



the pioneer

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QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

No one should worry about housing as the Congress government will make those deserving partners in Future City. The Fourth Estate will be part of the Future City. Let us all participate in the construction of the Fourth City, that is, the Future City. Quli Qutb Shah created Hyderabad City, Nizam and the British created Secunderabad, N. Chandrababu Naidu and YS Rajasekar Reddy created Cyberabad and we will create Fourth City

— A. Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister P3

Ready for talks with Pak if it stops terrorism in J-K
Rajnath

DECLINING
BANK CREDIT TO HURT EXPORTERS

Big break for Rachakonda
VISHWADEV

DON'T MISS...

BDC's third breach was successfully...

The 40-member Army Engineering Task Force Wing, under the supervision of officials from the Water Resources Department (WRD), successfully blocked the third and biggest breach of the Budameru Diversion Channel (BDC) at Shantinagar near Kondapalli in the NTR district on Saturday. They used the Gabion system, which consists of rectangular fabricated baskets filled with metal, to divert the Budameru flood towards the river Krishna via BDC and stop the flood water from entering Vijayawada City. However, around...

-PAGE: 3

Low-carb diets meet nutrient...

Low-carb diets can meet and sometimes even exceed one's nutrient needs, according to a study that examined the scepticism around the nutritional quality of such diets. Commonly recommended for diabetic patients to manage their sugar levels, low-carb diets restrict the intake of foods high in carbohydrates or added sugar, including sweets, starches, and refined grains. While low-carb diets have been shown to provide health benefits, including weight loss, researchers said scepticism remains...

-PAGE: 5

India has potential to become chip...

Due to the prevailing geopolitical situation, like-minded countries are collaborating with India to make it a major semiconductor manufacturing destination, a top Electronics and IT ministry official said on Sunday. In an interview with PTI, Ministry of Electronics and IT Secretary S Krishnan said pilot facilities of US storage semiconductor maker Micron and Tata Electronics have already rolled out chips, and their main plants in Gujarat will begin to produce made-in-India chips from the later part of 2025. "Globally..."

-PAGE: 8

Indian cricket powerful, talent...

The legendary Rahul Dravid on Sunday said that Indian cricket has evolved into an "extremely powerful" force, thanks to the growing talent pool that now extends to even the remotest corners of the country. Dravid, who masterminded India's triumph in the T20 World Cup, said a strong club cricket culture has a lot to do with bucking the old trend of city cricketers dominating the passage to the national team. "If you look at Indian cricket today, Indian cricket is extremely strong, it's extremely powerful..."

-SPORTS

FLOOD HAVOC IN AP

CM seeks Rs 6,880 cr Central aid

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In response to the extensive damage caused by recent floods and heavy rains, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has submitted a preliminary report to the Central Government, requesting Rs 6,880 crore in relief funds. Speaking to the media on Sunday, the CM confirmed that 28 lives have been lost due to the floods and assured that measures will be implemented to prevent a repeat of the devastation experienced at the Budameru canal.

The CM emphasised the need for more vigilance as further heavy rains are expected in various districts over the next two days. North Andhra is particularly at risk, according to the CM. He highlighted the importance of regularly reviewing the storage capacity of the Eleru Reservoir to manage inflows and outflows effectively. He also instructed that canals, ponds, and drains be cleared to ensure the unobstructed flow of water.

To mitigate the impact of the rains, the CM directed that adequate provisions of drinking water, food, and medical camps be prepared in vulnerable areas. He stressed the importance of keeping the public informed and prepared to minimise loss of life and property damage. [Continued on Page 2](#)

- Naidu submits preliminary report to Union government
- Steps on to prevent a repeat of the Budameru disaster



- **USE OF DRONES:** Drones will be employed for assessing damage, food distribution, and monitoring flood conditions.
- **TELECONFERENCE WITH COLLECTORS:** CM reviews rainfall impacts and preparedness; restrictions on crossing streams advised to prevent accidents.
- **FIELD VISIT:** CM inspects flood-affected areas in Vijayawada, including Prakasam Barrage and Jakkampudi Colony, addressing sanitation and relief efforts.
- **VIGILANCE AND PREPARATION:** Anticipating heavy rains in north Andhra, instructions given to clear canals, ponds, and drains, and to prepare for emergency needs including drinking water and medical camps.

Flood damage assessment begins today: Anitha

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Home and Disaster Management Minister, Vangalapati Anitha, announced that authorities would begin assessing the damage caused by heavy rains and floods across the state



from Monday. Speaking to the media at the NTR District Collectorate in Vijayawada on Sunday, the Minister mentioned that rescue operations had been

underway for the past eight days in the flood-affected areas.

The Home Minister mentioned that investigations are going on into the incident where boats collided with the Prakasam Barrage gates, causing damage to the lock gates. [Continued on Page 2](#)

REPAIRS TO PRAKASAM BARRAGE



Counterweights of 3 crest gates replaced

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Officials from the Water Resources Department successfully replaced the counterweights of gates 67, 68, and 69 of the Prakasam Barrage, which spans the Krishna River in Vijayawada, on Sunday. Initially, repairs commenced on gate 69, with a metal box being installed to address its counterweight issue by Saturday evening.

Under the guidance of Water Resources Department Mechanical Wing Advisor K. Kannayya Naidu, new counterweights were fitted to gates 67 and 70 on Sunday. The metal box is set to be filled with metal and concrete, and the repair work is expected to be completed

within two to three days.

Gate 69's counterweight broke last Monday when it was struck by a boat drifting upstream, splitting into two pieces. Upon inspection, officials discovered damage to the counterweights of gates 67 and 70 as well.

Following Advisor Kannayya Naidu's recommendations, the officials replaced these two counterweights, while confirming that the counterweight of gate 68 remains undamaged.

The Water Resources Department aims to complete the repairs within a week. Three gates are obstructed by boats, impeding the free flow of floodwater. [Continued on Page 2](#)

Techie swept away in floodwaters

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a tragic incident, a 40-year-old techie-turned-realtor, Kalidindi Phani Krishna Kumar from Machilipatnam, was swept away along with his vehicle in floodwaters in the suburbs of Vijayawada on Saturday. Phani Kumar had returned to his hometown to celebrate 'Vinayaka Chavithi'.

Inspector Shiva Prasad of Gannavaram stated that the incident occurred as Phani Kumar was travelling from Gannavaram to Machilipatnam after visiting relatives. Despite warnings from locals to take a safer route via Vijayawada, he opted for the route through Kesrapalli, Uppallur, and Kankipadu, which follows the course of the 'Budameru' stream.

With the floodwaters rising rapidly, Phani Kumar's vehicle became trapped in the surging waters. Upon receiving information, police and residents immediately launched a rescue operation. However, the search was suspended due to poor visibility. The following day, SDRF personnel located Phani Kumar's car, but his whereabouts remain unknown. Kumar is survived by his wife and two daughters, who reside in Vijayawada.

Inspector Siva Prasad added that efforts to locate the missing person are ongoing, though the rising water levels of the 'Budameru' stream continue to pose significant challenges.



Municipal Minister P. Narayana and MSME Minister Kondapalli Srinivas inspecting roads at Indira Naik Nagar in Vijayawada on Sunday.

Govt mulling retaining wall along Budameru to check city flooding

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government is contemplating the construction of a retaining wall along the Budameru Diversion Channel (BDC) to avert flooding in Vijayawada, similar to the existing Krishna River Retaining Wall. This proposed retaining wall is seen as a permanent solution to the Budameru flood problem.

During a visit to Indira Naik Nagar in Vijayawada, which was inundated by the Budameru Rivulet, Minister Narayana, accompanied by MSME Minister Kondapalli Srinivas, announced the plan on Sunday. The ministers also inspected flood-affected areas including New RR Peta, Ajith Singh Nagar, and Payakapuram, and reviewed the distribution of essential supplies to victims.

Minister Narayana reassured residents that, following the successful repair of the three breaches in the

Budameru Diversion Channel, the city would be protected from future flooding. He urged the public not to be concerned about the Budameru flood and stated that the government would accelerate sanitation efforts across the city.

He further noted that the construction of the Krishna River retaining wall had effectively safeguarded the Krishna Lanka area from floods. Similarly, the government is considering a retaining wall for the Budameru Rivulet within city limits to prevent future floods.

Additionally, the Minister for BC Welfare, Economically Weaker Sections Welfare, and Handlooms and Textiles, S. Savitha, visited the flood-affected areas in Old Rajarajeswari and met with the victims. She assured that the government would provide food, milk, and drinking water and that street and house cleaning in the city would be prioritised.

1st flood warning again at barrage

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Due to heavy inflows to River Krishna, the first flood warning was issued at the Prakasam Barrage for the second time within nine days. At 5 pm on Sunday, the barrage received 4,44,842 cusecs of floodwater, and the Irrigation Department discharged 4,44,640 cusecs into the sea by lifting all 70 crest gates to their full height of 10 metres.

Officials issued the first flood warning on August 31, followed by the second on September 1. Both warnings were withdrawn by September 4. However, with continued heavy inflows from the Srisailem, Nagarjuna Sagar, and Pulichintala projects, as well as local streams, the barrage has been receiving more water.



Two days ago, the counterweights of gates 67, 68, and 69 were successfully replaced under the guidance of Water Resources Department Mechanical Wing Advisor K. Kannayya Naidu. Additionally, the

counterweight of gate 70 was also removed. Despite these repairs, due to heavy flooding, all 70 crest gates, including gates 67 to 70, were lifted to discharge the excess water downstream. [Continued on Page 2](#)



CM briefs Gov about flood situation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu paid a courtesy visit to Governor S. Abdul Nazeer at Raj Bhavan on Sunday. During the meeting, the Chief Minister briefed the Governor on the ongoing flood situation and the extensive damage caused by heavy rains in Vijayawada and other parts of the State.

He also outlined the round-the-clock relief and rehabilitation efforts being undertaken by the government. Governor Abdul Nazeer lauded the Chief Minister's proactive approach in personally overseeing the relief measures and expressed hope that normalcy would soon be restored.

Depression moving towards north Odisha-Bengal coast

PNS ■ GUNTUR

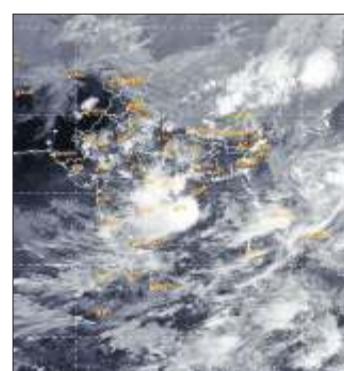
The depression over the west-central and adjoining northwest Bay of Bengal has been moving north-northwestward at a speed of 13 km/h over the past three hours. At 0830 hours on Sunday, it was centred over the same region, approximately 280 km east of Kalingapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), 230 km east-southeast of Gopalpur (Odisha), 260 km south-southeast of Paradip (Odisha), and 390 km south of Digha (West Bengal), according to the Meteorological Centre.

A daily weather update indicated that the depression is expected to continue moving nearly northward towards the north Odisha-West Bengal coasts and intensify into a deep depression within the next 24 hours.

Subsequently, it is very likely to shift west-northwestward and cross the Odisha and adjoining West Bengal coasts between Puri and Digha around the evening or night of 9 September. Continuing its west-northwestward trajectory, it is expected to traverse Odisha, adjoining Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand, and north Chhattisgarh over the following two days.

The Southeast monsoon remains vigorous over Coastal Andhra Pradesh and normal over Rayalaseema. Due to this, heavy to very heavy rain, with extremely heavy rainfall at isolated locations, is forecast for North Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 48 hours. Heavy rain is expected at isolated locations in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 24 hours and in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh on 10 September.

Thunderstorms, accompanied by lightning and strong surface winds reaching speeds of 30-40 km/h, are likely at isolated locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next five days, in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 48 hours, and in Rayalaseema over the next 24 hours. Strong surface winds with speeds of 30-40 km/h are also expected at isolated locations in Rayalaseema from 9-12 September and in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh from 10-12 September.



Light to moderate rain or thunder-showers are likely across many places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next seven days.

Heavy rainfall has been reported in Vizianagaram, NTR District, Srikakulam, and Visakhapatnam districts of Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the past 24 hours. Rainfall was observed at most places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and at a few locations in Rayalaseema during the same period, the report added.

Suspected mpox case under watch: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A man who recently travelled from a country experiencing mpox transmission has been identified as a suspected case of the disease, the Union health ministry said on Sunday.

The patient has been isolated at a designated hospital and is currently stable, it said, adding that there is no cause for concern.

Samples have been collected from the man and are being tested to confirm the presence of mpox. "The case is being managed in line with established protocols, and contact tracing is ongoing to identify potential sources and assess the impact within the country," the ministry said. The development of this case is consistent with the earlier risk assessment conducted by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and



there is no cause of any undue concern, it said. The country is fully prepared to deal with such isolated travel-related cases and has robust measures in place to manage and mitigate any potential risk, the ministry added.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared mpox a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) for the second time last month in view of its

The patient has been isolated at a designated hospital and is currently stable. Samples have been collected from the man it said, adding that there is no cause for concern.

prevalence and spread across many parts of Africa.

Since the 2022 declaration of PHEIC by WHO, 30 mpox cases have been reported in India. The last case of mpox was detected in March this year.

According to WHO's earlier statement, 99,176 mpox cases and 208 deaths have been reported from 116 countries since 2022. Last year, the reported cases

increased significantly.

The number of mpox cases reported so far this year has exceeded last year's total, with more than 15,600 cases and 537 deaths.

Mpox is a viral zoonosis with symptoms similar to those seen in the past in smallpox patients, although clinically less severe.

According to officials, mpox infections are generally self-limiting lasting between two and four weeks. Mpox patients usually recover with supportive medical care and management.

Transmission of the disease happens through prolonged and close contact with an infected person. It happens largely through the sexual route, direct contact with the body/lesion fluid of the patient, or through the contaminated clothing/linen of an infected person.

'Govt using 176 drones for flood relief operations'
P2

Monday Mirchi

CHANDRABABU NAIDU LEADS FROM THE FRONT

Since the onset of torrential rains and resultant flash floods in Vijayawada a week ago, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has been a ball of energy, wetting his feet and overseeing relief efforts with his hands on all aspects of the disaster. Defying the odds of age at 75, Naidu has unclogging bureaucratic rigmarole to provide timely assistance to the affected families, many of whom had been without power for over three days.

As he had promised during the recent Collector's Conference, he proved to be the 'Chandrababu of 1995', leaving many IAS and IPS officers on his team scrambling to keep pace with him. His swift and dynamic leadership has shaken the bureaucracy of all vestige of lethargy. Officers who had failed to deliver and who were 'caught in the act' were warned of serious consequences. Naidu is no mood to listen to excuses: it's action now or 'Get lost'.

AP BUREAUCRATS ON A STICKY WICKET

The recent flash floods in Vijayawada have landed Andhra Pradesh's bureaucrats on a sticky wicket. Amid the blame game, only one seasoned IAS officer conceded that they had an inkling of the impending floods full 24 hours in advance. It is a different matter that still they could not do much to mitigate the impact of the disaster. The Collector of NTR District had her own version of the chain of events, claiming there was no warning about the flood. The water 'regulator' at Budameru appears to have been a misnomer; the canal, designed to handle 15,000 cusecs of water, had to tackle over 40,000 cusecs. So, flooding across parts of the city became inevitable. Irrigation officials insist that they had done their job by notifying the state machinery about the release of water a day before the flood. Now that we know that over two lakh families had been hit due to mess-up by officials, it is difficult to pinpoint shirkers among babus.

LAIIDBACK BABUS NO MATCH FOR QUICK-THINKING REVANTH

The famous line "The speed of the boss is the speed of the team" is attributed to former president of Ford Company Lee Iacocca. There are mounting challenges beneath the surface calm of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's administration. Nine months down the line, it is not his political acumen that is being questioned, but whether his team would ever measure up to his habit of thinking on the feet. While his sharpness is undisputed, the whispers in the corridors of power suggest that his team of officers is struggling to keep pace with the Chief Minister's quick thinking. A seasoned bureaucrat conceded that this disconnect is causing unnecessary issues within the administration. The logical question that follows is: Will Revanth initiate another reshuffle within his team? Some insiders argue that a rejig again and that too soon could send the wrong message, raising questions of stability of the administration. Others nevertheless suggest it is better to make the requisite changes sooner than later. Interestingly, a senior bureaucrat hinted that while Revanth's loyalists in politics excel, their counterparts in the administration may leave a lot to be desired.

CAN NETAS SAY WHATEVER THEY WANT AND GET AWAY WITH IT?

Support of fraternal colleagues is vital for ensuring esprit de corps, be it in babudom or any other circle. Sometimes, silence in the face of serious assault on the dignity of bureaucrats by loudmouthed netas can whet curiosity as to whether associations AIS officers are dysfunctional. The latest whippers in the corridors of power are over the inexcusable and inexplicable silence of IAS officers over the outbursts of MLC Teenmaar Mallanna, also known as Chintapanu Naveen, who vented his ire at two women IAS officers, Alagu Varshini and Pamela Sathpathy, allegedly because they did not take his calls. "If you are unable to do the work; resign and sleep at home," he snapped, leaving many wondering why no one with spine has come out yet in their defense. The unusual silence among IAS circles has raised eyebrows, with insiders hinting at underlying tensions and dissensions as well as a pervasive fear of drawing unwanted attention among all sections of bureaucrats. With even IAS officers' associations choosing to stay silent, the larger question is: Is there more to it than meets the eye?

AN ELEVATION OR PRIMING?

A reshuffle of officials, particularly khaki-clad ones, in apparent disregard of their seniority can spark concerns over the state government's intentions and cause heartburn among those directly affected. The recent reshuffling of top police officials in Telangana has sparked animated conversations across the corridors of power, with 1992 batch IPS officer Jitender stepping in as the Director-General of Police and his senior, 1991-batch officer CV Anand, being brought back as Commissioner of Hyderabad City Police. Parallels are being drawn between this rare scenario and the one that prevailed when former top cops Anurag Sharma and AK Khan found themselves in comparable situations. For the unversed, CV Anand had been a strong contender for the DGP post. Now, with his return to the helm in Hyderabad, his role has become even more noteworthy. While Anand's appointment sends a strong message about the administration's intent to tighten its grip over law and order, there are other questions that linger: Is this a sign of his eventual elevation? Does it leave room for corrective reshuffle in the police brass? The intrigue is palpable, with insiders speculating about what this move signals for the state's police leadership.

VARSHINI UPSETS CM

Mending matters to fix specific wrongs is one thing and effecting systemic changes for cleaning the Augean stables is quite another. Dr Alagu Varshini has found herself in hot water following her contentious decision to sack 2,000 teachers from SC Gurukul Schools. A little bird told us that the move has not gone down well with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who is upset over the backlash it has generated. The Opposition has quickly seized on the issue, amplifying the sacking as part of a deeper malaise affecting the government's handling of educational policies. Insiders are now whispering that Varshini could be eased out once the varsham abates and the political dust settles.

--Yours truly

IUML to file PIL in HC over Budameru encroachments

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State president of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) and AP High Court lawyer, Basheer Ahmed, announced that the party will file a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the AP High Court. The PIL seeks the removal of illegal encroachments and the modernisation of the Budameru rivulet to prevent flooding and protect lakhs of people. Ahmed stated that the IUML is pursuing a writ of Mandamus to address the inaction of authorities in removing unauthorised constructions and expanding the width of the Budameru rivulet, which runs through NTR, Krishna, and Eluru districts. He emphasised that the failure to act violates Section 8 of the Andhra Pradesh Water, Land, and Trees Act, 2002, as well as Articles 14, 15, 19, and 21 of the Indian Constitution.

He urged the government to take immediate steps to remove the encroachments and illegal constructions, while also increasing the width of the rivulet to mitigate flood risks in the affected districts.

'Govt using 176 drones for flood relief operations'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister K. Atchannaidu announced that the government is distributing food items and medicines to people in flood-affected areas using an innovative approach involving drones. He noted that Andhra Pradesh is the first state to utilise drones in flood-prone areas for relief measures. The Minister briefed Education, IT, and Electronics Minister Nara Lokesh on the ongoing flood relief operations.

Atchannaidu explained that 176 drones were deployed from day one for relief operations. Of these, 115 drones were used to distribute food and medical supplies to 1,23,000 flood victims. Additionally, 50 drones were utilised for field-level supervision, and 11 drones were engaged in spraying to eliminate germs and pests in floodwaters to prevent the spread of diseases.



He mentioned that arrangements were being made to release water from the full Srisailem and Nagarjunasagar projects to downstream areas, noting that Vijayawada city was unexpectedly flooded by the 'Budameru' River. Acting swiftly, Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu instructed the department to provide essential assistance to the flood victims.

The Minister added that a comprehensive programme was launched under the agriculture department's supervision for drone use in the distribution of food, water, and medicine, sanitation spraying, and field-level monitoring in flood-hit areas during these disastrous conditions. He further stated that a team of technical experts, led by Dr. Satyanarayana from the

Acharya N. G. Ranga Agricultural University Research Directorate, collaborated with the Drone Corporation on this innovative experiment, yielding unprecedented positive results.

Atchannaidu remarked that one should always remain a perpetual student, continuously learning from global advancements, as frequently emphasised by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu in ministerial meetings. In line with the Chief Minister's vision of utilising cutting-edge technology for state development, Atchannaidu stated that he learned a great deal through this drone technology venture.

He added that the extensive use of drones, similar to helicopters, for assisting victims during natural disasters globally, has garnered praise from several ministers and senior officials across various departments.

Vijayawada floods blamed on mismanagement by govt

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Kurasala Kannababu has strongly criticised the TDP coalition government, holding Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu directly responsible for the mismanagement that caused the devastating floods in Vijayawada.

Addressing the media at the party's central office on Sunday, Kannababu pointed out contradictions in official statements. The Irrigation Department claimed to have warned the Revenue Department 20 hours in advance, while the District Collector said they had no information. Kannababu also highlighted a statement from Special Chief Secretary

(Revenue) R.P. Sisodia, who said evacuating two lakh people was impossible, describing this as evidence of negligence. He questioned why the Budameru Canal modernisation was not undertaken between 2014 and 2019, accusing the TDP of shifting blame to former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to cover their failures.

He further criticised Chief Minister Naidu for not holding a single review meeting on the crisis at the Secretariat, even though the situation has been ongoing for over eight days. He alleged that the TDP government seemed more focused on managing its public image in the media than addressing critical flood management issues.

Kannababu emphasised that, despite multiple flood warnings, CM Naidu's government failed to take adequate steps to evacuate people from danger zones.

He highlighted the tragic loss of over 45 lives and noted that flood victims are still waiting for essential relief supplies, as the government's response has been slow.

He also drew attention to failures in managing major projects along the Krishna River, which, he said, significantly worsened the flood situation. Kannababu called for immediate action, urging the government to expedite relief efforts and implement proper preventive measures, especially as more heavy rains are expected in the coming days.



Rs 12 cr donated to CMRF

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Director General of Police Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao, along with senior IPS officers, met Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday and handed over a cheque for Rs 12 crore for the

Chief Minister's Relief Fund for the relief of the flood victims in the recent floods in Vijayawada.

IGP Intelligence Mahesh Chandra Ladda, IGP Law & Order Ch Srikanth and presidents of Police Officers' Association were present.

1st flood warning again...

Continued from Page 1

Since Saturday, the barrage has been receiving significant inflows, which crossed 3.97 lakh cusecs by 11:30 am on Sunday. Following this, the first flood warning was issued. The Water Resources Department confirmed that floodwaters continue to rise.

Due to the counterweight replacement, all 66 gates of the barrage, except for gates 67 to 70, had been lifted to release the floodwaters. The barrage has a total of 70 gates, and repairs were ongoing after gate 69 was damaged last week when a boat drifted downstream and hit the gate, breaking its counterweight. In a statement on Sunday, AP Disaster Management Authority Director Ronanki Kurmanath confirmed heavy inflows into the Krishna River. The outflows at Srisailem were 3.09 lakh cusecs, compared to the inflows of 2.86 lakh cusecs. Similarly, at the Nagarjuna Sagar Project, both inflows and outflows were around 2.99 lakh cusecs. At the Pulichintala Project, inflows stood at 2.75 lakh cusecs,

while outflows reached 2.97 lakh cusecs.

On Saturday evening, WRD officials lifted 16 gates by 5 feet and 8 gates by 10 feet at the Nagarjuna Sagar Project, releasing 2,48,080 cusecs while utilising 28,298 cusecs for power generation. An additional 5,112 cusecs were released into canals. The project's storage was at 310.55 TMC out of its full capacity of 312.04 TMC.

As a result of these outflows, the flood levels at Prakasam Barrage, located downstream of Pulichintala, continue to rise.

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APSRTC incurred heavy losses due to floods: MD

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

APSRTC MD Ch Dwaraka Thirumala Rao visited the Vidyadharapuram RTC Depot on Sunday, which had been completely submerged due to heavy rains over the past week. The floods caused significant damage to the RTC infrastructure. Unable to walk through the depot premises, the MD and his team used a bus arranged by the authorities to view the submerged buses, garage, and scrap yard.

Later, the MD stated that, following the Chief Minister's directions, relief operations are underway in full swing in the flood-affected areas, with coordination from NDRE, SDRF teams, Octopus, Fire, and



Greyhounds personnel. He explained that the Chief Minister is monitoring the rescue operations regularly to reassure the public that the government is supporting the flood victims.

After observing residents wading through floodwaters,

the Chief Minister instructed that free buses be arranged for them. Special buses have been provided to transport people to various locations, and RTC DGT buses have also been allocated for the rescue operation. Consequently, both the RTC

and police departments are actively assisting the flood victims, the MD reported.

He further noted that the RTC has suffered substantial losses and damage due to the recent floods, with some depots completely submerged. Approximately 58 buses were inside the Vidyadharapuram depot, and the workshop and tyre retreading centre were also inundated.

Additionally, the MD reported that many types of medicines stored for employees at the Central Hospital were submerged, resulting in significant damage. The transport academy, new vehicle storage yard, and zonal stores also experienced extensive damage due to the floods.

NGOs extending support to flood victims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Many NGOs are at the forefront of assisting families affected by the severe floods in Vijayawada, which has inundated more than one lakh houses for a week. In addition to the state government's provision of food, water, milk, fruits, and other necessities, these NGOs are also offering their support by supplying food and water to the affected families.

Amrutha Hastam, an NGO led by Dara Karunasree, has been assisting the poor for over half a decade, serving meals at various locations in the city. The Amrutha Hastam team has risen to the occasion over the past few days, providing food to affected families in areas such as Ranigarhota, Krishna Lanka, RTC Workshop Road.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Sashthi: Sep 08 07:58 PM to Sep 09 09:53 PM
Saptami: Sep 09 09:53 PM to Sep 10 11:12 PM
Nakshatram: Vishaka: Sep 08 03:31 PM to Sep 09 06:04 PM
Anuradha: Sep 09 06:04 PM to Sep 10 08:04 PM
Rahukalam: 7:38 AM to 9:10 AM
Yamagandam: 10:41 AM to 12:13 PM
Varjyam: 10:24 PM to 12:08 AM
Gulika: 1:44 PM to 3:16 PM
Amritakalam: 08:20 AM to 10:06 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:48 AM to 12:37 PM
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Showers
Temp: 30°
Humidity: 84%
Sunrise: 5:55 AM
Sunset: 6:14 PM
Updated: September 8, 2024 5:00 PM

Counterweights...

Continued from Page 1

Four gates have been closed to facilitate the repair work and the removal of the obstructing boats.

According to Advisor K. Kannayya Naidu, counterweights for gates 67, 69, and 70 have been installed, with repair work being handled by Beckham Infra, Hyderabad. The process of filling the metal boxes with concrete is progressing swiftly. He further mentioned that the counterweight replacements were completed before the Prakasam Barrage faced flood inflows exceeding 4.50 lakh cusecs. The remaining filling works are expected to be finished in two to three days, after which the irrigation officials will be able to operate gates 67, 69, and 70. Meanwhile, Krishna Central (KC) Division Executive Engineer P.V.R. Krishna Rao confirmed that, under the supervision of Advisor Kannayya Naidu, the counterweight repairs will be completed in two to three days, allowing for the removal of the sand-laden boats currently stuck at the gates.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu visited the Prakasam Barrage on Sunday to review the repairs on gates 67, 69, and 70. He praised the engineering team for completing the counterweight installation before the anticipated flood.

He inquired about the progress of the work and asked officials about the expected flood inflows.

Continued from Page 1

Drones are to be utilised for assessing crop damage, distributing food to victims, and monitoring flood conditions. Relief camps are to be fully equipped to accommodate those displaced by the floods.

In his address, the CM also indicated that Central forces might be needed depending on the severity of the situation. Coordination between districts and timely alerts to residents about flood and rainfall conditions are crucial. He assured that immediate funds would be allocated for district-level relief efforts and reiterated that the Budameru incident would not recur. The CM vowed stern action against land grabbers involved in illegal activities with political backing.

Earlier in the day, CM Naidu conducted a teleconference with district collectors and authorities regarding the state of rains caused by low pressure in the Bay of Bengal. The collectors provided updates on rainfall, current conditions, and preparedness measures in their districts. The CM instructed that restrictions be imposed on crossing streams to prevent accidents and casualties, particularly during Ganesh Nimajjanam

(immersion) ceremonies.

The Eluru District Collector reported that over 2,000 people have been relocated to rehabilitation centres and are receiving food aid. The Vizianagaram District Collector noted heavy rains over the past two days, with traffic being regulated on bridges and information disseminated to the public. Efforts are underway to address potential flooding in the Nagavali and Vamsadhara rivers. In Bapatla district, arrangements are being made to accommodate an increasing number of victims in relief camps. CM Naidu visited flood-affected areas in Vijayawada on Sunday. Starting from the Vijayawada Collector's office, he inspected the Prakasam Barrage, which had been damaged by boat collisions. He met with irrigation officials and experts to discuss repairs. The CM then visited various locations including Jakkampudi, Kummariapalem Junction, Sitara Circle, Chittannagar, and the Milk Project.

During his visit, the CM observed sanitation efforts and road cleaning in Kummariapalem. He toured Jakkampudi Colony by Procleaner, where knee-deep water was still prevalent. The CM engaged with residents to hear their concerns and assured them of government support, inquiring about food distribution. After further inspections,

he returned to the Collectorate to review the ongoing issues with officials. Drones are to be utilised for assessing crop damage, distributing food to victims, and monitoring flood conditions. Relief camps are to be fully equipped to accommodate those displaced by the floods.

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Flood damage...

Continued from Page 1

The Minister praised Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu, who has been continuously monitoring the situation near Budameru for three days without rest, overseeing the repair of three breaches in the Budameru to safeguard Vijayawada city.

She further highlighted that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has been stationed at the collectorate for the past eight days, ensuring relief efforts reach all affected people. Regular reviews with officials from all departments are being conducted under the CM's supervision to prevent any complications. She claimed that no other Chief Minister has toured the flood-affected areas as extensively as Naidu.

Under the CM's directives, special measures have been taken to provide three meals a day to all families affected by the Budameru floods. On Sunday alone, over 300,000 food packets, milk, and biscuits were distributed. Following the CM's orders, vegetable sales at reduced prices have also been implemented to control inflation. Over 500,000 kilograms of vegetables have been sold across 163 stores to flood victims.



Heavy downpour causes flooding in Visakhapatnam

Low-lying areas severely affected; Damage reported across city

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam city and its suburbs were hit by incessant rainfall starting Saturday night, causing widespread waterlogging across several areas on Sunday. The heavy downpour, triggered by a well-marked low-pressure system over the northwest and central Bay of Bengal, later intensified into a depression over the west-central and adjoining northwest Bay of Bengal.



Motorists driving through an inundated road in Visakhapatnam on Sunday

By 5 pm on Sunday, Bheemunipatnam recorded 87 mm of rainfall, while Maharanieta saw 74 mm, Seethammadhara 72 mm, and Anandapuram 68 mm, according to a report from the district administration. Other areas, such as Padmanabham, Gopalapatnam, and Gajuwaka, recorded 40 mm to 60 mm of rain.

Numerous low-lying areas in Visakhapatnam were severely impacted by waterlogging, submerging roads and overflowing drains, creating havoc for residents. The road between the police barracks and the Old Post Office was particularly affected, with traffic brought to a near standstill. In Allipuram, the railway underpass became completely inundated, stranding several vehicles.

Damage was reported across the city, including collapsed boundary walls at Kancharapalem and CBM Compound, which damaged several parked vehicles and electric poles. Streams, or 'geddas', overflowed in HB Colony, Isukathota, and Akkayyapalem. In response, sanitation staff were deployed to clear debris from the drains. Due to heavy waterlogging, the Gnanapuram road under-bridge was closed, and traffic

was rerouted. In some areas, large trees were uprooted, including at NAD Junction and Visalakshi Nagar, blocking main roads. "The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) has acted promptly, deploying emergency teams to manage waterlogging and clear debris," said GVMC officials.

GVMC Commissioner P. Sampath Kumar, who was engaged in relief operations in Vijayawada, instructed his team to move residents from hilly and low-lying areas to rehabilitation centres. "Ensuring the safety of people in vulnerable areas is our priority," he said.

A minor landslide was reported in Ramakrishna Nagar in Gopalapatnam, prompting the evacuation of nearby residents. Visakhapatnam West MLA PGVR Naidu (Ganababu) closely monitored the situation. In response to the emergency, control rooms were established at the Collector's office and 11 Tahsildar offices. District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad urged residents to remain vigilant with more rain expected. "We have instructed all departments to remain on high alert. The GVMC is trying to manage

waterlogging, and citizens can contact the City Operations Centre helpline at 180042500009 for assistance," he stated.

Commissioner of Police Dr Shanka Brata Bagchi emphasised safety during the storm. "The Police Department is working closely with municipal authorities to address traffic disruptions. Motorists should avoid severely waterlogged areas and drive cautiously," he advised.

The downpour also caused power outages lasting over three hours in various parts of the city, including Poorna Market, Gnanapuram, Allipuram, Gajuwaka, and Maddilapalem. Several areas experienced traffic jams due to the flooding.

Alluri Sitharama Raju district has also faced relentless rainfall since Saturday night. By Sunday morning, Araku had recorded over 30 mm of rain, with Munchingputtu, Pedabayalu, Dumbrigunga, Araku Valley, and surrounding regions also receiving heavy showers. Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) Project Officer V. Abhishek urged residents in tribal areas to stay indoors unless necessary, warning of overflowing streams and geddas in Paderu.

BDC's third breach successfully closed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Concern over seepage from newly constructed bund

The 40-member Army Engineering Task Force Wing, under the supervision of officials from the Water Resources Department (WRD), successfully blocked the third and biggest breach of the Budameru Diversion Channel (BDC) at Shantinagar near Kondapalli in NTR district on Saturday.

They used the Gabion system, which consists of rectangular fabricated baskets filled with metal, to divert the Budameru flood towards River Krishna via BDC and stop the flood water from entering Vijayawada city. However, around 500 cusecs of flood water leaked from the temporary bund due to seepages, which may pose a danger to areas in Vijayawada city.

On Saturday, Minister for Water Resources Nimmala

Ramanaidu, Mylavaram MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad, and Water Resources Department Advisor M Venkateswara Rao supervised the breach-arresting work at Kondapalli. Despite successfully plugging the biggest breach, concerns remain about the seepage from the newly laid bund, prompting efforts to mitigate further flooding from the upper catchment area in anticipation of heavy rains in the next two days.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu monitored the work via drone, and the State government's WRD officials successfully closed the breaches on the Budameru drain, earning appreciation from the Army Engineering Wing. The India

Meteorological Department (IMD) officials predicted heavy rains over the next two days, leading the WRD officials to work on increasing the height of the BDC bund to prevent further flooding.

Despite heavy rain obstructing the height-increasing works at Kondapalli, Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu personally supervised the efforts and even travelled on a boat to assess the depth of the BDC and Budameru Rivulet. While 1.01 TMC of flood water stagnated in Vijayawada city, there were no fresh inflows in the Budameru drain, although outflows had increased.

The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) predicted that about 0.38 TMC of water

would reach the Budameru drain, with another 0.09 TMC of water entering Vijayawada city. According to IMD, a 1.86 TMC flood would reach the Budameru area, with an additional 0.37 TMC flowing into the city. In response to these predictions, the government prepared to address the emergency.

Mylavaram MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad stated that compared to Saturday, the flood inflows into the Budameru had reduced on Sunday. To address the potential further flood increase of up to 10,000 cusecs, the government planned to lay a third layer on the newly constructed bund. Besides, ongoing efforts are in progress to address the seven breaches on

the right side of the Budameru, with the design goal of enabling the BDC to discharge 35,000 cusecs of the flood.

CM appreciates Minister Ramanaidu

After successfully plugging the third breach in the Budameru Diversion Channel, CM Chandrababu Naidu called a meeting with ministers and senior officials at the NTR District Collectorate. He enquired about the progress of the work to address the BDC breaches with the officials.

The CM commended Water Resources Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu for his efforts in closing the breach. "Nimmala Ramanaidu, you did a great job in closing the BDC breaches at Kondapalli," he said.

Focus on completing 100-day house construction goal: Parthasarathy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Concerned departments should speed up infrastructure works

Minister for Housing and I&PR Kolu Parthasarathy has said the authorities should work hard to achieve the targets of the 100-day plan for the construction of houses for the poor. On Sunday, Parthasarathy held a teleconference with Housing Department officials and project directors of all districts on the progress of construction works. The progress related to the construction of houses across the State was reviewed.

Special Chief Secretary Ajay Jain explained the goals set under the Hundred Days Plan and the progress towards their achievement. Similarly, APSC Managing Director Raja Babu explained the details of all sanctioned houses, completed houses and the construction of houses in various stages. Special Secretary Mohammad Diwan explained the details related to the creation of infrastructure in the colonies.

On the occasion, Minister Parthasarathy said that the Chief Minister is giving priority to the construction of houses for the poor and the author-

ities should take initiative in this context. Out of the construction of 21 lakh houses has been undertaken across the State, around seven lakh houses have been completed and the rest should be completed by March 2025. He said that officials should visit the field from time to time and speed up the construction works. If there are any problems anywhere, the officials concerned should solve them without any delay. He directed the officials to talk to the beneficiaries regularly and guide them in completing the construction of houses.

Similarly, the officials of the Housing Department were directed to coordinate with the officials of the respective departments for the completion of the sanctioned works with a focus on the creation of infrastructure in the colonies.

Set up rehabilitation centres in low-lying areas: CM

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a crucial teleconference held on Sunday evening, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu sought an update on the measures being taken to protect Visakhapatnam from heavy rains. Expressing deep concern for the safety of residents, he has issued a directive for the immediate establishment of rehabilitation centres in vulnerable hilly and low-lying areas.

GVMC Commissioner Dr P Sampath Kumar, speaking from Vijayawada, detailed the ongoing response to the heavy rains, highlighting the collaborative efforts between the GVMC, police, and revenue authorities. "In light of the intense rainfall, we have established 80 rehabilitation centres across all GVMC zones. These centres are equipped to accommodate 10,620 people, and we have identified and alerted 14,630 families at risk," he reported.

The Commissioner also



MLA PVGR Naidu providing meals to individuals evacuated from the Ramakrishna Nagar landslide, sheltered at the Mandal Praja Parishad School

addressed recent developments in Ramakrishna Nagar, Zone 8, where a landslide at a retaining wall prompted immediate evacuation. "On Sunday, we evacuated five families from the affected area and relocated 20 nearby families. The Mandal Praja Parishad School has been designated as the evacuation centre, and food provisions have been arranged by West Constituency Legislator PVGR Naidu (Ganababu)," Dr. Kumar said.

With the potential for increased water flow due to the

opening of the Tatipudi Reservoir gates, Dr. Kumar advised that additional evacuation centres be prepared in Bheemili. He assured that GVMC authorities are implementing all necessary precautions, with continuous monitoring and directives being issued from Vijayawada. "We are taking all precautionary measures to prevent any potential accidents. Authorities have been instructed to proactively alert residents and guide them to the nearest rehabilitation centres," he emphasised.

Holiday for educational institutions today

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad has declared a holiday for all educational institutions in Visakhapatnam district on Monday (September 9) as a precautionary measure in light of the ongoing adverse weather conditions and continuous rainfall. The announcement was made on Sunday.

"We have decided to close all educational institutions, including government and privately-owned schools, junior colleges, and degree colleges across the district, to

ensure the well-being of students during this period of heavy rainfall," said District Collector Harendhira Prasad.

The District Education Officer (DEO), L Chandrakala, also commented on the situation, noting that the missed holiday would be compensated at a later date. "We will issue orders to make up for the lost day. Additionally, all headmasters are instructed to follow previous guidelines, including conducting classroom inspections and ensuring the safety of all rooms," she said.



'AP's industrial growth soared under YSRCP'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a statement shared on the X social media platform, former minister Gudivada Amarnath emphasised Andhra Pradesh's exceptional progress in the industrial sector under the leadership of former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Citing the State's stellar performance in the 2022 Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP), he noted that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry ranked Andhra Pradesh as the second-best State for promoting ease of doing business.

"Under the dynamic leadership of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, Andhra Pradesh emerged as a top performer in industrial growth," Amarnath remarked. He highlighted that the Union Minister for Industry and Commerce recognised Andhra Pradesh for its achievements during an event, presenting the State with citations for its success in creating a business-friendly environment.



Collapsed bridge in Chapagedda village in Alluri Seetharamaraju district

Heavy rains lash Alluri Seetharamaraju dist; villages cut off

PNS ■ PADERU

The Alluri Seetharamaraju district in Andhra Pradesh was severely impacted by heavy rainfall on Sunday due to a low-pressure system in the Bay of Bengal. The incessant downpour resulted in overflowing rivers and widespread flooding, disrupting normal life in several areas. Two habitations in the Chadalavada panchayat of Chintapalli mandal were among the worst affected. In Yerragunta village, two residences near the Pusavaku stream were inundated, forcing 30 families to evacuate to safer locations.

The bridge on the Chamagadda main road in G.K. Veedhi mandal collapsed, cutting off approximately 30 villages from the rest of the district. ITDA Project Officer V. Abhishek stated, "With the

Chemagadda bridge collapsing, traffic has come to a complete halt for 20 villages. We have deployed teams to assess the damage and restore connectivity as soon as possible."

Sub-Collector Souryam Patel visited Chediputtu Gedda in Hukumpeta mandal to inspect the situation. He emphasised the importance of public safety and instructed revenue officials to halt transportation in vulnerable areas to prevent accidents.

According to reports, Y. Ramavaram mandal recorded the highest rainfall at 74.2 mm, while VR Puram mandal saw the lowest with 7.6 mm. Other significant rainfall figures included Pedabayalu (72.6 mm), GK Veedhi (47.4 mm), and Paderu (33.4 mm). The continuous downpour flooded several crop fields, disrupting daily life.

1,700 teams formed to assess damage: Collector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana has announced that 1,700 teams have been formed to evaluate the property damage resulting from heavy rains and floods in the district. The teams would use a special app to register details of the affected houses and businesses, she said.

Special Principal Secretary RP Sisodia conducted a training programme at the Tummalapalli Kshetrah Kalakshetra in Vijayawada on Sunday. Following the training

programme, Collector Srijana stated to the media that, on the direction of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, immediate enumeration is being carried out to assist those affected by the heavy rains and floods.

Further, she said that in compliance with the Chief Minister's directive, 1,700 teams comprising staff from the Revenue Department and Secretariats have been formed to assess the losses incurred by households and businesses. The enumeration teams have visited every house and business affected by



the flood to register the losses, she said. For that, appropriate training has been provided to the team members in this regard, she added.

Additionally, she noted that the damage to 232,000 houses and commercial establishments in the affected areas will be evaluated across 170 secretariats. Each enumeration group will be led by a deputy Tahsildar, with the team consisting of a revenue inspector, ward secretary, volunteer, and police personnel, she said.

Moreover, each ward will be supervised by an IAS officer and a district officer during the damage assessment process, she explained.

Furthermore, Srijana said

the damage assessment will prioritize the areas that recently emerged from the flood. The assessment process is expected to be completed within the next three to four days after the receding of flood water, she said. Victims have been urged to be available during the enumeration process to assist the teams, she added.

After that, she said that flood relief measures such as food, drinking water, milk, biscuits, and fruits have been distributed in the affected areas.

No policy was norm in BRS govt: CM

KOLISHETTY VENKATESHWARLU venkat.k.warlu@gmail.com ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that Telangana had no policy during the last 10 years. The CM ridiculed the BRS government saying that 'no policy was the BRS government's policy'. He said the Congress government's policy is to increase public confidence in government systems.

"No one should worry about housing as the Congress government will make deserving people partners in Future City. The Fourth Estate will be part of the Fourth City, that is, Future City. Let us all participate in the construction of the Fourth City or Future City, Quli Qutb Shah cre-

ated Hyderabad city, the Nizam and the British created Secunderabad. N. Chandrababu Naidu and YS Rajasekar Reddy created Cyberabad and we will create the Fourth City now," the CM said.

Addressing the Jawaharlal Nehru Journalists Housing Society's (JNHS) meeting at which the Chief Minister handed over the Pet Basheerabad land's Memo to JNHS at the Ravindra Bharati on Sunday, the CM said that earlier political parties used to establish newspapers to spread their ideologies, but nowadays the media is dealing with frenzy.

The CM said that all journal-

'Our govt striving to increase public confidence in systems'



ists are getting a bad name because of what some people do. "Some journalists are changing the meaning of the word 'journalist'. It is your responsibility to control such people. It is our

government's responsibility to ensure that bonafide journalists are not harmed. Some newspapers cross the line regarding the language they use.

The post of Chief Minister is also being humiliated. They prefer to protect only the owners of political parties. Don't attribute actions taken against such people. It is your responsibility to protect real journalists," the CM said.

The CM said that journalists are 'doctors' who treat society. YSR decided to allot house sites to ensure their welfare.

"We have no hang-ups in taking decisions regarding housing for journalists.

'Will strive to conduct international cricket matches in Mangalagiri, Kadapa'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The newly elected president of the Andhra Cricket Association (ACA) and Vijayawada MP, Kesineni Sivanath alias Chinni, has expressed the association's commitment to organising international cricket matches in Mangalagiri and Kadapa stadiums, in addition to the Visakhapatnam stadium. The association also aims to improve cricket infrastructure in rural areas across the State.

The ACA's executive committee was elected unanimously during the special general body meeting at the Raintree Hotel in Vijayawada. The election took place on September 8,

and only one set of nominations was filed for each of the six key posts of the ACA, including the Apex Council Member. As a result, the new panel of the ACA was elected unanimously.

The Election Officer, former State Election Commissioner (SEC) Dr Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar, announced the new committee, with Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath being elected as president, Sana Satish from Visakhapatnam as secretary, P Vishnu Kumar Raju, Visakha North MLA, as joint secretary, and Venkata Prasanth and Dandamudi Srinivas as vice president and treasurer, respectively.

Centre promoting rural sports: Union Minister

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Union Minister for Civil Aviation K Ram Mohan Naidu has asserted that the Central government is giving priority to promoting sports and exhorted all to avail the opportunities, being provided by the government.

The Union Minister, along with State Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh, Sports and Transport Minister Ramprasad Reddy and MP Daggubati Purandeswari, inaugurated the 78th South Zone Inter-state Badminton championship in the RMC Indoor stadium here on Sunday.

The South Zone Inter-state Badminton Championship will be held from September 8 to 11. Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister Ram Mohan Naidu said that the Centre had allocated Rs 900 crore for the Khel India scheme and exhorted the players to avail the opportunities being provided by the governments and excel in sports.

He said that such events would help the players to gain experience and take part in national-level events. He recalled that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu had allocated land to Badminton coach Pullala Gopichand to establish a badminton academy to train budding players in Hyderabad in the combined state.



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State Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh said that no sports event had been held in Rajahmundry for the last two and half decades and congratulated the organizers for holding the 78th South Zone Inter-state Badminton championship in Rajahmundry. He stated that

Union Minister Ram Mohan Naidu and MP Daggubati Purandeswari are striving for the construction of a multi-purpose stadium and an indoor stadium in Rajamahendravaram.

Sports Minister M Ramprasad Reddy assured of providing all required infrastructures to the players at the international standards. MP

Daggubati Purandeswari asked the parents to encourage their children to participate in sports. MLA Adireddy Vasu said that over 200 players are participating in the 78th South Zone Inter-state Badminton championship, being played here.

These kinds of events would help to explore the innate talent of players and make them national players, the MLA added. Ex-MLA Adireddy Appa Rao and State Badminton coordinator Ankam Chowdary were present. Over 200 players from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, AP and Andaman Nicobar island are participating in the Badminton championship. Ankam Chowdary stated.

Water level in Kolleru Lake on the rise, several villages inundated



PNS ■ ELURU

Several villages in the Eluru district were inundated by the flood water and several other villages are facing inundation threat.

The water level in Kolleru Lake is increasing alarmingly as the flood of Budameru, Ramileru and Tammileru rivulets which damaged the national highway is reaching Kolleru Lake. This is the first time in four decades that Kolleru Lake received such a huge quantity of flood water, he stated.

The hyacinth spread in the canals and streams inhibiting the flow of water, resulting in the water gushing into villages and colonies, the villagers told the media. The floodwater



gushed into Komatilanka, Gudivada

Lanka, Prathikollalanka, Paidichintapadu, Sriparru, Maheshwaram and Kalakurru villages. The flood water also entered into the fish ponds at the villages causing huge losses to the aqua farmers. r.

Moreover, Mandavalli, Kovvada Lanka, Takkellapadu, Prathipadu, Pillipadu and Atapaka villages are facing inundation threats as the flood water is increasing. The vehicular traffic on the Kaikaluru was suspended as flood water overflowed on the road.

Eluru Range IGP GVG Ashok Kumar and district SP Pratap Shiva Kumar visited some of the flood-hit areas on Sunday and directed the officials to shift people from low-

lying areas. The floodwater of Budameru rivulet, after wreaking havoc in Vijayawada, started inundating many villages in the Eluru district. IGP Ashok Kumar and SP Shiva Kumar visited some of the areas at Eldlapadu village in Eluru rural mandal.

Speaking on the occasion, the IGP said that people living in low-lying areas should be moved to safer areas and infrastructure should be provided in the relief centres with revenue assistance. All the flood waters of Budameru, Tammileru, Ramileru flood and other streams merge in Kollert Lake. The water should merge in the Upputeru stream but not merging inhibition of flow by hyacinth creeper, the IGP added.

Meanwhile, Denduluru

MLA Chintamaneni Prabhakar also visited some of the flood-hit areas on Sunday. He visited Koniki, S Kottapalli and Kadimikunta villages in Pedapadu mandal. He went to the villages on a tractor driving the vehicle himself. He interacted with the villagers and assured them of extending all needed help.

The MLA told the villagers that 25 kg of rice, one packet of edible oil, one-litre of milk, two kg of potato and two kg of onions are being distributed to the flood victims. The MLA told the cattle rearers that 200 MT of fodder is being brought from other districts and that would be distributed to the cattle rearers in the flood-hit areas here. Later the MLA also spoke to the IGP and SP.

40 red sanders logs seized; three smugglers arrested

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Red Sanders Anti-Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) personnel seized 40 red sanders logs at two places and arrested three red sanders smugglers.

RSASTF SP P Srinivas said that a police team led by RI (Operations) Suresh Kumar Reddy and RSI Lingadhar conducted combing in the forest area at Karakambadi forest range. Later, they conducted a checking of vehicles on the Tirupati-Kadapa national highway at the Anjaneyapuram check-post.

The Taskforce personnel noticed a car moving suspiciously. When they tried to stop the car, the occupants started fleeing. However, the



task force police apprehended two persons who belonged to Selam in Tamil Nadu. The police arrested them and seized 12 red sander logs being transported in the car.

Another Task Force team led by RSI P Naresh conducted a combing at Chakraipat in Vempalli mandal. They spotted some personnel carrying red

sander logs in the forest area. On noticing the police, they dumped the red sander logs and started fleeing. However, the police chased them and apprehended one person. The task force personnel seized 28 red sander logs and a motorcycle. CI Suresh Kumar registered cases and launched a search to nab those who fled.



Union Minister promises efforts for airport in WG dist

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Union Minister for State for Steel and Heavy Industries Bhupatiraju Srinivas Varma has promised efforts for the establishment of an airport in West Godavari district.

The Bhimavaram Chamber of Commerce organized a programme to felicitate the newly elected MLAs and MP here on

Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, the Union Minister said that 500 acres of land is required to construct an airport here.

Bhimavaram MLA Pulavarti Ramanjaneyulu said that they were ready to acquire 600 acres of land for the construction of the airport here.

The Union Minister assured that he would strive for the

construction of an airport here. Narasapuram MLA Bommi Naykar, Undi MLA Kanumuri Raghurama Krishnam Raju, Tadepalligudem MLA Bolishetti Srinivas, Janasena District President Kotikalapudi Govinda Rao and BJP District President Narni Tataji were among who were present. The Bhimavaram Chamber of Commerce felicitated them.

40 RTC bus passengers have miraculous escape



PNS ■ PADERU

As many as 40 passengers, travelling in an APSRTC bus, had a miraculous escape when the bus overturned at Bornagudem in Rajavommangi mandal in the ASR district on Sunday. Police said that the

APSRTC Pallevelu bus was going to Narsipatnam from Rajahmundry. The bus veered off the road and overturned into a dried-up tank. All the passengers escaped unhurt. The RTC officials started an investigation to ascertain the exact reason for the accident.

Ex-minister Sidda donates Rs 50L to CMRF



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Sidda Raghava Rao has donated Rs 50 lakh to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF).

Sidda Raghava Rao donated Rs 50 lakh to carry out relief operations in the flood-affected areas. Sidda Raghava Rao, along with Sidda Suryaprakash Rao and Sidda

Hanumantha Rao, met Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in the Collector's office on Sunday and handed over the cheque.

TDP MLA Damacharla Janardhan accompanied Sidda Raghava Rao. Chandrababu Naidu thanked Raghava Rao for donating Rs 50 lakh for the relief operations.

Andhra varsity offers psychological counselling to flood victims



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Department of Psychology at Andhra University (AU) has announced the provision of free psychological consultations to flood victims in Vijayawada and surrounding areas.

Dr MVR Raju, the Head of the Psychology Department, emphasised the importance of addressing the mental health challenges that often accompany such disasters. "The trauma inflicted by the floods has taken a significant toll on the emotional well-being of the affected communities," Dr Raju stated. "Our department is dedicated to offering support and guidance to help them navigate this difficult period."

The Department's Centre for Psychological Assessment and

Counselling has a proven track record of providing assistance during crises. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the team successfully conducted online counselling sessions to address a wide range of psychological issues, including fear, anxiety, and depression. Building upon this experience, the department is now focusing its efforts on supporting those impacted by the floods.

Dr Raju added that licensed practitioners from the department are already stationed in flood-affected regions, including Vijayawada and the East and West Godavari districts. "Our team of 40 students, 68 faculty members, and research scholars is committed to providing comprehensive support to the affected population," he added.

Relief given to flood victims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Sowers Ministry has extended its support to the flood-affected families by distributing essential commodities.

The founder of the ministry Rev S Jayakumar Babu said that as per the call given by CM Chandrababu Naidu to help the flood-affected, he along with members of the ministry distributed essential commodities to the affected. They distributed rice, bed-sheets, blankets, sarees and other essential commodities to the flood-affected families of around 500 people. He said many supported the cause



including LJCC Trust chairman B Sivajiraju, Sowers Ministry vice chairman S Jaya Kumari and others.



Foreign student dies of snake bite on ANU campus

PNS ■ GUNTUR

In a tragic incident, a foreign student lost his life after being bitten by a snake on the Acharya Nagarjuna University (ANU) campus on Sunday.

According to police reports, the deceased, identified as Kondanna from Myanmar, was pursuing an MA in Buddhism at ANU. The incident occurred while he was collecting mushrooms on the campus. He ventured into the bushes, where he was bitten by a Russell's viper. Despite being rushed to a private hospital, he succumbed to the snake bite during treatment. University officials have informed his family of the tragic loss. State Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh expressed shock and sorrow over the incident. In a statement on Sunday, he urged university officials to implement measures to prevent such incidents from recurring on campus. The Minister also assured the bereaved family of full support during this difficult time.

Balepalli named R'mundry City Congress chief

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) presi-

dent Y S Sharmila has appointed Balepalli Muralidhar as Rajahmundry City Congress president.

Muralidhar was appointed City Congress president for the third successive time. Muralidhar is a close associate of Jakkampudi Ramamohan Rao. He has held many key positions in the Congress party. He was appointed city Congress president for the first by the then APCC President S Sailajanath.

Later, the then APCC president Gidugu Rudra Raju also appointed him as city Congress president. Now, YS Sharmila appointed him as city Congress president for the third successive time. The local Congress leaders congratulated Muralidhar for being appointed Rajahmundry city president for the third successive time.



PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

A leopard has been spotted on the outskirts of Rajahmundry, prompting a major operation by forest and police officials to capture the elusive animal.

CCTV cameras on Sunday recorded the leopard in the Diwancheruvu area of Rajanagar mandal. Officials believe the leopard may have wandered into the residential area from the

Leopard spotted in Rajahmundry

nearby reserve forest, which spans over 920 acres.

DRO Padmavati revealed that forest officials have installed CCTV cameras in key locations. The leopard is suspected to be roaming near the All India Radio and Prasar Bharati premises.

Forest officials announced on Sunday that 36 surveil-



lance cameras and two traps have been set up to capture the wild cat. DFO Bharani has advised residents of Swaroop Nagar, Roopa Nagar, Fatima Nagar, Housing Board Colony, Padmavati Nagar, Sriramapuram, and Diwan Cheruvu to remain indoors after dark for their safety.

ACROSS THE STATES



Govt promotes pulses production in tribal & Naxal-affected areas

The government is encouraging pulse cultivation, particularly arhar and urad, in Naxal-affected districts and tribal areas of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh to boost national production and increase farmers' income, according to a government official. The initiative, focusing on non-traditional pulse-growing regions, is a pilot project that could be expanded nationwide if successful, potentially reducing India's reliance on imports. The National Co-operative Consumers' Federation of India Ltd (NCCF), tasked with piloting the project, has identified four districts in Jharkhand and five in Chhattisgarh for implementation. "We're promoting arhar and urad production this kharif season in selected Naxal-affected and tribal areas of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, including women farmers," NCCF Managing Director Anice Joseph Chandra said. Target districts include Rajnandgaon, Jashpur, Bastar, and Mohla Manpur in Chhattisgarh, and Palamu, Katihar, Dumka, and Garwa in Jharkhand.

Ready for talks with Pak if it stops terrorism in J-K: Rajnath

PNS ■ BANIHAL (J-K)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said India is ready to start dialogue with Pakistan if it stops terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing an election rally in this assembly segment of Ramban district in support of BJP candidate Mohd Saleem Bhat, Singh said Article 370 of the Constitution that granted special status to J-K was revoked to end the misery of the people and make the region prosperous.

"Pakistan do one thing that is stop taking support of terrorism. Who would not like to improve relations with neighbouring countries? Because I know the reality that you can change a friend but not your neighbour. We want improved relations with Pakistan but first of all they should stop terrorism," Singh told a well-attended gathering here.

The defence minister said when Pakistan stops sponsoring terrorism in Jammu and



Kashmir, India will start dialogue with them.

"Among those who fell to terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, 85 percent were Muslims. Terror incidents used

to be a routine affair in Kashmir. Were Hindus being killed in the terror acts? I have been a home minister and I know the highest number of Muslims lost their lives in the

incidents of terror," Singh said.

Earlier in the day, the defence minister addressed an election rally in nearby Ramban in support of party candidate Rakesh Singh Thakur and said more than 40,000 people lost their lives in terror incidents in Jammu and Kashmir.

The BJP's Bhat is pitted against former Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president and ex-minister Vikar Rasool Wani who is looking for a hat-trick of wins from the Banihal seat.

'Join India, we consider you our own'

PNS ■ JAMMU

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday asked the residents of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to come and join India as "we consider you our own unlike Pakistan which treats you as foreigners".

Addressing an election rally in the Ramban assembly con-

stituency in support of BJP candidate Rakesh Singh Thakur, the Union minister asserted there is a sea change in the overall security situation in Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019.

The senior BJP leader came down heavily on the National Conference-Congress alliance

over its poll promise of restoring Article 370 and said it is impossible as long as the BJP is there. He said the "sea change" witnessed in the overall security situation in J-K since August 2019 means that youths now carry laptops and computers in their hands instead of pistols and revolvers.

Rahul to 'further strengthen' bond between India and US



PNS ■ HOUSTON

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday arrived in the US on a three-day visit during which he will hold "meaningful discussions and insightful conversations" to further strengthen the bond between India and America.

"I am truly delighted by the warm welcome I've received in Dallas, Texas, USA, from the Indian Diaspora and members of the Indian Overseas Congress," Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, said in a Facebook post.

"I eagerly look forward to engaging in meaningful discussions and insightful conversations that will further strengthen the bond between our two nations during this visit," he said, sharing some

photographs of his arrival.

In a post on X, the Congress party said that Gandhi received a "warm and enthusiastic" welcome at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport.

Indian Overseas Congress chairperson Sam Pitroda said last week that the Opposition leader is not coming to the US in his official capacity but will have a chance to interact with a variety of people on Capitol Hill at an "individual level".

"He (Gandhi) will have interactions with the press at the national press club, he will meet with the think tank people and will also have interaction at Georgetown University which is equally important in Washington DC," Pitroda said of Gandhi's first visit to the US since assuming the mantle of the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.



Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Al Nahyan arrives in Delhi

Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan arrived here to a warm welcome on Sunday as he kick-started a two-day maiden visit to India to further boost bilateral ties in a range of areas, including energy and connectivity, amid escalating tensions in West Asia. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal received the Crown Prince at the airport following which he was accorded a ceremonial welcome, in reflection of the importance India has attached to the visit. "A new milestone in a historic relationship. His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Zayed Al Nahyan arrived in Delhi on his first official visit to India," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on X. "Warmly received by @CimGOI @piyushgoyal and accorded a ceremonial welcome," he said. The Crown Prince is accompanied by several ministers from the UAE government and a business delegation.



Man hangs self after killing daughters in Prayagraj

A man allegedly killed his two minor daughters with a sharp weapon before hanging himself here on Sunday afternoon, police said. Additional Commissioner of Police N Kolanchi said they got information that a man has hanged himself in his house in Dhoomanganj and the bodies of his two daughters are lying nearby. The police along with the field unit reached the spot and opened the door of the room which was locked from inside and found the bodies of Manish Prajapati (30) and his daughters Nancy (5) and Khushboo (3), he said. The daughters have been stabbed in the stomach, he said. "On Sunday afternoon when his wife had gone out to the market he allegedly took the extreme step. Manish also called his wife before the incident." He said that the reasons for murder and suicide will be known after investigating this case. Manish's wife is currently not in a position to talk. The forensic team is collecting evidence from the spot. Manish used to do painting work, Kolanchi said.

MEDIC'S RAPE-MURDER

SC to hear RG Kar hospital incident case today



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday the case related to the murder and alleged rape of a junior doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata.

According to the cause list uploaded on the apex court's website, a bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra is slated to hear on September 9 the case, which was initiated by the top court on its own.

The Centre has recently

filed an application in the apex court alleging "unpardonable" non-cooperation by the West Bengal government in extending logistical support to the CISF, tasked with providing security at the hospital.

In its application, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs has termed the alleged non-cooperation of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government as an example "symptomatic of a systemic malaise" and sought a direction to the state authorities to extend full cooperation to the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

NSA AJIT DOVAL TO ATTEND BRICS MEET

Ukraine conflict likely to figure in discussions

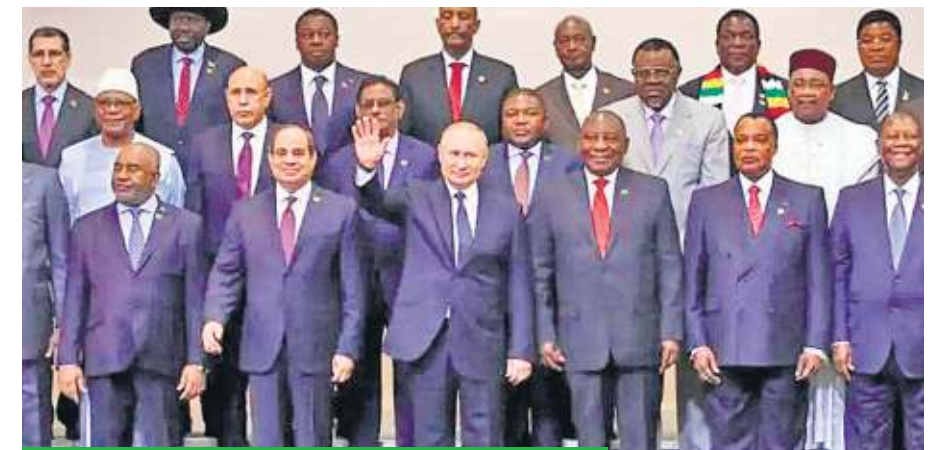
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval is travelling to Russia this week against the backdrop of calls for India's possible role in finding a solution to the Ukraine conflict following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visits to Moscow and Kyiv.

Doval is visiting Russia primarily to attend a conclave of national security advisors of the BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) grouping that is taking place amid a renewed push for peace talks between Moscow and Kyiv to end the conflict.

NSA Doval is travelling to Russia for the BRICS meet, official sources said. He is also expected to hold talks with his Russian counterpart and is likely to discuss ways to bring peace to the region. Doval's visit to Russia comes two-and-a-half weeks after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's high-profile trip to the Ukrainian capital Kyiv.

On Saturday, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, following her talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said



Doval is visiting Russia primarily to attend a conclave of national security advisors of the BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) grouping that is taking place amid a renewed push for peace talks between Moscow and Kyiv to end the conflict

India and China can play a role in finding a solution to the dragging conflict.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, speaking at a panel dis-

ussion at the Eastern Economic Forum in the Russian city of Vladivostok on Thursday, named India, Brazil and China as possible

intermediaries that could play a role in resolving the conflict

"First of all, it is the Chinese People's Republic, Brazil and India -- I am in contact with my partners and I have no doubt that the leaders of these countries, and we have relations of trust and confidence with one another, will be really interested and provide a helping hand," he said.

His remarks came in response to a question on possible countries that can act as a mediator between Russia and Ukraine.

Centre should protect territorial integrity of Manipur: CM

PNS ■ IMPHAL

Amid a fresh bout of violence in anipur, Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Sunday appealed to the Centre to take steps to protect territorial integrity of the state, according to an official.

Singh also urged the central government not to give in to the demand for a separate administration raised by Kuki Zo groups, said the official on condition of anonymity.

The chief minister made these appeals in a memorandum submitted to Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya when he, along with a number of MLAs and the assembly Speaker, called on him at Raj Bhavan and held a meeting.



In the memorandum to Acharya, Singh said the Centre should ensure peace in Manipur and give adequate power to the elected state government, according to the official.

Singh also called for revoking the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement.

The SoO pact was signed by the Centre, the Manipur government and two conglomerates of Kuki militant outfits - Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United People's Front (UPF). The pact was signed in 2008 and extended periodically thereafter.

'Political power can be inherited, but wisdom can't'

UP CM Adityanath slams Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Attacking Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav over dynastic politics, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said political power can be inherited but wisdom cannot.

Targeting the SP chief, CM Adityanath said those who previously wielded power as their "bapauti" (family property) are now resorting to "conspiracies and creating chaos" to regain power.

Adityanath said that during the SP's rule, criminal elements ran parallel governments and law enforcement



was under their control. Earlier goons used to chase police, but after the formation of the BJP government in 2017, the situation has changed, he

said, adding now swift action is taken against criminals and "unka Ram Naam Satya ho jata hai" (They are sent on their last journey)," he said.

Chhattisgarh: 7 men dead, 3 injured in lightning strike

PNS ■ BALODABAZAR

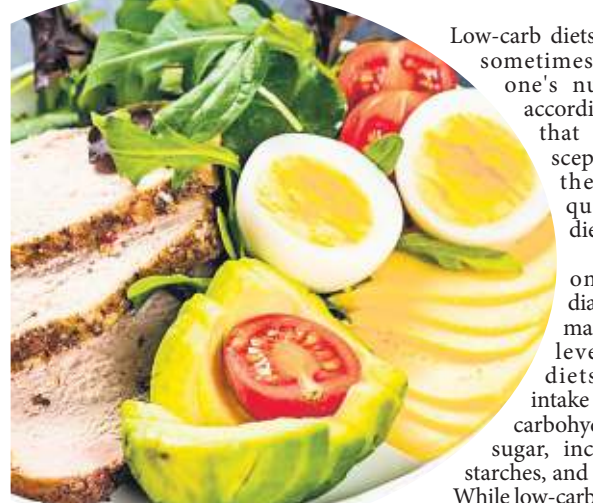
Seven men were killed and three injured after they were struck by lightning in Chhattisgarh's Balodabazar-Bhatapara district on Sunday, officials said. The incident took place this evening in Mohtara village when the vic-

timations, these persons gathered at the edge of a pond near their field amid heavy rainfall when lightning struck. The deceased were identified as Mukesh (20), Tankar Sahu (30), Santosh Sahu (40), Thaneshwar Sahu (18), P o k h r a j Vishwakarma (38), Dev Das (22) and Vijay Sahu (23)," he said. The three injured persons have been hospitalised, the official added.



Low-carb diets meet nutrient needs: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Low-carb diets can meet and sometimes even exceed one's nutrient needs, according to a study that examined the nutritional quality of such diets.

Commonly recommended for diabetic patients to manage their sugar levels, low-carb diets restrict the intake of foods high in carbohydrates or added sugar, including sweets, starches, and refined grains. While low-carb diets have been

shown to provide health benefits, including weight loss, researchers said scepticism remains around the nutritional quality of low-carb diets.

Some argue that cutting down on carbs leads to over-consuming protein or fat and under-consuming essential nutrients, the team, including researchers at the University of Vermont, US, said.

For the study, published in the journal Frontiers in Nutrition, they assessed the nutrient adequacy of three different seven-day low-carb meal plans. Two were ketogenic diets -- one that averaged about 20 grams of net carbs per day, while the other averaged about 40 grams of net carbs per day. The third was a more liberal meal plan that contained an average of around 100 grams of net carbs per day.

"All three low-carbohydrate meal plans exceeded recommendations (US) for vitamins A, C, D, E, K, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, B6, folate and B12 in males and females in the age group of 31-70 years and exceeded calcium recommendations for adults in the age group of 31-50 years," the authors wrote.

HARYANA POLLS

No final decision yet on AAP-Cong alliance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

No final decision has been taken on the alliance with the Congress for the October 5 Haryana Assembly polls yet, sources in AAP said on Sunday. The last date to file nominations is September 12.

"The talks are underway but there is no final decision yet," said an AAP source.

Earlier in the day, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha said both Congress and his party are trying to forge an alliance for the Haryana elections by keeping aside their

individual aspirations.

Chadha said while the parties are yet to reach a consensus on the alliance, the talks are progressing in a "positive" direction and they are hopeful of a good outcome. He, however, added that the AAP will not proceed with the alliance "if there is no win-win situation".

"The talks are happening in a positive atmosphere. Both parties are working towards contesting the elections together, prioritizing unity and the demands of the people of Haryana, while setting aside individual party and candidate aspirations," he said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Admission of guilt

After being in a state of denial for 25-odd years, Pakistan admits its army's role in the Kargil war for the first time

Pakistan has, for the first time, officially acknowledged the role of its army in the Kargil War of 1999. Speaking at an event to commemorate Defence Day, Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir said several Pak soldiers died in the 1999 Kargil War against India. This is the first time that Pakistan acknowledged active role in the war in a surprising departure from its elusive stance. Previously, Pakistan had maintained that the Kargil operation was carried out by mujahedeen or "freedom fighters" and local insurgents, distancing its military establishment from the war. However, this newfound candor could potentially reshape not only the country's internal discourse but also its relations with India and the broader international community. Indeed, India and the world knew it all along and there was not an iota of doubt about the role the Pakistan army under General Musharraf played in the Kargil war. It was orchestrated by the then Pakistan army chief General Musharraf who went ahead with his machinations without even taking the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif.



The Kargil War, fought between India and Pakistan from May to July 1999, erupted after Pakistani soldiers and militants infiltrated the Indian side of the Line of Control (LoC) in the Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir. Their goal was to seize strategic heights, from where they could disrupt supply routes to India's northern military outposts, including the Siachen Glacier. India was initially caught by surprise but responded with full-scale military operations to reclaim the territory. Indian forces mounted a determined counter-offensive, which eventually forced Pakistan to retreat. Multiple independent sources, including captured Pakistani soldiers and intelligence reports, indicated that regular units of the Pakistani Army were deeply involved. But the big question is why now? This change is likely driven by internal and external factors, including evolving political dynamics, growing transparency within the military establishment, and changing geopolitical realities. By acknowledging its role, Pakistan may be seeking to rewrite its narrative, demonstrating a willingness to confront uncomfortable truths in its military history. This admission could have several important implications for Pakistan, India, and the region as a whole. The official acknowledgement could prompt a deeper examination of the internal decision-making processes that led to the Kargil War. By owning up to its role, Pakistan could potentially build trust in future diplomatic engagements. This admission could further influence Pakistan's military strategy, possibly encouraging more caution and restraint in future operations. Pakistan's recognition of its army's involvement could alter its approach to the Kashmir dispute, leading to more diplomatic, rather than military, efforts to resolve the issue. While the scars of Kargil will not heal overnight, this acknowledgement opens up the possibility for greater introspection and, potentially, reconciliation in the future.

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PICTALK



Indian Air Force aerobatics team Surya Kiran performs at exercise 'Tarang Shakti', in Jodhpur

Indian economy thrives amid global challenges

While global powers struggle with economic slowdowns, India's strategic reforms, thriving startup ecosystem, and growing middle class continue to fuel its growth



SUDHIR HINDWAN

India's economic landscape remains one of remarkable resilience and potential, despite the challenges it faces. Although the recent GDP data for the last quarter of the current year indicates a decline from the anticipated 8% growth to 6.7%, the country continues to lead among the fastest-growing global economies. This achievement is an indicator of India's gradual economic aggrandizement, positioning it as a global player in economic growth and development. While major economies around the world experience slowdowns, India's economic growth has remained robust.

However, one of the key challenges facing the Indian government is the growing need to create more employment opportunities. The number of unemployed and underemployed citizens has increased over the years, and the problem has been exacerbated by rapid globalization. This has introduced a new era marked by the principle of "perform or perish," impacting public sector enterprises and businesses worldwide. India's public sector has not been immune to this trend, but the abundance of cheap labor and a proactive push towards Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) have given the country a promising future.

Despite India's initially cautious approach to economic reforms, the government has gradually implemented a range of confidence-building measures. These initiatives not only promote economic growth but also aim to ensure the equitable development of various societal sectors. The framework of socio-economic justice that India has developed has helped build trust within the country and abroad, as has its progress with export-oriented special economic zones (SEZs). The share of India's global trade was just 0.7% in the early stages, but efforts to strengthen the country's medium-term export strategy between 2002 and 2007 have yielded positive results.

Additionally, the economic reforms of 1991 gave India a significant boost, marking the beginning of its economic liberaliza-



tion. Although some East Asian economies and China receive higher levels of foreign direct investment, India's superior corporate governance and the high quality of its commercially driven companies have allowed it to achieve better returns on investment. India's success has also been driven by its business experts and investors, who have made their mark overseas, particularly in fields like information technology, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and healthcare. These sectors have become areas in which even advanced economies must catch up. Additionally, India's indigenous entrepreneurship and industries have provided the country with a significant advantage over other economies that rely heavily on foreign direct investment. A prime example of this is China, where the export-led manufacturing boom is largely fueled by FDI, which is not a substitute for home-grown entrepreneurship. India, on the other hand, has focused on building strong internal markets. The complexities of financial dealings are another challenge that India has handled well. For instance, Japan has faced severe economic issues due to a malfunctioning financial system in recent years, highlighting the importance of constant monitoring by competent authorities. India's mature financial markets and the robust regulations govern-



A PARTICULARLY PROMISING DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA'S ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE IS THE RECENT RISE OF STARTUPS. IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, THE COUNTRY HAS SEEN MORE THAN 10,000 STARTUPS EMERGE, CREATING OVER 100,000 JOBS, BOTH DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY

ing them have provided investors with confidence and stability. Additionally, while China may lead in savings rates, infrastructure, and manufacturing, India's services-driven growth and institutional stability, rooted in democracy and pluralism, set it apart.

A particularly promising development in India's economic landscape is the recent rise of startups. In the last five years, the country has seen more than 10,000 startups emerge, creating over 100,000 jobs, both directly and indirectly. This success has been attributed to a robust strategy that has expanded operational and support networks from rural to urban areas. The National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) reported that these startups have significantly contributed to employment generation, further solidifying India's economic prospects.

Foreign investors have also recognized India's potential. Over the past two decades, more than \$60 billion has been invested in Indian stock markets. Additionally, over 600 investors have been granted permission to trade on Indian stock exchanges. This influx of investment has resulted in a 125% growth in the Sensex and a 148% rise in the Bombay Stock Exchange. India's remarkable progress in the IT industry has opened

new doors for Indian companies, which are now aggressively expanding into overseas markets. The country's compliance and regulatory authorities have ensured that foreign investments are secure and that economic transactions are monitored thoroughly. Despite the challenges posed by a tough global economic climate, India's G20 Presidency has provided an opportunity to position itself as a key player in global manufacturing and as a reliable partner in various sectors. The cooperation among G20 nations has also fostered the development of new strategies to meet the needs of vulnerable countries, fostering a more inclusive global society. This cooperation could lead to a positive shift in international relations, promoting greater harmony and collaboration. India's impressive progress is largely attributed to its immense talent and strategic foresight. However, the country must continue to navigate social and political pressures to maintain its growth momentum. By addressing these challenges, India can further solidify its position as a global economic powerhouse, capable of driving growth not only within its borders but also across the world.

(The author, recipient of Bharat Gaurav award, is a professor and expert on strategic affairs; views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE US ELECTIONS

Madam — A section of media has reported Hindu groups support for Donald Trump against Kamala Harris which sends mixed signals as both Republicans and Democrats have sizable strength cadres of expats from India. How far does the support call for Donald Trump go, there is a distant possibility that Hindus will be benefitted by such a skewed political approach.

In earlier US elections also, Hindu Americans' support has never been so explicit publicly. US collaborations, trade and technology, defence ties and agreements and its support in geopolitical challenges from China in South Asia and the Indian Ocean are very crucial for India. Therefore, a restrictive narrative of Hindu support may turnaround the US policies for immigrants as Hindus or at large Indian expats in the US are entirely different community absolutely loyal to US or any other countries where they have settled.

The most powerful country US must be credited for giving opportunity to Indians to achieve the highest positions in their ruling, governance, business, corporate ladder and society. I hope wisdom will prevail on American Indians and particularly Hindus to play their significant role in the Presidential elections.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

COURTS AS THE LAST RESORT

Madam — There are two things which are to no one's liking, one is inflation and the other is litigation.

Indian courts are piling up with cases for reasons that one can state that every household has got a case or the other. The most complicated creatures are human beings and reason why there are two extremes as the behavioral scientist often recorded. No animals ending up in suicides than humans is an undisputed fact. When the top most court's advocacy from various legal luminaries is that there is nothing to substitute an out of the court settlement, the litigants never

Ambulance in traffic jam



I am writing in reference to the article, "When Golden Hour is Lost in a Stuck Ambulance" (September 7). The scenario of an ambulance caught in a traffic jam is a grave concern with potentially life-threatening consequences. Every minute of delay reduces a patient's chances of survival, highlighting the critical need for prompt medical intervention.

Urban traffic congestion, particularly in metro cities, often obstructs the swift movement of emergency vehicles. Compounding this issue is the lack of awareness and compliance from other drivers,

who frequently fail to yield the right of way. Inadequate road infrastructure, such as narrow lanes and poorly designed intersections, further intensifies the challenge.

To address this, dedicated ambulance lanes or corridors should be established to provide emergency vehicles with a clear path. Implementing intelligent traffic management systems, such as smart traffic signals and real-time monitoring, could optimize traffic flow during emergencies. Public awareness campaigns and driver education initiatives would also be instrumental in fostering a culture of giving priority to emergency vehicles. Additionally, modern technology like GPS tracking and intelligent traffic signal prioritization could ensure ambulances are directed along the fastest routes, minimizing delays at intersections. Such systems would allow for more efficient routing, taking real-time traffic conditions into account.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

THE REBEL TROUBLE

Madam — This refers to the news, Rebel trouble for the BJP in Haryana and BJP MLA in tears after being denied ticket (Sept 6/7). After the issuance of 67 BJP candidates in Haryana and Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini's clarification for not changing the tickets, the rebel leaders should now set aside their differences and work in the interest of the party. Instead they are adopting the Aya Ram Gaya Ram approach.

There can be many other reasons behind ticket denial viz low chances of winning, counter allegations against senior leaders, neglect of some areas development, condemning the internal matters of the party outside, lack of discipline within the party and decreasing popularity at the ground level. No party is untouched by casteism and nepotism. It is a tough task for the ruling and opposition parties to appease all communities.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Bihar's special land survey: A step towards resolving land disputes

This ambitious project aims to digitise and map land records, addressing longstanding issues of land disputes and enhancing transparency in land dealings

Bihar is undergoing a significant transition with the commencement of a Special Land Survey covering 45,000 villages across the state. To expedite this process, the government has deployed 10,000 officials, aiming to complete the survey by August 2025.

The Department of Revenue and Land Reforms has already digitized 64 million revenue documents. The digitisation of an additional 160 to 200 million documents is expected to be completed within the next year. These documents will be available to the public for a nominal fee.

The primary goal of the survey is to digitize and map the state's land data to enhance transparency in land dealings and address the persistent land disputes that overwhelm Bihar's courts. "Our main focus is to prepare accurate land records, including Kistwar (Plotting) and Khanapuri, to ensure legitimate land ownership," states Vinod Kumar Singh, Additional District Magistrate of Vaishali district.



Singh emphasizes the importance of this initiative, noting that 60% of land-related crimes in Bihar arise from missing or inaccessible Record of Rights (RoR) documents. Fraudulent claims on land titles have also contributed to the problem. Regarding the Vanshavali (Pedigree) Form, Singh clarifies that approval is not required from the Sarpanch (Panchayat Head). Individuals can certify and submit the form themselves along with Self-Declaration Form-2 (Prapatra 2). This form is particularly crucial for ancestral properties, regardless of the type of ownership, such as Khatiyani or Property Sale Deed. Vipin Kumar Yadav,

Settlement Officer (Bandobust Adhikari) of Vaishali, adds that if land is in the father's name and agricultural rent is being paid, a Vanshavali form is not necessary. However, if the father wishes to distribute the property among his children, the form must be completed along with Self-Declaration Form-2. Khatiyani is a legal document that records rights related to Khata (Account) number, Kheasara (Plot) number, Mouza (area), tenant's name, and land area. It specifically pertains to ancestral immovable property. The digitization and mapping efforts through the Special Land Survey are commendable. By reducing

land disputes, these measures will enable farmers to focus on enhancing agricultural productivity instead of engaging in protracted legal battles. Given that agriculture contributes 18% to India's GDP, improving land record management is crucial for the sector's growth. In conclusion, Bihar's Special Land Survey represents a crucial step towards modernizing land management and resolving persistent land disputes.

By digitizing and mapping extensive land records, the initiative aims to enhance transparency, reduce legal conflicts, and empower farmers to focus on agricultural productivity. With the goal of completing the survey by August 2025, this project underscores the state's commitment to improving land administration and supporting the agricultural sector, which is vital for Bihar's economy. As digitization progresses, stakeholders can look forward to a more efficient and equitable land management system.

(The author is a columnist, views are personal)



GYAN BHADRA





FIRST COLUMN

GANESHA: THE MASTER OF RIDDHI AND SIDDDHI

As the first deity, Ganesha guides the soul toward deeper spiritual experiences



ASHWINI GURUJI

Lord Ganesha is the swami of Riddhi and Siddhi. Riddhi is the force responsible for prosperity and abundance – material riches and luxury pertaining to the five senses. Siddhi refers to spiritual powers, like extra-sensory perception, clairvoyance, clairaudience, premonition, thought manifestation etc. Ganesha was born of the dirt of Mata Adi Shakti, as she took a bath indicating that all the riddhi and siddhi in creation are nothing but a spec of dirt of the phenomenal force of the Mother. Ganesha is the deity closest to physical creation, the swami of riddhi and siddhi, which are nothing but Maya, unreality. They are temporary and bound to leave. The majority spend their life chasing these forgetting the temporary nature of these forces and oblivious to what lies beyond... Ganesha is the first deity, pratham puja, just the first step to the phenomenal experiences of the world of spirit. Ganesha manifested at a time when impurities started creeping into the society. In due course of time as worldly desires took precedence over spiritual pursuits in ordinary men, different mantras and sadhnas were prescribed to invoke different aspects of Ganesha, to fulfil specific desires in the realm of the physical, the grossest layer of creation. Uchchishita Ganapati is invoked through specific mantras as a giver of boons, as a protector of the motherland or to develop mastery over the five senses. Heramba is the five-headed form of Ganapati, golden in colour and riding a lion. This ten-armed deity is invoked for fearlessness and to defeat one's enemies. Mahaganapati form corresponds to wealth and pleasures, the bestower of bliss. The red-golden Balaganapati is called upon for good health and a bright future. Haridra Ganapati with his turmeric complexion and yellow vestments is the harbinger of prosperity and protection.



Shwetark Ganapati is white and is said to exist in the root of the madar plant, a rare variety of madar that bears white flowers instead of the common purple flowers of Madar. Shwetark Ganapati brings vitality, vigour, strength when kept in the bedroom, intelligence, and concentration in the study room, spiritual powers when worshipped in the puja room, bring luck and prosperity and free the house from evil influences all the time. These sadhnas are extremely potent. They are given according to one's requirement and capacity by the Guru, who is himself a Siddha and does not charge you a fee. They are a personal relationship between the guru and shisha, not to be discussed and never taught en masse. When the Guru gives the mantra, blessings follow but then it's imperative to balance out that karma, since every action has an equal and opposite reaction, every pleasure has a pain attached to it, for which the Guru shows the way. Guru guides the practitioner on which mantra to practise, for how long, the correct charan and bhava and practices to complement the mantra. After the mantra sadhna, a yagya is performed for the siddhi of the mantra. One of the safest mantras to practice for the manifestation of the shakti of Ganesha is 'gama ganpataye namah' but this too has to be channelized by the Guru for the desired effects. The success of the sadhna is indicated by the manifestation of the deity in the yagya agni. Sadhaks at Dhyan Ashram who have been seriously practising the various mantra siddhis have had physical manifestations of the multiple gods (see image). Ganesha Chaturthi is the night of Siddhi mantra and mantra diksha under the sandhya of a Guru. To experience the power of mantra sadhana and Vedic yagya for the manifestation of thought on Ganesha Chaturthi. (The writer is a spiritual Guru, a guiding light of Dhyan Ashram; views are personal)

Soviet moves on the Afghan Chessboard



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

The Soviet Union's botched attempt to poison Afghan leader Hafizullah Amin in 1979 set off a chain of events that reshaped the geopolitical landscape of Afghanistan

The failure of the poisoning attempt to kill Hafizullah Amin led Soviet officials to reconsider their strategy. Soviet doctors, unaware of the assassination plot, treated Hafizullah Amin for food poisoning at his palace. The KGB did not report this failed attempt in their confidential records, deeming it an ineffective method for removing Amin. Consequently, Soviet authorities concluded that a military operation was the only viable option. Karmal and his allies were forced to return to the Soviet Union as the plan was re-evaluated. Ultimately, a decision was made to execute Amin through a carefully planned military assault. The operation on December 25, 1979, saw Soviet special forces, disguised as Afghan soldiers, storm Darul Aman Palace, resulting in significant Soviet casualties, including over 100 special forces personnel and their commanding officer, Colonel Grigory Boyarinov. The KGB concealed the death toll to protect its reputation, but Vasili Mitrokhin, a senior KGB archivist who defected to the UK in 1992, later exposed the grim details of the operation. His defection, revealing extensive Soviet espionage activities, marked a pivotal moment in the Cold War. The interplay of internal espionage and foreign intervention in Afghanistan, with ineffective Afghan intelligence and CIA-supported Mujahideen, highlighted the geopolitical manoeuvring that exacerbated Afghanistan's instability, including the assassination of Hafizullah Amin and the rise of Babrak Karmal, setting the stage for prolonged conflict. Karmal's rise to power after Amin's assassination marked a period of intensified Soviet control in Afghanistan. He sought to justify his regime by denouncing Amin as a CIA agent and framing himself as the rightful defender of the Soviet-backed revolution. Karmal's administration, supported by Soviet intelligence and military aid, aimed to stabilize the country but instead deepened its social and economic problems.



THIS POWER STRUGGLE CONTINUES TO HARM AFGHANISTAN. MAHMUD TARZI (1865-1933) NOTED THAT 'THE PROGRESS OF A NATION DEPENDS ON ITS ABILITY TO MOVE BEYOND IGNORANCE AND EMBRACE KNOWLEDGE AND REFORM'

28, 1979, under Karmal's regime, worsened Afghanistan's turmoil, leading to widespread devastation and secretive reporting of casualties, revealing internal KGB struggles. Karmal's leadership, heavily reliant on Soviet military support, ultimately proved ineffective in stabilising Afghanistan. The continuous conflict led to the rise of the Mujahideen, supported by the US and Pakistan, further destabilising the country. Karmal was replaced by Mohammad Najibullah in 1986, who continued to rule until 1992 when the Mujahideen took control of Kabul, marking the beginning of the first phase of Taliban rule. Karmal's life ended in 1996 in Moscow, and his tenure is remembered as a period of profound strife and political manipulation in Afghan history. This power struggle continues to harm Afghanistan. Mahmud Tarzi (1865-1933) noted that 'the progress of a nation depends on its ability to move beyond ignorance and embrace knowledge and reform.' He observed that while Europe advanced through education and modernization, the Muslim world remained entrenched in outdated traditions. Tarzi emphasized that intellectuals should guide their societies from darkness to modernity. This transition from enlightenment to darkness accentuates a deeper issue rooted in Afghanistan's turbulent political history. The events following the 1973 coup, which brought the foreign intelligence agencies of the KGB, CIA, and ISI into Afghanistan's political sphere, illustrate how external powers have long manipulated the country's fate, contributing to its ongoing strife. The overthrow of Mohammad Zahir Shah in 1973 marked the beginning of a period of significant destabilisation in

Afghanistan. Zahir Shah, who had a nuanced understanding of Afghanistan's needs and implemented substantial social reforms, was succeeded by Mohammad Daoud Khan. Despite Daoud Khan's attempts to seek American assistance, the refusal of support set the stage for Soviet intervention, exacerbating the country's instability. Zahir Shah's return to Afghanistan after the collapse of the Taliban in 2001 symbolised a nostalgic yearning for stability and unity. However, his exclusion from significant political decisions by Hamid Karzai highlights the challenges of integrating historical figures into contemporary politics without disrupting the prevailing power dynamics. The failure of both the Soviet Union's intervention and the subsequent U.S. involvement in Afghanistan underscores a profound lesson about the limitations of foreign military power in achieving lasting political stability. The Soviet Union's reliance on sheer military might and neglect of social and political trust is mirrored by the U.S. and its allies' inability to implement meaningful reforms. The eventual resurgence of the Taliban and the disgraceful withdrawal of foreign forces, leaving behind modern weapons, epitomises the failure to address Afghanistan's underlying issues. This pattern of short-term military solutions and inadequate attention to genuine structural reforms has led to repeated cycles of conflict and instability, reflecting a broader failure to understand and address the complex socio-political realities of Afghanistan. External influences, notably from China and powerful Arab states, crucially affected Afghan politics during the Soviet-Afghan War. Amid the China-Soviet ideological rift, Mujahideen groups led by

Ahmad Shah Massoud fiercely resisted both Soviet forces and the Pakistan-backed Taliban. Massoud's declaration, "We will not be pawns in someone else's game, we will always be Afghanistan," underlined his commitment to Afghan sovereignty. Henry Kissinger's covert 1971 visit to China, aimed at undermining Soviet influence, marked a significant Cold War strategy shift. Despite massive Soviet and U.S. investments, Afghanistan's political instability persisted due to the lack of a coherent strategy to address its complex social and administrative issues. Ultimately, the failure of both superpowers to grasp Afghanistan's intricate social fabric and implement effective governance solutions led to prolonged instability. The U.S. and its allies' focus on aligning with extremist factions, coupled with the Soviet Union's pursuit of a monolithic socialist state, failed to address the real needs of the Afghan people. The resulting chaos not only perpetuated a cycle of conflict but also laid the groundwork for the rise of the Taliban. This historical narrative accentuates the profound consequences of using small nations as pawns in geopolitical games, raising pressing questions about the future of Afghanistan's over forty-one million people under continued turmoil and social repression. The Taliban, ultimately, are not the sole symptom of the decades that Afghanistan plunged into an abyss. As a South Asian nation, Afghanistan's future depends on proactive collaboration with neighbouring countries and strategic efforts to establish strong people-to-people connections, rather than succumbing to isolationism. (The writer is a journalist and author. Views expressed are personal. Concluded)

India ramps up preparedness against monkeypox amid global surge

WHO declares the outbreak of monkeypox as a public health emergency of global proportions, underscoring need for preparedness

India is enhancing its preparedness to tackle Monkeypox (Mpox) by raising awareness, strengthening surveillance, setting up isolated wards, and expanding diagnostic testing capacity. Although a pandemic-like situation has not emerged, all mechanisms are being put in place to curtail the spread of Mpox and its menace. Since January 2023, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has reported more than 27,000 suspect Mpox cases and more than 1,300 deaths. Clade I Mpox occurs regularly, or is endemic, in DRC. The current outbreak is more widespread than any previous DRC outbreak, and Clade I Mpox has spread to some neighbouring countries, including Burundi, the Central

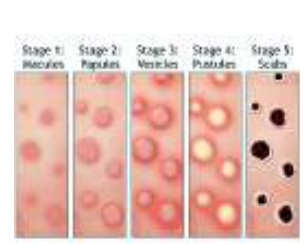


MANOJ VARGHESE

African Republic, the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda, and a travel-associated case in Kenya. On August 14, 2024, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). This is the WHO's highest level of global alert, and the decision recognizes the potential threat this virus poses to countries around the world.

The declaration focuses international attention on acute public health risks that require the coordinated mobilization of extraordinary resources by the international community for prevention and response. Monkeypox is a virus that transmits from animals to humans. Technically, it is known as a 'viral zoonosis'. Its symptoms are similar to smallpox and cowpox, but fortunately, Monkeypox is less severe. Cases have been emanated from Central Africa and are reported to be spreading fast across the globe. Common symptoms of Mpox are a skin rash or mucosal lesions which can last 2-4 weeks accompanied by fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain, low energy, and swollen lymph nodes.

So far, no cases have been reported from India. The Monkeypox virus was discovered in Denmark (1958) among monkeys kept for research. The first reported human case of Mpox was in a nine-month-old boy in the DRC in 1970. Following the eradication of smallpox in 1980, Mpox steadily emerged in central, east and west Africa. In 2003, an outbreak in the United States of America was linked to imported wild animals (Clade II). Since 2005, thousands of suspected cases have been reported in the DRC every year. In 2017, Mpox re-emerged in Nigeria and continues to spread among people across the country and travellers to other destinations. The natural reservoir of the virus is



unknown - various small mammals such as squirrels and monkeys are susceptible. In May 2022, an outbreak of Mpox appeared suddenly and rapidly spread across Europe, the Americas and then all six WHO regions, with 110 countries reporting about 87 thousand cases and 112 deaths. The global outbreak has affected primarily gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men and has spread person-to-person through sexual networks. The global Clade II

Monkeypox virus (MPXV) outbreak that began in 2022 demonstrated the pandemic potential of Mpox. Clade I MPXV is endemic in several Central African countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Clade I is generally associated with higher case fatality rates (CFRs) (1.4% to >10%) compared with Clade II MPXV (0.1% to 3.6%). MPXV can spread to persons from contact with infected wildlife, or through close, prolonged contact with persons infected with MPXV. During 2023-2024, DRC has reported an unprecedented number of suspected Clade I MPXV infections. Clade I MPXV transmission in DRC is more commonly reported among children. Widespread trans-

mission is reported because of zoonotic reservoirs, household occupants, and unhygienic resources. Diagnosis and reporting of Clade I MPXV infections to health officials are important for limiting onward transmission by aiding early containment measures, including contact tracing, isolating patients, offering the JYNNEOS vaccine to contacts, and strictly adhering to recommended infection prevention and control practices in health care settings. An additional benefit of vaccination is protection against Clade I MPXV infection. According to Dr A K Narula, Pharmacy expert of GGSIPU, Tecovirimat is typically the first therapeutic that should be considered for patients with Mpox other than supportive

care. In 2014, the West Africa Ebola virus outbreak demonstrated the risks associated with a delayed global response to a serious pandemic threat. Identifying Mpox is a difficult task, as other infections and conditions look similar. It is important to distinguish Mpox from chickenpox, measles, bacterial skin infections, scabies, herpes, syphilis, other sexually transmissible infections, and medication-associated allergies. For these reasons, testing is key for people to get treatment as early as possible and prevent further spread. (The writer is former editor Free Press Journal and presently media advisor to GGSIPU; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Arkade Developers Rs 410-cr IPO to open on Sep 16

Real estate developer Arkade Developers Ltd is set to float its Rs 410-crore initial public offering (IPO) on September 16. The initial share sale will conclude on September 19, and the bidding for anchor investors will open for a day on September 13, according to the red herring prospectus (RHP). The maiden public issue is entirely through a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 410 crore with no offer-for-sale (OFS) component. The company has already raised Rs 20 crore through a pre-IPO placement round. Proceeds from the issue will be used for the development of the company's ongoing as well as upcoming projects and funding the acquisition of future real estate projects and general corporate purposes. Arkade Developers is a fast-growing real estate development company with a significant presence in Mumbai. As of July 31, 2023, it has developed 1.80 million square feet of residential property, including through partnership entities in which Arkade holds the majority stake.



Clearance for NIIF to get stake in Ather Energy

The Competition Commission of India has approved the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund's (NIIF) proposal to acquire an additional stake in Ather Energy. The deal was cleared by the competition watchdog under the green channel route. "The acquirer (India-Japan Fund) proposes to acquire certain Series G Compulsorily Convertible Preference Shares of Ather," the regulator said in an order. India-Japan Fund (IJF) is a fund managed by NIIF. The fund focuses on investing in environmental sustainability, and low-carbon emission strategies and promoting investments by Japanese companies in India. The transaction will help IJF further its goals by creating value for the broader market for electric two-wheelers, clean mobility transport solutions, and technology-led last-mile transport vehicles, it added. Ather is engaged in the business of designing and developing electric scooters, while the India-Japan Fund (IJF) is a Sebi-registered alternative investment fund. It focuses on investing in environmental sustainability and low-carbon emission strategies and aims to enhance Japanese investments in India. The fund represents a strategic and economic partnership between the governments of Japan and India.



Adani floats China subsidiary to provide services

Adani Group has formed a subsidiary in China to carry out business of providing supply chain solutions and project management services, according to a regulatory filing. Adani Enterprises, the group's flagship firm, in the filing said a Singapore-based step-down subsidiary incorporated a wholly-owned subsidiary, Adani Energy Resources (Shanghai) Co. (AERCL), domiciled in Shanghai, China on September 2, 2024. "AERCL is incorporated to carry out business of providing supply chain solutions and project management services," it said without providing details. The subsidiary was incorporated by Adani Global Pte (AGPTE), Singapore - a step-down subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL). AEL houses the conglomerate's mining, roads, airports, data center and water infrastructure businesses. "AERCL has been incorporated and registered under the laws of Company Law of the People's Republic of China on September 2, 2024," the filing said. AERCL is yet to commence its business operations. The new unit comes days after AEL set up a subsidiary in Kenya. Airports Infrastructure PLC (AIP) to take over, operate, maintain, develop, design, construct, upgrade, modernize and manage the airports in the African nation.

India has potential to become chip manufacturing hub

Like-minded nations collaborating with it: Krishnan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Due to the prevailing geopolitical situation, like-minded countries are collaborating with India to make it a major semiconductor manufacturing destination, a top Electronics and IT ministry official said on Sunday.

In an interview with PTI, Ministry of Electronics and IT Secretary S Krishnan said pilot facilities of US storage semiconductor maker Micron and Tata Electronics have already rolled out chips, and their main plants in Gujarat will begin to produce made-in-India chips from the later part of 2025.

"Globally, and thanks to geopolitical circumstances, there is an increasing realisation that semiconductors are a very important and strategic commodity, and therefore, we need substantial resilience in the production of semiconductors," Krishnan said.

The importance of resilience in semiconductors was underlined during the pandemic when many industries -- including the auto industries, medical devices industries and other electronics, and consumer electronics industries -- suffered because they did not have access to chips, which led to a belief that there should be greater diversification, especially for sourcing of semiconductors, he added.



"In order to build this resilience, many like-minded countries are collaborating with India to develop India as the next major destination, where semiconductor manufacturing can actually take place. This is fundamentally to build resilience in the global semiconductor value chain. We have an agreement with the United States, European Union, UK, Japan, and now, with Singapore as well," Krishnan noted.

The government has approved projects entailing investments of Rs 1.5 lakh crore to date. This excludes the

recently announced Adani Group-Tower Semiconductor's Rs 83,000 crore investment in setting up a new chip plant in Maharashtra.

"The government has cleared five projects under the India Semiconductor Mission. The construction of the main plant by Micron in Gujarat is at an advanced stage. They have completed their pilot facility. Likewise, Tata Electronics has also set up its pilot facility for ATMP in Karnataka. These two pilot facilities have already rolled out the first chips. From the main facilities, sometime towards the later half of 2025,

we should see the rollout of the first chips," Krishnan said.

He also pointed out that semiconductor ecosystem companies are showing huge interest in India, and there has been a four times increase in participation in the upcoming Semicon India event due to the potential that the country holds for the semiconductor ecosystem.

"Semi is a global association of all the semiconductor industries. They hold these global conferences in the United States, Japan, Taiwan, Kuala Lumpur and these kinds of other locations.

IPO buzz as 13 companies to hit primary mkt to raise Rs 8,644-cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The IPO market will be bustling next week, with four companies, including Bajaj Housing Finance, set to launch their initial share-sale to raise a total of Rs 8,390 crore.

Besides these four main-board IPOs, nine SMEs are preparing to debut with their maiden public issues next week, targeting to collect Rs 254 crore. Together, these 13 firms are looking to raise Rs 8,644 crore through IPO. Munish Aggarwal, Managing Director Head - Equity Capital Markets, Equirus, expects the next two weeks to be hectic in terms of issuance activity in IPO markets. "While this seems to indicate that the markets are overheating, we believe that this is more symptomatic of the attempt by most issuers who have valid Sebi observations and decent traction with investors to try and utilize their financials for Fiscal 2024 to launch IPOs," he said.

According to Sebi, financial

data in the Red Herring Prospectus (RHP) must be less than six months old at the time of the IPO. Therefore, September is the last month when companies can use their FY24 financials to launch IPOs, he added. The four main-board IPOs include that of Bajaj Housing Finance, which is expected to mobilise around Rs 6,560 crore, P N Gadgil Jewellers (Rs 1,100 crore), Kross Ltd (Rs 500 crore), and Tolins Tyres (Rs 230 crore). Of these, the initial share-sales of Bajaj Housing Finance, Kross Ltd, and Tolins Tyres will open for subscription on September 9 and conclude on September 11, while that of P N Gadgil Jewellers will open on September 10 and close on September 12.

Declining bank credit to hurt exporters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Issue to figure in Sep 11 meeting with Goyal



The declining bank credit to exporters will hurt the sector, and traders will flag the issue prominently during their meeting with Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on September 11, an industry official said on Sunday.

While exports grew by 15 per cent in the rupee terms between 2021-22 and 2023-24, the outstanding credit in March 2024 dropped by 5 per cent over the same month in 2022, according to exporters.

Apex exporters body Federation of Indian Export Organisation (FIEO) said the export credit growth is not keeping pace with rising exports of the country.

"We have seen a decline in export credit between March 2022 and March 2024 despite the need for more credit for longer duration due to hike in prices of commodities, sharp spurt in freight (both sea and air) and the Red Sea crisis, leading to longer voyage time and

delayed payment," FIEO Director General Ajay Sahai said.

According to FIEO, the value of export credit outstanding has come down to Rs 2,17,406 crore in the March 2024 quarter from Rs 2,27,452 crore in the same quarter last year.

"We will raise this issue during the meeting of the exporters community with the minister," Sahai said, adding that given a consistent decline in credit to exporters during recent times, the RBI should consider prescribing a sub-target for export credit within the existing 40 per cent target for priority sector lending (PSL).

Domestic formulations biz to grow 9-10 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The drug formulations market in India is expected to grow at a CAGR of 9-10 per cent over the next decade with Jan Aushadhi outlets anticipated to emerge as a much stronger player in the country, according to Glenmark Pharmaceuticals.

The domestic formulations market is estimated to be at Rs 2 lakh crore, with a growth rate of 11 per cent over the past two decades.

"It is projected that the domestic formulations market will maintain a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9-10 per cent over the next decade," the Mumbai-based drug maker said in its Annual Report for 2023-24.

As the Trade Generics and Jan Aushadhi channels expand, it is anticipated that these channels could collectively contribute 30 per cent to the market volume in ten years, it stated.

The Jan Aushadhi initiative aims to enhance access to cost-effective, unbranded generics by scaling up to 25,000 franchise pharmacies by 2026, it said.

"It is estimated that Jan Aushadhi procurement could account for 3-5 per cent of the market share by volume and around Rs 40-50 billion (Rs 4,000-5,000 crore) in value

over the next decade," it added. Glenmark stated that despite the increasing influence of Trade Generics and Jan Aushadhi, branded generics are expected to remain dominant, comprising 65-70 per cent of the market by value and anticipated to grow at a CAGR of over 8 per cent during this period.

There are more than 10,000 functional Jan Aushadhi Kendras across the country. The government has set a target to open 25,000 such outlets across the country by March 2026.

The product basket of PMBJP (Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana) comprises 1,963 medicines and 293 surgical devices covering all major therapeutic groups.

The company noted that facing challenges in competing with the robust sales and marketing strategies of domestic firms, coupled with lower price realisations compared to their home markets, most multinational corporations have gradually scaled back their operations in the Indian market.

Informing its shareholders, the company said it has 52 product applications pending for approval in North America. As on March 31, 2024, it has 193 generic products authorised for distribution in the US market.



FPIs infuse Rs 11,000 cr in equities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors infused nearly Rs 11,000 crore in domestic equities in the first week of the month owing to resilience of the Indian market and expectations of rate cut in the US.

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have been consistently buying equities since June. Before that, they had pulled out funds to the tune of Rs 34,252 crore in April-May.

The recent inflows are promising and could continue, supported by India's stable macroeconomic position. However, global factors like US interest rate and geopolitical scenario would continue to be the driving force, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director-Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

According to the data with the depositories, FPIs put in a net investment of Rs 10,978 crore into equities this month (till September 6).

FPIs have been on a buying spree in the Indian equity markets after the sentiments improved following comments from US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, who suggested that a rate cut might be on the horizon.

"The substantial net inflows this week can be attributed to enhanced speculation of the commencement of interest rate cut cycle soon, coupled with improved prospects for India's economic growth," Srivastava said.

Additionally, buying in few select large-cap stocks also contributed to the inflows, signalling foreign investors' eagerness to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the Indian equity markets, he said.

SpiceJet's Ajay Singh may sell over 10 pc stake to raise funds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



SpiceJet promoter and chairman Ajay Singh may offload more than 10 per cent stake in the struggling carrier as part of the latest funding round that is expected to close by the end of September, according to sources.

The budget carrier -- which is grappling with multiple woes, including financial challenges, legal battles and grounding of aircraft -- is looking to raise money that will help it meet various obligations.

One of the sources said that Singh could offload up to a 15 per cent stake in the airline if certain conditions are conducive.

Singh, who is the Chairman

and Managing Director, would be offloading around 10 per cent shareholding in the airline and the quantum could go up, the second source said.

For the proposed QIP (Qualified Institutional Placement), there is already a commitment for up to Rs 2,000 crore and the airline is in

discussions with potential investors. Meetings with investors have been held in India and overseas, the sources in the know said.

There was no official comment from SpiceJet.

The funding round is expected to be completed by the end of September.

Inflation data, global trends to dictate trends

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Macroeconomic data announcements, global trends and trading activity of foreign investors would be the major driving factors for the equity markets this week, according to analysts.

"Crude oil prices has seen a meaningful correction over the few days with Brent crude now close to USD 73 per barrel. In India, investors will look forward to release of macro data this week, including CPI inflation. Globally, investors remain optimistic about the possibility of a rate cut by the US Fed and would keenly look forward to the US Fed meet scheduled later this month," Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research, Kotak Securities, said.

Among macroeconomic data announcements, industrial production for July and inflation data for August will be announced on Thursday.

Last week, the BSE benchmark dropped 1,181.84 points, or 1.43 per cent, while the Nifty declined 383.75 points, or 1.52 per cent.

Falling for the third day running on Friday, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 1,017.23 points, or 1.24 per cent, to settle at 81,183.93.

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PNS ■ ISLAMABAD

Cash-strapped Pakistan is facing an unprecedented financial crisis driven by a complex web of challenges, a prominent Pakistani-American economist has warned.

Princeton economist Atif Mian points to the convergence of skyrocketing domestic and external debts, unsustainable pension liabilities, and a failing power sector as critical factors plunging Pakistan into an economic abyss, the Dawn newspaper reported.

His assessment paints a grim

Pakistan faces unprecedented financial crisis



Warns Princeton economist

picture, suggesting that Pakistan's economic distress is uniquely severe, making it a stark example of fiscal mismanagement on the global stage.

"Pakistan's domestic and external debts, its unfunded pension liabilities, and the zombie power sector have pushed Pakistan into a deep fiscal crisis.

It is hard to think of another country in as bad a shape," Mian wrote in a comment posted on his official X account.

Reacting to Mian's analysis, former Treasury Head at Chase Manhattan Bank, Asad Rizvi, urged him to offer practical solutions to address these challenges and put the economy back

on track. Rizvi also requested Mian to explain how advanced economies with high debt-to-GDP ratios manage their situations.

Rizvi emphasised that without addressing critical issues such as the tax-to-GDP ratio (by documenting the economy), the bank advances-to-deposit ratio, and reducing open market operation (OMO) injections, which currently stand at Rs 11.974 trillion,

the economy will struggle to rebound. He also highlighted the need to stabilise the currency in circulation (Cic), which is Rs 9.12 trillion, and tackle the circular debt of Rs 2.5tr.

Another commentator noted that Pakistan heavily relies on the generosity of external benefactors and seems unwilling to make the tough decisions necessary to revive its economy.

Addressing these concerns,

Mian told Dawn that the debt-to-GDP issues faced by advanced economies like the United States and Japan differ fundamentally from those confronting Pakistan.

"These are countries with well-anchored inflation, a long history of credible monetary policy (and hence currency strength), a strong economy over the long run (as measured by productivity growth), and a well-run taxation system," he explained. "All of these give these countries a much larger fiscal space to play with -- and as a result, markets are very forgiving to these countries."

Nicole Kidman mourns her mother's demise

Nicole Kidman received the Best Actress prize at the Venice Film Festival for her role in the erotic drama *Babygirl*. The actress missed the ceremony to accept the honour due to her mother, Janelle Ann Kidman. Halina Reijn accepted the award on behalf of Nicole for her film *Babygirl*.

The director also delivered a pre-written acceptance speech on behalf of the actress, who dedicated the prize to her deceased mother. Halina was seen in a video posted on X (formerly Twitter), reading out Nicole's statement: "Today I arrived in Venice to find out that my beautiful, brave mother, Janelle Ann Kidman, has just passed. I am in shock but I have to go to my family, but this award is for her."

She further continued, "She (Janelle Ann Kidman) shaped me (Nicole Kidman), she guided me and she made me. I am beyond grateful that I get to say her name to all of you through Halina. The collision of life and art is heartbreaking, and my heart is broken."

After reading Nicole Kidman's message, Halina Reijn said, "We love you, Nicole."



Kylie Jenner reunites with Jordyn Woods!

Kylie Jenner shocked the online community by reuniting with Jordyn Woods in a TikTok video. The video was released five years following reports of Tristan Thompson allegedly being unfaithful to Khloe Kardashian's sister, Jenner, with Woods. The social media platform video posted on Friday, September 6, included Jenner's close friend and YouTuber Anastasia Karanikolaou.

In 2019, Jenner and Woods appeared to have ended their friendship due to the cheating scandal. Nevertheless, the billionaire frequently mentioned having a good relationship with Woods and they were first seen together following the incident in July 2023. The TikTok video showed the three best friends dressed in black, with Woods positioned between Jenner and Woods in the center of the shot. Woods' TikTok video, featuring the reunion of the three best friends, quickly spread across the internet and amazed fans. The video received 2.8 million views shortly after it was published.

In a previous episode of *Keeping Up With The Kardashians*, which aired in May, Jenner talked to Khloe about her recent meetings with Woods, one in Los Angeles in 2023 and another in Paris.

She said, "I saw Jordyn again in Paris. It was fun. I think we have a lot more healthy distance in the relationship. Now it's like, We talk once a month." She also explained how media attention led to a strain in their relationship. She said, "I think what I do love now is that the narrative about us online is also over. Like, when we were seen leaving that restaurant, it was the story for the day or two days, whatever—and now it's over. People know that we're cool and no one's talking about it anymore."



ANANYA PANDAY'S CANDID TAKE ON FACING JUDGMENTS

Actress Ananya Panday has been receiving acclaim for her role in *Call Me Bae*. Not long ago, Ananya, in an interview, spoke about her role in the show and also dealing with criticisms as a famous person. The actress also gave her opinion on the empowerment of women in current times.

Ananya's character Bella/Bae encounters various forms of criticism throughout *Call Me Bae*. Ananya was questioned if she had faced a comparable scenario in real life, where underestimation was a constant occurrence, to which the actress responded, "There is judgment and people say all kinds of things to all sorts of people. But I have realised over time to not pay heed to that because people will say whatever, no matter what you do or how you do it, they will find something negative to say at the end of the day. So I think it is about doing good work and focusing on that."

During the trailer launch of the show, Ananya Panday was questioned about the significance of ensuring that her character was not portrayed as a bimbet.

She said, "The first step for me was not to think of Bae as that. She has her vulnerabilities and flaws, so both Collin and I not judging her was important. As an actor, it was important for me to be fully convinced by what Bae was saying, even though it might seem ridiculous to everyone around. I couldn't make fun of her. I had to deeply believe what she was saying and I feel like on the surface Bae might look like something else, but when you get to know her, automatically that perception will be shaken off."

Discussing the sense of empowerment as a woman in the current era, particularly with the various atrocities taking place, Ananya Panday stated, "There is no black or white when it comes to feeling empowered. Things have gotten better in our industry. The guidelines and the safety protocols are put in place. The power of choice that female actors have now, the sheer number of women on a set—in that way, there is a lot of progress. But then there is also the flipside, where it seems almost regressive. So I don't think we can put it into the black-and-white box."



Aamir Khan's new approach for his upcoming productions

During his professional life, Aamir Khan has frequently been a trendsetter in the Bollywood film sector. In the early 2000s, he was the initial top actor to focus on one movie at a time, as well as the first actor or producer to create new marketing approaches to promote his films in the late 2000s. According to reports, the producer has made a new strategic choice: he will hold onto the digital rights of his upcoming film until it finishes its run in theaters.

"Aamir doesn't want to pre-sell the digital rights of his films. His vision is to revive the social comedy genre by keeping it exclusive for the big screen for at least 12 weeks," the report states a source as saying.

"He will sell the digital rights only after the release of the film in the cinema halls. While the digital medium is keeping the box-office clause in the contract, Aamir is willing to sell and value his film based on the audience's reception of the content on theatrical release," the source added, as per the report.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



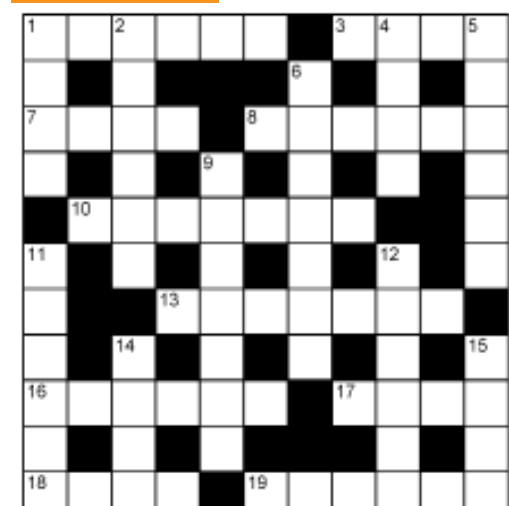
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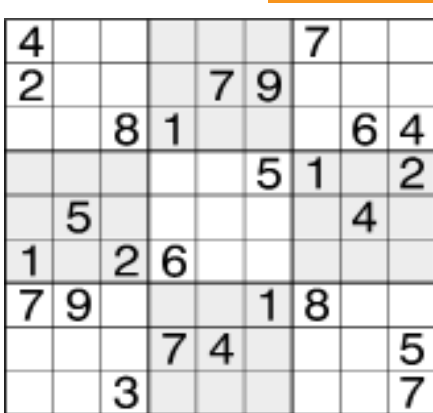
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

- 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

- Thief
- Tidy your hair with this
- Young woman
- A dairy product
- To turn round and round
- Gleam
- Truthful
- Bitter-tasting
- Thick cord
- Defeated

DOWN

- Great anger
- A round wooden container with flat ends
- Above
- A light wind
- Trembles with cold
- Find north with this
- Book writer
- Nearly
- Cut something with scissors
- This metal goes rusty



TUNEFUL DUO BEHIND **VEKH SOHNEYAA** BETWIXT **CALL ME BAE**

SHIKHA DUGGAL

These two very gifted up-and-coming musicians are causing quite a stir in the music industry. Do you know Bombay The Artist or Charan? *Vekh Sohneyaa*, the highlight single from the hit series *Call Me Bae*, was created by these two young artists! The first song from Ananya Pandya's digital debut, *Call Me Bae*, *Vekh Sohneyaa*, was released, adding to the frenzy that followed the release of the trailer. The song is the ideal preamble to Bae's colourful and complex journey, perfectly capturing the essence of *Call Me Bae*, where self-love meets romantic attraction. *Vekh Sohneyaa*, produced by Dishant and composed, written and performed by the dynamic pair Charan and Bombay The Artist—who are also making their musical debut on an OTT—won over listeners' hearts and playlists equally.

Excerpts from the interview:

Q Many compliments have been given to *Vekh Sohneyaa*. What was the process of bringing the song to life?

Bombay The Artist: Since its creation almost two years ago, it hasn't always been a romantic song. It's about the uneasiness that arises when one's sentiments aren't returned, such as when self-doubt occurs during a romantic relationship. I was on the verge of putting the song on hold, but Raj and A&R helped it revive. Next, I spoke to Charan and he did his magic. In an instant, the song's uneasiness gave way to a pure declaration of love and confession!

Charan: I have a hypothesis that songs can write themselves on occasion. In my opinion, Bombay and I served more as conduits for the song's energy during its creation. We had never worked together before and had never previously met in a studio. However, from the first time I worked on this song, I had the impression that it was writing itself and I was just following its lead. Naturally, Bombay is an amazing songwriter and her verse sets up my verse such that it seems like they were created together.

Q Did the plot of the series affect how you approached the song?

Bombay The Artist: That was enjoyable! I have to admit that we were allowed a lot of creative leeway. I wouldn't say it had a direct effect on me. From a third-person viewpoint, I could relate to Ananya's character in a way similar to how you would to your best friend.

Charan: I suppose it was the overall tone of the show more so than the plot. Every image conveys a feeling and *Call Me Bae* has an air of adventure. *Vekh Sohneyaa* is a great song that fits in since it's upbeat, fearless and follows its own instincts.

Q Each of you have your own musical style. In what ways do you think your partnership with *Vekh Sohneyaa* highlights each of your unique strengths?

Bombay The Artist: Our greatest strength, despite the stark differences in our styles, is genuineness. Charan offered years of artistic sense and I brought my typical headline Punjabi vernacular. And with that, the song felt finished! It succeeded because we both stayed true to ourselves.

Charan: As demonstrated in *Vekh Sohneyaa*, one of music's greatest assets, in my opinion, is the ability to blend several musical genres to create a unique whole. From one song to the next, I'd like to maintain some versatility in terms of the genre or production approach. The song is a fantastic blend of my fluidity and Bombay's urban-Punjabi flair and the two work well together.

Q When making *Vekh Sohneyaa*, what was the largest creative obstacle you had to overcome?

Bombay The Artist: Perhaps the most challenging thing was writing a song with individuals I didn't know at first. Having never been to another continent, I had no idea what to anticipate. However, it is the allure of working together. When Charan entered the stage with a masterful verse and lovely Punjabi words and vocals, I immediately felt that this song suited and felt complete.

Charan: The song naturally developed once I heard BTA's initial draft. I don't think there were any difficulties other than the fact that all three of the artists were located in different parts of the world, which is easily overcome when the desire to produce something truly amazing unites the collaborators. It was one of those moments where the music takes the lead and I just follow.

Q How did you choose the final sound and production elements of *Vekh Sohneyaa*?

Bombay The Artist: There weren't many revisions because from the start of this project, all of us had the same goals for the song. After locking down the last details over a Discord chat, we all came together. The hook was the only item that could have been altered! We eventually adjusted it to have a hook instead of the original intended drop.

Q As up-and-coming artists, what do you believe has contributed most to the public's awareness of your music?

Charan: I'm open to working with others since I follow my heart when it comes to music. Since art is a collective endeavour, I would be irresponsible to place the entire burden of a track's development just on the music. It's crucial to view everything you release online as separate works of art that complement each other to create a creative whole out of a track, since in a world where music can become noticed in the most unexpected ways. Being able to rely on your team is, in my opinion, crucial. A solid song sonically is much easier to have now that bedroom producers have entered the scene and the song-writing process has evolved. Even yet, I still enjoy going back to the basics and playing the instruments myself in order to create the perfect sound that is uniquely ours.

Q Finally, what new music and forthcoming concerts can your fans anticipate from you going forward?

Bombay The Artist: Yes, a lot! In the next six months, a number of tracks—some on independent labels, others with labels—will be released.

Charan: In the upcoming months, you can anticipate seeing a lot more experiments from me. I've been working on my own music for some time and I'm quite eager to share it with all of my listeners at this point. Keep an eye out for show announcements, as I'm also hoping to get into performances and am working hard to assemble a solid band to elevate my live shows!

Bombay The Artist: For emerging artists like myself, consistency has been the key to getting our music noticed. In today's fast-paced industry, it's easy to get lost in the noise, but by continuously creating and releasing new content, engaging with our audience and staying true to our artistic vision, we've been able to build a loyal following and generate buzz around our music. It's not about going viral or having a one-hit wonder—it's about putting in the work and consistently delivering quality art that resonates with people.

Charan: To add to it, I'm also thinking more deeply about the narrative I want to tell with my music. I enjoy bringing individuals together. I have cherished experiencing love. That's what I learned from life. When they listen to my music, I want my audience to experience the same thing.

Q When working on projects related to famous shows, how do you handle the pressure of producing a hit?

Charan: The goal is to constantly prioritise the song. Rather than putting too much pressure on myself to produce a hit, I prefer to just toss out whatever permutations and combinations that occur to me and see what works. I think all you have to do is give it your all and let the art speak for itself, provided that the sound and the intent are correct.

Q How do you keep abreast of the most recent musical trends?

Bombay The Artist: I don't follow or take into account trends. I think trends have the potential to seriously harm a song or even an artist. I simply stay honest. Yes, social media has helped me stay informed about current events, as I enjoy seeing what my friends and colleagues are up to! I hear what everyone has to say, but I don't always edit my copy since I write music for myself first. I use feedback to improve my decision-making because I feel that my music tells a story and I have an opinion about how the public will react to it. However, I do give the fans my whole attention. I released *Baadalon Mein* in response to requests from my audience to revive that particular sound following *Baat Kar!*

Q Do you think collaborating with others brings out the best in your music?

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Harnessing astrology with Ganesh Chaturthi

Ganesh Chaturthi, an auspicious Hindu festival dedicated to Lord Ganesha, is celebrated with zeal and devotion, marking the birth of the beloved deity known as the remover of obstacles and the god of wisdom. This festival, which typically falls between August and September during the Hindu lunar month of *Bhadrapada*, specifically on the fourth day of the waxing moon, holds significant astrological importance. The timing of Ganesh Chaturthi aligns with various celestial influences and planetary positions, making it an opportune period for spiritual and material endeavors.

Rituals and spiritual practices

The rituals performed during Ganesh Chaturthi are deeply intertwined with astrological principles. These practices are designed to harness the celestial energies of the time and align with the festival's spiritual goals.

• **Installation of Ganesha idols:** The placement of Ganesha idols is done with careful consideration of astrological factors. The idol is often placed in the northeast direction (Ishaan), which is considered highly auspicious for invoking positive energies and prosperity. This placement aligns with the cosmic principle of harnessing favourable energies for growth and well-being.

Celestial alignments and timing

Ganesh Chaturthi occurs during the waxing phase of the moon, known as *Shukla Paksha*, which is considered a favorable period in Vedic astrology for initiating new projects and making positive changes. The waxing moon represents growth, increase, and enlightenment, aligning perfectly with the festival's purpose of celebrating new beginnings and overcoming obstacles.

The festival is also closely associated with the lunar constellation (nakshatra) of *Magha*. *Magha nakshatra*, symbolised by a royal throne or palanquin, is ruled by the deity *Pitrs*, or the ancestors. This *nakshatra* is connected with authority, grandeur and respect, which resonates with Lord Ganesha's attributes of wisdom and learning. The alignment of Ganesh Chaturthi with *Magha nakshatra* amplifies the festival's spiritual significance, making it a potent time for invoking divine blessings and seeking guidance.

Planetary influences

Several planets are particularly relevant to the themes of wisdom, intellect, and overcoming obstacles:

• **Jupiter (Guru):** Jupiter, known as the planet of wisdom and higher knowledge, significantly influences the auspiciousness of Ganesh Chaturthi. When Jupiter is favourably positioned, it enhances spiritual growth, educational pursuits and overall prosperity. The festival's timing, aligned with Jupiter's favorable aspects, makes it an ideal period for seeking knowledge, undertaking educational ventures, and pursuing personal growth.

• **Mercury (Budh):** Mercury governs communication, intellect, and analytical abilities. During Ganesh Chaturthi, the alignment of Mercury can influence mental clarity and intellectual pursuits. A well-placed Mercury during this period can aid in overcoming mental blocks, improving communication skills, and enhancing cognitive functions. Given Lord Ganesha's association with intellect, this alignment supports efforts to gain clarity and insight.

• **Mars (Mangal):** Mars, the planet of energy and drive, plays a crucial role in overcoming challenges. A positive Mars influence during Ganesh Chaturthi can provide the necessary energy and determination to tackle obstacles and pursue goals with vigor. This planetary alignment aligns with Lord Ganesha's role as the remover of impediments, making it a propitious time for addressing challenges and pursuing new endeavours.

• **Saturn (Shani):** Saturn is associated with discipline, responsibility, and long-term efforts. While Saturn's influence can sometimes bring delays and challenges, its position during Ganesh Chaturthi can offer opportunities for addressing karmic issues and working through long-standing difficulties. This alignment encourages perseverance and disciplined efforts, aligning with Ganesha's role in helping devotees navigate life's trials.

• **Chanting of mantras:** Devotees chant specific mantras, such as the Ganesh Ashtakshara Mantra *Om Gan Ganapataye Namah*, to invoke the blessings of Lord Ganesha. These mantras are believed to resonate with the celestial vibrations of the time, enhancing their effectiveness. Chanting mantras during Ganesh Chaturthi aligns with the favourable planetary influences, amplifying their spiritual impact.

• **Immersion (Visarjan):** The immersion of the Ganesha idol at the end of the festival symbolises the release of negative energies and the cyclical nature of life. This ritual aligns with the astrological principle of letting go of obstacles and starting anew. The act of immersion signifies the return to the cosmic source, harmonising with the festival's themes of renewal and transformation.

Personal and societal impacts

On a personal level, Ganesh Chaturthi offers individuals a chance to align their goals and aspirations with the favourable cosmic energies present during this period. Devotees perform rituals and engage in spiritual practices to harness the benefits of planetary influences and seek divine blessings for success and prosperity. On a societal level, Ganesh Chaturthi fosters a sense of community and collective harmony. The festival brings people together in celebration, promoting unity and shared spiritual alignments. The collective aspect of the festival aligns with broader cosmic principles of balance and well-being, contributing to societal cohesion and positive energy.

Astrological remediation and benefits

These remedies are designed to mitigate the challenges posed by certain planetary positions and enhance overall well-being:

• **Jupiter's remedies:** For those facing challenges related to knowledge and growth, performing rituals or making donations during Ganesh Chaturthi can strengthen Jupiter's influence and promote wisdom and prosperity.

• **Mercury's remedies:** Individuals dealing with communication issues or mental blocks can perform specific prayers or rituals to appease Mercury and improve intellectual and communicative abilities.

• **Mars' remedies:** To address issues related to motivation or obstacles, devotees can seek Mars' favourable influence through dedicated worship and spiritual practices.

• **Saturn's remedies:** The festival provides an opportunity to address karmic challenges and work towards long-term goals with perseverance and discipline, aligning with Saturn's influence.

(The author, Dr. Gunja Mehta Ahuja, is a psychic reader on coto.)



Tanaav 2: Intense revenge tale that lacks depth

AARTI SREENATH

The series, known for its sleek and gripping narrative, depicted Israeli intelligence agents targeting Hamas militants. This portrayal was criticised by some as overtly pro-Israeli and, by extension, as anti-Palestinian propaganda. In adapting *Faada* into *Tanaav* for an Indian audience, the setting was shifted to Kashmir, where the focus is on a counter-terrorism unit confronting local insurgents. The transition faced notable challenges due to the differing political dynamics in Kashmir compared to the West Bank. Despite these challenges, the series successfully engaged audiences with its high-energy action and emotionally charged drama.

Plot: The second season of *Tanaav* is inspired by the plot of *Faada*'s second season but takes a different approach. Unlike its predecessor, *Tanaav 2* does not deeply explore the evolving political landscape of Kashmir. Instead, it simplifies the narrative, concentrating on a singular mission to capture terrorists and focusing on action over political complexity. Although there is a brief mention of peace talks

between the Indian government and the separatist faction Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, this subplot quickly takes a backseat. The primary focus of the drama remains on the intense conflict between Kabir's team and Fared, emphasising high-stakes confrontations and relentless pursuit. Fared is portrayed with clear-cut motivations driven by revenge and power, lacking deeper ideological motivations. The series suggests that individuals like Fared thrive on ongoing conflict, with peace rendering them purposeless.

Highlights: The cast's performances, particularly those of Manav Vij, Rajat Kapoor and Ekta Kaul, are central to the series. Kapoor's composed yet menacing presence contrasts with Vij's intense and relentless portrayal, creating a compelling dynamic when they share the screen—a tension that simmers and threatens to explode. The second season continues to excel in casting, with many actors reprising their roles. Returning actors Satyadeep Dubey, Soni Razdan and Sukhmani Sadana join new additions like Gaurav Arora and Kabir Bedi. The well-developed characters and strong performances remain the show's strongest asset.

Drawbacks: For viewers not inclined towards action-packed thrillers and revenge dramas, *Tanaav 2* may not be as engaging, given its heavy focus on intense action

sequences and confrontations. Additionally, the series concludes on a cliffhanger, which can leave the story feeling incomplete and abruptly directed.

Performance: An intriguing element of the series is Rajat Kapoor's portrayal of Jagjit Malik, the intelligence officer. His character continues to navigate a complex web of espionage, including unexpectedly friendly interactions with his Pakistani counterpart, also named Jagjit Malik and played by Danish Husain. This portrayal offers a contrast to real-world tensions, subtly implying that amicable diplomatic ties could have resolved the Kashmir issue. Season two feels lighter compared to the more nuanced first season. Although the action sequences, crafted by Abbas Ali Moghul, are a highlight—demonstrating the devastating impact of hatred—the narrative depth seems reduced. Farah, played by Ekta Kaul, continues to evolve from her storyline in the first season, where she was manipulated into marriage by Junaid (Shashank Arora), adding emotional layers to the plot. The decision to split the second season into two parts, each with six episodes, results in a cliffhanger that leaves the story suspended, prompting viewers to eagerly await the next chapter.

Technical aspects: Cinematographer Quais Wasiq effectively captures the

tranquil landscapes and dynamic action scenes, maintaining the narrative's momentum. Sudhir Mishra and E Niwas, the co-directors, bring a sophisticated and realistic touch to the series. Their meticulous approach enhances the series beyond a typical thriller. The music and background score build upon the first season's success, while the cinematography features impressive close-ups and beautifully framed scenes that highlight Kashmir's complexity and beauty. Attention to diction is another standout aspect. Many actors have made an effort to master the local dialect, reflecting the unique linguistic characteristics of Kashmir.

Verdict: *Tanaav 2* delivers a thrilling continuation with intense action and high-stakes drama. Although it retains strong performances from Manav Vij, Rajat Kapoor, and Ekta Kaul, it shifts away from the political depth of the first season. The introduction of Fared as a new antagonist adds fresh intensity, but the series' focus on revenge and terrorism might not appeal to those seeking a more nuanced narrative. Overall, it remains an engaging action thriller, though it lacks the depth that distinguished its predecessor.



Directed by: Sudhir Mishra
 Produced by: Applause Entertainment
 Cinematography by: Quais Wasiq
 Cast: Manav Vij, Rajat Kapoor, Arbaaz Khan, Sahiba Babi, Ekta Kaul, Rocky Raina, Mir Sarwar, Arslan Goni, Satyadeep Dubey, Soni Razdan, Sukhmani Sadana, Gaurav Arora and Kabir Bedi.
 Streaming on: Sony LIV
 Rating: 3/5

NEW ZEALAND SEEKS TO EXPLOIT AFGHANISTAN'S RED-BALL INEXPERIENCE IN TEST

PTI ■ GREATER NOIDA

New Zealand will aim to exploit Afghanistan's relative inexperience in red-ball cricket, in the one-off Test starting here from Monday, and gather momentum ahead of their upcoming World Test Championship challenges in the sub continent. New Zealand's first-ever Test against Afghanistan will kick off a challenging couple of months for the Black Caps who play six long-format matches on the bounce in the subcontinent, something they haven't done in 40 years. With their underwhelming subcontinent record in mind (40 losses in 90 matches), New Zealand would want to hit the straps straightaway. Senior batter Kane Williamson has emphasised on the need to adapt to conditions and with three games under their belt, they would be well prepared for the marquee series against India next month. Spin is expected to dominate proceedings and New Zealand have come well prepared with five slow bowling options.

Left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel, who returns to India for the first time since his 10-wicket haul in Mumbai in 2021, is expected to make the playing XI. Rachin Ravindra, who has been sweating it out in CSK High Performance Centre in Chennai, is expected to be handy with bat and ball while all-rounders Glenn Phillips, Mitchell Santner and Michael Bracewell are vying to fill the remaining spinners' spots. Matt Henry is New Zealand's best seamer at the moment but captain Tim Southee's dip in Test form will be a concern. Will O'Rourke, or express pacer Ben Sears may be given a go. New Zealand will need to shake off the rust as they haven't played Test cricket since early March and the tenacious Afghanistan side is poised to pose a strong challenge. For Afghanistan, who obtained Test status in 2017, this will be only their 10th ever outing in the traditional format. They head to the clash having



lost their last three Tests against Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Ireland. But in their brief Test journey they have managed to beat Ireland, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe. Afghanistan have made significant strides in white-ball cricket, but some players will now need to swiftly make the transition from T20 to Test format. The disparity in Test experience between Afghanistan and New Zealand is substantial, but Hashmatullah Shahidi and his team will look to gain from familiarity with the Shahid Vijay Singh Pathik Sports Complex in Greater Noida, where they have previously played five ODIs and six T20Is. Talismanic all-rounder Rashid Khan is not there to bowl his menacing leg-breaks, which is a huge blow for them, while T20 regulars Rahamullah Gurbaz, Mohammad Nabi, Fazallaq Farooqui, Mujeeb ur Rahman, Noor Ahmad and Naveen-ul-Haq are also not available. Ibrahim Zadran, Rahmat Shah and skipper Shahidi, who aver-

ages 44.09 in Tests, will burden the batting responsibilities. Seam-bowling all-rounder Azmatullah Omarzai is likely to make his Test debut, while Zia-ur-Rehman, Zahir Khan, Khalil Ahmed, Qais Ahmad, Shahidullah Kamal and Bahir Shah are the spin options. With rain and thunderstorms forecast throughout the week, the match is likely to be affected. Teams (from): Afghanistan: Hashmatullah Shahidi (c), Ibrahim Zadran, Rahmat Shah, Abdul Malik, Riaz Hassan, Afsar Zazai (wk), Ikram Alikhil (wk), Bahir Shah, Shahidullah Kamal, Azmatullah Omarzai, Shams Ur Rahman, Zia-ur-Rehman, Zahir Khan, Qais Ahmad, Khalil Ahmad and Nijat Masood. New Zealand: Tim Southee (c), Tom Blundell (wk), Michael Bracewell, Devon Conway, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Will O'Rourke, Ajaz Patel, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ben Sears, Kane Williamson, Will Young.

Shahidi calls for more Test cricket, dedicated home venue for Afghanistan



mat. We need more experience. If we get more chances on a regular basis, we will improve a lot. "It's in the hands of the ACB and ICC. When it comes to Test cricket, some players are different from those who play in the leagues." Shahidi, who has a Test double century, feels a longer run of red ball fixtures will help the Afghans hone their skills in format. "If we get three-four match series at a stretch, it will be helpful for us as a side. If you look at our past, we would prepare only 10 days ahead of a Test match. "It's not easy to come to red-ball cricket, by just playing in the nets. Only if you play matches, will you get better at judging the ball." The game against New Zealand is historic as it will be the first time these two side clash in the longest format. "It's a good opportunity for us to play against New Zealand, given their rankings. Hopefully, the ACB will try harder to give us opportunities against bigger teams in the future." Their inexperience cost them a historic win against Sri Lanka earlier this year and Shahidi feels it could hurt them against a vastly experienced side like New Zealand. "It will be a lack of experience, but when it comes to taking challenges, we are a nation that does not take a step backward." We have talented players and we can do well in every department - some of our players have hundreds in this format. It's tough, but if we play to our strength, we can beat any team," he said.

PTI ■ GREATER NOIDA

Greater Noida, (PTI) Afghanistan captain Hashmatullah Shahidi on Sunday called for more Test matches for his side and a dedicated home venue in India to improve training and gain a competitive edge over their opponents. Afghanistan cannot play in their home country due to ongoing security issues, instead they have hosted matches at three venues in India -- Greater Noida, Lucknow, Dehradun and the UAE. "India is our home, and when we host teams, other nations have played more cricket here," Shahidi said on the eve of the one-off Test against New Zealand.

"Hopefully, we will get a good venue here in India and if we restrict ourselves to one venue, it will be effective for us. Hopefully, the ACB and the BCCI will get us a good venue." "If you see our records in first-class, it's good because we play at our home ground. We know those conditions. Hopefully, in the future, there will be a time when the teams will travel to Afghanistan and our average will be higher," he added. Afghanistan have become a force to reckon with in the white-ball formats but since receiving the Test status in 2017, they have played just nine matches, most of them one-off fixtures. "In six years, nine games is not more. We are new in this for-

Moeen Ali retires from international cricket



AP ■ LONDON

England all-rounder Moeen Ali has announced his retirement from international cricket after being overlooked for the upcoming white-ball series against Australia. The 37-year-old Ali said in an interview with British newspaper The Daily Mail that it was "time for the next generation." "It felt the time was right. I've done my part," Ali said. Ali played 68 Tests, 138 One-Day Internationals and 92 Twenty20 Internationals for England, winning the World Cup in both the shorter forms. He said he still feels like he can compete at the highest level, but was "trying to be

realistic" about his international future. "I could hold on and try to play for England again, but I know in reality I won't," Ali told the Mail. Matthew Mott was fired as head coach of England's limited-overs teams last month after disappointing title defences in the ODI and T20 World Cups and the appetite for change continued with the removal from the squad of Ali and Jonny Bairstow - two senior players sharing over 400 caps. Moeen had been an influential vice-captain to Jos Buttler in recent years. England host Australia in an eight-game white-ball tour beginning on Wednesday with a T20 in Southampton.

Indian cricket powerful, talent comes from everywhere says Rahul Dravid

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The legendary Rahul Dravid on Sunday said that Indian cricket has evolved into an "extremely powerful" force, thanks to the growing talent pool that now extends to even the remotest corners of the country. Dravid, who masterminded India's triumph in the T20 World Cup, said a strong club cricket culture has a lot to do with bucking the old trend of city cricketers dominating the passage to the national team. "If you look at Indian cricket today, Indian cricket is extremely strong, it's extremely powerful. One of the big reasons for that is that talent comes from everywhere, from all over the country," said Dravid during the 50th year celebration of Mount Joy Cricket Club. "I think if you go back to the time of say GR Vishwanath or even when I was starting out my career, most of the talent came from the big cities or from few other states. "Even if they were talented boys in smaller places, they had to come to the big cities to play cricket. But today I think you see in Indian cricket that boys are coming from everywhere," he added. Dravid said it's getting reflected in the standards of domestic cricket in India. "You just look at the standard of the Ranji Trophy. In the old days when you played in the South Zone, other than playing Hyderabad or Tamil Nadu, I think it is fair to say, without being disrespectful, that a lot of other



teams you could take it not for granted but you could certainly take it a little bit more lightly. "I don't think there is any team in the South Zone today that you can walk in and say that you will comfortably beat," he added. "Hailing the club cricket structure in the country, particularly in Karnataka, Dravid said the system has allowed the sport to remain accessible to all. "We need clubs to be strong. We need cricket not to be concentrated in the hands of a few people. We need cricket to be egalitarian, we need it to be all over the place. "You cannot have talent or you cannot have facilities concentrated only in one or two places. To get the best out of talent,

we need to ensure that young boys and girls are getting access to good infrastructure in every part," he noted. "The 51-year-old former Indian captain then briefly revisited his club career when he was young to underscore the need for that system to thrive. "After the practice, HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited) would give us two eggs and one small glass of milk. I would always stay back for that glass of milk and those eggs. Not because I wanted the milk and eggs. "But because I wanted to sit and listen to the likes of BK Kumar or Nandan talking about cricket. And it used to be great fun to listen to them and learn so much from them," said Dravid.

Pacers shine as India B beat India A by 76 runs

PTI ■ BENGALURU

KL Rahul's gumption, which helped him pile a patient fifty, found no resonance among his colleagues as India B pacers led by Yash Dayal pushed India A to a 76-run defeat on the fourth and final day of their Duleep Trophy match here on Sunday. Chasing 275, India A were bundled out for 198 in their second innings as left-arm seamer Dayal (3/50), with able support from his colleagues Mukesh Kumar (2/50) and Navdeep Saini (2/41), led the India B attack. Rahul top-scored for 'A' with a 51. In the first session of the day, India B made 184 all out in their second essay to muster a handy overall lead of 274. The India A chase began on a shaky note as Mayank Agarwal departed in the second over itself, wafting Dayal away from his body to Nitish Kumar Reddy, who made a wonderful diving catch at second slip. That brought Rivan Parag to the middle and the right-hander followed the path set on Saturday by Rishabh Pant and Sarfaraz Khan. Parag took on the bowlers and pacer Mukesh bore the brunt of his aggression, getting



smoked for two sixes and the second maximum touched the roof of the Chinnaswamy Stadium over the mid-wicket region. Parag added 48 runs for the second with a rather subdued Shubman Gill, who was

dropped by Nitish Reddy to slips off Mukesh on 16, and 31 came off the former's bat in just 18 balls. But the approach was tough to sustain considering the kind of assistance the bowlers were getting here, and soon his

massive hoick off Dayal took an edge off Parag's bat en route to stumper Rishabh Pant. Gill (21) departed soon, falling to Saini for the second time in the match and on this occasion, he edged the pacer

to Pant. Dhruv Jurel poked Dayal well outside off-stump to Yashasvi Jaiswal at gully, as India batters perished to a combination of bowlers' persistence on that channel and their own carelessness.

They took the lunch at a queasy 76 for four that soon transpired into 99 for six after the dismissal of Shivam Dube and Tanush Kotian, an hour into the lunch. However, Rahul batted out 180 minutes 121 balls and

milked 42 runs for the seventh wicket with Kuldeep Yadav to delay the inevitable. The standout shot in an otherwise dour innings was a whistling on drive off Mukesh that fetched him a boundary. But Mukesh had his revenge soon when Rahul feathered a cut off him to Pant, who completed five catches in this innings, soon after reaching his fifty with a single off Saini. It effectively signalled the end of the road for India A, though Akash Deep (43, 42b, 3x4, 4x6) gave a few moments of fun with a cavalier innings. But beyond the entertainment value, it always was a case of when more than if. Earlier, resuming from their overnight score of 150 for six India B could only 34 runs more to the total before getting bundled out. Pacer Akash, whom Sarfaraz Khan carted around for five fours in a row the previous day, found his mojo to add the scalps of Washington Sundar and Saini to complete a five-wicket haul (5/56). The spell will keep his name floating among the contenders when the selectors sit together soon to pick up squad for two-match Test series against Bangladesh.

India to bid for 2030 Youth Olympics: Minister Mandaviya

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Sunday said India is set to bid for the 2030 Youth Olympics, a precursor to the country's ambition to host the 2036 Olympics. The 2030 Youth Olympics will be the fifth edition of the international event. "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi we are going to bid for the 2030 Youth Olympics but our focus remain on hosting the 2036 Olympics," Mandaviya said on the sidelines of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) 44th General Assembly here. "Under Modiji's leadership we have been able to host multiple international sporting events, including cricket World Cups, football U-17 World Cup," BJP president JP Nadda, who was the chief guest for the event, added. "India will fight against Peru, Colombia, Mexico, Thailand, Mongolia, Russia, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina to get the hosting rights for the 2030 Youth Olympics.

BIG BREAK FOR Rachakonda Vishwadev

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

Rachakonda Vishwadev made his debut in the film industry almost six years ago with *Pittagoda* and since then, he has portrayed numerous characters. His acting career received a major boost with the release of the latest film, *35-Chinna Kadha Kadu*. In an interview, he shares his happiness and also a little more about the film.

Actor Rachakonda Vishwadev is currently feeling content. The movie *35-Chinna Kadha Kadu* was released and is not only performing well at the box office but also receiving high praise from critics. Everyone is praising the performance given by Vishwadev in the film. He acted as the spouse of Nivetha Thomas and the parent of two children.

"I am overjoyed that I've finally gotten a good break after a long time. Now that I am receiving several roles, I feel assured," said an ecstatic Vishwadev.

He said that he has been putting in a lot of effort over the past few years and now it is finally starting to pay off for him. "To date, I've done many roles. However, everyone had appreciated my performance this time. My character Prasad in *35-Chinna Kadha Kadu* gave me complete satisfaction and I am getting a

lot of calls from many people. This is like my first success and my mother was almost in tears," he said. He feels that playing the role of a father at a young age is not going to be stereotyped. "Cinema is magical and you can do anything in two hours. You can change it from cinema to cinema. People after seeing my character in *35-Chinna Kadha Kadu* have been astonished because it's a completely different one. It depends on how we are using the characters," said Vishwadev.

Cinema, he says, is a strong medium and thus, one has to choose it differently. "Audience these days is very clever. It all depends on me to bring them something different on-screen," he shared, adding that this was what intrigued him to play the character.

Just like his co-stars, Vishwadev had also taken the training to proper his dialect based on the film. He further highlighted that discussing characters, the script and the dialect on the sets helps an actor to make it easy to play the character naturally.

Senior director and actor Bhagyaraj had also played an important role, along with senior actress Gautami. "I got to learn a lot from them. Gautami Garu spent most of the time on the set interacting with other actors. I thought it was great that she was being honest with them all and offering assistance." He further went on to praise all the actors who were a part of this project, including the children.

"Even the children performed very well and it is also because of them that I could give a good performance," said the actor, who went on to credit the director, Nanda Kishore, for coming up with a subject like this. "I am also glad to have been working with a star cinematographer like Niketh for this film," he said.

Not many are aware that Rachakonda Vishwadev is the grandson of popular Telugu writer Rachakonda Viswanatha Sastry (Ravi Shastry), whose name carries great weight in the Telugu literary community.



I trust the director always: Tovino Thomas

Malayalam star Tovino Thomas is currently in Hyderabad, promoting his upcoming film *ARM* in Telugu, which will hit the cinemas on September 12. He discusses the movie and explains his process for selecting a project.

The Malayalam movie *Ajayante Randam Moshnam* starring Tovino Thomas is set to be released in Telugu as *ARM*. Tovino is portraying not one or two, but three characters in this movie, which is helmed by Jithin Lal. Mythri Movie Makers are handling the distribution of the Telugu version, so the actor wished to also promote it in Telugu. This film also happens to be his 50th release.

"I began with playing small characters, then later supporting characters; villains and later, I got to play comedy characters. Since 2016, I've had the opportunity to play lead characters. I have told my friends that I am living my dream. Being an actor is a dream," said Tovino Thomas.

While this film marks his 50th release, ironically, he wasn't aware of it. "I didn't know that it was my 50th release. This is the first time I am doing three characters and it's a huge challenge for me. I told my director I didn't want to mess it up. He trusted me and I have to fulfill his trust," said the talented actor.

The actor underwent extensive training for this film. "I wanted to do a workshop. I have been trained in Kalaripayattu for nearly six months to get into the basics," said the actor.

When asked about the difficult character he played, "I will even get the back story of each character from the director; all three characters are challenging," he said as he goes on to reveal that he is very fascinated by the thief character, among the three.

Speaking of his belief in a debutant director and that the film is made on a huge scale, he

shares, "He trusted me and waited for me for nearly eight years with this script, so I have to trust him. If you look at my career, I have done 80 percent of movies with newcomers."

Going ahead, speaking of his Telugu films, he shares that he is keen on learning Telugu. The actor stated that Telugu filmmakers have asked him to do a Telugu film directly, but he prefers to learn the language first before taking on the project.

"I have to finish some movies in Malayalam. I have so many commitments right now. If anything extraordinary comes up my way, then I shall definitely take it up. Even though I can't just come, by heart, to the dialogues and render them, I want to learn Telugu first," said the actor. He mentioned that he has witnessed several of his friends delivering extensive speeches in Telugu and believes he can also do the same. "Strangely, I notice that I understand Telugu very well. I have watched a lot of Telugu movies since my school days. The first movie I watched was of Chiranjeevi and Sridevi; *Jagadeka Veerudu Athiloka Sundari*."

When questioned about selecting diverse scripts, he mentioned that he is gaining knowledge from his co-stars and technicians in every way. "I don't consider myself a star. I have always been working towards being a good actor. I choose scripts that are different. I love doing different kinds of movies and playing different characters. I should have something new to offer the audience. As an actor, I am still exploring my potential. I love cinema and I keep learning from one cinema to another from everyone from directors to technicians," said Tovino.

"I have to do one film at a time. When one film is about to complete, I will start on my next film. I do not prefer doing multiple films because I want to concentrate and justify one character," he said.

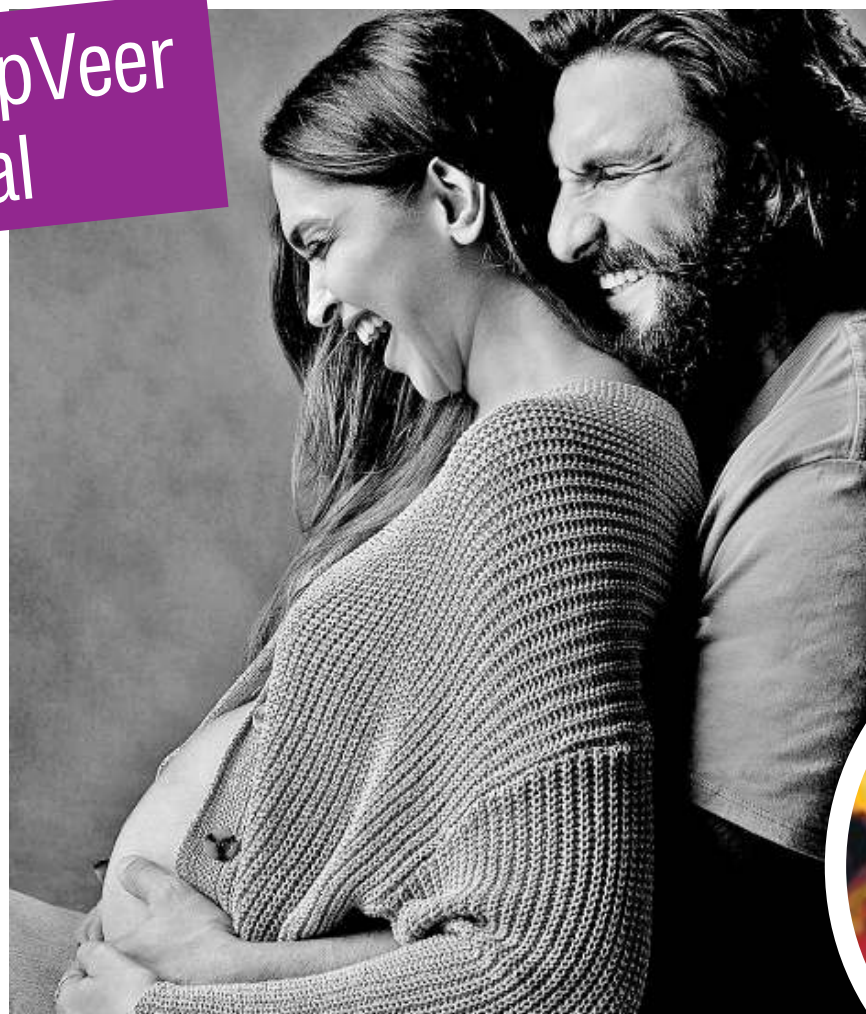
It's a baby girl! DeepVeer makes it official

Bollywood star couple Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh have officially announced that they have been blessed with a baby girl. Taking to Instagram on Sunday afternoon, the post shared by the stars read: "Welcome baby girl 8.9.2024... Deepika and Ranveer."

It was on Sunday that the news about the two welcoming their first bundle of joy went viral. On September 7, photographs and videos of Deepika going to the H. N. Reliance Hospital in the Girgaon area of Mumbai started doing the rounds, which raised speculations about her giving birth to their first child.

The couple and their families on September 6 had visited the Siddhivinayak Temple in Mumbai. It was in February 2024, when Deepika and Ranveer, fondly called DeepVeer by their fans, announced that they were set to become parents. The actress was said to be in her second trimester in February.

They took to Instagram to share a post announcing their pregnancy. The post read: "September 2024" with cute motifs of baby clothes, baby shoes and balloons. Ranveer and Deepika got married in November 2018 at a private and intimate ceremony at Lake Como and shared some pictures with fans on Instagram, and five years later on *Koffee With Karan*, fans got to see their stunning wedding video. Meanwhile, on the work front, both the husband and the wife will be seen in the upcoming Rohit Shetty directorial *Singham Again*. While Deepika is a new entrant into Shetty's cop universe, Ranveer will be seen in a cameo avatar as *Simmba*.



Roshan Kanakala's second film titled *Mowgli*

Anchor Suma's son, Roshan Kanakala, entered the film industry with his first movie, *Bubblegum*, last year. Although the movie was not successful in terms of box office earnings, it still boosts his confidence in his acting abilities. He has now signed his second movie, which will be helmed by Sandeep Raaj and the title of the film has been revealed as *Mowgli*.

TG Vishwa Prasad from People Media Factory is the one financing this movie. Interestingly, the debut film of Roshan was also linked with the same production house.

Director Sandeep Raaj, who received a national award for his first film *Colour Photo*, is now working with Roshan on a modern love story set in a forest setting.

However, Roshan Kanakala has received numerous praises for his acting and elegant dance moves and will be appearing in a unique role in the upcoming film called *Mowgli*. The initial poster features Roshan Kanakala wearing a vest, showing off his muscles, and smiling charmingly. The new story features a forest setting, like *Jungle Book*, with the beloved character Mowgli. Kaala Bhairava is in charge of the music for this movie. The creators revealed that *Mowgli* will be released in the summer of 2025.



Prabhas unveils trailer for *Mathu Vadalaru 2*

The film *Mathu Vadalaru 2* is receiving backing from major celebrities. On Sunday, the *Darling* star Prabhas released the trailer for the movie. This is a sequel to the previous *Mathu Vadalaru* and helmed by Ritesh Rana. In this sequel, Sri Simha Koduri and Satya play the main roles, with the addition of actress Faria Abdullah as another lead. Simha and Satya are now working as special agents for the HE Team in this follow-up.

It appears that the director, Ritesh Rana, main-

tains the same level of fun in the second part but alters the narration slightly. Sunil is also seen as the team's leader and he suspects Simha and Satya of being ruthless killers and is instructed to apprehend them. In order to evade them, Satya and Simha must engage in humorous actions to protect themselves. If you watch the trailer, you will see Rohini playing a different role as well. The director injected more humour and levity into this follow-up film. Mythri Movies is presenting the film produced by Cherry.

VENKATESH AND ANIL RAVIPUDI COMBO CONTINUES TO GIVE LAUGHS

Actor Venkatesh and director Anil Ravipudi are collaborating for the third time on an untitled film, with filming progressing quickly. The makers stated that they finished a schedule in Pollachi and returned to Hyderabad. Dil Raju functions as the producer. Venky and Anil were previously involved in the movie *F2: Fun and Frustration* and then worked on the follow-up film *F3*.

This marks the third instance that they collaborate for this third movie. The schedule lasts for 30 days during which the producers shot important scenes with the main actors, songs and action sequences. To mark Vinayaka Chaturthi, the producers shared a brief video from the filming location. It indicates that this movie will be filled with humour and will also have the classic Anil Ravipudi comedic style.

In the behind-the-scenes video, Venkatesh is dressed in traditional clothing and wearing glasses, while Aishwarya Rajesh, playing his wife Bhagya, is wearing a traditional saree. Meenakshi Chaudhary, portraying his ex-girlfriend Meenakshi, flaunts a contemporary and fashionable appearance. The director discloses that a sequence during a break was shot close to Munnar. They also suggested that the movie will be coming out next year during the Sankranti festival.

The makers also disclosed that the plot revolves around an intense triangle of criminal activities. The music was provided by Bheems Ceciroleo.



Brahmajji 'X' account hacked

Actor Brahmajji is gaining popularity on social media due to his political remarks. Former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, made an extensive post on his social media 'X' regarding the current Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and the ongoing floods in Vijayawada. The former chief minister condemned the current administration for their inadequate handling of the situation, resulting in the loss of lives and homes for many people. Jagan stated in his post that it is the government's failure.

Actor Brahmajji responded to YS Jagan and said, "They (The Government) can't do it sir, we will do and first we will release Rs 1,000 crore and ask every party worker to help for the flood victims. Government is not important for us, people are important, so let's do it ourselves." Later, Brahmajji once again posted on his social media regarding the above post and clarified saying, "It is not my post, my account has been hacked and the post is not mine. I complained about it also." This has become a major talking point among social media users. Brahmajji is currently occupied with the filming of *Pushpa 2*. Together with Malayalam star Fahadh Faasil, he is currently filming at RFC and is unaware of the incorrect post. After being alerted by someone, he became aware that his account had been hacked. He promptly reported, updated the password, and stated that he hadn't replied to YS Jagan's remark.