

Telangana voted seeing Sonia Gandhi's face and not Revanah Reddy's face. The people of Telangana didn't believe local Congress leaders. Sonia Gandhi, Rahul and Priyanka spoke sweetly in Telugu and made people, especially women, believe that they would get an allowance of Rs 2,500 per month. But now Rahul doesn't have the guts to visit Warangal
 — Kavitha, BRS MLC
 P3

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

PM Modi, French Prez Macron hold talks, agree to deepen ties

SIMPLIFIED INCOME TAX BILL BRINGS IN 'TAX YEAR' CONCEPT

Chiranjeevi lands in a CONTROVERSY

DON'T MISS...
 Shallow fog likely in Coastal AP

Shallow fog is likely to occur at isolated places in the morning in Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next three days. Meteorological Centre said on Wednesday. In a daily weather report here, it said that the maximum temperatures are likely to be above normal by 2-3 degrees Celsius in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next five days. Dry weather is likely to prevail in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next seven days. The lowest minimum temperature of 14 degrees Celsius was recorded at...

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RSS office has 3 13-storey towers

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has moved back its office in the city to its old address following the near completion of the rebuilding project spread across over 3.75 acre premises, housing three 13-storey towers and around 300 rooms and offices in total. Sources said the rebuilding exercise of the RSS office, Keshav Kunj, has cost nearly Rs 150 crore collected through contributions from over 75,000 people sympathetic to the Hindutva organisation's ideology and took over eight years, a...

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Investors' wealth erodes by Rs 18L cr

Investors suffered an erosion of Rs 18 lakh crore in six days of market fall, where the BSE benchmark Sensex tanked 3 per cent, amid continuous foreign fund outflows and trade war worries. The 30-share BSE Sensex, which had tanked more than 900 points intra-day, ended at 76,171.08, down by 122.52 points or 0.16 per cent following a recovery in bank stocks in the last hour. During the day, the benchmark tanked 905.21 points or 1.18 per cent to sink below the 76,000-level and hit a low of 75,388.39...

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India beats England, sweeps series 3-0

A robust batting show led by the Shubman Gill's attractive century heralded India's 142-run hammering of England in the third and final ODI as the hosts completed a dominant 3-0 clean sweep to culminate preparations for the Champions Trophy, here on Wednesday. India ticked all the remaining boxes with vice-captain Gill (112) following up his twin fifties earlier in the series with a seventh ODI ton of his career while middle-order mainstays Virat Kohli (52) and Shreyas Iyer (78) pushed India to a formidable...

-SPORTS



'Protecting devotees' sentiments my concern'

Happy that those responsible for Tirumala laddu adulteration were arrested: Dy CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan has expressed his deep concern over protecting the sentiments of devotees visiting the Tirumala temple. "Millions of devotees across the country have unwavering faith in Lord Balaji. They come to Tirumala with deep spirituality and trust and their sentiments should not be hurt," he said.

He expressed his disappointment over the recent laddu adulteration issue in Tirumala, and stressed the

need for measures to prevent such incidents in the future. Pawan Kalyan made these comments after visiting the Sri Agastya Maharshi Temple and Ashram in Chottanikkara, Kerala, as part of his personal pilgrimage across South India.

Speaking to the media, he said, "It is unfortunate that the Tirumala laddu was adulterated. It is good that the special investigation team has arrested those responsible for the adulteration. This is a step forward in the investigation."

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Are we not creating class of parasites?

SC SLAMS FREEBIES PROMISED BEFORE POLLS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On political parties promising "freebies" ahead of polls, the Supreme Court on Wednesday said instead of bringing people into the mainstream for national development "are we not creating a class of parasites".

A bench of Justices B R Gawai and Augustine George Masih said it would be better to make people a part of the society's mainstream and contribute towards national development.

"Rather than promoting them to be a part of the mainstream of the society by contributing to the development of the nation, are we not creating a class of parasites?" it asked.

Justice Gawai went on to add, "Unfortunately, because of these freebies, which just on the anvil of elections are declared, like 'Ladki Bahin' and other schemes, people are not willing to work."

The apex court was hearing a matter concerning the right to shelter of homeless persons in urban areas and said people got free rations and money without working.

"We quite appreciate your concern for them but would it not be better



"Unfortunately, because of these freebies, which just on the anvil of elections are declared, like 'Ladki Bahin' and other schemes, people are not willing to work." "We quite appreciate your concern for them but would it not be better to make them a part of the mainstream of society and permit them to contribute to the development of the nation?" the bench asked.

to make them a part of the mainstream of society and permit them to contribute to the development of the nation?" the bench asked.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for one of the petitioners, said there was hardly anybody in the country who did not want to work, if they had work.

The judge said, "You must be having only one sided knowledge. I come from an agricultural family. Because of the freebies in Maharashtra which they just announced prior to elections, agriculturists are not getting labourers."

The court, however, said it did not want to debate.

It said everybody, including attorney general R Venkataramani, was on the same page that providing shelter to the homeless merited due attention.

"But at the same time, should it not be balanced?" the bench asked.

Venkataramani said the Centre was in the process of finalising the urban poverty alleviation mission, which would address various issues, including the provision of shelter for the urban homeless.

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GRADUATE MLC POLLS
 Alapati's victory certain, says MP

Voter mapping process going on aimed at graduates registered to vote

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Leaders of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) from the NTR and Krishna districts convened a meeting at the Venue Convention Centre in Vijayawada on Wednesday. The primary objective of the gathering was to strategise for the electoral success of Alapati Rajendra Prasad, the NDA-supported candidate for the Krishna-Guntur Graduate MLC position. The meeting was chaired by Nettem Raghuram, the TDP president for the NTR district.

During the meeting, Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath, also known as Chinni, expressed confidence in



Alapati Rajendra Prasad's victory, predicting a significant majority in his district. He highlighted the ongoing voter mapping initiative aimed at

graduates registered to vote in the MLC elections across the seven constituencies within the Vijayawada parliamentary area.

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RBI to issue Rs 50 notes with Guv Malhotra's signature

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday said it will soon issue Rs 50 denomination banknotes bearing the signature of Governor Sanjay Malhotra.

Malhotra assumed office in December 2024 replacing Shaktikanta Das who demitted office after completion of his extended term. "The design of these notes is similar in all respects to Rs 50 banknotes in Mahatma Gandhi (New Series)," the RBI said in a statement.

All banknotes in the denomination of Rs 50 issued by the Reserve Bank in the past will continue to be legal tender.

Purandeswari meets Nitin Gadkari

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP State president and MP Daggubati Purandeswari had a meeting with Union Minister Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi on Wednesday. During the meeting, Purandeswari stressed the necessity of service roads for the bypass at Amaravati has become the State capital.

She highlighted the request of local farmers and residents, who have been asking for service roads in the vicinity of the bypass.

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Visakhapatnam Airport hit by growth constraints

Government inaction, slot restrictions and reduced flights limit airport's potential

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam International Airport, a key gateway for Andhra Pradesh, is struggling to reach its full potential due to a combination of factors, including perceived government inaction, slot restrictions, and reduced aircraft movements. These challenges are hindering growth in both passenger and cargo traffic, impacting the region's economic prospects.



Air traveller associations have acknowledged the State government's efforts to boost international travel, but emphasised the need for stronger focus on Middle-East

connectivity. "The government aims to make Vizag an IT, tourism, and financial hub, but isn't adequately promoting international links to the Middle East," representatives stated.

Tourism and travel industry stakeholders point to missed opportunities. K. Vijay Mohan, president of the Tours and Travels Association of Andhra (TTAA), highlighted the case of Emirates' feasibility study for a Visakhapatnam-Dubai flight.

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Jagan slams TDP, vows YSRCP's return
 Says Chandrababu betraying public trust by discarding manifesto

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Highlighting his administration's Rs 2.71-lakh crore direct benefit transfers and fulfilment of promises despite COVID-19 challenges, former Chief Minister and YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has criticised CM Chandrababu Naidu's coalition government for neglecting key sectors, failing to fulfil the poll promises and cancelling YSRCP's welfare schemes.

During a meeting with public representatives of the united Guntur district, Jagan Mohan Reddy said Chandrababu Naidu has been betraying public trust by discarding the manifesto and neglecting key

sectors like education, healthcare, agriculture, and industries. He stated that the YSRCP secured 40 per cent of the vote share in the last elections, with just a 10-per cent reduction.

He attributed this loss to his refusal to make false promises like Chandrababu.

However, he assured his supporters that he remains deeply connected to the people and will continue in politics for another 25-30 years.

He questioned the future of those in the current government, asking what would happen when people realise the deception.

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MP meets CM, Lokesh to discuss Sports City in Amaravati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni), along with Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh, met Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at the CM's residence in Undavalli on Wednesday to discuss the development of the Sports City.

SAAP Chairman Ravi Naidu and representatives of various organisa-

tions, including Siddharth from Populous Global Architects, Venkat from NV Architects and Vadamudi Harsha, Managing Director of IBS Project Management Consultancies, were present. The discussions focused on the plans and developments related to the Sports City project, which aims to boost sports infrastructure in Amaravati and attract global attention.

Over 2 cr devotees take holy dip on Maghi Purnima

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Amid heightened security measures, more than two crore devotees took a dip in the Sangam till 6 pm on Wednesday on the occasion of Maghi Purnima during the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela here.

According to an official statement, special arrangements have been made for the sacred bath that began early Wednesday.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has been monitoring the event since 4 am at the war room in his official residence in Lucknow, the statement said.

With the 'snan' on Maghi Purnima, another auspicious day for holy bath, the month-long 'Kalpavas' will be ending and around 10 lakh 'Kalpavasis' will start leaving the Maha Kumbh. The administration has requested them to follow traffic rules and use only



authorised parking spaces. While lakhs of devotees are headed to the Sangam area, the government in the statement said that by 6 pm, over two crore people had taken the ritual dip at the Triveni Sangam and other ghats. Overall since the start of

the Maha Kumbh, over 47 crore people have taken a dip in the Sangam, it said.

Flower petals were also showered on devotees from helicopter.

Cricketer legend Anil Kumble took a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam

along with his wife Chaitna Ramirtha.

After arriving in Prayagraj on Tuesday, Kumble chose to perform the bathing ritual on Maghi Purnima, a day when no VIP protocols are observed.

He joined the devotees as a regular pilgrim, taking a boat to the confluence with his wife for the ritual. Director General of Police Prashant Kumar, Principal Secretary (Home) Sanjay Prasad and officials of CM Secretariat are also present at the war room, the statement said. Maha Kumbh Mela DIG Vaibhav Krishna said, "Our arrangements are quite good and police deployment is there at all places. Crowd is moving comfortably. Our SOPs are being followed."

Maha Kumbh SSP Rajesh Dwivedi said the movement of devotees was going on smoothly and that security personnel were

taking care of all (crowd) pressure points. "We made elaborate arrangements during the previous 'snan' on Basant Panchami too. Our arrangements have been further augmented this time," he said.

Talking about security arrangements in place for the sacred 'snan', the SSP said, "More deployment has been done at all the pressure points. Along with that, we are briefing people to ensure a smooth movement." The UP government also launched 'Operation Chaturbhuj' at the Maha Kumbh to ensure the safety of the pilgrims.

According to the statement, the initiative has strengthened security with advanced surveillance by the Integrated Command and Control Center (ICCC), which monitored the event using 2,750 high-tech cameras, drones, and an anti-drone system for round-the-clock vigilance.

Lokesh meets Sify Technologies Chairman to attract investments

Discuss strategies for creating job opportunities for youth

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Minister for Education, Information Technology, Electronics and RTGS, Nara Lokesh, has held a productive meeting with Raju Vegesna, Chairman and Managing Director of Sify Technologies, to explore investment opportunities in Andhra Pradesh. The meeting took place at Lokesh's residence in Undavalli on Wednesday, where both discussed strategies for creating job opportunities for the State's youth through significant investments.

During the meeting, Vegesna highlighted Sify Technologies' prominence as a leading player among Fortune 500 companies. He also detailed Sify's role in providing data services to major corporations, including numerous banks across India, as well as clients in North



Minister Lokesh took the opportunity to elaborate on the State's investment climate, stressed the government's 'Speed of Doing Business' initiative and the newly introduced IT policies designed to attract investors.

America, United Kingdom and Singapore. Key discussions centred on Sify's potential expansion plans in Andhra Pradesh, particularly in the areas of establishing a state-of-the-art Data Centre and a cable landing station in Visakhapatnam. Minister Lokesh took the opportunity to elaborate on

the State's investment climate, stressed the government's 'Speed of Doing Business' initiative and the newly introduced IT policies designed to attract investors. He assured investors that the Andhra Pradesh government is committed to facilitating business growth, creating local employment, and

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

More than five years after its announcement, the South Coast Railway (SCoR) Zone is beginning to gain momentum under the new administration in Andhra Pradesh. Yet, a critical obstacle remains: the absence of a General Manager to oversee its implementation.

The Centre sanctioned the new railway zone in 2021 as part of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, incorporating the historic Waltair division. Despite its official approval, progress has been sluggish in the years since. Now, following the formation of the NDA government in the State, efforts to operationalise the SCoR have been rekindled.

At the forefront of this push are Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu, Visakhapatnam MP M Sribharat, and IT Minister Nara Lokesh.

Absence of a General Manager threatens to delay the operationalisation of SCoR



Their lobbying efforts recently culminated in Prime Minister Narendra Modi laying the foundation stone for the project during a visit to Visakhapatnam. A significant outcome of this renewed initiative has been the retention of the Waltair Division, now renamed the Visakhapatnam Division, within the new railway zone.

Yet, for all the progress, the lack of a General Manager remains a significant concern. Covering

more than 95 percent of Andhra Pradesh, the SCoR is poised to play a transformative role in regional connectivity and economic development. However, while General Managers have been appointed for both the East Coast Railway (ECOR) and the South-Central Railway (SCR), the SCoR remains without a dedicated administrative leader.

Chalasan Gandhi, former General Secretary of the East

Coast Railway Shramik Union, underscored the urgency of the appointment. "Waiting for a new administrative building to be completed in two years will only delay progress," he said. "Public representatives should push for immediate operations using existing infrastructure and expedite the appointment of a General Manager."

For the residents of North Andhra, the railway zone's operationalisation represents the fulfilment of a long-standing demand—one that has been nearly a decade in the making. Yet, with no clear leadership in place, concerns remain over potential bureaucratic delays. As the SCoR inches closer to reality, the challenge now lies in ensuring that its newfound momentum is not lost to administrative inertia.

79 farmers allocated 91 returnable plots

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As many as 79 farmers from Mangalagiri and Thullur mandals, who had provided land for the capital city, were allocated 191 returnable plots through a lottery system at the APCRDA office on Wednesday. The farmers from Krishnayaapalem, Navuluru 1, 2, Nidamaru 1, 2, Velagapudi, Mandadam 1, 2, were allocated plots from 10 AM onwards, while farmers from Kuralagallu 1, 2, Thullur 1, 2, Nekallu, and Anantavaram received their plots in the afternoon.

APCRDA Commissioner K Kannababu handed over pro-

visional certificates to the farmers who received the returnable plots. He urged the farmers to complete the registration process as quickly as possible. With development work beginning on the LPS lands, the Commissioner reminded the farmers to avoid delays in registration and announced the opening of nine new registration centres.

APCRDA Additional Commissioner Sai Praveen Chand, Lands Joint Director David Raju, Special Deputy Collectors G Bhimarao, Sheshareddy, Ravinder, P Padmavati, K Swarna Mary and other officials attended the event.

On Thursday, 364 returnable plots will be allocated to 167 farmers from 11 villages who had provided land for Amaravati, through a lottery system.

The lottery for farmers from Dondapadu, Pichukulapalem, Ainavolu, Lingayapalem, Shakamuru and Venkatapalem will start at 10 AM. Farmers from Uddandarayunipalem, Malkapuram, Rayapudi 1 & 2, Kondamarajupalem, and Abbarajupalem will be allotted plots starting from 2 PM. APCRDA officials have requested the respective farmers to be present for the event.



Silver ornaments donated to temple

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Silver ornaments were donated to Sri Kapileswara Swamy Temple on Wednesday.

Totalling around 9kg 115 grams the silver ornaments were donated to Sri Kamakshi Ammavaru of Sri Kapileswara Swamy Temple by Sri V Narahari of Tirumala, the devotee, along with his family on Wednesday.

TTD JEO Veerabrahmam

received the ornaments at the Unjal Mandapam. A total of 12 types of ornaments worth approximately Rs 9.28 lakhs were donated.

After that, the priests performed a special puja for the jewels. Temple Deputy EO Devendra Babu, AEO K Subbaraju, Superintendent KP Chandrasekhar, DE Mallaiah, Temple Inspector A Ravikumar and other officers were present.

'Do not use Parliament for personal attacks'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM/DELHI

Strongly condemning the TDP members levelling false allegations against YSRCP leadership in Parliament, YSRCP has said that the coalition members should try to get more benefits to the State instead of resorting to personal attacks.

Speaking to media here on Wednesday, Tirupati MP Guru Murthy said TDP members are repeatedly trying to mislead the Parliament by levelling false allegations against our leaders including P Mithun Reddy, Peddireddi Ramchandara Reddy and others.

"We condemn the allegations and the false stories being published by TDP friendly media," he said.

If there is a case, investigation will take its own course and there is no need to misuse the valuable time of the Parliament for repeatedly levelling false allegations against our leadership and restrain from personal attacks, he said.

The State has been witnessing vindictive assaults on YSRCP leaders and cadre across the State which we will raise in the House, he added.

Minister slams previous regime for mismanagement of housing funds

Govt fully committed to utilising the PMAY Gramin 2.0 scheme efficiently

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Minister for Information & Public Relations and Housing, Kolu Parthasarathi, expressed concerns over the negligence of the previous government, which led to the loss of approximately Rs 2,378 crore in Central housing funds. He criticised the earlier government for mishandling the funds and failing to complete housing projects on time, causing significant injustice to the poor.

In a press conference at the State Secretariat on Wednesday, Minister Parthasarathi reaffirmed the current government's commitment to providing permanent housing for all eligible poor families over the next five years. Under the PMAY Gramin 1.0 scheme, the government has completed 1.15 lakh houses and aims to complete 1.50 lakh more by the end of June this year,



out of the remaining 7.35 lakh houses.

Furthermore, Parthasarathi assured that the government is fully committed to utilising the PMAY Gramin 2.0 scheme efficiently. A survey to identify beneficiaries for this scheme has already begun, with 11,600 beneficiaries identified so far.

The state aims to secure five lakh houses under this scheme and has already sanctioned 50,000 houses, with plans to sanction another 4.5 lakh by the

end of March.

He said that the previous government had misused approximately Rs 3,598 crore in housing construction funds, depriving the poor of their rightful housing. He pointed out that despite the Central government allocating Rs 20,726 crore for housing under the PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana) Gramin scheme for the state, these funds were not utilized properly and many housing projects were not completed on schedule, leading to the loss of over Rs 2,378 crore in central funding.

The Minister also revealed that, under their current administration, in 2018 an extensive housing survey was conducted statewide, identifying 3,18,987 beneficiaries under PMAY Gramin 1.0. However, upon the YSRCP government's return to power in 2019, 1,39,243 benefi-

ciaries were removed from the central portal, resulting in an injustice to those individuals. Despite this, the central government allocated houses to 1,79,060 out of 1,79,744 remaining beneficiaries in 2021-22, and the remaining 684 beneficiaries were allocated homes in the current fiscal year.

Parthasarathi condemned the previous government's attempts to blame the current administration for these issues, calling it absurd and a distortion of the facts. He also pointed out that between 2014 and 2019, the state government had allocated Rs 2.50 lakh per house under the NT Rama Rao Rural Housing Scheme, along with additional amounts for SCs, STs, and PVTGs, whereas the previous government had only allocated Rs 30,000 over and above the Rs 1.50 lakh allocated by the Central government.

'Protecting devotees'...

Continued from Page 1

We must ensure that such incidents do not happen again in the future. Precautionary measures should be taken with respect to offerings like prasadam and other temple activities."

He further clarified, "My visit to the temples in South India, including in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, is a completely personal matter, unrelated to politics.

Four-and-a-half years ago, I had planned to visit these temples, but due to health reasons, I couldn't make it.

Now, I am visiting these temples. Along with this, I have raised the issue of illegal sandalwood trafficking with the police and requested the Central government to introduce new policies regarding sandalwood sales across the country."

Alapati's victory...

Continued from Page 1

He noted that the NDA alliance is assigning one observer for every 30 voters to facilitate this mapping process. Besides, he emphasised the efforts being made at the grassroots level to ensure that the first-choice votes in the MLC elections are cast for Alapati Rajendra Prasad.

He mentioned that the coalition leaders and activists are dedicated to mobilising graduates to the polling booths to ensure their participation. He also advocated for the inclusion of knowledgeable individuals like Alapati Rajendra Prasad in the legislature. He remarked that the NDA alliance members are particularly focused on these elections and are actively engaging graduate voters.

Purandeswari meets Nitin Gadkari

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A memorandum was submitted to Gadkari by Purandeswari, along with the local farmers and residents.

The issue of allocating a service road for the Vijayawada West Bypass Road Package 3 was raised. Purandeswari, MP and BJP State President, explained the situation to the Union Minister for Roads and National Highways, Nitin Gadkari. The Union Minister responded positively to the request.

Are we not creating class...

Continued from Page 1

The bench asked him to verify from the Centre the time frame within which the scheme would be applicable and also place on record the aspects covered by it.

"In the meantime, the attorney general is also requested to take instructions as to whether till the implementation of the said scheme, the Union of India would continue with the National Urban Livelihoods Mission," it said.

The bench further asked the Centre to collate information from all states for the consideration of the issue on a pan-India basis. One of the petitioners during the hearing said it was unfortunate that the cause of the homeless was not being addressed as it was last on the priority.

The bench was irked when he claimed the authorities showed compassion only for the rich, not the poor.

"Don't make a speech of Ramlila Maidan in this court," said Justice Gavai, "and don't make unnecessary allegations. Don't make a political speech here. We won't permit our

courtrooms to be converted into a (place of) political battle." The judge went on to add, "How do you say the compassion is shown only for the rich? Even for the government, how can you say this?"

Painting a picture that the government did not do anything or show concern for the poor was not in a good taste, the court added. Bhushan said as per a note placed before the bench, as on December 4, 2024, a total of 2,557 shelters was sanctioned by the states or union territories and 1,995 shelter homes were functional with a capacity of 1.16 lakh beds.

He said a survey showed there were about 3 lakh urban homeless in Delhi alone.

Bhushan said as per the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board, the total capacity of the shelters was 17,000 persons of which only 5,900 such facilities had beds. The DUSIB counsel said the board had 197 shelter homes running in Delhi as on date with a total capacity of 17,000 persons.

In the last four years, he said, the average maximum occupancy was 5,500 in all shelter homes.

Visakhapatnam Airport hit by...

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"The government seems to be prioritising Vijayawada, even with an existing Air India Express flight to Sharjah. A second Gulf flight from Vijayawada is unlikely to be viable," he argued. He recalled the successful seven-year operation of Air India's Visakhapatnam-Dubai flight (via Hyderabad) before its pandemic-era withdrawal.

Vizag's strategic importance for cargo operations is also clear. "Maximum exports of seafood, pharmaceuticals, apparel, and finished goods from Andhra Pradesh originate from Vizag," explained Vijay Mohan. "A passenger aircraft can carry two tonnes of cargo, offering a significant advantage." However, logistical hurdles remain. The proximity of Vijayawada to Hyderabad, with its numerous Middle-East flight options, makes it a more cost-effective choice for both air travel and cargo transport,

due to the added expense and time of road transport from Vizag.

Operational constraints further complicate matters. O. Naresh Kumar, vice-president of the AP Air Travellers Association (APATA), called for more late-night and early-morning flights. He expressed concern over the Navy's proposed airport closure from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. Dubai flight from Vizag has persisted since its discontinuation." Data reveals a concerning trend. Aircraft movements have decreased from 24,182 in 2018-19 to 20,120 in 2023-24. Domestic flights fell from 22,376 to 19,653, and international flights.

Jagan slams TDP, vows...

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He pointed out that TDP leaders are now afraid to enter villages because they have failed to keep their promises. He mocked Chandrababu's slogans, saying that instead of being a "guarantee for the future," he has become a "guarantee for fraud."

He slammed the coalition government for being involved in multiple scams, including sand and liquor scandals. He said corruption is rampant, bribes have become necessary for any work, gambling clubs are openly operating, and those who question the government are being arrested under harsh laws. He warned that such injustice will not last and that the people will give a strong lesson. He promised that YSRCP will return to power with Jagan 2.0 governance. He assured that no wrongdoers would be spared and that legal action would be taken against those involved in corruption. He admitted that during his tenure, COVID-19 restricted his ability to support party workers fully, but he pledged to stand by every worker in the future. He cautioned that the term of local bodies will end in March and that the ruling party will try to place its people in key positions through pressure and false cases. He urged his cadre to stay strong, saying that such situations are temporary and that YSRCP will soon be back in power.



'Polam Pilustondi' to improve crop yield

Collector interacts with farmers at Anumanchipalli

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha has urged farmers to engage actively in the Polam Pilustondi programme, which aims to improve crop yields while minimising cultivation expenses. This initiative is designed to equip farmers with the latest agricultural techniques and best practices to enhance their farming operations.

On Wednesday, Collector Lakshmisha visited several villages within the Jaggayyapet mandal to assess various development programmes at the grassroots-level. He participated in the 'Polam Pilustondi' programme held in Anumanchipalli village, where he enquired about the crops being cultivated, the use of fertilisers, and their availability.

Dr Lakshmisha gathered insights from farmers regarding their needs for the effective management of daily agricultural tasks. The farmers highlighted the necessity for agricultural machinery and voiced their concerns regarding the issue of monkey interference.

In his address, Collector Lakshmisha emphasised that the 'Polam Pilustondi' programme serves to inform farm-

Collector Lakshmisha visited several villages within the Jaggayyapet mandal to assess various development programmes at the grassroots-level. He participated in the 'Polam Pilustondi' programme held in Anumanchipalli village, where he enquired about the crops being cultivated, the use of fertilisers, and their availability

ers about the challenges they encounter in their fields concerning their crops and to implement strategic solutions. He encouraged farmers to adopt natural farming practices to ensure health and safety and assured them that the district administration was prepared to offer the necessary support and cooperation. He also mentioned that students are being taken to the fields through the 'Agri Connect' programme to educate them about crops, soil, soil fertility, and related topics.

Besides, the Collector inspected the Solid Waste Processing Centre (SWPC) in Pochampally, where he reviewed the organic fertiliser production process. He instructed that operations should continue with a clear objective. He noted that efforts are underway to make the 264 SWPCs across 286 gram panchayats in

the district fully operational, and measures are being taken to establish these centres in the 22 gram panchayats that currently lack them. He directed the officials to promptly finalise any necessary repairs and ensure they were managed effectively. He requested the relevant officials to implement Vermi Seeding across all centres. Subsequently, Lakshmisha inspected the 2.5 km BT road that was constructed using DMF funds in Pochampally village. During this inspection, the measurements and documentation on the roads were thoroughly reviewed.

Assistant Collector Shubham Nokhwal, Superintending Engineer of Panchayati Raj Z Ramesh, Agriculture Department Assistant Director Bhavani, Mandal Agriculture Officer V Varalakshmi, among others, were present.

GVMC Urban Planning under scrutiny

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) is embroiled in serious corruption allegations, particularly within its Urban Planning Department. Reports highlight multiple irregularities, primarily during the tenure of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government, with officials accused of enabling unauthorised constructions, policy manipulations, and bribery.

Sources indicate that several YSRCP-linked officials occupied key GVMC positions, allegedly exploiting urban planning policies for personal and political gains. Violations in Transferable Development Rights (TDR) and Non-Agricultural Lands Assessment (NALA) charges have been flagged. Despite some officials being reassigned under the current administration, critics argue that stringent action has yet to be taken. Complaints persist regarding continued corruption and favouritism toward individuals linked to the previous government.

A major case involves a Rs

Allegations surface over unauthorised constructions, TDR misuse, and bribery under YSRCP regime



30 crore TDR sanctioned in Venkatapathi Raju Nagar based on a 1926 document, which officials failed to revoke. Similar irregularities were reported in ASR Nagar, Bilal Colony, and Jalaripeeta slums, allegedly influenced by then Special Chief Secretary Sri Lakshmi. Following a complaint by Jana Sena corporator Peethala Murthy Yadav, these approvals were temporarily suspended but not entirely revoked.

Another major allegation suggests that town planning

officials personally benefited from TDRs. In one instance, 19 cents of Gedda property, classified under Urban Land Ceiling (ULC), were allegedly allocated to a public representative despite regulatory restrictions. Additionally, large-scale projects have proceeded without securing Valid Land Entitlements (VLE), raising concerns over regulatory oversight.

A recent Vigilance probe uncovered Rs 120 crore in unpaid taxes, yet officials reportedly issued occupancy

certificates (OCs) without ensuring financial compliance. Corruption concerns extend beyond Visakhapatnam, with reports of irregular TDR allocations in Kakinada. A senior GVMC official allegedly misused TDRs for the Convention of the Baptist Churches of the Northern Circars (CBCNC) projects. Under the YSRCP government, a TDR worth Rs 209 crore was issued for Revallapalem land, later revoked, but now reportedly under reconsideration.

Further scrutiny surrounds a multi-storey project near Diamond Park, where TDRs worth Rs 5 crore were allegedly sanctioned improperly. Concerns also revolve around TDR allocations for roads over NCC lands (valued at Rs 660 crore) and possible manipulation of TDRs for Dasapalla lands. Officials are additionally accused of approving TDRs for Simhachalam BRS Road victims without verifying ownership rights.

Avian Influenza: 721 Rapid Response Teams formed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Director of the Animal Husbandry Department, Dr T Damodar Naidu, has announced the formation of 721 Rapid Response Teams in response to the confirmation of Avian Influenza (Bird flu), which has been linked to the deaths of chickens in the East and Godavari districts, as verified by the National Institute of High-Security Animal Diseases in Bhopal.

These teams, comprising personnel from the Police, Revenue, Forest, and Animal Husbandry departments, have been deployed across the State to monitor the situation.

Dr Naidu detailed that following the discovery of dead chickens in Velpur village of Tanuku mandal in the West Godavari district and Kanur Agraharam in Peravali Mandal of the East Godavari district, officials from both districts promptly collected samples from the deceased birds. They were confirmed to be infected with Avian Influenza.

Fire breaks out at Jalakanya Handicraft Exhibition

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A small fire occurred at the Jalakanya Handicraft Exhibition at Sitara Centre in Vijayawada at approximately 12.30 PM on Wednesday, resulting in property damage. Fortunately, there were no injuries or fatalities, according to an official report. Emergency services responded promptly, with personnel from the fire department, municipal authorities, and police arriving swiftly to manage the situation. The fire ignited, prompting an immediate reaction from the closest fire station.

A significant concern during the incident was the safety of the animals present at the

Animals were evacuated safely before the situation escalated



exhibition. Authorities confirmed that all animals were

evacuated safely before the situation escalated. There have

been no reported injuries to either humans or animals. The fire was contained on time, preventing it from spreading to nearby areas.

Vijayawada Fire Officer Sankara Rao, stated, "Our team acted immediately upon receiving the information at 12.30 PM. Additional units were dispatched according to the fire's severity, and we successfully contained it quickly, averting further damage." Further fire-fighting units were sent in response to the fire's intensity, he said. Within a brief period, the blaze was effectively extinguished, minimising addition-

al harm to the exhibition space, he added.

Further, he said that the precise cause of the fire remains undetermined. However, authorities have initiated a thorough investigation to identify the specific factors that led to the incident. "While the exact cause is still under investigation, a detailed inquiry is underway to confirm this," Rao explained. Officials are currently evaluating the extent of the property damage, and more information will be provided soon as the investigation is being continued, he added.

Housing prices set to rise after hike in registration fees

Impact most pronounced in Dabagardens, Dwarakanagar, Madhurawada

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A recent surge in land registration fees has sent ripples through this coastal city's housing market, squeezing both buyers and developers and raising concerns about affordability. Effective from February 1, the fees, intended to bolster State revenue, jumped from five percent to as high as 20 percent in prime locations.

The impact is most pronounced in commercial hubs like Dabagardens, Dwarakanagar, Madhurawada, Beach Road and areas along the National Highway, now subject to the 20 percent levy. Residential neighbourhoods, including East Point Colony, MVP Colony and Seethammadhara, face a 15 percent increase. Officials project the changes will boost the district's property registration revenue from approximately 10 billion rupees to 12 billion rupees annually.

But the fee hike has already begun to reshape property prices. "Developers are adjusting to the new fees by raising prices," said Bayana Srinivas Rao, general secretary of the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI)-Andhra Pradesh. He told The Pioneer that gated communities on the city's outskirts have seen prices climb by 1,000 to 2,000 rupees per square foot. In Yendada, prices have risen by a similar amount, from 7,000 to 8,000 rupees per square foot, while in Madhurawada, prices have jumped from 4,000 to 5,000 rupees per square foot. "As a result," Mr. Srinivas said, "buyers will need to pay an additional



100,000 rupees on average."

The land market has also felt the pinch, with prices in Anandapuram reportedly rising from 10,000 to 13,000 rupees per square yard. This escalation is expected to further inflate apartment costs, making homeownership even more challenging. Industry experts also suggest that the increased fees could slow the absorption of the city's estimated 10,000 unsold flats.

Despite these challenges, Visakhapatnam's real estate sector remains cautiously optimistic, buoyed by ongoing and planned infrastructure projects. Tata Consultancy Services is establishing a large centre in the city, promising a wave of new jobs.

The construction of Bhogapuram International Airport is expected to attract significant investment. Progress continues on the Metro Rail project, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently laid the foundation stone for a green hydrogen initiative, which is also expected to draw professionals to the area.

While the higher registration fees may pose short-term obstacles, many believe these major infrastructure projects will sustain housing demand in Visakhapatnam.

Feb 15 deadline to complete SHGs' online profiling process

Initiative aims to establish comprehensive digital database of SHG members

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Commissioner HM Dhyanaachandra has instructed officials to finalise the online profiling of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) by February 15. He said the Resource Persons (RPs) should ensure that the information of each SHG member is accurately recorded online.

On Wednesday, Commissioner Dhyanaachandra conducted visits to the Ward Sachivalayam in Pejionipeta, Poornanandapeta, Heartpeta, and Pappulamill. During these visits, he assessed the progress of the SHGs' online profiling initiative. He also inspected the solar panels installed at the residence of beneficiary Muralikrishna in Pejionipeta, as part of the PM



Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner HM Dhyanaachandra talking with Resource Persons regarding the online profiling process of SHGs at a Sachivalayam on Wednesday

Surya Ghar Mufti Bijili Scheme. Speaking on the occasion, he highlighted that this initiative is designed to establish a comprehensive digital database of SHG members, which would enhance monitoring and support for their activities. "The VMC aims to improve the efficiency of SHG operations and ensure that resources are allocated effec-

tively to foster their development through the digitisation of members' details," he said.

Additionally, he noted that the profiling process entails gathering detailed information about each SHG member, including personal data, economic activities, and involvement in various programmes.

He asked the Resource

Rahul is scared to visit Warangal fearing public backlash: Kavitha

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha lashed out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and accused him of cancelling his Warangal visit due to fear of facing public scrutiny over unfulfilled promises.

She said that the people of Warangal were ready to question him about his father's declaration he had announced earlier but failed to act upon. "Rahul Gandhi is scared because he knows the people will not tolerate broken promises," she remarked.

Unveiling the poster for Telangana Jagruthi's upcoming "Mahila Shankharavam" event scheduled for March 8 in Hyderabad, Kavitha demanded that the Congress government fulfil its election promises to women. She warned that if these promises were ignored, Congress leaders in Telangana would find it difficult to move freely.



Criticizing the Congress leadership, she claimed that local leaders lacked credibility, which was why Sonia Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, and Rahul Gandhi had to campaign in Telangana during the elections. "Women trusted their faces and voted, but after coming to power, the Congress government has conveniently forgotten its promises," she said.

Kavitha pointed out that even after 14 months in office, the Congress had failed to provide the promised Rs 2,500 monthly financial assistance to

women, leaving Chief Minister Revanth Reddy with a pending due of Rs 35,000 per woman. She demanded that this amount be immediately transferred to every eligible woman's bank account.

Accusing the government of betraying young women, she said that the promised free scooters for girls above 18 years never materialized. She also slammed the Congress for discontinuing the KCR Kit scheme, which had benefited mothers and newborns.

Taking aim at law and order, Kavitha alleged that under Revanth Reddy's administration, crime against women had increased by 20 per cent. "Women now fear travelling alone, and crimes are rampant. Theft cases in suburban homes are rising. During KCR's 10-year rule, not a single communal clash occurred, but under Revanth Reddy's governance, communal tensions are erupting frequently," she alleged.

Format C-7
(for political parties to publish in the newspapers, social media platforms & website of the party)

Information regarding individuals with pending criminal cases, who have been selected as candidates, along with the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates.

(As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in contempt petition (C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP (C) no. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party : **TELOGU DESAM PARTY**
* Name of the Election : **BIENNIAL ELECTION TO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**
Name of State/UT : **ANDHRA PRADESH**
(1) Name of the Constituency: **Krishna-Guntur Graduates' Constituency**
Name of the candidate: **Alapati Rajendra Prasad**

Sl. No.		
1.	Criminal antecedents	
	a. Nature of the offences	1. U/s 143, 188, 341 r/w 149 IPC 2. U/s 143, 341, 188, 269, 270 r/w 149 IPC
	b. Case no.	1. 9/2020 Tenali Rural PS 2. 924/2021 Tadepalli PS
	c. Name of the Court	Not Applicable
	d. Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No)	No
	e. Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f. Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g. Any other information required to be given	----
2.	The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words)	He has been actively involved in social service activities and has been great supporter of the marginalized sections of the society. He was also actively involved in party activities.
3.	Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words)	No other suitable candidate was available.

(2) Name of the Constituency : **Krishna-Guntur Graduates' Constituency**
Name of the candidate : **Alapati Rajendra Prasad** and so on
* In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

Signature of office bearer of the Political party Name and designation
Sd/- Varla Ramaiah
Politburo Member & National General Secretary, TDP

Minister Gottipati visits renovated SC hostel building

PNS ■ BAPATLA

Minister for Energy Gottipati Ravi Kumar visited the renovated SC hostel building at Santhamagaluru on Wednesday.

The SC hostel building at Santa Mangalore was neglected during the previous YSRCP regime and had become dilapidated. The officials had taken to the notice of Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar about the bad condition of the SC hostel.

During the district visit previously, Minister Gottipati saw the dilapidated SC hostel building and moved to its pathetic state. The Minister ordered the officials to take steps to renovate the building and he ensured release of Rs 45 lakh to renovate the hostel building.

Minister for Social Welfare Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy responded to the issue and immediately released funds to renovate the building. The renovation works were carried out on war footing.

The students expressed happiness for making the SC hos-



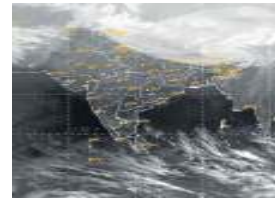
tel available for them with all facilities now.

The parents of the students thanked the Ministers for their swift action to renovate the hostel building. Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar visited the building on Wednesday and saw the facilities provided to the students.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister regretted that the maintenance of social welfare hostels was ignored during the YSRCP regime resulting in the hostels lacking facilities.

The Minister reminisced that over 170 students used to stay in the SC hostel at Santhamagaluru in 2019 dur-

ing the TDP regime as the hostel had all facilities. Now the students strength had fallen to 30 as students did not like to stay in the hostel due to lack of facilities. Now the SC hostel was renovated and all required facilities were provided, Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar acknowledged.



Shallow fog likely in Coastal AP in next 3 days

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Shallow fog is likely to occur at isolated places in the morning in Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next three days, Meteorological Centre said on Wednesday.

In a daily weather report here, it said that the maximum temperatures are likely to be above normal by 2-3 degrees Celsius in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next five days. Dry weather is likely to prevail in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next seven days.

The lowest minimum temperature of 14 degrees Celsius was recorded at Aroygaravaram in the Rayalaseema region on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday, the report added.

Election Observer Sunita inspects polling station



PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

MLC Graduates constituency election Observer K Sunita inspected a polling station, being set up in the MPP Government girls' school at Peravali village on Wednesday. The MLC Graduates constituency election will be held on February 27.

The Election Observer, accompanied by East Godavari district Collector P Prashanthi and other officials inspected the polling station.

Election observers Sunita advised the officials that the rules set by the Election Commission

should be strictly followed on the day of polling. Since the election process is being conducted through ballot papers, all arrangements should be made smoothly without any problems. Arrangements should be made to issue voter slips and move other polling equipment in advance, she ordered the officials.

The district officials explained to election Observer Sunita regarding preparations being made for the polling for the Graduate MLC elections to be held on February 27th. The Collector told the Observer that District Revenue Officer T

Seetharama Murthy is the Assistant Returning Officer of East Godavari district for the MLC election.

The Collector explained to her that 82 polling stations and 10 auxiliary polling stations are being set up in the district, adding that arrangements have been made for the conduct of the MLC elections as per the general election guidelines. District Revenue Officer T Seetharama Murthy, RDO Rani Susmita, Peravali Tehsildar and other officials were among those who accompanied election observer Sunita.

SP emphasises strict vigil on illegal transport of drugs

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari district Superintendent of police Adnan Nayeem Asmi directed the police official to lay strict vigil on the illegal transport of drugs and complete investigation of long pending cases expeditiously.

The SP on Wednesday held a crime review meeting with the police officials. The SP reviewed circle-wise registration and prosecution of grave, non-grave, property-related crimes and other cases registered in the district and he examined the CD files.

The SP conducted a review with the police officers regarding pending grave & non-grave cases, murder cases, POCSO & rape cases, dacoity, robbery, property, vehicle theft, missing, cheating cases, property cases, road accidents, cyber crimes, 174 Cr.P.C cases, enforcement work, investigation and recoveries in pending NBWs, NDPS cases in the district.

The SP gave the police officials instructions and techniques that help in resolving cases and controlling crime. The SP ordered the police



officers to visit the villages. "Measures should be taken to check road accidents, black spots should be visited along with the officers of government departments and take appropriate action. Install warning boards. Make people aware of road safety rules," he told the officials.

The SP issued orders to the police officials to impose fines on vehicles going on the wrong route, overloading, triple riding, motorists without helmets and those who do not fol-

low road rules. The SP stressed the need of implementing visible policing in the district.

SP Adnan Nayeem Asmi instructed the police officials to take steps to contain matka gambling, cockfights and illegal transportation of sand. He also underlined the need of creating awareness among people on cybercrimes. SP (Admin.) V Bhima Rao, DSPs Ravuri Ganesh Jaya Surya, G Veda and D Viswanath were among those who attended the meeting.

Ex-Minister objects Chief Minister's allegation on adulterated ghee

PNS ■ TADEPALLIGUDEM

YSRCP leader and Former Minister Kottu Satyanarayana strongly criticized Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and a section of the media for spreading false allegations regarding the adulteration of ghee used in Tirumala temple laddus.

Addressing the media here on Wednesday, Satyanarayana expressed his anguish over the baseless claims, stating that the SIT report did not confirm any adulteration in the ghee supplied for the temple's offerings.

Satyanarayana highlighted that the SIT investigation, initiated following allegations, only found irregularities in TTD tenders and arrested four individuals related to those violations. However, Chandrababu and certain media outlets twisted the facts, claiming that the arrests were linked to ghee adulteration.

"The SIT report clearly states that there was no evidence of adulteration in the ghee. Yet, Chandrababu and his media allies continue to mislead the public for political gains," he said. The former minister



accused Chief Minister Chandrababu of exploiting sensitive religious issues for political mileage.

"Naidu has a history of manipulating facts to suit his agenda. This time, he targeted the sacred offerings of Tirumala, hurting the sentiments of millions of devotees," Satyanarayana flayed. He also pointed out that TTD has its own labs to test the quality of ghee, and any substandard supply is immediately rejected.

The YSRCP leader demanded accountability from Chandrababu and the media, calling for an end to the politicization of religious matters. "Such actions not only harm public trust but also disrespect the faith of millions of devotees," he observed.

Tight security for Celebrity Cricket League

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Rachakonda Police have put in place stringent security arrangements for the Celebrity Cricket League (CCL) 2025 matches scheduled at Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, Uppal, on February 14 and 15. Rachakonda Commissioner of Police Sudheer Babu chaired a coordination meeting with CCL organisers at the stadium to review security measures and ensure a hassle-free experience for spectators. The meeting was attended by officials from the stadium management, GHMC, electricity department, revenue department, and various police wings, including intelligence, special branch and reserve police.

Speaking at the meeting, Sudheer Babu emphasised the need for foolproof security to ensure smooth conduct of the matches. Given the participation of film stars from various industries, a large turnout of spectators is expected. He instructed officials to ensure that law and order is maintained without any disruptions. Special attention was given to crowd management, traffic regulation, and entry-exit procedures.

The Commissioner directed officials to coordinate closely with CCL representatives and implement security measures at all entry points.

Tourism Corporation chairman flags off Kumbh Mela bus



PNS ■ ONGOLE

Andhra Pradesh Tourism Corporation chairman Dr. Nukasani Balaji flagged the Maha Kumbh Mela bus at Hotel Sarovar here on Wednesday.

Speaking to the media on the occasion, Tourism Corporation Chairman Balaji said that Andhra Pradesh Tourism has arranged a special package for spiritual pilgrimages. The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Corporation has arranged two AC buses for the convenience of pilgrims going to Maha Kumbh Mela, being held in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh.

He informed that the first bus would start from Nellore and go via Ongole, Vijayawada, Rajahmundry, Visakhapatnam, Odisha to Kashi, Prayagraj and other pilgrimage temples in Uttar Pradesh.

Stating that plans are being prepared for the development of Andhra Pradesh tourism, Dr. Balaji said that new tourism packages are being prepared so that tourists and devotees can

visit the important tourist destinations and temples in Andhra Pradesh.

The Tourism Corporation chairman revealed that the Tourism Department is arranging buses and accommodation facilities for places like Tirupati to Arunachalam, Tirupati to Bangalore, Mysore, Ooty, Tirupati to Chennai, Ooty, Visakhapatnam to Lambasingi, Araku Annavaram Simhachalam, SriSailam, Vijayawada and other places.

Dr. Balaji highlighted that the Tourism Corporation is being developed in such a way that Andhra Pradesh tourism is a role model in India. As per the suggestions of Tourism Minister Kandulu Durgesh, the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Corporation will organize many new tour packages in the coming summer season to attract tourists, said Dr. Balaji. AP Tourism Corporation Transport General Manager Seshidhar, Divisional Manager Srinivasa Rao and AP Tourism CRMTVS Prasad were among those who were present.



638 stolen/lost mobile phones recovered

PNS ■ ELURU

The Eluru district police have recovered 638 stolen/lost mobile phones worth Rs 76.56 lakh and handed over some of them to the owners.

Superintendent of police Prapat Shiva Kishore here on Wednesday said that the CCS police, the Cyber Crime and the Law & Order police personnel jointly recovered stolen and lost mobile phones over the past three months. Using the district toll-free number and the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) portal, a total of 638 mobile phones were recovered in the 14th phase, amounting to a total value of Rs 76,56,000.

These mobile phones were retrieved from current users in various locations, including Eluru, West Godavari, NTR District, Ambedkar

Konaseema, Krishna, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, Vizianagaram, Telangana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and other places.

"The Eluru district police from Phase 1 to Phase 14, have recovered a total of 2,398 lost/stolen mobile phones and the estimated value of the recovered phone is Rs 4,06,39,684," the SP revealed.

The SP emphasized the legal consequences of purchasing or selling stolen goods, as it is a punishable offense. As per Section 317 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023, individuals involved in such activities may face legal action, including imprisonment for up to three years. Cybercriminals are increasingly using inappropriate video calls and other deceptive methods for black-

mail and cyber fraud, the SP said. The SP urged citizens to remain cautious against UPI frauds and to avoid clicking on suspicious links to safeguard their mobile devices.

Citizens are encouraged to report their lost or stolen phones immediately at their nearest police station through the CEIR portal, which is available across all states and union territories in India. The CEIR portal helps prevent the misuse of stolen phones and accelerates recovery efforts. For cybercrime-related issues, the SP advised the public to report complaints promptly by calling 1930 or visiting cybercrime.gov.in. Additional SP N Surya Chandra Rao, DSP D Shrayan Kumar, CCS Inspector Rajasekhar and other police officials were among those who were present.

Vigilance officials seize fish feed, medicines, worth Rs 2.20 cr

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

The vigilance officials conducted raids on the aqua feeds shops at Chinamiram village and seized aqua feed and medicines worth over Rs 2.20 crore.

Vigilance Officials said that on the directions of Vigilance and Enforcement Officer V Rambabu, vigilance and fisheries department teams jointly conducted raids on the Shiva Sai Aqua feed and

Sai Pawan Aqua feed shops and found they were selling aqua feed and medicines without obtaining license. The officials found that the management of the shops were selling aqua feed and medicines without obtaining a license from the fisheries department. The officials seized 180 tonnes of aqua feed, worth Rs 1,88,97,176 from the Shiva Sai Aqua shop.

The officials also conducted a raid on Sri Sai Pawan Aqua Feeds and found



doing trading without license. The officials seized 19 tonnes of aqua feed worth Rs 31,96,237. Talking to the media, Enforcement officer Rambabu warned of stringent action if aqua feed and medicine shops are run without obtaining license from the fisheries department.

Vigilance Inspectors P Shivarama Krishna, D Prasad Kumar and Vigilance AO G Meeraiah were among those who conducted raids.

SEIL energy, IIT-Madras collaborate to revolutionize carbon capture technology

PNS ■ NELLORE

SEIL Energy India Limited (SEIL), One of the largest independent power producers (IPP) in India, and the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras, have joined forces to develop a groundbreaking carbon (CO₂) capture technology.

This innovative project, supported by SEIL's CSR initiative, has resulted in the creation of "Chemogel", a patented (IIT-Madras) nanoparticle-based solvent that significantly enhances carbon capture efficiency. The revolutionary research is supported by SEIL as its corporate social responsibility (INR 7.1 million).

Mr. Raghav Trivedi, CEO-SEIL Energy India Limited, said, "We are proud to



partner with IIT-Madras on this project. Our collaboration has the potential to transform industrial carbon capture processes, and we are excited to take this technology to the next level. This breakthrough aligns with our

commitment to sustainability and reducing our carbon footprint."

Chemogel, the amino derived microgelated solvent developed through this collaboration, has demonstrated better perfor-

mance in lab tests as compared to conventional amine-based solvents. It outperforms traditional amine-based solvents with higher carbon capture rates, improved regeneration efficiency at atmospheric and higher operating temperatures, and improved SO₂ tolerance.

A team from the Department of Chemical Engineering, led by Prof. Jitendra Sangwai, along with his research scholar Yogendra Kumar is partnering with SEIL Energy India Limited to develop novel methods for carbon capture. Prof. Sangwai is establishing a pilot plant demonstrator to facilitate improved carbon capture from coal fired power plant stacks.

According to Prof. Sangwai, decarbonizing industrial clusters is crucial for achieving net-

zero transition, which cannot be accomplished without large-scale, industry-oriented carbon capture and sequestration technology. Yogendra Kumar added that the pilot studies aim to optimize the performance of Chemogel technology in accordance with established standards in actual industrial operating conditions.

The breakthrough has significant implications for the development of more efficient and effective carbon capture technologies, which are crucial in the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change. SEIL Energy and IIT Madras are committed to further developing and deploying this technology to support a sustainable future.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Yunus Govt in the crosshair

Bangladesh army shifts away from the Yunus Government as it calls for stronger ties with India amid chaos and downward slide

Bangladesh is currently facing a period of political uncertainty and unrest as the government led by Muhammad Yunus finds itself increasingly at odds with the country's powerful military establishment. The recent statements made by General Waker-uz-Zaman, the Chief of Army Staff, at the Dhaka International Marathon 2025, indicate a significant shift in the military's stance towards the civilian government. His emphasis on peace, stability and international cooperation—particularly with India—suggests growing dissatisfaction within the army ranks regarding the Yunus administration's policies and governance approach. The military in Bangladesh has historically played a crucial role in maintaining internal stability, often stepping in when political crises spiral out of control. With political tensions escalating under the Yunus government, the army appears to be distancing itself from the administration, signalling a potential realignment in the country's power dynamics. Several factors seem to be driving the military's dissatisfaction with the Yunus government. This indicates the military's concerns over the deteriorating economic conditions and increasing social divisions under Yunus's leadership. Persistent political unrest could be damaging to foreign investments and economic growth, both of which are essential for national development.



The military appears to be worried about governance inefficiencies and security concerns, especially as political violence and mass protests become more frequent. The Yunus government's inability to control these disruptions may be viewed as a failure to ensure stability, a key concern for the army. Bangladesh's military leadership values strong bilateral relations with key regional powers. General Waker's remarks about India underscore the army's desire for a pragmatic foreign policy approach that prioritises stability and mutual benefits rather than ideological stances or populist rhetoric. General Waker-uz-Zaman's statement emphasising India as an important neighbour and a key partner in regional security and economic cooperation suggests a strategic recalibration in Bangladesh's foreign policy. His remarks that Bangladesh "depends on India in many matters" and that both countries should respect each other's strategic interests signal a clear endorsement of closer ties with New Delhi. India and Bangladesh share deep economic linkages, including trade, energy cooperation and infrastructure projects. A stable relationship with India ensures continued economic growth and regional connectivity. Cooperation in counterterrorism efforts and border management is crucial for maintaining peace and stability. Bangladesh's military leadership might be viewing stronger ties with India as a means to maintain a balanced foreign policy, ensuring that Dhaka does not become overly reliant on any single regional power. The balance of power between the civilian leadership and the military will be crucial in determining the country's direction in the coming months.

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PICTALK



Devotees perform rituals during the Thaipusam festival at Vadapalani Murugan temple, in Chennai

PTI

Breaking barriers: Building a future for women in science

Trailblazing women scientists continue to defy the odds, proving that inclusion is not just a matter of fairness but a necessity for scientific and societal progress

In the 21st century, where scientific breakthroughs continue to shape our world, the persistent underrepresentation of women in science remains a glaring issue. Women have been at the forefront of some of the greatest scientific achievements across the globe in diverse fields from basic science to space science. Despite these inspiring role models, systemic barriers continue to stifle women's participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). It's time we confront these challenges and build a future where women can truly thrive in science. What kind of scientific world are we building if we exclude half of our population? Without the full participation of women, we lose access to a vast pool of talent, creativity, and innovative solutions that could address some of our biggest challenges. Many girls are discouraged from pursuing science from a young age due to stereotypes that frame these fields as "unsuitable" or "too difficult." The so-called "leaky pipeline" begins to take its toll as early



as high school, with fewer girls opting for science-related studies and careers. Even for those who break through these initial hurdles, the challenges persist in higher education and professional life. Women in research face a lack of mentorship, unequal access to funding and systemic biases in hiring and promotions. The numbers speak for themselves: UNESCO reports that only 35 per cent of STEM students globally are women, and their representation in leadership roles remains even lower. In India, the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) confirms that while the number of women pursuing science has grown, their presence in top research positions and leadership roles is still dismal. Despite these odds, many Indian women scientists have

defied the status quo and achieved remarkable success. Dr. Indira Hinduja revolutionised reproductive medicine by developing India's first test-tube baby in 1986 and pioneering the gamete intrafallopian transfer (GIFT) technique. Dr. Soumya Swaminathan's leadership as Chief Scientist at the World Health Organization (WHO) played a crucial role in global health policy. Kalpana Kalahasti, a senior scientist at ISRO, was instrumental in India's triumphant Chandrayaan-3 mission and earned a spot in Nature's list of notable figures in 2023. These trailblazers not only pushed the boundaries of scientific knowledge but also broke societal barriers, paving the way for future generations of women in science. Does this make any difference to the society? Society benefits from more inclusive and comprehensive solutions when women are at the forefront of scientific innovation. Areas like maternal health, gender-specific medicine and community health interventions often flourish because of women scientists who understand these challenges first-

hand. Inclusion isn't just about fairness—it's about enriching science itself. So, how do we move forward? Building a future for women in science requires collective effort on multiple fronts. We must dismantle the structural barriers hindering women's advancement, provide mentorship programmes and promote policies that ensure equal hiring, funding, and career progression opportunities. Educational institutions should actively encourage girls to pursue STEM fields, while workplaces must offer flexible work environments that allow women to balance personal and professional responsibilities. It is time to tear down these barriers and build a future where every young girl who dreams of becoming a scientist can do so without limitations. When women are given equal opportunities to contribute to science, we all stand to gain—from groundbreaking discoveries to a more inclusive and prosperous world.

(The writer is the Dean-Academic Affairs, Garden City University, Bangalore, views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

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Mann ki baat: Leading the global revival of radio



SANTHOSH MATHEW

As we celebrate World Radio Day, Mann Ki Baat reminds us that the essence of communication remains the same—connecting, inspiring and bringing people together

Radio is not just a medium; it is a lifeline that transcends borders, connects people and amplifies voices. On World Radio Day, as the world celebrates the power of this enduring platform, India stands at the forefront of a remarkable communication revolution. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's monthly broadcast, Mann Ki Baat, which recently aired its 118th episode, exemplifies how radio is experiencing a renaissance in the digital age, proving to be one of the most effective tools of governance, inspiration, and soft power diplomacy. When UNESCO designated February 13 as World Radio Day in 2011, the objective was clear: to recognise the influence of radio in fostering dialogue, spreading awareness, and bridging communities worldwide.

In India, Mann Ki Baat is a testimony to the enduring power of radio. Launched in 2014, this monthly programme has transformed into one of the largest and most effective communication experiments in the world, reaching millions of listeners not just in India but globally. With an unparalleled ability to engage audiences through storytelling, Modi's initiative underscores the relevance of radio in an era dominated by digital noise. At a time when many predicted the decline of traditional radio, Mann Ki Baat has revived and redefined its significance. The programme's strength lies in its simplicity and relatability. Every episode delivers not just policy discussions but also inspirational stories of common citizens, grassroots innovations, cultural heritage and national achievements. The 118th episode was no different, weaving narratives that resonated with the spirit of nation-building, environmental consciousness, and collective responsibility. Beyond its national appeal, Mann Ki Baat has become an instrument of India's soft power diplomacy. The global Indian diaspora tunes in eagerly, fostering a sense of connection with the homeland. The broadcast's reach extends beyond national boundaries, often being



translated into multiple languages, including regional South Asian tongues, strengthening India's diplomatic and cultural ties with neighbouring nations. As India emerges as a global leader, leveraging radio as a tool for soft power projection enhances its image as a nation that values dialogue, shared heritage and cooperation. South Asia, a region bound by deep historical, cultural, and linguistic ties, finds an unexpected bridge in Mann Ki Baat. The programme's themes—self-reliance, community-driven initiatives, environmental sustainability and youth empowerment—are not just relevant to India but also resonate with India's neighbours. In an era where integration efforts in South Asia often face political roadblocks, the revival of radio as a medium of cultural and ideological exchange holds immense potential. India's radio diplomacy, through Mann Ki Baat, can become a catalyst for fostering deeper South Asian engagement, promoting shared developmental narratives, and creating common aspirations among regional populations. The 118th episode once again demonstrated how radio can be used as a participatory medium. Modi's interactions with citizens, his references to



AS INDIA EMERGES AS A GLOBAL LEADER, LEVERAGING RADIO AS A TOOL FOR SOFT POWER PROJECTION ENHANCES ITS IMAGE AS A NATION THAT VALUES DIALOGUE, SHARED HERITAGE AND COOPERATION

letters and messages from listeners, and his emphasis on people-centric governance make Mann Ki Baat an inclusive space for dialogue. Unlike social media platforms that are often fragmented and dominated by echo chambers, radio, through this programme, emerges as a unifying force that connects the masses uninterruptedly and intimately. From the fishermen in Tamil Nadu to the farmers in Punjab, from students in Meghalaya to entrepreneurs in Gujarat, Mann Ki Baat speaks to every Indian, transcending linguistic, geographic, and socio-economic barriers. It harnesses the power of storytelling to amplify the voices of unsung heroes, small businesses, and cultural custodians. Radio has always been a tool of influence, but Mann Ki Baat takes it a step further by combining traditional broadcasting with modern digital integration. The program is simultaneously aired on multiple platforms, including community radio stations, AIR (All India Radio), podcasts, and social media channels. This hybrid model ensures that the message reaches every demographic, from the rural farmer with a transistor radio to the urban professional tuning in via a smartphone app. On World Radio Day, as glob-

al discussions revolve around the revival and impact of radio, Mann Ki Baat stands as a shining example of how the medium can be harnessed for nation-building and diplomacy. Countries across the world can draw lessons from India's use of radio as a tool for constructive engagement, leadership communication, and global outreach. In an era where polarization is rampant, radio's ability to create a sense of collective consciousness is more valuable than ever. India, with its vast diversity, has found in Mann Ki Baat a unifying voice that reflects the aspirations of its people. The power of voice, the magic of words, and the intimacy of audio storytelling are elements that make this programme not just a political initiative but a cultural phenomenon. As the world looks for ways to reinvigorate traditional communication platforms, India's example showcases that radio is not just surviving but thriving in the digital age. Mann Ki Baat is leading this revival, proving that in the cacophony of digital noise, the human voice still holds the power to unite and inspire.

(The writer is an Associate Professor Centre For South Asian Studies, Pondicherry Central University. Views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AI FOR PUBLIC GOOD

Madam — Artificial intelligence has become a truly global technology. The adoption of AI in healthcare, education, finance, labour and transportation is impacting society on a global scale while fundamental breakthroughs are being facilitated by research collaborations around the world. Its rapid deployment also creates major challenges in terms of the reliability of information, the protection of basic rights and accessibility. It is the international community's responsibility to maintain balance in our societies and to craft AI that respects universal values. The Paris AI Summit has been focused on several key themes related to opportunities, benefits and governance of AI. Also, these themes include AI for public good, for global AI governance, for innovation and culture and for environmentally sustainable AI solutions. The aim of the summit is to strike a balance between technological advancement and the preservation of universal values. The Paris AI Summit is of significant importance for the future of AI due to its focus on global governance, accessibility and ethical development of AI. The AI Action Committee at Paris, co-chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, shed light on India and France's joint work in the five dedicated working groups to tackle key issues for tomorrow: Public interest AI, future of work, innovation and culture Trust in AI and global AI governance. The role of India in the Paris AI Summit is laudable.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

US TARIFFS ON ALUMINIUM, STEEL

Madam — US President Donald Trump has virtually dropped another bomb on the global economy with the announcement of levying a 25 percent duty on steel and aluminium imports and reciprocal duty on all other imports from all countries. India is one of the largest exporters of steel to the US. While the world was aware of Trump's unconventional policies, his blanket threat to impose reciprocal tariffs without any exceptions—almost upends the World Trade

Gandhi's insight on education



propos the article "Rekindling Gandhian values in education." Mahatma Gandhi wrote a few articles in a simple manner on the value of education that should serve as a big motivation for the students of our country. If the students read those writings and apply them in the modern perspective, they will surely give a new dimension to our education system. Gandhi played a significant role in value

education by emphasising the importance of moral and ethical principles. He encouraged educators to teach values like truth, non-violence and respect for others. He felt that instilling these values in students would help them become responsible and compassionate individuals.

Gandhi described himself as a curious and eager learner during his student days. He valued education and believed that it was essential for personal growth. We have to apply Mahatma Gandhi's ideas on value education as a demand of time. Gandhi's unique and refined views about value education are not only important but are worth applying not only in India but also in the rest of the world.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Organisation's (WTO) mandate to promote free trade by eliminating tariffs, quotas and other restrictions.

The free trade regime in the last 20 years kept inflation in manufactured products under control globally. However, Trump's populist agenda to find jobs for his support base consisting of semi-literate people in the US could damage the US-led alliance based on the Bretton Woods system. While the immediate threat from Trump's tariff on steel and aluminium could be negligible, the Indian economy could face the heat from fleeing foreign investors which could affect stock valuations and rupee weakness which could result in imported inflation.

N Sathasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

AFFORESTATION NEEDED TO SAVE FORESTS

Madam — It is indeed a matter of concern that a government agency like NHAI is overenthusiastic in felling a huge number of trees but not interested in attending to the compensatory afforestation. The government brought amendments in the Forest Act last year, which is sure to reduce

the forest cover in the country. Already the country's forest cover has come down from the recommended level of 1/3 to 1/5 of the land area.

Now we can expect further deterioration in the status, as using forest land is permitted for shikar and industrial activities. The centuries-old valuable thick forests in the Northeast are threatened with their very existence in the coming years. Mines are given to private players to hasten the process of exploiting the fossil fuels. This is an act that goes against the concern of everyone over the fast-changing climate. Every mine project begins with the destruction of forests in the vast sheet of hill areas, which will take many decades to reconstruct by afforestation efforts. It is high time the moments to save forests take the form of a people's movement to sensitise all the concerned and save the globe to make it fit enough to live. The apex court's concern conveyed to NHAI is welcome.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

ONE FAITH ONE WORLD

It's easy to point fingers when things go wrong, but true growth begins with self-reflection



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR **NIKUNJJI**

All of us have heard the famous phrase "United We Stand, Divided We Fall" during our school days through the simple story of an old farmer who, on his deathbed, taught the importance of unity to his disunited sons through a bundle of sticks. That story still holds an important place in our society and has even gained popularity because discord, disunity, strife and warfare have assumed unprecedented proportions in the modern world. Today, one of the most arduous challenges that face humanity is to establish harmony among people of different religions.

There is no doubt that political and religious leaders have time and again endeavoured to bring people onto a common platform and find ways and means to forge better understanding and acceptance of each faith. But despite their hard efforts, not much has changed. Hence, the greatest question of all at present is whether can the diverse religions and faiths ever be united. If so, then how? If we walk down history lane, we would find that one of the important reasons why the need for religious harmony originated is that the most



violent wars and conflicts in human history were based on religious intolerance and hatred. It might be a shocking statement, but it's the harsh reality that religions, which are supposed to make people more peaceful and loving, have today become the biggest cause of discord and bloodshed in the world. It's so appalling to see organized groups across the globe sworn to spread terror in the name of religion and carry out ethnic cleansing in the name of removing evil from the world.

If we closely examine the growth of each faith through the centuries, it reveals an interesting pattern. Even though there are some common values and tenets in all faiths, there are far too many misconceptions and conflicting beliefs that have continually fanned mistrust and hostility among the masses. It's quite imperative to know that, at the time of their inception, every religion had the power of purity, truth, and unity.

Gradually, cracks, factionalism, shallowness, delusion, deception and ritualistic adherence devoid of spiritual significance began to appear. Hence, instead of empowering spiritual values, religions perpetuated dogmas, disciplines, and barriers that segregate people on many lines. Many fall prey to the very evils they preach against, such as the lust for power, pleasure and money. There can be better understanding, tolerance, and acceptance of each faith, but there cannot be unity unless there is a single or common belief. So, what's the best way to reach a common solution acceptable to all faiths? According to divine knowledge imparted by the Supreme Almighty, everything in the eternal cycle of the human world drama goes through a change, which means that everything degrades from a perfect state to an imperfect, fragmented state. Be it human souls, nature, religions, or civilisations, almost everything passes through the sato (pure), rajo (mixed) and tamo (impure) stages as the time cycle spins from the Golden Age to the Iron Age.

As of today, we are witnessing the tamo-pradhan (most degraded) stage of all aspects of human existence, and religions are no exception to this process of change. Hence, we can envisage a unified faith only in terms of the spirituality inherent in all faiths. It is said that God is Truth, and true religion embodies that truth. Hence, when humans embrace that truth in their hearts, there will be a unified world. So, let us all stand united with one unified faith to welcome the new world where truth, peace and harmony will prevail.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

The MBA dilemma: Why degrees alone no longer guarantee success



DINESH SOOD

Once considered a guaranteed gateway to lucrative careers, the MBA is under scrutiny as unemployment rates rise—even among graduates from elite institutions



The job market for MBA graduates has reached a critical juncture, sparking conversations that resonate with a growing number of aspirants and professionals grappling with the changing realities of employment. Once seen as a surefire ticket to high-paying corporate roles, the MBA degree is scrutinised for relevance in an evolving economic landscape. This issue is not confined to India alone; even graduates from elite institutions like Harvard, Stanford, and Wharton feel the squeeze. The Wall Street Journal recently reported that in 2024, 23 per cent of Harvard Business School's MBA graduates were jobless. Other top-tier business schools like Stanford and Wharton have seen similar dips, with unemployment rates hovering around 20 per cent.

The problem is not just limited to the United States. According to the International Labour Organisation's Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024, 13 per cent of the global youth labour force was unemployed in 2023—a staggering figure representing nearly 65 million people. This unsettling trend makes traditional, generalist MBA degrees less appealing than targeted skill certifications. A recent Forbes report highlighted how some MBA graduates have succeeded by lowering their expectations and opting for less conventional roles. In an era where industries are shifting dynamically, the rigid, cookie-cutter MBA model is struggling to keep pace. The need for a 360-degree reimagination of this degree has never been more pressing.

Degrees Alone Won't Cut It Anymore One fundamental truth is becoming evident: degrees alone no longer guarantee job or entrepreneurship security. The future belongs to professionals who continuously upskill and adapt to meet the ever-changing demands of the workforce. What used to be a clear, structured career trajectory for MBA graduates—typically leading to consulting, finance, or management roles—is now blurred. The stark reality is that a prestigious qualification, while valuable, no longer provides



WHAT USED TO BE A CLEAR, STRUCTURED CAREER TRAJECTORY FOR MBA GRADUATES—TYPICALLY LEADING TO CONSULTING, FINANCE, OR MANAGEMENT ROLES—IS NOW BLURRED

immunity against unemployment or underemployment. Even more telling is the global shift in job seekers' mindsets. While travelling to Canada, I recently observed an MBA graduate running a salon branded "MBA Barber Shop." This reflects an important reality—many skilled gig jobs are vital for holistic growth, but traditional academic pathways have often dismissed such careers as unworthy. Yet, most developed nations respect one's skills rather than qualifications or family background. We must ask: Why doesn't Indian society do the same? **Skill Respect Over Degree Prestige**

The changing job landscape demands a fundamental shift in how we perceive employment, education, and career success. Skill acquisition is about individuals learning new competencies and families being sensitised to alternative career paths. It is about communities understanding the implications of an evolving job market. It is about cities and regions acknowledging and respecting those who possess the skills necessary to sustain a livelihood, irrespective of whether they hold an MBA or a B.Tech degree.

The MBA has been a gateway to professional and financial success for decades. However, the economy's evolution demands a departure from this narrow thinking. In India and many other countries, social conditioning has led to an unspoken hierarchy of professions. White-collar corporate roles are celebrated, while vocational or blue-collar jobs are often overlooked. This mindset is outdated and damaging in a world where adaptability and skills matter more than mere academic credentials. **A 360-Degree Skills Revolution** What we need now is a complete rethinking of education and skill development. The traditional MBA

must evolve from a broad-spectrum business degree into a dynamic, skills-focused program that integrates emerging industry trends. A 360-degree approach should include everything from finance to marketing and HR.

MBA programmes must incorporate niche skills such as data analytics, digital transformation, sustainability management and entrepreneurship in beauty-wellness, the most emerging sector. Instead of theoretical coursework, there should be a stronger focus on apprenticeships, live projects and problem-solving in real-world business scenarios.

Understanding AI, automation, and emerging technologies should be a core part of the curriculum to prepare graduates for future-ready roles. Rather than treating entrepreneurship as an alternative, business schools should actively promote and equip students with the skills to start and sustain their ventures. Business schools must recognise the gig economy's rise and train students to navigate freelance and contract-based work models. **Beyond Livelihood—Dignity in Work**

Redefining career success means placing equal value on all forms of work. Whether a person is an MBA graduate managing a corporate division, an AI consultant, a skilled tradesperson, or a self-employed barber, their ability to contribute meaningfully to society matters. The prestige of a job should be measured not by its title but by its impact and sustainability. Parents, educators, and policymakers have a role in fostering this change. We must instil in young minds that success is not confined to traditional white-collar professions. Regardless of their chosen field, a skilled individual should be celebrated just as much as a corporate executive. If an MBA graduate decides to become an artisan,

a chef, a salon owner or a renewable energy technician, they should be seen as pioneers, not failures. **The Need for Institutional Change**

Educational institutions must move beyond outdated frameworks and align themselves with industry demands. Business schools should foster adaptive thinking, preparing students for unconventional but lucrative career paths. The focus should be on problem-solving, digital proficiency, and entrepreneurial agility rather than rigid academic theories.

Governments and industries should also contribute by incentivising skill-based education. Scholarships, subsidies, and awareness campaigns can help shift societal perspectives on what constitutes a respectable and rewarding career.

Conclusion: A Future Built on Skills Once a golden ticket to corporate success, the MBA faces an existential crisis. If it is to remain relevant, it must undergo radical transformation. A degree is no longer a guarantee; what truly matters is an individual's ability to adapt, innovate, and deliver value in an ever-changing world.

As a society, we need to support and encourage young professionals in their quest to discover their true potential—even in jobs that were once considered "odd." In reality, no job is odd; what matters is its necessity and impact. By embracing a 360-degree perspective on skills and careers, we can build a more inclusive, resilient, and future-ready workforce. The time for change is now.

(The writer is a Co-Founder and MD of Orane International, a Training Partner with the National Skill Development Corporation, and a Network Member, of India International Skill Centres. View express are personal)

Ethics-driven AI in predictive healthcare: Building a foundation of trust and accountability

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionising predictive healthcare, offering early disease detection, personalised treatment plans and improved patient outcomes

In today's rapidly advancing healthcare landscape, Artificial Intelligence (AI) plays a transformative role, particularly in predictive healthcare. AI's ability to analyse vast datasets enables early disease detection, personalised treatment plans and improved patient outcomes. The global AI in healthcare market, valued at approximately \$15.4 billion in 2022, is projected to surge to \$187.95 billion by 2030, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 37 per cent. Yet, with this potential comes a responsibility to ensure that AI is used responsibly, ethically, and equitably. Establishing a framework that prioritises privacy, fairness, transparency and accountability is essential to protect patient rights and



GERALD JAIDEEP

maintain public trust. The Power of AI in Predictive Healthcare AI's role in predictive healthcare is primarily driven by machine learning and data analytics, empowering it to forecast diseases, assess risk factors, and recommend preventive measures. By examining patterns in com-

prehensive datasets, such as medical histories, genetic profiles, lifestyle information and real-time health data, AI can predict the likelihood of conditions ranging from diabetes and cardiovascular diseases to complex ailments like cancer and Alzheimer's. This shift from reactive to preventive care can ease the burden on healthcare systems and improve patient quality of life. For example, AI-based diagnostics for diabetic retinopathy have shown an accuracy rate of over 87 per cent, enabling early detection and timely intervention. Similarly, IBM Watson's Oncology AI has achieved 90 per cent accuracy in cancer treatment recommendations that align with those of human oncologists. However, to har-

ness AI's potential responsibly, it's crucial to address the ethical challenges it introduces. **Safeguarding Data Privacy and Security** The ethical use of AI in healthcare hinges on the responsible management of patient data. Predictive healthcare AI relies heavily on sensitive information, including medical, genetic, and behavioural data. Yet, the need for privacy is ever more pressing—72 per cent of Americans express significant concerns about data privacy in AI applications, particularly in healthcare. In 2022, nearly 50 million healthcare records were exposed to data breaches in the United States, underscoring the need for strong data security protocols. To protect this information, AI systems must



prioritise rigorous security measures such as encryption, anonymisation and regular audits. Patients should also provide informed consent, clearly explaining how their data will be used and stored. By centring data protection in AI development, healthcare can ensure patient confidentiality and foster the trust necessary for AI's

continued adoption. **Addressing Bias for Fair and Equitable Predictions** AI's reliance on historical data introduces the risk of bias, which can lead to predictions that disproportionately impact certain demographic groups. Research has shown that AI models trained on biased data result in 35 per cent more misdiagnoses for Black and Hispanic patients compared to white patients. In healthcare, such biases could exacerbate disparities for marginalised populations. Ensuring fairness requires AI systems trained on diverse, representative datasets, as well as continuous monitoring and adjustments to detect and correct biases. A study published in Nature Medicine found that AI systems trained on

inclusive datasets significantly reduce diagnostic discrepancies, underscoring the importance of inclusivity in training data. Collaboration with healthcare professionals and ethicists is also vital to developing AI solutions that are equitable and serve all patients effectively. **Promoting Transparency and Explainability in AI Models** The complexity of AI algorithms often results in "black box" decision-making, where the reasoning behind predictions is not fully understood by users or developers. In predictive healthcare, this lack of transparency can hinder trust and adoption among patients and healthcare providers alike. In a survey by the American Medical Association, 67 per cent of healthcare providers

expressed reservations about using "black-box" AI systems, highlighting the need for explainable AI. Currently, only 23 per cent of AI-based diagnostic tools meet explainability standards to ensure transparency. By developing interpretable models, researchers can make AI's decision-making processes accessible to healthcare providers, enabling them to communicate AI-driven recommendations clearly and fostering patient involvement in care decisions.

As AI continues to advance, a strong ethical framework will be essential to uphold public trust and ensure that AI-driven healthcare remains a force for good.

(The writer is CEO, Medvarsity; views are personal)

Vicky Kaushal on balancing his role in Chhaava with his true self

Bollywood actor Vicky Kaushal is set to dazzle audiences once again with his highly anticipated film Chhaava, in which he portrays the legendary Maratha ruler, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, son of the iconic Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The film, a historical epic, promises to take viewers on an immersive journey through the rich cultural and political landscape of the Maratha era. Chhaava is slated for release on February 14 and also stars Akshaye Khanna and Rashmika Mandana.



Known for his dedication to his craft, Vicky Kaushal described this role as his "toughest role yet." In a recent interview, he elaborated on the immense physical and mental preparation required to bring the historical figure to life. "Playing such a historical figure requires a lot of discipline. If you are not used to discipline, where I was, it becomes very challenging," Vicky explained. To achieve an authentic look, he reportedly gained around 25 kg and underwent rigorous training in horse riding and sword fighting, ensuring that every aspect of his performance mirrored the legacy of the Maratha ruler.

Beyond the physical transformation, Vicky immersed himself deeply in the culture, history, and language of the era. "Understanding the history of both Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj was crucial for me," he noted, emphasising the importance of connecting with the past to accurately portray the character. His extensive preparation was further bolstered by close collaboration with director Laxman Utekar, whose guidance helped him delve into the complexities of the role and connect with the emotional undercurrents of the narra-

tive. Vicky also reflected on the challenges of transitioning between his character and his real-life persona. "You become silent, stay more focused, and that stays with you for that time," he admitted, acknowledging how intense roles can linger in one's mind even after leaving the set.

While Chhaava aims to celebrate the valor and legacy of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, it has not been without controversy. A dance sequence featuring the traditional Maharashtrian Lezim performed by

the character was removed following objections from political figures, including Maharashtra Minister Uday Samant. Despite this setback, the film continues to generate significant buzz and anticipation among fans eager to see Vicky Kaushal's transformative performance.

As Vicky Kaushal embarks on this challenging cinematic journey, Chhaava stands poised to captivate audiences with its blend of historical grandeur, intense character portrayal, and the timeless legacy of the Maratha empire.

Bobby Deol says 'stakes are higher, drama bolder, secrets even darker' in Ek Badnaam Aashram season 3-part 2

Continuing its reign as one of India's most-watched OTT series, the season 3-part 2 of Ek Badnaam Aashram, delves deep into the murky intersections of crime, power, and faith, promising to captivate audiences with its relentless narrative of betrayal, revenge, and redemption.

Directed and produced by National Award-winner Prakash Jha, Ek Badnaam Aashram features an ensemble cast led by Bobby Deol, who reprises his role as the formidable Baba Nirala. Joining him are Aaditi Pohankar, Chandan Roy Sanyal, Tridha Choudhury, Darshan Kumaar, Vikram Kochhar, Anupriya Goenka, Rajeev Siddhartha, and Esha Gupta, among others. The newly released teaser offers a chilling glimpse into Baba Nirala's resurgence to power, as his unwavering loyalists and an increasingly volatile inner circle set the stage for a series of high-stakes confrontations.

The teaser which released on Wednesday, enriched by the evocative soundtrack "Duniya Mein Logon Ko" by Saregama, underscores the series' promise to deliver a roller-coaster of suspense and intrigue. The narrative centers on a rookie crime journalist's discovery of a fugitive gangster's return, which sets in motion a dangerous web of secrets and rivalries that could upend everything. With each revelation, the stakes rise, challenging the moral fabric of



the characters and threatening to shatter the precarious balance of power.

Bobby Deol, reflecting on his transformative journey as Baba Nirala, added: "The journey of Baba Nirala has been incredible, and the overwhelming love this franchise has received over the years is simply humbling. Portraying this character has been both thrilling and challenging. I can't wait for audiences to witness the next chapter, where the stakes

are higher, the drama bolder, and the secrets even darker."

Set to stream exclusively on Amazon MX Player for free, Ek Badnaam Aashram Season 3 - Part 2 will be available on the platform's mobile apps, Amazon's shopping app, Prime Video, Fire TV, and Connected TVs. As anticipation builds and fan fervor reaches new heights, this next chapter promises to deliver an unforgettable saga of crime, loyalty, and dark secrets.

Pankaj Tripathi ventures into audio storytelling with Velvet's cinematic experience

Renowned actor Pankaj Tripathi has stepped into the world of audio storytelling as the co-founder of Velvet, a platform dedicated to bringing India's rich oral storytelling tradition to a global audience.

Launched in October 2024, Velvet is the brainchild of Tripathi along with actor and dialogue coach Vikas Kumar, and co-founders Akshat Saxena, Varad Bhatnagar, and Sharib Khan. The platform seeks to offer listeners an immersive, cinematic audio experience, particularly in Hindi, with plans to expand into English and other regional Indian languages.

Tripathi, known for his performances in Stree 2, Gangs of Wasseypur, Bareilly Ki Barfi, and Mirzapur, expressed his deep connection to storytelling. "From folk tales to epics, storytelling has been at the heart of Indian culture. With this platform, we wanted to take that tradition forward - creating an audio experience that transports listeners into a world of imagination while staying deeply rooted in our cultural ethos," he shared in a statement.

Velvet aims to bridge the gap between traditional oral storytelling and modern digital entertainment, offering a space where creators can connect with audiences worldwide. Speaking about the potential of the platform, Tripathi added, "This is not just about entertainment; it's about preserving and promoting the art of storytelling in a way that resonates with contemporary listeners. Audio has a unique ability to evoke emotions differently from visual mediums - it allows the audience to imagine, dream, and engage with narratives on a deeply personal level."



Actress-singer Selena Gomez appears poised to concentrate on her acting career in the wake of her breakthrough role in Jacques Audiard's musical crime film, Emilia Perez. The 32-year-old star, whose performance in the film has garnered widespread acclaim, revealed at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival that returning to her music career will be a challenging prospect after experiencing the transformative power of film. "I think film and art-making and being around such incredible, talented people that have done nothing but uplift me along the way - it's going to be very hard for me to ever go back to music after this," Gomez remarked during the event.

This statement underscores her deep connection with the craft of filmmaking

SELENA GOMEZ: 'IT'S HARD TO GO BACK TO MUSIC' AFTER THE SUCCESS OF EMILIA PEREZ

and her desire to explore storytelling through a different medium. Gomez further elaborated on her new direction by expressing gratitude for the trust placed in her by the film's director. "The director just really trusted me and I was so grateful because I've gotten to show people that I am capable of doing more. I hope that this is just the beginning for me," she said. With Emilia Perez serving as a potential launching pad, the hitmaker looks forward to expanding her horizons in film and television projects. Despite enjoying significant success both as an

actress and as a singer - best known for chart-topping hits like "Good For You"-Gomez candidly acknowledged that she might be "a little too old for the pop-star life." In an interview with Variety, she explained, "I definitely think my strong suit is probably acting. But one thing I'm proud of in music is being able to tell a story - my favorite songs are mostly ballads, and they're very transparent and honest. But I think I might be a little too old for the pop-star life. I'm genuinely so happy to just be in this new era of my life, because in a lot of ways, it's just the beginning."

With her sights set on a future filled with film and TV projects, Gomez emphasised that her music career remains a cherished part of her journey but is now a separate chapter. "I love storytelling, and my music career is separate. However, I don't see that being a forever thing," she concluded. As Emilia Perez continues to captivate audiences across various platforms, Selena Gomez's bold transition marks a new era for the multi-talented star - one where her passion for acting and storytelling takes center stage, promising even more diverse and compelling projects in the years to come.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



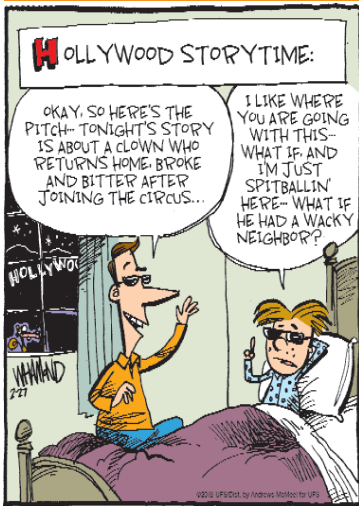
NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



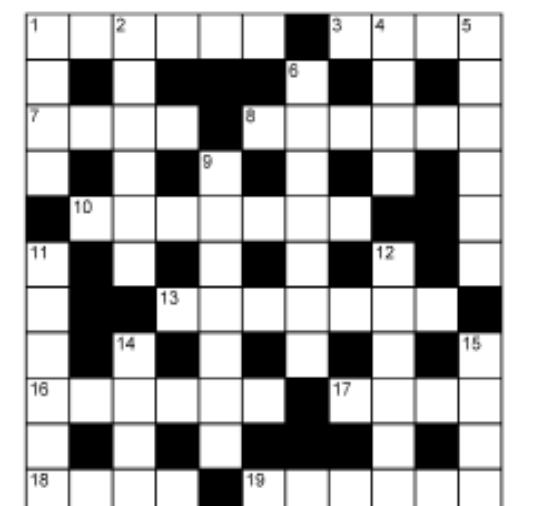
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

- 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 clasp on a belt
- Hint
- A foot covering
- Small glass ball
- Very angry
- Borrow books here
- A large shed for an aeroplane
- Leg joint
- Decays
- Dislike very strongly
- A month
- Alike
- A writer of books
- Medal for third place
- Rope tangle
- Departed

DOWN

- Finest
- A prickly plant
- Part of the ear
- Cricket team number



I got the mood to get married: Vishwak Sen

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
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Whenever young actor Vishwak Sen's film is released, some controversies also surround the film or the actor. His upcoming film 'Laila' is releasing this Friday. Actor Prudhvi's political comments became viral and hurt some people. Later, Vishwak said sorry about it, because it is his film. "I wanted to stop the controversies," said the actor. He added that he does not want to invite controversies, but they are unexpectedly coming. "Now, I am a more mature person, because I am becoming older. So, I would like to maintain more calm," said the actor when asked why he is quiet these days.

The actor has turned into a female in this film 'Laila'. "As an actor I would like to play all types of characters and a female character is one of them. It also shows a new dimension as an actor, and more than that it is almost two decades since a lead actor played a female role," said Vishwak about him playing a female role. He added that in Telugu there are only a few films like 'Madam', 'Chitram Bhalare Chitram' and 'Bhamane Satya Bhamane' released long back.

"So, I wish to play the female character in a strong way, and at the same time director Ram Narayan came up with this and I immediately agreed," he said. He added that in this film 'Laila' is going to dominate, but at the same time the audience definitely likes Sonu too. In Tamil, Siva Karthikeyan played the female character in 'Remo' and it was released in 2016. "He played a nurse's character and he did it to get his love interest. But in my film he is facing problems from three sides. So to escape from them he turns into a lady," said Vishwak Sen. He added that singer Sravana Bhargavi lends her voice for Vishwak's female character.

The actor said it's not completely an adult comedy, but it attracts youth. "When the director narrated the story to me, I laughed a lot. There are jokes, but they are more like youth content and different jokes," said the actor. Vishwak said it took him nearly two-and-a-half hours to do the makeup. "It's not easy, though I shaved in the morning, but by evening my beard grows, so again I had to shave," he said about the female character. He added that he didn't take any reference or workshop for it. "I used to mock my sister and my aunts, at school with girls, when I was a kid, so those are now helping me to play this female role," said Vishwak.

For this film, they initially roped in Tanishk Bagchi, but he was replaced by Leon James. "I didn't like Tanishk's work and he also couldn't meet our deadlines, so we replaced him with Leon James," he said about music. He added that he doesn't know that director Ram Narayan is also a music director. "When the motion poster was released, I asked who composed the music for it. To my surprise he said he did it," said the actor.

Vishwak also turned into a lyric writer and he said for it also there was no inspiration. "From the last few years I have had this itch in my mind that I want to write lyrics. So I asked my director if he likes them, he can use them, there is no compulsion. I wrote two songs in this film," he said. When asked if the controversy after actor Prudhvi's political comments settled? "I don't know, whatever needed I did," he said. On the same stage, Chiranjeevi also came up with political comments, "but he spoke about his younger brother," said Vishwak about Chiru. He added that he isn't into politics.

The actor accepted that his earlier film 'Mechanic Rocky' was a failure. "Yes, the film did not meet my expectations and we made a few mistakes in the film. I don't want to repeat those mistakes in my future films and I learnt a lesson from it," said the actor. He added that there is a scene in this film

VISHWAK SEN TALKS ABOUT HIS MARRIAGE, HIS MATURITY LEVELS, DISCIPLINE, CONTROVERSIES AND HOW DIFFICULT IS DOING A FEMALE CHARACTER, WHY HE DOESN'T WANT TO DO HORROR FILMS AND SO ON...

which leads to the sequel, but he wanted to add only in the second week. "If this film is successful, there will be a sequel," he added.

Vishwak Sen is going to enter his 30s in the coming March. When asked about marriage, "I got into the mood of getting married," he said. He added that he doesn't have anyone in his mind, and also he doesn't know what kind of girl he wants. "When it comes, I will see," he said.

Vishwak Sen earlier directed a film 'Falaknuma Das' and will he again wield the megaphone? "No, not now, after five years, I will direct a film," he said. He added that if he directs, he can do only one film in a year, otherwise he can do four to five films a year. "I also want to earn something, so I am focused on acting now," he said.

For another question he said, he doesn't want to do horror genre. "When you feel something in real life, you can do it on the screen. But I watched many horror films even in an empty theatre, but I wasn't scared, so I don't do horror films," he said. He said, but he was scared of humans. "We human beings can do anything," he said.

Siddhu's film releasing in theatres after five years

Siddhu Jonnalagadda's film 'Krishna and His Leela' was released directly in OTT in 2020. Ravikanth Parepu was the director, while Rana Daggubati and Sanjay Reddy were the producers. Shradha Srinath, Seerath Kapoor and Shalini Vadnikatti were the female leads. It's a romantic comedy and the film was a successful one on OTT.

Now after five years, the makers are releasing this film in theatres this Friday, on the occasion of Valentine's Day. "We are not re-releasing this film. We are releasing it for the first time in theatres," said Rana about the film. He added that they wanted to rename the film as 'It's Complicated'. "We have few names in our mind, but it is the director who comes up with this title," said Rana.

Siddhu said that he wanted to see this film with the audience and hence releasing it in theatres. "We have many requests on social media about this film's release, so we decided February 14 is the best," said Rana Daggubati.

Director Ravikanth said that his first short film was titled 'It's Complicated,' so he wanted to use the same title for this film.

Siddhu became a big star after his last film 'Tillu Square' which grossed more than Rs 100 crore. Now, the makers wanted to cash in on Siddhu's image.

So they are releasing this film now in theatres, says a source.



Chiranjeevi lands in a controversy for his 'sexist' remarks

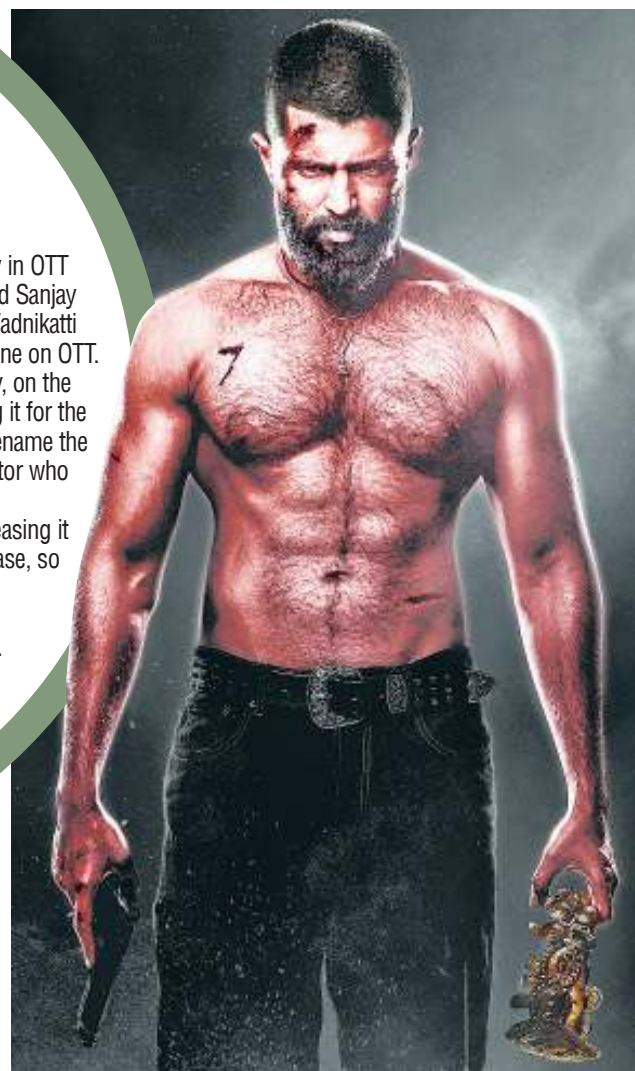
Mega Star of Telugu Cinema, Chiranjeevi is landed in a controversy. The actor was the chief guest for 'Brahma Anandam' film pre-release event. Though he made comments in a lighter vein, those landed him in a big controversy. In the film 'Brahmanandam' and his real son Raj Gowtham are playing the roles of a grandfather and grandson. Relating to this, they showed pictures of Chiranjeevi along with his granddaughters and asked him to comment. He said, "When I am at home with my granddaughters, it is like a ladies hostel, surrounded by many ladies and I am like a warden," said Chiranjeevi.

The actor didn't stop at that and added, "I am telling Charan next time to have a son, so that the legacy continues. But I am afraid he may have another daughter." He ended up by saying 'Lovely kids'. Though Chiranjeevi said it in a very light-hearted way, his comments landed him in a big controversy about his 'sexist' remarks. Many people reacted to his comment and said a girl also can carry on his legacy. Not about it, his other comment about his

In a film's pre-release event, Megastar made comments about his granddaughters. To continue his legacy, he asks Ram Charan to have a boy next time. His political entry and other comments go viral on the social media

grandfather's photo flashes on the screen and Chiranjeevi says, "He is my mother's father Radhakrishna Naidu. He is from Nellore, but settled in Mogaluru and retired as Excise Inspector. You can get any other person's similarities, but not him. Because he is a romantic person. I officially had two grandmothers, and when he was not in a good mood, he went to a third woman. I don't know there may be a fourth and a fifth woman also," he said about his grandfather.

This is the second time that Chiranjeevi attended a film event as a special guest, just one day before he attended 'Laila' pre-release event and then 'Brahma Anandam' event. At the same stage, he clarified that he doesn't want to enter politics again. "I will stay away from politics all my life and I decided to stay in the cinema. There may be doubts that I am meeting many people. So people may doubt, but I am meeting them to do social service," said Chiranjeevi about his political entry. He also added that his younger brother Pawan Kalyan is there to serve people and he will fulfill his vision and mission.



Vijay Deverakonda's film titled Kingdom

Vijay Deverakonda's upcoming film directed by Gowtam Tinnanuri is one of the most anticipated films of 2025. The makers of this film have officially announced the title as 'Kingdom'. The teaser was also released on Wednesday and it is an adrenaline-fueled action drama packed with intensity, emotions and scale. It promises a larger than life experience leaving audiences on the edge of their seats.

Interestingly, Jr NTR has lent his voice for the Telugu version, Suriya for Tamil and Ranbir Kapoor for Hindi. Vijay

Deverakonda has poured his heart and soul into this film giving it everything to make it as big as possible. After delivering the cult classic 'Jersey', Gowtam Tinnanuri is back, this time showcasing Vijay Deverakonda in a completely new avatar.

Anirudh Ravichander is one of the most in demand music directors, and he provided a power-packed and electrifying BGM adding to the film's intensity. Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya are producing this film and they announced that the film is to hit the big screens on May 30.

Amma Rajasekhara confident that he is back on track with Thala

For the last few days, Tollywood is busy with pre-release and other film events. Big actors like Chiranjeevi and Nagarjuna participated as chief guests in film events, while another small film 'Thala' also held its pre-release event. Popular choreographer turned director Amma Rajasekhara is the director of this film, and he is introducing his son Amma Ragin Raj as lead actor. The film is releasing on February 14. Srinivas Goud is the producer and this film is also releasing in Tamil at the same time. Ankita Naskar is also making her debut as the female lead.

Ragin Raj, the young actor, who is playing the lead, spoke in an emotional way. He shared how 'Thala' has been in the making for two years and how he endured real injuries for the action sequences. "This film is an intense journey of a young man shaped by his mother's sentiments, with elements of romance and action," said Ragin Raj.

Director Amma Rajasekhara, acknowledging the stress and challenges of the past months, expressed his gratitude to producer Srinivas Goud for unwavering support. He assured everyone that this film would mark his return and sought the audience's blessings for his son's debut. At the same event, Amma Rajasekhara collapsed because of his high blood pressure. First aid was provided immediately and the director recovered after some time.

