



# the pioneer

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**Mamata and Akhilesh say Central govt won't last long**

**PARUL'S NOSTALGIC REFLECTIONS FROM #BLUETICK (VERIFIED) SET!**

**Girl-next-door roles suit me at the MOMENT**

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
The pioneer

**How many farmers will benefit from the Musi project? What is the storage capacity in TMCs? How many acres will come under irrigation? What will be the increase in crop yield? What industrial needs will be met? How many new large reservoirs will be constructed? KTR questioned Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's preference for the Musi project over the Palamuru-Ranga Reddy project, which is in its final stages.**

**- KT Rama Rao, BRS working president**



P4

**DON'T MISS...**

**2 workers stranded in Dubai rescued...**

Two persons who were sent to Dubai under the false promise of lucrative employment have returned to their native villages, thanks to Swatantra TV, which brought their plight to light. A few days ago, Swatantra TV aired the ordeal of ten individuals stranded in Gulf countries. These individuals were sent by an agent, Jhansi, from West Godavari and East Godavari districts, with the promise of lucrative jobs on tourist visas. Upon arriving in Dubai and other locations, they found no suitable jobs and endured severe hardships, including...

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**'Will offer shelter to anyone in...**

Responding to the ongoing violence in Bangladesh, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday suggested that she would keep the doors of her state open for people in distress from the neighbouring country and offer them shelter. Banerjee referred to the United Nations Resolution on refugees as justification for her stand over the possible humanitarian crisis that may emerge on account of the severe law and order breakdown that has gripped Bangladesh in the past few days...

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**Harnessing AI in a big way in public...**

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu has said Artificial Intelligence (AI) has arrived and the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) is taking advantage of new technologies in improving the quality of public expenditure. "As it develops, we will develop ourselves accordingly. Whatever challenges are there we will try and overcome. We will follow global experiences and practices related to this and share our own to..."

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**India triumph over UAE by 78 runs...**

Contrasting fifties from skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and Richa Ghosh were complemented nicely by the bowlers as India notched up a massive 78-run win over UAE in their second match of the ongoing women's Asia Cup T20 tournament here on Sunday. Invited to bat, Kaur played the anchor's role to perfection with a 47-ball 66, while Ghosh produced late charge with an unbeaten 29-ball-64 to power defending champions India to 201 for five, their first-ever 200-plus score in T20Is. The bowlers...

-SPORTS

**AP ASSEMBLY SESSION FROM TODAY**

## TDP, YSRCP draw battle lines

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

With the Assembly sessions scheduled to begin on Monday, the TDP-led NDA government and the YSRCP have prepared their strategies to address the current situation in the State. The YSRCP plans to confront the ruling party on law and order issues and various other concerns related to Andhra Pradesh, while the ruling coalition government is set to highlight the debt accumulated during the YSRCP regime.

Initially, alliance leaders believed that Jagan Mohan Reddy's team of legislators would skip the Assembly sessions. However, after YS Jagan visited Vinukonda, he decided that the YSRCP should attend the session. He clarified that the YSRCP would question the TDP-led coalition government during the Governor's speech on Monday. They aim to draw national attention to the alleged lawlessness and anarchy that have plagued Andhra Pradesh in the 45 days since the coalition led by Chandrababu Naidu took power. YS Jagan also stated that the YSRCP demands the imposition of President's Rule in the state and plans to organise a protest in New Delhi on July 24 to highlight the anarchy prevailing in the State.

The YSRCP will emphasise the alarming number of political murders and murder attempts since the TDP assumed power during the sessions. Jagan reported that 36 political mur-

• YSRCP plans to confront the TDP-led government on law and order issues.

• Jagan Mohan Reddy has confirmed YSRCP's attendance.

• YSRCP demands President's Rule in Andhra Pradesh and plans a protest in New Delhi on July 24.

• A Vote-on-Account for three months will be introduced, with the full budget planned for October.

• The Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting will finalise the rest of the session's agenda.

• The TDP-led government will release three more white papers on law and order, excise, and finance.

ders and over 300 murder attempts have occurred within just 45 days of the coalition government taking the reins of the state. Additionally, he claimed that 37 individuals have committed suicide due to harassment by the TDP. With such conditions in Andhra Pradesh, Jagan argues that

there are grounds for the imposition of President's Rule in the state.

On the other hand, the Chandrababu-led government is prepared to highlight the detrimental impact of the YSRCP's five-year rule. The Chief Minister has mobilised efforts to inform the public about the

## Governor to address both Houses

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The TDP-led NDA government is likely to conduct a six-day Assembly session from Monday. The coalition government is expected to introduce a Vote-on-Account for the next three months. Additionally, the government plans to present the

Full Budget in October.

On the first day of the Assembly session, the Governor will address both the Assembly and Council members, beginning at 10 am. It is reported that the Land Titling Act Repeal Bill will

be introduced in the House on July 23.

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has already released four white papers on the previous regime of the YSRCP government.

Continued on Page 2



## YSRCP, JD(U) raise SCS at all-party meet

**TDP urges Centre to fulfil aspirations of AP people**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

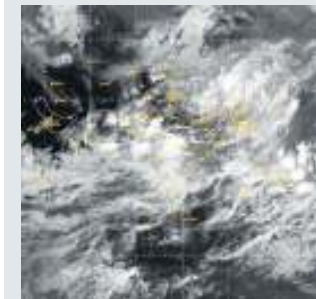
YSRCP MPs raised the demand for Special Category Status (SCS) for Andhra Pradesh during the all-party meeting ahead of the Budget Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Sunday. TDP members were also present at the meeting convened by the Centre but remained silent on the matter. NDA ally JD(U) also demanded Special Category Status for Bihar. The all-party meeting held in the Main Committee Room, Parliament House Annex, was chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

During the meeting, YSRCP members Vijayasai Reddy and Midhun Reddy highlighted the deteriorating law and order situation and called for the imposition of President's Rule in the state. Notably, the Telugu state has been witnessing targeted attacks on YSRCP leaders and workers ever since the TDP alliance assumed power.

Chairing the party parliamentary meeting at Tadepalli on Saturday, party chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy urged the party MPs to raise their voices in both houses of Parliament against the murders, attacks, and property destruction happening in the state.

Continued on Page 2

**More rain pain in store for AP**



PNS ■ GUNTUR

Thunderstorms, lightning, and strong surface winds with speeds of 30-40 km/h are expected in isolated areas of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 24 hours. According to the Meteorological Centre, rain or thundershowers are anticipated at several locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next week. The South West Monsoon remains normal over Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam but has weakened over Rayalaseema. Recent rainfall has been reported at various locations in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and at isolated places in Rayalaseema in the last 24 hours.

2



## Crops in 1L acres submerged in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Heavy floods in the Godavari, Shabari, Yerrakalva, and Yanamaduru rivers have caused extensive damage across the West Godavari, East Godavari, Visakhapatnam, and Srikakulam districts. More than 100,000 acres of crops have been inundated, with hundreds of villages experiencing severe damage to roads and infrastructure.

The relentless rains and flooding of major rivers, streams, and drains have resulted in significant destruction. Although there has been a temporary respite from the rains, heavy inflows into the Godavari, Shabari, Yerrakalva, and Yanamaduru drains continued on Sunday.

Preliminary assessments indi-

cate that over 1,00,000 acres of crops have been submerged, with paddy crops being the worst affected.

In the Eluru district, the Pedavagu River has caused significant disruption, surrounding 12 villages in Velerupadu mandal with floodwaters.

The West and East Godavari districts have suffered considerable damage due to flooding in the Godavari and Yerrakalva rivers. Reports suggest that 25 cattle have been swept away and over 50 houses have collapsed in Velerupadu mandal. More than 1,000 flood victims have been relocated to three relief camps in the affected districts. Roads leading to various villages have been damaged in 126 locations, and over 4,000 families have been impacted by the Pedavagu floods.

Continued on Page 2

## Special teams active in power restoration: Spl Chief Secretary

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In view of the rains and floods prevailing across the State, the Andhra Pradesh Power Utilities are taking steps on a war footing basis to tackle the damages and restore power supply to normalcy in flood-affected areas in all the districts of the State.

Special Chief Secretary Energy K Vijayanand, who is directly monitoring the power infrastructure damages and power restoration activities in the State, has reviewed the situation with AP Power utilities along with MD APGENCO and CMD APEPDCIL KVN Chakradhar Babu, CMD APEPDCIL I Prudhvi Tej, and CMD APSPDCIL K Santosha Rao.



Power restoration works going on in APEPDCIL in the rain affected areas.

The Special Chief Secretary Energy stated that, as per the directions of CM Chandrababu

Naidu and Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar, the Power utilities are carrying out restoration activities on a war footing to ensure that power supply is restored to the affected villages in the shortest possible time.

"Special teams of power utilities are working round the clock and making all-out efforts for speedy execution of works for early restoration of power supply. The required men and material are already available for the execution of works. Staff are working round the clock without any holidays and taking stock of restoration works periodically to restore power as soon as possible," Vijayanand said.

2

**Vet from AP dies in US mishap**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Veterinary doctor Jetty Harika, 25, from Tenali in Guntur district, tragically died in a road accident in Oklahoma State, USA.

Harika has been pursuing a Master's degree in Veterinary Medicine for the past 18 months.

Continued on Page 2

## Jagan meets Guv, seeks probe into violence



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy met Governor S Abdul Nazeer at Raj Bhavan in Vijayawada on Sunday to address the deteriorating law and order situation in Andhra Pradesh.

Jagan Mohan Reddy requested an investigation by central government agencies into alleged atrocities committed by the TDP government.

During the meeting, Jagan Mohan Reddy informed the Governor that constitutional institutions in the state have failed, leading to a paralyzed administration and a lack of protection for citizens. He accused leaders and workers of the ruling party of engaging in barbaric and inhumane activities, spreading fear among the populace.

Jagan Mohan Reddy claimed that following the recent elections, the

TDP-led coalition government targeted those who opposed them, particularly sympathisers of the YSR Congress Party. He alleged that TDP supporters have engaged in violence, including humiliation, beatings, and killings, while destroying properties such as residential houses. He also mentioned damage to government properties, including Village Secretariats, RBKs, and Village Clinics, which were targeted because they were established by the previous YSRCP government. Additionally, statues of the late Dr. Y.S. Rajasekar Reddy, former Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh, were reportedly vandalized.

The YSRCP highlighted the brutal killing of party activist Rashid in Vinukonda on July 17, 2024, noting that the incident occurred in a busy area with police nearby but seemingly uninvolved. He also mentioned an attack on MP PV Midhun Reddy in Punganur, Chittoor district, where TDP mobs attempted to murder him in the presence of police, demonstrating a severe deterioration in state protection.

Jagan Mohan Reddy criticized the state government's handling of law and order, alleging that the administration has become politicized and ineffective, allowing atrocities and violence to persist. He concluded that the law and order situation in Andhra Pradesh has reached alarmingly low levels, with governance being replaced by anarchy.

## India's own 'madhya rekha' passed through Ujjain

Reference to the Harappan civilisation as 'Sindhu-Sarasvati' among NCERT tweaks in textbooks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India had a prime meridian of its own much ahead of the Greenwich meridian and it was called 'madhya rekha', which passed through the city of Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, according to a new Class-6 NCERT textbook for social science.

No mention of caste-based discrimination, tweaks in references to B R Ambedkar's experience about the discrimination, referring to the Harappan civilisation as 'Sindhu-Sarasvati' are also among the changes in the textbook developed according to a new curriculum.

"The Greenwich Meridian is not the first prime meridian. There were others in the past. In fact, many centuries before Europe, India had



**"The Greenwich Meridian is not the first prime meridian. There were others in the past. In fact, many centuries before Europe, India had a prime meridian of its own! It was called madhya rekha (or 'middle line') and passed through the city of Ujjain (today Ujjain), which was a reputed centre for astronomy over many centuries."**

a prime meridian of its own! It called madhya rekha (or 'middle line') and passed through the city of Ujjain (today Ujjain), which was a reputed centre for astronomy over many centuries.

"Varahamihira, a famous astronomer, lived and worked there

some 1,500 years ago. Indian astronomers were aware of the concepts of latitude and longitude, including the need for a zero or prime meridian. The Ujjain meridian became a reference for calculations in all Indian astronomical texts," the textbook reads.

In a departure from the past, the textbook makes multiple references to the 'Sarasvati' river in the chapter pertaining to the beginning of the Indian civilisation.

In the new textbook, the river finds a prominent place in a chapter on the "Beginnings of Indian

Civilisation", where the Harappan civilisation is referred to as the "Indus-Sarasvati" or "Sindhu-Sarasvati" civilisation. It says the "Sarasvati" basin included major cities of the civilisation -- Rakhigarhi and Ganweriwala -- along with smaller cities and towns.

The river, according to the new textbook, "today goes by the name of 'Ghaggar' in India and 'Hakra' in Pakistan (hence the name 'Ghaggar-Hakra River') and is now seasonal.

The textbook, titled "Exploring Society India and Beyond", has details on the Vedas without mentioning the caste system and that women and Shudras were not allowed to study these scriptures.

2



# Monday Mirchi

**TALENT SHINES BEYOND BORDERS: JAYESH TO ADVISE LOKESH**

One of the most popular go-to persons under the previous Bharat Rashtira Samithi regime in Telangana, IT Secretary Jayesh Ranjan, is likely to go to Andhra Pradesh for replicating his magic there. The buzz in the corridors of power in TG is that he is going to seek voluntary retirement before moving to AP as Advisor to IT Minister Nara Lokesh. When yours truly contacted Jayesh with this 'technonic' shift, he termed it as 'just a 'rumour'. Well, everyone is aware of Jayesh's credentials in attracting investments to Telangana. He has incredible network within the industry. This move by Lokesh ups the game of AP in IT.

**A PEP TALK WHERE NONE IS TONGUE-TIED**

Communication is a two-way process, unless one is talking about a monologue at which members of the audience are prohibited from interrupting the monologist. This came to the fore the other day when Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy held a marathon Collectors' Conference (from 10:00 am-7:00 pm to be precise) at the almost secretive seventh floor of the Secretariat. When yours truly sounded bureaucrats about their takeaways from the meeting, their responses were illuminating. One termed it as 'motivational talk'; while another felt it was 'too early to say anything'. Yet another, speaking also for his peers, said, "It was a bonding session". Predictably, CMO officials enthused: "Bureaucrats are very appreciative of the meeting". All told, one stark difference between the first CM and the second one stood out. To paraphrase officials, "Everyone got to talk, including Ministers". The whispers in the corridors of power are whether this is merely a reflection of 'initial josh' or are winds of change really blowing.

**'FINISHING' TOUCH TO A DISTINCTION**

Finance Secretary K Ramakrishna Rao has had the unique distinction of preparing nine Budgets for Telangana. With the Telangana government set to present a full budget next week, and with Ramakrishna Rao still in the loop, it would be the tenth budget shaped by him. All eyes are on the Budget as the state government is upset that revenue targets are not being met like in the past. For newbies, Ramakrishna Rao was appointed as the Finance Secretary on February 29, 2016. Recently Sandeep Sultanias was appointed as the Principal Secretary-- Finance without disturbing Ramakrishna. The larger question for the media is whether the customary post-Budget briefing would take place at least this

time, since the government is not seeking a Vote-on-account.

**HOMECOMING OF OLD HORSES**

Following regime change, old horses are galloping to Andhra Pradesh. Senior Indian Revenue Service officer Ch Venkaiah Chowdary is now the Joint Executive Officer of TTD. During the previous TDP government's tenure, he served as the Vice Chairman and Managing Director of the Andhra Pradesh Mineral Development Corporation Limited. He had joined the state service in 2016 and continued for three years. However, following the change in government in 2019, Chowdary chose to return to his parent cadre. Ake Ravi Krishna (IPS: 2006: AP), Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau, was repatriated to his cadre from Delhi. A V Rajamouli has been appointed as Secretary to the Chief Minister. Rajamouli is a 2003 batch IAS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre. The Union government has been quickly sending back officers on request of the state government, reflecting rare bonhomie between TDP and BJP.

**IS THERE NOTHING ADHARM ABOUT DHARMA REDDY?**

Is a clean record questionable? Strangely, the answer is in the affirmative under some circumstances. Former TTD EO Dharma Reddy seems to have an impeccable record. For, the ongoing vigilance enquiry launched against the former TTD EO has not yielded anything incriminating so far. Almost two weeks on, not a word or leak has come out of the inquiry. A little bird told us that there were no irregularities during his tenure, though the powers that be want something or the other to nail him. It would be interesting to watch how the situation pans out as the inquiry progresses.

**HONOUR UNIFORM OR KOW-TOW TO POLITICAL BOSSES**

If khaki-clad officers honour their uniform and stick to rules, they need not bow their heads in shame following regime change. Nor will they be denied audience with the new chief minister. They can hold their heads high, rain or shine. In Andhra Pradesh, recently some senior police officers chose to bow before a senior TDP leader apologetically. They felt sorry for their behavior during the previous YSR Congress government. They blamed it on 'pressure from above'. Political circles exchanged knowing smiles as these officials know only how to please their present political masters, regardless of their service requirements and moral standards.

--Yours truly

## Governor to...

Continued from Page 1

Out of the seven white papers, four have been released, and the remaining three—covering Law and Order, Excise, and Finance departments—will be released and discussed in the House.

Telugu Desam Party legislators and Council members, including Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, will go to the Assembly on Monday at 8:30 am after paying floral tributes to the statue of TDP founder Dr NTR at Venkatapalem village. The Telugu Desam Legislative Party (TDLP) has suggested that the legislators and Council members of the party should come in yellow attire and scarves with the bicycle symbol on them.

Live coverage of these sessions will be provided to the media from the media point on the Assembly premises. Special facilities are being arranged for media representatives to cover the proceedings of the assembly sessions from the morning.

# MP Sribharat unveils ambitious plans for Gajuwaka's growth

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam MP M Sribharat expressed his profound gratitude for the community's overwhelming support while unveiling a comprehensive array of initiatives aimed at addressing the Gajuwaka region's most pressing concerns. During a meeting with pharmaceutical workers and allied unions on Sunday, Sribharat presented a detailed plan to tackle significant issues related to traffic congestion and pollution. Key to his strategy is the implementation of a dedicated pollution control system that will comply with National Green Tribunal (NGT) directives. "We are committed to creating a sustainable environment for our citizens," Sribharat stated, underscoring the critical importance of adhering to



environmental regulations. A major highlight of Sribharat's address was the announcement of an ambitious infrastructure project involving the construction of approximately 12 new bridges, extending from Aganampudi to Anandapuram. This initiative also includes an expressway that will connect three of these bridges along the Sheela Nagar-

Port Road. The MP emphasized the strategic importance of these developments, noting that they will enhance city-wide connectivity and alleviate challenges posed by rapid urbanization and land acquisition. Further bolstering Visakhapatnam's growth trajectory, Sribharat unveiled plans for an international sports stadium under a central govern-

ment scheme. "This stadium will provide world-class facilities and foster new opportunities for our youth," Sribharat highlighted, pointing to the benefits this project will bring to local talent and the wider community.

The meeting, which saw the presence of prominent local figures such as Gajuwaka MLA and Telugu Desam Party State President Palla Srinivasa Rao, Gajuwaka BJP in-charge Karamreddy Narasinga Rao (KNR), and various Gajuwaka TDP corporators, reflected a unified commitment to advancing the region's development. Sribharat's ambitious initiatives are set to have a transformative impact on the Gajuwaka region, marking a significant step forward in Visakhapatnam's ongoing journey towards sustainable growth and improved quality of life for its residents.

# Jagan making baseless charges against govt: HM Anitha

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha has criticised YSRCP president and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for making baseless allegations against the State government. Speaking to media persons on Sunday at Mangalagiri, the Minister stated that in the past two months, only four politically motivated murders have occurred in the State, three of which involved TDP activists.

The Home Minister questioned why action should not be taken against YS Jagan for his false claims that 36 politi-



cally motivated murders have taken place. She noted that during YSRCP's tenure, CID officials arrested individuals who posted comments on social media about actual incidents.

She argued that Jagan, who is making baseless accusations against the government, should

face similar consequences.

YS Jagan's recent statement about staging a dharna in New Delhi to seek Central rule in the state was also criticized by Anitha. She pointed out that despite the people rejecting the YSRCP, the party leaders continue to spread lies. The minister demanded that YS Jagan provide evidence for his claims of 36 politically motivated murders, 300 attempted murders, 30 suicides, over 560 incidents of property destruction, and 1,000 physical attacks. She warned that severe action would be taken if these details were not provided.

Anitha suggested that YS

Jagan is attempting to avoid attending the Assembly sessions by staging a dharna in New Delhi. She emphasized that the atrocities and looting committed by YS Jagan have been exposed through white papers released by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu.

The Home Minister also highlighted that under the current government, policemen and officials are being respected and necessary funds are being released for regular activities. She criticized YS Jagan's administration for not releasing funds to set up CC cameras and a forensic lab during his tenure.

## More rain...

Continued from Page 1

Strong surface winds of 30-40 km/h are also forecasted for isolated areas in Rayalaseema over the next five days and in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh from July 22-25.

The well-marked low-pressure area over interior Odisha and nearby regions moved northwest and is now located over interior Odisha and adjoining Chhattisgarh as of 08:30 hours on Sunday. It is expected to continue moving northwest across Chhattisgarh and gradually weaken into a low-pressure area within the next 12 hours. The monsoon trough at mean sea level currently extends from Jaisalmer to Kota, Guna, Mandla, and the centre of the well-marked low-pressure area over interior Odisha and adjoining Chhattisgarh, continuing eastwards to the east-central Bay of Bengal.

## Bihar to conduct 'indoor air pollution' study

PNS ■ PATNA

The Bihar State Pollution Control Board (BSPCB) has decided to conduct an "indoor air pollution" study in Patna to identify types of pollutants inside people's homes and their effects, besides suggesting corrective measures. The study will be first conducted in the capital city and later it will be held in Gaya, Muzaffarpur and a few other cities of the state.

Devendra Kumar Shukla, Chairman of the BSPCB, said, "We have initiated talks with the IIT-Tirupati for conducting indoor air pollution study in Patna to identify types of indoor air pollutants, their effects and also suggest corrective measures to reduce it. Our talks with IIT-Tirupati are expected to be finalised very soon." Bihar is probably the first state in India which has decided to conduct an indoor air pollution study, he said.

"People must know about the pollution levels inside their homes. The study will be conducted by dividing the city into various zones. A few houses will be selected from each zone for the study using modern techniques," said the BSPCB head.

## Special teams...

Continued from Page 1

Vijayanand added that the energy department had put the official machinery, particularly the power utilities, on high alert at all times to face any kind of emergency, and foolproof arrangements are in place to restore power supply to the areas, especially in districts affected by adverse weather conditions and heavy waterlogging. He urged the general public to cooperate with AP power staff to restore power supply as and when water recedes in the affected areas. He requested the general public to contact the toll-free number (1912) of AP DISCOMs in case of power disruptions. He also appealed to the general public to take precautionary steps to prevent and avoid any unforeseen incidents or accidents during the rainy season.

Explaining the status of restoration works in APEPDCL, CMD I Prudhvi Tej said that as a part of preparatory measures, poles, transformers, and necessary materials have been moved to the section offices of the divisions in all the circles in advance, and the necessary personnel have been arranged in teams, allowing for quick restoration measures. The DISCOMs are on high alert, recording complaints received from consumers, which are being monitored round the clock by call centres/control rooms, enabling field staff to restore power quickly," the CMD said.

APTRANSCO Director Grid AVK Bhaskar reported minimal feeder trippings across the state on July 20, 2024, except for the 132kV lines between Tadepalli and Guntur, and Tadepalli and AIIMS.

The Special Chief Secretary appreciated the efforts of APTRANSCO & DISCOMs and asked officials to speed up the remaining restoration works and provide 24x7 quality power to the consumers.

## '108' team overcomes a challenge in hospitalising a pregnant woman

PNS ■ PADERU

In a remarkable display of dedication amidst a severe weather event, the 108-emergency medical services team in D Polavaram region in Alluri Sitaramaraju district facilitated the timely hospitalisation of a pregnant woman experiencing critical medical complications. The region has been grappling with incessant heavy rainfall, leading to widespread inundation and impassable roadways.

Despite the logistical impediments caused by the damaged infrastructure, the 108-team responded promptly to a distress call from a local village regarding a pregnant resident suffering from acute abdominal pain. The prevailing road conditions necessitated the team to transport the patient via a dolly for a distance of 3 kilometres before reaching their ambulance.

The emergency personnel's resolute commitment was further tested by persistent heavy rain and fallen trees obstruct-



ing their path. However, the team remained undeterred, working tirelessly to clear the debris and ensure the safe passage of the ambulance. Their unwavering focus on their mission ultimately resulted in the successful transportation of the woman to a medical facility, where she is currently receiving treatment and is reported to be in stable condition.

The woman's mother expressed her profound gratitude to the 108 team for their exceptional service and unwavering commitment in a critical situation.

"Their timely intervention

and remarkable perseverance are truly commendable," she remarked, emphasizing the pivotal role played by the emergency responders in navigating the perilous circumstances.

This incident serves as a potent illustration of the paramount importance of emergency medical services and their unwavering dedication to safeguarding lives under even the most challenging conditions.

The courage and unwavering resolve displayed by the 108 personnel exemplify the tenacity of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

## Viksit Bharat primary goal of Union Budget 2024-25: BJP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

AP BJP spokesperson Lanka Dinakar stated that the Union Budget for 2024-25 is expected to be between Rs 48 to 50 lakh crore. He emphasized that this budget will be a significant step towards realizing the vision of "Viksit Bharat."

In a press release on Sunday, Dinakar described the Union Budget as the "Viksit Sankalpa Bharat Budget 2024-25." He highlighted that the nation aims to achieve a five trillion-dollar economy and become the third-largest economy in the world over the next five years. He noted that every state's contribution is crucial for this objective. Dinakar also mentioned that the interim budget's capital expenditure reached a record size of Rs 15 lakh crore—one-third of the total budget—and this level of expenditure is expected to continue in the upcoming full budget.

Dinakar said that in the past decade, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, the Central government has significantly accelerated infrastructure development through initiatives like the Gati Shakti Yojana. This

momentum is expected to continue and even accelerate. He also anticipated budgetary focus on rural economic development, job creation, support for MSMEs, agro-based sectors, and women's empowerment.

He noted that Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has taken initial steps by preparing a vision document for "Viksit Andhra" to align with the broader "Viksit Bharat" initiative. Naidu has submitted this document to the NITI Aayog Chairman, aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a "Double Engine Sarkar." Dinakar added that a similar vision document for the Prakasam district has been provided to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, with plans to present it to Chief Minister Naidu soon.

Dinakar explained that according to revised estimates, the gross domestic product at current prices is projected to grow by 11%, while efforts will be made to keep the fiscal deficit at 5% to ensure fiscal prudence. He concluded by stating that the budget embodies the principles of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas.'

## TODAY

### ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Pratipada:	Jul 21 03:47 PM to Jul 22 01:11 PM
Dwitiya:	Jul 22 01:11 PM to Jul 23 10:23 AM

Nakshatram:	
Shravana:	Jul 22 12:14 AM to Jul 22 10:21 PM
Dhanishta:	Jul 22 10:21 PM to Jul 23 08:18 PM
Rahukalam:	7:32 AM to 9:09 AM
Yamagandam:	10:46 AM to 12:22 PM
Variyam:	02:00 AM to 03:28 AM
Gulika:	1:59 PM to 3:35 PM
Amritakalam:	12:46 PM to 02:14 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:56 AM to 12:48 PM

### VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast:	Cloudy
Temp:	32°
Humidity:	78%
Sunrise:	5:45 AM
Sunset:	6:43 PM
Updated:	July 21, 2024 5:00 PM

## Crops in 1L acres...

Continued from Page 1

Farmers report that sand has accumulated in their fields. Eluru district Collector K. Vetri Selvi has issued a first warning signal for the Godavari River at Bhadrachalam. With increasing inflows, she has instructed officials to evacuate residents from Kukkunuru and Velerupadu mandals to safer locations immediately. The Yerrakaluva's heavy inflows continue to flood thousands of acres and affect more than 20 villages. A breach in a tank at Tinga Rajupalem has submerged roads leading to three villages. In the Anakapalli district, vehicular traffic has been suspended to 60 villages in the Paderu division due to damaged roads. All streams and drains in the ASR district are also overflowing.

Konaseema district Collector Mahesh Kumar has declared a holiday for educational institutions. Similarly, ASR district Collector Dinesh Kumar has announced a holiday for Monday, with road connectivity to 20 villages cut off after a bridge at Rampa village was submerged.

Officials report that 7.5 lakh cusecs of water is being discharged into the sea at Dowleswaram barrage, with the water level at 10 feet. No loss of life has been reported as of Monday.

## Vet from AP dies...

Continued from Page 1

Her family, including her father Jetty Srinivas Rao, a tax department employee, and her mother Nagamani, are currently awaiting the repatriation of her body through the Indian Embassy. They have appealed to the government to expedite the process of returning Harika's body to Tenali for her final rites.

A close relative expressed their grief, saying, "We are devastated by this sudden loss. Our immediate priority is to bring Harika's body back to Tenali to conduct the final rites. We urgently seek the government's support and assistance during this difficult time."

The family has requested Minister Nara Lokesh to take the initiative and aid in the repatriation process. Union Minister Pemmasani Chandrasekar is coordinating with NRIs in the USA to ensure the prompt return of Harika's remains to Tenali.

## YSRCP, JD(U) raise...

Continued from Page 1

He invited all political parties to join the protest being organized by YSRCP in the national capital on Wednesday. The protest aims to highlight the worsening law and order situation in Andhra Pradesh.

On the other hand, during the all-party meeting, TD Parliamentary Party leader Lavu Srikrishna Devarayalu said that they have requested the central government to fulfill the aspirations of the people of Andhra Pradesh. He also mentioned the financial mismanagement in AP during YSRCP's five-year rule, explaining that there was no development during this period. Lavu brought to attention during the all-party meeting that they are releasing white papers on the economic destruction caused by the previous government in the assembly meetings.

After the all-party meeting, the MP said they discussed the Polavaram project, Vizag Steel Plant, and Railway project. He mentioned that during the Parliament session, they would highlight issues related to the state. He further stated that the state government is giving top priority to law and order and commented that the opposition is trying to divert attention from the state's financial problems accumulated during the previous government.

## India's own 'madhya...

Continued from Page 1

According to the new book, "Many professions are mentioned in the vedic texts, such as agriculturist, weaver, potter, builder, carpenter, healer, dancer, barber, priest, etc." The previous textbook said, "Some priests divided people into four groups called varnas.... Shudras could not perform any rituals. Often women were grouped with Shudras. Both women and Shudras were not allowed to study the Vedas." "The priests also said that these groups were decided based on birth. For example, if one's father and mother were Brahmins, one would automatically become a Brahmin and so on..." the old book said.

The references were also tweaked in the COVID-19 rationalisation, which was earlier termed temporary by the NCERT to reduce burden. The new social science textbook for Class 6 is a heavily-truncated amalgamation of what were earlier three separate books for history, geography and civics published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). "We have tried to keep the text to a minimum by focusing on the 'big ideas'. This has enabled us to combine in a single theme inputs from several disciplines -- whether history, geography, political science or economics," NCERT Director Dinesh Saklani writes in the introductory chapter of the new textbook.



# Collector appoints Special Officers for 16 mandals

Special Officers will oversee implementation of government's key programmes; inspect schools, anganwadi centres, PHCs and RBKs

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana has implemented a special initiative aimed at enhancing governance for the benefit of the people. As part of this initiative, she has appointed Special Officers to oversee the effective implementation of the State government's key programmes and welfare schemes at the grass-roots-level. These Special Officers have been assigned to each of the 16 mandals in the district, except for the four mandals within Vijayawada Urban.



NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana

The role of the Special Officer is pivotal, as they are tasked with ensuring that government initiatives are executed efficiently and reach the intended beneficiaries. To empower them further in their duties, Collector Srijana has bestowed them with special authority and responsibility.

As per the duty chart given by the Collector, these Special Officers are looking at the duties of mandal officers and village secretaries. The

Collector has also given them powers to inspect schools, Anganwadi Centres, Welfare Hostels, Primary Health Centres, Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBK), and Village Secretariats every Wednesday. The remarks should be written and signed as per the instructions and sent to the Collector. Based on the report, she will take action.

SPECIAL OFFICERS	
A Konduru - K Vidyasagar, Animal Husbandry Officer	
Gampalagudem - P Venkata Narayana, MEMPA PD	
Vissannapeta - V Peddi Babu, District Fisheries Officer	
Reddigudem - P Balaji Kumar, Horticulture Officer	
Tiruvuru - J Sunitha, DWAMA PD	
Jaggaiyapeta - G Maheswara Rao, Samagra Siksha APD	
Vatsavai - U Srinivasa Rao, District Youth Welfare Officer	
Penuganchiprolu - A Krishna Chaitanya, Weights & Measures Officer	
Nangigama - G Uma Devi, ICDS PD	
Chandrapadu - B Naga Raju, Ground Water DD	
Veerullapadu - PM Subhani, APMP PD	
Kanchikacherla - M Rajani Kumar, Housing PD	
G Konduru - G Mohan Babu, DSO	
Mylavaram - NV Siva Prasad Yadav, DPO	
Ibrahimpatnam - E Kiranmayi, KRRC Special Deputy Collector	
Vijayawada Rural - Ch Sailaja, District Cooperative Officer	

They should also inspect the works under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), R&B, Panchayat Raj and Rural Water Supply (RWS). The data collected as per the checklist should be signed and a detailed report should be submitted to the Collector. For this purpose, Dr Srijana

has set up a WhatsApp group for Special Officers.

If the mandal officials cause trouble to the people or make them roam around the offices, they can immediately complain to the Special Officers, said sources. They will in turn submit the remarks to the Collector, who will take action against the respective mandal officials if necessary.

# Three-day Sakambari Utsavams conclude with 'Poornahuthi'

Durga Devi decorated with 40 tonnes of vegetables, leafy greens and fruits



Durga Temple priests performing 'Poornahuthi' atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Sunday, in the presence of EO Rama Rao



MLA Bonda Umamaheswara Rao performing puja on the occasion of Guru Purnima in Vijayawada on Sunday

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The three-day Sakambari festivities concluded at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Sunday. On the final day of the celebrations, goddess Durga Devi was beautifully adorned with the offerings of 40 tonnes of vegetables, leafy greens, and fruits, to the delight of the devotees who came to seek her blessings. The culmination of the Sakambari Utsavams was marked by the ritual known as 'Poornahuthi', performed by Vedic scholars in the presence of Executive Officer (EO) KS Rama Rao. Over 2.20 lakh devotees thronged the temple during the

festival, which was organised to propitiate goddess Kanaka Durga for bountiful rains. The temple priests performed Saphasathi Havanam, Maha Vidya Parayana, Santhi Poushtika Homams, Kushmanda Bali, and Kalasa Udvassana on the last day of the festival. The Executive Officer and others were present.

The sanctum sanctorum of the main temple and the 'Upa Aalayams' (sub-temples) were also decorated with vegetables, as part of the Sakambari festival. Kadambam Prasad was given to the devotees visiting the temple. The three-day annual festivities attracted huge crowds on the second and third days. They offered special prayers to the

deity, who was adorned as Sakambari Devi. While the temple witnessed a footfall of around 60,000 each on the first and the second days, the number crossed 1.20 lakh on the final day.

Women devotees presented the traditional Aashadam Maasam saree to the deity. The temple management also conducted Gori Pradakshina as Sunday, which happened to be Pournami (full moon day as per the Telugu calendar).

The temple priests performed special rituals before drawing near Kamadhenu Ammavari temple. Gori Pradakshina, circumambulation of Indrakeeladri, passed through Kummari Palem Centre, Nalugu Sthambhala

Centre, Sitara, Kabela, Milk Factory, Chitti Nagar, Kothapeta, Nehru Bomma Centre, Brahmin street, and culminated at Kamadhenu Ammavari temple on ghat road.

Meanwhile, Guru Purnima was also celebrated at the Durga temple. The temple priests performed special pujas on the occasion, and several devotees had darshan of the goddess. Guru Purnima was also observed at various temples in the city.

Vijayawada Central M.L.A Bonda Uma Maheswara Rao visited the Shirdi Sai Temple at Mutyalampadu and offered special pujas. Many Shirdi Sai temples witnessed the Guru Purnima celebrations.

# Residents of hilly areas to be shifted to rehabilitation centres

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Serious concerns are being raised about the safety of the people living in hilly areas, due to the risk of boulders that fall during heavy rains. Dr A Mahesh, the Commissioner in charge of Vijayawada Municipal Corporation, has instructed the authorities to take immediate action to ensure the safety of residents.

He directed them to relocate the people living in these areas to safe places, such as rehabilitation centres. Planning and Amenities Secretaries have been advised to visit the hilly areas. They should explain the dangerous situation posed by falling boulders due to the incessant rains and relocate people to safer accommodations, he said.

As part of the daily visits, Dr Mahesh inspected Siddhartha



Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner in charge Dr Mahesh inspecting the open drain in the city on Sunday

Nagar, Andhra Prabha Colony and other areas on Sunday. During the inspections, he instructed the Zonal Commissioners to report to the Secretaries regularly about the rains and concerns of the residents of hilly areas.

Also, he said officials concerned should visit hilly areas in their jurisdiction and take necessary steps to vacate people who are in danger.

# 15,000 cusecs discharged from Prakasam Barrage

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Prakasam Barrage has received an influx of over 15,000 cusecs of floodwater from the upper catchment areas. To manage this significant volume, authorities discharged the water into the Bay of Bengal by lifting 17 gates of the barrage, each by a height of one foot. The action was necessitated by heavy rains in the upper catchment of the Krishna Basin, causing numer-

ous tributaries and rivulets to overflow and as a result, the water level at the Prakasam Barrage is rising.

To maintain the Full Reservoir Level (FRL) within acceptable limits and prevent flooding, the Water Resources Department (WRD) took measures to release the excess water

downstream. This discharge helps to regulate the water level and mitigate the risk of flooding in areas surrounding the barrage and downstream regions.

For the second consecutive day, the Irrigation Department officials continued the releases of the flood water downstream.

# GVMC politics hots up as TDP eyes Mayor seat

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The political landscape of the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) is heating up as the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) aggressively targets the Mayor seat following their recent victory in the general elections. With a strategic focus on bolstering their numbers within the council, the TDP aims to not only secure the mayoral position but also to dominate the standing committee, setting the stage for a fierce political showdown.

The Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP), determined to retain control, is working fervently to prevent defection among its corporators. Amidst this turbulent backdrop, both parties are engaging in intense discussions with their respective members, drawing significant public and media attention. Rumours are rife that over 20 YSRCP corporators are contemplating a switch to the TDP, signalling a potential seismic shift in the GVMC's power structure.

The March 2021 GVMC elections saw the YSRCP clinch the mayor's seat by winning a majority of the wards. Out of 98 wards, YSRCP secured 58, TDP 30, Jana Sena three, and Independents four, with CPI, CPM, and BJP each winning one. YSRCP's Golagani Hari



Venkata Kumari was subsequently appointed mayor. Post-election, the YSRCP's council strength was bolstered to 65 with support from three TDP and four Independent corporators. However, recent defections and resignations have weakened YSRCP's hold. The resignation of Vamsikrishna Srinivas, a 21st ward corporator elected as MLC, left one ward vacant. Two Independent corporators who initially supported YSRCP shifted allegiance to Jana Sena, and Urukuti Narayana Rao, a 29th ward corporator, joined the TDP, reducing YSRCP's strength to 60.

The TDP-Janasena-BJP alliance's triumph in the general elections has demoralized YSRCP leaders and galvanized the alliance to seek control over GVMC, including the coveted mayoral seat. With a requirement of at least 59 members to secure the mayoral position, the alliance is actively courting potential defectors from YSRCP. Reports suggest over 25 YSRCP

corporators are interested in joining the TDP, though five controversial figures have been declined. A consensus reached at a recent meeting indicates that 20 corporators will officially join the TDP in the presence of state president Pala Srinivasa Rao very soon, with numbers potentially increasing. YSRCP leaders are countering with renewed efforts to retain their corporators. A critical meeting was held on Saturday in the mayor's chamber under the leadership of former minister Gudivada Amarnath. However, only 30 corporators attended, with the conspicuous absence of the other 30. Among those present, ten corporators voiced strong criticism of party leadership, citing a lack of basic courtesy and support.

The term of the GVMC Standing Committee ends on July 27, necessitating a new election. With more than 20 YSRCP corporators potentially defecting to the TDP, the alliance's strength could reach 54 when combined with Jana Sena and BJP. The 97 corporators will elect ten Standing Committee members, with the alliance poised to secure these seats. Following the corporator inductions, the standing committee election is expected by month's end, with a council meeting slated for early next month.

# EPDCL 'working tirelessly' to restore power

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Incessant rains and strong winds, reaching speeds of up to 50 kmph, have caused havoc in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, leaving a trail of damage to electricity infrastructure and disrupting the power supply to thousands. The weather phenomenon, triggered by a depression in the Bay of Bengal, has impacted a significant area.

The Eastern Power Distribution Company of AP Limited (EPDCL) has reported damages exceeding Rs 84 lakh to its electricity network. Nearly 50,000 electricity connections across 140 villages in 24 mandals have been affected, leaving residents without power. EPDCL Chairman and Managing Director, Prudhvitaj Immadi, informed The Pioneer that as of today, most of the power supply has been restored.

"Over 90% of the affected areas now have electricity," he said. He further added that teams are working round-the-clock to address the remaining issues.

To address the extensive damage, Prudhvitaj Immadi stated that nearly 200 members from 18 special teams have been deployed with machinery to rectify the power issues. The affected areas include three 33/11kv substations at Kukunuru, Velairpadu, and Rajeevnagar in the Eluru circle, and one substation at Maredumilli in the Rajahmundry circle. Additionally, 17 33kv feeders were impacted, with five in Vizianagaram, nine in Visakhapatnam, and one each in Rajahmundry and Eluru circles. The storm also damaged 26 33KV poles and 355 11KV poles, 41 of which are still under restoration due to continued heavy rains on July 21.

Furthermore, 137 distribution transformers were affected, with eight still under repair. The storm also damaged 300 LT poles, with 115 in Eluru alone. The overall damage includes 6 km of 11KV lines, primarily in the Eluru circle, and around 4 km of LT lines throughout the EPDCL limits. A senior EPDCL official confirmed, "A total of 1884 distribution transformers are available in stock. A total of 47,999 non-agricultural and 1,837 agri-

cultural services were affected in the discom limits. Power supply is being restored to the remaining 486 agricultural connections, including 106 in Vizianagaram, 92 in Rajahmundry, and 288 in Eluru."

Out of the total 47,999 non-agricultural connections, Vizianagaram circle accounts for 25,000, Eluru for 20,000, Visakhapatnam for 800, and Rajahmundry for 150. Similarly, out of the 1,837 agricultural connections, 1,500 are in Eluru, 130 in Rajahmundry, 134 in Vizianagaram, and 54 in Visakhapatnam.

As EPDCL continues its efforts to restore power and repair the damaged infrastructure, the resilience and dedication of its staff shine through, working tirelessly to bring normalcy back to the affected regions amidst challenging weather conditions.

# Kharge's birthday celebrated



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

All India Congress Committee (AICC) president Mallikharjuna Kharge's birthday celebrations were organised by the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) at Andhra Ratna Bhavan in Vijayawada on Sunday. Senior Congress leaders Naraharsetti

Narasimha Rao, Kolanukonda Sivaji, Gurunatham, Ansari, Khurshida, and others were present at the cake-cutting.

Naraharsetti Narasimha Rao said that Kharge is striving for the development of the party in the country. Under the leadership of Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, they will try to expand the party in the State, he said.

# Visakhapatnam set to unveil state-of-the-art Heli Museum

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The iconic Visakhapatnam beachfront is set to receive a remarkable upgrade with the upcoming inauguration of a cutting-edge Heli Museum. This new attraction will prominently feature a retired Indian Navy UH-3H helicopter, enhancing the existing lineup of military exhibits that currently includes a submarine, a Tu-142 fighter jet, and a Sea Harrier aircraft along Beach Road. The project is progressing rapidly. After the successful planning phase, efforts have shifted towards the installation of the museum. Given the VMRDA's renowned proficiency in managing naval air-

craft exhibits, the Indian Navy has entrusted them with the responsibility of integrating the UH-3H into this prestigious museum.

A meticulous site inspection led to the selection of a prime 20-cent plot on Beach Road, strategically situated near the TU-142 aircraft and the AU Convention Centre gate. This location offers unparalleled accessibility and visibility. The site selection ceremony was attended by District Collector Harendira Prasad, VMRDA Commissioner Ravindra, CE Bhavani Shankar, and naval officials.

It will feature a retired Indian Navy UH-3H helicopter



The UH-3H helicopter, with its storied 17-year career in the Indian Navy, has a rich history of contributing to special operations, investigations, disaster relief, and critical support

missions. Now retired, this 60-foot wingspan aircraft, with its distinctive pilot and crew cabins, is poised to become a major attraction for visitors.

The Heli Museum is designed to offer an immersive and educational experience. Visitors will have the opportunity to embark on a virtual tour of the helicopter's interior, complete with dedicated sections for viewing, photo opportunities, and group pictures. Additionally, the museum will feature spare parts and detailed specifications, providing insights into the UH-3H's operational capabilities and

historical significance.

The museum will feature a unified ticketing system, allowing visitors access to the submarine, all three warplanes, and the new helicopter. This initiative is expected to significantly boost the overall appeal of the Visakhapatnam beachfront as a premier tourist destination. As preparations for the museum's inauguration approach their final stages, Visakhapatnam is set to further establish its reputation as a hub for maritime and aviation heritage. This exciting new addition promises to deliver an engaging and educational experience, drawing aviation enthusiasts and casual visitors alike.

# 'Stop Diarrhoea 2024' drive held in port city

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) is taking a two-pronged approach to combat the spread of diarrhoeal diseases in the city. Their new "Stop Diarrhoea 2024" initiative joins forces with the ongoing "Safai Apnao - Bimari Bhagao" (Embrace Cleanliness - Drive Away Diseases) program, emphasizing hygiene and sanitation to significantly reduce the prevalence of preventable illnesses.

At a press conference, GVMC Additional Commissioner K. S. Viswanathan, IAS, stressed the importance of these campaigns. He urged residents to adopt simple yet essential hygiene practices, particularly frequent hand-washing with soap and water. This will protect themselves and their families, especially young children, from preventable diarrhoeal diseases often linked to poor sanitation and contaminated water.

To stop the spread of diarrhoeal diseases, health experts urge residents to make hygiene a priority. This includes frequent handwashing with soap and water, especially before

meals and after using the toilet. Ensuring clean drinking water is also crucial. Residents can boil water at home or use water purifiers. Finally, keeping the environment clean is vital. Participating in community clean-up drives and properly disposing of waste in designated bins helps prevent the spread of disease.

"Every small step counts," said Commissioner Viswanathan. "By working together, we can create a healthier Visakhapatnam by washing hands frequently, using clean water, and keeping our environment clean."

The GVMC is further amplifying its efforts through educational programs in schools and communities to spread awareness about hygiene practices. Additionally, they are providing resources like hand sanitizers and clean water stations in high-risk areas.

With the monsoon season upon us, these initiatives are critical to preventing the spread of waterborne diseases. "Stop Diarrhoea 2024" and "Safai Apnao - Bimari Bhagao" demonstrate the GVMC's commitment to public health and their proactive approach in tackling health challenges.



# Two workers stranded in Dubai rescued, thanks to Swatantra TV

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Two persons who were sent to Dubai under the false promise of lucrative employment have returned to their native villages, thanks to Swatantra TV, which brought their plight to light.

A few days ago, Swatantra TV aired the ordeal of ten individuals stranded in Gulf countries. These individuals were sent by an agent, Jhansi, from West Godavari and East Godavari districts, with the promise of lucrative jobs on tourist visas. Upon arriving in Dubai and other locations, they found no suitable jobs and endured severe hardships, including starvation for 60 days. The agent who sent them did not respond to their pleas for help.

The stranded individuals sent video messages to their relatives and friends detailing their dire situation. Swatantra Telugu News Channel broad-



casted a series of stories on their ordeal, including these video messages. This prompted the relevant authorities to take necessary steps to bring the stranded individuals back to Andhra Pradesh. Indian Embassy officials in Dubai responded and made arrangements for their return to India. So far, eight victims from WG and EG districts

have reached their homes. Among the returnees, Gantasala Venkata Raju and Jayaramu from Tokalapalli village in Nidamaru mandal expressed their gratitude to Swatantra News Channel. Speaking to the channel, Venkata Raju shared how the telecast of their plight gave them hope and confidence to return to India. He men-



tioned that his parents sold his bike to send money for his return from Dubai. "After 48 days, the house owner in Dubai forced us to vacate as we couldn't pay the rent. We slept on the terrace of a food factory. The management confined six of us in a room, but the agent did not help us," he recalled. Venkata Raju thanked

Swatantra TV for highlighting their ordeals in the Gulf. He advised all youths to thoroughly verify the guarantee of employment and salary and to use authorized agents before seeking jobs in the Gulf. He also demanded that the government take action against Jhansi for deceiving them with false promises of lucrative employment.

# Officials told to take steps to avoid loss of life, livestock

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector C Nagarani has directed the officials to take all required measures to avoid loss of life and livestock due to floods in the district. She reviewed the flood situation of the Godavari River, streams and drains.

The Collector said that the people living in the low-lying areas should be more vigilant that there should be no loss of life, property or livestock while dealing with the consequences of heavy rains and floods efficiently.

In the West Godavari district, the Godavari river catchment mandals, Lanka areas, Narasapuram, Mogalthur, Yalamanchili, Achanta and Penugonda mandals have been given more attention. At present, the effect of rains is decreasing, there is a possibility of danger to the district in the form of floods due to the rains falling in the upper catchment areas. Keeping in



this view, the Collector asked the authorities to be prepared to face any challenge.

If the floods and rains increase, the people in the flooded villages should be ready to come to the rehabilitation centres, the Collector said. The relief centres have been set up in government buildings and all the flood victims to come to relief centres. The authorities and staff have prepared rice, gas, vegetables, oil, and essentials and candles for the distribution of flood victims in the centres. Collector Nagarani directed the officials to keep

ready generators to supply power without interruption at the relief centres.

She said that the water level of the river Godavari at Bhadrachalam, Dhavalaswaram Godavari is being monitored constantly and necessary measures are being taken, she said. If there are any problems, the authorities should resolve them first without any hesitation and then bring them to her attention.

Sandbags, wooden logs, bamboo logs and other materials should be kept ready, the Collector told the officials. She asked to provide the details of the nodal officers appointed for each mandals and each rehabilitation center.

The officials were directed to take steps to supply drinking water, and food to the victims in relief camps and set up medical camps. The fishermen were already cautioned not to venture into the sea for fishing, the Collector said, adding that the deployment of NDRF and SDRF was sought.

# Grandeur marks 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Arunodaya Kala Samiti



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Arunodaya Kala Samiti marked its 6th anniversary with a grand celebration at Sri Sringeri Peetham, Sivaramakrishna Kshetram. The event, held on the auspicious Guru Pournami day, featured Gurupujotsavam, a traditional ritual to honour and impart the value of the guru to students.

The celebration included captivating Kuchipudi and Bharatanatyam performances under the guidance of Guru Pakki Manzoosha. The program began with a Kuchipudi dance dedicated to Ganapathi

Stuthi, performed by Niveditha Sri, Chakrika, Srinisha, Jasmita, Teja Sri, Thanvitha, Chaitra Vardini, and Varsha. This was followed by Bharatanatyam performances for Devata Stuti by Sathvika, Nivruthi, and Mahathi. The students also showcased classical pieces such as Swagatha Nrutyam, Ayigiri Nandini, Ashtalakshmi Sthothram, Annamacharya Keerthana, and Prahlada Sabdam, with Varsha delivering a standout performance.

Guru Pakki Manzoosha enchanted the audience with an Ashtapadi, a traditional expression song, receiving

widespread applause. In appreciation, the students honoured Guru Pakki Manzoosha with Padapuja, a shawl, garland, and Guru Dakshina.

The cultural event commenced with the lighting of the lamp by distinguished guests, including Ambati Madhu Mohan, President of the AP Film Chamber of Commerce; IN Murthy, Field Officer, Department of Language and Culture; Mareedu Madhavi Latha, Director of Asha Jyothi Handicapped Home; Aman Singh, CEO of Deepakshi Handicrafts and Sports; and BVS Kumar, Secretary of the AP Red Cross Society.

# Gandhi Pochamma temple submerged in floodwater

PNS ■ PADERU

The famous Gandhi Pochamma temple was submerged in the Godavari floodwater on Sunday. The Gandhi Pochamma temple is located on the bank of the River Godavari at Devipatnam village in Rampachodavaram constituency. The temple was almost submerged in the floodwater and the top of the temple could be seen now. As the entire premises of the temple are in about 20 feet of Godavari flood water, the police outpost was set



up there to ensure that no one tried to reach the temple. The Gandhi Pochamma temple is a

famous temple in the district and hundreds of devotees through the temple daily.

# 2 passengers killed as private bus overturns

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Two persons were killed when a private travel bus overturned on National Highway 544 at Tippayapalem village in the wee hours on Sunday. Markapuram in-charge SI Sk. Abdul Rehman said that a private travel bus was going to Anantapur from Vijayawada. The bus driver noticed a herd of buffaloes on the road and tried to avoid hitting them. In the melee, he lost control over the bus resulting in it overturned on the road.



# 'Chaturmasa Vratam' begins at Tirumala

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The Chaturmasa Vrata Deeksha for the senior and junior pontiffs of Tirumala began on a sacred note this Sunday.

In accordance with tradition, Pedda Jeeyar Swamy, followed by Chinna Jeeyar and other disciples, commenced their journey from the Pedda Jeeyar Mut, located adjacent to the Bedi Anjaneya Swamy temple. They proceeded to the Bhu Varaha Swamy temple, where they offered

prayers. Upon reaching the Mahadwaram of the Srivari temple, the Jeeyar duo received a traditional welcome from TTD Executive Officer J. Syamala Rao and Joint Executive Officer Veerabrahmam.

After their prayers, at the Ranganayakula Mandapam, Sri Pedda Jeeyar Swamy was honoured with the "Melchat" while his deputy received the "Ulchat" Vastram. Temple DyEO Lokanatham was also present for the occasion.

# Former Minister Ambati slams TDP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Former minister Ambati Rambabu lambasted the State government for the severe deterioration of law and order in the state and said the government is failing in all aspects, citing increased violence, murders, and property destruction over the past 45 days.

Speaking to the media here on Sunday, Rambabu criticised

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for releasing false white papers to discredit YSRC President YS Jagan politically. He said that the delay in releasing the white paper on law and order reflects the government's awareness that the public would reject their claims.

The former minister condemned the political manipulation surrounding the brutal murder of a party worker in

Vinukonda, Palnadu district, criticising the portrayal of the incident as a personal dispute rather than a political killing. He questioned why local MLAs and MPs had not visited the victim's family if it were merely a personal feud. Rambabu also highlighted the tragic incident in Nandyal district where a girl was kidnapped, raped, and murdered, with the suspect dying in police custody under suspicious cir-

cumstances. He demanded a thorough investigation and accountability from the government. Additionally, he mentioned an attack on MP Mithun Reddy in Punganur by TDP members, questioning the state's law and order if an MP cannot safely visit his constituency. He expressed outrage over Home Minister Anita's inappropriate comments and threats against former Chief Minister

# Minister Dola flags off new APSRTC buses at Ongole

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Minister for Social Welfare Dr Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy flagged off new super luxury buses at the APSRTC bus depot here on Sunday.

Minister Bala Veeranjanya Swamy flagged off two Star Line buses and three Super Luxury buses at Ongole bus depot. Speaking to the media on the occasion, the Minister said that the state government is giving utmost priority to the safety of passengers.

He said that he is very happy to flag off 5 new buses at Ongole Depot today coinciding with the auspicious Guru Pournami.

He said that replacing 25 per cent of old buses is a good development. The Minister said that steps are being taken to replace all the outdated buses. On the occasion, the Minister directed the Regional



Manager to run sleeper coaches to Tirupati.

He highlighted that five super luxury buses and four-star line buses have been flagged off during the last 10 days. The outdated buses would be removed from the fleet in a phased manner, he asserted.

The Minister stated that as per the promise given during the election, steps are being taken to implement the Super Six welfare schemes. "The guidelines are being formulated to introduce free bus travel to the women in the state in the RTC buses," he made it clear.

# Two killed as car hits mobike

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Two persons were killed when a speeding car knocked down their motorcycle at Kalpana Centre in front of the municipal office here after midnight on Saturday.

Police said that the car overturned after hitting the motorcycle and the traffic island on Saturday night. The car driver and another

occupant, a woman, were injured.

The police rushed to the spot and rescued the two injured and rushed them to the government general hospital. Police seized the car.

Police identified the deceased as Peetha Sathish (32) and B. Lakshman both are locals and residents of the Perrajupeta area. The bodies were shifted to GGH for postmortem, police added.



# MP distributes essential items to flood victims

PNS ■ ELURU

Eluru MP Putta Mahesh Kumar on Sunday visited a relief centre set up for the flood victims at Kummargudem village in Velerupadu mandal and distributed essentials to the victims.

The Peddavagu stream is in spate and inundated several villages in Velerupadu mandal. The flood victims were evacuated to the relief centre. The Minister went to the relief centre on a tractor and distributed essentials. He inquired about providing essential and medical services to the flood victims in the camp.

He interacted with the flood victims and listened to their difficulties. The MP assured them of taking steps to construct houses for the Peddavagu stream flood victims permanently at a safer place. The MP directed the officials to spray



bleaching and distribute mosquito nets and medicines to 12 villagers in 7 panchayats which were inundated by the Peddavagu stream flood water.

The MP appreciated the police officials for their timely action to rescue those who were stuck in flood water with the cooperation of IAF personnel. The MP told the flood vic-

tims that the government would extend all needed help to the flood victims and asked them not to worry.

MLAs Chirri Bala Raju, Songa Roshan Kumar, Ex-MLA Ghanta Muralikrishna and Eluru district TDP president Ganni Veeranjanya were among those who accompanied the MP.



INDIA CORNER

### Heavy rain lashes Odisha, over 7,000 affected in Malkangiri

Several districts of Odisha have been affected by heavy rain over the past three days due to the impact of a depression over the Bay of Bengal, an official statement said on Sunday. More than 7,300 people of Malkangiri district have been most affected by heavy rainfall during that period, it said. Under the impact of the depression over the Bay of Bengal, the districts of Nabaranghpur, Koraput, Khurda, Nayagarh, and Malkangiri received heavy rainfall on July 19. Similarly, on July 20, Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Gajapati, and Nabarangpur districts received heavy rain, while Nuapada, Sonepur, Boudh, Malkangiri, Bolangir and Angul received heavy rain on July 21. Due to the heavy rain, several roads and bridges in Malkangiri district were submerged, the office of the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) said in its statement. The SRC office said 1,045 villages under 111 panchayats in the district were also affected, and the local administration has so far evacuated 121 people from the low-lying areas to safe shelter homes.



### Tripura: Woman, her partner arrested for murdering husband

A woman and her partner were arrested in Tripura's Khowai district for allegedly murdering her husband, police said. The body of Kinkar Debnath (47) was found in the Karailong area, about 1.5 km away from his home, on July 19, they said. During the course of the investigation, police summoned his wife Purnima Debnath and her partner Amit Ghosh for interrogation. "During interrogation, Purnima confessed that she and her partner, who is a real estate developer, murdered him on the night of July 18," the officer-in-charge of Teliamura police station Rajib Debnath said. Purnima first sedated her husband, and then along with her partner, she allegedly strangled him to death, the officer said. "Amit then disposed of the body nearby. They have been arrested on murder charges," he said. Purnima told the police that she fell in love with Amit after he was engaged by her husband to reconstruct their house, he said.



### 14 Indian nationals trapped in Cambodia rescued

At least 14 Indian citizens trapped in a cybercrime scam in Cambodia were rescued, the Indian Embassy said in a statement on Saturday and informed that they are working for their expeditious return home. The Indian Embassy in Cambodia in collaboration with the authorities got the 14 Indian citizens released and they are being looked after by the Cambodian side, the embassy said in a post on X. In an official press release, the embassy in Cambodia's capital here said it has facilitated the rescue and repatriation of over 650 Indian citizens who had fallen victim to fraudulent job offers that lure them into cybercrime operations. It said the embassy provided specific leads to the Cambodian police leading to their rescue. The rescued individuals are currently being cared for by an NGO working in collaboration with Cambodia's Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation.



WB CM SLAMS NDA ALLIES FOR SACRIFICING MINISTERIAL BERTHS

## Mamata and Akhilesh say Central govt won't last long

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday asserted that the BJP-led government at the Centre would not "last long and would collapse soon", claiming it was formed through "intimidation and threats".

Addressing the mega 'Martyrs' Day' rally of the TMC, Banerjee, without naming anyone, also criticised the BJP's allies in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government at the Centre for "sacrificing" ministerial positions allegedly for financial gain.

The TMC leader praised Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, who was present at the event, for his party's performance in the Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh. "The government at the Centre won't last long. This is not a stable government and will collapse soon," she said.

Describing the NDA allies as "cowards and greedy individu-



als who yielded to financial inducements," Banerjee questioned, "Has anyone ever heard of money being offered instead of ministries? They are cowards, shameless, and greedy. They sacrificed their own identities."

While commending Akhilesh Yadav, Banerjee

remarked, "The 'Khel' (game) you played in UP should have forced the BJP government (in UP) to resign, but the shameless government continues in power by misusing agencies and other means. You cannot intimidate us by misusing agencies..."

"The TMC supremo claimed that only Bengal can preserve the existence of India and there can be no India without Bengal.

Echoing Yadav's claim that the BJP-led NDA government would not endure, Banerjee predicted it would soon "collapse".

## BSF 'on high alert' to deal with any situation that may arise due to Bangladesh unrest

PNS ■ AGARTALA

The Border Security Force (BSF) is on high alert to deal with any situation that may arise due to the prevailing unrest in neighbouring Bangladesh, a top official said on Sunday.

Anti-quota agitations in the neighbouring country have left more than 100 dead, prompting the government to enforce a curfew to tackle the volatile situation.

"The prevailing law and order situation in Bangladesh is a security concern for the BSF too as we are entrusted with guarding the international border. We are fully seized of the situation and have beefed up security so that criminal elements from across the border do not take



advantage of the current situation," BSF Tripura Frontier Inspector General Patel Piyush Purushottam Das said at a press conference.

He said a large number of troops and all senior commanders have been sent to the border

to ensure a high level of operational preparedness.

"The BSF is fully committed to securing the borders of our country and is fully prepared to deal with any exigency," he said.

Das said that one of the prime concerns at present is the

safe return of Indian students studying in Bangladesh.

"The number of Indian students in Bangladesh is believed to be close to 8,000 and most of them are enrolled in medical colleges. Most of the students are studying in medical colleges in Comilla, Brahmanbaria and Dhaka and many have chosen to enter India through Tripura," he said.

Altogether 314 students, including 66 Nepalese studying in Bangladesh, returned to India through the northeastern state's border on Sunday, while 379 students entered from the neighbouring country on July 19 and 20. A total of 693 students have so far been evacuated from violence-hit Bangladesh.

### 'Communal forces at the Centre' are hatching conspiracies

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav said on Sunday that the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre would not last long, asserting that "communal forces" may experience temporary success but would ultimately be defeated.

While addressing the mega Martyrs' Day rally of the TMC, Yadav said, "Those who have come to power are guests for just a few days."

"This government at the Centre won't last long and will fall soon. Such communal forces want to be in power at

any cost, but those designs won't succeed," he said, without naming the BJP or the NDA.

The Samajwadi Party leader asserted that the "communal forces at the Centre" are "hatching conspiracies and trying to destabilise the country". "The forces which want to divide the nation on communal lines may taste temporary success, but they will be defeated in the end," he added.

The Samajwadi Party had won 37 Lok Sabha seats from Uttar Pradesh, which sends eighty MPs to the Lower House of Parliament.

### JD(U)'s J-K unit asks Nitish to reconsider alliance with BJP

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir unit of the Janata Dal (United) on Sunday asked the party's national president Nitish Kumar to reconsider the alliance with the BJP at the Centre.

"The actions of the BJP in Jammu and Kashmir has forced us to appeal to our national leader Nitish Kumar to reconsider our participation in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA)," JD(U) state general secretary

Vivek Bali said here.

He said the JD(U) was trying to bring the Islamic scholars in Kashmir back to the mainstream but the BJP was allegedly creating obstacles in these efforts.

"We are trying to bring these Islamic scholars back into the system so that they can contribute to nation building. We cannot leave them out.

However, the BJP finds ways and means to create obstacles in this," Bali added.

### Yogi worships his guru on Guru Purnima

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday sought blessings of his 'guru' on the occasion of Guru Purnima and performed a special puja at Gorakhpur's Gorakhnath temple for the happiness and prosperity of the people of the state.

The chief minister worshipped his 'guru' Mahant Avedyanath Ji Maharaj in Gorakhpur, before which he also performed Guru Purnima rituals for Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath, according to an official statement issued here.

Adityanath performed a special puja and Rudrabhishek at the Shaktipeeth of Gorakhnath temple and prayed for the happiness and prosperity of the people of the state, the release said.

He also met children on the occasion, it added.

Adityanath is also the Peethadheeshwar of the famous Gorakshpeeth.

## Boy infected with Nipah in Kerala dead, says Health Minister Veena George

PNS ■ KOZHIKODE



The 14-year-old boy from Kerala's Malappuram, who was under treatment here for Nipah infection, died on Sunday, state Health Minister Veena George said.

George said the boy from Pandikkad suffered a massive cardiac arrest at 10.50 am on Sunday and efforts to revive him failed.

"He was on a ventilator and was not conscious. The urine output had reduced this morning. After the massive cardiac arrest, the revival efforts failed and he passed away at 11.30 am," George said.

The Minister said the funeral will be held following international protocols.

"Further matters on funeral will be decided only after the district Collector holds discussion with the parents and the family," George said.

The Minister said currently there are three people under isolation at Kozhikode medical college where the deceased boy was undergoing treatment.

"At Manjeri Medical college, four high-risk category people

are admitted out of which one person is in ICU," the minister said, adding that the results of their samples will be out today itself.

The minister said the child went to school on May 11 and till now there are not many cases of patients with symptoms.

Earlier in the day, the Minister had informed that there are a total of 246 people in the contact list of the boy out of which 63 were under high-risk category.

"We will be testing all under the high-risk category but initially those with symptoms will be tested. We have labs in the state and a mobile lab from the Pune NIV is arriving in the state," George said.

The Health department has also decided to conduct fever surveillance in two panchayats including the epicentre Pandikkad and a total of around 33,000 houses will be covered under it. "The survey will be conducted jointly by the officials of the Health department, the LSGD and the Directorate of Animal Husbandry," the Minister said.

Fruit bats are the usual reservoir of the virus, and humans can become infected by accidentally consuming bat-contaminated fruits.

Outbreaks of the Nipah Virus Disease (NiVD) have been reported in Kerala in the past, with the last occurring in 2023 in Kozhikode district, the statement said.



### Centre to deploy team to support Kerala in probing Nipah virus case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government will deploy a multi-member joint outbreak response team to support Kerala in investigating a Nipah virus case detected in its Malappuram district, identifying epidemiological linkages and providing technical assistance.

In a statement on Sunday, the Union health ministry said a 14-year-old boy from the district exhibited the acute encephalitis syndrome and was admitted to a healthcare facility in Perinthalmanna before being transferred to a higher health centre in Kozhikode.

He succumbed to the disease and samples were sent to the Pune-based National Institute of Virology, which confirmed Nipah virus infection, it said.

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## 'Will offer shelter to anyone in distress at our door'

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Responding to the ongoing violence in Bangladesh, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday suggested that she would keep the doors of her state open for people in distress from the neighbouring country and offer them shelter.

Banerjee referred to the United Nations Resolution on refugees as justification for her stand over the possible

humanitarian crisis that may emerge on account of the severe law and order breakdown that has gripped Bangladesh in the past few days.

"I should not be speaking on the affairs of Bangladesh since that is a sovereign nation and whatever needs to be said on the issue is a subject matter of the Centre. But I can tell you this, if helpless people come knocking on the doors of Bengal, we will surely provide them shelter," Banerjee said at the Martyrs Day rally of the TMC in Kolkata.

"That's because there is a United Nations Resolution to accommodate refugees in regions adjacent to those under turmoil," the Bengal CM added while drawing an example from Assamese people who were allowed to live in the Alipurdwar area of north Bengal for a considerable period during the Bodo strife in the northeastern state.

Assuring all cooperation to Bengal residents whose relatives may have remained stuck on account of the escalating violence on the eastern side of the international border, she also extended assistance to Bangladeshis who came to Bengal but were facing difficulty in returning home.

Banerjee also appealed to the people of West Bengal to not get provoked over matters concerning the current situation in Bangladesh.

"We should exercise restraint and not walk into any provocation or excitement on the issue," she stated.

The Trinamool supremo also expressed her solidarity with the people who have remained at the receiving end of the ongoing violence in the neighbouring country.

"We are sad to see blood getting spilt and my heart goes out to those students who were killed," she said.

"We should exercise restraint and not walk into any provocation or excitement on the issue," she stated.

The Trinamool supremo also expressed her solidarity with the people who have remained at the receiving end of the ongoing violence in the neighbouring country.

"We are sad to see blood getting spilt and my heart goes out to those students who were killed," she said.

## 'Still time to roll back Kanwar eatery order', says RLD leader Jayant

PNS ■ MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP)

BJP ally Rashtriya Lok Dal chief Jayant Chaudhary on Sunday demanded the Uttar Pradesh government roll back its order that eateries along the Kanwar route must display the names of their owners, saying the pilgrimage does not belong to any one religion or caste.

He said Kanwariyas ask none their religion when they seek any service from them, neither should the matter (the pilgrimage) be linked to any religion.

Days after the Muzaffarnagar Police asked all eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route to display their owners' names, the Uttar Pradesh government on Friday extended the controversial order across the state. The order has been slammed by opposition



parties and members of the ruling alliance, who say it targets Muslim traders. "It seems that the order was taken without much thought and the government is adamant on it because the decision has been taken," Rajiya Sabha member Chaudhary told reporters here. "There is still time. It (roll back) should happen or the government should not put much emphasis on (implementing) it," he said.

## Delhi Police issues traffic advisory ahead of Kanwar Yatra from today



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Sunday issued a traffic advisory regarding the elaborate arrangements for the upcoming Kanwar Yatra and cautioned that congestion is expected at several places.

The Kanwar Yatra will commence on the first day of Sawan (Shravan) on Monday and will culminate on August 2 as holy Ganga water will be offered to Lord Shiva. A large number of Kanwariyas will reach Delhi, while some of them will go to Haryana and Rajasthan via Delhi borders. This year, the expected number of people is about 15-20

lakh, the advisory said.

The advisory said that during the period of the Kanwariyas movement, traffic violations will be checked by on-the-spot prosecution and by photography or videography of violations.

The devotees carrying Kanwars will pass through several routes, including Apsara Border, Shahdara Flyover, Seelampur T Point, ISBT Flyover Boulevard Road, Rani Jhansi Road, Faiz Road, Upper Ridge Road, Dhaura Kuan, NH-8 and exit from Rajokri Border for Haryana, the advisory said.

To ensure a smooth yatra for the Kanwariyas, heavy transport

vehicles (HTV) will be diverted by the Uttar Pradesh Police from Mohan Nagar towards NH-24, and no such traffic will be allowed towards Wazirabad Road via Bhopura and towards GT Road via Apsara Border, the advisory read. The HTVs, except city buses, will not be allowed on GT Road towards Shahdra and Wazirabad Road. The heavy commercial transport vehicles, except city buses coming from GT Karnal city at Outer Ring Road, will be diverted straight towards NH-24 and will not be allowed to move on Wazirabad Road and GT Road towards Shahdra, it said.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Trouble in Bangladesh

Students rampage in Bangladesh protesting job quota for veterans' families; India calls it an 'internal matter'

Bangladesh is going through the worst phase in years as students have taken to the streets protesting the Government's 30 per cent quota for relatives of the veterans who fought its war of independence in 1971. A national curfew has been imposed and the army has been deployed after 105 people including two journalists died in the bloodiest protests for a decade. A 'shoot-on-sight' order is also in place giving security forces the authority to fire on mobs, showing the gravity of the situation. Slowly but surely the student protest is turning into an all-out protest against the government as student protesters stormed a prison and freed inmates. The students maintain that job reservation for families of veterans mostly benefits supporters of Hasina, whose Awami League party led the independence movement. Students are struggling in a country where around 32 million young people are neither employed nor in education. Although job opportunities have



increased in certain areas of the private sector, many individuals prefer government jobs due to their perceived stability and better pay. The Government's crackdown on the protesting students has had little effect in controlling the violence. The protests, which began earlier this month, have led to widespread unrest and disruption across the country, leaving many foreign students in precarious situations.

About 15,000 Indians live in Bangladesh, of whom around 8,500 are students. Around 4,000 students are still awaiting their turn to be evacuated. The MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi has

confirmed that 1000 Indian students have been safely brought back home. The families are anxiously waiting for the return of stranded students. The Indian High Commission in Dhaka has set up a dedicated helpline to assist students and provide real-time updates on the repatriation process. Students have been advised to stay in touch with the mission and follow its guidance closely. A communication blackout has been in place since Thursday, including the suspension of mobile data and text message services. Besides, the Government's high-handedness in dealing with the protests has only escalated the tension and put the Hasina Government in a bad light. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government is facing one of the most severe challenges of her 15-year tenure. Indeed, it is one of the biggest challenges Sheikh Hasina has faced in years. The student protests are turning into general protests against the government. Sheikh Hasina has appealed to students to wait for the court verdict on the issue but to no avail. India meanwhile has termed the unrest in the neighbourhood as an 'internal matter of Bangladesh' but must be concerned as Sheikh Hasina's Government maintains good relations with India and any disruption may impact Indo-Bangladesh relations.

### PICTALK



Devotees wait in queues to offer prayers at Vindhyavasini Temple on the occasion of Guru Purnima, in Mirzapur PTI

## Bihar's business boom: A new era of development

As Bihar strengthens its infrastructure and undertakes reforms, it is poised to become a hub of economic activity and innovation

A year ago, when the Adani Group decided to invest Rs. 8,700 crore in Bihar, it attracted the attention of investors from all over the country. The bureaucracy of Bihar, supporting the Nitish government, has made development and investment its campaign. Why can't entrepreneurs come here? The credit goes to the officers who returned from central deputation in Delhi. Additionally, Nitish Kumar, the head of the current NDA government in Bihar, strengthened his political connections. In Delhi, many JDU MPs became influential in the power corridors, such as Lallan Singh and Sanjay Jha, whose responsibilities increased. Bihar has successfully convinced the Center, resulting in several policy changes in energy and industry. As a result, Bihar is becoming self-sufficient in energy, a development appreciated in other BJP-ruled states. Similarly, the process of identifying and allocating land for industry has begun, and naturally, investors have started project reconnaissance. This seems to be a turning point in



tourism, officials started working tirelessly to provide important information, and selfie points began to be established at tourist locations. Consequently, groups like Mayfair Hotel opened Bihar's first five-star hotel in Purnia. This new initiative led to proposals worth about Rs.10,000 crores in the field of food processing at the Bihar Investors Meet. However, Bihar's misfortune has been that although proposals came in, investors did not follow through in proportion. But now, the situation is changing. A cursory glance shows that Bihar is an agriculture-based state. The state's agriculture roadmap discusses processing units for various crops like fruits, vegetables, grains, and makhana. Especially, products of litchi, mango, guava, banana, makhana, potato, and toma-

to have been the main focus. Many investors showed interest, but most left projects incomplete. Currently, according to the Chamber, 15 companies are interested in food processing and have expressed a desire to invest about Rs10,304 crores. Companies like Godrej, Anmol Foods, and Bangladesh's Pride Food are also showing interest. Prime Minister Modi has appointed Bihar's young minister Chirag Paswan and experienced minister Giriraj Singh in these ministries with great expectations. Bhagalpur silk has now entered the international market for the textile industry in Bihar. Additionally, many units related to handloom and khadi clothes are working on a very small scale in Bihar. Until now, investors were unaware of Bihar's cottage industry potential. The responsibility for expanding this sector lies with senior leader and MSME Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi. The climate here is also suitable for the textile industry. The government has 44 old proposals regarding textile, leather, and food processing that need

to be brought to Bihar. In the past, many reasons hindered industrial growth in Bihar. Law and order problems were discouraging, but now better electricity and roads are attracting everyone. Today, India is the third-largest domestic civil aviation market in the world after China and America. Some states like Bihar lagged in aviation due to political differences, but the Bihar government is now gearing up for aviation infrastructure. In the proposed aviation plan for Bihar, apart from the Greenfield Airport in Bhagalpur and Rajgir, a Flying Training Academy in Begusarai, small cities of Bihar are also included. Existing airstrips in Saharsa, Munger, Birpur, Valmiki Nagar, Chhapra, Madhubani, Kishanganj, and Dalmianagar will be renovated and upgraded. In the Kosi area, many highway constructions are underway. The day is not far when, Bihar transforms into a developed state but it depends on preferential treatment the state gets in Union Budget. (The writer is senior journalist; views are personal)



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

to be brought to Bihar. In the past, many reasons hindered industrial growth in Bihar. Law and order problems were discouraging, but now better electricity and roads are attracting everyone. Today, India is the third-largest domestic civil aviation market in the world after China and America. Some states like Bihar lagged in aviation due to political differences, but the Bihar government is now gearing up for aviation infrastructure. In the proposed aviation plan for Bihar, apart from the Greenfield Airport in Bhagalpur and Rajgir, a Flying Training Academy in Begusarai, small cities of Bihar are also included. Existing airstrips in Saharsa, Munger, Birpur, Valmiki Nagar, Chhapra, Madhubani, Kishanganj, and Dalmianagar will be renovated and upgraded. In the Kosi area, many highway constructions are underway. The day is not far when, Bihar transforms into a developed state but it depends on preferential treatment the state gets in Union Budget. (The writer is senior journalist; views are personal)

(The writer is senior journalist; views are personal)

# The evolution of cricket and umpiring

Cricket has undergone significant transformations. The journey includes not only victories but also bloopers and game changing umpiring mistakes

The elusive cup reached home amidst thunderous applause and the rapturous welcome of the men in blue. As the euphoria settles and the cricketers (a lot richer) and fans (a lot happier) go home, it is time to look back and think about the evolution of the game and its future direction. As ardent followers of the game, it made us think how far we have come from the age of Maharaja Ranjitsinh ji to Kerry Packer to the glam world of the IPL. The history of cricket can only be complete with the history of bloopers, misjudgements and game-changing (quite literally) umpiring mistakes. The love-hate relationship between the Indian cricket team and umpire Steve Bucknor is well known, particularly in the famous monkey-gate test match. We still remember vividly the anger we felt when Sachin Tendulkar was given out LBW in a controversial decision by Bucknor when India toured down under in 2003. However, we have come a long way since then, thanks to the ever-increasing use of technology. The gentleman's game has a rich history of evolution in its rules and regulations, particularly in umpiring. Initially, cricket matches featured just one umpire, but as the game grew in complexity and intensity, it came the system of having two umpires. The second umpire, positioned at square leg, was introduced to assist with decisions that the main umpire at the bowler's end might miss, such as run-outs and stumping, thereby enhancing the accuracy and fairness of on-field decisions. In the 1990s, the third umpire system, enabled by technology, changed cricket umpiring. What the field umpires considered unjudgeable, they could now refer to the third umpire, who in turn can watch theoretically unlimited replays of what transpired before giving a verdict. The Decision Review System (DRS), introduced more recently, further revolutionised the game. It allows players to challenge on-field umpire decisions, with the third umpire reviewing the play using various



technological aids like ball-tracking and ultra-edge detection. This system has given more power to players and increased the accuracy of decisions. Statistics highlight that out of the 1,201 umpire decisions made during test matches between 2009 and 2014 that were challenged, 310 (25.81%) were overturned by a third umpire. Research that accounted for various match and team factors conducted logistic regressions to demonstrate the following: (1) Leg before wicket (LBW) and caught decisions that are initially deemed "out" by the on-field umpire are more prone to being overturned compared to decisions ruled "not out"; (2) When it comes to both LBW and caught decisions, there is an equal likelihood of the home and away teams winning a reversal by the 3rd umpire. Compared to cricket, sports like football demonstrate a compelling need for on-field officials due to the game's fast-paced nature. Football referees make instantaneous decisions on fouls,



THE ADVANCEMENT OF TECHNOLOGY IN CRICKET UMPIRING HAS UNDENIABLY ENHANCED THE ACCURACY OF DECISIONS AND THE INTEGRITY OF THE GAME. HOWEVER, TECHNOLOGY CANNOT REPLACE UMPIRES' HUMAN TOUCH

yellow and red cards, and off-side calls, which are critical for maintaining the flow and fairness of the game. While technology, such as the Video Assistant Referee (VAR), supports these decisions, the subjective nature of many calls—like tackles or hand-balls—requires the immediate and nuanced judgment of on-field referees. This dynamic is quite similar to cricket, where the on-field umpires' interpretation of situations, like appealing for a catch or judging a no-ball, often involves subjective judgment that technology alone cannot fully replicate. Despite the evident utility of on-field umpires, modern technology has permeated the game so much that the need for having on-field umpires is becoming questionable. The advancement of technology in cricket umpiring has undeniably enhanced the accuracy of decisions and the integrity of the game. However, technology cannot replace umpires' human touch throughout the game

by managing player interactions and upholding decorum. However, the current system of having two on-field umpires now brings an element of redundancy. One on-field umpire renamed as a referee, supported by comprehensive technological systems and a vigilant remote umpire, could suffice. While the remote umpire can pass decisions aided by technology, the referee could help smooth the conduct of the game and ensure that all the rules and spirit of the game are upheld. This would streamline the officiating process and speed up the game. This hybrid model that combines the strengths of human wisdom with technological aids could offer the best solution, ensuring the game's efficiency and integrity are upheld. After all, cricket is a gentlemen's game. It should remain a gentlemen's game. (Rahul Pachori is Director, GOI, and Divya Singh Rathore is Senior Policy Specialist, GOI. Views expressed are personal)



RAHUL PACHORI



DIVYA SINGH RATHORE

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### NARCOTIC HELPLINE LAUNCHED

Madam — On 18th July, the Union Home Minister inaugurated the National Narcotics Helpline, 'MANAS' (Madak Padarth Nishedh Asuchna Kendra). The helpline, accessible through the toll-free number 1933, a web portal, and a mobile app, allows citizens to anonymously report drug trafficking activities. Although 'MANAS' collects personal information, it guarantees that the identity of the informant will be kept confidential.

This anonymous reporting system could be expanded to cover other types of crimes. 'Crime Stoppers', a collaborative effort between police and civil society, enables citizens to anonymously provide information about crimes or suspects via phone calls, online forms, or mobile apps. Many individuals, despite having critical information about crimes, are hesitant to speak directly with the police due to fears of testifying or concerns for their safety. Crime Stoppers ensures the anonymity of those reporting suspected criminal activities. Crime Stoppers helplines do not display caller numbers or trace calls.

Upon receiving a call or a completed anonymous online form, they compile a report that excludes any information that could identify the caller. This report is then forwarded to the relevant authority, such as the police, customs, or the NCB, for further investigation. Founded in the US in 1976 (1-800-222-TIPS), Crime Stoppers has since been adopted in the UK (0800 555 111), Australia (1800 333 000), and South Africa (08600 10111). Since its inception in the UK in 1995, Crime Stoppers has received over 2.2 million actionable calls, leading to the arrest and charging of more than 151,000 individuals and the seizure of illegal drugs worth over £367 million. According to the recent National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Report 2022, released in December 2023, 5,824,946 cognizable crimes were registered in

### Learning from the Microsoft server outage



The recent global disaster caused by Microsoft's server outage highlights the need for preparedness against such fail-

ures and cyber-attacks. A glitch in the system can play havoc across the world.

The outage disrupted air traffic, banking, TV broadcasting, government and non-government operations, and even emergency services in America. It's ironic that this happened alongside the implementation of new cybersecurity measures, which themselves can jeopardize security. While technology is integral to modern life, the dominance of a few large tech companies poses risks.

These firms often impose arbitrary conditions on users and create different rules for different countries. To counteract this, governments must collaborate to curb the monopolies of private digital businesses. Whether major nations can unite against these internet giants is uncertain, but India could take steps in this direction.

Abhijit Roy | Jamshedpur

2022. This includes over 1,200 crimes against women and 445 crimes against children per day. The establishment of an Indian Crime Stoppers initiative is urgently needed.

Srinivas Madhav | Hyderabad

### KARNATAKA'S JOB RESERVATION BILL

Madam — This is regarding the news that Karnataka CM is slowing down on the private sector job quota bill (July 19). Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's decision to delay the Job Reservation Bill for Kannadigas, amidst political opposition, is a step in right direction. The industry's concerns that such a bill could hinder innovation and competitiveness are valid. The government's lack of consultation with the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry suggests ulterior motives. Instead, the focus should be on improving skill development programs and educational environments to address local unemployment effectively.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad ADDRESSING WEAVER SUICIDE

Madam — The frequent suicides of weavers due to financial problems and lack of buyers for expensive woven cloth are distressing. A practical solution would be to employ weavers in textile industries, as traditional weaving is becoming more of a hobby for the rich in the age of mechanized, inexpensive cloth. The high price of handwoven clothes cannot compete with industrial cloth. The frequent suicides of weavers due to financial struggles and lack of buyers for expensive handwoven cloth are alarming. Employing weavers in textile industries could be a practical solution, as traditional weaving is becoming a luxury hobby.

Handwoven clothes can't compete with cheaper industrial cloth, and high electricity costs make mechanized weaving expensive

PV Madhu Nivriti | Secunderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com





## FIRST COLUMN THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKPLACE ETIQUETTE

It enhances individual career opportunities and builds a professional image



SAKSHI SETHI

Manners are essential in the workplace for several reasons, as they contribute significantly towards the overall functioning and atmosphere of the work environment. The transition from being a student to a working professional comes with its own set of challenges, including the need to adapt to workplace etiquette.

Much talked about, the term 'Workplace etiquette' is simply the anticipated behaviour and actions of a person in a workplace and society which includes being respectful to others and always keeping a well-mannered behaviour thereby creating a comfortable environment for everyone. It is a guide for actions in different situations and how to deal with those situations while being courteous to the employer and co-workers. It varies from one workplace to the other and serves as a map to every organization.

It is often said that first impressions are everlasting and in a professional setting, they can significantly influence perceptions and opportunities. Being punctual, wearing appropriate dress and polite greetings help create a positive first impression. When the employees exhibit these behaviours, they demonstrate respect for their colleagues and the organization thereby setting a tone of professionalism from the outset. This event fosters a cooperative environment where employees feel valued and are more likely to work together productively. For a few, this can even open doors to new opportunities, promotions and career advancements. Employers value individuals who contribute positively to the work environment and represent the company well. There is no denying the fact that respect and trust are the foundations of any successful professional relationship.

Adhering to workplace etiquette such as active listening, avoiding interrupting others and acknowledging contributions, fosters an environment of mutual respect. This respectful behavior builds trust among colleagues, facilitating smoother collaboration, and harmonious and efficient teamwork. An organisation that promotes and



expects proper etiquette is seen as more professional and reputable. This can attract top talent, clients as well as business partners who want to be associated with a respectful and well-mannered organization. It is often said that trust, once established, enhances communication and encourages open sharing of ideas, thereby leading to innovative solutions and better decision-making. Utilizing etiquette in the workplace can ensure that everyone feels comfortable while being productive.

Maintaining workplace etiquette goes a long way in ensuring that one commands the respect of co-workers and superiors and that the individual's professional image remains unblemished. Remember, an employee will be a much more valuable staff member if they stay alert, tune into conversations around them and contribute to the general discourse. Undoubtedly, in any workplace, conflicts are inevitable, but proper etiquette can help resolve them.

Approaching conflicts with a calm and respectful demeanour, listening to all perspectives and seeking mutually beneficial solutions prevent escalation and help in maintaining a positive work environment. Escalation should be the last resort but one shouldn't shy away if needed.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

# Harnessing ancient wisdom for economic prosperity



B K JHA

The time is ripe for Bharat to make use of its historical wisdom, embrace global opportunities, and drive towards a prosperous and inclusive future

As Bharat aspires to become the third largest economy in the world, it must not only achieve this goal but also focus on sharing surplus to create a vibrant and inclusive society. The author of 'Arthashastra', Acharya Chanakya, says 'Dharmasya Moolam Arthah' (Economy is the Strength). Hence, the land of Chanakya needs a clear vision—Making Society Prosperous with a mission of creating and sharing surplus wealth. The ancient wisdom of the Vedas, "Sat Hasta Samahara, Sashtra Hasta Sankira," translates to "Create wealth with 100 hands and share it with 1,000 hands." Hindus contributed significantly to the world economy from the 1st to the 15th century CE, reflecting their understanding of wealth creation and distribution. Hindu civilization's prosperity is evident in the magnificent monuments of past and present such as Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, Lothal, Nalanda and Takshila University, Ayutthaya in Thailand, Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Prambanan and Borobudur in Indonesia, and the temples of Rameshwaram, Brihadeshwara, and Meenakshi in Bharat. However, this prosperity was lost during periods of Islamic invasion, colonial rule, and the Industrial Revolution.

The 21st-century economy is driven by knowledge and youth, and with a significant portion of the Hindu population being young, there is an inherent potential waiting to be unlocked. The current economic boom, coupled with the recession of major economies, has created turmoil worldwide. Traditional responses, such as cost-cutting and protectionism, are insufficient. What is needed is a new and creative approach to generating surplus wealth and rescuing the global economy from its current crisis. Today, while some economies face turbulence, emerging economies offer great opportunities. The challenge is how to leverage the global situation for collective growth. Hindus should cooperate and collaborate globally to facilitate market access across geographic zones and countries, from Auckland to Alaska and Oslo to Johannesburg. Similarly, there should be cooperation in capital availability and technological innovation, matching technically savvy Hindus with those who can turn innovation into business opportunities. The fundamental problems of hunger, poverty, and illiteracy cannot be solved merely through donations and charity.

A growing population has growing needs, which can be addressed only by creating surplus wealth and empowering the masses, especially those at the bottom of the pyramid. This approach aligns with the philosophy of creating "That, which sustains," and aims to eradicate hunger, poverty, and illiteracy. Historical evidence shows that the British plundered Bharat extensively. Economic historian, Utsa Patnaik's research suggests the British colonial regime looted almost USD 45 trillion from India from 1765 to 1938. This astronomical sum is fifteen times the annual GDP of the UK today. This wealth funded the Industrial Revolution in England, highlighting the significant economic contribution of Bharat. Nations and communities regain their



THE CONCEPT OF LINKING HINDUISM WITH ECONOMIC GROWTH FIRST EMERGED IN FEBRUARY 1973, WHEN BPR VITHAL, WRITING UNDER THE PSEUDONYM NAJIN YANUPI, REFERRED TO THE RATE OF GROWTH OF INDIA'S PER CAPITA INCOME, SUGGESTING A RANGE OF 1% TO 3%.

economic strength through cooperation and dedication. For instance, the Jews rebuilt themselves after the Holocaust through networking, community support, and self-organization. Similarly, Japan and Germany emerged as economic superpowers after World War II, and China has become the second-largest economy since 1950. The GDP of Bharat in 2015 was USD 2.07 Trillion. Now it is slightly over USD 3 trillion. In the next three years, the nation aims to achieve USD 5 trillion. The concept of linking Hinduism with economic growth first emerged in February 1973, when BPR Vithal, writing under the pseudonym Najin Yanupi, referred to the rate of growth of India's per capita income, suggesting a range of 1% to 3%. This notion, termed the "Hindu rate of growth," was later popularized by economist Raj Krishna. Former Chief Economic Advisor Kaushik Basu defended this term in a 2007 paper, noting, "Hindu rate of growth" is the tongue-in-cheek expression coined by the Indian economist, the late Raj Krishna, to capture the frustrations India's planners faced with growth. No matter what they did, growth seemed, invariably, to revert back to 3.5%, almost as if this magic figure was written in the land's scriptures." Since then, many economists, including former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia (1995) and former Chief Economic Advisors Shankar Acharya (2002) and Arvind Virmani (2006), have

explored the theme of the Hindu rate of growth. The smooth legitimization of this phrase, despite its contemptuous undertones towards Hinduism in a predominantly Hindu country, highlights the tolerance and acceptance of those who practice this faith. Equating slow GDP growth with Hinduism and attributing economic stagnation to religion is being seen as a challenge now. Credits go to an IIT alumnus Swami Vigyananand, the Founder, of the World Hindu Economic Forum (WHEF) who created a global forum with a mission to 'Making Society Prosperous'. The journey of economic resurgence for the Hindu community began in 2012 in Hong Kong and has since traversed global locations such as Bangkok, New Delhi, London, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Mumbai. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the movement has continued to expand through digital business networks and local chapters. Rooted in the philosophy of the Bhagwad Gita, the focus remains on forward-thinking and sustainability to generate surplus wealth and enhance societal well-being. This socio-economic non-governmental organization is set to host its highly anticipated event- WHEF 2024 in Mumbai. The mega business conference and exhibition will be organized from December 13th to 15th, 2024. With the theme "Think in Future, for the Future," this forum aims to cultivate forward-think-

ing and sustainable economic strategies. 'Viksit Bharat,' (Developed India), Industry 4.0, Skill Development, E-Commerce, Capital Market, and Regional Opportunities are expected to be in focus. Hindus now aim to gain at least 16% of the world's GDP in proportion to their population share. By fostering cooperation and collaboration globally, facilitating market access, supporting financial ecosystems, and encouraging technological innovation, the community can drive economic empowerment and social development. By fostering and mentoring enterprise and entrepreneurship, the community can collectively drive economic growth and secure a prosperous future. Communities and nations regain their economic strength when they work with a spirit of cooperation and single-minded dedication. This collaborative approach can lead to significant contributions to the world GDP, visibility, acceptability, and respectability for the Hindu community. As Bharat marches towards becoming the third-largest economy, the focus needs to be on creating and sharing surplus wealth. By leveraging historical wisdom, fostering global cooperation, and embracing forward-thinking and future-ready strategies, the community can drive economic empowerment and social development, ultimately contributing to a prosperous and inclusive society. (The author is a senior journalist and the views expressed are personal)

# India's bold climate leadership amidst global heatwave concerns

India stands out as a beacon of hope, demonstrating unwavering commitment through innovative climate initiatives and sustainable practices

This year's record spell of an intense heatwave in Delhi, during which temperatures touched 50°C, highlighted concerns over the adverse effects of climate change globally. India remains a beacon of hope through its actions as part of the global efforts to stem climate change. Through myriad initiatives, the country has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability. India's journey toward climate action began in 2009 when the country voluntarily pledged to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 20-25% by 2020 compared to 2005 levels. Impressively, India achieved a 24% reduction within the stipulated timeframe. In alignment with the Paris Agreement, India submitted its



SOURYABRATA MOHAPATRA

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the UNFCCC in 2015, setting forth eight ambitious targets for 2021-2030, further reinforcing its commitment to combating climate change. Tree plantation and forest conservation are at the heart of India's environmental efforts. Through programs like the National Mission for Green India and the Compensatory Afforestation Fund

Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), India encourages the use of barren land for tree plantations. The country ranks third globally in net forest area gain, with 21.71% of its geographical area covered by forests. Initiatives like the Green Credit Program further incentivize tree plantation and forest restoration. India's commitment to wetland conservation is equally impressive, with 80 designated Ramsar sites. The Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes (MISHTI) aims to promote and conserve mangroves, which are vital for carbon storage and marine biodiversity. The country has implemented the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, ban-

ning the use of single-use plastics. Renewable energy is another area in which India excels. The National Green Hydrogen Mission, launched in January 2023, aims to position India as a leader in green hydrogen technology. The country ranks fourth globally in renewable energy capacity. India's environmental initiatives extend beyond its borders. The country plays a pivotal role in global platforms such as the Global Alliance for Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency. India has made notable strides in addressing climate change, earning a commendable 7th place in this year's Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), up one spot from last year, making it one of the highest performers globally.



India's high ranking in the GHG Emissions and Energy Use categories underscores the country's efforts to manage its environmental impact despite its large population. Notably, India's per capita emissions remain relatively low, aligning with global benchmarks aimed at limiting temperature rise to well below 2°C above the pre-industrial average.

However, the path forward is complex, and critical areas still require focused attention and accelerated action. India continues to rely heavily on coal, oil, and gas to meet its growing energy demands. This dependence is a major contributor to GHG emissions and severe air pollution, especially in urban areas. While there is a slight positive trend in the adoption of renewable energy, the pace of this transition is too slow to meet urgent climate goals. Despite high marks in emissions and energy use, India receives a medium rating in Climate Policy and Renewable Energy. The country has clear long-term policies focusing on renewable energy, including the domestic manufacturing of renewable energy com-

ponents. Yet, the implementation of these policies needs to be more effective. The COP26 announcement by Prime Minister Modi, setting a net-zero emissions target for 2070, has been criticized by experts for lacking ambition. The call for a faster phase-out of coal, reduced reliance on gas, and a significant expansion of renewable energy is strong. India's heavy reliance on coal presents a significant challenge. Despite high taxes on petrol and diesel, consumption has not decreased. Some experts view these taxes as effective, while others highlight the government's dependence on the revenue they generate. The rephrasing from 'phase-out' to 'phase-down' for fossil fuels, championed by India

and China at the last COP, was a setback for global climate commitments. Large-scale renewable energy projects in India have also faced criticism for negatively affecting local communities through land grabs and unequal resource distribution. Policies have been largely mitigative rather than transformative, often overlooking adaptation and disaster risk management. There is a growing call for policies that incorporate ecosystem-based solutions and prioritize equity, ensuring that climate actions benefit all segments of society. India needs a more bottom-up approach to policy implementation, incorporating the needs and demands of tribal and rural communities. (The writer is a NCAER faculty; views are personal)



MONEY MATTERS

### Jindal Stainless seeks zero customs duty on ferro nickel, molybdenum

Jindal Stainless has urged the government to remove the customs duty on ferro nickel and molybdenum in the upcoming Budget to ensure the industry's access to these critical raw materials at competitive prices. The present customs duty on ferro nickel is 2.5 per cent, while in the case of ferro molybdenum, it is 5 per cent. "We propose a long-term waiver of basic customs duty on ferro nickel and ferro molybdenum to ensure the industry's access to these essential raw materials at competitive prices," Jindal Stainless Ltd (JSL) Managing Director Abhyuday Jindal said. Jindal, on behalf of the stainless steel industry, urged the government to continue its support towards making the "Make in India" initiative competitive with incentives for innovation and sustainable practices. Reducing import duties on raw materials and offering tax benefits for research and development would greatly benefit the sector, he said. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will table the full budget for FY25 in Parliament on Tuesday.



### Huge potential for Indian garment players to export products to Japan: APEC

Indian garment players have huge potential to export their products to Japan and the domestic industry should take greater advantage of the free trade agreement (FTA) between the two countries, APEC said on Sunday. The Apparel Export Promotion Council (APEC) said to tap the growing potential, they are leading a delegation to participate in the India Text Trend Fair (ITTF) in Tokyo. The three-day fair will begin from July 23 and over 200 exhibitors are participating. Some of the renowned Japanese brands, including Sumitomo Corporation, MUJI, Toyoshima, Marubeni, Mitsubishi, Koyo trading, United Arrows, MYK Fashion will be there to source their requirements, it said. "Indian exhibitors from across the country will be displaying a diverse range of Indian RMG across various categories, including summer and winter collection," it said. Chairman APEC Sudhir Sekhri said Japan is the fourth largest garment importer in the world.



### Coal India ventures into non-coal mineral mining with graphite project

Graphite is the first mineral Coal India Limited (CIL) will diversify its operations beyond coal, following an order from the Ministry of Mines granting the company a composite license for prospecting and mining. This license pertains to the Khattali Chihoti Graphite Block in Alirajpur, Madhya Pradesh. "This is the first mineral other than coal for us," Debasish Nanda, Director of Business Development at Coal India, said. CIL is required to pay a mining premium of 150.05 per cent of the value of minerals dispatched to the state government. Coal India said the timeline is one year for the grant of the composite license and three years for the execution of the mining lease deed, the miner informed sources. Currently, the project is in a very preliminary phase, necessitating further exploration. In alignment with the government's Atmanirbharta vision, Coal India has formed a special team to focus on other critical minerals both globally and within India.



## Airbus shortlists 8 Indian sites for H125 helicopter final assembly line

PNS ■ MARGIGNANE (FRANCE)

European major Airbus has shortlisted eight sites in India for setting up its final assembly line for H125 helicopters and the ground-breaking ceremony for the facility is expected later this year.

The facility, which will be the fourth Final Assembly Line (FAL) for the single engine H125, will initially produce up to 10 helicopters annually and the capacity will be ramped up depending on the market demand, Airbus officials said. "India is the market of the future for helicopters... at present, the market is extremely embryonic, it is very small compared to what the potential could be," Olivier Michalon, Executive Vice President Global Business of Airbus Helicopters, said. The ground breaking ceremony for the FAL is expected in October or November this year and the facility will be operational in 2026 and the delivery is anticipated to start towards the end of 2026. "We have identified eight sites which we are currently assessing. We are still in the final assessment stage. We should be in a position to announce it shortly.



"We want to be attractive and in an ecosystem that is best suited for industrial activities, logistics, employees and of course, regulations," Michalon said at a briefing at Marignane earlier this week. Marignane is the headquarters of Airbus Helicopters. For Airbus, H125 is the most-sold helicopter in India as well as the South Asia region.

Airbus has projected the demand for H125 helicopters in India and neighbouring countries at 500 over the next 20 years. "We are targeting 10 helicopters per year and as the demand picks up we can ramp up," Head of Airbus Helicopters in India and South Asia Sunny Guglani said at the briefing. Michalon stressed that 10 might not sound like a lot and it could be 20, 30, or 50 in some years, depending on the market demand. "We manufacture, sell and support helicopters. Also, we manufacture, sell and support solutions. This is what we can provide. Make In India solutions," he said. Highlighting the success story of its narrow-body A320 aircraft, Michalon said, "H125 is our A320".

PNS ■ PUNE

Govt has no plans to import milk powder, opposition making false claims: Shah

### Govt has no plans to import milk powder, opposition making false claims: Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Amit Shah on Sunday said the Centre has no plans to import milk powder and accused the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi of spreading false information. Speaking at the BJP's Maharashtra convention in Pune, Shah, who holds the home and cooperation portfolios, said an old, undated notification was doing the rounds and MVA had cited it to claim that the government was planning to import milk powder. "Even I got confused and called up Piyush Goyal (commerce minister), who told me that this was not our decision but that of Sharad Pawar. Don't be confused. The circular was made by them," said the senior BJP leader.

## Affordable housing, infra growth, boost to mfg likely to be in focus

ASSOCHAM ON BUDGET

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Greater focus on green mobility, affordable housing, holistic infrastructure development and a big push to manufacturing, along with boosting consumption demand, are expected to find prominence in the forthcoming Union Budget, said an ASSOCHAM-Primus paper. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Union Budget on Tuesday in Parliament. Highlighting that the first Budget of the Narendra Modi 3.0 government will also include a long-term blueprint for making India a developed nation by 2047, the paper listed areas that would require the government's greater attention and priorities for realising the national goals. "While the Budget would attend to the immediate requirements of



boosting consumption, investment and augmenting the supply side of the economy, it is also expected to lay a roadmap for the bigger goal of scaling up national income to a level of developed nations," said ASSOCHAM President Sanjay Nayyar. He further said the government has the fiscal space to spend on capex but recycling the funds from monetisable operating assets would be strategically a better strategy to

manage it even better. The ASSOCHAM-Primus paper said the wheels of the Indian economy will increasingly run on green fuel. The directional shift is gathering pace across different levels. It expects the launch of PMAY 2.0, incorporating components like Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP) and Beneficiary Led Construction (BLC) to tailor housing solutions to financial capabilities of large sections of the population.

## GCPL invests over Rs 1,000 cr on advertising in FY24

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

FMCG major Godrej Consumer's advertising investment shot up by 47 per cent to Rs 1,011 crore in FY24 in the domestic market, even as it has reduced SKUs by around 30 per cent through a rationalisation process. Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL), which aims for double-digit volume growth, is spending more on brands, automation and SKU rationalisation with a "keen focus on simplification," according to the latest annual report of the company. "In line with our strategy of category development, we have made significant investments in advertising. We were the fifth largest advertiser in India in 2023, from being number 17 in 2021. We are adding to this with investments in distribution," GCPL Managing Director and CEO Sudhir Sitapati said.

GCPL's spending on 'Advertising and Publicity' was Rs 1,011 crore for the financial year ended March 2024. This was 47 per cent higher than Rs 687.34 crore a year before. "In India, we are now spending over Rs 1,000 crore in advertising, from Rs 350-400 crore a few years ago, a significant increase. We realised that our categories were being run differently across the world, advertising agencies were different, production was being done differently," he said. The company owns popular brands like Cinthol, Godrej No 1, HITS and Good Knight. "From multiple agencies, we moved to a single agency, which is our in-house agency, the LightBox," Sitapati said, adding that "from multiple executions, we are moving to a single execution, shooting differently in the same location with different models for different countries".



## Land deals drop 57% to 325 acres in Apr-Jun on high prices

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Land acquisitions remained muted during April-June, and only 25 deals covering 325 acres were closed during this period, mainly due to high prices and general elections, according to Anarock. In contrast, there were 29 land deals closed in the year-ago period, comprising 721 acres. Real estate consultant Anarock pointed out that the



general elections and the heated land prices seem to have dented the appetite for land acquisition for developers and other entities in the second quarter of 2024. The number of land deals closed in Q2 (April-June) 2024 came down to 25 transactions for around 325 acres. Prashant Thakur, Regional Director & Head - Research & Advisory, Anarock Group, said Bengaluru topped in the number of land deals. "The city (Bengaluru) saw 9 separate deals for approximately 114 acres closed in Q2 2024," he added. Gurugram saw the closure of as many as 7 deals for over 77.5 acres. Of the total land deals closed in April-June, over 17 have been proposed for residential

developments covering more than 163 acres. Agriculture, mixed-use development, data centres, logistics parks, industrial, and retail saw one deal each. As per the April-June data, Mumbai witnessed 2 land deals, involving 4.52 acres, Hyderabad 1 deal comprising 48 acres, Pune 2 deals (27.5 acres), Chennai 1 deal for 27 acres, Thane 2 deals involving 24.95 acres and Ahmedabad 1 deal for just 1.37 acre.

## AMD leverages AI to shape next-gen computing experience; eyes emerging mkts

PNS ■ LOS ANGELES

Chip maker AMD is looking to position itself as a key player in AI-enhanced personal computers (AIPCs) through strategic innovations on the hardware side to cater to powerful new-age applications, a top company official said. It is taking a holistic approach by integrating technology across CPUs, GPUs, and NPUs, creating a strong ecosystem that supports the development of powerful AI applications. This broad approach allows AMD to serve various markets, from high-performance gaming systems to lightweight laptops, all enhanced with AI capabilities, said John Anguiano, Senior Director, Product Marketing at AMD. The California-based company has unveiled its latest lineup of Ryzen Series of mobile and desktop processors, strengthening its play in computing and Artificial

Intelligence (AI) technology at its Tech Day event here. AMD, which competes with heavyweights like Intel, Apple, and Qualcomm, is trying to establish itself as a key player in the growing field of AI-enhanced personal computers (AIPCs) for laptops and desktops. "The promise of AI generally, and across AMD, holistically, is bigger than just a technology story. It is about improving how we live and work, making us more productive and helping everyone focus on their strengths," said Anguiano. By optimising these processors for AI, AMD is not only enhancing performance but also ensuring that its devices can handle future technological demands, he added. "AMD is integrating technology across CPUs, GPUs, and NPUs, creating a strong ecosystem that supports the development of powerful AI applications.



## Hero MotoCorp plans to roll out affordable EVs this fiscal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eyeing leadership in the electric two-wheeler segment, Hero MotoCorp is looking to roll out affordable models in the current fiscal, according to CEO Niranjan Gupta. The country's largest two-wheeler maker is also hopeful of the debut of its electric range in the international markets. Addressing shareholders in the company's Annual Report for 2023-24, Gupta said the two-wheeler major has a roadmap to scale its electric vehicle business rapidly.



"We want to build leadership in EV, and in order to do that, we will be creating a very powerful EV product portfolio, augmenting the VIDA V1 Pro that we have today," he noted. The company will be launching products in the mid-

and affordable segments this fiscal, Gupta said. Hero MotoCorp's VIDA electric scooter series is priced between Rs 1-1.5 lakh, including state subsidies. Hero MotoCorp Executive Chairman Pawan Munjal said

together with Ather Energy, VIDA has established India's largest public-charging infrastructure for two-wheeler EVs. Additionally, the partnership with Zero Motorcycle will facilitate the development of new EV motorcycles targeted at a distinct customer segment, thereby expanding the overall market size, he added. "I am particularly pleased to witness VIDA V1's rise as one of the leading electric scooters in India, and I anticipate its future launch in global markets, where it is poised to become a significant player as well," Munjal noted.

## Demand for AI/ML engineers, BPO surges since 2022

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Demand for artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) engineers has seen a significant increase since 2022, a report has said. The demand for such roles surged 433 per cent, reflecting the growing reliance on artificial intelligence and machine

learning technologies across various sectors, it said. This is closely followed by Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) executives, which saw a 314 per cent increase in demand, underscoring the continued expansion of the outsourcing and customer service industries, the Indeed report stated.

These two roles, though vastly different in skill requirements, are driving significant employment growth at both ends of the skill spectrum, said the report. This report is based on demand data on various professions and industries on job platform Indeed from January 2022 to June 2024.

## Indo-Bangla trade comes to standstill as students' protests intensify

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Trade between India and Bangladesh via land ports came to a standstill on Sunday as there was no movement of cargo trucks to and fro due to the ongoing student protests in the neighbouring country, officials said. The Bangladeshi side of the

Petrapole landport remained non-functional, they said. Nearly one-third of land-based trade between India and Bangladesh takes place through Petrapole. "Trade from other land ports to Bangladesh, including Petrapole, Gojadanga, Fulbari, and Mahadipur, has also stalled.

## Noida: Industry status, GST main Budget concerns for realty

PNS ■ NOIDA

Real estate developers in Noida and Greater Noida in western Uttar Pradesh expect the first Budget of the Modi 3.0 government to accord 'industry status' to their sector for easier access to funds, and address woes related to GST, including the 28 per cent taxation on cement. Hoping for "nuanced approach" to real estate woes, the developers seek the government's support beyond fiscal incentives, with the upcoming Budget focussing on enhancing transparency and efficiency through a robust regulatory framework, streamlined approvals process. Industry body CREDAI's western UP Secretary Dinesh Gupta said boosting the real estate sector with tax incentives, improved tax structures, and a single-window clearance policy will encourage further investment from both domestic and foreign sources. "Furthermore, tax reforms that lower income taxes for



both corporations and individuals, simplify tax legislation, offer targeted incentives, expand the SWAMIH stress fund, and lower the GST rates on building materials will boost the building industry and improve the situation for real estate players," he said. "The combined effect of these reforms will raise the amount of money accessible to taxpayers, enabling them to buy real estate more enthusiastically and ultimately speed up the nation's economic growth," Gupta said. Bhutani Group CEO Ashish Bhutani said the country's real

estate sector's contribution in GDP is much lower when compared to Europe or China and batted for taking it up to 30 per cent by 2047. "I believed there should be 100 per cent relief on GST for low and mid-income housing and the GST rebate should be in a way that developers should at least get input credit, which can be passed on to buyers," he said. Avneesh Sood, Director of Eros Group, said while industry status for real estate and revived incentives for affordable housing remain key expectations, a nuanced approach is crucial.

## Harnessing AI in a big way in public auditing space: CAG Murmu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu has said Artificial Intelligence (AI) has arrived and the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) is taking advantage of new technologies in improving the quality of public expenditure. "As it develops, we will develop ourselves accordingly. Whatever challenges are there we will try and overcome. We will follow global experiences and practices related to this and share our own to them," Murmu said. Recently, he said, "We have



signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi for leverag-

ing AI and other emerging technologies for the advancement of audit practices. With the rapid advance-

ment of AI, machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented

opportunities for innovation and efficiency, he said. AI has emerged as a catalyst for change in the field of audit, offering a plethora of opportunities to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and insight, he said. By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyse vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy, he added. Besides, he said, capacity building is another area that the organisation constantly put great emphasis on.



# what's brewing?

## MUTANT ERA COMING UP POST DEADPOOL AND WOLVERINE

Kevin Feige, the head of Marvel Studios, has some intriguing news regarding the MCU's post-multiverse future: 'The Mutants' will be the main focus. A number of the mutants have already been shown to us in *Deadpool* and *Wolverine* promos footage and more. After Disney purchased the mutants' rights in 2019, the characters made their debut in other MCU projects. Fans have previously seen *Deadpool* and the mutants in the Fox-owned universe. Kevin Feige was quoted in a recent piece that detailed Marvel's plans for when the Multiverse saga concludes. However, this does not imply that fans would have to wait for *Avengers: Secret Wars* to conclude the multiverse narrative. With *Wolverine* and *Deadpool*, it has



access already started. "Also, the 'after' is obviously something we haven't had

to before now that we have characters from the *X-Men* world, the Mutants," Feige added. He continued, "So, this is the

beginning of that and every [movie] post *Deadpool & Wolverine* will be the Mutant era coming into the MCU." He also discussed whether fans will see more R-rated movies after *Deadpool* and *Wolverine* in the MCU. Kevin Feige said, "The before and after [aspect of it all]? I think a lot of people talk about the R-rating and ask, 'Is every [Marvel] movie going to be R-rated after this?' [And the answer is] of course, not. But I hope every movie after this embraces its tonality the way *Deadpool & Wolverine* and this team do." The Marvel boss also said, "The R-rating is never exploited; it's never really used just to use it." He also mentioned, "It's just there as a facility to tell the most authentic story about these two iconic characters coming together on screen for the first time." On July 26, *Deadpool* and *Wolverine* will hit the theatres.

## Anna Faris says she's open to returning to *Scary Movie*



Hollywood star Anna Faris says she is willing to return to the *Scary Movie* franchise but has listed two conditions for it. In the parody horror franchise, Faris played the role of Cindy Campbell in four films: *Scary Movie*, *Scary Movie 2*, *Scary Movie 3* and *Scary Movie 4*. In an interview, Faris was asked what it would take for her to make a comeback to the film series. "Well, money," the actor replied, listing out her first condition. She would also want to reunite with co-star Regina Hall, who played Brenda in the franchise. Both actors had chosen not to feature in the franchise's fifth part, which

was released in 2013. "I would love to work with Regina again. I just love her so much. We would make each other giggle all day long. Regina Hall would be my answer. And money. But mostly all Regina," the 47-year-old actor said. Looking back, Faris said being a part of the *Scary Movie* franchise played an important role in her career. "If there is a high school comparison for my growth experience, those four movies played an important role in my life in terms of teaching me

how to use props, how to fall, how to get hit in the head and how to hold chiclets in my mouth and then spit them out with blood at a convenient time for the camera," she said. The actor currently stars in the action comedy movie *My Spy The Eternal City*, also featuring Chloe Coleman and Dave Bautista. The movie, directed by Peter Segal, is currently streaming on Prime Video.



## Diljit's *Sardaarji 3* to debut on June 27, 2025

Punjabi superstar Diljit Dosanjh, who has been on a dream run professionally, has another project lined up for release. The actor-singer's upcoming film, *Sardaarji 3*, has now booked its release date. The film is set to debut in theatres on June 27, 2025. On Sunday, Diljit shared the film's poster on Instagram, featuring a monochromatic and blurred image of him with his back to the camera, along with a dialogue exchange in voice-over. In the caption, Diljit wrote: "*Sardaarji 3* Releasing Worldwide June 27, 2025 @whitehillstudios @manmordsidhu @gunbir\_whitehill @sonalsingh." So far, 2024 has been a remarkable year for Diljit.

The Punjabi superstar was earlier seen in the biopic *Amar Singh Chamkila*. The film, which was released on Netflix, garnered great response from all quarters and was noted for its narrative style and a hit soundtrack by Oscar- and Grammy-winning composer AR Rahman. Diljit also made a cameo appearance in the female-led film *Crew*, which starred Tabu, Kareena Kapoor Khan and Kriti Sanon and was well-received upon its theatrical release. Additionally, Diljit performed with English singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran during his visit to India, making Sheeran sing in Punjabi while performing on stage at Mahalakshmi Race Course during Ed Sheeran's India Tour. However, Diljit has recently faced controversy over allegations of non-payment to dancers during his *Diljit Dosanjh-Dil-Luminati* tour in Canada. Some dancers claimed they were not paid for their work, while others were satisfied and honoured to have performed with Diljit. Diljit's manager stated that the dancers who raised the allegations had not contacted them regarding the payment dispute.



**STANDALONE**  
The trailer launch for *Dharmaveer 2: Mukkam Post Thane* evolved into a spectacular evening of glitz and power. Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Dr. Shrikant Lata Eknath Shinde and Bollywood star Salman Khan marked their presence on the occasion, making it an evening of momentous political and entertainment convergence.

## RHEA CHAKRABORTY DIVULGES HER LIFE POST-SSR CONTROVERSY

Rhea Chakraborty is embarking on a new chapter in her life by using motivational speaking as her main source of income and leaving the film industry behind. In her most recent podcast episode, *Chapter 2*, actress Rhea discusses her life since the passing of her ex-boyfriend, actor Sushant Singh Rajput, and the attention she received from the public and media. This past Saturday saw the debut of Chakraborty's podcast, which includes an open discussion with actor Sushmita Sen. Chakraborty addressed the ambiguity surrounding her career in the episode. "People are confused about what I do for a living anymore," she stated. "I am not acting in films; I engage in motivational speaking and that's how I earn my money." This change of emphasis follows a time of great public attention and personal difficulties. Chakraborty encountered strong opposition after Rajput's death in June 2020, which culminated in his arrest in September 2020 on suspicion of narcotics

procurement. The same year, in October, she was given bail. The name *Chapter 2* for Chakraborty's podcast symbolises her fresh start. She explained, "Everybody knows my 'chapter one,' or assumes that they know it. I went through many phases of feeling different emotions, being different versions of myself. Finally, I am feeling more me, but a newer version, like a rebirth. I want to celebrate that with anyone who has a 'chapter two.' It is okay to start again and move on in life." Chakraborty has also given some thought to how people have interpreted her public persona. She saw that her appearance was frequently misconstrued, drawing both praise and criticism. She humorously described her ability to "polarise" rooms, saying, "I often joke that I have a big superpower. I enter a room and can polarise it! Half of them would think, 'She has done something, she is a witch, she practices black magic,' and the other half would think, 'She's a strong girl who fought through it, she had courage.'"



### FUN

#### ARCHIE



#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### GARFIELD



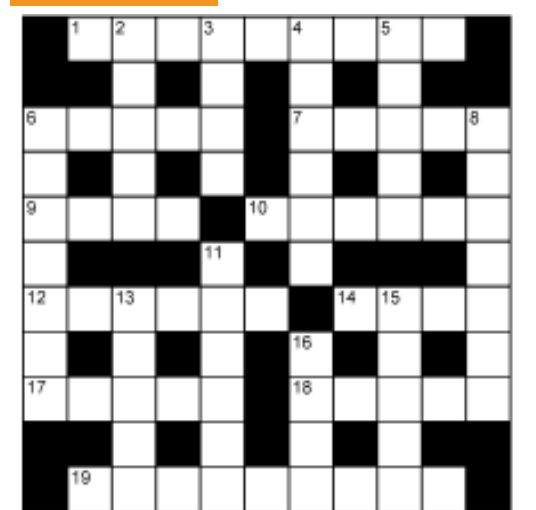
#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



#### CROSSWORD



#### NANCY



#### SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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

- The largest land animals
- A small rock
- Move slowly and quietly
- A flower with thorns on its stem
- An extinct animal or plant that has turned to rock
- Film stars
- A sound bouncing back to you
- A cloth for drying yourself
- People who make meals
- The leader of the USA
- Large plants in a forest
- A housemaid or butler
- Headrests on beds
- Tools for making holes
- A tall, narrow building
- A circus funny person
- This liquid chemical will burn your skin

#### DOWN

- Large wild cats
- A writer of verse
- A ship's heavy metal hook



#### GINGER MEGGS





## PARUL'S NOSTALGIC REFLECTIONS FROM #BLUETICK (VERIFIED) SET!

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Obtaining a blue tick on social media is, of course, the newest thing. In an exclusive conversation, actress and entrepreneur Parul Gulati discusses it and helps us understand the "powers" and "curses" of the blue tick. To keep the long story short, Parul Gulati and Zee5 have announced that #Bluetick (Verified) will be available for streaming on their add-on platform, Epic-On.

The movie's lead actress calls us during Hyderabad's torrential downpour and says, "My character was just following her dream of being an influencer. The character's only complexity was having to battle to sift through an unfamiliar industry. Social media is, after all, a public platform." We realised mid-conversation that what the *Girls Hostel* fame was trying to communicate also resonated on a personal level. She said, "I had experienced something similar when I was attempting to become a successful actor in this idyllic city of Mumbai. I therefore had to deal with some feelings that were making me nostalgic for my own time and made me a little teary on the sets of #Bluetick (Verified). Additionally, the planning was quite linear, which is extremely unusual for a web series."

So the gripping tale of a young influencer from a middle-class upbringing who fervently seeks popularity is told in #Bluetick (Verified). She will do everything it takes to keep her status, obfuscating the distinction between real and reel life, which ultimately brings her to ruin. "Sometimes, social media can be detrimental to us. Anything in excess is not always a good idea! These days, I manage my own nationwide business in addition to being an actress and

social media has become my third priority," adds *Silence 2* fame.

Yes, she did remember to share with us another special anecdote. "I remember when I was getting started on social media—social media was on fire for making easy money from it," she said. "It was something I was eager to attempt. I wasn't picked up by brands, but my other industry pals were. Not that it was difficult for me, but even though we both had the same amount of followers, it helped me recognise that I needed to improve my content in order to receive a blue tick. This 'blue tick' will either be a problem that changes lives or a turning point in some people's lives."

In response to a question about her first day on the sets, Gulati said, "I remember I was travelling. I arrived at this movie set straight out of another country. I had a crucial sequence to shoot on the first day and I was worried about how I looked because I had a bloated face." The *Zorawar* fame continues, sharing some more intriguing stories and saying, "I just want influencers to not give kids false hope. This social media validation sneaks into us without our awareness. We don't have many pals; we just have those in the industry. A random comment on social media provides us with a dopamine high because sometimes our industry buddies are also racing to finish their own work."

In a lighthearted manner, she replied,

"Everyone enjoys social media if it succeeds. We get needless hate the moment it flips off. Nobody likes rude remarks or negativity!" As our discussion was nearing an end, Parul told us how social media had enabled her to make a significant difference as well. "When I founded Nish Hair seven years ago, I was able to shift people's perceptions about a product that they had previously considered taboo. I made hair extensions and wigs commonplace! Without social media, Nish Hair's success would not have been as great."



In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, Parul Gulati, who is a part of Zee5's Epic on #Bluetick (Verified), talks about the project and offers some unique anecdotes of her own experiences with the social media frenzy.



In vitro fertilization (IVF) has transformed the field of reproductive health, giving hope to many couples battling with infertility. Despite its proven success, numerous myths and misconceptions may discourage people from getting this useful treatment. Here, we clarify some prevalent IVF myths and give suggestions on when to see a fertility specialist.

### Myth 1: IVF always works on first try

One of the most common myths is that IVF ensures pregnancy on the first try. While IVF considerably enhances the odds of conceiving, success rates vary depending on age, cause of infertility, and general health.

### Myth 2: IVF leads to multiple births

While it is true that IVF can result in multiple births, advances in reproductive science have reduced

this possibility. Fertility doctors now prioritize single embryo transfers (SET) wherever possible, lowering the risk of twins or higher-order multiples. The objective is to have a healthy singleton pregnancy.

### Myth 3: IVF is only for women with blocked fallopian tubes

IVF was originally intended to assist women with blocked or damaged fallopian tubes, but it is now used to treat a variety of infertility conditions. It may be a treatment for male infertility, unexplained infertility, endometriosis, and other disorders affecting both men and women. IVF has evolved into a versatile technique in the field of reproductive medicine.

### Myth 4: IVF is only for younger women

While age is important in ferti-

ty, women in their late 30s and 40s can benefit from IVF. In certain conditions, older women may need to consider using donor eggs to improve their chances of success. Consulting with a fertility specialist to determine the best method based on the patient.

### Myth 5: Babies born through IVF are not biological children

A prevalent misperception is that IVF babies are not the parents' biological children. In reality, if a couple uses their own eggs and sperm, their child will be theirs. The IVF procedure simply promotes fertilisation outside of the body, following which the embryo is put in the mother's womb and grows normally. In conditions when donor eggs or sperm are used, the kid may have a different genetic link, but this is a personal decision that the parents are fully aware of.

### When to visit a fertility specialist?

Understanding when to seek the assistance of a fertility specialist is critical for couples experiencing infertility. If you are under 35 and have been trying to conceive for a year with no success, it is time to see a professional. For people over 35, the duration is reduced to six months. Furthermore, if you have known reproductive issues, such as irregular menstrual cycles, endometriosis, or a history of pelvic inflammatory disease, you should seek early treatment. In conclusion, despite widespread understand-

ings and misconceptions regarding IVF, it remains a highly successful treatment for many people suffering from infertility. Couples who contact a fertility expert can obtain precise information and specialised care, increasing their chances of having a successful pregnancy. Don't let wrong information get in the way of your desire for parenthood—seek advice from professionals and explore the options that modern reproductive treatments provide.

(The author, Dr Saroja Koppala, is a Fertility Specialist at Nova IVF Fertility Chanda Nagar, Hyderabad.)

## FINDING CLARITY OFFLINE

AARTI SREENATH

Do you ever find yourself endlessly scrolling on your smart phone, losing track of time? If so, you're not alone. This constant connection can negatively impact your quality of life and overwhelm your senses. Enter the concept of a digital detox!

In our increasingly digital world, where smartphones, laptops and social media are ubiquitous, the concept of a digital detox is gaining prominence. Seema Seth, a psychotherapist specialising in counselling psychology in Hyderabad, emphasises the importance of stepping away from our devices and the profound impact it can have on our well-being.

"We've integrated smartphones, laptops, smartwatches and digital media deeply into our lives, they enhance convenience but also breed dependency. This dependency not only affects our psychological well-being but also our physical health, as recent studies indicate," she confirms. According to Seema, digital detox involves disconnecting from gadgets and digital platforms, reclaiming time for introspection and real-world connections. "It's about stepping out of the virtual bubble, where we're bombarded with information. It allows us to focus on ourselves, improve our decision-making and foster healthier relationships. Moreover, it encourages environmental consciousness and engagement with real-world issues." Seema identifies common signs indicating a need for digital detox: "Constantly checking our phones, feeling anxious without notifications, or experiencing FOMO (fear of missing out) are red flags. Excessive social media use, leading to negative emotions and stress, also signals dependency." She advises on practical strategies such as gradually reducing screen time, setting boundaries on gadget use and practicing mindfulness to stay present. Structuring our day without digital distractions promotes discipline and enhances overall well-being.

Dr. Navodita Kumar, a clinical psychologist, echoes concerns about excessive screen time. "It contributes to anxiety, depression and loneliness, fuelled by comparisons on social media. Sedentary behaviour and disrupted

sleep patterns further compound health issues like obesity and poor mental health." "A digital detox can significantly improve mental and physical health," notes Dr. Kumar. Dr. Prabhakar G V, an ophthalmologist consultant-cataract at Cornea Lasik Sankara Eye Hospital, Hyderabad, highlights the impact of screens on eye health. "Digital eye strain, dry eyes and disrupted sleep cycles are common issues. Implementing the 20-20-20 rule—taking breaks every 20 minutes to look at something 20 feet away—can relieve eye strain and improve overall comfort."

Popular YouTuber, singer and content creator Sejal Kumar and Satwika Jampa, an actor, share personal insights on balancing digital presence with personal life. Satwika emphasises the importance of maintaining hobbies and passions outside of the digital realm, while Sejal highlights the value of periodic breaks to prevent burnout. Satwika reflects on her experience: "I don't know if it's because I don't find it so exhausting or if I'm just too much of a Gen Z to realise that it's exhausting me. I'm usually humbled by my passion for performing arts, which I also dedicate my time to. Like classical dance, music, gym, etc. I always urge people to stay rooted in their hobbies and passions in life to balance out the effects of social media."

Sejal adds, "A typical day in my life involves meetings with my team, ideating our next week's worth of content, catching up on brand deals and other projects. Since I'm also a singer and actor, we also look at my upcoming songs and projects. Screen time would be around 5 hours. I'm pretty good with my screen time, using it as much as my work requires for research and references for content. We log out at 8 p.m., encouraging everyone to live their life and enjoy it, which is what I want to do since this is my long-term career."

On managing the pressure of content creation, Sejal admits, "Yes, it does get a lot, and it feels like you're on a never-ending hamster wheel. Earlier, I had a lot of short-term goals, like wanting a certain number of followers or subscribers by a specific time. Now, it's more long-term. I have goals and bucket list items, but I don't put a timeline on myself because it's a career, not a short-term project. Having a team definitely helps."

Sejal has taken multiple digital detoxes throughout her career. "I took my first break after three or four years on YouTube, which was a month long, and I felt extremely guilty. After that, I realised people do get it and understand. Now, I take breaks often—four or five days here and there—giving my life like my other corporate friends who have breaks and holidays. I didn't give myself that permission before, but now I manage the workload between all the team members."

To avoid burnout, Sejal follows specific strategies. "I started doing a lot of self-work, began therapy a few years ago and worked with a life coach. Reading up on spirituality and doing one hour of meditation daily for the past year and a half has also helped. Not comparing myself and not setting high standards of perfection have helped me enjoy this. In the middle, I wasn't enjoying it at all because I had such high expectations for myself. But now, I'm enjoying working with other people too, and things are happening without killing myself. That's amazing!" Sejal emphasises the importance of taking breaks from digital media. "Anytime I get overboard, I feel low and then go back to my routine. I read a lot, so you'll mostly find me reading more than scrolling on reels. Taking breaks from digital media, even short ones, is great. Anytime I've done a workshop or gone on a trip, I noticed so much clarity and wasn't anxious. It obviously helps."

"Digital eye strain," explains Dr.

Prabhakar, "is when a person experiences eye ache, brow pain, headache, burning sensations in the eyes and neck and shoulder pain due to prolonged screen time on phones, laptops, or tablets. This strain is often caused by poor lighting, glare from screens, poor sitting posture, uncorrected visual acuity, and improper viewing angles. Regular digital detoxes can help mitigate these effects if practiced consistently." Dr. Prabhakar also emphasises that prolonged screen time can affect the eyes in two primary ways: digital eye strain and dryness. "Often, the letters on digital screens are not as precise or sharply defined as those on paper. The reduced contrast, along with screen glare and reflections, makes viewing difficult. This requires more effort to read on a screen compared to print, especially for those with uncorrected refractive errors. Poor posture and improperly designed glasses for screen viewing can also lead to muscle spasms or pain in the neck, shoulder, or back."



Beyond eye health, Dr. Prabhakar highlights the overall mental and physical benefits of a digital detox. "Prolonged screen time can trigger stress responses, disturb sleep cycles due to disrupted circadian rhythms, accelerate aging and contribute to depression and anxiety. Simple detox practices can prevent these conditions in the long run. Social media scrolling often leads to instant gratification and constant content seeking, which increases anxiety." "Blue light from screens can disrupt our body's circadian rhythms," Dr. Prabhakar explains. "Our eyes play a crucial role in initiating the physiological responses that regulate the body's internal clock. Constant exposure to screen light can disrupt sleep cycles. Using blue light filters or anti-glare tints on glasses can help control this exposure."

Seema also highlighted the potential drawbacks of digital detox, especially for those in digital media. She stated, "While digital detox might sound appealing, it isn't always sustainable for individuals who need constant interaction with digital tools for their work. It can also be counterproductive, leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness instead of relieving stress. Instead, it's better to develop a healthier, more balanced relationship with the digital world. However, practicing digital detox strategies can be a good starting point for this journey." Incorporating these practices into daily routines can lead to significant improvements in overall well-being, making digital detox an essential part of a healthy lifestyle.



# INDIA TRIUMPH OVER UAE BY 78 RUNS

## HARMANPREET, RICHA GHOSH GUIDE INDIA WIN IN WOMEN'S ASIA CUP T20

PTI ■ DAMBULLA

Contrasting fifties from skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and Richa Ghosh were complemented nicely by the bowlers as India notched up a massive 78-run win over UAE in their second match of the ongoing women's Asia Cup T20 tournament here on Sunday. Invited to bat, Kaur played the anchor's role to perfection with a 47-ball 66, while Ghosh produced late charge with an unbeaten 29-ball-64 to power defending champions India to 201 for five, their first-ever 200-plus score in T20Is.

The bowlers, led by Deepti Sharma (2/23), then produced a clinical show to limit UAE to 123 for 7 as India put one foot in the semifinals.

With two wins in as many games, India occupy the top spot in group A with four points and have a Net Run Rate of +3.298.

India will play their third and final group game against Nepal on Tuesday.

Chasing the daunting total, opener Esha Rohit Oza scored a 36-ball 38 (5x4, 1x6) but UAE never were in the chase as they kept losing wickets at regular intervals.



Peace duo of Renuka Singh (1/30) and Pooja Vastrakar (1/27) dismissed Theertha

Satish (4) and Rinitha Rajith (7) as UAE slipped to 24 for 2 in 5.2 overs.

Deepti then struck in her third ball, removing Samaira Dharnidharka (5) but Oza

and Kavisha Egodage (40 not out) played some entertaining shots to score

20 runs in next three overs. However, Tanuja Kanwar (1/14), who had replaced an

injured Shreyanka Patil in the playing XI, had Oza stumped, while Radha Yadav (1/29) got rid of Khushi Sharma (10) as UAE fell to 95 for five in the 16th over.

Heena Hotchandani then became Deepti's second victim and Rithika was run out in the last ball as UAE finished far away from India's total. Earlier, while the 35-year-old Harmanpreet blasted seven fours and a six during her innings, Ghosh slammed as many as 12 boundaries and a maximum, including five consecutive hits to the fence in the final over of the innings bowled by Hotchandani.

Kaur stitched two crucial partnerships, adding 54 off 39 balls with Jemimah Rodrigues and 75 off 45 balls with Ghosh to put India in a commanding position.

Opener Smriti Mandhana (13) blasted a six and a four to give India a good start but an overambitious shot saw her being holed out at mid-off off spinner Egodage in the third over.

Shafali Verma then produced some sensational shots, carting the bowlers for five fours and a six en route an 18-ball 37. But she committed the mistake of

edging a short and wide ball from seamer Dharnidharka as the keeper did the rest. Hotchandani then cleaned up Dayalan Hemalatha (2) in the first delivery of the next over as India slipped to 52 for 3 inside the powerplay. Harmanpreet and Rodrigues (14) then joined hands and kept the scoreboard ticking with the former doing the heavy lifting in the 39-ball 54-run stand, which put India across the 100-mark in the 11th over.

Once Rodrigues was dismissed by Egodage in the 12th over, Ghosh displayed her boundary-hitting prowess, using her cover drive to perfection to rack up 18 runs off Oza's over with four boundaries. Harmanpreet reached her fifty in the 18th over and then clobbered two fours and a six off Samaira as India crossed the 180-run mark. While Harmanpreet was run out in the first ball of the 19th over, Ghosh slammed five fours in the remaining five balls to reach her fifty, her first in the shortest format.

Ghosh reached her fifty in just 26 balls, and in the last over alone she milked 20 runs.



## Leander Paes, Vijay Amritraj inducted into Tennis Hall of Fame

PTI ■ NEWPORT (USA)

Legendary Indian tennis players, Leander Paes and Vijay Amritraj, the heroes of many a historic triumph transcending generations, on Sunday became the first two exponents of the sport from Asia to be inducted into the International Hall of Fame.

Paes, 51, whose list of achievements include the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games men's singles bronze, eight men's doubles and 10 mixed doubles grand slam crowns besides several Davis Cup victories, was given the rare honour in the 'Player Category'.

Vijay Amritraj, 70, reached the men's singles quarterfinals at the Wimbledon and US Open twice each besides guiding India to the Davis Cup finals twice -- in 1974 and 1987. At his peak, he was ranked No.18 in the world in singles and No. 23 in doubles.

He along with Richard Evans was inducted into the Hall of fame in the 'Contributor Category'. "Paes was inducted in the Player Category, while Amritraj and Evans were recognised as a part of the Contributor Category: honoring visionary leaders,

pioneers, or individuals who have made a consummate impact on the sport. The three inductees brings the total to 267 legends from 28 nations represented in the Hall of Fame," said the International Tennis Hall of Fame statement.

Paes spent 37 weeks at No. 1 in the world rankings in doubles, and won 54 doubles titles on tour. He is one of only three men in tennis history to capture a career Grand Slam in both disciplines. Paes, who hails from Kolkata, competed in seven straight Olympic Games between Barcelona, 1992 to Rio, 2016, the most in tennis history.

Reflecting on his journey, Paes said, "A few of us are very blessed to be born into legacy. Today, sitting here at the International Tennis Hall of Fame, I wouldn't have ever dreamt it, playing street cricket and street football barefoot back in Calcutta.

"I am so excited to share this with all of you, representing every young boy and girl around the planet who has a dream in their mind, passion in their hearts and fire in their belly," said Paes, who partnered Mahesh Bhupathi in men's doubles and took Indian tennis to great heights before their acrimonious split.

## Neeraj Chopra's adductor is fine, he is doing intense training now: Coach Bartonietz Singh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The adductor niggle that has troubled Neeraj Chopra in the past couple of months "is fine" now and the reigning Olympic champion has entered the high intensity phase of his Paris preparations, his German coach Klaus Bartonietz told PTI, dismissing concerns surrounding the Indian star's fitness.

The 26-year-old Chopra, who scripted history by winning the javelin throw gold at the Tokyo Olympics, is once again the country's best bet for a top podium finish in the Paris Games beginning on July 26. But his season has been far from perfect in terms of fitness. Bartonietz, however, insisted that things are back on track.

"Everything is according to plan. At the moment, no issue with that (adductor niggle), it's fine, it looks good, hoping to remain like that till the Olympics," the coach, who has been with Chopra for close to five years, told PTI in an exclusive interview from Antalya, Turkey where they are currently based for training.

"It's just over two weeks left in the Olympics, so the intensity of training is high. He is having full throwing sessions." Chopra withdrew from Ostrava Golden Spike on May 28 as a precautionary measure after he felt "something" in his adductor (group of muscles located on inner thighs). He made a strong comeback by winning gold at the Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland on June 18 with a throw of 85.97m.

He opted out of the Paris Diamond League on July 7, insisting that the event was never a part of his



competition calendar this year. Chopra's competition day is just two weeks away with the qualification round scheduled on August 6. Asked about the training routine of Chopra, Bartonietz said, "We have sessions of sprinting, jumping or throwing or weightlifting alternately for activation in the morning. Two sessions, one in morning and one in evening, two to two-and-a-half-hour long each. Bartonietz said the approach is nearly the same as the one adopted before the Tokyo Olympics. Chopra has maintained that he is focusing more on training than competitions this time. He is working on strengthening his blocking leg to mitigate pressure on his groin.

"Yes. Generally, javelin throw is all about it (having fast runway and blocking well). It's very hard to throw far with a poor runway. More the energy you bring with that, the better it is," said the German biomechanics expert. "Three events before Olympics not disadvantage" Chopra competed in five events before Tokyo but in

only three ahead of the Paris Games. His coach does not see anything wrong in cutting down competitions. "You can compete in many events or not, it's tough to say what is enough (number of events). It depends on the situation. Jan Zelezny (Czech legend and world record holder) says he does not compete in too many events (just two before 1992 Olympics where he won gold). "Competitions sometimes disrupt preparation and you start all over again. Competing in high class events can become risky also. Travelling too much with logistics, with javelins around the world, is also not good. "So, it's fine, he has prepared and trained well." Asked about Chopra opting out of the Paris Diamond League on July 7, Bartonietz said, "There were some minor issues, not worth risking by going there. "The venue (of Paris Diamond League) was also not the Olympic stadium (where Chopra will compete on August 6 and 8) anyway, so we decided not to take chances."

Not safe to predict medal None of the top javelin

throwers have performed exceptionally well this season and Bartonietz suggested that the competition could be wide open in the Olympics. As usual, he would not even predict Chopra's chances. "Olympics is a high-stakes and high-pressure situation and anything can happen. Guessing a medal on the basis of statistics is difficult. "All the top throwers are training their best, they want to give their best in Paris and win a medal. Just like them, we can also claim that Neeraj can win. These claims (of medal chances) can be biased and can bungle up also," he pointed out.

German teenager Mex Dehning is the only one to have thrown more than 90m this year, and Bartonietz said it all boils down to momentum. "An 88m throw may not be enough in the Olympics for a medal but it can happen with an 85m also, you never know. It is like a game of poker and on some days you can throw far if you have momentum." Apart from Czech Republic's Jakub Vadlejch (silver medal winner in Tokyo Olympics), Julian Weber of Germany and two-time former world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada, Bartonietz also picked Oliver Helander of Finland as a medal contender.

The Olympic Stadium in Paris will have purple-coloured Mondo tracks, which experts believe give faster timings in races. Asked if Neeraj will gain from the track on the runway, Bartonietz said, "It's basically for sprinters (to have better timings). It may be good for Neeraj also, of course, but it's for all javelin throwers, it can be fast. But it is a matter of full use of the speed."



## India's Kush Maini wins his first-ever F2 Sprint race

PTI ■ BUDAPEST

India's Kush Maini won his maiden Formula 2 Sprint Race at the Hungarian Grand Prix after initial winner Richard Verschoor was disqualified due to a technical infringement.

Following the top of podium finish, the 23-year-old Invicta racing driver added 10 points to his season tally. With the win at the at Hungaroring on Saturday, Maini surpassed Mercedes junior driver Kimi Antonelli in the Formula 2 Drivers Standings to P8 with 66 points under his belt. Placed ninth on the starting grid in round 9 of the F2 Championship, Maini had his work cut out after a tough start on the hard compound tyre, which saw him lose a position on the opening lap to the Prema racing driver Antonelli.

Despite the setback in the opening lap, Maini kept his composure and steadily closed the gap on his rivals, finally bearing fruit on lap 17, when he showcased his acumen and ability to perform under pressure, regaining P2. The final 11 laps saw him not only fiercely defending his position, but also constantly challenging Verschoor -- demonstrating his prowess in handling the demanding Hungarian circuit. The sole Indian driver on the 2024 F2 grid is currently enjoying his career-best season with five podiums, including a race win under his belt. "The team and I, we keep coming back and we keep fighting. I have a great team around me and thank you so much to them for today," Maini said. Maini's strong performance came on the heels of his exhilarating experience at the Goodwood Festival of Speed last weekend, where he had the honour of driving the iconic E20 Lotus, adorned in the Alpine livery, a car once piloted by racing legend Kimi Raikkonen and Romain Grosjean.

## Mandeep's obsession with hockey has grown over the years: Sister

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian hockey forward Mandeep Singh might not have acquired a cult figure like his skipper Harmanpreet Singh or former captain Manpreet Singh but when he is on the prowl upfront, rival defenders dare not take him lightly.

With the 29-year-old prolific goal-getter set to be a vital cog in India's campaign at the Paris Olympics, after being a part of the team that won bronze at the Tokyo Games, his sister Bhupinderjeet Kaur says Mandeep's obsession with hockey has only grown over the years, so much so that if he stays away from the national camp for even a few days, he becomes restless.

"He was so crazy about playing hockey that he would come home from school, skip meals, and head straight to practice. As Mandeep grew older, his commitment only deepened. "Even now, whenever I talk to him during a break, he says he has fun at home but starts missing the camp after 15 days," Kaur said in an episode of 'Hockey Te Charcha', highlighting her brother's passion for the sport.

Mandeep's blinder against Belgium in the semifinal at the Tokyo Olympics and his speed



left the rivals confused but the Red Lions regrouped to beat India 5-2 to end their hopes of a gold medal. India, though, returned with a bronze, making every player a national hero. But Kaur says, Mandeep just doesn't want to be in the limelight. "He prefers to be seen as a simple boy rather than a star," said Kaur. Recalling the celebrations at

home when India won the bronze medal in Tokyo beating Germany, Kaur said it filled everyone with pride. "We were all watching it on TV. Mandeep looked up with tears in his eyes, having a silent moment to himself. At home, everyone was praying, fingers crossed, hoping for victory. When we finally won, it felt like we had achieved something monumental. The atmosphere at home was electric with joy and pride," she said. Mandeep's prolific goal-scoring has seen him being a part of several successful campaigns, including the Junior World Cup title triumph in Lucknow in 2016, Asia Cup gold in 2017, Asian Champions Trophy titles

in 2018 and 2023, Commonwealth Games silver in 2022, Birmingham and the Hangzhou Asian Games gold in 2023, which helped India qualify automatically for Paris. Kaur herself has forged a bond with the entire India team and she says all the players respect her and she wants them to return from Paris a successful bunch. "Once Harmanpreet asked where his rakhis was, and from then on, I started sending it to all of them (players). They call me their sister, and I feel the same way." She is confident India will come back with a gold medal from Paris. "The team has become so perfect that they will win and bring (home) the gold," she said.



## Pakistani actress Sajal Aly to star in Prabhas' *Raja Saab*

Renowned actor Prabhas is enjoying immense success following the release of his most recent movie, *Kalki 2898 AD*, which was directed by Nag Ashwin. Next, Maruthi's horror comedy, *The Raja Saab*, starring Prabhas, is scheduled to release. Sajal Aly, a Pakistani actress, is rumoured to be paired opposite



Prabhas in the next romantic action drama. Sajal Aly is well-known for her part in the late actress Sridevi's movie *Mor*. Even though the casting announcement is pending confirmation, it has already created a lot of talk. With a planned premiere date of shortly, this project is being substantially invested in by Mythri Movie Makers. For this film, composer Vishal Chandrasekhar, who worked well with Hanu Raghavapudi on *Sita Ramam*, will collaborate once more.

## SAIEE MANJREKAR: GIRL-NEXT-DOOR ROLES SUIT ME AT THE MOMENT

At just 22, Saiee Manjekar is already carving out a niche in the film industry and she's comfortable with her current girl-next-door image. The talented actor, who first captured attention with Salman Khan's *Dabangg 3*, is keen to explore diverse roles as her career progresses, acknowledging that her youthful and relatable persona works well for now. Following her debut, Saiee expanded her portfolio with notable performances in films like the Telugu drama *Ghani*, the gripping *Major* and the action-packed *Skanda*. Her upcoming project, *Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha*, is set to offer a fresh perspective, featuring her in the role of a younger version of Tabu's character. The film also stars Ajay Devgn and Shantanu Maheshwari, adding to its anticipated appeal. In a recent conversation, Saiee shared her thoughts on her current image. "The girl-next-

door roles suit me at the moment, as they reflect my youthful and somewhat naive appearance. As I gain more experience and evolve, I believe my roles will diversify naturally. Until then, I'm happy to embrace these roles. When the right time comes, I'm eager to break free from this image and explore different characters," she said. Saiee, the daughter of celebrated actor and filmmaker Mahesh Manjekar, is aware of the industry's unpredictability. "The journey of every actor is unique," she noted. "There are always obstacles, but I see it as a race. Everyone is striving towards the same goal, but the path varies—some face uphill challenges while others coast downhill. It's important to navigate your journey and embrace the experiences along the way." *Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha*, directed by Neeraj

Pandey, tells the poignant story of a couple—played by Ajay Devgn and Tabu—who are separated when the former is imprisoned for murder. Their lives intersect once more, 20 years later, when he is released from jail. Reflecting on her experience working with Tabu, Saiee praised her co-star's effortless presence. "Tabu ma'am's natural ease on set is incredibly inspiring. Her ability to be so genuine and effortless in front of the camera is something I deeply admire," Saiee remarked. The film, which also features Jimmy Shergill, is scheduled for release on August 2. Produced by Narendra Hirawat, Kumar Mangat Pathak (Panorama Studios), Sangeeta Ahir, and Shital Bhatia and presented by NH Studioz and Friday Filmworks, *Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha* promises to be a noteworthy addition to Saiee's growing filmography.



## Ravi Teja's *Mr Bachchan* releasing on August 15

The highly anticipated film *Mr Bachchan*, starring the dynamic Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja and directed by the acclaimed Mass Director Harish Shankar, is gearing up to deliver unparalleled entertainment. Set to hit theatres on Independence Day, August 15, the film will take full advantage of the extended five-day weekend, thanks to the Raksha Bandhan holiday on August 19 (Monday). The premiere is scheduled for August 14, with Ravi Teja's striking and intense look featured prominently in the release date poster. With the shoot complete and post-production in progress, the film's team is actively preparing for a series of updates. The first single, *Star*, has already made waves, topping music charts with its classical and soothing composition, picturesque settings and the sizzling chemistry between Ravi Teja and Bhagyashree Borse. Composer Mickey J Meyer reunites with Harish Shankar for this film, following their successful collaborations on *Subramanyam For Sale* and *Gaddalakonda Ganesh*. *Mr Bachchan* also features notable performances by Jagapathi Babu and Sachin Khedekar. Produced lavishly by TG Vishwa Prasad under the People Media Factory banner, with Vivek Kuchibhotla as co-producer, the film boasts the tagline "*Naam Tho Suna Hoga*." The project benefits from the expertise of cinematographer Ayanka Bose, art director Brahma Kadali and editor Ujwal Kulkarni.



## Rakesh Varre celebrates *Peka Medalu* success, plans star-studded promotions

In a triumphant gathering to celebrate the success of *Peka Medalu*, producer Rakesh Varre and director Nilgiri Mamilla shared their excitement and gratitude with fans and media alike. Held recently, the success meet was a testament to the film's impact and a nod to the robust support it has received since its release. *Peka Medalu*, a film that shines a light on women's empowerment, has been widely praised for its compelling content and heartfelt narrative. Directed by Nilgiri Mamilla and produced under the banner of Crazy Ants Productions, the film stars Vinod Kishan and Anusha Krishna. The movie has resonated strongly with audiences, particularly due to its accessible ticket pricing of Rs.100, making it easier for a broader audience to enjoy the film. At the success meet, Rakesh Varre spoke passionately about the journey of the film. "Whether it's a small or a big



movie, the key to audience engagement is strong content. If the film has substance, people will come to the theaters," Varre said. Reflecting on the film's success, he expressed his emotions and future ambitions. "We worked tirelessly on this project for nearly two years. Today's success has bolstered my confidence and motivated me to

continue creating impactful films." Producer Rakesh Varre also hinted at exciting promotional plans, including special appearances by stars Prabhas and Bunny. This star-studded initiative aims to further celebrate and promote *Peka Medalu*. Director Nilgiri Mamilla conveyed heartfelt thanks to

the media and audience for their support. "The positive response, especially from women, has been overwhelming. I have received more than 50 calls praising the film. I am deeply grateful to our producer, Rakesh Varre and everyone involved in this journey," Mamilla noted. The film's distributor, Dheeraj Mogilineni, played a crucial role in its Telugu release, ensuring it reached a wide audience. As the film continues to enjoy success, Rakesh Varre emphasised the Telugu audience's unwavering support for quality cinema, stating, "The Telugu audience has once again proven that good movies will be successful. I am truly thankful to everyone for their support and for making this film a success." With its powerful message and impressive reception, *Peka Medalu* is poised to make waves both in theatres and beyond.

## Brinda trailer showcases artistic prowess of Trisha Krishnan

Sony LIV has dropped the trailer for its highly anticipated crime-thriller series, *Brinda*, set to release on August 2. The series promises an engaging story of triumph and justice, featuring South cinema icon Trisha Krishnan in her OTT debut. In a time when all hope seemed lost, *Brinda* emerges as a beacon of light, portraying a tale where good ultimately prevails. The series will be available for streaming on Sony LIV in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Bengali and Hindi. Written and directed by Surya Manoj Vangala and produced by Adding Advertising LLP,



*Brinda* showcases the artistic prowess of Trisha Krishnan, renowned for her exceptional talent in South Indian cinema. The screenplay, crafted by Surya Manoj Vangala and Padmavathi Malladi, is complemented by a melodious score from music director Shakthikanth Karthik. The production design is handled by Avinash Kolla, with Dinesh K Babu overseeing cinematography and Anwar Ali serving as the editor. The series features a stellar ensemble cast, including Indrajith Sukumaran, Jaya Prakash, Aamani, Ravindra Vijay, Anand Sami, Rakendu Mouli, among others. With its blend of drama, crime, and mystery, *Brinda* promises to deliver a gripping and captivating viewing experience.

## Committee Kurrollu to hit big screens on August 9

Meega daughter Niharika Konidela is making headlines with her latest venture, *Committee Kurrollu*, a film that promises to captivate audiences with its vibrant storytelling and fresh talent. Scheduled for release on August 9, 2024, the film coincides with the start of Friendship Day week, making it a fitting tribute to the themes of camaraderie and affection. The film has already generated buzz with its engaging promotional content, including enchanting songs and intriguing teasers. Niharika, through her production company, Pink Elephant Pictures, is spotlighting emerging talent in Tollywood, bringing together a promising ensemble cast that includes Sandeep Saroj, Yashwanth Pendyala, and others. Under the direction of debutant Yashwanth, *Committee Kurrollu* is set to offer a refreshing cinematic experience. The film features witty dialogues by Venkata Subhash Cheera and Kondal Rao Addagalla, with Raju Eedurolu's cinematography and Anwar Ali's editing enhancing its appeal. The cast's dynamic performances are complemented by a soundtrack that has already garnered acclaim. The collaboration between Pink Elephant Pictures and Sriradha Damodar Studios marks a significant milestone, with the film showcasing a mix of seasoned and new talent. Niharika Konidela expressed her excitement about launching her production banner with this film and highlighted the collaborative effort with Sriradha Damodar Studios. She believes the

movie's themes and talented cast will resonate with viewers of all ages. Director Yashwanth discussed the film's focus on the complexities of friendship and love, set against a village backdrop. He anticipates that *Committee Kurrollu* will provide an enjoyable and heartfelt cinematic experience, perfectly timed for celebrating Friendship Day. Phani and Jayalakshmi of Sriradha Damodar Studios also praised the film's strong narrative and their fruitful partnership with Pink



Elephant Pictures. They are confident that *Committee Kurrollu* will be a hit, offering a compelling and entertaining story to audiences. With its August 9 release date, *Committee Kurrollu* is poised to offer a memorable celebration of friendship and new talent, eagerly anticipated by movie enthusiasts looking forward to an engaging and heartfelt film experience.

## Celebrity Cricket Carnival: Season 2 set for November

Following the triumph of its debut season in February, the much-anticipated Season 2 of the Celebrity Cricket Carnival is scheduled for November. The event, known for its star-studded lineup, saw participation from prominent Telugu film celebrities including founder Sai Krishna, actors Srikanth, Tarun, Ashwin Babu, Sushant, Aadi Sai Kumar, Samrat, music director Thaman, artist Bhupal and Omkar. Hero Srikanth praised founder Sai Krishna for his dedication to organizing the event for charity, acknowledging the challenge of hosting two seasons in one year. He commended the success of Season 1 and expressed optimism for the upcoming November 15 and 16 events, extending congratulations to



Sai Krishna for his grand efforts. Hero Tarun lauded Sai Krishna for his charitable initiative and expressed confidence that they would also win Season 2 and continue

their support for The Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne. Music Director Thaman described cricket as a stress reliever and noted the enthusiastic reception they

received in Australia during Season 1. He further wished Sai Krishna success for the upcoming season. Hero Ashwin Babu appreciated the TCA for integrating charity into their cricket

matches, underscoring the importance of playing for a good cause. He looked forward to a successful curtain-raiser event in September. Hero Aadi Sai Kumar expressed his excitement for Season 2 and thanked Tarun and Srikanth for including him in the charity cricket match. He hoped for a successful continuation of the event. Hero Samrat shared his enthusiasm for playing cricket, particularly for charity, and hoped that Season 2 would surpass the success of the first. Founder Sai Krishna expressed gratitude to Srikanth and Tarun for their support since the beginning. Reflecting on the success of Season 1, he thanked everyone involved in making it a grand success and supporting the charitable cause.

## Shraddha Srinath joins Vishwak Sen's *Mechanic Rocky*

Actor Vishwak Sen is ready to light up the Diwali season with his upcoming film *Mechanic Rocky*, which is set to release on October 31. This mass action-comedy entertainer is directed by debutant Ravi Teja Mullapudi and produced by the well-known Ram Talluri under SRT Entertainments. The film features Meenakshi Chaudhary and Shraddha Srinath in lead roles, with a captivating triangular love story at its core. The makers have recently unveiled the first look poster of Meenakshi Chaudhary, showcasing her in a chic slit maxi dress and a radiant smile. *Mechanic Rocky* is crafted on a grand scale with a substantial budget and involves a team of distinguished technicians. The music is composed by Jakes Bejoy, while Manojh Katsani handles the cinematography. Anwar Ali is the editor, Kranthi Priyam serves as the production designer and Satyam Rajesh and Vidya Sagar J are the executive producers.

