



**India supports policy of development, asserts Modi**

**SITHARAMAN**

**MOOTS QUARTERLY TARGETS FOR CAPEX BY MINISTRIES**

**Janhvi & Jr NTR drop their dance magic**

**INDAAVUDI**

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

**The pioneer**

During the 2022 floods in the erstwhile Khammam district, BRS leaders, including KCR and Harish Rao, tried to divert attention by claiming 'a foreign conspiracy' behind the cloudbursts. Are you again viewing the current floods with the same conspiracy lens? We expected at least one suggestion from KCR, with his 10 years of governance experience, but he hasn't even opened his mouth. Unlike KCR, who remained in his farmhouse during the rains, we have been on the ground with the people from the moment the first drops fell.

**- Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Minister, Telangana**

**DON'T MISS...**

**GVMC demolishes structures on...**

The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) has initiated the demolition of concrete structures at a site in Bheemunipatnam, near Visakhapatnam, allegedly encroached upon by Neha Reddy, daughter of Rajya Sabha member V Vijayasai Reddy. The demolition, carried out on September 4, comes in response to a directive issued by the High Court following a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by Jana Sena corporator Peethala Murthy Yadav. According to GVMC officials, the now-demolished structures...

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**No link between mobile phone...**

There is no link between using a mobile phone and developing brain cancer, according to a review of studies, which was commissioned by the World Health Organization. An international team of researchers looked at more than 5,000 studies of which 63, published between 1994 to 2022, were included in the final analysis. The team, led by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), found that even though the use of wireless technology has...

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**India remains fastest growing...**

India remains the fastest-growing paper market in the world with domestic consumption of packaging paper and paperboard growing at 8.2 per cent in 2023-24, a report said on Wednesday. According to the report by Indian Paper Manufacturers Association (IPMA) for 2023-24, packaging paper & paperboard market is growing at an annual rate of 8.2 per cent in the country. The domestic packaging paper & paperboard market stands at about 15 million tonnes which is nearly 65 per cent of the...

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**Pant in focus on red ball return...**

Rishabh Pant's red-ball return will be closely monitored but the national selectors will also trace suitable backup options to frontline stars when Duleep Trophy, which precludes an important Test season, begins across Bengaluru and Anantapur on Thursday. Pant, who returned to white-ball formats after that horrific car crash, is yet to play in a longer-duration match. His last red-ball outing was against Bangladesh in December 2022. Now, he will turn out for Abhimanyu Easwaran-led Team B against Shubman....

-SPORTS

# Govt will stand by the people

**Asserts CM Naidu, warns officials of severe action against private boats collecting money**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Observing that relief operation is in full swing in the flood-affected areas in the State, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, on Wednesday, promised to stand by the victims and provide whatever assistance they need.

After visiting the flood-hit areas near Vijayawada, the Chief Minister told media persons at the NTR District Collectorate that this is the worst devastation that he had ever seen in his lifetime. Operation to fill the conduits near Budameru is going on, the Chief Minister said that the State government will bear the expenses of operating private boats and if the boat operators collect money from the flood victims they will be sent to jail.

The Chief Minister felt that Budameru has become a major problem for Vijayawada and said that since all small rivulets merged into Bugameru it has now turned into a serious issue. The previous government has completely neglected Budameru, Chandrababu said, adding that the encroachments in the lakes and the Budameru flow channels will be removed.

Expressing concern that the YSRCP leaders are resorting to false propaganda that Amaravathi has submerged when the people are in deep distress, the Chief Minister opined that the political criminals and those who resort to fake publicity should be excommunicated from society. "When I am striving so hard for the people, these YSRCP leaders are coming in the way like monsters," Chandrababu said.

Continued on Page 2



## Medicines, ambulance service will be provided: CM

**Directs officials to give 25 kg rice, palm oil, onions, potatoes, sugar for every family**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu directed the officials to ensure that ambulance service is made available in the flood-hit areas in Vijayawada. The CM held a tele-conference on the relief measures in the flood affected

areas with the ministers, district collectors and officials.

The CM said that every family affected by floods should be provided help. He said that those who died in the floods should be identified and handed over to their families. However no one claims the body, the last rites should be

performed respectfully on behalf of the government. A medical camp was ordered to be set up in every secretariat as there are chances of health issues due to floods. The Chief Minister said that every family in the flood affected areas should be provided with essential commodities. **Continued on Page 2**

## Cyclonic circulation over North Coastal AP

**IMD warns of heavy rains, storms**

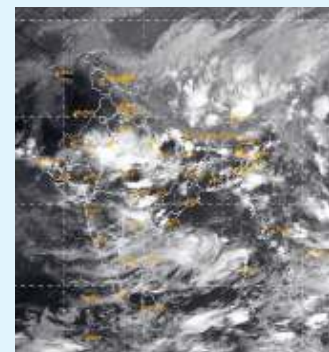
PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a weather advisory, warning of potential heavy rains and thunderstorms across North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and its adjoining areas.

According to the Cyclone Warning Centre in Visakhapatnam, a cyclonic circulation lies over North Coastal Andhra Pradesh and its neighbourhood, extending between 3.1 km and 7.6 km above mean sea level, with a south-westward tilt with height. This atmospheric disturbance is expected to lead to the formation of a low-pressure area over the West Central and adjoining Northwest Bay of Bengal around September 5, 2024.

The IMD has predicted light to moderate rain or thundershowers at many locations across Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam. Additionally, thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are likely at isolated places within these regions. The advisory also highlights the possibility of strong surface winds, reaching speeds of 30-40 kmph, which may occur at one or two locations over Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam.

Significantly, heavy to very heavy rainfall is expected at one or two places, particularly over the Sri Alluri Sita Ramaraju and Eluru districts of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh. Other districts such as Parvatipuram Manyam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli, and East Godavari are also likely to experience heavy



**CENTRAL TEAM TO VISIT AFFECTED PLACES TODAY**

Amaravati: The death toll in the unprecedented torrential downpours and floods in Andhra Pradesh rose to 32 and the number of evacuees in relief camps increased to 45,369, officials said on Wednesday. An inter-ministerial team from the central government will visit the flood-ravaged districts of Krishna, NTR, and Guntur on Thursday and interact with the victims. "The Central team will include National Disaster Management Authority adviser KP Singh, Central Water Commission director Siddarth Mitra", said a release.

raints at isolated places. Speaking on the situation, spokesperson of India Meteorological Department Cyclone Warning Centre Visakhapatnam stated, "The cyclonic circulation currently impacting the region is typical for this time of year.



Floodwater being discharged from Prakasam Barrage

Photo: Ch Vijaya Bhaskar

## Flood warnings at Prakasam Barrage withdrawn

**Currently, the barrage receives 3.23 lakh cusecs of water**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Inflows from the Nagarjuna Sagar and Pulichintala Project leading to the Prakasam Barrage are gradually receding. The Prakasam Barrage received significant inflows of 11.43 lakh cusecs from the upstream and the same was discharged into River Krishna. Currently, flood inflows at the Prakasam Barrage are 3.23 lakh cusecs and the same flood has

been discharged into the sea by lifting all 70 crest gates.

Following the receding flood inflows, the Water Resources Department withdrew the second flood warning at 3 am on Wednesday. The first warning was withdrawn at 11 am. The inflows from upstream from Nagarjuna Sagar and Pulichintala Projects are in decreasing mode.

Continued on Page 2

## BDC breach-closing works on at brisk pace

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In view of the additional flood warning for the Budameru Rivulet, the Water Resources Department (WRD) is taking swift action to address potential issues. There will be an increased flood caution for the Budameru Rivulet, prompting urgent measures to mitigate further damage.

The WRD officials are accelerating efforts to close breaches in the Budameru Diversion Channel (BDC). This is a critical step to prevent the floodwater from causing additional damage and to manage the flow of water effectively.

The breach-closing operations are being conducted at a brisk pace at Shantinagar of Kondapalli of Ibrahimpatnam adjacent to the BDC to address the threat promptly and minimise the impact of the ongoing flood situation. These actions are crucial for controlling the floodwaters and reducing the risk of further inundation. The authorities are coordinating with other departments to ensure a comprehensive response to the flood risk. As per the directions of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Minister for Human Resources and IT Nara Lokesh and Minister for Water Resources

**Ministers Nara Lokesh, Nimmala Ramanaidu, MLA Vasantha Kriahna supervise works**



Nimmala Ramanaidu, Mylavaram MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad, WRD Advisor and in Charge Engineer In Chief (ENC) M Venkateswara Rao and former minister Devineni Uma Maheswara Rao supervised the BDC breach-closing works at Shantinagar on Wednesday.

Six to eight breaches were found to the Budameru Diversion Channel, which is leading to the Dr Narla Tatarao Thermal Power Station. The original BDC discharging capacity is around 36,000 cusecs. However, due to the lift of the gates of Budameru Regulator at

Velagaleru, the total flood submerged various areas in Vijayawada city. If the flood diverted into the BDC, it would meet in River Krishna at the Pavitra Sangamam.

The Chief Minister instructed Ministers Lokesh and Ramanaidu to monitor the breach-closing measures on a war-footing basis. The Ministers rushed to Kondapalli and sped up breach-closing measures.

As of now, two breach-closing works have been completed and another one is progressing. At any cost, all breaches of the BDC should be closed, they instructed.

**HIDDEN CAMERAS**



**Students can approach CERT**

**Women's Commission issues notices to college staff**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Police are investigating the alleged installation of hidden cameras inside the girls' hostel washrooms in Seshadri Rao Gudlavalluru Engineering College premises and are conducting a comprehensive probe into this matter. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is personally overseeing the progress of the investigation and is being kept informed through regular updates. He is also providing necessary guidance to ensure a thorough investigation.

The Krishna district police, on Wednesday, said that any student of the college, who has concerns or enquiries about the investigation, can directly approach the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) team at the college on Thursday between 10 am and 2 pm. As part of the investigation, the police are collaborating with national-level technical experts. The CERT team, New Delhi, has been made a key partner in the investigation process and is involved in the collection of evidence.

Meanwhile, State Women's Commission Chairperson G Venkataakshmi registered a suo moto case regarding the matter. She inspected hostel washrooms after interacting with the inmates. The negligence of the hostel staff was visible.

The students raised some doubts with the Chairperson seeking justice and the Chairperson issued a notice to the hostel staff asking them to appear before the Women's Commission on September 10 at 11 am and give an explanation. She stated that further action will be taken after their explanation.

## HC rejects anticipatory bail plea of YSRCP leaders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a big setback to YSRCP leaders, the AP High Court, on Wednesday, refused to issue anticipatory bail to them in connection with the attack on TDP central office and N Chandrababu Naidu's residence. Party leaders like MLCs Talasila Raghuram, L Appireddy, former MP Nandigam Suresh and Vijayawada youth leader Devineni Avinash are the accused. Jogi Ramesh is an accused in the case of attack on Chandrababu's residence.

The YSRCP leaders sought to suspend the orders for two weeks, however the High Court refused to do so.

With the High Court refusing the anticipatory bail, stage has been set



for the arrest of YSRCP leaders. Police went to the house of Nandigam Suresh on Wednesday evening to arrest him, but the former was not in the house.

In October 2021, the YSRCP supporters attacked the TDP central office in Mangalagiri resulting in the police registering a case with various sections of the IPC, arresting many and serving notices to the rest.

## Centralised pension withdrawal system from Jan

**Minister says pensioners can withdraw pensions from any bank across nation**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pensioners under Employees' Pension Scheme 1995 run by retirement fund body EPFO will be able to get pension from any bank or branch across India from January, Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Wednesday.

Mandaviya, who is also the chairperson of EPFO's apex decision-making body Central Board of Trustees, has approved the proposal for a Centralized Pension Payment System (CPPS) for Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995, a labour ministry statement said.

According to the statement, CPPS marks a major shift by establishing

**According to the statement, CPPS marks a major shift by establishing a national-level centralised system, enabling pension disbursement through any bank or any branch across India.**

a national-level centralised system, enabling pension disbursement through any bank or any branch across India.

"The approval of the CPPS marks a significant milestone in modernisation of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). By enabling pensioners to receive their pensions from any bank, any branch, anywhere in the country, this initiative addresses the long-standing challenges faced by pensioners and

ensures a seamless and efficient disbursement mechanism," the minister said.

This is a crucial step in our ongoing efforts to transform the EPFO into a more robust, responsive, and tech-enabled organisation, committed to serving the needs of its members and pensioners better, he added.

CPPS is expected to benefit more than 78 lakh EPS-95 pensioners of the EPFO. By harnessing advanced IT and banking technologies, it will

offer a more efficient, seamless, and user-friendly experience for pensioners.

The centralised system would ensure disbursement of pension throughout India without any need for transfer of Pension Payment Orders (PPO) from one office to the other even when the pensioner moves from one location to another or changes his bank or branch.

This would be a great relief to pensioners who move to their hometown after retirement. This facility will be launched as part of EPFO's ongoing IT modernisation project Centralized IT Enabled System (CITES 2.01) from January 1, 2025. In the next phase, CPPS will enable a smooth transition to Aadhaar-based payment system (ABPS), it said.

# Amaravati project faces renewed political assault

As Andhra Pradesh grapples with unprecedented floods, the natural disaster has quickly spiralled into a political storm. While Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's government races to provide relief, the opposition YSRCP has seized the moment to hurl accusations and reignite the controversy over Amaravati's viability as the state capital.

The recent floods in Andhra Pradesh have not only wreaked havoc on the lives of thousands of people but also given room for political manoeuvring. A natural calamity of unprecedented proportions has been exacerbated by a series of events that have turned disaster response into a political showdown.

Andhra Pradesh witnessed torrential rains this season, leading to massive inflows into the Krishna River, overwhelming the existing flood management systems. The Budameru Vagu, a stream that often swells during heavy rains, breached its

banks, adding to the chaos. The breach caused massive flooding in several areas, including the densely populated Ajit Singh Nagar in Vijayawada, leaving thousands marooned and desperate for help.

The Chandrababu Naidu government, already stretched thin by the sheer scale of the disaster, launched extensive rescue and relief operations. Chief Minister Naidu took to the streets, personally visiting flood-hit areas, including Ajit Singh Nagar, to oversee relief efforts and reassure the affected communities. The government's response was swift, with rescue teams, boats and helicopters in place to evacuate stranded residents. Relief camps were set up, and food packets distributed to those in need.

## POLITICAL ALLEGATIONS AMIDST THE CRISIS

As the state government struggled to manage the crisis, the Opposition seized the opportunity to hurl allegations. YS Jagan

**As the state government struggled to manage the crisis, the Opposition seized the opportunity to hurl allegations. YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, Leader of the Opposition and former chief minister, made a brief but high-profile visit to the flood-hit Singh Nagar area.**

Reddy, Leader of the Opposition and former chief minister, made a brief but high-profile visit to the flood-hit Singh Nagar area. During his visit, Jagan accused the Naidu government of mismanaging the situation and alleged that the gates of the Budameru Vagu were deliberately lifted to protect Naidu's residence in Undavalli, leading to the flooding of Singh Nagar. This statement sparked controversy and charged the already

tense atmosphere. Jagan's allegation that the Budameru Vagu gates were lifted for political gain added a new dimension to the flood crisis. The accusation was quickly picked up by YSRCP leaders and other detractors, who used it to fuel a broader narrative against the Naidu government.

**CHALLENGES IN RELIEF EFFORTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION**  
Amidst the political blame



**RAMESH KANDULA**  
Chief Editor Swatantra TV and author

game, the real challenge of addressing the needs of the marooned people became increasingly difficult. There were reports of a lack of coordination in the administration, particularly in the distribution of food packets and essential supplies. The chaotic scenes of people scrambling for aid highlighted the deficiencies in the relief operations.

In many instances, those in need mirrored mob mentality, making orderly distribution of supplies nearly impossible.

The administrative lapses provided more ammunition for the Opposition, who criticised the Naidu government for its failure to manage the situation effectively. However, the complexity of the situation -- with multiple agencies involved and the sheer scale of the disaster -- made it a difficult challenge for any government to handle seamlessly.

## THE AMARAVATI CONTROVERSY REIGNITED

As the floodwaters receded, the political fallout continued. The YSRCP and other critics of the Naidu government revived their campaign against the Amaravati capital project. They pointed to the temporary water stagnation in parts of the capital region as evidence that Amaravati was unsuitable as the state's capital. This, despite the

fact that Amaravati had largely escaped the worst of the flooding, thanks to the Kondaveeti Vagu Lift Irrigation Project, constructed during Naidu's previous tenure.

Educational institutions in the Amaravati region continued to function smoothly, and the area did not experience prolonged water-logging. Nonetheless, detractors of Amaravati seized on the temporary flooding as means to discredit the capital project, ignoring the broader context and the effectiveness of the flood management systems in place.

## TURNING DISASTER INTO POLITICAL CAPITAL

The flood situation in Andhra Pradesh has been turned into an opportunity for political gain by various parties. The latest developments should serve as a wake-up call for the Naidu government, highlighting the persistent and potent opposition to the

Amaravati project.

If the government fails to address these challenges and counter the negative narrative, the ambitious Amaravati project could face further setbacks. The flood crisis, while primarily a natural calamity, has exposed the underlying political tensions in the state. It has underscored the need for the Naidu government to strengthen its resolve in defending the Amaravati brand and ensuring that the capital project is not derailed by those who seek to exploit disasters for political ends.

As Andhra Pradesh begins the long process of recovery from the floods, the political reverberations will continue to be felt, reminding all that in the world of politics, even natural calamities can be manipulated for gain. The Naidu government must navigate these treacherous waters with caution, lest history repeat itself and Amaravati's future is put in jeopardy.

## MP, Ministers supervise distribution of food

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath has swung into action to ensure that food is distributed thrice a day to the people of flood-affected areas in the city. On Wednesday morning, he came to Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium and supervised all the work to avoid any delay in the distribution of food to the victims. Water bottles, milk and breakfast were to be provided to the victims were sent in lorries and tractors.



Ten lakh water bottles, four-and-a-half lakh tiffins, and two lakh litres of milk were moved from the IGMC stadium to the flood victims division wise. Food was also supplied to the flood victims of Jakkampudi Colony in Mylavaram constituency. MP Sivanath ordered the officials to ensure that there is no delay in



## Food, water, medicines at victims' doorstep

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Kolusu Parthasarathy, Minister for Housing and I&PR, has informed that as the flood water has reduced, the victims will get better help from the government and the authorities will assess the damage. The Minister said that due to the foresight of the State government, they have been able to prevent loss of property and loss of life. State ministers, other public representatives and officials are engaged in relief activities. The Minister assured that the water is stagnant in many areas and the water will be drained with motors wherever necessary. Minister Parthasarathy drove a tractor and went to the victims of Singh Nagar and

distributed food, fruits, milk, buttermilk and water. He said that the situation in Singhnagar is gradually improving and assured the victims that ministers, officials and public representatives will provide all help to the victims. The Minister said that the compensation to affected victims will be provided to all by the State government.

Eluru MLA B Radha Krishna arranged the blankets and food items to be distributed to the victims by the Minister. Legislative Council member P Ashok Babu, former minister and legislator Kanna Lakshmi Narayana, former legislator Ganta Murali, party leaders Boppana Bhuvakumar, Rondi Krishna and others were present.

## Medicines, medical services to be made available in flood-hit areas

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In view of decreasing water level in various flood affected areas in Vijayawada city and as there is a possibility of communicable diseases to prevail, medicines and medical services are made available, said C Harikiran, Commissioner, Health and Family Welfare.



On Wednesday, the Commissioner inspected the supply of emergency medicine kits in the city and the distribution of medicines in 104 mobile ambulances. He visited Sitara Center at Bhavanipuram area personally and inspected the distribution of medicines. He spoke to the doctors and staff about the medicines they are distributing, and made it clear that none of the victims should face shortage of medicines. He said that 64 medical camps have been set up in 32 wards, and necessary

medical tests will be done for the patients and medicines will be provided free of cost.

Along with 32 wards, medical camps are also being set up in five nearby rural areas which have suffered a lot of damage. Mobile medical camps have also been arranged. As many as 200 types of medicines have been kept ready in these camps. He said that 10 teams have been formed with higher officials for appropriate sug-

gestions and advice in providing medical services. A control room has also been set up for continuous monitoring.

He added that the Medical and Health Department has undertaken measures to provide emergency health services. In 32 wards that are under water logging, six types of emergency medicine kits and leaflets explaining how to use them have been given to all.

## Action against those fleeing flood victims: CP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Commissioner of Police (CP) SV Rajasekhara Babu has warned of strict action against individuals and private boat operators who operate in flood-affected areas if they collect money from people. Action will be taken if they sell milk, food, and other essentials at prices higher than the MRP in Vijayawada city, the Commissioner said, adding that criminal cases will be filed. Following the orders of

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, the department will take into police custody those private boat operators and individuals who are collecting money and selling essentials at higher prices, according to a release issued by Rajasekhara Babu on Wednesday. Many people stranded in the flood-hit areas such as Ajith Singh Nagar, Old and New RR Pet, Vambay Colony, Nandamuri Nagar, Nunna, and Pipula Road have complained of boat operators fleeing people for shifting them from their homes.

## YSRCP to distribute 75,000 milk packets, 1 lakh water bottles

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Opposition Leader in Legislative Council Botsa Satyanarayana has announced that YSRCP will distribute 75,000 milk packets and one lakh water bottles to Vijayawada flood victims on Thursday.

"As part of the ongoing relief efforts, YSRCP distributed one lakh milk packets and two lakh water bottles on Wednesday to support those affected by the floods," he said, and added that the party is committed to continuing the relief operations and will also provide essential supplies to the flood-affected families soon.

## GVMC demolishes structures on 'encroached' land

Site was allegedly encroached upon by Neha Reddy, daughter of MP Vijayasai Reddy

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) has initiated the demolition of concrete structures at a site in Bheemunipatnam, near Visakhapatnam, allegedly encroached upon by Neha Reddy, daughter of Rajya Sabha member V Vijayasai Reddy. The demolition, carried out on September 4, comes in response to a directive issued by the High Court following a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by Jana Sena corporator Peethala Murthy Yadav.

According to GVMC officials, the now-demolished structures were constructed on survey numbers 1516, 1517, 1519, and 1523, in violation of the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) rules.



The GVMC took swift action following the court directive, which was issued after a detailed hearing of the PIL. "The demolition was a necessary step to uphold the law and ensure that there are no violations of CRZ regulations," said a GVMC spokesperson.

Neha Reddy, upon receiving notices from the GVMC,

challenged the demolition order by moving the High Court's single bench. However, her petition was denied, with the bench refusing to grant a stay on the demolition process. "The High Court's decision was a significant setback for Neha Reddy, and it underscores the importance of adhering to legal guidelines," said a legal

expert.

The constructions, now demolished, were reportedly undertaken when Vijaya Sai Reddy was serving as the YSR Congress Party's in-charge for the North Andhra region. The controversy surrounding the case intensified as Murthy Yadav leveled a series of allegations against YSRCP leaders, including senior IAS officers such as former Chief Secretary K. S. Jawahar Reddy. Murthy Yadav accused them of land grabbing in Visakhapatnam.

"The demolition of these structures sends a clear message that no one is above the law, regardless of their political connections," remarked Murthy Yadav, reiterating his commitment to fighting corruption and illegal encroachments.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Water Resources Department (WRD) officials and the NTR district administration have apparently failed to make appropriate decisions and manage the huge flood reaching Budameru, a major drain in the State. The WRD officials have lifted the gates to prevent flooding near the Dr NTTPS and other adjoining areas. But, they reportedly did not alert the civic authorities in Vijayawada. Consequently, the flood from Budameru inundated many residential localities.

The gates hardly function, and there are many breaches on the Budameru Diversion Channel at Kondapalli, Shantinagar, Vijayawada Durga Nagar and other areas. Plans to increase the capacity of the Budameru Diversion Channel

(BDC) to 10,000 cusecs still remain on the paper. More than 60,000 cusecs of flood reached Budameru drain from Khammam in Telangana due to heavy rains in just four days.

Notwithstanding the ongoing political sluffest, it is evident that flooding of residential localities in the city is a man-made tragedy rather than nature's fury. The successive governments haven't paid enough attention to the Budameru drain issue. The negligence of the Water Resources Department has upped the ante, and thousands of families in the city suffered.

Budameru drain, one of the major drains in the State, became an epicentre of politics in Vijayawada following the inundation of many residential localities in the city due to flood waters.



## Jagan demands Rs 25L ex gratia for kin of deceased

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

SRCP president and former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has demanded that the State government provide Rs 25 lakh ex-gratia to the families of the deceased and Rs 50,000 to each house affected by the recent floods in Vijayawada.

YS Jagan Mohan Reddy visited flood-affected areas in Old RR Peta, Vijayawada, where he walked through knee-deep water and interacted with residents and enquired about their difficulties.

Speaking to the media on Wednesday, he expressed deep concern over the government's handling of the flood situation and held Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu responsible for the loss of 32 lives.

He stated that the disaster could have been avoided if the government had acted in time. He questioned Chandrababu Naidu's negligence in managing the crisis and asked whether he was fit to remain in office. He demanded that the Chief Minister admit his mistakes and issue a public apology.

Jagan further stated that the government's failure to take preventive measures had worsened the situation. He said that CM Naidu has prioritised his house over the well-being of Vijayawada and said that when his house was submerged, Naidu moved to the Collector's office, falsely claiming that he was staying there for the sake of the people.

He added that Naidu's convoy in the flood-affected areas was more for show, with little real assistance provided to the people.

## Govt will stand by the...

Continued from Page 1

The entire official machinery is on the field extending all possible assistance to the flood-hit. Chandrababu said that food could be supplied to 91 per cent of the victims by 11.30 am on Wednesday. Through IVRS feedback is being collected from the people three times a day to correct the faults, if any, to serve the victims in a better way, he remarked.

Maintaining that food is being supplied to the flood-affected after thoroughly checking its quality, the Chief Minister said that the State government is moving ahead in a perfect manner.

Ministers Lokesh and Nimmal Ramanaidu are personally overseeing the works to fill the trenches and also steps are being taken to restore power-supply, the Chief Minister said.

Drinking water is being supplied to the people through 182 tanks and the water supply through civic connections too is being restored, he said, adding that medical camps are being organised where necessary medicines are being supplied. Sanitation works, too, are taken up, he said.

Announcing Rs 5 lakh as ex gratia to each family of those who died in these flash floods, the Chief Minister

said that 32 IAS officers are on the field to supervise the relief operations. Under the supervision of the MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni), a team is thoroughly studying whether any inflows are coming from anywhere, Chandrababu said.

Thanking the employees for voluntarily coming forward to extend their assistance to the flood victims, the Chief Minister said that the State government employees have announced one-day salary as relief to the flood-hit. Chandrababu Naidu said that special outlets are being set up to sell vegetables at very reasonable prices.

## Medicines, ambulance...

Continued from Page 1

"Each family should be given 25 kg of rice, one litre of palm oil, two kg of onions, two kg of potatoes and one kg of sugar. Mobile Rythu Bazaars should be set up and vegetables should be provided at low prices in the wake of floods," said the CM, adding that extensive measures are being taken in flood affected areas to bring the situation back to normal.

The government will provide a compensation of Rs 5 lakh to the family members of the deceased. People should be sensitised through pamphlets on precautions to be taken against fever.

All the medicines should be made available to everyone in the flood affected area, said the CM and estimates of crop loss should be provided at the earliest.

## Flood warnings at...

Continued from Page 1

Subsequently, the floodwater discharge downstream of the barrage also reduced and currently the barrage level is 11.5 feet. According to the officials of the Irrigation Circle, Vijayawada, discharges from the Srisailem, Nagarjuna Sagar, and Paleru reservoirs are falling. However, the discharge from Pulichintala Project is stable, the officials said. Flood inflow to the Srisailem Project is 1,71,310 cusecs and outflow, 90,390 cusecs. Inflow to the Nagarjuna Sagar is 1,83,447 cusecs and outflow is 29,638 cusecs.

Meanwhile, the Pulichintala Project has been receiving 1,83,897 cusecs and discharging 26,799 cusecs of water into River Krishna. The flood inflows to the project are continuing. The Munniyeru and Keesara inflows are also continuing steadily, the officials said.

On the other hand, the Meteorological Department warned of heavy rain on September 5 and 6, and the Irrigation Department officials alerted the people downstream and upstream of the Prakasam Barrage. If the flood inflows increase, many areas will be submerged, they said.

# Budameru flood situation serious

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The situation in Krishna district due to the Budameru Rivulet flood is quite serious. Heavy rainfall has been registered in the upper catchment area of the Budameru. Currently, around 36,000 cuses of floodwater from Budameru has already submerged various areas in Vijayawada city and is moving towards Kolleru Lake.

The Irrigation Department reports that more than 10,000 cuses of Budameru floodwater is expected to reach the district. Residents are advised to follow evacuation orders and stay in touch with local authorities for updates and instructions. The situation remains fluid, and continued vigilance and cooperation with emergency services will be crucial for managing the impact of the flood.

Due to the Budameru flood, areas such as Moparru of Pedaparupudi mandal and Puttagunta of Nandivada mandal, are experiencing rising flood levels.

## Officials advise Moparru, Puttagunta villagers to vacate houses



Significant flooding has occurred from the Enikepadu Under Tunnel (UT), affecting agriculture, horticulture, and infrastructure. Many roads,

including routes from Gannavaram and Hanuman Junction to Gudivada, are cut off. District Collector DK Balaji

and Superintendent of Police (SP) R Gangadhara Rao have visited flood-affected areas like Moparru and Puttagunta. They assessed the situation

and interacted with locals to gauge the impact. Both officials have advised residents to evacuate their villages. Collector Balaji has instructed Revenue officials to evacuate the entire village of Moparru and move people to rehabilitation centres.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Balaji assured that the government is prepared to support the affected populations. Rehabilitation centres have been set up, and the administration is providing food, drinking water, and medical assistance. The Collector added that further flooding is expected, and urged residents to move to safe places.

Meanwhile, SP Gangadhara Rao has directed police officials to be vigilant and assist in forcibly evacuating people from flood-prone areas. He emphasised the need for coordination among various departments for flood relief measures.

# 6.44 lakh people affected

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Kolusu Parthasarathy, Minister for Information and Public Relations and Housing, has assured that the State government will support the flood victims in all ways. Speaking to the media at the Vijayawada Collectorate on Wednesday, the Minister said that the Chief Minister has been staying at the Collectorate for four days and monitoring the situation. He said that the city could be saved from serious damage due to the vast experience of CM.

He said that 6.44 lakh people in the State were affected by the floods and crops were damaged in 20 districts. He added that 3.74 lakh acres of paddy and 47,543 acres of horticultural crop were damaged. In erstwhile Krishna and Guntur districts, paddy was damaged to a maximum extent. The Minister said that 3,678 km of roads have been damaged across the State. Breakfast, lunch and dinner have been provided to the

- 3.74 lakh acres paddy, 47,543 acres horticultural crops damaged in 20 districts
- 3678 km of roads were damaged in the state
- Govt will support the flood victims in all ways: Minister Parthasarathy



flood victims in a systematic way. In a few instances, food, drinking water, biscuit packets and milk were provided to the flood-affected areas from the Vijayawada from Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium. A senior IAS officer was in charge of overseeing the relief operations of all the 179 secretariats. Everyone from the CS to the lower level officers swung into action to take up

relief measures.

On Wednesday, six lakh food packets and three lakh litres of milk were distributed, besides five lakh biscuit packets, said the Minister. He said that 182 tankers are supplying drinking water to the people and steps have been taken to clean the mud inside the houses with fire engines.

He said that in Vijayawada city, around 4,000 sanitation workers have taken up sanitation work and for this purpose, officials and staff have also been specially deployed from other districts. Minister Parthasarathy said that 158 medical camps are being set up and medical services are being provided to the people in view of the possibility of epidemics if sanitation is not proper.

# Employees to donate one-day pay to CMRF



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In the wake of the flood situation, State employees JAC leaders have decided to give one day's basic pay from September to the CMRF, and submitted a letter to Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu in this regard.

The employee leaders who were present on the occasion were State JAC Chairman NGO State president KV Shivareddy, secretary general P Hrudaya Raju, AP UTF president Nakka Venkateshwarlu, STU general secretary Raghunatha Reddy, NTR district chairman A Vidyasagar, capital city president Nagabhushanam, State NGO leaders Jagadish, State Pensioners Association secretaries Venkateshwarlu, Prabhudasu, PAO Employees president Harinath Babu, Gram Secretariat Employees State president Jani Basha, Public Sector Employees Federation State Association president A Sambasiva Rao, Panchayat Raj Diploma Engineers State president Ravindra, Agricultural Extension Officers Association State president Venumadhav and other JAC leaders.

# Special camp for students of ashram schools

PNS ■ PADERU

Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) Project Officer V Abhishek has announced the provision of special medical services for students affected by scabies in tribal welfare ashram schools. This initiative comes in response to recent cases identified during routine medical examinations.

On Wednesday, a team of dermatologists conducted a thorough medical examination at the GTW Ashram School (B) in Talarisingi. Out of 528 students screened, 108 were diagnosed with scabies. In response, the ITDA APO promptly distributed Ivermectin tablets and permethrin soap to the affected students. "The health and well-

## Of 528 students screened, 108 diagnosed with scabies at GTW Ashram School, Talarisingi



being of our students are our top priority," stated the ITDA Project

Officer. "This initiative is part of our broader effort to ensure that

all students in tribal welfare schools receive the medical attention they need."

Abhishek further elaborated on the success of previous interventions in March and April, where dermatologists examined students in Hukumpet and Paderu mandals. "The use of Permethrin soap and ivermectin tablets led to a 96 per cent reduction in scabies cases among the students. This remarkable success was reported to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), which has since validated our findings," he added.

# AGRASRI to organize Symposium on Food Security on Sep 8

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Academy of Grassroots Studies and Research of India (AGRASRI), Tirupati, will organize a Symposium on Food Security: Innovations and Strategies for Hunger Free India @2047, through Zoom platform, on September 8.

Dr. Harishchandra Prasad Singh, Founder and Chairman, Confederation of Horticulture Associations of India, New Delhi; Dr. P. Rethinam, International Plantation Crops Management Specialist and Former Chairman, Coconut Development Board, Government of India, Kochi; Dr. George V. Thomas, Former Director, ICAR -

Central Plantation and Crops Research Institute, Kasargod; Ram Saran Verma, Padma Shri Awardee and National Progressive Farmer, Barabanki (Uttar Pradesh) and Prof. P.V.P.S. Vidya Sagar, International Agricultural Expert and President of the Retired Indian Council of Agriculture Research Employees Association (RICAREA), Hyderabad will participate in the Symposium as Panelists, said Dr. D. Sundar Ram, Founder and Director of AGRASRI, in a release here on Wednesday. They will provide important suggestions on future innovations and strategies to be adopted for the country's food security, he added.

# Efforts to restore power in flood-hit areas in full swing

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The staff of the Andhra Pradesh Eastern Power Distribution Company Limited (APEPDCL) are working tirelessly to restore power supply in the flood-affected regions of Krishna, NTR, Guntur, and Bapatla districts. These areas have been severely inundated due to relentless heavy rains, leaving thousands without electricity.

APEPDCL CMD Prudhvi Tej Immadi, accompanied by his team, arrived in Vijayawada equipped with the necessary tools and equipment. "Our priority is to ensure that power is restored as quickly as possible to bring relief to the affected communities," said Prudhvi Tej Immadi. "We have mobilised

## APEPDCL CMD Prudhvi Tej Immadi and team arrive in Vijayawada



64 teams, comprising 600 employees from chief engineers to line staff."

The CMD personally conducted reviews and surveys in various regions, including Thullur and Harish Chandrapuram, assessing the damage and overseeing restoration activities on the ground. "It's crucial to be on-site to understand the extent of the damage and to direct the teams effectively," he added. The CMD and his team also visited the Kollur section of the Tenali division, identifying flooded areas and initiating measures to restore power supply. "Our teams are working round the clock to ensure that no stone is left

turned in restoring normalcy," the CMD emphasised.

In addition to the efforts of APEPDCL, the Indian Navy has also stepped in to provide much-needed assistance. Responding to requests from the State government, the Eastern Naval Command at Visakhapatnam deployed 10 helicopters, one Dornier aircraft, and 10 Flood Relief Teams (FRTs) actively engaged in rescue and relief operations. So far, helicopters successfully transported approximately 58,000 kg of food, water, and medical aid to stranded individuals, dropping these supplies directly onto rooftops. Flood Relief Teams, along with the airborne assets, remain on standby to provide comprehensive assistance as required.

# Ministers tour flood-affected villages in Bapatla district

They assessed extent of agricultural losses



PNS ■ BAPATLA

In response to the severe flooding that has impacted several villages in Bapatla district, Ministers Gottipati Ravikumar and Anagani Satyaprasad toured the affected areas to assess the damage and ensure that relief measures are effectively implemented.

The Ministers visited Chatagadda, Rudravaram, Morthota, Tiratla Lanka, Bobbaralanka, Myneni Varipalem, Chandupallivari Palem, Rajula Cheruvu, Lankavani Dibba, Tummala, Potu Meraka, and Nalluri Palem. They engaged directly with the residents, listened to their grievances, and issued

immediate instructions to officials to resolve issues promptly.

Ministers Ravikumar and Satyaprasad also inspected farmlands and shrimp ponds that have been submerged and damaged by the floods, specifically in the villages of Mainenivaripalem, Morthota, and Chatragadda in Repalle mandal. They assessed the extent of agricultural losses and assured the farmers that the government is committed to standing by them during this difficult time.

Ravi Kumar said that the Chandrababu Naidu government is committed in supporting every single flood victim and ensured that all necessary

relief measures are implemented swiftly to alleviate the hardships faced by the affected communities. The ministers also visited a rehabilitation centre in Bobbaralanka village, which is currently housing around 50 families displaced by the floods. They enquired about the relief measures being provided and emphasised the government's commitment to providing comprehensive support.

Minister Satyaprasad confirmed that officials are in the process of assessing the damage to crops and infrastructure. A detailed report will be submitted to the Chief Minister, and assistance will be provided to farmers who have suffered losses due to the floods.

# Collector calls for vigilance against cannabis



PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

District Collector Dr BR Ambedkar has urged for a concerted effort to eradicate cannabis from Vizianagaram district. In a district-level committee meeting, he emphasised the need for collaboration between law enforcement and other departments to curb the production, transportation, and use of the illegal substance.

"We must work together to eliminate the menace of cannabis in our district," Dr Ambedkar said. He also stressed the importance of educational initiatives to raise awareness about the dangers of drug use, suggesting the establishment of anti-drug committees in educational institutions and awareness campaigns in public places.

District Superintendent of Police (SP) Vakul Jindal provided an update on the district's anti-drug efforts, revealing that 49 cases have been registered this year, leading to the seizure of 1,109 kg of ganja and the arrest of 140 individuals. While no ganja cultivation has been detected within the district, the SP expressed concerns about the underutilisation of the district's de-addiction center and requested the collector to restore it to full operational capacity.

The District Medical and Health Officer (DMHO), Dr. Bhaskara Rao, highlighted the lack of a medical officer at the 15-bed ward at GGH for six months. In response, Dr. Ambedkar directed that the de-addiction centre be reactivated immediately.

# Ponguleti: Unlike BRS, we didn't blame floods on foreign conspiracy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Pointing to the world of difference between the manner in which the present government in Telangana had been handling the flash floods caused by recent torrential rains and the way in which the erstwhile Bharat Rashtra Samithi government had dealt with floods in 2022, state Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy criticized the BRS leaders for their claims relating to 'foreign conspiracy', and said they were unfit to comment on the Revanth government's studied efforts to address the crisis caused by the recent floods. The Minister was interacting with the media on Wednesday at Khammam.

Ponguleti recalled that, during the 2022 floods in erstwhile Khammam district, BRS leaders, including Harish Rao, had tried to divert attention by claiming a 'foreign conspiracy' behind the cloudbursts. He questioned whether they were viewing the current floods again with the same foreign conspiracy lens. Ponguleti stated, "Unlike KCR, who remained in his farmhouse during the rains, we have been on the ground with the people from the moment the first drops fell. The preemptive measures we took helped minimize the loss of lives to the extent possible."



The Minister strongly condemned the comments reportedly made by former BRS minister Harish Rao on Tuesday regarding the floods in Khammam district. He remarked that it was unfortunate for BRS leaders, who could not even visit the families of those who had died in the floods, to now criticize the government.

Citing a specific instance, Ponguleti mentioned that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, along with other cabinet ministers, visited and consoled the family of scientist Nunavat Ashwini, who tragically died when her car was swept away in the floods. "BRS leaders, on the other hand, did not even bother to offer condolences," he added.

The Minister pointed out how KCR had time to bless a child released from jail but did not care to step out (of farmhouse) for flood victims. "We expected at

least one suggestion from KCR, with his 10 years of governance experience, but he hasn't even opened his mouth," he said.

Criticizing KTR for his lack of involvement, Ponguleti said, "While his father remains silent, KTR posts uninformed comments on social media from the US. Why hasn't he returned yet?" The Minister also highlighted how BRS, despite being in power for 10 years, completely neglected disaster management. "Did they ever hold a meeting on natural disasters or even think of strengthening disaster management? If they had, the damage could have been mitigated today." Ponguleti detailed the government's efforts to mitigate the floods, especially in Khammam district, where he worked alongside Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao.

## Mock drill demonstrated using robot lifeboat

PNS ■ ELURU

A mock drill demonstrating the use of a robot lifeboat was conducted by the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) in Eluru's Tammileru river. The drill was led by the Eluru District SP K Pratap Shiva Kishore, and Eluru DSP D Sravan Kumar to prepare for potential life-threatening situations caused by flash floods or heavy water flow in streams and canals.

The drill showcased how SDRF personnel would rescue people caught in flash floods. It also provided guidance on what individuals should do if caught in water current. The SDRF team conducted a field demonstration using a robot

lifeboat.

Eluru Two Town Inspector YV Ramana, Eluru Traffic Inspector K Srinivas Rao, Eluru One Town Inspector Satyanarayana, and 3 Town Inspector Koteswara Rao, along with police and SDRF personnel, participated in the event.

The Eluru district police, in collaboration with the SDRF, conducted a mock drill to demonstrate the use of a robotic lifeboat. This drill was aimed at preparing for potential flood-related emergencies in the region. The mock drill is aimed at showcasing the rescue procedures and educates the public on safety measures during floods and a robotic lifeboat was the primary tool demonstrated.



## GESTURE TO PANCHAYATS

# Pawan announces Rs 6 crore donation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

### Rs 1 lakh for 400 panchayats

Deputy Chief Minister for Minister for Panchayat Raj K Pawan Kalyan has announced Rs 6 crore donation individually to carry out relief operations in the flood hit areas.

The film here turned politician, Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan said that Rs 4 crore would be given to 400 village panchayats, Rs 1 lakh for each panchayat. It may be mentioned here that Pawan Kalyan had already announced Rs 1 crore donations to the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister's Relief Fund and Rs 1 crore donation to



Chief Minister's Relief Fund of Telangana State. He said that he would credit Rs 1 lakh to the bank account of 400 village panchayats directly. Meanwhile, the Panchayat Raj employees have donated their one day wages. There are 1.64 employees working in various departments and they would donate one day salary works out at Rs 14 crore. The Panchayat Raj engineer division is donating Rs 75 lakh and rural water supply employees announced Rs 10 lakh donation to the CMRF.



## Officials asked to be prepared to face floods, rains

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari district Collector Chadalavada Nagarani directed the officials to be prepared with a proper plan to face the threat of flood and heavy rain.

The Collector held a meeting with the officials and reviewed the preparations being made to face the imminent heavy rains threat due to low pressure in the next few days. Speaking on the occasion, Collector Nagarani said that the irrigation officials should be alert and steps should be taken to identify and strengthen the areas where the embankments of canals and rivers are weak.

She directed them to speed up the removal of weeds and wild creepers from the canals to ensure free flow of water. The necessary material should be kept ready, she ordered them stating that the civil supplies officials should be ready to identify the vendors who supply candles and matchboxes in bulk. The PDS dealers were asked to stock essential commodities to supply to the affected areas, if needed.

"The mandal level officials will have to be alert and prepare milk and other supplies on a war footing. Lack of sanitation in panchayats and

**The Collector held a meeting with the officials and reviewed the preparations being made to face the imminent heavy rains threat due to low pressure in the next few days. Speaking on the occasion, Collector Nagarani said that the irrigation officials should be alert and steps should be taken to identify and strengthen the areas where the embankments of canals and rivers are weak.**

towns cannot be tolerated. Care should be taken that drain water does not mix in drinking water pipe lines, leakages should be detected and repaired immediately," the Collector instructed the officials and told them that drinking water should not be supplied under any circumstances without chlorination. Arrangements should be made to drain out rain water from the roads, she told them.

"Better sanitation management programmes should be undertaken on a large scale so that lack of sanitation is not a reason for the outbreak of fevers in the district. DPOs and DLDs should monitor sanitation programmes in panchayats. DM&HO should thoroughly monitor the cause of the fevers and take appropriate measures to control them," the Collector directed them.

The District Agriculture Officer told the Collector that the water flow was not smooth due to the decrease in the length of the drains at Mallavaram and Kopparru in Kolana Mandal, Narasapuram Mandal and because of this, the agriculture fields are getting marooned. The Collector instructed the officials to issue notices to the encroachers. The Collector advised the electricity officials to ensure that high tension wires are not hung at a low level and no electrocution incident should take place in the district.

Joint Collector T Rahul Kumar Reddy, DRO J Uday Bhaskar, Special deputy Collector B Shivannarayana Reddy and DMHO Dr. D Maheswara Rao were among those who attended the meeting.



## Blast in fire crackers unit, one killed

PNS ■ NELLORE

One person was killed when the fire cracker godown caught fire and an explosion took place at Kallurupalli housing board colony near here in the wee hours of Wednesday.

Police said that a huge quantity of fire crackers were stored in the godown. The godown caught fire and a massive explosion took place killing watchman Subbaya.

The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for postmortem. Meanwhile, Nellore rural MLA Kotamreddy Srihar Reddy visited the ill-fated fire crackers godown, consoled the family members of deceased Subbaya and assured them of extending needed help.

## DC, SP visit vulnerable areas at Kolleru lake

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi and SP KP Shiva Kishore accompanied by MLA Chintamaneni Prabhakar visited some of the villages in the Kolleru lake area which are facing flood threat.

They visited Komatilanka village in Eluru rural mandal and reviewed the flood situation. They interacted with the village sarpanch and the villagers. They asked the villagers to stay at their villages for the next two days and the Kolleru lake is receiving heavy inflows.

The Collector said that medical camps would be set up at the villages and the pregnant women would be shifted to the PHCs. She instructed officials to make ready boats to supply essentials and medicines to the flood victims.

Denduluru MLA Chintamaneni Prabhakar said that the government had previously sent proposals and sanctioned funds for the construction of the road related to Komatilanka, but due to the lack of permission from the Forest Department, the works could not be carried out. Keeping this in mind, the MLA



brought to the attention of the District Collector that the Collector should discuss with the relevant authorities and start the works.

The MLA also asked the Collector to take up the process of removing the hyacinth creeper in consultation with the irrigation officials so that the floodwaters would not gush into the roads. The Collector responded to this and issued instructions to the officials of the Irrigation Department to take steps to remove hyacinth

from the canal. District SP KP Siva Kishore said that along with the VROs in the villages, the police personnel would also monitor the people of the villages to prevent them from traveling on boats. Under any circumstances, parents are advised to keep their children at home so that children in villages do not go fishing or swimming for fun as all canals and nalas are brimful.

Later the Collector monitored the removal of hyacinth from the Malugunur Bridge.

The people of the village brought to the attention of the Collector that the roads leading to Perumalanka, Nandigailanka, Sriram Nagar, Ingilipaka and the villages were blocked due to flood water of Budameru rivulet overflowing on roads. The Collector ordered the Mandal Tahsilidar to distribute medical camps and essential commodities in these villages as well. RDO K Khajavali and MPDO Pranav and other officials were among those who accompanied them.

## 300 kgs cannabis seized; one peddler arrested

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

The police seized 300 KGs of ganja while being transported in a car at Kanchikacherla and arrested one peddler.

ACP Ravi Kiran told the media that on a tip off, a police team conducted checking of vehicles on the highway.

The police found 300 KGs of ganja was being transported illegally in a car. The ganja was purchased in Narsipatnam forest area in Anakapalli district and was being taken to Maharashtra. The police arrested drug ped-



dler Shubham Dattatray Bandavalkar (26) and seized 300 KGs of ganja, the car, three mobile phones and Rs. 11,500 cash from him.

The peddler told the police that he purchased the ganja at Rs 3000 per KG and was taking it to sell in Maharashtra at Rs 10,000 per KG.

## Godavari in spate; officials asked to set up relief centres

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

District Collector P Prashanthi directed the officials to set up relief centres to shift people from low-lying areas in view of heavy floods to the river Godavari.

The Collector held a video conference with the officials on Wednesday and reviewed the flood threat to the river Godavari. She ordered the officials to be alert and take appropriate precautions regarding the programs to be undertaken in rainy conditions and that the rehabilitation centers should be equipped with adequate facilities.

In view of the high rainfall recorded in the upper areas of the Godavari catchment area and the possibility of over 9 lakh cusecs of flood water reaching Dhavaleswaram in the evening, precautions should be taken, she told the officials. She also suggested the officials make all arrangements to shift the displaced people to the relief centres from inland areas.

"All the dwellers living in the island villages and low-lying areas should be shifted to the relief centres before the flood



water inundated the villages," she ordered the officials.

The officials should lay special focus on the area of Rajahmundry and Kovvuru and the nodal officers should take all precautions to avoid any untoward incident, she told the officials. The Collector hinted that there is a scope of developing breaches to Surampalem, Kovvada and Erra Kaluva. If there are any inundations due to encroachments, the official concerned should be held responsible, the Collector warned.

"In view of the danger alert issued at Bhadrachalam, we should be ready before the first danger alert at Dhavaleswaram is issued," she told the officials.

The Irrigation officials apprised the Collector that the Dowleswaram project is receiving 4.9 lakh cusecs of flood water and 5 lakh cusecs is being released to the downstream. The inflow is likely to increase to 9 lakh cusecs by night.

The Collector asked the officials to make ready boats to shift people from low lying areas to safer places and she warned the fishermen not to venture into the river and sea for fishing. Massive trees are likely to get rooted due to heavy winds and the staff should be ready with equipment to remove the trees. She also directed the officials to set up medical camps for the displaced people.

## Food Safety Officer intensifies crackdown on pesticide abuse

Those found guilty could face up to seven years in prison and fines of up to Rs 10 lakh

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a move to protect public health, the Food Safety Officer for Visakhapatnam, GV Apparao, has issued a stern warning to sellers, emphasising the severe consequences of using excessive pesticides. Those found guilty could face up to seven years in prison and fines of up to Rs 10 lakh, as per Section 59 of the Food Preservation and Standards Act, 2006.

"We have received numerous reports of alarmingly high pesticide residues in fruits, vegetables, and other produce sold at popular supermarkets like Rythu Bazars, Pure O Natural, Reliance, Spencers, and More," Apparao stated. "This is a serious public health concern as excessive pesticide exposure can lead to various health problems, including chronic illnesses and reproductive issues."

To address this pressing issue, Apparao and his team, acting on directives from the National Food Safety and Standards Agency, conducted a surprise inspection of these supermarkets on Tuesday. "We collected a total of 34 samples

from different sections of these stores, focusing on produce that is most likely to be affected by pesticide residues," Apparao explained. "These samples have been sent to a certified food laboratory for thorough analysis."

Apparao emphasised that if the test results reveal that pesticide levels exceed the permissible limits, his team will take immediate action. "We will not hesitate to impose the maximum penalties allowed by law," he said. "Our goal is to deter sellers from using excessive pesticides and to ensure that the produce sold in Visakhapatnam is safe for consumption."

In addition to the crackdown on sellers, Apparao also issued a public advisory to consumers. "We urge all residents to be vigilant and take necessary precautions to protect their health," he advised. "Thoroughly washing vegetables, leafy greens, and fruits before consumption is crucial to remove any pesticide residue. By reporting any suspicious practices or concerns to our department, citizens can play a vital role in ensuring the safety of our food supply," he said.



## Hindustan Shipyard Ltd partners with South Korean firms

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) has partnered with South Korean companies LWT and VINSSEN to develop green vessels in India. The collaboration aims to promote sustainable maritime operations and align with India's 'Make in India' and 'Green India' initiatives.

Cmdr Hemant Khatri (IN, Retd), Chairman and Managing Director of Hindustan Shipyard Limited, emphasised the significance of this collaboration. "Our partnership with LWT and VINSSEN is a significant step forward in our mission to lead



the green vessel market in India. This collaboration will enable us to deliver technologically advanced, eco-friendly green vessels that are poised to transform the future of mar-

itime operations in India," he stated.

Maninder Singh, CMD of Lotus Wireless Technologies India Private Limited (LWT), echoed this sentiment, high-

lighting the benefits of South Korean engineering. "By partnering with VINSSEN, we are bringing the best of South Korean engineering to India's shores. Additionally, we are

committed to providing comprehensive maintenance support for these vessels for the next 10 years, ensuring long-term reliability and operational excellence."

Lee Chil Han, CEO of VINSSEN, expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership and its impact on India's maritime sector. "We are excited to bring our advanced hydrogen and hybrid propulsion technology to India in collaboration with HSL and LWT. This partnership not only showcases the strength of Korean technology but also reflects the deep and enduring friendship between India and South Korea. We are confident that our combined expertise will set a new standard for green vessel technology in India's maritime sector, fostering a very good long-term partnership."

ACROSS THE STATES



People still dying due to 'defective' vaccines: Soren

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Wednesday alleged that people were still dying because of "defective" Covid-19 vaccine doses administered during the pandemic. He claimed that though a particular vaccine was banned globally, it was still being supplied in India and given to the public. Soren's remarks followed the recent deaths of 12 people during physical tests for an excise constable recruitment drive in the state. On Monday, the government halted the ongoing job drive for three days. "Unfortunately, some aspirants died during the recruitment drive. The deaths are not only happening due to running; people are also dying while walking. It is known that the vaccine doses given to the people of this country during Covid-19 pandemic by the BJP government were defective and have had a global impact," Soren said.



Chargesheet filed against Darshan in murder case

The Bengaluru Police on Wednesday filed a chargesheet against 17 accused in the Renukaswamy murder case, including Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa. A "watertight" chargesheet was prepared after investigating the case from all aspects, Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda told reporters here. The chargesheet comprises 231 witness statements and technical and electronic evidence, the police said, adding it was a massive investigation. The 3,991-page chargesheet (with seven volumes and 10 files) was submitted to the 24th Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate court. "We have arrested 17 people in this case who are in judicial custody. There are three direct eye witnesses; 27 witnesses have given their statements before the court and other witnesses have recorded their statements before the police," Dayananda said.



'My honour in your hands': Omar's emotional appeal

National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah on Wednesday made a passionate appeal to the people of Ganderbal to vote for him, saying his honour is now in their hands. Abdullah filed his nomination papers earlier from the constituency, marking the return of the NC leader to the constituency that he represented from 2008 to 2014 when he was the chief minister of the NC-Congress coalition government in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. He won the 2014 assembly polls from Beerwah assembly seat in central Kashmir's Budgam district, leaving the Ganderbal seat to his then party colleague Ishfaq Jabbar. Abdullah, who contested the 2024 Lok Sabha polls from Baramulla constituency, had lost to independent candidate Engineer Rashid. Addressing his party workers at the NC office here.

India supports policy of development, asserts Modi

PNS ■ BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday said India supports a "policy of development, and not expansionism", a remark that appeared directed at China as he wrapped up a bilateral visit to Brunei, where the two countries also reiterated their commitment to "freedom of navigation" in the region. India and Brunei elevated their ties to "enhanced partnership" as Prime Minister Modi held wide-ranging talks with Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah covering defence, trade and investment.



India and Brunei elevated their ties to "enhanced partnership" as Prime Minister Modi held wide-ranging talks with Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah covering defence, trade and investment

"We support the policy of development, and not expansionism," Prime Minister Modi said at a banquet hosted by Sultan Bolkiah, without naming any country.

China is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in the South China Sea (SCS) and the East China Sea (ECS). China claims most of the South China Sea, while the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei and Taiwan have counterclaims.

"We agree that a Code of Conduct should be finalised in this region," Modi said, adding that India has always given priority to ASEAN Centrality and will continue to do so.

"We support freedom of

navigation and overflight under international laws like UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)," said Modi, the first Indian Prime Minister to travel to Brunei on a bilateral

visit. A joint statement issued after their talks said both leaders "reiterated their commitment to maintaining and promoting peace, stability, maritime safety and security, as

well as respecting freedom of navigation and overflight and unimpeded lawful commerce, consistent with international law, notably the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982."

'India ideal investment destination'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday arrived here for a two-day visit aimed at boosting India-Singapore friendship, deepening 'strategic partnership' and attracting investment from the Southeast Asian country. During his visit at the invitation of his Singaporean counterpart Lawrence Wong, the prime minister will connect with three generations of Singapore's leadership, officials in New Delhi

said. "Landed in Singapore. Looking forward to the various meetings aimed at boosting the India-Singapore friendship. India's reforms and the talent of our Yuva Shakti makes our nation an ideal investment destination. We also look forward to closer cultural ties," Modi posted on X soon after his arrival for his fifth official trip to Singapore. Modi flew to Singapore after

wrapping his visit to Brunei, the first bilateral visit there by an Indian prime minister. "PM @narendramodi lands in the Lion city, Singapore today. Warmly received by Minister of Home Affairs and Law K Shanmugam of Singapore. An action packed agenda lies ahead," Ministry of External Affairs said in a post on X. The prime minister will receive an official welcome at the Parliament.

'Will do anything to defeat BJP,' says Sisodia

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

AAP leader Manish Sisodia on Wednesday said his party will do "anything" to defeat the BJP, even allying with the Congress for the Haryana Assembly polls.

The former deputy chief minister of Delhi, who was campaigning in Haryana, said alliance with the Congress will be finalised after AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind

Kejriwal is released from prison. Party leaders from both sides have already held two rounds of talks over seat sharing in Haryana, where polls are due on October 5. The AAP has demanded nine seats against Congress's offer of seven seats, party insiders said. Sisodia said the BJP has "betrayed" the people of Haryana in its 10-year rule.

"We Will do anything to defeat the BJP. Kejriwal has to come out and we will finalise.

Bangladesh will become "big brother of Pakistan": Giriraj Singh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stating that Bangladesh's control has fallen into such hands that it will become the "big brother of Pakistan", Union Minister Giriraj Singh on Wednesday asserted that investors will shy away from the neighbouring nation.

Singh was speaking at a curtain raiser event of Bharat Tex 2025 to be held from February 14-17 at the Bharat Mandapam here.

The minister's remark comes in the backdrop of recent violence that led to regime change in Bangladesh.



Singh was speaking at a curtain raiser event of Bharat Tex 2025 to be held from February 14-17 at the Bharat Mandapam here

"Ab Bangladesh ki dori to aise haath main chala gaya hai, ki Pakistan ka bada Bhai ban jayega, Chhota nahi rahega, to kaun investor wahan jaana chahega (Reins of Bangladesh

fallen into such hands that it will become big brother of Pakistan...then which investor would like to go there)," Singh said. Elaborating on his comments, the minister said that

the Indian textile industry is not facing any challenge either from Bangladesh or Vietnam as India has a large labour market. He further said that if Bangladesh becomes like Pakistan, investors will think before going there.

The minister also said there are plans to link every sector to the production-linked incentive scheme. "...We are trying to bring more PLI schemes, to link every sector to it," Singh said. Bharat Tex 2025 is a mega global textiles event being organised by a consortium of Textile Export Promotion.

'All three MVA parties vying for Maha CM's post'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Union minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday claimed that all three major constituents of the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) were keen to get the Maharashtra Chief Minister's post.

He was reacting to reports that MVA allies -- Congress, NCP (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT) -- were likely to decide that the party winning the most seats in the coming assembly polls will get the top post. "All three constituents are in the race for the top post...It is their internal matter," Goyal told reporters here. The BJP MP, who represents North Mumbai, also denied claims that development in his constituency is suffering as civic elections have been pending for more than two years and the Brihanmumbai.

'World looks at India for new models, solutions'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The world looks at India for new models and solutions to challenges of our age. "I exhort the academic fraternity to work in a focused and time-bound manner for reinventing their institutions, transforming higher educational landscape and achieving national priorities," he said.

Pradhan also called upon the academic fraternity to reinvent their institutions and achieve "national priorities". The minister made the remarks in his address at a workshop on Institutional Development Plan (IDP) organised by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

"Our education must address 21st century aspirations and create solutions for local and global challenges. The world looks at India's talent pool for new models and

solutions to challenges of our age.

"Education will propel India from being a consuming economy to becoming a producing economy," he added.

The minister asserted that the institutional development plan should focus on enhancing competencies of our demography, integrating Indian languages in higher learning, prioritising innovation, entrepreneurship and job-creation, and achieving global standard of research & development.



PM miserably failed in protecting people of Manipur: Kharge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "miserably failing" to protect the people of Manipur and said the turmoil in the state is another stark addition to the long list of his "betrayals" of the people of India.

Kharge alleged that it has been 16 months since Manipur has been engulfed in violence, but the BJP's 'double engine' government has done nothing to mitigate it.

No measure has been taken which instils confidence among the people of all the communities to ensure peace and normalcy, he claimed.

"Why has the Manipur CM (N Biren Singh) made to brazen it out and has not been sacked by you? Is he not culpable in virtually paralysing the state machinery, and mak-



Kharge alleged that it has been 16 months since Manipur has been engulfed in violence, but the BJP's 'double engine' government has done nothing to mitigate it

ing obnoxious statements, now recorded in public domain? A resignation drama was enacted to shamelessly dodge that bullet," he said.

"Modi ji, why have you been so remorseless? Why have you not bothered to set foot in the state? It is because of your ego that people of all communities are suffering. Your government's rank incompetency and shamelessness has not been able to start

even a fundamental peace process!" Kharge said in his post on X. He said bombing through drone attacks have just taken place in Imphal West district and Union Home Minister Amit Shah "seems to be asleep at the wheel".

"Even your own BJP leaders and their houses are being attacked. Was the Governor removed because she raised her voice against the deplorable conditions of the relief camps?" the Congress chief said.

"At least 235 people have been killed. Countless injured. 67,000 people have been displaced and thousands including women and children continue to languish in relief camps with deplorable conditions," Kharge said.

No link between mobile phone use, brain cancer

SAYS WHO-COMMISSIONED REVIEW

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There is no link between using a mobile phone and developing brain cancer, according to a review of studies, which was commissioned by the World Health Organization.

An international team of researchers looked at more than 5,000 studies of which 63, published between 1994 to 2022, were included in the final analysis.

The team, led by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), found that even though the use of wireless technology has "massively" increased over the last two decades, cases of brain cancers have not risen.

The analysis, "the most comprehensive and up-to-date

The team, led by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), found that even though the use of wireless technology has "massively" increased over the last two decades, cases of brain cancers have not risen

assessment of the evidence to date," is published in the journal Environment International. In May 2011, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) -- the WHO's cancer agency -- classified exposure to radio waves as "possibly carcinogenic to humans," based on an increased risk for glioma, a malignant type of brain cancer, associated with wireless phone use. Mobile phones use radio waves for communication.

However, the classification was "largely based on limited

evidence from human observational studies," according to the researchers.

"This systematic review of human observational studies is based on a much larger dataset compared to that examined by the IARC, which also includes more recent and more comprehensive studies, so we can be more confident in the conclusion that exposure to radio waves from wireless technology is not a human health hazard," lead researcher Ken Karipidis, Health Impact Assessment Assistant Director



at ARPANSA, said. The authors found that exposure to radio waves from mobile phones was not associated with an increased risk of glioma or other brain-related cancers such as meningioma, pituitary tumours and paediatric brain tumours.

They also called for studies that could look at the effects of 5G mobile networks.

"Given that wireless communications have only recently started to use (radio) frequencies above 6 (gigahertz) there are no epidemiological studies investigating 5G mobile networks directly as yet, but it is envisaged that future prospective cohort studies should cover this and other future planned technologies," the authors wrote

Odisha MLAs demand salary hike

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Cutting across party lines, Odisha legislators on Wednesday urged Speaker Surama Padhy to direct the state government to introduce a Bill to increase the salary and pension of MLAs and ex-members.

The issue was raised during the Zero Hour by senior Congress MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati and supported by BJD lawmaker Ashwini Patra, BJP's Sanatan Bijuli, and others. They highlighted the difficulties faced due to the current pay package amidst rising essential commodity prices and meeting public expectations. The legislators also pointed out that some former MLAs are struggling to secure funds for medical.

SC to hear Kejriwal's pleas against arrest today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Thursday Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's pleas seeking bail and challenging his arrest by the CBI in the alleged excise policy scam.

According to the cause list, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan is likely to hear the matter. The top court had on August 23 allowed the CBI to file its counter affidavit in the matter and gave two days to Kejriwal to file a rejoinder.

Kejriwal has filed two separate petitions challenging the denial of bail and against his

arrest by the CBI in the case. He has challenged the August 5 order of the Delhi High Court upholding his arrest.

The AAP chief was arrested by the CBI on June 26.

On August 14, the top court refused to grant interim bail to Kejriwal in the case and sought a response from the probe agency

on his plea challenging his arrest. The Delhi High Court had on August 5 upheld the arrest of the chief minister as legal, and said there was no malice in the acts done by the CBI which was able to demonstrate how the AAP supremo could influence witnesses.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## A boost to 'Act East'

Prime Minister Modi's visit to Singapore, marks a crucial step in fortifying India's 'Act East' policy

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Singapore marks a significant milestone in India's 'Act East' policy, reinforcing the strategic importance of the Southeast Asian region in India's foreign relations. Modi's Singapore visit enhanced bilateral cooperation in key areas, reflecting India's broader goals in the Indo-Pacific. Singapore occupies a pivotal position in India's 'Act East' policy, serving as a gateway to Southeast Asia and a key partner in advancing India's Indo-Pacific strategy. As the coordinator of ASEAN-India relations from 2021 to 2024, Singapore plays an instrumental role in shaping the regional dynamics between India and ASEAN, a bloc crucial for maintaining peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. Prime Minister Modi's visit underscores the deepening of ties between the two nations, particularly in areas such as trade, digitalisation, and sustainable development. With a trade volume reaching \$36.6 billion in 2023, Singapore is India's largest trade partner in Asia.



PM Modi's agenda during the visit included discussions with Singapore's senior leadership, including President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, aimed at exploring new avenues for collaboration in advanced manufacturing, logistics, and commercial real estate.

The visit is expected to yield significant economic benefits, particularly in attracting foreign direct investment from Singaporean companies into India's emerging sectors. The focus on advanced manufacturing and digitalisation aligns with India's

broader goal of transforming into a global manufacturing hub. Additionally, the emphasis on sustainable development highlights India's commitment to addressing global challenges such as climate change, a priority for both nations. Strategically, Singapore's role as a crucial partner in the Indo-Pacific region cannot be overstated. India's '5 S' approach—Sammaan (respect), Samvad (dialogue), Sahyog (cooperation), Shanti (peace), and Samridhi (prosperity)—forms the foundation of its Indo-Pacific engagement, with Singapore and Brunei being key players. The visit reinforces India's commitment to maintaining a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific, where ASEAN plays a central role. Indeed, Prime Minister Modi's visit to Singapore is more than a bilateral engagement; it is a reaffirmation of India's commitment to strengthening ties with Southeast Asia as part of its 'Act East' policy. The discussions held during this visit are likely to pave the way for deeper economic and strategic cooperation, not just with Singapore, but across the Indo-Pacific region. As India continues to assert its role as a key player in the region, Singapore remains an indispensable partner in this endeavor, embodying the principles of dialogue, cooperation, and shared prosperity.

### PICTALK



An aerial view of the illuminated Chennai Street Circuit during the Formula 4 Street Car Race, in Chennai

# BJP's recruitment drive to solidify power



KALYANI SHANKAR

As the BJP aims to recruit 100 million new members, it continues to strengthen its dominance, despite facing criticism and internal challenges

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party is working to expand on a two-track basis. The first is by recruiting influential leaders from other parties, particularly Congress. Although this may involve a small number of leaders, their influence is significant.

Second, the party is focusing on enrolling a large number of new members. Former Jharkhand Mukti Morcha Chief Minister Champai Soren joined the BJP after current CM Hemant Soren, allegedly involved in a scam, was released last week and resumed his post. This move adds to the trend of influential chief ministers joining the BJP, highlighting the party's strategic success. The BJP embraces well-known leaders from other parties as they bring their influence and workers along. — Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, imported from Congress, is a classic example. Sarma has become the go-to man in the northeast. According to the National Election Watch-ADR, the main reasons for defections and party switching are the absence of value-based politics, greed for money and power, rewarding political positions, and lack of efficient, honest, and credible leaders. BJP has plans to recruit 100 million new members on a parallel track.

At last week's meeting, the BJP leadership decided that the drive would be in two phases: September 2 to 25 and October 1 to 15. Over the last decade, the BJP has seen significant growth. In the 1980s, upper-middle-class, urban, and Hindus primarily supported the BJP. It has since built a broader political base, showing its increasing influence. The BJP has overtaken Congress and is already the world's largest party, with 180 million members. The Grand Old Party, Congress, has 130 million members. Between 2014 and 2019, around 180 million people joined the BJP nationwide. Eighty thousand leaders and workers from various parties have joined the BJP, which aims to recruit about 100,000 leaders at national and district levels.



Through this drive, the BJP collects data about its members, including their caste, gender, age, residence, and other details. In the last decade, many influential Congress leaders, including former chief ministers and ministers, shifted to the BJP, revealing their frustration, greed and lust for power. The BJP has rewarded some of them with good positions. Notable leaders among them include Himanta Biswa Sarma, Gulam Nabi Azad, Captain Amarendra Singh, Kapil Sibal, Jitin Prasad, R.P.N. Singh, Milind Deora, and Jyotiraditya Scindia. Former Maharashtra chief minister Ashok Chavan, Ritesh Pandey, Sangita Azad, and others have recently joined the BJP.

They come from various political parties such as Congress, Bahujan Samaj Party, All India Trinamool Congress, and YSRCP. The BJP has benefited the most from members switching sides, while the Congress has suffered the most since 2014. Even after winning, the Opposition parties are concerned that the BJP will try to persuade their legislators to switch—many defectors at crucial moments, such as during government majority voting. Why do they defect? If there is



EIGHTY THOUSAND LEADERS AND WORKERS FROM VARIOUS PARTIES HAVE JOINED THE BJP, WHICH AIMS TO RECRUIT ABOUT 100,000 LEADERS AT NATIONAL AND DISTRICT LEVELS

a reason for the defectors to leave their respective parties, the BJP also embraces them without hesitating. These leaders fear becoming politically irrelevant when their party loses power. By aligning with the dominant BJP, they hope to gain control and secure a political future for their children. The BJP's successful strategy of attracting leaders from other parties is evident in the ADR analysis. It shows that 22% of re-contesting candidates who switched parties joined the BJP, followed by 10% joining the Congress and 6% joining the BSP. Over the past decade, the BJP has attracted several leaders from other parties, contributing to the rise of leaders like Himanta Biswa Sarma in the northeastern region. Why does the BJP welcome these defectors? There are three key reasons: First, it weakens the party from which the defection occurs. Second, it allows the BJP to absorb known leaders from established parties, strengthening its ranks. Third, given the BJP's lack of second-rung leaders, it is easier to absorb the defectors. It is not as if dissenters have not left the BJP. Some, like Kalyan Singh, Shankar Singh Vaghela, and Yediyurappa (all chief ministers), launched their par-

ties but returned to the BJP when they failed. The BJP's deeply ideological glue holds it together. The BJP's long-time loyal members are unhappy when newcomers get good positions while they have been faithful to the party. This has happened in the past. During Vajpayee's leadership, the party could only accommodate some, and others left. While the party has been expanding, its leadership is still dominated by the Upper caste. The BJP has strengths but receives criticism for its limited ideology, aggressive attitude, complacency, and arrogance. The BJP's upcoming membership drive will test its strength in the post-2024 poll period. Though it emerged as the single largest party, it got only 240 seats in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, 32 short of the majority. Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to achieve a "Congress-Free India," but it may be challenging. You cannot eliminate a 140-year-old party in a day, as the Congress showed revival instincts. The BJP must refrain from repeating the mistakes of the Congress to stay in power. (The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### ACTOR VIJAY ENTERS POLITICS

Madam — Environment prevailing, political narratives set, leadership space available and the ability to convert the mass created in the film industry determine the success of a film star who turns into a political leader. Though many film stars have entered into politics only few have succeeded. While M G Ramachandran (MGR) and N T Rama Rao (NTR) can be said to have had superlative successes both the stars have had in the 1970/80s are in no way comparable to any. For both MGR and NTR carefully built their image as a mass leader over two decades before plunging into politics.

While Jayalalitha was successful she had the advantage MGR's backing and her cleverly capitalizing on MGR's image. One more leader who came very close to success was Vijaykanth who set an anti corruption narrative and it took nearly a decade for him to become the LOP after which he died due to poor health. Superstar Rajinikanth backtracked after announcing his entry in politics citing health reasons. Seeman also from Kollywood though has his own vote bank he is yet to prove himself as a successful leader. Pawan Kalyan from Tollywood has tasted some success thanks to the alliance with BJP and TDP in AP. We will have to wait to see Vijay who has been successful as a hero in Kollywood and has a youth following, entering into TN politics when the towering leaders like Jayalalitha and Karunanidhi are absent the political narrative he sets and his ability to convert the mass following into his vote bank. Despite all these strengths the political party possess in the state, to fight the elections on its own without an alliance and form the government on its own is difficult and hence we will have to see the partners with whom he forges alliance in the 2026 TN assembly elections which he has announced to fight.

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

SC ADDRESSES FARMERS' CONCERNS. Madam— The recent Supreme Court

### Improve ties with neighbours



The editorial on SOSA details the need for India to be in this forum. Equally important for India is to improve its ties with its neighbours. As of now India is an island

decision to form a panel to address the farmers' concerns at the Shambhu border marks a critical step in resolving the ongoing crisis. It is essential that this panel operates with the utmost transparency and fairness, ensuring that the voices of the farmers are genuinely heard and their grievances adequately addressed. Farmers, the backbone of the nation, have been protesting for their rights and livelihood. Their demands are not just about immediate relief but also about securing the future of agriculture in the country. The formation of this panel must not be seen as a mere formality. Concrete actions must follow, with clear timelines and accountability. Moreover, this issue transcends regional boundaries and affects the entire nation. The agricultural sector's stability is crucial for food security and economic growth. A balanced and empathetic approach is necessary, where the government and the judiciary work in unison to safeguard the interests of both the farmers and the nation.

India's dependability on China is more. 70% of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients imported from China are inevitable to maintain the position of India as a global Pharma hub. Even Solar cells need to come from China. Therefore the so called arrangements and agreements against China are to push more weapons in the name of security. India needs to be careful not to fall in the trap of weapon mafia. A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## A green tribute to mothers and the environment

Inspired by PM Modi's "Ek Ped Ma Ke Naam" initiative, the Chhattisgarh Government has launched the ambitious "People for Peepal" plantation drive in Nava Raipur



O P CHOUDHARY

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the "Ek Ped Ma Ke Naam" (a tree in the name of the mother) initiative, a deep thought process went behind it. One, to cherish the memory of our mothers; and two, to environmental conservation. The Chhattisgarh government took it as a unique opportunity to give Nava Raipur a new identity. The Nava Raipur Atal Nagar Development Authority launched the "People for Peepal" plantation drive to transform the city into the first "Peepal Tree" city in India. We also saw it as an opportunity to address the pressing issue of climate change by establishing Nava Raipur as a "Peepal Tree" City in the coming years. This drive reflects a strong commitment to environmental sustainability and aims to set a new benchmark for urban green spaces. We envision a city where extensive tree planting and green infrastructure contribute significantly to improving the urban environment and combatting climate



change. Echoing the Prime Minister's commitment to Mother Earth, the Chhattisgarh government is together with Modi's vision of nurturing our planet the way our mothers take care of us. The campaign, kick-started by Narendra Modi this World Environment Day on June 5, will help in reversing land degradation, recharge groundwater, prevent desertification and bring in drought resilience. The "People for Peepal" campaign aims to plant over 20,000 Peepal trees apart from 80,000 trees of other varieties throughout the city. Peepal or Ficus Religiosa, a large and fast-growing deciduous tree unique to

India that is a revered symbol of eternal life, wisdom and spirituality, has been chosen for its significant ecological benefits and cultural importance. The massive plantation will ensure that Peepal trees become a prominent and recognizable feature across Nava Raipur. In addition to Peepal trees, which are one of the most oxygen-producing trees, the drive will include planting other key species such as Neem, Banyan, and Jamun. These trees are integral to the city's green infrastructure, enhancing biodiversity and providing additional environmental benefits. To boost community involvement, the campaign includes a "virtu-

al adoption programme". This initiative allows individuals and organizations to adopt trees virtually, fostering widespread engagement and support for the drive. This approach encourages collective responsibility towards environmental conservation and helps ensure the campaign's success. The ultimate goal of this extensive plantation drive is to position Nava Raipur as a model city for environmental preservation and to earn recognition as the first "Peepal Tree" City of India. By expanding green spaces and promoting biodiversity, the city aims to inspire other urban areas and set a global example for sustainable urban development. Through this initiative, Nava Raipur seeks not only to address climate change but also to enhance the quality of life for its residents, establishing itself as a leading example of environmental stewardship and green urban planning. (The writer is the Minister of Finance of Government of Chhattisgarh; views are personal)



## FIRST COLUMN

## BEYOND SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

We must reconcile modern progress with sustainability by shifting to spiritually



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

The competitive world in which we are living believes in the theory of "Survival of the Fittest," meaning that the strongest one is the one who survives. However, humanity in the 21st century has perceived this in a rather different manner because, in the actual sense, the strongest people are those who are most ethical and helpful, not those who gain strength by hurting others and exploiting nature. Today, educated people all over the world are well aware of the fact that the environment across the globe has deteriorated menacingly to its lowest ebb, and if this deterioration continues further for some more time at this rate, then the very existence of the human race will be in grave danger. But today, when economic progress takes precedence even over politics, many governments are under great pressure to increase production substantially and to take major strides towards high economic evolution and growth by undertaking developmental activities on a large scale for a quick turnaround. Therefore, every government increasingly engages itself in fulfilling the goals of modernisation through rapid industrialisation and technological advancement to create more jobs and thriving economies. But the real dilemma is that if the governments accelerate developmental activities and industrialisation, then the quality of the environment will be badly affected. If they do not take visible steps towards economic growth, then they cannot compete with other nations and may face criticism from their people and ultimately have to step down. So, the challenge faced by all countries is: "How to improve or sustain the quality of the environment while ensuring a high level of economic activity and growth?"



The solution that is generally suggested is that there should be sustainable development. But is this practically feasible without affecting the social domain? There is bound to be more and more strain on the environment and the depleting of mineral and natural resources. It is, therefore, urgent and important that we realize at the earliest that it will simply be impossible for the earth to sustain us if the strain on it increases. So, for our survival in a clean and healthy environment, it is of the utmost necessity to reduce our consumption and wastage by changing our lifestyle.

With massive industrialization and economic growth, the gains of some sectors of the society inevitably create pressures on the social fabric of an erratic developing society creating a great imbalance in the consumption levels of a small number of rich and an ever-increasing downtrodden. Hence to overcome all these issues, the need of the hour is to have a simple lifestyle, which is not possible through the virtues of the capitalistic or the socialist system of economy but only through the spiritual orientation of our economic thought because survivors aren't always the strongest; sometimes they're the smartest, but more often simply the luckiest.

Hence it is better to change ourselves before time devastates us. Indeed, we can cultivate a society that prioritizes the health of the planet over short-term gains. Schools, colleges, and universities should integrate environmental education into their curriculums, teaching students not only about the challenges we face but also about the solutions that can lead us to a more sustainable future. In conclusion, the path to true survival does not lie in the outdated notion of 'survival of the fittest,' understood as domination and exploitation. Instead, it lies in our ability to live in harmony with nature and each other, fostering a world where progress is measured not by the wealth we accumulate but by the health of our environment and the well-being of all living beings. If we fail to recognize this and continue on our current path, we risk not only our future but the very survival of the planet itself.

(Writer is a spiritual educator and a columnist; views are personal)

# Reviving the legacy of quality in teacher education



J S RAJPUT

This year's Teacher's Day celebrations carry a special resonance as they align with the enduring concerns of Dr S Radhakrishnan, who passionately advocated for quality in education

Teacher's Day celebrations this year are indeed special in the context of quality, which was the major concern expressed on several occasions by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, whose contributions are recalled with gratitude on this day every year. Necessary academic and professional preparations have been made and the Integrated Teacher Education Programme - ITEP - has already been launched in 64 institutions. This initiative is based on the recommendations of the National Education Policy -NEP-2020 - that after 2030 all of the pre-service teacher preparation programmes would be only of four-year duration and all others shall be scrapped. It would be prudent to recall an earlier experiment in quality teacher preparation which was initiated in 1965 by the then newly established organization, the National Council of Educational Research and Training - NCERT - in its four Regional Colleges (now Institutes) of Education, located in Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, and Mysore.

It was acknowledged at the level of experts and accepted by national decision-makers that the one-year teacher preparation programmes were inadequate in preparing quality teachers and must be replaced by the four-year integrated programmes after senior secondary. The products of these four-year integrated courses established a distinct reputation for themselves in the education sector, and also in other professions as well, which they preferred to join. It is indeed heartening to note that the NEP-2020 made the recommendation on ITEP based upon the solid evidence offered by the NCERT institutions. One is convinced that the growth, development and progress of any nation would be a direct consequence of the quality of education it achieves.

This quality is invariably a product of the level of excellence achieved by the Teacher Education Institutes -TEIs - of the nation. It is the work culture of the TEIs that mandates - without ever saying so formally - the work culture of the schools. The level of competence, commitment and performance witnessed in the TEIs by the student-teachers flows directly to schools and creates practically a comparable environment for school children. It is possible to achieve comprehensive personality evolution over four years and this is well-established in India, courtesy of the NCERT.

One must hasten to add that the proposed ITEP version of the earlier four-year programmes of the NCERT must be handled with great caution and care. Any inadequacy of academic, professional physical and financial resources could inflict irreversible damage to the great initiative. The future of the planet Earth and humanity depends on how education deals with man-nature mutuality. India decided in 2020 that 'The rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge and thought' would be a guiding light for the NEP-2020.

It has, thus, accepted that education in India must be 'rooted in a culture committed to new knowledge.' In every alert and active culture, the tradition of knowledge quest has to remain dynamic in word and deed. It is because of this inherent strength, that Indian culture and its tradition of knowledge quest with its



ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS NEED TO POSE AN INTERNAL QUERY: ARE WE FUNCTIONING AT A LEVEL OF SELF-CONFIDENCE, CONVICTION, DETERMINATION AND PASSION THAT COULD BRING CREDIBILITY TO EACH ONE OF US AND OUR INSTITUTION?

unique objectives and vision are now receiving global attention in the world. Yes, the knowledgeable and concerned persons of the world must come together and realize that the wanton destruction of natural resources without caring for their replenishment has forced scientists to calculate how long the planet Earth could survive.

They must inspire everyone to wake up and realize the dreadful magnitude of the devastation being inflicted on nature must stop, and much more, present big plans before people, but there it all ends. There is a solution that Indians are aware of from "ancient times": 'Aparigraha'. It was put up before the world in very simple terms in his indomitable style by Mahatma Gandhi: Nature has a sufficient resource to meet the needs of everyone but not the greed of anyone."

This is the only alternative. "To me, hope lies in the Teacher! The Teacher can do it if they resolve to do it and the 'Teachers of the world' unite! A new chapter has to be written in every discipline and an emphasis on multidisciplinary concerns of the human knowledge quest, the process of transfer and acquisition of knowledge.

Towards this, teachers shall have to realize, accept and internalize that they are makers of the future of human existence on planet Earth! It is their responsibility to shape every learner coming to them as an unaware and uninitiated person into a personality! That would shape the future generations, would prepare citizens committed to their nation, and their people but fully conscious of their role as international cit-

izens as well. The legendary philosopher, revered statesman and worthy teacher Dr. S. Radhakrishnan was one of the finest intellectual brains of the 20th century. He was a matchless interpreter of Eastern and Western thought, philosophy and the 'concept of a man'. We recall his greatness, and his multifarious contributions, but allow his philosophy and guiding principles for teachers to remain confined to a few shelves of some reputed libraries.

He pleads particularly to institutions of higher learning: "The ideal of the university is the promotion of liberty of mind and or freedom of thought. It has little to do with the protection of privilege or a call to conformity. It contests privilege which is something other than that excellence which follows on intellectual eminence or spiritual greatness. It contests conformity, for each individual has a right to develop his own convictions." Once this is accepted at each appropriate level by all those dealing with higher education, it becomes clear that the seeds for creating such an environment in institutions of higher learning have to be sown in schools!

Schools in the present context just cannot become the nourishing and nurturing grounds for the flowering of new ideas unless school teachers are well-equipped and well-endowed with the determination that every child, every learner is to be encouraged to express himself in whichever way he chooses to; may be in music, sports, mathematics, painting, imagination, creativity, and the like! In India right from the Ministry of Education to primary schools is just forgotten after

every discussion and deliberation! One is referring to the most distinct role of teacher education institutions; TEIs. Quality, ideas, innovations, and imagination are nurtured in schools and universities but how to do so is learnt, internalized and tested in TEIs. To universalize this comprehension, one must be ready with a reality test! We are proud of India of ancient times because of the universality of its culture and acceptance of the essential unity of mankind despite all the apparent diversities.

Academic institutions need to pose an internal query: are we functioning at a level of self-confidence, conviction, determination and passion that could bring credibility to each one of us and our institution? As academics 'have we accepted and succumbed to being 'teachers less original, to ambitions less exalted and to tame compliance with old forms! We were warned over seven-eight decades ago by Dr Radhakrishnan on this count: "There was a dread of venturing outside the safe limits of guaranteed ideas. The country seems to suffer from exhaustion." The future belongs to those equipped with learning that encourages ideas, imagination, curiosity and creativity. The fittest and finest tribute to Dr. Radhakrishnan and in fact to the great Indian tradition of teaching, learning and knowledge quest would be to respect teachers, and treat them as the creators of the future of not only the individual learner but of the society, community and the nation.

(Professor Rajput works in education, social cohesion and religious amity, views are personal)

## The true power and purpose of teaching in a changing world

On this Teacher's Day, let us reflect on the challenges and triumphs of this noble profession

Born into a family of accomplished women, I've often faced a question that has puzzled me for years: "Why did you choose to be a teacher?" This question, posed by family, friends, and even strangers, stems from two assumptions. First, that teaching is a lesser profession, inferior to careers like medicine or bureaucracy, which my sisters have pursued. Second, and more disheartening, is the belief held by some that only those who fail in other "proper" professions resort to teaching. The underlying notion is that teaching is easy and requires no special skills—a perception I find not just ironic but profoundly misguided. The irony lies in the fact that we all remember teachers



SWATI PAL

who profoundly impacted our lives. We recall the teachers whose classes we eagerly attended, whose kindness and encouragement shaped who we are today. Conversely, we also remember those whose classes were dull, who seemed to take pleasure in demeaning students, or who treated teaching as nothing more than a paycheck. The truth is, teaching is easy only for those who see it as mere-

ly a job—a means to an end, rather than a calling. For those who aspire to be remembered as 'good' teachers, the profession is far from easy. It requires dedication, empathy, and a genuine desire to make a difference in students' lives.

Unfortunately, there has been a shift in attitudes towards teaching, influenced by a growing corporate mentality and consumer culture. Many teachers today seem more concerned with holidays, salary increments, and perks than with the students they are supposed to nurture. While it's not wrong to seek these benefits, when they become the sole focus, teaching is reduced to a transactional relationship. This attitude contributes to the neg-

ative perception of teachers in society, where they are often seen as nothing more than paid servants in an "easy" profession.

Yet, the disillusionment among teachers is not entirely self-inflicted. The idealism that once characterized the profession has been eroded by systemic issues that go beyond individual attitudes. Over the three-plus decades I've spent in education, I've witnessed changes that have not always benefited teachers or students. One of the most significant changes has been the shift from an annual examination system to a semester system at the undergraduate level. While the intention of aligning with global patterns is understandable, the semester system has

reduced teaching to a race to complete syllabi, leaving little room for individualized attention or meaningful engagement with students.

This shift is particularly ironic in an era when "quality education" is a buzzword. The question we must ask is whether the semester system truly enhances quality or merely ensures that all the boxes are ticked on time. Teachers who feel they cannot do justice to the curriculum or their students are bound to feel frustrated. Even the most resilient educators may eventually succumb to the pressures of the system, abandoning the high ideals that initially drew them to the profession. The space that the annual system once provided for exploring innovative

teaching methods has been replaced by a relentless focus on deadlines, leading to a sense of exhaustion and apathy among teachers.

The accreditation system, though well-intentioned, has also added to the burden. While it has encouraged institutions to improve infrastructure, training, and community outreach, the process itself is cumbersome. Hours are spent documenting activities and ensuring they conform to prescribed criteria for a good grade. This bureaucratic approach to education often detracts from the unique qualities of individual institutions, fostering a spirit of competition that can be more self-defeating than motivating. Another challenge is the rapid

succession of educational reforms—CBCS, LOCF, NEP, and others. While each reform is introduced with the intention of improving education, the pace of change has led to confusion, inadequate curriculum revision, and a lack of clarity about the objectives of these reforms among both teachers and students.

The result is a situation where "a little learning," as Alexander Pope warned, becomes a "dangerous thing." Instead of fostering deep understanding, these rapid changes have led to superficial learning and a sense of disillusionment among educators. Despite these challenges, I remain steadfast in my belief that teaching is one of the

most powerful professions in the world. A teacher has the potential to drive away the clouds of ignorance to teach empathy and integrity, and to guide students toward a brighter future. Rabindranath Tagore, captured this sentiment beautifully in his poem "Where the Mind is Without Fear," envisioning a world led by reason, truth, and freedom. On this Teacher's Day, I urge my fellow educators to remember the profound role we play in shaping the future. Despite the odds, we must strive to create a better world by becoming more humane and resilient, even if we are the last ones standing.

(The writer is Professor and Principal, Janki Devi Memorial College, DU; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Flipkart expects to create 1 lakh new jobs

E-commerce major Flipkart is expecting to create 1 lakh new jobs for the upcoming festival season sale, The Big Billion Days 2024, across India, the company said on Wednesday. Ahead of The Big Billion Days (TBB) 2024, Flipkart has launched 11 new fulfillment centres (FCs) across nine cities, bringing their total number in the country to 83, the Walmart group firm said in a statement. "With its commitment to socio-economic development, Flipkart remains focused on enabling employment opportunities, creating over 1 lakh new jobs within its supply chain across the country. This aims to strengthen Flipkart's operational capabilities while empowering local communities and driving economic growth during this year's festive season," the statement said. Flipkart said the new job roles will be spread across various supply chain verticals, including inventory managers, warehouse associates, logistics coordinators, kirana partners and delivery drivers.



Star Health launches insurance policy in Braille

Private sector retail health insurer Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Ltd on Wednesday launched its first insurance policy in Braille - Special Care Gold -- tailored for individuals with 40 per cent or more disability. It is a significant step towards ensuring that the visually-impaired can access information and make independent decisions on matters related to their health and finance, the company said. Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Ltd in a statement said about 34 million people were visually impaired in India and it is committed to support the unserved, marginalised section of society with training and up-skilling them to become health insurance agents. "We are pleased to announce the launch of Special Care Gold policy in Braille. This is a significant milestone in our mission to deliver equitable access to health insurance across all segments of society."



Dr Reddy's, Lupin recall products from US

Dr Reddy's Laboratories and Lupin are recalling products in the US due to manufacturing issues, as per the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA). Dr Reddy's Laboratories Inc, a subsidiary of Hyderabad-based drug firm, is recalling Ibuprofen tablets in multiple strengths, the US health regulator said in its latest enforcement report. Ibuprofen tablets are indicated for pain relief and fever. New Jersey-based Dr Reddy's Laboratories Inc. is recalling 1,03,298 bottles (800 mg); 31,802 bottles (600 mg); and 14,940 bottles (400 mg) of Ibuprofen tablets in the US market, USFDA said. The company is recalling the affected lot due to "Failed impurities/degradation specifications," it added. "Results for unknown impurity were 0.13 per cent and 0.11 per cent, respectively, exceeding the 0.10 per cent specification limit," USFDA noted. The company initiated the Class II nationwide recall on August 6 this year. USFDA stated that Lupin is recalling 4,554 bottles of Cefixime for Oral Suspension in the market.

India provided more climate finance than rich countries: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India contributed USD 1.28 billion in climate finance through multilateral development banks (MDBs) in 2022, surpassing the contributions of many developed countries, according to a new analysis.

The analysis, conducted by the UK-based think tank ODI and the Zurich Climate Resilience Alliance, comes amid a renewed push by some developed countries to broaden the donor base for climate finance to include developing countries like China and Saudi Arabia.

The report reveals that only 12 developed countries provided their fair share of inter-

national climate finance in 2022. These countries are -- Norway, France, Luxembourg, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Japan, the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium and Finland.

Researchers noted that the significant gap in climate finance is largely due to the United States failing to contribute its fair share. Australia, Spain, Canada and the United Kingdom also performed relatively poorly in this regard.

The analysis has identified the top 30 non-Annex II countries that provided substantial climate finance to developing countries in 2022 through multilateral contributions to development banks and climate funds.



Sitharaman moots quarterly targets for capex by ministries

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday underlined the importance of setting quarterly targets for capex by various ministries and expedite spending in the remaining months of the year.

In a review meeting on the budgeted capital expenditure for the Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways (MoRTH) and the Department of Telecom, Sitharaman exhorted the respective ministries to expedite implementation and make up for the June and September quarter targets in December quarter of FY2024-25 itself, the finance ministry said in a statement.

A series of review meetings to be chaired by Sitharaman has been scheduled with various ministries/departments with significant capex outlays.

During the meeting, Sitharaman underlined the importance of setting quarterly targets and ensuring that they are achieved within a stipulated timeframe, the statement added.

Budgetary capex allocation for the Ministry of Road,



Sitharaman underlined the importance of setting quarterly targets and ensuring that they are achieved within a stipulated timeframe, the statement added. Budgetary capex allocation for the Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways has increased by 90 per cent from Rs 1.42 lakh crore in FY2019-20 to Rs 2.72 lakh crore in FY2024-25.

Transport and Highways has increased by 90 per cent from Rs 1.42 lakh crore in FY2019-20 to Rs 2.72 lakh crore in FY2024-25.

Secretary MoRTH apprised the Union finance minister about the capex plans for the remaining FY 2024-25.

Secretary MoRTH informed the Union finance minister that efforts are being made to attract private capital through various measures and efforts are underway to ensure that asset recycling targets are also

met, the statement added.

During the review with respect to the ministry of communication, the details of capex plans in FY2024-25 for Bharat Net Programme, 4G mobile projects -- Indigenous Technology, Network for Spectrum, and 4G saturation and other mobile projects were discussed. The estimated capex budgetary allocation for the ministry of communication in FY2024-25 stands at Rs 28,835 crore.

Secretary, Department of

Telecommunications (DoT), apprised the Union finance minister about the capex plan and targets for the Bharat Net project, which aims at providing affordable broadband services to citizens in rural and remote areas.

DoT secretary also apprised about the capital expenditure plans for the 4G saturation project and other mobile tower projects, which seek to improve connectivity in uncovered villages in remote and difficult areas.

Institutional investors put in Rs 2,300 cr bids for GIC Re OFS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Institutional investors on Wednesday put in bids worth about Rs 2,300 crore in the government's offer for sale (OFS) of General Insurance Corporation (GIC Re).

The first government disinvestment of the current fiscal -- the OFS of GIC RE -- saw a slow start on Wednesday with the issue getting fully subscribed just before the close of market hours. The OFS received bids from non-retail investors for 5.81 crore shares, which is 108.49 per cent of the over 5.35 crore shares reserved for them, as per BSE data.

Retail investors will get to bid in the OFS on Thursday. Based on indicative price of Rs 395.11 for the bids, institutional investors put about Rs 2,300 crore bids for GIC Re shares on Wednesday.

Nifty snaps 14-day run, Sensex drops 202 pts

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Nifty took a breather after a 14-day winning run while Sensex closed lower by 202 points on Wednesday due to profit-taking in IT, banking and metal shares amid weak global trends.

Recovering from the day's lows, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled at 82,352.64, down by 202.80 points or 0.25 per cent. The index opened lower and tumbled further 721.75 points or 0.87 per cent to hit a low of 81,833.69 amid losses in Asian markets.

Snapping its 14-day rally, the NSE Nifty declined 81.15 points or 0.32 per cent to 25,198.70. Intra-day, it tanked 196.05 points or 0.77 per cent to 25,083.80. Nifty had surged nearly 1,141 points or 4.59 per cent in 14 straight days to Tuesday.

"The warning signals from weak US manufacturing data added concerns about a potential slowdown in the US economy, which dragged the



domestic indices. Due to a lack of major domestic triggers, the indices will take direction based on global cues," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Axis Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Infosys, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Steel, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finance and Adani Ports were the major laggards.

Asian Paints, Hindustan Unilever, UltraTech Cement, Sun Pharma and Reliance Industries were among the gainers.

"The markets ended their gaining streak, losing nearly half a per cent due to weak global cues. In-line with other Asian markets, the Nifty index opened with a gap down, following a decline in US markets. However, selective buying in heavyweight stocks helped

trim the losses as the session progressed," Ajit Mishra -- SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 0.15 per cent while smallcap index climbed 0.26 per cent.

Among the indices, metal dropped 1.11 per cent, IT (0.91 per cent), telecommunication (0.82 per cent), teck (0.71 per cent) and bankex (0.70 per cent).

Healthcare, commodities, consumer discretionary and realty were the gainers.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai, and Hong Kong ended sharply lower.

European markets were also trading in the red. The US markets ended significantly lower on Tuesday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,029.25 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.14 per cent to USD 73.65 a barrel

India will need 10-20 chip plants in next 10 years: Semi CEO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India will need 10-20 chip manufacturing plants over the next 10 years, Semicon India organiser Semi President and CEO Ajit Manocha said on Wednesday. Manocha said that huge interest is developing in the semiconductor ecosystem, especially in Taiwan after the success of Foxconn and Wistron in India.

"I think we will need probably in the next 10 years... maybe 10-20 fabs in India. This is a rough estimate," Manocha said.

Semi will organise the first global conference on semiconductor ecosystem, Semicon India 2024 from September 11-13 in Noida. Manocha has over 40 years of experience in the semiconductor industry.

Two-wheeler makers should provide helmets at a discount: Gadkari

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday said two-wheeler manufacturers should provide helmet to the purchaser of the vehicle at a discount or reasonable rate as many people die in road accidents just for not wearing helmets.

Addressing an event here, Gadkari said 50,029 people lost their lives in accidents in the country in 2022 when they were not wearing helmets.

"I am thinking of requesting two-wheeler manufacturers... if they can give some reasonable discount on helmets to the purchaser of the vehicle then we can save the life of the people," he said. The road transport and

highways minister also stressed on the need to plan the parking arrangement for school buses.

Noting that the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019 has enforced hefty penalties on traffic offences, he said, "But actually, effective enforcement is also a big challenge."

Gadkari said his ambition is to start driving school in every taluka of the country.

According to a new report titled "National Strategy for Prevention of Unintentional Injury", compiled by the Ministry of Health, road crashes

cause the most deaths due to unintentional injuries in India, accounting for more than 43 per cent of such fatalities, with overspeeding being the leading reason.



"There were 4,30,504 deaths from unintentional injuries and 1,70,924 deaths due to intentional injuries in India in 2022. From 2016 to 2022, there has been a marginal increase in deaths due to unintentional and intentional injuries. Road traffic crashes are the highest cause of unintentional injuries (43.7 per cent)," the report had said

Rupee falls 4 paise to close at 84.02 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee fell 4 paise to close at 84.02 (provisional) on Wednesday amid a sharp decline in the domestic equity markets as investors stayed away from riskier assets.

However, a weak dollar against major currencies overseas and a drop in crude oil prices capped further losses in the local unit, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 83.96 and traded in the range of 83.95-84.01 during the day.

The unit moved in a tight range of 83.95-83.97 for most part of the session. However, it slipped at the fag-end of the trading hours to settle at 84.02 (provisional), 4 paise below its previous close of 83.98. "...Weak domestic markets and risk aversion in the global markets pressurised the rupee.

However, a decline in crude oil prices and FII inflows cushioned the downside.

SILVER PLUMMETS RS 1,650 Gold slumps Rs 450 to Rs 73,600 per 10 gram

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices slumped by Rs 450 to Rs 73,600 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday, extending losses for the third straight session amid decline in precious metal rates in the overseas markets.

In the previous session, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 74,050 per 10 grams.

Silver prices also plummeted by Rs 1,650 to Rs 83,600 per kilogram from Rs 85,250 per kg in the previous close, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also plunged by Rs

450 to Rs 73,700 per 10 grams. Domestically, traders said reduced demand from jewellery and retail buyers as well as global influences led to the fall in gold prices.

In the international markets, Comex gold was trading 0.13 per cent lower at USD 2,519.80 per ounce.

"Gold fell in the European trading hours on Wednesday after the release of disappointing US manufacturing data on Tuesday which triggered a worldwide sell-off in all financial asset classes, which has left the market mood gloomy," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

India remains fastest growing paper market: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India remains the fastest-growing paper market in the world with domestic consumption of packaging paper and paperboard growing at 8.2 per cent in 2023-24, a report said on Wednesday.

According to the report by Indian Paper Manufacturers Association (IPMA) for 2023-24, packaging paper & paperboard market is growing at an annual rate of 8.2 per cent in the country.

The domestic packaging paper & paperboard market stands at about 15 million tonnes which is nearly 65 per cent of the total paper, paperboard and newsprint market of 23 million tonnes in the country, the report said.

Demand for better quality packaging of FMCG products, textiles, pharmaceuticals, among others, as well as, booming e-commerce and rising healthcare spends are among the factors that are driving the growth of packaging paper & paperboard market in India, it said.

The ban on single-use plastic, with paper offering a sustainable environment-friendly option, has also emerged as a key demand driver for these products, it added.

"Overall, the demand for paper in India is growing at 6-7 per cent per annum, making it one of the fastest growing markets in the world," the report said.

Writing & printing (W&P) paper market, which is tradi-

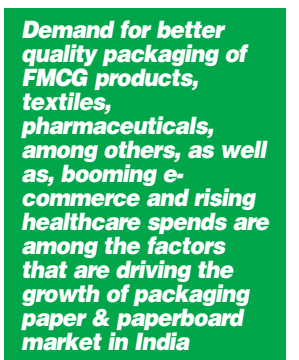


tionally associated with consumption of paper in the country, is growing at around 3 per cent and within this, copier paper demand is growing at the fastest rate of 4.5 per cent, it said.

Per capita paper consump-

tion in India is currently at a low of 16 kg as against the global average of 57 kg. Developed countries have 200+ kg of per capita consumption of paper, as per the report.

"Per capita paper consump-



tion in India is projected to increase over time with increasing levels of literacy, higher growth of organised retail and need for packaging, and overall economic development," said Pawan Agarwal, President IPMA

Upcoming Vadhvan Port attracting significant global interest: Sonowal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The upcoming Vadhvan Port in Maharashtra's Palghar is attracting significant global interest and would create 12 lakh jobs once operational, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said.

The Ports, Shipping, and Waterways minister was speaking at the curtain raiser event for the launch of 'Sagarmanthan: The Great Oceans Dialogue'.

The inaugural edition of the event is scheduled to take place on November 18 and 19, 2024, in Mumbai.

The minister also reflected on India's recent maritime



coast, being developed with an estimated investment of USD 10 billion, is set to create over 1.2 million jobs once operational and has already attracted significant global interest," he said.

Sonowal highlighted India's leadership in green transition efforts, particularly through the Green Tug Transition Program, which will not only benefit India but also serve as a model for other countries in their climate transition.

The minister further emphasized the success of the Global Maritime India Summit in 2023, where India secured over USD 119 in investment commitments.



## Celebrating spirit of heroic bravery with 120 Bahadur

Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar's Excel Entertainment, in collaboration with Amit Chandrara's Trigger Happy Studios, is presenting *120 Bahadur*, the story of Maj Shaitan Singh PVC and the soldiers of Charlie Company, 13 Kumaon Regiment. This military action film, set against the backdrop of the 1962 Indo-China war, draws inspiration from the Battle of Rezang La, where our men in uniform displayed unparalleled courage, heroism and sacrifice. Excel Entertainment and Trigger Happy Studios dropped two intriguing motion posters, introducing Farhan Akhtar as Maj Shaitan Singh PVC. The first shoot schedule of the film began on Wednesday in Ladakh.

Farhan Akhtar, celebrated for his portrayal of strong on-screen personalities, will now be seen stepping into the role of Maj Shaitan Singh PVC. His depiction of the Major's extraordinary bravery and leadership promises to resonate profoundly, highlighting the sacrifices made by India's armed forces during this pivotal historical moment. Directed by Razeesh 'Razy' Ghai and produced by Excel Entertainment, *120 Bahadur* is set to deliver an immersive cinematic experience. With stunning visuals and a gripping storyline, the film aims not only to entertain but also to reverently honour the valour of India's armed forces. This film promises to provide a poignant glimpse into the sacrifices made by military heroes.



## Blood and secrets spilled in Ishaan Khatter's H'wood debut

On Wednesday, Netflix released the trailer for its newest show, *The Perfect Couple*, starring Nicole Kidman and marking Ishaan Khatter's Hollywood debut.

The trailer, which runs for over two minutes, explores the lives of the wealthy, dysfunctional Winbury family as they become the subject of a murder probe. A body is found on their premises following an "incident," but residents show no signs of fear.

"Somebody has died. And somebody is guilty," says the investigative officer as visuals show the "perfect" family coming under spotlight for the crime. The trailer features two quick looks at

Ishaan, one of which is very brief. Even though there are no conversations, Ishaan will likely portray a friend of one of the family members in the film. The series features Dakota Fanning, Eve Hewson, Billy Howle, Jack Reynor, Meghann Fahy, Sam Nivola, Michael Beach, Donna Lynne Champlin and Mia Isaac, as well as Liev Schreiber and Isabelle Adjani.

Susanne Bier, known for works such as *Bird Box*, *The Night Manager* and *The Undoing*, helms *The Perfect Couple*. The TV series is an adaptation of Elin Hilderbrand's book with the same title. The six-episode series is set to debut on September 5.

## DEMI MOORE REVEALS DOING 45 TAKES FOR A SCENE IN THE SUBSTANCE

Demi Moore has disclosed that she had to shoot 45 "extremely challenging" shots of an "emotional" scene in her latest film, *The Substance*. Moore is depicting Elisabeth Sparkle in the upcoming horror film. In the movie, Sparkle is a declining star who stumbles upon an illegal substance that can temporarily transform her into a younger version of herself.

In one scene of the movie, Moore's character prepares for a date and is worried about appearing old. She repeatedly applies and removes makeup in front of the mirror. The actress, aged 61, confessed that she felt something "shatter" within her during the scene. "It was very difficult," Moore told. "It's one of the most heartbreaking moments in the film."

Moore went on to say that everyone can relate to "trying to make ourselves look better" when they actually end up "making it worse and worse." "Coralie likes to do a lot of takes, and my face was just raw," Moore recalled, referring to the film's director, Coralie Fageat. "I got to a point where I couldn't do it anymore. And Coralie still wanted one more take."

Moore said that this was when the makeup artist "stepped in" and said, "We're done." She added that shooting this scene involved a "certain

kind of madness." "There are three setups to that scene, and easily 15 takes for each," Moore said. "Also, the idea of looking at yourself in the mirror and seeing only what's wrong—it's like you're seeking to make yourself uglier, so you can look how you feel."



## Jennifer Lopez's bold new chapter!

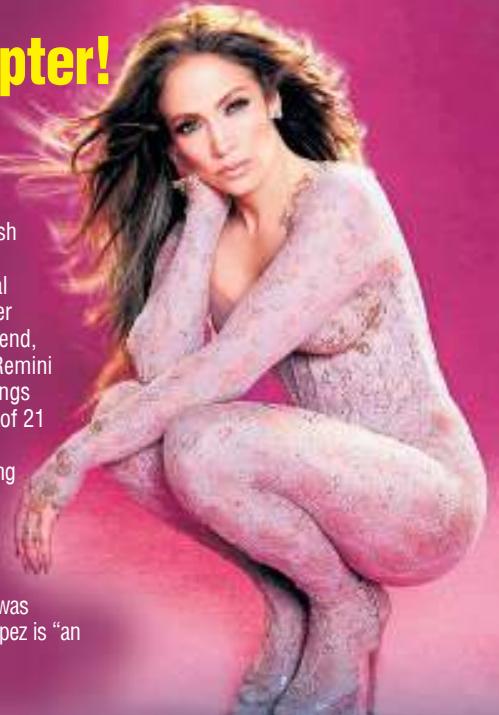
Jennifer Lopez had posted multiple images of herself on social media in the midst of her separation from Ben Affleck. The post featured pictures of her wearing a swimsuit as well as different outfits with quotes from poets.

One of her photos from the carousel featured a t-shirt with a quote by R.H. Sin— "She's in bloom and unbothered out of reach and at peace." Page Six was informed by a source that Lopez is reinventing herself following the breakup.

The source told the media outlet that Lopez is aiming to transform her image as she moves forward from her divorce and Affleck. The artist's close group of confidants, which includes her longtime manager Benny Medina, is very close-knit. Nonetheless, she is willing to listen to suggestions from unfamiliar individuals.

A source told the media outlet that she is willing to hear new perspectives from those

close to her as she strives to move forward in her personal life. The source also mentioned that she requires input from different individuals to bring a fresh perspective and receive new recommendations for her personal life. Lately, the *On The Floor* singer made amends with her ex-best friend, Leah Remini during the divorce. Remini recently initiated divorce proceedings from Angelo Pagán, her husband of 21 years. Rumours of a breakup and J.Lo filing for divorce on August 20, the second anniversary of her Georgian wedding, caused a lot of attention recently. A source stated that the intention behind the move was to make it clear to everyone that Lopez is "an independent woman."



## POOJAHEGDE WRAPS DEVA SHOOTING



Pan-India sensation Pooja Hegde has officially completed her shooting schedule for the much-anticipated film *Deva*. The actress wrapped up with a high-energy song sequence filmed over the last four days in Mumbai, marking the official completion of the film's production.

Taking to her Instagram Stories, Pooja shared a heartfelt thank you note from the team, expressing their deep appreciation for her performance and dedication. She captioned the post, "The Sweetest. Thank you @roykapurfilms #DEVA #itsawrap." *Deva*, starring Pooja Hegde alongside Shahid Kapoor, is set to hit theatres on February 14, 2025. In the film, Pooja plays a determined journalist, while Shahid Kapoor takes on the role of a rebellious police officer embroiled in a high-profile case that unveils a tangled web of deceit and betrayal.

Directed by renowned Malayalam filmmaker Rosshan Andrews and produced by Roy Kapur Films in collaboration with Zee Studios, *Deva* promises to be a gripping roller-coaster ride packed with drama, suspense, and unexpected twists. In addition to *Deva*, Pooja Hegde has a busy slate with upcoming projects including *Surya 44*, Nadiadwala Grandson's *Sanki* and other yet-to-be-announced ventures.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



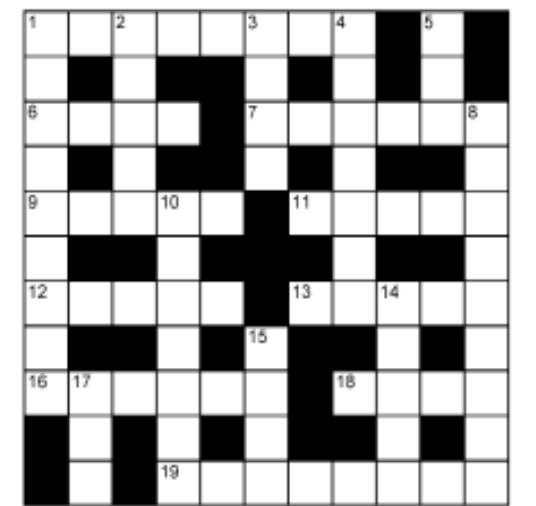
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

### ACROSS

- Expecting a baby
- Scraps of material
- Weigh yourself with these
- Frequently
- A row of metal rings fastened together
- Jumble together (3,2)
- Sneak
- Baby's toy
- A stinging insect
- A newspaper employee

### DOWN

- Actor or singer
- An octagon's number of sides
- As well
- Instructor
- Use your eyes
- Rub wood smooth with this
- An imaginary line around the middle of the Earth
- Precise
- Jump
- A chopping tool



## Hoops & hopes

# BASKETBALL RENAISSANCE IN TELANGANA

The Telangana Basketball Association has been diligently promoting the sport on a national level and nurturing skilled basketball players from the state. *The Pioneer* engages with the General Secretary of the association to provide additional insights on the topic

AARTI SREENATH

**W**hen you speak with Norman Isaac, the General Secretary of the Telangana Basketball Association, you immediately sense his fervour for the game. Basketball in Telangana has been making significant strides. For Isaac, basketball isn't just a game; it's a lifelong commitment, a passion that has shaped both his personal and professional life. His journey reflects the evolution of the sport in the region and highlights the challenges and triumphs of nurturing talent in a landscape filled with obstacles.

The Telangana Basketball Association (TBA) operates with a comprehensive reach, covering the entire state of Telangana. "There are 33 districts according to the government and 19 of those are affiliated with our association," he says, detailing us about the association's extensive network. The TBA annually conducts inter-district championships across four age categories: youth, juniors, sub juniors and seniors. These championships serve as crucial platforms for talent identification, with top players from each district being selected to represent Telangana in the national championships organised by the Basketball Federation of India (BFI).

His own journey with basketball began in 1977 at the YMCA in Secunderabad. "I was into all kinds of sports—cricket, table tennis—but it was basketball that captured my heart," he recalls with nostalgia. Over the years, his passion for the game transformed into a professional calling. He represented the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh state as a player and



later transitioned to become an international referee. "I was the first Indian nominated as a technical delegate to the world body and I officiated about 300 international games, including the 2019 World Cup final, becoming the first Asian to do so."

When Telangana was formed in 2014, following the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, he stepped up as the General Secretary of the newly formed Telangana Basketball Association. Before that, he had served as the Treasurer of the Andhra Pradesh Basketball Association. With nearly two decades of experience—ten years in Andhra Pradesh and nine in Telangana—his tenure as General Secretary is set to conclude soon due to the national sports rules that limit administrative roles to two terms. "In three months, I will relinquish my post," he shares, reflecting on his journey with a mix of pride and sentimentality.

Despite its successes, the association faces significant challenges. A glaring issue is the lack of government support. "The Andhra Pradesh government had sports hostels in Hyderabad and other regions, identifying and nurturing talent. But after the national games in 2000, the sports hostel was shut down," he explains. The closure of these hostels has resulted in a noticeable decline in the inflow of talent. "Playing in Hyderabad, the hub of basketball, allowed players to compete against better opponents, automatically raising their standards. That's missing now," he adds.

The absence of appointed coaches fur-

ther complicates the situation. "Unless the government appoints coaches, it's difficult. Senior players are often not keen to guide junior players and parents are more focused on academics for a bright career," he says, outlining the cultural shift that prioritises academics over sports.

Compounding these issues is the lack of job opportunities in sports. "Departments like Telangana Police, APSRTC, Postal and Electricity used to recruit sports talent, but not anymore. Even though there is a 2% reservation for sports in recruitment, we don't know which sport benefits," he laments. His own experience at SBI, where he worked for 33 years, paints a stark contrast to the present reality. "The last recruitment for SBI was in 1995. After that, there has been none."

Financial constraints are another significant hurdle. "From 2019 till date, the government has not released a single financial grant to any state association," he points out. Despite these challenges, the Telangana Basketball Association has managed to win three gold and two silver medals at national championships in recent years. "With more support from the government and private corporations, the game could have a better future," he asserts, holding onto hope for the sport's revival.

A cornerstone of his vision for basketball in Telangana is grassroots development. "We ensure that inter-district championships are played, which helps us identify talent. We encourage school management to conduct more tournaments, giving players more opportunities to compete at a high level," he explains. This approach has led to more opportunities for young athletes, especially those from less privileged backgrounds. "Basketball is usually not played by the higher society but by those from financially challenging districts. In Hyderabad's heart, we ensure that no child who wishes to play is left behind."

The YMCA, where his journey began, remains a crucial hub for basketball in Telangana. "We provide free basketballs and financial assistance to children who can't afford them. We also offer coaching at highly subsidised rates," he says. These efforts are instrumental in keeping the sport alive at the grassroots level, providing a foundation for future stars to emerge.

He is particularly proud of recent success stories that have emerged under the association's watch. "Elleti Pritam, who played for Telangana in 2018-19, went to the US but came back to represent India in 2022. Aryan Sharma played for the India Under-18 team last year," he shares. Additionally, three players from Telangana—Dhruv Bopanna, Vihar Jonnalagadda and Saanvi Polishetty—were recently selected by the Basketball Federation of India's Corvoss Academy in Mumbai, which is modelled after the NBA and features American coaches. "It's



a good beginning for us," he says with optimism. Looking forward, Isaac reveals ambitious plans to establish academies in Hyderabad and other districts. "Our next plan is to get into the medal tally for the Khelo India Games. Once we qualify, we get noticed at the all-India level. We also propose to start a couple of academies—one in Hyderabad and one in another district," he outlines. These academies are envisioned as key to nurturing young talent through regular, structured coaching programs, offering a pathway to higher levels of competition and success.

His story is intertwined with that of basketball in Telangana. Raised in a family deeply involved in sports, his uncle, G. Sampath Kumar, is considered the "father of basketball" in Andhra Pradesh and India. His initial attraction to basketball during a summer coaching camp at the YMCA has evolved into a lifetime commitment to the sport.

As his tenure nears its end, Norman Isaac leaves behind a legacy marked by unwavering determination, challenges overcome and the promise of a brighter future for basketball in Telangana. His story, like the sport he loves, is one of perseverance, passion, and an unyielding belief in the transformative power of sports.

## Women's sexual health 101

**S**exual health is an essential part of a woman's life, but most women do not know where to start in caring for it. Understanding key components of sexual health can help a woman make better choices that lead to a healthier and fuller life. The following are the critical areas every woman must be informed about to keep her sexual life healthy:

### Routine gynaecological check-ups

Scheduling regular gynaecological visits is one of the major steps in maintaining sexual health. These check-ups are very important in early detection and prevention of possible issues. Such examples include routine Pap smears and HPV testing—important in the prevention of cervical cancer by the detection of abnormal cells before they become malignant. Regular screenings ensure that other aspects of reproductive health are followed up on promptly. Consistency with such appointments empowers the woman to be ahead in ensuring good sexual and reproductive health.

### Contraception and family planning

Knowledge of contraceptives is one of the critical issues that relate to sexual health. With numerous types of contraceptives, it is very crucial for a woman to look for one which best suits them. However, whether it refers to a birth control pill, intrauterine device, or some other form of contraception, each differs in its particular risk and benefit. How each works and understanding the risks and benefits could empower women to make such decisions which best fit each one's situation. The effective contraception and family planning not only avoid unplanned pregnancy but also enable the woman to make choices about her own body.

### Sexually transmitted infections—awareness and prevention

STIs are the other important sexual health concern the prevention of which depends on awareness. Many STIs do not have apparent signs or symptoms; thus, regular screening is important, even without any immediate apprehensions. The main way to avoid STIs transmission is via safe sex, proper use of condoms, and making it a rule to talk about their sexual history with their partners. In addition, examination for STIs will offer the chance of early identification of an infection and will aid in the prevention of serious complications that could

eventually create unfavourable effects on their health. Being proactive with STI prevention and awareness, women are also protecting their partners from different serious health conditions.

### Menstrual health awareness and monitoring

The menstrual cycle is a good indicator of the general reproductive health for women. A woman should be able to know about her menstrual cycle and note changes that might indicate a problem. Irregularities, such as a change in the cycle length, sharp pains, or abnormal bleeding, should not be ignored. These could be signs of underlying conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome, endometriosis, Pelvic Inflammatory Disorders, Fibroids, or any other serious reproductive problems. Giving more attention to menstrual health and seeking doctor advice from time to time will help women to catch the potential problems early on, thus keeping them in good reproductive health.

### Psychological and emotional well-being

Sexual health encompasses a wide variety of meanings which largely includes emotional and psychological well-being. Women often have questions or insecurities pertaining to sexual health, which must be addressed in a non-judgmental environment. Communication is the key—be it through a health care provider, therapist, or partner. Open discussion of sexual health will help the woman build confidence to work through other challenges such as sexual anxiety, relationship concerns, or body image issues. A good sexual life is linked with mental and emotional health, which, when improved, can generally lead to better satisfaction. Women's sexual health is all about routine medical checkups, responsible contraception choices, knowledge of sexually transmitted infections, menstrual health monitoring and not forgetting one's mental-emotional health. Knowledge and a proactive attitude will enable women to be in the driver's seat when it comes to sexual health and thus pave the way towards a healthier and more productive life. It is also important to have a holistic look at sexual health, considering that the latter should not only prevent diseases but also create an enabling relationship with oneself and health.

(The author, Dr Manjula N V, is a consultant in the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology at Ramaiah Memorial Hospital.)

## Balancing badlands of *Murshid* with joys of fatherhood

TEJAL SINHA

**T**he gangster world of *Murshid* has not just added yet another list to the desperado dramas, but for all the obvious reasons, the series has opened to some amazing reviews. But one could just not ignore the fact that Tanuj Virwani had gotten so well into the skin of a cop, Kumar Pratap Rana, a dashing inspector!

This year has been certainly an amazing one for him with back-to-back interesting projects and reality shows, including playing the character of Sameer Khan in *Yodha*, hosting the most trending youth show *MTV Splitsvilla X5* and now with *Murshid*. "Honestly, it's been a fantastic year and I consider myself extremely grateful and blessed," enthused Tanuj in an exclusive telephonic interaction with *The Pioneer*.

"The year started on a good note. I got to do my first Dharma project, *Yodha*. Then I did not actually know what to expect with *Splitsvilla* because it was the first time I was dabbling with a reality television show. I knew the show was extremely popular among the youth, but I did not expect this response. The show had aired for about 4 and a half months. Every week the buzz was so much and now *Murshid* is out just as *Splitsvilla* got over. None of this was planned and all of it just fell into place. People who have been observing my journey would think I'm a master technician, but I had no hand in any of it." Apart from all of it, nothing can just come closer to him becoming a father; after all, he is all excited for this new phase of his life.

Going ahead, the experience of working in *Murshid* was a great experience for him for many reasons. One of which was the director Shrawan Tiwari, with whom he has worked in *Kamathipura*. "We understand how we function, what our way of working is and what his expectations are for me. We had many conversations before we even started shooting about how this guy should look, how he should act, how he should walk, talk, you know, everything. I like being prepared, so



When I was there, the director didn't have to direct me personally. He just had to tweak my performance as to what he wants and what he doesn't want," shares the *Luv U Soniyo* fame adding that working with the director of that calibre and then actors like Kay Kay Menon or Zakir Hussain, he believes you have no alternative but to kind of up your game and go that extra mile. Working with the talents, he says, "It automatically helps you raise your own game, you know. As they say, a rising tide raises all ships. So yeah, it's been great and very aesthetic."

So this makes it evident that the star cast had certainly played a major role in making him get onboard for the project. But again, the *Purani Jeans* actor says, "*Murshid* is a nice throwback to those gangster films like *Satya*, *Company* and *Sarkar*. It's a show that puts substance over style. These days you see there's style but not much substance. It's all about the technical aspects. *Murshid* is the kind of content we used to see back then."

Playing the character of an inspector in the 'Khaki' uniform was something very intriguing for him to do.

Actor Tanuj Virwani has been over-the-top with some back-to-back good releases and works that he is keen on being a part of. Tanuj, who is also soon going to enter the phase of fatherhood, speaks to *The Pioneer* about his latest gangster show *Murshid* and discusses donning a cop uniform

While his character is on one side of the law, Kay Kay Menon's character *Murshid* is on the other.

"When you are playing any man in uniform, it adds a sense of responsibility and definitely adds a lot of pride. But having said that, I love to play characters that are not defined by their job or profession. Just because I play a cop doesn't mean he has to be in a particular way. Kumar Pratap's character could work in

any sector, but because he has strong morals and moralities, he would certainly stand for what's right. It was an integral part of him being an inspector. I tried to play him to the best of my ability and in a way the script needed me to. At the end of the day, all the characters bond into the large game of chess," opines the *Cartel* star.

Gangster stories, he says, have somewhere captured our imaginations as the audience. "It was quite a while since we had a gangster-centric show to do with police, politicians and the gangster stuff. The star cast of course had something to do with it (we laugh out loud)."

Fantastic! He describes his experience working with Kay Kay Menon. Though they did not have many scenes together, however, the scenes they had together were no less than a breeze to shoot. "He comes well prepared. He is very giving as an actor. I've seen many actors give their shot and just go away. But he is always present physically and mentally on set. He wants to give the best of his shot every time. Even if he is not in the frame, just by delivering the line, our performance gets better. So he is not just thinking about his character but for the rest as well," shares the *Inside Edge* star with great enthusiasm and regards. Taking us through a day in the shoot of *Murshid*, he went on to share, "We were shooting in live locations and we used to rehearse on sets and go shoot on these locations. It felt like we were making a really big-budget short film just as we used to make during college. Here with the time that we had, we had to make the best use of it."

Tanuj's main criteria when it comes to ticking off a project is quality over quantity. He emphasizes the importance of sharing. "You would end up burned out and then every actor has a fixed bag of tricks. Overexposing yourself gets very monotonous. You as a performer and audience, both wouldn't be enjoying it." Readers, get ready for his upcoming project because there's *DAU Mumbai*, a cop-based Mumbai thriller by Applause, where he will be seen playing an ACP, *Johnny Jumper* and also reveals completing the shoot of *Rana Naidu* season 2.

PANT IN FOCUS ON RED BALL RETURN; SELECTORS EYE BACKUP OPTIONS

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Rishabh Pant's red-ball return will be closely monitored but the national selectors will also trace suitable backup options to frontline stars when Duleep Trophy, which precludes an important Test season, begins across Bengaluru and Anantapur on Thursday.

contenders are there for the wicketkeeper-batter's slot. The front-runner is Dhruv Jurel (Team A), who was impressive in his debut series against England earlier this year.



BOWLING BACK-UP: India have been well-served by the troika of Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj and Mohammed Shami in Tests for a while now, but it's unwise to enter a long Test season without sufficient alternates.

Trophy with an illness and Shami, whose last competitive outing was the 2023 50-over World Cup final, is still recuperating after a surgery.

with Arshdeep Singh, Avesh Khan, Khaleel Ahmed, Vidwath Kaverappa, Vysakh Vijayakumar and Harshit Rana.

Ravindra Jadeja, who was released from Team B, Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel form a formidable Indian spin unit.

In that context, spinners such as Washington Sundar, also a capable batter, R Sai Kishore, top wicket-taker in the previous Ranji season with 53 scalps, Manav Suthar and Saurabh Kumar will be hoping to be in the range of the five wisemen's radar.

SQUADS: India A: Shubman Gill (C), Mayank Agarwal, Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel (WK), KL Rahul, Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Tanush Kotian, Kuldeep Yadav, Akash Deep, Prasidh Krishna, Khaleel Ahmed, Avesh Khan, Vidwath Kaverappa, Kumar Kushagra, Shashwat Rawat.

I've worked on my defence against spinners: Gill eyes improvement in Test performance



PTI ■ BENGALURU

Shubman Gill understands that his Test career has not touched the expected peaks yet, but the right-hander is banking on an improved defence against spinners to make a mark in the upcoming season that will feature 10 traditional format matches.

Unlike in white ball formats where Gill is a storm force, the 24-year-old is yet to blaze the Test arena, and he hoped for a turnaround sooner than later.

leadership group add an extra layer of pressure on him? "Not really extra pressure (being part of the leadership group). My role as a batsman does not really change, even if I am the captain or vice-captain. It's all about scoring runs for the team," he said.

Pakistan drop to 8th in Test rankings following loss to Bangladesh

PTI ■ DUBAI

Pakistan's first-ever series loss to Bangladesh has resulted in Shan Masood's team slipping down to the eighth position in the ICC Test rankings besides hitting a historic low of lowest rating points since 1965.



have seen them drop below West Indies to eighth with 76 rating points.

insufficient number of matches." Bangladesh's chase in the second Test of 185 was also the third highest successful chase in Pakistan for any visiting side, but there was a little in terms of promotion for the 'Tigers'.

Bangladesh remained in ninth position and behind Pakistan despite gaining 13 rating points.

Rahul Dravid set to be appointed Rajasthan Royals head coach for IPL 2025

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rahul Dravid, who masterminded India's T20 World Cup 2024 triumph, is set to take over Rajasthan Royals' head coach role in the IPL 2025.

Accidental chess player Vidit Gujrathi says it's worked out well for him

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A self-proclaimed accidental chess player, Indian Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi says he thought of sports as a more "stable" career option after watching his doctor parents being called to work at odd hours, an "error of judgement" that has ultimately "worked out well" for him.



Having seen his doctor parents work at odd hours due to late-night emergencies, Gujrathi said he wanted a relatively easy-going life and thought of sports as the right option.

Tournament, an eight-man competition held to determine the Challenger for the World Chess Championship slated for November.

Sharath, Manika headline India's TT squad for Asian Championships

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran Sharath Kamal and star female player Manika Batra were on Wednesday named in the India squad for the 27th Asian Table Tennis Championships, scheduled to be held in Astana, from October 7 to 13.



the guidance of foreign expert Massimo Constantini, who has been working to fine-tune the players' skills and strategies since

his return to India in June. "I am hopeful they will put their best foot forward in the Astana championships," Constantini said.

The squad, especially the women, had done well in the Paris Olympics, reaching the quarterfinals. The men's team had lost to the mighty China in the round of 16. It was the first time that India qualified for team events at the Olympics.

SQUAD

Men's Team: A. Sharath Kamal (captain), Manav Thakkar, Harmeet Desai, G. Sathiyam, Manush Shah; Reserve Players: SFR Snehit and Jeet Chandra. Women's Team: Sreeja Akula, Manika Batra (captain), Ayhika Mukherjee, Diya Chitale, Sutirtha Mukherjee; Reserve Players: Yashaswini Ghorpade and Poymante Baisya.

Karunakaran, Subramanian reach Taipei Open quarterfinals

PTI ■ TAIPEI

India's Sathish Kumar Karunakaran and Sankar Subramanian reached the men's singles quarterfinals of the Taipei Open badminton tournament but women's singles players had to deal with disappointment here on Wednesday.



women's singles as three of them lost in the quarterfinals to crash out of the tournament.

her Lauren Lam, but the American shuttler bounced back to win the next two and the contest 17-21, 21-19, 21-11.

# Shilpa Rao on sweet symphony of Chuttamalle

**THE MUCH-CELEBRATED SINGER SHILPA RAO, WHO HAS YET AGAIN CAPTIVATED THE AUDIENCE WITH HER LATEST TRACK CHUTTAMALLE, SPEAKS TO THE PIONEER, SHARING HER EXCITEMENT OF SINGING THIS SONG IN HER MOTHER TONGUE AND SOME BEHIND THE MAKING OF THIS TRACK FROM DEVARA**

AARTI SREENATH

Shilpa Rao is a name that resonates deeply in the world of music, known for her rich, distinctive voice that has captivated listeners across genres. With her husky, textured voice that effortlessly traverses the realms of Bollywood ballads and indie compositions, her talent also reached international heights, earning her a Grammy nomination for collaboration on the globally acclaimed album *Love Letters*, highlighting her artistry and global appeal.

From the moment she debuted, her voice resonated with a raw, unfiltered emotion, capturing the hearts of millions. Whether she's delivering heartfelt Bollywood ballads or exploring the nuances of indie music, her versatility is unmistakable.

Hailing from Jamshedpur and mentored by the iconic Hariharan, Shilpa's journey from her hometown to becoming a leading playback singer is truly remarkable. With hits, the *Abacha* singer has carved a niche for herself, combining classical sensibilities with a contemporary edge. Her voice, often described as both powerful and comforting, has become the emotional core of many beloved tracks.

Beyond her success, she remains deeply dedicated to her art, always striving to push the boundaries of her vocal capabilities and explore new musical avenues. For her, singing is more than just a career; it's a lifelong passion, a way of connecting with people through the universal language of music.

When she lent her voice to the song *Chuttamalle* for the much-anticipated film *Devara*, she found herself embarking on a musical journey that was as refreshing as it was nostalgic. "Working on the song

*Chuttamalle* was a completely new experience for me," she shared.

"The song has such a sweet and fresh vibe, with bouncy words that capture the slow dance feel of Telugu music so smoothly. Collaborating with Anirudh was fantastic; it felt more like a jam session than just recording. I loved every moment and learned a lot during the process."

The song, set to be a highlight in *Devara*, struck a chord with the singer the moment she first heard it. "When I first heard *Chuttamalle*, I was struck by its beautiful, flowing nature melody. Anirudh's ability to create something so seamless and lovely was impressive," she reflected.

"The song has a slow dance bounce to it, which is a good combination that

I love. Also, Anirudh imagines my voice in ways I wouldn't. It is always a pleasure working with him."

The *Oh my baby* singer, known for her versatile repertoire, approached *Chuttamalle* with a careful blend of respect for tradition and her unique vocal style. "I paid close attention to the emotions and story behind the song, which helped me choose the right vocal style and delivery. It was about finding the right balance between respecting the traditional roots and bringing my own touch to the mix," she explained.

Having had the opportunity to glimpse parts of *Devara*, she believes that *Chuttamalle* fits seamlessly within the film's context. "Janhvi Kapoor and Jr NTR look amazing and their dance is quite mesmerising and smooth. The song's blend of traditional and modern elements really matches the film's vibe," she said.

Recording *Chuttamalle*



was not just a professional milestone for her, but also a personal one. She recalled a memorable moment from the studio: "During the recording sessions, we discovered that we both are huge fans of Tennis, which made the process even more enjoyable. What we have in common is our dedication to making the song sound amazing. The song is above all. And like I mentioned, as a com-

poser, Anirudh's ability to imagine my voice in these songs is impeccable and definitely pushes my horizons too. Telugu is my mother tongue and it was quite nostalgic to finally sing in my mother tongue."

The fan reaction to the snippets of *Chuttamalle* has been nothing short of overwhelming. "It's amazing to see people dancing and enjoying the song. The comments they leave are heartwarming. I'm grateful for all the love," the *Naa Nijam Rangu* singer expressed.

As an artist with a strong background in music, she is acutely aware of the evolving landscape of Indian cinema. "I feel you will be left out if you don't grow constantly. I love challenging myself and I need music every day. I put in an effort to learn something new, even if it is just by trying to do technical stuff or even aesthetic stuff. Both are important. So yes, evolution is very important and if you don't evolve, you will be left behind. It is as simple as that," she asserted.

Looking ahead, she has several exciting projects on the horizon. "Along with *Chuttamalle*, my Bollywood song *Tumhare Hi Rahenge* from the movie *Stree 2* is out with composers Sachin - Jigar. There is also an independent single, *Aisa Tera Pyaar*, set to release on 16th August. Look forward to that as well and many more yet to come," she hinted.

As for exploring new musical terrains, her curiosity knows no bounds. "There are so many genres and the list is endless. I would love to explore more of South Indian music definitely," she said, leaving her fans eagerly anticipating what she will delve into next.

With *Chuttamalle* continuing to captivate audiences, the *Egire Egire* singer continues to push the boundaries of her craft, blending tradition with her distinct voice to create music that resonates with both the past and the future.

**Janhvi & Jr NTR drop their dance magic in Daavudi**

The third single from

the high-octane action drama *Devara: Part 1*, titled *Daavudi*, has finally dropped, and it has all the right elements to become a massive hit. Choreographed by Sekhar VJ, this energetic dance number will have you on your feet, grooving along.

Shot against a stunning water backdrop with over 200 dancers, the song features Jr NTR and Janhvi Kapoor, who light up the screen with their electrifying moves. Sung by Nakash Aziz and Akasa in Hindi, *Daavudi* is sure to be a chartbuster, offering yet another opportunity to watch our favorite Jr. NTR dazzle the world with his dance skills.

*Daavudi* is the third single from *Devara*, following the release of the intense *Fear Song* and the romantic track *Dheere Dheere*. With its release set for 27th September, the film is poised to set a new benchmark in Indian cinema. Directed by Koratala Siva, *Devara* is produced by NTR Arts and Yuvasudha Arts, and presented by Nandamuri Kalyan Ram.



## Mega donations from Chiranjeevi, Mahesh Babu, Sonu Sood and more

Megastar Chiranjeevi has once again stepped forward to aid those in need, this time extending a helping hand to the flood-stricken people of the Telugu states. The recent devastating floods in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have left a trail of destruction and hardship, with countless lives affected. In a heartfelt gesture, Chiranjeevi announced a generous donation of Rs. 50 lakhs each to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund of both states. This significant contribution reflects his deep concern for the well-being of the people and his desire to alleviate their suffering. In an emotional message shared on social media, he expressed his pain over the devastation caused by the floods, particularly the tragic loss of innocent lives. He praised the proactive efforts of both state governments in addressing the crisis and called on the public to contribute to the relief efforts in whatever way possible.

Superstar Mahesh Babu has also stepped up in response to the devastating floods affecting the Telugu states, pledging a total of Rs 1 crore—Rs 50 lakh each—to the CM Relief Funds of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. In his announcement, he expressed his appreciation for the swift actions taken by both governments to assist those impacted and called on the public to contribute to the relief efforts.

Additionally, in the wake of devastating floods that have ravaged parts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood has stepped up to offer much-needed assistance. In a video, Sonu Sood expressed his deep concern for the victims of the floods and emphasised the importance of collective action in times of crisis. The actor's relief initiative includes essential supplies such as food, clean water, medical kits and temporary shelter for the affected individuals. He said his team has been working tirelessly to ensure that aid reaches the most vulnerable populations.

Not too far behind, even Sri Akkineni Nageswara Rao always came forward to support at times of need. He encouraged civil society to contribute and stand by people especially during natural calamities. Fifty lakh rupees each are donated to the Chief Ministers Relief Funds of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The donation is made by Alulofluride Ltd., Visakhapatnam and Annapurna Studios, Hyderabad, group companies of the Akkineni family!

Known for his philanthropic endeavours, Allu Arjun has consistently demonstrated his compassion for those in need. As someone who has made liberal donations in the past, he has once again done it. This time, he has made a timely donation to the victims of the devastating floods. In response to the heavy rains that have affected the Telugu states, Allu Arjun has also donated a sum of Rs 1 Cr to aid those who have lost their homes and belongings. He expressed deep sorrow for the hardship caused by the floods and wished for a recovery from the situation.

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister, Panchayat Raj Minister and Janasena Party President, Pawan Kalyan has also decided to make a massive donation looking at the drastic devastation caused by heavy rains and floods in both Telugu States. He donated Rs.1 crore to Telangana CM Relief Fund and Rs.1 crore Andhra Pradesh CM Relief Fund. Being Panchayat Raj Minister, he also decided to donate Rs.1 lakh each to 400 Panchayats (Rs 4 Cr) in Andhra Pradesh state. In total, he donated a huge Rs.6 crores amount, personally, to both Telugu states, while he is overlooking the relief activities at each Panchayat and every affected area in Andhra Pradesh state, staying true to his ideals.

## Dil Raju and Vijay Deverakonda's film is all set to go on floors this April

Vijay Deverakonda, known for his powerful performances like *Arjun Reddy*, is set to collaborate once again with renowned Telugu producer Dil Raju on a new project. Announced on Vijay's 35th birthday earlier this year, this upcoming film is an untitled action drama scheduled for a pan-Indian release in 2025. It will be directed and written by the talented Ravi Kiran Kola.

At the Moscow International Film Week, Dil Raju shared that shooting will begin in April next year in conversation with a leading portal. He expressed his excitement about working with Deverakonda again, emphasising their strong professional relationship and the actor's widespread appeal. "We share a very good equation. He's very close to me," Raju said.

Raju praised Deverakonda for his recent choices of scripts, highlighting his dedication to tackling diverse and challenging roles. "He's working really hard these days. He's focusing on proper commercial scripts now. The film he's currently working on is a full-blown commercial film. My next script is also a mainstream film set against the backdrop of the 1980s. It's heavy on action," Raju remarked. As Deverakonda transitions from his popular loverboy roles to more intense and dramatic parts, fans are keen to see how his new films will merge action with engaging storytelling. Currently, Deverakonda is engaged in a project with Jersey director Gowtam Tinnanuri. Despite earlier budgetary concerns, the film is progressing smoothly.



## Roti Kapda Romance to be released worldwide in theatres on October 4

*Roti Kapda Romance*, the coming-of-age bro-mantic and romantic comedy, is produced by Bekkem Venugopal and Srujan Kumar Bojjam. Lucky Media of Hushaaru, Cinema Choopishta Mama, Mem Vayasuku Vacham, Prema Ishq Kadhal and Paagal fame is poised to score a hit at the box office. The film will hit the screens worldwide on October 4.

Producers said that this is a youthful entertainer made with the intention of conveying a new message to the audience. Director Vikram



Reddy has made a very impressive film. Recently, a show was held for young people, and their feedback made the makers more confident.

Harshvardhan Rameshwar's music is a big plus for the film. Director Vikram Reddy said, "We are very confident about the film's success. We have a vision to promote new talent, we have no doubt about its success. The box office performance is ultimately in the hands of the audience.

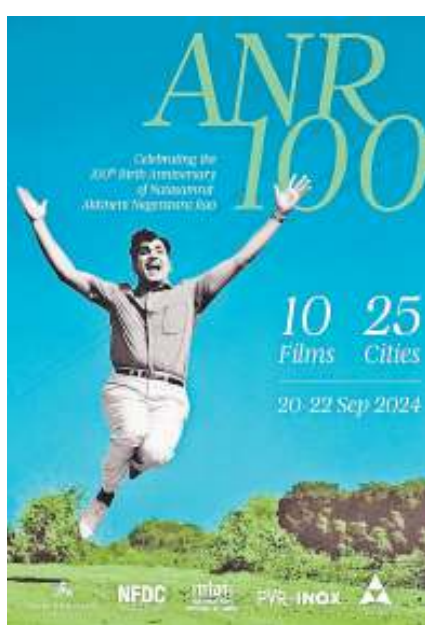
It's an emotional ride with love, emotion, and all kinds of emotions present in the film."

## Ragini Dwivedi takes center stage in Maharshi's Shloka

*Shloka* is a Sanskrit film directed by renowned writer and director Janardhana Maharshi. Produced by his daughters Sravani and Sharvani under the banner of Sarvejanah Sukhinobhavantu Films, the film stars actress Ragini Dwivedi in the lead role. The talented Ragini will be seen portraying a distinctive young woman who ventures into the Rudhra Bhoomi (cemetery) and engages in conversations with Nature. To commemorate Teacher's Day on September 5, the film's director, Maharshi, has dedicated *Shloka* to Sanskrit teachers.



## FHF announces film festival in honour of Akkineni Nageswara Rao



To mark the 100th birth anniversary of Natasamrat Akkineni Nageswara Rao which falls on 20th September this year, Film Heritage Foundation announces a retrospective film festival titled 'ANR 100 - King Of The Silver Screen' that pays tribute to legendary doyen of Indian cinema.

The festival will feature a compilation of 10 restored classics of ANR that will be screened from September 20 - 22, 2024 across 25 cities, including major metros like Hyderabad, Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Bengaluru and smaller cities like Vadodara, Jalandar, Rourkela, Warangal, Kakinada and Tumkur.

Film aficionados across the country will have the exclusive opportunity to witness the remarkable versatility and powerful performances of the South Indian icon once again on the big screen in a

curated festival of landmark Telugu films including *Devadasu* (1953), *Missamma* (1955), *Mayabazar* (1957), *Bharya Bharthalu* (1961), *Gundamma Katha* (1962), *Doctor Chakravarthi* (1964), *Sudigundalu* (1968), *Prem Nagar* (1971), *Premabhishekam* (1981) and *Manam* (2014).

Film Heritage Foundation and Akkineni Nageswara Rao family is presenting the countrywide festival in association with the NFDC - National Film Archive Of India and PVR-Inox.

Akkineni Nagarjuna states, "I am delighted that the Film Heritage Foundation is celebrating the 100th birth anniversary of my father with a festival of his landmark films across the country. He was rightfully called Natasamrat for his amazing ability to play a range of roles from a saint to an alcoholic to a romantic hero in a way that has stayed in people's hearts and minds

for decades. His performance in *Devadasu* has been acknowledged as one of the best across all versions of the film over the years and his films like *Premabhishekam*, *Doctor Chakravarthi* and *Sudigundalu* are loved even today. He was a pioneer who established Annapurna Studios, laying the first foundation for the Telugu film industry in our state. We are very proud of his legacy and through this festival audiences across the country will remember an icon not just of Telugu cinema but of Indian cinema. We would like to preserve this legacy so that people will remember him for another hundred years. The entire Akkineni family would like to thank the NFDC-NFAI and PVR-Inox for partnering with us to make this festival possible."

Versatility, humility and a powerhouse of talent. These are some of the words often used to describe Akkineni Nageswara Rao, or ANR

or Nata Samrat, as he was fondly called. An actor and producer who worked in Hindi, Telugu and Tamil cinema, ANR was most famous for his work in Telugu cinema. In a career spanning 71 years and more than 250 movies, he was best known for his diversity of roles. He acted in mainstream movies and offbeat films, in mythologies, dramas and comedies. The trailblazer was the recipient of the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan, Dadasaheb Phalke Award, Raghupati Venkaiah Award, Filmfare Awards, amongst others. ANR established Annapurna Studios in Hyderabad that grew as a hub for the Telugu film industry. ANR passed away on January 22, 2014 leaving behind two generations of actors, including his son the superstar Nagarjuna and grandsons Naga Chaitanya and Akhil Akkineni to carry forward his legacy.