritika Marasini, Puja Mahato, Bindu Rawal, Roma Thapa, Sabnam Rai, Samjana Khadka, Kajal Sreshtha (wk). **UAE:** Esha Oza (c), Theertha Satish (wk), Emily Thomas, Samaira Dharnidharka, Kavisha Egodage, Lavanya Keny, Khushi Sharma, Indhuja Nandakumar, Rinitha Rajith, Rishitha Rajith, Vaishnave Mahesh, Suraksha Kotte, Heena Hotchandani, Mehak Thakur, Rithika Rajith.

# Geoffrey Boycott undergoes successful surgery

PTI ■ LONDON



England cricketing great Sir Geoffrey Boycott has undergone a successful surgery to remove a tumour from his throat, his daughter Emma said. The former England batter had undergone extensive chemotherapy for the same in 2002. But in May, the 83-year-old learnt his cancer had returned.

"Just to let everyone know my Father, Geoffrey, has successfully come out of surgery this evening after a 3 hour operation to remove his throat cancer. "Yet to see him but surgeon says it went well. He asked that I post an update," Boycott's daughter Emma tweeted from the cricketer's account on Wednesday. In his illustrious career spanning 1964 to 1982, Boycott scored 100 first-class hundreds while amassing over 8,000 runs in 108 Tests at an average of nearly 48. Former Australia player and head coach Darren Lehmann reacted to the news along with ex-England players Alan Butcher and Michael Vaughan, who posted a red heart on X. "Thanks for the update, please pass on our thoughts to the whole family and

glad the surgery went well," Lehmann wrote, while Butcher wrote, "Great news." While announcing his diagnosis last month Boycott had said, "In the last few weeks, I have had an MRI Scan, CT Scan, a PET Scan, and two biopsies, and it has now been confirmed I have throat cancer and will require an operation." "From past experience, I realize that to overcome cancer a second time I will need excellent medical treatment and quite a bit of luck, and even if the operation is successful, every cancer patient knows they have to live with the possibility of it returning. So I will just get on with it and hope for the best," he added.



# Quintal becomes 1st Indian rider to compete at World Superbike

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Rider Kavin Quintal is all set to make a historic debut at the WorldSBK SSP300 competitions and become the first Indian rider to participate in a World Superbike Championship. Thanks to the opportunity provided by the Irish team, Team#109 Retro Traffic Kawasaki and its management company Gaman Racing Global Service, Quintal's entry was accepted for the SSP event in the fourth round which begins at Most, Czech Republic on Friday. SBK, founded in 1988, is an event for heavily modified production sports motorcycles and consists of a series of rounds held on permanent racing facilities. The 19-year Chennai star, Quintal, will be filling in for the Irish team's main rider, Spaniard Daniel Mogeda, who suffered an injury after leading the Supersport 300 class, in an unfortunate crash that paved the way for the Irish team to rope in the

Indian. Quintal, a world-class rider, is currently competing in the European Stock Championship within the FIM JuniorGP and in the Asia Road Racing Championship. In the three rounds of JuniorGP, Quintal had a top-10 finish. As a rider, who took his baby steps at 13, he was the youngest to earn points in the Indian National events. He went on to win the Talent Cup twice, in 2021 and 2023, in India. Later, after the Asia Talent Cup events, he soon blossomed into a mature rider, moving to Europe. "It is a great opportunity that I will try to learn and enjoy at the same time. I will be able to show my maximum level together with a great team that surrounds this structure. I would like to thank the team for this opportunity," Quintal said. The practice sessions will be on Friday followed by a race each on Saturday and Sunday at Most, Czech Republic.

# Mandaviya to inaugurate phase 2 of talent identification programme

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Making use of the buzz around the upcoming Paris Olympics, Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya will inaugurate the second phase of the government's ambitious Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) programme here on Friday. The first phase of KIRTI was launched by Mandaviya's predecessor in the post, Anurag Thakur, in

Chandigarh on March 12. KIRTI aims to conduct 20 lakh assessments across the country throughout the year to identify promising athletes through notified Talent Assessment Centres. A scouting and assessment programme of this scale is a first in India. KIRTI's athlete-centric programme is conspicuous by its transparent selection methodology based on Information Technology, it



was stated in a press release. Data analytics based on Artificial Intelligence are being used to predict the sporting acumen of an aspiring athlete, the release said. In its first phase, out of 3,62,683 registrations across 70 centres, close to 51,000 assessments in 28 states and union territories have been made. Maharashtra and Haryana, two states which have always done well in Khelo India meets, have had the maximum

number of assessments - 9168 and 4820 -- respectively. Assam was third with 4703 assessments. Evaluation of aspiring athletes has happened in 11 disciplines - archery, athletics, badminton, boxing, football, hockey, kabaddi, kho-kho, volleyball, weightlifting and wrestling. Maximum assessments have happened in athletics (13804) and football (13483). Mandaviya will lay emphasis

on the project that aims to achieve 20 lakh assessment in the financial year 2024-25 by "onboarding all states and treating the district as a unit of assessment". The press release said this is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "vision to take sports to every child in the country through mass participation and ultimately achieve excellence through Khelo India's structured pyramidal programmes".

# We are on way to making it to next Olympics: CFI secretary general Maninder Pal Singh

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Cycling Federation of India (CFI) secretary general Maninder Pal Singh on Thursday said the COVID-19 pandemic dashed their hopes of participation at Paris Olympics but asserted they "have plans in place" for 2028 Los Angeles Games. The country has won three medals in cycling at the Asian Games but is yet to see representation at the Olympics. When asked about India's failure to qualify for cycling at the Paris Games, Maninder said COVID-19 affected their plans during the qualification campaign. "Cycling is not a sport that you can equate to others when it comes to Olympic qualification. It takes two and a half years to qualify for the Games. Besides taking part in the qualifiers, one needs to



attain points from events of various classes," he told PTI in an interaction arranged by HCL. "This year, we were hopeful of our riders qualifying. But, because of COVID, events in Asia took a hit, unlike Europe, where the riders took the required points to qualify. "Nonetheless, we are well on our way to making it to the next Olympics (in Los

Angeles). We have our plans in place and are both hopeful and confident of qualifying for the first time." Maninder further explained the challenges faced by the sport in the country and said infrastructure has a massive role to play in preparing cyclists. "Cycling alone cannot thrive on its riders, but it is hugely dependent on its

infrastructure, not only the equipment but also the coaches. And, it's not easy to get since the infrastructure is very expensive. "About 4-5 years back, there were some velodromes that were not being utilised due to some problems. While Chennai already has one, there's one coming up in Kolkata and also one in the state of Odisha. Currently, we have about 16-17 velodromes in the country," Maninder was in the city on Thursday to launch a cyclothon event, an initiative of the CFI to promote the sport in the country. Besides the cyclothon, he affirmed that plans were in place to produce certified coaches along with some talent hunt programmes. "Other than cyclothon, we have a huge programme in place for the coaches' development.

# FIFA RANKINGS

## India remain on 124th position, toppers Argentina consolidate position

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Success-starved India held on to the 124th position in the FIFA men's rankings released on Thursday, even as reigning world champions and Copa America winners Argentina strengthened their grip at the top of the pecking order. In the FIFA rankings released in June, the Indian men's national football team dropped down three places in the list after its failure to qualify for the third round of the 2026 World Cup Qualifiers after losses to Qatar and Afghanistan. Since December last year, India have been sliding down. They had broken into the top 100 last year, with a best ranking of 99, but since then it has been a downward spiral. In Asia, India remained on the

22nd position, behind the likes of Lebanon, Palestine, and Vietnam. Having successfully defended their Copa America crown, Argentina (1st) tighten their grip at the top of the table. France (2nd) remained their closest challengers, after reaching the semi-finals of EURO 2024. Newly crowned European champions Spain (3rd, up 5) have yet more reason to celebrate after hauling themselves into the top three of the ranking, while beaten finalists England (4th, up 1) were just behind the leading pack, having leapfrogged Brazil (5th, down 1). Belgium (6th, down 3) now find themselves outside the top five, with the Netherlands (7th) and Portugal (8th, down 2) just behind them.

# Prannoy focussed on increasing speed ahead of Paris Olympics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

His body has been ravaged by a spate of illnesses, the most recent being a bout of chikungunya, but seasoned Indian badminton player H S Prannoy is unwilling to let it come in the way of a dream Olympic debut that is happening a tad late in his career. He is focussed on building his stamina for the grind that awaits him in Paris later this month and helping him is his coach and former player RMV Gurusaidutt. The 32-year-old Kerala shuttler, a 2022 Thomas Cup title winner and a world and Asian Games bronze-medallist, has battled past a chronic stomach disorder, a nagging back injury, and more recently a week-long bout of the mosquito-borne viral disease. "The preparations that we started after the Australia Open, those are on point, we are on the right track," Gurusaidutt told PTI. "The best thing about Prannoy in this entire journey is that though he was struggling, he was showing

up for training and giving his best. Of course now, since he had another rough patch, it is not easy to get into the winning momentum," he explained. But Gurusaidutt is confident nonetheless and does not feel that the latest illness will trigger "too many changes" in Prannoy's training routine. "He has been that kind of a player who steps up on big occasions. He's done that multiple times over the last three or four years. So, as a coach, me and Gopi sir (national coach Pullela Gopichand) have that confidence in him." Following the high of his world championship bronze in 2023, Prannoy was laid low by another stomach disorder, a condition which was similar to the chronic acid reflux problem that he had suffered in the past. Such was complexity of his illness that it was difficult for him to have a meal without wanting to throw up later. The result was six first-round exits and a semifinal and a quarterfinal appearance this year. But he has



persevered. Gurusaidutt said the coaching team has introduced some specific drills to address the minor issues,

mainly related to speed and enduring long rallies. "We wanted to introduce a few programs. Gopi sir thought he needed to play

longer matches...Based on the last 3-4 tournaments, I particularly felt people were trying to push him at the pace in terms of making him

move quickly. "...There is not too much time for him to get space between the shots. So that was something that we thought we could make it easier for him in training. Otherwise, it was about getting him confidence, and getting his fitness levels up. Those were the major aspects," he said. Elaborating on the need to step up his pace, Gurusaidutt said, "...We wanted work on it to prepare him for somebody playing some sharp shots, and cross-courts. So, it was meant to make him feel comfortable for those things. "So, once he picks those up, he gets into his style, that's where the game changes usually. If somebody is pushing at him constantly, once he is out of that, once he survives it then he gets into his zone again."

"Flexibility and unpredictability will be key" Gurusaidutt, a 2014 Commonwealth Games bronze-medallist, feels Prannoy also needs to mix things up, be flexible but not predictable. "We should have a counter when someone is attacking him but also we need to make sure that he's not too defensive. He has to mix up a lot, not be predictable in one style of play." **Want to be a little pressure-free: Prannoy** It will be Prannoy's maiden Olympics and he said he wants to keep things "simple and usual" without taking unnecessary pressure. "I think everyone just wants to talk about Paris. But I just want to be a little bit more pressure-free, kind of enjoy it a little bit more and just take it as one more tournament in my career," Prannoy had said during an earlier interview with PTI. "So from a preparation point of view, I think for me it's really important to kind of get back to basics...I was not there mentally in a lot of matches. So I think that's what I tried to do and just try to be a little bit more simple and usual."



# Ashwin Babu discusses the depths of *Shivam Bhaje*

PNS | HYDERABAD

**G**anga Entertainments' Production 1 *Shivam Bhaje* is all set for a grand release in theatres on August 1. Producer Maheswara Reddy Mooli has announced the release date of the new-age intriguing divine suspense thriller starring Ashwin Babu and Digangana Suryavanshi in lead roles. Directed by Apsar, the film stars Bollywood actor Arbaaz Khan, Hyper Aadi, Sai Dheena, Tanikella Bharani, Murali Sharma, Brahmaji, Tulasi and other senior actors in crucial roles. *Ram Ram Eeswaram*, the first song from the movie, has been unveiled digitally by sensational music director SS Thaman. Vikas Badisa's tune is rousing. The music, designed to hypnotise and evoke praise for Shiva, received an amazing response from all quarters shortly after its release. Producer Maheswara Reddy Mooli is thrilled that people of all ages and regions report entering a meditative state and experiencing devotional chills while listening to the song. The lyrics are written by Poornachari, while the song is rendered by Sai Charan. The song arrives at a pivotal point in the story and will be accompanied by equally captivating visuals. In the meantime, we sat down with Ashwin Babu to discuss his latest role in the much-anticipated film *Shivam Bhaje*. With the film blending suspense, crime thriller and mythology, Babu offers insights into his character, the filmmaking process and his future projects.

## EXCERPTS FROM THE INTERVIEW:

**Q: Can you delve into the unique aspects of your character in *Shivam Bhaje*?**

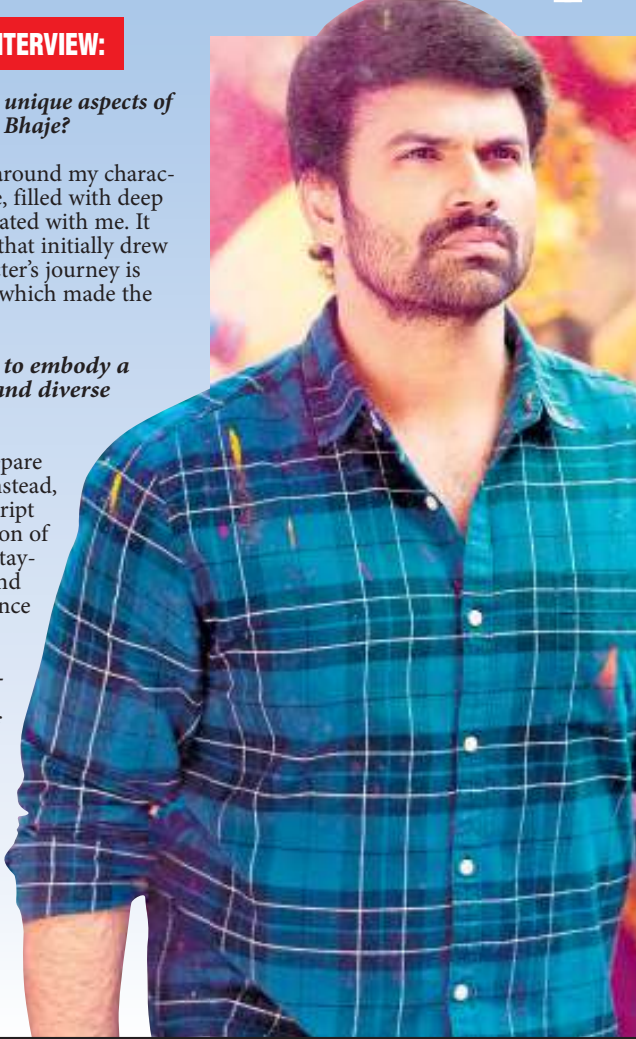
**Ashwin Babu:** The story around my character is exceptionally unique, filled with deep emotions that really resonated with me. It was this emotional depth that initially drew me to the role. The character's journey is intricate and meaningful, which made the role very compelling.

**Q: How did you prepare to embody a character within a rich and diverse narrative?**

**Ashwin Babu:** I didn't prepare extensively for this role; instead, I placed my trust in the script and in the divine inspiration of Lord Shiva. I focused on staying true to the narrative and letting the character's essence guide my performance.

**Q: How was your experience working with director Apsar and the rest of the cast?**

**Ashwin Babu:** Working with director Apsar was a revelation. His script was impressive, especially given that he comes from an Islamic background and crafted a narrative centered on Lord Shiva's



divine power. It was truly remarkable. Digangana Suryavanshi is a dedicated and talented artist, and collaborating with her was a pleasure. The set was filled with memorable moments, and the camaraderie among the cast made the experience enriching.

**Q: How did the technical aspects influence your performance and the overall storytelling?**

**Ashwin Babu:** The teaser's success is a testament to the hard work of our entire crew. Our editor, Ravi, deserves special mention for his exceptional work, which was even praised by S.S. Thaman. This is my second film with him, and he consistently delivers top-notch results. The CG work, thanks to our director and producer, was meticulously executed within budget constraints, adding significant depth to the storytelling.

**Q: What was your reaction to the audience's positive feedback and how do you think it sets the tone for the film's release?**

**Ashwin Babu:** I'm thrilled with the positive response to the teaser. It's incredibly exciting to see the audience's enthusiasm. I believe the film will be even more thrilling than the teaser suggests and I'm confident it will exceed expectations upon release.

**Q: How did Vikas Badisa's score contribute to the atmosphere of**

*Shivam Bhaje* and do you have a favourite piece from the soundtrack?

**Ashwin Babu:** Vikas Badisa's score is indeed a highlight of the film. The track *Poonakalu Loading* is a showstopper and really stands out. I'm sure Vikas will become even busier with his talent being showcased in this film. His music added a significant layer of atmosphere and depth to the film.

**Q: Is there a personal or spiritual connection you felt with the story or your character that influenced your performance in *Shivam Bhaje*?**

**Ashwin Babu:** As a devotee of Lord Shiva, I felt a profound spiritual connection throughout the shoot. The divine and positive vibrations I experienced helped me deliver my best performance and brought a genuine authenticity to the role.

**Q: After *Shivam Bhaje*, what types of roles or genres are you interested in exploring next?**

**Ashwin Babu:** I'm always excited about exploring different and unique stories. Currently, I'm working on a suspense thriller, and we've completed about 40% of the shooting. I'm looking forward to bringing more diverse roles to the screen in the future.

Ashwin Babu's dedication to his craft and his enthusiasm for future projects suggest an exciting trajectory ahead. Fans eagerly await *Shivam Bhaje* and the promising work he has in the pipeline.

## VARUN TEJ'S *MATKA* WRAPS UP RFC SCHEDULE, NEW PHASE IN VIZAG



**M**ega Prince Varun Tej is fully immersed in the production of his ambitious Pan-India film *Matka*, which is making significant progress. Directed by Karuna Kumar and produced by Dr. Vijender Reddy Teegala and Rajani Thalluri under Vyra Entertainments and SRT Entertainments, *Matka* is shaping up to be Varun Tej's most expensive and challenging project to date.

The film has recently concluded an extensive and pivotal shooting schedule at RFC. This phase saw the team working in meticulously crafted vintage sets that capture the essence and charm of Vizag from a bygone era. The schedule included the filming of crucial scenes, high-octane action sequences and vibrant retro-themed musical numbers. A new poster from the film showcases Nora Fatehi in a glamorous retro look, elegantly posing in a colorful pub setting. Known for her exceptional dance skills, Nora will shine in the retro songs choreographed by Jani Master, promising to highlight her dancing prowess.

Currently, the production has shifted to a new schedule in Vizag, progressing rapidly. Varun Tej is tackling one of the most demanding roles of his career, requiring multiple makeovers as the narrative spans 24 years, from 1958 to 1982. Meenakshi Chaudhary also stars in the film, which is anticipated to be a landmark project in Varun Tej's career, thanks to its high production values and the authentic recreation of vintage Vizag.

## OPERATION RAAVAN RELEASE PREPONED TO JULY 26

**R**akshit Atturi, who gained acclaim with his performance in the 2020 hit *Palasa 1978*, is set to headline the upcoming bilingual thriller *Operation Raavan*. Originally scheduled for an August 2 release, the film's release date has now been moved up to July 26, as announced by the filmmakers.

The announcement was accompanied by a fresh set of posters featuring the tagline 'A Psycho Story,' which hints at the film's intense narrative. Produced by Dhyan Atturi, *Operation Raavan* is a modern suspense thriller directed and written by debutant Venkata Satya, with dialogues penned by Lakshmi Lohit Pujari. The film stars Radikaa Sarathkumar and Sangeethana Vipin in pivotal roles and includes a supporting cast of Charan Raj, Vidya Sagar, Rocket Raghava, Raghu Kunche, KA Paul Ramu, and Karthik. The music for the film is composed by Saravana Vasudevan, while Satya Giduthuri handles editing. Cinematography is done by Nani Chamidishetty, and Nani T oversees the art direction. With its release now set for July 26, *Operation Raavan* promises to deliver a gripping cinematic experience.



## December release locked for *Kannappa*

**A**ctor Vishnu Manchu has officially revealed that his highly anticipated film *Kannappa* is set to hit theaters in December 2024. On July 18, Manchu took to X (formerly Twitter) to announce the release window, stating, "December 2024 #Kannappa #HarHarMahadev (sic)."

*Kannappa* is a grand mythological fantasy directed by Mukesh Kumar and is currently nearing completion. The film, which tells the story of a devoted follower of Hindu god Shiva, has already created a buzz in the film industry. The teaser, first showcased at the Cannes Film Festival in May, garnered significant attention and was officially released in India on June 14, receiving a warm reception from audiences. The film features a star-studded cast, including Mohan Babu, Sarathkumar, Mukesh

Rishi, Brahmanandam, Madhoo and Preity Mukhundan. It also includes special appearances by Prabhas, Akshay Kumar, Mohanlal and Kajal Aggarwal.

Vishnu Manchu, who also penned the screenplay, has collaborated with Paruchuri Gopala Krishna, Eshwar Reddy, G. Nageswara Reddy and Thota Prasad for the film's production. The film's music, composed by Mani Sharma and Stephen Devasi, is expected to further enhance its epic narrative.

The film was shot in New Zealand, adding a unique visual flair to its mythological storytelling.

Produced by Ava Entertainment and 24 Frames Factory, *Kannappa* is poised to be a major release in December, with the official date to be confirmed in the coming months.

## TEJUS KANCHERLA'S NEXT *URUKU PATELA* IS URIKIFIED

**R**ising star Tejus Kancherla, acclaimed for his performances in films like *Hushaaru*, is set to make waves with his new project, *Uruku Patela*. Known for his versatility and dedication, Kancherla is now channeling his energy into creating compelling and unique content that resonates deeply with audiences.

The much-anticipated first look of *Uruku Patela* has just been released, showcasing Kancherla in a captivating pose that piques interest. The poster features the actor in a dynamic action sequence against a rural backdrop, suggesting a blend of entertainment and emotional depth. The film's

tagline, "Get *Urikified*," hints at a distinctive cinematic experience.

Directed by Vivek Reddy and produced by Kancherla Bala Bhanu under Lead Edge Pictures, *Uruku Patela* promises a high-quality production with cinematography by Sunny Kurrapati and a soundtrack by Pravin Lakkaraju. With shooting completed and post-production underway, the film is gearing up for its theatrical release, with the date to be announced soon.

With a talented team and an engaging storyline, *Uruku Patela* is poised to captivate audiences and offer a fresh, creative perspective in Indian cinema.



## Arivu makes a powerful comeback after 5-year hiatus

**T**he Indian music industry is buzzing with excitement as Tamil Hip-Hop and Folk Pop sensation Arivu releases his highly anticipated album, *Valliamma Peraandi Vol. 01*. After a five-year hiatus, Arivu makes a monumental return with a 12-track album that promises to be the next big thing in the music scene.

Known for his ground-breaking single *Enjoy Enjaami*, which garnered 80 to 85 million audio streams and over 480 million YouTube views, Arivu's new album is poised to redefine the landscape of South Indian music. As one of the largest non-film album launches in South India, *Valliamma Peraandi Vol. 01* blends Pop, R&B, EDM, Drill, Romance, and Emancipation, all while maintaining Arivu's signature hard-hitting song writing.

Featuring standout collaborations like *Rasaathi* with Punjabi talent Rishmeet Kaur and *Sarbaaga* featuring Ambassa bandmates Gaana Balachandrar and Chellamuthu, the album showcases an unexpected and refreshing side of Arivu's music.

Fans will also be thrilled by tracks like *Thodadha* and *Kangaani* which stay true to Arivu's impactful lyrical style. The album explores the romantic side of Arivu with songs such as *Maala* and *Diamond Baby*, adding a new dimension to his artistry. Expressing his excitement, Arivu shared, "I am beyond excited to return with an album after five long years! This album is lots of fun, love, swag with a beautiful message. For the first time, I have experimented with many themes and soundscapes which are close to my heart. It's going to be a multi-genre experience with diverse influences ranging from drill rap to the most heart-melting melodies. Can't wait for it to release and can't wait to perform it live. Stay tuned! Brother Bigson Madela is coming!" From hard-hitting lyrics to soulful melodies, this album captures the essence of Arivu's artistry and his ability to connect deeply with his audience. *Valliamma Peraandi Vol. 01* delivers an eclectic mix of genres and emotions, creating an immersive experience that resonates with both long-time fans and new listeners.

## Dheeraj Mogilineni addresses challenges faced for *Peka Medalu*

**A**t the pre-release event for *Peka Medalu*, producer Dheeraj Mogilineni shared his concerns about the difficulties faced by small films in the current market. Despite the ticket prices being set at Rs 100, he noted the challenges in releasing smaller films and emphasised the need for support from the industry.

The film, which is set to release on July 19, has garnered significant backing from prominent figures such as Rana Daggubati, Adivi Sesh and Viswak Sen. Produced by Rakesh Varre and coming from Crazy Ants Productions, *Peka Medalu* features Vinod Kishan as the lead and Anusha Krishna as the heroine, with direction by Nilagiri Maamilla. The film focuses on women's empowerment and has received positive feedback from special shows in Vizag and Vijayawada.

Dheeraj Mogilineni, who is also distributing the film, expressed his appreciation for the support and outlined his promotional strategies. He stated, "I believe this film has the potential to resonate strongly with audiences if given the right exposure. The challenge lies

in attracting viewers to smaller films, especially when ticket prices are higher. To make it accessible, we've set ticket prices at Rs100 and planned paid premieres in multiple cities, including Vijayawada, Vizag, and Hyderabad, with tickets priced at Rs 50. The positive response from those who have seen the film

so far gives me confidence that it will be well-received." Director Nilagiri Maamilla also thanked the media for their support and described the positive response to the paid premieres as a promising sign. "I'm very confident about the film's success and grateful to Dheeraj for his support in bringing it to audiences. I

hope the film will be loved by the viewers."

Heroine Anusha Krishna expressed gratitude for the media's support and encouraged everyone to watch the film. "The passion we poured into this project will resonate with the audience. We hope the film's release on the 19th will be a success, thanks to everyone's support."

Hero Vinod Kishan was excited about the positive feedback from the premieres and highlighted the innovative promotions. "The response has been encouraging, and I'm hopeful that audiences will enjoy and support the film."

Producer Rakesh Varre echoed the sentiments of gratitude towards the media and supporters. "The media has been instrumental in promoting our film, and we appreciate all the positive responses. Special thanks to Dheeraj for his support and to Rana Daggubati, Adivi Sesh and Viswak Sen for their encouragement. We are optimistic that the audience will embrace *Peka Medalu* and make it a success." With its release approaching, *Peka Medalu* is set to make an impact, bolstered by strong industry support and a dedicated promotional effort.

