



Brunei, Singapore important partners in our Indo-Pacific vision: **PM Modi**

HOUSEHOLD SAVINGS BUILDING UP; TO REMAIN TOP NET LENDERS TO ECONOMY



'GOAT is not a political **FILM**'



The BC Chief Minister slogan was confined to the 2023 Assembly elections and it will not continue till the next elections. The BJP high command will decide the new Telangana BJP President at an appropriate time. The party needs a new president in Telangana. Only a leader, who is free of other responsibilities, can do justice to the party by paying full attention to the job

- G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister

DON'T MISS...

Another breach to Budameru bund...

Another breach has occurred in the 'Budameru' rivulet bund beneath the railway line from Vijayawada to Gudivada, at Vijaya Durga Nagar 'Madhyakatta', near Madhura Nagar in Vijayawada. The breach, which took place on Tuesday, was caused by the inability of the Enikepadu Under Tunnel (UT) to discharge floodwaters downstream towards Kolleru Lake. As a result, floodwaters have inundated the Eluru Canal, submerging approximately 500 houses in Vijaya Durga Nagar 'Madhyakatta'. Residents believe that...

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Union Minister tenders apology...

Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje on Tuesday filed an affidavit before the Madras High Court, apologising to the people of Tamil Nadu for her remarks made in light of the Rameshwaram Cafe blast in Bengaluru earlier this year. Post the March 1 low intensity blast at the popular eatery in Bengaluru, Karandlaje had linked the people of Tamil Nadu with the incident and she was booked by the Madurai police over the matter. She had moved the court seeking to quash the criminal proceedings against her. In her affidavit...

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'Will work to make India green...

The government will relentlessly push for adoption of green mobility in India through all the policy levers available with it, G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant said on Tuesday. Speaking at the Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India (MBRDI) event here, he stated that the government is taking several policy measures to encourage a shift towards electric mobility in the country. 'We have had a policy framework where the tax on electric vehicles is just 5 per cent as compared to...

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It's time to make amends: Pat...

Australian captain Pat Cummins is looking at the upcoming five-match rubber against India as a chance to "make amends" for the successive Test series defeats at home against their fierce rivals. He said the next Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which will start on November 22 in Perth, promises to be a 50-50 affair. India retained the trophy in the last four series, from 2016-17 to 2022-23. India had defeated Australia in their own backyard in the last two series in 2018-19 and 2020-21. Cummins said Australia are...

-SPORTS

14.76L MT of sand available at 28 stock points: MK Meena

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Principal Secretary of the Mines and Excise Department and Chief Commissioner of the Department of Commercial Taxes, Mukesh Kumar Meena, has announced that the recent heavy rains and floods across the State have caused a minor disruption in sand supply, which will be resolved shortly. He mentioned that sand supply from various sources had been halted, but it will resume at full capacity once the rains subside and transportation conditions improve. As of Wednesday, 14.76 lakh metric tonnes of sand is available at 28 stock points.

On Tuesday, 1,027 applications were received statewide for 13,011 metric tonnes of sand. Of these, 3,356 metric tonnes were supplied to 202 pending applicants, with a total of 16,367 metric tonnes distributed to 1,229 applicants.

Meena also urged customers to cooperate with the current situation, as road damage has occurred in many areas.

Ensure food for all flood-hit: CM

Number of flood-affected people reaches 6.4 lakh; 190 relief camps set up

- Residents in Ajit Singh Nagar start vacating homes due to waterlogging and power outages
- Complaints about extortion by private boat operators galore
- Govt appeals for voluntary food donations
- Fresh low-pressure area likely to form tomorrow

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, on Tuesday, conducted his third consecutive day of extensive inspections in flood-hit areas of the State. He travelled over 22 km by JCB to reach areas inaccessible by vehicles, beginning his tour at Bhavanipuram. He visited Sitara Centre, Kabela Centre, Jakkampudi, Vambay Colony, Ambapuram, Kandrika, and Nunna Inner Ring Road, where he supervised relief operations and sought to reassure flood victims.

Naidu has been staying at the District Collector's camp office for the past three days, moving from there to the affected areas. Residents reported some relief on Tuesday as floodwaters receded. The Chief Minister urged all officials to enhance their efforts in providing aid, particularly in Vijayawada, which has been severely impacted by unprecedented rainfall and flooding.

Naidu is conducting surprise inspections and using the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) to gather feedback from residents.

"People are facing severe hardships. Snakes and scorpions are entering upper-floor residences. I am receiving reports via IVRS about food shortages. Officials must rise to the occasion and act with humanity," he stated at a press conference at the NTR District Collectorate.

He has been forwarding IVRS messages, including phone numbers, to officials, encouraging accurate reporting to enable effective action.

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Lokesh reviews relief efforts



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh conducted a review of flood relief measures with senior officials on Tuesday. He met with DGP Ch D Tirumala Rao, Special Secretary to the Chief Minister Ravichandra, and Intelligence DG Mahesh Chandra Ladda to assess the progress of relief operations and urged officials to intensify efforts as the floodwaters begin to recede.

The Minister emphasised the impor-

ance of vigilance from the Medical and Health Department, noting the potential for disease outbreaks in flood-affected areas. Medical services are being provided through 14 relief centres across the flooded regions of Vijayawada.

Arrangements have been made to distribute 10,000 medical kits by helicopter, with current flood flow at Prakasam Barrage recorded at 7,47,344 cusecs as of 6 p.m., expected to return to normal levels by tonight.

Plans are in place to distribute 3 lakh

food parcels to flood victims, with helicopters set to deliver food and water bottles to Vambay Colony, Ajit Singh Nagar, Arunodaya Nagar, and Jakkampudi Colony.

Minister Lokesh later held discussions with Ministers Vangalapati Anitha, Kollu Ravindra, Kollu Parthasarathy, and Chief Secretary Nirab Kumar Prasad on the ongoing relief efforts. Generous donations are being received from across the state to support flood victims.

Visakha MP Bharat and the Chairman of GITAM Educational Institutes will provide food for 50,000 people, with a further 25,000 being supported by NRI TDP. The TTD is contributing 5,000 rice packets.

Since the morning, 55,000 kgs of food and water bottles have been dropped by helicopter across 34 flood-affected areas, including Vambay Colony, Ajit Singh Nagar, Jakkampudi YSR Colony, and New Rajiv Nagar.

To ensure effective relief operations, Minister Lokesh has assigned one MLA to oversee each ward, with senior IAS officers already monitoring ward-wise relief efforts.

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CM travels 22 km by JCB for 4 hours in city

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a determined effort to serve flood victims and ensure the effective distribution of food to those stranded, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu set aside his convoy and travelled 22 km in a JCB through the inundated areas of the city on Tuesday.

The Chief Minister made this decision to travel through the flood-ravaged areas in a JCB to interact directly with the victims and obtain first-hand information about the supply of food and water.

To assess the situation on the ground, the CM took matters into his own hands, visiting all the flood-affected regions, and even skipping lunch in the process. He instructed officials to work with commitment and adopt a humanitarian approach to serving flood victims.

'Counterweights of barrage to be replaced'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Advisor to the Mechanical Wing of the Water Resources Department (WRD), K Kannaya Naidu, on Tuesday, addressed concerns regarding the Prakasam Barrage gates after an incident where sand boats collided with gates 67, 68, and 69. He said although the gates themselves were unharmed, Naidu confirmed that the collision damaged their counterweights.

At the request of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Kannaya Naidu visited Vijayawada on Tuesday to review the situation with Irrigation Department officials. He met with the Water Resources Department's Commissioner of Designs Organisation (CDO),



Executive Engineers Vijaya Sarathy and Venu Gopal, to discuss the damage. Naidu reported that the counterweights of gates 67, 68, and 69 were affected and might need replacing once the floodwaters recede. He mentioned that new counterweight

boxes would be designed at the workshop and provided suggestions to the CDO officials.

Despite the damage, Naidu assured that operating the gates would not pose a major problem.

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HIDDEN CAMS SCANDAL

Experts from Delhi visit engg college

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Responding to the issue of hidden cameras in women's hostel washroom at an engineering college in Krishna district recently, the Andhra Pradesh government has acted swiftly, prompting a visit from the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) from New Delhi. A team of three experts, led by Dr. Sanjay Bahl, Director of CERT-In, visited the Seshadri Rao Gudlavalluru Engineering College near Gudivada on Tuesday. They were accompanied by two additional experts from the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), who are collaborating with the CERT-In team.

The incident, involving hidden cameras found in the washrooms of



the girls' hostel at Seshadri Rao Gudlavalluru Engineering College, has caused a statewide sensation. The initial investigation was launched after hundreds of students protested on campus. The police have taken all suspects into custody, and the incident has also

sparked political controversy.

During the visit by the CERT-In team from New Delhi, the investigating officers, including Inspectors General of Police (IGP) GVG Ashok Kumar, M Ravi Prakash, and PHD Ramakrishna, along with Krishna district Superintendent of Police

(SP) R Gangadhara Rao, provided a detailed briefing on the case.

The experts thoroughly examined the Seshadri Rao Gudlavalluru Engineering College campus. They reviewed all information transmitted via the nearest mobile tower, recovered messages and video recordings, and traced and analysed data from the mobile phones of the college's students.

IG GVG Ashok Kumar stated that the experts from New Delhi have gathered comprehensive information from the college. He reassured students that there was no need to worry and urged them not to believe false rumours on social media. He added that anyone with doubts about the case could contact Krishna district SP R Gangadhara Rao. The investigation is being conducted with full transparency.

Choppers airdrop food & water in city



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams and local officials on Tuesday began dropping food packets, water bottles and other necessities for people in flood-affected areas of Vijayawada on Tuesday.

As many as six helicopters and drones have been deployed for distribution of food, which also included biscuits, fruits milk and medicines, an official press release said.

"National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams, Central forces and district officials are distributing food, water and other necessities through helicopters," said the release, sharing pictures of choppers being loaded with relief material.

According to a statement from the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA), Ministers, IAS officers and IPS officers are engaged in relief activities ward-wise in the centrally located commercial city, where several neighbourhoods were inundated.

As part of the relief work, necessities are being accorded priority while 43,417 affected people have been moved to rehabilitation centres. As many as 48 NDRF and SDRF teams are extending relief while 197 medical camps have been set up.

In the wake of a depression in the Bay of Bengal, several parts of the state received record rains which resulted in unprecedented floods with Vijayawada being the worst affected.

Spl CS Vijayanand visits flood-affected areas

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Special Chief Secretary of the Energy Department and Chairman & Managing Director of AP Transmission Corporation, K Vijayanand, visited the flood-affected areas alongside Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday. Vijayanand inspected the flood-stricken localities in the 45th division. Notably, he was appointed as the nodal officer for this division to oversee the relief operations.

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1,000 Energy dept workers to tackle power issues

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a move to tackle the power disruptions caused by recent floods, Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar has announced the deployment of 1,000 electrical workers from the Eastern Power Distribution Company Limited (EPDCL) and Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (SPDCL) to the flood-hit areas.

Minister Ravi Kumar highlighted that as the floodwaters have begun to recede, these teams are being sent to areas experiencing power outages to quickly address the issues.

"Our teams are working on the ground to restore power and resolve any electrical problems faced by the flood-affected communities," he said.

The Minister also noted that the Chairmen and Managing Directors (CMDs) of the respective DISCOMs are making regular field visits to monitor the situation and take



necessary actions.

During a briefing, officials informed the Minister that electricity is currently being supplied through generators at relief centres. Additionally, 750 lights and several mobile phone charging points have been set up to assist residents displaced by the floods.

Minister Ravi Kumar also advised officials to use solar lanterns in areas still without power. "We have already coordinated with the Solar Corporation to provide solar lanterns," he said, adding that around 1,000 solar lamps have been requested for distribution in the district to support relief efforts.

Natural calamity: Time when political noise is better drowned

A natural calamity, aside from causing widespread devastation in a region, also has the potential to silence the political noise, however shrill it might be in terms of competing claims. This is best exemplified by the current situation in Andhra Pradesh, following torrential rains and resultant flooding in urban and rural areas. With political one-upmanship relegated, the administration has risen to the occasion by engaging itself earnestly in relief operations.



(YSRCP), having been decimated in the recent AP Legislative Assembly elections, is yet to recover from the shock. The inter-nal situation in YSRCP is so shaky that the party is clueless over the shifting of loyalties by its public representatives to the ruling front headed by Telugu Desam Party (TDP) under the leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. It may be mentioned here that two Rajya Sabha members belonging to YSRCP, Mopidevi Venkataramana Rao and Beeda Mastan Rao, have resigned from their RS membership, having decided to join the ruling front. Mopidevi Ramana Rao has raised eye-

With the Chief Minister himself offering food packets to the affected people past midnight, the ruling TDP-led alliance does not need spin doctors to put across its message. Experience counts. The 1998 floods of Krishna River had a great impact on the combined state of Andhra Pradesh.

rows; for, being a close associate of party chief YS Jaganmohan Reddy, he had spent nearly one and half years in jail along with his boss. Impressed by his loyalty, Jagan had inducted him into his cabinet, though Mopidevi had not won in the 2019 elections. Later, he was made

Rajya Sabha member. In this context, it is felt that the opposition is perhaps of the view that any criticism of the government's handling of the present calamity could boomerang on the party, given the agony faced by the affected people. It is a different matter that such silence of the



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self offering food packets to the affected people past midnight, the ruling TDP-led alliance does not need spin doctors to put across its message. Experience counts. The 1998 floods of Krishna River had a great impact on the combined state of Andhra Pradesh. Chandrababu Naidu, who was the Chief Minister then, did not allow officials to release flood waters with a view to storing the surplus water at Srisailem project for meeting the needs of the state for both agriculture and drinking purpose besides power generation. In fact, Srisailem project was designed initially for power generation. But due to changing priorities of successive governments, the project has

become essential for meeting irrigation needs as well. This point might have driven Naidu then to act like that. But as the flood situation worsened, all of a sudden, the official machinery could not handle the situation properly, leading to the submergence of the power house at the dam site. The resulting situation forced the official machinery to hurriedly lift all the gates to release huge amount of water downstream. Then flood water created havoc downstream at both Nagarjuna Sagar and Prakasam Barrage. This columnist was part of the media team from Hyderabad that had, along with Congress legislature party leader P. Janardhan Reddy, assessed the ground situation at Srisailem.

Then power minister Kalidindi Ramachandra Raju was grilled by the CLP members for alleged failure of the government in effectively dealing with the situation. During floods caused by Krishna River in October 2009, the situation was handled effectively by then chief minister K. Rosaiah. Ahead of heavy inflows, the reservoir of Nagarjuna Sagar was so handled as to prevent disaster in four districts. During that flood, nearly 400 tmc of water passed through the Nagarjuna Sagar. Thus, natural calamities rarely entail political noise. After all, people, as better judges always, are watching, and, more importantly, they know history.

'Adequate food and fruits distributed to flood-hit'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister P Narayana convened a meeting to discuss the sanitation works to be undertaken once the floodwaters recede in the affected areas. He announced that as soon as the floodwaters subside, the roads will be cleaned using tankers, with assistance from fire department personnel. This will be followed by bleaching and fogging operations, which will be initiated immediately. The minister also mentioned that arrangements are being made to organise medical camps in collaboration with the health department.



The minister further noted that once the floodwaters recede, the focus will shift to maintaining sanitation by preventing sewage from contaminating the roads. He estimated that 10,000 workers would be required to restore sanitation in the flooded areas. Commissioners from 123 municipalities across the state have been tasked with overseeing sanitation works in flood-

affected areas, with each secretary assigned a special officer. Minister Narayana reported that the government has prepared a large quantity of food parcels to be distributed to the victims in the flood-inundated areas of the city. Food packets, fruits, and water packets have been transported to the Indira Gandhi Stadium in lorries from other districts. The minister personally inspected the distribution of food packets to the flood-affected areas of the city. Under the directions of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, the distribution of food to the flood victims is being carried out on a large scale, said Minister Narayana. He added that 2 lakh food packets for breakfast and 3 lakh water bottles have already been sent for distribution to the victims. Municipalities from Guntur, Ongole, Eluru, Bhimavaram, Rajahmundry, the Hare Krishna organisation, and several other groups have been entrusted with food preparation. Minister Narayana stated that a total of 6 lakh food packets and 6 lakh water bottles, along with fruits such as bananas, are being distributed. He assured that all government machinery would remain in Vijayawada to ensure the arrangements are managed smoothly, providing support to the flood victims.

1.80 L hectares of Kharif crops damaged

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Preliminary reports released by authorities on Tuesday indicate that 1,80,244 hectares of agricultural land and 16,870 hectares of horticultural land were damaged due to the recent cyclone. The storm affected 2,05,194 farmers across 20 districts for agriculture and 27,477 farmers in 5 districts for horticulture. Authorities have sent alert messages about heavy rains and floods to 7.49 crore mobile users through AP Alert. The storm also resulted in the death of 149 cattle, including both large and small animals, and 59,848 poultry birds. The veterinary department has vaccinated 11,968 cattle. The cyclone caused significant damage to infrastructure, with 12 electricity substations affected. Heavy rains also damaged 2,851 km of Roads and Buildings (R&B) roads and 221 km of panchayat roads. Additionally, 78 minor irrigation ponds have been blocked.

Govt stands by flood victims: I&PR Minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister of Housing and Information & Public Relations, K. K. Kolu Parthasarathy, took part in relief efforts in the Krishna Lanka area on Tuesday, distributing food and water to flood victims. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister assured that the government stands firmly with the flood victims and will do everything within its power to support them. During his visit, the Minister toured Ramalingeswaranagar, Gitanagar Katta, and other affected areas within the 15th and 16th divisions of the VMC. He engaged with the victims, inquiring about the relief measures they had received. Minister Parthasarathy noted that the floods were unprecedented in scale, but praised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and the state government for their



timely intervention, which prevented a major disaster. He informed that the government has deployed 10 helicopters and hundreds of boats to carry out critical relief operations. Food and drinking water are being delivered to the victims by air and water, ensuring that their immediate needs are met. The Minister also stated that the government will continue to support the victims in every possible way. Once the floods recede, a thorough assessment of the damage will be conducted, and the necessary assistance will be provided. He emphasized that the Chief Minister has directed ministers, legislators, and the bureaucracy to visit relief camps and extend their support to the victims, ensuring that no one is left without help. Minister Parthasarathy was accompanied by Eluru MLA B. Radhakrishna, Gopalapuram MLA Venkata Raju, and other officials. TDP leaders R. Krishna Yadav, Boppana Bhava Kumar, and others were also present.

Bhuvaneshwari donates Rs 1 crore each to AP, TG towards flood relief

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Nara Bhuvaneshwari on Tuesday announced Rs 1 crore each to CM's Relief Fund of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana on behalf of Heritage Foods Limited towards Relief activities for the benefit of rain flood-affected families. Speaking on the occasion, Nara Bhuvaneshwari, Vice Chairperson and Managing Director of Heritage Foods Limited, said, "At Heritage Foods, we believe in standing by our communities, especially in times of crisis. The recent floods in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have impacted many lives, and we are committed to supporting the state's efforts in providing relief and rebuilding the affected areas. We hope our contribution will make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who have been affected."

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Dashami: Aug 28 01:33 AM to Aug 29 01:19 AM
Ekadashi: Aug 29 01:19 AM to Aug 30 01:37 AM
Nakshatram: Mrigashirsha: Aug 27 03:38 PM to Aug 28 03:53 PM
Ardra: Aug 28 03:53 PM to Aug 29 04:39 PM
Rahukalam: 12:17 PM to 1:50 PM
Yamagandam: 7:38 AM to 9:11 AM
Varjyam: 12:33 AM to 02:12 AM
Gulika: 10:44 AM to 12:17 PM
Amritakalam: 06:59 AM to 08:36 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham: Nil
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Cloudy
Temp: 34°C
Humidity: 63%
Sunrise: 5:54 AM
Sunset: 6:23 PM
Updated: August 27, 2024 5:00 PM

CM warns of stern action against 'negligent' officials

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has reiterated that the authorities are taking comprehensive measures to address the issues faced by flood victims, including the provision of food, water, and medical supplies. He cautioned that there have been complaints from some victims regarding the lack of assistance and warned officials that stern action would be taken if they exhibit negligence in their duties. Speaking to the media on Tuesday at the NTR district collector's office, Chandrababu Naidu accused YSRCP leaders of disseminating false propaganda for political gain. He highlighted several incidents, including the SR Engineering College in Gudlavallu case, the Prakasam barrage boat tragedy, and others, which have raised numerous questions. The Chief Minister also pointed to the murder of



Vivekananda Reddy, suggesting that it has added to the doubts surrounding the situation. Chandrababu Naidu recalled his conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who expressed confidence in Naidu's management of the Hudhud cyclone crisis. "The Prime Minister was taken aback by the public's response to my efforts," Naidu stated. The Chief Minister announced the appointment of a senior IAS officer to each division, with approximately 32 officers actively engaged in relief efforts.

Food is being distributed from ten districts across the state to ensure that flood victims receive meals three times a day in the most affected areas. Naidu also addressed reports of snakes and scorpions entering the homes of affected individuals along with floodwaters, urging officials to handle these issues with empathy. Complaints about food distribution have been noted, and victims' contact details will be forwarded to relevant officers. He emphasised that victims should keep officials informed about their needs. The Chief Minister warned that if complaints against officials are not addressed, severe consequences would follow. He appealed to the public to provide financial support and essential supplies to those in need, assuring them that the government will continue to do its utmost to aid the victims.

DG takes part in flood relief efforts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Director General of Police (DGP) Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao, accompanied by senior IPS officers Mahesh Chandra Laddah, RK Meena, and Vinith Brizal, on Tuesday participated in flood relief efforts in the inundated areas of Ajith Singh Nagar in Vijayawada, which were severely affected by the Budameru flood. The DGP visited the submerged regions and reviewed the ongoing relief operations with officials from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and



the police department. During his visit, DGP Tirumala Rao distributed essential supplies, including food packets, drinking water, and medicines, to the affected residents. He urged the public to remain vigilant, noting the increased risk of seasonal diseases due to the floodwaters, and advised on taking necessary precautionary measures to prevent such illnesses. The DGP also highlighted

the collaborative efforts in the relief operations, mentioning the involvement of NDRF and SDRF teams alongside police personnel. He informed that approximately six APSRTC buses are stationed on the Ajith Singh Nagar flyover to transport residents to rehabilitation centres. Furthermore, he emphasised the need for coordination between the police department and other key agencies such as the Revenue, Energy, Water Resources, and Vijayawada Municipal Corporation departments.

Ensure food for all... Lokesh reviews...

Continued from Page 1

IAS officers have been deployed to the ground, and Naidu has ordered officials to ensure food reaches every last affected individual. He warned of strict action against any lapses in relief efforts. In Vijayawada, where relief centres are being overwhelmed, Naidu instructed officials to focus on main centres and expand distribution efforts to every ward secretariat. According to a government release, recent torrential rains damaged 2,684 km of roadways and affected over 1.8 lakh agricultural fields in 20 districts. As of Tuesday, 323 trains were cancelled, 170 diverted, and 12 partially cancelled. The number of flood-affected individuals has risen to 6.4 lakh, with 190 relief camps established, accommodating 44,041 people. Five helicopters, including two from the Navy and three from the Air Force, are aiding relief efforts by dropping food and airlifting stranded individuals. They have delivered 4,870 kg of food and rescued 21 people so far. In Ajit Singh Nagar, residents have begun temporarily vacating their homes due to waterlogging and power outages. One resident reported wading through waist-deep water for two kilometres before reaching Vijayawada railway station. "Many families have left for relatives' homes locally and elsewhere, fearing a prolonged power outage," they said. The area has been without power for three days, though water levels are receding. Amidst the power shortage, residents are struggling to charge mobile phones at the railway station. Complaints have also emerged about private boat operators allegedly extorting flood victims. Hari Krishna, a former police officer now volunteering in Ajit Singh Nagar, criticised these extortionists and noted that officials are overwhelmed with rescue operations and unable to address these issues promptly. The government is soliciting voluntary food donations at a designated point in Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium, Vijayawada. The India Meteorological Department has reported a cyclonic circulation over coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, and nearby areas, with a new low-pressure area expected to form over the Bay of Bengal around September 5. The forecast includes heavy rainfall and thunderstorms in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, along with strong winds reaching up to 40 km/h in southern regions.

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In a show of support, donors from across the state have handed over cheques to Minister Lokesh. Contributions include Rs 10 lakhs from Kallam Rajasekhar Reddy of Mangalagiri constituency and Komreddy Kiran, Rs 7 lakhs from AV Ramana Reddy, Rs 1 lakh from Medarametla Subbaiah of Ongole, and Rs 50,000 each from Aluru Kondalarao and Aluri Jhanseelakshmi. Minister Lokesh continues to coordinate closely with Ministers Payyavula Keshav, Kondapalli Srinivas, MP Keshineni Chinni, and TDP State President Palla Srinivas Yadav to ensure the ongoing success of the flood relief measures. 'Counterweights...' Continued from Page 1 Alternative arrangements are being made to lower the gates, though the counterweights will need to be arranged before they can be fully operational. He clarified that only one gate had significant issues, while the other two gates were mostly unaffected. Naidu stated that a decision on repairs would be made based on further observations and that the counterweight design and installation would be completed within 15 days after the floodwaters receded. Additionally, the two sand boats currently stuck at the gates will be removed once the flood conditions improve.

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Another breach to Budameru bund inundates 500 houses

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Another breach has occurred in the 'Budameru' rivulet bund beneath the railway line from Vijayawada to Gudivada, at Vijaya Durga Nagar 'Madhyakatta', near Madhura Nagar in Vijayawada. The breach, which took place on Tuesday, was caused by the inability of the Enikepadu Under Tunnel (UT) to discharge floodwaters downstream towards Kolleru Lake.

As a result, floodwaters have inundated the Eluru Canal, submerging approximately 500 houses in Vijaya Durga Nagar 'Madhyakatta'. Residents believe that the weakening of the 'Budameru' bund led to the breach. Consequently, vehicular movement on the route from 'Budameru' Vanthana to Gunadala has been disrupted, and the area around Madhura Nagar is also expected to be affected by the floodwaters.

Over 36,000 cusecs of floodwater have entered the 'Budameru', but there is no proper channel for it to flow into the Enikepadu UT. As a result, the flood has submerged areas including Ajith Singh Nagar, Payakapuram, Rajiv Nagar, KV Kandrika, Prakash Nagar, Devi Nagar, and other localities within the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation limits, as well as Ambapuram, Jakkampudi, Rayanapadu, Kothuru Tadepalli, and other villages in the Vijayawada Rural Mandal.



Over 36,000 cusecs of floodwater have entered the 'Budameru', but there is no proper channel for it to flow into the Enikepadu UT. As a result, the flood has submerged areas including Ajith Singh Nagar, Payakapuram, Rajiv Nagar, KV Kandrika, Prakash Nagar, Devi Nagar, and other localities within the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation limits, as well as Ambapuram, Jakkampudi, Rayanapadu, Kothuru Tadepalli, and other villages in the Vijayawada Rural Mandal.

Corporation limits, as well as Ambapuram, Jakkampudi, Rayanapadu, Kothuru Tadepalli, and other villages in the Vijayawada Rural Mandal.

The 'Budameru' channelisation was proposed as part of the Krishna Delta Modernisation for Rs. 540 crore. However, due to various circumstances, this project has not yet materialised. The Krishna Delta Modernisation was initially proposed by the late Chief Minister Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy. Interestingly, after the death of Dr. YSR, no subsequent Chief Minister has pursued this project.

Since the flood warnings began, residents have expressed concern over the weakening of the 'Budameru' 'Madhyakatta', but no officials from the Water Resources Department (WRD) responded until the bund breached. The breached road serves as an alternative route from Kedareswarapeta to the Gunadala area, leading to Ramavarappadu Ring, Auto Nagar, Benz Circle, and the one-town area.

According to residents, the breach in the 'Budameru' 'Madhyakatta' has raised fears about the stability of the railway bridge pillars. They also mentioned that no prior warnings were given by irrigation officials, and even the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation officials did not visit their area. Meanwhile, the residents have urged officials to undertake immediate repair work at Vijaya Durga Nagar, warning that further delays could lead to severe problems. When contacted, officials from the irrigation department stated that they would commence repair work on the 'Budameru' 'Madhyakatta' once the floodwaters recede.

They also mentioned that no prior warnings were given by irrigation officials, and even the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation officials did not visit their area.

Meanwhile, the residents have urged officials to undertake immediate repair work at Vijaya Durga Nagar, warning that further delays could lead to severe problems. When contacted, officials from the irrigation department stated that they would commence repair work on the 'Budameru' 'Madhyakatta' once the floodwaters recede.



GVMC dispatches team to V'wada for flood relief ops

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In response to the State government's directive, the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) has sent a specialised team to Vijayawada to support flood relief operations. "We are mobilising all necessary resources to assist in the flood relief efforts in Vijayawada. Our team is prepared and equipped to provide immediate support," declared GVMC Commissioner P Sampath Kumar.

The relief team, personally led by Commissioner Sampath Kumar, Additional Commissioner SS Verma, and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Naresh Kumar, is on the ground in Vijayawada, overseeing the critical operations. This team is not only well-prepared but also well-equipped, comprising eight assistant engineers, seven drinking water tanker lorries, a water pumping machine, two assistant medical officers, and 16 sanitary inspectors.

"We have ensured that our team is fully equipped to handle the situation on the ground. From engineers to medical officers, every member has a critical role to play," said S.S. Verma, highlighting the strategic deployment of personnel and resources. In addition to this core team, the GVMC has sent 1,400 sanitation workers, all of whom are travelling to Vijayawada in 29 buses.



As floods begin to recede, victims move to rehab centres

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As the heavy floods in the Krishna River and Budameru Rivulet gradually recede, residents who have been submerged in floodwaters are beginning to heave a sigh of relief and are attempting to evacuate their homes to reach rehabilitation centres or stay with relatives. However, they are facing significant difficulties in finding transportation, such as tractors, boats, or any other means, to leave their flooded homes.

The floodwaters in the Krishna River have reduced from 11.43 lakh cusecs to 8 lakh cusecs as of Tuesday, and the heavy inflows into the Budameru Rivulet are also decreasing. Amid these challenges, many organisations, political parties, and individuals are stepping up to provide aid. They are distributing food and water packets, supplementing the assistance provided by the government to support those affected by the floods.

Flood inflows from upstream into the Prakasam Barrage have been gradually declining. Since Monday night, the flood inflows have been receding, and by 6 pm on Tuesday, 7.25 lakh cusecs had reached the Prakasam Barrage.

However, the second flood warning remains in effect. Water Resources Department officials have indicated that the floodwaters will recede further, and a return to normalcy is expected by Wednesday.

According to Krishna Central Division Executive Engineer K.V. Krishna Rao, all 70 gates of the Prakasam Barrage have been lifted, discharging 7.24 lakh cusecs into the sea. An additional 500 cusecs were released into the canals, and the present crest level stands at 17.1 feet. He further stated that the flood inflows to the barrage are expected to decrease further.

Meanwhile, the Budameru flood inflows from upstream are also gradually receding. Floodwater levels in various areas of Vijayawada are reducing, and people are trying to vacate their houses. Additionally, there are no inflows into the Budameru above the upstream of the Velagaleru Regulator, and irrigation department officials have closed all the regulator's gates.

For the past two days, thousands of people have been stranded on rooftops without food, drinking water, or power supply. Due to the Budameru flood, major portions of the

Singh Nagar area have been severely affected, with floodwaters submerging Payakapuram, Kandrika, Rajiv Nagar, Prakash Nagar, Pipula Road, Jakkampudi, and Ambapuram.

In response, after the receding of the Budameru flood, many individuals, voluntary organisations, and others have intensified their relief efforts, supplying food and drinking water in areas such as Kandrika, Payakapuram, and Prakash Nagar using tractors and vans. Flood victims have expressed their gratitude for the relief supplies, noting that government officials had failed to provide them.

Irrigation Department Special Division Executive Engineer K. Gangaiah, speaking to 'The Pioneer', stated that there is no longer any flood threat from the Budameru.

He confirmed that all gates of the Velagaleru Regulator have been closed and that efforts are underway to remove floodwaters across the city. He expects that the Budameru flood will recede by Wednesday night. Additionally, he mentioned that the floodwaters had entered the Eluru Canal and Ryves Canal, which would further aid in the receding process.

MEIL extends support to flood victims in V'wada

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Mega Engineering and Infrastructures Limited (MEIL) has promptly responded to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's call to assist the flood-affected people of Vijayawada.

In collaboration with the Hare Krishna Movement, MEIL has initiated a food distribution programme, providing breakfast, lunch, dinner, and water bottles. On Tuesday, it distributed food to 1,35,000 people at Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium. Breakfast was distributed to 25,000 people, and lunch and dinner were distributed to 1,10,000 people. The food, prepared in the kitchens of Hare Krishna Movement and MEIL, was handed over to government officials at the Collector's office in Vijayawada for distribution in the affected areas.

MEIL, in collaboration with

Initiates food distribution programme along with Hare Krishna Movement

Hare Krishna Movement, will continue the food distribution programme for a few more days in Vijayawada, and will increase the quantity to serve more people with breakfast, lunch, dinner, and water bottles.

MEIL has a long-standing commitment to social responsibility, particularly during natural calamities. The company has a history of providing immediate relief measures, including hospital management, construction of cancer hospitals, and food distribution through Akshaya Patra.

"We are committed to standing by the people affected by natural disasters," said Kommareddy Bapi Reddy, MEIL, AP Regional Office In-charge.



600 people shifted to rehabilitation centres on sports boats

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As per the instructions from Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) Vice Chairman & Managing Director (VC&MD) PS Girisha, the NTR District Sports Authority (DSA) coaches under the leadership of District Sports Development Officer (DSDO) SA Azeez participated in the flood victims relief measures at New Rajarajeswari Peta and Ajith Singh Nagar in Vijayawada on Tuesday.

They shifted around 600 flood victims from their houses on two sports boats. Also, they distributed food, drinking water, bread, milk, biscuits and candles

to the victims. The entire NTR DSA staff took part in these relief measures to shift victims to rehabilitation centres.

With permission from the government, Girisha sent the food packets, drinking water bottles, fruits and others dispatched from the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation (IGMC) Stadium in Vijayawada via tractors.

Water sports coach M Srinu, national-level water sports athletes Chinababu, Jagadish, and Nagendra, DSA coaches P Ravi, E Srinu, K Bhaskar, S Santosh Kumar, I Seetaramanjaneyulu, Sk Riyaz, Sk Muntaz Begum, K Chiranjeevi, K Swamy and others were present.

Ramesh Hospitals donates Rs 5L to CMRF



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr. Rayapati Mamata and Dr. Y. Karthik Choudhary, representatives of Ramesh Hospitals, presented a cheque for Rs 5 lakh to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF).

The donation was handed over to the State Education and IT Minister, Nara Lokesh.

The event was also attended by Union Civil Aviation Minister Rammohan Naidu and State Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra. The ministers congratulated the management of Ramesh Hospitals.

Port city plans comprehensive flood prevention strategy

Restoration of ponds and water bodies to help improve water management

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In the wake of the devastating floods that have recently ravaged Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam is ramping up its efforts to tackle flood risks as heavy rainfall looms over the city. Authorities are implementing a comprehensive flood prevention strategy to safeguard residents and mitigate the potential impact of severe weather events. Following the lead of other major cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, and Hyderabad, which have faced severe flooding due to heavy rains and encroachment on water resources, Visakhapatnam is implementing a comprehensive flood prevention strategy.

Speaking to 'The Pioneer', KS Vishwanathan, Commissioner of the Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA), outlined the

strategy. "We are aware of the challenges posed by encroachments and heavy rainfall," he said. "Our aim is to ensure that Visakhapatnam remains resilient and prepared."

The city's strategy includes the restoration of ponds and water bodies to improve water management. As part of this effort, a network of 15 ponds in Ramapuram, Pendurthi mandal, will be interconnected to channel excess water to Mehadri Gedda. Similarly, water from the Gambhiram Reservoir will be redirected through 18 cleared ponds in Kapulupada before eventually reaching the Bay of Bengal.

Addressing the issue of encroached streams, Vishwanathan revealed that authorities are experimenting with various restoration techniques. "As a pilot project, we are revitalising a stream in Simhachalam," he noted. "Additionally, two

ponds near Gopalapatnam, which have become clogged with debris, will undergo clearance and restoration to remove obstacles from floodwater channels."

Vishwanathan also highlighted an ongoing flood prevention survey, expected to be completed by the end of the month. This survey will involve officials from the Survey and Revenue Departments, along with local residents, to identify flood-vulnerable areas and assess funding needs. "Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives are anticipated to play a substantial role in supporting these efforts," he added.

"We are collaborating closely with local residents to pinpoint potential flood-vulnerable areas and gather valuable information. By engaging the locals, we can ensure that our measures are effective and tailored to the unique needs of Visakhapatnam," he said.

Manipal Hospital, AP Chambers provide relief to victims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Manipal Hospital, Vijayawada, undertook a food distribution drive in Tadepalli, one of the worst-affected areas following heavy rainfall and the resultant Krishna River flooding.

Food was distributed to the affected families by the hospital staff and volunteers, bringing respite amidst the challenging circumstances.

Meanwhile, Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation (AP Chambers) provided food and water to the flood victims in Vijayawada.

The Chambers donated 25,000 food packets and 50,000 water bottles to the flood victims that have been severely affected by the unprecedented

ing circumstances.

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The Chambers donated 25,000 food packets and 50,000 water bottles to the flood victims that have been severely affected by the unprecedented



floods in Vijayawada. The floods have inundated many areas in and around Vijayawada and the residents are still reeling under its severe impact. Many industrial units are also affected and as a result their production has come to a halt causing job losses. The AP Chambers requested industries to support their employees during this hour of need.

Navy steps in for flood relief operations

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In response to requests from the State government following the flood-like situation caused by incessant rains in Andhra Pradesh, the Indian Navy has swiftly deployed aircraft, Flood Relief Teams (FRTs), and diving teams from the Eastern Naval Command (ENC) in Visakhapatnam to assist in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations.

The Navy has mobilised four helicopters, including two Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) and two Chetak helicopters, along with a Dornier aircraft for Search and Rescue (SAR) missions. "The situation is critical, and our immediate priority is to reach stranded individ-

Rescues 22 people, air-drops over 1,000 kg of food



uals and provide necessary aid. Our aircraft have already rescued 22 people, and over 1,000 kg of food has been air-dropped to those in need," said a senior Naval officer overseeing the operations. In addition to the aerial missions, the Navy has dispatched 10 FRTs to the most affected areas.

These teams, equipped with specialised rescue equipment, are on the ground, working tirelessly to reach those trapped by rising waters.

Their primary focus is on evacuation, providing first aid, and ensuring that essential supplies reach those in need. "Our teams are well-prepared to handle challenging conditions, and

we are fully dedicated to assisting the State government during these difficult times," stated a spokesperson for the Eastern Naval Command. "We have additional Naval assets and rescue teams on standby, ready to be deployed at any moment."

Local authorities have expressed their gratitude for the Navy's swift response. "The Navy's timely intervention has been a lifesaver for many of our residents. Their efforts in airlifting stranded people and delivering essential supplies have provided a much-needed lifeline in these difficult times," said a senior official from the State Disaster Management Department.

Skill Census: AP reaping the demographic advantage

A rjuna would not have been so dexterous without the guidance of Acharya Drona. Ekalaya would not have acquired legendary skills in archery without rigorous practice. The former example stresses the importance of guidance and the latter of the need for continuous practice. Practice makes one perfect and if it is under some expert guidance, then one can hone one's skills and excel in any chosen field. Amid emerging needs, the skills of youth needed to be honed to help them stand on their own.

Being skilled is different from being educated. Education makes one knowledgeable; while practice equips one with skills, and ensures ease of doing things. Here is where the state of Andhra Pradesh government stands. Making knowledge and

skill an intrinsic part of development is so vital for any economy. The present government's decision to prioritize skill development is based on the dire need for meeting certain emerging needs and providing for foreseeable future requirements.

The Andhra Pradesh government's ambitious plan to give training to lakhs of people belonging to different communities and sectors is a sure shot to impart in-depth skills in the fields of their choice. For this to happen, the state government wants to enumerate the household needs of people and estimate who is best fitted for what kind of training. For any major task to be successfully achieved there must be a proper assessment of the development requirements and provision of necessary wherewithal for its achievement.

As for the vision behind Skilled Andhra Pradesh, the state government wants to first assess the availability of people whose skills are to be honed. For the first time in the nation, the AP government has taken up the strenuous task of assessing and enumerating the available human force. After that, these people, based on their level of skills, will be linked to the industries. This makes the workforce industry-friendly and they will immediately be provided with the jobs in an industry that needs them the most. This kind of effort is much needed in the state as it wants not only to provide employment to the



BUDDHAVARAPU RAJESWARA PRASAD
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people but also enhance their income sources so that they become financially strong and competitive. This kind of training makes the youth more employable and more productive in their work environment. Making skill development a

part of the syllabus is also a viable option, as it makes the students industry-ready upon their graduation. The government intends to make required changes in the syllabus structure itself to achieve the targets in a time-bound manner.

As per latest Labour Force Survey, Andhra Pradesh has more unemployed youth than any other state. The lack of employment among those who have crossed the age of 15 years is 4.1 per cent. So, empowering youth with proper skills makes way for the state to reap demographic advantage.

India has the advantage of having more youth in its population than any other nation and the state of Andhra Pradesh is also endowed with such a youth force that could be turned into an expert and skilled force. As per the latest estimates,

there are 3.54 crore people under the working age group. In this background, a Skill Census allows the Andhra Pradesh government to assess the relative abilities of people and give them proper training in their field of interest. The first-of-its-kind Skill Census is a massive task that could involve hundreds of enumerators to complete the entire process of enlisting the skill profile of the people.

Skill training would be given to identified youth in as diverse fields as fintech to data analytics. This will enhance the scope of their employable abilities and thereby reduce the impact of unemployment. Recognising the need for honing the skills of youth, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu included this in his priority initiatives. If the youth of Andhra Pradesh, wherever they reside, could

utilise this opportunity; they would be making significant contribution to the state's economy by way of enhanced productivity.

The availability of resources and employability of the workforce act as a proactive stimulus for industries and companies of different kinds that may come to Andhra Pradesh to establish their units. Skilled manpower is very crucial for any company to start its production unit. Now Andhra Pradesh government is positioned not only to provide them with the much-needed infrastructure, but also the skilled workforce for their future needs. It is a win-win situation for the unemployed youth and the companies that are eager to come to the state.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

Farmers hit as crops submerged in 4.50 L acres

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Farmers, particularly those engaged in horticulture, have borne the brunt of the recent floods and incessant rains, with vast areas of crops submerged under floodwaters.

According to official sources, a preliminary assessment reveals that crops in over 4.50 lakh acres have been inundated. Paddy fields alone account for over 3 lakh acres submerged in floodwaters.

The state had paddy sown in more than 20 lakh acres, of which over 3 lakh acres are now marooned. The combined Krishna and Guntur districts have been the worst affected due to the relentless rains and flooding. In the combined West and East Godavari districts, paddy and other crops have been submerged across 65,000 acres.

The cotton crop has also suffered significantly due to the floods. Sources indicate that



cotton fields in the Pedakurapadu, Amravati, and Tadikonda constituencies, covering approximately 60,000 acres, are now under floodwaters. In Palnadu district, paddy crops over 878 hectares, cotton

across 6,900 hectares, black gram in 35 hectares, and red gram in 150 hectares have been damaged, according to District Horticulture Officer Ramana Reddy. Chilli crops on over 260

hectares, turmeric across 115 hectares, plantain crops in 14 hectares, and vegetable crops over 20 hectares have also been damaged due to the relentless rains in Palnadu district.

Collector calls upon people to pledge eyes

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani has called upon people to come forward to donate eyes.

She participated as a chief guest at a programme to mark the 39th national eye donation awareness fortnight organized by the Lions Club on the campus of Vishnu Engineering College here on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the National Eye Donation Awareness fortnight was being organised from August 25 to September 8. She lamented that lack of sight is very painful in life and that eye donation can do a lot of good for society.

Everyone should be aware that by donating the retina of the deceased, sight can be provided to two people.

"For the prevention of blindness, large-scale awareness rallies should be held to create awareness about eye donation. Moreover, special attention should be paid to the prevention of blindness," the Collector observed.

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"For the prevention of blindness, large-scale awareness rallies should be held to create awareness about eye donation. Moreover, special attention should be paid to the prevention of blindness," the Collector observed.

could be collected within 6 hours after death and the eyes give sight to the blind which gives a new lease of life. "Today I am filling out the eye dona-

tion pledge form from this platform. I appeal to the people also to come forward towards eye donation," Collector Nagarani said. The

District Collector administered a pledge with all eye donors. RDO M Acyut Ambarish, Global Service Coordinator and Lions International CH Krishnam Raju, Bhimavaram Lions club president P Murthy Raju, DMHO Dr D Umamaheshwar Rao and Vishnu Engineering College Director Dr.P Srinivasa Rao were among those who attended the programme.

1.6 lakh food packets sent to flood-hit areas from Eluru dist

PNS ■ ELURU

The government machinery of Eluru district sent 1.60 lakh food packets to the flood-affected areas in Vijayawada on Tuesday. Collector Vetri Selvi inspected the quality of food packets in the Fathebad catering centre on Tuesday.

Talking to the media, the Collector said that the district administration has made arrangements to send another 1.60 lakh food packets to the



NTR district on Tuesday. Collector Vetri Selvi said that 1.25 food packets, 1 lakh milk packets, 1 lakh biscuit packets, 30,000 bread packets and 50,000 candles and matchboxes were sent from the district on Monday. On Tuesday morning, breakfast packets were sent in special vehicles.

The Collector said that preparation and packing work was started at 4 am to provide breakfast packets to the victims on time, adding that the timely

delivery of breakfast packets to Vijayawada was beneficial to the victims and the victims expressed their happiness.

Similarly, lunch packets required for noon and evening will also be prepared and sent to Vijayawada, the Collector said. Apart from these, food packets will also be sent from Nuzvid, Agiripalli and Jangareddygudem.

Joint Collector P Dhatri Reddy RDO NSK Khajavali and DRDA PD Vijayaraju were among those who accompanied the Collector.



Lingala Bridge washed away, water pipelines destroyed

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

The Lingala Bridge, across the Munneru rivulet, was washed away at Lingala village in Vatsavai mandal. The Munneru rivulet is in spate with heavy inflows. The Bridge across the rivulet at Lingala village along with 1 km-long approach road washed in the flood.

The water pipeline laid on the bridge to supply drinking water to Vatsavai and Lingala villages was also destroyed. The bridge played a key role in connecting Jaggayyapet in the NTR district

in AP and Khammam in Telangana state. With the washing away of the bridge, the road connectivity to Khammam was cut off. Moreover, two kilometers of the road was also badly damaged due to heavy flood water to the Munneru rivulet. Official sources said that the Bridge could not be repaired and a new bridge to be constructed.

Meanwhile, there is a let-up in the Munneru rivulet flood on Tuesday. The flood water started receding. The inflow in the Munneru rivulet was 17,000 cusecs.

Govt mishandled flood crisis: Kakani

PNS ■ NELLORE

Former minister Kakani Govardhan Reddy has launched a scathing attack on the TDP coalition government, criticising Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and his cabinet for their failure to manage recent flood relief efforts, which have caused significant hardship to the people of Vijayawada.

Speaking to the media at the party office in Nellore, Kakani lambasted the Chief Minister for not implementing necessary preventive measures ahead of the floods, and then attempting to shift the blame onto the opposition for his own shortcomings.

Kakani condemned Chandrababu's statement blaming IAS and IPS officers who were not given postings for the government's failure in flood relief efforts. He termed it highly inappropriate and warned against harassing officials for political gains.

He also questioned the absence of key ministers during the ongoing heavy rains and floods, especially when the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) had already issued warnings. He highlighted the absence of Deputy Chief Minister and Minister Nara Lokesh during a time when the public needed their support the most.



12 cars, 6 autos swept away

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

The Munneru rivulet and River Krishna wreaked havoc in Nandigama mandal submerging crops in hundreds of acres. As many as 12 cars and 6 auto rickshaws were swept away from the highway at Itasvaram village.

As the vehicular traffic on the Vijayawada-Hyderabad came to a halt due to overflowing of flood water on the highway, the car and auto rickshaw owners

stopped their vehicles at the toll plaza on the highway and took shelter in nearby hotels. After a few hours, they were shocked to see that their cars and auto rickshaws were swept in the flood water and landed a kilometer away from the highway on the fields. The vehicles struck in the slush in the fields. The crane and JCB owners are demanding exorbitant prices to retrieve the cars and auto rickshaws from the fields, the car owners lamented.

Centre giving Rs 3 lakh to families of the dead: Kishan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that the Centre is giving Rs 3 lakh as ex-gratia to the families of the deceased, the Union Minister of Coal and Mines, G. Kishan Reddy, said that he does not know whether the ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakh announced by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy includes the Centre's Rs 3 lakh.

He said the Centre had extended help to offset other losses. The Centre gives Rs 2.5 lakh to persons with more than 60 per cent disability, Rs 16,000 to those receiving treatment in hospitals for more than a week and Rs 5,400 to those taking treatment for less than a week.

He said the Centre would give



Rs 2,500 to persons who lost their clothes, Rs 2,500 to people who lost utensils, Rs 37,000 to those who lost livestock, Rs 4,000 each to people who lost goats, sheep etc and Rs 32,000 to those who lost their bullocks. The Centre will give Rs 18,000 to small and marginal farmers if they have lost their crops, he said. Kishan said the TG govern-

ment should get Central assistance by sending a report. The state must help flood victims by providing them with medical treatment, drinking water etc.

"The Prime Minister would visit flood-affected areas if the need arises. However, the Centre will not declare it as a national calamity. It is important whether the Centre is providing funds or not. The Centre's policy is not to disturb relief operations by allowing VIPs to visit flood-affected areas immediately. The PM did not visit immediately even though a natural disaster took place in Kerala recently," he said.

He said that people living in flood-affected areas are saying that officials have neither reached them nor helped them.

YSRCP announces Rs 1 cr aid for victims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Substantial relief measures not implemented: Jagan

YSRCP president and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has announced Rs 1 crore in aid for Vijayawada flood victims after discussing the situation with party senior leaders at the party's central office in Tadepalli.

During the meeting, YS Jagan, who personally visited the flood-affected areas, criticised the government's failure to assist the victims adequately. He said that the



Rs 1 crore aid would be used to support those in need. The YSRCP leaders noted that despite Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu touring the affected areas, substantial relief measures had not been implemented, leaving many people without basic necessities like food, clean water, and medicines.

Senior leaders such as party general secretary Sajjala

Ramakrishna Reddy, Council Opposition Leader Botsa Satyanarayana, former ministers Merugu Nagarjuna, Vellampalli Srinivas, Karamuri Nageswara Rao, Kurasala Kannababu, former MLAs Malladi Vishnu and Kaile Anil Kumar, Vijayawada Mayor Rayana Bhagyalakshmi, former Kapu Corporation Chairman Adapa Seshu and party leader Sheikh Asif, among others, attended the meeting.

Two injured in clash

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

Two persons were injured in a clash which took place between youths of two communities at V Kota village on the night of Monday.

Police said that some youths belonging to the minority community were playing cricket on the road. The cricket ball hit a woman belonging to another community who objected to playing cricket on the road.

Irate over this, some youths of the minority community

attacked the house of another community and inflicted bleeding injuries on two persons. The victims were admitted to the GGH. The victims staged a dharna on the road in protest of the attack on their houses by the youths of the minority community. District Collector Sumit Kumar and SP Manikantha Chandole rushed to the village and brought the situation under control. The police pacified the agitating people by assuring that the accused would be arrested.



Brunei, Singapore important partners in our Indo-Pacific vision: PM Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As he embarked on a visit to Brunei and Singapore, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday that the two nations are "important partners" in India's 'Act East' policy and asserted that his visits would further strengthen the partnership with the two countries and the larger ASEAN region. Modi is on a two-nation visit from September 3-5, starting with Brunei.



Today, I am embarking on a first ever bilateral visit to Brunei Darussalam. As we celebrate the 40 years of our diplomatic relations, I look forward to my meetings with His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah and other esteemed members of the Royal family to advance our historical relationship to new heights," he said in his departure statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs.

The visit will further strengthen India's cooperation with Brunei in all existing sectors, including defence cooperation, trade and investment, energy, space technology, health cooperation, capacity building, culture as well as people-to-people exchanges and explore avenues for cooperation in newer sectors, the MEA earlier said. Modi's visit to Brunei is the first bilateral visit of an Indian prime minister to that country.

"From Brunei, I will travel to Singapore on September 4. I look forward to the opportunity to meet President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives in Brunei

PNS ■ BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday said he was looking forward to strong ties with Brunei, especially in boosting commercial and cultural linkages, as he arrived here on the first leg of his two-nation trip during which he will hold talks with the country's top leadership.

Modi, who is the first Indian Prime Minister to travel to Brunei on a bilateral visit, said he was looking forward to his meetings with Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and other members of the royal family to advance the historical relationship to new heights.

"Landed in Brunei Darussalam. Looking forward to strong ties between our nations, especially in boosting commercial and cultural linkages. I thank Crown Prince His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah for welcoming me at the airport," Modi said in a post on X.

'Less effective anti-rape laws'

Mamata demands resignation of PM, HM, CMs of BJP-ruled states

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the chief ministers of all states that have "not been able to implement effective legislations to safeguard women". Speaking in the assembly after tabling of the Aparajita Woman and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws and Amendment) Bill 2024, Banerjee said the proposed legislation aims at quick investigation, fast justice delivery and enhanced punishment of the guilty.

perpetrators and quicker justice to victims. They showed no enthusiasm for it. That's why we made the move first. This Bill, once enacted, can serve as a model for the rest of the country," the chief minister said.

Banerjee also tabled the two letters she recently wrote to PM Modi in this regard, one of which was a counter statement to Union Women and Child Development Minister Annapurna Devi's response to her first letter. "I demand the resignation of PM Modi,



Bengal Assembly passes anti-rape Bill

The West Bengal Assembly on Tuesday unanimously passed the state anti-rape Bill which seeks capital punishment for rape convicts if their actions result in the victim's death or leave her in a vegetative state and stipulates life sentence without parole for other perpetrators.

Amid chaotic scenes on the floor of the House when BJP legislators raised slogans demanding the chief minister's resignation over the alleged rape and murder incident at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, Banerjee also demanded the resignation of Suwendu Adhikari, the Leader of the Opposition, for obstructing the proceedings for passage of the Bill.

Home Minister Amit Shah and chief ministers of all states that have failed to implement effective laws that can ensure security of women and children across the country," she stated.

ACROSS THE STATES



Assam: 28 foreigners shifted to transit camp after verdict

A total of 28 people, including nine women, from Barpeta district of Assam were shifted to a transit camp in Goalpara after they were declared foreigners by a tribunal, police said on Tuesday. It was a heart-wrenching scene for the family members when their dear ones were packed in a bus at the office of the Superintendent of Police on Monday and taken to the dedicated detention centre, now called a transit camp. Barpeta Superintendent of Police Sushanta Biswa Sarma said, "These people were declared foreigners by the Foreigners Tribunal after proper hearings. As per its order, we carried out the transfer of these foreign nationals to the camp. The Tribunals are quasi-judicial bodies that decide the citizenship status of persons living in Assam who are suspected to be foreigners. Around 100 Foreigners Tribunals functioning in Assam.



Govt to sign peace pact with Tripura insurgent groups

An agreement will be signed between the central and Tripura governments and two insurgent groups of Tripura here on Wednesday, in presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, to end violence and bring "lasting peace" in the Northeastern state. Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha and senior officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Tripura government will also be present during the signing of the Memorandum of Settlement. "In presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, a Memorandum of Settlement is to be signed among government of India, government of Tripura and representatives of National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF), in New Delhi on September 4," an official statement said. The MHA has been working tirelessly to fulfil Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of developed Northeast, free from extremism, violence and conflict, it said.



HP Assembly to begin 'Zero Hour' from Sep 4: Speaker

The Himachal Pradesh Assembly will hold 'Zero Hour' from Wednesday, with consensus from all parties, on the pattern of Lok Sabha to raise issues of public interest. Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania announced in the House on Wednesday. This is the first time that such sessions will be held in the state assembly. The 'Zero Hour' sessions, lasting for half-an-hour, will start after the 'Question Hour', Speaker Pathania said. The introduction of these sessions aims to allow assembly members to raise public interest issues, which otherwise get neglected due to time shortage, and any issue not pertaining to public interest would not be allowed in the 'Zero Hour', he added. The speaker said although a decision to start a Zero Hour has been taken, the opinion of political parties on the matter is yet to come and it would be implemented after a consensus from the members.

Research should be encouraged in education system: Murmu



PNS ■ PUNE

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday stressed the need to encourage research in the education system, and said research scholars in India are capable of finding solutions to the problems not only faced by the country but by the world. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 gives impetus to research, she noted while addressing the 21st convocation ceremony at Symbiosis International (Deemed University) in Pune. Murmu also urged students to pursue excellence and not to equate success with material possessions like money, a big house or a car.

"I am confident that the young generation is working hard towards the development of the country. People of the country possess a lot of talent and skill.

"I want you to understand the requirements of the society and using your knowledge, come up with solutions that can help in the development of the masses, especially those who are marginalised, and it can encourage sustainability," the President said.

Through the government schemes, like Start-Up India, Skill India and Stand-Up India, the young generation can achieve its aims, she said. "I would like to tell everyone here that research should be encour-

aged in the education system. Research scholars from India are capable of finding solutions not only to the problems within the country but from the world. In the National Education Policy, the research has been given impetus," the President added. The President urged professors, faculty members, and alumni of Symbiosis University to promote research in the education system. Years of research lead to new inventions and provide new solutions to challenges, the President noted, adding that multi-disciplinary research centres are working in many areas, including water resource management, stem cell, nano-science, and climate change at Symbiosis University.

JHARKHAND CM MEETS TOP CONG BRASS

'INDIA bloc will get 'massive majority' in state polls'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Tuesday met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi who asserted that the INDIA bloc will win the upcoming assembly polls in the state with a "massive majority". The meeting comes days after former Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren joined the BJP after resigning from the JMM citing dissatisfaction with the party's current

style of functioning and "bitter humiliation". Soren met Kharge and Gandhi at the Congress president's residence here. Congress general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal and Soren's wife Kalpana Soren were also present during the meeting.

Though Soren termed the meeting as a courtesy call, preparations for the assembly polls later this year were learnt to have been discussed.

"Courtesy meeting with Jharkhand Chief Minister Shri Hemant Soren and Mrs.

Kalpana Soren in the presence of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge. INDIA is united for the upliftment and rights of the people of Jharkhand, the poor and the tribals. We will win this election with a massive majority," Gandhi said in a Facebook post.

After the meeting, Kharge also asserted that INDIA bloc will win in Jharkhand.

"Today, along with Mr. Rahul Gandhi had a courtesy meeting with the Chief Minister of Jharkhand, Mr. Hemant Soren.



Karnataka govt. notifies dengue as 'epidemic disease'

PNS ■ BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has notified dengue as an 'epidemic disease' and introduced regulations, which allow authorities to penalise those who disobey its orders or fail to take measures to stop breeding of mosquitoes.

"In exercise of the power conferred by section 3 of The Karnataka Epidemic Diseases Act, 2020 (Karnataka Act 26 of 2020), the Government of Karnataka hereby notifies Dengue fever, including severe forms of dengue fever as an Epidemic Disease in the State of Karnataka," a government notification said.

The government has also introduced amendments to the Karnataka Epidemic Diseases Regulation, 2020, mandating people to be more responsible in containing the

spread of the vector-borne disease.

The amendment proposes penalties in three categories - household, commercial and active construction areas.

The government has also introduced amendments to the Karnataka Epidemic Diseases Regulation, 2020, mandating people to be more responsible in containing the spread of the vector-borne disease

For households in urban and rural

areas, the penalty would be Rs 400 and Rs 200 respectively.

In commercial areas, the penalty would be Rs 1,000 in urban regions and Rs 500 in the rural neighbourhoods.

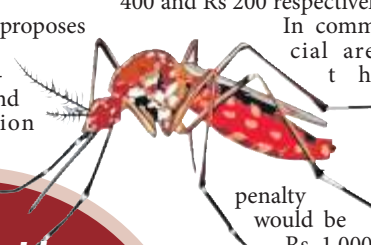
Owners of active construction areas which provide space for mosquitoes to breed will be fined Rs 2,000 in urban localities and Rs 1,000 in rural ones.

The regulations make it mandatory for owners and occupiers of the household buildings to take necessary measures to prevent breeding

of mosquitoes. "They should ensure to cover or secure the water storage containers, sumps or overhead tanks with a lid or any material to prevent mosquito breeding. They should also dispose of solid waste material to prevent water accumulation & mosquito breeding," according to the notification.

Empty vessels, pot saucers, cans, containers, unused tyres, parts or any other solid waste materials should not be kept in such a manner that they are likely to collect and retain water which may cause breeding of mosquitoes, it was stated.

Every person, institution or agency should take care to prevent collection or accumulation of water, inside or outside the premises, so as to prevent nuisance to the neighbours or the community as a source for mosquito breeding, the regulations read.



Wearable devices could help detect early signs of COVID: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Wearable devices that track one's physical activity, such as smartwatches, could help detect early signs of disease, including COVID-19, heart conditions and falls, a new study has suggested.

Researchers from the University of South Australia reviewed 28 studies, including 12 lakh participants, and found that smartwatches and activity trackers could correctly identify COVID-19 status in 88 out of 100 people, similar to results from rapid screening tests.

They also found that data from wearable devices could be used to identify atrial fibrillation in 87 out of 100 people, in which the heart beats irregularly and faster than normal.

Falls were detected in 82 of 100 people using these activity-tracking devices. The findings are published in the Journal of Medical Internet Research mHealth and uHealth.

While originally designed for tracking fitness and physical activity, including exercise, wearable technology now also displays blood pressure, heart rate, along with sleep quality, skin temperature, stress levels and more.

"Our systematic review shows that wearable activity trackers have significant promise in detecting COVID-19 and heart conditions in real-world settings, which has the potential to improve personal health monitoring," lead researcher Ben Singh from the University of South Australia said.



SHIVAJI STATUE COLLAPSE look-out notice against sculptor Jaydeep

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Police in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district has issued a Look Out Circular against contractor Jaydeep Apte in connection with the collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue at Rajkot fort, officials said on Tuesday.

An LOC is issued to airports and all other exit points to stop a person from fleeing

the country. Apte, a Thane-based sculptor, had executed the contract to make the statue.

Following its collapse on August 26, less than nine months after Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated it on the coastal fort, Malvan police registered a case against Apte and structural consultant Chetan Patil for negligence and other offences.

RAMESHWARAM CAFE BLAST

Union Minister tenders apology to TN

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje on Tuesday filed an affidavit before the Madras High Court, apologising to the people of Tamil Nadu for her remarks made in light of the Rameshwaram Cafe blast in Bengaluru earlier this year.

Post the March 1 low intensity blast at the popular eatery in Bengaluru, Karandlaje had linked the people of Tamil Nadu with the incident and she was booked



by the Madurai police over the matter. She had moved the court seeking to quash the criminal proceedings against her.

In her affidavit filed before the bench of Justice G Jayachandran, Karandlaje said the remarks made about the

She said she has already retracted her previous comments and tendered "my profound apologies through social media platforms"

people of TN was done "without any intention" to hurt their sentiments and feelings.

She said she has already retracted her previous comments and tendered "my profound apologies through social media platforms."

"I state that I have the highest respect and regard to the history, rich culture, tradition, and to the people of Tamil Nadu and I had or have no intention whatsoever to hurt the sentiments of the people of Tamil Nadu by any conduct of mine."



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PAPER WITH PASSION

A strategic pivot

Amid rising regional tensions, Indo-US defence ties are strengthening, marking a significant strategic shift in South Asia

India has solidified its defence partnership with the United States through two pivotal agreements, signaling a deepening American commitment to South Asia at a time when China's military influence is expanding across the region. The agreements, secured during Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's recent four-day visit to the United States, include a Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA) and a Memorandum of Agreement on the Assignment of Liaison Officers. These developments underscore a significant shift in the dynamics of Indo-US relations, with both nations moving closer in their defence cooperation. The SOSA, a non-binding bilateral pact, is designed to prioritise support for defence-related goods and services between the two countries. This agreement is particularly crucial in addressing supply chain vulnerabilities that are critical to national security. Under the SOSA, India will receive assurances from Washington's Defence Priorities and Allocations System, while Indian companies will provide priority support to the United States. India's inclusion in the elite group of 18 SOSA partners, which includes nations like Australia, Canada, and Britain, marks a significant step in defence cooperation.



In effect it means if either of two nations ended up in combat with an adversary, the SOSA could help accelerate the delivery of crucial weapons and materials required for defence, thereby ensuring robust supply chains in times of crisis. India and the United States have already established several key strategic agreements, including the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) signed in 2016

and real-time intelligence sharing since 2018 under the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA). These agreements, alongside the new SOSA, create a framework for expedited deliveries of contracted goods and services, potentially streamlining defence commerce between the two nations. In 2019, the signing of the Industrial Security Annex marked another significant step, allowing the sharing of classified US information with private Indian defence firms—a departure from previous restrictions. The Reciprocal Defence Procurement Agreement could further streamline defence commerce, enabling private companies in both countries to bid on each other's contracts. Indeed, a technologically advanced Indian military aligns with American interests. The recent Indo-US defence agreements mark a significant milestone in the evolving relationship between the two nations. As China's influence continues to grow across South Asia, particularly in Islamabad and the Maldives, these agreements provide a foundation for enhanced collaboration and a shared commitment to regional stability. With these developments, India and the United States are poised to further deepen their defence ties, building a partnership that could play a crucial role in shaping the future of the region.

PICTALK



Devotees carry an idol of Lord Ganesh ahead of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival, in Mumbai

The US endorses India-Tibet ties

The recent visit of a bipartisan delegation of U S lawmakers to New Delhi and Dharamshala marks a significant moment in the US diplomacy in the region



ASHOK K MEHTA

A Tibet festival started on 3 September at India International Centre New Delhi to celebrate its rich Buddhist heritage, culture and identity. The Sikyong (head of Central Tibet Administration, Penpa Tshering, will preside over various activities to highlight Tibet's geo-strategic, spiritual and cultural importance for India.

His Holiness Dalai Lama at 89, is in a New York hospital for medical treatment but is considered in good health. US Special Coordinator on Tibet, Uzra Jeyva met him which elicited "immediate (solemn) protest from China". Foreign Affairs spokesperson Mao Ning said: "we don't allow Dalai Lama to engage in political activities in the US". Backchannel talks between the Dalai Lama envoy and China have been going on for an undisclosed period though Beijing does not confirm them. Talks are being pushed by the US House Resolution Resolve Tibet Act July 2024 which calls for restoration of its full autonomy. India needs to add its voice for Tibet's autonomy both internally and externally as part of a broader coalition. India's recognition of full Chinese sovereignty over Tibet was based on Beijing granting and implementing Tibet's autonomy. Instead, China has quashed Tibet's autonomy and trade treaties opening for India to take a more nuanced position.

Two issues require Gol's prompt attention: the Dalai Lama succession; and the border issue including restoration of peace and tranquillity and full disengagement in east Ladakh. The visit of a bipartisan US delegation of lawmakers to Dharamshala and Delhi and being received both by Dalai Lama and Prime Minister Narendra Modi was significant. China baiter Nancy Pelosi had some unpleasant things to say about President Xi Jinping that drew Chinese ire. On the ground, the sinicisation process of Xijiang (Tibet) started in the mid-1960s. The time-tested method of injecting 7.5 mn Han Chinese into Tibet along with neutralization of Tibetan



Buddhism by deploying Chinese monks in Tibetan monasteries was designed to change the heart and soul of Tibet. Soon militarisation and infrastructure construction began which has hurt the environment. USD 5.8bn was spent on the Sichuan to Tibet railways system which is being extended to borders with India, Nepal and Bhutan. A new border law has led to the building of 628 well-off border villages close to or encroached into neighbouring countries. In 1965 Convenience Police Stations were constructed as a key security innovation: Big Brother is Watching. By 2011 Tibet Autonomous Region advertised for 2500 police stations with 458 designated for Lhasa alone. By 2016, this grid-style social management of Tibet had recruited thousands of Han Chinese and some Tibetan policemen. A Chinese Communist Party (CCP) political secretary has always kept a hawk-eye vigil over Tibet which is run by the CCP from Beijing. Internal policing has resulted in fostering a feeling of 'otherness' by the surveillance drive. There are reports that attempts are being made to recruit Tibetans into the PLA including some forcible intake. The day is not far when some Nepalese might opt to join PLA for other than the South West Theatre Command in



THE VISIT OF A BIPARTISAN US DELEGATION OF LAWMAKERS TO DHARAMSALA AND DELHI AND BEING RECEIVED BOTH BY DALAI LAMA AND PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI WAS SIGNIFICANT

Tibet. This will be the result of the ill-conceived Agniveer policy. The Chinese Renaming Campaign has resulted in what Forum for Non-Violent Alternatives (FNVA) has called "Thread of Beads: an analysis of renaming 62 locations in India's Arunachal Pradesh since 2017. China claims that 90 per cent of Zangnan (Arunachal Pradesh) is illegally occupied by India. Chief Minister Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma, has suggested renaming 62 locations in Tibet. This is not likely to irk the Chinese. The Chinese renaming drive was done in four phases in 2017, 2021, 2023 and 2024.

It had been supplemented by salami-slicing into Nepal and Bhutan by building Xiakong villages (well-off) in contested areas to strengthen their claims to them. While Nepal and Bhutan are pretending this has not happened or happening, India is building some 600 vibrant villages for which funds have been released. Numerous encroachments have taken place in India also. The strategic importance of Tibet for India cannot be overstated. The root of the border problem and the Tibet issue is India's failure to comprehend its significance in time and act. In C Eastern Command, Lt Gen Sir Francis Tucker had foreseen in 1946 in a paper he

wrote that India must prevent China from occupying Tibet and be prepared to occupy it. This did not happen for which we are paying now. The priority for now is to coordinate with Dalai Lama to articulate his succession. The Dalai Lama has been silent on it for some time now but has spoken and written about it in the past.

The Chinese are bound to appoint their own Dalai Lama as they appointed a Panchen Lama (second to Dalai Lama) Gyaltsen Norbu. This must be preempted. The CTA is preparing a new map of Tibet with the help of cartographic experts from Princeton University in the US.

The issue of the map and India announcing the contours of its Tibet policy including the border and full disengagement of PLA from its intrusions in east Ladakh have to be coordinated with CTA. A succession policy should also be outlined. With Tibetans migrating to the US and soon the majority of Tibetans residing there than in India, the Tibet issue may vanish leaving Delhi with no potential leverage against Beijing.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Citation manipulation is undermining research integrity

As institutions chase rankings, the very foundation of scientific inquiry is at risk, calling for urgent reforms in how research quality is assessed and rewarded

The mushrooming of predatory journals, fake research publications, and manipulated citations compromises the integrity of academic research. In the latest NIRF 2024 rankings, serious concerns were raised regarding the dropping ranking of many prestigious national institutions. Many mediocre institutions climbed to a higher level than institutions of national repute. Though the purpose of accreditations and rankings is to improve the quality of each institution through a competitive spirit, one major point of concern is that many institutions climbed the ladder through a single parameter, the publication metrics. The over-emphasis on publication spoils our country's academic and research environment. Even people who don't know how to write a paper properly publish one paper per month. There was a time when a researcher used to publish one or two papers per year. Even at the international level, people have expressed reservations about citation metrics. In a recent issue of Nature (published on



20th August), a team of researchers led by Yasir Zaki explicitly shows that a citation black market is operating in our society. The citation black market is the unscrupulous act of exchanging citations to enhance research articles' perceived influence unduly. The citation black market functions through the following mechanisms, 1. Citation Cartels: Citation cartels are groups of researchers who agree to quote each other's work a lot, even if it has nothing to do with the current topic. These cartels can change citation metrics in a big way, giving the wrong impression of how important and influential the study is. 2. Paid Citations: Citations may sometimes be available for purchase by researchers or publications. This phenomenon is especially widespread

in predatory publications, which frequently give primacy to financial gain above academic honesty. To enhance their citation counts, researchers may compensate these journals to incorporate their work into other publications, therefore artificially inflating their citation metrics. The study published in the journal Nature found that the companies were charging \$300 for 50 citations and \$ 500 for 100 citations. 3. Coercive Citation: Journal editors or reviewers can also manipulate citations by pushing writers to include certain papers, usually their own, to boost the number of citations for specific journals or articles. This can make the peer review process less reliable and tilt the research towards certain people or groups. Many people have been practising this to boost their scientometrics level. The intense pressure on academics to publish frequently and in high-impact journals drives this booming citation black market. The obsession with the impact factor as a factor of academic or scientific excel-

lence has incentivized citation manipulation. The study showed that Google Scholar (and ResearchGate), is manipulatable. Despite the conspicuous vulnerabilities, these are used to judge the quality of a researcher. The 'citation black market' has several detrimental effects on the scientific community and society. The government should reconsider its reliance on citation-based metrics, such as the impact factor, as the primary indicators of research quality. Alternative metrics, such as article-level, open peer reviews, and qualitative research impact assessments, should be explored and adopted. Metrics evaluating the social impact of research—that of policy, industry, or public understanding—should also be considered. This strategy can inspire effort in addressing practical problems and acknowledges the broader benefits of research to society. (The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies; views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Madam —The Justice Hema Committee report was only the tip of the iceberg against the sexual harassment. What we need is the solution and not confrontation anymore to the ongoing unpalatable issue. The time has changed and we are in the midst of gender equality. The world has become thickly competitive and along with freedom comes the package of jealousy, comparing with each other and at the end taking the pressure of enhancing the social status which is at times caused by giving up their own personal liberty and rights. The ongoing sexual harassment is not just there in one particular industry. It's a rapid fire spreading across industries and globally. Cinema industry is in the eyes of the public because the glamour attached to celebrities is coming to light quickly. Today our culture has changed and values eroded. The Hon'ble Supreme Court permits living together and there are couples united this way. Some relationship breaks lead to mental turmoil by physical assault. The ratio of hate, love changed overnight, ending up in a divorce. All this is happening only because of economic independence of the once a weaker sex. There's no more weaker sex as we can conclude and in many places women are the stronger sex challenges men in many fields.

Where is the actual problem then? The problem starts with the anticipation by comparison to improve upon the social status. Even the luxuries became needs from wants under the current trend. When the background to the issue is such, how can we fix men alone as the reasons for the harassment? It was surprising to observe that a very senior artist after having acted in more than 200 movies has come out with her grievances that can't be taken at face value. One thing is to be noted that when someone is looking for an opportunity they shouldn't try it out as a chance since the very word 'Chance' dilutes the talents and ends up in a compromise and thereby the merits is taking

Need for the caste census



In the absence of fresh data, government agencies are still formulating policies and allocating subsidies based on the data accrued from the 2011 Census. The government estimated that around 810 million people required food assistance for 5 more years. However, this estimate is based on the 2011 census. Economists pointed out that more than 100 million deserving Indians would not get the benefit of the 5-year

extension of free ration because of the government's failure to conduct the long-due population census. A government cannot function without updating necessary and detailed data on the population of the country every ten years. So, census and caste census should immediately and simultaneously be undertaken. A caste census will not add to the cost of conducting a census. A caste census can be done only by adding a question or two to the questionnaire for the census. Caste hatred and caste nepotism are like fractures in our society. After a suspected fracture, a doctor always takes decisions after doing at least an X-ray. Any action on caste reservation must similarly be taken after collecting necessary data by conducting a caste census. Sujit De | Kolkata

the back seat.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

RAINS WRECK HAVOC IN TELUGU STATES

Madam — The heavy rains have wreaked havoc in both Telugu states. The way Vijayawada has been inundated leaving lakhs of people got vacated to safe places and scores of people dead is unprecedented. The state governments have geared up their relief operations. The centre should come forward with all its might to help out the states in their most trying times. The seasons in India have been acting extreme with a regularity. The hot summer with abnormal levels of temperatures is now followed by rainy season with heavy down pours. There should be proper preparedness to mitigate the fury of nature. Raising green cover and decreasing carbon print will help in long run. DVG Sankara Rao | Vizianagaram

BREAK ON RELIGIOUS BREAK

Madam — While it may be true that the CM of Assam has not done justice to his

constitutional post on numerous occasions vis-à-vis the Muslims of the state, his move to put a brake on the two-hour break for Friday prayers in the state Assembly can hardly be compared with Hitler's treatment of the Jews. Hitler wanted a total extermination of the Jews and was unapologetic about targeting millions of them. Has Sarma given a similar call to eliminate Muslims from the state of Assam? All that he has done is to put an end to a practice that allowed Muslims to avail of a two-hour break as a matter of right, in order to fulfil their religious obligations. Imagine the chaos that would ensue if professionals of other denominations were to press for similar breaks in the course of their duties? Is there anything that is more holy and sacred and pleasing to one's Creator than the performance of prescribed duties? Avinash Godbole | Dewas

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

GENERATION Z'S FASHION DILEMMA

Can Gen Z find a sustainable balance between personal style and financial responsibility?



SHAINY SHARMA

Fashion has always been a form of self-expression and identity, but for Millennials or Generation Z (Gen Z); Generation Alpha (Gen Alpha) and many more, it has taken on new dimensions. The generation, growing up in the digital age, is deeply influenced by social media, fast fashion and the need for constant reinvention. Moreover, the spending habits of Gen Z on fashion are notable not just for the frequency of purchases but also for the psychological and financial implications. While many in this generation are still students or early in their careers, they tend to spend a substantial portion of their disposable income on clothing and accessories.

The constant bombardment of new trends and must-have items can create a sense of urgency and FOMO, leading to impulsive purchases, driven by the fear of missing out on trends or sales, which is a common behaviour among the current generation. This generation is also more likely to engage in buy now, pay later schemes, which can further lead to debt accumulation if not managed carefully.

The desire to maintain a certain image can result in financial strain, as spending on fashion takes precedence over saving for the future. Algorithms on social media platforms are designed to show users content that aligns with their interests, including fashion. This means that as users scroll, they are often presented with targeted ads and influencer promotions that encourage them to buy more, even if they don't need anything. Social media is a major driver of contemporary fashion, influ-



encing how trends are created, spread and consumed.

While it has democratized fashion, giving individuals more influence and visibility at the same time it has also contributed to the challenges of fast fashion, overconsumption and sustainability issues. Thus, while social media is not solely responsible for fashion, it is undoubtedly one of the most powerful forces shaping the industry today. As a result, fashion has become both a passion and a source of significant expenditure for the generation, driving new consumer behaviours and reshaping the fashion industry. Fashion is not just about clothing rather it is a vital tool for expressing individuality and belonging. In a world where social media plays a dominant role, the clothes one wears are often seen as an extension of one's brand.

Platforms like Instagram, TikTok and Pinterest allow users to curate and showcase their style to a global audience, reinforcing the importance of fashion as a form of self-expression. The desire to create a unique and ever-evolving identity pushes this generation to frequently update their wardrobes. Mindless scrolling for fashion is a double-edged sword. While it provides entertainment and easy access to the latest trends, it can lead to impulsive buying, overconsumption and a detachment from sustainable and ethical practices. Being mindful of how much time is spent on these platforms and making conscious decisions about purchases can help mitigate these effects.

The need to stand out while simultaneously fitting in with peer groups creates a paradoxical demand for both originality and conformity, leading to increased spending on fashion items. Fast fashion brands, have capitalized on this behaviour by offering affordable, trendy clothing that changes frequently. These brands release new collections at a rapid pace, allowing consumers of every generation to keep up with the latest styles without breaking the bank—at least in the short term. However, the low prices and frequent purchases add up, leading to significant overall spending. As this generation continues to mature, it will be interesting to see how their fashion consumption evolves and whether a balance can be struck between the desire for personal style and the need for ethical, sustainable practices.

(The writer is a faculty at Art of Living, views expressed are personal)

UPA: Addressing employee aspirations



B K SINGH

Unified Pension Scheme promises a guaranteed pension for long-serving employees, but at a significant fiscal cost to the exchequer



The old pension scheme (OPS) has been a big burden on the union and states' budget of the country. In one of the economic reforms, it was shelved for employees joining government services in 2004 and later. The new scheme was called the National Pension Scheme (NPS), where the employee had to contribute 10% of the salary during the entire period of service. Initially, the government too was to make a matching contribution of 10%, which was later increased to 14%. The corpus generated for pension this way was invested in government securities, shares and corporate bonds, which had daily net asset value like mutual funds. At the time of retirement, at least 40% of the corpus is to be used for purchasing an annuity. The NPS scheme does not guarantee a monthly pension equivalent to 50% of the last salary drawn.

This led to resentment among the government employees and opposition parties especially Congress saw an opportunity to keep the BJP-led central government in the dock. Among several freebies, Congress also promised in the election manifesto to revert to OPS in states they came to power. Montek Singh Ahluwalia has gone on record to bring home the point that the economy of the country will be ruined if OPS is revived for employees who joined service in and after 2004. Many experts have also concurred with the views. Congress won the Himachal Pradesh Assembly election on the promise to revert to OPS but did not implement it. Subsequently in the Telangana election and also in the Lok Sabha 2024 election, the revival of OPS was not again brought up in the manifesto.

BJP having disappointed with the Lok Sabha results in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh had to make a tightrope walk and find a middle ground between OPS and NPS. The central government now proposes a Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for employees whose service lasts for 25 years



THE NEW SCHEME WAS CALLED THE NATIONAL PENSION SCHEME (NPS), WHERE THE EMPLOYEE HAD TO CONTRIBUTE 10% OF THE SALARY DURING THE ENTIRE PERIOD OF SERVICE. INITIALLY, THE GOVERNMENT TOO WAS TO MAKE A MATCHING CONTRIBUTION OF 10%, WHICH WAS LATER INCREASED TO 14%

or more to get a pension of 50% of the average of the preceding twelve months' salary before the super annulation. The pension amount will be inflation-adjusted in dearness allowance twice a year. It has also a provision for a 60% family pension, for all diseased employees. The scheme does not benefit those who served for less than ten years. However, a monthly pension of Rs 10,000 has been guaranteed for employees who retired after serving for at least ten years. An additional sweetener has also been brought in the provision for the payment of a lump sum amount linking it with the duration of service in the government.

The scheme will come into effect from 1st April 2025 and will benefit 23 lakh employees of the central Government if they opt for it. Further, if all states also opt for the scheme, 90 lakh employees will be benefited in the country. The Maharashtra government, where the Assembly election is due shortly, has already opted for the scheme. UPS is also a contributory scheme like NPS, where employees' contributions remain unchanged at 10% and the government matching contribution is increased from 14% to 18.5%.

If the monthly salary of the employee is Rs 50,000, the annual increase in the corpus is 3%, equivalent to a compound annual growth of 8%. SBI, LIC and UTI are three managers of corpus for employees' pensions. SBI offers 9.75% and LIC 9.56% interest on the fund. Currently, in NPS, government employee has three options for investment and 95% of subscribers allow 65% investment in government securities, 15% in equities and the remaining 20% in corporate debt.

Since the corpus is not large enough to earn 50% of the average of the last twelve months' salary, the government's matching contribution has been increased from 14% to 18.5%. Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan on UPS said, "definitely fiscally more prudent." "It remains within the same architecture of contributory funded scheme.

This is the critical difference. The OPS is unfunded, non-contributory scheme, this is funded, contributory scheme. The only difference in the changes made is to give an assurance and not leave things to the vagaries of market forces. But otherwise the structure of UPS has best elements of both (OPS and NPS)", he said. Economists think that UPS balances the fiscal cost and the aspiration of the employee. The increased cost of living will be taken care of because the real pension would not change as it is indexed to inflation. In NPS, if inflation goes up real pension comes down. Nevertheless, the scheme would put an extra burden of Rs 6250 crores on the government in the first year.

This has been done to satisfy 23 lakh beneficiaries, who are vocal political constituencies and no political party would easily ignore their demand. It is expected that most states would adopt UPS, without bothering for additional financial burden.

With the announcement of UPS, opposition parties are stepping up their demand for restoration of OPS. Economists have been consistently warning against the restoration; it has the potential to make the growth sluggish and hamper the progress of the nation. It also impacts the lives of the poor. Economic Advisory

Council to the Prime Minister has suggested that reverting to OPS will be catastrophic for poor populations and would crowd out private investments in states that revert to it. Reserve Bank of India in January 2023 had flagged concerns about the government finances for states opting to revert to OPS last year.

RBI had already cautioned that the move would lead to accumulation of liabilities, which can become a major risk in future. RBI had also said that states were expected to incur a 16% rise in pension expenditure at Rs 4,63,436 Crores as against Rs 3,99, 813 crores in the previous year. Pension outgo under NPS is Rs 4 lakh crores, which would be Rs 17 lakh crores if OPS is reverted. At present Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Punjab have reverted to OPS. Since then BJP has come back to power in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and it is hoped that both governments will continue with NPS and opt for UPS with effect from 1st April 2025. Punjab is governed by AAP and their main agenda is to remain in power and not to be concerned about the state's finances.

UPS itself is causing a financial burden on the Central government of Rs 6250 crores in the first year. If all the states opt for it, the total economic burden on central and all state governments would be of the order of Rs 25,000 crores in the first year. Let there be no politics and political parties be conscious of maintaining fiscal discipline.

(The writer is a retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests -Head of Forest Force-Karnataka; views are personal)

Policy rollbacks: The unseen cost of ignoring stakeholder consultation

There have been a number of high-profile policy rollbacks, underscoring the need for consultation and consensus-building before implementing major reforms

Since the Modi Government 1.0, India has witnessed a series of high-profile policy rollbacks that highlight a critical issue in governance: the need for broader consultation and consensus-building before introducing significant reforms. The latest example is the rollback of the lateral entry scheme, which sought to bring professionals from outside the traditional civil services into government roles.

While the merits and demerits of such a policy can be debated, the rapid reversal following its announcement points to a deeper, more systemic issue—the lack of comprehensive stakeholder engagement. This pattern is not new. The government's



JAIDEEP VAIDESWAR

attempts to implement sweeping reforms have repeatedly stumbled due to insufficient consultation. The Land Acquisition Bill, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) paired with the National Register of Citizens (NRC), and the Farm Laws all serve as prime examples. In each case, the policies were introduced with minimal input from those most affected—be it farmers, minority

communities, or state governments. The predictable outcome has been an intense public backlash, forcing the government to either backpedal or face prolonged unrest. The trend is concerning. Policymaking in a diverse democracy like India requires not only a vision but also the patience to engage with a wide range of stakeholders. This includes not just the obvious beneficiaries or those directly affected but also civil society, industry experts, and regional representatives. The lack of such engagement has led to a growing distrust between the government and the public, where every new announcement is met with suspicion rather than optimism. Moreover, the need for broader consultation

becomes even more pressing when considering the long-term impact of these policies. Short-term political gains or expedient decision-making may lead to swift policy announcements, but the absence of robust dialogue with stakeholders can result in policies that are unsustainable or unimplementable in the long run. Take, for instance, the recent discussion in the media on potential additional restrictions on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the tobacco sector. While the government may have had reasons for this move, the absence of dialogue with stakeholders—particularly tobacco farmers—has exacerbated concerns. Tobacco provides livelihood

to 36 million people including 6 million farmers and 20 million farm labour engaged in tobacco farming. Since the huge scale of investment of \$4 trillion that the finance minister pointed to at the recent Voice of Global South Summit, it is clear that the FDI is the only way to protect farmers. Similarly, both the ill-conceived Tax Collection at Source (TCS) on foreign travel and now the introduction of the new Tax Clearance

Certificate requirement for Indians travelling abroad are poorly thought through and have virtually no machinery to provide certificates on an emergency basis. The repeated lack of consensus-building not only undermines the effectiveness of policies but also erodes public trust in governance. It creates an environment where even well-intentioned reforms are viewed with scepticism, and the potential benefits are overshadowed by the immediate backlash. This is particularly damaging in a country as diverse as India, where the success of any policy hinges on its acceptance across different regions, communities, and economic strata. Furthermore, these repeated rollbacks damage India's



international reputation, as global investors and partners begin to view the country as an uncertain policy environment. This uncertainty not only affects domestic stakeholders but also risks deterring foreign investment, which is crucial for driving economic growth and development in a rapidly globalizing world. Moving forward, the government must adopt a more inclusive approach to policymaking. This means going beyond the corridors of power in New Delhi and engaging with stakeholders at the grassroots level. It means recognizing that the voices of citizens, small business owners, and regional leaders, are not just peripheral—they are central to the success of any

reform. It also means being open to feedback and willing to make adjustments before policies are finalized, rather than being forced into a retreat after the fact. India's growth story is too important to be derailed by avoidable missteps in policy formulation.

By fostering a culture of consultation and consensus, the government can ensure that its reforms not only achieve their intended goals but also enjoy the support and trust of the people. The lesson from recent rollbacks is clear: no matter how well-conceived a policy may be, it cannot succeed without the buy-in of those it is meant to serve. (The writer is a former consultant to MyGov. Views expressed are personal)

IN BRIEF



Gold slips Rs 50; silver slumps Rs 250

Gold prices slipped Rs 50 to Rs 74,050 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had finished at Rs 74,100 per 10 grams in the previous session on Monday. Silver prices also slumped by Rs 250 to Rs 85,250 per kilogram on Tuesday. It had closed at Rs 85,500 per kg in the previous close. Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity fell by Rs 50 to Rs 73,700 per 10 grams. On the global front, Comex gold is trading at USD 2,531.40 per ounce, up by USD 3.80 per ounce or 0.15 per cent. "Gold fluctuated in a narrow range on Tuesday as traders remained sidelined ahead of US job market data that may influence the US Federal Reserve's (Fed) interest rate-cutting path," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. However, silver was quoted 1.81 per cent lower at USD 28.62 per ounce in the international markets.



GSTN to launch invoice management system

GST Network will launch the Invoice Management System (IMS) from October 1 which will facilitate taxpayers in matching their records/invoices vis-a-vis issued by their suppliers for availing the correct Input Tax Credit (ITC). In an advisory to Goods and Services Tax (GST) payers, GSTN said to enable taxpayers to efficiently address invoice corrections/amendments with their suppliers through the portal, a new communication process called the IMS is being launched. This will also facilitate taxpayer in matching of their records/ invoices vis-a-vis issued by their suppliers for availing the correct ITC, GSTN said. IMS will allow the recipient taxpayers to either accept or reject an invoice or to keep it pending in the system, which can be availed later. This facility shall be available to the taxpayer from October 1 onwards on the GST portal.



ONDC gets award for application of emerging tech

The government-backed Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) on Tuesday received the gold award for application of emerging technologies. ONDC is an initiative of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). It aims to promote an open platform for all aspects of e-commerce retail and help small retailers expand their business through e-commerce medium and reduce dominance of giants in the sector. The network is now enabling more than 12 million orders per month, spread across categories ranging from fashion to electronics in products, and ride-hailing to metro ticketing in services. Over 6 lakh sellers across India have been on-boarded so far. The gold award, under the category 'Application of Emerging Technologies for Providing Citizen-Centric Services' in the National Awards for e-Governance (NAeG), was received by Sanjiv, Joint Secretary in the DPIIT and other officials from the department in Mumbai.

Household savings building up; to remain top net lenders: RBI

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Household savings have again started building up, which sharply declined from the level in 2020-21, and will remain top net lenders to the economy in coming decades, Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra said on Tuesday. In India, the household sector typically generates surplus savings relative to its investment, which it lends to other sectors.

Recently, the net financial savings of households have almost halved from their level in 2020-21 due to behavioural changes underway in the form of unwinding of prudential savings accumulated during the pandemic and shifts from financial assets to physical assets like housing, Patra said.

"Going forward, boosted by rising incomes, households will likely build back their financial assets... This process has already begun - households' financial assets have increased from 10.6 per cent of GDP during 2011-17 to 11.5 per cent during 2017-23 (excluding the pandemic year)," he noted.



Their physical savings have also risen in the post-pandemic years to over 12 per cent of GDP and could rise further. They had reached 16 per cent of GDP in 2010-11, he said in a keynote address at the Financing 3.0 Summit: Preparing for Viksit Bharat organised by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII).

"Accordingly, households will remain the top net lenders to the rest of the economy in the coming decades," the senior RBI official said.

He further said the private corporate sector has drastically reduced its net borrowings from the rest of the economy,

reflecting a combination of rising internal accruals and subdued capacity creation. Looking ahead, its net borrowing requirement is likely to rise on the back of a revival in the capex cycle, he added.

"These financing requirements will largely be met by households and external resources. Net dissaving of the public sector has been moderating albeit unevenly; this sector will remain a net borrower in the economy in view of the critical role envisaged for fiscal policy in shaping India's future," the deputy governor said.

Patra stressed that India will need a transformation in its institutional architecture for intermediating the needs of finance of its aspirational trajectory. The emphasis, he said, would be on financing physical, social and digital infrastructure, skilling, green energy, innovative manufacturing and MSMEs.

At its core, there has to be a robust corporate bond market with adequate secondary market trading liquidity and breadth, he said. External financing will play an increasingly vibrant role in propelling investment and bringing in new technologies, provided the absorptive capacity in respect of external funding expands with the pursuit of reforms that enhance export potential and attract FDI, he added. "In India's quest for higher levels of development, financing should be seen as a facilitator, not an obstructer," he said. During his address, Patra also delved into India's growth story and the fact that the country is riding on the cusp of a distinct demographic advantage.

He said a productive workforce is critical for value creation in an economy, while capital would play an important supportive role.

World Bank raises India growth forecast to 7%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The World Bank on Tuesday raised the growth forecast for the Indian economy to 7 per cent from an earlier projection of 6.6 per cent in the current fiscal, helped by recovery in the agri sector and pick-up in rural demand.

This is in line with projections by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Asian Development Bank (ADB). Both multilateral funding agencies have raised their forecast to 7 per cent for the financial year ending March 2025.

According to Economic Survey, the country's real gross domestic product (GDP) will grow at 6.5-7 per cent in 2024-25. However, the Reserve Bank of India estimates a higher 7.2 per cent for the current financial year.

It is to be noted that the World Bank has raised the GDP forecast by 40 basis points from earlier estimates of 6.6 per cent for FY25 released in June.

An increase in GDP forecast is supported by improvement in monsoon, private consumption and rising exports, World

Bank senior economist Ran Li said.

The growth rate of India, which accounts for the bulk of the South Asia region, is expected to remain strong at 7 per cent in 2024-25, the World Bank said in the India Development Update.

"Amid challenging external conditions, the World Bank expects India's medium-term outlook to remain positive. Growth is forecast to reach 7 per cent in FY25 and remain strong in FY26 and FY27," it said.

With robust revenue growth and further fiscal consolidation, it said, the debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to decline from 83.9 per cent in FY24 to 82 per cent by FY27.

The current account deficit is expected to remain around 1-1.6 per cent of the GDP up to FY27.

India's robust growth prospects, along with declining inflation rate will help to reduce extreme poverty, said World Bank's country director Auguste Tano Kouame.

"India can boost its growth further by harnessing its global trade potential.

TRAI'S CRACKDOWN ON PESKY CALLS

Telcos block 2.75 lakh telephone numbers, 50 firms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 2.75 lakh telephone numbers have been disconnected and services to 50 entities blocked as part of regulator Trai's massive crackdown against pesky calls and unregistered telemarketers.

The move came after Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) asked telcos to blacklist and disconnect unregistered telemarketers.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, Trai said it has observed a significant rise in spam calls, with more than 7.9 lakh complaints reported against unregistered telemarketers in the first half of 2024.

In a bid to put a check on this, Trai had issued stringent directives to all access providers on 13th August 2024, and mandated access providers to immediately stop promotional voice

calls from unregistered senders or telemarketers using SIP, PRI, or other telecom resources, according to the statement.

"Consequent of these directions, access providers have taken stern measures against misuse of telecom resources for spamming and blacklisted over 50 entities and disconnected more than 2.75 lakh SIP DID/mobile numbers/telecom resources. These steps are expected to have a significant impact on reducing spam calls and providing relief to consumers," Trai said.

Trai urged stakeholders to contribute to a "cleaner and more efficient telecom ecosystem", and said any unregistered telemarketer found to be misusing these resources will face severe consequences, including disconnection of all telecom resources for up to two years and blacklisting.

Kia, Audi top customer experience index: study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Kia India and Audi have topped the customer experience index in mass market and luxury segments, respectively, as per a study undertaken by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) and Frost & Sullivan.

The primary objective of the study was to assess and quantify customer experience across sales, after-sales service and product quality in the passenger vehicle category.

Customer Experience Index (CEI) was conducted with a sample size of 8,685 respondents.

Kia India led the mass market segment with a score of 45.84, as per the study.

NIFTY ON UPWARD TRACK FOR 14TH DAY

Markets settle flat in lacklustre trade

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty took a breather after a record rally and ended on a flat note on Tuesday, with the 50-stock index settling in the green for the 14th straight session.

Halting its 10-day rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex dipped 4.40 points or 0.01 per cent to settle at 82,555.44. During the day, it dropped 159.08 points or 0.19 per cent to 82,400.76.

The NSE Nifty eked out a marginal gain of 1.15 points to settle at 25,279.85, its highest-ever closing level.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Adani Ports, JSW Steel, HCL Tech, Bharti Airtel, IndusInd Bank and Tata Motors were the biggest laggards.

ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finserv, Titan, Nestle and HDFC Bank were among the gainers.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong



Kong settled lower. European markets were quoting in the negative territory. The US markets were closed on Monday for the Labour Day holiday.

"Amid mixed global signals and the absence of significant new catalysts, aside from the anticipated Fed rate cut, which is already factored in, the domestic market took a breather. Mild caution emerged due to a recent slowdown in manufacturing activities, which indicates a slowdown in demand," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit

Financial Services. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,735.46 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.79 per cent to USD 76.13 a barrel.

Surging for the 10th straight session on Monday, the BSE benchmark jumped 194.07 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 82,559.84. During the day, it surged 359.51 points or 0.43 per cent to reach a new intraday record peak of 82,725.28.

Ex-president of Atlas Cycles dies by suicide

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former president of Atlas Cycles Salil Kapoor allegedly shot himself dead at his home in Lutyens Delhi area on Tuesday, police officials said.

Kapoor's body was found in a pool of blood near the puja room of his house on the Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Road around 1 pm by his manager, they said.

According to a police officer, Kapoor shot in his head with a licensed revolver. In a note recovered from the spot, the former president of Atlas Cycles reportedly mentioned a "financial burden" on him, he said.

His wife and three children were staying separately, the police officer said.

TUNNEL CONSTRUCTION

Gadkari favours 51% stake to foreign firms in joint ventures

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday favoured giving a majority 51 per cent stake to foreign partners in joint ventures for building tunnels and detailed project reports to improve work quality.

Gadkari said providing a majority stake to a foreign partner in the joint venture is necessary to ensure that only serious and technically qualified players bid for tunnel projects.

In a lighter vein, Gadkari said that in some tunnel projects, European companies even choose Indian partners who own caterer services or beauty parlours.



"I seriously feel that foreign partners must have 51 per cent stake, leaving 49 per cent for the Indian companies in JV for building DPR and construction of tunnels, to ensure that work is done properly," the minister said at an event here.

Gadkari, known for his candid views, further said although the technical and financial parameters should be liberal, these should not be at the cost of quality.

"I probably should not be using the word 'culprit' but I will. "DPR makers are the 'culprits' for their lack of oversight during the process of constructing tunnels, which often leads to landslides, that are increasing in India annually," he said.

The minister said a permanent solution is needed to address frequent landslides in Uttarakhand and other Himalayan areas.

India key market for Syngenta: CEO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Global agricultural company Syngenta considers India one of its most important markets worldwide with a strong focus on bringing innovation to Indian farmers and enhancing food security, according to CEO Jeff Rowe.

Rowe highlighted the unique challenges and opportunities in the Indian market.

"The rapid growth of the market is both a challenge and an opportunity. While it brings some hurdles, the opportunities far outweigh the challenges," he said. Syngenta's offerings are tailored to meet the specific needs of Indian farmers.

"We have some of the best new products that we are bring-

ing to the market. As a global company operating in over 100 countries, we prioritize bringing our innovations to India early," he stated.

The company's expansion plans in India focus on introducing new production practices for more sustainable, effective, and profitable farming. Rowe sees potential across India but noted the northern region's importance as the country's breadbasket. Syngenta plans to launch new technologies in crop protection, biological products, and vegetable seed varieties. Innovation is central to the strategy, said Rowe adding, "We want to be an innovation powerhouse in agriculture globally."



'Will work to make India green mobility destination'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government will relentlessly push for adoption of green mobility in India through all the policy levers available with it, G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant said on Tuesday.

Speaking at the Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India (MBRDI) event here, he stated that the government is taking several policy measures to encourage a shift towards electric mobility in the country.

"We have had a policy framework where the tax on electric vehicles is just 5 per cent as compared to 48 per cent on hybrids which we intend to continue over a long period of time," Kant stated.

He noted that the government is pushing for battery manufacturing in a very big way in India.

"Our policy is that we push for more and more electrification in mobility through all the policy levers available including CAFE norms. So we will relentlessly push for India becoming a green mobility destination," Kant said.

He noted that if the country doesn't make the shift it would miss out on the opportunity to become a leader in EV manufacturing. Kant noted that following the tender for about 6,000 electric buses for seven cities, new bigger tenders would roll out in future.

"The next tender we are doing is for 10,000 buses and



the third tender would be for 50,000 buses, so the size and scale would help in bringing down the prices of electric buses in a big way," he said.

MBRDI on Tuesday announced the expansion of Sustainability Garage - A Mercedes-Benz initiative, a unique platform for diverse



stakeholder groups to collaborate and champion sustainability goals.

Designed to enable research, create interactive

spaces for immersive engagement, and promote social innovation projects in climate, environment, and sustainable mobility, the initiative will now include two new Centres of Excellence based out of Hyderabad and New Delhi.

"The new Sustainability Garage projects will play a vital role in furthering innovation from India to meet some of the most pressing global challenges," MBRDI Managing Director and CEO Manu Saale said. Mercedes-Benz Group AG Member of the Board of Management for Integrity, Governance & Sustainability Renata Jungo Brungger said the company wants to make a positive contribution to society that goes beyond its core business activities

IEX trade volume rises to 12,040 million units

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) total trade volume rose 35.8 per cent year-on-year to 12,040 million units (MU) in August this year. The electricity volume increased 17.1 per cent year-on-year to 9,914 MU in August, an IEX statement said.

According to the statement, IEX achieved total (trade) volume (including certificates) of 12,040 MU in August 2024, marking a 35.8 per cent year-over-year increase.

The renewable energy certificates (REC) at 2,116 MU, increased 737.4 per cent year-on-year. At Rs 115 per certificate, the REC market recorded

an all-time low price in the trading session held on August 28, 2024. These prices provide an opportunity to obligated entities (DISCOMS and Captive Power Producers) to meet their renewable purchase obligations, and voluntary customers to meet their sustainability aspirations. As the monsoon gained momentum in August, there was a substantial increase in hydro and wind power generation, enhancing the overall availability of renewable energy in the system, according to the statement. This led to a significant decline in Day-Ahead Market (DAM) prices and Real-Time Market (RTM) prices on the exchange.

Kriti Sanon is creatively satisfied as producer of *Do Patti*

Kriti Sanon, riding high on her latest successes, is now venturing into the world of production with her upcoming film *Do Patti*. The actress is bringing her creative energy to *Do Patti*'s production and her excitement for the project is palpable. In a conversation, Kriti shared her motivation for stepping behind the camera. "The thought was in my head that I wanted to produce content and back it. I am a creative person. I am always excited about the script of projects. I am always excited about what is happening in scenes and not just my part in the film. When I was shooting for *Mimi*, I got so passionate about *Mimi*'s script. So, I decided back then that whenever I produce a film, I have to feel passionate about it."

my search, I met Kanika Dhillon. I have always loved her writing. I think she writes quirkily. The characters in her scripts are very layered. And then I told her that I wanted to produce a film." Discussing her collaboration with Kanika, Kriti added, "She had an idea. She asked me whether there was a subject or story I had in my head. I told her. After a month, she came back to me. She married my subject with her idea and created a story out of it. It connected with me immediately. And it is the first time I have been involved in a project right from scratch. I am creatively satisfied as a producer of *Do Patti*." Fans eagerly awaiting *Do Patti* can look forward to a suspenseful and fresh narrative, highlighting Kriti Sanon's expanding range as both an actress and a producer. The film is set to release on Netflix in 2024.



what's brewing?

Sunny Leone claims top spot in the list of busiest actresses of the year

Sunny Leone is experiencing a very exciting phase in her career. A look at her filmography, you'd know how the actress, primarily known for her work in Bollywood, is diving into a variety of scripts and genres, proving that she is a performer who can pull off any role she sets her eyes on, which her glimpse from the Tamil film *Quotation Gang* is proof of.

Currently, Leone has a packed schedule for 2024 and 2025. Her impressive roster includes more than five high-profile projects spanning genres from drama to action, showcasing her ability to tackle diverse and challenging roles. Apart from the Tamil film, she is looking forward to *Petta Rap* in which she shares the dance floor with the iconic Prabhudeva, which makes Leone's song one to watch out for.

She also has Prabhudeva and Himesh Reshammiya's *Badass Ravikumar* and an untitled Malayalam project to her credit. Beyond this, she will be seen in *Shero*, details of which have been kept under wraps. The actress, who is also one of the most searched celebrities across the globe, wrapped up *Tent* this year, which will release in 2025. She has two untitled projects to her credit, which also will head for a release in 2025.

Sunny Leone's forthcoming filmography is shaping up to be a testament to her remarkable talent. As she prepares to step into these new roles, both fans and critics are eagerly awaiting the fresh and compelling performances she is sure to deliver.



Jennifer Meyer announces her engagement

Jennifer Meyer, Tobey Maguire's former spouse, is set to marry billionaire Geoffrey Ogunlesi. Meyer revealed her engagement on her Instagram account by posting a photo of herself with a large diamond ring on her left hand last Saturday.



The wording of the post said, "YES!!!" The image suggested that the couple was enjoying a private dinner party with white roses in vases and wine bottles along the walls. Geoffrey had Meyer in a tight embrace after asking for their hand in marriage.

Meyer got engaged to the lawyer and investment banker son of Nigerian billionaire Adebayo Ogunlesi. As of September 2024, Forbes stated that his fortune amounts to \$1.7 billion.

Geoffrey, similar to his father, serves as the CEO and creator of the thriving entertainment and music company Ogunlesii Group. According to his LinkedIn profile, he established the company in 2022 and manages a variety of successful

artists from different genres, including Young Thug and Myles Frost of MJ Musical. Before starting his business, he was an A&R consultant at Warner Music Group and later worked in the same role at 300 Entertainment, according to reports.

Knives Out 3 has 400% more budget than first two films

Daniel Craig will once again play the character Benoit Blanc in the stand-alone sequel to the 2022 mystery *Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery* in *Knives Out 3*. The movie is named *Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery*. Similar to the last two movies, this one also features a large cast, which is why the budget is reportedly skyrocketing.

The inaugural *Knives Out* movie was released in 2019, with Ana de Armas and Chris Evans playing important characters alongside Daniel. As per the most recent report, the rumoured budget for the third installment is over two times the total budgets of the two previous films. Viewers reacted positively to both prequels.

According to reports, *Knives Out 3* has a larger budget compared to the first film. The recent report by industry insider Jeff Sneider reveals that the budget for the upcoming film is not only larger than the first movie but also surpasses the combined budgets of both films. Netflix is ready to invest heavily after *Glass Onion* succeeded as a popular streaming show on the platform. According to ScreenRant, the last two films were made with a budget of \$40 million each, while the next movie is said to be five times more costly than them.



DEEPIKA FANS BAWL OUT TROLLS ACCUSING DEEPIKA OF FAKING PREGNANCY!

Numerous celebrities choose to keep their personal lives private and away from the public. Fans were unaware that Anushka Sharma was expecting her second child until February of this year, when she and Virat Kohli revealed the birth of their son Akaay. However, certain celebrities take pleasure in sharing life's happiness with their followers. Similar to Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh, who used social media in February to announce their expected arrival time—September 2024. Unfortunately, despite Deepika making numerous public appearances with her baby bump, certain trolls still accused her of pretending to be pregnant.

Deepika and Ranveer's fans believe that their pregnancy photo shoot is a strong message to silence negative critics. We are referring to the series of monochromatic images that the expecting parents posted on Instagram last night, causing a buzz on social media. Deepika and Ranveer appear incredibly cute!



The infectious smiles on their faces can make you feel just as thrilled as them for the upcoming adventure the joyful couple is about to begin. The main attraction is obviously Deepika's exposed pregnant belly and the radiant glow of pregnancy on her face.

Several celebrities and internet users expressed their affection towards the soon-to-be parents in the comments. However, most comments were from devoted DeepVeer fans, criticizing trolls who had accused Deepika of wearing a false pregnancy bump.

One social media user wrote: "That's Deepika, shutting up the mouths of the haters who say it was a lie. We love you Deepika and Ranveer", while another challenged trolls by writing: "Now say that she's faking her pregnancy!". Another comment read: "This was much needed for the people who were spreading negativity saying Deepika is faking her pregnancy, she doesn't look like pregnant women, it's pakka surrogacy and she is covering up bla bla. Love you Deeps."

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



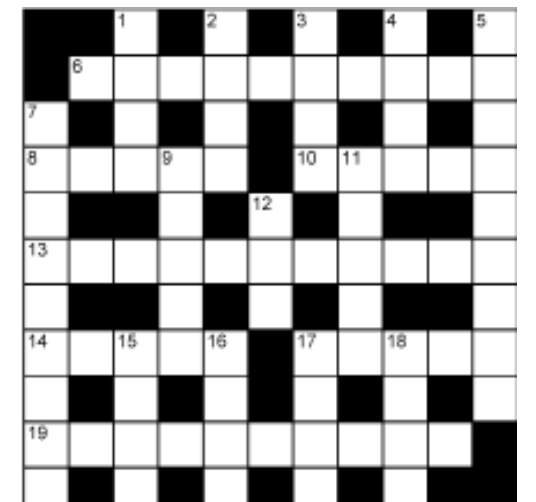
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

ACROSS

- 6 Job
- 8 A sung musical drama
- 10 A short part of a play
- 13 Refusing to obey orders
- 14 To cook vegetables or meat in an oven using fat
- 17 Listen to music and news on this
- 19 Somewhere students go

DOWN

- 11 Porcelain
- 12 Fast aeroplane
- 15 This chemical liquid burns
- 16 Held by ropes
- 17 Take a break
- 18 A fruit from a palm tree

SOLUTION

S	L	E	E	P	I	E	R	I	S	L	O
C	O	P	E	M	O	G	R	A	T	E	S
M	A	R	G	I	N	T	E	R	I	O	
H	D	E	R	E	S	T					
E	P	I	A	C	E	S					
L	P	N	I	A	O						
P	A	L	A	C	E						
E	U	E	E	E							
R	O	M	E	C	H	O	S	E	N		



Pritam Chakraborty:

I left a few bestselling films so I could do *Dangal*!

TEJAL SINHA

Our guest for the day is a renowned musician, who has journeyed from Kolkata to Mumbai, overcoming challenges to establishing a legacy at the National Awards. So without any further ado, we bring to you our exclusive interaction with the none-other than Pritam Chakraborty, who has created music for over 125 Hindi films during his two-decade-long career, earning many awards. But the composer is celebrating a significant reward now, as he wins his first National Film Award!

His music for *Brahmastra: Part One - Shiva* (2022) captivated music lovers. Tracks such as *Kesariya* and *Deva Deva* are still being celebrated to such an extent that they continue to endure. Isn't now the perfect time for us to share with you our exclusive interview with him, where he discusses his humble beginnings and much more?

"The journey has been amazing, but of course with a lot of ups and downs," begins the music composer over a chat with us. But you know what, more than anything else, what's something that he really enjoys and feels blessed about is working in a profession that he has always loved—music after all. "My work never felt like work. Even if I had to work for hours without even sleeping, I never felt exhausted. Back then, we lived in a small house in Kolkata. Coming from a lower-middle-class family, we just had a few professions like doctor, engineer, CA, or professor. Initially, I was also supposed to be going in the same direction, though my love for music and playing in the band was on. I was hand-helped by destiny to accidentally reach the film institute."

Studying at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTI) changed his life. Unlike others, he never had a dream to travel down to Mumbai and work. But again, getting a chance to be selected in FTI, he by chance had applied in; got selected and his life changed in such a way that his inclination towards music just kept growing. Pritam, who got his big break for *Tere Liye* further recalls, "The ambiance of FTI was highly around the classics of Indian cinema. The faculty was so good. But though we had no special music course in FTI back then, there was a brilliant lecturer who was also into music. He kept orienting me in the film score. FTI was a very important part of my journey."

There was a time in his life when he had to stay with over 10 people in a small apartment, 8 of whom were his seniors. As things went on, so did he start getting opportunities for jingles; then came *Tere Liye*. In 2002, the duo we forever enjoy listening to, Jeet Ganguly and Pritam Chakraborty, aka Jeet-Pritam, were all in the news for their chart-buster songs in *Mere Yaar Ki Shaadi Hai*. Later came *Dhoom*, which was again a blockbuster that had also opened the doors for him in the industry!

Followed by many more of his compositions, the music of *Life in a...Metro* had garnered critical acclaim. This film to him is all about memories. "Anurag is a friend and we happen to stay together in a building complex," shares the tunesmith with great regards as he continues, "Anurag had narrated to me the story of *Gangster* and *Life in a...Metro* in this garden, where both of us were sitting on this 'jhula' as he was narrating. *Gangster* was a different story altogether and a great one. But *Life in a...Metro* got me very excited! It was such a fresh film and the whole idea of the band being there was something new. Anurag is brilliant in cheating locations. He was good at shooting something somewhere and making it look like it was shot somewhere else. It has become such a cult movie that the sound we decided to take in was more like soft rock. It kind of worked out really well back then. Being on-screen wasn't that much of a thing, but being a part of such a project?"

Many misconceptions exist regarding kids' skincare, which can cause parents to overlook using the right products. The health of a child's skin can be greatly impacted by misconceptions about what is good or bad. Together, we will dispel some common misconceptions about kids' skincare and offer evidence-based recommendations for maintaining your child's skin health and vibrancy.

• Kids don't require skincare:

One of the most common misconceptions is that children's skin is naturally adaptable and doesn't need particular care. However, children still require regular skin care, even though they often have healthier skin than adults. Children's skin is still susceptible to environmental irritants like pollution, sunlight, and even harsh soaps. These may result in long-term harm, dryness and discomfort.

A musical connoisseur altogether that he has been, Pritam Chakraborty, aka Pritam Da, has won his first-ever national award. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, he takes us through his humble beginnings, creating the music for the cult film *Life in a...Metro* and more



How could we miss out on the opportunity of discussing with him about the much-awaited *Metro...In Dino*? Is there any sort of pressure to keep up with the nostalgic elements around *Life in a...Metro*? "The pressure, don't ask (he laughs). Pressure *lena hi mushkil hai*," humorously reveals the recipient of multiple Filmfare awards with *The Pioneer*. "If you take pressure, you certainly will not be able to match the essence or recreate something. 17 years later, that music has grown somewhere. It's impossible to match that. I don't think you should even try to match it because the music has lived for 17 years. It has seeped through and all this time, the sound has changed. *Metro...In Dino*, the sequel, has no connection. I am not going to put a comparison in my head. We are not trying to take forward any of the songs. It's just like a fresh soundtrack for me."

Known for *Jab We Met*, *Race*, *Kismet Connection*, *Kidnap*, *Love Aaj Kal*, *Ajab Prem Ki Gazab Kahaani*, *Crook*, *Dum Maaro Dum* and a lot more to the end-less list, *Dangal* marked his first film that was based on sports and had no romantic music. Guess what? The songs like *Dangal* title track, *Haanikaarak Babu* and *Dhaakad* were all cracked one-after-one in just three days. "We were all travelling and had gone to Aamir Khan's Panchgani house and there was some magic there. We finished these three songs in three days. But unfortunately, after that, both Amitabh and I fell sick. Later, on the next trip, we cracked *Naina* and the other songs from the film. *Dangal*, I was not expecting so much of love song-wise because this doesn't have anything romantic, but as I read the bound script, I was so happy."

He also revealed that songs for *Laal Singh Chaddha* were also composed in the same way. Then came 83, to which he was emotionally attached and still has many memories around it. But coming to *Dangal*, he said, "I was extremely moved. I had to leave a few films just so I could do *Dangal*. In movies that had these item songs and love songs, the scope of music was not as high as it was in *Dangal*. AK wanted very undivided attention. *Dilwale* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* at the same time were going on. There was something about the script that made me feel like I had to do it. In *Dangal*, I had done the background music as well." Going ahead, one of the actors that he's simultaneously worked with has been none other than Ranbir Kapoor. His association with the charming star dates back to *Ajab Prem Ki Gazab Kahaani*.

"Ranbir Kapoor is love. He is a director's dream. I got to work with him closely in *Barfi* and *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani*. When I saw him in *Barfi*, I told Anurag that there could hardly be anybody to have pulled off this role. He kind of always moulds himself to the role and he is like Rishi ji; he is also a musical star. The *Rockstar* songs, if you see, the way he has emoted himself, then in *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil*, he emoted all of it through his eyes, which was stupefying for me and Arijit, as we were working after the songs were shot," signs off Pritam, who has got some really big projects in his kitty, including *Metro 2*, *War 2* and *Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari*, among the other ones.

METRO...IN DINO HAS NO CONNECTION WITH LIFE IN A...METRO. WE ARE NOT TRYING TO TAKE FORWARD ANY OF THE SONGS. IT'S JUST LIKE A FRESH SOUNDTRACK FOR ME

From love to war

AARTI SREENATH

Santosh Singh's journey from an assistant director to helming notable projects like *Broken But Beautiful* and *Ranmeeti: Balakot and Beyond* is nothing short of inspiring. With every project, he continues to explore new horizons in filmmaking, driven by a desire to tell stories that resonate deeply with audiences.

Reflecting on his career, the *Broken But Beautiful* mastermind begins, "I've been fortunate and God has been kind. The hard work I put in, learning all the tricks of the trade as an assistant director, has paid off. The experience I gained on sets over the years is something I now pour into my filmmaking. It's been a journey full of ups and downs, but I'm loving every bit of it." Out of all his projects, as we ask him which of them was his favourite, to which he says, it's a hard choice. "I enjoy exploring different genres. As a filmmaker, I don't want to limit myself. Whether it's the love story of *Broken But Beautiful*, the massy appeal of *Apaharan*, or the geopolitical military drama of *Ranmeeti*, each project challenges me in new ways. Every genre requires different filmmaking techniques and ideas, making each one special."

Broken But Beautiful, his directorial debut, holds a special place in his heart. He enthused, "That show introduced me as a director. Even now, I receive messages and letters about how much it resonated with people. It's incredible to be known for your work, even if people don't know you personally. There's no greater feeling." He goes on, "The biggest reason it worked was because people could connect with the story. When people relate to characters, it makes a lasting impression. During *Ranmeeti*, I met an actor who told me he'd watched *Broken But Beautiful* seven times because it mirrored his life. It's always amazing to hear how the show has touched upon people's lives."

As we move ahead in this chat, he goes on to discuss his approach, emphasising the importance of connecting with the audience. "Our job as storytellers is to present the story in the simplest, most impactful way possible. I'm passionate about telling stories that resonate with people. Whenever I come across a story that excites me, I jump at the chance to bring it to life. It's about making sure the story reaches the right audience and that they can relate to it."

Filmmaker Santosh Singh speaks to *The Pioneer* about his much-acclaimed series *Broken But Beautiful*, his bond with Vikrant Massey and also discusses his upcoming project *Aankhon ki Gustaakhiyan* and more

His collaboration with Vikrant Massey in *Aankhon ki Gustaakhiyan* is something he's looking forward to. He reveals to us that the project is still in its pre-production phase. Well, this is going to be his second collab with Vikrant, with whom he shares a great bond. "Vikrant and I, our bond dates back to our first project together, *Broken But Beautiful*, which also helped him reach a wider audience and it was my debut as a director. We've been trying to find the right script to work on together again and I think we've found it. When it comes to love stories, we make a great team."

Aankhon ki Gustaakhiyan, he reveals, is a musical love film and something very different from what Vikrant has done before. "You will see a different Vikrant altogether. A new challenge for me as well. It's going to be one of the most exciting projects for both of us."

Coming to his latest project, *Ranmeeti*, it has presented its own set of challenges, having been inspired by real-life events. So the filmmaker says, "Getting it right required extensive research. We shot it across the world, from Serbia to Kashmir and the scale of the production was immense. Seeing the final product and the love it received made all the hard work worth it."

As for his future endeavours, he is ready to keep pushing the envelope. "I've always believed in challenging myself as a filmmaker. Working in different genres keeps my passion alive and allows me to avoid getting stuck in a rut. My next project, *Nausikhiye*, is a comedy produced by Lionsgate and Ellipsis. It stars Abhimanyu Dassani, Amol Parashar and Shreya and it's a complete fun and laughter project. We're currently finalising the release dates."



Gentle washing, moisturising and sun protection are essential components of basic skincare for kids.

• Children don't need to wear sunscreen:

It's a terrible misunderstanding to think that young skin is not tough enough to need sunscreen. A kid's sensitive skin is more vulnerable to the damaging effects of ultraviolet (UV) light. Their skin is thinner and more translucent than adults, making them more susceptible to the harmful effects of UV radiation. These effects can include sunburn and skin cancer, which can have long-term effects. Kids need to be protected from the sun every day. It is recommended to use sunscreen with a minimum



Debunking myths around kids' skincare

SPF of 30.

• Kids don't need a moisturiser:

A common misconception among parents is that since children's skin is naturally moisturised and soft, they don't require moisturiser. However, climate, frequent cleaning and chlorinated pool water can cause a child's skin to become parched, which can irritate. Keeping the skin's natural barrier intact requires a good moisturiser. Select one that is suitable for your child's skin type and is mild, gentle and make sure it has allergen free fragrances.

• Natural products are always safe:

The term "all natural" might be deceptive when it

comes to kids' skincare products. Many parents believe kids' products are inherently safe for their child's skin if they are natural, but the truth is that they may also irritate the skin or trigger allergic reactions. Always check the ingredients on the label to ensure they won't cause any allergic reaction to your kids.

• Kids can use adult skincare products:

Some parents may believe it's more convenient to use their skincare products on their children. However, children's skin is more sensitive and may respond differently to adult-formulated cosmetics. Always choose products made especially for kids. When in doubt, get advice from a pediatric dermatologist before giving your child any adult-sized cosmetics.

(The author, Prasanna Vasanadu, is a Parent Educator and Founder of Tikitoro.)

IT'S TIME TO MAKE AMENDS: PAT CUMMINS ON TEST SERIES AGAINST INDIA

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australian captain Pat Cummins is looking at the upcoming five-match rubber against India as a chance to "make amends" for the successive Test series defeats at home against their fierce rivals.

He said the next Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which will start on November 22 in Perth, promises to be a 50-50 affair.

India retained the trophy in the last four series, from 2016-17 to 2022-23. India had defeated Australia in their own backyard in the last two series in 2018-19 and 2020-21.

Cummins said Australia are hoping to draw confidence from their win over India in the World Test Championship Final at London last year.

"The last two series here in Australia, we haven't been successful, so it's been a long time. Hopefully, it's time to make amends," Cummins told Star Sports.

"You know, we've played them (India) plenty of times where they've beaten us, but we've also had plenty of wins against them as well, which we'll draw confidence from. The most recent Test match was, of course, the World Test Championship in neutral conditions, and we came out on top in that match.

"It's always fiercely competitive, and it always feels like it's 50-50. I'm 10 out of 10 excited for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy," he added.



Senior batter Steve Smith agreed with the skipper and said it will be a "big summer" for Australia against a "well-balanced" Indian team.

"...You know, it's going to be a great series. You know, India have been playing outstanding cricket. We've been playing really good cricket the last couple of years. You know, we haven't beaten India in the last two times they've come out here," he said.

"Obviously got a terrific side, very well-balanced team, all bases covered. So, you know, they've played really good cricket out here. They've played good cricket when we've been over in India as well, where we know they're very, very difficult to beat. So it's going to be a big summer. It's going to be an exciting one."

importance of the rivalry by keeping it at par with the Ashes.

"For Australian cricket, you've got the Ashes and then you've got the Border Gavaskar Trophy in there. I mean there's a long history in the Ashes but that Border Gavaskar rivalry, if you like, has just grown from strength to strength over each series.

"And now we see it as a five Test match series which is fantastic for not only the rivalry but for the Test series as well. Whether it's the calibre of player, the calibre of matches that we see as fans and as cricketers just continues to grow strength on strength each series," he said.

"Now (with) India obviously winning a number of series in a row, it's created even a bigger rivalry between the two countries. I mean both teams are well known to one another, we play each other very often across the formats, so I'm sure it'll be another exciting series," Starc added.

All-rounder Glenn Maxwell said an India-Australia contest in any format has become a must-watch affair now. "I think over the last few years, definitely, it feels like the two teams sort of swap places in the rankings quite a bit. Whichever format it is, you will always see these two teams at number one at some stage around the world," Maxwell said.

"The different contexts we've had in both countries across all formats certainly provide a lot of highlights for the rest of the world. It's always must-watch cricket whenever these two teams are playing."



Bangladesh thump Pakistan by 6 wickets in 2nd Test to complete historic sweep

AP ■ RAWALPINDI (PAKISTAN)

Bangladesh completed a six-wicket victory over here on Tuesday and achieved an historic sweep of their two-Test series.

Needing 143 more runs on the final day with 10 wickets in hand, Bangladesh knocked them off for the loss of four wickets when Shakib Al Hasan hit the winning boundary. Bangladesh recorded only its second bilateral series win of two or more Tests away from home; the last was against the West Indies in 2009.

The tourists won the opening Test by 10 wickets and required just four days in the second after the first day was washed out in Rawalpindi.

The visitors' second innings finished on 185-4, and Shakib was 21 not out and Mushfiqur Rahim 22 not out. Bangladesh was 26-6 in the

first innings but Litton Das and Mehidy Hasan Miraz led a gallant recovery.

Fast bowlers Hasan Mahmud, Nahid Rana and Taskin Ahmed dismissed Pakistan for 172 in the second innings to leave Bangladesh a victory target of 184 in four sessions. The Bangladesh top order showed plenty of resilience to flatten Pakistan plans of a dramatic comeback, with meaningful contributions from opener Zakir Hasan (40), captain Najmul Hossain Shanto (38) and Mominul Haque (34).

They extended Pakistan's miserable home record in Tests to 10 matches without a win. Pakistan's last home win was in December 2021 against South Africa at Rawalpindi. Shan Masood has suffered a second consecutive clean sweep since he was elevated to the test skipper last year, having lost to Australia 3-0.

WTC Final to be played at Lord's from June 11-15 next year: ICC

PTI ■ DUBAI

The third World Test Championship (WTC) final will be played at the iconic Lord's between June 11 and 15 next year, announced the International Cricket Council on Tuesday.

The ICC has marked June 16 as the reserve day, if required. "The ICC World Test Championship Final has quickly become one of the most anticipated events in the crick-

eting calendar and we are pleased to announce the dates for the 2025 edition," said ICC CEO Geoff Allardice in a statement. The Lord's is hosting the WTC final for the first time as Southampton (2021) and the Oval (2023) were the venues for the two previous title matches. India featured in those two finals, but lost to New Zealand in the inaugural match and last year they were defeated by Australia. Currently, Rohit Sharma's India are sitting in pole

position ahead of reigning champions Australia. India will face the Aussies in an away five-match series later this year in the race to the WTC Final. However, New Zealand (third), England (fourth), Sri Lanka (fifth), South Africa (sixth) and Bangladesh (seventh) are still in contention for a place in the one-off decider next year. However, Pakistan suffered a huge setback as Bangladesh inflicted a 0-2 defeat on them in the just-concluded two-match home series.

NZ award central contracts to Nathan Smith and Josh Clarkson

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Promising all-rounders Nathan Smith and Josh Clarkson have been awarded New Zealand's central contract for the first time, replacing Devon Conway and Finn Allen in the 20-member list. Clarkson has played three ODIs and six T20Is for the Black Caps since debuting against Bangladesh in Dunedin at the end of last year, while Smith was the standout performer for Wellington during the most recent Plunket Shield season at the domestic level in New Zealand.

The two spots were left vacant after Conway and Allen declined the offers

last month. Conway, who has signed up for Joburg Super Kings in SAT20, has signed a casual agreement with NZC that will make him available for all internationals except for the Sri Lanka white-ball matches in January. New Zealand coach Gary Stead said Smith and Clarkson deserved their first central contracts and believes the duo can make an impact at international level over the coming months.

"Nathan's been on our radar for a while having been a significant performer in domestic cricket for some time," Stead was quoted as saying in a New Zealand Cricket statement.



ball squads over the past twelve months which shows the strides he's made in his game," he said. "Josh will provide depth and adds value

given the volume of white-ball cricket on the horizon."

Both Smith and Clarkson have also represented New Zealand at Under-19 level at the 2016 ICC Under-19 World Cup in Bangladesh, alongside fellow contracted players Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra and Ben Sears. **NZ CENTRAL CONTRACT 2024-25:** Tom Blundell, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Josh Clarkson, Jacob Duffy, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Wally O'Rourke, Ajaz Patel, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ben Sears, Nathan Smith, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee, Will Young.



Purani Dilli 6 beat Central Delhi Kings by 33 run to enter DPL playoffs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Purani Dilli 6 rode on Lalit Yadav's unbeaten 46 off 29 balls and Prince Yadav's 3/15 to beat Central Delhi Kings by 33 runs in their final league stage match and qualify for the playoffs of the Delhi Premier League T20 tournament here. Put into bat, Purani Dilli 6 notched 173 for 6 in their allotted 20 overs, and then dished out a clinical bowling performance to restrict Central Delhi Kings to 140 for 8 on Monday night.

They exploited the early swing at the Arun Jaitley Stadium to restrict Central Delhi Kings to 39 for 2 inside Powerplay. Prince Yadav drew first blood by dismissing Dhruv Kaushik, and the second wicket came through a run-out.

Lakshay Thareja, who looked in good touch, couldn't build on his start as he was dismissed for 34 off 26 in the ninth over. At the halfway mark, Central Delhi Kings were reduced to 57 for 3.

Shivam Sharma then removed Hiten Dalal (27 off 25) in the 14th over, with the required run rate climbing above 12. Central Delhi Kings crossed the 100-run mark in the 15th over but they struggled to accelerate the run chase. Prince Yadav picked up his second wicket of the match when he dismissed impact sub Aryan Rana (8 off 10) in the 17th over, putting Purani Dilli 6 firmly in control. Jonty Sidhu brought up his

fifty in 31 balls in the 19th over but was caught and bowled in the same over off Prince Yadav. Ayush Singh Thakur picked up two wickets in the final over to ensure Purani Dilli 6 entered the playoffs with a remarkable win.

Earlier, Purani Dilli 6 had a challenging start to their innings as they lost three wickets by the end of the Powerplay with only 38 runs on the board.

Keshav Dalal and Yug Gupta steadied the ship with timely boundaries, but Jonty Sidhu provided a breakthrough to Central Delhi Kings when he removed Dalal for 28 off 20 balls in the 11th over.

Gupta, on the other hand, took the team's total to the 100-run mark in 12.2 overs but was dismissed in the very next ball after scoring 44 off 30. Mayank Gussain (13 off 12) also fell cheaply to Dalal in the 16th over, leaving Purani Dilli 6 at 131 for 6.

From there, Lalit Yadav took charge as his unbeaten 46 off 29 balls and Sumit Chhikara's 19 not out off 10 balls guided Purani Dilli 6 to a competitive total of 173 for 6. Dadar was the pick of the bowlers as he returned with 2/29 in his four overs. **Brief Scores:** Purani Dilli 6: 173/6 in 20 overs (Lalit Yadav 46 not out, Yug Gupta 44; Rajneesh Dadar 2/29) beat Central Delhi Kings: 140/8 in 20 overs (Jonty Sidhu 52, Lakshay Thareja 34; Prince Yadav 3/15) by 33 runs.

Can't rest on laurels, time to start afresh and retain ACT title: Harmanpreet

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Indian men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh said it's time to move on from the euphoria of a second successive Olympic bronze medal if the side desires to retain its Asian Champions Trophy title in Hulubuir, China this month.

Under Harmanpreet's leadership, India won a second successive bronze medal for the first time in over half-a-century at the Olympics in Paris recently. But Harmanpreet said it's time to move and start afresh after a deserving break for the Asian showpiece to be held from September 8 to 17.

"With a brief break after the Paris Olympics, the team is ready to take on the best hockey playing nations in Asia and prove its mettle.

"We had a good outing in Paris but hockey is a very close game, we cannot rest on our laurels," the skipper said before leaving for China in the early hours on Tuesday.

"The aim will be to play high-octane hockey and retain our title."

Besides India, the Asian Champions Trophy will feature Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan and hosts China.

India will begin their campaign against China on September 8, followed by a match against Japan on September 9.

After a one-day break, India will take on Malaysia on September 11, followed by Korea on September 12 and arch-rivals Pakistan on



September 14. The top four teams will advance to the semifinals slated for September 16, with final scheduled for September 17.

India are the most successful team in the tournament with four titles, followed by Pakistan (3).

India won the last edition in Chennai, beating Malaysia 4-3 in the final.

Vice captain Vivek Sagar Prasad said the side has a few new players in the team this time around, who have immense potential and are eager to perform.

"We will do our best to create a nurturing environment for them on the way to our title defence," he said.

FIFA says \$6.5 billion of international spending in transfer window

AP ■ ZURICH

Spending on transfer fees in international men's player deals cooled off during the mid-year trading period, according to International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) research published on Tuesday.

FIFA said clubs committed to spend USD 6.46 billion on buying players in cross-border deals during the June-to-September transfer window - down from USD 7.43 billion in the same period a year ago.

The average transfer fees paid by clubs in Europe, by far the richest market, was USD 3.13 million compared to USD 3.8 million a year ago.

The FIFA study is not a complete guide because it does not count the biggest transfer deal of the European offseason, nor does it include moves by players between two clubs in the same country.

Kylian Mbappé joined Real Madrid without a transfer fee being paid because the France star was a free agent after



letting his contract expire at Paris Saint-Germain. Still, Madrid had to pay Mbappé a signing bonus variously reported as between USD 110 million and USD 165 million.

The biggest transfer fees in cross-border deals were Julián Alvarez's move from Manchester City to Atletico Madrid, reported to be about 75 million euros (USD 83 million) and Leny Yoro from Lille to Manchester United for a reported 62 million euros (USD 69 million).

The FIFA study does not include deals involving two clubs in the same country where the player's registration

is not transferred between member federations.

Deals in the top-10 biggest transfer fees not counting toward the FIFA figures include Dominic Solanke from Bournemouth to Tottenham, Pedro Neto from Wolves to Chelsea and Teun Koopmeiners from Atalanta to Juventus.

English clubs were the biggest overall net spenders with an outlay of USD 1.69 billion on international transfers, and USD 1.25 billion recouped. Clubs in England, Italy and Saudi Arabia all had a collective net spending of at least USD 400 million.

Belgian clubs took a net profit of USD 302 million, by receiving USD 412 million from selling players abroad and spending USD 110 million on players from clubs in other countries, according to FIFA. Those deals included Igor Thiago moving from Club Brugge to Brentford and Ernest Nuamah from Molenbeek to its sister club Lyon.

Tearful Luis Suárez announces Uruguay retirement

AP ■ MONTEVIDEO (URUGUAY)

Striker Luis Suárez will play his last game for Uruguay on Friday. Suárez was emotional as he announced he was ending a 17-year international career after the World Cup qualifier against Paraguay at Centenario Stadium.

"It hurts to say it, but Friday will be my last match with my country's national team," Suárez said late Monday, unable to hold back tears at a press conference.

"I am retiring because I want to step aside. I am 37 years old, there are a lot of talented players, and I know it would be difficult to get to the next World Cup.

"It is comforting to know I can retire on my terms and not have to retire due to injuries, or to not being called up. I want to say goodbye here, with my people. This is the ideal moment."

Suárez debuted in 2007 and is Uruguay's all-time leading scorer with 69 goals in 142 matches. He played in four World Cups and five Copa America.

He helped to lead the team to the title at the 2011 Copa, where he scored twice in the semifinals and the match-winner in the final and was named player of the tournament.

"It's very difficult, but I want to be relaxed when I play my last game with the national team," he said. "I will be just as excited as I was for my first national team appearance in 2007 when I was a 19-year-old kid."

"Now, I am a veteran, an older player, whatever you want to call it, with an incredible history with the national team and I will give my life for the team on Friday."

In the 2010 World Cup quarter-finals, Suárez prevented Ghana from



scoring an extra-time winner with his hand on the goal line and was red-carded. Ghana missed the resulting penalty kick, Uruguay won a penalty shootout and reached the

semifinals for the first time in 40 years. Suárez was hailed at home as a saviour, but he was scorned at the 2014 World Cup when he bit Italy defender Giorgio

Chiellini in their last group game. It was the third of four times in his career he bit a player. FIFA banned Suarez for nine games, the longest ban in

World Cup history, and he missed the rest of the tournament and the 2015 Copa America.

"My fear has always been that my lasting image for my children and all Uruguayan fans would be of 2014," Suárez said.

"I have gotten past that. And, I hope the people have also forgotten and they are left with all the great moments I lived in our stadium, with all the things our team accomplished, in Copas America, in World Cups."

He reached 100 caps at the 2018 World Cup and was twice named man of the match en route to the quarter-finals. But in 2022, Uruguay didn't get out of their group. Suárez will continue at Inter Miami, which he has previously said will be his last club. He's also had a stellar career at clubs including Barcelona, Liverpool, Ajax and Atletico Madrid.

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Tamil Superstar Thalapathy Vijay announced his entry into politics a few months ago and now his fans have been eagerly anticipating his upcoming movies. Following the declaration of his political party, the actor will star in a few movies and one of them is *The Greatest Of All Time (GOAT)* set to be released on September 5 in both Tamil and Telugu.

The film is directed by Venkat Prabhu and actors including Prashanth, Prabhu, Vaibhav, Sneha, Laila and Meenakshi Chaudhary, participate in this film collectively. Yuvan Shankar Raja composed the music for it.

Vijay is entering politics, so can the audience expect any political dialogues in this film? "Absolutely no," clarifies the director, adding, "It is not a political film and there is not even a single political dialogue in it. Actually, Vijay sir has never included politics into his films; instead, he has always viewed them as films." When writing the script, he considered it for the big screen and didn't feel obligated to include any political dialogues.

Venkat Prabhu originally intended to cast Rajinikanth as the father and Dhanush as the son. "But later I came to know the AI technology with the VFX team. I thought it was best to show Vijay sir in both characters. In this film, Vijay sir will appear in dual roles; younger and older one," said Venkat Prabhu.

"It is not easy because we need to provide the AI with a significant amount of inputs. When we sought to exhibit a younger version of Vijay sir, I spoke with his mother to gather information about his youthful appearance and obtained numerous photos of him from his youth," said the director. The latest released song from the film has received negative reviews, which has turned into a matter of concern for the team. Further speak-



'GOAT IS NOT A POLITICAL FILM'

DIRECTOR VENKAT PRABHU DISCUSSES HIS UPCOMING MOVIE GOAT STARRING TAMIL SUPERSTAR VIJAY AND THE CHALLENGES HE HAD ENCOUNTERED DURING THE FILM'S PRODUCTION

ing about it, he said, "Yes, I am aware and even Vijay sir is also concerned about it. He has asked us not to change the body, as many usually know his face. He mentioned that he completed all the edits and the finalised version will be visible upon the movie's release."

Vijay is taking on two different roles, making this his most challenging film yet. "We have one younger Vijay and the other one is older. We had action and chasing scenes. We needed to do the same scenes for two days. Definitely, this is the toughest film in my career," he said.

The late actor Vijaykanth was also featured

in this movie. But how? The director clarifies, "With the help of AI, we managed to include Vijaykanth in a few scenes, where he resembles his character from the famous movie *Captain Prabhakaran*. We are in a technological world and anything is possible, but at the same time, I am also scared of it," said the director.

Venkat Prabhu had previously collaborated with the popular actor Ajith. "Both are relaxed and enjoyable, but Ajith sir is more entertaining and communicates more. Vijay sir is extremely quiet and reserved," mentioned Venkat while collaborating with these celebrities.



Jr NTR & NBK's gesture towards Telugu states flood victims

After visiting his mother's homeland of Kundapura, Jr NTR is back and was blessed at Udupi Srikrishna Matha. Upon arriving in the city, he learned about the severe rain and the impact it has had on many individuals in the Telugu states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. He instantly felt the urge to take action for the residents of Telugu states.

He has now donated Rs. 50 lakhs each to both the Telugu states, a total of Rs one crore. "Due to the recent rains, the Telugu states suffered heavy floods and devastated many people. It has disturbed me. I pray to God that they will recover quickly from this devastation and come to normal soon," said Jr NTR on his social media. He further stated that he contributed one crore rupees, giving fifty lakhs each to Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, in order to assist the government and the people. "As part of my support, I am donating Rs 50 lakh each to Telangana and AP for the Chief Minister Relief Fund," said Jr NTR.

Before Jr NTR, Vyjayanthi Movies had donated Rs 25 lakhs to the AP Chief Minister Fund. "The state has given us so much to us and it is our duty to give back to them at this challenging time," the production house said on its social media page.

Actor Vishwak Sen donated Rs 5 lakh each to Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. "To support the flood relief efforts, I am pledging a donation of Rs 5 lakhs," said the actor on his social media. Meanwhile, Sithara Entertainments, Trivikram Srinivas and producers Radhakrishna and Naga Vamsi jointly announced Rs 25 lakh to each Telugu state. "We hope and pray for faster recovery of the people affected," they said on their social media.

Young actor Siddhu Jonnalagadda responded to the devastation that caused the two Telugu states. He announced a donation of Rs 30 lakhs to both the states; each state gets Rs. 15 lakhs. "With a profoundly heavy heart, I have decided to contribute Rs 30 lakh rupees (Rs. 15 lakhs to AP and Rs. 15 lakhs to Telangana) to the flood relief fund," said the actor on his social media.

Actor Nandamuri Balakrishna has pledged to donate Rs 50 lakhs each to the Andhra Pradesh CM Relief Fund and Telangana CM Relief Fund. The actor, who is at present celebrating his 50 years in the industry, issued a statement saying, "My acting career has been shining bright for 50 years, with the divine blessings of my legendary father, who directed my first ever shot. Along with his blessings, my mother's Telugu language blessings and Telugu people's appreciation and kindness have created this unbreakable bond between us. I can't repay their love."

Going ahead, he shared that he would like to pledge his life to them and dedicate it for their upliftment and entertainment. At this joyous moment, he expressed his gratitude to everyone, who has been a part of his journey.

Speaking of the current situation of floods in the Telugu states, he said, "Now, catastrophic floods have hit our Telugu states, and the visuals are heartbreaking. With a heavy heart, I'm pledging a Lakhs donation to the Andhra Pradesh CM Relief Fund and another Rs. 50 lakh donation to the Telangana CM Relief Fund for relief activities and all affected people. I would like to pray to God that the Telugu States return to normalcy, quite soon."

The Telugu film industry is consistently at the forefront during natural disasters in our country. A lot of individuals in the industry gave generously to the Kerala Chief Minister Relief Fund during the recent period of rain and floods in the state.



Paid premieres are a strategy for small films: Dil Raju

Actor Suhas is becoming more prominent with each film he appears in. His upcoming film *Janaka Aithe Kanaka* is set to release on September 7. Sandeep Reddy Bandla serves as the director, while the film is being produced by Dil Raju Productions. Dil Raju, the film producer, has revealed that the movie has finished the censorship procedures.

"The trailer and the other promotional videos enthralled everyone. Suhas is

inching step by step toward the top by selecting good scripts. He is choosing different stories and the audience is also encouraging him. I am confident that this *Janaka Aithe Kanaka* is also a big success," said Dil Raju. He also mentioned that international distributors are reporting that Suhas's movies are now securing a minimum guarantee at the box office.

"In my production, I have made clean films. This film is different as compared to my previous films. However, I made sure

to cross the line and made it very careful," said Dil Raju. He added that this film is like an educated one to the audience. "But it entertains you in all aspects," he said.

He praises Malayalam actress Sangeethana, who played the female lead in this one. "Though she is a Malayali, she learned Telugu and lent her own voice to her role," said Dil Raju. "Paid premieres are a strategy for small films and I too wanted to screen premieres for my film on September 6," said Dil Raju.

Another film with police backdrop

Numerous Telugu films have been created featuring police themes and the upcoming release of *Police Vaari Hechcharika* adds to this collection. Babji is the one who directs the film. Senior actor Srikanth reveals the film's initial appearance and describes the poster as intriguing.

"The first look is interesting with the title. Usually, we see someone else getting tied with ropes, but in this poster, a policeman is tied with guns and ropes, which is new to me," said Srikanth after releasing the poster. He added that he knows director Babji and he

always comes up with innovative stories and ideas. "I am confident that he will achieve good success with this film," said Srikanth.

Director Babji said that actor Srikanth is like his brother. "Srikanth is a good-hearted person and I always believed when he did the honours to my film, it is going to be a good success," said director Babji. The makers stated that they have recently begun promoting the movie and will reveal the release date shortly within the upcoming days. The producer is Belli Janarthan. Sunny Akhil is in the starring role.



Mokshagna to debut as Simba

Many reports circulating in Film Nagar suggest that director Prashanth Varma is helming the debut film of Mokshagna, the son of Nandamuri Balakrishna. On Tuesday, Prashanth Varma shared a post on his social media platform that has been circulating online. After reading the caption, numerous individuals commented saying that he was introducing Mokshagna and they verified it. A lot of people observed that the only one who entered was Mokshagna.

He captured an image of *The Lion King* and shared it on his social media platform, which read, "A new dawn is breaking at ThePVCU. Simba'sComing."

The director did not reveal anything about the movie and Mokshagna, leading netizens to speculate that Simba is actually Mokshagna.

According to a source, Mokshagna's debut film will be officially launching on September 6. "It is an auspicious day and Balakrishna wanted to introduce his son on that day," said a source. Some of the best technicians are being brought on board for this movie and several industry celebrities are expected to attend the launch event. However, Prashanth Varma achieved success as a director with his previous movie, *HanuMan*. The movie did not only do well in Telugu, but in all languages. Additionally, he revealed a follow-up to his movie *HanuMan* and helmed the debut film of producer Danayya's son Kalyan Dasari.

GOPICHAND'S ULTRA STYLISH ROLE COMBINES COMEDY & INTENSITY

Director Sreenu Vaitla is an expert in dealing with commercial entertainers. He is particularly expert in handling comedy. The director is presently making a stylish action and family entertainer *Viswam* with Macho Star Gopichand playing the lead role. On Tuesday, the makers released the film's teaser as a part of its promotions.

The teaser begins with Naresh's voiceover, followed by the introduction of Gopichand and Kavya Thapar's characters. Their contrasting roles promise a comedic spark. The teaser then showcases a series of comedic scenes with the prominent cast, before transitioning into action and thrilling elements in the latter half.

Sreenu Vaitla seems to be back in his element, balancing entertainment and action effectively. The witty dialogues and blend of comedy and action make it a promising commercial outing.

Gopichand appears ultra-stylish and shines in a role that combines comedy with his usual intensity. Kavya Thapar adds to the appeal with her glamour, while Naresh, Vennela Kishore and others contribute to the humour and entertainment.

KV Guhan's cinematography stands out, and Chaitan Bharadwaj's background score adds depth to the story. Produced by TG Vishwa Prasad under People Media Factory and Venu Donepudi's Chitralayam Studios, the production values are impressive.



Gopi Mohan, a veteran collaborator on Sreenu Vaitla's blockbusters, penned the screenplay. The team also includes Amar Reddy Kudumula as editor and Kiran Manne as art director. *Viswam* is slated for release on October 11th for Dussehra, positioning it perfectly as a family entertainer during the festive season.