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Focus on Ayush a core strategy: **Govt**



GLOBAL INVESTORS EYEING INDIA



Thiragabadara Saami is all about how man turns victim of **CIRCUMSTANCES**



QUOTE OF THE DAY



If the government cannot undertake development projects in Adilabad, allow us to merge with Maharashtra. There is a significant Marathi-speaking population in Adilabad who would be open to the idea. In Maharashtra, tribal areas are well developed with good roads and other facilities, unlike in Adilabad. If we had known that Adilabad would not have been neglected after the formation of Telangana and we would not have supported the demand for Statehood



-Dr Palvai Harish Babu, BJP MLA

P4

DON'T MISS...

Dy CM issues strict warning to...

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of Environment and Forests, Pawan Kalyan, has issued a stern directive to the state's top forest officials to take uncompromising action against those involved in poaching and smuggling wildlife. This follows an inquiry into an incident on Tuesday morning where forest department employees were attacked while apprehending a gang smuggling a pangolin (Alugu) in the Vijayapuri South Range forest area of Palnadu district. The Deputy CM emphasised that strict legal measures must...

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Don't charge exorbitant fees...

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that state bar councils cannot charge exorbitant fees for enrolling law graduates as lawyers as it perpetuates systemic discrimination against marginalised and economically weaker sections besides undermining their participation in the legal profession. The levy of exorbitant fees ranging from around 15,000 to over Rs 40,000 by some state bar councils (SBCs) was "contrary to the principle of substantive equality", the top court held, adding the...

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Pulses import jumps 90% in...

India's import of pulses rose 90 per cent annually to 47.38 lakh tonnes during 2023-24 to meet domestic demand, the government informed Parliament on Tuesday. "All India production of pulses has increased from 163.23 lakh tonnes during 2015-16 to 244.93 lakh tonnes during 2023-24 (as per 3rd Advance Estimates)," the Minister of State for Agriculture Ram Nath Thakur said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha. In 2021-22, import of pulses stood at 26.99 lakh tonnes, while exports were at 3.87 lakh tonnes...

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17-year-old McIntosh wins...

Canadian phenom Summer McIntosh claimed the first gold medal of her just-burgeoning career Monday night with a dominating victory in the 400-meter individual medley at the Paris Olympics. The 17-year-old McIntosh collected her first medal of any color on the opening night of swimming, taking a silver in the 400 freestyle behind Ariarne Titmus - and ahead of Katie Ledecky. Now, McIntosh has the most prized color of all. "I try to take every event very individually and just do my..."

-SPORTS

HEAVY INFLOWS CONTINUE AT SRISAILAM DAM

7 crest gates lifted



The Srisailem reservoir, with a maximum capacity of **885** feet, has reached a water level of **883.5** feet. Out of the reservoir's full capacity of **215.807** TMC, **207.04** TMC of water has been impounded.

PNS ■ KURNOOL

Heavy inflow of floodwaters continued at the Srisailem Dam on Tuesday, prompting officials to lift seven crest gates to release water downstream to the Nagarjuna Sagar Project (NSP). Heavy rains in the upper catchment areas, including Maharashtra, have caused a significant rise in the Krishna River's water levels. Consequently, all crest gates of the Jurala project have been opened to release floodwaters to the Srisailem Dam. The Srisailem Dam is currently receiving an inflow of

4.02 lakh cusecs from the Jurala and Sunkesula projects. According to the project engineer, seven crest gates were lifted to 10 feet, releasing over 2.05 lakh cusecs of water to the

downstream Nagarjuna Sagar project. Hydropower generation has also commenced at the Left and Right canals of the Srisailem project.

Continued on Page 2

'JALA HARATHI' BY NAIDU AT DAM TOMORROW

VIJAYAWADA: Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu will participate in the 'Jala Harathi' ceremony at the Krishna River, taking place at the Srisailem Dam on August 1. According to an official release, the Chief Minister will travel by helicopter and land at Sunnipenta village in

Srisailem mandal, Nandyal district. He will visit the hill shrine of Lord Sri Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Swamy from 10:10 to 10:30 am. Following the temple visit, Naidu will participate in the 'Jala Harathi' ceremony at the Srisailem reservoir from 10:45 to 11:05 am.

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Landslides wreak havoc

At least 93 dead, 128 injured in Kerala. Rescuers race against time to find survivors

PNS ■ WAYANAD

In one of the worst natural disasters in Kerala, at least 93 persons were killed and 128 injured in massive landslides triggered by torrential rains in Wayanad on Tuesday. With hundreds trapped under the debris, sparking fears of mounting fatalities, rescue agencies were racing against time to pull out any survivors.

Heart-wrenching scenes and phone conversations of several people crying and pleading to be rescued, as they were either trapped in their houses or had no way to move out of places where they were stranded, were witnessed after the landslides that left a trail of death and destruction in the picturesque hamlets of Mundakkai, Chooralmala, Attamala and Noolpuzha. Speaking at a press conference in

Thiruvananthapuram about massive tragedy, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said: "Due to the intense rainfall, landslides occurred, and an entire region has been destroyed. Ninety-three bodies have been recovered so far."

He said 128 people are undergoing treatment at various hospitals. "Children who went to sleep last night, including infants, are among those who lost their lives in this disaster and are now buried under the earth. The floodwaters swept away many people. Sixteen bodies were recovered from the Chaliyar River in Pothukallu in Malappuram district (neighbouring Wayanad), and body parts were also found," Vijayan said.

"This is one of the most severe natural disasters our state has ever seen," he said.

Continued on Page 2

VOTE-ON-ACCOUNT AP govt issues ordinance

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government issued an ordinance on Tuesday for the Vote-on-Account budget. The ordinance was approved online by the ministers before being sent to the Governor for final approval. The previous Vote-on-Account budget period ends on Wednesday, prompting the new ordinance to extend the budget for an additional four months.

The ordinance allocates approximately Rs 1.30 lakh crore and is designed to cover the demands and grants of 40 departments. Funds have been earmarked for urgent needs, including road repairs and the construction of canteens. Officials estimate that Rs 1,100 crore will be dedicated to road repairs. Anna canteens are expected to open on August 15, with additional funds allocated for matching grants to key central schemes.

This is the first instance in the state's history of issuing a Vote-on-Account budget twice within the same year. The government anticipates needing another two months to gain a clearer picture of the financial situation, with a full-scale budget expected to be introduced in September 2024.

'Dolis' in tribal tracts passe: CM

Says feeder ambulances will be back to ferry pregnant women to hospitals



- Pregnant dormitories for tribal women to be reopened.
- International Tribal Day to be organised next month.
- CM criticises the previous govt for undermining tribal welfare schemes.
- Araku coffee promotion to be revitalised alongside other tribal products.
- Ganja cultivation in tribal areas to be completely stopped.
- Tricar, GCC, and ITDA to be reinstated and their activities accelerated.
- Detailed reports on tribal land use, crop income, and per capita income stressed for better planning and support.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has instructed officials to ensure that incidents of women being carried in Dolis in tribal areas are eliminated. Instead, he has directed the reintroduction of feeder ambulances. The CM has called for the reopening of pregnant dormitories, which were previously provided by the Telugu Desam government for expectant tribal women. The Chief Minister also emphasized the need to organize International Tribal Day next month.

During a review meeting of the

tribal welfare department at the state secretariat on Tuesday, the CM assessed the current status of education, medical, and welfare schemes for tribals.

He criticised the previous YSRCP government for undermining the programs in place from 2014 to 2019. Chandrababu pointed out that initiatives such as NTR Vidyannathi, NTR Vidyannathi Scheme for Civil Service Training, Best Available Schools, and Chandranna Pellikanuka, had significantly aided thousands of families.

Continued on Page 2

Naidu asks officials to design financial security initiatives for Dalits

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has urged officials to design programmes aimed at providing financial security for economically disadvantaged Dalit communities. During a review meeting of the Social Welfare Department at the Secretariat on Tuesday, the CM emphasised the importance of supporting these communities.

The Chief Minister assessed the department's performance and the implementation of various schemes for Dalits. He highlighted that during the Telugu Desam government's tenure from 2014 to 2019, several beneficial schemes, including the Ambedkar Overseas Vidyannathi, NTR Vidyannathi Scheme for Civil Service Training, Best Available Schools, and Chandranna Pellikanuka, had significantly aided thousands of families.

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HC notices to Assembly Secretary, Speaker's Secy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Tuesday heard a petition filed by YSRCP chief and party's Legislative Assembly leader YS Jagan Mohan Reddy seeking official recognition of Leader of the Opposition status. Representing YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, his lawyer argued that the denial of opposition status was done with malicious intent.

When the judge asked whether YS Jagan had submitted a representation to the Speaker, the lawyer



confirmed that it was submitted on the 24th of the previous month. The court issued notices to the Assembly Secretary and the Speaker's Secretary and directed them to file a counter.

Continued on Page 2

NTR BHAROSA PENSIONS TOMORROW

Rs 2737.41 cr allocated: CS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad has directed District Collectors to initiate the NTR Bharosa Pension distribution programme at 6 a.m. on August 1. During a video conference held on Tuesday from the State Secretariat, the Chief Secretary emphasized the need for timely distribution of pensions.

Prasad announced that Rs 2737.41 crore has been allocated for the distribution of 64,82,052 pensions for August. He instructed collectors to coordinate with Lead District Managers to ensure that



Prasad announced that Rs 2737.41 crore has been allocated for the distribution of 64,82,052 pensions for August. He instructed collectors to coordinate with Lead District Managers to ensure that these funds are accessed by Wednesday afternoon.

these funds are accessed by Wednesday afternoon. Additionally, he mandated that Village and Ward Secretariat staff must distribute 96%

of the pensions on the first day and complete 100% distribution by the second day.

Continued on Page 2

NIRBHAYA-LIKE INCIDENT IN TG

Driver rapes woman in moving bus in TG

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A woman passenger was allegedly raped by the driver of a private sleeper bus travelling from Nirmal district of Telangana to Prakasam in Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday. Osmania University Police Station officials said the 26-year-old survivor had called 'Dial 100' and informed the police about the incident after Monday midnight when the bus was on the outskirts of Hyderabad. She said that one of the bus



drivers had placed a blanket on her mouth and had raped her on the moving bus even though there were other passengers in the bus.

Immediately, the police intercepted the bus. When the vehicle slowed down near the Mettuguda area, the suspect driver fled and the woman was admitted to a hospital.

Meanwhile, the person who was driving the bus was taken into custody and is being questioned. A case was registered at the Osmania University Police Station.

Lokesh's 'Praja Darbar' draws strong public response

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for IT, Education, and Electronics, Nara Lokesh's Praja Darbar programme is garnering increasingly positive feedback from the public, with many coming forward with their grievances. Initially restricted to the Mangalagiri constituency, the programme has quickly attracted people from across Andhra Pradesh, who are now submitting their concerns at his Undavalli residence. On Tuesday, differently-abled individuals, women, and patients presented their issues and requested resolutions. Minister Lokesh engaged with them, forwarded the complaints to the relevant departments, and assured prompt action.



State. Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy and TDP National general secretary Kambhampati Rammohan Rao were present to receive the public

petitions. Chinna Yallaiah from Battavaripalli in Darsi Mandal, Chandalaru Gram Panchayat, expressed frustration over not

Minister Lokesh engaged with them, forwarded the complaints to the relevant departments, and assured prompt action.

receiving bills for work done in 2019 under the 'Neeru Chettu' scheme and requested the release of these pending bills. RTC outsourcing employees, feeling overlooked by the previous government, asked the current administration for job security and justice. Minister for Transport, Ramprasad Reddy, promised to address their pay scale concerns.

Villagers from Ghantasala Mandal in Krishna District requested the restoration of a bus service discontinued by the previous gov-

ernment, citing difficulties in travelling from Vijayawada to Ghantasala at night and accessing hospitals. Turaka Chinnababu, a blind resident of Sangam Mandal, Nellore District, reported that his disability pension was halted by the previous government and sought its reinstatement, citing his 100% disability certificate.

Nattala Sivamma from Panyam Constituency complained about encroachment on her 2.28 acres of land and requested its recovery. Minister Ramprasad Reddy promptly contacted officials from that constituency to address the issue. The parents of Purna Sai, a resident of Pedda Elamilli in Eluru District's Unguturu Constituency, sought assistance for their son, who is suffering from liver problems. They appealed for urgent support for his operation, and the minister assured them of help.

AP's CM will have to work in alignment with the Centre!

The days of a chief minister of a state fighting for the interests of his or her state not just with other state or states, but even the Centre are over. Today, amid talk of replicating 'double-engine' sarkars in a tattered federal set-up, it has become essential for a chief minister to work in perfect alignment with the Centre. This is in line with a Telugu proverb that means 'even a mother won't feed her child unless asked'.



thing regarding states, regardless of the genuineness of those demands.

The recommendations made by the Justice Sarkaria Commission on Centre-state relations 44 years ago to ensure a cordial political atmosphere in the country are yet to be implemented in letter and spirit. No concrete efforts have been made by successive governments at the Centre for implementation of the panel's recommendations. Had they been implemented, the atmosphere in the country with regard to Centre-States relations would have been entirely different. With crass politics replacing just federal relations between the Centre and the States, the situation seems to be slowly getting out of hands with several states warring among them-

Chief ministers can no longer afford to adopt a combative spirit towards the Union government for getting their demands fulfilled. Should they adopt a fighting mode, there would be political backlash, straining further the relations between the state concerned and the Centre.

selfes and with the Centre. Today developmental projects in states are at the mercy of the Union government. The states per se do not have the bargaining power, unless they are ruled by parties that provide solid support to the central government.

Chief ministers can no longer afford to adopt a combative spirit towards the Union government for getting their demands fulfilled. Should they

adopt a fighting mode, there would be political backlash, straining further the relations between the state concerned and the Centre.

The present political situation in Andhra Pradesh is such that no chief minister can afford to fight with the Union government for securing the state's legitimate demands and sustainable development. It is but natural that Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu can-



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

not switch to a fighting mode as he is part of the ruling NDA both at the Centre and in the state. Making requests respectfully to the central government is the only option for him to do anything in the state ruled by him.

Former chief minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, who was

in power until recently, did not dare to question the central government on any important matter related to the state. It was his political compulsion to maintain amicable relations with the Centre as criminal cases have been filed against him by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Jagan had to extend his party's support to crucial bills introduced by the ruling NDA in Parliament despite non-cooperation on the part of the central government on key issues related to AP.

Telugu Desam Party founder-president and four-time chief minister of combined AP NT Rama Rao can be considered the last CM who had adopted a fighting mode against the Centre. He asserted that the state of AP has a right to demand funds/financial assistance from the central

government. Due to this fighting spirit, he was ultimately made leader of the opposition alliance at the national level.

The National Front (NF) was formed at Chennai (then Madras) on 18 August 1988 to fight the then Congress regime headed by prime minister Rajiv Gandhi. No other chief minister of AP can be compared with NTR when it comes to waging a political war against the Union government. It was a bitter pill for NTR to swallow when he lost power in the 1989 elections at a time when the National Front had come to power at the Centre.

Dr Marri Channa Reddy, who took the reins of AP for the second time when the Congress stormed to power in 1989, had a tough time in facing then NF government headed by VP Singh at the Centre. Channa Reddy strove to get the World Bank's Rs.700

crore assistance for the Cyclone Emergency Reconstruction Project (CERP), despite obtaining the Centre's permission following the devastating cyclone that hit the state on 9 May, 1990. This project later set the badly damaged Godavari and Krishna deltas to ensure proper irrigation, drainage and flood control systems.

The promises of conferring Special Category Status (SCS) on residual AP and implementation of certain assurances made to it in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act-2014 remain unfulfilled, obviously due to the state's continual weak negotiations with the Union government. Such genuine demands can be achieved only by adopting a fighting mode against the Union government. Sadly, those days are over, more so in the case of Andhra Pradesh.

Dy CM issues strict warning to poachers

Says attacks on Forest Dept employees won't be tolerated

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of Environment and Forests, Pawan Kalyan, has issued a stern directive to the state's top forest officials to take uncompromising action against those involved in poaching and smuggling wildlife. This follows an inquiry into an incident on Tuesday morning where forest department employees were attacked while apprehending a gang smuggling a pangolin (Alugu) in the Vijayapuri South Range forest area of Palnadu district.

The Deputy CM emphasised that strict legal measures must be enforced against anyone found guilty of poaching wildlife, destroying forest resources, illegal transportation, or attacking forest staff. He also recalled a personal

The Deputy CM emphasised that strict legal measures must be enforced against anyone found guilty of poaching wildlife, destroying forest resources, illegal transportation, or attacking forest staff. He also recalled a personal experience from his school days in Ongole, where he witnessed the brutal killing of a pangolin.



experience from his school days in Ongole, where he witnessed the brutal killing of a pangolin.

In response to the recent attack, the Deputy Chief Minister held discussions with the Palnadu District Collector and Superintendent of Police, who provided a detailed

account of the incident. Pawan Kalyan urged immediate and appropriate action against those responsible for the assault on forest staff. Additionally, he stressed the importance of raising awareness among local communities about the laws protecting forests and wildlife.

US Consul General meets Pawan Kalyan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

US Consul General Jennifer Larson held a courtesy meeting with Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan at his residence in Mangalagiri on Tuesday morning. Larson congratulated Pawan Kalyan on his new role and presented him with a commemorative memento.

During the meeting, Kalyan briefed the US delegation on investment opportunities and development projects in Andhra Pradesh.

The Deputy Chief Minister emphasised the State's political stability and its welcoming stance towards investments. He highlighted the skills of the state's youth, aligning with emerging technologies, and urged for opportunities to leverage their talents.

Pawan Kalyan requested support for students pursuing higher education in the United States and reiterated the government's commitment to promoting environmentally friendly initiatives.



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Joining Larson were Frank Talluto, Chief of US Consul Political and Economic Affairs, along with Shrimali Kare and Siba Prasad Tripathy.

AP Red Cross Chairman visits flood-hit ASR district

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

ASR district is one of the worst affected and many villages and tribal hamlets were inundated with heavy and continuous rains for the last week.

Dr Sridhar Reddy, Chairman, Indian Red Cross Society, AP State Branch has personally visited the Godavari flood-affected villages and hamlets in ASR Paderu district braving the adverse weather conditions and bad transport facilities.

AP Red Cross pressed into service Teams of Red Cross Volunteers at Chintoor to distribute tarpaulins and mosquito nets to the families stranded in the water and lost their thatched huts.

The Chairman has dis-



cussed with A.S. Dinesh Kumar, Collector, ASR Paderu district and assured to assist the official machinery in conducting medical camps in the affected villages apart from providing some more Tarpaulins and Mosquito nets.

Dr C Venkateswara Reddy, State Treasurer, Dr Srinivasa Reddy, State MC Member

accompanied the Chairman and participated in the relief activities.

AS Dinesh Kumar, the Collector and President, the Indian Red Cross Society, ASR district has appreciated and thanked the AP Red Cross for its timely supply of the much-needed tarpaulins and mosquito nets to the tribal families

Naidu asks officials...

Continued from Page 1

However, he criticized the current YSRCP government for cancelling these programs, arguing that such actions have negatively impacted Dalit communities.

Officials reported that under the Telugu Desam government, 83 per cent of the allocated funds for social welfare were utilized, compared to only 67 per cent under the YSRCP government.

The Chief Minister stressed the need for continued support for the most impoverished groups and called for the creation of essential programs to alleviate their financial hardships. He emphasized that education and employment opportunities are crucial for improving their lives.

Minister Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy and relevant department officials were present at the meeting.

Nobel laureate Kremer lauds AP's PAL initiative

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Michael Kremer, a University of Chicago professor and Nobel Laureate (2019) recognised for his research on the Personalised Adaptive Learning (PAL) programme, commended the Andhra Pradesh government's implementation of PAL, noting it as superior to that in other states.

During his visit on Tuesday to the State Office of Samagra Shiksha in Patamata,



Vijayawada, Kremer engaged in discussions about the PAL program's rollout in the state.

The meeting was attended by Secretary of School Education Kona Shashidhar, Samagra Shiksha State

Project Director B Srinivasa Rao, Central Square Foundation representatives Sanjay and Aishwarya, School Education IT representative Kishore, SAMO representative Madhavi Latha

D, and others. The agenda included a review of PAL's implementation and its impact on learning outcomes, research inputs by the Development Innovation Lab (DIL), the expansion of PAL to 700 schools under the SALT project, and the extension of PAL remediation at the field level. The discussion also covered best practices from other states and evaluations through field visits to PAL schools.

'Jala Harathi' by...

Continued from Page 1

During his visit, irrigation officials will provide updates on inflows and water levels. The Chief Minister will also tour the Srisaillam Right Bank Hydro Power Station, the release noted. Later, the Chief Minister will distribute NTR Bharosa pensions directly to beneficiaries and visit a mulberry plantation and sericulture shed. He will also engage with the residents of K Gundumala village at the Kariyamma Devi temple.

HC notices...

Continued from Page 1

The court adjourned the hearing for three weeks.

YS Jagan recently filed a petition in the High Court, alleging that the Speaker was deliberately delaying the recognition of opposition status for his party, despite the party winning 11 seats in the Legislative Assembly elections. He claimed that this delay was due to an unwillingness to grant opposition status.

Landslides wreak havoc...

Continued from Page 1

He said 34 bodies have been identified, and 18 of them have been handed over to relatives of the deceased persons. More than 3,000 people have been shifted to 45 relief camps set up in the district, Vijayan added.

He said the first landslide occurred at 2 am, followed by another at 4.10 am, adding that Meppadi, Mundakkai and Chooralmala areas have been cut off and the Chooralmala-Mundakkai road has been destroyed. The Vellarimala GHSS school has been completely buried under the earth and the Iruvazhinjipuzha river has split into two, Vijayan said, giving details of the destruction caused by the landslides and rain. "There are still people trapped under the earth and swept away by the floodwaters. Efforts to find them will continue. All possible resources and methods will be used to continue the rescue operations," Vijayan said.

Rescue teams comprising the Army, Navy and NDRF are collectively looking for survivors amid the rough weather, and multiple agencies are working in tandem to provide critical assistance to those affected. To reinforce the rescue efforts, additional columns comprising 200 soldiers, medical teams and equipment from the Defence Security Corps (DSC) Centre in Kannur and the Territorial Army from Kozhikode have also been pressed into service.

The bodies of the deceased are being taken to various hospital morgues for identification and autopsy.

Wailing relatives of missing persons were seen desperately searching among the bodies to find loved ones.

Some people broke down at the shock of seeing the cold and injured bodies of their kin, while others heaved a sigh of relief at not finding them among the deceased.

The Kerala government has sought further assistance from the nation's defence forces to augment the rescue teams. A 43-member team from the 122 Infantry Battalion (TA) MADRAS has been deployed to aid in the efforts. In a bid to rapidly evacuate the stranded persons, two Indian Air Force helicopters from the Air Force Station in Sulur near Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu have been dispatched to the affected area.

Furthermore, the Navy's River Crossing Team from the Ezhimala Naval Academy in Kannur is set to join the rescue efforts, following a request made by the Kerala government.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed concern over the incident. He said he spoke to Chief Minister Vijayan and assured all possible help from the Centre to the state.

Modi also announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased. The injured would be given Rs 50,000.

Meanwhile, Congress sources in New Delhi said that Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and party General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will visit landslide-hit Wayanad on Wednesday morning.

'Dolis' in tribal...

Continued from Page 1

The CM discussed the promotion of Araku coffee, noting that while it had been a priority, the subsequent government failed to support the sale of tribal products alongside Araku coffee. He highlighted the national and international demand for tribal products and suggested that leveraging this could bring significant improvements to tribal livelihoods.

He proposed promoting agriculture, including honey, horticulture, and coffee, in tribal areas to achieve better results.

CM Chandrababu instructed officials to take measures to completely halt Ganja cultivation in tribal regions. He called for the reinstatement of Tricar, GCC, and ITDA, urging an acceleration of their activities. The CM also directed officials to review and enhance tribal welfare schemes implemented by the Center, and to develop plans to secure state funding.

'CM's claims on land survey contradictory'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Ambati Rambabu has strongly criticised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for his contradictory statements and false claims about the comprehensive land survey initiated by the previous government.

Speaking at the party's central office, Rambabu emphasised the survey's importance in resolving land disputes and ensuring rightful ownership. He accused Naidu of spreading lies and reversing his stance on the land survey, which he initially opposed, citing potential harm to farmers. Rambabu highlighted the previous government's efforts, including employing 14,630 surveyors to cover millions of agricultural and private properties.

YSRCP govt neglected Jal Jeevan Mission: V'wada MP



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In the Vijayawada Parliamentary Constituency, only 59% of the 2.67 lakh eligible rural households have received water connections through the Jal Jeevan Mission over the past five years.

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivnath highlighted this issue in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, citing the previous government's negligence for the lack of progress and calling for regular maintenance audits of the water tap connections provided under the scheme.

MP Sivnath criticized the previous administration for failing to maintain quality standards in the Jal Jeevan Mission.

He pointed out that due to this negligence, the drinking water supplied has become contaminated, leading to health issues.

He reported that around 300 people in the NTR district suffered from diarrhoea after consuming the contaminated water, with fatalities occurring in A Kondur and Jaggaiahpet areas. The MP expressed concern over the growing fear among residents regarding the adverse health effects of the contaminated water.

Rs 2737.41 cr allocated...

Continued from Page 1

The Chief Secretary stressed the importance of preventing a recurrence of issues experienced in West Godavari, Kadapa, and Anantapur districts in July. He underscored that strict disciplinary action will be taken against those responsible for any irregularities, with suspended personnel facing immediate consequences. Shashibhushan Kumar, Chief Secretary of the State Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Department, who joined the meeting virtually, assured that all necessary measures for pension distribution are in place. He acknowledged past problems with Aadhaar authentication due to server issues in July and pledged to work with UIDAI officials to resolve these issues. The meeting was attended by SERP CEO G. Veerapandyan, Additional Secretary of Finance Department J. Niwas, District Collectors, DRDA PDs, and other officials.

7 crest gates lifted...

Continued from Page 1

Officials have cautioned villagers living downstream of the Srisaillam Dam, warning them of potential flooding in their areas. The Srisaillam reservoir, with a maximum capacity of 885 feet, has reached a water level of 883.5 feet. Out of the reservoir's full capacity of 215.807 TMC, 207.04 TMC of water has been impounded. Meanwhile, thousands of visitors have flocked to the Srisaillam Dam to witness the spectacular sight of lakhs of cusecs of water gushing down.

Police have faced challenges in regulating the heavy vehicular traffic to the site.

10 TMC water to be released to Pulichintala Project from NSP

Krishna District Irrigation Advisory Board meeting passes unanimous resolution

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

During a meeting held by the Krishna District Irrigation Advisory Board (IAB) at the Collector's office in Machilipatnam, a resolution was unanimously passed to release 10 TMCs of water from the Nagarjuna Sagar Project (NSP) to the Pulichintala Project. The move aims to address the irrigation water requirements in the Krishna Delta, particularly for the ongoing Kharif paddy cultivation.

The meeting, chaired by Krishna District Collector DK Balaji, was attended by Minister for Mines & Geology and Excise Kollu Ravindra, as well as several MLAs including Mandali Buddha Prasad (Avanigadda), Kemineni Srinivas (Kaikaluru), Kagitha Krishna Prasad (Pedana), and Varla Kumar Raja (Pamaruru).

The Water Resources Department (WRD) officials highlighted the current low water storage at the Pulichintala Project, which stands at only 0.8 TMCs. They emphasised the necessity of transferring water from the NSP to meet the needs of approximately 13.07 lakh acres of Ayacut in the combined Krishna, Guntur, West Godavari, and Prakasam districts. The Pulichintala Project has a total storage capacity of 45.77 TMCs.



Minister Kollu Ravindra addressing the Krishna District Irrigation Advisory Board meeting held at the Collector's office in Machilipatnam on Tuesday

The IAB meeting resulted in several significant resolutions. The release of 10 TMCs from the NSP to the Pulichintala Project was approved to ensure sufficient irrigation water supply during the current Kharif season. Also, another resolution was passed to relocate the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) headquarters from Visakhapatnam to Vijayawada, due to its closer proximity to the Krishna catchment area.

The meeting resolved to recruit Lascars through an outsourcing system and requested the government to release Rs.32.10 crore to interlink the

The Water Resources Department (WRD) officials highlighted the current low water storage at the Pulichintala Project, which stands at only 0.8 TMCs. They emphasised the necessity of transferring water from the NSP to meet the needs of approximately 13.07 lakh acres of Ayacut in the combined Krishna, Guntur, West Godavari, and Prakasam districts. The Pulichintala Project has a total storage capacity of 45.77 TMCs.

Polavaram Right Main Canal at 137.29 km with the Eluru Canal, as proposed by Gannavaram MLA Yarlagadda Venkata Rao. An assurance was

given to provide irrigation water to all areas within the Krishna Delta.

Addressing the meeting, Minister Kollu Ravindra criti-

cised the previous YSRCP government for neglecting the Pulichintala Project, resulting in inadequate water storage and operational issues including the neglect of the Pattiseema Lift Irrigation Scheme.

He praised Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's efforts, which have led to the release of floodwaters from the Srisailem Project to the NSP, benefiting Delta farmers.

He pledged that the TDP-led NDA government will ensure adequate water supply to the Krishna Delta. The previous government did not bother about the desilting of canals, and drains, he said.



Two-bin system for waste disposal must for hotels in Tirumala

All eateries should set up complaint/suggestion boxes: TTD EO

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

With an intention to provide a hygienic environment and qualitative food to the scores of pilgrims visiting Tirumala, TTD EO J Syamala Rao has instructed that all eateries including big and small hotels should maintain two garbage systems for waste disposal and set up a complaint/suggestion box to get feedback from the devotees.

A review meeting on the big and Janata Canteens, and APTDC hotels was held at the meeting hall of Padmavathi Rest House in Tirupati on Monday. Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdhary, JEOS Goutami and Veerabrahmam were also present.

The EO instructed that all hotels in Tirumala should separate garbage as wet waste and dry waste and dispose of them often for maintaining a hygienic environment on the hotel premises. The hotels have to display the following guidelines: No synthetic colours/banned colours are used in the food items, Tasting salt shall not be recommended for those below 12 years, Hotel is not given for any sub-lease. The rates of each dish also should be displayed.

He added that the big and Janata Canteens have to display the names of their hotels. The hotels have to submit the revised rates to the Revenue section of TTD. "For all canteens in Tirumala, the Food Safety Department will give

FoS&T training after August 5. After that the canteens and eateries will be inspected. Even the water bottles should not be sold for more than Rs.20. During the inspection, if anyone is found violating the prescribed guidelines, stern action will be taken," he asserted.

Later, the activities and issues related to Annappasadam, Donor Cell and Health departments were also reviewed.

Among others, Annappasadam DyEO Rajendra Kumar, Catering Special Officer Shastry, DyEO Donor Cell Selvam, DyEO Health Asha Jyothi, Additional HO Dr Sunil Kumar and others were present at the meeting.

ITDA's 'Super 50' initiative gains momentum

PNS ■ PADERU

In a remarkable effort to uplift and inspire tribal students, Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Paderu Project Officer V. Abhishek has called upon the students of Guthulaputtu Tribal Welfare Girls' Ashram School and Digumoda Puttu Tribal Welfare Boys' Ashram School to set ambitious goals and diligently pursue their dreams. This motivational push came during his visit on Tuesday, where he reviewed the Super 50 educational initiative designed to enhance the academic performance of Class X students.

Abhishek's visit was marked by a strong emphasis on academic excellence, urging stu-



dents to aim high in their exams and secure admissions to prestigious colleges. He highlighted the importance of pursuing higher education at esteemed institutions like IIT, IIIT, and NIT, which can open doors to brighter futures. In

addition, Abhishek provided valuable guidance on preparing for competitive exams such as NEET and MSET, and offered insights into the preparation for APSSC, Group-1, Group-2, and UPSC Civil Service exams, encouraging

students to aspire to prestigious roles like IAS, IPS, IFS, and IRS.

Abhishek recommended that teachers screen informative films on Sundays, promoting a culture of continuous learning and curiosity. This initiative is designed to supplement traditional classroom education with engaging, real-world knowledge.

The event saw robust participation from the Deputy Director of the Tribal Welfare Department I. Kondal Rao, ATW OL. Rajani, and a cadre of dedicated teachers. Their combined efforts signify a major stride towards empowering tribal communities through focused educational initiatives and inspired aspirations.

Tenders invited for Unity Mall

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Handloom and Textiles Commissioner G. Rekha Rani, IAS announced on Tuesday that tenders are being invited for the construction of the Unity Mall in Madhurawada, Visakhapatnam district. This initiative is part of the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2023-24, reflecting the State's commitment to enhancing regional infrastructure and economic vitality. The Unity Mall, slated to be built on a five-acre plot of land, aims to boost local economic growth and create employment opportunities. The tender documents, which outline the specifics of the project, are currently undergoing judicial review.

Interested bidders, along with the general public, are encour-



aged to participate in the review process. Suggestions, comments, and objections can be submitted through the online platforms: Judicial Preview, Handlooms AP, or via email at apjudicialpreview@gmail.com and Handlooms_textiles@yahoo.co.m. The deadline for submitting feedback is 5 PM on August 6. For those interested in reviewing the tender documents, they are available on the aforementioned websites.

City Police crack down on illegal activities in spas

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a major crackdown on drug trafficking, illegal activities, and antisocial behaviour, the Visakhapatnam city police have launched extensive raids on spa and massage centres across the city. Under the supervision of senior officials, 71 teams, comprising approximately 200 personnel, conducted simultaneous raids on 71 spa and massage centres.

During the operation, several instances of unruly behaviour and anti-social activities were detected, particularly in the Dwarka Police Station area. This led to the registration of an FIR (Cr.No. 117/2024) under U/s 144(2) of the BNS Act, Sec 3(1), 4(1), and 5(1)(a) of the Prevention of Immoral Trafficking Act. The police arrested the manager and an associate of the implicated spa/massage centre and rescued six women victims, who were subsequently taken to a rehabilitation centre.

In addition to the police action, the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) issued notices to several establishments operating without valid trade licences, labour certificates, and

GVMC issues notices to several establishments operating without documents

GST certificates. A total of 21 spa and massage centres were identified for non-compliance with regulatory standards, and notices were issued to relevant authorities for further action.

Despite multiple raids over time, certain individuals continue to engage in antisocial activities within the city's spa and massage centres. Managers have been repeatedly informed about the mandatory rules and regulations they must follow. City Police Commissioner Dr Sankhabrata Bagchi has assured the public that strict legal action will be taken against those violating the rules or engaging in antisocial activities. He also encouraged residents to report any issues or instances of police misconduct, including bribery, and promised complete confidentiality for those who provide information. Residents are urged to contact the city police to report issues, with the assurance that their details will be kept confidential.

Principal Secretary unveils ambitious plan for AU's development

State-of-the-art, industry-oriented labs

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Principal Secretary of the Higher Education Department, Saurabh Gaur, has unveiled a plan to elevate Andhra University into a top-tier institution. During his visit to the university on Tuesday, Gaur presented a comprehensive vision designed to fundamentally reshape the institution into a premier hub of academic excellence and industry readiness.

Central to this ambitious plan is a robust emphasis on skill development and industry integration. Gaur announced the introduction of state-of-the-art, industry-oriented labs in each department. He highlighted the necessity for interdisciplinary collaboration and a sweeping overhaul of admissions procedures, academic calendars, and facilities to align with national benchmarks. The overarching goal is to catapult Andhra University into the top 50 universities across India.

To achieve this, the university will prioritise increasing student awareness of opportunities beyond traditional academics. This includes the introduction of skill-based courses and strategic partnerships with incubation centres, technology hubs like STPI, and Visakhapatnam's burgeoning tech ecosystem. Gaur's vision is for Andhra University to

become a model for other State universities, demonstrating excellence in integrating academic learning with industry requirements.

Well-being of students will be a cornerstone of the new plan. The university is set to implement comprehensive mental health services and enforce a strict zero-tolerance policy against substance abuse, ensuring a supportive environment for all students. During his visit, Gaur, accompanied by Vice-Chancellor Prof. G. Sasibhushana Rao, also toured the Avanti Skill Training Centre. He recommended integrating the centre with the Prime Minister's Kaushal Yojana to further bolster skill development initiatives. Gaur concluded his visit with an address to first-year engineering students, detailing the transformative plans and their anticipated impact.

Prof. Sasibhushana Rao provided insights into the university's current academic and research activities, while Prof. P. Umamaheswari Devi, Vice-Chairperson of the AP State Council of Higher Education, along with other officials, engaged in discussions about the plan's implementation. This ambitious initiative marks a significant new chapter for Andhra University, positioning it as a leader in higher education and setting a new standard for excellence in the State.

Unity in focus at Indian American Christians' meet

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Indian Christian Day, also known as Yesu Bhakti Divas, was recently celebrated in Boston, drawing hundreds of Indian American Christians to the Boston Church of Christ in Framingham, MA. The event honoured the nearly 2,000-year-old legacy of the Indian Christian community, focusing on the person and message of Jesus Christ in India.

Part of a month-long programme, the celebration highlighted the extraordinary history and heritage of Indian Christians. Bishop Sudharshan Komanapalli from Manna Ministries International delivered the keynote address on the theme of "Christian Unity."

Numerous churches and fellowships participated, including



the Tabernacle of Holy Spirit in Shrewsbury, Boston Indian Christian Fellowship, New Hampshire Outreach Group, Jesus Family Ministry (JFM) Church in Rhode Island, New England Indian Christian Fellowship (NEICF), Agape Partners, Boston Christian Assembly, Boston Indian Tamil Church, New Life Church, New England Tamil Church, United Boston Christian Confederation, Indian

Community Church, Carmel Marthoma Church of Boston, International Church of God, Mount Hope Church, Ascension CSI Church, CSI Congregation of New England, Park Street Church, and St. Basil Syriac Orthodox Church.

The grassroots movement was driven entirely by volunteers and grassroots donations, highlighting its non-political and non-sectarian nature. The event was inclusive, welcoming partic-

ipants from various languages and traditions. The Boston celebration featured a range of activities that fostered community spirit and highlighted the rich cultural heritage of Indian Christians. Inspirational speeches and greetings from representatives of 25 Indian Christian Fellowships in the New England area shared messages of faith, unity, and the enduring legacy of Indian Christians.

Bituminous road brings hope to hilltop villages

Absence of proper infrastructure poses immense challenges for these villages

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

After enduring years of hardship and relentless protests, the tribals living in the hilltop villages of YB Patnam, Pedagaruvu, and Losingi finally heave a sigh of relief. District Collector Vijaya Krishna has approved the construction of a vital Bitumen Top (BT) road to connect these isolated villages. The Rs 2.5 crore project will primarily be funded through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA), which will cover 75 per cent of the costs (Rs 1.87 crore), with the remaining 25 per cent (Rs 62.50 lakh) provided by a convergence grant. The absence of proper infra-



structure has posed immense challenges for these villages. In a bid to find a solution, villagers constructed a makeshift road in

2020 using their resources. Unfortunately, the road was washed away during the monsoon, leaving them cut off from

essential services once again. The lack of a reliable road has had severe consequences, particularly in terms of healthcare. Sick individuals and pregnant women had to be transported on makeshift stretchers to reach the nearest road for further travel to hospitals. Collecting pensions and monthly rations has been equally daunting due to the treacherous terrain. Additionally, the absence of an Anganwadi centre and access to clean drinking water has exacerbated their difficulties.

The approval of the BT road construction has been met with immense relief and gratitude from the villagers. "We are thankful to the Collector for sanctioning the road. This road

will not only help us commute daily to work, but also make it easier to transport pregnant women and the elderly to hospitals on time. It will also improve access to ration depots and pensions. We hope this development will bring good tap water connections to our villages," said a village elder.

The District Panchayat Raj Engineering Officer has been directed to initiate the road construction immediately, adhering to all government guidelines. Key directives for the project include generating work commencement letters within seven days and completing the project by the end of the current financial year.

To ensure transparency and

accountability, the Collector has mandated detailed documentation of the entire process. This includes recording the project's status before commencement, during execution, and after completion, with all reports sent to the project director at the District Water Management Agency (DWMA) Office. Quality control teams will regularly check the project's progress and maintain separate work files for MGNREGA works, including all approvals and resolutions. This development marks a significant step towards improving the quality of life for the tribals in Rolugunta Mandal, promising better connectivity and access to essential services.

Steps to prevent crop submergence announced

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Special Chief Secretary of the Agriculture and Cooperation departments, Budithi Rajasekhar, announced on Tuesday that the government is considering a permanent solution to prevent agricultural fields from being submerged by floodwaters every year.

During a visit to Tadepalligudem Rural mandal, Rajasekhar assessed the affected crops in Nandamuru, Arulla, Nawabupalem, Jagannadhapuram, Madhavaram, and Apparaopeta in West Godavari district.

Accompanied by State Agriculture Director Delhi Rao, District Collector C Nagarani, and MLA Boliseti Srinivas, he inspected the damage and interacted with local farmers.

Farmers voiced their concerns about the significant crop losses they endure annually due to floods and rains, requesting a permanent solution to this issue. They also highlighted their interest in cultivating the PR 126 variety of rice, which has a shorter crop duration. However, they are currently forced to sell through middlemen due to the lack of government approval for this variety at grain procurement centres.

The farmers urged the gov-



ernment to allow official procurement of the PR 126 variety and to provide immediate compensation for the current crop damage. Rajasekhar assured them that his visit aimed to draw the government's attention to the flood-affected fields and to direct officials to prepare detailed reports on the crop damage. He promised that the government would consider ways to provide compensation once the details are received. Acknowledging the breaches in embankments caused by

annual rains and floods, Rajasekhar emphasised that the government is committed to finding a permanent solution. He advised farmers to cultivate short-duration rice varieties in flood-prone fields and pledged to coordinate with the Civil Supplies and Agriculture Departments to establish grain procurement centres in Tadepalligudem in advance, eliminating the need for middlemen. Rajasekhar reassured farmers of the government's support and urged them not to worry.

He also mentioned the regulations of the SDRF and NDRF regarding crop loss subsidies and said the government is considering providing input subsidies. Later, Rajasekhar inspected the collapsed bridge over the Errakalava between Madhavaram and Kamalapuram, which has not been reconstructed since it was washed away four years ago. Farmers pointed out a temporary road set up for transportation below the collapsed bridge.

Relief measures to continue until floods recede: Nimmala



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Minister for Water Resources Development, Nimmala Ramanaidu, has assured the public that relief measures will continue until the Godavari floodwaters recede, urging flood victims not to worry. The Minister visited the flood-affected village of Badava in Yelamanchili mandal on Tuesday.

Ramanaidu travelled by tractor through floodwaters to reach the village, where he waded through the inundated roads to interact with the victims and listen to their concerns.

He also inspected the submerged paddy fields and distributed 25 kg of seed and essential commodities to the affected residents.

The Minister noted that the Srisailem reservoir was receiving heavy inflows and would soon be full. Water is being released to the Rayalaseema region through the Pothireddypadu regulator. Ramanaidu promised action against officials who failed to release water from the Handri Neeva project despite orders.

Lambasting former Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, Ramanaidu accused the YSRCP-led government

of indebting Andhra Pradesh by Rs 14 lakh crore. He alleged that the former Chief Minister borrowed extensively, mortgaging all government departments.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has taken all necessary steps to implement welfare schemes for the poor despite the state's financial constraints. The Chief Minister is working diligently to improve the financial situation of the state," Minister Ramanaidu asserted. He was accompanied by several officials, including Special Officer for Flood Relief, B. Venkataramana.

Officials directed to complete RIDF works of NABARD expeditiously

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi has directed the officials concerned to take steps to carry out Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) works being taken up by the NABARD in the district.

The Collector held a meeting with the officials here on Tuesday and reviewed the progress of RIDF works. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that with the funds of the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund, various projects are being undertaken by 11 departments in the district to provide various infrastructure facilities in rural areas.

"Construction of additional classrooms, toilets in government schools, infrastructure in schools, social welfare department, infrastructure in schools and hostels as part of tribal welfare, rural, Panchayati Raj through RWS, construction of roads through R&B, construction of Anganwadi centres in ICDS have been taken up at various places," the Collector said, adding that the construction of government hospitals, advanced medical equipment and other infrastructure will also be provided under the scheme.

Collector Vetri Selvi said that these schemes would be



very useful to the people and that the works should be completed quickly and made available for the people's use. "The works are being carried out with the NABARD Rural Infrastructure Development Fund. The officials of various departments should work in coordination and complete the works on time," the Collector told the officials. She reviewed the completed, in-progress and yet-to-be-started works with the officials of the concerned departments. The Collector directed the officials to attend the next meeting with full knowledge and reports, and instructed them to expedite and complete the works expeditiously. She ordered the officials to submit her reports on the completed works.

NABARD DDM Anilkant, Agriculture JD SK Abib Basha and DEI Abraham were among those who attended the meeting.

Plea to raise salary of VRAs



APRSA president Bopparaju Venkateswarlu and others submitting a representation to Revenue Minister Anagani Satya Prasad seeking to resolve VRAs' issues at the Secretariat at Velagapudi on Tuesday

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Revenue Services Association (APRSA) president Bopparaju Venkateswarlu has demanded rise in salaries of Village Revenue Assistants (VRAs), who have not received a pay raise in the past six years. During the tenure of the TDP government from 2014 to 2019, the VRAs' wages were increased from Rs. 6,500 to Rs. 10,500 per month. However, there was no salary hike during the five years of the YSRCP rule.

Bopparaju Venkateswarlu, along with the leaders of the AP Village Revenue Assistants Association (APVRAA), sub-

mitted a representation to Minister for Revenue, Stamps, and Registrations Anagani Satya Prasad at the secretariat at Velagapudi on Tuesday. He said that VRAs receive lower wages compared to other government employees. Previously, the honorarium for VRAs was Rs. 1,700 per month, which was increased to Rs. 3,000 in 2011, and further raised to Rs. 6,500 per month in 2014 and Rs. 10,500 per month in 2018.

Venkateswarlu emphasised that despite working tirelessly, VRAs only receive Rs. 10,500 per month, whereas MDU operators receive Rs. 21,000 per month. He also mentioned that despite sever-

al representations to the previous government, no action was taken. He noted that the government had recovered Rs. 13.44 of DA, which was paid to the VRAs from 2018 to 2021.

Additionally, he urged the government to provide promotions for VRAs to positions such as night watchmen, office subordinates, and chainmen, as well as VRO Grade 2, and other equal posts, in line with government orders. Venkateswarlu also requested the return of the recovered DA to the VRA bank accounts.

APRSA leaders Garikapati Brahmaiah, RV Rajesh, D Srinivas, and others were also present.

Give funds or merge with Maharashtra: Sirpur MLA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharatiya Janata Party legislator from Sirpur Dr Palvai Harish Babu has voiced his frustration over the lack of progress in Adilabad district and suggested that if there is no further development, the district should consider merging with Maharashtra.

During a discussion in the State Assembly on budget allocation on Tuesday, Harish Babu criticized successive governments for ignoring Adilabad and failing to provide essential services. He pointed out that while south Telangana districts were in

focus, north Telangana districts, including Adilabad, were often neglected. "If we had known that Adilabad would be neglected after the formation of Telangana, we would not have supported the separate statehood movement. If the government cannot undertake development in the district, let us merge with Maharashtra. There is a significant Marathi-speaking population in Adilabad who would be open to the idea. In Maharashtra, tribal areas are well-developed, with good roads and facilities, unlike in Adilabad," he stated.



Rs 5 lakh ex gratia given to bereaved family

PNS ■ NELLORE

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Nellore Rural MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy handed over Rs 5 lakh ex gratia to the family of the boy who was killed in a wall collapse when he was at school five days ago.

The MLA handed a Rs 5 lakh cheque to the parents of 9th standard student Guru Mahendra who was killed when a parapet wall of the KNR municipal school at which he was studying collapsed and fell on him.

Minister for IT and Human Resource Development Nara Lokesh announced Rs 5 lakh ex gratia to the bereaved family.

MLA Sridhar Reddy assured the parents of the deceased boy to allocate a house site and extend all help for the education of their second son.

Thunderstorms with lightning likely in AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Isolated thunderstorms with lightning are anticipated in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 48 hours, according to the Meteorological Centre's report on Tuesday. Rayalaseema is expected to experience similar conditions within the next 24 hours.

The forecast also predicts strong surface winds ranging from 30-40 km/h in isolated areas of North Coastal Andhra

Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema for the next five days. Additionally, light to moderate rain or thunder-showers are likely to occur at a few locations across these regions over the coming week.

The southwest monsoon has been progressing normally in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema. Recent rainfall has been reported at various places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and at a few locations in Rayalaseema, the report concluded.

'Zero tolerance to crime against women'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Kollu Ravindra, the Minister for Mines, Geology, and Excise, has strongly warned against crimes targeting women. He emphasised that such actions are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. He promised that the government will take strong measures to eradicate human trafficking at its roots.

Minister Ravindra, along with Senior Civil Judge Ramakrishnaiah, participated in the World Day against Trafficking in persons (Anti-Human Trafficking) awareness programme held at Hindu College in Machilipatnam on Tuesday.

During his address, Ravindra mentioned that the negligence of the previous YSRCP government had resulted in the oversight of 32,000 women and girls from 2019 to 2024, as reported by the Central government. Ravindra also reminded the audience that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan had previously organised protests against human trafficking.



Minister Kollu Ravindra addressing the anti-human trafficking awareness programme held at the Hindu College auditorium in Machilipatnam on Tuesday

He emphasised that the current government is taking strong actions against those who intend to harm women and girls and declared that such offenders will face severe consequences. CM Naidu swiftly reacted to recent attacks on women and girls in Vizianagaram and Guntur districts. Both the CM and Deputy CM have given clear instructions to officials to take stern action against the accused involved in these attacks, he said.

Meanwhile, he announced that the government is planning to reintroduce the Yuva Keratalu programme, which was organised during the TDP regime. Minister Ravindra also highlighted the achievements of female students, praising their self-confidence and their parents' support. He recalled the establishment of Padmavati Mahila University by the late Chief Minister Dr NTR in Tirupati. Minister Ravindra mentioned

that the Chief Minister is focusing on Machilipatnam Port works and taking steps to speed up the process. With cooperation from the Central government, many industries are expected to be established in Machilipatnam, leading to increasing employment opportunities.

TDP Krishna district president and former MP Konakalla Narayana Rao, SP R Gangadhara Rao, DEO Tahera Sulthana and others took part in the event.



NTR District Collector Dr Srijana inspecting the poster after releasing it on the occasion of World Day against Trafficking in Persons at the Maris Stella College in Vijayawada on Tuesday

Step forward with self-confidence, NTR Dist Collector exhorts girls

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana has emphasised the importance of girls stepping forward with self-confidence and working hard with discipline to advance in their careers.

She made these remarks while participating in the observation of Anti-Human Trafficking Day, emphasising the seriousness of human trafficking as a crime and the strict consequences under the law for those involved. Maris Stella College Women Empowerment Cell, Forum for

Child Rights, Women Development and Child Welfare, and NTR District Police Commissionerate jointly observed World Day against Trafficking in Persons at the Stella College auditorium in Vijayawada on Tuesday. She administered the oath to the students and later released a poster.

Srijana attended the programme as a special guest and stated that human trafficking is a serious crime with strict legal consequences. She warned that the punishments will not be lenient.

22 kg ganja seized; 4 peddlers arrested

PNS ■ ELURU

The police seized 22 kg of cannabis and arrested four drug peddlers at Venkatapuram village in Kalidindi mandal.

DSP Srinivasulu told the media that on a tip-off that ganja was being sold in the Kaikaluru and Kalidindi areas, Kaikaluru rural CI B

Krishna Kumar and SI Priya Kumar conducted a raid and arrested the four peddlers.

The police team arrested the four accused when they were taking the ganja in a bag to sell at an irrigation canal at Venkatapuram village. The accused were produced before court which sent them to judicial remand.



INDIA CORNER



No Bill to completely abolish manual scavenging

There is no bill proposed for complete mechanisation of sewerage cleaning and abolition of manual scavenging, the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment said on Tuesday. Responding to a question in the Lok Sabha, Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale said there was a proposal to amend the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, with the aim to formalise the institutional setup for safe cleaning practices. In view of the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) -- formulated jointly by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment -- it was decided not to amend the law, he said.



Nearly 30.5 L dog bite cases in 2023; 286 died: Govt

Nearly 30.5 lakh cases of dog bites were reported during 2023 leading to death of 286 persons, the government informed Parliament on Tuesday. "As per the data captured in the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, total 30,43,339 number of dog bite cases reported during 2023. During the year, 286 persons died due to dog bite," Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha. The number of anti-rabies shots for dog bite cases during the year 2023 was 46,54,398 as reported by National Centre for Disease Control. The health ministry has been implementing the National Rabies Control Programme since the 12th five-year plan in all states/Union Territories, except for Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep, to prevent and control rabies in the country. "Further, dog population management is one of the key functions for



Odisha govt suspends senior IPS officer for 'misconduct'

The Odisha government on Tuesday suspended senior IPS officer Pandit Rajesh Uttamrao for allegedly misusing his position, an official statement said. Uttamrao, a 2007-batch IPS officer, was serving as DIG, Fire Services & Home Guards, Odisha. "A complaint has been received, alleging that Pandit has disgraced the dignity of his position by misusing his power last Saturday (July 27) night," said the statement issued by the chief minister's office (CMO). It was alleged that Pandit misbehaved with a woman police inspector and her husband on July 27. Bhubaneswar DCP Prateek Singh said that police action will be taken if any complaint is lodged over the alleged incident. After returning from his four-day visit to New Delhi on Monday evening, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi took immediate action, the CMO statement said. Majhi ordered the department concerned to immediately suspend the "errant senior police officer and take appropriate action against him".



2 killed, 22 hurt as 18 coaches of Howrah-Mumbai Mail derail

Two persons were killed and 22 others injured after 18 coaches of the Howrah-Mumbai Mail derailed in Jharkhand's Seraikela-Kharsawan district early on Tuesday, officials said. The accident occurred at 3:45 AM in Potobeda village near the Barabambo station in the Kharsawan block, they said. South Eastern Railway spokesperson Om Prakash Charan said there was another derailment of a goods train nearby. "At least 18 coaches of the 22-coach 12810 Howrah-Mumbai Mail via Nagpur derailed near Barabambo station in SER's Chakradharpur Division," he said. Of these, 16 were passenger coaches, one power car and one pantry car, Charan said. "Two persons were killed and 22 others injured. Of the injured people, 18 have been discharged from hospitals and four are under observation," Seraikela-Kharsawan Superintendent of Police Mukesh Kumar Lunayat said. All rescue and relief operations were completed within a few hours after the accident as teams of state police, district administration and Central Reserve Police Force rushed to the spot, Lunayat said, denying the possibility of any act of sabotage by Naxalites. One wagon of the goods train had derailed and fell on other tracks on which the Howrah-Mumbai Mail was coming, he said, adding that the passenger train hit the wagon, resulting in the derailment of 18 coaches.

INDI alliance has no nationalistic thinking: Goyal

Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday attacked Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on his speech a day earlier, stating that the INDI alliance has no nationalistic thinking and no positive agenda to offer to the people of the country. Goyal, who is also the commerce and industry minister, said Gandhi made all baseless claims during his speech. The country's economy was in bad shape when the Modi government took charge in 2014, he said. Gandhi on Monday said an atmosphere of fear prevails all around with a group of six trapping the entire country in a 'chakravayuh' and promised that the INDI bloc will break it. "Very clearly, the speech of Mr Rahul Gandhi yesterday (Monday) demonstrated that just to cast aspersions or make certain barbs on constitutional authorities and persons in the country, he has clearly showed that the so-called INDI alliance, UPA in its new name, has no nationalist thinking and except for making irrational claims and demands, (they) have no positive agenda to offer to the people of India," Goyal told reporters here.

'Warming of Arabian Sea linked to Wayanad landslides'

Warming of the Arabian Sea is allowing the formation of deep cloud systems, leading to extremely heavy rainfall in Kerala in a shorter period and increasing the possibility of landslides, a senior climate scientist said on Tuesday. Extremely heavy rain triggered a series of landslides in the hilly areas of Kerala's Wayanad district early on Tuesday, leaving at least 45 people dead. Many were feared trapped under the debris. S Abhilash, the director of the Advanced Centre for Atmospheric Radar Research at Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) said Kasargod, Kannur, Wayanad, Calicut, and Malappuram districts have been receiving copious rainfall due to the active monsoon offshore trough affecting the entire Konkan region for the last two weeks. The soil was saturated after two weeks of rainfall. A deep mesoscale cloud system formed off the coast in the Arabian Sea on Monday and led to extremely heavy rain in Wayanad, Calicut, Malappuram, and Kannur, resulting in localised landslides, said.



Focus on Ayush a core strategy: Govt

Mainstreaming of Ayush is one of the core strategies in the National Health Mission, which seeks to provide accessible, affordable and quality health care, Union Ayush Minister Prataprao Jadhav said on Tuesday. Engagement of Ayurveda, yoga and naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and homoeopathy (Ayush) doctors/paramedics are supported under the National Health Mission (NHM), provided they are co-located with existing district hospitals, community health centres and primary health centres, with priority to remote community health centres and primary health centres, Jadhav said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha. Mainstreaming of Ayush has been taken up in 13,222 Ayush facilities co-located under NHM -- 6,612 primary health centres, 3,035 community health centres, 469 district hospitals, 2,916 health facilities above sub-centre but below block level and 190 health facilities other than community health centres at or above the block level but below the district level. Also, 27,421 Ayush doctors and 4,581 paramedics were in position in various co-located health facilities as on December 31, the minister said. According to Ayushman Bharat, the government is supporting the states for the transformation of sub-health centres and primary health centres into health and wellness centres around the country for provisions of Comprehensive Primary Health Care that include preventive health care and health promotion at the community level with a continuum-of-care approach to realise the goal of universal health coverage. Ayush medicine is also a part of ASHA drug kit for the management of primary conditions at the community level, Jadhav said. The North Eastern Institute of Ayurveda and Folk Medicine Research in Arunachal Pradesh's Pasighat has been established with a mandate to revitalise and promote folk healing practices and folk medicine, the minister said. The institute is engaged in the documentation of ethnomedicinal practices and scientific validation of folk claims, he said. It is also trying to develop capacity among the traditional healers and organising awareness camps for popularising the potential of folk healing practices and folk medicine. The Quality Council of India is certifying traditional community healthcare providers under the Voluntary Certification Scheme for Traditional Community Healthcare Providers.



No State denied money in Budget, says Sitharaman

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday termed misleading claims by opposition leaders that if any state is not named in the Budget speech, then it does not get any budgetary allocation. Replying to a Budget discussion in the Lok Sabha, Sitharaman asserted that no state was being denied money. She recalled that in the past Budgets by the UPA government also did not mention names of all states in their Budget speech. "I have been picking up on Budget speeches since 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008 and so on. The Budget of 2004-2005 did not take the name of 17 states. I would like to ask the members of the UPA government at that time - did money not go to those 17 states? Did they stop it?" Sitharaman said. She was responding to comments by several opposition members that the Budget has provided funds only to Bihar and Andhra Pradesh and nothing to other states. Sitharaman said India is the fastest-growing economy globally and has overcome the after-effects of the pandemic due to heavy capex push. She also said the government is complying with the fiscal deficit trajectory. It will bring down the deficit to below 4.5 per cent by 2025-26 from the targeted 4.9 per cent for the current fiscal. The deficit was 5.6 per cent in 2023-24. The Budget has provided substantial financial support of Rs 17,000 crore to the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir this year. It includes Rs 12,000 crore towards financing the cost of J&K police. "That's the burden we want to take on our shoulders," Sitharaman said.



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UPA govt refused to give 50% profit on cost to farmers: Min

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday said the previous UPA government had refused to provide 50 per cent profit on cost to farmers in the minimum support price for crops, as based on the formula suggested by the M S Swaminathan Commission. During the Question Hour in the Lok Sabha, Congress MP Deepender Hooda asked a supplementary question related to the farmers' protests of 2020-21 and said around 750 farmers lost their lives during the agitation. He asked if the government is considering providing jobs to the next of kin of those who lost their lives during the year-long protests at Delhi's borders against three contentious farm laws of the Centre that have since been repealed. Chouhan said the question was not related to the main question, which was on issues faced by farmers. "The government is totally committed to farmers' welfare," he said. The agriculture minister alleged that the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government had refused to implement the recommendations of the Swaminathan commission that had suggested 50 per cent profit to farmers on their cost. "The Swaminathan commission report came in 2006 and it said 50 per cent profit on cost should be added for calculating the MSP for crops. Their government had denied it. I have documents... Their minister, Kantilal Bhuria, had said 50 per cent profit cannot be given. Sharad Pawar was the agriculture minister, he had also said it cannot be given," Chouhan said.

Kejriwal's life in danger, BJP's politics about 'hatred'

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita on Tuesday hit out at the BJP saying their politics is about "hatred" and "stopping" the work of residents of the national capital even as she stressed that her husband's life is in danger in Tihar. Addressing the INDIA bloc rally here at Jantar Mantar, Sunita Kejriwal alleged that her husband was framed in the excise policy case on the basis of one statement. "Why did the Enforcement Directorate arrest Kejriwal? It was because of a conspiracy and pressure. The trial court granted bail to him. But the Centre initiated twin actions -- the ED took a stay on the bail and the CBI (central Bureau of Investigation) arrested him. He has been suffering from diabetes for last 22 years but we had to approach the court to get him insulin," she said. Talking about the health condition of her husband, Sunita said there is a sensor tied to his arm that records his sugar levels. "If sugar levels go down below 50, the patient starts shivering. While he was at home, such things happened once in five months and we would give him something sweet to stabilise him. But a few days back, we learnt that in jail his sugar levels have gone down multiple times," she said. The AAP has been accusing the BJP of "conspiring to kill" Kejriwal in jail and cited his medical report to show that his sugar levels have fallen 34 times between June 3 and July 7. "I am thankful to God that nothing untoward happened with him. His life is in danger. Recently LG sir wrote a letter saying that chief minister is 'wilfully' reducing his food intake. 'What joke this is! He also said he is taking less insulin. When sugar levels are high, then insulin is administered," she said. Hitting out at the BJP, she said, "Is this not dictatorship and conspiracy of the BJP? They have framed him in a fake case to stop the work of people of Delhi. He would always fight to ensure that the work of people does not suffer."



No bill proposed for complete abolition of manual scavenging: Govt

There is no bill proposed for complete mechanisation of sewerage cleaning and abolition of manual scavenging, the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment said on Tuesday. Responding to a question in the Lok Sabha, Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale said there was a proposal to amend the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, with the aim to formalise the institutional setup for safe cleaning practices. In view of the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) -- formulated jointly by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment -- it was decided not to amend the law, he said. Responding to a question on if there was any bill pending with the ministry for complete mechanisation of sewerage cleaning and abolition of manual scavenging, the minister said, "At present, there is no bill proposed for complete mechanisation of sewerage cleaning and abolition of manual scavenging."

Don't charge exorbitant fees for enrolling lawyers

Supreme Court urges state bar councils

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that state bar councils cannot charge exorbitant fees for enrolling law graduates as lawyers as it perpetuates systemic discrimination against marginalised and economically weaker sections besides undermining their participation in the legal profession. The levy of exorbitant fees ranging from around 15,000 to over Rs 40,000 by some state bar councils (SBCs) was "contrary to the principle of substantive equality", the top court held, adding the SBCs and the Bar Council of India (BCI) cannot "alter or modify" the fiscal policy laid down by Parliament. A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said the bar bodies are delegates of powers under the Advocates Act, 1961. The bench said SBCs and the BCI cannot charge more than Rs 750 and Rs 125 for enrolling law graduates from general and the SC-ST categories, respectively. provision specifically lays down the fiscal pre-conditions subject to which an advocate can be enrolled on State rolls. "The SBCs and the BCI cannot demand payment of fees other than the stipulated enrolment fee and stamp duty, if any, as a pre-condition to enrolment," it held. Writing the 68-page judgment, the CJI said the decision of SBCs to charge fees and charges at the time of enrolment in excess of legal stipulation violated Article 14 (right to equality) and Article 19(1)(g) (right to practice a profession) of the Constitution. The bench, however, said the decision will have "prospective effect" and SBCs were not required to refund the excess enrolment fees collected so far. The bench linked the levy of exorbitant fees by various SBCs to the dignity of law graduates, especially belonging to SCs, STs and the EWS categories. The bench said dignity is crucial to substantive equality. The dignity of an individual encompasses the right of the individual to develop their potential to the fullest.



"The SBCs cannot charge 'enrolment fees' beyond the express legal stipulation under Section 24(1)(f) as it currently stands," it held, adding the



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Taking on the dragon

S Jaishankar admits strained relations with China but rules out third-party mediation

In what can be construed as a candid admission by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, he has categorically stated that relations between India and China are not on an even keel. His recent statement underscores the ongoing diplomatic tension between India and China. Even earlier he had said that China is a bigger economy, implying that we should think twice before acting against China. The Minister's assessment of the current state of the India-China relationship highlights the challenges that persist despite various diplomatic efforts and high-level engagements. One of the key aspects of Jaishankar's statement was his firm rejection of third-party mediation in resolving the disputes with China. The Foreign Minister emphasised that India prefers to handle its issues with China bilaterally, without external intervention. This stance aligns with India's long-standing policy of managing its international relations directly. Jaishankar's comments reflect India's approach to maintaining sovereignty and autonomy in its foreign policy. By ruling out third-party mediation, India is signalling its intention to address its differences with China through direct dialogue and negotiation. This position underscores India's commitment to resolving disputes through established diplomatic channels while rejecting external influence that might complicate or hinder the process.



Prime Minister Modi had personally taken a keen interest in resolving the issue but to no avail. Chinese Premier Xi was invited and given a grand welcome but that did not break ice and the tension on borders continued. In the complex web of geopolitics, India has drifted closer to the US which wants to use India to contain Chinese influence, naturally much to the consternation of China. The Chinese unease is reflected in its actions on the border which had remained peaceful from 1962 to 2017 when the Doklam incident happened. India-China relations are complex and multifaceted, influenced by historical, political, economic, and strategic factors. The two countries share a long border. The most notable conflict occurred in 1962 when the Sino-Indian War broke out over border disputes in the Aksai Chin region. Ironically trade relations between the two countries have grown despite border disputes. China is one of India's largest trading partners. However, recent years have seen border skirmishes and strategic rivalries. In recent years, the relationship has been marked by both cooperation and contention. The Doklam skirmish in 2017 was a prominent example of border tensions. The confrontation occurred in the Doklam plateau, an area disputed between China and Bhutan. Additionally, the 2020 clashes in the Galwan Valley further highlighted ongoing tensions. Despite these challenges, India and China have continued to engage diplomatically and economically. Both nations must recognise the importance of managing their differences while pursuing mutual benefits, given their significant roles in the global economy and regional geopolitics.

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PICTALK



Clouds hover over the hill town of Shimla

Kolkata's healthcare transformation into world-class medical facilities

Over the past two decades, Kolkata's medical facilities have transformed significantly, reducing the exodus of patients to Chennai and Vellore

The hordes of medical pilgrims filling up berths in Coromandel Express and Madras Mail have thinned substantially over the years, as Kolkata's private healthcare sector scrambles to make up for lost time. Kolkata was not always best served in matters of healthcare, and for patients with serious ailments and often with not-so-serious conditions, Chennai, Vellore or Mumbai were the default destinations. It was also a matter of perception as most Kolkatans believed they would receive superior care in outpatient hospitals only. However, the healthcare landscape in Kolkata has been undergoing a paradigm shift over the past two decades, riding the tailwinds of private sector initiatives, as the bed count continues to soar. The availability of able doctors was never a problem in the city and now that the pool of healthcare experts has increased significantly with a steady reverse traffic of medical practitioners coming back from the NHS in the UK and other advanced countries' health systems to cater to the growing demand



back in their hometown. Over time, the city has gradually regained its confidence in its private hospitals seeing that they aren't short of modern facilities and latest equipment anymore. The faith is beginning to trickle back, ounce by ounce, and the Coromandel isn't as packed with south-bound patients as before. Of course, it hasn't happened overnight, and there is still a long way to go. Kolkata's progress in terms of private sector participation is in sync with the national scenario as analysts say between 2016 and now, the country's healthcare industry has grown at a CAGR of 22% and the Centre's allocation of Rs 90,658.63 crore for the sector in the interim Budget for 2024-25 reflects this uptrend. However, restora-

tion of faith in any service, not the least healthcare delivery, takes a lot of commitment and meticulous planning. After all, like any other customer, a patient has a retail choice and can switch allegiance if expectations are not met. It is well known that a big and significant milestone in this medical makeover of Kolkata was the unveiling of the Rabindranath Tagore International Institute of Cardiac Sciences in 2000 by Narayana Health Group's Founder, Dr. Devi Shetty. This set the ball rolling and many other world class hospitals started their services in Kolkata. It was the flagship venture of the founder which he started in his favourite city, Kolkata. The journey began over two decades ago with a single speciality hospital and has grown into a network of four super-speciality hospitals in Kolkata. Now Kolkata can boast of super-speciality tertiary care, these facilities offer over 35 specialities such as Cancer Care, Mother & Child Care, and Orthopaedics. The healthcare sector in India, serving a vast population of

1.4 billion, faces challenges like inadequate infrastructure, doctor shortages, poor rural facilities, and limited health insurance access. Addressing these issues, the Group plans a 1,000-bed hospital in New Town and a 100-bed facility in Mukundapur. The New Town hospital will treat 5,000 to 7,000 OPD patients daily. Kolkata's hospitals also serve patients from neighbouring countries, managing a growing load of non-communicable diseases. The adoption of cutting-edge technology and modern treatment protocols has reduced the average hospital stay from six to four days, optimizing resources. A future-ready approach aims to increase smiles by saving lives. Healthcare evolution, on desirable lines, is crucial in the region. This would lead to a higher stage of advancement, guided by the principles of compassion, innovation, and deep dedication that were envisioned over two decades ago. (The Author is the Group Chief Operating Officer of Narayana Health. Views expressed are personal)



R VENKATESH

Honouring the legacy of Bal Gangadhar Tilak



RAJDEEP PATHAK

As the nation commemorates Tilak's 168th birth anniversary, we reflect on his profound influence on the independence movement and his contributions as a reformer

In 1921, Mahatma Gandhi's visit to the Nellore district marked a significant moment in India's freedom movement. He inaugurated the Satyagraha Ashram in Pallepadu and delivered significant speeches at the Town Hall and V.R. College. At the Rebala Lakshmi Narasa Reddy Town Hall, he unveiled a portrait of his political mentor, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, emphasizing Tilak's profound patriotism and leadership, which galvanized the freedom movement. Gandhi extolled Tilak's legacy, invoking the ideals of "Swaraj" (self-rule) and characterizing the Non-Cooperation Movement as an act of "self-purification". He urged contributions to the 'Tilak Swaraj Fund', established in 1920, to support educational institutions, Khadi promotion, and Swadeshi efforts. It was a successful mobilized mission. July 23, 2024, marked the 168th birth anniversary of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, also revered as "Lokmanya" and "The Lion of Maharashtra". This is for his dual role, as a freedom fighter and social reformer. His impact has also been underscored by notable figures, such as British journalist Valentine Chirol who termed him "the father of Indian unrest", while Jawaharlal Nehru hailed him as "the father of the Indian revolution" and Mahatma Gandhi recognized him as "the Maker of Modern India". A distinguished Sanskrit scholar and thinker, Tilak was also a visionary leader. Sri Aurobindo, in his collection of Tilak's writings and speeches, emphasized Tilak's transformative influence on the Indian National Congress, reshaping it from its occidental characteristics to embrace mass participation in the freedom struggle. In "The Intellectual Biography of Bal Gangadhar Tilak" published in the Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science, Raj Hans Ojha, contends that "The story of Tilak is the story of India's Swaraj, of the Indian National Congress, coming to its adulthood, and of the rise of Indian masses for the first time in quest of 'Home Rule' and 'Independence'". Lokmanya Tilak believed that "Swaraj is the foun-



ation and not the height of our future prosperity. We have to build a new nation, develop a new character, live the principles, which we advocate, faith in spiritual values, love of country and tolerance for views from which we differ." Tilak's intellectual contributions were many. His works such as, "The Orion and Research into The Antiquity of The Vedas" (1893) and "The Arctic Home of Vedas" (1901), complemented his political activism. Despite his devotion to independence, he expressed a preference for academia, a path cut short by his untimely death on August 1, 1920, at age 64. His educational contributions are equally noteworthy. He co-founded institutions like the 'New English School', the 'Deccan Society for Education', and 'Fergusson College', and presented a comprehensive educational blueprint to the Hunter Commission (1882 & 1919). Bal Gangadhar Tilak was a strategist, transcending the roles of an idealist and philosopher, and his multifaceted contributions continue to resonate in India's historical and educational landscape. As a formidable journalist, Tilak was renowned for his fearless and impartial stance in his weekly publication, 'Kesari'. He championed a rigorous

HE WAS AMONG THE FIRST MAINSTREAM POLITICAL LEADERS IN INDIA TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT "THE NATION THINKS NOT WITH THE BRAIN BUT WITH AN OVERHEATED HEART. IT IS ONLY IN THE THROES OF TUMULT THAT NATIONS ARE BORN"

approach to journalism, asserting that 'Kesari' would boldly address all issues, resisting the prevailing trend of appeasing the British and embodying its namesake's courage. Bal Gangadhar Tilak also leveraged his paper 'Maharashtra Advocate for the People, drawing upon Hindu scriptures and the Bhagavad Gita to support his arguments. His profound contributions as a patriot, scholar, and politician had a significant impact on Mahatma Gandhi, who, in a March 4, 1905, article, lauded Lokmanya's scholarship, particularly his astronomical findings that traced Indian scriptures to over 10,000 years old, recognizing him as a luminary whose intellectual influence extended beyond national borders. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was imprisoned in 1908. He strongly believed that "There are higher powers that rule the destiny of things and it may be the will of providence that the cause I represent may prosper more by my suffering than by my remaining free." Gandhi and Tilak had great mutual respect for one another. In his reflections in The Indian Opinion, Gandhi praised Tilak for his readiness to endure suffering for the cause of India's freedom. While they were ideologically different in their thoughts and actions, both

Lokmanya Tilak and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi fought for one cause, which was 'freedom'. Mahatma Gandhi maintained a profound respect for Tilak's contributions and acknowledged his unparalleled influence and the reverence he commanded among the masses. In his tributes and public statements, Gandhi consistently lauded Tilak's selfless service, burning patriotism, and magnetic leadership. Tilak's mantra, "Swaraj is our birthright, and I shall have it", resonated deeply with Mahatma Gandhi, who adapted it to his philosophy of truth and non-violence, and thus, Tilak's assertive nationalism blended with Gandhi's principles of peaceful resistance. Mahadev Desai, recalls Mahatma Gandhi's views on Lokmanya Tilak, which he expressed on 24 July 1934 at Cawnpore (Kanpur today), in one of the meetings. Mahatma Gandhi said: "If Tilak Maharaj taught us that 'swaraj is our birthright', he also taught us that 'selfless service' is the key to win it. Selfless service may have been in existence before Tilak came, but he was who systematized it." Tilak's life was a demonstration of this great ideal of Karma Yoga. (The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UNAUTHORISED PG MUSHROOMING

Madam — Paying guest accommodations (PG) for women have made headlines following the brutal murder of a woman in one such facility located in a posh Bengaluru locality. It is crucial to take strict action against unauthorized PGs. The police argue that without a formal complaint, securing PGs is not inherently their responsibility, and this claim is understandable. Nonetheless, increased patrolling in sensitive areas where these accommodations are situated should not be overlooked. Thus, the responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of female residents falls on the PG owners. It is alarming to note that many PGs in India lack security guards. Security personnel should thoroughly frisk strangers seeking entry into PGs. The importance of a biometric fingerprint system for all entrants cannot be overstated. Additionally, providing kitchens that prepare hygienic food is essential to prevent women from frequently venturing out for meals, enhancing their safety. Troublemakers such as hawkers and beggars should be kept at bay. Regular presence and unwavering supervision by the owners at the PGs can significantly boost residents' morale. Overall, a collective commitment is vital.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

USE OF TRIBALS IN THE SCHOOL NAMES

Madam — The Madras High Court has strongly criticised the Tamil Nadu government for using the term "Tribal" in the names of government schools. This issue arose with schools in the Kalvarayan Hills being named "Government Tribal Residential School." The court rightly observed that this terminology is inappropriate, especially for a secular government. The use of caste or community names in school titles is astonishing and deemed unacceptable by the court. The court emphasised that labeling a school as a "Tribal School" could stigmatise the children attending it, making them feel their school is inferior to others. This could lead to an inferiority complex among the

Grand spectacle of Paris Olympics



The Paris Olympics 2024 have begun, filling the city with excitement and drawing visitors from around the world to witness this grand sporting event. While the Olympic games promise thrilling spectacles, Paris offers many other activities to enrich your visit. If you're a food enthusiast with a penchant for history, indulge in iconic Parisian bites

that offer a delightful journey through time and taste. Wander through charming streets and savor culinary delights that are integral to Parisian culture. For those seeking unique experiences, venture beyond the usual tourist spots and discover offbeat attractions that provide a different perspective on the city. Additionally, Paris offers various free activities that allow you to enjoy the city's charm without breaking the bank. From serene parks to historical landmarks, there's no shortage of cost-free ways to immerse yourself in the Parisian ambience. Lastly, don't miss out on the must-see attractions that define Paris. Iconic sites such as the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, and Notre-Dame Cathedral are timeless treasures that captivate visitors. Jayanthi Subramaniam | Mumbai

students. Caste and community play a significant role in the political arena as vote banks.

The caste system is deeply entrenched in government policies and programs, leading to reverse discrimination. The principle of "all are equal in law" is often neglected, with reservation in education and employment based on caste. Some states have defied the Supreme Court's directive to limit reservations to 50 percent, extending them to over 75 percent, which adversely affects merit. If some communities feel deprived of fair representation in education and employment, the government may consider pro-rata reservations for all communities as a solution. KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS

Madam — Since independence, our country has undergone significant changes. While we have adopted many new governance systems, we still retain some from our colonial past. One such legacy is the role of governors acting as representatives of the President in all states, a practice that

continues unchanged. Recently, the Supreme Court agreed to consider separate petitions from opposition-ruled Kerala and West Bengal. These petitions allege that the respective governors refused to assent to bills passed by their assemblies. This is not an isolated incident; similar cases have been brought before the Hon'ble Supreme Court numerous times. West Bengal, for example, claimed in its petition that the Governor had withheld assent to eight bills. I believe the position of governors has never been impartial in this country. The office has become increasingly politicized; a study found that between 1950 and 2015, only a quarter of governors completed a five-year term, with 37 percent serving less than a year. Defying traditions, governors are typically appointed by the ruling party without consulting the elected state government, leading to strained relations between federal and state governments. Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

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FIRST COLUMN CURIOUS MINDS ENGINEER CHANGE

Mental re-engineering can infuse life with renewed vigor and purpose



RAVI VALLURI

Often, conventional and commonplace way of thinking only results in clambering the ladder. A person leading a ho-hum existence cannot re-engineer his/her personality. Tale of an old man Aeon's ago, lived an elderly gentleman who in the winter of his life decided to embark on a spiritual journey to transfigure his personality. The pater now embarked on the spiritual sojourn and enrolled in a monastery. Upon completing his tutelage, armed with various nuances of Zen teachings, he left for his small town. He stepped out of the portals of the temple of knowledge and involuntarily slipped into a rivulet. "Oh, the old monk falls in the river!" chortled some young tutees.

He was to dramatically declare that the re-engineering processes and techniques he acquired had enabled him to accommodate water into himself and not the other way around. "We are shaped by our thoughts, we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves," said Gautama Buddha. The thought process, thinking patterns, building blocks of thought, organised thinking and goal direction are five keys to re-engineer the mind to metamorphose and refashion our lives. An ingenious individual to re-engineer his life has to change the existing pattern. He should begin by identifying the problem. In the swathes of his mind, such a process represents and delineates the problem; as he/she is mindful and discerning, solutions and a set of sub-goals are outlined. The quick-witted individual then selects the balm for the misadventure and executes it with precision.

The human mind is now brim-full of ideas and it is time to evaluate the outcome and once again rethink and redefine problems and arrive at new solutions. It was the time of Sakhya Muni Gautama Buddha when an animated group of denizens were involved in a rambunctious argument about Divinity and various religions. In sheer exasperation, they arrived at the feet of Lord Buddha. The Compassionate and Enlightened One smiled and ruminated for a while. Lord Buddha then asked his disciples to arrange for an elephant and for four persons to be blindfolded. And so, it happened that the first of the blindfolded persons felt the elephant's leg and exclaimed that God appeared as a pillar. The second person



touched the elephant's tummy and opined that Almighty God was a wall. The third gentleman stroked the elephant's ear and observed that God was a piece of cloth. The fourth man grazed the tail and described that God was a piece of rope. Once again, the group of four was engaged in a raging debate on the form of Almighty God. After the exercise was completed, Buddha asked the assembled disciples and citizens. The four blindfolded individuals felt the same elephant, but provided varying answers, so what could be the correct answer? The episode just proved that no one individual or thought process is complete. One should always be prepared to accept that one might be correct in parts and that other streams of thought could be complementary. Techniques for training the spiritually inclined can re-engineer their lives by undertaking the bouquet of courses imparted by the Art of Living, or pursue Vipassana; attempting to mutate their minds through the practice of yoga, pranayama and meditation. Others have a logical bent of mind and charter a different path.

They need to develop a passion, take up a sport, and read inspirational literature among other things. But it is elemental and foundational to re-engineer the mind and thought processes at regular intervals to live life with gusto.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Balanced budget reflects Modi's vision of 'Vikasit Bharat'



K S TOMAR

PM Modi's "self-reliant India" vision is central to the 2024-25 Union Budget. It boosts domestic production, supports SMEs, and fosters innovation to reduce import dependency

Prime Minister Modi's vision of a "self-reliant India" (Atmanirbhar Bharat) is a recurring theme in the budget. This vision emphasizes self-sufficiency in critical sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and technology. The budget outlines measures to boost domestic production, support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and encourage innovation. These initiatives are designed to reduce import dependency and create a robust, self-sustaining economy. At the same time, the budget reflects Modi's understanding of India's interconnectedness with the global economy. The focus on enhancing India's export competitiveness, attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), and participating in global value chains underscores the dual approach of strengthening domestic capabilities while engaging with the global market.

This balanced approach is crucial for India to navigate the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly complex global economic landscape. The Union Budget, a cornerstone of the country's economic planning, may serve as a reflection of the government's strategic priorities and vision for the future. It is being billed as a path-breaking foundation of Reforms for the next 5 years. According to some experts, under the leadership of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, the budget has been targeted to foster economic growth, address social inequalities, and position India as a key player on the global stage. The latest budget unveiled amidst a backdrop of global economic uncertainty, showcases a balanced approach, combining domestic development with an international outlook.

CHALLENGES BEFORE FM

In light of the 2024-25 Union Budget, the BJP-led central government faces scrutiny over its dealings with opposition-ruled states, which allege discrimination in fund allocation and policy implementation. Experts say that Central Schemes and Fund Allocation; The Budget reveals a 15% increase in allocations for flagship schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and Ayushman Bharat. However, opposition states argue that their share of these funds does not reflect their proportionate needs. For instance, Tamil Nadu has claimed that despite a significant allocation under PMAY, delays in fund release and implementation hinder effective utilization. The central government's response involves reiterating the equitable distribution based on various factors, but opposition states view these explanations sceptically. Implementation Issues; Critics point to inefficiencies in scheme implementation as evidence of discrimination. The opposition-ruled states have raised concerns about delays and insufficient execution of these schemes.

The central government needs to ensure that these funds are utilized efficiently and that implementation is monitored closely to address these grievances. Political Dynamics; Allegations of political bias also come into play. Opposition leaders argue that central agencies are used to target political rivals, exacerbating feelings of discrimination. With the BJP's political rivals accusing it of manipulating central resources, the government must navigate these complex political dynamics carefully.

STEPS TO ADDRESS THE CONCERNS



THE BUDGET REVEALS A 15% INCREASE IN ALLOCATIONS FOR FLAGSHIP SCHEMES SUCH AS THE PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA (PMAY) AND AYUSHMAN BHARAT. HOWEVER, OPPOSITION STATES ARGUE THAT THEIR SHARE OF THESE FUNDS DOES NOT REFLECT THEIR PROPORTIONATE NEEDS

To mitigate allegations of discrimination, the central government should adopt multiple strategies which include Enhanced Transparency: Provide detailed reports on fund allocations and expenditures to ensure transparency and address concerns of inequitable distribution. The focus should be on the efficient and timely execution of central schemes, particularly in opposition-ruled states, to demonstrate commitment to equitable development. The Centre must engage in regular discussions with opposition state governments to address grievances and ensure that their concerns are heard and addressed. A Balanced Approach for Sustainable Growth: The Indian Union Budget, under the leadership of Modi, presents a balanced blueprint for growth, combining a focus on domestic development with a strategic international outlook. The emphasis on infrastructure, healthcare, education, and financial inclusion reflects the government's commitment to inclusive growth.

At the same time, the focus on global partnerships, defence manufacturing, and renewable energy highlights India's aspirations to be a key player on the world stage. Domestic Positives: A Focus on Inclusive Development; The budget's primary focus is on inclusive growth, ensuring that the benefits of economic development reach all sections of society. A significant allocation has been made towards infrastructure development, including roads, railways, and digital infrastructure. This not only promises to create jobs but also lays the groundwork for long-term economic resilience. The emphasis on renewable energy and green technology is another forward-looking aspect, aligning with global trends towards sustainability. Healthcare and educa-

tion have not received substantial attention. The substantial increase in funding for public health infrastructure is a must, especially after the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, investments in education, particularly in digital and vocational training, will equip the younger generation with skills for the future job market.

This focus on human capital development is critical for sustaining economic growth in the long term. The government's commitment to financial inclusion continues with initiatives to expand the reach of banking and financial services to rural areas. This effort is crucial for integrating rural populations into the formal economy, enhancing their economic opportunities, and reducing regional disparities. Moreover, targeted welfare schemes for farmers, women, and marginalized communities underscore the government's intent to address social inequalities and ensure a more equitable distribution of resources. Extreme evidence of a discriminatory approach exhibited in the union budget estimates for 2024-24 pertains to the allocation of Rs 11,500 crore for flood mitigation to Bihar whereas Himachal as well as Uttarakhand faced unprecedented catastrophe in July/August 2023 which suffered extensive damages to the tune of over Rs 12,000 crore and Rs 4,000 crore respectively but figures have not been mentioned in the budget.

Himachal government is in a quandary as 550 lives were lost and rehabilitation of lakhs of hapless people had been undertaken by the state government by making provision of Rs 650 crore hence expected a liberal Special Package from the union finance minister who preferred to just give an assurance about financial assistance to the state but no allocation

of the budget. Inordinate delay in the announcement of a "Special Package" had affected relief and rehabilitation works though the state demanded immediate help of Rs 9,042 crore from the centre in Aug 2023. Chief Minister, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu regretted the apathy of the centre which gave nothing for one year. The finance minister skipped Punjab also which witnessed devastation owing to heavy rains and floods in 21 out of 23 districts and damages were more than Rs 1,680 crore. About 70 lives were lost and the state government has been demanding financial assistance which has been ignored in this budget. Contrary to it, Bihar has been chosen for special treatment and the finance minister allocated Rs 11,500 crore for flood mitigation which is being interpreted as a Reward for helping BHP to form a government after its reduced strength in Lok Sabha. Experts say that Bihar has been India's most flood-prone state with 76% of the population of north Bihar living under recurring threat of devastating floods for decades hence it deserves a special package but not by ignoring other states that suffer an identical natural disaster every year. As India navigates the challenges of a post-pandemic world, the budget's provisions for economic resilience, social equity, and environmental sustainability provide a solid foundation for future growth. Modi's vision of a self-reliant India resonates throughout the budget, offering a roadmap for the country's economic and strategic aspirations. This holistic approach, balancing domestic priorities with international engagement, positions India well for a sustainable and prosperous future.

(The writer is a political analyst and senior journalist based in Shimla; views are personal)

How persistence and empathy can cure tuberculosis

Tuberculosis is a 'curable infectious disease linked to inequities, it is therefore crucial to invest in partnerships that address these disparities with empathy

A year ago 20-year-old Tahira was convinced she was going to die. A fever that refused to go accompanied by a persistent cough, a loss in appetite and extreme weakness had confined her to the bed for months. Her husband, a rickshaw puller, had neither the means nor the time to take her to a doctor. It was only when her brother came to visit her in Kolkata and saw her failing health that he decided to take matters into his own hands. He brought Tahira back with him to her natal house in Seemapuri, Delhi. This decision was to save her life. Around this time, Humana People to People India (HPPPI), a not-for-profit, was reaching out with information and guidance on tuberculosis (TB)



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

as a part of their Project LEAD (Leveraging Educating, Advocating to Disrupt TB transmission). Working in close coordination with the government's National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP), LEAD focussed on the oft-ignored and overlooked marginalized communities living in low-grade urban slums, the homeless and migratory population in four cities, Delhi, Mumbai, Howrah and Hyderabad.

Persistence Pays When LEAD field officer Shanti met Tahira, she immediately knew what had to be done. First, she was taken for a chest X-ray. When it showed Tahira presumptive for TB, sputum microscopy was conducted which confirmed TB. Once this became clear, the diagnosis was reconfirmed through the WHO-recommended molecular test via the Cartridge-Based Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (CBNAAT) and drug susceptibility test via Line Probe Assay (LPA) provided free at the government GTB Hospital. The drug susceptibility test is done to ensure that the TB bacteria (Bacillus Mycobacterium Tuberculosis), that infects a person is not resistant to the medicines they are treated with.

Realising there was no time to waste, Shanti quickly enabled her registration on Ni-Akshay, the government's NTEP real-time patient management web system, so that her card could be made and her treatment started the same day. As a trained worker, Shanti knew time was of the essence and treatment adherence critical. So, for the next six months, Shanti would become Tahira's shadow. She kept a watchful eye and followed up doggedly with 40 visits to ensure Tahira didn't miss out or falter in sticking to the drug regimen. Her persistence paid off when Tahira tested negative a couple of months ago and is now completely cured. The Techno CATTB being an infectious disease, early detection and



treatment is vital especially as it spreads when persons with the illness expel the bacteria into the air, mostly by coughing. Here is where technology can play a role. Cough Against TB (CAT) an innovative application AI-powered cough-sound-based screening tool to assess the likelihood of pulmonary TB developed by Wadhvani AI, resulted in a 10.8% presumptive rate and a positivity yield of 15.6%.

One of the important outcomes of using CAT was its detection of asymptomatic cases, which otherwise would have been missed. While technology has been an enabling tool, the real success of screening over 600,000 individuals, identifying 3,182 people with TB (PwTB), and supporting 98% of them in Delhi with treatment adherence has been due to the commitment and compassion shown by the women field workers. The project findings at the end of the one-year project indicate that the female field officers proved to be more effective than their male counterparts in TB awareness and screening because of their empathy. A Human Touch How a human touch can make all the difference was seen in Tahira's

case. Shanti's support to Tahira during her challenging treatment journey was not just by counselling but also through food ration supplements every month through her contacts with an NGO. Additionally, she also linked her to NTEP's Ni-Akshay Poshan Yojana, the government scheme to provide Rs 500 per month for PwTB to buy food. Deploying women now cured of TB as activists and field workers have also worked wonders to reach out to those who fall through the cracks. They know what it means to live with TB and the societal stigma that have to face. Their determination to help others in similar situations has boosted early detection and treatment. It is a known fact that those most at risk are people residing in poorly ven-

tilated and overcrowded conditions, suffering from malnutrition and diseases and with limited access to healthcare. Project LEAD has shown that women field officers are more successful in persuading TB screening and treatment adherence among the vulnerable and marginalized because of their understanding and sensitivity. TB researchers Dr Anurag Bhargava, Dr Madhukar Pai and Dr Madhvi Bhargava reiterate that TB is a "curable" infectious disease linked to inequities, it is even more imperative to invest in more partnerships that bridge these inequalities with empathy.

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

MONEY MATTERS



6 cr ITRs filed for FY24; 70% under new tax regime

About 6 crore income tax returns have been filed for income earned in 2023-24, of which 70 per cent were filed under the new simplified tax regime which offers lower rate of tax, Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra said on Tuesday. Addressing the post-budget session of PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Malhotra said there were apprehensions as to whether people would shift to the simplified tax regime. "About 6 crore filed for last year and 70 per cent is under the new income tax regime. The whole move has been towards simplicity with the ultimate purpose being to reduce the compliance burden," Malhotra said. For the 2022-23 fiscal, 8.61 crore ITRs were filed. The idea behind comprehensive income tax review as announced in the Budget is to make the tax law simpler. "We will come up with a draft and then we will seek suggestions," Malhotra said. Currently, India has two personal income tax regimes. In the old income tax regime, the tax rates are relatively high but taxpayers can claim several exemptions and deductions.



BE gets WHO pre-qualification status for oral polio vaccine

Biological E. Limited (BE) on Tuesday announced that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has granted pre-qualification status to its Novel Oral Polio Vaccine type 2 (nOPV2). nOPV2 which is the 10th pre-qualified vaccine of BE is a next-generation live, attenuated oral vaccine significantly reduces the risk of circulating vaccine-derived Poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) outbreaks, a press release from BE said. It is aimed at immunisation in countries that are affected by cVDPV2 outbreaks, which is a crucial moment in the fight against polio. With its improved genetic stability, nOPV2 has a significantly decreased chance of seeding new outbreaks in low-immunity environments as against its predecessor, the Sabin poliovirus type 2 (mOPV2) vaccine, the release said. Mahima Datta, managing director, Biological E. Limited, said: "We are pleased to be a part of the global effort to eradicate polio. Our collective quest to eradicate polio marks a significant milestone with the WHO pre-qualification of nOPV2." The vaccine has been specifically designed to address concerns about Vaccine-Associated Paralytic Polio (VAPP), which has occurred in approximately 2 to 4 cases per million births with the traditional OPV due to the vaccine virus reverting to a virulent form, she said.



Sebi bans Omaxe, its head, MD from mkt for 2-yrs

Sebi on Tuesday barred real estate firm Omaxe, its chairman Rohitas Goel, managing director Mohit Goel and three others from the securities market for two years for irregularities in the company's financial statements. The others restrained from the securities markets are -- Sudhangshu S. Biswal, Arun Kumar Pandey and Vimal Gupta. Additionally, these five persons have been "prohibited from holding any position as Director or Key Managerial Person of any other listed company for a period of two years". Apart from this, the regulator has levied a fine totalling Rs 47 lakh on 16 entries, including these six entities. The penalties range from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 7 lakh need to be paid within 45 days. In its 126-page final order, Sebi said these entities have "acted in concert in order to execute a fraudulent scheme which they tried to portray as normal transactions for the benefit of the company although it was experiencing loss, while also trying to portray that these as merely lending activities, thereby trying to maintain the price of the scrip of Omaxe for a period of three years".

Gross sugar output may fall to 333 lakh tonnes: ISMA

India's gross sugar production is estimated to decline 2 per cent to 333 lakh tonnes in 2024-25 marketing year starting October, according to industry body ISMA. Indian Sugar Mills & Bio-Energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA) on Tuesday released the preliminary estimates of sugar production for 2024-25 marketing year (October-September). The estimate was released after comprehensive analysis of satellite imagery, field reports on expected yields, sugar recovery rates, drawal percentage, the impact of rainfall from previous and current years, water availability in reservoirs, and anticipated rainfall during the Southwest Monsoon 2024.



Global investors eyeing India

Don't miss this 'golden chance': PM to India Inc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said India is firmly on the path to becoming the world's third-biggest economy within next five years and that global investors are eyeing it as an investment destination, as he exhorted the domestic industry to seize the golden opportunity to be part of the journey of 'Viksit Bharat'. Addressing a CII post-Budget conference on 'Journey Towards Viksit Bharat', he said, wealth creators are the main driving force of the country's growth story at a time when India's policies, commitment, determination, decisions and investments are becoming the basis of global progress.

"Today,



ED declares 9 defaulters as fugitive economic offenders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has declared nine defaulters as Fugitive Economic Offenders, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary informed Parliament on Tuesday. The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA) has been enacted for attachment and confiscation of property of a fugitive economic offender, he said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha. Further, he said, in the case of accused who fled abroad, the ED has declared nine of them as Fugitive Economic Offenders (FEO) under the provisions of FEOA. "Also, 25 extradition requests have also been sent, in respect of 16 accused who fled abroad. In addition to this, assets amounting to Rs 725.90 crore have been confiscated under the provisions of FEOA," he said. With regard to bad loans, he said, Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) have made an aggregate recovery of Rs 6,82,328 crore in NPA accounts, including written-off loans, during the last five financial years.

whole world is looking at India and you (industry). Policies of the government and commitment and investment are becoming foundation of global development. Investors across the world are keen to

the prime minister informed the industry about his call in the recent NITI Aayog meeting to state chief ministers for creating investor-friendly charters, bringing clarity in investment policies and creating a con-

Today, the whole world is looking at India and you (industry). Policies of the government and commitment and investment are becoming foundation of global development. Investors across the world are keen to come to India. World leaders are filled with positivity for India. This is the golden chance for the Indian industry and we should not lose this opportunity," Modi said.

Pointing towards the growing interest in India among global investors, India is growing at 8 per cent and the day is not far when the country will become the third-largest economy globally from the current fifth position, he

ducive atmosphere for investment. With high growth and low inflation, he said, India is a beacon of growth and stability in a world which is facing high inflation and low growth and other geopolitical challenges. The domestic industry, he said, should compete with the government to make India a developed nation by 2047 and also make it a global player in sunrise sectors. He also recalled various measures announced in the Budget, especially for promoting the MSME sector which creates crores of jobs. The prime minister said the government is highly focused on skill development and employment keeping in mind Industry 4.0 standards.

Check for 'wilful default' in NPA accounts exceeding Rs 25 lakh: RBI to banks

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The RBI on Tuesday issued a Master Direction on the Treatment of Wilful Defaulters and Large Defaulters under which banks and NBFCs will have to examine the 'wilful default' aspect in all non-performing asset accounts with outstanding amounts of Rs 25 lakh and above.

A lender will identify and classify a person as a 'wilful defaulter' by following a specified procedure. The evidence of wilful default will be examined by an identification committee, according



to the direction. 'Wilful defaulter' means a

FTA moving slow, but India pursuing: Goyal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The negotiations to review the free trade agreements (FTAs) implemented with Japan, Korea, and Asean are moving slow but India is pursuing those talks, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday.

He said these agreements were signed and implemented during the UPA regime.

These pacts are hurting the domestic industry and almost all firms stated that they are "unfair" agreements, Goyal said.

"I am helpless as those agreements (came into effect) before we came to power. I am

helpless to change it until we close the negotiations.

"We are under re-negotiations but obviously when they (Japan, Korea, Asean) realise that the Congress's agreement



was better for them (Japan, Korea, Asean), they are happier to keep that rather than change the agreements... they are going very slow, (but) we are also pursuing," he said while speaking at a CII programme on Viksit Bharat.

The minister also did some tough talking with the industry.

He said the domestic players seek duty concessions in FTAs but they are not ready to give market access to other countries.

Sensex, Nifty rise for 3rd day

Gains in Tata Motors, HDFC Bank

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty eked out gains in volatile trade to settle at record high levels on Tuesday, extending their gaining streak to the third day on the back of buying in Tata Motors and HDFC Bank.

The 30-share BSE Sensex closed higher by 99.56 points or 0.12 per cent at 81,455.40 - its all-time closing high -- with 16 of its components advancing and 14 ending lower. The index opened higher and jumped 459.43 points or 0.56 per cent to hit an intra-

day high of 81,815.27.

The NSE Nifty edged up 21.20 points or 0.09 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 24,857.30. During the day, it surged 135.65 points or 0.54 per cent to 24,971.75. The index hit a low of 24,798.65.

"The domestic market ended flat, due to profit-booking at higher levels.



Gold jumps Rs 550 to Rs 71,600 per 10 g

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices jumped by Rs 550 to Rs 71,600 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday following strong demand from jewellers and firm global trends.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 71,050 per 10 grams. Silver prices, on the other hand, remained flat at Rs 84,500 per kg on Tuesday, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also bounced by Rs 550 to Rs 71,250 per 10 grams from the previous close of Rs 70,700 per 10 grams.

Pulses import jumps 90% in to 47.38 lakh tonnes: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's import of pulses rose 90 per cent annually to 47.38 lakh tonnes during 2023-24 to meet domestic demand, the government informed Parliament on Tuesday.

"All India production of pulses has increased from 163.23 lakh tonnes during 2015-16 to 244.93 lakh tonnes during 2023-24 (as per 3rd Advance Estimates)," the Minister of State for Agriculture Ram Nath Thakur said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

In 2021-22, import of pulses stood at 26.99 lakh tonnes,

while exports were at 3.87 lakh tonnes.

During 2022-23, imports of pulses stood at 24.96 lakh tonnes, while exports were 7.62 lakh tonnes.

In 2023-24, the imports of pulses were 47.38 lakh tonnes and exports stood at 5.94 lakh tonnes.

"During the last ten years i.e. 2014-15 to 2023-24 (as per 3rd Advance Estimates), total pulses and oilseeds production has increased by 43 per cent and 44 per cent, respectively," Thakur said.

In reply to a separate question, the minister said the government has substantially



enhanced the budget allocation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare from Rs 27,662.67 crore in BE (budget estimate) during 2013-14, to Rs 1,25,035.79 crore BE during

2023-24.

Answering another query, Thakur said the National Commission on Farmers (NCF), constituted under the Chairmanship of MS Swaminathan in 2004, inter alia, recommended that Minimum Support Price (MSPs) should be at least 50 per cent more than the weighted average cost of production. "To give effect to this recommendation, the government, in its Union Budget for 2018-19, had made an announcement to keep MSP at a level of minimum one and half times of the cost of production as a pre-determined principle. "Accordingly, MSPs for all mandated Kharif, Rabi and other commercial crops have been fixed with a margin of at least 50 per cent over weighted average cost of production," he said.

ADB commits US\$ 200 mn loan for solid waste management in 100 Indian cities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asian Development Bank and the Government of India recently signed a US\$ 200 million (about Rs 1,700 crore) loan to improve solid waste management and sanitation in 100 cities across eight states in the country.

The signatories to the loan agreement for the Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 - Comprehensive Municipal Waste Management in Indian Cities Program were Juhli Mukherjee, Joint Secretary,



Finance Ministry, and Mio Oka,

Country Director for Asian Development Bank (ADB) - India Resident Mission, the Manila-based multilateral funding agency said in a statement on Tuesday.

After signing the loan agreement, Mukherjee said that the programme supports the objectives of the government's Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission - Urban 2.0 by enhancing sanitation and solid waste management infrastructure, including waste segregation, collection and disposal.

Qualcomm unveils India-specific chip to democratise 5G

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to make 5G more affordable and accessible in India, American chipmaker Qualcomm on Tuesday launched the Snapdragon 4S Gen 2 chipset and said it will bring down 5G smartphone price to Rs 8,000 and less.

Designed for entry-level handsets, the Snapdragon 4S Gen 2 mobile platform claims to make 5G accessible to over 600 million smartphone users in India.



The chipset will bring gigabit 5G smartphone prices below US\$ 99 (about Rs 8,290), Qualcomm officials said during the "Snapdragon for India" event here. According to IDC data, the lowest-priced 5G smartphone in India currently retails for Rs 9,999.

what's brewing?

AANKHON KI GUSTAAKHIYAN: Vikrant steps into the shoes of a blind musician

Vikrant Massey's star continues to rise in Bollywood, fuelled by the success of *12th Fail* and his recent film, *Blackout*. Now, get ready for a cinematic treat as Vikrant teams up with *Ranneeti* director Santosh Singh for *Aankhon ki Gustaakhiyan*. Vikrant is set to star in *Aankhon ki Gustaakhiyan*, an adaptation of Ruskin Bond's beloved short story. Directed by the versatile filmmaker Santosh Singh, known for his work on *Ranneeti: Balakot and Beyond*, this film promises to be an emotional journey filled with music and the magic of storytelling. In *Aankhon ki Gustaakhiyan*, he will step into the shoes of a blind musician, a role that is expected to showcase his exceptional acting

skills and bring a unique depth to the character. The film explores themes of resilience, passion and the indomitable human spirit, all set to a beautiful musical backdrop. Vikrant Massey and Santosh Singh have previously worked together on *Broken but Beautiful Season 1*, which was a huge success. These two teaming up again for *Aankhon ki Gustaakhiyan* is highly anticipated and promises to be something to look forward to. With Santosh Singh's directorial prowess and Vikrant Massey's raw talent, we can't wait to witness *Aankhon ki Gustaakhiyan* unfold its magical journey.



SAIYAMI KHER'S DUAL CHALLENGE

Actress Saiyami Kher is not taking a break from her hectic shooting schedule to gear up for the final leg of preparation for the Triathlon Ironman race in Germany. The gruelling race requires participants to complete 3.86 km of swimming, 180.25 km of biking and a 42.20 km marathon run. Saiyami is balancing her intense training regimen with her busy shooting schedule in Hyderabad, with Sunny Deol for her upcoming film *Jatt*, gradually extending her preparation time. "I have always been passionate about pushing my limits, both as an actor and an athlete," says Saiyami Kher. "Participating in the Triathlon Ironman race is a dream come true for me. The race is one of the most demanding physical challenges in the world and I am determined to give it my all. Balancing my acting career in the world and I am grateful to have been so rewarding, but as the race approaches, I need to dedicate more time to ensure I am fully prepared. The support from my team and fans has been overwhelming and I am grateful for their understanding as I focus on my training. I am excited to return to my projects with renewed energy and a sense of accomplishment after completing the race."



Sharvari begins shooting for Alpha!

The rising star of Bollywood, Sharvari, has started shooting her highly anticipated film, *Alpha!* A YRF Spy Universe project, Sharvari, will be seen alongside superstar Alia Bhatt in *Alpha*. Both play super agents in the film. Sharvari, on Tuesday, announced this milestone moment of her career. She shared a picture of director Shiv Rawail and her on the set of *Alpha*, just before she gave her first shot! Sharvari wrote, "It doesn't get bigger than this! Super stoked to start my #Alpha journey today! Trust me... I have manifested this moment super prepped but can feel the butterflies in my tummy... Thank you Adi sir for your faith & @shivrawail for your belief in me!" Earlier, Sharvari had expressed her gratitude to be a part of a superstar-studded franchise like the YRF Spy Universe. She said, "It is hugely overwhelming to be a part of this massive YRF Spy Universe. I'm like a ball of energy right now—too excited to have this opportunity—too excited to be working with one of the greatest superstars of our country, Alia Bhatt. To be part of a universe that has my cinematic idols is, honestly, a dream come true. Just the fact that I'm playing a super agent in this galaxy of the greatest icons of cinema is just too surreal." On the work front, Sharvari will be seen in Nikkhil Advani's next, *Vedaa* which is set to release on August 15. She plays the titular role in the film.



On the sixth day of FDCI x India Couture Week 2024, designer Jayanti Reddy captivated audiences with her stunning collection, *Evocative Nawabi Canvas*. Aditi Rao Hydari took centre stage as the showstopper, dazzling in a breathtaking gold sharara ensemble. The outfit featured a long-sleeved blouse with a dipped neckline and pleated details, paired with flared palazzo trousers, seamlessly blending modernity with tradition.

Day six of India Couture Week 2024 saw a mesmerising showcase of designer Gaurav Gupta's latest collection, *Arunodaya*. The highlight of the evening was Khushi Kapoor and her rumoured boyfriend, Vedang Raina, who graced the ramp as showstoppers for the designer.

FREEDOM AT MIDNIGHT BRINGS AN ELECTRIFYING STORY OF INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE



Presenting the first drop of this electrifying story, *Freedom at Midnight* is based on the award-winning book by Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins. Streaming soon on Sony LIV, the show is produced by Emmay Entertainment (Monisha Advani and Madhu Bhojwani) in association with Studio Next and Sony LIV. Nikkhil Advani serves as the showrunner and director. The story is penned by Abhinandan Gupta, Adwitiya Kareng Das, Gundeep Kaur, Divya Nidhi Sharma, Revanta Sarabhai and Ethan Taylor. The series features a stellar cast, including Sidhant Gupta as Jawaharlal Nehru, Chirag Vohra as Mahatma Gandhi, Rajendra Chawla as Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Arif Zakaria as Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Ira Dubey as Fatima Jinnah, Malishka Mendonsa as Sarojini Naidu, Rajesh Kumar as Liaquat Ali Khan, KC Shankar as V.P. Menon, Luke McGibney as Lord Louis Mountbatten, Cordelia Bugeja as Lady Edwina Mountbatten, Alistair Finlay as Archibald Wavell, Andrew Cullum as Clement Attlee and Richard Teverson as Cyril Radcliffe in pivotal roles.

FUN

ARCHIE



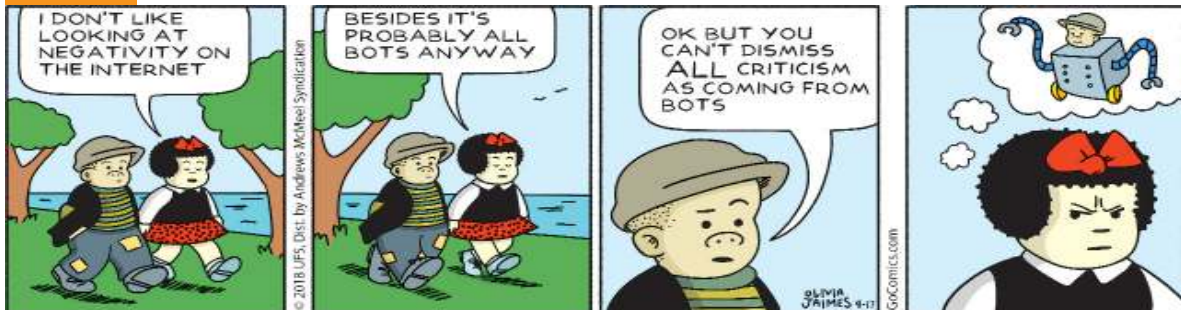
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



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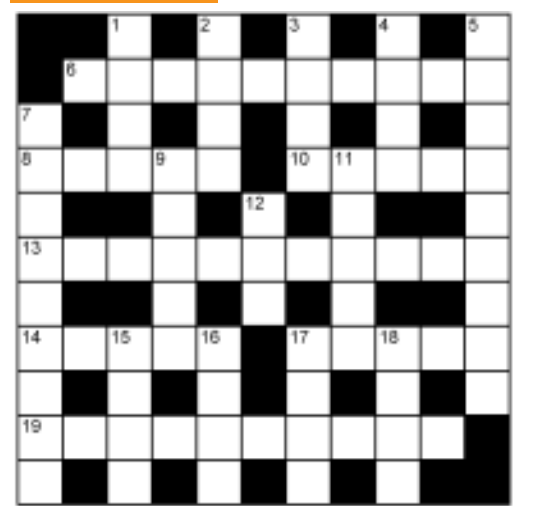
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



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Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- A large naval ship
- Feeling very annoyed
- A strap for trousers
- A South American dance
- A very wealthy person
- Gets closer to
- A soft type of hat
- A grower of fruit trees

DOWN

- Gun sound
- Don't go
- A strap for trousers
- Skinny
- The people you play against in a game
- A court game played with rackets and a shuttlecock
- A measuring stick
- Astonish
- Female deer
- Curved part under a bridge
- A sewed joint in material
- Hospital patients lie in these
- Go quickly

SOLUTION

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



SHIKHA DUGGAL

Fans are incredibly excited about Roshan Mathew's next film, *Uljah*, as seen by the quick sell-out of its special preview showing in several cities. The film's team quickly scheduled fan screenings in Delhi, Mumbai, Jaipur, Ahmedabad and other cities after releasing its gripping trailer. As previously indicated, we have the prominent actor with us today who shares the secrets and is well-known in Malayalam cinema.

"I am happy knowing that I have been called an unconventional actor; however, to break the bubble, I don't specifically go out looking for one," Roshan, who is well-known for his unique choices, said as we started this exclusive conversation. "For me, it's always a combination of what naturally interests me, whether or not I find the character appealing and whether or not I want to collaborate with the actors! For me, that has always been the deciding factor. I'm Roshan, the actor and those who know me that I don't travel with any preconceptions. For instance, it would take something really unique to convince me to work on a Malayalam film. Give me a good enough excuse to go outside and shoot!"

And with *Uljah*, he says, "The first and most evident reason to support a film is to recognise a strong script! You won't believe me when I say that I read the entire script in one sitting out of intense curiosity about what would happen next. I think the decision by the filmmakers to cast Janhvi Kapoor in the lead role was an intriguing one. I can admit, though, that I was most thrilled to be placed opposite Gulshan because I have always respected his work."

Hollywood action filmmaker Nick Powell has planned stunt sequences for this spy thriller, *Uljah*. He is well-known for his stunts in Hollywood productions like *The Last Samurai*, *Gladiator* and *Born Identity*. Aside from this, Roshan informs us, "I contacted my director very early on to learn more about the subjects of espionage and diplomacy. He sent me a prepared list of interviews and books—oh my goodness! Accounts from former diplomats and embedded agents at an embassy were also available. I had no idea this was the world. I'm not connected to any embassy! Though I wish I had, I'll never

Well-known for his stint in Malayalam cinema, actor Roshan Mathew will soon be seen in *Uljah*, starring Janhvi and Gulshan. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, the actor discusses his unique choices, getting on board for *Uljah* and his camaraderie with co-stars.

'I READ THE ENTIRE SCRIPT OF ULJAH IN ONE SITTING'

mind (he laughed) and ring them up to find out more information. I also turned to a few literary allusions."

Continuing on a lighter note, he says, "I truly enjoy the research aspect of my work. Every film I see reveals a different side of me! I have to suddenly become someone I didn't know anything about before. That's really awesome! I am strolling past my bookshelf while I speak with you right now. To be honest, *Bridge of Spies* was also a big help. This piques our interest, since acting can be incredibly draining otherwise. These movies provide us with a secret goal to strive toward!"

The actor also declares, "I have very few scenes with Gulshan that I am particularly disappointed about," in reference to his fellow actors in *Uljah*. "What a talented actor he is! I've been a huge fan of this guy for a long time, even before I did my first movie. I had never met any of the co-actors previously, so my first encounters with them all occurred during the workshop sessions. Janhvi's maturity really impressed me,

I must admit! She didn't have any temper tantrums and I observed her being quite available for all the tasks she was requested to complete. *Uljah* was only elevated by Janhvi Kapoor. I had one of the trickiest scenes with her; we had to film for nearly the entire night and we were having a lot of trouble. Dear God!"

More exclusive details were revealed by Roshan to *The Pioneer*, who reported, "It was my first time in London and I had a great time. My sister spent some time there. She was a student in Edinburgh! I began my career in theatre and as we all know, London theatre has a global following. During my free time, I would investigate everything and attend as many performances as I could. I walked a lot, had the renowned London coffee—what more could one need in life? (He laughed aloud.) The *Uljah* schedule in London was fantastic. Yes, we had a full schedule in Bhopal as well! However, we were astute and didn't portray it as Bhopal." Well, that was quite enlightening.

ther ado, *The Pioneer* connects with the artist to learn more about her art.

Inspired by Mother Nature, she has always loved to explore art since childhood. "Life becomes much simpler by enjoying the simple pleasures of nature," shares the self-taught artist, who finds this thought to be her driving force. "I began my journey by experimenting with numerous fine art forms. Doing art is like meditation for me and I practice it almost every day to excel in my craft."

Nature, she says, has undeniably been her biggest guru. Basically, when she started taking workshops with T-Works, she got to explore the art of finger painting. Discovering her true passion for developing intricacy in a contemporary setting, she enjoys amalgamating abstract, textured backgrounds against tribal elements. In regards to finger painting, "I have learned how colours work and how we can mix different colours. This art aids in sensory integration, improving fine motor development by strengthening finger and hand muscles." This art not only helps the kids but also people of different age groups, strengthening their senses and motor skills.

It was certainly a challenge for her to create a niche here, coming from a different background. She recalls, "It was very difficult for me to connect with galleries to conduct workshops. But with my dedication, hard work, and courage, I am now able to pursue my art career. Throughout my journey, my family has been my biggest support and has always pushed me forward so I could achieve my goals. Doing art is like meditation for me, and I practice almost every day to excel in my craft."

With this skill, she has taken part in various competitions and group shows at the national level and received several accolades for her work. It was in 2019 that she conducted her first solo exhibition at the Alliance Française of Hyderabad, followed by IconArt Gallery in 2022.

But what sets finger art apart? "I love finger painting because it allows me to express myself in unique and creative ways," she gleefully shares, adding that it helps her create unimaginable art using this technique.

As we head towards the end of this chat, she goes on to enunciate, "I want people to know the value of art in our daily lives and how art is important for mental well-being. In the future, I will be conducting more such creative workshops and keep working on developing my art and style so that anyone can paint with me irrespective of their age."

EMBRACING SIMPLICITY & SWEETNESS WITH SAVERA

TEJAL SINHA

Baatein ye saari main tumse hi karna chaahoon has certainly been that feeling we have for that special person. We always look forward to sharing the good and bad of our day. Making this feeling of ours much easier to express and appreciate, Iqlipse Nova and Anubha Bajaj have made it simpler with their latest track, *Savera*.

Iqlipse and Anubha, known for their previous works *Khwab* and *Lamhey*, respectively, collaborate on this debut single. This lovely romantic song beautifully conveys the enchantment of everyday love, giving listeners a musical comfort akin to a warm cup of *chai* on a rainy evening. The gentle guitar strums and comforting vocals in *Savera* create a musical experience that brings about feelings of warmth and nostalgia. The song skillfully mixes current indie pop with traditional Indian musical components, crafting a sound that is both ageless and up-to-date.

The Pioneer connects with the duo for an exclusive chat and brings you more interesting insights on the song and the making of it.

EXCERPTS FROM THE INTERVIEW:

Take us through your inclination toward music.

Iqlipse: I was in class 7 when I was watching this concert by Julio Iglesias on TV. I was like, There's this guy who is singing this one song and people are going crazy about it. At that point in time, I was like, *Mujhe yehi karna hai*.

Anubha Bajaj: I've been interested in music ever since I was a little kid. I always wanted to learn guitar. For me, it was like one thing that led to another. I started off by learning the guitar and I fell in love with it. Then I learned piano and I fell in love with that too. Eventually, I got into songwriting. Now I'm at a stage when I'm releasing my songs, so it's pretty much been that journey of me knowing what I want and just going after it.

First single together, how excited were you both for the same?

Iqlipse: I was very excited because I've always admired what she does and I was the one texting her on Instagram about making a song together. So somewhere, I knew whatever we do together was going to be amazing.

Anubha: It's pretty much the same for me as well. I was very excited when he texted me on Instagram. Both of us coming together was like two powerhouses coming together and making a project. I had an inkling at the very beginning that this would be an amazing song.

Tell us about *Savera*.

Anubha: When we were writing this song, we were talking about someone who was just about one call away. That one person we call when something new happens in our lives, He (Iqlipse), was the one who came up with the sentence, *Baatein yeh saari main tumse hi karna chaahoon*. I was very skeptical in the beginning—is it a good beginning to the chorus and he was like, 'no, trust me and stick with it'. I had full faith and that's how it just became a full romantic song.

How did you get the idea of *Baatein yeh saari*.....?

Iqlipse: We were trying to make the song at Anubha's home studio and we jammed for like 3 hours and nothing came out. There are days when the music doesn't come out of you. And we were like, Chalo, it's fine and we would write something new. I was just leaving and I had booked my cab and just then, she came up with the melody, the chorus melody. The moment she sang it, I was like, It is so cool and just instantly I wrote the line, *Baatein Yeh saari mai tumse hi karna chahoon*. It was so random. We tried to stick to it and wrote the entire song around it. My idea was that the entire song has to be around that special person and be an expression of appreciation for that person.

***Savera* is a song that symbolises love in its purest form. What would you like to say about it?**

Anubha: In this song, I was more involved in the production aspect of it. I was less involved in the lyrics. I would give more credit to him for the lyrics. Ultimately, I was happy that I was going to do a romantic song and I just wanted to be part of the song where I was involved in writing romantically. I am happy that I got the opportunity to work with the guy himself, who had sang songs like *Udta Parindaa* and *Dil Besabar*. I knew he had been making so many songs about love, dating and being single. I knew if, from the writing point of view, he took the front foot, it would be better for the song.

Take us through the musical journey of *Savera*.

Iqlipse: The musical journey was like a hell of a ride. The problem with the song was that my comfortable scale was different than that of Anubha. She sings on a lower scale and that's why we had to come to a conclusion—a common point where both of us sound good. We settled down at a particular scale and the song was composed in such a way that when both of us sang it together, it would sound better than just one of us singing.

Mastering creative canvas through finger painting art



RASHMI BHUMIREDDY

Remember of the first time you painted with your tiny fingers to create an adorable picture? Yet at that time, we were unaware of our skill in finger painting. Are you amazed, just like we are?

Well, we had come across how this art that we did back then has been gaining immense popularity and is indeed such a meditative therapy!

Neha Jain, a finger painting artist, has perfected this skill and has created numerous intricate paintings using only her fingers, without using any brushes. Her artistic pieces resonated with the members of the Hyderabad Arts Society and her works were chosen and exhibited at the Salarjung Museum and State Gallery of Arts.

After experimenting with numerous fine art forms such as Tanjore, Oil and acrylic, Folk and tribal arts, Neha discovered her true passion for developing intricacy in a contemporary setting. She amalgamates abstract, textured backgrounds against tribal elements—a unique style for which she is being recognised. Without any fur-

Finger painting art has been a fun form of art that has created a stir. *The Pioneer* presents Neha Jain, an artist from Hyderabad, who has dedicated herself to promoting and creating awareness about this art form.



US men's soccer team close to reaching knockouts of Olympics for first time since 2000

AP ■ SAINT-ETIENNE (FRANCE)

The United States men's soccer team is closing in on qualification to the knockout phase of the Olympics for the first time since Sydney 2000. Argentina is back in control of its destiny after its first game was marred by violence and chaos - and a shock defeat to Morocco. The group stage of the men's soccer tournament at the Paris Games concludes on Tuesday and with only Spain and Japan guaranteed their place in the quarterfinals tensions are likely to be high as a host of nations battle for a place in the final eight. The U.S. is competing in its first Olympics since Beijing 2008 and the 4-1 win against New Zealand last week has put it in a strong position to advance. "I said, even before coming here, when people ask me what they can expect from us, I said one thing: I promise that this group is going to give everything on the field and where that's going to take us, I don't know. But I know that they're going to give everything," U.S. Coach Marko Mitrovic said.

The Americans face Guinea at Stade Geoffroy-Guichard in Saint-Etienne after the win against New Zealand saw Mitrovic's team bounce back from an opening 3-0 loss to France in Group A. The U.S. is in second place, level with New Zealand on three points, but ahead on goal difference. France, which is top on six points, plays New Zealand in its final match and is expected to secure the win or draw needed to be certain to advance. There is the potential that three teams could be tied on either six or three points, depending on results in the final round of games. That would mean goal difference or other tiebreaker criteria is required to determine which teams advance. **GROUP B:** Argentina plays Ukraine and is on top of Group B on goal difference, with all four teams tied on three points. Argentina beat Iraq 3-1 in its second game after its opening loss, which was marred by violent scenes when Moroccan fans rushed the field and forced a delay of around two hours. Ukraine's late 2-1 win against



Morocco means all four teams won and lost their opening two games and a tiebreaker could be required if there are two draws in the final round of fixtures. "We're not thinking about the next round. First we have to beat Ukraine," said Argentina coach Javier Mascherano. **GROUP C:** Spain (6 points) has qualified after back-to-back wins in Group C but could still have a big say over who joins it in the next round. Spain plays second-placed Egypt (4 points), which needs a draw to guarantee it advances. Third-placed Dominican Republic (1 point) plays already eliminated Uzbekistan (0 points). **GROUP D:** Any one of three teams could join Japan and advance from Group D. Japan (6 points) is into quarterfinals after back-to-back wins and plays last-placed Israel (1 point), which needs a victory to stand any hope of qualifying. Second-placed Paraguay (3 points) plays Mali (1 point). A win for Paraguay would guarantee its place in the quarterfinals.

Carlos says he has been dealing with groin muscle problem since Wimbledon

AP ■ PARIS

Carlos Alcaraz took a medical timeout for what he said is a lingering groin muscle issue in the second set of his 6-1, 7-6 (3) singles victory over Tallon Griekspoor at the Paris Olympics. Alcaraz is scheduled to play doubles for Spain with Rafael Nadal on Tuesday - and the opponents happen to be the Dutch pair of Griekspoor and Wesley Koolhof. "It's a pain that I've been dealing with. I know what I have to do ... To deal with this pain," said Alcaraz, a 21-year-old who won the French Open at Roland Garros, the same site being used for Olympics tennis, last month, and Wimbledon this month.



"I will try to recover as soon and as (best) as I can tonight," he said, "to be ready ... 100 percent tomorrow in my doubles." Alcaraz said he watched part of Nadal's 6-1, 6-4 loss to Novak Djokovic in singles earlier Monday, before preparing to face Griekspoor. "When Djokovic is playing at this level, it's really, really difficult to play against him. Really aggressive, no mistakes, moving very, very well," Alcaraz said. "I saw Rafa playing decent, let's say. Not his best tennis, for sure. But when Djokovic is like this, he's almost unbeatable." That last word is one often used to describe Alcaraz, who was the first teenager to reach No. 1 in the ATP rankings, was the youngest man to win major titles on hard, grass and clay courts, and defeated Djokovic in each of the past two Wimbledon finals. "One of the best players there is," Griekspoor said about Alcaraz. "Someone who likes to play on this court. He made it very difficult for me in the first set." That was clear. But in the second, Griekspoor began to serve better and hit more aggressively, and suddenly it was a much tighter match. After Alcaraz left the court with a trainer while trailing 5-4 in that set, he

returned and was a single point from being pushed to a third. Griekspoor couldn't convert that chance, which Alcaraz erased with a volley winner that he celebrated with a right uppercut and a yell of "Vamos!" Soon, in the tiebreaker, he was back in full control. "I didn't see any problems with him," Griekspoor said when asked how Alcaraz seemed in the second set. "I don't know what the problem was, but it's not like he fell down or twisted his ankle and couldn't walk anymore. He was still all over the place." Griekspoor said he would prepare for the rematch of sorts by going back and taking a look at the first-round doubles victory for Nadal and Alcaraz to help figure out a game plan. Giant barrels and steady swells for men's third day of surfing competition Teahupo'o (France), Jul 30 (AP) With the ceremonial blow of a conch shell and blare of a judge's horn, the third day of the Paris Olympics surfing competition in Tahiti began on Monday with the men's surfers going head-to-head, some reaching the end of the road in their quest for gold. Stunning waves and steady swells in the morning heats brought a fresh surge of energy to competitors and spectators, after Sunday's lackluster

conditions, while conditions rapidly tapered around midday due to a storm, postponing the women's afternoon competition. "Today is probably gonna be one of the most exciting days... There's some serious waves out there," said Jordy Smith from South Africa, who lost to Peru's Alonso Correa in the day's first heat. "I got pounded a couple of times." Coming out of a barrel and riding across a wall of nearly 10-foot cerulean blue water, French Polynesian surfer Kauli Vaast raised his arms to the air, an enormous smile on his face as he cruised to victory in his heat, knocking out Griffin Colapinto from the United States. "I just came out, after a great ride, great takeoff and great wave," Vaast said. "That one felt good, and I was just too happy and enjoying the moment." Colapinto's loss was the first for the U.S. Team during the Paris Olympics surfing competition, after the entire team won their heats the first day of competition thus directly qualifying for Monday's round. John John Florence from the U.S. Was also eliminated from the competition. Brazil also suffered its first surfer being knocked out of the competition, after Filipe Toledo lost to Japan's Reo Inaba.

Gabriel Medina from Brazil made Olympic history on the waves, receiving the highest score in Olympic surfing history - a 9.9, just shy of a perfect 10. After the ride he launched himself into the air, raising his right arm and pointing towards the sky in a gravity-defying moment. At times water safety patrol staff on jet skis pulled surfers from the water after their rides, towing them to calmer waters before jettling them back out to the wave. "It's really dangerous out there. It's super shallow ... You can see the corals," Medina said after his win against Kanoa Igarashi from Japan. On land, emotions ran high. Expletives were commonly heard from losing surfers coming back to shore. Broken boards, snapped from the power of the waves, were laid on the ground and inspected by teams shaking their heads. Staff of opposing teams going head-to-head whistled in awe and clapped at their opponents rides, marveling as surfers reappeared from being inside heavy barrels of water. Blustery winds swept in around midday, turning the surf conditions sour, marring the men's final heats and causing the women's competition being postponed. Monday was the last men's competition day before the quarterfinals, semifinals and gold medal heats take place on the fourth and final day of competition.

Correa from Peru, Inaba from Japan, Joan Duru and Vaast from France, Joao Chianca and Medina from Brazil, Ethan Ewing and Jack Robinson from Australia all qualified to compete in the final day of the men's competition. The rest of the competition functions as a single-elimination, head-to-head bracket. Each heat will feature two surfers, with the winner advancing to the final stage of competition: the quarterfinals, semifinals and final gold medal heat. The next competition day will be determined after officials assess wave conditions.

Ex-NBA player Chase wins beach volleyball debut in Paris

AP ■ PARIS

Chase Budinger has never forgotten how badly he played in his first NBA game. He'll have only good memories from his Olympic debut. The former Arizona and professional basketball player and his partner, Miles Evans, beat host France in straight sets on Monday to coast through their opening match of the Paris beach volleyball tournament. "I really tried to use my basketball experience of playing in front of big crowds to be composed the whole time," Budinger said after a 21-14, 21-11 victory. "But it definitely was not like that inside." Budinger spent seven years in the NBA, mostly as a bench player for the Rockets and Timberwolves, before turning to beach volleyball to fulfill an Olympic dream. His first game, he still remembers, "I played awful."



"On the bus ride over here, I was telling Miles about my first basketball game, of how nervous I was and how the nerves really got to me," Budinger said. "I was 0-for-2 (from 3-point range), had two turnovers and one of my shots I had was an airball. So the nerves affected my game play." At the Eiffel Tower Stadium on Monday the jitters didn't get to him - even against a French team that had won the last three matchups on the

international tour. "It took me six years. It took me a long time to finally achieve this goal and I am here competing at the Olympics," Budinger said. "And there is no better feeling." Budinger and Evans scored the first three points and never trailed in the first set. In the second, France did eke out a 3-1 lead before the Americans won the next three points and finished the match in just 32 minutes.

"It's one of the best starts we could imagine," Evans said. "I had all these bad scenarios in my head going into this match. I am super thankful we were able to overcome that." Unlike the NBA debut against the Portland Trail Blazers back in 2009, Budinger said, "I felt like out here, I was able to get a couple of points early. That helped relieve some of that stress, those nerves and allowed me to play my game more without it affecting me as much." In other notable beach action on Monday, Americans Kristen Nuss and Taryn Kloth beat Tokyo silver medalist Taliqua Clancy of Australia and her new partner, Mariafe Artacho del Solar, in straight sets to improve to 2-0 in Paris. France swept Rio gold medalist Laura Ludwig of Germany and her new partner, Louisa Lippmann. Qatar, the bronze medalist in Tokyo on the men's side, beat top-ranked Sweden 2-1 to improve to 2-0 in pool play.

Chennaiyin FC announces 22-member squad for Durand Cup

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Chennaiyin FC on Tuesday announced a 22-member squad for the 133rd edition of the Durand Cup being played from July 27 to August 31. Chennaiyin FC are placed in Group D along with ISL side Jamshedpur FC, Indian Army and Assam Rifles with all six games of the stage to be played at the JRD Tata Sports Complex in Jamshedpur. The Marina Machans will face Indian Army in their opening game on Wednesday as the group winners and possibly the second-placed team will advance to the knockouts. "The squad features a blend of senior team members and promising reserves, including notable players such as Vincy Barretto, Bikash Yunnam, Irfan Yadwad, Samik Mitra,



Alexander Romario Jesuraj, and Sachu Siby," the club said in a statement. "This mix of experience and youth is reflected in the roster, which comprises three goalkeepers, eight defenders, nine midfielders, and two forwards, ensuring a well-

balanced team across all positions." Chennaiyin FC, who reached the quarterfinal stage in the 2022 and 2023 iterations of the Durand Cup, will take on Jamshedpur FC on August 4 followed by their last group stage game against Assam

Rifles on August 11. "We are going there to win games. We are not going there to take part. As a team, we are going to be together, on the field, off the field. There's going to be unity. We are going to go on the field and fight and give our 100 per cent," said CFC assistant coach Noel Wilson, who joined the club ahead of this season. **CHENNAIYIN FC SQUAD:** **Goalkeepers:** Mohanraj K, Samik Mitra, Malhar Umesh Mohol **Defenders:** Niketh N, Bikash Yunnam, Alexander Romario Jesuraj, Robjak Ali SK, YV Praful Kumar, Aby S, Shanu Stellus, Sachu Siby **Midfielders:** Ngangom Raman Singh, Ganeshpandi S, Solaimalai R, Jayasurya, Vivek S, Karthik T, Vincy Barretto, Komal Thatal, Lalpekhlua

AP ■ NANTERRE (FRANCE)

Canadian phenom Summer McIntosh claimed the first gold medal of her just-burgeoning career Monday night with a dominating victory in the 400-meter individual medley at the Paris Olympics. The 17-year-old McIntosh collected her first medal of any color on the opening night of swimming, taking a silver in the 400 freestyle behind Ariarne Titmus - and ahead of Katie Ledecky. Now, McIntosh has the most prized color of all. "I try to take every event very individually and just do my work, but starting off for me - getting on the podium - is definitely a great way to start," McIntosh said. "You try to continue to get better and better." She pushed the pace hard through the first half of the grueling race - the butterfly and backstroke legs - to leave everyone in her wake except American Katie Grimes. McIntosh was under her own world-record pace, but couldn't keep it going. She touched in 4 minutes, 27.71 seconds, more than three seconds off the mark of

17-year-old McIntosh wins gold in 400-metre IM

4:24.38 she set at the Canadian trials in May. But it was more than enough to blow away the field in the Olympic final. McIntosh seemed to take it all in stride. Maybe it's because she competed at the Tokyo Olympics at age 14, so she sort of feels like a veteran now. "Every single time I get to race on the world stage, I learn more and more about handling mentally and physically and emotionally and trying not to get too high or too low," McIntosh said. She's got a grueling schedule in Paris which includes two more individual races - the 200 butterfly and 200 IM. There are no plans to celebrate just yet. "I mean, obviously I'm super happy with this gold," McIntosh said. "But now I'm all about the 200 fly on day five." Grimes, who is also swimming the open water event in Paris, held on to claim the silver in 4:33.40. The Americans also grabbed the bronze



when Emma Weyant touched in 4:34.93. **ANOTHER TEEN RULES:** David Popovici made the teenagers 2-for-2 on the night when he pulled off a thrilling victory in the men's 200 freestyle. The 19-year-old Romanian was among three swimmers who swapped the lead back and forth on the final lap. First, it was American Luke Hobson edging in front. Then Britain's Matthew Richards, out in Lane 1, pushed to the lead. Finally, it was Popovici mustering everything he had to get to the wall in 1:44.72 -- a mere two-hundredths ahead of Richards, with Hobson just 0.07 back to earn the bronze. Britain's Duncan Scott, the silver medalist in Tokyo three years ago, finished in 1:44.87 to miss out on the podium this time. The top four were separated by a mere 0.15 seconds. **GOLD FOR ITALY, AGAIN:** Thomas Cecon gave Italy its second gold in as many nights at La Defense Arena, rallying to win the

men's 100 backstroke. China's Xu Jiayu led at the turn, just ahead of American Ryan Murphy - the 2016 gold medalist. Cecon was third, but he switched to another gear on the return lap. The Italian, who has held the world record since the 2022 world championships in Budapest, now has a gold medal to go with it after finishing in 52.00. Xu claimed the silver (52.32), while the 29-year-old Murphy settled for the bronze for the second Olympics in a row at 52.39. Cecon followed Nicolò Martinenghi, who grabbed Italy's first gold at the pool with a victory in the 100 breaststroke Sunday night. **LOOKING AHEAD:** In the only semifinals of the night, Australia's Kaylee McKeown and Regan Smith of the U.S. Set up a much-anticipated duel in the women's 100 backstroke. They each won their heats, with McKeown posting the fastest time (57.97) ad McKeown right on her heels (57.99). McKeown is the reigning Olympic champion and former world-record holder - a mark that Smith snatched away with time of 57.

Prabhas has an exciting lineup ahead!

THIRAGABADARA SAAMI IS ALL ABOUT HOW MAN TURNS VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCES

K. RAMYA SREE

As the release date for *Thiragabadara Saami* approaches, producer Malkapuram Shiva Kumar shared his insights on the film and his career in an exclusive interview. The film, featuring actor Raj Tarun and directed by A.S. Ravikumar Chowdary, has been generating substantial buzz. With Malvi Malhotra in the lead role, the movie promises a blend of romance, sentiment, high-voltage action and emotional depth.

Malkapuram Shiva Kumar revealed that the project began in 2023, and he was immediately drawn to the story presented by Director A.S. Ravikumar Chowdary. "When I heard the story, I was captivated instantly. I decided to move forward with it in one sitting," he said. From the outset, the team believed Raj Tarun was the ideal choice for the role.

Discussing the film's content, Shiva Kumar explained that the story involves elements of violence that are integral to the narrative. "In this film, a person's behaviour is shaped by their circumstances. The situations they encounter can transform someone who is normally quiet into someone who acts violently. Raj Tarun has delivered an exceptional performance in this context."

Reflecting on his journey in the film industry, Shiva Kumar recounted his

start with the film *Bhadradi*, supported by Srihari Garu. "Director Bobby also made his debut as a writer with that film. Since then, I've been focused on introducing new talents. In *Surya vs Surya*, I introduced Karthik Ghattamaneni and in another project, Tridha Chowdhury. Now, in *Thiragabadara Saami*, we're introducing Malvi Malhotra and working with a new director."

Producer Malkapuram Shiva Kumar, coming up with his next film, *Thiragabadara Saami*, shares his journey in the industry and insights about the film

When asked about what audiences can expect from *Thiragabadara Saami*, Shiva Kumar described it as a reflection on the bonds between husbands and wives. "The film is a testament to how couples should remain connected in their relationship. The content is engaging and will resonate with a wide audience," he said.

Mannara Chopra's role in the film, playing the negative female lead, has been praised by Shiva Kumar. "Mannara's role is crucial throughout the movie. She has portrayed the character exceptionally well," he noted.

The production experience was notably enjoyable for Shiva Kumar, with the majority of shooting

taking place in Zaheerabad. "We had nearly 400 people involved in the daily shoot and it was a very homely and enjoyable experience," he added.

On the financial side, Shiva Kumar expressed satisfaction with the film's progress. "The film has worked out very well from a business perspective, which is why we're releasing it with great happiness," he said. Reflecting on his career as a producer, Shiva Kumar admitted that, while the financial rewards have been modest, the industry offers a unique opportunity to create employment and support others. "Even if a film breaks even, it provides opportunities for new talents and helps sustain the industry," he shared.

Looking ahead, Shiva Kumar is excited about his Bollywood projects, including a film directed by his friend Raj, currently in post-production. "We are also working on a web series titled *Rahu Ketu* and another series based on Tirupati Balaji," he revealed. Additionally, new projects on the horizon include a film featuring J. D. Chakravarthy, Naresh Agastya and Seerat Kapoor, which will introduce a new director named Shivan.



Prabhas, the reigning pan-India superstar, continues to push the boundaries of cinema with his groundbreaking blockbusters. His latest release, *Kalki 2898 AD*, has not only captivated audiences nationwide but also set a new benchmark as the highest-grossing Indian film of 2024 and the sixth highest-grossing Indian film of all time, among numerous records for Telugu and Indian cinema.

But Prabhas isn't stopping there. He's gearing up for an even more impressive lineup with major projects on the horizon, including *The Raja Saab*, *Salaar: Part 2—Shouryaanga Parvam* and Sandeep Reddy Vanga's *Spirit*.

The excitement has already started building with the release of the teaser poster for *The Raja Saab*,

which showcases a fresh look for Prabhas and promises to elevate the anticipation even further. Scheduled for release in April 2025, this film is expected to be a major highlight. Following that, Prabhas will appear in *Salaar: Part 2—Shouryaanga Parvam*, one of the most awaited sequels. He will also star in Sandeep Reddy Vanga's highly anticipated film, *Spirit*.

With such a stellar lineup of grand films, Prabhas is poised to make a massive impact at the box office. His dedicated fans can look forward to a series of spectacular blockbusters that promise to deliver on the high expectations they have come to cherish.



Toofan impresses with high-voltage action sequences

Hero Vijay Antony's highly anticipated film, *Toofan*, is gearing up for a spectacular release on August 2. The movie is produced by Kamal Bora, D. Lalitha, B. Pradeep and Pankaj Bora under the Infinity Film Ventures banner, known for backing previous Vijay Antony hits like *Raghavan* and *Hathya*. Directed by Vijay Milton, *Toofan* promises to deliver a poetic action entertainer.

The newly released sneak peek features a high-octane action sequence that is expected to be one of the film's standout moments. In the clip, a police officer interrogates a young hotel owner and his mother about a mysterious individual named Dolly and a troubling incident at a mall. Tensions rise as the police, accompanied by several villains, storm the hotel to confront their target. A thrilling fight scene between the hero and the antagonists adds to the growing excitement surrounding the film.

Musical family entertainer Santhana Prapthirasthu first look show up!

Vikranth and Chandini Chowdary star in the forthcoming film *Santhana Prapthirasthu*, produced by Madhura Sreedhar Reddy and Nirvi Hariprasad Reddy under the banners of Mathura Entertainment and Nirvi Arts. The film is directed by Sanjeev Reddy, who is also a producer on the project. Reddy is known for his work on ABCD with Allu Sirish and the web series *Aha Naa Pellanta* with Raj Tarun, and recently earned acclaim for creating an anti-drug advertisement featuring Megastar Chiranjeevi for the Telangana government.

The screenplay for *Santhana Prapthirasthu* is penned by Sheikh Dawood Ji, recog-

nized for his work on films like *Venkataadri Express*, *Express Raja* and *Ek Mini Katha*. The movie is set to be a musical family entertainer.

In celebration of Vikranth's birthday, a special poster from *Santhana Prapthirasthu* has been unveiled. The poster, featuring the actor, creatively incorporates themes around increasing sperm count, highlighting approaches such as a healthy diet, medication, exercise, yoga, stress management, and educational resources.

Director Sanjeev Reddy aims to create an engaging film that tackles contemporary issues. The film is currently in the midst of regular shooting.



Kalyan Ram's intense climax shoot on 1000 artists completed

The climax of *#NKR21*, starring Nandamuri Kalyan Ram and directed by Pradeep Chilukuri, has been successfully wrapped up. This crucial segment was filmed over thirty days on an elaborate set built on the outskirts of Hyderabad. The filmmakers spared no expense on this pivotal scene, investing a remarkable Rs 8 crore, making it the most expensive single episode in Kalyan Ram's career and underscoring the grandeur and scale of the sequence.

Brahma Kadali, renowned for his exceptional set designs, crafted the elaborate and visually stunning environment for the climax. Action choreography was managed by Ramakrishna, ensuring that the fight sequences and stunts were both exhilarating and meticulously executed.

The climax sequence features nearly 1,000 artists, highlighting the significant financial and creative investment in this

segment, which plays a crucial role in the film's narrative.

The film, known for its high-octane action, stars Vijayashanthi in a powerful role as an IPS officer, adding a dynamic presence to the cast. The ensemble also includes Sohail Khan, Saiee Manjrekar and Srikanth, contributing depth to the storyline.

Produced by Ashok Vardhan Muppa and Sunil Balusu under Ashoka Creations and NTR Arts, and presented by Muppa Venkaiah Chowdary, *#NKR21* boasts a top-notch team of technicians. Ram Prasad handles cinematography, capturing intense moments with precision, while Ajaneesh Loknath provides a compelling musical score. Tammiraju is the film's editor, and Srikanth Vissa has crafted the screenplay, ensuring a gripping and cohesive narrative.

'EVERY SEQUENCE OF THANGALAN HAS MYSTIC ELEMENTS MAKING IT MAJESTIC'

Pa. Ranjith's upcoming film, *Thangalaan*, has been creating a buzz nationwide, with anticipation reaching new heights. Known for his visionary approach, Ranjith is celebrated for infusing each project with unique elements, and *Thangalaan* is no exception. His innovative style ensures that every frame of the film is meticulously crafted, making it essential for audiences to pay close attention to catch all the intricate details and subtext.

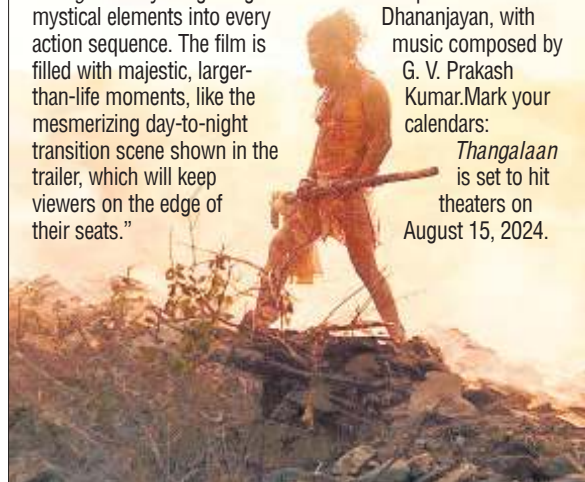
A source close to the director revealed, "Pa. Ranjith has truly excelled with *Thangalaan* by integrating mystical elements into every action sequence. The film is filled with majestic, larger-than-life moments, like the mesmerizing day-to-night transition scene shown in the trailer, which will keep viewers on the edge of their seats."

Adding to its intrigue, *Thangalaan* is set against the real-life backdrop of the Kolar Gold Fields (KGF), distinguishing it from fictional narratives and highlighting a unique historical context. This film exemplifies the innovative spirit of South Indian cinema, showcasing fresh narratives and groundbreaking approaches.

Produced by Studio Green, *Thangalaan* stars Chiyaan Vikram, Malavika Mohanan, Parvathy Thiruvothu and others. Directed by Pa. Ranjith, the film is produced by Pa. Ranjith, K. E. Gnanavel Raja, Jyoti

Deshpande and G. Dhananjayan, with music composed by G. V. Prakash Kumar. Mark your calendars:

Thangalaan is set to hit theaters on August 15, 2024.



Varnikha Visuals to release Ashwin Babu's Shivam Bhaje overseas

Ganga Entertainments is gearing up for the theatrical release of their prestigious debut venture, *Shivam Bhaje*, hitting screens worldwide on August 1. The Ashwin Babu-starring film is already generating significant buzz ahead of its release.

Producer Maheswara Reddy Mooli has secured the overseas distribution rights for the film through Varnikha Visuals.

With the release date drawing near, excitement for *Shivam Bhaje* continues to build. In response to growing anticipation, Varnikha Visuals has scheduled the film's overseas premieres for July 31, a day before the official release.

Directed by Apsar, *Shivam Bhaje* is a new-age divine suspense thriller featuring Digangana Suryavanshi as the lead heroine, opposite Ashwin Babu. Notably, Bollywood actor Arbaaz Khan will appear in a surprising and pivotal role.



Mannara is taking the internet by storm with her stunning appearance on the cover of a well-known magazine. And we are unable to look away!

P I C

T A L K

Kaalam Rasina Kathalu release date announced

Passionate filmmaker MMV Sagar is gearing up to release his latest project, *Kaalam Rasina Kathalu*. Not only is Sagar the producer, but he is also directing the film. On Tuesday, actor Sivaji unveiled the film's release date poster and extended his best wishes to the team.

At the event, Sivaji expressed his excitement, stating, "The film's title and concept are intriguing. I wish the entire team great success."

Director-Producer MMV Sagar shared insights about the film, saying, "The majori-



ty of the shoot was done around Pedana in Machilipatnam. *Kaalam Rasina Kathalu* is a youthful love and family entertainer featuring a host of emerging talents. The story focuses on the conflicts between five couples and includes enough twists to keep audiences engaged. Particularly, the scenes involving Lord Shiva in the second half are set to be a highlight. We've already received a positive response to the teaser and songs. We are excited to announce that the film will be released on August 29."