

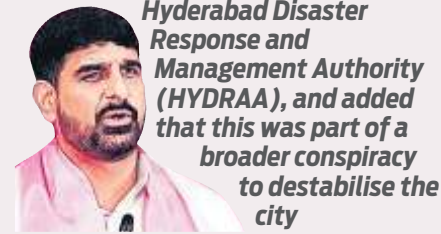
the pioneer

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Published From: VIJAYAWADA HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

The actions of Revanth are not in the interests of Hyderabad or Telangana. He is functioning as per Chandrababu Naidu's directions to shift the city's development to Amaravati, which clearly shows his intent to hinder our state's growth. Revanth is spreading fear among people under the guise of the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Management Authority (HYDRAA), and added that this was part of a broader conspiracy to destabilise the city



— BRS MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy

P4

Amit Shah to address 4th Akhil Bharatiya Rajbhasha **Sammela**



I CALL MYSELF A MORE HYDERABADI THAN A MALAYALI



Nani concentrates on Hit 3, **HERE & NOW**



P12

DON'T MISS...

Dewatering in city's flood-hit areas...

Municipal Administration Minister P Narayana has announced that the dewatering process in Vijayawada's flood-affected areas is progressing rapidly. The minister took prompt action to ensure that floodwaters, which had accumulated in various parts of the city, were drained swiftly. He visited areas including Kandrika and Bose Nagar, where floodwaters had been stagnant, and within hours, the water was removed using large pumps. Minister Narayana instructed officials to use pumps to remove the floodwaters ...

-PAGE: 3

Postal dept to assist pensioners...

The postal department will provide doorstep delivery of services to aged pensioners to help them submit their digital life certificates (DLCs), according to an official statement issued on Friday. The move assumes significance as the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW) has decided to hold DLC campaign 3.0 from November 1-30, 2024, in all district headquarters and major cities across India. A preparatory meeting to structure the DLC campaign 3.0 in all district post offices was ...

-PAGE: 5

Fire-resistant upholstery fabrics...

The government has introduced stringent regulations mandating the use of fire-resistant upholstery fabrics in non-domestic furniture, a move expected to improve public safety with respect to fire-related tragedies. Effective from October, the Quality Control Order (QCO) now requires all upholstery components used at public spaces to comply with the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) norms. The QCO applies to upholstered composites and fabrics used in non-domestic furniture found in public areas such ...

-PAGE: 8

Team India begins practice in...

It is back to business for Rohit Sharma's side following its much-deserved month-long break, as the team began its preparations in right earnest under new coach Gautam Gambhir here on Friday, for the upcoming two-Test series against Bangladesh. With the first Test against Bangladesh scheduled here from September 19, the entire squad, including Rohit and batting stalwart Virat Kohli, assembled at the MA Chidambaram Stadium with new bowling coach, South African great Morne Morkel, and batting coach Vikram...

-SPORTS

FLOOD RELIEF DISTRIBUTION

Cover every victim: CM

Accurate enumeration of affected people key to proper aid distribution



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu on Friday directed officials to ensure that government assistance reaches every flood victim without exception.

During a review of flood relief measures, the Chief Minister stressed that the government is fully prepared to support all those affected by the unprecedented flooding. He emphasised that the enumeration of victims should be accurate and that aid must reach every individual who has suffered losses.

- Relief efforts progressing well, with public expressing satisfaction.
- Two categories of assistance: for residents on the first and second floors of buildings.
- Compensation for damaged two-wheelers, autos, and cars to be provided.
- New houses to be built for those whose homes were completely destroyed.



Estimated **2,13,456** housing units submerged in floods

"The public is expressing satisfaction with the ongoing relief efforts in the flood-affected areas," said the Chief Minister. He further instructed that the list of victims should be drawn up meticulously, particularly when it comes to compensating those affected. He added that if damage assessments are completed promptly, relief will be provided to the victims by September 17. Officials provided a detailed explanation of the process for identifying flood victims.

Continued on Page 2



8 killed, 30 injured as 2 trucks ram RTC bus

The injured rushed to hospitals in Chittoor, Palamaner, and Bangarupalem.

The critically injured transferred to Vellore Hospital in Tamil Nadu.

District Collector Sumit Kumar visits the accident site to oversee rescue and relief efforts.

Among the deceased was RTC bus driver Manohar and several passengers.

Authorities are investigating the cause of the accident.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a tragic accident, eight people lost their lives, and 30 others sustained injuries when two lorries collided with an RTC bus in Chittoor district on Friday afternoon. The incident occurred at Mogili Ghat on the Chittoor-Bangalore highway.

The injured were shifted to government hospitals in Chittoor, Palamaner, and Bangarupalem for treatment, with the critically injured being transferred to Vellore Hospital in Tamil Nadu for advanced care.

Continued on Page 2

Guv, CM, Dy CM express grief

VIJAYAWADA: Governor of Andhra Pradesh, S Abdul Nazeer, has expressed grief over the tragic road accident near Mogali Ghat in Chittoor district, which claimed eight lives and injured many. The Governor directed the district administration to ensure that the injured receive proper medical care and extended his condolences to the bereaved families.

Continued on Page 2

AFTER SIX MONTHS IN TIHAR JAIL...

Kejriwal out on bail

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supreme Arvind Kejriwal walked out of Tihar Jail on Friday evening, hours after he was granted bail in the corruption case lodged by the Central Bureau of Investigation in connection with the excise policy 'scam'.

Kejriwal left the jail premises amid heavy rain in the national capital. He was accompanied by his wife Sunita Kejriwal, and senior AAP leaders, including Manish Sisodia, Atishi, Sanjay

Singh, Bhagwant Mann and others.

Standing through the sunroof of a car, the AAP chief then addressed party workers who gathered outside the Tihar Jail and chanted slogans of "Jaik Ke Tale Toot Gaye, Kejriwalji Chhoot Gaye".

Beginning with slogans of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai', 'Vande Mataram' and 'Inquilab Zindabad', Kejriwal thanked the people of Delhi for their blessings.

Thank you all for waiting for me in the rain.

Continued on Page 2

'Will continue to fight anti-national forces'

In his first remarks after being released from the Tihar Jail, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said he will continue to fight "anti-national" forces working to weaken the nation, and asserted the incarceration has only strengthened his resolve.

Hours after the Supreme Court granted him bail in the Delhi excise policy case, Kejriwal stepped out of the jail to a resounding welcome by his party leaders and supporters. Addressing party workers



from the sunroof of a vehicle, Kejriwal raised slogans of 'Inquilab Zindabad' and 'Vande Mataram'.

Continued on Page 2

50,000 houses to be ready by October-end: Minister Kolusu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Housing and Information & Public Relations Minister Kolusu Parthasarathy has instructed Option-3 contractors to adhere strictly to quality standards in the ongoing housing projects across the State. He said that an inspection is underway to check for defects. If any issues are found, contractors must correct them; otherwise, payments for these structures will be withheld until the defects are addressed.

Minister Parthasarathy on Friday held a review meeting with Option-3 contractors and senior officials from the Housing Corporation at the State Housing Corporation office in Vijayawada. District officials participated in the meeting via video conference.

During the meeting, the Minister reviewed the challenges faced by contractors in Option-3 colonies and



proposed immediate solutions. He directed officials to ensure the timely completion of house constructions and warned against negligence. Contractors are expected to demonstrate progress; those who have not advanced after two years must start work immediately and meet their targets, or face necessary actions.

The Minister has set a deadline for completing 50,000 houses under construction by the end of October. He

instructed that buildings at the roof level should be finished promptly and that geo-tagging and other pending tasks be completed on schedule. District authorities are to coordinate with contractors to meet these targets.

To mark 100 days since the government's formation, various programmes will be held from September 20. Minister Parthasarathy noted that the Chief Minister is closely monitoring the housing construction department, stressing that the ongoing projects must be completed on time. By the end of the 100 days, the housing construction department should complete and present 10,000 house slabs to the Chief Minister.

Special Chief Secretary of the State Housing Department, Ajay Jain, has instructed authorities to ensure the completion of 50,000 houses by the end of October, address water issues in the colonies, and drill boreholes near the colonies.

CUT IN IN-SERVICE PG MEDICAL SEAT QUOTA

'Move aimed at meeting State's specialist needs'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Responding to the reduction in quotas for clinical and non-clinical postgraduate medical seats, Special Chief Secretary of Health, Medical and Family Welfare, MT Krishna Babu, stated that the reduction in the in-service quota for postgraduate medical seats in the state is a strategic decision aimed at meeting the state's specialist needs.

Speaking to the media at the secretariat on Friday, Krishna Babu explained that the changes were made after a thorough analysis by a committee of senior health officials. The Government Order (GO Ms No 85), issued on July 20, 2024, reduces the quota for clinical seats from 30% to 15% and for non-clinical seats from 50% to 30%. This decision responds to an increase in postgraduate medical seats from 1,231 in 2014-15 to 3,225 in 2023-24, alongside improved specialist recruitment efforts. The Special Chief Secretary noted that vacancies for specialists in secondary health institutions and medical colleges have significantly decreased.

He added that the committee also found that in-service doctors, after



completing postgraduate courses, often struggled to find appropriate vacancies in their specialties, particularly in Primary Health Centres (PHCs), which lack specialist facilities. Additionally, the government noted violations of bond provisions, with 273 out of 800 Civil Assistant Surgeons failing to join government posts after securing their degrees.

To address these issues and make 270 seats available for Open Category candidates, the government decided to reduce the in-service quota. However, PHC doctors have threatened to strike in protest, demanding a rollback of the decision.

FLOOD FURY IN KONASEEMA

Road connectivity cut off to 40 island villages

PNS ■ AMALAPURAM

The plight of flood victims in Konaseema and Kakinada districts continued on Friday, with many villages still submerged in floodwaters from the Godavari and Yeluru rivers. Over 40 island villages in Konaseema district remain cut off due to the flooding.

Although the Godavari's floodwaters have begun to recede, more than 35 villages were still surrounded by water on Friday. The flow at the Dowleswaram project exceeded 14 lakh cusecs, prompting a second danger signal.

Officials said that road access to the island villages could be restored if the floodwaters drop below 10 lakh cusecs.



Officials said that road access to the island villages could be restored if the floodwaters drop below 10 lakh cusecs. Several villages, including Thanelanka, Gurajapulanka, Kunalanka, Chintapallilanka, Chintavanirevu, Kamini, Saladivaripalem, and Valasalattippa in Mummdivaram mandal, are still marooned, with villagers confined to their homes.

Several villages, including Thanelanka, Gurajapulanka, Kunalanka, Chintapallilanka, Chintavanirevu,

Kamini, Saladivaripalem, and Valasalattippa in Mummdivaram mandal, are still marooned, with villagers confined to their homes.

packets are being distributed to flood victims in P. Gannavaram, Allavaram, and Sakshinetipalli mandals. Crops, including coco, plantain, yam, betel leaf, and vegetables, have been submerged in hundreds of acres across the flood-hit villages. Floodwaters have also affected Kanakayalanka, Pedalanka, Doddipatla, and Lakshmi Palem villages in Yelamanchili mandal.

In Guntur district, persistent rains and floods have devastated farmers, with crops across thousands of acres submerged. The damage includes 17,000 acres in Ponnur constituency, 7,000 acres of paddy in Pedakakani mandal, and 6,500 acres in Chebrolu mandal.

Continued on Page 2

BJP shows the way to press for more funds

We are a prosperous state with higher per capita income than any other state; hence, the Finance Commission should allocate more funds to the state. We are growing faster than most states; hence, the Finance Commission (FC) should allocate more funds from the divisible pool to the state. The earlier government mismanaged the state's finances, resulting in a considerable debt burden; therefore, we need more funds. We made substantial welfare guarantees in our manifesto to come to power; hence, we need higher fund allocations. The Center collects large sums through surcharges and cesses; therefore, the Finance Commission should bring those revenues into the divisible pool. States need more funds; therefore, the Finance Commission should increase the states' share of the divisi-

ble pool to 50% from the current 41%. The Constitution mandates that the Central government collect certain taxes and put them in the divisible pool. It also mandates a Finance Commission to be constituted by the President every five years to make recommendations on how these revenues should be shared by the Center and the states and between states for the next five years. The Congress and the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) made the above demands and suggestions to Arvind Panagariya, the Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission. Panagariya and his team visited Hyderabad this week to consult with state stakeholders regarding the division of divisible pool revenues. Though the claims made by the Congress and BRS leaders—represented by the state's current and previous Finance

'Positive net intra-state migration reflects that a particular state has become an enormous employment generator, attracting and providing employment to out-of-state Indians too. Employment generation is the most significant national necessity, and any state that is an engine for it deserves all necessary support through an increased share in funds'

Ministers, Bhatti Vikramarka and Harish Rao of the BRS—were factually correct, they seemed more focused on playing to the gallery rather than procuring a higher share of the divisible pool for Telangana state. Bhatti used the occasion to blame the previous BRS government for the dire straits of the state's coffers so that he could use it later as an excuse for failing to fulfil his party's pre-poll promises. On the other hand, Harish was intent on claiming credit for the state's growth over the past decade to sidestep Bhatti's criticism. Both leaders, having been Finance Ministers, understand the principles and methodology used by Finance Commissions to apportion revenues from the divisible pool. The cardinal principle of taxation is that the rich pay more taxes, and a higher proportion of the tax revenues go to uplift the poor. Claiming Telangana is prosperous and fast-growing is not a viable argument when asking for more money. One need not be



KISHORE POREDDY

a finance minister to understand this principle; every taxpayer knows this. Also, if being in heavy debt is a reason for more allocation, no state government would stop spending profligately and push itself into a debt trap. Similarly, both finance ministers know that adding cesses and surcharges to

the divisible pool needs a Constitutional amendment, which is in Parliament's scope, not in the domain of the Finance Commission. The Finance Commission weighs the changing burdens of the central and state governments to decide on revenue split. The 14th Finance Commission increased the states' share from 32% to 42%. The 15th reduced it to 41% as Jammu and Kashmir moved from the states column into the union territories column, making it a responsibility of the Center. Once the Commission determines the states' share, it evolves a formula to apportion the states' share among individual states. The current formula gives 85% weight to the state's size, population, poverty levels and forest cover and 15% to its performance in controlling population and growing tax revenues. A logical argument to the Finance Commission needs to have two components. The first

would be to impress on the growing responsibilities of the states vis-a-vis the Center. The second would be to change the formula used to determine each state's share so that Telangana's share increases. There are two ways of achieving this: adding new parameters to the existing formula and increasing the weights of specific parameters that increase Telangana's revenue share in the current formula. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), represented by Eatala Rajender—the only other person to have been the state's finance minister—demonstrated this understanding and put forward ideas that can help the cause of Telangana. A significant innovative idea presented pushes for considering net intra-state migration as a parameter for fund allocation. Positive net intra-state migration reflects that a particular state has become an enormous

employment generator, attracting and providing employment to out-of-state Indians too. At the same time, net migration also stresses the civic infrastructure of the receiving state. Given our demographic dividend, employment generation is the most significant national necessity, and any state that is an engine for it deserves all necessary support through an increased share in funds. Another parameter relates to addressing the growing concern of climate change through allocations for disaster prevention and relief and encouraging renewable energy production. Of the three finance ministers the state had seen, only one—Eatala Rajender of the BJP, used their experience and insight to benefit the state. The other two just played politics. (The author is BJP TS spokesperson.)

Rajahmundry Railway Station to be modernised: Purandeswari

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP leader and Rajahmundry MP Daggubati Purandeswari stated that the upgraded Rajahmundry Railway Station would be a landmark facility, providing a seamless and comfortable experience for passengers.

MP Purandeswari participated in a review meeting with Railway Officials on Friday at the Divisional Conference here and discussed the major upgrade of Rajahmundry Railway Station. At the outset, Narendra A. Patil, Divisional Railway Manager, Vijayawada, Gati Shakthi officials, and a team of Branch officers briefed the MP on the project's progress through a PowerPoint



presentation.

The meeting focused on the developmental works currently underway and the assistance required from the state

government regarding the sparing of land on the east side for adequate circulating area and other clearances.

MP Daggubati

Purandeswari directed state government officials to work closely with railway officials to ensure the early completion of the project. She emphasised the importance of coordination and timely clearances to meet the project's deadlines. She thanked DRM Narendra A. Patil and the State Government officials for attending the review meeting.

PE Edwin, ADRM, Infrastructure, CHPR Vittal, CPM, Gati Shakthi, V. Rambabu, Sr. DCM, S Varun Babu, Sr. DEN, Coordination, other Branch Officers and Staff took part in the review meeting.

The prestigious project, being carried out with Rs 284.88 crore, aims to enhance

the passenger experience and improve the station's infrastructure, the key features of the upgrade include the West side: New station building with G+3 floors, East side: Main station building with G+5 floors, Entire covering of Platforms with COPs and provision of 17 escalators and 7 lifts for free and easy movement, pockets of parking lots being developed to accommodate approximately 300 cars, 24-meter wide roof plaza, approximately 110 meters long, New Foot Over Bridges (FOBs), 6 meters wide on either side, Provision for additional platform on the east side in the future and Provision for multi-level car parking were discussed.



Resolve non-financial issues under 100-day action plan: CS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad has instructed various departments to take immediate action to address non-financial and short-term issues under the 100-day action plan. The directive was issued during a review meeting held on Friday.

The Chief Secretary emphasised that government departments—particularly those of Medical and Health, General Administration Department (GAD), Law, Endowments, Planning,

Excise, Water Resources, Mines and Geology, Energy, Agriculture, Cooperation, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Village and Ward Secretariats, Social Welfare, BC, Minority and EBC Welfare, and Handloom and Textiles—should focus on achieving the targets set for the 100-day action plan.

He clarified that non-economic issues, which can be resolved within the 100-day timeframe, must be prioritised. The Chief Secretary instructed officials to take appropriate steps to address

public grievances and other non-economic matters across various government departments within this period.

MT Krishna Babu, Special Chief Secretary of the Health Department, and Vijaya Kumar, Special Secretary of the Home Department, participated virtually in the meeting. S Satyanarayana, Secretary of Endowments; K Sunitha, Secretary of Law; N Srinivasulu, Additional Secretary of GAD; and officials from the Planning and Excise departments were also in attendance.

Kejriwal out on ...

Continued from Page 1

They put me in jail, they thought putting Kejriwal behind bars would break his morale. Today, I want to tell you that I have come out of jail. My morale has been boosted 100 times. My strength has increased 100 times," the Chief Minister said.

"My life is dedicated to the country. Every moment of my life, every drop of blood is dedicated to the country. I have seen a lot of struggle in life, faced a lot of hardships, but God has supported me at every step because I was truthful and honest," he added.

The AAP chief also said that God supported him because he was honest and right. "I have faced many difficulties in my life, but God has supported me at every step. This time, too, God supported me because I was honest," Kejriwal said.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan granted relief to Kejriwal, but barred him

from visiting the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) or signing any official documents.

Kejriwal, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in the excise policy case on March 21, was granted interim bail on May 10 by the Supreme Court for campaigning in the Lok Sabha polls and has been in jail since June 2 when he surrendered.

"The Supreme Court has shown a mirror to 'kattar beimaan' (outright dishonest) Arvind Kejriwal while granting bail to him. He should immediately resign after this," BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said.

Hitting out at the BJP, AAP demanded that the ruling party should apologise to the country for keeping a "staunchly honest" leader like Arvind Kejriwal in jail. The party also said that the Supreme Court order granting him bail in the excise policy case has exposed the BJP's "lies".

'Will continue to fight ...

Continued from Page 1

"I want to thank people who prayed for my release. You have braved rain to come here and I am thankful to you. Every drop of my blood is dedicated in the service of my nation. In my entire life, I have faced difficulties but the God has always been with me," he said. Kejriwal stressed that the jail time has strengthened his resolve.

"They put me in jail to break me but my resolve has only grown stronger. Jails cannot break me. I will continue my fight against anti-national forces," he said.

Hundreds of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) workers and senior party leaders, including Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, were waiting outside the prison to welcome Kejriwal.



Charge memo issued woman cop for taking selfie with Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A woman constable, Ayesha Banu, has received a charge memo after taking a selfie with YSR Congress party president and former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy at Guntur jail. The incident occurred when Jagan visited the jail to meet former MP Nandigam Suresh.

While Jagan was addressing reporters outside the jail, Ayesha, accompanied by her daughter, made her way through the crowd and requested a selfie, mentioning that she was a fan and sought his blessings for her

daughter. Jagan obliged, and the photograph soon went viral on social media. Although the government initially did not respond, supporters on social media raised the issue, tagging Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha and calling for action. Anitha subsequently ordered an investigation.

The Jails department on Friday issued Ayesha a charge memo, asking for an explanation regarding her conduct while on duty. According to sources, a committee may be formed to review her explanation and recommend suitable action.

Road connectivity...

Continued from Page 1

Horticulture crops in 680 acres in Chebrolu mandal were also damaged. Vizianagaram district has seen severe damage to plantain orchards and vegetable crops in Regidi, Amadalavalasa, Mentada, Nellimarla, Jami, Ramabhadrapuram, Bondapalli, and Denkada mandals. Maize and cotton crops have also been significantly affected. The district experienced breaches in 44 irrigation tanks, damage to a 67-kilometre stretch of highway, and the uprooting of 68 electrical poles.

Cover every victim...

Continued from Page 1

The government is planning to offer assistance not only to those whose homes were completely submerged but also to those living on the upper floors of buildings. Two categories of assistance are being considered: one for residents on the first floor who have lost household items, and another for those on the second floor.

The government will also provide compensation to those whose two-wheelers were damaged in the floods, and

new houses will be built for individuals whose homes were completely destroyed. It is estimated that at least 2,13,456 housing units have been fully submerged, with thousands of two-wheelers, cars, and autos damaged, for which appropriate compensation will be provided.

Ministers Vangalapati Anitha, Payyavula Kesav, Anagani Satya Prasad, P Narayana, and Nadendla Manohar, along with officials from various departments, attended the meeting.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Ekadashi: Sep 13 10:30 PM to Sep 14 08:41 PM
Dwadashi: Sep 14 08:41 PM to Sep 15 06:12 PM
Nakshatram: Sep 13 09:35 PM to Sep 14 08:32 PM
Uttara Ashadha: Sep 14 08:32 PM to Sep 15 06:49 PM
Shravana: 9:09 AM to 10:40 AM
Yamagandam: 1:42 PM to 3:13 PM
Varjyam: 12:15 AM to 01:44 AM
Gulika: 6:07 AM to 7:38 AM
Amritakalam: 02:25 PM to 03:57 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:47 AM to 12:35 PM
VIJAYAWADA WEATHERS
Forecast: Mostly Cloudy
Temp: 34°
Humidity: 63%
Sunrise: 6:07 AM
Sunset: 6:17 PM
Updated: September 13, 2024 5:00 PM

CELEBRATIONS ERUPT AT AAP OFFICE

Party calls it 'loss for dictatorship'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Celebrations erupted outside the AAP headquarters here on Friday after the Supreme Court granted bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a corruption case lodged by the CBI in connection with the excise policy 'scam'.

Several AAP leaders and workers gathered outside the party headquarters and distributed sweets and burst crackers to celebrate the release of their party supremo.

Meanwhile, outside the chief minister's residence, Kejriwal's wife, Sunita Kejriwal, along with senior AAP leaders and workers, also distributed sweets as party supporters raised slogans like "Aa gave bhai aa gaye, Kejriwal aa gaye" and "jail ke taale toot gaye, Kejriwal chhoot gaye".

Senior AAP leaders Manish Sisodia, Atishi, Sanjay Singh and his wife Anita

were also present at the spot. "BJP's plans have been foiled. They wanted to put opposition leaders behind the bars to stay in power," Sunita Kejriwal told reporters.

The bail order comes almost three and a half months after the Delhi chief minister surrendered on June 2, ahead of the Lok Sabha poll results.

Several AAP workers were also seen dancing to the beats of 'dhols' outside the AAP headquarters, where Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj also reached to join the celebrations.

Cabinet minister Gopal Rai, who was also present at the occasion, called the event a "big victory for our party and a loss for dictatorship".

Sweets were also distributed outside senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia's residence. Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the excise policy linked money laundering case on March 21.

BJP should apologise to the country

AAP on Friday demanded that the BJP should apologise to the country for keeping a "staunchly honest" leader like Arvind Kejriwal in jail, and said the Supreme Court order granting him bail in the excise policy case has exposed the BJP's "lies".

At a joint press conference here, senior AAP leader and former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia said the Supreme Court order granting bail to Kejriwal was a moment of "big relief" for the party and its leaders and workers.

Guv, CM, Dy CM ...

Continued from Page 1

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu expressed shock over the loss of lives in the accident involving an RTC bus from Tirupati to Bangalore that collided with a lorry. He inquired about the relief measures and urged officials to provide the best possible medical treatment to the injured. Naidu assured the affected families of government support. Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan also expressed shock over the incident, noting that eight people, including the bus driver, had perished. He extended condolences and promised government assistance.

YSRCP leader and former CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy shared his shock over the accident, which involved two lorries and resulted in over 30 injuries. He urged the government to ensure top-notch medical care for the victims and support for the grieving families. Transport Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy and Minister Nara Lokesh also conveyed their condolences and stressed the need for enhanced safety measures.

Rs 476 cr for repairs to ...

Continued from Page 1

Chandrababu Naidu expressed concerns that some contractors working on national highways are not performing adequately and warned that serious action will be taken if improvements are not made immediately.

He instructed officials to advance work on the Amaravati Outer Ring Road, Visakhapatnam to Mulapet, Vijayawada East Bypass, and the widening of the Vijayawada-Hyderabad, Hyderabad-Bengaluru highways, as well as plans for the Greenfield Corridor from Hyderabad to Amaravati through the National Highway Authority.

8 killed, 30...

Continued from Page 1

The accident took place near Mogili Ghat in Palamaneru constituency, when an RTC bus travelling from Tirupati collided head-on with a lorry coming from Palamaneru, which subsequently crashed into another lorry.

Chittoor District Collector Sumit Kumar rushed to the scene on Mogili Ghat Road to oversee rescue operations and ensure assistance. Among the deceased was the RTC bus driver, Manohar, along with several passengers.

The devastating incident has claimed eight lives and left the local community in shock. Authorities are investigating the cause of the accident while ensuring that the injured receive timely medical attention.

Dewatering in city's flood-hit areas progressing well: Min

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Municipal Administration Minister P Narayana has announced that the dewatering process in Vijayawada's flood-affected areas is progressing rapidly. The minister took prompt action to ensure that floodwaters, which had accumulated in various parts of the city, were drained swiftly. He visited areas including Kandrika and Bose Nagar, where floodwaters had been stagnant, and within hours, the water was removed using large pumps.



Minister Narayana instructed officials to use pumps to remove the floodwaters across all affected areas by evening. The operation was carried out on a war footing, and the water was effectively cleared. The minister returned to the area in the evening to speak with residents, who expressed their satisfaction at the removal of the floodwaters that had lingered for several days due to the minister's efforts.

After his second visit, Minister Narayana briefed the media, explaining that floodwaters had affected all 32 wards of Vijayawada. It took time to pump out the water, as some areas had experienced prolonged stagnation, particularly in 61 to 64 wards. He noted that all areas

except the Journalist Colony had been completely dewatered. The minister also mentioned that the Chief Minister had assured that all necessary measures would be taken for the flood-affected residents, and following the Chief Minister's instructions, efforts were being made to resolve the situation promptly. "We managed to pump out

all the floodwater in Bose Nagar within eight hours, as instructed to clear all water by the evening. Water has been removed from 11 wards, and roads are being cleaned with the assistance of 11 fire engines during the night. We are making arrangements to address the water in the journalist colony tomorrow (Saturday)," the minister said.

Cases to be swiftly resolved at Mega Lok Adalat today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

AP DGP Ch Dwaraka Thirumala Rao reviewed the cases suitable for settlement with all the district SPs and CPs during a special teleconference held on Friday, and instructed the officials to make the Mega Lok Adalat on Saturday a grand success. He directed that all pending cases eligible for settlement should be swiftly resolved in the Mega Lok Adalat, taking place across all police stations in the State.

DGP Thirumala Rao emphasised the need to raise awareness among the public on the national Mega Lok Adalat. Besides, he announced a special award for those who demonstrate exceptional performance in the Mega Lok Adalat. He suggested that the APSRTC, under his administration, also utilises the Mega Lok Adalat to settle cases. Along with the SPs from all districts, Range IGS, IGP Legal, and additional DGP CID participated in this teleconference.



Removal of boats at Prakasam Barrage continues for third consecutive day

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The operation to remove boats at Prakasam Barrage entered its third consecutive day on Friday, with efforts progressing at full throttle. A specialised team of 14 experts from Kakinada is leading the mission to extract four heavy boats that have become lodged against the barrage gates.

Utilising seven powerful vessels, each capable of lifting over 50 tonnes, the team is working hard to secure chains to the stranded boats and haul them free.

One of the boats has already been cut into two by a diving team from Visakhapatnam, and plans

are underway to remove the severed sections. Once this is accomplished, attention will turn to the remaining three boats, which will also be extracted with the assistance of heavy-duty vessels. Authorities have ensured

that the removal process is being conducted with utmost care to avoid any damage to the barrage's walls and crest gates. Officials have stated that every possible measure is being taken to expedite the operation.



'Alternative methods needed to reduce animal testing'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Scientists and researchers must place animal welfare at the forefront of their work by adhering to ethical guidelines during experiments, ensuring that animals are not subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering, experts said during a workshop held at GITAM Deemed to be University on Friday.

The event, titled 'Welfare and Ethical Guidelines in Surgical Small Animal Model Development for Pharma & Biomedical Research', was organised by the GITAM School of Pharmacy to bring together prominent scientists to discuss the importance of ethical considerations in research.

Dr. Mandar Kulkarni, CEO of Vyas Cancer Research Park, inaugurated the workshop, highlighting the increasing number of animals used in research due to advances in medical technology. "The need for alternative methods, such as AI models, is crucial to reducing reliance on animal testing and avoiding unethical practices," he said.

Dr M. Jerald Mahesh Kumar, Senior Principal Scientist at CSIR-CCMB, spoke about the scope of animal testing. "Around 80-100 million animals, from zebrafish to non-human primates, are used globally in scientific research each year."

Dr. Vivek Tyagi, Senior Consultant at CCSEA, emphasised the role of the CCSEA in enforcing ethical standards in research. "CCSEA regulates the use of animals in experiments through the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. Researchers must avoid using larger animals when smaller ones can achieve the same results."

Mexican delegation to visit AP to study APCNF model

Apart from officials, the team has agriculture researchers, civil society representatives, technicians as well as farmers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A delegation from Mexico will visit Andhra Pradesh for a week to study the Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF), a government programme. The APCNF officials said that it is recognised as the world's largest agroecology programme, with over 10,35,000 farmers enrolled in natural farming across 4,120 villages in the State. The officials, technicians and producers from the government of Mexico will study the APCNF model in detail and take the learning to replicate this model in their country at the earliest.

According to the APCNF officials, the nine-member Mexican delegation is being led

by key representatives from the government, from the programme (Producción para el Bienestar (Production for Well-being), led by Area Director Maria Natividad Diaz.

Apart from government officials, the Mexican delegation consists of agriculture researchers, civil society representatives, technicians as well as farmers. They further stated that in addition to the Mexican delegation, Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS) is also hosting its international philanthropy partner -- NOW Partners -- who have deputed senior representatives Renske van Grinsven and Leonardo Andrade to study the APCNF model in-depth. They are joining the Mexican delegation on field visits. From September 15 to 17, the

team will visit APCNF project areas in Tirupati district and from 18 to 20, the team will travel through project areas of Eluru, visiting cacao, paddy, oil palm and vegetable fields. The visit will begin with a detailed orientation on the APCNF programme by T Vijay Kumar, Executive Vice-Chairman, RySS. Following this, over the next three days, the team will learn on the field the nine universal principles of natural farming, method demonstrations, ATM (Any Time Model), A Grade models, self-help group interactions and participate in practical demonstration of all of these models. On September 21 morning, a detailed debriefing and closure meeting is planned in Vijayawada.



Jagan visits flood-hit areas

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP chief and former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy visited flood-affected villages including Madhavapuram, Nagulapalli, and Ramanakkapeta in the Pithapuram constituency of Kakinada district on Friday. He interacted with the villagers, offering his support and enquiring about the losses they had suffered due to flooding from Yeluru reservoir.

Speaking to the media later, Jagan expressed concerns over the State government's handling of the Yeluru flood situation, comparing it to the recent floods in Vijayawada, and questioning the lack of proper flood management. He criticised the government for failing to take preventive measures despite early cyclone warnings. No review meetings were held and special officers were not appointed to manage the crisis in the affected districts.

YS Jagan raised concerns over the poor management of the Yeluru reservoir, which has a capacity of nearly 23 TMC. He questioned why, despite receiving an inflow of 9,950 cusecs, the government failed to take appropriate action by releasing excess water when the downstream canal can handle up to 14,000 cusecs. Poor response led the reservoir to reach full capacity by September 9. On September 10, the water released was 25,270 cusecs, far exceeding the canal's capacity.

Jagan slammed CM Chandrababu Naidu for the mismanagement of the Yeluru floods, emphasising that these were man-made floods caused by the mishandling of the reservoir under Naidu's government.

VSP faces shutdown due to raw material shortage

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), is facing a serious production crisis due to a severe shortage of coking coal. This has led to a sharp decline in steel output. One of the plant's main blast furnaces, Annapurna (BF-3), was shut down on Thursday, 12th September 2024. Earlier this year, in March, another blast furnace, Godavari (BF-1), was also closed. Currently, only the Krishna furnace remains operational, but even it may stop functioning soon, as the coal supply is only expected to last for another five to six days.

"This is the first time since the plant started in 1982 that we are facing a potential complete halt in steel production," said an official from RINL-VSP. He added, "If we don't receive new coal supplies soon, we'll have to shut down the third furnace, which would stop all steel production." The plant requires 14,000 tonnes of coking coal daily to produce 20,000 tonnes of liquid steel, but currently, it only has 20,000 tonnes in stock. Ideally, it should maintain a 45-



day reserve of 6.3 lakh tonnes to run without interruptions.

According to sources, the decision to shut down Annapurna was made a few days ago, and a technical instruction document titled "Technical Instructions for Reducing Down Blast Furnace-3" was circulated within the plant. The shutdown operation was completed by late Thursday night, overseen by a senior officer, with extra safety measures in place, including fire personnel and ambulances.

An employee involved in the operation said, "This isn't the first time Annapurna has been shut down. It was out of operation from January 2022 to December 2023. We had hoped its restart in January would start something better,

but the ongoing coal shortage continues to hinder us." This slowdown is a major concern for the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, a key player in India's steel industry. Both industry experts and plant employees are urging the government to take immediate action to secure raw materials and prevent a total production halt.

"If the government doesn't act soon, the situation will worsen, impacting thousands of employees and delaying important infrastructure projects that rely on steel from RINL," a senior industry analyst warned. With the plant already under financial strain, the future of RINL-VSP depends on swift action to restore coal supplies, or it may face an unprecedented complete shutdown.

'Brahmotsavam' arrangements reviewed

Action plan for parking slots prepared

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

In preparation for the annual Brahmotsavam, scheduled from October 4 to 12, TTD EO J. Syamala Rao, along with Additional EO Ch. Venkaiah Chowdhary, reviewed the progress of arrangements by various departments.

The review meeting was held on Friday evening at Annamaiah Bhavan in Tirumala. JEO Veerabrahmam and CVSO Sridhar also attended.

The EO instructed the vigilance officials to devise an action plan for setting up additional parking slots for Garuda Seva on October 8. Currently, the existing areas in Tirumala can accommodate around 11,000 vehicles, including both two-wheelers and four-wheelers. The EO emphasised the need for additional parking slots and coordination with



local police for security arrangements, extra manpower, CCTV, and additional luggage centres.

Later, the EO reviewed the progress of various preparations, including engineering works, transport, accommodation, distribution of water and Annappasadam, deployment of Srivari Sevaks, decorations by the Garden wing, stock of laddus, selection of dance troupes, additional toilets, and other related activities.

Earlier, the EO, along with relevant officials, inspected the Laddu Complex and Potu. During the inspection, they visited the laddu counters and 'boondi potu', monitored the distribution of laddus and preparation of 'boondi', and instructed that a safety audit of Srivari Potu be conducted.

CE Satyanarayana, Temple DyEO Lokanatham, EE1 Subramanyam, GM Transport Sesha Reddy, CPRO Dr. T. Ravi, and others were present.

Lokesh visits Ganesh pandals in Mangalagiri, performs special 'puja'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As people across the State celebrate Ganesh Navratri, Minister of Education, IT, and Electronics Nara Lokesh visited various Ganesh pandals set up around Mangalagiri town.

The organisers of the Ganesh pandals and local leaders warmly welcomed Minister Lokesh. He first visited the Ganesh pandal organised by the Arya Vyasa Sangam in the main bazaar of Mangalagiri town, where he performed a special puja to a Ganesh idol decorated with currency notes worth Rs 2.3 crores. The priest offered 'aarathi' to the Minister.

Subsequently, Lokesh visited the Ganesh pandal set up by the Chhatrapati Shivaji Youth at Sitarama Kovela. He also



inspected the Ganesh idol at Sattenapally Subbaiah Centre and the Ganesh idol at GR School Centre, which was adorned with handloom material.

Additionally, Lokesh visited the Ganesh Mandapam set up at 25th Ward, Tadepalli Bypass Lokesh Sports Ground, and performed special puja there.

During his visit, the Minister expressed his hope that the problems would be resolved, and that the state's people would prosper and find happiness.

Activists and residents gathered in large numbers to celebrate Minister Lokesh's visit, with many taking selfies with him.

SRM contributes Rs 3 cr to CMRF

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Pro-Chancellor of SRM University-AP, Dr P Sathyanarayanan has contributed Rs 3 crore as financial aid to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to help rehabilitate and reconstruct the drastically affected areas by the recent floods. The leadership team of the university, including Trustee Balaji Sathyanarayanan, Executive Director Research of SRM Group Prof D Narayana Rao and Registrar of SRM University-AP Dr R Premkumar, handed over the cheque to Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu at the AP Secretariat on Friday.



"It is in the very fabric of humankind to help others who are in need of safety, security and shelter. We, at SRM University-AP, stand with Andhra Pradesh at this dire hour and will extend our extensive support towards the rehabilitation projects," stated Dr Sathyanarayanan. The CM expressed gratitude for the contribution.

SRM University-AP also distributed food parcels and other amenities to the flood victims. The distribution programme was initiated by the Pro-Chancellor and conducted under the aegis of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Manoj K Arora. Food packets worth Rs 10 lakh, water bottles, fruits, bread and biscuits were distributed in Gollapudi, Singh Nagar and Vambay Colony areas.

Idol immersions marred by PoP debris on Vizag beaches

JAVVADI LAKSHMANA RAO lakshmana123@gmail.com ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The immersion of Lord Ganesh idols in Visakhapatnam on Friday saw grand processions through the city's streets, with thousands of devotees participating. However, the festivities led to concerns, as residents found the beaches littered with Plaster of Paris (PoP) idols and plastic waste.

Despite efforts by the district administration and environmental groups to encourage the use of eco-friendly clay idols, many devotees continued to use PoP idols, contributing to environmental pollution. "The paints used on PoP idols contain heavy metals and toxic chemicals, which can seriously

harm both water and soil. We hope the authorities act quickly to clear the debris," said Sohan Hatangadi, vice president of the Greater Visakha Citizens' Forum.

The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) and city police had organised 13 immersion sites across the city, with special teams deployed to manage the event. Local beaches, including Bheemili, Yarada, and Appikonda, were key immersion locations, with provisions such as tents, lighting, barricades, and cranes arranged. The improper disposal of PoP idols has heightened concerns over pollution. "We deployed around 700 additional sanitation workers to manage the immersion sites, except in Zone



"The paints used on PoP idols contain heavy metals and toxic chemicals, which can seriously harm both water and soil. We hope the authorities act quickly to clear the debris," said Sohan Hatangadi, vice president of the Greater Visakha Citizens' Forum

5," a GVMC health officer said. Special teams also collected decorative items like leaves and flowers, which were sent to waste processing units.

At Jodugullapalem Beach, police officers praised the overall cooperation of the public but

acknowledged the issue of littering. "We ensured that devotees could immerse the idols without entering the water themselves, thanks to the arrangements made," a senior officer noted.

As concerns grow, residents are urging the district administration to act quickly to clean the beaches and prevent further environmental harm. The situation highlights the need for more responsible practices in religious celebrations to safeguard the environment.

Minister Kolusu promises lasting solution to prevent inundation in Kolleru Lake area

PNS ■ ELURU

Minister for Housing and I&PR K. Parthasarathy has promised a permanent solution to prevent the inundation of localities around Kolleru Lake. Accompanied by MLA Kamineni Srinivas and officials, Minister Parthasarathy visited flood-affected areas in Kaikaluru and Bondavalli mandals on Friday. The Minister and MLA inspected the flood situation from a boat on the lake.



Minister Parthasarathy attributed the flooding in Budameru, within the Kolleru area, to human error. He blamed the lack of maintenance of irrigation canals and projects over the past five years under the previous YSRCP

government for the current flood issues. He stressed the need for regular removal of silt and

hyacinth from irrigation canals and drains to ensure the free flow of floodwater. The Minister pledged to address the

Kolleru flood problem by tackling encroachments and widening the canals and drains. He also promised to build a

regulator across the Upputeru drain.

Compensation will be provided to all those affected by the floods, with a commitment to offer proper housing to deserving poor residents in the Kolleru region. The Minister instructed officials to be generous in extending compensation to flood victims.

MLA Kamineni Srinivas noted that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has been urged to take action to mitigate the flood threat to Kolleru Lake. The Minister also reported that 50 tonnes of fodder had been supplied to farmers for their cattle.

RDO N. S. Khajavali and other officials were present during the Minister's visit.

Management asked to ensure no mishap takes place in industries

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Andhra Sugar Limited.

West Godavari District Collector Chadavalada Nagarani has directed the managements of industries to take steps to ensure that no industrial mishap takes place in the district.

The Collector held a meeting with the management of industries and reviewed the measures taken to prevent mishaps in industries. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that out of 53 industries in the district, two industries were registered under 'A' category and 51 industries were registered under 'B' category.

Six of these chemical industries have been identified as the most dangerous which included Tanuku Jayalakshmi Fertilizers, Tanuku The Andhra Sugars, Van Barri Limited in K. Illindalapurru village of Iravaram mandal, Paidiparru Plots Tech Labs Limited in Tanuku mandal, Mallikharjun Chemicals Private Limited in Jakkaram village in Kalla mandal, Aspirin Plant in Tanuku

property and causing deep concern among the industrialists and the general public. Incidents like this should be taken very seriously and immediate inspections should be conducted in all API manufacturing and some other chemical, petroleum and

petrochemical factories in the district," the Collector directed the officials concerned.

Inspections must be as per checklists and cover previously communicated guidelines. In addition to installing sensors to detect danger in industries, they should install CCTV cameras at dangerous units, the Collector said, asking them to organize a workshop on safety measures

and create awareness, the Collector stated. Vijayawada Deputy Chief

Inspector of Factories K Srinivasa Rao, Bhimavaram Inspector of Factories B Ramakrishna, district industrial officer M Mangapati Rao, APPBC EE Venkateswara and district Labour Officer A Lakshmi were among those who attended the meeting.



54 red sanders logs seized; 4 smugglers arrested

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Red Sanders Anti Smuggling Task Force personnel seized 54 logs and arrested four smugglers at Chabolu village in Nandyal district.

RSASTF SP P Srinivasulu told the media that a task force team led by Reserve Inspector M Chiranjeevulu and RSI P Naresh conducted

checking of vehicles at Chabolu village on the Kurnool-Kadapa highway in Nandyal district.

A mini-lorry was going towards Kurnool. On seeing the police checking, the occupants of the vehicle jumped off the vehicle and started fleeing. However, the task force personnel chased and apprehended four of them.

Later the task force police

personnel inspected the mini-lorry and found 54 red sander logs worth Rs 62.50 lakh. The task force personnel seized the red sander logs, the mini-lorry and 54 red sander logs weighing over 1.25 tonnes. One of the arrested red sander smugglers belongs to Rajasthan state. The SP announced rewards to the task force personnel who seized 54 red sander logs.

SEIL Energy bags CII award for excellence



PNS ■ NELLORE

SEIL Energy India Limited (SEIL), one of the largest Independent Power Producers (IPP) in India, on Friday announced that it has won the prestigious 'National Award for Excellence in Energy Management 2024' from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). SEIL's Project -1 has been honoured with this award in the 'Excellent Energy Efficient Unit' category. Winning this award demonstrates SEIL's leadership in the energy sector and its dedication to excellence in energy management.

The Company representatives JVLH Nageshwar Rao,

Head, Operations Support and Performance Monitoring, Sri Ramachandra Murthy Bhuvanagiri, DGM - Engineering, Narayana Boddu, AGM - Asset Performance, received the award during the CII's 25th National Award for Excellence in Energy Management 2024 ceremony held in Hyderabad, SEIL said in an official release here on Friday.

Raghav Trivedi, CEO - SEIL Energy India Limited, appreciated the team for their outstanding efforts and said, "We are delighted to receive this prestigious national award, which validates our relentless pursuit of energy efficiency and sustainability."

Ensure success of Swachhata Hi-2024: Collector to officials

Swachhata Hi-2024 programmes to be conducted from September 17 to October 2

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad has urged officials from various departments to ensure the successful execution of Swachhata Hi-2024 programmes, organised by Swachh Andhra Corporation under the Swachh Bharat Mission. Speaking during a district steering committee meeting at the collectorate on Friday morning, he emphasised the need for thorough preparations by September 13, ahead of the district-level programmes scheduled to begin on September 17.

The Swachhata Hi-2024 programmes will be conducted from September 17 to October 2, and it is crucial that all departments are well-prepared to ensure their success," said the Collector. "The initiatives are based on three primary pillars: Swachhata Ki Bhagidari, Sampurna Swachhata, and Safai Mitra Suraksha Shivirs."

"We are calling on citizens to participate actively, including

in sapling plantation drives to honour mothers, and to raise awareness about important issues like energy conservation, water saving, plastic waste reduction, and healthy lifestyles," he said.

The Collector instructed offi-



cially to identify littered areas and organise special drives to clean public spaces, including roads, government and private offices, parks, and drains. "We will be utilising drones for monitoring cleanliness, and

special efforts will be made to beautify public areas and educational institutions," he added.

The Education Department will conduct quiz competitions to raise awareness among students about hygiene, with a focus on handwashing at Anganwadi centers. The Safai Mitra Suraksha Shivirs pillar will focus on the welfare of sanitation workers, with medical check-ups and special health camps planned. "We must prioritise the health and safety of our sanitation workers, and provide them with necessary medical services, nutrition distribution, and vaccination drives," said the Collector.

Harendhira Prasad concluded by emphasising the importance of involving local communities and public representatives in cleanliness drives across mandals, GVMC areas, and constituencies. "The grand closing ceremony on October 2, marking Swachh Bharat Diwas, will require full cooperation from all departments to ensure its success," he said.



Temporary repairs bring relief to devastated GK Veedhi-Sileru Road

PNS ■ PADERU

The Alluri Sitarama Raju district administration has completed temporary repairs to the critical GK Veedhi-Seeleru road, allowing light vehicles to pass through as of Friday afternoon. However, heavy vehicles, including buses and lorries, will remain prohibited for at least another week due to ongoing safety concerns. "The district authorities have done a commendable job in quickly restoring temporary access, especially at areas where bridges were washed away or landslides occurred," praised V Abhishek, ITDA Project Officer. "This has brought immense relief to the affected communities, who can now access essential services and supplies."

The swift response comes in the wake of catastrophic landslides and infrastructure damage caused by intense rainfall in the region, resulting in the tragic loss of four lives. The 50 km stretch between GK Veedhi and Seeleru was severely impacted, with landslides reported at 15 locations and seven bridges completely washed away. "The situation was dire, but our team worked tirelessly to clear debris and establish temporary solutions at critical points," said the District Collector AS Dinesh Kumar.

"We understand the importance of this road for the local communities and are committed to restoring it to its full capacity as soon as possible."

Preliminary damage assessments reveal extensive losses across various sectors, including roads, bridges, and residential properties. The district administration, in coordination with the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), has worked rapidly to mobilize relief efforts, setting up 33 relief camps and 153 medical camps across the region.

"We have deployed a team from the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), along with 34 boats to assist with rescue operations," said the District Collector AS Dinesh Kumar. "As of Friday, 2,855 individuals have been safely evacuated, and 750 metric tonnes of rice have been distributed free of cost to those affected."

While partial access has been restored, authorities continue to urge caution for travellers and request patience as further rehabilitation efforts progress to fully restore the road and address the extensive damage caused by the heavy rains. "We understand the inconvenience this has caused, but safety remains our top priority," said V Abhishek. "We will continue to work tirelessly to restore the road and support the affected communities in their time of need."

Bankers asked to extend loans to flood-hit farmers liberally

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi has appealed to the bankers to extend loans to the flood-affected farmers liberally and asked the insurance companies to settle personnel claims at the earliest.

Collector held a special DCC meeting with bankers on the credit facility for farmers and people who suffered due to floods in the district on Friday and reviewed the flood damage. Speaking on the occasion, Collector Vetriselvi said that heavy rains and floods for 15 days created disaster in the district and farmers have lost their standing crops and people in many mandals.

The havoc wrecked by incessant rains and floods in the district should be considered a 'disaster' and the bankers should take relief measures for the farmers and the people, the Collector told them.

The Collector said that due to heavy rains and floods, crops were badly damaged in Kaikalur, Kalidindi, Pedapadu, Eluru Rural, Mandavalli, Nuzvid, Musunur, Agiripalli, Kukkunur, Velerupadu and



other mandals. She lamented that the worst affected were the paddy farmers, aquaculture farmers and horticultural farmers, deploring that cattle also died due to floods.

The Collector asked the bankers to reschedule farmers' crop loans, taken from the banks, and provide benefits to farmers through 'Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana'. In the settlement of insurance claims, the officials of insurance companies should take steps for immediate settlement of claims instead of making the farmers pillar to post to get their claims settled.

"The insurance claims related to the victims who have lost

their houses and belongings should also be settled immediately and the loans of the victims should also be rescheduled by giving some moratorium time. The officials of the departments of agriculture and allied sectors should collect applications for crop insurance compensation and rescheduling of loans from the farmers whose crops have been damaged," the Collector told the bank and insurance officials.

Union Bank Regional Head N Srinivas, DRDA PD R Vijayajulu, Animal Husbandry JD Dr G Nehru Babu and Horticulture DD K Rammohan were among those who attended the meeting.

RDWS joins hands with Save the Child Foundation for flood relief

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Rural Development Welfare Society (RDWS) from Visakhapatnam has partnered with Save the Child Foundation, USA, to deliver essential aid to those affected by the recent flooding in Rajarajeshwari, Vijayawada. "Ensuring proper hygiene is crucial, especially in the aftermath of a disaster," said Dr Ooha Mahanthi, Director of RDWS. "We are committed to providing not just immediate relief, but also support that addresses the health and dignity of the individuals affected."

Through their collaborative efforts, the organisations distributed family survival kits to 33 flood-affected families. Each kit contained 24 essential grocery items, dry clothes, and hygiene materials, including sanitary napkins, bath soaps, and toothbrushes with toothpaste. In addition to these kits, RDWS volunteers distributed sarees to 45 elderly women, providing them with dignity and comfort. The organisation also offered nourishment to 68 children, supplying them with buns, biscuits, and fruits.



Dr Mahanthi highlighted the educational needs of affected children. "Their books and school bags were lost to the

floodwaters," she noted. To address this, RDWS is preparing to provide 1,250 children with new notebooks, school bags, and essential stationery materials. "Education is a critical component of recovery," Dr Mahanthi stressed. "We want to ensure that these children can continue their studies without further interruption."

Dr Mahanthi expressed her gratitude to local youth and volunteers involved in the relief efforts. "Their dedication and hard work have been invaluable in managing and executing these programmes," she said.

ACROSS THE STATES



Mamata's resignation will be in interest of nation: BJP

It will be in the interest of the nation and West Bengal if Mamata Banerjee resigns as chief minister of the eastern state, senior BJP leader and Madhya Pradesh minister Kailash Vijayvargiya said on Friday. The TMC government is facing large-scale protests over the brutal rape and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on August 9. Junior doctors have been on 'cease work' since then. Banerjee on Thursday said she was 'ready to resign' for the 'sake of people' after protesting junior doctors refused to meet her unless the interaction was livestreamed. "It will be in the interest of the nation and West Bengal if Mamata Banerjee resigns as chief minister. It will also lead to protection of human rights in that state. There is a lot of unconstitutionality prevailing in West Bengal,"



Man lynched on train for sexually assaulting girl

A 34-year-old railway contract labourer was beaten to death by fellow passengers on a moving Humsafar Express train between Lucknow and Kanpur after he allegedly sexually assaulted an 11-year-old girl, police said on Friday. The deceased identified as Prashant Kumar, a native of Bihar. He was caught by the victim's family and other passengers after the incident on Tuesday night. Additional DG (Railway) Prakash D told PTI on Friday that Kumar had boarded the Humsafar Express from Siwan, Bihar, along with the victim's family. He allegedly offered her berth to the 11-year-old girl and sexually assaulted her while her mother was away. The girl reported the incident to her mother, who informed her family and other passengers. Enraged by the sexual assault, the victim's family and passengers thrashed Kumar. He was taken into custody by the GRP at Kanpur Central station.



HC rejects Oppn leader's plea for CBI probe

In a boost to the Left government in the state, the Kerala High Court on Friday dismissed a plea by the Leader of Opposition in the Assembly V D Sathesaran seeking quashing of the award of contracts for the KFON project and a CBI probe into it. A Bench of Justices A K Jayasankaran Nambiar and Syam Kumar V M said the material before the court does not persuade them to arrive at a prima facie finding regarding any illegality or irregularity in the implementation of the Kerala Fibre Optic Network (KFON) project. "On the contrary, the prima facie view that emerges, after considering the explanation offered by the Advocate General on behalf of the respondents (state government), is that the KFON project appears to be well on course towards realisation of its stated objectives..." This is more so because we are told that as of now connectivity through the optical fibre network already laid under the project, has been provided to 20,336 government offices and free internet has been provided to 5,484 economically backward families till date," the bench said.

NCPCR, CWC initiate action in row over student 'bringing non-veg food'

PNS ■ AMROHA (UP)
The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has ordered the district magistrate to conduct a probe into the allegations of a private school here allegedly suspending a nursery student for bringing "non-vegetarian food" in tiffin box.
Hilton Convent School's principal Avnish Kumar Sharma has also been directed by the district Child Welfare Committee (CWC) to appear before even as the student's mother claimed her three children have stopped going to school out of fear and she may seek legal recourse.
The incident first came to light on September 6 when a video of a heated argument between the principal and the boy's mother surfaced on social media platforms. The principal alleged that the boy, who hails from the Muslim community, used to make religious comments in school and brought non-veg food every day.
A probe into the alleged misconduct by the principal found that the charges of him holding the student hostage and removing him from the institution were baseless.
As the issue refused to die down, the NCPCR, the country's apex child rights body, ordered the District Magistrate Rajesh Kumar Tyagi on Thursday to conduct a fresh probe on the issue and submit a report in 10 days. CWC Chairman Atulesh Kumar Bhardwaj also told mediapersons that the committee has taken suo motu cognisance of the incident under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.
He emphasised the committee's authority to investigate harassment cases involving minor children and take appropriate action.

Bail to Kejriwal exposes BJP's 'lies': Aam Aadmi Party

Claims CBI, ED saffron party's 'tota-maina'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Friday demanded that the BJP apologise to the country for keeping "staunchly honest" leader Arvind Kejriwal in jail and asserted that the Supreme Court bail in the excise policy case has exposed the saffron party's "lies" while dubbing central probe agencies CBI and ED as its "tota-maina".

Kejriwal's bail comes as a big boost to the Aam Aadmi Party, which is seeking to make forays in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir in the coming elections and also gearing up to retain power in Delhi where polls are due early next year.

Celebrations erupted at the AAP headquarters with party leaders and workers distributing sweets and bursting firecrackers.

Sunita Kejriwal, wife of the Delhi chief minister, congratulated the party leaders and workers on her husband getting bail in the excise



policy-linked money laundering case filed by the CBI. He has already got bail in another case registered by the Enforcement Directorate in July.

Talking to reporters, senior party leader Manish Sisodia claimed the Supreme Court's observation makes it clear that the BJP was using the CBI and the ED as its "tota-maina" to keep the AAP supreme behind

bars as part of its conspiracy.

"The BJP should be ashamed for using 'tota-maina' ED and CBI for arresting opposing leaders," he said. "The BJP intended to keep Kejriwal in jail, so the CBI arrested him after he got bail in the ED case. The CBI fulfilled the intentions of the BJP," Sisodia alleged, adding that the bail order is a "big slap on the BJP's face".



Mumbai artist makes 'Ardhanari' Ganesh to highlight crimes against women

PNS ■ MUMBAI

An artist from Mumbai has created a Ganesh idol in the 'Ardhanari' form - half male, half female - to highlight the need for harmony between the two genders amid rising crimes against women.

Rintu Rathod has sculpted an idol of the elephant-headed deity from chocolate, something she specialises in.

Rathod said she used 20 kg

of dark chocolate and 10 kg of white chocolate to create the 25-inch-tall idol in the 'Ardhanari' form, installed at her Santacruz home.

"This form of Ganapati is particularly significant in Hinduism. It emphasises the idea that male and female principles are essential and complementary to each other, promoting harmony and balance in the universe," she said. An 'Ardhanari' idol of a 12-

ATTACK ON ARMY OFFICERS

Accused approached victims after hearing loud music

PNS ■ INDORE

The men who allegedly attacked two Army officers and raped their woman friend near Mhow in Madhya Pradesh were drawn to the picnic spot after hearing loud music, police said on Friday.

The police have arrested three out of six men for the attack that occurred near Jam Gate, a popular tourist spot, on the intervening night of September 10 and 11. The spot is around 30 km from the Mhow military cantonment.

Located on the Vindhya ranges, Jam Gate is surrounded by forests. In monsoon, tourists frequent the spot during the day, and the area is deserted at night. Talking to reporters, Superintendent of Police (Rural) Hitika Vasal said two Army officers and their two

women friends had been at the spot since 11 pm on Tuesday.

"The four of them were listening to loud music, and on hearing the sound in the deserted area late in the

night, the six accused reached the spot and committed the crime," she said.

One of the attackers threatened the victims with a pistol, while the others were armed with sticks, the official said.

BJP workers, kin behind Mhow assault-rape incident: Cong

PNS ■ BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh Congress on Friday alleged that some BJP workers and their relatives were behind the incident of assault on two army officers and rape of their woman friend near Indore's Mhow.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), however, rubbished the allegation and accused the opposition party

of creating a "false perception" on the issue. It also said the state government is very sensitive in such matters and that the accused in the Mhow case will not be able to escape.

Two army officers were assaulted and one of their two women friends was allegedly raped in the wee hours of Wednesday near popular tourist spot Jam Gate, about 30 km from Mhow military cantonment.

Probe 'corruption' in Anandacha Shidha scheme: Cong leader

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Maharashtra Congress leader Atul Londhe on Friday alleged corruption in the state government's 'Anandacha Sidha' scheme.

Under the scheme, several segments of society are given a food kit comprising suji (semolina), chana dal (Bengal gram), sugar and one litre edible oil ahead of festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi and Diwali. Addressing a press conference here, Londhe, the state Congress' spokesperson, said "70 to 80 per cent" of areas in Maharashtra had not been covered, adding the kit contained poor quality items.

"Huge corruption is taking place in the Anandacha Sidha scheme. The Maharashtra government must form a committee to probe irregularities," Londhe said.

Railway Minister hops on local train, chats with commuters



PNS ■ MUMBAI

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday travelled by a local train, the lifeline of lakhs of Mumbaikars, and chatted up with commuters.

Vaishnaw boarded the suburban train at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in south Mumbai at 2.34 pm and alighted at Bhandup station at 3.18 pm after his 27 km-long

journey. Railway officials said Vaishnaw, who was in the city for an awards ceremony, boarded a second class coach of the Ambernath-bound slow local train and got down at Bhandup station.

Vaishnaw is also visiting a Ganesh mandal in the city during the ongoing Ganesh festival, an official said.

Central Railway General Manager Dharam Veer Meena

and other senior officials accompanied Vaishnaw during the train journey.

Vaishnaw had travelled by a local train between Thane and Diva stations on the Mumbai suburban rail network in February 2022 for inspection of two additional railway lines, and had eaten 'vada pav', a popular snack, at a roadside eatery during that visit, officials said.

Amit Shah to address 4th Akhil Bharatiya Rajbhasha Sammela

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday will address inaugural session of official language diamond jubilee celebrations and 4th Akhil Bharatiya Rajbhasha

'Rajbhasha Gaurav' and 'Rajbhasha Kirti' awards on the occasion.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been constantly emphasising on the development of Hindi and Indian languages and better coordina-

tion between them, the release said.

The home minister had conceptualised organising Hindi Diwas on a large scale in various cities of the country in 2019. Realising this concept, Hindi Diwas and the first Akhil Bharatiya Rajbhasha Sammelan were organised in Varanasi in 2021.

After that, Hindi Diwas and



Shah will also launch the diamond jubilee special issue of 'Rajbhasha Bharti' magazine on the occasion besides releasing a commemorative postage stamp and coin, an official release said

Sammelan here to commemorate the completion of 75 years of Hindi becoming the official language.

Shah will also launch the diamond jubilee special issue of 'Rajbhasha Bharti' magazine on the occasion besides releasing a commemorative postage stamp and coin, an official release said.

He will present the

second and third Akhil Bharatiya Rajbhasha Sammelan were organised in Surat in 2022 and in Pune in 2023.

Organising Hindi Diwas event and Fourth Akhil Bharatiya Rajbhasha Sammelan here is also special in the sense that the official language department is celebrating this occasion as the diamond jubilee, the release said.

The 75-year journey of Hindi becoming an official language has not only crossed many important milestones but also made continuous progress in the field of technology.

Postal dept to assist pensioners in submitting digital life certificate

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The postal department will provide doorstep delivery of services to aged pensioners to help them submit their digital life certificates (DLCs), according to an official statement issued on Friday.

The move assumes significance as the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW) has decided to hold DLC campaign 3.0 from November 1-30, 2024, in all district headquarters and major cities across India.

A preparatory meeting to

structure the DLC campaign 3.0 in all district post offices was held by V Srinivas, Secretary (DoPPW) with Sanjay Sharan Director General Postal Services, Rajul Bhatt Deputy Director General Posts and R Viswesvaran MD & CEO of India Post Payments Bank (IPPB), among others, on September 12, 2024.

It was agreed that district post offices will coordinate with pensioner welfare associations, pension disbursing banks and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), among others,



to conduct the DLC campaign 3.0 at district post offices, the statement issued by the Personnel Ministry said.

"Jeevan Pramaan (or DLC) can be submitted by pensioners at district post offices using face authentication from an Android smart phone," it said. "The Department of Posts will also provide doorstep delivery of services to aged/(and to) inform pensioners to submit their DLCs as per requirements," the statement said.

Wide publicity will be given to the DLC Z 3.0 campaign by spreading awareness through

banners, social media, SMS and short videos, it said.

The UIDAI and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) will provide technical support during camps, the statement said. "It is envisaged that the collaboration will broaden and deepen the government's efforts for digital empowerment of pensioners and will contribute immensely to their ease of living," it added.

In 2023, the DLC campaign 2.0 was held in 100 cities and 1.45 crore pensioners submitted their DLCs.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Adieu comrade Yechury!

The untimely passing away of Sitaram Yechury is a defining moment for CPI(M) and Indian Left politics

Sitaram Yechury, the General Secretary of CPI(M) and veteran Left ideologue is no more. He died after prolonged illness in Delhi. Yechury, one of India's most prominent left-wing politicians, has left a deep void in the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Indian politics. As the General Secretary of the party and a key ideologue of India's Left movement, Sitaram Yechury was widely recognised for his ability to bridge ideological divides within the CPI(M) and foster cohesion in a faction-ridden party. Under his leadership, the CPI(M) worked toward navigating the challenges of declining relevance, especially in key states like West Bengal and Kerala, where the party held sway. Yechury's pragmatic approach sought to balance Marxist orthodoxy with the demands of modern politics, often encouraging alliances with non-Left parties to check the rise of right-wing forces, particularly the BJP. His tenure as General Secretary was marked by his efforts to revitalise the party in an era where communist ideologies found not



many takers. His ability to remain cheerful in the midst of crisis and light hearted won him many admirers across party lines. His ability to engage with younger generation was indeed remarkable. His influence extended beyond CPI(M) to broader Left coalitions, making him a key figure in shaping progressive political discourse in the country.

The CPI(M) has lost two of its prominent leaders in quick succession. Just a month ago, Buddhadeb Bhattacharya passed away, and now with the departure of Sitaram Yechury, the party may face a significant void in its politburo that will be difficult to fill. While Buddhadeb Bhattacharya brought pragmatic economics to the Left, it was Sitaram Yechury who steered Left politics towards a more centrist alignment. Yechury's passing poses a significant challenge for the CPI(M). His adeptness at navigating intra-party conflicts, especially between the hardliners and those favouring more pragmatic politics, was pivotal in keeping the party from splitting along ideological lines. His absence may lead to a leadership vacuum that could exacerbate existing tensions. The choice of Yechury's successor will be critical in determining whether the CPI(M) continues his centrist approach or swings toward a more hardline stance. However, replacing someone of Yechury's stature, who had both the intellectual capacity and the political acumen to lead in challenging times, will not be easy. In recent years, the left parties have struggled to maintain electoral relevance in most parts of India as the BJP and regional parties have filled the political space traditionally held by the Left. Sitaram Yechury, a politician and a gentleman, would be missed in Indian politics. His ability to transcend party politics and engage with a broader spectrum of ideas gave him a unique position in Indian politics. Yechury's absence will be profoundly felt, not only by his comrades but also by those who admired him as a kind and compassionate individual.

PICTALK



Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama during a teaching session at the Main Tibetan Temple, in Dharamshala. PTI

Perfect parenting: Navigating expectations and aspirations

In an age where parenting seems to be under constant scrutiny, the stress of raising children has evolved into a modern-day burden

In the olden days, it wasn't uncommon to be born in large families and be raised along with several siblings. But for some reason, parents back then did it with a laid-back approach and have not been heard or known to feel pressured by the size of the family they had to support. My paternal grandparents had 13 children and my maternal grandparents had ten.

It is a scenario impossible to even imagine in modern times, where stress has become a staple for all — from kindergarten children to pensioners past their prime. Today's parents are engulfed in a whirlwind of expectations, constantly feeling the weight of being "perfect" while juggling the unrelenting pressures of life.

The irony is not lost on any of us—despite our best efforts, parents often feel they are falling short, outpaced by a society that holds them to impossible standards. Dr Vivek Murthy, the US Surgeon General, recently said that parental stress is a significant public health issue and called for shifts in cultural norms. In our hyper-con-



nected world, where every action and decision is subject to public scrutiny, the quest for perfection is an unending pursuit that only leads to exhaustion. We need to pause and ask: Are we, as parents, pushing ourselves into a corner, one where our best is never good enough? How far should we go to prove our merits and how much strain can we take before we break at the seams?

A young parent recently mentioned how she was waiting for her toddler to grow up by a few years so that the tensions of the difficult years are past, but the truth is the stress of parenting seldom leaves, no matter how old the children become. It is in the psyche of the parent to be ever concerned, with the concerns and expectations only changing with age. Once a parent, always a parent. There is a relentless battle to become the

perfect parents who have raised peerless offspring that the world would appreciate. This pressure to adopt the best practices of parenting is now increased manifold by social media which presents picture-perfect family lives. What parents often forget is the travails of raising children are never easy and what seems perfect on social media are filtered versions of a life and landscape filled with challenges.

The idea of being a 'perfect parent' is a myth and it would be prudent on the parents' part to recognise that benchmarks set by society, media and peers are often unattainable. Each family should set its priorities and boundaries commensurate with its resources, circumstances and the children's capacity to undertake over-demanding expectations from all around. How parents of yore have been able to divide their attention between the litany of concerns and complaints their children must have presented baffles me. The joke that goes around in our family is this — the children just grew up; no one raised them by following any stringent stan-

dards. This attitude may not work in our times where the bars are set so high and the race for achievement is taken so seriously that parents find themselves caught in the quagmire of worry and anxiety even after the children have flown from their homes and built their nests. The anxiety of being an inadequate parent haunts many and the truth is there is no single right way to parent; neither is there a prescribed format to make children successful and happy except by instilling the right values in them. Embracing their imperfections as parents and learning to let go are difficult but essential traits to pick up in their journey of parenthood. What children need most is not a parent who has everything figured out, but one who loves them, supports them and is present through the highs and lows of life. Constant fretting about children will only take away from the confidence of the children and make them incompetent to face life's numerous challenges. (The author is a columnist and writing coach based in Dubai. Views are personal.)



ASHA IYER KUMAR

The statesman who bore the burden of Kandahar



BHOPINDER SINGH

In the Kandahar hijacking, Jaswant Singh stands out for his quiet resolve. He shouldered the responsibility of securing the release of 161 hostages

Beyond the usual 'manufactured-outrage', there was an inadvertent redemption with the role played of the Soldier-Statesman-Scholar, Jaswant Singh, in the recent OTT series IC-814 — The Kandahar Hijack. Undoubtedly, the hijacking saga casts a dark shadow on Indian governance with glaring mismanagement e.g., lack of cohesion among intelligence agencies, slow alignment amongst stakeholders, allowing the aircraft to take off from Amritsar et al, but in public memory, it is the singular image of Jaswant carrying three terrorists to Kandahar to secure the release of passengers and crew of IC-814. Many saw it as a moment of sovereign capitulation. Others saw it as successful negotiations under impossible circumstances, where negotiations were the only option (An entebbe-style raid, clearly wasn't feasible).

It was, as Jaswant himself puts it succinctly, "a choice between a bad decision, and a far worse decision". Negotiating the release of the hijacked passengers was a collective decision of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS). The composition of CCS was chaired by then PM Vajpayee, and had included the then Home Minister, NSA, Defence Minister, and of course the External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh. If that is so, why was it only Jaswant who carries the can of blame for posterity? The answer can be attempted in a couple of ways — firstly by understanding the inherent construct of Jaswant the individual, and his understanding of his 'duty', and secondly by understanding the impulse of others in the same situation, who were also part and parcel of this complex and questionable decision. Why didn't Jaswant come clean (or at least forcefully enough) to share the blame with his colleagues? For starters, it has to do with Jaswant's imagined sense of himself and his conscience.

Honourable soldiers do what is to be done, with no fuss or grandiosity. Major Jaswant Singh was a cavalier from the illustrious Central India Horse and had left



the Indian Army prematurely but always exemplified its finest tenets and values steadfastly, throughout his public life. The institution had defined him, and he had marched out without any usual 'terminal benefit' but with what he reflected, "My service with is my benefit, and what the army gave me, taught me, left me with me is my priceless pension". One such 'officer-and-a-gentleman' quality is what General James Mattis (former US Defense Secretary) alluded to while expressing his measured disagreement with the unhinged Donald Trump i.e., the French expression 'devoir de reserve' (literally, the duty of silence).

Perhaps Jaswant was informed by decades of soldiering, politics and statesmanship that to brave a difficult situation like IC-814 was one thing, but to further weaken the 'moment' for India by name calling or finger pointing, even worse. His colleagues were spared the taint, for he had protected them. It is another story that many were incredibly absolving themselves of any knowledge of the exchange or his dash to Kandahar. When one misstep after another was happening with IC-814 with no one taking charge of the situation, Jaswant had stepped up and personally



PERHAPS JASWANT WAS INFORMED BY DECADES OF SOLDIERING, POLITICS AND STATESMANSHIP THAT TO BRAVE A DIFFICULT SITUATION LIKE IC-814 WAS ONE THING, BUT TO FURTHER WEAKEN THE 'MOMENT' FOR INDIA BY NAME CALLING OR FINGER POINTING, EVEN WORSE

offered to go to Kandahar to secure the release, with the unpredictable Taliban and amoral ISI, across. The usually blustering and omnipresent Ministers were meekly abstaining from giving media bytes or even talking to distraught relatives, as they knew the hopelessness and intensity of the situation.

The situation was fluidic, and anything could have happened requiring quick decision-making, and so Jaswant put himself in the line of fire. His colleagues were better politicians, and he, was a soldier to his country and conscience, first and foremost. We were to engage frequently at the Rashtrapati Bhawan when he was earlier an opposition MP, and later a Cabinet Minister (Defence, External Affairs & Finance), and then again, as an opposition MP. Each time in a gathering of civilians he would catch the eye of those in 'Uniform' and acknowledge them with a gracious nudge or salute when saluted.

In all his varied professional capacities, his sole and avowedly apolitical questions were about the welfare of the President's Bodyguards or about their magnificent horses, on whom too, his eyes rolled rather gently. Many questions can be posed about

Jaswant's decisions e.g., IC-814, but he remained an essentially decent and dignified voice of reason. So winds of politics in his partisan camp changed, and he became an 'outsider' in the new sensibilities. Like a noble soldier, he left his camp but didn't join the 'other side', as done by most. He was too proud to do that, so he passed away silently like a ship at night, saving his colleagues, party, and the country, like he saved the moment in Kandahar.

He was to profoundly introspect in, A Call to Honour, "between this 'right' act of saving 161 lives, or standing up against terrorism and letting them all 'go', for all to die — will that be another 'right' act? By choosing that which is otherwise extinguished for always — Life, for, in any event this fight against terrorism will continue, from one challenge to another". Just for the fact that the Gentleman (an old-fashioned word that he'd understand best) stood up for all his decisions (right or wrong) and never really blamed others (when he could have), he certainly deserves a better memory.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RIISING SUICIDES: A SERIOUS CONCERN

Madam — According to the recently released National Crime Record Bureau data, only in 2022 more than 1 lakh 71 thousand Indians chose the path of suicide due to various reasons. On the other hand, according to the report of Lancet Public Health, this number worldwide is about 7 lakh 76 thousand. The brutal presence of global suicides simultaneously calls into question the overall social order of our individualistic lives. According to NCRB data, 12 out of every 1 lakh Indians take suicide-like decisions. More than 10 percent of them are farmers. An average of 154 Indian farmers commit suicide every day mainly due to unprofitable agriculture, failure to find a way out of chronic poverty, inadequate institutional financial credit system. Loneliness, family turmoil, childhood trauma, extramarital affairs, illness, and financial insecurity have emerged as causes of suicide among other segments of the population. Besides, the suicide of students makes us worried. Almost every day we come across such incidents, driven by the pressure of academic ambition as well as the artificial glamor of social media, which is increasingly drowning inexperienced teenagers in the darkness of gloom. In this situation, it is urgent to take appropriate measures to prevent this mental epidemic. The Lancet study claimed that a dollar increase in daily income reduced the number of suicides by an average of 8,000 per year during the period 2006-2016, which was confirmed by the study. At the same time, the government should implement poverty alleviation programs quickly. According to the NCRB study, there is a direct correlation between the increase in the pace of housing projects and the decrease in suicides. Counseling should be arranged in every school and coaching center for the students so that they are able to strike a balance between expectations and reality. Besides, it is imperative to include mental health as a subject in the syllabus.

Arka Goswami | Asansol

Not a cakewalk for Congress in Haryana



This refers to the article, "Haryana elections: BJP faces Congress' resurgence" (September 12) by Kalyan Shankar). Despite the fact that the BJP is facing an anti-incumbency of 10 years rule in Haryana, the forthcoming assembly polls in the state may not be a cakewalk for the party due to some other factors. On ground sharp division among voters in the state on the lines of Jat and non-Jat as well as Urban and rural cannot be overlooked. Result of Lok Sabha polls also proved it.

The Congress snatched five Jat-dominated Lok Sabha seats from the Congress but the saffron party also managed to retain an equal number of seats dominated by non-Jat voters. This shows the BJP still has a strong presence in non-Jat as well as urban voters, however it is not sufficient to bring it to power third time. Besides BJP, the JJP-ASP alliance also may play a spoilsport for the Congress by denting in its dalit votes. Internal conflicts may also cost the Congress dear in assembly polls. Due to internal conflicts, the Congress failed to cobble an alliance with the AAP. Though former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda has proved a greater star in the all matters including distribution of tickets but ambitions of Kumar Shailja, MP from Sirsa may play a spoilsport. A divided Congress will find it very difficult to defeat the BJP despite the latter being on a weak ticket.

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

SLASH RATES OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

Madam — It is a hard fact, when there is a hike in international prices the government's revenues increase proportionately as customs duty along with other central taxes are imposed thus the government reaps a bonanza. But when there is a fall in global crude prices state-owned oil companies are still earning more profits on petrol and diesel. The recent declining trend in crude prices owing to geo-political reasons, the Indian basket of crude has fallen from \$90/barrel in March to \$69/barrel today. The government needs to cut prices of petroleum products to bring some relief to the common man who is otherwise living at skyrocketing price levels. The reduction in petroleum products may be on the basis of calculations.

S K Khosla | Chandigarh

JAMMU AND KASHMIR ELECTIONS

Madam — The people of Jammu and Kashmir are no strangers to the menace of terrorism. However, cross-border terrorist activities have surged noticeably in

recent days, coinciding with the announcement of assembly elections in the state. With the first phase of polling set for September 18, incidents of terrorist activity have been reported across various regions, including Kathua. Fortunately, these threats have been effectively neutralized by the Indian Army. By instigating fear and anxiety among the local population, Pakistan seeks to undermine the democratic process set in motion by the Indian government. Despite India's relentless efforts, Pakistan continues to stir unrest, ensuring Kashmir remains a contentious issue. Conducting elections is the first step toward restoring democracy and peace in the region. It is essential to encourage the people of Kashmir to exercise their right to vote, strengthening both their state and the path to lasting peace and harmony, free from the shadow of terror.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

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FIRST COLUMN

STRIVE TO HAVE AN EMPTY MIND

One must have empty mind which lead to the spiritual awakening



RAVI VALLURI

Aeons ago a neophyte Zen student was an apprentice at a temple of knowledge. Regrettably, his mind was not robust enough and kept vacillating; so much so his mind and soul were not satisfied with "mere" breathing practices and meditation techniques imparted at the monastery. Petals of knowledge revealed. In a state of haughtiness, the Zen student arrived at another temple of knowledge where he remarked, rather dramatically that, "The human mind, Sakya Muni Buddha and other sentient beings, in reality do not exist." The pontiff of the monastery was silently listening to the outburst but uttered nothing for a while. And then abruptly and quite unexpectedly he whacked the tutee with his prized bamboo pipe which angered the student. The Zen Master compassionately inquired of the tutee that if nothing existed, from where did his bout of anger and arrogance emerge? The mentee was momentarily nonplussed and then fell at the feet of the Zen Master, begging for forgiveness. A hollow and empty mind. The percipient Master agreed to admit the whippersnapper but with a few stipulations. It was incumbent upon the greenhorn to remember the cardinal principle of trying to keep the mind hollow and empty. Lord Krishna's flute. There is an interesting parable about Lord Krishna and his flute. It is believed that he used to visit a garden and whisper, "I love you" to all the flora and fauna. In unison, the flora and fauna reciprocated their unalloyed and unadulterated affection towards Lord Krishna. It so transpired that one day, an animated Lord Krishna approached a bamboo tree in the garden. The Lord broke the cataclysmic news that



he would have to snuff out the life of the bamboo plant. The entire garden was agast as the news spread; several plants and trees were however secretly joyous that they were spared of the torture. The bamboo mulled upon the news for a while and then languidly responded, "Lord, you and I have no choice. At the altar of the Master of the Universe, I am willing to sacrifice my life." Hearing this, Lord Krishna beamed. With surgical precision, he struck the bamboo plant. Soon the bamboo was fashioned into a flute for Lord Krishna himself. The flora and fauna, all the gopis and gopikas were now covetous of the bamboo, that in its new avatar it would always be inseparable, constantly in the hands of Lord Krishna.

The exultant bamboo flute was to become a triumphant possession of Lord Krishna. "What was so noteworthy about you, that you were the chosen one?" was an incessant refrain faced by the flute. "Nothing but my singular capitulation to will of the Master; willing to be an instrument of the Lord," was the refrain of the flute. The classical epic Mahabharata is populated with numerous valorous characters. But the ace archer Arjuna stands out prominently. Why is that so? Arjuna is the Sakha, the Nara through whom Narayana revealed the divine celestial song - The Bhagavad Gita. It was Arjuna's unflinching devotion to the Lord that made the character so robust and aerobicized. He faithfully carried out all the commandments of the Lord. Only inner strength and a mature mind transfigure an individual to establish contact with the source of our inner energy.

This is possible through the process of authentic surrender. Breathing techniques like Sudarshan Kriya help to make the mind hollow and empty. "A mature mind is one who understands the impossibility of knowing the ultimate, and with this understanding there is a new dimension, the dimension of the being," said the philosopher, Osho.

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

New world order: Is Western hegemony crumbling



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

In an unprecedented joint public appearance, CIA Director William Burns and MI6 Chief Richard Moore assert the enduring strength of their intelligence agencies

Last week, the heads of major Western intelligence agencies made a striking public appearance, first with a provocative op-ed and then in a high-profile interview with the Financial Times editor. Although some questions remained unanswered, their statements provided critical insights into their covert and overt operations. William Joseph Burns, Director of the CIA, and Richard Peter Moore, head of MI6/SIS, both distinguished diplomats before their current roles, asserted with conviction that their organisations are more formidable than ever. Their strong professional alliance highlights a key strategy: confronting their main adversaries, Russia and China. This unprecedented public engagement reflects Sun Tzu's strategic principle from The Art of War: "Appear weak when you are strong, and strong when you are weak." So, who is truly weak? Is this a perfect example of Orwellian doublespeak in the era of Artificial General Intelligence? The nuances of their statements suggest an intriguing answer when read between the lines.

This marks the first joint public appearance by Burns and Moore since their appointments, though separately they have spoken occasionally in public gatherings, signalling a departure from the traditionally more secretive approach of their predecessors. This dramatic 'openness' may be part of a broader strategy to project strength and capability in a shifting global power dynamic. Their commentary suggests that Western hegemony is waning, and those within the system must awaken and confront Russia before China is brought into the strategic equation, challenging the rise of Asia and the Global South. The article's audacious claim, if accurate, that "We have no more trusted or esteemed allies," starkly reveals the widening chasm among their partners.

This intensifying polarization is driven by rising discontent with the United States and the United Kingdom, whose actions have exacerbated global crises and dragged others into worsening conflicts. Burns and Moore emphasised the crucial role of transparency in the 21st century and democratic systems, noting that public engagement is key to demonstrating their agencies' priorities and building trust.

Burns highlighted the importance of visibility for attracting talent and enhancing public understanding of their work. The discussion also revealed the deep collaboration between their agencies, which has been instrumental in global events, such as providing early warnings about the war in Ukraine. Moore praised their joint efforts and the "best athlete model," where the most suitable agency handles specific operations, showcasing a high level of trust and effectiveness. They also addressed broader geopolitical issues, noting the threat posed by the cooperation among China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. While these nations share military technology, their collaboration is described as pragmatic rather than value-based, unlike the alliances within the Western intelligence community. Burns and Moore mentioned the lack of direct evidence of weapon transfers from China to Russia and the stalled status of the gas pipeline from Russia to China, attributing its likely incompletion to sanctions and shifting geopolitical factors.

However, they offered no new information on the widely reported Nord Stream pipeline sabotage, where it was suggested the CIA had prior knowledge. Regarding the increasing military cooperation between Russia and



THIS INTENSIFYING POLARISATION IS DRIVEN BY RISING DISCONTENT WITH THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM, WHOSE ACTIONS HAVE EXACERBATED GLOBAL CRISES AND DRAGGED OTHERS INTO WORSENING CONFLICTS

North Korea, including the use of North Korean missiles in Ukraine, both spies recognised the heightened threat to US allies in Asia. Moore highlighted the gravity of the situation, stating, "North Korean weaponry and dual-use materials from China are already impacting the battlefield in Ukraine, and this cooperation poses a significant danger." Both leaders also stressed the critical importance of ongoing support for Ukraine, with Burns noting the severe and methodical nature of the conflict, where "Putin is using a traditional tactic of taking village by village, leaving nothing behind."

Despite the grim outlook, the resilience of the Ukrainian forces remains a focal point. Moore lauded Ukraine's bold strategy, such as the move into Kursk, as a game-changer. He remarked, "The Ukrainians, by going in and taking Kursk, have really brought the war home to ordinary Russians," disrupting Putin's narrative and demonstrating the effectiveness of their counteroffensive. Addressing the broader implications of the conflict, Burns acknowledged that while Putin's grip on power remains firm, it is not necessarily stable. "Putin's grip on power doesn't seem to be weakening, but don't ever confuse a tight grip with a stable grip," he stated. The recent Kursk offensive and past events, such as the Prigozhin mutiny, have exposed vulnerabilities within Russia, challenging Putin's confident narrative. Burns and Moore discussed the differing approaches of the US and UK in providing military aid to Ukraine. Burns reaffirmed the US's substantial support despite concerns over escalation, emphasising the ongoing commitment to Ukraine even amid Russia's nuclear threats. Moore echoed this, stressing that the West must not be intimidated. They also addressed Russia's intelligence operations in Europe, noting a shift toward using criminal elements for sabotage,

which has made these operations easier to detect.

The discussion also highlighted the threat of Russian intelligence, citing the 2018 Salisbury poisoning as a stark example of their reckless tactics. Moore emphasised the importance of dealing with such threats through intelligence sharing and collaboration. They also touched on Russian military intelligence activities in the Americas, particularly concerns about Russian agents operating in Mexico and potentially aiding illegal migration into the US. Burns assured that this issue remains a top priority, with law enforcement agencies closely monitoring and countering such threats. Burns updated on efforts to secure a ceasefire and hostage deal in Gaza, based on a three-phase plan proposed by President Biden: ceasefire, hostage release, and reconstruction. Despite progress, finalising the deal remains challenging, requiring strong political will and mediator support.

He hopes new proposals will drive action, with both leaders urging external pressure on Hamas for humanitarian aid and peace. Burns also backed the two-state solution but no questions were raised about the US's double standards—hosting ICC-wanted Benjamin Netanyahu while pushing other nations to arrest Putin on an ICC warrant. This highlights the hypocrisy in the US approach to international justice. Regarding Iran, Moore expressed concern about potential retaliation for the assassination of Qasem Soleimani. "We shouldn't let our guard down regarding the type of activity Iran might pursue," he cautioned, citing Iran's history of destabilising actions and support for militant groups. But the overthrow of Mosaddegh, the shooting down of Iran Air Flight 655, and unilateral sanctions show the real picture. The discussion then shifted to the strategic challenge posed by China. Burns and Moore both underscored that China remains a top pri-

ority for their respective agencies.

"The CIA has reorganised to reflect this priority," Burns noted, highlighting a significant increase in resources dedicated to addressing China's challenges. Despite economic difficulties in China, Moore observed that Xi Jinping remains a powerful and ambitious leader, making understanding China crucial for global strategic dynamics. Burns and Moore discussed the transformative role of AI in intelligence operations, with Moore emphasising its use in data analysis and counterterrorism, while Burns stressed the importance of maintaining open channels with China. They highlighted the need to balance AI advancements with human oversight.

Their public appearance reflects a shift in Western strategy, focusing more on leadership than on traditional destabilisation tactics. With the US elections approaching, it is clear that a broader alliance is working to secure Vice President Kamala Harris's victory against her main contender, Donald Trump. In his book, The Back Channel, Burns comments on Trump, stating, "In the age of Trump, America is diminished, the president's worldview smaller and meaner, the world full of difficult currents." The entire discussion highlights how the absence of decisive political leadership is not only eroding the system but also accelerating the West's decline. This decline follows decades of destabilizing nations in the Global South and Europe to maintain hegemony, which is now cracking. This situation goes beyond the simplistic notion of new adversaries emerging against the West. It signifies a profound awakening from the deep-seated colonial legacies that have long influenced many Asian, African, and Latin American countries. Consequently, the old mantra of manipulation, isolation, and elimination may no longer work.

(The writer is a journalist and author; Views are personal)

Crime against women: A call for swift justice and comprehensive reform

Safety of women remains a fundamental concern worldwide, with millions of women falling victim to the horrific crimes of rape and abuse each day

Safety is a fundamental concern worldwide, with the pervasive issues of rape and abuse affecting millions of women and girls daily. These heinous crimes have a profound impact, extending beyond the individual victims to disrupt families, communities, and societies at large. The consequences are not just physical or emotional but are also societal, leaving lasting scars that undermine trust and cohesion.



VIKAS TIWARI

At the core of rape and abuse lies a complex web of societal attitudes and deeply ingrained power imbalances. Often, perpetrators use these crimes as tools of control, asserting dominance over their victims. The devastating consequences of rape range from physical injury to emotional trauma,

social isolation, and even death. The psychological damage endured by survivors is difficult to quantify, and the ripple effects on society are immense. A recent case that shook the conscience of the nation was the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Hospital, Kolkata. This brutal crime recalled the infamous

Nirbhaya case, igniting nationwide outrage. Yet again, it posed a critical question to both the central and state governments: Is the judicial system adequately addressing crimes against women? Are victims truly receiving the justice they seek?

Another notorious example is the 1992 Ajmer gang rape and blackmail scandal, where over 100 girls were blackmailed with obscene photographs, many subjected to gang rape. Justice, in this case, was only served 32 years later, with six accused sentenced to life imprisonment and fined ₹5 lakh each. This shocking delay once again raises concerns about whether the Indian legal system is equipped to tackle cases of sexual violence effectively.

India, with its population of 1.5 billion, has over 750 fast-track courts designed to expedite justice. Yet, cases like the Ajmer gang rape, Nirbhaya, Unnao, and Balrampur drag on for decades. The slow pace of justice signifies a collective failure of the government and law enforcement agencies in a country that claims to be the world's largest democracy. This begs the question: Do we need a judicial overhaul to ensure timely justice for victims of sexual violence?

The global landscape shows a diverse range of approaches to preventing violence against women. The UK, for instance, has recently passed a bill recognizing violence against women as a national security threat, equating it with Islamist terrorism. Several European



countries, such as Denmark, Iceland, and Switzerland, have adopted stringent laws under the umbrella of 'Zero Tolerance' policies, which even include the death penalty for those convicted of sexual violence. These examples offer potential models for India to consider as it grapples with its own crisis of gender-based violence. Preventing rape and abuse

requires a multifaceted approach, one that addresses the root causes of these crimes. Education and awareness programs about consent, healthy relationships, and respect are essential starting points. Engaging communities, especially involving men and boys in discussions around women's safety, can help shift societal attitudes and reduce the prevalence of such crimes.

Equally important is providing accessible support services for survivors, such as counseling and legal aid. These services are vital for helping victims heal and pursue justice. Policy reforms aimed at strengthening laws to protect women and ensure swift accountability for perpetrators are also crucial. Empowering women and girls plays a critical role in prevent-

ing rape and abuse. This can be done by promoting economic independence, which helps reduce vulnerability to violence, and fostering safe spaces where women can report incidents without fear. Encouraging survivors to speak out against violence can help break the silence that often surrounds these crimes, lifting the stigma and encouraging others to come forward. In today's digital age, technology can also play a pivotal role in enhancing women's safety. Innovative tools such as safety apps, which allow women to alert family or friends in emergencies, and online support platforms for survivors offer new avenues for protection and support.

Data analytics can help identify patterns and hotspots of

violence, enabling authorities to target prevention efforts more effectively.

Ultimately, women's safety is a collective responsibility. It demands the involvement of individuals, communities, organizations, and governments. By addressing the root causes of rape and abuse and implementing solutions at various levels, we can create a society where women and girls live free from the fear of violence. It is time for decisive action. The protection of women should not be seen as an afterthought but as a fundamental pillar of societal well-being. Only by working together can we create a safer, more equitable world for all.

(The writer is a social worker and a RTI Activist; views expressed are personal)

IN BRIEF



CCI selects MDIS to conduct mkt study on AI

Fair trade watchdog CCI has selected the Management Development Institute Society (MDIS) to conduct a market study on artificial intelligence and competition that will examine various aspects, including potential competition issues in the AI ecosystems. In April this year, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) had issued a request for proposal to conduct the market study on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Competition. The Gurugram-based MDIS has been engaged to conduct the study that will seek to understand certain key AI ecosystems, including stakeholders, resources, value chains, market structures and parameters of competition, CCI said in a release on Friday. It will also examine the emerging and potential competition issues in these markets/ecosystems as well as look at the scope and nature of AI applications/use cases, and assess associated opportunities, risks and ramifications from a competition standpoint.



Moneyboxx Finance raises Rs 176 crore

Moneyboxx Finance, a NBFC providing business loans to micro entrepreneurs, on Friday said it raised Rs 176 crore to support growth plans. In a filing to BSE, the company announced the allotment of equity shares and warrants convertible to equity amounting to Rs 176 crore. The capital raise includes Rs 63 crore via preferential equity issue and Rs 113 crore via equity warrants from both promoters and non-promoters. The company has received Rs 91 crore, which includes Rs 63 crore from preferential equity issue and Rs 28 crore from warrants, and the balance Rs 85 crore pursuant to warrants is receivable within 18 months, Moneyboxx Finance said. The net worth of the company stood at Rs 174 crore as on June 30, 2024, which has increased by over 50 per cent by August 31, 2024 and will double with the total equity raise of Rs 176 crore, it said.



Western Carriers IPO subscribed 79% on 1st day

The initial public offer of logistics company Western Carriers (India) Ltd got subscribed 79 per cent on the first day of subscription on Friday. The Rs 493-crore initial share sale received bids for 1,64,59,269 shares against 2,08,68,467 shares on offer, as per NSE data. The Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) part received 1.41 times subscription while the quota for non-institutional investors got subscribed 38 per cent. Western Carriers (India) on Thursday said it has mobilised Rs 148 crore from anchor investors. The Kolkata-based company's initial public offering (IPO) is available for subscription in the price range of Rs 163 to Rs 172 per share. The IPO has a fresh issue of equity shares, aggregating up to Rs 400 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of up to 54 lakh equity shares worth Rs 93 crore, at the upper end of the price band by promoter Rajendra Sethia. Proceeds from the fresh issue to the tune of Rs 163.5 crore will be used for debt payment and the remaining funds towards general corporate purposes.

MORE MEDICAL INSURERS JOINING PLATFORM

NHCX gains momentum

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The National Health Claims Exchange (NHCX) platform, introduced by the National Health Authority, is gaining traction among Indian health insurers, offering various benefits to insurers, healthcare providers and patients.

This digital platform aims to enable patients to access quality healthcare quickly and reduce out-of-pocket expenses.

NHCX connects insurance companies, healthcare service providers, and government insurance scheme administrators to streamline healthcare access and claims.

Officials said that leading insurers like Aditya Birla Health Insurance, Magma HDI General Insurance, Reliance General Insurance, Future Generali India Insurance and HDFC Ergo are joining the NHCX platform in their operations.

By leveraging this technology, insurers can significantly reduce claim processing time, improve operational efficiency, and enhance customer satisfaction, health insurance firms said.



claim processing. It also underscores IRDAI's commitment to expanding insurance coverage and accessibility nationwide," said Mayank Bathwal, CEO of Aditya Birla Health Insurance.

It will enable the company to streamline the claims process, reduce administrative costs, and provide a better experience for the customers, he said.

"I think the National Health Claims Exchange is a fantastic idea by the regulator.

IRDAI's primary focus has been affordability, accessibility and customer-centricity. The regulator believes that if the industry has to grow well then it has to create an enabling environment and a regulatory interface where the insurers are able to quickly react to whatever changes are happening in the market," said Anup Rau, MD & CEO of Future Generali India Insurance.

The adoption of NHCX is a positive development for the Indian healthcare industry.

"As more insurers join the platform, we can expect further improvements in the efficiency and transparency of healthcare claims processing," a company official said.

"The NHCX platform, designed to streamline and expedite the claims process, represents a significant advancement in the insurance sector. We believe it will play a significant role in furthering the insurance movement in the country. It testifies to our belief that technology can provide impetus to India's insurance sector," Magma HDI Chief Technical Officer Amit Bhandari said.



Call to encourage youth in agriculture sector

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Governor Haribhau Bagde on Friday stressed promoting research in agricultural universities and encouraging entrepreneurial development in the sector.

Bagde attended the event of the 12th foundation day of Karna Narendra Agricultural University of Jobner. During his address, he said that more steps should be taken in the interest of farmers by teaching them to do the work of production, grading and packing at home.

He also stressed on maximum dissemination of beneficial schemes of the central and state governments to be implemented for the benefit of the farmers. Bagde said that everyone should make a collective

effort to conserve rainwater. This is the era of climate change and the agriculture sector is too facing crisis.

"We can develop the nation only by planting more saplings and adopting natural farming," he said.

He further emphasized motivating the youth towards farming and entrepreneurial development in the agricultural sector.

Rajasthan Kisan Aayog Chairman C.R. Chaudhary and MP Rao Rajendra Singh also attended the event. The Governor interacted with the students and saw the exhibition of agricultural animal husbandry products. He also inaugurated the building of the university's Dairy and Technology College.

Warivo forays into high-speed e-scooter segment; eyes Rs 120 cr topline in FY25

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Electric two-wheeler startup Warivo Motor India is looking to nearly double its topline to around Rs 120 crore this fiscal on the back of its entry into high-speed electric-scooter segment, according to top company officials.

The company, which has been present in low-speed (top speed of up to 25 kmph) so far, on Friday launched its high-speed scooter CRX with price starting at Rs 79,999 (ex-showroom).

"Earlier, we were in the low-speed electric scooters segment. Now with the CRX, we are getting into the high-speed segment which will help us get more volumes," Warivo Motor India CEO Shammie Sharma said.

While the CRX has been positioned in the mid-segment of high-speed scooters, the company is planning a bridge product between the low-speed and high-speed

looking at Rs 120 crore, up from Rs 62 crore in FY24."

The company, which has a manufacturing unit at Ellenabad in Haryana has a production capacity of 600 units a day.

In terms of sales, Sharma said the company has been averaging around 2,000 units per month from its low-speed scooters.



Food Ministry inks pact with FCI to boost grain output

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The food ministry has signed an agreement with the state-run Food Corporation of India (FCI) for the 2024-25 fiscal year, aiming to enhance efficiency and accountability in foodgrain procurement and distribution.

The MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) sets specific performance benchmarks, including metrics for FCI depots, and outlines accountability measures to optimise public fund usage in food security operations.

"Depot efficiency parameters like capacity utilization, operational losses, security measures, and modernisation of processes are part of the performance benchmarking," the ministry said in a statement. This initiative underscores the government's commitment to refining the Public Distribution System (PDS) and ensuring efficient management of food subsidy funds through improved FCI operations.

Ford: Preparing to use Chennai manufacturing plant for exports

PNS ■ CHENNAI

American auto major Ford Motor on Friday said it is preparing to utilise its Chennai manufacturing plant to roll out vehicles for exports and has intimated the same to the Tamil Nadu government.

Minister for TRB Rajaa, who is in the United States accompanying the Chief Minister M K Stalin to woo investors, said the efforts of the Chief Minister to reposition 'Brand Tamil Nadu' in its Numero Uno place has yielded rich dividends.

The comments by Rajaa follows the decision by the US car maker Ford which earlier in the day said that it was preparing to utilise its Chennai manufacturing plant in Maraimalai Nagar to roll out vehicles for exports and has intimated its intention to the state government through a 'Letter of Intent'.

"A year of constant interactions and consistent pitches under the guidance of our CM Tamil Nadu M K Stalin have today resulted in the return of Ford Motor



Company to Tamil Nadu," Rajaa said.

"Our CM's efforts to showcase TN's manufacturing prowess, its abundant talent pool and the efforts he has taken to reposition Brand Tamil Nadu in its rightful Numero Uno place has yielded rich dividends," he said in a social media post on Friday.

Rajaa also shared a video of his earlier visit to the factory of Ford in the United States where the car maker produces F150 at its Dearborn Manufacturing unit.

Recently, Chief Minister Stalin met the senior management of Ford Motor Company and said he had an engaging dis-

cussion with the team from Ford Motors and explored the feasibility of renewing Ford's three decade partnership with Tamil Nadu.

Earlier today, Ford said it has submitted a Letter of Intent to the Tamil Nadu government, indicating its intention to utilize the Chennai plant in Maraimalai Nagar in Chengalpattu district, located about 45 km from here, to serve overseas markets. The company had stopped manufacturing of its products in September 2021, after nearly three decades, and said it would sell only imported vehicles going ahead as part of the restructuring exercise.

TN CM Stalin concludes two-week US tour

Govt signs pacts worth over Rs 7,000 crore

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government on Friday said it has signed an MoU with US-headquartered Rapid Global Business Solutions, Inc, a supplier of business solutions across various industries, and the firm would set up a new unit in the state by investing Rs 100 crore.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Chief Minister M K Stalin in Chicago on September 12 between officials of the state and the company, represented by its Chairman and CEO Nanua Singh and others, an official

release here said, adding the new electronic and telematics firm would come up at Hosur.

Industries Minister TRB Rajaa and top state officials were present.

In total, the state government has inked pacts totally worth Rs 7,616 crore with 18 companies during the Chief Minister's official US tour to attract

investments. Stalin, who embarked on his US tour on August 27, completed his trip and departed from Chicago to Chennai on September 12 following a warm send-off by the Tamil diaspora.

In a post on Goodbye, USA! The CM is scheduled to land in Chennai on Saturday morning.

Stalin, also the ruling DMK's chief writing to his party cadres said the Dravidian model of government has been putting into action the government's ideal of making Tamil Nadu the first destination of investors and the investment commitments secured in the US would provide employment opportunities to the young people.

Recalling his interaction with the Tamil diaspora in Chicago on September 7, he said they did not fail to laud the momentous schemes of the DMK government during the past three years.



Markets take a breather after record rally; settle marginally lower in volatile trade

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty took a breather on Friday after a record rally in the previous session and ended marginally lower on the emergence of profit-taking.

In a volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell by 71.77 points or 0.09 per cent to close at 82,890.94. During the day, it dived 309.49 points or 0.37 per cent to 82,653.22.

The NSE Nifty dropped 32.40 points or 0.13 per cent to 25,356.50.

Adani Ports was the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, declining 1.37 per cent, followed by ITC, Bharti Airtel, NTPC, Maruti, Asian Paints, Sun Pharma, Power Grid, Hindustan Unilever and Larsen & Toubro.

In contrast, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, IndusInd Bank, Tata Steel, Axis Bank and Tech Mahindra were among the gainers.

In Asian markets, Tokyo and

Shanghai settled lower, while Seoul and Hong Kong ended in positive territory.

"The market took a breather and ended on a flat note after the previous day's sharp uptick. Despite domestic CPI inflation being within the RBI's target band, the increase in food prices may influence the central bank to remain prudent on rates.

"Higher liquidity from FIIs to the domestic market and a slide in US 10-year yield increased the prospects of the FED rate cut, which will aid domestic sentiment," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Retail inflation in August inched up to 3.65 per cent, though vegetables and pulses witnessed price rise in double digits, according to official data released on Thursday.

The retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), however, remained below the Reserve Bank's median target of 4 per cent for the second month in a row.



Fire-resistant upholstery fabrics mooted

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has introduced stringent regulations mandating the use of fire-resistant upholstery fabrics in non-domestic furniture, a move expected to improve public safety with respect to fire-related tragedies.

Effective from October, the Quality Control Order (QCO) now requires all upholstery components used at public spaces to comply with the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) norms.

The QCO applies to upholstered composites and fabrics used in non-domestic furniture found in public areas such as offices, malls, airports, restaurants, underground shopping complexes, museums, hospi-



tals, places of worship, and educational institutions.

The order is also applicable on all imports of complete furniture or sub-assemblies having upholstered fabric meant for public use, however relax-

ation till March 31, 2025 has been provided on the request of industry.

"This decisive action underscores the government's commitment to enhancing fire safety in public spaces and

ensuring that all non-domestic furniture meets the highest standards of quality and safety, thereby safeguarding lives and property," an official statement by the Ministry of Textiles said.

QCOs are part of the government's broader strategy to ensure quality and safety in critical products.

"While BIS certification is voluntary for many products, compliance with these standards for strategic items like fire-retardant upholstery is now compulsory. This regulation is a significant step towards creating safer public spaces and ensuring that the furniture used in these environments meets the highest safety standards," the statement said.

Focus on being a future ready company: RITES

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

RITES Ltd, an infrastructure, consultancy and engineering firm under the Railway Ministry, has focussed on being a future ready firm with several initiatives centred around information technology and artificial intelligence, Rahul Mithal, the Chairman and Managing Director of the company said in a press statement.

According to the statement, in the 50th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the company held on September 12, Mithal said that over the past five decades, RITES has grown from humble beginnings to being granted the prestigious

Navratna status this financial year, committed to delivering consistent results and creating value for stakeholders.

"With our focus on being Future Ready, RITES has vigorously pursued its #ITReady, #SkillReady, and #AIRReady initiatives," Mithal added.

"During the AGM, the shareholders approved resolutions such as the adoption of Audited Financial Statements of the company, 1:1 Bonus Equity Share for shareholders and Rs 5/share as a final dividend for FY2023-24," it said.

"This is in addition to the three interim dividends totalling Rs 13 per share, which have already been paid during the year.

KAREENA CANCELS THE BUCKINGHAM MURDERS PROMOTIONS FOR BFFS MALAIKA & AMRITA

Kareena Kapoor's latest mysterious thriller, *The Buckingham Murders*, has been released in theatres to rave reviews. However, fans also commended Kareena for her sensitivity, aside from her acting in the movie. You may have heard about the sudden death of Malaika and Amrita Arora's father that shocked the entire Bollywood industry! A lot of celebrities such as Arbaaz Khan and Arjun Kapoor, among the other celebrities, were present at Malaika's residence to express their grief, but Kareena, being the Arora sisters' BFF, grabbed eyeballs by cancelling the promotions for her newest movie. Kareena Kapoor, Malaika Arora and Amrita Arora are best friends and when Malaika's father passed away, Kareena decided to delay the promotions for her new movie in order to be there for her friend. According to reports, Kareena was set to be a special guest at an event at Lido Cinemas on Juhu Tara Road in Mumbai on September 12. However, the event has now been postponed.



Fatima to play Yuvraj Singh's love interest in his biopic

Ever since the biopic on cricket sensation Yuvraj Singh's inspiring journey—from prodigy to World Cup hero to cancer survivor—was announced, everyone has been curious to know details on the same. However, the guessing game about the male lead is still on and speculations for the female lead are rife. Reports suggest that Fatima Sana Shaikh might be seen playing the cricketer's love interest in the film. As per an independent industry source, "The team is considering Fatima Sana Shaikh to play Yuvraj Singh's love interest in his biopic. Although not much has been heard from the actress or the makers about the same, the chances are strong that she might be seen playing a pivotal role in the film."



Huma Qureshi wraps *Bayaan!*

With Kareena Kapoor Khan and Deepika Padukone stepping into roles as police officers in their respective upcoming films, *The Buckingham Murders* and *Singham Again*, another powerhouse performer joins their ranks. Huma Qureshi, playing a detective named Roohi in *Bayaan*, leads the charge in Bikas Mishra's latest film set in the stark landscapes of Rajasthan. Roohi faces her first major case while grappling with familial expectations and a formidable adversary. Huma Qureshi, who recently wrapped the film, says, "Playing Roohi has been an incredible experience. This role allowed me to delve into the challenges of a cop who is constantly balancing the weight of familial expectations with the pressures of her profession. It's a journey that has left me richer." Qureshi has officially wrapped filming on the highly anticipated drama, marking the milestone with a celebratory post on Instagram. "An incredible journey, that would not have been possible without this incredible cast and crew. Thank you all," the post read. The film, supported by the International Film Festival Rotterdam's Hubert Bals Fund and developed through *Film Independent's Global Media Makers* program, is now entering post-production. Produced by Shiladitya Bora, Madhu Sharma, Kunal Kumar and Anshuman Singh, *Bayaan* also features Chandrachud Singh, Sachin Khedekar, Avijit Dutt and others in pivotal roles.

Cardi B welcomes her third baby

Cardi B revealed the birth of her third child with Offset shortly after their breakup, posting a touching Instagram photo on September 12. The rapper is seen in the photo carousel, smiling happily while holding her newborn baby in a hospital bed, dressed in a colorful robe. Images and clips show Offset, Cardi's separated husband, with their new pet. Even though they filed for divorce in July, the couple appears to have a good relationship as they celebrate the arrival of their new baby. Cardi expressed her delight in the caption, writing, "The prettiest lil thing 9/7/24." Cardi and Offset's family now includes another child, in addition to their son Wave (3) and daughter Kulture (6). The article also depicts the family of five in the hospital room, where Kulture sweetly embraces her new baby sister and Cardi looks lovingly at her two daughters.



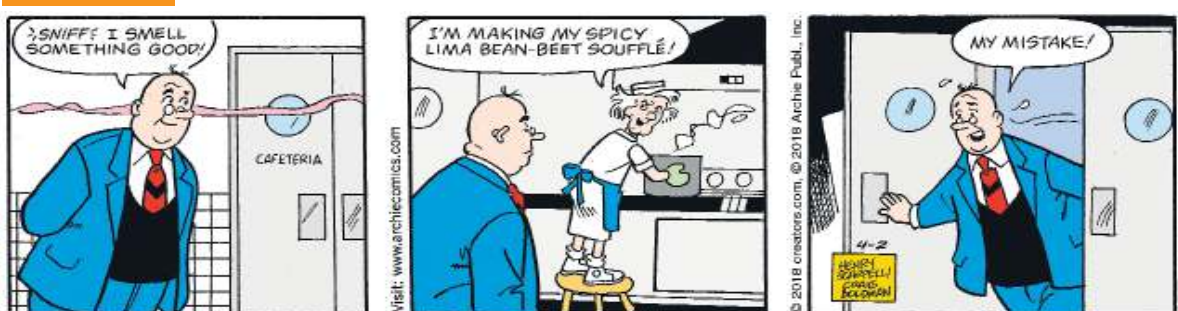
SOBHITA AS 'SITARA' BRINGS HEARTFELT FAMILY DRAMA

Love, *Sitara* is slice-of-life family drama with a lot of heart promises to peel back the layers of a seemingly perfect family, exposing the raw, messy truths that lie beneath. Produced by Ronnie Screwvala's RSVP Movies and directed by Vandana Kataria, *Love, Sitara* will exclusively premiere on ZEE5 on September 27. *Sitara*'s trailer teases a powerful blend of an emotional yet entertaining family saga on love, acceptance and forgiveness set against Kerala's lush landscape. The story centers on Tara (played by Sobhita Dhulipala), a fiercely independent interior designer and Arjun (played by Rajeev Siddhartha), a passionate chef on the brink of international success. Their seemingly perfect relationship faces a crucial test when unexpected situations prompt a spontaneous marriage proposal. As wedding preparations unfold in Tara's home, intergenerational conflicts and hidden truths begin to emerge. The preview teases shocking revelations that threaten to unravel not just the couple's future, but the entire family's foundation. *Love, Sitara* explores the complexities of modern relationships, the weight of family expectations, and the courage needed to face uncomfortable truths. As tensions escalate and secrets surface, viewers are left to question: can love truly overcome all obstacles, or are some wounds too deep to heal? Speaking of *Love, Sitara*, Sobhita Dhulipala said, "Playing *Sitara* has been a very meaningful journey for me, a coming-of-age in real life. *Sitara* is a character with interesting complexities—a successful interior designer attempting to understand the reasons for her own choices, her family dynamics and the patterns we inherit from family, unknowingly. What drew me to this role is that it's the story of a girl who finds the courage to shatter her conditioning and be honest to herself no matter what. She is a family girl at heart and will stand for what she believes in, even if it is not easy. There is something dignified, relatable and real in *Sitara*'s personality that all women connect to. We shot this sweet family drama in Kerala while navigating some very unique challenges during Covid lockdowns. I do hope this humble, heartfelt story moves you the way it moved the whole of our cast and crew."



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



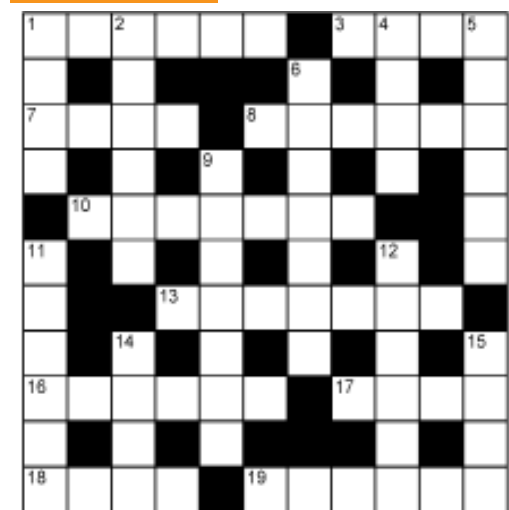
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

ACROSS

- A written communication
- Bathe
- Touch lips with someone
- Concealed
- A sale where people make bids for things
- Rocks in space that burn up when close to the Earth
- An animal with a shell
- Mix up with a spoon
- Very impolite
- A university award
- Repaired
- Refuse to follow an order
- Pointy part of a church roof
- A restaurant employee
- Author
- Poke with a finger
- Factual

DOWN

- Enjoy
- Very thin, soft paper
- Broad





Vijayawada

'I call myself more Hyderabadidi than Malayali'

AARTI SREENATH
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In a world that often rushes forward, forgetting to pause and appreciate the simpler joys, Sreeja Sreekumar found her way back to a slower rhythm through the delicate art of baking. A resident of Hyderabad for over 35 years, Sreeja Sreekumar, now the owner of Flavours Baked with Love, embarked on an unexpected journey from the fast-paced corporate world into the heartwarming, aromatic confines of her kitchen.

Born in Wayanad, a serene town nestled in the lush greenery of Kerala, Sreeja's journey to Hyderabad began when she was just a child. "I came to Hyderabad when I was a kid," she recalls with a smile. "I did my schooling, college, everything here. So, it's been over 35 years now and this city has become more than just home to me."

Her life in Hyderabad has been one of adaptation and transformation, shaped by the city's ever-evolving cosmopolitan spirit. "Hyderabad is such a cosmopolitan place. You find people from different states, speaking different languages, with different cultures. I call myself more a Hyderabadidi than a Malayali," she says proudly.

But before she became a full-time baker, she spent nearly two decades in the corporate world. "I worked with Airtel and a few other companies for almost 20 years," she reflects. "It was a good run, but at one point, I felt the need to do something different." Little did she know that her next chapter would be baked with love—quite literally.

It was a decision that required courage—quitting a stable corporate career for the uncertainties of entrepreneurship. "I took the leap of faith and decided to focus entirely on baking. It's been almost a year and a half now and I haven't looked back."

Hyderabad, she believes, played a key role in shaping her new career. "There's a lot of opportunity here to learn and grow. There are so many tutors and workshops available that teach the latest baking techniques," she says. "Also, since Hyderabad is so cosmopolitan, people are more inclined to try home-baked goods, especially because of the hygiene factor and the customisation we can offer, which is often missing in large bakeries."

Her journey wasn't just about learning new skills; it was also about the support she received from her family, particularly her son. A proud moment came when she was selected to attend a curated dinner by the famous judges of *MasterChef Australia*: Gary Mehigan, Matt Preston and George Calombaris. "When I got the call from the

In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, Sreeja Sreekumar, the passionate home baker behind Flavours Baked with Love, opens up about her remarkable journey from a corporate career to building a thriving bakery business in Hyderabad. Sreeja shares heartfelt stories of her transition, the city's role in shaping her dreams, and a once-in-a-lifetime encounter with *MasterChef Australia*'s Gary Mehigan.



Konosh team, I was so excited. They had a contest and I was one of the winners. I got to meet them at The Westin," she shares.

Her son, Swesh, played a crucial role in making this moment memorable. "He insisted that I should bake something for them. I was hesitant at first—they are such big chefs! But he encouraged me, so I baked brownies for them. "The result?" Gary had one of the brownies, and he gave such amazing feedback. He even took the box with him!" she beams. "It was an experience that I'll cherish forever."

But for her, baking is not just about creating delicious treats; it's about the connections she makes with people and the city she calls home. "Hyderabad is my city now. It's modern, with broad-minded people, and it has helped me grow both personally and professionally," she says. And despite its fast pace, Hyderabad's warmth stands out to her. "I've travelled to other cities for work, but nothing compares to the warmth here. People are so helpful—even an auto driver will ask you if you need help before you even ask."

Her fondest memories are tied to her family's visits from Kerala. "Whenever my cousins come down, we visit places like Golconda Fort and Falaknuma Palace. But my favourite spot is the Salar Jung Museum—I've been there five or six times and could go again."

Yet, like any city, Hyderabad isn't without its challenges. "The traffic is insane, especially around the high-tech city area. But other than that, there's nothing I don't love about this place," she admits.

As a woman who has seen the city evolve over decades, she is proud of Hyderabad's advancements, especially in healthcare. "I worked in the medical field before quitting, and I can say Hyderabad has some of the best hospitals around. The health infrastructure is excellent, with multi-specialty hospitals in every corner of the city," she says.

Her connection to Hyderabad runs deep, so much so that her relatives from Kerala always find an excuse to visit. "They love coming to Hyderabad. They can't get enough of Ramoji Film City and, of course, Biryani. No other biryani matches up to Hyderabadidi biryani," she laughs. "They always take a packet back home with them!"

If there's one thing that truly encapsulates her love for Hyderabad, it's the people. "This is one of the safest cities. You can walk around in the middle of the night and still feel safe," she says. "And the best part is the sense of community—people here are always ready to help."

As she looks toward the future, Sreeja is excited about continuing her journey as a baker in the city she now calls her own. "Hyderabad is the best city," she says with conviction. And with every bite of her delicious brownies, it's easy to taste the love she has for her craft—and for Hyderabad.

RAHUL BOSE ON BERLIN

PNS/HYDERABAD

In the world of cinema, it's often the subtleties—the unspoken moments and quiet tensions—that breathe life into a character. Rahul Bose, a master of navigating these spaces, has always been drawn to roles where the layers aren't instantly visible. His latest film, *Berlin*, is no exception.

"When I read the script, what attracted me the most was the interiority of the character and the film—the way everything isn't immediately obvious," Bose reflects. "It's a game played in shadows, and even the characterisation of Sondhi, the role I portray, follows the same path. As an actor, I've always loved working in those spaces between words, in the silences. That's what drew me in."

Bose's character, Sondhi, is a complex figure tough yet undisciplined, with a power that feels dissolute. To bring this vision to life, the actor undertook a physical transformation. "I wanted Sondhi to have that puffed-up look, like a tough guy who's slightly swollen. I put on three or four kilograms around my stomach to achieve that. And then there's the mustache," he adds with a laugh. "Atul and I agreed it suited him perfectly."

But it wasn't just the physical aspect that he worked on. He delved deep into Sondhi's dialect, intonation and accent, crafting a speech pattern distinct from his own. "It's subtle but consistent throughout the entire film," he notes, highlighting the care he takes in crafting a character's authenticity.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the shoot, according to Bose, was working with his co-stars Ishwak Singh and Aparshakti Khurana. He compares acting to a tennis match, explaining that "you raise your game based on what's in front of you. It's tough to maintain your level if the other actor doesn't have the required skill. But with Ishwak and Aparshakti, it was different. They have talent, intuition, and an inner rhythm. They understand the cadence of cinema."

He continues, "Acting in movies isn't something you can do alone. Both Ishwak and Aparshakti really understood this piece, and more than that, they're wonderful human beings. I had a fantastic time working with them." The camaraderie on set was palpable, and the *Dil Dhadakne Do* star speaks fondly of his time in Bhopal, where the crew spent several days shooting. "I discovered Bhopal while shooting *Berlin*," he shares. "After filming, I would go for runs around the city, experiencing its nights, lakes, and urban landscape. But what I truly enjoyed was working with Apar and Ishwak. There was zero ego, just trust, and that's a rare thing."

As Indian cinema continues to evolve, his optimism "If we have actors like Apar and Ishwak leading the way, the future is bright," he says, his belief in the next generation of talent clear.

With *Berlin*, Rahul Bose has once again stepped into a role that allows him to explore the nuances of human behaviour. It's in the silences, the shadows, and the carefully chosen words that he finds his groove, reminding us why he's one of the most respected actors in Indian cinema today.

Dream to reality:

Young entrepreneur changing business barriers!

IN A TETE-A-TETE WITH **THE PIONEER**, YOUNG BUSINESSWOMAN NIYATI TIWARI, FOUNDER OF TWO DYNAMIC FIRMS, TAKES US THROUGH HER HUMBLE BEGINNINGS, CHALLENGES AND MORE

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Who wouldn't have once dreamt of becoming their own boss? In fact, these days many wish to become the founder of a firm in their early 20s.

These days, youngsters, as soon as they hit their 20s, are on a quest to achieve their dreams and one among them is Niyati Tiwari. She isn't a founder of just one firm but two: an online fashion platform, Inaraa, and Niyati.ai, a free AI education platform.

The young talent gets on board for an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, who finds her inspiration in her father, Naveen Tiwari, who is the founder of Inmobi. "His influence had a great impact on me, which made me pursue entrepreneurship. Growing up in an entrepreneurial environment, I was constantly exposed to the idea that businesses can be powerful tools for societal change and that nothing is impossible. His journey has demonstrated to me the significance of creativity and how it influences the world. Since that time, I have developed a strong enthusiasm for merging culture, innovation and technology to enhance social impact to the fullest extent possible. With this, we can effectively expand on a large scale and reach a global audience from our country," shares Niyati.

She started her journey by receiving a solid education from two outstanding schools, Rishi Valley and The International School Bangalore (TISB),

which prioritised the holistic development of students. These schools encouraged her to delve into a wide range of interests, including our rich history and diverse culture, particularly in traditional tribal arts and artificial intelligence. In addition to her education, her parents, who are enthusiastic about technology, culture, innovation and the arts, have played a crucial role in influencing her entrepreneurial ambition and motivation. In the home environment, problem-solving and critical thinking have always been the focus when addressing challenges in ways that are beneficial to society. This attitude has been instilled in her since she was a child, inspiring her to go beyond her own achievements and concentrate on developing solutions that can result in significant changes.

She shares, "I have been focused on developing ventures. Both initiatives stem from my desire to make a meaningful impact, whether by empowering artisans who most need it or providing young people with the tools to help them succeed in a technology-driven world."

Well, the idea for Inaraa came from a deep appreciation for India's rich cultural heritage and a desire to make it more accessible and relevant to today's fashion landscape. "I have always been fascinated by the intricate artistry of tribal designs and the stories they tell, but I noticed that these traditional crafts were often confined to specific regions and communities, limiting their reach and impact. At the same time, fast fashion and e-commerce have been growing at an exponential rate. For me, sustainable fashion and preserving our cul-

ture complement each other. I wanted to bridge this gap by bringing these beautiful, often overlooked designs, handicrafts and artistry into the mainstream fashion industry. The idea was to create a platform where modern fashion could coexist with traditional art, allowing these designs to reach a broader audience while ensuring that the artisans behind them are fairly compensated and recognised for their work."

These values were instilled in her by her mother, Aditi, who left her prestigious job in the US to come back and serve the country. "She has shown me how different tribes live and work and their craft is not just a unique marker of their region but carries their cultural heritage and the stories of their villages. Inaraa is more than just a fashion platform; it is a celebration of India's diverse cultural heritage and a way to empower tribal artisans, particularly women, by giving them a sustainable source of income and a global stage to showcase their talent," Niyati added.

Nevertheless, the young entrepreneur did encounter numerous obstacles. Gaining the trust of tribal artisans and convincing them to collaborate on a platform combining traditional art with modern fashion was a major challenge. "These communities often have deep-rooted traditions and it was essential to approach them with respect and sensitivity, ensuring that their cultural heritage was preserved and not commercialised in a way that compromised its authenticity. Then, navigating the logistics of onboarding and distribution while ensuring that the artisans were paid fairly and promptly was



another challenge. Many of these artisans are located in remote areas, which makes communication and coordination more complex. It was crucial to establish a system that not only streamlined these processes but also maintained transparency and integrity throughout the supply chain. We regularly conduct workshops imparting digital literacy and skills in these tribal communities to ensure their independence and ability to use our platform."

Additionally, introducing traditional tribal designs to a modern global market requires careful thought and creativity. She had to find the right balance between preserving the essence of these designs and adapting them to fit contemporary fashion trends. This involved a lot of experimentation, feedback and iteration to create products that resonated with today's consumers while staying true to the original art forms. Despite these challenges, the journey has been incredibly rewarding. "Overcoming these obstacles has only strengthened my commitment to Inaraa's mission of empowering artisans and preserving India's rich cultural heritage through sustainable fashion."

In regards to Niyati.ai, a free AI education platform includes an app that aims to serve both users on the desktop and mobile to use the AI services served by the portal. It is basically a simplified eLearning portal, making AI tools available to students from all backgrounds. It

emphasises training, skill development and others.

"We also try to work with schools as teachers can help guide the students, while the platform encourages positive, community-focused projects. Regular assessments ensure students not only gain technical skills but also understand the ethical implications of their work, minimizing risks while maximising the benefits of AI education. Niyati.ai fosters a learning environment where students can share projects, exchange ideas, and work together on AI challenges. This not only enhances their learning experience but also builds a network of young innovators who are equipped to use AI responsibly. By promoting teamwork and creativity, the app helps students develop a deeper understanding of AI's potential while also cultivating the skills and mindset needed to contribute positively to society through technology," says Niyati.

In conclusion, Niyati shares her motivating advice for young students and peers keen on entrepreneurship: remain curious, persevere, and welcome challenges as opportunities to learn. "Surround yourself with helpful mentors and peers to receive guidance, and don't shy away from taking strategic risks. Entrepreneurship involves more than just building a profitable business; it also means having a beneficial influence on the local community and society as a whole," she signs off.

TEAM INDIA BEGINS PRACTICE IN CHENNAI FOR FIRST TEST AGAINST BANGLADESH

PTI ■ CHENNAI

It is back to business for Rohit Sharma's side following its much-deserved month-long break, as the team began its preparations in right earnest under new coach Gautam Gambhir here on Friday, for the upcoming two-Test series against Bangladesh. With the first Test against Bangladesh scheduled here from September 19, the entire squad, including Rohit and batting stalwart Virat Kohli, assembled at the MA Chidambaram Stadium with new bowling coach, South African great Morne Morkel, and batting coach Vikram Rathour also in attendance. BCCI posted images of the first day of practice and wrote, "The countdown starts as Team India begin their preps for an exciting home season." The images showed the entire squad listening attentively to Gambhir, his support staff and



skipper Rohit. Earlier, India skipper Rohit arrived in Chennai on Thursday, while Virat flew in directly from London for the opening Test. Wearing a yellow jersey, Rohit was seen emerging from the airport escorted by security

personnel, in a PTI Video on Thursday night, while Kohli came from London in an early-morning flight. The likes of India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, KL Rahul and wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant had earlier reached the city on Thursday.

The players are returning to the field after a much-needed break of more than a month and would look to put behind the disappointment of losing the ODI series against Sri Lanka in August and get back to winning ways quickly under Gambhir.

This will be India's first Test under Gambhir and his new support staff, and it would be interesting to see how Rohit's side approaches the game against a Bangladesh side, which is riding a wave following their 2-0 Test series win over Pakistan.

Vital World Test Championship (WTC) points are at stake in the two-match series as India get ready for a gruelling 10-match Test season, which also includes a three-Test series at home against New Zealand and the five-match Border-Gavaskar series later this year in Australia. India are currently heading the table with 68.52 percentage points, while Australia are a close second with 62.50 percentage points. Bangladesh have jumped to fourth spot with 45.83 percentage points following their 10-wicket win against Pakistan in the opening Test and their amazing fight-back in the second Test where wicketkeeper-batter Litton Das scored a century to singlehandedly guide the side to a series triumph. The second Test of the India-Bangladesh series will be played in Kanpur from September 27.



ACT hockey: Favourites India look to continue supremacy over Pakistan

PTI ■ HULUNBUIR (CHINA)

A semifinal berth already secured, unbeaten India will look to continue the winning run and supremacy over arch-rivals Pakistan in their last and most-awaited round-robin match of the Hero Asian Champions Trophy here on Saturday. With four wins out of as many games, defending champions India are leading the points table, followed closely by Pakistan. Starting the tournament as clear favourites, Paris Olympics bronze-medallists India haven't disappointed so far, beating hosts China 3-0, Japan 5-1, trouncing Malaysia 8-1 before registering a 3-1 victory against Korea in their last match. Pakistan, on the other hand, have been resilient in the campaign. Playing under the guidance of legendary forward Tahir Zaman, the Ammad Butt-led side has improved with every passing game. Pakistan drew 2-2 against Malaysia and Korea, before beating Japan and China 2-1 and 5-1 respectively to climb to the second spot. Going by recent results, India enjoy an upper-hand over Pakistan. In their last meeting at the Hangzhou Asian Games last year, India thrashed Pakistan 10-2. A few months before that, the Indians beat Pakistan 4-0 when the ACT was held in Chennai. At the Asia Cup in Jakarta in 2022, a relatively young Indian side held Pakistan to a 1-1 draw while at the 2021 ACT in Dhaka, India beat Pakistan 4-3 to clinch the bronze medal. India captain Harmanpreet

Singh, regarded as one of the best drag-flickers in the world, is continuing his good form from Paris, and is excited to resume the rivalry against Pakistan. "I have been playing with some of the players in the Pakistan team since my junior days and we share a special bond with them. They are like my brothers. Of course, on the field, we will go about the match like we would against any other opponent and make sure we keep our emotions in check," he said. "In world hockey, the rivalry the two teams share is unparalleled and I am sure fans across the globe will be waiting for an India-Pakistan match." Though India enjoys an edge over Pakistan, Harmanpreet is least bothered about past results. "Past results will not matter when we take on a team like Pakistan. They are a tough side and have the potential to bounce back at any stage in the game," he said. The Indians can also take heart from the fact that the team's young forward-line is living upto the expectations and scoring a lot of field goals, an area which was a bit of concern in Paris. Pakistan's skipper Butt is also confident about Saturday's contest and said his side has improved with each passing game. "India has undeniably played like true favourites in the tournament so far. We will take heart from the matches we have played, and I must say, we have improved in every single game, not conceded cards and have played disciplined hockey.



Agarwal, Pratham give India A edge after Devdutt makes 92 for India D in Duleep Trophy

PTI ■ ANANTAPUR

Half-centuries by skipper Mayank Agarwal and Pratham Singh helped India A reach 115 for one in their second innings and extend their hold over India D after second day's play of the Duleep Trophy here on Friday. India A, who made 290 in their first innings, earlier bowled out their opponents for 183 despite India batter Devdutt Padikkal's valiant 92 to gain a lead of 107 runs. Now, India A have an advantage of 222 runs, with Agarwal (56, 87b, 8x4) and Pratham (59 batting, 82b, 6x4) leading their run glut in the second innings. However, Agarwal, who is eager to chart his way back into selectorial reckoning, will be kicking himself for falling on the last ball of the day to part-time spinner Shreyas Iyer, spooning a simple return catch. But till that point, Agarwal and Pratham played fluently and executed some fluent drives and cuts as the run-rate never came under four. However, that's just one part of India A's story of domination on the day as earlier pacers Khaleel Ahmed and Aaqib Khan bagged three wickets apiece to rattle the India D line-up. Only one of their batters defied the constant challenge of judgement - Devdutt who stroked his way to a 124-ball

92 with 15 hits to the ropes. The Karnataka left-hander who made his Test debut earlier this year against England was particularly harsh on any offering on his pads or away from the off-stump. A century was there for his taking, but the 24-year-old fell just eight runs shy as his attempt to play a shot on the up off state-mate Prasidh Krishna ended up in a simple catch to stumper Kumar Kushagra. The 11-4-30-1 figures do not fall under the hallow-spell category, but for Prasidh it was important in his comeback journey. This was the pacer's first outing in competitive cricket since Karnataka's Ranji Trophy game against Gujarat in January this year. Since that match, the 28-year-old was recuperating from a quadriceps injury. Harshit Rana made a 31 off 29 balls, including two back-to-back sixes off left-arm spinner Shams Mulani, but his effort was not enough for India D to close the gap with their rivals. However, Rana can take a slice of comfort as he completed a four-wicket haul in the opening session of the day to bowl out India A for 290 in their first dig. India A were resuming from their overnight 288 for eight, but lost Mulani and Aaqib to Rana who ended up with 4 for 51.

Maxwell excited about Kohli vs Smith showdown in Border-Gavaskar Trophy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Australia all-rounder Glenn Maxwell is thrilled about the prospect of watching modern-day greats Virat Kohli and Steve Smith battle for supremacy in the Border Gavaskar Trophy against India later this year. Kohli and Smith are among the 'Fab Four' batters of the modern generation, alongside England's Joe Root and New Zealand's Kane Williamson. "I think the way that the two superstar batters, Steve Smith and Virat Kohli, probably head-to-head. Seeing how their dominance I suppose is asserted on the series and how much of an influence that has on who takes home the Border Gavaskar Trophy," Maxwell told Star Sports. "One of those two is going to



make a lot of runs, if not both of them, and it's going to be pretty exciting to watch the two of the finest players of our generation go head-to-head,"

he added. Both Kohli and Smith are former captains, and have indulged in fiery on field exchanges early in their careers but their relationship has evolved in recent times. Smith recently said that Kohli was an Australian amongst the Indian players in terms of attitude. "I believe Virat Kohli is Australian in thoughts and action. The way he gets into a battle, the way he gets into the challenge and tries to get on top of the opposition. He's probably the most Australian of the Indian players, I'd say," Smith had said. India travel to Australia for the marquee five-Test series, starting in Perth on November 22. Since 2014-15, Australia have failed to lay their hands on the Border Gavaskar Trophy, with India winning four consecutive series including the historic triumphs Down Under in 2018-19 and 2020-21.

Rafael Nadal withdraws from Laver Cup in Berlin

AP ■ BERLIN

Rafael Nadal withdrew Thursday from next week's Laver Cup in Berlin, leaving it unclear when the Spanish great will play again. The Laver Cup - the tournament where Roger Federer retired in 2022 after teaming up with Nadal in doubles - would have been Nadal's first event since the Paris Olympics and potentially one of his last ever. "I'm really disappointed to share that I won't be able to compete at the Laver Cup in Berlin next week," the 38-year-old Nadal said. "This is a team competition and to really support Team Europe, I need to do what's best for them and at this moment there are other players who can help the team deliver the win." The 22-time Grand Slam champion didn't address his current fitness after a spate of



injuries in recent years, or when he might play again. Nadal withdrew last month from the U.S. Open, meaning he missed three of the four Grand Slam tournaments in 2024. He last played in reaching the men's doubles quarterfinals at the Olympics, where he also lost in the second round of singles to Novak Djokovic. The Laver Cup, to be held from Sept. 20-22, is an indoor hard-court men's competition pitting Team Europe against Team World in a format reminiscent of golf's Ryder Cup.

Next test for Slot is navigating Liverpool's busy schedule amid Salah contract questions

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool has yet to allow a goal this season and Mohamed Salah has scored in each of the three games - all victories. If this is what contract distractions look like at Anfield, new manager Arne Slot is fine with it. Salah, captain Virgil van Dijk and right-back Trent Alexander-Arnold are all in the final year of their deals, and though it's still early in the Premier League season Liverpool is the only team keeping pace with defending champion Manchester City. Slot reiterated Friday at a press conference that "we don't talk about contract situations over here" - unless there's a new deal - and said the focus is on making it four wins in a row when Nottingham Forest visits Merseyside on Saturday. "I'm fully focused on the individuals and the team," he said about the trio in question, "and they are part of the team and trying to work with them in the best possible way to get the best out of them. So it's not a distraction for me at all." The transition from Jurgen Klopp has



been seamless. Slot is the first manager to win his first three Premier League games without conceding a goal since Sven-Göran Eriksson at Man City in 2007. "It's not the defense who keeps a clean sheet - it's 11 players who keep a clean sheet," Slot said. "We try to convince them constantly about this because in an ideal world we don't need (goalkeeper) Allison. It's a team performance that we don't concede and that has a lot to do

with us putting in a lot of work without the ball." The schedule gets busy now, though, with seven games in the next three weeks. Liverpool plays at Inter Milan on Tuesday in the Champions League. The international break saw lots of Liverpool players logging heavy minutes for their national teams. "Maybe in the future I sometimes would love it to be a bit different," Slot said. "It's a positive thing that we are in such a good place that we have 10 players that can play every minute for the national team. It says a lot about the quality we have." Salah marked his 100th cap for Egypt with a goal in a 4-0 victory over Botswana on Tuesday in an Africa Cup of Nations qualifier. In the Premier League this season, Salah is the only player to have scored three goals and provided three assists. Harvey Elliott will be sidelined for several weeks because of a foot fracture, which Slot said is "a blow" for both the team and the midfielder. "He would have had a lot of playing time in the upcoming fixtures," the manager said.

Verstappen faces challenge in Baku as Red Bull's F1 dominance under threat

AP ■ BAKU (AZERBAIJAN)

Lando Norris is only one of Max Verstappen's problems at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix. The other is his own car. Verstappen needs to tame a car he's called a "monster" to hold off Norris and defend his Formula 1 title, all while the Red Bull team's years of dominance in Formula 1 seem to be nearing their end. Verstappen and Red Bull haven't won any of the last six races going into the Azerbaijan Grand Prix on Sunday. Norris will now be favored by McLaren over teammate Oscar Piastri but will likely need some big slip-ups from Verstappen or Red Bull to overhaul the Dutch driver's 62-point lead in the last eight races of 2024. The target is much closer in the constructor's standings, with the McLaren team just eight points behind Red Bull, so that lead could change hands in Azerbaijan on Sunday. New rivals to Red Bull are emerging, powered by Red Bull expertise.

The departure of Red Bull's car design guru Adrian Newey to Aston Martin is a sign of the long-term ambition of a team backed by billionaire Lawrence Stroll. Dubbed "the team of the future" by driver Fernando Alonso, they have an eye on designing a car to exploit the new F1 regulations in 2026 - just like Newey did for Red Bull in 2022. Aston Martin has even signaled it would be open to signing Verstappen, who has a Red Bull contract through 2028. Another key lieutenant to Red Bull team principal Christian Horner, sporting director Jonathan Wheatley, is leaving at the end of the season before heading up the ambitious new Audi works team arriving in 2026. More immediately, there simply isn't much room to improve Red Bull's once-dominant car. McLaren and Mercedes seem to have more stable, adaptable designs. The car "was basically on rails and I could do whatever I wanted," enthused Verstappen after winning the Chinese Grand Prix in April, his



fourth in five races at the start of the season. Each upgrade seems to have made the car less stable and increased tire wear. "We basically went from a very dominant car to an undriveable car in the space of, what, six to eight months?" he said in Italy. Papaya rules' confusion The confirmation that McLaren will have a "bias" toward Lando Norris over his teammate Oscar Piastri from now on should boost Norris' title challenge. But key questions remain unanswered. Racing under the team's vaguely defined "papaya rules" - named for McLaren's orange color - at the Italian Grand Prix, Norris and Piastri started first and second but neither got the win. Piastri overtook Norris early on, allowing Ferrari's Charles Leclerc to get by too, and when Norris and Piastri competed to set fast lap times, it hurt their tires and let Leclerc take a win with smart strategy. What "papaya rules" meant was never fully explained, and the team's

"bias" is almost as mysterious. Norris suggested Thursday that Piastri would be expected to hand over "lower positions" but would keep a win if he was "deserving" of it. Would there be repeat of the scenes at the Hungarian Grand Prix, when a team one-two was marred by awkward radio pleas for Norris to hand the lead back to Piastri? Unclear. Youngsters in the spotlight British teenager Oliver Bearman is back on the grid with Haas in Baku after Kevin Magnussen was suspended one race for picking up too many penalty points in a series of different incidents. Bearman - who was seventh for Ferrari at the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix in March - is the Formula 2 teammate of Kimi Antonelli, who's replacing Another F2 face lighting up F1 is Franco Colapinto, who replaced Logan Sargeant at Williams last month and was an impressive 12th on his debut in Italy. If he can break into the top 10, Colapinto would be the first driver from Argentina to score points since 1982.

Mathu Vadalaru 2: Satya's one-liners take center stage!

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Many successful movies have sequels and now even a modest film like *Mathu Vadalaru* received one called *Mathu Vadalaru 2*. The lead actor in the movie is Sri Simha Koduri, who is the younger son of popular music director MM Keeravani. The music for the film is provided by Kaala Bhairava, the elder son of MM Keeravani. The movie is made by Cherry (Chiranjeevi), who belongs to the renowned production company Mythri Movie Makers. On Friday, the film also featuring Faria Abdullah premiered.

STORY:

Delivery boys Babu Mohan (played by Sri Simha) and Yesubabu (played by Satya) have been recruited as special agents in the High Emergency (HE) Team, specialising in handling kidnapping cases. These individuals gained recognition handling those cases while also stealing some money intended for the kidnapers. Babu, Yesubabu desired to handle a high-profile kidnapping case discreetly from their superior and aimed to earn a large sum of money from it. They have been faced with a kidnapping case and they are determined to handle it without outside help. They were close to solving the case, but to their surprise, the kidnapped girl was found murdered in the backseat of Babu and

Yesubabu's car. This made them the main individuals under suspicion in a murder investigation. A video has also been released identifying Babu and Yesu Babu as the main suspects. Who was the one responsible for killing that girl? What is the link between this murder investigation and actors Vennela Kishore and Ajay from the movie *Star Yuva*? The crux of the story is understanding exactly what occurred.

ANALYSIS:

The film by director Ritesh Rana relies heavily on comedic scenes. Focus solely on the comedy scenes, particularly the one-liners, and don't worry about the plot or logic of the film. Similar to its predecessor, *Mathu Vadalaru 2* relies heavily on comedian Satya and his comedic spoofs. In fact, Satya takes the lead role in this movie, while Sri Simha plays a supporting role. In part one, they were both delivery boys, but in this follow-up, they have transformed into special agents. The director briefly demonstrates how they enter the investigative agency.

Just as in the original, the main characters in this follow-up also desired to make some cash by engaging in criminal activities, leading them into trouble. The way they handle those difficulties is portrayed in a more humorous manner. In this sequel, the director focused more on memes than on the story, unlike in the first film. As stated previously, if you disregard the logic, the movie is enjoyable to watch once, especially with Satya's comedic performance.

The series of events continues in this fol-

REVIEW



low-up, but it is not as remarkable as the first installment. The initial part of the movie is full of humour, but the latter half fails to meet expectations. The director illustrates the resolution of the agents' issues, resulting in a significant reduction in the comedic element. Some scenes also moved slowly for too long. The sequences in the movie where Satya imitates Chiranjeevi are portrayed beautifully.

The outcome of the Vennela Kishore episode was disappointing. A scene featuring Vennela Kishore speaking with the media in the trailer does not appear in the movie. His personality has not been crafted correctly. In this sequel, they added Faria Abdullah's character as a senior agent, which she did relatively well. The story is completely predictable and has no surprises at all.

PERFORMANCES

Satya stands out for his performance with his dramatic acting and witty one-liners. At times, one might feel like he is exaggerating a bit, but the director has a lot of trust in him and he proved himself in his role. He

is without a doubt the standout in the movie. Next is Sri Simha, who has been with Satya since the start. He performed well. Another standout is definitely Faria Abdullah, who delivered a strong performance as a senior agent. Her character is included in the next installment and she proves her worth completely. In the latter part of the show, Vennela Kishore delivered the most comedic moments and gave a stellar performance. Ravathi appears in a different form in this movie, unlike her usual roles as a mother in other films. Ajay, Raja Chebolu, Sunil and the rest provided good support. The conversations are clever and enjoyable. The music by Kaala Bhairava is satisfactory. The cinematography is also commendable.

VERDICT

In conclusion, *Mathu Vadalaru 2* doesn't live up to the standards set by the original. Comedian Satya and his one-liners comedy take the spotlight. The movie provides some occasional laughs without any logical reasoning, making it a fun way to pass the time.

Actors: Sri Simha Koduri, Satya, Sunil, Faria Abdullah, Revathi, Vennela Kishore, Raja Chembolu, Ajay and others

Director: Ritesh Rana Cinematography: Suresh Sarangam

Music: Kaala Bhairava Producers: Chiranjeevi (Cherry), Hemalatha Pedamallu

Writer and director: Ritesh Rana Rating: 2.5/5

Bhale Unnade: Raj Tarun is back on track, but...

PNSHYDERABAD

Bhale Unnade marks Raj Tarun's third release in theatres. Despite releasing films regularly, he has not been able to sustain box-office success. *Bhale Unnade* is presented by renowned filmmaker Maruthi, which results in generating some intriguing elements. The promotional videos are showing promise as well, prompting curiosity about this film. Kannada actress Manisha Kandkur is starring as the main female character for the first time in this movie.

STORY:

Radha (played by Raj Tarun) works as a saree-draping professional and resides in Visakhapatnam with his mother Gauri (played by Abhirami). Despite being a saree-drafter, he is a kind and excellent individual who never makes physical contact with the girl while carrying out his job. Gauri is employed at a bank where Krishna (played by Manisha Kandkur) has recently started working as a new employee. During lunchtime at the bank, Gauri shared her lunch with Krishna, who was impressed by Radha's skillful cooking as she is also a talented chef. Krishna loves Radha without meeting her, and they exchanged letters through Gauri's lunch box. Krishna, a contemporary girl, attempts to seduce Radha on several occasions, but Radha consistently refrains from crossing any boundaries. Krishna's friend gets divorced right after their second day of marriage. Krishna is uncertain about Radha's suitability for marriage. Krishna accompanied Radha to a holistic healing center—what unfolded during their visit? What is the reason Radha always keeps a distance when he encounters a girl? The crux of the



Cast: Raj Tarun, Manisha Kandkur, Abhirami, VTV Ganesh, Hyper Aadhi, Goparaju Ramana, Srikanth Iyengar, Singeetham Srinivasa Rao, Leela Samson and others
Music: Sekhar Chandra **Cinematography:** Nagesh Banella
Producer: NV Kiran Kumar **Writer and director:** J Sivasai Vardhan
Release date: September 13, 2024 **Rating:** 2.5/5

story lies in what transpired at the conclusion.

ANALYSIS:

Director Sivasai Vardhan humorously conveyed a serious message in his narration. The main story revolves around the definition of a complete man, society's perception of him if he doesn't cross the line and the repercussions he faces. The director emphasised the definition of love between a girl and a boy and depicted its ending in a unique manner. When a girl tries to attract a boy and he does not respond, many assume he is at fault and criticise him. However, they never delve into the reasons behind the boy's actions and his reasons for not exceeding his boundaries.

This is the plot described by the director in *Bhale Unnade* featuring Raj Tarun as a decent guy and

Manisha as a contemporary girl portraying Krishna. The initial part of the movie presents information in a comical manner with minimal humor. The story commences with Raj Tarun recounting his tale alongside VTV Ganesh in a humorous manner. The way in which characters Radha and Krishna meet each other is depicted in an engaging manner. The feeling of maternal love is also expressed very well.

However, the movie takes a sudden dip in the second half when the focus of the story changes to a wildlife rehabilitation center. The scenes here feel contrived and lack intrigue. These episodes also tend to drag a bit and consist of typical masala jokes. The scenes featuring Singeetham Srinivasa Rao and Leela Samson are well executed, but they are overshadowed by the type of jokes seen in the second half, which are more in line

with Maruthi's style. Prior to the climax, the emotional bond between Radha and Krishna, the mother and son, is strong, yet the ending is predictable. Good job to the director for making a good point, but it

PERFORMANCES:

When it comes to the acting abilities, Raj Tarun stands out and delivers his performance with a subtle touch. Compared to his previous movies, this is Raj Tarun's best performance and subject-wise film. He definitely finds this movie to be a good one. Manisha Kandkur is newcomer, but she excelled in her first performance. She doesn't come across as a newcomer, performing like a seasoned actress. She has a promising career ahead in acting. Raj Tarun and Manisha have good chemistry in front of the camera. Abhirami landed a significant role and excelled in portraying a formidable single mother. Singeetham Srinivasa Rao, a highly experienced director, also excelled in his role as an actor. Hyper Aadhi, Sudharshan provides some moments of laughter for you. Srikanth Iyengar, Racha Ravi and Goparaju Ramana all performed admirably to the best of their abilities. The film features music by Sekhar Chandra, which is considered a standout aspect. The conversations are enjoyable. The cinematography is also excellent.

VERDICT

Finally, *Bhale Unnade* is one of the best films for Raj Tarun when compared to his recent films. He performed well along with the lead actress, Manisha. The point in this story is new, but it falls short in the second half. The director could have made it interesting if he concentrated more in the second half. But still, this film is watchable—a good one for Raj Tarun.

AARTI SREENATH
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PLOT:

Bench Life, directed by Manasa Sharma, is a witty, humorous exploration of life on the corporate sidelines, following three eccentric employees who find themselves on the 'bench'—a paid vacation of sorts for those not currently on active projects. The show delves into the lives of Balu (played by Vaibhav Reddy), the unmotivated yet lovable slacker; Meenakshi (played by Ritika Singh), the ambitious filmmaker stuck in the corporate grind and Ravi (played by Charan Peri), whose sole goal is to escape to Goa. As they navigate office politics and personal dilemmas, their interactions spark a delightful mix of comedy and heartwarming moments. Balu's unspoken love for a colleague, Meenakshi's creative struggles and Ravi's escapades bring the workplace to life in ways both amusing and relatable.

PERFORMANCE:

Vaibhav Reddy steals the show with his portrayal of Balu, effortlessly combining humour with just the right amount of vulnerability. His laid-back persona and zany antics make him a character you root for, even when he's up to no good. Ritika Singh is equally compelling, delivering a nuanced performance as Meenakshi, the dreamer who quietly rebels against corporate monotony. Charan Peri's character Ravi is the lovable but often irritating newlywed whose reckless pursuits add levity, though his character can at times feel frustrating. The real gem, however, is Rajendra Prasad as Prasad, a retired cop trying to reconnect with his daughter. His warmth and comedic timing give the show a deeper emotional layer.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The brilliance of *Bench Life* lies in its quirky exploration of workplace absurdities. From navigating clueless American bosses to the constant struggle to swipe in proxies for absent



Directed by: Manasa Sharma **Produced by:** Niharika Konidella

Cinematographer: Dhanush Bhaskar

Cast: Vaibhav Reddy, Ritika Singh, Charan Peri, Rajendra Prasad, Aakanksha Singh, Nayan Sarika, Tulasi

Streaming on: SonyLIV **Rating:** 3.5/5

friends, the series finds humour in the most mundane aspects of corporate life. The interactions between Prasad and his younger colleagues offer a delightful generational contrast, while Meenakshi's quiet defiance in chasing her filmmaking aspirations injects a layer of depth. Though some characters' arcs are more memorable than others, the chemistry among the lead trio is undeniable, keeping viewers hooked even when the plot dips into familiar territory.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS:

Manasa Sharma's direction is sharp, ensuring that the tone stays light and breezy, even when the show flirts with more serious themes. The series is visually appealing, with the cinematography skillfully capturing the energy of office life, from its claustrophobic cubicles to its fleeting moments of

escape. The score complements the whimsical vibe, though it occasionally feels heavy-handed when attempting to push emotional scenes. While the writing, shared by Manasa Sharma and Mahesh Uppala, tends to play it safe, the humor is punchy, and the workplace satire feels spot on.

VERDICT:

Bench Life is a fun, easy watch that highlights the absurdities of corporate life while keeping things light and laugh-filled. Despite a few clichés and the occasional dip into melodrama, the series succeeds in being a feel-good show with standout performances, especially from Vaibhav Reddy and Rajendra Prasad. For anyone who's ever found themselves daydreaming at their desk or plotting an escape to Goa, *Bench Life* is a must-watch.

NANI CONCENTRATES ON HIT 3, HERE & NOW

Actor Nani is pleased with how his latest movie *Saripodhaa Sanivaaram* turned out. The actor was heavily promoting that film until recently, but now is shifting focus to a different film. The actor is currently occupied filming his upcoming movie *Hit: The Third Case*. The third installment of the *Hit* movie series is helmed by Dr Sailesh Kolanu and funded by Prashanti Tipirneni. Similar to the previous two installments, this movie will also be an engaging crime thriller. A short promotional video featuring Nani as Arjun Sarkar in his role as a HIT officer was also recently released.

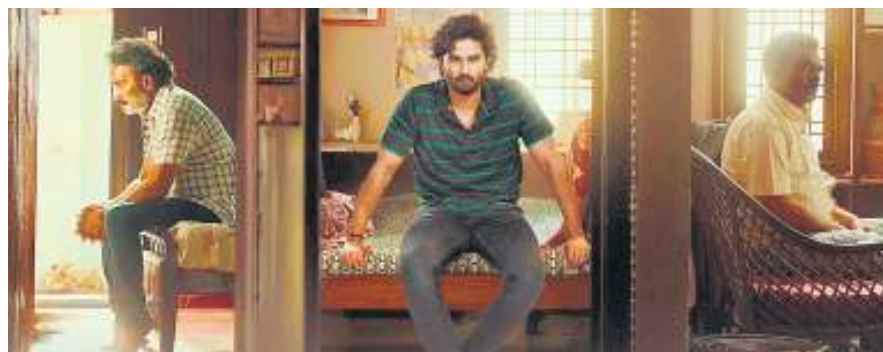
Currently, filming for this movie is happening at a location in Secunderabad. Nani, Rao Ramesh and several other actors are taking part in the filming, with the director capturing some crucial scenes featuring them. In *HIT 2*, he will

portray the character of Arjun Sarkar, an officer in the HIT team. His role in *Hit: The 3rd Case* as the Hunter's Command highlights his powerful and intense acting skills.

Nani gets a fresh new look for the film with experienced profession-



als handling various aspects of production. Sanu John Varghese works as the cinematographer, whereas Mickey J Meyer is responsible for the music. The movie *HIT 3* is set to premiere on May 1, 2025, during the summer season.



Preview for Sudheer Babu's upcoming movie looks good

Sudheer Babu, the actor, has commenced the promotion of his new movie *Maa Nanna Superhero*. Abhilash Reddy Kankara, a newcomer, serves as the director, while Sunil Balusu is the producer. The teaser came out on Thursday and appears to be full of promise and emotion. This long-awaited film is scheduled to be released during Dasara. This teaser displays Sudheer Babu's strong emotional bond with his father. He calls both Sayaji Shinde and Sai Chand his paternal figures. Although Sayaji Shinde's character is hostile towards Sudheer Babu, Sai Chand's character has a positive relationship with him.

"This is the most satisfying film in my career to date. Everybody will connect with the emotion of father and I

liked the subject when the director narrates to me. In the same manner, I completed this film with a lot of interest and liking. I hope everyone likes the film when it gets released," said Sudheer Babu at the teaser release event. He added that he loves his father very much. "My father gave me a very good life and he worked hard towards it. I can't tell how much I love my father in real life; sometimes I can't express it in words either. I love my father and in this film, the father-son relationship, love and bonding are narrated in a more emotional way," said Sudheer Babu about the film. He further praises the director, Abhilash Reddy and says that in the coming days he is going to be a big director. Film also stars Aartha, who is playing the female lead.

STANDALONE:

On the runway for designer Robert Naorem during the fifth iteration of Global India Couture Week, Urvashi Rautela sparkled. Leading designers showcased their collections at The Bristol to kick off the five-day premier fashion event, which was organised in association with the International Fashion Design Council. The first day of Global India Couture Week (GICW Season 4) featured a stunning array of creations from renowned designers, each of which added their own unique artistic touch to the catwalk.

